Interaction in Multicultural Project-Team Meetings: Managing the Formative Stages

by

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DECLARATION

I declare that the present thesis is my own work except where acknowledgement is given to outside sources. I also confirm that the thesis contains no material which has previously been submitted to this University or to any other institution for another degree, diploma, certificate or qualification.

ABSTRACT

This thesis explores how newly-formed, short-term, multicultural project teams develop ways to manage their interactions in project-team meetings. The research took place within a management integration programme at a multinational company in France.

A number of models have been proposed in international business on international teamwork (e.g. small group development processes, international team life-cyles, features of internal team functioning). However, these models provide little or no detail on the interactional processes that team members experience as they move through the different stages of development. Research within applied linguistics and education, on the other hand, provides frameworks for analysing interactional processes. For example, frameworks such as 'activity types' and 'communication of practice' have posited that communication is regulated by a system of rules and norms as to the expected interpersonal and verbal behaviour. However, when new teams are forming, appropriate behavioural practices need to be created for teams to be operationally effective. Yet, little or no research has explored how this occurs within international teams. In my research I aim to fill this gap by examining the interactional processes of international teams during their formative stages.

Using an ethnographic-like case-study method to examine three teams, this study explores the interaction processes that occurred as team members learned to work together, the similarities and differences in the establishment of these processes across teams and the factors that were perceived as playing an influencing role.

Key findings from the research are that establishing rules and setting up roles were beneficial to teamwork, while language differences rather hindered operational effectiveness. Other factors that affected the project-team workshops across all teams appeared to be interpersonal team relations and corporate culture and values.

ABBREVIATIONS AND ALIASES

ABBREVIATIONS

AIRTs:	Academic International Research Teams
CBI:	Confederation of British Industry
BELF:	Business English as a Lingua Franca
ELF:	English as a Lingua Franca
GLOBE project:	Global Leadership and Organizational Behavior Effectiveness Research Program
VOICE:	Vienna Oxford International Corpus of English
CC:	corporate culture
HQ:	headquarter(s)
MNC:	multinational company
MNT:	multinational team
MTS:	mother-tongue speaker
SLS:	second-language speaker
FS:	fluent speaker
LFS:	less fluent speaker

ALIASES

GP:	Global Player (alias given to the company)
MIP:	Management Integration Programme (alias given to my data collection site)
Teams G, K and T:	aliases given to the three teams observed and investigated
G1, G2, G3, G4, K1, K4, T1, T2, T3, T4:	Tasks 1, 2, 3 and 4 for Teams G and T, and Tasks 1 and 4 for Team K
Acronym IDs for the participants:	*See Section 3.4.5; Appendix A4*

Chapter 1 - Introduction

As an instructor at a business school in France, I often put my students into teams to carry out a number of assignments. Although I may have clearly spelled out my objectives and given precise instructions, the resulting teamwork may turn out quite differently from one team to the next depending on the people and the groups, and some teams may experience more difficulties than others. More precisely, in one of my Master's level role-play groups comprised of students of diverse backgrounds, the chair felt it was his responsibility to go around the table asking straightforward questions one by one to each individual rather than letting people participate more informally when they felt they had something relevant to contribute. After a while, one of the other students requested: "can't we just have a free discussion?" A second example of student teamwork involves twelve project teams composed of five French students and one American per group. The various teams reported a whole range of problems, including miscommunication among team members, disorganisation, lack of preparation, a last-minute rush to finish the assignments and partially-completed tasks. Moreover, in some groups the Americans were treated as if they were ignorant or incompetent because they could not always follow the discussions spoken in French at mother-tongue speaker (MTS) speed using slang words. However, in other groups the Americans were treated as equals and were given the same quantity of work as the French students, and they all helped each other out with the workload. And in yet another group, all students found a system whereby they separated their work into individual tasks and then shared everything on Facebook, especially since they did not live near each other and their classes were on two separate campuses, so they could not necessarily get together physically. Apparently, this system worked smoothly and there were no misunderstandings or communication problems. They thus seemed to have found an effective way of functioning.

Over the years, these types of classroom situations have left me wondering about a number of issues involving teamwork: How do heterogeneous teams find ways of handling their interactions? Which factors influence team dynamics and processes? What can we, as instructors, do to optimise these team exercises so that lessons can

be learned? What should we be teaching our students so that they can acquire the necessary teamwork skills to operative effectively in the workplace?

Therefore, after many years of teaching foreign language and culture to undergraduate- and graduate-level business students and of organising study abroad programs to enable these students to enhance their linguistic fluency and to become more culturally open-minded, I wanted a first-hand glimpse of how they might apply these skills in companies upon graduation. I thus started my thesis with the intention of investigating how multicultural groups handle their interactional processes in workplace meetings. From a practical point of view, then, the focus of my thesis reflects my desire to better prepare business students to become competent international managers in the global workplace. More particularly, this desire originates from the fact that I teach within the department of foreign languages and cultures at a French graduate school of management (*grande école de commerce*) where I have chaired the department for a number of years. One of the main objectives of the department has been to educate students with the necessary knowledge and skills to function effectively in an international context with people from diverse cultures and with speakers of different languages.

1.1 Rationale

Broadly speaking, my initial interest in investigating communicative processes in multicultural team meetings stems from the increasingly common practice of multinational companies (MNCs) to rely on teams composed of people having a variety of linguistic and cultural backgrounds, often with differing interaction patterns. Such nationally-heterogeneous teams (Schweiger, Atamer and Calori, 2003) have become central features of the global workplace (Bartlett and Ghoshal, 1989; Brannen and Salk, 2000; Cohen and Bailey, 1997; Govindarajan and Gupta, 2001; Snow, Snell, Canney Davison and Hambrick, 1996). Given this growth in teamwork as a widely used approach to managing global complexities in business operations (Maznevski, 2011; Maznevski and Chudoba, 2000; Pauleen and Yoong, 2001; Thomas, 1999), organisations have reported a greater and greater need for

higher education graduates to possess specific employability competencies to meet the international challenges and expectations of a successful workforce. Out of these competencies, the mastery of teamwork skills within diverse groups has been identified as one of the top requirements sought by today's employers (Adams and Laksumanage, 2003; Association of Graduate Recruiters, 2011; British Council, 2013; Butler and Zander, 2008; CBI, 2012; Economics Network, 2007; Economist Intelligence Unit, 2012; Gallup Organization, 2010). Moreover, as we know, in today's fast-paced global environment multicultural team projects may last for a short time, which means that teams need to become operational quickly.

In sum, as globalisation of business operations has increased the need for heightened reliance on international teamwork, I am providing insights into how team members handle their interactive processes in the early stages of short-term project teams within a MNC. Moreover, managing interactive processes in multicultural teams has rarely been studied in its own right in the international management literature. Similarly, in the field of Business English as a Lingua Franca (BELF), no studies that I know of have been conducted involving multicultural teams. On the other hand, many studies on multicultural teams involve groups of students in classroom situations, whereas I was interested in finding out how teams operate in a corporate setting, for which access to data is limited owing to reasons of confidentiality and anonymity. Nevertheless, I felt my research questions could not be dealt with without an empirical investigation of what multicultural teams actually experience in a professional environment.

1.2 Data Collection, Participants and Research Questions

In order to conduct my research, I approached a multinational company located in France and obtained data involving three newly-formed multicultural teams carrying out four problem-solving tasks within a management integration programme (MIP). For reasons of confidentiality, I use the pseudonym Global Player (GP) in all references to the company and aliases have replaced the names of people, functions and events to avoid revealing their identities. In this MIP programme, and among

other activities, participants were put into problem-solving teams, using English as a common language, to find solutions to four corporate issues. To complete their tasks, the teams needed to establish team-working practices to handle their interactive processes. This study has enabled me to investigate how people from diverse backgrounds try to make sense of their context and develop strategies for working together in order to reach their objectives. Perceptions from the interactants provide examples of how the MIP participants felt they dealt with and attempted to overcome challenges working in these intercultural project teams using English as a *lingua franca*. My data-set include thirty-seven and a half hours of observations of project-team workshops and over forty-nine hours spent in interviews.

The research questions of the present study can be summarised into the following overarching question:

- *How do newly-formed, short-term multicultural project teams manage their interactions in the formative stages?*

The particular research questions are:

1. *What challenges do newly-formed, short-term multicultural project teams experience in their interactions in the formative stages?*
2. *How do teams manage these challenges and to what extent do they learn to do so successfully?*
3. *What factors affect the management processes of different teams?*
4. *What impact do the challenges and strategies have on team processes and dynamics?*

To address these questions I examine interaction in multicultural project-team meetings from three perspectives. These include two types of observational data as well as interview data. My observational data are two-fold: (a) interactions in multicultural project teams to solve a task assignment; followed by (b) debriefing sessions with the team's coach, called a *moniteur*. The themes that emerged in the

team debriefs constitute my primary data and enabled me to determine what to include in the case studies. Further details concerning my methodology are explained in Chapter 3.

1.3 Outline of the Thesis

The thesis is organised as follows:

Chapter 2 presents a review of selected literature, with particular attention to conceptualisations of multicultural project teams, team life-cycles and factors affecting the dynamics of interaction for both standard and international teams.

Chapter 3 discusses my methodology and explains my research position and design, the planning and collection of data, ethical considerations and working with and presenting data.

Chapter 4 provides an introduction to the case study of the three project teams by presenting the context, characteristics and objectives of the project-team meetings and by giving the team arrangements.

Chapters 5, 6 and 7 present the individual case studies and address the first two research questions by pointing out the challenges the three teams faced in their interactions and by showing how the teams learned to develop strategies and manage these challenges. An introductory section at the beginning of each of the three case study chapters reports the constitution of the team and summarises how they functioned together.

Chapter 8 addresses all research questions by drawing out insights from across the three case studies with regard to the challenges all teams experienced in working together, the strategies they used to address them, and the relative effectiveness of these strategies, including the effects on team processes and dynamics. This chapter

thus focuses on what was happening within the teams themselves, i.e. the 'internal' factors that appeared to influence team interaction.

Chapter 9 addresses the third research question by examining the influence of contextual, demographic and linguistic variables that might have had an effect on how the teams functioned. This chapter therefore looks at 'external' factors that according to the literature might have influenced teamwork processes and team dynamics.

Chapter 10 provides concluding remarks as to the research findings, theoretical and practical implications, assessment of limitations and recommendations for future research.

Chapter 2 - Literature Review

2.1 Introduction, Chapter Outline and Definitions

As I have pointed out in the introductory chapter, I seek to examine how newly-formed, short-term multicultural project teams handle their interactional processes in the early stages of their teamwork. The aim of this chapter is therefore to review the literature that relates to the particular research questions: *(1) What challenges do newly-formed, short-term multicultural project teams experience in their interactions in the formative stages? (2) How do teams manage these challenges and to what extent do they learn to do so successfully? (3) What factors affect the management processes of different teams? (4) What impact do the challenges and strategies have on team processes and dynamics?*

In order to explore and conceptualise the processes that teams establish to manage their challenges and thus facilitate interacting and working together, this review adopts a multidisciplinary perspective, drawing upon insights from two main domains, international management and applied linguistics. In this section, I first explain how the chapter is outlined and then give key definitions.

This chapter consists of four main sections. It first establishes the usefulness of frameworks for conceptualising and analysing 'multicultural project teams' and draws on international management frameworks with theories on international team life-cycles (2.2). In the second section, I present an overview of the central factors affecting the dynamics and processes of team interactions (2.3), before looking at two specific factors affecting 'multicultural' teams, those of language (2.4) and cultural diversity (2.5).

First, though, I define some key terms relevant to this study. What is meant by 'teams', and more precisely, 'multicultural teams'? And what are 'project' teams?

Teams have been characterised as a set of two or more individuals who cooperate to achieve specific objectives (Baker and Salas, 1992), who share responsibility for task outcomes (Cohen and Bailey, 1997; Johnson, Suriya, Yoon, Berrett and La Fleur, 2002; Sundstrom, De Meuse and Futrell, 1990), who are interdependent and have complementary skills (Adams and Laksumanage, 2003), and who work towards a common goal (Canney Davison, 1996; DeSanctis and Jiang, 2005). Some scholars have tended to use the word 'teams' for groups that accomplish a variety of tasks beyond the scope of small group activities (Adams and Laksumanage, 2003; Baker and Salas, 1992; Brannick, Roach and Salas, 1993; Jackson and Parry, 2011) and that have developed a high degree of 'groupness' (Cohen and Bailey, 1997; Guzzo and Shea, 1993). Although I am aware of the conceptual differences between a 'team' and a 'group', for the purpose of the current study I use the terms interchangeably to avoid too much repetition. Moreover, using these two constructs equally is not uncommon in the literature on small group research (Horwitz and Horwitz, 2007). I define a team as an entity of people who interact interdependently for a designated time period and who are collectively responsible for completing a task. My specific concern is with small teams of managers who come together temporarily and who have no past or future as a group (Jarvenpaa and Leidner, 1999; McGrath, 1991). Thus, at the time of their inception, my teams have not yet collaborated as a team. Instead, they are groups of people who have just been put together, they do not know each other and they have not yet discovered each other's complementary skills. Furthermore, although my work may appear to resemble that of previous studies on short-lived teams (e.g., Aritz and Walker, 2009; Chatman, Polzer, Barsade and Neale, 1998; Cox, Lobel and McLeod, 1991; McLeod, Lobel and Cox, 1996; Thomas, 1999; Watson and Kumar, 1992; Watson, Kumar and Michaelsen, 1993), my teams in fact differ significantly from them. In those studies, the teams comprised undergraduate and graduate students rather than professionals, and the data were obtained in classrooms as opposed to corporate settings.

Different expressions appear in the literature to identify teams with a diversity of backgrounds (Schweiger, Atamer and Calori, 2003). Peterson (2001) summarises different approaches to international collaboration among scholars doing academic research and distinguishes between 'international', 'multinational', 'global' and

‘transnational’ orientations. All four terms have also been used by researchers to label heterogeneous teams. Judging simply by the titles that appear in the bibliography to this thesis, and although the list is not exhaustive, examples include: ‘international’ (Canney Davison, 1994, 1996, with Ward, 1999; Kassis Henderson, 2005; Meyer, 1993; Teagarden, Drost and Von Glinow, 2005); ‘multinational’ (Canney Davison, 1995; Chevrier, 2003; Earley and Gardner, 2005; DeSanctis and Jiang, 2005; Hanges, Lyon and Dorfman, 2005; Salk and Brannen, 2000; Shapiro, Von Glinow and Cheng, 2005); ‘global’ (Chen, Geluykens and Choi, 2006; Goodbody, 2005; Govindarajan and Gupta, 2001; Jarvenpaa and Leidner, 1999; Maznevski and Chudoba, 2000; Maznevski and DiStefano, 2000; Shachaf, 2008); and ‘transnational’ (Earley and Mosakowski, 2000; Iles and Hayers, 1997; Janssens and Brett, 1997; Lagerström and Andersson, 2003; Schweiger et al., 2003; Shapiro, Furst, Spreitzer and Von Glinow, 2002; Snow, Snell, Canney Davison and Hambrick, 1996).

The dominant cultural characteristic identified in international, multinational, global and transnational teams appears to be nationality (Brannen and Salk, 2000), while other traits of heterogeneity, such as race, gender and profession, are regarded as secondary determinants of cultural diversity (Earley and Mosakowski, 2000; Hambrick, Canney Davison, Snell and Snow, 1998). Nevertheless, in Schnurr and Zayts’ (2012) study in multicultural workplaces, characteristics of both national and professional identities are considered; Robinson’s (2012) group of students were diverse with regard to race, ethnic background, gender, social class, age and maturity, and educational experience and qualifications; the variables of cultural diversity in Stahl, Maznevski, Voigt and Jonsen’s (2010) investigation into multicultural groups include gender, age, profession, organisation, ethnicity and religion, in addition to country-based dimensions; the members of the international projects in Spencer-Oatey and Tang’s (2007) research are diverse in many ways: nationality, subject-area expertise, professional background, age, level of seniority, prior experience, and level of linguistic fluency; and Maznevski (1994) divides diversity in decision-making groups into two basic types: (a) role-related (occupation, organisational position, special knowledge and skills) and (b) inherent dimensions (age, gender, nationality, cultural values and personality).

Given the emphasis on a range of cultural dimensions (Butler and Zander, 2008) in the present thesis, I prefer the use of 'multicultural', rather than 'international', 'multinational', 'global' or 'transnational', and define a multicultural team as a group of people who are culturally diverse in terms of national, professional, organisational and demographic backgrounds.

Finally, the present study focuses on 'project' teams, which are considered to be effective resources for managing critical business issues (Butler and Zander, 2008) by providing efficiencies and creative initiatives (Govindarajan and Gupta, 2001). I therefore define a 'project' team as a group of people with diverse sources of complementary knowledge, information and skills who can draw on this competence to provide a rapid and creative response to a precise problem or task (Chevrier, 2003; Iles and Hayers, 1997; Schweiger et al., 2003; Spencer-Oatey and Tang, 2007).

2.2 Frameworks of International Team Life-Cycles

Since the teams in the current study are temporary and since I am interested in explaining how interactional behaviour develops in project teams, in this section I review theories in the management literature on team life-cycles to help analyse how the present teams learn to work together by creating strategies for managing their challenges. Numerous studies have been carried out on the role of diversity in multicultural work groups and, to name some of the principal areas previously investigated, they include the impact of heterogeneity: on outcomes and performance (Berg, 2012; Brodt, 2011; Ely and Thomas, 2001; Hmieleski and Ensley, 2007; Horwitz and Horwitz, 2007; Jehn, Northcraft and Neale, 1999; Lau and Murnighan, 2005; Matveev and Nelson, 2004; Maznevski, 2011; Van Der Zee, Atsma and Brodbeck, 2004; van Knippenberg, De Dreu and Homan, 2004); on creativity, innovation and competitive advantage (Bowers, Pharmer and Salas, 2000; Brett and Crotty, 2011; Gassmann, 2001; Kurtzberg, 2005; McLeod, Lobel and Cox, 1996; Swann, Polzer, Seyle and Ko, 2004); on turnover (O'Reilly III, Caldwell and Barnett, 1989); on decision-making (Watson and Kumar, 1992); and on cooperative or competitive group behaviour (Cox et al., 1991). Yet, despite my preference for the

term ‘multicultural’ over ‘international’, ‘multinational’, ‘global’ or ‘transnational’, far less research on managing interactional processes in diverse work groups has been conducted in ‘multicultural’ teams than ‘international’ teams, which is why I now turn to studies in this latter area.

However, first of all, before reviewing frameworks relevant to ‘international’ teams, I begin with theories on the development of ‘national’ or ‘standard’ teams, i.e. from a broad perspective. In particular, traditional small group development theorists (Bales and Strodtbeck, 1951; Bettenhausen and Murnighan, 1985, 1991; Tuckman, 1965, with Jensen, 1977) consider that teams move through a series of linear stages in order to handle their challenges and accomplish their tasks. The well-known Tuckman (1965; with Jensen, 1977) model maintains that groups develop through four consecutive periods: forming, storming, norming and performing. This four-stage model was used in the Management Integration Programme (MIP) where I collected my data, in that the participants received literature about this theory from the MIP staff to enable them to comprehend the programme objectives. Bettenhausen and Murnighan’s (1985, 1991) theory also proposes a four-phase developmental pattern – sensemaking, interacting, challenging and cementing – that has similarities with the Tuckman (1965; with Jensen, 1977) model. The basic tenet relative to the traditional developmental theory holds that when people initially undertake their collaboration, groups are not ready to resolve their task-related or interpersonal challenges (Bettenhausen and Murnighan, 1991; Tuckman, 1965). It is only after they have completed the initial stages that groups advance towards the subsequent phases and to the final stage of performing.

The problem with these models is that they assume all groups advance at the same rhythm and in a similar fashion, yet it has been found that there can be different developmental processes and that a more complex multi-sequence model often occurs. For example, it has been suggested that problem-solving groups demonstrate substantial variations in the occurrence, number and order of development stages (Poole, 1983a, 1983b); that shifts in behaviour, perspectives and procedures are linked to the calendar life of groups (Gersick, 1988, 1989); that multifunctional teams develop at three levels: within the organisation, as a social

group, and as individual members (McGrath, 1991); and that task action processes may occur in sequential order with interpersonal team processes taking place throughout the team's activities (Marks, Mathieu and Zaccaro, 2001; Teagarden et al., 2005). It is interesting to apply these findings to the teams in the present study since they show that, depending on the individual approaches and styles of the diverse groups, task management and team dynamics and processes develop simultaneously and at irregular paces (Poole, 1983a, 1983b); the elements interact continuously and frequently (Teagarden, Von Glinow, Bowen, Frayne, Nason, Huo, Milliman, Arias, Butler, Geringer, Kim, Scullion, Lowe and Drost, 1995; Teagarden et al., 2005); and development tends to occur in sudden spurts rather than in steady streams (Canney Davison, 1994, 1996, with Ward, 1999). I anticipate that data from the current study will enhance this body of research to reveal the uniqueness of small group development depending on the particular circumstances of each team. My study differs from the studies reviewed here since the aim is not only to provide a developmental slant giving rich descriptions at the micro level, focusing on the challenges individual teams face and the strategies they establish to handle these challenges at each of the four 'stages' of their development, i.e. during each of their four tasks,[1] but also to compare this development across teams.

Having presented team development from a 'general' standpoint, and owing to the focus of the present research on 'multicultural' teams, I now review the literature on team development and life-cycles in 'international' teams, much of which has been carried out by Sue Canney Davison and her colleagues (Canney Davison, 1994, 1996, with Ward, 1999; Hambrick et al., 1998; Snow et al., 1996). Studies on international teams by other scholars will also be examined, including those by Maznevski and DiStefano (2000), Teagarden et al. (1995, 2005), and Easterby-Smith and Malina (1999).

Firstly, Sue Canney Davison's (1994, 1996, with Ward, 1999) features of and guidelines for leading and facilitating international teams are based on findings from two extensive research projects. In the first investigation, cultural processes in twenty-three teams in European and East Asian multinationals were videoed and

[1] See chapter 3 on methodology, as well as case study chapters 5, 6 and 7.

surveyed for doctoral research at London Business School. The analysis focused on the amount individuals participated within each team. In the second piece of research team members and leaders were interviewed and surveyed from multinational companies as part of a research project on transnational teams for The International Consortium for Executive Education and Research (ICEDR) (see Snow et al., 1996). Canney Davison's (1994, 1996, with Ward, 1999) work provides examples and best practices in many aspects of international teamwork and focuses primarily on 'dispersed' teams that meet face to face on a regular basis every three or six months but then work apart the majority of the time.

Canney Davison's (1994, 1996, with Ward, 1999) life-cycle model consists of a series of four phases (start-up, first meetings, mid-point and closing) with a total of nineteen procedures that she recommends for international teams to adopt at each of these four phases in order to address their challenges and improve their processes (Figure 2.1).

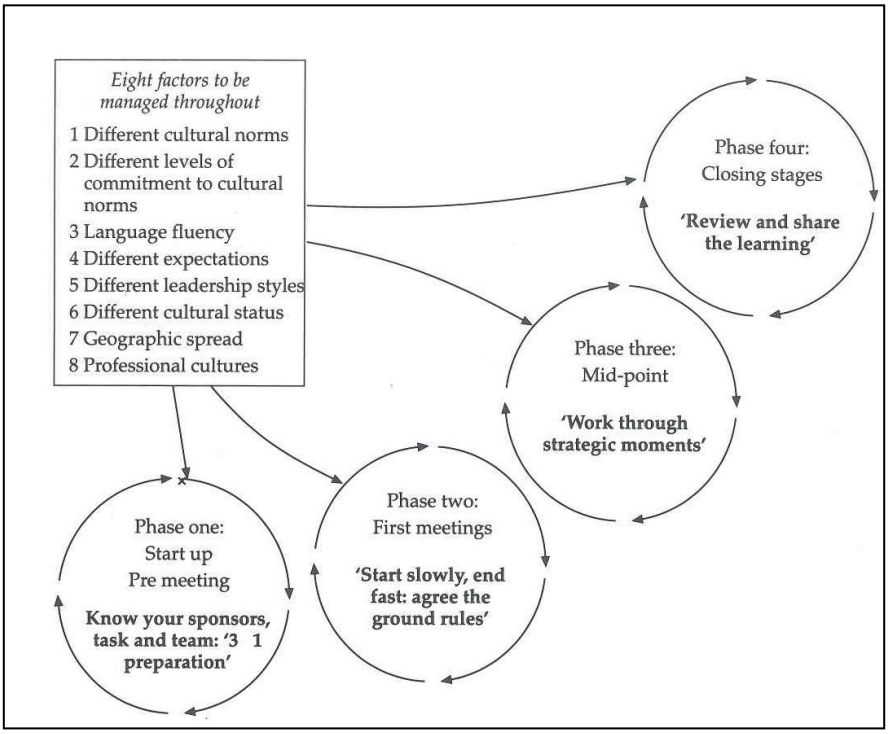

Figure 2.1 – Canney Davison's International Team's Life-Cycle (Source: Canney Davison and Ward, 1999, p. 90)

I feel this framework, with its four phases and nineteen procedures, offers a number of useful perspectives for analysing how my teams managed their challenges, which I explain below:

Phase One: Start-up, Pre-meeting: prepare the work; summed up as: 'know your task and team' and '3 x 1 preparation'.

1. **Develop and agree the purpose of the team with the sponsors**: team leaders and sponsors need to clarify the objectives, accountability, time scale, training and support resources, organisational constraints and key stakeholders.
2. **Select team members**: the composition, which could be based on skills, functional background or positions held within the company, needs to be understood by the participants; the selection process has a strong influence on subsequent team dynamics.
3. **Plan the communication technology support**: prepare the necessary support facilities in advance to 'enhance the interaction of the team for that particular task'.
4. **Decide if you need an external facilitator, contract with the sponsors and team, and clarify the boundaries of responsibility and the facilitator's role**: a neutral person would aid common agreement; if a team leader is 'heavily involved in the technical detail', this person might find it difficult to 'attend to process'; it would be useful to find out the 'level of experience and confidence of the team leader in managing an international team'; initial clarity of skills, knowledge, roles and power-sharing can level the playing field for the team players.
5. **Interview the key players**: elicit information from participants to better ascertain their attitudes, levels of commitment and understanding of the task.
6. **Plan the first meetings**: go through the agenda, decide who will present what, prepare the documentation and pre-reading, and prepare the facilities: this planning and preparation will have a major influence on the start-up of the team's activities.

With regard to 'know your task and team', the first motto of Phase One, two types of interaction among group members have been identified in the literature on team processes: those dealing with 'instrumental', or 'task' concerns; and those dealing with socio-emotional, or 'team' concerns (Baker and Salas, 1992; Cohen and Bailey, 1997; Guzzo and Shea, 1993; Lim and Klein, 2006; Mathieu, Heffner, Goodwin, Salas and Cannon-Bowers, 2000; Mathieu, Heffner, Goodwin, Cannon-Bowers and Salas, 2005; Smith and Berg, 1997; Tuckman, 1965). In order to work effectively as a team, members not only need to perform the task-related features of the situation but also need to handle the team-related aspects (Baker and Salas, 1992; Mathieu et al., 2000, 2005). Both behaviours are considered essential for the achievement of team goals (Baker and Salas, 1992) and have been widely studied.

Firstly, task process activities and structural requirements for decision-making and problem-solving are necessary to get the job done (Poole, 1983a, 1983b). Such 'content' issues (Teagarden et al., 2005) relative to task management involve, for instance, developing action plans and identifying and choosing solutions (Guzzo and Shea, 1993; Sundstrom et al., 1990).

Secondly, team-related features pertain to both team interactions and to teammates (Mathieu et al., 2000) and reflect group well-being and relations among group members (McGrath, 1991). This relational sphere involves the development of mutual trust (Easterby-Smith and Malina, 1999; Guzzo and Shea, 1993); group cohesion (Guzzo and Shea, 1993; Marks et al., 2001; Sundstrom et al., 1990); consensus (Easterby-Smith and Malina, 1999; Teagarden et al., 1995, 2005); synergy (Teagarden et al., 1995, 2005); commitment (Teagarden et al., 1995, 2005); motivation (Marks et al., 2001); open-mindedness; communication, coordination, and the management of participation (Goodbody, 2005; Teagarden et al., 1995, 2005) and relationships (Easterby-Smith and Malina, 1999); flexibility (Easterby-Smith and Malina, 1999; Teagarden et al., 1995, 2005); respect (CBI, 2012; Easterby-Smith and Malina, 1999; Price, 1996); a cooperative manner (CBI, 2012; Easterby-Smith and Malina, 1999); friendly attitudes and principles of reciprocity; and a shared vision (Easterby-Smith and Malina, 1999). Team processes should provide an enjoyable environment (Price, 1996), improve confidence (Marks et al., 2001; Price, 1996),

manage conflict and disagreements (Guzzo and Shea, 1993; Marks et al., 2001; Von Glinow, Shapiro and Brett, 2004) and resolve dilemmas (Easterby-Smith and Malina, 1999) through diplomacy and gentleness (Price, 1996). The emphasis on the psychological and emotional components (Marks et al., 2001), relative to groups, influences members' ability to handle their work and achieve results (Gersick, 1988). Owing to the central importance of team-related features of interactional processes, more research is needed to gain an in-depth look at this factor. New insights that the current research can offer are the impact of interpersonal team relations on the interactional and task-management processes.[2]

As we have already seen in the non-traditionalist team development literature, relationship management may emerge at each stage of the task-solving process (Marks et al., 2001; Poole, 1983a, 1983b; Teagarden et al., 2005), and not necessarily during the start-up phase as Canney Davison and Ward (1999) suggest. Therefore, periods of idea elaboration with regard to the task may be interspersed with socio-emotional periods characterised by joking, anecdotes and positive remarks (Poole, 1983a, 1983b). Moreover, 'breakpoints', involving problems or disagreements, may interrupt the activities at different points in time. These 'breakpoints' require restructuring of the group endeavour in order to move toward goal accomplishment (Poole, 1983b). Empirical research at the micro-level may enable us to obtain first-hand examples of such 'breaks' in decision-making steps and to reveal how they are managed.

'Know your task and team' also extends to the leadership role, and this dual function of leaders has been proposed in the literature. Owing to the rise of self-managing teams (Barry, 1991; Day, Gronn and Salas, 2004; Gronn, 2002; Jackson and Parry, 2011; Raelin, 2003; Zaccaro, Rittman and Marks, 2001), leadership roles are increasingly shared by all team members (Sundstrom et al., 1990). More tangibly, due to the complexities of team processes, it may be difficult for a single leader to manage the task content as well as the interactive and relational features, as indicated in procedure four above (Canney Davison and Ward, 1999). As will be explained below, my research provides insights into the impact of this dual

[2] See Table 3.9 and Chapters 5, 6, 7 and 8.

leadership role, i.e. while one person may be needed to concentrate on the task focus, a neutral person is expected to manage and facilitate common team processes, crucial for team relations, such as checking for understanding and making sure everyone is involved.

Canney Davison maintains that 'Know your team' involves understanding and managing eight sources of similarities and differences in the composition of international teams that apparently impact on team dynamics and performance:

- Cultural factors:
    1) The degrees of difference or similarity that exist between the cultural norms of the individuals within the team
    2) Different levels of commitment to cultural norms
    3) Differences in language fluency, communication patterns, non-verbals and who says what when
    4) Culturally different leadership styles
    5) The different expectations about key team processes
- Organisational factors:
    6) The status of different cultures within the organisation
    7) The geographic spread of the team members
    8) The similarity or difference between functional, professional and other 'cultures'

(Extract from Canney Davison, 1996: 160; with Ward, 1999: 63)

Owing to the interplay of these eight factors, she claims that difficulties in both task and process activities can result in four possible outcomes common to cross-cultural interactions:

- Polite stand-off: being too polite might create loss of motivation and commitment
- One subgroup dominates: the dominant nationality or fluent speakers (FSs) and/or mother-tongue speakers (MTSs) might gain the floor
- One or two people are excluded: lack of language ability or expertise might cause intentional or unintentional exclusion

- Interactive synergy: tolerance, understanding and respect should lead to interactions characterised by the involvement and participation of all team members whereby everyone's knowledge and skills are used; a successful tactic is characterised by the regular incorporation of brief pauses into the exchanges to check that everyone is following and to keep people involved (Adapted from Canney Davison, 1996: 165-166)

In terms of '3 x 1 preparation', the second motto of Phase One, owing to the complex dynamics of international teams, Canney Davison's framework advocates that three times as much preparation is required for meetings involving international work groups. This motto ties in with the 'start slowly' motto in the second phase below.

Phase Two: First meetings: ensure that everyone understands and is comfortable about the task, process and context before rushing into the task; plan a common working approach. Two useful mottos to apply include: 'start slowly' and 'agree the ground rules'.

7. **At the first set of meetings, explain the organisational strategy and policies, putting the purpose of the team into context; jointly identify, prioritise and agree the mission, purpose, objectives and key success criteria**: gain commitment to a shared direction before exploring differences. It is vital to bring out the different expectations and approaches that individuals have come with and to work toward shared goals that everyone accepts and understands.
8. **Emphasise building interrelationships when face to face**: building working relationships and establishing trust is essential in initial meetings when people are face to face.
9. **Consciously explore the cultural similarities and differences and the resulting strengths and weaknesses of the team**: teams need to recognise any differences in professional cultures, communication patterns and leadership styles and to introduce a common cultural framework for communicating and making joint decisions. Strategies should also be devised for working with different levels of language fluency. Being sensitive to these

two areas, culture and language, should ensure that subgroup dominance or exclusion does not occur.

10. **The final task of the team at this stage is to agree the first set of action plans**: teams need to agree who does what and to establish a communication charter to manage geographical distance when they work apart.

During these first meetings, team members are faced with a number of initial challenges. Basically, it is important for everyone to understand the task goals and for the team to plan a common work method before beginning to work on the task. One of the key recipes for international teams to apply appears in Figure 2.2 below and can be summed up as: 'start slowly and end fast; start fast and maybe not end at all' (Canney Davison, 1994, 1996; Canney Davison and Ward, 1999). These basics need to be implemented before the team rushes into carrying out the task. A 'slow start' entails the four key steps outlined above to be taken at the first set of meetings.

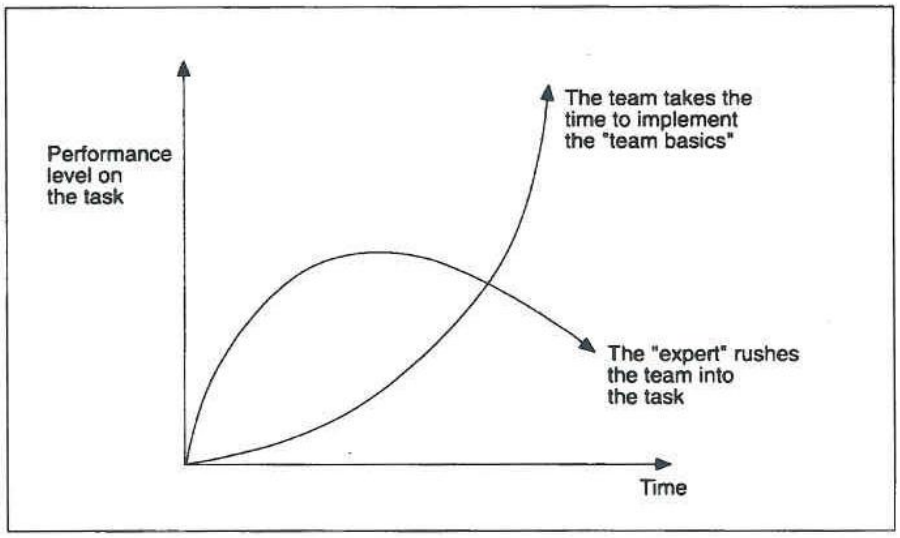

Figure 2.2 – Canney Davison's Team Basics for High Performance International Teams (Source: Canney Davison, 1994, p.86)

With regard to a 'slow start' (Canney Davision, 1994, 1996, with Ward, 1999), the first motto of Phase Two, a number of other researchers have emphasised the importance of the initial developmental stages (Brett, Behfar and Kern, 2006; Goodbody, 2005; Hackman, 1987; Janssens and Brett, 1997; Lau and Murnighan,

1998; Swann et al., 2004; Van Der Zee et al., 2004) for facilitating smooth and harmonious group functioning (Gersick, 1988, 1989) and successful team performance (Bettenhausen and Murnighan, 1985, 1991), as members of new groups attempt to make sense of their unfamiliar task and of the need to learn about the other people in their group (Bettenhausen and Murnighan, 1985, 1991; Lau and Murnighan, 1998). Indeed, the management literature on team development has underlined the fact that when teams first start working together they need to achieve a number of things to deal with their challenges: identify both the technical and group skills each member brings to the team (Canney Davison, 1994, 1996, with Ward, 1999; Guzzo and Shea, 1993; Snow et al., 1996); develop team norms (Bettenhausen and Murnighan, 1985, 1991; Lau and Murnighan, 1998; Price, 1996; Snow et al., 1996); allocate appropriate team roles (Hackman, 1987); and define success criteria for a sound group process (Snow et al., 1996). More precisely, groups are apparently faster at subsequent task performance when they develop a role structure with a hierarchy of authority and introduce a two-minute planning period before setting to work (Argyle, Furnham and Graham, 1981). Basically, as it appears to be human nature to seek solutions before problems have been fully understood, research indicates that success in problem-solving activities is proportionate to the time devoted to working on the problem as opposed to providing solutions. Therefore, group performance can be enhanced when team members 'start slowly' (Canney Davison, 1994, 1996, with Ward, 1999) and adopt a 'problem-minded' approach as opposed to a 'solution-minded' approach (Van de Ven and Delbecq, 1971: 207-208). Due to this crucial importance of the first steps of group development, rich data coming from an analysis of interactional processes in newly-formed teams may shed more light on the early stages of team activities, which appear to have a key influence on team performance and outcomes.

Moreover, setting 'ground rules', the second motto of Phase Two, and creating a clear set of behavioural guidelines for interacting is vital in international teams. Basically, teams need to pay attention to what the task involves and how they will approach the task and the interaction. If these 'ground rules' have been set firmly, and if team members have taken the time to get to know each other better, their divergent views are kept within the scope of the interaction and lead them to a

multifaceted outcome which incorporates contributions from everyone. Strong rules entail greater freedom for creative interaction, with nobody's particular norms overriding group norms (Canney Davison, 1996, 1999). Nevertheless, tightly structured ground rules do not imply being rigid, but rather the creation of an 'agreed field to play in' (Canney Davison and Ward, 1999: 104). The current research will offer insights into what may happen when 'ground rules' are missing or are too 'rigid'.

With regard to language and communication,[3] in order to compensate for any inequalities in linguistic ability, and to ensure a level-playing field for all members, Canney Davison argues that international teams need to establish and follow a set of rules for effective language use:

- Slow down
- Be careful about interruption patterns
- Remove idiomatic phrases
- Be aware of multiple or ambiguous meanings
- Break complex ideas down into a series of simple ones
- Check and recheck understanding, often by asking the same question a number of different ways
- Seriously consider what seem like off the wall untimely suggestions
- Ensure that the pattern of interaction and decision making is including everyone
- Give time out to talk in mother tongues so that people can explore and define what they want to say and paraphrase it back into the working language
- Use pictures, diagrams or stories to come at something from different angles

(Extract from Canney Davison and Ward, 1999: 77)

Owing to cultural and linguistic diversity, international teams also need to generate rules to ensure effective interactive processes:

- Early introductions to explain who has had previous experience in the task topic.
- Slow, steady pace of English with the incorporation of pauses to check that everyone is following.
- Ensuring that everyone has the opportunity to express ideas.

[3] See **Phase Two: First meetings**, procedure nine in Canney Davison's framework above.

- Division into subgroups paying attention to skill distribution; second-language speakers (SLSs) tend to speak more after contributing to subgroups.

(Adapted from Canney Davison and Ward, 1999: 86)

Data from empirical research (e.g. Schweiger et al., 2003) can provide insights into how these communication challenges and issues are handled within transnational project teams throughout their collaborations. For example, Spencer-Oatey and Tang (2007) used Canney Davison and Ward's (1999) framework to examine the challenges faced by a number of Sino-British teams and found that language and communication were significant issues affecting both project progress and member relations. Findings such as these could be relevant to my study.

The five procedures of the third phase of Canney Davison's framework are outlined below:

Phase Three: Mid-Point: review the work and align it to the task.

11. **Work through strategic moments**: The potential for strategic moments heightens during this phase. 'Strategic moments' – often involving discomfort and frustration – are apparently greater in international teams than in national teams but can vary depending on the leader's or facilitator's creativity in handling such moments. Persistence and humour are useful strategies for teams to adopt. By effectively managing the eight cultural and organisational factors[4] team leaders might be able to transform strategic moments into constructive results.
12. **Make sure that everyone is involved and uses the feedback tools established at the beginning**: by paying attention to process, people can ensure that participation and involvement are carefully defined and more evenly balanced. Equal involvement is not necessarily equated with everyone speaking the same amount, but depends more on using the knowledge and skills within the team. Feedback and reviews can highlight any dominance or exclusion, and determine if people feel they've been included and involved. English fluency needs to be dealt with since SLSs tend

[4] See Figure 2.1 for these eight cultural and organisational factors.

to speak less, while MTSs tend to speak more since they can think and speak faster in their first language.

13. **Keep a check on the timing, space the milestones and use the time together and time apart to its full potential**: check the timing and spread out the milestones since team activity tends to be in sudden spurts rather than in steady streams; the time together and the time apart should be devoted to different aspects.
14. **Communicate what is being achieved and broadcast successes as they emerge**: communicating and sharing successes can maintain motivation and prevent stagnation.
15. **Leaders sharing control and facilitators reducing their presence**: leaders and facilitators should reduce their control of events as much as possible. Control and management of activities should be increasingly shared by the team as a whole; all participants need to be accountable for the results. The sponsors' main roles are to clarify the initial goals and to provide feedback at the end.

Concerning involvement, outlined in procedure twelve above, Canney Davison argues that all team members need to be involved and included in the decision-making process. When English is used as the business language, subgroups may use other languages in side discussions. This practice is necessary because requiring the use of only one language may exclude people; moreover, SLSs may use language as a pretext not to participate. Owing to these and other language-related issues, teams need to encourage tolerance with regard to language differences. Furthermore, turn-taking and interrupting need to be managed since the tendency to talk over others is impacted by cultural traits. People who freely interrupt may dominate those who do not have this habit, but instead wait for a pause in the discussions or for their opinion to be asked (Canney Davison, 1994).

The four procedures of the fourth and final phase of Canney Davison's life-cycle model appear below:

Phase Four: Closing Phase

16. **Make sure everyone stays involved to the end**: team efforts are vital; all members need to remain involved throughout the life-cycle of the team.
17. **Review the learning within the team**: Although Tuckman's (1965, with Jensen, 1977) model of forming, storming, norming and performing is presented in a linear fashion, many teams see their learning and development in terms of jagged lines and curves. Since teams can learn from their mistakes, formal and informal feedback is essential for assessing team performance, for determining areas to improve and for setting guidelines for future teams.
18. **Celebrate the success and plan for the future**: share successes within the team and throughout the organisation; define an action plan for implementing and evaluating results.
19. **The team needs to pass on what it has learned to the rest of the organisation**: capture and share the lessons learned; the skills acquired to lead, facilitate and participate in teams should be shared within the company.

Canney Davison's (1994, 1996, with Ward, 1999) life-cycle model offers useful guidelines for analysing the interactive challenges and processes of teams such as those in my research. However, many of her recommended best practices are intended for team leaders and sponsors to carry out prior to the teams' first meetings as well as for the organisation to support these teams. The context of my study differs from this in that I am looking at the challenges team members face in their formative stages and the strategies they themselves adopt in order to learn to collaborate successfully. The most useful guidelines and lessons in Canney Davision's (1994, 1996, with Ward, 1999) framework for my study are thus likely to be those intended for individual team members to manage their challenges and handle their processes.

A second international team life-cycle model, Mapping, Bridging and Integrating (MBI) (Figure 2.3) proposed by Maznevski and DiStefano (2000), also offers useful concepts that apply to the teams under study, and has similarities to the Canney

Davison (1994, 1996, with Ward, 1999) model. Although no particular research methods are cited in Maznevski and DiStefano's (2000) article, an endnote explains that most of what the authors discuss applies to multicultural teams, and the bibliography to another related study by the same authors (DiStefano and Maznevski, 2000) states that their research was strongly influenced by two highly complementary studies on diverse teams by Canney Davison and colleagues (with Ward, 1999; Snow et al., 1996).

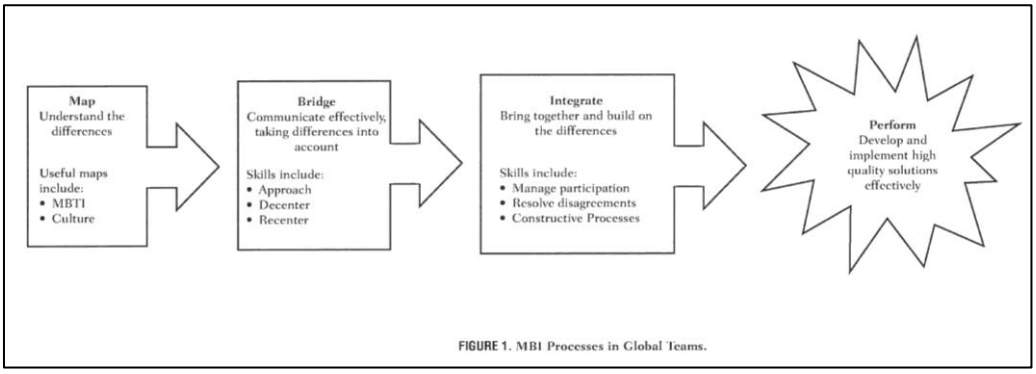

Figure 2.3 – Maznevski and DiStefano's MBI Processes in Global Teams (Source: Maznevski and DiStefano, 2000, p.198)

Key notions that Maznevski and DiStefano suggest for managing team challenges include the following: **Mapping** refers to the processes established by new teams to become familiar with each other and to discover the skills and expertise of the different members. This involves not only understanding differences in culture but also in people (e.g., MBTI). 'Mapping' appears to have parallels with 'forming' (Tuckman, 1965, with Jensen, 1977) and with 'sensemaking' (Bettenhausen and Murnighan, 1985, 1991), two concepts proposed by development theorists reviewed above. **Bridging** involves communicating these different worldviews in order to be understood by and to understand others, and reflects the development of shared norms and procedures: thanks to **decentering**, team members not only convey their different viewpoints, they also incorporate an understanding of each other's views into their own perceptions; and team members must also be skilful at **recentering**, by adopting a common viewpoint and agreeing upon shared norms for interaction. **Integrating** requires managing participation so that everyone's input is obtained; in this phase, disagreements and conflicts need to be resolved. Through collaboration

and constructive processes, the team can thus take advantage of the diverse perspectives offered by the team members to build creative and innovative solutions to **Perform**.

The involvement of all team members is therefore another significant research strand which has implications for the current investigation of the management of challenges in newly-formed teams. Indeed, the degree of member involvement primarily manifests itself in the 'team' activity component[5] and influences member contributions and consequently the quality of the joint effort (Poole, 1983b). Team effectiveness is thus improved when communication is more evenly shared rather than dominated by a few members, and when the contribution of ideas and efforts are better balanced among team members (Canney Davison, 1994, 1996, with Ward, 1999; Goodbody, 2005). In collective work settings where individual members pool their inputs (Karau and Williams, 1993), if team members feel their contributions are redundant or if they experience low control over decision-making (Price, 1987), they may exert themselves less (Latané, Williams and Harkins, 1979) or withhold effort (Shapiro et al., 2002; Van de Ven and Delbecq, 1971). To avoid such behaviour, individuals need to feel that their contributions are 'meaningful' (Janssens and Brett, 1997) rather than ambiguous, and that they have a particular responsibility for the teams' decisions (Guzzo and Shea, 1993; Price, 1987).

Nevertheless, as mentioned above, 'meaningful participation' (Janssens and Brett, 1997) does not imply equal participation, or everyone speaking the same amount (Canney Davison, 1994, 1996, with Ward, 1999), but involves input dependent upon the relevance of team members' respective expertise, knowledge and experience with regard to the group's task. For this to occur, 'mapping', i.e. awareness about who has what skills and competencies, is a hard-and-fast rule that needs to be implemented from the start. With this rule, no individual interests should take primacy over the interests of the group. Meaningful participation is therefore a process based on the development of trust stemming from the respect for the interests, skills and stakes of other team members (Canney Davison, 1994, 1996, with

[5] See also the explanation on 'Know your task and team' in Phase One of Canney Davison's (1994, 1996, with Ward, 1999) model.

Ward, 1999; Janssens and Brett, 1997). Teams that adopt this type of trust, developed through behavioural norms of cooperation and respectful treatment, are better able to integrate cultural, personal and linguistic differences and to attain high-quality decisions (Janssens and Brett, 1997). Overall, with the rise of multicultural project teams in international business, further research needs to be devoted to understanding the factors that facilitate participation and maximise involvement in problem-solving activities (Van de Ven and Delbecq, 1971). Real-life empirical data can reveal thick descriptions with regard to how teams learn to discover and use members' expertise in an attempt to involve everyone – to add to our knowledge in these two areas.[6] Moreover, given the value of the implications of involvement and establishing 'meaningful participation' (Janssens and Brett, 1997), more empirical research providing in-depth understandings and perceptions would enhance our comprehension of the development and management of such behaviour.

While the tips and advice in these two frameworks (Canney Davison, 1994, 1996, with Ward, 1999; Maznevski and DiStefano, 2000) appear relevant to international project-team meetings, few in-depth concrete examples are provided. What are missing are rich and thick descriptions which would offer valuable complementary insights by revealing how these processes emerge in newly-formed teams.

The literature on 'project' team development in the field of international management also extends to academic international research teams (AIRTs). One particular example, the Best International Human Resource Management Project, referred to as the Best Practices project (Teagarden et al., 1995, 2005), takes a project life-cycle perspective and makes recommendations for multinational teams engaged in such joint research ventures. Modifying and extending Teagarden et al.'s (1995) original four phases, Easterby-Smith and Malina (1999) organise their methods of cross-cultural collaborative research around five phases for dealing with the distinct challenges encountered at each stage. Being grounded in academia rather than international business, the phases in the Teagarden et al. (1995, 2005) and Easterby-Smith and Malina (1999) AIRTs models are less useful for

[6] See Table 3.9 in which these two notions, 'expertise' and 'participation', are listed.

conceptualising the establishment of strategies to cope with the challenges faced by the multicultural project teams in the current study at different stages of their development. Nevertheless, both models point out the need to begin by developing a clear vision and building positive interpersonal relations before actually focusing on the purpose of the project.[7]

2.3 Models of Internal Team Dynamics and Processes

As we have seen in the previous section, when teams form, they (need to) develop processes and adopt strategies that enable them to cope with their challenges so as to reach their final stage of performing (Marks et al., 2001). A number of other frameworks have been devised to identify the range of variables at play within team processes that appear to affect the dynamics and challenges of interactional team processes. A useful model depicting such factors is that of Earley and Gardner (2005) (Figure 2.4). It aims to explain the functioning of multinational teams (MNTs) in terms of their central internal dynamics of MNTs.

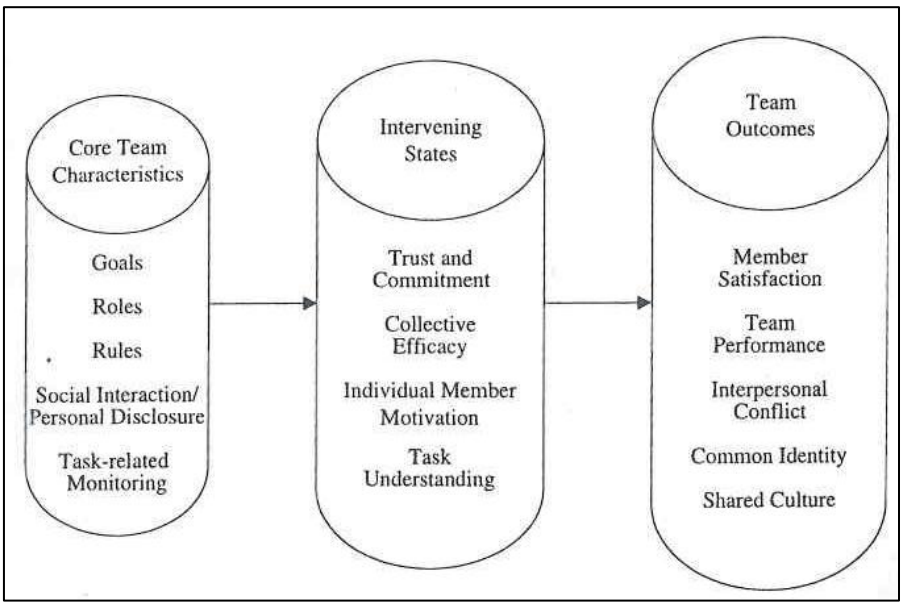

Figure 2.4 – Earley and Gardner's Framework of Internal Functioning and Key Multinational Team Characteristics and Related Outcomes (Source: Earley and Gardner, 2005, p.6)

[7] These two notions tie in with 'planning' and 'interpersonal team relations' identified in Table 3.9.

This model draws on one of Earley's (with Mosakowski, 2000) previous studies and so I now turn to this particular study. The focus of Earley and Mosakowski's (2000) work was to explore the creation of hybrid team cultures within transnational teams, and it is of particular relevance for the present research for several reasons, including not only the methodology but also the findings.

Firstly, with regard to methodology, Earley and Mosakowski's (2000) work consisted of three research studies, the first of which was an empirical study using field observations of and interviews with members of five transnational teams to assess how the heterogeneous composition of the teams affected internal team dynamics and to identify key variables that accounted for this influence. Additionally, three teams had not yet been formed, and although the other two teams already existed, the observer relied on retrospective accounts of their formative periods. Thirty-seven managers participated in the five teams, each of which had between five to eleven members representing eight countries. Finally, team meetings were observed twelve times during a six-week period and members were interviewed shortly after the meetings.[8]

Secondly, with regard to findings, the conclusions to this first study suggest that behind the effect of team heterogeneity, the development of a hybrid culture is dependent upon several intervening process variables, all of which may be relevant to my research: establishment of rules and practices for interpersonal and task-related interactions, effective communication and conflict management, the development of high team performance expectations thanks to a sense of confidence in team potential, and the creation of a common team identity and unity.

Earley and Gardner's (2005) framework (Figure 2.4) therefore suggests a team's success depends on its ability to engage in processes that develop a unified culture to face their challenges and perform more effectively (Earley and Gardner, 2005; Earley and Mosakowski, 2000; Snow et al., 1996). This construct consists of five core team features (goals, roles, rules, social interaction and task-related monitoring) and four intervening states (trust and commitment, collective efficacy, individual member

[8] See Chapter 3 in which I explain the methodology of the current research.

motivation and task understanding) which lead to five key team outcomes (member satisfaction, team performance, interpersonal conflict, common identity and shared culture), as outlined below:

Core Characteristics

- **Goals**: Team members who share the same goals are more effective than teams who do not have a unified sense of purpose (Earley and Gardner, 2005; Earley and Mosakowski, 2000; Guzzo and Shea, 1993; Snow et al., 1996; Sundstrom et al., 1990; Swann et al., 2004). Moreover, participating in the goal-setting process is beneficial for two main reasons: members are more committed to the goals they have set and have acquired a higher understanding of the task requirements (Earley and Gardner, 2005; Latham, Erez and Locke, 1988).
- **Role Expectations**: Lau and Murnighan (1998) claim that sub-group 'faultlines' may form early in group development processes as members of new groups attempt to make sense of both the nature of the task and the other people in the group. It is therefore vital for team members to be aware of each other's roles and duties to avoid interpersonal conflict (Earley and Gardner, 2005; Tajfel, 1982; Tsui, Egan and O'Reilly III, 1992). When teams first start working together, they need to identify both the technical and group skills each member brings to the team (Snow et al., 1996).
- **Rule Clarity and Social Interaction**: The rules a team adopts serve as crucial guidelines to govern team interactions, role enactment and the dynamics of what constitutes appropriate behaviour with one another (Argyle et al., 1981; Earley and Gardner, 2005; Klimoski and Mohammed, 1994). During the early stages of teamwork, the group should develop team norms, allocate useful team roles and define success criteria for a sound group process (Snow et al., 1996).
- **Task-Related Monitoring and Reporting**: The dynamics of task-related monitoring and reporting influences trust, motivation and performance.

Intervening States

- **Trust and Commitment**: Interpersonal trust is a key outcome of teams having a mutual set of goals, roles and rules, since being able to predict how people will act reduces conflict and enhances positive feelings toward other team members.
- **Group/Collective Efficacy and Individual Member Motivation**: Self-efficacy, the quality of an individual to be successful, influences the group's capability of performing effectively.
- **Task and Performance Understanding**: Enhanced task and performance understanding is linked to the clarity of rules and roles for social interaction.

(Adapted from Earley and Gardner, 2005)

Key Concepts Emerging from the Literature

Drawing upon these frameworks as well as those of other related research, I now explore concepts and issues relating to interactive processes and strategies that recur in the literature and that are likely to be relevant to the teams in the current study.[9]

Shared Goals and Processes: A crucial element for handling the challenges in newly-formed groups is the emergence of a group-based understanding (Canney Davison, 1994, 1996, with Ward, 1999) about appropriate behaviour (Bettenhausen and Murnighan, 1985, 1991). When teams spend time getting to know each other and establishing shared understandings of the new situation (Canney Davison, 1994, 1996, with Ward, 1999; Goodbody, 2005; Poole, 1983b), these initial interactions will have a long-lasting influence on the group because the mechanisms for collaborating will already be in place (Bettenhausen and Murnighan, 1985; Janssens and Brett, 1997). Indeed, team efforts, and thinking in terms of the team rather than the self, bring performance benefits by stimulating mutual engagement focusing on sustained relations (Wenger, 1998) and group synergy as opposed to individualistic behaviour (DeSanctis and Jiang, 2005; Ellemers, de Gilder and Haslam, 2004; Shapiro et al., 2002). Therefore, to optimise individual effort within a group, individual team members need to identify with the team from a socio-emotional perspective, and to

[9] See section 3.6.2 and Table 3.9.

develop a 'group ethos' (Robinson, 2012), a 'third culture' (Adair and Ganai, 2011) or 'hybrid culture', whereby members mutually devise and adopt a common set of interactive processes to foster team communication and performance (Earley and Mosakowski, 2000). The emphasis is thus on shared team identity rather than self-identity (Erez, 2011; Goodbody, 2005; Shapiro et al., 2002; Swann et al., 2004; Van Der Zee et al., 2004) and on 'shared mental models' (Baker and Salas, 1992; Brannick et al., 1993; Cohen and Bailey, 1997; Klimoski and Mohammed, 1994; Lim and Klein, 2006; Mathieu et al., 2000, 2005; Stout, Salas and Carson, 1994) to ensure cohesion and coordination and to enable agreeing on a shared response to a common dilemma through joint enterprise (Wenger, 1998). Clearly, there is a need for rich data to better understand the emergence of these shared processes, more particularly in multicultural teams.

Roles: Roles and responsibilities are basic defining features of work groups (Sundstrom et al., 1990). Role-systems facilitate the attainment of goals by providing a 'clear guide to behaviour' and 'scripts for performance' (Argyle et al., 1981: 166, 172), by stating individual responsibilities and obligations, and by prescribing role competence and functions (Shapiro, 1987). Indeed, understanding everyone's boundaries (Hackman, 1987; Mathieu et al., 2000) prevents ambiguity (Van de Ven and Delbecq, 1971), reduces interpersonal conflict (Earley and Gardner, 2005; Tajfel, 1982; Tsui et al., 1992) and consequently enhances feelings of well-being and comfort (McGrath, 1991). Since working in three or more team subgroups may facilitate the development of shared processes through greater exchange of information, knowledge and skills (Brett et al., 2006; Canney Davison, 1994, 1996, with Ward, 1999; Earley and Mosakowski, 2000), one strategy for teams to enhance the management of their activities may come from a division of labour in which group members carry out complementary roles, dependent upon their specific skills, knowledge and expertise, so as to rely on a joint effort to attain their goals (Argyle et al., 1981).

Rules: I now consider how rules and norms have been defined. 'Norms' have been defined as standards of practice relative to the appropriateness of conduct (Adams and Laksumanage, 2003; Argyle et al., 1981; Chatman and Flynn, 2001; Shapiro,

1987), and have been regarded as regular patterns of behaviour that 'ought to' (Bettenhausen and Murnighan, 1985, 1991) and 'should' (Saville-Troike, 1989) happen, and that are recognised by participants based on a 'shared understanding of how meetings are "meant to" operate' (Angouri and Marra, 2010: 620) thanks to practices and features that are 'significant', 'familiar', 'identifiable' and 'mutually understood' (Angouri and Marra, 2010). Norms indicate the 'allowable contributions', characterised by restrictions and constraints (Levinson, 1979; Thomas, 1995) and other functional procedures. In successful processes, norms are established incrementally and cautiously by all parties to reflect mutually beneficial procedures (Chatman and Flynn, 2001; Larson, 1992; Robinson, 2012). They are 'shaped' and 'co-constructed' through a 'dynamic' and 'on-going' process which develops and evolves over time (Angouri and Marra, 2010).

In contrast to the norms of established and on-going teams, in my study I am looking at the formative stages of short-term project teams for which there are no established rules and practices (Earley and Mosakowski, 2000). Indeed, newly-formed teams have to create procedures in order to be operational and are therefore not like ongoing work teams which already have features that are recognisable within the boundaries of the specific group. In sum, I define rules as the necessary practices, routines and procedures that members create in order to attain their objectives (Ouchi, 1979; Shapiro, 1987). This may involve, for example, the establishment of a repertoire of shared resources and points of reference, including both linguistic and non-linguistic elements (Wenger, 1998). Each team's 'modus operandi' (Lambrechts, Bouwen, Grieten, Huybrechts and Schein, 2011: 134) emerges during the lifespan of the group and evolves as members become more 'familiar' (Argyle et al., 1981) with each other and their task. Moreover, consensus and agreement about rules enable groups to regulate member behaviour and support self-regulation, thereby fostering positive synergistic interaction among members and promoting group effectiveness (Govindarajan and Gupta, 2001; Hackman, 1987; Janssens and Brett, 1997; Maznevski, 1994).

In line with the distinctions above, I interpret the use of the term 'norms' as an indication that these procedures already exist and have therefore become the

'norm', as opposed to 'rules' which could have recently been set up and have not yet become standard practice. In my view, the mere existence of 'norms' implies that conventions have already been established and have become habitual, because people have become familiar with them thanks to a common agreement to follow them. Moreover, teams are also influenced by external norms and values (Angouri and Marra, 2010; Hymes, 1962; Saville-Troike, 1989; Wenger, 1998), such as those provided by organisational culture (Sundstrom et al., 1990).[10]

Two points related to rules deserve further attention. Firstly, the flexibility of rules has been underscored in the literature. When a set of rules is created, they may cover ninety percent of the issues. In this manner, it is left up to the group to settle the remaining ten percent as the particular needs arise, rather than trying to anticipate everything and develop a lengthy, explicit set of rules in advance (Ouchi, 1979). As long as people comply with the basic procedures, there is still plenty of leeway and latitude (Shapiro, 1987). This flexibility in control mechanisms is derived from social relations, moral obligation and trust (Larson, 1992). Additionally, the paradox is that boundaries designed to indicate responsibilities and processes both constrain and enable; they make certain actions possible while putting restrictions on these same actions (Smith and Berg, 1997). Overall, to reduce the creation of anxiety, activities need to be sufficiently organised to enable tasks to be carried out, but not so structured that they hinder individual responsiveness (Hanges et al., 2005) or prevent processes from flowing naturally (Smith and Berg, 1997). For example, 'completely equal participation will probably have been achieved by some very mechanical rules being applied to the interaction', which may lead to frustration (Canney Davison and Ward, 1999: 82). Therefore, 'the challenge is to achieve the right level of control without becoming too restrictive' (Teagarden et al., 2005: 323). In fact, as new teams are learning to 'norm' their behaviour (Tuckman, 1965, with Jensen, 1977) and to 'cement' their procedures (Bettenhausen and Murnighan, 1985, 1991), challenges to the emerging rules become violations rather than merely disagreements (Bettenhausen and Murnighan, 1985, 1991). First-hand observations and participants' perspectives at the micro-level would provide richer insights into

[10] Organisational culture will be discussed in section 2.5.

the mechanisms different teams adopt and the rules they apply based on the specific needs and styles of their individual members.

Secondly, social interaction schemes, rules and norms governing group decision-making and collaborative exchanges may or may not be formally defined (Davis, 1973; Larson, 1992). When explicit mechanisms are not employed, informal agreements about what constitutes appropriate behaviour remain implicit. Intangible norms of confidence and reciprocity may thus replace formal rules to shape and coordinate behaviour (Larson, 1992). These more subtle, less visible forms of control, work quite effectively, thanks to a sense of community, cooperative action and commitment among group members (Ouchi, 1979). Such internalised patterns of social behaviour, involving an embedded degree of trust, therefore develop to govern personal relations and structures (Doney, Cannon and Mullen, 1998; Granovetter, 1985; Peterson, 2001). This type of social control may thus become an alternative to more explicitly defined control strategies (Eisenhardt, 1985).

In fact, Peterson (2001) suggests five forms of social control that groups can adopt to manage their activities: two are based on systems of rules (both prescribed and customised), a third on trusting relationships, a fourth on experience, and a fifth on a central leader:

1) **A prescribed framework of rules – five steps**: the group develops a joint model of control with some universal elements that apply to the whole group and other elements that apply uniquely to particular cultures.
2) **A customised framework of rules – the social contract**: the group participates jointly to prepare a written set of rules in the form of a 'social contract'.
3) **A basis in relationships – fostering trust**: this model of group control emphasises the soft aspects of social processes whereby trust, mutual respect and strong personal ties are essential for the project's successful implementation (Easterby-Smith and Malina, 1999).
4) **A basis in the participating individuals – self-development of collaborators**: this form of control assumes that individuals have already collaborated to

different degrees and have thereby acquired the appropriate skills and experience.

5) **A basis in leadership and hierarchy – the GLOBE project**: the GLOBE project (Gupta, Hanges and Dorfman, 2002; House, Javidan, Hanges and Dorfman, 2002; Javidan and House, 2002) provides an example of a successful leader-centered project which recognises the importance of providing a strong structure while maintaining enough flexibility to enable individual responsiveness (Hanges et al., 2005).

Out of Peterson's (2001) five forms of control, two appear to be better suited for analysing how the teams in the present study attempt to manage their challenges (see Table 3.9): (a) a customised framework of rules, whereby the team participates to generate an explicit set of rules; and (b) a basis in social processes, which emphasises trust, respect and interpersonal relations (Easterby-Smith and Malina, 1999). Further studies are needed to explore how these two concepts, the generation of rules and the fostering of trust, affect interactive teamwork processes, especially in new teams with people of diverse cultures.

Trust: Numerous scholars have argued that trust is a vital component of all social relationships, interactions and activities (Child, 2001; DiStefano and Maznevski, 2000; Inkpen, 1996; Janssens and Brett, 1997; Shapiro, Ozanne and Saatcioglu, 2008; Sitkin and Roth, 1993), and plays a key role in collaborative processes (Child, 2001; Goodbody, 2005) and in team functioning and performance (Canney Davison, 1994, 1996, with Ward, 1999; DeSanctis and Jiang, 2005; Dirks, 1999; Easterby-Smith and Malina, 1999; Gersick, 1988, 1989; Govindarajan and Gupta, 2001; Jarvenpaa and Leidner, 1999; Langfred, 2004; Sitkin and Roth, 1993; Teagarden et al., 1995, 2005; Tenzer, Pudelko and Harzing, 2014).

In fact, as we have seen in Earley and Gardner's (2005) framework, trust is a key outcome of teams having a mutual set of goals, roles and rules. In fact, research on trust has shown that formal contracts and standardised rules and procedures may become impersonal, symbolic substitutes for trust (Sitkin and Roth, 1993). Indeed, these procedural mechanisms, or formal contracts, are considered fragile (Leana and

Van Buren III, 1999) and may be unsuccessful because the regulatory requirements create a psychological or interactional barrier between the two parties, widening the existing gulf between them and resulting in yet more distance and formality (Sitkin and Roth, 1993). Such administrative responses are more or less effective depending on the circumstances: when task reliability is violated (trust violation), formal procedures may restore trust; when expectations about core values have been called into question (distrust), contractual mechanisms exacerbate the problems and lead to greater interpersonal distance (Sitkin and Roth, 1993). Consequently, reliability-based trust is easier to restore through legalistic specifications because the domain is narrower and more specific. When distrust occurs owing to an erosion of shared values, the written-out, formalised rules, regulations, standard procedures or other administrative mechanisms are insufficient, or have a limited effectiveness, in resolving the violations to fundamental beliefs and values. Three causes for the failure of formal procedures have been evoked: (a) an objective, impersonal and functional mechanism appears to be an insufficient substitute for interpersonal trust and relations; (b) explicit measures can disrupt the implicit practices that habitually govern social interactions by imposing structural barriers, thus rendering the exchanges more distant and indirect; and (c) the explicit nature of the rules and procedures focus on specific actions but do not address the fundamental, less tangible, system of value orientations (Ouchi, 1979; Sitkin and Roth, 1993). This underlines the importance of informal and interpersonal processes, which are thought to be more resilient than formal procedures (Edelman, 1990; Granovetter, 1985; Larson, 1992; Leana and Van Buren III, 1999; Shapiro, 1987; Sitkin and Roth, 1993). As a matter of fact, positive interpersonal relationships and social communication foster trust building, enable the development of a more cohesive team and optimise working conditions (Teagarden et al., 2005). Moreover, as indicated above, interpersonal trust is a key outcome of teams having a mutual set of processes, since being able to predict how people will act reduces conflict, enhances positive feelings toward other team members (Earley and Gardner, 2005) and promotes cooperation (DeSanctis and Jiang, 2005). Nevertheless, trust is more difficult to establish and sustain in culturally-diverse work groups owing to differences in expressing and manifesting trust across cultures (Jarvenpaa and Leidner, 1999; Meyer, 1993). This highlights the call for more studies to focus on

understanding how trust operates in multicultural groups for which further research is required to ascertain these less tangible aspects of team processes.

As we have seen in this section, a wealth of studies has enriched our understanding of key team features associated with managing the challenges that occur in the early stages of project-team processes: developing common approaches and setting unified goals; clarifying roles and duties; and creating mutually beneficial rules for social interaction, all of which entail the building of trust. While these interlocking components provide useful pointers for shedding light on the interpersonal dynamics and interactional processes of the teams under study, a shortcoming is that they tend not to explore in detail other key complexities of 'international' teams, notably language and communication, and cultural factors. Consequently, in order to fully address the dynamics and processes of multicultural teams, I now explore the impact of two particular aspects pertaining to multicultural teams: language (2.4) and cultural diversity (2.5).

2.4 The Impact of Language on Multicultural Team Processes

I now turn to studies in two main fields: international management and English as a Lingua Franca (ELF). I first refer to sources in the international management literature which make reference to issues involving language and communication in multicultural teams (2.4.1). I then review the literature in the field of applied linguistics which investigates the use of English as a common working language involving speakers of different cultures, better known as 'English as a Lingua Franca' (ELF), in which we will see significant gaps in empirical and conceptual understandings of authentic multiparty team interactions (2.4.2).

2.4.1 Language in International Teams

Although previous studies in international management have addressed issues regarding language and interactional processes in multinational teams (e.g., Brannen

and Salk, 2000; Brett and Crotty, 2011; Canney Davison, 1994, 1996, with Ward, 1999; Gassmann, 2001; Govindarajan and Gupta, 2001; Janssens and Brett, 1997; Lagerström and Andersson, 2003; Price, 1996; Shachaf, 2008; Teagarden et al., 1995, 2005), these are often 'stumbled' upon but are not necessarily the main research questions (Tietze, 2014). Thus, to my knowledge, only a small number investigate the theme of 'language and communication in international teams' in its own right. These include del Carmen Mendez Garcia and Perez Canado (2005); Hinds, Neeley and Cramton (2014); Kassis Henderson (2005); and Tenzer et al. (2014). Because these four studies primarily obtained their data from interviews, and only one of these conducted observations of authentic interactions (Hinds et al., 2014), they tend to focus on retrospective perceptions about the challenges and opportunities generated by language use in teams (e.g., the relationship between language and power in multicultural teams; the effect of language asymmetries on power contests and subgroup dynamics in global teams; how language diversity affects socialisation and trust-building in management teams; and the impact of language barriers on trust formation in multinational teams, respectively). In short, there are plenty of studies that rely on perceptions but we need more studies that move beyond what people say, thus avoiding the dangers of stereotyping, by using authentic workplace interactions (Schnurr and Zayts, 2012). Another study (Chen et al., 2006) discusses the importance of language in global teams from a purely theoretical perspective and involves no empirical work, although the authors demonstrate the usefulness of applying research on linguistic analysis to improve global team management and practices. Yet empirical cross-disciplinary work tracking language activity across MNCs would contribute valuable insights to the field (Tietze, 2014). In fact, the present study, using an empirical approach based on direct observation, attempts to provide a rich understanding of interactional processes in multicultural teams in a MNC from a variety of standpoints, including those of applied linguistics and international management.

Additionally, as we saw in section 2.2, significant work on intercultural processes in international teams rooted in empirical research (Canney Davison, 1995) offers recommendations for handling language and communication challenges within such teams (Canney Davison, 1994, 1996, with Ward, 1999). These guidelines, consisting

of rules for effective language use and interactional processes that I have previously examined, will play a role in analysing the strategies that the teams in my study adopted to handle the challenges they faced due to language differences. Therefore, Canney Davison and her colleagues (1994, 1996, with Ward, 1999), as well as the handful of researchers mentioned in the preceding paragraph, have started to fill the gap in the literature with regard to how international teams interact, and have recommended practices for improving the communicative processes of such teams. Through the present study I attempt to build on this research by focusing more particularly on an investigation into the handling of challenges experienced by newly-formed multicultural project teams in interacting together and will provide findings from qualitative data.

2.4.2 Conceptualisations of English as a Lingua Franca (ELF)

As business activities have become increasingly global, and more and more international communication takes place using English as a common language (Babcock and Du-Babcock, 2001; Firth, 1996; Gimenez, 2001; Maclean, 2006; Nickerson, 1998; Schnitzer, 1995; St. John, 1996), English as a *lingua franca* (ELF) has become the dominant language for business purposes around the world (Charles, 2007; Ehrenreich, 2010; Harris and Bargiela-Chiappini, 2003; Kankaanranta and Planken, 2010; Louhiala-Salminen, 2002; Louhiala-Salminen, Charles and Kankaanranta, 2005). In the emerging field of ELF, (Ehrenreich 2010; Klimpfinger, 2009; Mauranen and Ranta, 2009; Seidlhofer, 2004, 2009b; Seidlhofer, Breiteneder and Pitzl, 2006), research studies have only recently attempted to define its characteristics. With this reality in mind and taking into account the present study, I thus examine how ELF has been conceptualised in terms of ELF speakers and the nature of ELF and then review empirical studies of ELF in business settings (BELF).

(a) Identifying ELF Speakers

Firth (1996: 240) defines ELF as 'a "contact language" between persons for whom English is the chosen *foreign* language of communication' (emphasis in the original).

Similarly, Poncini (2002) distinguishes between '*lingua franca*', the language used when only second-language speakers (SLSs) are involved, and 'common language', the medium of expression in interactions among both SLSs and mother-tongue speakers (MTSs) (Charles, 2007; Seidlhofer, 2004). Rogerson-Revell and Louhiala-Salminen (2010) reiterate that most researchers use the label 'English as a Lingua Franca' (ELF) to refer to communicative situations in which only SLSs participate and the term 'English as an International Language' (EIL) for interactions that involve both MTSs and SLSs (Schnitzer, 1995).

These definitions of ELF, which refer to interactions involving only SLSs, contradict another view in which MTSs are not excluded (Ehrenreich, 2010; Jenkins, Cogo and Dewey, 2011; Rogerson-Revell, 2007b, 2008; VOICE, n.d.). For the purpose of my research, I have adopted the depictions of ELF expressed by these latter researchers, which do not exclude MTSs of English, and which widen the perspective so that the specific pragmatic realities of each ELF community can be taken into account (Ehrenreich, 2010; Louhiala-Salminen et al., 2005). Indeed, depending on the particular context, I believe MTSs of English are very much part of international business activities carried out using ELF as a working language.

(b) The Nature of ELF

As ELF does not belong to any one particular language community and does not possess mother-tongue standards or norms (Ehrenreich, 2010; Louhiala-Salminen et al., 2005; Sweeney and Hua, 2010), its emphasis is on fluidity, interpersonal relations, the purpose of the exchanges and the transmission of ideas, rather than on mother-tongue accuracy (Dewey, 2007, 2009; Hülmbauer, 2009; Jenkins et al., 2011; Seidlhofer, 2009a). In the global workplace, where a variety of English forms is used, the major challenge is communication effectiveness (Ehrenreich, 2010; Schnitzer, 1995) rather than mastering purely mother-tongue speaker, such as British or American, versions of the language (Dewey, 2009; Hilton, 1992). This emphasises the practical aspects of the language whereby the needs of the particular context take precedence over the linguistic code. ELF interlocutors must exhibit mutual understanding, cooperation and flexibility to sustain communication and maintain

the flow of information required to meet their needs (Jenkins et al., 2011; Schnitzer, 1995) and to suit the communicative purpose (Dewey, 2009) in intercultural communication (Hülmbauer, 2009).

(c) Empirical Studies of ELF in Business Settings (BELF)

I begin with an overview of studies on interactions in multicultural business settings followed by perceptions and findings that have emerged in the field of business English as a *lingua franca* (BELF) (Charles, 2007; Ehrenreich, 2010; Kankaanranta and Louhiala-Salminen, 2010; Kankaanranta and Planken, 2010; Louhiala-Salminen et al., 2005; Pullin, 2010; Rogerson-Revell and Louhiala-Salminen, 2010).

While increasing numbers of BELF studies have investigated international business communication involving people from other cultures, little research has been carried out on *authentic* business communication in general (Louhiala-Salminen, 2002) and on *authentic multiparty* interactions in multicultural environments in particular (Poncini, 2003).[11] One reason for this scarcity is the limited access to data, especially spoken interactions (St. John, 1996), as companies are often reluctant to allow outsiders to observe meetings, let alone record them, mainly for issues of confidentiality (Angouri and Marra, 2010). Yet, of primary interest are qualitative studies from an emic perspective focusing on interpersonal dynamics (Seidlhofer, 2009b; Seidlhofer et al., 2006).

I have identified over a dozen studies focusing on authentic interactions in a multicultural business setting which involve two-party intercultural participation, i.e. interactants from two national cultures (Babcock and Du-Babcock, 2001; Charles, 1996, 2007; Firth, 1996; Gimenez, 2001; Halmari, 1993; Louhiala-Salminen, 2002; Piekkari, Vaara, Tienari and Säntti, 2005; Pitzl, 2005; Spencer-Oatey and Xing, 2003; Vaara, Tienari, Piekkari and Säntti, 2005; Virkkula-Räisänen, 2010; Vuorela, 2005). However, I could only find six studies that have investigated authentic multiparty interactions among business professionals within international business settings

[11] The emphasis is mine.

(Bilbow, 1998, 2002; Ehrenreich, 2009, 2010; Poncini, 2002, 2003; Pullin, 2010 and Pullin Stark, 2009; Rogerson-Revell, 2007a; and Rogerson-Revell, 2007b, 2008, 2010).

Other studies, that have merely explored *perceptions* pertaining to authentic workplace communication as opposed to *observations of authentic interactions*[12] in international business settings, include the following: Andersen and Rasmussen, 2004; Charles and Marschan-Piekkari, 2002; Chew, 2005; Franklin, 2007; Fredriksson, Barner-Rasmussen and Piekkari, 2006; Kankaanranta and Louhiala-Salminen, 2010; Kankaanranta and Planken, 2010; Kassis Henderson, 2005; Louhiala-Salminen, 1996; Louhiala-Salminen et al., 2005; Makela, Kalla and Piekkari, 2007; Marschan, Welch and Welch, 1997; Marschan-Piekkari, Welch and Welch, 1999; Sweeney and Hua, 2010; Tange and Lauring, 2009; Welch, Welch and Marschan-Piekkari, 2001.

However, because none of the studies cited in the previous two paragraphs involve investigations of *multicultural teams*[13] in business settings using BELF, there is undoubtedly a wide gap to fill. Given what has already been investigated, there is therefore a need for more authentic data on intercultural communication in international management (Spencer-Oatey and Xing, 2003), with a particular emphasis on multiparty interactions, and more specifically those involving multicultural teams. Applied linguists have a role to play and can thus contribute to such research in cross-cultural business activities in order to provide rich perspectives into intercultural communication processes in the global workplace (Franklin, 2007). Since, to my knowledge, no previous BELF studies have dealt with teams, my contribution to the field would consist of insights gained from data involving multiparty team interactions as part of an integration programme within a multinational company.

This brings us to what has emerged from BELF studies in international management. The literature on ELF communication in global business encompasses a broad range of perspectives focusing extensively on issues relating to the choice of a common corporate language (Charles, 2007; Charles and Marschan-Piekkari, 2002; Feely and

[12] Again, the emphasis is mine.
[13] The emphasis here is also mine.

Harzing, 2003; Fredriksson et al., 2006; Kankaanranta, 2006; Louhiala-Salminen, 2002; Louhiala-Salminen et al., 2005; Marschan et al., 1997; Marschan-Piekkari et al., 1999; Piekkari et al., 2005; Sweeny and Hua, 2010; Tange and Lauring, 2009; Vaara et al., 2005; Virkkula-Räisänen, 2010; Welch, Welch and Piekkari, 2007; Welch et al., 2001).

In contrast, the present research attempts to better understand the effects of the use of a common working language within multicultural teams and the manner in which the groups cope, given their own precise contexts and dynamics. In this thesis, though, I have not undertaken a discourse or conversational analysis of the use of English as a *lingua franca* in a company setting, since my work is an ethnographic-like case study of language use and interactional processes in multicultural teams, and is based on direct observation as suggested by Hymes (1962, 1964, 1972, 1974). Indeed, Hymes (1962, 1964, 1972, 1974) posited that since language use and behaviour cannot be isolated from their social contexts (Ray and Biswas, 2011) and since speaking is regulated through socio-cultural rules, the linguistic frameworks and speech activities of a community must be determined empirically through ethnographical studies based on direct observation of the different patterns of speaking, for which he proposed the name 'ethnography of speaking' (1962) and later 'ethnography of communication' (1964, 1972, 1974). This type of study fits the approach of the present study, as we will see in the next chapter where I explain my methodological choices.

The BELF and international management literature have also identified a number of challenges linked to turn-taking as well as to language proficiency. I first examine the strand of literature dealing with turn-taking in BELF settings. In fact, although a system of rules is said to regulate the smooth flow of conversations by ensuring that participants take simultaneous turns (Sacks, Schegloff and Jefferson, 1974) and yield the floor to other speakers at the appropriate signals (Duncan, Jr., 1972), turn-taking violations may occur (Sacks et al., 1974). These turn-taking errors are characterised by two parties talking at the same time for which previous cross-cultural researchers (e.g., Cogo and Dewey, 2006; Halmari, 1993; Murata, 1994; Wang, Hu and Cao, 2011) distinguish between interruption and overlapping-interruption.

Concerning the former, interruption often conveys negative and intrusive behaviour since it may accompany topic changes or floor-taking. This form of interruption is basically not tolerated. Concerning the latter type of utterance, overlapping-interruption does not necessarily signify an attempt to change the topic or take over someone's speaking turn. On the contrary, it tends to provide solidarity, cooperation or involvement in on-going discussions by incorporating features that complete the exchanges or confirm ideas. This kind of overlapping speech may be accepted; nevertheless, regardless of the interrupter's intentions, the interruptee may consider any type of interruption as being rude and disrespectful, depending on the situation, setting or circumstances, especially in cross-cultural communication (Cogo and Dewey, 2006; Du-Babcock, 1999, 2006; Halmari, 1993; Murata, 1994; Ulijn and Li, 1995; Wang et al., 2011).

When turn-taking troubles occur in conversation, mechanisms are required to repair the problems; repair devices include listening, in addition to a set of basic rules regarding 'rights and obligations' that could apply to speakers in any social context (Sacks et al., 1974). As far as I know, however, none of this turn-taking literature has dealt with the challenges of interruption and overlapping-interruption in multicultural teams. On the other hand, the current research will attempt to fill this gap by addressing the turn-taking challenges experienced by the teams under investigation, and the strategies they developed to handle such issues.

Now, I turn to what has emerged from empirical studies relating to proficiency in the common working language in the global workplace (Brett et al., 2006; Feely and Harzing, 2003; Hinds et al., 2014; Janssens and Brett, 1997; Lagerström and Andersson, 2003; Tange and Lauring, 2009; Tenzer et al., 2014). Firstly, a loss of time and frequent interruptions may result from constant translating and explaining of ideas (Ehrenreich, 2010); decision-making processes may thus be slowed down due to a sense of linguistic inadequacy (Marschan-Piekkari et al., 1999; Park, Hwang and Harrison, 1996; Tange and Lauring, 2009; Victor, 1992). Moreover, mother-tongue varieties may be difficult to comprehend due to specific accents, the fast pace in which the language is spoken, and the sophisticated structures and expressions used by mother-tongue speakers (MTSs) (Franklin, 2007). Therefore, MTSs are not

necessarily at an advantage (Brannen and Salk, 2000; del Carmen Mendez Garcia and Perez Canado, 2005). On the other hand, frustrations from inequalities created when SLSs feel they are at a disadvantage due to their less-fluent command of the English language (Bilbow, 2002; Welch et al., 2001) may result in code-switching (Harzing and Feely, 2008; Hinds et al., 2014; Neeley, Hinds and Cramton, 2012; Tenzer et al., 2014) or 'sidebar conversations' (Brett et al., 2006), and impact their capability to 'join and influence internal team process' (Janssens and Brett, 1997). To my knowledge these types of challenges in multicultural teams have not yet been fully addressed in previous BELF studies and would therefore be my contribution to the literature.

In addition to challenges, strategies to overcome BELF-related issues have been suggested in previous research. Firstly, a crucial skill in business communication is the establishment of smooth working relationships (St. John, 1996) through socialising and small talk (Kassis Henderson, 2005; Louhiala-Salminen, 2002; Pullin, 2010), which contribute to developing trust, strengthening social cohesion, and creating a sense of solidarity (Robinson, 2012, with Hogg and Higgins, 2014). Laughter, having a good time (Hüttner, 2009) and humour (Holmes, 2006; Holmes and Marra, 2002, 2004; Holmes and Schnurr, 2005; Schnurr, 2008) also foster collegial relations in the workplace and thereby play a vital role in achieving business objectives. Data from the present study will give insights into the effects of interpersonal team relations on multicultural workplace teams engaging in social conversation.

Secondly, respect and listening facilitate effective interaction and help overcome communication obstacles (Fisher, 2001; Grosse, 2002). A third strategy, integrating team members from different cultures (Maznevski, 1994), consists of the co-construction of exchanges and involvement of all participants (Hüttner, 2009). A fourth strategy involves accommodation by BELF speakers who are sensitive to the difficulties and frustrations of SLSs and adjust their language in multilingual business settings (Rogerson-Revell, 2007b, 2010; Sweeney and Hua, 2010). Language adjustment ensures sustained communication and participation (Rogerson-Revell, 2008), efficiency (Ehrenreich, 2009) and understanding (Rogerson-Revell, 2010;

Virkkula-Räisänen, 2010). Other studies in the area of accommodation explore the use of repetition and paraphrasing to enable effective communication (Lichtkoppler, 2007) as well as procedures to indicate non-understanding (Pitzl, 2005).

Fifthly, the use of multiple language resources, such as code-switching, serves as a creative tool to clarify issues and expedite matters (Brannen and Salk, 2000; Feely and Harzing, 2003) in order to carry out communicative processes and achieve business objectives (Cogo, 2010; Klimpfinger, 2009; Louhiala-Salminen, 2002). Further studies in BELF as well as in international management have revealed that in addition to English, the use of other languages in international business situations is seen as a valuable means to enhance communication so as to accomplish the tasks at hand. Indeed, short, occasional asides in another language may take place during meetings to clarify an issue, check a point, translate a technical term or rephrase an idea. Such switches facilitate the work, meet the immediate business needs, improve the understanding of goals and allow building common ground and solidarity among participants (Brannen and Salk, 2000; Chew, 2005; Ehrenreich, 2010; Feely and Harzing, 2003; Janssens and Brett, 1997; Kankaanranta and Planken, 2010; Louhiala-Salminen et al., 2005; Poncini, 2003; Tenzer et al., 2014; Virkkula-Räisänen, 2010). Nevertheless, code-switching for pragmatic purposes is not often met with appreciation; instead it may be considered as rude and disrespectful, triggering feelings of frustration or mistrust, regardless of the intentions behind this behaviour (Harzing and Feely, 2008; Hinds et al., 2014; Neeley et al., 2012; Tenzer et al., 2014). The present study will portray specific instances where asides in French are made and show how they are handled.

While studies in BELF have revealed rich findings, as far as I know, little of the research in this area has explored multicultural teams conducting their business activities using English as a common language. My study attempts to fill this gap in the BELF literature by going beyond what has already been investigated. As we have seen, issues in this field pertain to challenges with regard to proficiency and to strategies for BELF users, such as establishing relations; respect and listening; involving everyone; accommodating and adjusting talk; and using a diversity of language resources, e.g. code-switching. Insights into these matters will be gained

from my investigation of multicultural teams using English as a business *lingua franca* to carry out their tasks.

2.5 The Impact of Cultural Diversity on Multicultural-Team Interactions

With a particular focus on multicultural project teams in the workplace, managing a number of differences in the composition of international teams impacts on team dynamics and performance, including the management of differences in national and professional cultures, leadership styles, language fluency, communication patterns and expectations about key team processes as suggested by Canney Davison and Ward (1999; Figure 2.1). Understanding cultural differences is also a key component of Maznevski and DiStefano's (2000) Mapping, Bridging and Integrating (MBI) model (Figure 2.3). With respect to cultural diversity in multicultural teams, I use the term 'culture' to refer to a set of shared assumptions, values and behaviours (Barmeyer and Mayrhofer, 2008; Byram, 1997; DiStefano and Maznevski, 2000; Geertz, 1973; Gregory, 1983; Hofstede, 1980; Schwartz, 1999; Smircich, 1983; Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner, 1997; Wilkins and Ouchi, 1983) that are accepted by the members of a group, such as a nationality, professional or age group (Corder and Meyerhoff, 2009).[14] Culture in this sense has an impact on the way people think, act (Deal and Kennedy, 1982; Gordon, 1991; Schein, 1996; Thompson, Stradling, Murphy and O'Neill, 1996) and use language (Larkey, 1996; Vansteenkiste, 1996). Thanks to a shared system of implicit meanings, individuals are provided with structures and patterns that influence their 'practices and perspectives' (National Standards, 1996, 1999); indicate the range of appropriate behavioural processes to be followed; and serve as a model for interacting and communicating with other members of the group (DiStefano and Maznevski, 2000; Hall, 1959; Larkey, 1996; Shachaf, 2008; Vansteenkiste, 1996). This orientation system guides and directs the individuals in the group, binds them to one another (Franklin, 2007) and enables them to feel comfortable with the group's expectations (Gibbs, Hulbert, Hewing, Dortch, Pearson and Ramsey, 1988).

[14] See section 2.1 in which I give my definition of 'multicultural'.

These cultural ways of life, which have been acquired 'relatively unthinkingly' (Corder and Meyerhoff, 2009) and are thus taken for granted (Adler and Jelinek, 1986; Schein, 2010), primarily become apparent when confronted with differences. These differences in behaviours may actually hinder interactional processes (Corder and Meyerhoff, 2009) in diverse workgroups. In fact, the cultural diversity of heterogeneous teams is said to increase the complexity, ambiguity and challenges for group members as they interact together (Canney Davison, 1994, 1996, with Ward, 1999; Chevrier, 2003; Janssens and Brett, 1997; Shachaf, 2008) and may entail communication difficulties and barriers (Iles and Hayers, 1997; Shachaf, 2008). Two recent studies that argue for the influence of cultural factors on cross-cultural communication include Merkin, Taras and Steel (2014) and Smith, Torres, Hecker, Chua, Chudzikova, Degirmencioglu, Donoso-Maluf, Feng, Harb, Jackson, Malvezzi, Mogaji, Pastor, Perez-Floriano, Srivastava, Stahl, Thomason and Yanchuk (2011). Although these two studies are not specifically on teams, they deal with business contexts and argue for a contextual approach. Merkin et al. (2014) provide a review and meta-analysis of sixty empirical studies and report weak to moderate but significant links between cultural values (e.g., individualism, masculinity, power distance, uncertainty avoidance) and communication patterns (e.g., indirectness, self-promotion, openness, interruption and face concerns). Moreover, despite the small dataset and the possibility of omission of relevant data, the authors emphasise the importance of moving research forward on the effect of culture on communication processes. Smith et al. (2011) report on the content analysis of brief descriptions of cross-national problem events reported by over one thousand three hundred business employees from many nations. The results of this study indicate that not only can the types of work-related problems that occur in cross-national interactions be understood in terms of contrasting dimensions of national culture, but also that reciprocal cultural-based accommodation behaviour with regard to the other party can lead to positive outcomes. The authors conclude that cross-cultural training should therefore provide briefings about the other party's cultural context as well as more situation-specific cross-cultural skills.

In fact, although the potency of national culture is often assumed, its effects on individuals within multinational teams may be far less significant than suggested in

the literature owing to individual and contextual determinants (Brannen and Salk, 2000; Salk and Brannen, 2000). Moreover, additional studies have called into question the 'cultural' aspect of intercultural communication (Sarangi, 1994) and have avoided explaining differences in intercultural interactions in narrow cultural terms based on single cultural variables (Milliken and Martins, 1996; Rogerson-Revell, 2007a; Stahl et al., 2010; Thompson et al., 1996). Rather, culture is multi-layered and has multiple effects (Milliken and Martins, 1996; Thompson et al., 1996). Given the uncertainty over the impact of cultural-related variables in multicultural teams, and owing to the composition of the teams investigated, the current study does not attempt a large-scale investigation into cultural diversity in global teams, although it will try to ascertain how multicultural teams interact and to what extent demographic variables and corporate culture play a role in the team interactions.

Concerning corporate culture, although cultural dynamics within organisations is not fully understood, it is believed to be created and preserved through the phenomenon of adopting shared norms about what constitutes appropriate or inappropriate attitudes and behaviours (O'Reilly, 1989; Schein, 1990). Based on their own experience of collaborating with fellow team members in the GLOBE project, Hanges et al. (2005) suggest that a strong organisational culture may reduce national cultural differences in multinational teams (Earley and Mosakowski, 2000; Hanges et al., 2005). I define a strong corporate culture in multicultural teams as widely shared and strongly held norms and values (Chatman, 1989; Deal and Kennedy, 1982; Sorensen, 2002) that serve as a source of behavioural consistency (Schneider, 1988; Sorensen, 2002), cooperation (Smircich, 1983) and consensus (Sagiv and Schwartz, 2007) thanks to a stable environment (Schein, 1984; Smircich, 1983; Sorensen, 2002). The strength of corporate culture in work groups stems from the organisational tenure (Wiersema and Bantel, 1992), characterised by the intensity and length of the members' shared experiences, perspectives and values (Schein, 1984; Wiersema and Bantel, 1992). Basically, shared corporate experiences foster similar interpretations, which facilitate communication and understanding (Schein, 1984; Wiersema and Bantel, 1992). Corporate culture as a homogenising force may also provide a mechanism of control through in-house company programs and socialisation

processes (Chatman, 1989; Schneider, 1988; Schneider, Goldstein and Smith, 1995; Wiersema and Bantel, 1992).

Nevertheless, even when there is a strong corporate culture, personal differences are inherent in every organisation (Hofstede, 1980; Schneider, 1988; Schneider et al., 1995; Vansteenkiste, 1996), creating a cultural mosaic (Schneider, 1988). For example, while some team members may be impatient to begin task activity, others may be frustrated by the lack of any reflection on the team's processes (Smith and Berg, 1997). Moreover, some individuals need structure (Guzzo and Shea, 1993) and are uncomfortable in unstructured situations without rules or someone in charge, while others feel the opposite. Therefore, owing to the individual and collective cultural norms and values within multinational organisations, multicultural teams are advised to take advantage of cultural variation by cultivating differences and creating synergies (Vansteenkiste, 1996; Wenger, 1998). Research suggests that culture influences but does not override personality; nevertheless, it is often less problematic to talk about cultural differences than to give feedback on personal differences (Brett et al., 2006; Canney Davison, 1994, 1996, with Ward, 1999). Therefore, talking about culture may not cover all types of behaviour but it is often considered to be neutral territory (Canney Davison, 1994, 1996, with Ward, 1999).

These theories have interesting implications for the current research and should be useful for shedding light on the development of interactional processes in the present teams within an organisational setting. Indeed, the present study explores not only project-team meetings but also a social group of people developing a common culture. Nevertheless, while the current study attempts to provide insights into the role of culture, its uniqueness pertains to the field of BELF, where it may be one of the first to explore multicultural team interactions in an authentic business setting using English as a *lingua franca*. Moreover, in the field of international management, it may be one of few studies to focus on the challenges of how language, communication and interactional processes are managed in multicultural teams. Another characteristic of the current research is that it brings together findings from numerous strands of literature to explore communication practices in newly-formed teams within a management integration programme in a multinational

company. Therefore, although culture has not been overlooked, this study is different from previous research on multicultural teams in that culture is not placed centre-stage for exploration in its own right.

2.6 Summary

This chapter has reviewed the literature relating to my overarching research focus: an investigation of the ways in which newly-formed, short-term multicultural project teams manage their interactional challenges and processes during the early stages of their teamwork. After defining key terms, I have explored several team development theories in the fields of management and international management to explore how diverse cultural groups establish processes for working together. Afterwards, and in order to provide a close-up view of the interplay of factors that appear to affect the dynamics of interaction in multicultural teams, I have reviewed research in the management and international management literature as well as in applied linguistics (especially in the field of Business English as a Lingua Franca [BELF]) on language and communication and the impact of culture.

In the next chapter, I now turn to explain the methodology that I adopted for my study.

Chapter 3 - Methodology

Having established the overall focus of the thesis, the topic and its relevance in the review of the literature in the preceding chapter, I now explain why and how my methodological choices specifically address my research question and sub-questions, which are:

How do newly-formed, short-term multicultural project teams manage their interactions in the formative stages?

1. *What challenges do newly-formed, short-term multicultural project teams experience in their interactions in the formative stages?*
2. *How do teams manage these challenges and to what extent do they learn to do so successfully?*
3. *What factors affect the management processes of different teams?*
4. *What impact do the challenges and strategies have on team processes and dynamics?*

3.1 Outline of Chapter

This chapter begins with a description of the theoretical perspectives (3.2) that underpin the development of my research design and methodological approach. I then describe my data collection planning (3.3) and provide details of my data gathering (3.4). Ethical considerations are presented in section 3.5. Finally, my methods of working with and presenting data are described in sections 3.6 and 3.7, respectively.

3.2 Research Position and Design: Theoretical Perspectives

The aim of this section is to outline the worldviews underpinning my investigation. As previously mentioned, the overall purpose of my research is to explore how members of newly-formed, short-term multicultural project teams manage their

interactional processes in their formative stages. In order to understand how my study was conducted, it is important to define my ontological, epistemological and methodological standpoints, i.e. my paradigmatic position, my research design and my methodology. I thus turn to a discussion as to the positions which influenced the approach I took to address my research questions.

3.2.1 Ontological Principles

From an ontological point of view, or paradigmatic position, my worldview incorporates both constructivist and post-positivist orientations. In the constructivist approach, social knowledge is derived from individual reconstructions of realities (Guba and Lincoln, 2005). In the current research, meaning was socially produced by individuals interacting in a particular environment (Tietze, 2008). The understandings of this world were constructed, reconstructed and co-constructed as people interacted with others in these specific circumstances. This means there were multiple ways of viewing and understanding the same world, e.g. the same setting, the same activities and the same interactions (Croker, 2009). In my study, I was not looking for one reality, but how the different participants, including myself as an observer, represented the team interactions from diverse viewpoints.

The advantage of the constructivist stance is the yielding of multiple perspectives which allow a more comprehensive and nuanced interpretation of the social world. This enables an in-depth analysis and explanation of the happenings, and generates a rich overall picture of the world being investigated. The shortcomings of this position relate to the fact that although the meanings and understandings of this social context are dynamic, they are nevertheless complex (Croker, 2009).

In the post-positivist school of thought, foundations of truth and knowledge about reality stem from a form of rigour in the validity, reliability and objectivity of social phenomena (Guba and Lincoln, 2005). In the current research, the events under investigation were examined from more than one source. These multiple sources enabled triangulation of the data and contributed to a certain validity of my work,

providing a partially objective account of the world under study (Denzin and Lincoln, 2005).

The benefits of post-positivism reside in its approach of acquiring knowledge about the social community investigated by constructing narratives through observations, participants' reactions, discussions during interviews and my own interpretations of these interwoven ideas (Ritchie and Rigano, 2001). In spite of this rich social construction of reality, and owing to its complexity, the post-positivist standpoint requires an on-going reflexivity on behalf of the researcher. This reflexive attitude means that, as a researcher, I must look critically at and embrace the contradictions and competing ideas that may arise in the stories of the different participants (Ryan, 2006) as I seek to explore the social processes of the environment being studied, and to make sense of the multiple views that may emerge (Cresswell, 2009).

3.2.2 Epistemological Premises

From an epistemological perspective, I adopted a case study design to address my research questions. The purpose of my case study is 'intrinsic' (Stake, 1995; Thomas, 2011), as the interest lies in the particularities and the uniqueness of the case itself. In order to acquire an in-depth understanding of the features of the case, the elements are viewed from several angles and vantage points (Thomas, 2011). To enable triangulation of findings and justification of research claims and conclusions (Hood, 2009), my data sources include direct observation, interviews, physical artefacts and documentation (Yin, 2009). The approach I am following is 'descriptive' (Thomas, 2011; Yin, 2009), as the study seeks to draw a rich picture of the particular project-team sessions by describing, illustrating and analysing their key components.

Although there are various types of case study approaches, the process I undertook was a single-case design with multiple sub-units of analysis that Yin (2009) calls 'embedded' and Thomas (2011) refers to as 'nested'. My unit of analysis concentrates on one type of meeting: interactions in multicultural project teams to solve a management task as part of an international integration programme for

senior managers, the Management Integration Programme (MIP), at a French-based multinational company, Global Player (GP).[15] The 'embedded', or 'nested', sub-units of analysis involve three cohorts of managers participating in the MIP programme. The advantage of researching multiple sub-units within a single case are summarised by Eisenhardt (1991): 'By piecing together the individual patterns [from multiple sub-units], the researcher can draw a more complete theoretical picture [so as to] emphasize complementary aspects of a phenomenon' (Eisenhardt, 1991: 620). Using multiple-unit designs thus relies on the comparative logic of replication across groups, which enables the identification of consistent tendencies (Eisenhardt, 1991).
My case-study approach also has an ethnographic-like element (Eisenhardt, 1989) in that I observed the integration sessions over an extended period of time; altogether I spent a total of eighty-six hours and thirty-five minutes in the company for the study – thirty-seven and a half hours in observations (see Tables 3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 3.4) and forty-nine hours and five minutes in interviews (see Table 3.5; Appendix A4) – in addition to two hours of preliminary meetings,[16] all of which enabled me to investigate the groups in their natural setting through sustained engagement (Creswell, 2009). However, my approach was not truly ethnography as I only observed one MIP event (multicultural teamwork to solve a management dilemma), albeit with three different cohorts. In fact, ethnography differs from case study research owing to its broader cultural perspective by which the behaviour and values of groups rather than individuals can be understood (Heigham and Sakui, 2009; Hood, 2009), whereas a case study has a narrower focus on the particular behaviour of individuals or groups (Hood, 2009).

As with all research designs, carrying out an ethnographic-like case study has both strengths and weaknesses. Owing to the in-depth nature of my methods, my study offers rich insights into understanding the overall context of the project teams (Gill and Johnson, 2002; Myers, 1999; Schein, 1990, 1996) from multiple perspectives (Stake, 2005). The thorough understanding and familiarity with the MIP programme

[15] As mentioned in the Abbreviations section and in the Introduction, these are the aliases given to the company where I collected my data and to my particular data collection site.
[16] I was invited to a one-hour initial meeting with the Head of the MIP programme, who was also the Head *Moniteur* and the *moniteur* for the three teams observed. I later attended a one-hour MIP staff meeting with the Head *Moniteur*, five other *moniteurs* and two MIP office assistants; see 3.3.2.

within GP constitute valuable benefits enabling my narratives to provide trustworthy and convincing accounts thanks to thick descriptions (Geertz, 1973) of the context and the issues. Another advantage of my study is that its flexible method evolved during the research process as the participants responded to their situation and the realities they were experiencing (Creswell, 2009). Moreover, as the case context and boundaries were unclear to me at the outset (Hood, 2009; Yin, 2009), my research questions were revised and refined on an on-going basis throughout the study as the research inquiry unfolded; this iterative approach allowed findings to take shape (Hood, 2009).

Conducting the case study research entailed several challenges, including the ability to ask appropriate questions, be an effective listener, be adaptive and flexible and have a firm grasp of the issues under study (Yin, 2009). Consistent and meticulous analysis of the data throughout the entire data collection process was also an essential aspect. Two further challenges with my ethnographic-like case study design included the time-consuming nature of the research as well as ethical considerations.[17] As with all qualitative research, I had to adhere to strict codes of ethics during observations and interviews; when reporting my findings I have taken care not to disclose personal views or circumstances which could put those researched at any risk or embarrassment (Stake, 2005).

3.2.3 Methodological Approach

From a methodological standpoint, I have used multiple forms of qualitative data collection types and options (Creswell, 2009) including non-participant observations of behaviour of one 'event' (Miles and Huberman, 1994; Spradley, 1980), i.e. a management dilemma to be solved in multicultural project-team workshops as part of an integration programme for international managers (MIP); individual, 'face-to-face' (Creswell, 2009) 'semi-structured' (Richards, 2009b), 'open-ended' (Fontana and Frey, 2005) interviews, and recordings of these with interviewee consent;

[17] See Appendices A1 and A2 for my Information Fact Sheet and Company Consent Form, respectively.

artefacts from the integration programme; and corporate documentation available to the general public.

The first method, observation, considered to be the basis of all research methods (Angrosino, 2005) and often used with case study research and ethnography, enabled the capture of a rich, in-depth picture of the MIP participants' behaviour in their natural setting (Cowie, 2009). My observations were followed up with interviews to obtain complementary insights into individual beliefs and perspectives.

The membership role I took on, corresponding to my involvement in the context (Cowie, 2009), was generally that of a 'peripheral member researcher' engaged in 'non-participant observation' (Adler and Adler, 1987; in Angrosino, 2005: 733), conceptualised as a 'complete observer' in Gold's (1958) earlier classification of roles in sociological field observations. The challenge posed by this role relationship (Gold, 1958) would have been the risk of becoming too detached and removed from the social interactions, had it not been for the fact that there were occasional pressures to become more of a core member. In fact, I was asked to lead the debrief once (see 3.4.4; Table 3.4) and I often received nods, smiles and comments during the interactions in addition to invitations for coffee, lunch and chocolates, before or after the project-team meetings. Therefore, my involvement as a peripheral member was not exactly clear-cut.[18]

Areas of concern with my observation included maximising observational effectiveness (Angrosino, 2005) through practice and rigour (Cowie, 2009) and producing relevant, valid and reliable data through triangulation with other procedures for collection and analysis (Angrosino, 2005; Cowie, 2009). Ethical considerations focused on reducing the perception of intrusion (Angrosino, 2005), minimised thanks to my membership role (see preceding paragraph) and my assuring the participants of confidentiality and anonymity (Cowie, 2009).

Interviews constitute the second method I employed to collect data. The major form of interviews I used was 'open-ended' (Fontana and Frey, 2005), classified by

[18] See also my insider-outsider status in 3.5.1.

Richards (2009b) as 'semi-structured', the type that is most commonly used in applied linguistics thanks to the flexibility it allows.

My interviews were jointly constructed conversations influenced by my own personal characteristics as well as those of the MIP participants (Fontana and Frey, 2005). In this process, as a researcher, I was not neutral or invisible but was an active contributor to the discussions; and by applying my interviewing skills of asking questions and listening, I was able to gain access to knowledge, feelings and emotions (Fontana and Frey, 2005).

The approach that I employed to produce knowledge in my qualitative interviews has been labeled as 'constructionist' (Roulston, 2010, 2011). From the constructionist perspective of interviewing, rather than eliciting a 'report' that describes an interior state of mind, both the interviewer and the interviewee co-produce an 'account' (Baker, 1997, 2002; Mann, 2011; Rapley, 2001; Richards, 2009a; Roulston 2010, 2011; Talmy, 2010) or 'narrative' (Baynham, 2011) reflecting the social events – in this particular study, these consisted of the MIP team interactions which I observed and in which my interviewees participated. My interactional style was thus central (Rapley, 2001) in what has been termed the 'active interview' (Gubrium and Holstein, 1997; Holstein and Gubrium, 1995, 2003; Silverman, 2006) whereby my questioning, listenership and responses inevitably influenced the development of the interview talk (Richards, 2011). Basically, my presence influenced the narratives, and helped shape the joint construction of interpersonal relationships and interactional encounters that were negotiated between myself, as interviewer, and the interviewees (De Fina, 2011; De Fina and Perrino, 2011; Rapley, 2001). My research interview was therefore not merely a tool for acquiring data; on the contrary, this interviewing style has been theorised as social practice (Talmy, 2010, 2011) or social action (Rapley, 2001; Wortham, Mortimer, Lee, Allard and Daniel White, 2011) in which my purpose was to discuss, interpret and co-construct – together with my interviewees – the various aspects and implications of the team interactions.

When reporting the findings, I sometimes include my questions and remarks in the transcription so as to depict the interview talk within its full context, represented by

lead-in questions, follow-up 'prompts' and communicative features (Potter and Hepburn, 2005). I have therefore given 'voice' not only to the informants but also to myself, the researcher, in order to reflect the co-construction of the interactional event (Mann, 2011). Nevertheless, in writing my narrative, I have tried to be careful not to go overboard to depict 'how' my interactions were constructed but rather to focus on 'what' was said (Mann, 2011; Rapley, 2001; Richards, 2011; Roulston, 2011; Silverman, 2006; Talmy, 2010, 2011; Talmy and Richards, 2011), while still remaining sensitive as to the collaborative nature of the interview interaction (Mann, 2011).

The main issue I had to face with my interviews stemmed primarily from the challenge of making arrangements with MIP participants in the teams observed, and with willing informants (Fontana and Frey, 2005) from teams not observed, within the tight time frame of the integration programme. Other dilemmas that I confronted related to both the choice of language in which to conduct the interview (see Table 3.6) and to translation decisions (Mann, 2011). I did not find establishing rapport and gaining trust (Fontana and Frey, 2005) to be problematic in my interviews as this seemed to come about naturally thanks to the company's support of my research and to my presence during the project-team workshops. On the other hand, in order to improve the quality of my interviews I felt it necessary to reflect on my performance through 'self-critical awareness' (Richards, 2009a: 194-195) throughout the interviewing process.

Ethical considerations revolved around carefully informing the participants about the aims of the research (see 3.3.2; 3.5.3; Appendices A1, A2) and protecting the identities of the interviewees (Rallis and Rossman, 2009). Another concern with my interviews included maintaining the integrity of the phenomena obtained by preserving the viewpoints of the respondents when interpreting (Fontana and Frey, 2005) and translating the interview data.

Finally, with regard to data collection sources, the advantage of physical artefacts is their insightfulness into cultural features while the strength of documentation includes its broad coverage (Yin, 2009). However, owing to the major difficulty of these types of data not necessarily being available, due to reasons of confidentiality,

or relevant (Yin, 2009), my gathering of these two kinds of data sources is limited, yet useful and complementary nonetheless (see Table 3.7).

Now that I have presented my paradigmatic position, epistemological perspective and methodological approach, and have examined the general principles and issues relating to these points of view, I now turn to the planning of my data collection, the gathering of my data and the analysis of my findings.

3.3 Planning Data Collection

This section explains how I planned my data collection so that I could investigate how short-term multicultural project teams develop ways of managing their interactions in the formative stages.

3.3.1 Negotiating Access to Global Player (GP)

As mentioned in the introductory chapter, I approached a French-based multinational company, Global Player (GP), to enquire whether I could conduct case study research with them. Several reasons influenced my choice of this particular company. Firstly, the company has a strong reputation in France and abroad. Secondly, close links exist between my university and GP thanks to partnerships established between the two institutions. Many of my students carry out internships at GP where they acquire experience and receive coaching for future recruitment. Therefore, I thought finding out about the needs of the company would be helpful for future course planning. Geographically speaking, the company's proximity to my place of employment would facilitate my research. On a more personal level, I started my professional activities at GP, and my husband carried out his entire career with the GP Group. These assets and my familiarity with the company contributed to my selection of GP as the business setting where I wished to carry out my research.

Negotiating access into GP for data collection lasted from June to November 2009, and was a measured process. It needed to be done carefully by contacting the right people at convenient times for the process to move forward effectively. Without this network of business contacts, my access to the company may not have been possible (Gill and Johnson, 2002).

3.3.2 Data Collection: Management Integration Programme (MIP)

In giving authorisation for my research, GP also specified the data collection boundaries (Miles and Huberman, 1994). During the course of my initial meetings at GP in September 2009, we discussed identifying a particular setting within the organisation that would meet my requirements and that would also be suitable for the company. I explained that I was interested in interactions and exchanges between people of different nationalities using English as a common language. In October 2009, I was informed of the company's authorisation for me to conduct research within an integration programme designed for newly-recruited or internally-promoted top-level managers, people with high potential for leadership and whom the company wishes to develop to take up managerial responsibilities in its international operations both at home and abroad. A meeting was arranged in mid-November 2009 with the programme director (to whom I refer in this thesis as the Head *Moniteur*), who described the integration programme, and who eventually determined how best to accommodate my research requests while also respecting the corporate issues of confidentiality.

Thanks to preliminary meetings at GP,[19] to my observations and interviews during data collection and to a book written by two former GP employees[20], I learned about the programme which was to become my data collection site. Although some aspects of the integration programme for managers and professionals, for which I have given the pseudonym Management Integration Programme (MIP), may resemble a training programme, the MIP is not considered one. Basically, it is not

[19] See also 3.2.2 for more information about my preliminary MIP meetings.
[20] This book is not included in the bibliography of references so as to keep the company's identity anonymous.

organised by the training department but by the Head of Personnel for the Group. The aims and objectives are two-fold; firstly, for each participant, or *stagiaire*,[21] to learn about the company, its culture, organisation, top management and career opportunities, and to start to share its vision, values and ways of doing things; and secondly, for each *stagiaire* to get to know each other and to begin to build an internal network of long-lasting relations.

Three types of *stagiaires* participate in the programme: young graduates or new recruits (from France; some still on their probationary period) with at least five years of higher education; company employees from technical or administrative backgrounds (also from France) who have been promoted internally to senior management status through merit and advancement in their careers; and experienced managers and professionals from the Group's international operations located in other countries. It must be pointed out that participation in the programme is considered within GP as an honour and a privilege and, as such, a form of recognition by the Group.

The MIP brings together all types of managers and professionals from diverse geographical and cultural backgrounds, from all age groups and professional disciplines, men and women alike, for an intensive four-week programme. As the Group is headquartered in France, French people make up a large percentage of the programme's participants although there is a growing number of international participants, all of whom speak either French or English, the company's two corporate languages. For this reason, the programme has become bilingual (French-English). Conferences are given by senior managers in one of the two languages and are translated simultaneously into the other language by official translators; slides and other documents are often written in both languages, and headsets are available to anyone who may need them.

[21] Paradoxically, the French word *stagiaire* translates as 'trainee', i.e. someone who participates in a *stage* – the French term for 'training programme'. Yet, in the MIP context, a *stagiaire* refers to the participants of the MIP integration programme, who are not considered as 'trainees'. Because of this particular connotation of the word *stagiaire* in the MIP context, the term is maintained in both languages throughout this thesis and was used throughout the sessions by all participants – so as to retain this precise meaning.

The MIP is managed by a Head *Moniteur* and a team of *moniteurs* who report directly to the Head *Moniteur*, all of whom are assigned a group of *stagiaires* to 'monitor'. The role of a *moniteur* is (1) to coach *stagiaires* during the programme and to provide feedback to enable the participants to develop individual competencies; (2) to assess *stagiaires'* integration and potential career prospects within the company; and (3) to collaborate with the French and international career managers and the Group's Personnel Manager to make a placement proposal to *stagiaires* at the end of the programme. A *moniteur* may be someone who works in Personnel or who has been chosen from another corporate division. The team of *moniteurs* reflects the diversity within both the company and the programme: different nationalities, professional backgrounds, ages, genders and personalities.[22]

Three MIP sessions per year take place at company headquarters in France and consist of a four-week programme. Activities include conferences, site visits, career forums, a production workshop experience, management seminars, individual and group projects, and team interactions and committees. MIP participants are put into three types of multicultural teams and given work assignments that are useful and real. The three teams include (1) MIP logistics teams whereby the *stagiaires* assist the MIP staff with a logistical aspect of the integration programme, such as publishing the cohort's directory or organising evening and weekend social events; (2) consumer workshop teams in which the participants compare and contrast consumer behaviour in the different geographical zones where the company is present; and (3) project-team workshops which involve solving four management dilemmas with which the company has recently been confronted. All teams are expected to put their skills into action and generate results. The company gave me permission to be a non-participant observer of one type of team interaction, the project-team workshops, which took place four times per cohort for the three cohorts I was authorised to investigate during the MIP sessions in 2010. I was allowed to observe the sessions, interview as many participants as accepted to be interviewed and collect any relevant documentary data.

[22] See Tables 4.1, 5.1, 6.1 and 7.1; Chapter 8; Appendix A8 for background information about the *moniteurs* and team members investigated.

Before the start of my data collection in March 2010, I was invited in February 2010 to meet the *moniteurs*, at which time I provided my Information Fact Sheet (Appendix A1) and my Company Consent Form (Appendix A2),[23] both of which had already been revised and adapted as suggested by the Head *Moniteur* after my initial meeting with her in November 2009.[24] More specifically, she requested that I clarify the reason for my interest in intercultural exchanges and how this information would be used.[25] Although I had also prepared a Participation Consent Form and a Recording Consent Form, the Head *Moniteur* explained it was only necessary to give each participant a copy of the Information Fact Sheet since the company's consent was sufficient.[26]

As revealed through the two preliminary meetings with the MIP staff, first the individual meeting with the Head *Moniteur* in November 2009 and then the group meeting with the team of *moniteurs* in February 2010, I was informed that for the project-team workshops, the participants are divided into groups with specific tasks; are observed by *moniteurs*; and are provided with feedback using particular corporate methods. Ultimately, each group develops its own team processes in order to carry out the team requirements.

3.3.3 Discussion of Data Collection Boundaries

GP's selection of activities for my data collection had its strengths and weaknesses. The main rationale for GP's choice was that many of the MIP participants were new recruits and the team tasks that were assigned were not of a highly sensitive nature. Confidentiality was therefore not a major issue. The advantages for me to be involved in the MIP sessions were that the participants were of mixed nationalities and included people representing a variety of ages, backgrounds, business divisions

[23] See also 3.5.3 for more about ethical considerations.
[24] See also 3.2.2 for my previous explanation about these two initial meetings with the *moniteurs*.
[25] I reiterated my overall interest in multicultural group interaction in the corporate world to improve my future course planning and teaching.
[26] Therefore, the Participation Consent Form and the Recording Consent Form are not included in the Appendix section.

and organisational positions within the company. Indeed, approximately forty percent of the participants involved in the international programme were non-French and came from different geographical zones (see Figure 8.1; Appendix A8.1).

As we have seen in 3.2.2, working with three cohorts enabled me to collect data using within-case strategies (Maznevski and Chudoba, 2000; Miles and Huberman, 1994; Yin, 2009) and multiple-case comparative logic (Eisenhardt, 1991), i.e. from different informants taking part in similar corporate activities. The corporate settings were duplicated and the topics and the nature of the interactions were repeated for each new group. Consequently, the tasks observed were the same for each of the different cohorts, the data collected have therefore been comparable, and the findings have been strengthened thanks to this replication strategy (Eisenhardt, 1991; Yin, 2009). Comparing and contrasting replicating units of analysis have enriched and reinforced research findings.

I have identified several limitations regarding the data collection boundaries established by GP. Firstly, each MIP session lasted for only four weeks and was highly intensive. Moreover, once the programme finished, the participants returned to their respective countries and posts, providing fewer opportunities for meeting with these informants. I therefore had to be organised, adaptive and flexible when setting up individual interviews.

A second weakness of the data collection setting came from the fact that it provided a narrow vision of the overall picture, focusing on only one small section of the whole integration programme and overall business process. Nevertheless, the ethnographic-like case study approach I adopted involving observations of behaviour in context, in-depth interviews and their recordings, as well as various MIP artefacts and corporate documents, enabled me to dig deeper to obtain useful information and a variety of data.

Thirdly, video recordings would have provided me with richer details of the discourse of the interactions; however, despite several requests, GP only agreed to observations of the project-team workshops and audio recordings of the interviews.

It seems that this was primarily due to concerns about confidentiality and anonymity that are ever-present in real-life settings and which often prevent access to authentic data (Stubbe, 2001).

Although I was disappointed at not being able to audio- or video-record the interactions, people were quite willing to speak to me individually in recorded interviews and spoke very frankly. Moreover, although generalised interviews are widespread in the field of intercultural research, what appear to be lacking are in-depth studies involving the challenges of individuals in particular workplace contexts (Stubbe, 2001). I therefore consider myself fortunate to have gained access to observe the multicultural project-team workshops, conduct related interviews and gather programme artefacts.

3.4 Gathering Data: Three MIP Cohorts

Data collection started with the March 2010 MIP cohort, followed by the subsequent cohorts in June and October 2010. The March cohort included eighty-five current and potential managers of seventeen nationalities; the June cohort consisted of one hundred and two participants from twenty-one countries; eighty-three members of fourteen different nationalities comprised the October cohort.[27]

3.4.1 Design of Study: Research Objectives and Questions

Data from the first group of MIP participants in March provided an initial understanding of the situation, gave insights into the opportunities for data gathering, indicated the types of relevant data to which I could, or could not, have access and revealed the boundaries for recording. This experience pointed me in the right direction and enabled me to work out my research design and methodology within the pre-determined company circumstances (Stubbe, 2001). Although it was helpful to plan the research design and some possible constructs prior to collecting

[27] See Appendix A3 for an overview of the data gathering.

data, these were tentative in the early stages. The analytic foci emerged after data collection began (Eisenhardt, 1989). This process of formulating and reformulating my research objectives on an ongoing and iterative basis is one of the characteristics of qualitative research (Freeman, 2009; Maxwell, 2005). I thus refocused my research questions as I learned more about the data collection boundaries set by the company and the nature of the integration programme. My overall aim, therefore, evolved and gradually my focus became to explore the manner in which corporate project teams manage the formative stages of their teamwork.

3.4.2 Data Collection Methods

The ethnographic-like case study approach (Eisenhardt, 1989) that I adopted included gathering data via non-participant observations of ten project-team workshops; in-depth interviews with forty-one international managers (thirty-five with *stagiaires* and six with *moniteurs*) from a dozen countries who were involved in the team workshops; audio recordings of these;[28] and artefacts and written documentation, where provided.

The observations involved spending time with the targeted shortlist of participants, i.e. *stagiaires*, during pre-selected activities consisting of team interactions followed by debriefing sessions with each team's *moniteur*. Semi-structured interviews produced individual reactions to the project-team meetings and enabled me to obtain perceptions of the different components that intertwined in the multicultural teamwork processes in this specific corporate context. Written artefacts and documents provided by GP staff and MIP *moniteurs* and *stagiaires*, complemented the data and enabled data triangulation (Gill and Johnson, 2002; Yin, 2009) adding to the credibility of the study.

[28] Although the company, GP, gave its consent for the interviews with *stagiaires* and *moniteurs* to be audio-recorded, in the March cohort one *stagiaire* chose to be interviewed in an unrecorded phone call and I chose not to record my face-to-face interview with the Head *Moniteur* (see also 3.4.5; Table 3.5).

3.4.3 Ten Project-Team Workshops: The Setting and Actors

As the project-team workshops constitute the most challenging and interactive team activities of each MIP session,[29] the Head *Moniteur* compiles the individual project teams to create a balance of nationalities all speaking a common language, either English or French. The three MIP cohorts I investigated in 2010 were divided into seven project teams in March, nine in June and ten in October, out of which two per cohort were French-speaking, while the remaining teams used English. For my research, I was authorised to observe the interactions of the Head *Moniteur*'s three English-speaking project teams. Since each MIP session included a series of four project-team workshops, I was invited to observe a total of twelve team workshops during the March, June and October 2010 sessions. However, due to professional engagements, I was only able to attend two of the four workshops during the March session. Table 3.1 provides a timeline of the ten workshops observed.[30] As can be seen in this table, I have given the three teams observed the aliases of Team K (March), Team G (June) and Team T (October).

Workshop	**Team and Task Acronym**	**Date of Workshop**	**Workshop Timetable**	**Length of Time per Workshop**
Task 1	K1[31]	11 March 2010	8:00-12:00	4 hours
Task 4	K4	31 March 2010	14:00-17:15	3.25 hours
Task 1	G1	11 June 2010	13:30-17:30	4 hours
Task 2	G2	15 June 2010	14:00-18:00	4 hours
Task 3	G3	25 June 2010	8:00-12:00	4 hours
Task 4	G4	28 June 2010	14:00-17:15	3.25 hours
Task 1	T1	1 October 2010	13:30-17:30	4 hours
Task 2	T2	8 October 2010	8:00-12:00	4 hours
Task 3	T3	13 October 2010	13:30-17:30	4 hours
Task 4	T4	21 October 2010	8:00-11:00	3 hours
Total Workshops Observed: 10				**Total Time of Observations: 37.5 hours**

Table 3.1 – Timeline of Observations of Project-Team Workshops

[29] See 3.3.2 for the three types of teams included within the programme.
[30] See also Appendix A3 for an overview of data collection.
[31] As indicated above, I gave the three teams investigated the aliases of Teams K, G and T. In this table as well as throughout the thesis both the teams and the tasks are indicated; for instance, K1 refers to Team K's first task, while G2 refers to Team G's second task, and so on.

The four topics of the tasks were real business problems already dealt with by the company in the recent past. The objectives were for the MIP *stagiaires* to work in project teams to solve the management dilemmas, and to be prepared to present their conclusions to the task presenter, the *moniteurs* and the entire cohort. Each workshop that I observed took place according to a similar structure in four distinct periods:

1. **Auditorium with the entire cohort**: Presentation of the task to solve by a company expert who had already experienced the issue; *my own formal introduction to the entire cohort on Day One* (approximately thirty minutes)
2. **Separate breakout rooms**: Problem-solving and decision-making interactions in project teams; each team was observed and coached by a *moniteur*; the task experts went from room to room to answer any questions the teams had (approximately ninety minutes)
3. **Auditorium with the entire cohort**:
    a. Presentations by two or three of the teams chosen at random to present their solutions (approximately ten minutes per presentation)
    b. Questioning by the task experts and/or the audience with regard to the teams' decisions and arguments (approximately five minutes per team)
    c. Presentation of the real solution that the company took relative to the circumstances and context at the given time (approximately thirty minutes)
    d. Overall question and answer period (approximately ten minutes)
4. **Separate breakout rooms**: Debriefing session with the teams' *moniteur* to discuss and assess team dynamics and processes (approximately thirty minutes)

3.4.4 Data Collected: Observation Data

As indicated in 3.2.2, altogether I spent over eighty-six hours in the company during my data collection period, thirty-seven and a half in observations[32] and approximately forty-nine hours in interviews.[33] As we have already seen in section 3.4.3, the full project-team workshops that I observed consisted of four periods. Of these, I was primarily interested in the second and fourth periods, the team interactions and team debriefing sessions, respectively (underlined in Table 3.2 below). Out of the ten workshops I attended, I observed ten team interactions and seven team debriefing sessions, as summarised in Table 3.2, and as detailed in Tables 3.3 and 3.4.

Overall Observational Data (unrecorded)	**March**	**June**	**October**
10 problem-solving workshops (*task introduction; team interactions; team presentations & solution by expert; and team debriefs*):[34] • 10 team interactions • 7 team debriefs **Total time spent in observations: 37.5 hours, out of which:** • **15 hours 15 minutes** in team interactions[35] • **2 hours 30 minutes** in team debriefs[36]	2 workshops • 2 team interactions • 1 team debrief	4 workshops • 4 team interactions • 3 team debriefs	4 workshops • 4 team interactions • 3 team debriefs

Table 3.2 – Summary of Overall Observational Data

Table 3.3 shows the team interactions I observed for the three teams investigated as well as the length of time the teams were given for each interaction. Although the norm allotted for each task was one hour and thirty minutes, this amount of time varied depending on the circumstances. Overall, I observed ten team interactions:

[32] See Tables 3.1, 3.2, 3.3 and 3.4 for details about my observational data.
[33] See Table 3.5; Appendix A4 for details about my interview data.
[34] See section 3.4.3 for more information about the problem-solving workshops in project teams.
[35] See Table 3.3 for details about the interactions observed.
[36] See Table 3.4 for details about the team debriefs observed.

two for Team K* and four each for Teams G and T – for a total time of fifteen hours and fifteen minutes for all ten team interactions.

Team Interactions Observed	**Team K – March**	**Team G – June**	**Team T – October**
Task 1	K1: 1 hour 50 mins	G1: 1 hour 30 mins	T1: 1 hour 30 mins
Task 2	*[not observed]**	G2: 1 hour 45 mins	T2: 1 hour 30 mins
Task 3	*[not observed]**	G3: 1 hour 30 mins	T3: 1 hour 35 mins
Task 4	K4: 1 hour 30 mins	G4: 1 hour 15 mins	T4: 1 hour 20 mins
Total Time: 15 hours 15 mins	**K1, K4: 3 hours 20 mins**	**G1, G2, G3, G4: 6 hours**	**T1, T2, T3, T4: 5 hours 55 mins**

Table 3.3 – Observational Data: 10 Team Interactions

Table 3.4 shows the debriefing sessions I attended for the three teams observed as well as the length of time the teams devoted to each debrief. Although thirty minutes was allocated for the team debriefs, some sessions did not last that long. Altogether, I observed seven debriefs for my ten observations of team interactions:[37] one for Team K* and three each for Teams G and T – for a total time of roughly two-and-a-half hours for all seven debriefing sessions.

Team Debriefs Observed	**Team K – March**	**Team G – June**	**Team T – October**
Task 1	K1: 30 minutes	G1: 30 minutes	T1: 30 minutes
Task 2	*[not observed]**	G2: 15 minutes	T2: 20 minutes *(led by researcher)*[38]
Task 3	*[not observed]**	G3: 12 minutes	*no team debrief*
Task 4	*no team debrief*	*no team debrief*	T4: 10 minutes
Total Time: roughly 2.5 hours (147 minutes)	**K1: 30 minutes**	**G1, G2, G3: 57 minutes**	**T1, T2, T4: 60 minutes**

Table 3.4 – Observational Data: 7 Team Debriefing Sessions

* I was unable to attend Tasks 2 and 3 for Team K. This is indicated in Tables 3.3 and 3.4 by *[not observed]*.

[37] During the four-week programme one of the team debriefing sessions was replaced by a special session on individual leadership profiles. This is indicated in Table 3.4 by *no team debrief*.

[38] During Team T's second task, the team's *moniteur*, as Head *Moniteur*, had to deal with a company emergency. Consequently, she asked me to lead the team's debriefing session for this task. This is indicated in Table 3.4 as *(led by researcher)*.

3.4.5 Data Collected: Interview Data

During the March session, I was able to interview seven out of the twelve participants in the project team I observed, as well as two *stagiaires* in teams not observed. In the June and October sessions, I obtained an interview with each member of the teams observed, as well as three additional *stagiaires* in teams not observed in both the June and October cohorts. Altogether I conducted a total of forty-one interviews: twenty-seven *stagiaires* from teams observed; eight from teams not observed; and six *moniteurs*, four from the March session, and one each in June and October.[39]

Aliases have been assigned to protect the informants' identities,[40] and the project teams are labeled, with letters of the alphabet in random order, to reduce the likelihood of identification. Appendix A4 provides interview facts and figures with the aliases of the interviewees, the dates of the interviews, the interview language, the length of the audio recording for each interview and the time spent per interview. Table 3.5 summarises the interview data obtained during the three MIP sessions.

Semi-Structured Interview Data	**March**	**June**	**October**	**Total**
Teams Observed (G, K, T): -Interviews with *stagiaires* + notes (recorded) -Interview with *stagiaire* + notes (unrecorded)	-6 interviews (*face-to-face*) -1 interview (*phone call*)	-12 interviews (*face-to-face*)	-8 interviews (*face-to-face*)	**27 interviews** with members of teams observed
Teams Not Observed (B, C, D, M, N, P, R): -Interviews with *stagiaires* + notes (recorded)	-2 interviews (*face-to-face*)	-3 interviews (*face-to-face*)	-3 interviews (*face-to-face*)	**8 interviews** with members of teams not observed

[39] See also Appendix A3 for an overview of data collection.

[40] Each person has been given an acronym ID: a person's name followed by a capital letter indicates the alias given to each *stagiaire* as well as the *stagiaire*'s problem-solving project team. *Moniteurs* are indicated by the word 'Moniteur' (unitalicised) as a prefix preceding the alias.

***Moniteurs*:** -Interviews with *moniteurs* of teams not observed + notes (recorded) -Interview with Head *Moniteur* (*moniteur* of team observed) + notes (unrecorded)	-3 interviews (*face-to-face*) -1 interview (*face-to-face*)	-1 interview (*face-to-face*)	-1 interview (*phone call*)	**6 interviews** with *moniteurs*
Total interviews:	**13**	**16**	**12**	**41 interviews**
Total time spent in interviews:	**15:05:00**	**16:15:00 hours**	**17:45:00 hours**	**49:05:00 hours**
Total audio recordings: (39 audio files and transcripts for the recorded interviews)	**11:11:10 hours**	**10:24:00 hours**	**9:42:39 hours**	**31:17:49 hours**

Table 3.5 – Summary of Interview Data

The dates of the interviews influenced the comments interviewees gave with regard to their team's development; the early interviews conducted while the interactions were still in progress concentrated on the initial stages, whereas the interviews that took place after the sessions had ended provided a more holistic view of team dynamics and processes.

Being bilingual in English and French enabled me to carry out my research in both languages with participants of twelve different nationalities. Rather than giving the native French speakers the opportunity of choosing their interview language, I purposefully decided to interview them in French to enable collection of more nuanced and authentic data (Welch and Piekkari, 2006). I found this to be an appropriate decision, despite the fact that the reporting language of my research is English. Not only did it enable the native French informants to express themselves both more subtly and fluently in their own language, it also took the pressure off them of making a language choice, thereby saving them any possible embarrassment or shame (Welch and Piekkari, 2006). Only one of the native French speakers (Allison-T) requested using English in her interview and negotiated the option of reverting to French at any time or inserting French words within the middle of a sentence otherwise stated in English.

Table 3.6 provides an aggregate summary of the languages of the forty-one interviews and the nationalities of the interviewees.[41]

Language of the Interviews	**Nationalities of Interviews with Mother-Tongue Speakers (MTSs) of French and English**	**Nationalities of Interviews with Second-Language Speakers (SLSs) of French and English**
29 in French with: • 24 *stagiaires* (19 on teams observed; 5 on teams not observed) • 5 *moniteurs*	➢ **25 MTSs of French** ➢ 1 Belgian ➢ 24 French	➢ **4 SLSs of French** • 1 Brazilian • 2 Italians • 1 Romanian
12 in English with: • 11 *stagiaires* (8 on teams observed; 3 on teams not observed) • 1 *moniteur*	➢ **9 MTSs of English** ➢ 4 Americans ➢ 1 Australian ➢ 1 Canadian ➢ 1 Indian (2 interviews) ➢ 1 Singaporean	➢ **3 SLSs of English** • 1 French • 1 German • 1 Swede
Total: 35 *stagiaires* & 6 *moniteurs*		

Table 3.6 – 41 Interviews: 2 Languages and 12 Nationalities

To record my interviews, I had access to two Sony recorders: Sony ICD-P620 Digital Voice Editor 3 and Sony ICD-CX50 Visual and Voice Editor. Having two recorders allowed me to have a back-up device in times of need. As mentioned in a footnote in 3.4.2, and indicated in Table 3.5, during my March data collection period, two of my interviews were unrecorded: I chose not to record my meeting with the Head *Moniteur*, and one of the *stagiaires* of this cohort preferred not to be recorded during his twenty-minute phone interview; detailed notes were made instead. All other interviews were recorded.

3.4.6 Data Collection: Other Data

In addition to observation and interview data, I collected other relevant data. Table 3.7 lists the physical artefacts and documentation received from GP staff and MIP *stagiaires* during my data collection period. The table also provides the status of the

[41] See also Appendix A4 for interview facts and figures, including the interview language.

people who provided these, the team concerned, the type and form of the artefacts and documents, as well as the date on which the artefacts and/or documents were received.

People who Provided Artefacts and/or Documentation	**Status**	**Team**	**Type of Artefact/ Documentation**	**Form of Artefact/ Documentation**	**Date Received**
------	***Former Top Executive***	------	Charter of Corporate Performance and Responsibility	Hard copy (also available to public on the Internet)	9 September 2009
Moniteur-Anita and Assistant-Barbara	***Moniteur and Moniteur's Assistant***	All teams	Timetables for the March, June and October MIP sessions	Excel file	March-October 2010
Corporate Task Experts	***Task Experts***	All teams	Workshop tasks (English & French versions): • *Task 1* • *Task 2* • *Task 3* • *Task 4*	Hard copies provided in auditorium to participants	March-October 2010
Moniteur-Anita	***Moniteur***	All March teams	March cohort directory	Hard copy	31 March 2010
Ethan-K*	***Stagiaire***	Team K	Team K's rules	Word file	19 April 2010
Joshua-B*	***Stagiaire***	Team B	Team B's leadership profiles	Excel file	26 April 2010
Moniteur-Anita*	***Moniteur***	All teams	Team debriefing documents: 6 *leadership profiles*[42]; 4 stages of small group development: *forming, storming, norming, performing*[43]	Hard copies	3 May 2010

* See 3.4.4 and 3.4.5 for explanations of team and participant acronyms and Appendix A4 for interview facts and figures.

[42] *Artisan, Diplomat, Healer, Pathfinder, Visionary, Warrior* (source: internal corporate documents).

[43] Corporate documents adapted from Tuckman, 1965, with Jensen, 1977.

James-G*	***Stagiaire***	All June teams	June cohort directory	Hard copy	1 July 2010
Leah-M*	***Stagiaire***	Team M	Team M's rules	Word file	8 July 2010
Dylan-T*	***Stagiaire***	All Octo-ber teams	October cohort directory	Hard copy	27 October 2010
All participants	***All Stagiaires***	All teams	Email correspondence (interview arrangements and follow-up responses)		September 2010 – February 2011

Table 3.7 – Physical Artefacts and Corporate Documentation Received from MIP Programme Staff and *Stagiaires*

Overall, triangulation of the data enabled examination of the events under investigation from more than one source. Moreover, during the collection phase, I simultaneously prepared careful and regular write-ups of observation notes and interview summaries, noting impressions and questions that emerged (Miles and Huberman, 1994; Myers, 1999; Yin, 2009). My field notes thus included reflections about the overall MIP context and the particularities of the team workshop sessions investigated. Consequently, the multiple sources and 'various phenomena' (Miles and Huberman, 1994) that I collected, organised and stored for later access constitute a 'chain of evidence' (Yin, 2009: 116) and 'audit trail' (Guthrie, 2007; Patton, 2002) to support my research findings and contribute to the validity of my work.

3.5 Reflections on the Research Process and Ethical Considerations

In this section I reflect on the research process (3.5.1, 3.5.2) and consider ethical issues. Ethical concerns consisted of approval and consent (3.5.3)[44] as well as a climate of trust and confidentiality (3.5.4).

[44] See Appendices A1 for Information Fact Sheet and A2 for Company Consent Form; see also section 3.3.2 for more information about the company's policy with regard to my ethical forms.

3.5.1 Relationship to the Research Setting: Insider-Outsider Status

One of the criteria for carrying out ethnographic studies is to maintain an insider and outsider perspective simultaneously (Heigham and Sakui, 2009; Wolcott, 2008). I started out with an outsider position, and as the activities unfolded, I progressively adopted an insider perspective whereby I became familiar with the more permanent elements of my research setting, e.g., the *moniteurs*, the premises, the goals and organisation of the programme. This facilitated my understanding of the environment and actors, and thus enabled me to ascertain my surroundings and the events as something of an insider (Heigham and Sakui, 2009). After observing several international cohorts and being more and more immersed in the context (Heigham and Sakui, 2009), I gradually became quite knowledgeable about the programme design and organisational setting, which provided me with a more balanced insider-outsider perspective. At the same time, I was careful to pay attention to establishing inclusion as well as distance, involvement as well as detachment (Gill and Johnson, 2002), thus balancing the 'role-and-self demands' (Gold, 1958).

On Day One of my observations, I was called on stage in the auditorium to introduce myself to the entire cohort at the end of the first period before the participants separated into their individual teams to solve the management dilemmas (see overall organisation in 3.4.3). During my introduction, I explained the purpose of my research at GP, i.e. to focus on intercultural interactions in a multinational company with the aim of better preparing future business managers to work effectively in the global workplace. I chose to give my speech in French to demonstrate that as an American and as an instructor of Business English and Culture, I had also mastered the French language. I felt that speaking the two languages not only added to my credibility as a researcher, but it also reduced the distance between myself and all participants, both French and international (Welch and Piekkari, 2006).

3.5.2 Interviews: Exploring a Social World with Multiple Meanings

By interviewing seven participants of the twelve-member March team and all twelve and eight members of the June and October teams, respectively, all three of which I observed, I obtained a plurality of opinions and perspectives about the particular social world under investigation. Multiple meanings were also provided by eight MIP *stagiaires* (two in March, three in June and three in October) who participated in other multicultural teams I did not observe, as well as by six *moniteurs*. By simultaneously observing the ten project-team interactions (two in March and four each in June and October) and interviewing these thirty-five *stagiaires* and six *moniteurs*,[45] the interviewees and I attempted to make sense of their activities within the MIP programme.

More tangibly, the purpose of my interviews was to investigate the perspectives of the members of the MIP teams so as to draw a rich description (Geertz, 1973) of their shared reality. The issues explored focused on how they managed the formative stages of their project-team workshops. The interpretations of the informants, along with my own field observation notes, constitute the pieces of the puzzle (Heigham and Sakui, 2009). As seen in 3.2, my role has been to 'construct meanings' rather than to present the 'truth' (Heigham and Sakui, 2009: 106; Wolcott, 2008).

My initial set of interviews were exploratory, and became more focused as I learned more about the data collection context and as I developed my skills in qualitative research interviewing (Richards, 2009a). I became more adept at getting the interviewees to provide thick perspectives about their social environment and at digging more deeply into the understandings of their experiences of working in multicultural teams. My interview guide (see Appendix A5 for the October version) was adapted on an ongoing basis as the data gathered in the field became richer thanks to my observations and to the information obtained from each interviewee. Although my interview protocol included a series of topics to be covered and contained a list of carefully-worded questions that I read through prior to the start of

[45] See also Appendix A3 for an overview of data collection.

each interview, during the encounters I let the conversations flow naturally and rarely consulted the interview guide. This practice allowed the interview to remain spontaneous and permitted the interviewees to talk about their own experiences and feelings.

Although Kvale and Brinkmann (2009: 162) have warned against the dangers of too much 'idle chatter', small talk took place before and after the interviews. The co-production of meaning and knowledge was thus brought about as a result of the social interaction and interpersonal relationships I developed with the interviewees during the interview process.

3.5.3 Ethical Approval and Consent

Ethical clearance was obtained from the university and the following sheets were developed: an Information Fact Sheet (Appendix A1), a Company Consent Form (Appendix A2), a Participant Consent Form and a Participant Recording Consent Form.[46] All appropriate consents were given. The Head *Moniteur* recommended that I first introduce myself orally to the cohorts and then give each participant the written Fact Sheet.[47]

3.5.4 Observations and Interviews: Climate of Trust and Confidentiality

It was crucial for me to develop a positive rapport with the *stagiaires* and *moniteurs*. Firstly, I was aware of the 'observer's paradox' (Cowie, 2009; Louhiala-Salminen, 2002), i.e. the influence that an observer has on the activity under scrutiny (Gill and Johnson, 2002). Since an observer is not an invisible onlooker and obviously has an effect on the results of the interactions taking place, it was desirable for me to be somewhat involved in the events so as not to cause the participants to feel uneasy

[46] Despite preparing these latter two consent forms for ethical purposes, they were not used owing to MIP policy reasons, as we have seen in 3.3.2.

[47] See 3.3.2 for more information about the company's recommendations with regard to my ethical forms.

about my presence.[48] This led to the creation of an atmosphere of trust and cooperation (Gill and Johnson, 2002), thereby facilitating the arrangement of interviews and the depth of information acquired during the individual interviews. I therefore acknowledge the importance of rapport-building in contributing to the effectiveness of my data collection and the quality of the results obtained.[49]

In the interviews, I feel I respected the integrity of the interviewees by not asking too deep and probing questions so as not to breach the privacy of the people being interviewed (Kvale and Brinkmann, 2009). In fact, my conversational skills were quite natural so as to create mutual exchange and 'disclosure' (Holstein and Gubrium, 2003: 69) of views and perspectives and to allow my informants to unfold their narratives spontaneously (Richards, 2009a). I felt I was open, clear and structured, while at the same time remaining sensitive and gentle (Kvale and Brinkmann, 2009). These characteristics enabled the production of rich knowledge thanks to an ethically sound climate of trust. In order to obtain external validation of my interview style, I checked for any signals of unhappiness (Kvale and Brinkmann, 2009) or discomfort and formulated my questions and remarks accordingly. By using such judgement, the process appeared respectful and acceptable.

To protect the confidentiality and anonymity of the subjects, the audio recordings and their transcripts are stored in a secure place, and the names of people, places and institutions mentioned in the interview have been altered so that they are unrecognisable.

3.6 Working with Data

In this section I explain my approach to handling my data: the transcription of my interview data and validity of transcripts (3.6.1), my use of NVivo software, my method of coding, my approach to analysing my data and decisions as to how to

[48] See 3.2.3 and 3.5.1 for more information about my membership role and my insider-outsider status, respectively – during my field work period.
[49] See also 3.5.2 for more information about the nature of my interviews.

present my findings (3.6.2). Then I discuss the computer analysis of my interview data (3.6.3).

3.6.1 Interview Transcription Process and Validity of Transcripts

To gain time, I had all thirty-nine of my recorded interviews transcribed by a bilingual assistant whose mother tongue is French and who speaks fluent English.[50] After receiving the interim transcripts from this assistant, I went back over them, scrupulously listening to every word in the audio recordings and comparing them with the transcribed versions so as to correct them for accuracy and make any necessary adjustments. The interviews have thus been rigorously transcribed in both English and French[51] and are trustworthy versions of the oral interviews in terms of content. They are verbatim renditions, retaining pauses, repetitions, "uh's" and "oh's" and the like, and include a few annotations such as *laughs* and *phone ringing*.

The interviews I conducted were live social interactions that took place in face-to-face situations, with the exception of one unrecorded phone call with a *stagiaire* from the March cohort and one recorded phone call with a *moniteur* from the October cohort.[52] The audio recordings constitute the oral transformation of these live conversations while the transcripts of the recordings are a written form devoid of body language, expressiveness and other features of live oral interviews (Kvale and Brinkmann, 2009). The transcripts have been essential to enable me to recall the discussions and interactions with my interview subjects, and have been useful for making notes in the margins which supported coding and analysis; nevertheless, in no way are they a substitute for the audio recordings of the live dialogues.

I sent the transcribed interviews one by one to the interviewees, requesting them to check and validate their statements, and to add or correct anything with the benefit of hindsight. Table 3.8 indicates the follow-up email response rate from the *stagiaires* interviewed upon receipt of their transcripts.

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[50] See Table 3.5 for a summary of my interview data.
[51] See Table 3.6 for the language of the forty-one interviews.
[52] See Table 3.5; Appendix A4 for details about my interview data.

Cohort	Transcripts of Recorded Interviews Sent to *Stagiaires*	Number of *Stagiaires* who Sent Follow-up Email Replies	Response Rate
March	9 interviews: 8 recorded; 8 transcripts sent	2	25%
June	15 interviews: 15 recorded 15 transcripts sent	9	60%
October	11 interviews: 11 recorded 11 transcripts sent	4	36.36%
Overall Figures	**34 transcripts sent to *stagiaires***	**15 *stagiaires* sent follow-up replies**	**44.12%**

Table 3.8 – Follow-up Email Response Rate to Transcripts Sent to *Stagiaires.*

Out of the five *moniteurs* for whom the interviews were recorded, none replied to me about the transcripts sent. Nevertheless, we met each other at subsequent sessions and they then acknowledged receipt of my messages; however, they made no further comments concerning the contents of the interviews.

Asking each interviewee to verify the validity of their statements increased the trustworthiness of the transcripts (Kvale and Brinkmann, 2009). In the follow-up email replies I received, nothing was rejected or contested and none of the interviewees expanded on their ideas, although some of my interview subjects made casual comments about their own oral style. The process of sending the transcribed interviews was also a way to maintain relationships. Some of the interviewees expressed their encouragement regarding my research, while others volunteered to answer further questions if necessary in order to fill any gaps I may find in the comments already provided.

3.6.2 NVivo Project, Approach to Coding Data and Case-Study Analysis

As mentioned previously, my data consist of three main sources: observational data of team interactions, observational data of team debriefs, and interview data.[53] I used the computer software programme for qualitative research methods, NVivo (Bazeley, 2009), to store, organise and code these data. I coded and analysed my

[53] See sections 3.4.4, 3.4.5; Tables 3.2, 3.3, 3.4 and 3.5 for details about the observational and interview data collected.

data on an on-going basis during my field-work period (Van Maanen, 1988). My method was to read through the observational notes from the interactions and debriefs and to listen to the original audio interviews while reading the transcribed texts, making notes in the margins and developing descriptive categories for coding. I analysed and coded my data in the original language in which they were collected: English for the observational data (records of team interactions and debriefs) and English and/or French for the interview data.[54] Moreover, in reporting my findings, the process of translating relevant statements into English from the interviews conducted in French enabled me to get closer to the data by carefully examining each word and expression so as to provide an accurate rendition. By playing with the data in this way (Miles and Huberman, 1994) I became more familiar with my material.

Rather than using a specific coding frame for each team I used the same frame for all teams, even though the different teams and *stagiaires* sometimes came up with different issues – despite the fact that the three teams I observed carried out the same problem-solving tasks and were coached by the same *moniteur*.

During these initial phases of coding, I focused on coding for topic. This led to a very large number of different codes, and so as suggested by Miles and Huberman (1994), I developed a master coding sheet,[55] listing the coding clusters and sub-clusters that emerged from all data sources and prepared a summary of the NVivo clusters for each interviewee. As can be seen from the interview coding summary for Benjamin-G in Appendix A6, many of the topics that came up in the interviews are consistent with the themes identified in the team debriefing sessions (e.g. task management, language and communication, interpersonal team relations; see Table 3.9). Figure 3.1 shows an excerpt from NVivo of coded passages for General Practices: Time Management[56] from Team K's fourth task and Figure 3.2 is a screenshot that illustrates the sub-themes and frequencies from the Language coding cluster. All

[54] See Table 3.8 for the language of the interviews.
[55] This sheet has not been included in the Appendix section for lack of space but can be provided on request.
[56] See Table 3.9 for coding frame.

coding clusters[57] were revised throughout the coding process as new themes and concepts emerged.

GENERAL PRACTICES: TIME MANAGEMENT
[2.20% Coverage]

Reference 1 – 0.32% Coverage
Wyatt-K: put time to work
Olivia-K: reaching same point as last time
Wyatt-K: put time, but adjust it, ready to listen. How many time for risk analysis?

Reference 2 – 0.62% Coverage
On the board:
-Risk Analysis: 10 minutes
-Methodology to come to action plan: 40 minutes
-Action plan: 20 minutes
-TOTAL TIME: 70 minutes
Parker-K: you say 20 minutes, and you mean 40
Leo-K & others: I'm not sure

Reference 3 – 0.06% Coverage
Risk Analysis – 10 minutes

Reference 4 – 0.21% Coverage
Ethan-K: (*as timekeeper, first in French*): il reste 25 minutes; (*then in English*): 25 minutes

Reference 5 – 0.85% Coverage
Wyatt-K: good point, but timekeeper how much time?
Ethan-K: 15 minutes.
Wyatt-K: He said 15 minutes.
Ethan-K: 14

Reference 6 – 0.05% Coverage
Ethan-K: 8 minutes

Reference 7 – 0.10% Coverage
Wyatt-K: talk about timing.
Zachary-K: no time

Figure 3.1 – Excerpt of NVivo Coding – Team K-Task 4 – General Practices: Time Management

[57] My coding clusters consisted of: Interviewee Profile, GP Corporate Culture, HQ Corporate Culture, Local Corporate Cultures, MIP Context, Project-Team Workshop Context, Team Diversity, Teambuilding and Development, Teamwork: Task Management, Team Dynamics: Interpersonal Relations, Language Differences, Interview Questions and Methodology.

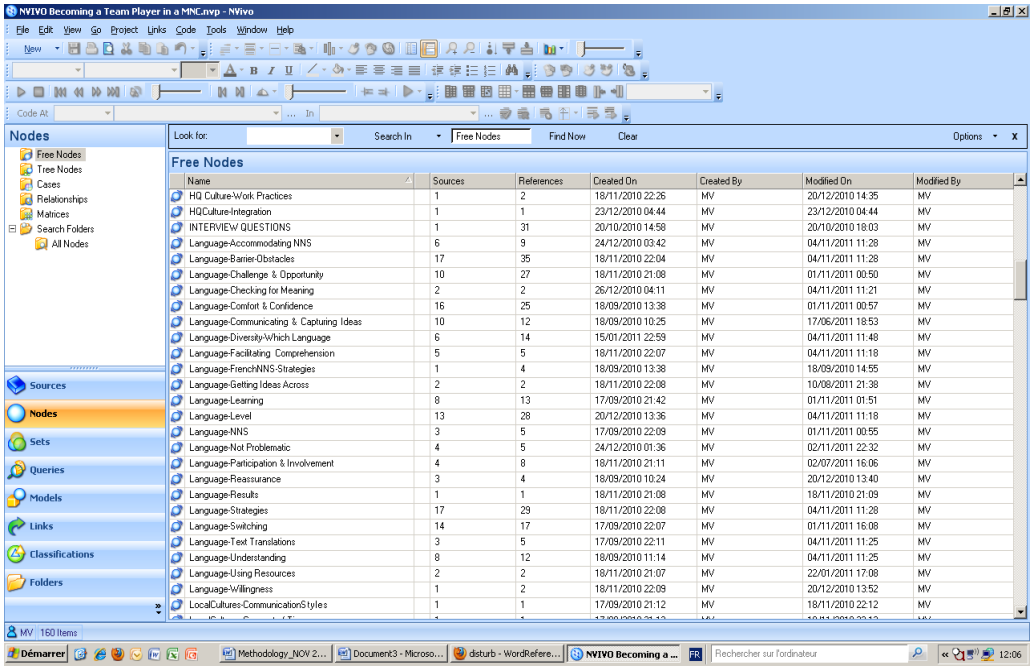

Figure 3.2 – Sample of NVivo Coding Clusters – Language Differences

Having done this and in view of the volume of data, I decided to use the *moniteur's* debriefs[58] as the basis of what to look for in the team interactions and interview comments. I therefore decided to focus on the issues that were raised by the *moniteurs* and the *stagiaires* at the end of each project-team session.[59] My presentation of the three case studies, therefore, is from the perspective of what the *moniteurs* were trying to achieve and what the participants commented on and were concerned about.[60]

The rationale underlying this decision is as follows. The debrief sessions were a joint production in which all participants, both *moniteurs* and *stagiaires,* commented on the team interactions, after stepping back and reflecting on their team dynamics and processes.[61] The topics and issues that they raised were done without my intervention and hence avoided any risk of imposition from me. If I had taken the interviews, for example, as my main starting point, any emerging themes could have

[58] See Table 3.4 for details about my debrief data.
[59] These issues are reflected in the debrief themes that are listed in Table 3.9.
[60] See also 4.3 for more information about the objectives of the project-team workshops.
[61] The debrief statements are therefore presented in the case studies as a dialogue in paragraph form, as opposed to the interview comments, which are separated by a blank line between each comment.

been construed as influenced by my personal interests since the discussions were co-constructed between each individual interviewee and myself. The same could have been said of my observation notes. So in my case study chapters I use the themes that arose in the debrief sessions as the topics to focus on. I then searched my NVivo Project for observation records and interview comments on these same issues.

Table 3.9 depicts the particular themes that were highlighted during the seven team debriefing sessions I attended as being important in some way: that they were present when they should not have been, that they were missing from the project-team interactions when they should have been present, or they were recommended as behaviour that the teams should strive towards or in which they had improved. Three main categories appeared in the debriefs and relate to the challenges and issues with which the teams were confronted during their interactions: task management; language and communication; and interpersonal team relations. Table 3.9 outlines these broad themes and the associated sub-themes identified during the debriefing sessions after the tasks that Teams K, G and T carried out. The acronyms (K1, G1, G2, G3, T1, T2, T4)[62] correspond to the specific tasks allocated to each of the three teams for which a debriefing session was held.[63] I explain the meaning of the codings below.

[62] As we have already seen in Table 3.1, K1 refers to Team K's first task, while G2 and T4 refer to Team G's and Team T's second and fourth tasks, respectively, and so on.
[63] See Table 3.4 for the debriefing sessions that took place.

	Team Tasks							*Total references*
Debrief Themes	K1	G1	G2	G3	T1	T2	T4	
TASK MANAGEMENT								
-Roles and Expertise								
Roles	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		*6*
Expertise	✓	✓	✓		✓		✓	*5*
-Rules and Practices								
Rules	✓	✓	✓		✓			*4*
Planning	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		*6*
General practices	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	*6*
Shared processes	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	*6*
LANGUAGE AND COMMUNICATION								
Participation	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	*7*
Turn-taking	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		*6*
Language differences						✓		*1*
INTERPERSONAL TEAM RELATIONS								
Respect	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓	*5*
Trust			✓			✓		*2*
People and personalities	✓				✓			*2*
Frustration	✓							*1*

Table 3.9 – Themes that Emerged in the Debrief Data

Coding Frame

Task Management refers to the 'activities' teams enacted to manage their tasks; in this research I am interested in the 'process activities' and 'social aspects' (coordination of processes and individuals who collaborate to complete the task) rather than the 'topical focus', i.e. content (issues and arguments raised in the discussions) or the 'technical aspects' (transformation of ideas) (Poole, 1983b: 326-327).

-*Roles* refer to the identification and allocation of duties (Earley and Gardner, 2005),[64] including role-systems, i.e. the structure of interlocking and complementary roles (Argyle et al., 1981: 164-165).

-*Expertise* refers to the discovery, i.e. 'mapping' (Maznevski and DiStefano, 2000)[65] and use of members' knowledge, skills, abilities, characteristics, experience (Maznevski and DiStefano, 2000; Teagarden et al., 1995) and 'unique competencies' (Teagarden et al., 2005: 323).

[64] See Figure 2.4.
[65] See Figure 2.3.

-*Rules* refer to the guidelines put into place to govern interpersonal relations and task-related interactions within the teams (Earley and Gardner, 2005; Earley and Mosakowski, 2000).

-*Planning* refers to the extent to which members clarified what needed to be done (Earley and Mosakowski, 2000) prior to performing their tasks, i.e. 'starting slowly' by taking the time to implement the 'team basics' before rushing into the tasks (Canney Davison, 1994, 1996, with Ward, 1999).[66]

-*General Practices* refer to the procedures developed and used to govern interactions and perform tasks (Earley and Mosakowski, 2000).

-*Shared Processes* refer to the development of shared understandings, expectations (Earley and Mosakowski, 2000) and goals, and a 'unified sense of purpose and direction' (Earley and Gardner, 2005) thanks to a group-oriented identity (DeSanctis and Jiang, 2005), to build mutual solutions through 'integrating' (Maznevski and DiStefano, 2000) and cohesion (Earley and Mosakowski, 2000).

Language refers to the fact that the three teams observed were designated as English-speaking and were expected to use English as the common working language. This meant that teams were composed of members with differing English levels: mother tongue speakers (MTSs), and second-language speakers (SLSs) who were either fluent speakers (FSs) or less-fluent speakers (LFSs). Fluent speakers refer to SLSs who had had previous international experience (Canney Davison and Ward, 1999). *Language* also refers to the fact that, as the majority of the members of each team spoke French, French was sometimes used in asides. Yet, teams had to be careful not to exclude the non-French speakers.[67]

Communication refers to the patterns of interaction among team members (DeSanctis and Jiang, 2005).

[66] See Figures 2.1 and 2.2.

[67] The mother tongue speakers (MTSs) in the three teams observed were American (3), Canadian (1), Australian (1) and Indian (1); the fluent speakers (FSs) were Dutch (1), French (1) and Swedish (1); and the less-fluent speakers (LFSs) were Brazilian (1), French (20), Italian (2) and Romanian (1). Tables 5.1, 6.1 and 7.1, and section 9.4 indicate the English fluency of the members in each team; these tables and section also indicate whether team members were 'French' or 'Non-French' speaking.

-*Participation* refers to the ability to participate and to the amount of contributions (Canney Davison and Ward, 1999; DeSanctis and Jiang, 2005) and 'input' (Maznevski and DiStefano, 2000).

-*Turn-taking* refers to the patterns of speaking, listening, interruption and simultaneous talk (Argyle et al., 1981; Canney Davison and Ward, 1999: 83).

-*Language differences* refer to the challenges of using English as a common working language and to the practices and strategies teams used to manage the different levels of English fluency. In this research, I am interested in strategies used (and reviewed in Chapter 2) to aid the less-fluent English speakers (LFSs), including decisions as to 'the choice of language' (Canney Davison and Ward, 1999), i.e. the use of asides in French as one of the strategies to manage these differences in fluency.

Interpersonal Team Relations refer to the 'approaches to relationships' (Maznevski and DiStefano, 2000) and 'relational aspects' among people within the teams (Teagarden et al., 2005: 311-313).

-*Respect* refers to concern for others (Wenger, 1998) and consideration for individual differences so as to 'take into account the interests and stakes of all group members' (Janssens and Brett, 1997).

-*Trust* refers to the level of confidence team members had in each other to meet their obligations (DeSanctis and Jiang, 2005; Earley and Gardner, 2005). This involved 'mutual understanding' and establishing a 'positive approach to bridging' (Maznevski and DiStefano, 2000).

-*People and Personalities* refer to the behaviour of the different individuals (Maznevski and DiStefano, 2000), and to what extent they were 'team players' (Teagarden et al., 2005: 328).

-*Frustration* refers to the feeling of dissatisfaction and lack of enjoyment, fulfilment (Canney Davison and Ward, 1999) or happiness (Earley and Mosakowski, 2000).

3.6.3 Discussion of Computer Analysis of Data

One drawback of using NVivo has been the time required to learn to use the software's functions and applications. Secondly, although NVivo has been helpful in

storing, organising and managing my data, the process of coding data sometimes overly emphasised the mechanical steps of coding rather than capturing the essence of the data and their analysis (Gilbert, 2002). In fact, the literature on computer analysis (Gibbs, 2002; Gilbert, 2002; Guthrie, 2007: 104-107; Kelle 1995; Kvale and Brinkmann, 2009) points out the danger for the researcher of falling into the trap of becoming distant from the original data by focusing too much on coding and also of preferring coding to analysis and interpretation of the data. In short, the software cannot be a substitute for the constant reading and re-reading of my original observational notes and listening and re-listening to the live interviews.

On the other hand, having coded the data into topics and issues, with the help of NVivo I have been able to retrieve specific statements from the interviews and from my observational notes of the team interactions to enrich the remarks expressed during the team debriefing sessions. In the next section, I explain how these three types of data are presented in the case study narratives.

3.7 Presentation of Data in the Case Studies

At this point, I needed to make some more principled decisions as to how to further analyse my data and present my findings. I made a key decision. Basically, I decided to present each team as a separate case and to report it chronologically. This was because there were interesting differences across the teams which might not have come across clearly if the data were presented by theme. Moreover, a chronological approach would allow the developmental element to emerge more clearly. In sum, when I decided to focus on the challenges the teams were facing, how they handled them and their developments over time, I turned to a case by case approach, and used the team debriefs as the key lead-in to the main challenges.

The data are presented in four case-study chapters. Chapter 4 serves as an introductory chapter to the case study involving the three teams investigated; Chapters 5, 6 and 7 portray the individual case studies for Teams K, G and T. As mentioned in the previous two sections, the data included in the case-study chapters

stem from insights and perspectives from three main sources: observational records of the project-team interactions; remarks stated during the debriefing sessions conducted with the teams' *moniteur*; and comments made during the interviews.

Each of the three individual case studies (Chapters 5, 6 and 7) present a brief narrative of how each task unfolded. These narratives, taken from my observation notes, are supplemented by debrief remarks and interview comments. In my original observation notes of the team interactions, I numbered the lines in my notes for Team K's interactions[68] but decided to indicate the time frame in the margins of my notes of the interactions for Teams G and T rather than to continue numbering the lines. Primarily, the narrative accounts that appear in the three case study chapters are paraphrased versions of my observational notes; when verbatim excerpts from the team interactions are used, these appear in boxes or quotes. Since the team interactions and debriefing sessions both took place in English as a common language, no translations are provided in the case study chapters for the observation narratives or debrief remarks; however, translations are given for the French words which were occasionally used in both. For excerpts taken from the interviews carried out in French, in the write-up of data findings, I have chosen to provide the original French quotes in footnotes at the bottom of the page for the reader to be able to consult the original interview text more easily.[69] Three dots in quotes from the interactions, debriefs or interviews represent omitted text.

As we have seen in 3.4.5, each person has been given an acronym ID. After each quote, a suffix to the alias indicating the type of quote, that of 'debrief' or 'interview', also accompanies the acronym IDs;[70] and the suffix 'observation comments' appears only for Moniteur-Anita, the Head *Moniteur*, and the *moniteur* for the three teams I observed, who on several occasions leaned over to make comments while we were both observing the project-team workshops.

[68] See Appendix A7 for my observation notes of Team K's first task.
[69] See Table 3.6 for the language of the interviews.
[70] For example: Audrey-K-debrief; Ryan-G-interview; Moniteur-Thomas-interview.

3.8 Summary

In this chapter, I have presented my paradigmatic approach, as well as the processes I have used to collect and analyse my data. As we have seen, my worldview draws from both the constructivist and post-positivist stances in order to make sense of the difverse perceptions of the events under investigation. Additionally, the descriptive ethnographic-like case-study research design I adopted has enabled me to gather in-depth understandings of the project-team workshops within a management integration programme (MIP) at a French multinational company, GP. Investigating the three project teams forming the multiple units of the single case-study has allowed me to identify consistent patterns and thus to draw a more thorough theoretical picture. In this chapter, I have described my multiple forms of qualitative data sources, primarily observations and interviews, and to some extent physical artefacts and documentation, and have examined their strengths and weaknesses. I have explained my data collection planning and methods, presented the data collected and have discussed reflections on the research process and ethical considerations. Finally, I have explained my approach to working with my data, including the transcription of my interviews, my use of NVivo and my method for coding, analysing and presenting the data.

In the next four chapters, I report my findings from the three cohorts in relation to my overarching research question: *How do newly-formed, short-term multicultural project teams manage their interactions in the formative stages?*

Chapter 4 - Case Study of Three Project Teams: An Introduction

4.1 Introduction and Chapter Outline

Having reviewed the literature in Chapter 2 and explained the methodology for my research in Chapter 3, I devote the next four chapters to my data analysis. As specified in 3.6.2 and 3.7, in the three case studies of the project-team interactions that follow, I depict the dynamics and processes of the teams investigated with the help of three types of data: the debrief remarks made during the team debriefing sessions (period 4 of the workshops; see 3.4.3) form my core data and are supplemented by my own observational notes of the project-team interactions (period 2 of the workshops; see 3.4.3) and the comments made during my interviews.

As we have previously seen, the overarching research question I address is: *How do newly-formed, short-term multicultural project teams manage their interactions in the formative stages?* In order to answer this question, I present individual case studies of the three teams I observed: Team K (Chapter 5), Team G (Chapter 6) and Team T (Chapter 7).

Prior to examining the teams individually, this chapter first introduces the *moniteurs* I interviewed[71] (4.2). I then explore participants' perceptions as to the nature and goals of the project-team workshops (4.3). The final section of this chapter explains the team arrangements (4.4).

4.2 Project-Team Workshops: The *Moniteurs* and their Backgrounds

As the *moniteurs* represent key players in the project-team workshops (see 3.3.2), in addition to my meeting with the Head *Moniteur*, Moniteur-Anita, in May 2010 after

[71] See section 3.4.5 and Appendix A4 for more information about the *moniteurs* interviewed.

investigating the first cohort, I was able to organise interviews with five other *moniteurs* throughout my data collection period.[72] Table 4.1 provides a list of the *moniteurs* I interviewed and indicates their alias, nationality, professional sector, gender, age, number of years of pre-GP professional experience, number of years of GP corporate tenure and interview language.[73]

MONITEURS Alias	**Nationality**	**Professional Sector**[74]	**Gender**	**Age**	**Pre-GP Experience**	**Corporate Tenure**	**Interview Language**
Moniteur-Anita (Head *Moniteur*)[75]	Belgium	Personnel	F	42	3 years	15 years	French
Moniteur-Audrey-K[76]	India	Personnel	F	35	10 years	4 years	English
Moniteur-Hunter	France	Personnel	M	62	30 years	12 years	French
Moniteur-Julia	France	Personnel	F	31	-------	7 years	French
Moniteur-Kayla	Romania	Personnel	F	41	8 years	5 years	French
Moniteur-Thomas	France	Personnel	M	46	2 years	21 years	French

Table 4.1 – *Moniteurs* Interviewed

4.3 Nature and Objectives of the Problem-Solving Tasks

In order to become familiar with my data collection setting, and therefore with the problem-solving tasks, I asked the *moniteurs* and *stagiaires* interviewed to explain their interpretations of the nature and goals of the project-team tasks. I report their comments here.

The participants emphasised that the teams were given a problem to solve for which the ultimate goal was to help them work better in groups rather than to find the ideal solution:

[72] See Table 3.5; Appendices A3 and A4.
[73] Tables 5.1, 6.1 and 7.1 provide the acronym IDs and cultural components for the members of Teams K, G and T, while Appendix A4 provides interview facts and figures for all interviewees – both *stagiaires* and *moniteurs*. See also Table 3.5.
[74] See footnote in Table 5.1.
[75] Moniteur-Anita was the *moniteur* for the three teams I observed: Teams K, G and T.
[76] Audrey-K was interviewed twice: once in March as a *stagiaire* in Team K, and once in October as a *moniteur*. See also Table 5.1 and section 5.1.1.

We give them…a problem…to solve, to…get them working rather than to have…the solution. …Certainly it's important to have the solution but the method is much more important (Moniteur-Kayla-interview).[77]

The objective was not so much…to give pertinent solutions…as to have to work in groups (Elizabeth-G-interview).[78]

No matter what the result, whether we proposed white, black or green…the most important thing was to propose something, and that the group agreed on the solution, even if it wasn't good. …The objective is to see how we're going to work together (Ethan-K-interview).[79]

The [tasks] are more about how you manage the team than...about…the result of your conclusion (Jordan-T-interview).[80]

The tasks were real problems that GP had already solved, and for which the company did not expect to obtain a solution. The apparent advantage was that the problems were authentic and realistic. Moreover, since a number of solutions existed, the teams were not required to find any particular results:

It's not a genuine issue with which…the company is dealing at the time. They're 100%…real problems but…from the past. …The speakers say…: "at the time, with the facts we had, with the state of mind we had, with everything we could do, we took this decision…but certainly…today, we could do otherwise because we have other types of information…the market has evolved…the context has changed". …We're well aware there isn't just one solution, several possible solutions exist, that are actually more or less acceptable (Moniteur-

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[77] *Moniteur-Kayla-interview: On leur donne…un problème…à solutionner, plutôt pour…les lancer que pour avoir…la solution. …Certainement c'est important d'avoir la solution mais la démarche est beaucoup plus importante.*

[78] *Elizabeth-G-interview: L'objectif c'était pas tant…de donner des solutions pertinentes...que d'avoir à travailler en groupe.*

[79] *Ethan-K-interview: Peu importe le résultat, qu'on propose blanc, noir ou vert… le tout c'est de proposer quelque chose, et que le groupe se mette d'accord autour d'une solution, même si elle est pas bonne. …L'objectif c'est de voir comment on va travailler ensemble.*

[80] Jordan-T-interview: Original in English.

Kayla-interview).[81]

Having us confront a situation where a solution exists…a concrete issue…where GP has already provided a solution. …There's no good or bad solution, it's mainly to…think…about a…more or less realistic and…imaginable…topic (Carter-T-interview).[82]

The tasks involved a variety of teamwork challenges:

Getting organised…defining rules…taking the lead…defining roles (Moniteur-Thomas-interview).[83]

Running a group meeting, group dynamics…reaching a solution…getting everyone to talk…group mechanics (Jacob-K-interview).[84]

It was more about how we communicate (Elizabeth-G-interview).[85]

What we expect is to see…how everyone…contributes…his or her fair share…makes an input…to the teamwork…with what resources; …is there anyone totally withdrawn (Moniteur-Julia-interview).[86]

People thus pointed out the challenges with which the problem-solving project

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[81] *Moniteur-Kayla-interview: C'est pas un problème réel avec laquelle…l'entreprise confronte au moment donné. …Ce sont des sujets réels...à 100% mais…qui sont historiques… Les interlocuteurs disent…: "au moment donné, avec les données qu'on a eues, avec l'état d'esprit qu'on a eu, avec tout ce qu'on pouvait faire, on a pris cette solution...mais certainement…aujourd'hui, on pourrait faire autrement parce qu'on a d'autres types d'informations…le marché a évolué…le contexte a changé". …On sait bien qu'il n'existe pas une solution, il existe des solutions possibles, qui sont finalement…plus ou moins acceptables..*

[82] *Carter-T-interview: Nous mettre face à une situation où une solution existe…un cas concret…où [GP] a apporté une solution. …Il y a pas de bonne ou de mauvaise solution, c'était surtout de…réfléchir...sur une question… plus ou moins…réaliste et… imaginable.*

[83] *Moniteur-Thomas-interview: …s'organiser…définir des règles…prendre le lead…définir des rôles.*

[84] *Jacob-K-interview: …l'animation de réunion de groupe, la dynamique de groupe…de déboucher sur une solution…faire parler tout le monde…la mécanique de groupe.*

[85] *Elizabeth-G-interview: …c'était plus comment on communique.*

[86] *Moniteur-Julia-interview: Ce qu'on attend c'est de voir…comment chacun…apporte sa pierre à l'édifice, contribue…au travail du groupe…avec quel ressort; …est-ce qu'il y a des gens qui sont totalement effacés.*

teams were confronted, as opposed to the other two types of teams within the integration programme (see 3.3.2). The challenges cited included producing results within tight deadlines, dealing with unfamiliar topics, working in fairly large groups and using English as a *lingua franca* with people from a diversity of backgrounds who do not know each other:

> *It's the most interesting…group because the challenges are rather numerous* (Joseph-G-interview).[87]
>
> *You're gonna be placed in a team…and…you need…to come to the conclusion as quickly as possible* (Jordan-T-interview).[88]
>
> *The timing is very, very short; …there's…a first phase…where we need to agree on what we want to do; …so that creates tensions. We have to go fast to…check that we have all understood; …and it's up to everyone…to mark their territory* (Ethan-K-interview).[89]
>
> *It's sometimes a little unsettling because it deals with topics about which they have little knowledge, they're working with people they don't know very well at the beginning…people who don't all necessarily speak the same language…so that makes the way of working…a little more complex* (Moniteur-Julia-interview).[90]
>
> *For a team of people who don't know each other, who have different ways of operating, with different origins…cultures, work habits, plus the question of language, because…not everyone had the same…fluency…in English. …The*

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[87] *Joseph-G-interview: C'est le groupe…plus intéressant parce que les défis sont plutôt nombreux.*

[88] Jordan-T-interview: Original in English.

[89] *Ethan-K-interview: Le temps est très très court; …il y a…une première phase…où il faut se mettre d'accord sur ce qu'on veut faire; …donc ça crée des tensions. Il faut aller vite pour…vérifier qu'on a tous compris; …et c'est à chacun…de marquer son territoire.*

[90] *Moniteur-Julia-interview: C'est…parfois un petit peu déstabilisants parce que c'est des sujets sur lesquels ils ont peu de connaissances, ils travaillent avec des gens au début qu'ils ne connaissent pas bien…des gens qui ne parlent pas nécessairement tous la même langue...donc ça complexifie un peu…la manière de travailler.*

size…of the group, in relation to what's expected, in the allotted time…is very large…; these workshops…in very short time frames with…a team that's progressing…in their capacity to work together effectively…above ten [people per group] things become difficult (Olivia-K-interview).[91]

One of the main objectives of the four problem-solving tasks was to enable the project teams to learn to develop as a team:

There's a steady group that forms…there are four tasks, which enables us…to explain…the four…stages of team dynamics…forming, storming, norming, performing[92] *(laughs)…and obviously that things don't always work out…like the perfect model, but…that when we have a little experience, we can develop…no matter what the real situation is. That's one of the objectives, to monitor the team dynamics…and that's like traditional training* (Moniteur-Kayla-interview).[93]

The objective afterwards is…to discuss this with the participants…for them to take home a certain number of things in terms of team dynamics…multicultural management…and to leave the session with several guidelines that will be able to help them…in their future assignments, in their future roles as managers (Moniteur-Julia-interview).[94]

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[91] *Olivia-K-interview: Pour une équipe de gens qui ne se connaissent pas, qui ont des modes de fonctionnement, des origines…des cultures, des habitudes de travail…différents, plus la question de la langue, puisque...tout le monde n'avait pas la même…aisance…en anglais... La taille…du groupe, par rapport à ce qu'on en attend, dans le temps qui lui est donné…est très importante; ...ces workshops…dans des temps très courts avec…une équipe qui progresse…dans la capacité à travailler ensemble de façon efficace…à partir de dix ça devient quand même délicat.*

[92] Tuckman, 1965, with Jensen, 1977.

[93] *Moniteur-Kayla-interview: Il y a un groupe constant qui se forme…il y a quatre études de cas, ce qui nous permet...d'expliquer…les quatre…étapes de la dynamique d'une équipe…forming, storming, norming, performing (rires)…et évidemment que ça ne se passe pas toujours…comme un idéal, mais…quand on a un peu d'expérience, on peut construire…peu importe qu'elle a été la réalité. Ca c'est un des objectifs…de suivre la dynamique d'équipe…et c'est vraiment comme dans une formation classique.*

[94] *Moniteur-Julia-interview: Le but étant après…d'échanger là-dessus avec les participants…pour que eux en retiennent un certain nombre de choses en termes de dynamique d'équipe…management multiculturel…qu'ils quittent la session avec quelques lignes guides qui pourront les aider…dans leur mission future, dans le rôle de manager à venir.*

When the *moniteurs* described the nature of the problem-solving tasks, another key aspect was cultural diversity:

> *The complexity of the group…has been designed because…in all the groups you will have people from different nationalities, different backgrounds…functions…departments. ...And when we are making the groups also the age…the gender is kept in mind...the language…so…every group you would see is a mixture…that's…purposely done* (Moniteur-Audrey-K-interview).[95]

For Moniteur-Thomas, the objective was to create a complete cultural mix:

> *Bringing people together in a room; …so much cultural, geographic, professional…diversity; …it's really a…complete mix* (Moniteur-Thomas-interview).[96]

Moniteur-Julia described this cultural mix as something positive. To refer to the cultural make-up of the teams and the different styles of working, she used the term 'alchemy':[97]

> *Totally different ways of working that resulted from both…national…and…professional…cultures; …generally they manage to turn it into a strength…a good alchemy* (Moniteur-Julia-interview).[98]

She depicted the culturally diverse profiles in the problem-solving project teams as being composed of a variety of factors including nationality, profession, personality, level of experience and age. For her, it was the mix of elements that created the richness of the team interactions:

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[95] Audrey-K-interview: Original in English.

[96] *Moniteur-Thomas-interview: Faire réunir dans une salle...autant de diversité…culturelle, géographique, métier; …c'est vraiment…un mixage complet.*

[97] The Concise Oxford English Dictionary (2008) defines 'alchemy' as 'a seemingly magical process of transformation, creation, or combination'.

[98] *Moniteur-Julia-interview: Des manières de travailler totalement différentes qui résultaient à la fois…des cultures…pays d'origine…et…des métiers; …généralement ils arrivent à en faire une force…une bonne alchimie.*

There are all those extremely diverse nationalities…professions…people with their distinctive nature and personalities, …very diverse…levels of experience; …young people with little experience, people getting on in years; …actually it's the variety of profiles that allows things to happen and for things to take off…and for us to manage to…make sure it's enriching for everyone. …It's about using everyone's richness…so each person can get the most out of it and learn as much as possible (Moniteur-Julia-interview).[99]

Moniteur-Hunter summed up the main goal of the MIP programme as being able to function in teams that are multicultural (in terms of profession, nationality, experience, age) and multilingual (French, English) through applied situations, all the while learning about company values and processes, and enjoying the session at the same time:

The real goal is to…get used to…GP culture in terms of values; to…get used to living in an intercultural environment…in a team with multi-professions, multi-cultures, multi-experiences; …there are young people, and those less young…all in French or English; …at the end of the programme they have acquired a better knowledge of the GP group, …in workshops, exercises, …multinational teamwork…and at the same time they have learned a lot about certain essential processes…not to mention the 'fun' moments (Moniteur-Hunter-interview).[100]

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[99] *Moniteur-Julia-interview : Il y a toutes les nationalités…métiers…caractères et des personnalités extrêmement variés, …des niveaux d'expériences…très variés; …des jeunes qui ont peu d'expérience, des personnes qui ont beaucoup plus de bouteille; …justement, c'est la variété des profils qui fait que il y a quelque chose qui, il y a une mayonnaise qui prend...et qu'on arrive à…faire en sorte que ce soit enrichissant pour tout le monde. …C'est exploiter la richesse de chacun…pour que chacun puisse tirer du groupe le meilleur et le plus d'enseignement possible.*

[100] *Moniteur-Hunter-interview: La véritable mission c'est…s'habituer à…la culture [GP] au sens des valeurs; …s'habituer à vivre dans un milieu interculturel...dans une équipe multi-métiers, multicultures, multi-expériences; …il y a des jeunes…des moins jeunes…le tout, en français ou en anglais. Au terme de cette session-là, ils ont acquis une meilleure connaissance du groupe [GP], une mise en pratique, en exercice…du travail en équipe multinationale…et en même temps ils ont beaucoup appris sur certains processus essentiels…je passe sur les moments 'fun'.*

Owing to the significance of corporate culture as one of the goals of the MIP sessions (see 3.3.2), and to the fact that in my interviews corporate culture seemed to be the cultural variable which had the most consistency as to its impact on the team tasks (see 9.3.5), I would like to end this subsection with Moniteur-Hunter's perspective about the effect of corporate culture on the multicultural team interactions that I investigated. For him, shared corporate culture reduced the impact of the different cultures and personalities and enabled the teams to work more effectively together. He felt all teams went through the four phases of forming, storming, norming and performing;[101] yet, in his opinion, thanks to the GP culture, the storming phase arrived later and the norming phase was longer:

> *In the four short problem-solving tasks…they went from…forming, storming, norming…as was the case…in the preceding [integration] session with slight differences [from team to team]. …They were all very calm, they all carefully listened to each other…so the storming…part arrived a little later; …the norming was…a little longer* (Moniteur-Hunter-interview).
>
> *Do you think…that was due to cultures…or personalities?* (Researcher-interview).
>
> *I can't really answer. …Why? …Because…there's a third element, which is they all have a certain experience within the GP group…and the GP group itself has a norming effect; …GP values…listening, respect for people. …So…it's personality…culture, and then…the third element…corporate values. That equalises somewhat…that makes things uniform…that reduces the impact of cultures…and…people…personal behavior* (Moniteur-Hunter-interview).[102]

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[101] Tuckman, 1965, with Jensen, 1977.

[102] *Moniteur-Hunter-interview: Dans ces quatre petits [exercices]…ils sont passés par…forming, storming, norming...comme c'était le cas…lors de la session précédente avec des petites différences. …Is étaient tous très calmes, ils se sont tous bien écoutés…donc la partie…storming, elle est arrivée un petit peu plus tard. …Le norming il a été…un petit peu plus long.*
Researcher-interview: C'est les cultures, vous pensez, ou…les personnalités qui font…ça ?
Moniteur-Hunter-interview: Je sais pas bien répondre. …Pourquoi ? …Parce que…il y a un troisième élément, c'est qu'ils ont tous une certaine expérience du groupe [GP]. …Et le groupe [GP] lui-même, il a un effet norming; …la valeur [GP]…l'écoute, le respect des personnes. …Donc…c'est de la personnalité…la culture, et puis…le troisième élément…des valeurs de l'entreprise. ...C'est assez nivelant…ça homogénéise; …ça diminue l'impact des cultures...et…des personnes…du comportement personnel.

4.4 Team Arrangements

Now that the nature and goals of the problem-solving tasks have been described, I explain the team arrangements. At the beginning of each four-week session, MIP *stagiaires* were placed in a project team, and were informed of their team's common language, either English or French, and their *moniteur*'s name. The three teams I investigated were English-speaking and were all three coached by the same *moniteur*, Moniteur-Anita, who was also the Head *Moniteur*.

Prior to the first project-team interaction for each cohort, the *moniteurs* organised a treasure hunt teambuilding game for members to get to know their fellow teammates. When the project teams began solving their first task, they had therefore already met informally. The teams later participated in a second teambuilding activity, an art contest, whereby they were expected to create a work of art and compete against the other project teams in the programme. S*tagiaires* were also encouraged to attend evening and weekend social events.

As we saw in 4.3, of the three MIP teams, the project teams were the most complex. Basically, in addition to the make-up of the teams, the groups were challenged in several ways in terms of task requirements. For example, at the start of each project-team workshop, the teams reported to the auditorium where a company expert introduced the problem to solve and gave them a precise task (see 3.4.3). Handouts of the task assignment were provided in two versions, English and French (see Table 3.7). The teams were observed by a *moniteur* and were expected to generate results; at the end of the task interaction, several teams were chosen at random to present their solutions to the company expert and the entire cohort. All teams were chosen to present at least once, and some were asked to present a second time; however, they only learned of this when called upon in the auditorium (Period 3 of the workshop; see 3.4.3). Added to this pressure of the activity were the team size and the one-and-a-half hour time limit, in addition to the team's multicultural and multilingual composition.[103] Moreover, some of the French *stagiaires* were still on their probationary period, while the international participants and people from

[103] See 5.1.1; 6.1.1; 7.1.1 for the composition of each team.

subsidiaries within France were trying to familiarise themselves with the headquarter culture. They all wanted to make a good impression on their *moniteur* and fellow teammates, all of whom would eventually be giving their own opinions regarding everyone's leadership profiles during a special meeting, which replaced one of the debrief sessions for each cohort.[104]

As the Management Integration Programme was a developmental programme in which the *moniteurs* and *stagiaires* discussed the challenges the teams experienced and whether they had improved on those challenges, my lead data consisted of the issues and challenges involved with working together in teams and finding strategies for doing so effectively. These challenges were shown in my coding scheme in Table 3.9 and consist of three broad themes that were raised in the team debriefs after each task: task management; language and communication; and interpersonal team relations. In fact, the *moniteurs* were looking for particular behaviour and skills as described in section 4.3 on the challenges and goals of the project-team workshops. Moreover, as the *moniteurs* were aiming to foster a learning aspect, i.e. a '*group that* forms' and '*can develop*' (4.3), the first goal was to learn to develop as a team. The three case study chapters therefore look at the development side and also show differences between teams.

In the three case-study chapters that follow (Chapters 5, 6 and 7), I depict how each individual team coped with these challenges, as I address my main research question and sub-questions:

How do newly-formed, short-term multicultural project teams manage their interactions in the formative stages?

1. *What challenges do newly-formed, short-term multicultural project teams experience in their interactions in the formative stages?*
2. *How do teams manage these challenges and to what extent do they learn to do so successfully?*
3. *What factors affect the management processes of different teams?*
4. *What impact do the challenges and strategies have on team processes and dynamics?*

[104] See 3.4.4, Table 3.4; I was not invited to attend these special meetings.

Chapter 5 - Case Study for Team K

5.1 Introduction and Chapter Outline

This chapter presents a longitudinal description of my first case: Team K. I begin by presenting background information on the team members (5.1.1) and then give an overall synopsis of the team's four project-team sessions (5.1.2). After this I take each session in turn, and describe in detail the challenges participants experienced, their ways of handling them, and whether the means chosen were successful or not.

5.1.1 Team K: Members and their Backgrounds

Table 5.1[105] provides the aliases for the members[106] of Team K as well as their nationalities, professional sectors, genders, ages, the number of years of pre-GP professional experience, the amount of time they had worked at GP at the beginning of their first task, and their language fluency in English and French.[107]

[105] See also Appendix A8 and Chapter 9 for more details about the demographic and cultural variables for the members of each team.
[106] There were thirteen members in Tasks 1 and 2; twelve members in Tasks 3 and 4.
[107] The table indicates participants' fluency in both English and French: (1) English fluency, i.e. whether the participants were mother-tongue speakers (MTSs) or second-language (SLSs) who were either fluent speakers (FSs) or less-fluent speakers (LFSs) and (2) whether the participants were French speakers or Non-French speakers. See Language coding frame descriptors in 3.6.2 for a description of these two components. See also 9.4 for an analysis of the impact of these components on each team's processes; see also Figures 9.10 and 9.11, and Appendix A8.8 for more details.

TEAM K Alias	Nationality	Professional Sector[108]	Gender	Age	Pre-GP Experience	Corporate Tenure	Language Fluency
Audrey-K[109]	India	Personnel	F	35	10 years	4 years	MTS Non-French
Emma-K	USA	Personnel	F	48	6 years	20 years	MTS Non-French
Ethan-K	France	Logistics	M	43	17.5 years	1.5 years	LFS French
Jacob-K	France	R&D	M	32	10 years	6 months	LFS French
[James-K][110]	[France]	[Industry]	[M]	[49]	[25 years]	[3 months]	[LFS] [French]
Leo-K*	France	Industry	M	31	6 years	10 months	LFS French
Lucas-K*	France	R&D	M	27	----	1.5 years	LFS French
Mark-K*	France	Industry	M	27	----	3 years	LFS French
Michael-K	France	Finance	M	25	----	6 months	LFS French
Olivia-K	France	Personnel	F	52	25 years	0 (new)	FS French
Parker-K*	Romania	Marketing-Sales	M	33	12 years	2 years	LFS French
Wyatt-K	France	Agronomy	M	25	----	1.5 years	LFS French
Zachary-K*	Netherlands	Personnel	M	46	20 years	4 years	FS Non-French

Table 5.1 – Team K's Components of Cultural Diversity

5.1.2 Overall Synopsis of Team K's Four Project-Team Sessions

In the first task Team K experienced frustrating interpersonal team relations and difficulties in managing team processes, although people appeared surprised at how well Emma-K presented the team's solution in the auditorium. Additionally in Task 1, everyone was talking over each other, which caused a lot of problems, as is explained below. The second task was even more troublesome, so between the second and third tasks, the team decided to establish rules to help manage their interactions. In the third task, the rules allowed them to improve their team dynamics and processes.

[108] I created broad categories to classify professional sectors for all teams. Finance, for instance, includes people who defined their current positions as Financial Control Manager, Financial Data Manager, Financial Director, Internal Auditor, Tax Analyst, Treasurer, etc. See Appendix A8.2 for the aggregate list of professional categories of the three teams investigated.

[109] See also footnote in Table 4.1.

[110] James-K left the team after two tasks.

[*] Not interviewed.

In the fourth task, they appeared to work together fairly smoothly but quite a few issues had still not been resolved.

5.2 Team K: Task 1

For their first task, Team K had one hour and fifty minutes to make a decision and at the end, it was one of three called upon to give their presentation to the entire cohort. There was a debriefing session afterwards that lasted for thirty minutes and I was able to interview Emma-K two days after the first task; at the end of the four-week period I interviewed six other *stagiaires*. In this section I present the ways in which the team handled their challenges in the three main areas that emerged across all debriefs: task management (5.2.1), language and communication (5.2.2) and interpersonal team relations (5.2.3).[111]

5.2.1 Task Management

In this subsection, I report on how Team K managed roles, expertise, rules and practices.[112] The team began by discussing roles (lines 1-5).[113] Emma-K ended up being the leader and later explained she accepted the leadership role since she felt everyone else was reluctant to step in and take charge of the initial task:

> *No one wants to be the leader the first time around…so I accepted to lead the group…because everybody wants to kinda step back* (Emma-K-interview).[114]

This reluctance in Task 1 is quite surprising compared with what happened in Task 2, in which people were apparently fighting '*to take the lead*', as we will see in 5.3.1.

[111] As mentioned in 3.6.2, these are the three broad themes that emerged in Table 3.9.
[112] As indicated in Table 3.9, these are the sub-themes related to 'Task Management' that emerged in the team debriefs.
[113] In my observation notes for Team K, I numbered the lines (see 3.7; Appendix A7), whereas in my observation notes for Teams G and T, rather than continuing with the numbering, I labelled the lines chronologically with the timing indicated in the left-hand margins.
[114] Emma-K-interview: Original in English.

But, in the team debrief[115] after the first task, Moniteur-Anita complimented the team for demonstrating '*three good-intended decisions*', including allocating the following roles: '*Zachary-K to write objectives on the board...Wyatt-K to be the timekeeper...Emma-K to be the leader*'. Nevertheless, merely allocating roles was apparently insufficient, since Moniteur-Anita also specified in the debrief that '*missed roles*' was one of Team K's key weaknesses in their first task: '*There was no division of roles...Emma-K was bombarded as the team leader, but nobody took the next step to set up role responsibilities*.' She then advised them '*to identify important roles*' and added that while '*some people are leaders...others are more back office*'.

Concerning expertise, although they had identified who had experience in the subject (lines 1-5),[116] Moniteur-Anita pointed out they should have spent more time initially finding out about each other's background in order to make better use of it in handling the task. She wrote me a note about this during the first thirty minutes of the team's interaction: '*Leo-K has had supply-chain experience. They are not taking the time to understand each other's competencies*'.

I now look at rules and practices, consisting of planning, rules, general practices and shared processes.[117] Firstly, despite the fact that four participants attempted to help the group establish a work method as a preliminary step before discussing the subject (lines 9; 16-17; 18; 21-22), the team as a whole started focusing on the outcome immediately after assigning roles. In other words, without any structuring of their work, people were already starting to deal with the solution (lines 15; 17-18; 19; 20-21; 26-27; 29-30). Consequently, they seemed confused about their focus, even in the final fifteen minutes (lines 36-37; 55-57; 60-61).

This (lack of) teamwork management was assessed negatively by Moniteur-Anita. During the task, she wrote me a second note: *'They have been talking for thirty-five*

[115] Moniteur-Anita started each team debriefing session with an open question for the teams to discuss how they felt about the solutions they had prepared (i.e., the 'task') and about their teamwork (i.e., the 'team') (see Chapter 2 for the conceptualisation of these two notions and Chapter 8 for a discussion on managing the 'task' and 'team'). She provided her comments about each issue team members raised, and ended each session by giving a general evaluation and by pointing out areas for improvement.

[116] As mentioned previously, see Appendix A7 for the observation notes for Team K's Task 1.

[117] As indicated in Table 3.9, these are the sub-themes related to 'Rules and Practices' that emerged in the team debriefs.

minutes without any method'. And in the team debrief, she gave them the following feedback:

> *This group was too results-oriented. ...Setting the objectives first would have allowed organising better...instead you jumped into action. ...You felt it would be a waste of time preparing the work* (Moniteur-Anita-debrief).

She added that *'Ethan-K tried three times to give the objectives'*, but that '*nobody listened at first...then everybody was reading...then everyone moved on to the messy part'.* She then advised them they needed to 'start slowly'[118] in their next tasks:

> *What should the steps be? ...Start with the methodology and objectives before looking at the results* (Moniteur-Anita-debrief).

Interestingly, she also brought up the subject of rules, claiming that Team K's first task was characterised by *'missed rules'*, and instructing them as follows:

> *Before looking at the details, set rules so as to work together* (Moniteur-Anita-debrief).

This comment on rules turned out to be a crucial aspect of Team K's subsequent dynamics and processes as will become clear from sections 5.3 and 5.4.

Concerning general practices, suggestions by four *stagiaires* to separate into subgroups went unheeded (lines 7-8; 15-16; 16-17; 21-23) since it was not until almost halfway through the task that they worked in two separate groups (lines 24-26), and then in the final fifteen minutes they hurriedly divided into three new groups (lines 31-36; 40-44). Afterwards in the debrief, Moniteur-Anita emphasised that '*working in small groups is better*' but maintained they had wasted too much time before dividing into groups. Therefore, her overall evaluation of Team K's solution for Task 1 was negative, owing to their ineffective practices:

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[118] Canney Davison (1994, 1996, with Ward, 1999); see Figure 2.2.

You didn't reply to the main question and objectives. ...Your solution was not clear enough. ...This was a consequence of the whole organisation of the group. ...You lost too much time talking about actions and not putting them into perspective. ...Too much time just discussing...and doing nothing...and then at the last minute…hurriedly working on the presentation. …You need to manage time (Moniteur-Anita-debrief).

She also indicated that not only did their decision to divide into groups come too late but it was also '*not a shared decision*'. Moreover, when it was time to go to the auditorium for the third period of the problem-solving workshop,[119] and Emma-K appeared to be attempting to help the team agree on a proposal for their presentation (lines 63-65; 74-75; 83-84), there appeared to be no shared decision about who would present their results, should they be called upon:

> When their preparation time was up, Emma-K asked: "Who's going to present?" but without hearing a response, carried on, "I don't care, I'll present" (lines 88-89).

In fact, Team K was one of the two teams selected to present their solution to the entire cohort (lines 90-91) and during the debriefing afterwards, Moniteur-Anita claimed that '*everyone was surprised by Emma-K's clear presentation of the slides in the auditorium*', despite the way in which the team had put the proposal together. Emma-K accepted the praise on behalf of the entire team, saying '*it was good teamwork...details were shared*'. She was perhaps just being polite and supportive in saying this, as in my interview with her two days after Task 1 she expressed how difficult she found it to lead the group. She felt they spent too much time analysing the options instead of determining their solution and preparing the presentation. She commented as follows:

[119] See 3.4.3 for the different periods of the problem-solving workshops.

That's why at the end I was just like: "OK. No more discussion of whether it's good, bad or indifferent. We need a presentation." ...But the group kept wanting to analyse the decisions (Emma-K-interview).[120]

As we have seen in this subsection, the challenges Team K experienced in task management pertained to their mishandling of all the main debrief issues listed in Table 3.9: roles, expertise, planning, rules, general practices such as managing the time and working in subgroups, and shared processes.

5.2.2 Language and Communication

This subsection examines how Team K managed the challenges related to language and communication in their first task: participation, turn-taking and language differences.[121] Regarding participation, all *stagiaires* seemed to be participating, although some appeared more dominant in whole-group discussions (lines 11-14) while others remained '*quiet in the large group but participated in a group of five*' (line 39). What appeared problematic was that some people had difficulties trying to participate:

James-K tried to speak, but was unable to make himself heard. Olivia-K at one point tried to involve him by saying, "let James-K speak" (lines 6-7).

Moreover, owing to the size of the group and the time specified for the task, Ethan-K felt '*thirteen [of us]*' in a '*fairly short time*' restricted the '*time to speak*'.[122] Likewise, Michael-K considered that some people in Team K '*are much more individualistic than I am*' and were therefore '*rather frustrated...that the speaking time...was*

[120] Emma-K-interview: Original in English.

[121] As indicated in Table 3.9, these correspond to the sub-themes under 'Language and Communication' that emerged in the debrief data.

[122] *Ethan-K-interview: Les groupes étaient nombreux, on était douze à treize à chaque fois, dans des temps assez courts, une heure et demie c'est très, très court, d'ailleurs ce qui pose des problèmes parce que tout le monde n'a pas le temps de parler.*

limited, because actually it was necessary for all of...the individuals in the group to participate and that takes time'.[123]

Another critical element was their poor turn-taking behaviour, consisting of interrupting, speaking at once and not listening. My observation notes recorded a number of examples, including one in which Olivia-K was interrupted and appeared to be offended:

> Olivia-K: "Can I finish my sentence?" (lines 69-71).

Olivia-K's offense at being interrupted is quite surprising since we will see that others took offense when she interrupted in Task 4 (5.4.2).

Owing to the time pressure to complete their proposal and to the fact that there were '*too many conversations*' and people were '*saying too many things*' (lines 63-64), the atmosphere appeared to be tense and uncomfortable (lines 78-83). Mark-K, who was trying to type up the PowerPoint presentation, appeared to be experiencing difficulty due to the numerous suggestions about what to include in the slides:

> Mark-K...: "Only one person speaking; it's not realistic; please no questions (lines 80-81; 83).

In the debrief Moniteur-Anita commented on these issues, saying that '*everybody was talking at once'* and *'this was frustrating'.* She explained as follows why it was problematic:

> *There were up to six discussions going on at the same time. ...It was very noisy in the corridor. ...Task Presenters XXX could hear you from outside the room. ...You need to learn to listen* (Moniteur-Anita-debrief).

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[123] *Michael-K-interview: Ce nombre est irréaliste...pour un travail…qui doit amener à délivrer des résultats. …Certains…sont bien plus individualistes que je ne le suis…c'est à dire qu'ils étaient assez frustrés...que les temps de parole…soient limités, puisque finalement il fallait que l'ensemble…des individualités du groupe intervienne et que ça prend du temps.*

Several of the *stagiaires* also perceived this as a problem, as the following comments indicate:

> *We had the debrief; we said that nobody was listening to anybody* (Olivia-K-interview).[124]
>
> *And in that room nobody was listening to what I said anyway...cause everybody...wanted to throw in their own things…and…that got frustrating a little bit* (Emma-K-interview).[125]
>
> *I was in charge of putting together a sort of...[spreadsheet]. ...I had a steady flow of I don't know how many people...who came to ask me for different types of information, and it was something...I experienced quite badly* (Michael-K-interview).[126]
>
> *It's good to let people talk, but you need a gatekeeper to tell people when to 'shut up' to make a decision. …Another role that's needed is a policeman to make sure people respect each other* (Emma-K-debrief).

Consequently, Moniteur-Anita explained in the debrief that there was no centralisation of ideas; some relevant suggestions were expressed only to a few people, and hence were not able to be taken into consideration. For her, the team needed to ensure that ideas were communicated to the group as a whole by involving everyone:

> *Talking was a factor for everyone as a group trying to give input for the whole piece. ...Some people had good ideas but these weren't pushed...they were only expressed in small groups. ...James-K had good ideas but didn't interfere. ...You lose important ideas. ...You should concentrate on...how to*

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[124] *Olivia-K-interview: On a eu le debrief, on a dit que personne n'écoutait personne.*
[125] Emma-K-interview: Original in English.
[126] *Michael-K-interview: J'étais chargé de faire un espèce de...[fichier Excel]. …J'ai eu un flot de je ne sais pas combien de personnes...qui sont venus me demander des indications différentes et c'est quelque chose…que j'ai assez mal vécu.*

bring people in…involve everyone...manage…people (Moniteur-Anita-debrief).

Concerning language differences, Audrey-K claimed that one French person was not proficient enough in English, so she wondered why he had been assigned to one of the teams for which the designated working language was English. In her opinion, he '*could not speak*' or '*understand*' the language.[127] On the other hand, when French was spoken in asides or in small groups (lines 12; 25-26; 61-62; 84-85), these language-switching occurrences did not appear to have posed any major difficulties in Task 1 which is quite surprising since, as we will see in 5.4.2, people were annoyed and frustrated when Olivia-K made a very brief aside in French in Task 4.

5.2.3 Interpersonal Team Relations

In this subsection, I focus on the following sub-theme that appeared to have affected interpersonal team relations in Team K's first interaction: people and personalities.[128] Firstly, in Michael-K's opinion, during the first session people did not understand either the purpose of the task or the *moniteur's* role, which for him caused confusion and stress and thus impacted negatively on people's behaviour:

> *How could things have worked…better? …Everybody was talking at once…maybe it was a language difficulty; …people weren't listening…* (Researcher-interview)
>
> *No, I think it was the first time. …We didn't really know…the objective. Was it…to provide a solution at the end…of the afternoon…to learn to work in groups…or (laughs)…to make ourselves look good for the moniteurs? …I think everyone was sort of…confused…about these three elements and so everyone had to try to shine, to show they were participating…because Moniteur-Anita was taking notes and…we didn't understand what she was doing…and…that…stressed some people…so I think…we'd need to have a stable*

[127] Audrey-K-interview: Original in English.
[128] See complete list of themes and sub-themes in Table 3.9.

and well-defined…environment (Michael-K-interview).[129]

Two other *stagiaires* had similar opinions. For Jacob-K '*there was a lot of stress*', since *'a lot of people were putting pressure on themselves to demonstrate something'* in Moniteur-Anita's presence. He added: '*For the people on their trial period we can understand…but there were also other people…who…were telling themselves…"I have to prove myself…I have to stand out"*'.[130] According to Audrey-K, since the *moniteur* was sitting and observing:

> *There were people who were just talking for the heck of talking…in the first task; …there were some things…not making any sense. …That's a lot of pressure…on some…people who really need to prove themselves*.[131]

Debrief remarks and interview comments provided further insights about the people in the team, especially those who were '*putting pressure on themselves*' to '*shine*' and to '*stand out*'. Two *stagiaires* claimed there were strong personalities with outspoken ideas:

> *Strong personalities...people were outspoken and pushed their ideas* (Olivia-K-debrief).

---

[129] *Researcher-interview: Comment ça aurait pu mieux…fonctionner? …Tout le monde parlait en même temps... peut-être que c'était une difficulté de la langue…les gens ne s'écoutaient pas...*
Michael-K-interview: Non, je pense que c'était la première fois…on ne connaissait pas vraiment…l'objectif. Est-ce que…de délivrer quelque chose en fin…d'après-midi…d'apprendre à travailler en groupes…ou (rires)…de bien se faire voir par ses moniteurs? ...Je pense que tout le monde était un petit peu…confus…sur ces trois éléments…et donc tout le monde a dû essayer de se montrer sous un meilleur jour, de montrer qu'il participait…puisque…Moniteur-Anita prenait des notes et…on comprenait pas ce qu'elle faisait…et…ça…en a stressé quelques-uns…donc je pense que…il faudrait avoir un environnement…stable et défini.

[130] *Jacob-K-interview: Il y a eu beaucoup de stress...beaucoup de gens…se mettaient une pression pour démontrer quelque chose. ...Pour les gens qui sont en période d'essai ça peut se comprendre...mais il y avait aussi d'autres personnes qui…se disaient: "il faut que je démontre…il faut que je sorte du lot".*

[131] Audrey-K-interview: Original in English.

> *There were strong personalities and...the listening was very, very poor, and nobody was...selling an idea; something was very tough there and everyone had their own opinions* (Audrey-K-interview).[132]

In the debrief, Moniteur-Anita noted that the difficulties Team K experienced seemed linked to the fact that the participants did not know one another, and that getting to know each team member took time:

> *It was difficult to work together since nobody knew each other. …You need time knowing each team member* (Moniteur-Anita-debrief).

She also pointed out that Team K was composed of *'an interesting mix of people'*, and made a general comment about international teams:

> *An international team…what does that mean? ...Too many leaders sometimes* (Moniteur-Anita-debrief).

She further emphasised the need to manage people's different personalities as one of their areas for improvement:

> *You can keep your own personalities, but these need to be used in the right way and regulated* (Moniteur-Anita-debrief).

5.2.4 Summary

As we have seen in 5.2, Team K experienced numerous challenges in their first task. These involved managing practically all the issues identified in the team debrief data (Table 3.9): roles, expertise, planning, rules, general practices such as working in small groups and managing the time, shared processes, participation, turn-taking and language differences. Moreover, Team K's first task was also characterised by

[132] Audrey-K-interview: Original in English.

frustrating and disrespectful interpersonal team relations among the people and personalities within the team.

5.3 Team K: Tasks 2 and 3

After Team K's four-week session ended, interviews with five *stagiaires* (Audrey-K, Ethan-K, Jacob-K, Michael-K and Olivia-K) provided insights about the second and third tasks[133] as well as the fourth.

5.3.1 Factors Leading to the Creation of Rules

In this section, I report on the impact of three key challenges that characterised the second task which eventually led to the establishment of group rules. These challenges were in the three broad areas listed in the debrief themes (Table 3.9): task management; language and communication; and interpersonal team relations; and included in particular: (a) the lack of roles and organisation for managing the task; (b) difficulties with turn-taking and participation; and (c) people and personalities. With regard to task management, Michael-K explained that no roles were assigned during the second task, like in Task 1:

> *Again…we didn't clearly define the responsibilities; we didn't designate…a leader. The…problem…was that we had someone who was more or less an expert, rather…who said he knew about the subject. And straight away…he got up and went to the board and…tried to explain how things had been done with him. …Except that...I didn't appreciate it very much, because…we weren't there to…copy something that existed…to find the best solution, but…to…build something together. ...What bothered me was that he did it rather*

[133] As explained in the Methodology chapter, I did not attend Team K's second and third tasks but found out about them in five interviews afterwards. Two other *stagiaires* from Team K who were interviewed (Emma-K after Task 1 and Wyatt-K in a phone interview after Task 4) did not speak about Tasks 2 and 3. Further insights about the second and third tasks were provided during Task 4 (see 5.4.1).

decisively…automatically, by getting up…and…imposing his solution from the start…which was totally off-key…compared with…teamwork (Michael-K-interview).[134]

Comments from interviewees provided further insights about the competition among team members to coordinate Task 2. Three *stagiaires* felt people were vying for the leadership role, which entailed conflict at the beginning of the second task:

People…were trying to position themselves…to be the leader (Olivia-K-interview).[135]

The person who took the board marker straight way, who had quote-unquote 'an advantage' over the others...became the leader…so a sort...of tension and competition...not so easy (Jacob-K-interview).[136]

As…we're observed everyone tried to take the leadership in their own way, so there was some competition (Ethan-K-interview).[137]

Thus, for Audrey-K the team needed both trust and strong leadership:

The people need to trust and there has to be a very clear leadership…to...take them towards the...vision (Audrey-K-interview).[138]

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[134] *Michael-K-interview: Là-encore…on avait pas défini clairement les responsabilités; on avait pas défini…un chef…d'assemblée. [Le] problème…[était] on a eu quelqu'un qui était plus ou moins expert, qui disait qu'il s'y connaissait…plutôt…dans le sujet. Et qui d'office…s'est levé et est parti au tableau et…a essayé de nous expliquer comment ça s'était passé chez lui. …Sauf que…moi je l'ai assez mal pris, puisque…on était pas là pour…copier quelque chose qui existait…pour…trouver une meilleure solution mais…pour…construire quelque chose ensemble. …Ce qui me gênait c'était que il l'a fait de manière assez péremptoire…d'office, en se levant…et en…imposant sa solution dès le début…ce qui était totalement déphasé…avec…un travail en groupe.*

[135] *Olivia-K-interview: Les gens… cherchaient à se positionner...pour être le leader.*

[136] *Jacob-K-interview: Celui qui prenait le marqueur tout de suite, qui prenait entre guillemets un avantage sur les autres…c'était devenu lui le leader…donc une espèce…de tension et de compétition...pas évident.*

[137] *Ethan-K-interview: Comme…on était observé, chacun essayait de prendre à sa façon le leadership, donc il y avait de la concurrence.*

[138] Audrey-K-interview: Original in English.

Moreover, without a pre-designated team leader, Jacob-K felt Team K experienced a sort of unreasonable '*mess*' and '*fight*' to chair the second task, which he claimed did not occur in workplace reality, whereby meetings are prepared and there is usually someone who coordinates them:

> *Generally when there is a meeting...out of the twelve people there is at least one...who has prepared it, and who comes...as...the coordinator. ...In real life, we avoid (laughs)…the sort of mess at the beginning where everyone was trying to fight to take the lead; ...generally...then the structure is a little more...reasonable* (Jacob-K-interview).[139]

Overall, according to Michael-K if '*roles and responsibilities*' had been '*clearly established*', with speaking times indicated in the '*agenda*', and if the task had been more '*structured*', teamwork would have been smoother. Thus, he felt that both roles and organisation were needed to manage Task 2 to prevent them from losing sight of '*the initial objective*'.[140]

In the area of language and communication, and more specifically concerning turn-taking and participation, Ethan-K also gave his perspective of what went wrong during the second session. For him, there was no listening and people were being interrupted, which strained team relations. He felt everyone was guilty of this disrespectful behaviour. Consequently, he claimed people became offended and this '*left a mark*' on the group for the rest of the problem-solving sessions:

> *Here's my vision of things. …In terms…of manners…we weren't respectful; …we interrupted; we started going around the table…people were cut off. ...We were all guilty. …Pressed for time…we didn't listen to everyone's opinion. …People who weren't being heard got offended, which was totally*

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[139] *Jacob-K-interview: Généralement quand il y a une réunion…dans les douze personnes il y en a au moins un…qui l'a préparée, et qui arrive en tant que…responsable. …Dans la vraie vie, on évite (rires)…toute l'espèce de bazar au début où chacun va essayer de lutter pour prendre l'animation…généralement…les cadrages sont un peu plus...corrects.*

[140] *Michael-K-interview: Les rôles et les responsabilités…bien établies…quelque chose qui manque beaucoup [ici]. …L'agenda…un temps de parole indiqué. …Le cadre…moins bien défini, les responsabilités moins claires…la réunion…plus de mal…à converger vers son objectif initial.*

understandable…and there were a few clashes. …I think…this left a mark on the team for the following tasks, both for us to improve, and also that was the origin of tensions (Ethan-K-interview).[141]

Therefore, it appeared to Michael-K that, like in the first task, people were all speaking at once and nobody was listening to what anyone had to say; someone who had fairly long-standing corporate experience apparently took this badly:

The discussions were a little…disorganised like the first time. …We went from one subject to another without really building on what had just been said. Building means that either we keep your suggestion and continue adding onto it or…it's not suitable and as a group we decide to give it up. …And [another] element, that came from another person…who, with good reason, didn't feel listened to…like a lot of others. …I mean we all tried to speak except that…other people started talking before we had finished…it was fairly unpleasant. …Well I'm young…I put my ego to one side and my priority was…for the group to perform. This person was much more experienced than me…and took it…much worse (laughs)…was rather angry…but that was understandable (Michael-K-interview).[142]

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[141] *Ethan-K-interview: Je vous donne ma vision des choses. …En terme…de savoir vivre…on l'a pas vraiment respecté; …on coupait la parole; on commençait des tours de table…ils ont été coupés. …On est tous coupable. …Pressés par le temps…on a pas écouté l'avis de tout le monde. …Ceux qui ont pas été entendus se sont vexés, ce que je comprends tout à fait...et il y a eu quelques accrochages. …Je pense que…ça a marqué le groupe pour les réunions suivantes, à la fois pour s'améliorer et puis ça a été à l'origine de tensions.*

[142] *Michael-K-interview: Les discussions étaient un petit peu…désorganisées comme lors de la première fois. …On passait d'un sujet à l'autre sans véritablement construire sur ce qui venait d'être énoncé. Construire ça veut dire soit on garde ta proposition et on continue à rebondir dessus soit…ça ne nous convient pas et on décide en groupe de l'abandonner. …Et [un autre] élément, qui venait d'une autre personne…qui ne s'est pas sentie…écoutée…à juste titre, mais comme beaucoup d'autres. ...C'est à dire qu'on a tous essayé de parler sauf que…d'autres personnes rebondissaient avant qu'on finisse. …C'était assez désagréable. …Alors, moi je suis jeune…mon égo je le mets un petit peu de côté et ma priorité était…que le groupe délivre. Cette personne-là était beaucoup plus expérimentée que moi…et l'a…moins bien vécu, (rires)…était plutôt…fâchée. …Mais ça se comprend.*

Participation was also hindered when speaking got tough and people could not make themselves heard, whereby, in Ethan-K's words '*as soon as…things got out of control…some people…dropped out of the game…weren't participating anymore*'.[143]

In terms of interpersonal team relations, besides the previous statements by Michael-K and Ethan-K, two *stagiaires* described the second task as being characterised by a strong 'storming' phase.[144] Firstly, Audrey-K mentioned that people and personalities were problematic again, and that owing to all the talking but no listening, those with expertise could not express themselves. She thus felt the team demonstrated the same type of disrespect as in the first task and '*the trust wasn't there*':

> *You have personalities again…and then you talk, talk and then the people who are experts, their opinions aren't taken into consideration. …Things were not so...well respected again…very 'storming'…very bad; …there was nothing at all; …we could not do anything. And…the people were very strong personalities and they didn't want to trust each other or probably they wanted themselves to…prove better than the others* (Audrey-K-interview).[145]

Secondly, Olivia-K specified that, unlike in the first session, in Task 2 people responded to each other's diverging viewpoints:

> *The second time we were really more 'storming' where there were…very different, opposing viewpoints…and whereby people responded to the different…points of view, whereas the time before, there were…all parallel lines in fact* (Olivia-K-interview).[146]

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[143] *Ethan-K-interview: Dès…que ça dérapait un peu…des personnes…sont sorties du jeu…participaient plus.*

[144] Tuckman, 1965, with Jensen, 1977. This remark about a "strong 'storming' phase" is quite interesting in light of Moniteur-Hunter's comments in 4.3 in which he felt the GP corporate culture had a tendency of reducing the impact of personal behaviour. Corporate culture will be discussed further in 8.3.5.

[145] Audrey-K-interview: Original in English.

[146] *Olivia-K-interview: La seconde fois on était vraiment…plus en 'storming' où là il y avait…des points de vue très différents qui s'opposaient…et où les gens se répondaient sur des points de vue…différents. Alors que la fois d'avant, c'était…toutes des lignes parallèles en fait.*

Consequently, according to Jacob-K, '*there was a very strong reaction to put in place...some discipline...to channel...the anarchy...that was starting to be a little negative; …we were such a team out of control; ...that was a little tense at the beginning*.[147]

5.3.2 Team K's Rules

Interview comments enabled me to find out that the group called a special meeting between the second and third tasks to devise rules to improve the team's way of operating, and even before my interviews when I returned for Task 4, Moniteur-Anita whispered to me that the team had got off to a very bad start and had called a special rule-setting meeting. Comments from one interviewee explained why the team met to define rules:

> *We got together between the second and third sessions. …Several of us…experienced things badly the second time…and felt we couldn't continue like that. So we said: "If we go back…without sorting things out, during the third session maybe things will go well, but there was basically a strong likelihood that things wouldn't work out. There was no reason why things would improve by themselves"* (Jacob-K-interview).[148]

Three people described how the rule-defining process unfolded:

> *Out of the…twelve people, we managed…to get together about nine of us between the two sessions…to express…what wasn't working out…and then to try to draw up…some rules of conduct* (Jacob-K-interview).[149]

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[147] *Jacob-K-interview: Il y a eu une réaction très forte de mettre en place…de la discipline...pour recadrer…l'anarchie…qui commençait à être un peu négative; …on était une telle équipe de sauvages;…ça a été un peu tendu au début.*

[148] *Jacob-K-interview: On s'est retrouvés entre la deuxième et la troisième séance. ...On était plusieurs…à avoir mal vécu la deuxième séance...à se dire qu'on pouvait pas continuer comme ça. Donc on s'est dit: "si on revient…sans s'être parlé, à la troisième séance, peut-être que ça va bien se passer, mais il y a surtout de fortes chances pour que ça se passe mal. Il y a pas de raisons que ça s'améliore comme ça tout seul".*

[149] *Jacob-K-interview: Sur les…douze personnes, on a réussi…à se retrouver à peu près à neuf*

We met outside…the time allotted…for the problem-solving tasks. …About half the team…defined…one or two key roles necessary for the organisation…of the group. And then…some specific rules for operating which applied to everyone (Michael-K-interview).[150]

We made an attempt…to norm by…clarifying some sort of…best practices…which needed to be done for things to work well and wrote them out (Olivia-K-interview).[151]

One of the interviewees sent me a copy of the team's written rules, which were presented in a PowerPoint slide as follows:[152]

Teamwork

- **Monitor Group**

1. **Roles and responsibilities**
   - Facilitator
     - Neutral
     - Teamwork
     - Organize
     - Interaction between groups
     - Make sure everybody speaks
     - Challenger
     - Make group define who will present
   - Timekeeper
   - PPT writer
     - Responsible of writing PPT presentation
   - Comments
     - "Experts": no specific rule. Not compatible with facilitator if they want to keep neutral?

---

entre les deux séances…pour…exprimer…ce qui n'allait pas…et puis essayer d'en tirer…quelques règles de conduite.

[150] *Michael-K-interview: On l'a fait en dehors…des heures imparties…pour ce travail-là. …Une moitié de groupe… a défini…un ou deux postes clé, nécessaires à l'organisation…du groupe. Et puis…des règles de fonctionnement propres, qui devaient s'appliquer à tous.*

[151] *Olivia-K-interview: On a fait une tentative…pour normer avec…la mise au point de, sorte de...best practices…comment il faut qu'on s'y prenne pour que ça marche bien, et rédiger.*

[152] Table 3.7 shows from whom and when I obtained these rules; the original punctuation and wording in English have not been altered.

2. **Global method**
   - Understand the objective
     - Write it on paper board (visual management)
   - Gather facts describing the problem
   - Identify and choose a solution
   - Describe solution
   - Define implementation
     - Risk management, change management, …
   - Share PPT presentation and define who will present

3. **Common group rules**
   - Listen to others
   - Speak English and slowly
   - Have trust in others' job
   - There's no perfect answer, we'll have to make assumptions
   - Define and respect a planning

Figure 5.1 – Team K's Rules

5.3.3 The Rules and their Impact

As indicated in Figure 5.1, the rules focused on three main areas: task management (roles, expertise, planning, general practices, shared processes) language and communication (participation, turn-taking, language differences) and interpersonal relations (trust).[153] Interview comments provided participants' impressions about the impact of these rules on Team K's teamwork processes. Firstly, as can be seen in Figure 5.1, in terms of roles and expertise, the top section of Team K's rules was devoted to '*roles and responsibilities*', and specified there should be a '*facilitator*' who would be '*neutral*' and who would not be '*compatible*' with '*experts*' so as to maintain neutrality. Therefore, for Audrey-K, '*there had to be a facilitator and there had to be a leader*'; while it was the role of the leader, who '*could be an expert*', to provide the '*vision*', it was the facilitator's responsibility to '*help…the leader*' and oversee the interactions '*because if the leader is leading…and giving vision…and is also facilitating, things were not working, because we were working in close, very*

[153] These three areas relate to the themes/sub-themes listed in the debrief data in Table 3.9.

tight, tight lines'.[154] Likewise, Ethan-K reported '*there were rules of etiquette…to decide that someone…would make sure the group was efficient…would coordinate…without taking part*'.[155] Therefore, in spite of differing terminology, the team believed it crucial for there to be two leadership functions, one to manage the task, i.e., the '*leader*' or '*expert*', and one to manage the group, i.e. the '*facilitator,*' '*regulator*' or '*coordinator*',[156] who was to remain neutral. This point should be helpful in understanding a rule-breaking incident in Task 4 with regard to the facilitator's neutrality (5.4.1).

Secondly, regarding practices, shared processes and interpersonal team relations, establishing a set of rules as a group apparently helped the team improve their dynamics and processes. Ethan-K claimed that, in addition to '*organis[sing] the teamwork…with values of respect*' which he found '*praiseworthy*', Team K's written '*charter…had the advantage of being shared*'.[157] Likewise, Michael-K pointed out that although only '*about half the group*' met to determine the '*specific rules of functioning*', everyone '*more or less respected…followed and applied*' the '*framework*'.[158] Thus, one of the strong points appeared to be that everyone abided by the protocol because it had been set up by members of the group:

> *It was interesting because beyond the rules themselves…it was the group that defined…a way of working. So afterwards…there was a commitment to try to make an effort; …so…even if we didn't respect the rules to the letter…(laughs)…in the two sessions that followed, we all tried to pay attention* (Jacob-K-interview).[159]

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[154] Audrey-K-interview: Original in English.

[155] *Ethan-K-interview: Il y a des règles de bienséance...que quelqu'un animerait mais ne jouerait pas…il ferait en sorte que le groupe soit efficace, il le coordonnerait, il le dirigerait, sans prendre part au débat.*

[156] These terms were used by the *stagiaires*, e.g., Audrey-K, Ethan-K and Jacob-K in this section and in 5.4.1.

[157] *Ethan-K-interview: Organiser le travail de groupe…avec des valeurs de respect…qu'était louable…la charte…avait l'avantage d'être partagée.*

[158] *Michael-K-interview: Une moitié de groupe…a défini…des règles de fonctionnement propres ; …on a tous plus ou moins…respecté…ce cadre qu'on avait établi ensemble; …des règles…suivies et appliquées…par tous.*

[159] *Jacob-K-interview: C'était intéressant parce qu'au-delà de la règle elle-même…c'est le groupe qu'a défini...une façon de travailler. Donc après…c'était un engagement à essayer de faire un effort...donc…même si on les a pas respectées à la lettre…(rires)…dans les deux*

Thirdly, several people commented on the positive influence of the speaking rules, which seemed to have led to greater participation, improved turn-taking and better handling of language differences. Basically, Audrey-K believed the rules gave '*everybody an opportunity to speak*' and made sure everyone was '*a good listener*'.[160] And Ethan-K claimed the leader was entrusted with the responsibility of ensuring that English fluency did not prevent second-language speakers (SLSs) from following or contributing:

> *If you don't master the language, you sometimes end up tuning out which can be troublesome…because you need to make sure everyone is following. And that was somehow the job of the person…who played the role of regulator or facilitator to make sure…each person who wanted to speak could give an opinion* (Ethan-K-interview).[161]

Additionally, for Ethan-K, the speaking rules emphasised being careful when speaking English to enable SLSs to follow:

> *What we tried to do…was each person would speak slowly and especially we'd use a limited vocabulary in the number of words…because it's easy…to have a sophisticated, refined language for somebody to give up…if they're not mother-tongue speakers. …And…that helped us function better* (Ethan-K-interview).[162]

Finally, for Jacob-K the speaking rules specified respecting all speakers of both English and French:

> *The non-French speakers said…"respect us, speak English"…and the French*

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séances qui ont suivies, on essayait de faire attention tous.

[160] Audrey-K-interview: Original in English.

[161] *Ethan-K-interview: Si on maîtrise pas la langue on finit par décrocher parfois ce qui peut être gênant...parce qu'il faut s'assurer que tout le monde est encore là. Et c'était quelque part le travail de la personne…qui jouait le rôle de régulateur ou d'animateur de s'assurer…que chacun qui voulait parler pouvait donner son point de vue.*

[162] *Ethan-K-interview: Ce qu'on a essayé de faire…que chacun parlerais doucement et surtout qu'on emploierait un vocabulaire limité, en nombres de mots…parce que c'est facile…d'avoir un langage recherché châtié, pour quelqu'un dont c'est pas la langue native…on décroche. …Et…ça nous a permis de mieux fonctionner.*

speakers said…"OK, but respect us, speak slowly" (laughs)…so that was the rule (Jacob-K–interview).[163]

Overall, the assessment of the rules put in place appeared to be fairly positive. Jacob-K felt that afterwards '*it turned out well'* since '*we secured the system*'.[164] Moreover, in Audrey-K's opinion, '*in one of the meetings*', Task 3, the team '*did very well, where people were very religiously following [the rules] and the things changed*'. However, despite these positive comments, we will see in Task 4 (5.4) that the '*system*' was not as '*secured*' as they had expected.

5.3.4 Summary

We have seen in sections 5.2 and 5.3 that – as a result of the challenges pertaining to task management, language and communication and interpersonal team relations that Team K experienced in both Tasks 1 and 2 – the establishment of a formal set of written rules (Figure 5.1) was one of the main strategies the team put into place to manage their problem-solving tasks. In 5.4, we will see whether these rules were effective and whether they enabled Team K to become more successful in handling their challenges.

5.4 Team K: Task 4

Team K had one hour and thirty minutes for their fourth task. Moniteur-Anita whispered to me that James-K, a Frenchman who was on his probationary period at the start of the programme, had left the company. She explained that this was part of the '*game*'.[165] There were therefore twelve members in Team K for the final

[163] *Jacob-K-interview: Les non francophones disaient…"respectez-nous, parlez anglais"...et les francophones disaient…"d'accord, mais respectez-nous, parlez lentement" (rires)…donc ça c'était la règle.*
[164] *Jacob-K-interview: Ca s'est bien terminé…on avait (rires) verrouillé le système.*
[165] *Moniteur-Anita-observation comment: Cela faisait partie du jeu.* See also 5.1.1.

problem-solving task, instead of thirteen as there had been for Task 1.[166] No team debriefing session was held for the fourth task.[167] After Task 4, I carried out face-to-face interviews with five *stagiaires* (Audrey-K, Ethan-K, Jacob-K, Michael-K and Olivia-K) and an unrecorded phone interview with Wyatt-K. In this section, I report on a number of factors depicting the team's (mis)handling of task management (5.4.1) language and communication (5.4.2) and interpersonal team relations (5.4.3).[168]

5.4.1 Task Management

In spite of the rules that had been created, and the lessons learned from previous tasks, at the very start of Task 4, there appeared to be some sort of scramble and confusion as to who was going to be the team's leader:

> A discussion ensued and Wyatt-K became the new facilitator (lines 9-12).[169]

As leader, Wyatt-K began the session by reading out loud, one by one, a selection of seven key rules taken from the team's written document:[170]

[166] As indicated in the Methodology chapter, I did not attend Team K's second and third sessions.
[167] As we have previously seen in 3.4.4 and Table 3.4, one team debriefing session per project-team workshop was replaced by a special session on individual leadership profiles to which I was not invited.
[168] See themes in Table 3.9.
[169] These numbered lines refer to my observation notes for Team K's Task 4, which are not included in the Appendix section, but which could be provided upon request.
[170] Figure 5.1.

Wyatt-K had in his hands a sheet of paper and he started out with, 'remember the rules':

- Listen to others
- Speak English
- Trust each other
- There's no perfect answer
- There needs to be a facilitator, a timekeeper and a PowerPoint writer
- We need to make assumptions
- We need to respect rules of planning (lines 26-33)

Then, keeping these rules in mind, several challenges involving planning and general practices were managed effectively. For example, Wyatt-K suggested the team re-read the topic, plan their work, and draw up a timetable (lines 35; 100-104). Adhering to a specific time frame that the group determined together seemed to be vital and numerous references to timing were made throughout the task (lines 36; 211; 253-256; 311; 338-339; 344).

Concerning the role-system,[171] three main roles were named – facilitator, timekeeper and PowerPoint writer (lines 74-75; 346-348), while three participants took turns more informally to assist the facilitator (lines 72; 76-78; 109-112; 116-119; 181-182; 190; 204; 216; 218-220).

As specified in the rules, Wyatt-K, as facilitator, carried out a number of responsibilities including organising the teamwork, managing the interactions and making sure everyone spoke (lines 50; 114; 118; 218; 303; 310; 325; 333). Furthermore, he appeared to be constantly attempting to obtain group consensus since he checked for agreement ten times during the ninety-minute whole-group discussion (lines 84; 140; 146; 148; 151; 158; 214; 274; 300; 335), whereby the team never divided into subgroups. In fact, several statements made during the interaction revealed a certain spirit of cooperation and two people mentioned building on others' ideas (lines 34; 142).

[171] Argyle et al., 1981.

Nevertheless, contrary to the rules concerning the leadership role, and despite the fact that Wyatt-K was careful in organising the teamwork and establishing consensus (lines 114; 218; 303), near the end of the task he apparently diverged from his role as a neutral leader and started getting involved in determining the team's solution (lines 258; 272; 276; 297-298). Two interviewees claimed the team did not appreciate his participation in the discussions since a key component they had stipulated in their rules had been the neutrality of the leader.[172] Not only did this characteristic appear twice under the responsibilities of the facilitator, but it was also put at the top of the list and was underlined, signalling that the team felt this to be a crucial element of the leader's line of duty. When Wyatt-K began contributing to the group's decision, this behaviour was thus considered by the rest of the team as breaking the rules, since for Ethan-K '*the strong point*' of '*the resolutions*' and '*rules of etiquette*' was the specification for '*the coordinator*' not to intervene in the talks '*but [to remain] neutral*'.[173]

Ethan-K then depicted how this rule was applied after the rules had been defined, but described how Wyatt-K broke out of his role in the fourth task, whereas Jacob-K, in the third task, had respected the neutrality rule up until the very end by remaining outside the discussions the entire time:

> *It was…decided that someone would lead but not get involved…and would see that the group was efficient. …He would coordinate…would direct, without taking part in the discussion. …We tested it twice; …the last task…Wyatt-K held out almost the entire time, then the last ten minutes he entered the talks...he gave his opinion, he made some suggestions. …So three-fourths of the time Wyatt-K stuck to the role that was defined. …However, Jacob-K in the task before…played that role and respected it from beginning to end. …He stayed on the sidelines…he was useful for the group…which Wyatt-K tried to do, but…didn't manage…the whole time* (Ethan-K-interview).[174]

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[172] See Figure 5.1. People in Team K used the two different labels of 'leader' and 'facilitator' interchangeably, and specifically used the term 'facilitator' in their rules to make it clear that this was a key feature they wanted for their leader.

[173] *Ethan-K-interview: Le point fort de…la résolution…des règles de bienséance...le rôle d'un animateur, mais neutre.*

[174] *Ethan-K-interview: C'était…de décider que quelqu'un animerait mais ne jouerait pas…il*

Olivia-K also commented on Wyatt-K's leadership role during the fourth task and maintained, as facilitator, he was not supposed to give an opinion but to chair the meeting:

> *Wyatt-K…saw how difficult it was…with regard to the rules we defined…in…the 'norming' phase…which were that the facilitator takes the ideas…but…doesn't put his own ideas…forward* (Olivia-K-interview).[175]

5.4.2 Language and Communication

Of the three sub-themes related to language and communication listed in Table 3.9, I report on the two that emerged as significant in Team K's fourth task: language differences and turn-taking.[176]

With regard to language differences, I noted that some participants seemed to be having difficulties in oral English expression (lines 221-226) although Michael-K did not find speaking English to be problematic for the team: '*we all spoke English more or less decently*.[177] Two other interviewees shared Michael-K's viewpoint that the use of English was not a hindrance. Jacob-K thought that even without the exact vocabulary, he managed to communicate his ideas and was '*rarely…at a standstill*',[178] and Wyatt-K felt he was able to understand and be understood, in spite of his '*mediocre*' level of English.[179] Moreover, Jacob-K alluded to one of the strengths of

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ferait en sorte que le groupe soit efficace...il le coordonnerait…le dirigerait, sans prendre part au débat. Ca on l'a testé deux fois. …La dernière réunion…Wyatt-K...a tenu presque tout le temps, là les dix dernières minutes il est rentré dans le jeu…il a donné son avis, il a fait des propositions. …Donc Wyatt-K a tenu les trois quarts du temps le rôle qui était défini…alors que Jacob-K dans la réunion d'avant...avait joué ce rôle-là et lui il avait respecté de bout en bout. …Il s'est mis hors-jeu…il a été utile au groupe…ce qu'a essayé de faire Wyatt-K, mais Wyatt-K a pas réussi…jusqu'au bout.

[175] *Olivia-K-interview: Wyatt-K…a vu à quel point c'était difficile… par rapport aux règles qui avaient été définies…dans…la phase 'norming'...qui étaient le facilitateur prends les idées...mais…ne mets pas ses propres idées...en avant.*

[176] See Table 3.9 for the three areas related to 'Language and Communication' that emerged in the debrief data.

[177] *Michael-K-interview: Nous parlions tous un anglais plus ou moins convenable.*

[178] *Jacob-K-interview: Je suis rarement…bloqué…à cause de la langue.*

[179] Wyatt-K-interview: Notes taken from unrecorded phone interview.

an ELF community: owing to everyone's '*respective accents*' and fluency levels (i.e., '*speaking English that's sometimes not really accurate*'), using English as a '*common language*' put people '*on the same footing*'.[180]

On the other hand, Ethan-K mentioned challenges linked to language differences within the first two minutes of his 00:51:28 interview: he found the different language levels and accents in the group to be a barrier, and used the terms '*frustrating*', '*difficulty*', '*problem*' and '*nuisance*'. For him, what aggravated the problem was the '*speed of speaking*' in spite of the team's '*[speak slowly] rule,*' which he felt the group had a hard time enforcing.[181] Similarly, Audrey-K commented that mother-tongue speakers (MTSs) did not always accommodate others since they were not necessarily aware they spoke '*very fast English'* or that their accents were not '*neutral*'.[182] In fact, she herself seemed to be '*mumbling something*', which led Wyatt-K to ask her to '*speak to the whole group, as it might be interesting for everyone*' (lines 113-115).

Moreover, in spite of his impression that he managed to get his points across and that using ELF put people on an equal footing (mentioned above), Jacob-K felt language was a barrier when members of the group could not participate '*the way they would have liked to*' because of their linguistic ability and competence.[183] Likewise, Olivia-K considered the different levels of fluency did not allow '*being subtle enough*', were a '*handicap*' and '*increase[d] frustration*' for both speakers and listeners, which did not '*facilitate*' multicultural teamwork.[184] Basically, Ethan-K

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[180] *Jacob-K-interview: On était pas francophones et anglophones, on était...Indien...Néerlandais...Roumain. …On avait une langue commune qui était l'anglais, mais…pas forcement notre langue maternelle (rires). …Je trouve qu'il y a une ambiance plus détendue quand on est tous…à parler un anglais parfois approximatif avec nos accents respectifs (rires); ...ça met tout le monde…sur un pied d'égalité.*

[181] *Ethan-K-interview: C'est frustrant…on s'est pas toujours tenu…au respect…de la vitesse d'élocution. …Et on a eu beau le répéter…on a eu beaucoup…de mal à faire respecter la règle. …Je pense que ça a été une difficulté…pour avancer aussi, parce que du coup on perdait du temps, sur ce problème de langue. …En fait plus que la langue, l'accent est embêtant. …Enfin, moi il me semble…la prononciation…est souvent embêtante…et la vitesse d'élocution.*

[182] Audrey-K-interview: Original in English.

[183] *Jacob-K-interview: Ca posait un problème…à certains…qui…n'arrivaient pas à participer à la hauteur de ce qu'ils auraient voulu (rires)...à cause de la langue.*

[184] *Olivia-K-interview: J'ai senti…comme un problème la...moindre maîtrise, moindre aisance de certaines personnes en…anglais…parce que…ça ne permet pas de mettre suffisamment de*

claimed that in work groups with speakers from diverse national backgrounds, the language factor sometimes '*generates fatigue*' and '*has an impact on the efficiency at the end of the day*'. In order to '*take this into consideration*', he recommended that multilingual teams take '*more frequent breaks*' to compensate for the fatigue brought on by language differences and to ensure that interactions remain effective.[185]

Despite Wyatt-K's fairly effective management of interactional processes (lines 158; 218; 302-303), and despite the fact that Michael-K felt the team had no problems expressing themselves, Michael-K still believed that an overall lack of understanding was a possible explanation for the '*disrespect*' entailed by the '*surprising*' communication practices such as abrupt changes in the subject, which did not allow the team to build on ideas, '*which was in the end rather complex...in terms of coherence...and moving...the project forward*' (Michael-K-interview).[186] Thus, he felt that overall the team rarely built on each other's ideas, which could have clarified '*possible misunderstandings*':

> *I think we would have been much clearer...if...we had built (laughs) on the ideas that were stated...which was rarely the case...because...by re-explaining or redefining what has just been said to go further...we manage to clarify...any...possible misunderstandings* (Michael-K-interview).[187]

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subtilités; ...je trouve que…c'est quand même…un handicap et que ça doit augmenter la frustration, à la fois de celui qui s'exprime, et moi ça augmente la mienne en tant que personne qui écoute...ça ne facilite pas les choses…surtout pour une équipe de gens qui ne se connaissent pas, qui ont des modes de fonctionnement, des origines…des cultures, des habitudes de travail qui sont différents.

[185] *Ethan-K-interview: C'est des journées assez longues, et pour quelqu'un dont c'est pas la langue native…je pense que c'est générateur de fatigue…et ça je pense qu'il faut qu'on en tienne compte. …Donc en fait ça joue beaucoup…sur l'efficacité des fins de journée. ...Alors peut-être qu'il faut des pauses plus fréquentes.*

[186] *Michael-K-interview: Pour parler de l'irrespect…il y a une difficulté…avec la langue de travail qui était l'anglais puisque…peut-être que…certains n'ont pas compris l'ensemble des éléments…dits…par les intervenants…parlant avant eux…et…quand ils prenaient la parole changeaient complètement le sujet…ce qui était finalement assez complexe...en terme de suivi...et d'avancement;...c'était…assez surprenant.*

[187] *Michael-K-interview: Je pense qu'on aurait être beaucoup plus clair…si…on avait construit (rires) sur les idées qui étaient émises…chose qui était rarement le cas...puisque…en réexpliquant ou en redéfinissant ce qui venait d'être dit pour aller plus loin…on arrive à clarifier…tous les…contre-sens éventuels.*

Consequently, he felt the team's lack of building on ideas did not allow them to collaborate and construct shared solutions. Likewise, Olivia-K considered that building on ideas should be '*a success factor for work teams…to…perform*', but claimed this did not happen very often in Team K's discussions and admitted she was just as guilty and '*didn't do any more than the others*' to '*bring this [idea] a step further*'.[188]

In fact, three particular issues pertaining to language and communication occurred in Team K's fourth task: (a) the English word 'eventual'; (b) language-switching; and (c) turn-taking, and the latter two involved rule-breaking. The first issue was language-related and concerned a possible misunderstanding of the word 'eventual' in English. Indeed, six times during the task, Parker-K questioned one of the factual elements in the problem to solve. Five *stagiaires* as well as Moniteur-Anita intervened to clarify the facts of the scenario each time (lines 51; 66-67; 121-122; 161-169; 238-241; 314-324). At first, people seemed to be wondering whether there was a misinterpretation of the word 'eventual' in the English version of the task instructions; beneath the surface it turned out not to be a language problem after all, but a disagreement with a component in the scenario. This issue slowed down Team K's discussions and caused some confusion and annoyance.

Olivia-K provided her impressions about this issue:

> *Some don't understand and...won't even admit it. ...So we said it's a question of vocabulary, we explain the word...'eventually' to him and...we thought that's what it was, and he stuck with his idea, and we told him again, and he kept to his idea, and we told him again. ...He wanted to be sure, and in fact, he had understood...but he didn't agree (laughs)* (Olivia-K-interview).[189]

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[188] *Olivia-K-interview: Une autre chose…qui pour moi est dans les règles de réussite des groupes de travail…c'est "build on other people's ideas". …Je l'ai pas plus fait que les autres ; ..."comment est-ce que je pourrais l'emmener un pas plus loin, cette idée-là?". Et le groupe qui fait ça c'est un groupe…qui est vraiment performant.*

[189] *Olivia-K-interview: Il y en a qui comprennent pas et…ils vont même pas le dire…donc on se dit c'est une question de vocabulaire, on lui explique le mot...'eventually' et...on croyait que c'était ça et il reste sur son idée, et on lui redit, et il reste sur son idée, et on lui redit. …Il voulait être sûr…et en fait il avait compris…mais il n'était pas d'accord (rires).*

For Jacob-K, the issue with the word 'eventual' demonstrated that even though language turned out not to be the cause of the problem after all, language obstacles '*distort…the messages*' when someone was '*off the subject*' or '*missed the point*':[190]

> *There was precisely the word...'eventually'...a false friend...which is why Olivia-K stepped in...saying: "...that's why he doesn't understand"...but he continued. ...We 'wasted' quote-unquote a little time...because...we were wondering if...it was linked to language. ...But after two or three times, it was obvious...beneath the surface…it was...no longer a language problem. ...Language slows down our comprehension...because it's the first 'excuse' quote-unquote...of misunderstandings...it can hide something else* (Jacob-K-interview).[191]

A second language-related issue involved a language-switching episode. Despite the rule stipulating the use of English at all times, in one particular speech event Olivia-K made a very brief statement in French. When others in the group shouted '*in English*' she apologised (lines 187-190). Insights gained from interviews depicted how this episode aggravated the discord within the team which had never truly subsided since the first task. The reason why this issue turned out to be problematic was because Olivia-K had used French to address the two people who were facilitating the task, whereas only one of them, Wyatt-K, the facilitator, could understand her aside. The other person, Zachary-K, who had gone to the board to help Wyatt-K, was Dutch, and could not speak French.[192] He immediately left the board quite discretely and went back to his seat (line 190).

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[190] *Jacob-K-interview: La langue… ça déforme…les messages…quand une personne…exprime…une idée à côté du sujet, à côté de la plaque.*

[191] *Jacob-K-interview: Il y avait justement ce mot…'eventually'…un faux-ami…c'est pour ça que Olivia-K est intervenue…se dire: "…c'est pour ça qu'il comprend mal"...mais il a continué. …On a "perdu" entre guillemets un petit peu de temps...parce que…on se demandait si…c'était lié à la langue. …Mais au bout de deux ou trois fois, c'est sûr que…derrière...c'est…plus un problème de langue. …La langue ça ralenti notre compréhension...parce que c'est la première "excuse"…entre guillemets…à des incompréhensions…ça peut masquer autre chose.*

[192] See Table 5.1 for details about the non-French speakers in the team; see also 9.4.2 for a discussion of the impact of language differences on team dynamics and processes.

Two interviewees gave their accounts of this language-switching event. Firstly, according to Audrey-K, Zachary-K became offended when Olivia-K broke the rule and spoke in French while he was helping to facilitate Task 4, so he returned to his seat:

> *Wyatt-K was supposed to be the facilitator and...Zachary-K was the leader...but when Zachary-K started writing [on the board], Wyatt-K at one point started talking French and Zachary-K lost...what they were saying...and then...I think he got personally offended of it and he came back and he sat...because he was really, really that frustrated* (Audrey-K-interview).[193]

Secondly, Olivia-K discussed this issue, commenting on the particular 'speak-English' rule at length and explaining how she believed rules in general should be applied. She acknowledged she was totally aware of the fact she was breaking the 'speak-English' rule. Although she felt this was a good rule, she claimed it was too rigid. With regard to her aside, she felt that speaking in French to one or two French people was justified because she did not consider her comment pertinent enough to merit saying it in English. As we have previously seen, she apologised afterwards owing to the group's reaction (lines 187-190), even though she was still convinced that the use of English was not necessary in this case:

> *In the rules...of the group that were written...there was "speak only in English and slowly". ...It's good to have a rule like that. In a specific incident, in the last task, while being extremely aware of this rule, I wanted to make...an aside to someone in particular because...I had something to say to that person; ...I told myself, this person might not be...fluent enough; ...I summed it up...in three words, in French, to tell him what I wanted to say. ...It was to Wyatt-K. ...I was well aware of the rule, but it was only said to him...not even ten seconds...and I had the rule clearly in mind, but I wanted...him to understand and that concerned only him, so it wasn't pertinent to do it in English. And at that particular moment, I don't know how many…who...said*

[193] Audrey-K-interview: Original in English.

> *"...in English, in English!"...[The rules are good but not]...such rigidness* (Olivia-K-interview).[194]

For Olivia-K what appeared to matter most were positive intentions, not necessarily respecting the rules to the letter:

> *I think that what works well...in relations, it's when we are convinced of the positive intentions...of others. ...It's true, we are different, we don't operate the same way, we don't have...the same country, the same profession...but as long as...we have the conviction of positive intentions, we will make it* (Olivia-K-interview).[195]

These intentions apparently seemed lacking since Audrey-K believed that this language-switching example clearly illustrated the lack of trust within the team even after four tasks together. She claimed this prevented them from reaching the 'performing'[196] stage, i.e. the final phase in their four-phase development:

> *There were people who could not trust simply some of the other people. ...We could not really reach the performances...at the last stage* (Audrey-K-interview).[197]

The third language and communication issue in Team K's fourth task involved turn-taking, which was characterised by contrasting behaviour with regard to speaking:

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[194] *Olivia-K-interview: Dans les règles…du groupe qui avaient été écrites...il y avait "parler uniquement en anglais et lentement"…c'est bien d'avoir une règle du jeu comme ça. A un moment donné, dans la dernière session, tout en étant extrêmement consciente de cette règle-là, j'ai voulu faire…un aparté à une personne en particulier parce que…j'avais quelque chose à lui dire; …je me suis dit, cette personne n'est peut-être pas…suffisamment à l'aise; …je lui fais un résumé…en trois mots, en français, pour lui dire ce que je voulais dire…c'était à Wyatt-K. …Je savais bien la règle mais ça ne s'adressait qu'à lui...même pas, dix secondes…et j'avais bien en tête la règle, mais je voulais…qu'il comprenne et ça ne concernait que lui, donc c'était pas pertinent de le faire en anglais. Et à ce moment-là il y en a combien qui…ont dit: "…en anglais, en anglais!". …[Les règles c'est bien mais pas]...la rigidité, là.*

[195] *Olivia-K-interview: Je pense que ce qui marche bien…dans les relations, c'est quand on est convaincu des intentions positives…des autres. …C'est vrai qu'on est différents, on fonctionne pas pareil, on a pas…le même pays, le même métier...mais à partir du moment où…on a la conviction d'intentions positives, on va y arriver.*

[196] Tuckman, 1965, with Jensen, 1977.

[197] Audrey-K-interview: Original in English.

overlapping and an overall politeness. On the one hand, although Wyatt-K seemed to be managing turn-taking fairly well in Task 4 (Lines 113-115; 158; 218; 302-303), Olivia-K overlapped with two people and then immediately apologised (lines 171-172; 307-309). She explained in her interview that during the team's special session on individual leadership profiles[198] held after Task 4, judgements had been made about her turn-taking behaviour, but she thought the criticism of her behaviour was unfair. In fact, she felt overlapping was a sign of listening and caring, since she claimed she was showing an interest in what the speakers were saying. She believed letting someone speak to the end and then not building on their idea was a sign of not caring. For her, it was the intention that counted; and her intention when she overlapped was to show respect with regard to what the others were saying. Her perception was that not interrupting, i.e. listening, was a valid rule but that her interruptions were constructive and not intrusive because she felt they involved building on other people's ideas; she also felt rules should not be taken to the extreme:

> *Listening doesn't mean not interrupting (laughs). …We impose rules on ourselves that can be restraining like, don't talk when others are speaking, don't interrupt. Wait, it depends on why. If you interrupt...to build on the ideas of the person...to move forward together, to continue the conversation...it's not at all the same thing. ...I really prefer that to be done to me rather than someone who waits until I've finished speaking to show they could care less about it...and who...goes with their own idea. ...It's a question...of perception. ...In fact, we need rules that are shared, rules of etiquette...that are culturally acceptable for everyone, and I think that not interrupting is probably a good rule. ...But, like all rules, it's...not necessary to take them to the extreme...either. ...What counts is the intention. And the intention is…respect and trust. And [Interrupting to me means listening]...because it shows I'm with you!* (Olivia-K-interview).[199]

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[198] See 3.4.4 (Table 3.4); 3.4.6 (Table 3.7); 4.4 for more information about this special session on individual leadership profiles.

[199] *Olivia-K-interview: L'écoute ce n'est pas ne pas couper la parole (rires). …On se met des règles qui peuvent être bloquantes comme: ne pas couper la parole, ne pas interrompre. Attends, ça dépend pourquoi. Si tu coupes la parole…pour construire sur l'idée de la personne...pour aller avec elle quelque part, pour rebondir, …c'est pas du tout la même*

A different type of turn-taking behaviour in Task 4 seemed to contrast with Olivia-K's overlapping style. Twice, for example, Zachary-K asked for permission to speak and both times raised his hand (lines 62; 264). In spite of this seemingly respectful behaviour, Jacob-K found this overly polite turn-taking style, brought on by the new set of rules, to be unnatural. He wondered why there was not a middle ground where the flow of speech could have been less artificial and not regimented by a facilitator to give people permission to take the floor:

> *It wasn't natural...between...the anarchy at the beginning...the extreme...politeness and the extreme structure of the end. ...I think there's a happy medium...where people can speak when they want to speak, or speak when they have...an interesting idea to pass on and not necessarily when...after raising their hand, the facilitator gives them the floor* (Jacob-K interview).[200]

5.4.3 Interpersonal Team Relations

As we have seen, despite people's efforts to apply the rules established between the second and third tasks, three rules had been seemingly broken in Task 4: the leader's neutrality (5.4.1), speaking English, and listening without interrupting (5.4.2), and there still seemed to be tension and annoyance among team members, as exemplified with the issue concerning the English word 'eventual' (5.4.2). Two people provided their impressions as to what might have been missing and what may have thus prevented the team from working more smoothly together. Jacob-K's

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chose. ...Je préfère vraiment qu'on me fasse ça plutôt que quelqu'un qui attends que j'ai fini de parler, qui montre qu'il en a rien à faire…et qui...va avec son idée. …C'est une question...de perception. …Effectivement il faut des règles en commun, faut des règles de vie en société…qui soient culturellement acceptables, pour tout le monde et je pense que le fait de ne pas couper la parole c'est probablement une bonne règle. ...Mais, comme toutes les règles, il…faut pas les prendre à l'extrême…non plus. ...Ce qui compte c'est le fond. Et le fond c'est le respect; le respect et la confiance. Et…[pour moi interrompre c'est l'écoute]…parce que ça montre que je suis avec toi!

[200] *Jacob-K-interview: C'était pas naturel…entre…l'anarchie du début et…l'extrême…politesse et l'extrême structure de la fin. …Je pense qu'il y a un juste milieu…où les gens peuvent parler quand ils ont envie de parler, ou parler quand ils ont…une idée intéressante à faire passer et pas forcément quand…après avoir levé la main, l'animateur leur donne la parole.*

assessment was that Team K's rules improved their organisation enough to allow them to '*fill in the gaps*', which '*prevented...the system from falling apart*' during the final two tasks. For something more permanent, for instance '*if we had to work together on a long-term basis*', he felt they would have needed to '*set up*' a more long-lasting '*structure*'. Nevertheless, he predicted Team K would eventually have '*found our cruising pace*' and '*succeeded*' in '*resolving somewhat...the...individual conflicts, by learning to know each other better*' in order '*to let up on some of the discipline*'.[201] As for Audrey-K, she concluded that '*the solution could be the people need to trust*'.[202]

This disharmony in Team K's task management, language and communication and interpersonal team relations in their final task appeared to reflect some underlying difficulties the team apparently never managed to fully resolve during their four sessions together.

5.5 Summary

As we have seen in Task 4, in spite of the rules created between Tasks 2 and 3, and in spite of the previous three sessions of trying to learn to work together, certain challenges still remained problematic even in Team K's final task. More precisely, although the team appeared fairly effective in handling role allocation, expertise, planning, the general practice of managing their time, and shared processes, they still seemed to be experiencing difficulties managing other challenges. These included: the neutrality function of the leadership role, the application of rules, turn-taking –

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[201] *Jacob-K-interview: On avait mis…une structure…pour…colmater les brèches donc ça a évité que…le système s'écroule; …on avait pas construit quelque chose de durable; …on sentait que c'était…de la construction temporaire pour tenir les deux dernières séances. Je pense que si c'était un groupe qui devait travailler…dans la durée…il y aurait encore des ajustements à faire, il y aurait encore des explications…mais…ça a permis de tenir correctement, dans une ambiance...à peu près saine. …Mais c'est vrai qu'il y…avait des gens qui s'entendent peut-être pas dans le groupe, il y a des gens qui se sont un peu rentré dedans, donc…il aurait fallu assainir ces trucs-là. …C'est pour ça…s'il y avait eu une 5ème, une 6ème, une 7ème, une 8ème séance, on aurait trouvé notre rythme de croisière, on aurait réussi...en résolvant un peu…les petits conflits individuels, en apprenant à mieux se connaître encore, à pouvoir relâcher un peu la discipline…tout en maintenant l'efficacité voir en l'améliorant.*

[202] Audrey-K-interview: Original in English.

more specifically listening and overlapping – and a number of issues related to language differences. In fact, it seemed that language differences remained a '*handicap*' and involved such areas as the speed of speaking, distinctive accents, linguistic ability, building on ideas, understanding, as well as using asides in French (as we saw in the particular language-switching incident in 5.4.2). Moreover, with regard to interpersonal team relations, people seemed frustrated and irritated with each other, and trust seemed to be lacking up until the very end.

Chapter 6 - Case Study for Team G

6.1 Introduction and Chapter Outline

This chapter provides a longitudinal description of my second case: Team G. I begin by presenting background information on the team members (6.1.1) and then give an overall synopsis of the team's four project-team sessions (6.1.2). After this I take each session in turn, and describe in detail the challenges participants experienced, their ways of handling them, and whether the means chosen were successful or not.

6.1.1 Team G: Members and their Backgrounds

Table 6.1[203] provides the aliases for the twelve members of Team G as well as their nationalities, professional sectors, genders, ages, the number of years of pre-GP professional experience, the amount of time they had worked at GP at the beginning of their first task, and their language fluency in English and French.[204]

[203] See also Appendix A8 and Chapter 9 for more details about the demographic and cultural variables for the members of each team.

[204] See footnote in 5.1.1 for more details about the two language-fluency components; see also Figures 9.10 and 9.11, and Appendix A8.8 for further details.

TEAM G Alias	Nationality	Professional Sector[205]	Gender	Age	Pre-GP Experience	Corporate Tenure	Language Fluency
Benjamin-G	France	Communi-cation	M	33	8 years	4 months	LFS French
David-G	Australia	Finance	M	37	11 years	7 years	MTS Non-French
Elizabeth-G	France	Finance	F	27	3 years	7 months	LFS French
James-G	France	Industry	M	27	----	2 years	LFS French
Joseph-G	Italy	Industry	M	35	7 years	13 years	LFS French
Logan-G	France	Communi-cation	M	46	20 years	1 month	LFS French
Madelyn-G	USA	Marketing-Sales	F	41	12 years	8 years	MTS Non-French
Nathan-G	France	Finance	M	37	-----	13 years	LFS French
Ryan-G	France	Supply Chain	M	25	----	1.5 years	LFS French
Samuel-G	Canada	Marketing-Sales	M	44	5 years	20 years	MTS French
Sarah-G	France	Tax Law	F	31	5 years	3 months	LFS French
Tyler-G	Sweden	Marketing-Sales	M	33	7 years	2 years	FS Non-French

Table 6.1 – Team G's Components of Cultural Diversity

6.1.2 Overall Synopsis of Team G's Four Project-Team Sessions

In Team G's first task, they worked as a full group; it was thus difficult for all twelve members to participate equally. Sometimes there were several conversations simultaneously; other times French was used. In the second task everyone was more involved, especially when they divided into subgroups. By the third task Team G seemed to have found an effective way of working together. In the third and fourth tasks, people appeared to be listening more and to be building on each other's ideas; and there seemed to be more participation owing to more organised teamwork methods. Throughout the four tasks there appeared to be a positive climate, full of laughter and joking, whereby people seemed to be having a good time.

[205] See footnote in Table 5.1 for more details about the categories created to classify the professional sectors for the members of the teams investigated.

6.2 Team G: Task 1

Team G had one hour and thirty minutes (14:20-15:50)[206] to solve their first task. The debriefing session afterwards lasted thirty minutes (17:55-18:10). I was unable to arrange any interviews between Team G's first and second tasks. In this section I present the ways in which the team handled their challenges in the three broad areas: task management (6.2.1), language and communication (6.2.2) and interpersonal team relations (6.2.3).[207]

6.2.1 Task Management

In this subsection, I report on how Team G managed roles, expertise, rules and practices.[208] Firstly, the team started by learning about each other's backgrounds and assigning three major roles: Ryan-G to be the leader owing to his expertise in the topic, James-G to be timekeeper and Tyler-G to be PowerPoint writer (14:20). Others involved themselves in different ways (14:20; 14:24; 14:30-31; 14:36; 14:51; 15:04-15:05; 15:11; 15:20; 15:25; 15:30; 15:45-15:46; 15:49). Although the group had started out by designating roles and identifying each other's competencies, in the team debrief,[209] participants and Moniteur-Anita felt there were inadequacies with their approach because they did not go one step further to define how each person would apply their competencies to perform their roles:

> *You started out with a good method…you found someone who had competence in Supply Chain* (Moniteur-Anita-debrief).
>
> *We started by finding out the areas of expertise of each team member* (Madelyn-G-debrief).

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[206] For Teams G and T, my observations are labelled chronologically with the timing indicated in the left-hand margins, unlike my observation notes for Team K, for which the lines are numbered (see Appendix A7 for the observation notes of Team K's Task 1; no other observation notes are provided in the Appendix section but can be provided upon request).

[207] As mentioned in 3.6.2, these are the three broad themes that emerged in the debrief data (Table 3.9).

[208] As indicated in Table 3.9, these are the sub-themes related to 'Task Management' that emerged in the team debriefs.

[209] See footnote at the beginning of 5.2.1 for the general structure and nature of the debriefs.

We didn't use the method…introduced at the beginning of our work…who does what (Joseph-G-debrief).

We identified who was to be responsible for certain tasks, but we didn't finish the method we started (James-G-debrief).

I was shocked to hear you say: "Ryan-G, you just have one hour to finish." No! This reflects your way of working. …It was to have been the work of the team. …Ryan-G couldn't do the model…the presentation (Moniteur-Anita-debrief).

Several people recognised this apparent mistake of assuming it was the expert's role to find the solution since the purpose was for everyone to provide input:

We dumped everything on Ryan-G (Madelyn-G-debrief).

Ryan-G was focusing on the spreadsheet while the other eleven spoke at him for one hour (David-G-debrief).

It's detrimental to the others…since…it's training for everyone. …The first one…was…a catastrophe…(laughs) (Sarah-G-interview).[210]

We…assumed the expert was the one to find the solution. …We would have had more creativity, because…perhaps others who aren't at all experts would manage to propose something else (Ryan-G-interview).[211]

Therefore, Joseph-G claimed that, overall, they began work without fully specifying '*the contribution of each one'* (Joseph-G-interview).[212]

In terms of rules and practices, Ryan-G, as leader, started the task as follows:

We have an hour and a half. I suggest we do brainstorming for an hour and work on the PowerPoint for the last thirty minutes (14:20).

[210] *Sarah-G-interview: C'est au détriment des autres…comme…il y a une formation pour tout le monde. ...Le premier…c'était...une catastrophe...(rires).*

[211] *Ryan-G-interview: On est partis sur le fait que l'expert ce soit lui qui trouve la solution. …On aurait plus de créativité, parce que…peut-être que des gens qui sont pas du tout experts arriveraient à proposer quelque chose d'autre.*

[212] *Joseph-G-interview: Nous avons commencé à travailler…sans…bien comprendre…la contribu de chacun.*

The team thus adopted his proposal and, like Team K in their first task, went straight to work on the solution, without taking time to plan their work:

> *In the first interaction…we began working without…being…organised* (Joseph-G-interview).[213]

> *Our only objective was to reach the goal…"tête baissée";[214] we started and everyone followed* (Benjamin-G-debrief).

With hindsight, Ryan-G, the leader, regretted starting out without planning:

> *I headed straight towards the end…without really knowing…what the objectives were overall* (Ryan-G-interview).[215]

During the team debrief, Moniteur-Anita highlighted their unclear approach:

> *Key one was missing…no methodology* (Moniteur-Anita-debrief).

In fact, several people expressed dissatisfaction with the team's ineffective general practices, i.e. disorganisation, poor time management and lack of task division:

> *The first task…was a bit of a disaster...(laughs). …We did the classic example, spend two or three hours with twelve people and two or three hours later, you've retrieved nothing…except two or three hours of discussion* (David-G-interview).[216]

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[213] *Joseph-G-interview: Pour la première interaction, la chose…qui n'aura pas…bien fonctionné, c'est la question du temps...parce…que…nous avons commencé à travailler sans…être…organisés.*

[214] The French word for: headfirst, rashly, carelessly.

[215] *Ryan-G-interview: Je suis parti droit sur la fin…sans forcément savoir…quels étaient les objectifs, en gros.*

[216] David-G-interview: Original in English.

It was only in the first task where we were perhaps a little bit too tight because we had…a few…problems managing the time (James-G-interview).[217]

We lacked time…handling and managing the case. …We are twelve; …we should have divided into three groups (Ryan-G-debrief).

I should've…said: "…we divide up; some people work separately on one of the subjects" (Ryan-G-interview).[218]

Consequently, in their solution, they '*had forgotten three points out of four*' (Ryan-G-interview).[219] This was assessed negatively in the debrief:

What we presented was much too technical and only dealt with part of the solution (Joseph-G-debrief).
We tackled it the wrong way and too late (David-G-debrief).
At 14:33 early on, Madelyn-G started by saying "we're speaking about [xxx]; …we need to see the other questions". …At 14:50, she said "we're just looking at one of the questions…we need to answer the other three". …At 15:20, Madelyn-G was making the same points about the method (Moniteur-Anita-debrief).
Yes, we only focused on one of the questions. …An hour later we were at the same point where we had been an hour before… (James-G-debrief).

Nevertheless, at the end of the debrief, Moniteur-Anita reassured them their way of working was typical of a new team:

This is typical of a group that is not yet mature. …You all wanted to find the answer, but at 14:30, I'm not sure you were hearing the signs of alarm (Moniteur-Anita-debrief).

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[217] *James-G-interview: Il y a que le premier cas où on était peut-être un petit peu trop juste parce qu'on avait...eu un peu…de soucis dans la gestion du temps.*
[218] *Ryan-G-interview: J'aurais dû…dire: "...on se répartit, il y a des gens qui travaillent à côté, sur un des sujets".*
[219] *Ryan-G-interview: On avait oublié trois points sur quatre.*

Like after Team K's first task, she then advised them to '*define [and] stick to the rules*' to help them improve their performance.

6.2.2 Language and Communication

This subsection examines how Team G managed the three challenges related to language and communication in their first task: participation, turn-taking and language differences.[220] Concerning participation, although all twelve team members seemed to have contributed during the first thirty minutes (14:20-14:50), Logan-G, Benjamin-G, and Tyler-G appeared to be the quietest. To finalise their solution, almost everyone participated, with the exception of Benjamin-G, who did not appear to have said anything (15:36-15:50). In the debrief, several people claimed everyone had participated, but others wondered what participation actually meant:

> *Everyone has participated to the solution with his own competence and knowledge* (James-G-debrief).
> *Did everyone participate?* (Moniteur-Anita-debrief).
> *More or less* (Sarah-G-debrief).
> *What is participation? Everyone was speaking with a friend; …there were a lot of conversations* (Joseph-G-debrief).

In fact, not everyone shared the perspective that they had all participated. Ryan-G and Elizabeth-G felt some people were unable to contribute owing to the time frame and the group size, and Madelyn-G did not feel everyone participated equally:

> *Especially when we only have an hour and a half for a subject…a group of twelve…can't brainstorm, can't reach a solution. There's bound to be…maybe…three-fourths of the people who're really going to…intervene and then…one-fourth who'll intervene very little* (Ryan-G-interview).[221]

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[220] As indicated in Table 3.9, these correspond to the sub-themes under 'Language and Communication' that emerged in the debrief data.

[221] *Ryan-G-interview: Surtout quand on a qu'une heure et demie pour un sujet…un groupe de douze...ne peut pas brainstormer, ne peut pas arriver à une solution. Va forcément y*

The first time…I don't think it was balanced at all (Madelyn-G-interview).[222]

Secondly, regarding turn-taking, as mentioned in Joseph-G's debrief comment above, there were numerous side conversations (14:36; 14:44; 14:47-14:48; 14:58-14:59; 15:05; 15:11; 15:13; 15:17; 15:45). At one point, like in Team K's first task, there were four unofficial subgroups all talking at the same time (15:10). Owing to this behaviour, Joseph-G (14:48) and Madelyn-G (15:11) appeared to be trying to discipline the group to stop speaking separately. In spite of these overlapping discussions, unlike in Team K, two people felt there was respect:

> *We were calm, showed respect, even though there were often five conversations at the same time* (James-G-debrief).
> *Each person could express himself; …there was respect; …each person had the opportunity to speak what he thought; …it was rich* (Nathan-G-debrief).

Moreover, James-G believed individual conversations did not hinder teamwork for too long:

> *Everyone…would actually realise that…we were too dispersed, then, all at once, we'd get back into the group* (James-G-interview).[223]

On the other hand, Benjamin-G felt side dialogues needed to be managed:

> *As soon as…we're all in side groups discussing…there'll be pair 1 talking about point A, pair 2…talking about point B…there's pair 3 also talking about point A but they see it from a totally different angle. …So it's necessary for someone to put everyone back in line…so roles need to be established* (Benjamin-G-interview).[224]

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avoir…peut-être vraiment…trois-quarts des personnes qui vont vraiment…intervenir et puis…un quart qui va très peu intervenir.

[222] Madelyn-G-interview: Original in English.

[223] *James-G-interview: Tout le monde…se rendait compte en fait…que…on s'était dispersés puis, hop, on revenait tous vers le groupe.*

[224] *Benjamin-G-interview: A partir d'un moment ou…on est tous dans des sous-groupes en train de discuter…il y a le binôme 1 qui est en train de parler du point A, il y a le binôme 2...qui*

In terms of speaking, Madelyn-G attempted to find reasons why team members were talking out of turn. Her explanation was that everyone wanted to give an opinion since they were all managers with professional experience:

> *It's a bunch of leaders. We all want to give our opinion…and we're used to doing that. ...We don't have anybody in our group that's particularly…brand new to the company. …We've got people who've been with GP for a while and are generally managing people* (Madelyn-G-interview).[225]

Owing to their constant talking, Joseph-G claimed the team's lack of listening was the cause of shortcomings in their first task:

> *The first time I think we had…a lot of weak points…in our group work…because…there wasn't a lot…of listening* (Joseph-G-interview).[226]

In fact, Moniteur-Anita recommended in the debrief, like in Team K's first debrief, for them to learn to '*listen*'.

With regard to the challenges of language differences,[227] mother-tongue speakers (MTSs) appeared to help rephrase ideas (14:20) and answer questions about specific words (14:44; 14:59). Nevertheless, according to two interviewees, some less-fluent speakers (LFSs) lacked the skills to express themselves clearly in English:

> *The level is very different between the participants…and that's…a disadvantage…[to] pinpoint exactly what [they] wanted to say* (Tyler-G-

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est en train de parler du point B…il y a le binôme 3 qui parle également du point A mais qui le perçoit d'un angle totalement différent. ...Donc il faut quelqu'un pour recadrer derrière. ...Après faut établir des rôles.

[225] Madelyn-G-interview: Original in English.

[226] *Joseph-G-interview: La première fois je pense que nous avons…beaucoup de points faibles…de notre travail en groupe…parce…qu'il y a pas été beaucoup…d'écoute.*

[227] As indicated in Table 6.1, Team G was composed of three MTSs of English and nine SLSs, of which eight were LFSs and one was a FS of English. Also, out of the nine SLSs, seven were French. Thus the majority of the SLSs spoke French, which was often used in asides, and which thus constituted one of the challenges with which the team was confronted, as we will see below.

interview).[228]

> *English…was an additional obstacle because sometimes we have the ideas and then the words…(laughs) don't necessarily come out* (Sarah-G-interview).[229]

James-G felt this lack of linguistic competency had a direct effect on participation:

> *English fluency…sometimes might've slowed things down for some people; …so they participated…more episodically than they might've wanted* (James-G-interview).[230]

Additionally, some MTSs spoke quite fast (15:31), which seemed to have been an issue for LFSs:

> *In the first task…we had a hard time responding…because they spoke so quickly* (Elizabeth-G-interview).[231]

> *Sometimes they spoke so quickly in English that I first needed to understand and capture what people were saying, before thinking about my own response* (James-G-interview).[232]

Finally, owing to the frequent use of French (14:40; 14:45; 14:50; 14:58-14:59; 15:05; 15:11; 15:13-15:14; 15:17; 15:31; 15:40), Madelyn-G advised the group to speak English to respect the non-French speakers (14:58). James-G, however, found that using French was sometimes helpful to enhance understanding:

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[228] Tyler-G-interview: Original in English.

[229] *Sarah-G-interview: L'anglais…c'était un obstacle en plus parce que des fois on a les idées et puis les mots…(rires)…ça sort pas forcément.*

[230] *James-G-interview: Peut-être la maîtrise de l'anglais...a pu être un frein à certains moments pour certains; …donc ils participaient de façon…plus épisodique que ce qu'ils auraient peut-être voulu.*

[231] *Elizabeth-G-interview: Au cas numéro 1….on avait du mal à rebondir…parce qu'ils parlaient très vite.*

[232] *James-G-interview: Des fois, ça parlait tellement vite en anglais qu'il fallait d'abord que je comprenne et que je m'approprie ce que disaient les gens, avant de penser à ma propre réponse.*

The aside of…ten-fifteen seconds…allowed us…to catch onto the argumentation…more rapidly (James-G-interview).[233]

6.2.3 Interpersonal Team Relations

Although there were weaknesses in the way the team dealt with roles and expertise, handled rules and practices, and managed language and communication, both James-G and Nathan-G highlighted the team's strengths, primarily their calm and respectful behaviour (see 6.2.2). Thanks to these strong points, Nathan-G claimed in the debrief that, in spite of their inefficiency in completing the task, they did '*good teamwork*'.

Moreover, the overall atmosphere appeared positive. In fact, the task started off with a sense of humour and a reference to Ryan-G's professional expertise by Nathan-G: '*Ryan-G's the only guy in Supply Chain, let's take a break*! (14:20)'. Similar quips occurred frequently throughout the afternoon, as well as encouraging comments, such as the one Joseph-G made while they were working on the action plan: '*We're lucky to have Ryan-G in our group*! (14:49)'.

6.2.4 Summary

We have seen in this section, like in Team K's first task, that Team G had difficulties handling the following challenges in Task 1: roles, expertise, planning, rules, general practices such as managing the time and working in subgroups (6.2.1), participation, turn-taking and language differences (6.2.2). Nevertheless, in terms of interpersonal relations, unlike in Team K, there appeared to be more respectful behaviour, better teamwork and a more positive atmosphere within Team G.

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[233] *James-G-interview: L'aparté de…dix-quinze secondes…nous permettait…de se raccrocher plus rapidement...à l'argumentation.*

6.3 Team G: Task 2

Team G had one hour and forty-five minutes (14:30-16:15) to solve their second task. At 16:39, they were the second of two teams chosen to present their proposal, after which they had a debriefing session which lasted fifteen minutes (17:55-18:10). I carried out interviews with four *stagiaires* between their second and third tasks: Benjamin-G, Joseph-G, Madelyn-G and Ryan-G. In this section, I present how the team progressed with regard to the three broad challenges: task management (6.3.1), language and communication (6.3.2) and interpersonal team relations (6.3.3).

6.3.1 Task Management

I begin by focusing on roles and expertise, before presenting rules and practices, since the former emerged as a significant issue for this team. The group spent the first ten minutes discussing roles (14:30-14:40), whereby Samuel-G was named leader because of his technical expertise. Three others appeared to play strong roles: Madelyn-G managed the timing (14:40); Joseph-G took it upon himself to facilitate processes (14:30; 14:40; 15:26; 15:38; 15:52); and David-G helped the team focus (15:15; 15:24-15:25; 15:47; 15:52).

Ryan-G and Benjamin-G found that having both a leader and a facilitator/moderator[234] influenced positively on the team's performance:

> *Samuel-G was appointed leader for his knowledge of the subject; …Joseph-G…played a key role…concerning the organisational aspect. This…was fairly effective* (Ryan-G-interview).[235]
>
> *Joseph-G…really added something* (Benjamin-G-interview).[236]

[234] As we saw in Chapter 5, Team K used the term 'facilitator' whereas Team G used the term 'moderator' for this (similar) leadership role.
[235] *Ryan-G-interview: Samuel-G a été désigné leader pour sa connaissance du sujet ; …Joseph-G…a joué un rôle clé...sur la partie cadrer. …C'était assez efficace.*
[236] *Benjamin-G-interview: Joseph-G…a vraiment apporté quelque chose.*

In the debriefing session afterwards, it seemed that *stagiaires* were unsure how they should best manage the roles of leader and facilitator/ moderator, and whether the same person could or should fulfil both roles:

> *We haven't learned all the things from the last time. …We began by designating Samuel-G as the moderator and the leader, but an expert in the field cannot be in…the subject and manage the meeting* (James-G-debrief).
> *With the expert on the subject, the risk is to forget the profile of the moderator* (Joseph-G-debrief).
> *An expert is not a good [moderator]. …We had the example of Ryan-G and Samuel-G. …They did not think of the five objectives* (James-G-debrief).
> *I agree…we need a [moderator] and an expert* (Logan-G-debrief).

They then spent a lot of time discussing the importance of the role of moderator, and again drew distinctions between the two roles. They identified the moderator's main responsibility as managing the speaking and making sure people's ideas were captured. Moreover, although they had only officially assigned a leader, and not a moderator, they also acknowledged the fact that Joseph-G took on the role of moderator to manage the teamwork processes, but left the leadership role up to Samuel-G because of his background in the topic:

> *We need a moderator to determine how long to spend on each task and to let people speak* (Logan-G).
> *We were disciplined. …Joseph-G played a great role for that; …he helped us respect the "delay"*[237] *and the target* (Nathan-G-debrief).
> *A [moderator] should take distance…watch the time…see that everyone keeps the objectives* (James-G-debrief).
> *A moderator in a large group just needs to be directive and holder of the rules. …The group agrees on the rules and the moderator says when it's OK to speak and when to shut up* (Logan-G-debrief).

[237] 'Delay' is a false-friend of the English word for *'deadline'* or *'timing'.*

> *I agree…a leader is not compulsory. …A moderator is needed to say "shut up…let's listen". …A leader should be an expert. …The moderator is…a big role to play…just focus on…the discussion without listening* (Benjamin-G-debrief).

During my interviews with Madelyn-G later that same evening and with Joseph-G the following evening, they both explained how they interpreted the difference between a 'leader' and a 'moderator', i.e. 'coordinator', and Joseph-G claimed the team operated with these two roles during Task 2:

> *A moderator is not necessarily making decisions but keeping everybody on track, facilitating the discussion, making sure people's voices are heard... A leader needs to be a decision-maker* (Madelyn-G-interview).[238]

> *The coordinator…is…the techniques…for working. …This person checks…that people…speak…or haven't spoken. …It's sort of…the way we adopted in the second one. …I was trying to somewhat do…the coordination…and the leader was…Samuel-G* (Joseph-G-interview).[239]

Team G's discussion on the dual leadership role contrasted with the role allocation system in Team K in which only one role, the facilitator, was specified in the rules the team established between the second and third tasks (section 3.2; Figure 5.1). Basically, the responsibilities of Team K's 'facilitator' corresponded to Team G's 'moderator' – both of which were expected to remain neutral so as to manage the processes without getting involved in the interactions. The disadvantage for Team K was that because a leader was not named to help make decisions in Team K's fourth task (5.4.1), the facilitator was unable to remain neutral the entire time and therefore gave his opinion about the team's solution. On the other hand, having two leadership roles, both a leader and a moderator, proved to be beneficial for Team G,

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[238] Madelyn-G-interview: Original in English.

[239] *Joseph-G-interview: Le coordinateur…c'est…la technique…de travail. …Il regarde…que quelque personnes…va…parler ou a jamais parlé. …C'est un petit peu…la façon que nous avons pris pendant la deuxième. …Je cherchais de faire un peu…la coordination…et le leader c'est…Samuel-G.*

since the leader could focus on solving the task while the moderator could focus on managing the team.

Moreover, two *stagiaires* in Team G spoke of the '*confidence*' and '*trust*' brought about through effective leadership:

> *We need to be "rassuré"*[240] *to take a decision and maybe a bad decision but to be confident* (Nathan-G-debrief).
> *It's up to the leader to be sure people understand, agree and trust* (Benjamin-G-debrief).

This is an interesting point because Audrey-K also claimed Team K needed '*clear leadership*' which she also linked to '*trust*' (5.3.1). Yet, while people in Team G apparently trusted Joseph-G's skills at moderating Team G's processes (6.3.1; 6.4.1; 6.5.1), it was not until their third task that Team K named a '*facilitator*' to manage their '*teamwork*' (5.3.2) but trust still seemed to be lacking even in Task 4 (5.4.3).

In terms of expertise, during the debrief, two *stagiaires* praised Team G for identifying professional competencies and one commended them for allowing contributions from those who were not experts:

> *We well identified the skills* (Benjamin-G-debrief).
> *We identified the technical skills but let others, without technical skills, give their input* (Sarah-G-debrief).

Moreover, Joseph-G felt Task 2 was an improvement since they set up roles to suit the different backgrounds: *The second one…the strong point was…to really begin at the beginning with…the definition…of roles…linked to the profile…of each one* (Joseph-G-interview).[241]

In their second task, Team G had therefore improved in the areas of roles and

[240] The French word for 'reassured'.
[241] *Joseph-G-interview: La deuxième je pense que…l'atout, c'était…de bien commencer au début, avec…la définition…de les rôles…liée à le profil…de chacun.*

expertise, unlike in Team K's second task, in which people were still '*fight[ing] to take the lead*' and an '*expert…impos[ed] his solution*' (5.3.1).

I now look at rules, planning, general practices and shared processes.[242] With regard to rules, Benjamin-G underlined the need to take five minutes to create rules, even though something unexpected might come up. Otherwise, he claimed it was a '*jungle*':

> *I feel we need five minutes…to set the structure, to establish rules and then to follow the plan…then there's always something unexpected. …If we establish rules and we all respect them…that really facilitates things. If not, it's a jungle. …We started out doing this…it wasn't respected right away…and then we re-respected things, because we set up a structure. …We said: "OK, this group you do this, this and this…; we'll get back together after such and such a time*" (Benjamin-G-interview).[243]

In fact, Team G never established any written rules but discussed a number of practices orally during the first and second sessions such as naming a leader and moderator, reviewing the topic before starting, planning and structuring their work, working in subgroups, and managing their time. Later, Tyler-G claimed the group was inefficient setting up these rules '*because…we need everyone's OK before doing anything, and…in my mind we would perhaps just set up the rules and get started (laughs)* (Tyler-G-interview).[244]

Basically, they had started Task 2 with the rule suggested by Joseph-G and Tyler-G for the group to take five minutes to review the task assignment (14:40). But this rule was not '*respected*' since the leader immediately began speaking so no time was ever

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[242] As indicated in Table 3.9, these are the sub-themes related to 'Rules and Practices' that emerged in the team debriefs.

[243] *Benjamin-G-interview: Je pense qu'il faut prendre cinq minutes…pour donner le cadre, établir les règles et après on suit le plan…après il y a toujours des imprévus. …Si on établit un cadre et qu'on le respecte tous…ça facilite quand même vachement les choses. Sinon c'est la jungle. …On a commencé à le faire...ça a pas été respecté tout de suite…et puis après on l'a re-respecté, parce qu'on a défini la structure. …On a dit: "allez, ce groupe là il fait ça, na, na, na, na, na; on se revoit tous dans je sais pas combien de temps".*

[244] Tyler-G-interview: Original in English.

devoted to re-reading the task objectives. Three participants found this to be lacking:

> *We didn't have time to…really reflect upon it. …Someone said…: "Let's take five minutes to read". And right away there were two people who started on the discussion. …This rule wasn't respected* (Benjamin-G-interview).[245]

> *When we said: "we're gonna take five minutes", we didn't…and I think most of us needed more time to read* (Madelyn-G-interview).[246]

> *Clearly understanding…the objectives…of the subject…is…very important* (Ryan-G-interview).[247]

Likewise, in terms of planning, one person mentioned that this aspect of task management was also missing in the team's second task:

> *We wanted to implement straight away; we should have imagined different scenarios* (Elizabeth-G-debrief).

As a result, Moniteur-Anita pointed out in the debrief that Team G's method was still '*a bit fuzzy*'.

Conversely, with regard to general practices, two practices seemed more successful compared with Task 1: time management and subgroup work. Firstly, the team appeared to have worked according to the time frame they established (14:40) and, Madelyn-G, as timekeeper, frequently reminded them of their schedule (15:10; 15:12; 15:21; 15:25; 15:52; 16:00; 16:06; 16;20). Consequently, they seemed satisfied with their performance, and realised they were effective because they followed the task presenter's instructions concerning the time frame:

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[245] *Benjamin-G-interview: On a pas le temps de…se poser vraiment la réflexion. …Il y a quelqu'un qui a dit: "On va lire. On va prendre cinq minutes pour lire". Et tout de suite il y en a deux qui sont partis sur la discussion. ...Cette règle a pas été respectée.*

[246] Madelyn-G-interview: Original in English.

[247] *Ryan-G-interview: Bien avoir compris…les objectifs…du sujet… c'est…très important.*

We were lucky. ...Task presenter XXX told us to spend less than thirty minutes on the organisation; …we listened (Nathan-G-debrief).
It's not because he gave that advice that all teams listened (Moniteur-Anita-debrief).

It worked out…because…the task presenter had told us: "Don't spend more than thirty minutes on the structure." And…fortunately…we had our time-keeper (Benjamin-G-interview).[248]

Secondly, upon David-G's suggestion (15:15; 15:24), the team worked in three separate groups (15:26-15:47), which people believed was successful, not only because they felt they had '*found a good way to save time by separating tasks*' (Elizabeth-G-debrief), thus becoming '*more efficient*', but also because '*everybody feels more able to make a contribution*' (Madelyn-G-interview).[249] In fact, Moniteur-Anita complimented the team for their improved efficiency in the second task owing to their separation of tasks:

I was surprised…before I left the room everyone was talking…when I returned, there were three groups working quietly, looking at computers. …I left for eleven minutes and then everything was on the slides; …you couldn't have done this in an hour last time (Moniteur-Anita-debrief).

Benjamin-G also reported subgroups improved the team's way of working: '*As soon as…we divided up into subgroups, it worked out really well'* (Benjamin-G-interview).[250]

Then, in terms of shared processes, because the team was experiencing difficulties agreeing on a solution, Samuel-G, as leader, suggested they vote on one alternative (15:15). Although the team never managed to actually go through with the vote,

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[248] *Benjamin-G-interview: Ca a marché…parce que…la personne qui nous présentait le cadre nous avait dit: "Faut pas passer plus de trente minutes sur la structure." Et…heureusement…qu'on avait notre time-keeper.*
[249] Madelyn-G-interview: Original in English.
[250] *Benjamin-G-interview: A partir du moment où on avait défini la structure et qu'on s'est divisés en sous-groupes, là ça a marché super bien.*

what counted for the participants was the fact that their decisions were mutual:

> *I like the idea of a democratic vote to be sure we're going in the right way* (Benjamin-G-debrief).
> *I really liked the democratic attempt…when Samuel-G proposed to vote. …But we didn't succeed in voting…so we took a solution…we had to finish* (Ryan-G-debrief).
> *At some stage we have to agree…either with a vote or a discussion. …It has to be a group decision* (Logan-G-debrief).

In fact, Benjamin-G highlighted the importance of these shared teamwork processes:

> *At some point we…have to be aligned with the dynamics of the team. …The important thing was to have common ground...so once that was done…things went well* (Benjamin-G-interview).[251]

Finally, Team G spent the last twenty minutes (15:47-16:15) assembling the slides from the three separate subgroups and at 16:39, they were the second of two teams chosen to present their solution. Their presentation lasted for twelve minutes (16:39-16:51), and as they had agreed, there were four speakers (Samuel-G; Tyler-G; Logan-G; David-G). The team seemed to be pleased with their results, while Moniteur-Anita acknowledged the quality of their presentation:

> *Are you proud*? (Moniteur-Anita-debrief).
> *I always am* (laughter)!! (Samuel-G-debrief).
> *It was better than last time* (laughter)! (Logan-G-debrief).
> *1 beer* (laughter)! (Joseph-G-debrief).
> *I was proud if you weren't* (Moniteur-Anita-debrief).
> *We had clear ideas and put them nicely in the PowerPoint* (Logan-G-debrief).

[251] *Benjamin-G-interview: Il y a un moment…ou faut s'accorder avec la dynamique de groupe. …L'important c'était d'avoir la structure commune…donc une fois que ça c'était fait…c'est très bien.*

I recognise the qualities of the presentation. …I am convinced it was easy for you to see what needed to be presented; …other people have more difficulties (Moniteur-Anita-debrief).

As we have seen in this subsection, compared with their first task, in Task 2 Team G had improved in handling general practices such as time management, subgroup work, shared processes and their final presentation; they had begun to set up rules, allocate roles and identify expertise; yet their processes with regard to planning and rules were still '*a bit fuzzy*'.

6.3.2 Language and Communication

In this subsection, I present the developments in Team G's second task regarding the three overall challenges related to language and communication: participation, turn-taking and language differences.[252] Firstly, participation appeared to have improved compared with their first task since all twelve team members seemed to have contributed to the different processes, although some were quieter in whole-group discussions, like in Task 1. Yet, in the team debrief, Tyler-G claimed everyone spoke, while for Elizabeth-G, people were more involved thanks to subgroups:

Everyone said something (Tyler-G-debrief).
When we were working as a whole group, not everyone was implicated in all, but in small groups everyone was (Elizabeth-G-debrief).

Another reason why participation may have improved in Task 2 was the positive influence of the moderator. Basically, trying to obtain everyone's participation appeared to be one of Joseph-G's concerns and objectives while moderating the processes:

It's not easy…to attain. …Benjamin-G now…has clearer ideas. ...It will be very interesting to see during the third one, the behaviour of each one to…see

[252] See Table 3.9 for the full list of debrief themes and sub-themes.

what's…improved. …It's necessary…not to lose…the interaction of Ryan-G. …James-G…had some problems participating. …He's another person…I've taken…as my target (Joseph-G-interview).[253]

A further factor which apparently fostered an increase in everyone's participation involved the improvement in the allocation of roles (6.2.1). To Madelyn-G, it seemed everyone wanted a role to show they were participating:

You don't feel like you're participating and contributing…if you don't have a role to play. So the more jobs we have, the better (Madelyn-G-interview).[254]

Conversely, turn-taking, the second language and communication challenge, still appeared problematic, as it had been in Task 1. Basically, three types of turn-taking issues remained ongoing: trying to take the floor, listening and individual conversations. In terms of taking the floor, three people seemed to be struggling to speak: Madelyn-G (14:46), Benjamin-G (15:05; 15:10; 15:13) and Logan-G (15:15). Thus, participants made the following comments in the debrief:

We…didn't take the time to hear. …During ten minutes I was there but nobody looked around the table…it's not a joke. …Sarah-G, Elizabeth-G and me…we had no answer (Benjamin-G-debrief).
I saw you were there and felt it. …The difficulty is that when someone has an idea or a question…nobody is answering (Moniteur-Anita-debrief).
Everyone was saying something else, but not responding (David-G-debrief).

Consequently, Logan-G claimed in the debrief that team members were '*talking all the time*' and Joseph-G underlined the team's poor listening, which he linked to team size:

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[253] *Joseph-G-interview: C'est pas facile…obtenir. ...Benjamin-G, maintenant…a idées plus clair. ...C'est sera très intéressant à regarder pendant la troisième, le comportement de chacun pour…regarder qu'est-ce qui…s'est amélioré. …C'est nécessaire…de pas perdre…l'interaction de Ryan-G. …James-G…a quelques problèmes à sortir. …C'est une autre personne que…j'ai pris...comme mon cible.*
[254] Madelyn-G-interview: Original in English.

The attention…the listening…aren't easy…because…there are twelve of us; …I saw Madelyn-G…trying once to speak and nobody was listening (Joseph-G-interview).[255]

Thus, they had not taken the advice about listening that Moniteur-Anita had given them at the end of the first task (6.2.2).

Likewise, even though Joseph-G and Madelyn-G made efforts to discipline the group not to hold individual discussions (15:15), side conversations were still a weakness in Task 2:

We did a great job, but in the first half everyone was talking all the time (Joseph-G-debrief).
There were twelve people all talking at once (David-G-debrief).

Similarly, challenges in language differences were still problematic in the second task. Issues involving the use of English pertained primarily to difficulties in comprehending mother-tongue speech and pace and the resulting consequences. Firstly, Benjamin-G claimed understanding MTSs hindered participation:

The mother-tongue English speakers go very quickly. …There are quite a few…who…participate less…because they follow things less quickly because of the language (Benjamin-G-interview).[256]

Secondly, for Ryan-G, the large group rendered it more difficult to ask someone to repeat when ideas were not clear:

What's difficult…especially when we're in groups of twelve…and we don't exactly understand is getting someone to repeat. …I don't think…we can waste time for each person to explain something over and over again (Ryan-

[255] *Joseph-G-interview: L'attention…l'écoute…c'est pas facile…parce que…nous sommes douze. …Je regarde que Madelyn-G…cherche une fois de parler et rien écoute.*
[256] *Benjamin-G-interview: Les anglophones ils vont très vite. …Il y en a pas mal…qui…participent moins…parce qu'ils suivent moins vite les choses à cause de la langue.*

G-interview).[257]

Finally, although five asides in French appeared to have occurred (14:46; 14:54; 15:08; 15:10; 15:20), Ryan-G expressed the need for such asides:

> *When there are twelve of us…the advantage of having a small sub-discussion rapidly with…the person next to us is that…if we have a question…we can at least ask our neighbour* (Ryan-G-interview).[258]

6.3.3 Interpersonal Team Relations

Like in Task 1, a pleasant working environment was still present. More precisely, as we have seen in the debrief dialogue at the end of 6.3.1 Team G accepted Moniteur-Anita's praise for the quality of their presentation with laughter and humour, reflecting the team's cheerful behaviour. In fact, the group seemed to be having fun and making witty remarks about what they were doing rather than taking themselves too seriously. For example, at 13:13 when Samuel-G referred to a '*best practice*' Nathan-G addressed him in a teasing way: '*you're the best*'. Another time, Samuel-G made fun of his slow typing '*at a snail's pace*', and in the debrief three of them mocked their method:

> *It was more a brainstorming than a meeting* (Logan-G-debrief).
> *It was just 'storm'* (Tyler-G-debrief).
> *Without the 'brain'* (Samuel-G-debrief).

People also strove for harmony by checking for consensus. For instance, Sarah-G was careful to ensure the team agreed with one of her suggestions: '*Why not propose*…?…*Do you understand what I mean*…?' (14:54); Joseph-G verified that

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[257] *Ryan-G-interview: Ce qui est difficile…surtout quand on est dans des groupes de douze personnes et qu'on comprend pas exactement, c'est d'arriver à faire répéter la personne. ...Je pense pas…qu'on puisse perdre du temps à ce que chaque personne réexplique…vingt fois.*

[258] *Ryan-G-interview: Quand on est douze…l'avantage d'avoir une petite sous-discussion rapidement avec...la personne d'à côté de nous, c'est que…si on a une question…on peut au moins demander à la personne d'à côté.*

people understood what he was asking: '*It's clear my question*?' (14:56); and Tyler-G gave his opinion and then wanted to know '*Are you with me*?' (15:10). Their collaborative style was reflected in the debrief:

> *We have learned a lot about the positives and negatives in the group* (Joseph-G-debrief).
> *It was constructive. We wanted to work and succeed. It was an improvement* (Nathan-G-debrief).

These comments illustrate Team G's enthusiasm as well as their efforts to understand each other to enable progressing as a team. In fact, as we have seen in 6.3.1, they were satisfied with their results and presentation, and several people, including Moniteur-Anita, Logan-G and Nathan-G, mentioned their '*improvement*' and that they were working '*better*' than in the first task. This improvement in Team G's second task contrasts sharply with the increased difficulties in Team K's second task which led them to create rules between Tasks 1 and 2 (5.3.1).

6.4 Team G: Task 3

Team G had an hour and thirty minutes (8:46-10:16) to solve their third task. Afterwards, they held a debriefing session that lasted twelve minutes (11:58-12:10), and I was able to interview Tyler-G between the team's third and fourth tasks. In this section, I present the developments with regard to the broad challenges: task management (6.4.1) language and communication (6.4.2) and interpersonal team relations (6.4.3).

6.4.1 Task Management

I first deal with roles and expertise and then with rules and practices. Firstly, with regard to roles and expertise, on arrival in the room, there appeared to be a tacit agreement that Elizabeth-G would be the PowerPoint writer again (8:46-8:48) as she

had been in Task 2. Nevertheless, she had thought someone else would fulfil the role this time, but realised it was reassuring to '*capitalise on…competence*':

> *In the third task, I considered someone else would do it. And straight away…I was told: "…change places". …That reassures people. I also feel…the others think that…when we capitalise on…competence we save time…but you can't impose yourself. If others want to do certain things, you can't always be the one who fulfils…the role* (Elizabeth-G-interview).[259]

As he had done in Task 2, Joseph-G continued to help facilitate/moderate teamwork processes (8:46-8:47; 9:00-9:03; 9:07-9:08), while Madelyn-G was named leader and Benjamin-G timekeeper (9:04-9:05). As moderator, Joseph-G appeared to remain neutral and to refrain from giving his opinion, unlike the facilitator in Team K's fourth task. In the debrief, remarks revealed that the team now appeared satisfied with their way of handling roles:

> *We were clear on who does what* (Tyler-G-debrief).
> *I read the time very well (laughter)!* (Benjamin-G-debrief).
> *A human clock (laughter)!* (David-G-debrief).

However, when interviewed, Tyler-G felt there was no clear leader, and that they mainly had leaders in the subgroups. In fact, though, he felt a leader was not necessary, especially since they were enjoying themselves. On the other hand, owing to the tight timing, he believed a structure was needed more than a leader:

> *We had absolutely no…clear leader. …We…had a pretty good time, so...it wasn't necessary. …On the other hand…I think there was…a clear leader in the subgroups. ...Because of the timing, where you need to be organised very quickly...since you only have an hour...and a half…I don't think a leader is*

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[259] *Elizabeth-G-interview: Au cas numéro trois, je considérais que quelqu'un d'autre le ferait. Et d'emblée…on m'a dit: "…change de place". …Ca rassure les gens. Je pense aussi…qu'ils se disent que…quand on capitalise sur la compétence on gagne du temps. ...J'aime autant que ça se passe comme ça…mais faut pas imposer. S'il y a des gens qui en ont envie de faire certaines choses, faut pas imposer d'être toujours celle qui fait...la tache.*

needed. …I just think it's...to set a framework and then work within it (Tyler-G-interview).[260]

I now report on the following rules and practices: planning, shared processes and general practices. Concerning planning, everyone responded to Joseph-G's suggestion to review the topic to better understand the objectives, and unlike in Tasks 1 and 2, they read through the assignment before jumping ahead to the results (8:48-9:00). Their remarks below illustrate that both reading through the task and devising a plan before getting started contributed to their increased effectiveness:

It was more structured (Joseph-G-debrief).
What was positive is that we took the time, ten minutes, to read the case; …we didn't do it the previous times; …this was necessary for understanding (Benjamin-G-debrief).

Thanks to an initial planning and organisational phase (9:07-9:32), Team G devised the following schedule: '*twenty minutes brainstorming, twenty minutes in teams, twenty minutes finalising the presentation'* (Madelyn-G, 9:07). However, although they felt they were more structured during the third task than during the previous two, they ran out of time since the task presenter stayed with the group longer than expected:

We had a good plan, but Task Presenter XXX used up more time than we expected, so our plan was gone (Madelyn-G-debrief).
We were good, but rapid; …we needed five more minutes (Logan-G-debrief).
Yes, it was the five minutes Task Presenter XXX stayed over (Moniteur-Anita-debrief).

In terms of shared processes, throughout the task, people seemed careful not to impose their ideas but to check for consensus and to make joint decisions (9:16-9:18; 9:20; 10:15). In fact, Sarah-G believed that because nobody imposed any one particular solution, this enabled everyone to contribute:

[260] Tyler-G-interview: Original in English.

Elizabeth-G…had seen…how it was done in her product line. …We all participated and after an hour Elizabeth-G said: "…what I saw put into place was this…" And it turned out that later when we were given the final solution…that was actually what had been applied. …I found it good that she didn't impose this solution…because…the objective was also to reflect and find something different. …If we have the solution right away…the task is of no interest (Sarah-G-interview).[261]

Concerning general practices, despite the fact they had run out of time, they efficiently put together their final results thanks to the work of the three separate subgroups. During the debriefing session afterwards, Moniteur-Anita praised Team G for the clarity of their solution:

Your solution is here on the board; …please tell me how you felt (Moniteur-Anita-debrief).
We had less ideas than the last time; …it was a more difficult area; …we did good (Tyler-G-debrief).
On the issue, you were clear. *…Your results were higher than average; …you are working well together. …You are "rodé"…how do you say that in English*? (Moniteur-Anita-debrief).
Well-oiled! (Samuel-G-debrief).
We promise not to tell (laughter)! (Tyler-G-debrief).

Thus, in Task 3, the team seemed to have improved in areas which had previously been somewhat problematic: roles, rules, planning and general practices, and their processes continued to be shared, as they had been in Task 2.

[261] *Sarah-G-interview: Elizabeth-G avait vu…comment ça s'était passé dans sa ligne-produit. …On a tous participé et au bout d'une heure il y a Elizabeth-G qui a dit: "…ce que j'ai vu faire c'était ça...". Et il s'est trouvé qu'après quand on nous a donné la solution finale…c'est effectivement ça qui avait été appliqué. ...J'ai trouvé ça bien qu'elle impose pas…cette solution là parce que…l'objectif c'est aussi de réfléchir pour trouver autre chose. …Si on a tout de suite la solution...l'exercice a pas d'intérêt.*

6.4.2 Language and Communication

Concerning language and communication, there appeared to be an improvement in all three broad challenges: participation, turn-taking and language differences, perhaps owing to Joseph-G's role as moderator to ensure that these challenges were successfully managed. Regarding participation, in fact, according to Joseph-G, everyone seemed to have participated, especially in subgroups. Nevertheless, he claimed there was less participation at the beginning, owing to the difficulty of the subject:

> *Did everyone feel they were participating*? (Moniteur-Anita-debrief).
> *…Not everyone said something from the beginning; …it was a hard topic. …After we began working in subgroups, each person participated* (Joseph-G-debrief).

However, from a general standpoint, Tyler-G believed that, due to group size, participation was dependent on the topic or the roles adopted:

> *Twelve people I guess it's pretty normal. Because we would've always had, depending on what case you're studying...one or two or three...that perhaps…don't say that much, or…haven't very active roles, even though, I think, everyone is participating, but some is more active than others* (Tyler-G-interview).[262]

For example, Elizabeth-G's role to be in charge of compiling the PowerPoint presentation in the second, third and fourth tasks enabled her to be involved by carrying out a useful function without necessarily contributing orally to the discussions:

> *I usually express myself more…but…it was necessary for the group to function so…we have to find our tasks. That's why I quickly took on…the PowerPoint…to provide the slides. ...That's something that needs to be done.*

[262] Tyler-G-interview: Original in English.

I really like having a responsibility…that's useful and consolidates (Elizabeth-G-interview).[263]

In terms of turn-taking, no distracting side conversations appeared to occur in English or French. Sarah-G, in the team debrief, thus believed the group listened better than in the previous two tasks and built on each other's ideas more, while Tyler-G, in his interview, found everyone to be respectful by refraining from interrupting and overlapping:

We listened more; …we weren't just sharing ideas, but constructing (Sarah-G-debrief).

I think the group is very respectful and let people get to the point; we don't interrupt or help them on the way (Tyler-G-interview).[264]

Finally, Tyler-G believed Task 3 was an improvement since people were not just speaking to hear their own voices, but were trying to help the group progress. He contrasted this with Task 1 which he considered to be a '*complete mess*' because everyone had to say something.

I think the group is getting better. ...We're not speaking just to hear our own voice. …We're actually...trying to go forward. The first one…everybody was up and...contributing to a complete mess (Tyler-G-interview).[265]

Regarding language differences,[266] fluency in English did not appear to be as problematic in the third task as it had been in Tasks 1 and 2. On the contrary, two references to the language factor seemed to have lightened the atmosphere. The first one pertained to David-G's mother-tongue vocabulary and speed (9:25),

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[263] *Elizabeth-G-interview: D'habitude je m'exprime davantage… mais… il fallait que le groupe fonctionne donc… il faut se trouver une tache. C'est pour ça que vite j'ai pris… les PowerPoint… pour donner du support. …Ca fait partie des trucs qu'il faut faire. ... J'aime bien avoir une tache...qui est utile et de consolidation.*

[264] Tyler-G-interview: Original in English.

[265] Tyler-G-interview: Original in English.

[266] See Table 6.1 for more details about the language abilities for Team G's participants.

whereby he was asked to '*speak more slowly*'. Referring back to the first example, a second language-related incident occurred (9:35) in which David-G instructed the less-fluent speakers (LFSs) to '*speak more quickly*' when the team realised they were running short of time. Judging by the laughter, people appeared to be able to make fun of themselves and to tease each other, rather than to get offended. Two interviewees seemed to share this perspective:

> *I don't think David-G was offended. He...(laughs)...was asked to slow down* (Tyler-G-interview).[267]

> *The three pure mother-tongue speakers…(laughs)…especially when they wanted to present their arguments, tended to get carried away a bit and to speak relatively fast. …They themselves realised this and if ever they didn't realise…there was someone who said: "can you speak more slowly because I'm totally lost"* (James-G-interview).[268]

Finally, French appeared to be used only five times, either to the whole group or in side dialogues (9:35; 9:49). When this occurred, Elizabeth-G (9:35) and Madelyn-G (9:49) reminded the team to speak English, and overall, people seemed to have shown respect for the non-French speakers by avoiding the use of French as much as possible. As we have previously seen, this contrasts significantly with Team K's reaction to the use of French in a brief aside in their fourth task (5.4.2).

6.4.3 Interpersonal Team Relations

Like in the previous two tasks, Task 3 appeared to be characterised by humour and joking from the start (8:46; 9:25; 9:28; 9:35). This atmosphere seemed to make people feel at ease and also led them to contribute positively to shared results. For

[267] Tyler-G-interview: Original in English.

[268] *James-G-interview: Les trois anglophones pure souche...(rires)...surtout quand ils veulent argumenter ils ont tendance à s'emballer un peu et à parler relativement vite. …Ils s'en rendaient compte eux-mêmes et si jamais ils s'en rendaient pas compte…il y en a un qui a dit: "est-ce que tu peux parler plus doucement parce que là je suis complètement paumé".*

instance, this pleasant climate is represented in section 6.4.1 in debrief remarks about roles and also in comments by Tyler-G in which he reported people were enjoying themselves. The two language-related incidents about which people laughed and joked (6.4.2) are also illustrative of the jovial atmosphere within the team.

6.5 Team G: Task 4

Team G had an hour and fifteen minutes (14:35-15:50) to solve their fourth and final task. No team debriefing session was held. After the four tasks ended, I carried out interviews with Elizabeth-G, James-G, Nathan-G, Samuel-G and Sarah-G. In this section I report on the team's progress with regard to task management (6.5.1), language and communication (6.5.2) and interpersonal team relations (6.5.3).

6.5.1 Task Management

In this subsection, I focus on roles, expertise, rules and practices.[269] Like in Task 3, everybody seemed to have found their functions and occupied a role; Joseph-G continued to facilitate the processes and Elizabeth-G to type up the PowerPoint presentation as they both had done in the previous two tasks (14:35; 14:52; 15:16; 15:34-15:39; 15:44-15:47). In spite of their apparently clear role allocation, what appeared to be striking for some team members was their way of sharing roles:

> *It was even more obvious in the third and fourth; …we would assign a leader at the beginning of the session…and then…other people…filled the function…at different times. …We didn't have a single…leader, but…a lot of small leaders who took turns. …We managed to be relatively efficient. …The only role…that was somewhat respected was the PowerPoint-writing…but…we all had the role…of leader, time-keeper, coordinator and*

[269] See Table 3.9 for the full list of debrief themes and sub-themes.

global vision (James-G-interview).[270]

Owing to this role-sharing, Sarah-G claimed having several leaders created a well-balanced situation and facilitated the team's interacting and listening. For her, the disadvantage was their lack of structure since nobody was actually in charge:

> *There was not just one leader…there were…two or three. …It was rather balanced. …I think that also helped…the exchanges…and the listening. …The other side of the coin…was that we could have been more structured…since nobody really wanted to take over; …sometimes things drifted a bit…(laughs)* (Sarah-G-interview).[271]

Likewise, James-G felt role-sharing caused disorganised discussions. Nevertheless, he claimed that since roles evolved and people had their places within the team, this enabled everyone to participate and give their opinions:

> *I felt we weren't organised…since everyone did everything and nothing. …But since…everybody had a more or less defined…place…with roles that evolved…progressively…with the different tasks…everyone said…"I had my role…I gave my opinion…when I wanted to"* (James-G-interview).[272]

For Elizabeth-G, however, the group was slow getting started each time since people had to proceed cautiously to find their bearings:

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[270] *James-G-interview: Ca a été plus flagrant encore dans le troisième et le quatrième ; …on désignait…un leader en début de séance...et finalement…d'autres gens…remplissaient la fonction…à différents moments... On avait pas de leader…unique, mais…plein de petits leaders qui se relayaient. …On arrivait à être relativement efficaces. …Le seul cas…qui était un petit peu respecté c'était la prise de note…mais…on avait tous le rôle…de leader, time-keeper, coordinateur et vision globale.*

[271] *Sarah-G-interview: Il y avait pas qu'un leader…il y avait…deux ou trois. ...C'était assez équilibré. …Je pense que c'est ça aussi qui a favorisé…les échanges…et l'écoute. …Le pendant de ça…c'est qu'on aurait peut-être pu être plus structurés...vu que personne voulait vraiment prendre l'ascendant. ...Des fois c'était un peu flottant…(rires).*

[272] *James-G-interview: Je trouvais qu'on était pas organisés...du fait que chacun faisait tout et rien. …Mais comme…chacun avait plus ou moins une place…définie…avec des rôles qui évoluaient…au fur et à mesure…des différents cas…tout le monde a dit…"j'avais mon rôle…j'ai donné mon avis...quand j'en ai eu envie."*

> *The weak point…since people had…different competencies, each time, we had to find our marks again. Who's got the competence? Who dares to express themselves. …We were walking a little on eggs again and everyone was looking for their way. …We didn't get there…directly* (Elizabeth-G-interview).[273]

Similarly, James-G believed the team still seemed to be struggling with identifying people's expertise and competencies at the start of each new task:

> *Because the subject was so different…each time it was necessary to have this period of figuring out who…had the most expertise…for us to…see the extent of the group* (James-G-interview).[274]

Concerning the team's 'rules and practices', planning, general practices and shared processes[275] all seemed to be working well. Concerning planning and general practices, members of Team G structured their final task with five precise phases as they had done in Tasks 2 and 3: reading (14:35-14:37); planning (14:44-14:46); brainstorming and allocation of work (14:46-15:00); subgroups (15:00-15:30); and compilation of slides into the PowerPoint presentation (15:30-15:47). Elizabeth-G felt the team worked more effectively after Task 1, whereby they seemed to have found a certain rhythm for working, thanks to these distinct phases:

> *The other three tasks functioned somewhat alike each time. …It went a little in all directions, but we apparently needed that phase. …Then…it became more formal, we broke into groups…we were much more efficient. …Then…we got back together, we summarised very, very, very rapidly and*

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[273] *Elizabeth-G-interview: Le point faible…comme les gens avaient des…compétences différentes, à chaque fois il fallait qu'on reprenne nos marques. Qui a les compétences? Qui ose les exprimer. ...On remarchait un petit peu sur des oeufs et tout le monde se cherchait. …On allait pas...directement.*

[274] *James-G-interview: Parce que le sujet étant tellement différent...à chaque fois il fallait qu'on ait cette petite période de savoir qui…était le plus expert…pour qu'on voie…l'étendue du groupe.*

[275] See Table 3.9 for the full list of debrief themes/sub-themes.

that was it (Elizabeth-G-interview).[276]

In interviews, people discussed the advantages of the team's practice of separating into subgroups, which they had already adopted in Tasks 2 and 3. Sarah-G claimed this practice enabled everyone to participate more, and David-G felt that, since everyone could have their say, this helped the team advance:

> *Once we were in small groups...[participation] was good (laughs)* (Sarah-G-interview).[277]

> *The thing that worked the most for us was…we'd break it into smaller groups that is manageable. …Because when you've got three or four people, you can hear everyone's opinion and you can actually progress* (David-G-interview).[278]

Shared processes constituted another team asset, whereby team members collaborated to find common ground without any one individual's solution dominating the group's decision. David-G highlighted the team's collaborative processes:

> *I don't think any of the solutions we put to any of the cases would've been any one individual's perfect solution. ...It was always try to find that common ground where everyone could sort of say: "hey, well, you know, I agree with most of it or most of it makes sense"* (David-G-interview).[279]

> *The group managed to agree on a solution* (James-G-interview).[280]

Likewise, using the metaphor of laying stones, both Joseph-G (after Task 2) and James-G (after Task 4) expressed that their shared teamwork processes enabled

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[276] *Elizabeth-G-interview: Les trois autres cas fonctionnaient un petit peu à chaque fois de la même façon. …Ca part un peu dans tous les sens, mais on avait besoin apparemment de cette phase. …Puis…ça se formalise, on coupe en groupes…on était beaucoup plus efficaces. …Après…on se remet ensemble, on synthétise très, très, très rapidement et voilà.*
[277] *Sarah-G-interview: Dès lors on était en petits groupes…[la participation] c'est bon (rires).*
[278] David-G-interview: Original in English.
[279] David-G-interview: Original in English.
[280] *James-G-interview: Le groupe arrivait à se mettre d'accord sur une solution.*

them to build something collectively:

> *Every day there was one more piece…that allowed putting things closer…which improved gradually. …That's how…everybody had the chance…of…recognising like…a mosaic. …They could say this is my stone; …put it here next to yours…to be able to compose something* (Joseph-G-interview).[281]

> *The interest is…for everyone to lay a stone that's somewhat different and that allows building something…more solid in the end* (James-G-interview).[282]

6.5.2 Language and Communication

I now report on the progress with regard to the three challenges in language and communication in Team G's fourth task: participation, turn-taking and language differences. Firstly, everyone appeared to have participated in all or some of the task work. This illustrated a type of unwritten rule that team members seemed to have gradually adopted, whereby people contributed only when they had something relevant to say. This particular point was brought up by two interviewees. David-G claimed people spoke only when necessary to avoid a '*complete mess*':

> *When you've got an hour to do something, you can't sit around and listen to all twelve opinions. …You pick the things you really thought mattered...and you let go of the others. ...Otherwise...it would degenerate into...a complete mess* (David-G-interview).[283]

Similarly, James-G found the team made conscious efforts to let others talk in one

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[281] *Joseph-G-interview: Chaque jour il y a un morceau en plus...qui permet de rattacher des trucs plus à côté…qu'améliore un petit peu. …C'est la façon que…chaque personne a la possibilité…de…reconnaître comme…une mosaïque. ...Il dit ça c'est mon pierre ; ...mettre ici parce qu'avec toi...pour pouvoir composer.*

[282] *James-G-interview: L'intérêt c'est…que chacun apporte une pierre qui est un peu différente et qui permet de construire quelque chose…de plus solide au final.*

[283] David-G-interview: Original in English.

task if they felt they had been too talkative during the '*previous experience*':

> *"I might have talked a little too much last time…what's more the subject concerns me less, I'm going to deliberately…withdraw and see how things go*" (James-G-interview).[284]

He also claimed the team ensured everyone spoke:

> *We managed to give everyone the floor more or less. …There was always somebody who said: "…hey…he hasn't spoken", or "she…hasn't spoken"* (James-G-interview).[285]

Sarah-G did not necessarily share James-G's perspective. She commented that not everyone participated, but that they should have made more of an effort to speak, especially since the atmosphere facilitated expression:

> *There were two or three people who hardly participated; …we ought to…go after…their opinion…but also it might be up to them to impose themselves more, since…I felt…the climate…encouraged…expression* (Sarah-G-interview).[286]

On the other hand, Logan-G believed that people's participation was influenced by their level of comfort with the subject, through either interest or competence:

> *Participation was…directly linked to the interest we had for the subject. …When the topic…is somewhat outside your domain of competence, you are more measured; you put yourself forward less…even if…you have qualities*

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[284] *James-G-interview: A l'expérience d'avant…: "j'ai peut-être un peu trop parlé la dernière fois. …En plus le sujet me concerne moins, je vais faire volontairement…replier en arrière et voir comment ça se passe."*

[285] *James-G-interview: On arrivait à se donner tous la parole plus ou moins. ...Il y en avait toujours un qui se disait: "…tiens…il a pas parlé", ou "elle a pas parlé".*

[286] *Sarah-G-interview: Non…il y a…deux ou trois personnes qui ont presque pas participé; …il faudra…aller chercher…leur avis…mais aussi c'est peut-être à eux de s'imposer plus, comme…moi je trouve que…le climat…favorisait…l'expression. …Je trouve que c'est aussi un peu à chacun…de se faire violence…de parler.*

and experience that can enrich the debate (Logan-G-interview).[287]

Likewise, for James-G, those with the most expertise had the most constructive ideas and participated more, although he felt everyone has something to contribute, with or without expertise:

> *We saw that…the people who participated and who…brought the best ideas…or the most constructive were those who were concerned by those issues. …When you master the subject it's much easier…to participate. …We…don't need…just experts. …They tend to get locked into their ideas. …People…who stand back more…can contribute something different* (James-G-interview). [288]

Secondly, in terms of turn-taking, people seemed to have gradually learned to listen and build on each other's ideas (14:46-14:47; 15:15-15:16). In fact, two interviewees felt listening and not interrupting were two positive team features:

> *I found there was a lot of respect in that team…because…when someone took the floor generally…we managed to listen. …There were very…rarely several people…talking at the same time* (James-G-interview).[289]

> *The strengths…were that we…respected each other; …when someone was speaking…we listened, we didn't interrupt* (Sarah-G-interview).[290]

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[287] *Logan-G-interview: La participation était…directement lié à l'intérêt qu'on avait sur le sujet. …Quand le sujet…est un peu en dehors de votre domaine de compétence, vous êtes plus mesuré, vous vous mettez moins en avant…même si...vous avez des qualités et une expérience qui peuvent enrichir le débat.*

[288] *James-G-interview: On a vu que…les personnes qui intervenaient et qui…apportaient les meilleures idées…ou les plus constructives étaient des gens qui était concernés par ces cas là. …Quand on maîtrise le sujet c'est beaucoup plus facile…de participer. ...On…a pas besoin...que d'experts. …Ils ont tendance à s'enfermer dans leurs idées. ...Des gens…qui ont un peu plus de recul…peuvent apporter quelque chose de différent.*

[289] *James-G-interview: J'ai trouvé qu'il y avait beaucoup de respect dans ce groupe là…parce que…quand quelqu'un prenait la parole, de manière générale on arrivait à s'écouter. …On avait très...rarement plusieurs personnes...qui discutaient en même temps.*

[290] *Sarah-G-interview: Les points forts…c'est qu'on…se respectait; …quand une personne parlait…on écoutait, on coupait pas la parole.*

David-G claimed people's intelligence and experience also contributed to the team's listening and respect for others:

> *They're…an intelligent group…well-experienced. …On the whole most ideas were well-thought out and I thought there was substance behind them. …So I think that always breeds a bit of respect among the group; that people are willing to listen to others when…they value…or they think their opinion…is based on something* (David-G-interview).[291]

Concerning language differences, English no longer appeared to inhibit communication, since people seemed to collaborate to find the right words to express their ideas (14:46; 15:04; 15:10; 15:16; 15:20; 15:30), and sometimes French was used in this process (14:37; 14:40; 14:50; 15:16; 15:45). In spite of these efforts to communicate, comments from both MTSs and LFSs revealed that language differences still represented somewhat of a challenge. David-G, a MTS, was aware that LFSs may have been struggling with the English language:

> *I think James-G struggled with it, in particular... because he doesn't feel his English is good* (David-G-interview).[292]

Logan-G believed nobody had a complex about speaking English but claimed it was a difficulty when expressing complex ideas:

> *There was no inhibition…just the difficulty…of having to express ideas…somewhat complex* (Logan-G-interview).[293]

Although David-G may have had the advantage of being a MTS, he felt this also brought the disadvantage of not being understood:

> *I do have the advantage of being an English-speaker but also have the*

[291] David-G-interview: Original in English.
[292] David-G-interview: Original in English.
[293] *Logan-G-interview: Il y a pas d'inhibition...juste la gêne…de devoir exprimer des idées…parfois un peu complexes.*

disadvantage that most people can't understand what I say (laughs) (David-G-interview).[294]

Elizabeth-G claimed it was simpler to understand SLSs since she found MTSs were much more powerful. She also mentioned she would have been more talkative and more convincing in her own language:

> *When it was…people whose mother-tongue language wasn't English, and when we spoke English as a common language, it was much simpler…than when…Madelyn-G…or Samuel-G or David-G…who…as soon as they expressed themselves…it was much more powerful. …There were times when I felt if it had been in French, I would have spoken up…more…and with more conviction…than in English…since we're still not 100% fluent so…we're not as powerful* (Elizabeth-G-interview).[295]

Finally, owing to language differences two people felt asides in French were necessary to help the group move forward:

> *Sometimes I judged [asides] useful…because when they responded to each other…(laughs)…it was like a ping-pong ball…and it was difficult to stop them…in their argumentation* (James-G-interview).[296]

> *People…for whom…English was a hindrance…sometimes…spoke up saying: "OK, I'm making a small aside in my mother tongue…(laughs) because it will be faster". …We were successful…using…these asides in French* (Logan-G-interview).[297]

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[294] David-G-interview: Original in English.

[295] *Elizabeth-G-interview: Quand c'est…des gens dont c'est pas la langue maternelle l'anglais, et qu'on parle en anglais parce que c'est la langue qui fédère, c'est beaucoup plus simple...que quand…Madelyn-G…ou Samuel-G ou David-G…qui…dès qu'ils s'expriment…c'est beaucoup plus percutant. …Il y avait des moments où je sentais que si ça avait été en français, j'aurais pris la parole…d'avantage…et avec plus de conviction…qu'en anglais où…on est quand même pas 100% fluent donc…on est pas aussi percutants.*

[296] *James-G-interview: Des fois j'ai jugé [les apartés] utile…parce que…quand ils se répondaient l'un l'autre…(rires)…ça faisait balle de ping-pong…et c'est difficile des les arrêter...dans leur argumentation.*

[297] *Logan-G-interview: Des personnes…pour qui…l'anglais était un frein…parfois…prenaient la*

6.5.3 Interpersonal Team Relations

Like Task 3 (6.4.3), their fourth task was also marked by humouristic interludes which seemed to have enhanced discussions and led to consensus and cohesive functioning. People could be serious and light at the same time, which everyone appeared to appreciate and which seemed to have facilitated their teamwork. For example, the team shared some final moments of teasing and joking when the two subgroups pretended to compete against each other (15:30-15:43) after working separately on the different angles of the PowerPoint presentation for thirty minutes.

James-G felt this relaxed atmosphere had a positive effect on team relations and enabled them to collaborate successfully and gave them a sense of satisfaction:

> *I was happy to work with this group because…we were fairly close-knit, we got on very, very well, we managed to be serious when it was necessary and then to have funnier moments* (James-G-interview).[298]

6.6 Summary

After several teething problems in Tasks 1 and 2 with regard to roles, expertise, rules, planning, general practices, participation, turn-taking and language differences, Team G seemed to have found an effective method by their third and fourth tasks. More specifically, by the final stages of their development, an initial preparation period led to a division into various phases (6.5.1). They seemed comfortable with this approach and appeared to find common ground, enabling them to work together successfully. Moreover, the atmosphere in the group was cheerful and people seemed to be enjoying themselves. Language and communication issues were thus handled effectively thanks to humour, respect and a positive working climate within

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parole en disant: "bon, je fais une petite parenthèse dans ma langue maternelle...(rires) parce que ça ira plus vite". …On a réussi…en utilisant…ces apartés en français.

[298] *James-G-interview: J'ai été content de travailler avec ce groupe parce que…on était assez soudés, on s'entendait très, très bien, on arrivait à être sérieux quand il fallait et puis à avoir des moments un peu plus drôles.*

the group, unlike the situation in Team K in which there were a number of unresolved issues, a lack of trust and a frustrating working climate – even during the final task.

Chapter 7 - Case Study for Team T

7.1 Introduction and Chapter Outline

This chapter presents a longitudinal description of my third case: Team T. I first present the team members and their backgrounds (7.1.1). Then I give an overall synopsis of the team's four project-team sessions (7.1.2). Afterwards I take each session individually and describe the challenges they faced, the ways in which these were handled, their progress or lack of progress over time and how this case study compared with the other two.

7.1.1 Team T: Members and their Backgrounds

Table 7.1[299] provides the aliases for the eight members of Team T as well as their nationalities, professional sectors, genders, ages, the number of years of pre-GP professional experience, the amount of time they had worked at GP at the beginning of their first task and their language fluency in English and French.[300]

[299] See also Appendix A8 and Chapter 9 for more details about the demographic and cultural variables for the members of each team.

[300] See footnote in 5.1.1 for more details about the two language-fluency components; see also Figures 9.10 and 9.11, and Appendix A8.8 for further details.

TEAM G Alias	Nationality	Professional Sector[301]	Gender	Age	Pre-GP Experience	Corporate Tenure	Language Fluency
Allison-T	France	Finance	F	49	28 years	3 months	LFS French
Anna-T	Brazil	Communi-cation	F	27	-------	5.5 years	LFS French
Brandon-T	France	Industry	M	48	25 years	1 month	LFS French
Carter-T	France	Industry	M	26	1.5 years	4 months	LFS French
Dylan-T	France	Communi-cation	M	55	22 years	1 month	LFS French
Jordan-T	USA	Marketing-Sales	M	50	10 years	17 years	MTS Non-French
Kevin-T	Italy	Industry	M	36	-------	11 years	LFS French
Luke-T	France	Supply Chain	M	25	-------	1 year	LFS French

Table 7.1 – Team T's Components of Cultural Diversity

7.1.2 Overall Synopsis of Team T's Four Project-Team Sessions

Team T seemed to have started out working fairly smoothly together, and by the end of the programme, had enhanced their teamwork style. In the team's first problem-solving task, people seemed to be listening but some were not participating in the discussions. The facilitator claimed it was hard to get input from everyone, and one person felt he did not have the opportunity to speak. In the remaining tasks, everyone seemed to have participated, but it took some people longer to feel comfortable enough to participate actively. While turn-taking never appeared very problematic, the team seemed to learn to handle the challenges of a linguistically-diverse group using English as a common language. Throughout the four tasks, for example, occasional asides in French allowed checking for comprehension and verifying thoughts and the mother-tongue speaker (MTS) rephrased ideas for clarity when people were at a loss for words. From the very first task, there appeared to be respect and tolerance.

[301] See footnote in Table 5.1 for more details about the categories created to classify the professional sectors for the members of the teams investigated.

7.2 Team T: Task 1

The eight members in Team T had one hour and thirty minutes, from 14:15-15:45,[302] to solve their first task. After presentations in the auditorium by three teams, including Team T, a thirty-minute debrief session was held from 17:00-17:30. I was able to interview Jordan-T after the first task. In this section, I report on how Team T managed the three broad challenges: task management (7.2.1), language and communication (7.2.2) and interpersonal team relations (7.2.3).

7.2.1 Task Management

In this subsection, I report on how the team handled roles, expertise, rules and practices.[303] Firstly, like Teams K and G, Team T did not define roles in Task 1, although people took on specific responsibilities (14:19-14:54; 15:16; 15:20-15:21; 15:40). Nevertheless, both Kevin-T and Brandon-T expressed in the debrief that roles were lacking when they started out:

> *At the beginning…there were no roles* (Kevin-T-debrief).
> *We started without a leader* (Brandon-T-debrief).

Although Moniteur-Anita specified that the team should have identified '*strong roles*', one of the five positive points she singled out was the way they changed leaders naturally without actually allocating roles: '*natural leadership without assigning roles*'.

Concerning their handling of expertise, although Anna-T requested people define the expertise within the team (14:30), they went to work without identifying competencies. In the team debrief, Moniteur-Anita mentioned that the group should have defined '*the competencies of each person*'. Likewise, when interviewed, Jordan-T recognised that Team T should have spent more time discovering each

[302] See footnote in 6.2.
[303] See Table 3.9 for the themes identified in the team debriefs.

other's expertise – which was also lacking in Teams K's and G's first tasks. He felt the mistake he made was to assume they knew each other's competencies since they had already experienced the teambuilding activity together.[304] Instead, as facilitator, he moved the group straight into discussing the facts:

> *I tried to take a role of facilitator...initially…to try to get the group to…open the discussion. …We could've…[said] what's the expertise of the team. Somewhat we had that knowledge. So it wasn't as if we were brand new to the...environment and needed...to discover that about…the group* (Jordan-T-interview).[305]

He then emphasised the importance of knowing people's backgrounds in order to be able to determine how they could be better involved in team processes:

> *I will be faced with situations...where I walk into a team and the players…unknowns. ...So I'll need to...begin to understand the background…their nationality…and past experience…because all of that will play into how they...can participate and contribute. …It will tell me...how to get the most from the team* (Jordan-T-interview).[306]

In spite of these weaknesses handling roles and expertise, Jordan-T claimed that right from the start people were open and did not fight for positions: '*I saw a real openness. ...There was really no infighting, there was no jockeying…for contrary positions*.[307] This contrasted sharply with the '*competition*' in Team K's second task, in which people were said to be fighting '*to position themselves*' and '*to take the lead*' and an expert apparently '*got up and…automatically*' imposed '*his solution*' (5.3.1).

[304] See section 4.4 about the treasure hunt teambuilding activity.
[305] Jordan-T-interview: Original in English.
[306] Jordan-T-interview: Original in English.
[307] Jordan-T-interview: Original in English.

Concerning rules and practices, I report on planning, rules, general practices and shared processes.[308] In the first ten minutes, Anna-T and Luke-T suggested focusing on scenarios since they felt the team had spent too much time merely brainstorming (14:24-14:25), Brandon-T believed the discussions focused too much on precise details (14:30; 14:43), and Dylan-T reminded the group of the task objectives (14:44). Moniteur-Anita summed up that the team was too caught up in the figures without stepping back to see what was important:

> *From the beginning, you were digging too deeply into figures. …You should have quickly stepped back without looking at all the details. …It took you twenty minutes before Luke-T, Anna-T and Brandon-T stopped you from going more deeply into the details and suggested working on scenarios* (Moniteur-Anita-debrief).

Likewise, both Jordan-T and Allison-T claimed the team had no overall view of their analysis:

> *We were trying to solve a specific problem. …We had no helicopter view* (Jordan-T-debrief).
> *We had no big view* (Allison-T-debrief).

The lesson Luke-T learned was the importance of first planning their method prior to moving towards the outcome. He believed the team should have reflected on the overall context before moving into action, which had also been the case for Teams K and G in their first tasks:

> *It's an area of improvement I was given during my probationary period. …Rather than going…straight to results…to talk a little…about method…to go over the main points of reflection before reaching the final conclusion; …I was placing results before…intermediary steps* (Luke-T-interview).[309]

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[308] See Table 3.9 for the list of themes that emerged in the team debriefs.

[309] *Luke-T-interview: C'est un axe de progrès qu'on m'avait donné, pendant ma période d'essai; …plutôt que d'aller…au résultat direct…de parler un peu…de la méthode…de dérouler*

Jordan-T realised after the debrief that they had skipped the planning stages, like both Teams K and G (5.2.1; 6.2.1), and had not determined a time frame or a work method:

> *I see now, having listened to the feedback...that we could've taken an earlier step to just say...let's break down our time, let's figure out how…we'll do this* (Jordan-T-interview).[310]

With regard to rules, the team had therefore set to work on the solution without either identifying roles and competencies or planning and structuring their work. Consequently, Kevin-T started the debrief session by claiming they were disorganised at the beginning and that there were no rules for working. At the end of the debrief, Moniteur-Anita advised them to consider rules, as she had done in the debriefs to both Teams K's and G's first tasks:

> *There was no organisation at the beginning; …there were no rules* (Kevin-T-debrief).
> *Think of rules* (Moniteur-Anita-debrief).

Concerning general practices, after forty minutes of interacting, team members divided into two subgroups, one English-speaking and one French-speaking, in which they worked for twenty minutes before continuing their whole-group discussions (14:40-15:00). Jordan-T found it interesting that people split up naturally to concentrate on the two approaches to the assignment:

> *It was interesting that two groups formed and then came back together, each with a…kind…of a different assignment. ...One was a…sort of an engineering approach...to the problem; the other was…more or less…a big picture* (Jordan-T-interview).[311]

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les grands points du raisonnement avant d'arriver à la conclusion finale…je mets le résultat sans…point intermédiaire.

[310] Jordan-T-interview: Original in English.

[311] Jordan-T-interview: Original in English.

In the debrief both Kevin-T and Anna-T underlined the effectiveness of working in subgroups because they were able to perform better with fewer people:

> *Can I say something positive? …We did better in small groups. …There were less people* (Kevin-T-debrief).
> *We did a better job in two groups* (Anna-T-debrief).

This practice of working in subgroups was more successful in Team T's first task compared with the practices in the other two teams' first tasks in which Team K wasted too much time before working in smaller groups (5.2.1) and in which Team G never worked in subgroups, which turned out to be '*a bit of a disaster*' (6.2.1).

When their solution was ready, Anna-T suggested the presentation be in English and that Jordan-T, the team's mother-tongue speaker (MTS), be the main speaker (15:22). Out of the ten teams in the cohort, Team T was the second of three teams chosen to speak (16:09-16:20), and Jordan-T presented their decision. In the team debriefing, Moniteur-Anita expressed her surprise, since she felt the ideas that had come out in their interactions had given meaning to their solution, but claimed these were lost during the presentation:

> *Your discussions and brainstorming gave sense to your decision, but during the presentation, this was lost; …you were too analytical and got your points across too quickly* (Moniteur-Anita-debrief).

With hindsight, Luke-T expressed in his interview that if each team member had spoken during the presentation, their proposal would have been clearer: '*The solution would have been for each one to participate*'.[312] Nevertheless, in the debrief, Kevin-T appeared satisfied with the team's '*good presentation*' which he felt was '*nicely presented*'.

Therefore, like Team K (5.2.1), Team T had only one main speaker deliver the team's presentation, both of which took place during the first tasks for these two teams,

[312] *Luke-T-interview: La solution ça aurait été que chacun participe.*

whereas Team G had four main speakers (6.3.1) since Team G's presentation took place at the end of their second task, when they had already begun to 'norm' their processes.[313]

Basically, despite the weaknesses handling the challenges related to roles, expertise, rules and planning, Team T's overall evaluation was that they collaborated effectively as a group thanks to shared processes, unlike Team K's first task in which their decisions were '*not…shared*' (5.3.1). This team feature was highlighted in debrief remarks:

> *We answered the question collectively* (Anna-T-debrief).
> *The group shared the same point of view* (Luke-T-debrief).
> *You agreed on how to work…and you worked smoothly together. …You should be proud of your first one* (Moniteur-Anita-debrief).

7.2.2 Language and Communication

In this section, I report on how Team T managed the three broad challenges related to language and communication in their first task: participation, turn-taking and language differences.[314] Concerning participation, in the first five minutes, everyone had participated except Carter-T and Dylan-T, although they participated somewhat in subgroups or through asides in French (14:44). Jordan-T, as facilitator, reported in the debrief that it was difficult to obtain '*input*' since '*not everyone was contributing, but they were listening*', which he considered to be a form of '*participating*'. Dylan-T agreed with Jordan-T that they were not all contributing, and in the debrief claimed that not everyone had the '*right to speak*'. Perhaps he wanted to say the '*opportunity to speak*', but could not find the exact word in English to express what he meant. When interviewed, Allison-T provided further insights about participation, which for her was not necessarily speaking, but contributing. Bearing this definition in mind, she felt Dylan-T did not have the chance to contribute during the first task:

[313] Tuckman, 1965, with Jensen, 1977.
[314] See Table 3.9 for the full list of themes that emerged in the debrief data.

Did you feel everyone was able to participate? (Researcher-interview).
No...but in fact...participation…speaking is not really…necessary. ...In the first I think Dylan-T…couldn't have a chance…to contribute (Allison-T-interview).[315]

Jordan-T discussed his concern with bringing a second person, Carter-T, into the interactions by giving him a role:

Looking at the whole group, the one thing I was concerned about…was to try to pull something more from Carter-T because I know…he was quite…more of an observer than a participant... (Jordan-T-interview).
Perhaps he could be something like a timekeeper; ...he would have a role... (Researcher-interview).
Then he would...have to take...some control (Jordan-T-interview).[316]

Allison-T also seemed to be aware of Carter-T's lack of involvement and tried to encourage him to contribute an idea he had proposed in the subgroup; he, however, declined to speak up (15:35). Jordan-T described the soft approach Allison-T adopted to help the team move forward by trying to involve people:

Allison-T is interesting because…her approach is sort of in the background; …she's quite strong...but…not forceful (Jordan-T-interview).[317]

Therefore, participation seemed to have been an issue for Team T, as it had been for Teams K and G in their first tasks (5.2.2; 6.2.2).

Secondly, turn-taking did not seem to be problematic for Team T compared with Teams K and G. In fact, Moniteur-Anita pointed out in the team debrief after the first task that people in the team '*showed respect*' because they '*were listening to each other*'. This contrasted with her advice to Teams K and G after their first tasks, i.e., that they needed to '*learn to listen*' (5.2.2; 6.2.2); and '*listen to others*' (5.3.2) later became one of Team K's rules, which was also repeated at the start of Task 4 (5.4.1).

[315] Allison-T-interview: Original in English.
[316] Jordan-T-interview: Original in English.
[317] Jordan-T-interview: Original in English.

Whereas Team G gradually learned to listen more by Task 3 (6.4.2), listening remained a challenge for Team K even in their fourth task (5.4.2).

Thirdly, like the other two teams, in terms of language differences, although Team T was one of the English-speaking teams of the session, French was sometimes used in asides (14:26; 14:30; 14:38; 14:39; 15:00; 15:15). Yet, Jordan-T, the only non-French speaker in Team T, was tolerant and understood it was natural for the French to make asides in their own language. That is because he felt that most of the time the '*culturally aware*' people in the group would remind everyone to revert to English:

> *The French…naturally will migrate to that. …However, the ones that are more culturally aware…all of a sudden they will realise what's happening because it's just natural for them to...speak in…their language…and they will say: "Oh, wait a second. I see…Jordan-T's listening, so we need to speak in English*" (Jordan-T-interview).[318]

In fact, this tolerance in Team T, as early as their first task, contrasted with the behaviour in Team K, in which people were offended by Olivia-K's use of French in a brief aside in Task 4, even after four tasks together (5.4.2).

7.2.3 Interpersonal Team Relations

In addition to the team's satisfaction with some of their general practices (subgroup work and solution), their shared processes (7.2.1), and their respectful behaviour concerning listening and asides in French (7.2.2), other aspects were mentioned that illustrated the team's positive dynamics. Jordan-T evaluated the team as being collaborative compared with what he had heard about other teams in the MIP session:

> *We gelled very quickly as a team. …What I've heard about some of the other teams that I haven't experienced here…were some strong…opinions that…it*

[318] Jordan-T-interview: Original in English.

took a while for them…to resolve. …I haven't really seen that…with our group (Jordan-T-interview).[319]

Likewise, Anna-T expressed in the debrief that people in the team were '*complementary*' and '*fit with each other*'.

Team T thus seemed to have got off to a better start than had Teams K and G, in spite of their difficulties managing the challenges related to roles, expertise, planning, rules and participation.

7.3 Team T: Task 2

Team T had one hour and thirty-five minutes, from 8:45-10:20, to solve their second task. As Head *Moniteur* of the integration programme, Moniteur-Anita had to deal with a company emergency and asked me (as researcher-observer) to lead the debriefing session, which lasted for twenty minutes from 11:40-12:00. I was able to carry out interviews with Anna-T and Luke-T between the second and third tasks. This section describes Team T's progress with regard to handling the three broad challenges: task management (7.3.1), language and communication (7.3.2) and interpersonal team relations (7.3.3).

7.3.1 Task Management

In this section, I report on how the team progressed in terms of managing the challenges related to roles, expertise, rules and practices. Unlike in their first task, the team started by assigning roles (8:45; 8:58; 9:20), and both Jordan-T and Dylan-T tried to find the right role for Carter-T, who agreed to be timekeeper (8:52-8:54). Team T's apparent success at handling roles was highlighted. Firstly, Kevin-T pointed out in the debrief that they '*assigned roles*' and Anna-T, in her interview, felt

[319] Jordan-T-interview: Original in English.

'e*veryone has a role and…it's complementary*' and that people contributed in their own way:

> *Luke-T…always gives good advice…the right direction; …Carter-T…who doesn't speak much…but when he speaks it's interesting…he has good things to say* (Anna-T-interview).[320]

She added that since everyone had clear roles people were able to voice their opinions, and nobody opposed the team's decisions:

> *Everyone had a role and…it's clear. Each person gives their opinion. …And I don't see anyone saying…"No, no, no…it's not working." …I never saw that* (Anna-T-interview).[321]

Likewise, concerning expertise, participants started out by asking about people's previous experience (8:52). Moreover, Luke-T claimed that since the topics in Tasks 1 and 2 were new to everyone, nobody was at an advantage. Therefore, unlike in Team K's second task in which an expert imposed his solution (5.3.1), Luke-T felt that no self-named expert took over to be at the helm of Team T:

> *Everyone was brand new on the subjects; …in the two tasks…there was nobody who stood up…and…who positioned themselves to push the group forward* (Luke-T-interview).[322]

With regard to Team T's handling of rules and practices, they appeared to have a better approach managing the task in their second session than during their first, primarily owing to their improved planning and general practices. In fact, they seemed to be applying the lessons learned from the debriefing session after Task 1,

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[320] *Anna-T-interview: Tout le monde a un rôle et…c'est complémentaire. …Luke-T…donne toujours des bons conseils...la bonne direction. …Carter-T…qui parle pas beaucoup…mais quand il parle c'est intéressant…il a des bonnes choses à dire.*

[321] *Anna-T-interview: Chacun a son rôle et…c'est clair. Chacun donne son opinion. …Et je vois pas un personne qui dit…: "Non, non, non…ça marche pas." J'ai jamais vu ça.*

[322] *Luke-T-interview: Tout le monde était tout neuf sur les sujets…dans ces deux groupes là ; …il y en a pas un qui est sorti du lot…et…qui s'est placé pour tirer le groupe.*

since they organised the task (8:45) and reviewed the instructions before setting to work (8:46) and later aligned their method to the task objectives (8:55; 9:18-9:19). In the team debrief, Kevin-T claimed they '*had a better organisation at the beginning*' and Anna-T expressed that '*the timing was good*' and, when later interviewed, she felt they were more organised than the first task:

> *The first time…we should have organised; …we've already corrected this* (Anna-T-interview).[323]

Then, unlike in Team G's second task in which this team worked effectively thanks to a division of tasks among separate groups (5.3.1), Luke-T explained that Team T did not divide into subgroups in the second task: '*We stayed in one group since the subject didn't [lend itself to] small groups*'. We will see the impact of this general practice on participation in 7.3.2.

Finally, concerning shared processes, members of Team T all seemed to have evolved towards a joint solution even though they may not have had the same vision of the problem from the start and in spite of their diverging viewpoints:

> *What's interesting is that…there are always divergent opinions and then we reach something at the end. …What's pleasing is that…once we've carefully reflected, we manage to put forward something and people are behind it. …There's nobody who says: "…that doesn't correspond at all to…my point of view". …Everyone was able to evolve…for there to be coherence…around the subject* (Luke-T-interview).[324]

Therefore, in spite of individual differences, there was a group collaboration to produce a unified outcome; Team T's processes were thus shared – as they had been in Task 1. Moreover, in the final minutes, Jordan-T suggested everyone be involved

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[323] *Anna-T-interview: La première fois…il a fallu l'organisation; ...on l'a déjà corrigé.*

[324] *Luke-T-interview: Ce qui est intéressant c'est que…il y a toujours des avis divergents et puis on arrive quand même à la fin à quelque chose. …Qui me plaît bien, c'est que…une fois qu'on a bien réfléchi, on arrive à poser quelque chose et les gens sont derrière. …Il y a pas quelqu'un qui se dit: "…ça correspond pas du tout à...mon point de vue." ...Chacun a pu évoluer…pour qu'il y ait une cohérence…autour du sujet.*

should they be asked to deliver their results in the auditorium (10:10-10:15), but Team T was not one of the teams chosen to make their presentation. Thus, like Team G, in which four people collaborated to deliver their presentation in the second task, by Task 2 Team T was also prepared to present their results more collectively.

7.3.2 Language and Communication

In this section, I report on the team's progress in their second task handling the three main challenges related to language and communication: participation, turn-taking and language differences. With regard to participation, as we saw in the previous section (7.3.1), Team T stayed together for the whole task and never divided into subgroups. The impact of this was that during the entire interaction, Dylan-T only spoke to the full group five times (8:52; 8:54; 9:03; 9:20; 9:27), and Carter-T six (8:53; 9:25; 9:30; 9:47; 10:00; 10:09). Nevertheless, in the debriefing session, Dylan-T, the only person to comment on participation, claimed '*everyone participated*'. Apparently this time he no longer thought participation was problematic as he had found it to be in the first task (7.2.2), perhaps because he had volunteered for a role (7.3.1; 7.3.3).

When asked to define the term participation, Luke-T felt it meant contributing ideas to build something collectively and not merely talking for the sake of it or remaining completely outside the discussions. With this definition in mind, Luke-T believed everyone participated in the first two tasks:

> *There are always people who participate more than others; that's natural, but…I don't feel there were people who were…on the sidelines and who didn't participate. …It's contributing…speaking to add something…to give an opinion…or to help build…the reasoning…to help the group move forward. …It's not speaking for the pleasure of speaking. …Nor is it…staying in a corner and not speaking* (Luke-T-interview).[325]

[325] *Luke-T-interview: Il y a toujours des gens qui participent plus que d'autres, c'est naturel, mais…j'ai pas le sentiment qu'il y ait des gens qui soient…de côté et qui ne participent*

Like people in Team K (5.4.2), Anna-T found that the mix of languages and cultures tended to put everyone on the same footing. For her, this facilitated participation in spite of language differences, whereas in Team G, people seemed to have had a hard time participating owing to the different language levels (6.2.2):

> *I see a lot of positive points. …This mix of cultures [and] languages …puts…everyone at the same…level…if there's someone with a higher position, someone who's worked for…a longer time. …As long as everyone's at the same level…everyone feels at ease to contribute* (Anna-T-interview).[326]

Team T's turn-taking techniques constituted additional characteristics that helped generate a positive atmosphere of trust and confidence, enabling participants to speak and contribute. The fact that people listened without interrupting allowed everyone enough time to voice their opinions:

> *There was respect; …we felt we were listened to; …we didn't feel we were going to be interrupted; …we felt there was enough time for each one to speak* (Brandon-T-debrief).
> *Your strong points were your tolerance for letting others take their time to speak. …This created a climate of trust and confidence…so people felt comfortable to contribute* (Researcher-debrief).

> *Things are going well…when I give my opinions, I feel everyone's listening. …I feel at ease…to say things. …In the end, we succeed (laughs); …we have good results. …I've already participated…in work teams which were much more difficult* (Anna-T-interview).[327]

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pas. ...C'est contribuer…parler…pour apporter quelque chose…pour donner son avis...ou pour aider à construire…le raisonnement…aider à faire avancer le groupe. …C'est pas parler pour le plaisir de parler. ...C'est pas non plus…rester dans son coin et ne pas parler.

[326] *Anna-T-interview: Je vois beaucoup de points positifs. …Ce mélange de cultures [et] de langues...laisse…tout le monde dans le même…niveau…s'il y a quelqu'un qui a un poste plus important, quelqu'un qui travaille depuis…plus de temps. …A partir du moment que tout le monde est dans le même niveau...tout le monde se sent à l'aise pour contribuer.*

[327] *Anna-T-interview: Ca marche bien…quand je donne mes opinions, je crois que tout le monde écoute. …Je me sens à l'aise…pour dire les choses. ...Et, finalement, on réussit (rires); …on a des bons résultats. …J'ai déjà participé…des équipes travail qui ont été beaucoup plus difficiles.*

This ease to speak and listen that members felt in Team T's second task contrasted sharply to the behaviour in Team K's second task, which was said to have '*left a mark*' on the team for the remainder of the tasks (5.3.1), as well as to that in Team G's second task, in which people were still having difficulties taking the floor and speaking (6.3.1).

Throughout the second task two types of challenges related to language differences seemed to be dealt with effectively: the use of English and asides in French. Firstly, difficulties with the use of English appeared to have been carefully managed. For instance, two of the second-language speakers (SLSs) who were less fluent speakers (LFSs), both Kevin-T and Anna-T, asked directly for help with expression and understanding (9:00; 9:10), and when Luke-T could not find the exact wording he used a gesture to explain what he wanted to say (9:05). Throughout the task, Jordan-T, the only MTS, helped his teammates when they were struggling with the language (8:55; 9:00; 9:11; 9:20). Although in the debrief Allison-T claimed that '*it was difficult*' for people '*to express ideas*' in English owing to '*the language issue*', she found that '*ideas were not lost*'.

Moreover, in the debriefing session that I was asked to lead (7.3), I complimented the team on the different strategies they had used to handle language differences:

> *Speaking in French from time to time with your neighbours allowed you to check for understanding and to verify your ideas before sharing them with the group. …This gave you time to think in French before speaking in English. …Jordan-T was able to capture your ideas and rephrase them in English for clarity…when participants were at a loss for words* (Researcher-debrief).

French was thus used for different reasons. Dylan-T used it with a touch of humour to express which role he would take (8:54; see 7.3.3); Allison-T spoke in French to encourage Dylan-T to contribute an idea (9:21), and, even though the team never worked in smaller groups, only three asides in French took place (8:56; 9:50; 10:05).

7.3.3 Interpersonal Team Relations

During the role-assignment process (8:52-8:54) both Brandon-T and Dylan-T lightened the atmosphere by deliberately mixing English and French and by not taking themselves too seriously; instead, they were making fun of the roles they would adopt. There was thus a balance between serious work and a pleasant environment.

Moreover, owing to the team's manner of involving and integrating people (7.3.1) and to their respectful and tolerant listening and turn-taking habits, which created trust and confidence (7.3.2), during his interview after the second task, Luke-T described the general caring attitude he found within the team whereby *stagiaires* demonstrated thoughtfulness towards one another:

> *The availability of people; …people go towards each other; …people are interested in each other; …ask one another questions; …that helps everyone to integrate; …it's a sort of snowball effect…whereby everybody integrates well* (Luke-T-interview).[328]

In their second task, Team T, like Team G, had thus improved in handling a number of challenges. For Team T, these included roles, expertise, planning and to some extent participation. Their processes continued to be shared, their turn-taking techniques still seemed effective and their interpersonal team relations remained positive and respectful, unlike Team K's second task in which '*clashes*' and '*tensions*' led to a special rule-setting meeting (5.3).

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[328] *Luke-T-interview: La disponibilité des gens; ...les gens vont les uns vers les autres ; …les gens s'intéressent les uns aux autres; …se posent des questions ; …ça aide tout le monde à l'intégration; …ça fait une sorte de phénomène de boule de neige… où tout le monde s'intègre bien.*

7.4 Team T: Task 3

Team T spent one hour and thirty-five minutes (14:05-15:50) solving their third task. No team debrief was held afterwards. Nor was I able to conduct any interviews between the team's third and fourth tasks. This section reports on the team's progress with regard to managing their challenges related to task management (7.4.1), language and communication (7.4.2) and interpersonal team relations (7.4.3).

7.4.1 Task Management

In this section, I present the team's progress handling roles, expertise, rules and practices. Firstly, in spite of the debrief comments after Task 1 (7.2.1) and the team's role-allocating process in Task 2 (7.3.1), in Task 3 they began their discussions without assigning roles. This, however, did not seem problematic since on the whole everyone took on natural responsibilities, apparently retaining the same functions as in previous sessions (14:05-14:07; 14:10; 14:22; 15:18; 15:31; 15:35; 15:40).

In addition to facilitating the teamwork, Jordan-T was also the expert in the field (14:15; 14:25). The dual responsibilities of facilitator and expert for Team T's leader contrasted to the separation of the two leadership functions for both Teams K and G, whereby '*experts*' in Team K were not '*compatible*' with the '*neutral facilitator*' (5.3.2) and Team G's '*leader*' and '*moderator*' were two people with distinct duties (6.3.1).

In terms of rules and practices, before starting on the issues, the team first organised their time frame (14:05-14:08) and clarified the task contents (14:08-14:12), as they had also done effectively in Task 2.

Concerning shared processes, like in the first two tasks, there appeared to be agreement, consensus and cooperation (14:10; 14:14; 14:16; 14:20; 14:23; 15:31). This team effort meant that people built on each other's ideas, were diplomatic and

made joint decisions (15:10-15:16); nobody imposed their own suggestions, but went along with those of the majority (14:51; 15:25; 15:20; 15:31).

7.4.2 Language and Communication

In this section, I report on the team's progress handling the three broad challenges pertaining to language and communication: participation, turn-taking and language differences. Firstly, everyone participated more in Task 3, although individuals contributed differently. Allison-T seemed to participate more in small groups (14:44; 14:48), and Anna-T became more involved when the team began concentrating on an aspect of the task linked to her professional sector. Since everyone contributed to the PowerPoint document that Luke-T was compiling (14:36-14:37) either by suggesting ideas (15:00; 15:02-15:04; 15:14) or by helping with the phrasing (15:15; 15:20; 15:27; 15:40; 15:44), this reflected the progress which had been made managing participation. In fact, questions and answers about vocabulary and expressions in the team's presentation (14:41; 14:45; 15:07; 15:40; 15:44) allowed the involvement of everyone, even those who were not providing the solution to the problem. Overall, Dylan-T participated more than he had done in the previous tasks, while at the same time he appeared to be using French more frequently (14:45; 14:52; 14:58). Moreover, thanks to the humouristic exchanges and the warm and light atmosphere (7.4.3) Carter-T seemed to have gained the necessary confidence to contribute more actively to the teamwork.

Secondly, with regard to turn-taking, as in the first two tasks, and in spite of the side conversations in French as well as in English (14:10-14:11; 14:14; 14:25-14:27; 14:48-14:50; 15:00-15:04), overlapping was still not problematic, compared with the situation in Team K (5.3.1; 5.4.2).

Regarding language differences, the team continued to find strategies to handle the challenges. Jordan-T, the only MTS in Team T, reformulated his teammates' ideas in English (15:20; 15:31; 15:35) and Luke-T used the spell-check option to make sure he did not misspell what he was typing (14:38). When Jordan-T used terminology that

the others could not understand (14:23), Anna-T was not inhibited to admit she had not captured his suggestion, which he immediately reworded (14:23-14:25). Moreover, a language joke occurred between Carter-T and Jordan-T, causing laughter and loosening the atmosphere (14:38).

Additionally, a fairly long aside in French involving most of the participants was set off by Dylan-T's comment that he had not understood something (14:52-14:54). Yet, Jordan-T, the only non-French speaker, did not complain about this use of French, but remained tolerant and later resumed the interaction in English (14:54). He thus appeared to be aware of the advantages of these asides in French to enable people to clarify the points being discussed, as we also saw in his interview comments after Task 1 (7.2.2). Ironically, this tolerance of a lengthy aside in Team T's third task contrasted sharply with the behaviour in Team K's fourth task in which people were annoyed with Olivia-K's brief aside, even after four tasks together.

7.4.3 Interpersonal Team Relations

As in the previous two tasks, in addition to the teamwork collaboration illustrated at the end of 7.4.1, team members had positive attitudes, were pleased with their results and provided encouraging praise (14:32; 14:36; 15:02; 15:35). Moreover, short pleasantries, such as laughing, teasing and joking (14:30; 14:47; 14:55-14:59; 15:07; 15:10; 15:16; 15:31; 15:40; 15:46) relaxed the atmosphere.

7.5 Team T: Introduction to Task 4

Team T had one hour and twenty minutes, from 8:30-9:50, to work on their fourth task. They had a debriefing session which lasted for ten minutes from 11:00-11:10. After the four problem-solving workshops ended, I was able to interview the remaining five *stagiaires*: Allison-T, Brandon-T, Carter-T, Dylan-T and Kevin-T. In this section, I report on Team T's progress handling the three main challenges: task

management (7.5.1), language and communication (7.5.2) and interpersonal team relations (7.5.3).

7.5.1 Task Management

In this section, I report on the team's development with regard to roles, expertise, rules and practices. Concerning roles, like in Task 3, no role-assigning process took place in the fourth task. Nevertheless, people seemed to have retained their particular functions from previous tasks (8:30; 8:52; 9:12) and to have taken on the necessary duties to ensure that the work was achieved (8:47; 8:50; 8:53; 9:10; 9:25; 9:42; 9:45). For example, Allison-T claimed her '*personal objective*' was to be '*available*' for the team by acting as a '*guide*' to help '*the group*' find its '*path*' because she liked '*each one…to say something…and to contribute*' (Allison-T-interview).[329]

Expertise was also handled well, as it had been after Task 1 (7.2.1). For example, both Kevin-T (8:34; 9:34) and Jordan-T (8:42; 9:00; 9:14; 9:16; 9:20) wanted to share similar situations they had already experienced in Italy and the USA, respectively. Nevertheless, they were careful not to impose their expertise on the others; instead they let the team determine a solution collectively as a group. As a result, Allison-T felt Team T collaborated well:

> *We could work and achieve…despite your experience…Jordan-T; despite your feeling of the situation…emotional…for Italy you saw, Kevin-T* (Allison-T-debrief).

Jordan-T agreed and pointed out that everyone needed to contribute, not just those with expertise:

[329] Allison-T requested to carry out her interview in English and to use some insertions in French when she could not find her words.

I had a similar experience, but still everyone needs to feel they have a voice (Jordan-T-debrief).

Yet, Kevin-T felt the team did not fully benefit from everyone's expertise in the fourth task since they were diplomatic and respectful in their approach which was to listen to everyone's input:

> *I didn't see anyone benefiting…from my experience or Brandon-T's. …Also Anna-T…in the communication part…we probably didn't benefit…from her experience. …That's probably out of…respect…for the others…to…listen to all…the propositions…of everyone…so we were very diplomatic in our…speaking* (Kevin-T-interview).[330]

In fact, this behaviour impacted positively on the team's development. More precisely, owing to Carter-T's young age and lack of professional experience, he had not felt it was legitimate for him to contribute in the first two tasks, but felt more comfortable with the last two tasks:

> *The subjects at the beginning…I think that someone with fifteen years of corporate…experience had…more to say, more legitimacy…and…I was a little lost in the first two. …The last two were much more open. …[In the first] I didn't have enough hindsight or knowledge to be sure enough…about such-and-such a solution. …The same goes for the second one* (Carter-T-interview).[331]

In terms of rules and practices, I report primarily on shared processes, which emerged as significant in this task owing to new challenges that developed.

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[330] *Kevin-T-interview: J'ai vu pas les personnes qui a profité…de mon expérience ou…de Brandon-T. …Aussi Anna-T…sur la partie communication...on a pas profité probablement…de son expérience. ...Ca probablement pour…respect…des autres...pour…écouter tous…les propositions...des autres…donc on était très diplomates dans notre...discours.*

[331] *Carter-T-interview: Les cas, au début...je pense que quelqu'un qui avait quinze ans d'expérience...dans l'entreprise avait…plus de choses à dire, plus de légitimité…et …j'étais un peu plus perdu sur les deux premières. …Les deux dernières étaient beaucoup plus ouvertes. …[Le premier] j'avais pas assez de recul et de connaissances pour être aussi assuré…qu'il fallait mieux telle ou telle solution. ...Et pareil, le deuxième cas.*

Somewhat unexpectedly, especially since their processes had been shared in the first three tasks, Carter-T expressed he found it more difficult for the team to come to a shared agreement in Task 4 than in the previous tasks. For him, this was due to the general nature of the topic which led to strong and distinct convictions:

> *It was really very general, so I think that might be why in the last one…we had more difficulty agreeing because…everyone had an opinion on the question* (Carter-T-interview).[332]

Nevertheless, participants appeared to work towards a joint solution and show respect with regard to differing opinions (8:40; 8:43; 8:55; 9:08; 9:09; 9:15; 9:16; 9:18-9:20). More precisely, Luke-T accepted the majority opinion, even though he disagreed with the solution the team adopted:

> *Our friend Luke-T was not happy* (Anna-T-debrief).
> *The team won't always be in agreement; ...sometimes there's a compromise; ...you're in a majority* (Jordan-T-debrief).
> *It's exactly that; ...the majority is not agree with me; ...I let the majority; …this case tells us we are different; ...we showed respect* (Luke-T-debrief).
> *That's why it's the last*... (Moniteur-Anita-debrief).
> F*or the first time we diverged; …we did good work in the team for the same reason*… (Allison-T-debrief).

Moniteur-Anita also complimented the team for their solution which was '*close to what happened*' in reality.

7.5.2 Language and Communication

This section presents how Team T handled the three main language and communication challenges in their fourth and final task: participation, turn-taking

[332] *Carter-T-interview: C'était vraiment très général, donc je pense que c'est pour ça peut-être dans le dernier…on a eu le plus de mal à se mettre d'accord, parce que…tout le monde a un avis sur cette question.*

and language differences. In this task, the former two challenges were interrelated since turn-taking problems, i.e. overlapping, occurred owing to an increased participation. More tangibly, within the first ten minutes all eight team members had participated; and everyone continued to take part in the conversations, including Carter-T, who, since becoming more involved as of Task 3, no longer stayed in the background. At times, the interaction was lively and characterised by energetic expression, whereby everybody wanted to speak at once, which sometimes led to frustration (9:33-9:34).

Two elements contributed to this increased participation, and the resulting turn-taking issues, which the team had not experienced previously. Firstly, as we saw in 7.5.1, the general nature of the topic entailed strong emotions about the situation which led people to contribute more to the discussions. Secondly, people knew each other better and thus seemed more at ease to speak and share their viewpoints. Yet, for Allison-T, in spite of the increased turn-taking difficulties, this enhanced contribution meant they were finally able to construct something collectively as a team:

> *The most difficult. …We know each other more; …we expressed ourselves* (Anna-T-debrief).
> *We know each other better; …it was the most difficult teamwork to manage…* (Dylan-T-debrief).
> *There was strong brainstorming at the beginning* (Brandon-T-debrief).
> *It was difficult*… (Jordan-T-debrief).
> *…Finally each had a chance to express himself each one…and finally build something correct*… (Allison-T-debrief).

Carter-T explained that it took him two tasks out of the four during the four-week programme to feel relaxed enough to participate because at first he did not know anyone in the team. When he gradually began to know his fellow teammates this enabled him to become more involved in the discussions:

At the beginning…I was a little…cautious; I wasn't very much at ease; …then…I got…to know the people; …it took time. …I stayed back a little more in…the first two…but things were better in the last two (Carter-T-interview).[333]

Speaking of Carter-T's involvement, Brandon-T felt Carter-T needed to feel comfortable in order to provide his added value:

He…waited to feel good. …When he felt at ease...he gave the dimension…his true value (Brandon-T-interview).[334]

With regard to language differences, as we saw earlier in this section, *stagiaires* had numerous ideas they desired to communicate. Since everyone wanted to speak, they thus had to make enhanced efforts to convey their viewpoints in English. In doing so, they used English inaccurately or they mixed languages by inserting some words in French or by reverting back and forth between English and French. Yet Jordan-T, the team's only MTS, was patient and helpful and took the time to explain the meanings of vocabulary and to phrase the group's presentation (8:52; 9:28; 9:40).

For many people in the team, English still represented a challenge for them to express themselves. Yet, Kevin-T claimed he overcame the language difficulty by trying to speak whenever possible and to say what he had to say even with mistakes or with parts of his sentences in French. He did not feel he could afford waiting to be totally accurate:

Language, for me, was a difficulty; …not the main one…but in fact…it was still a constraint… (Kevin-T-interview).

What did you do to manage this difficulty…? (Researcher-interview).

…I always…tried…to speak English…and…to say the sentence anyway…with

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[333] *Carter-T-interview: Au début…j'étais un peu…sur la réserve; j'étais pas très à l'aise; …après…j'ai commencé…à connaître les gens; …il m'a fallu un peu de temps. …J'étais un peu plus en retrait sur…les deux premiers…mais ça allait mieux…les deux derniers.*

[334] *Brandon-T-interview: Il…a attendu de se sentir bien. …Quand il s'est senti décontracté...il a donné la dimension…sa vraie valeur.*

mistakes and…with some parts in French…not to wait to be perfect (Kevin-T-interview).[335]

Likewise, for Carter-T the language strategy that the team adopted encouraged them to make the effort to express their opinions even though they might have had doubts or hesitations about their language skills. Secondly, he seemed to feel that Jordan-T helped the team reformulate their ideas and that everyone tried to assist the team with words and expressions:

> *Nuances…simple in French…are more difficult…to explain in English. …We're always…afraid; we wonder…"Did I understand correctly? …Did I say…what I wanted to say a certain way…?" …Then we just tried…and we ended up understanding each other. …I found that Jordan-T…when somebody didn't know a word in English, we tried to find…a synonym…for him to rephrase* (Carter-T-interview).[336]

Although Allison-T considered Jordan-T was careful and spoke slowly for everyone to understand, she believed some people may feel uncomfortable asking others to repeat or asking for explanations because this might give a negative impression. Consequently, she claimed group facilitators should take this into consideration to ensure that everyone is following and nobody is lost or feeling left out:

> *The…problem we find…in international context…is that Anglophones…which was not...so often with Jordan-T, but…as it is their own language…they cannot pay attention...to speak slowly. …So I am comfortable, because I know that…I can ask him to repeat three times if I need it. …But…when…there is no*

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[335] *Kevin-T-interview: La langue, pour moi, c'était une difficulté; ...c'est pas le principal…mais en fait…c'est quand même un contrainte…*
Researcher: Qu'est-ce que vous avez fait pour gérer cette difficulté…?
Kevin-T-interview: …J'essayais…tout le temps…de parler en anglais…et…à faire quand même la phrase...avec des erreurs et…avec quelques parties en français…pas attendre d'être parfait.

[336] *Carter-T-interview: Des nuances…simples en français…sont plus difficiles…à expliquer en anglais. …On a toujours…peur, on se dit: "Tiens, est-ce que j'ai été bien compris? …Ce que j'ai voulu dire…est-ce que je l'ai dit d'une manière...?" …Après, je pense que chacun se lance…et on finit par se comprendre. …Je trouve que Jordan-T…quand quelqu'un savait pas dire un mot en anglais, on essayait de trouver...un synonyme…pour qu'il le reformule.*

manager in the group, who is going to tell?[337] *…When we organise the group and…facilitate it…it's something very easy, because…the facilitator…can ask: "can you repeat for so-and-so?"…When it's the person who didn't understand who says it, we can come across as stupid and…it's a bit embarrassing. …I'm not embarrassed* (Allison-T-interview).[338]

As in both Teams K and G and in Team T's previous tasks, asides in French constituted another language tactic people used to enable them to get their ideas across. Indeed, owing to the strong convictions, and thus the greater involvement evoked above, there was an increased use of French (8:34; 9:12; 9:20; 9:25-26; 9:34; 9:38-40; 9:41). In three such speech episodes, to show respect to Jordan-T, the only non-French-speaker in the team, Anna-T requested '*in English*' (8:34), Kevin-T apologised (9:42) and Allison-T translated:

…Once I was…near Jordan-T and somebody told, "Well, I'm speaking French because I have a problem" and I did translate to him, but he didn't ask me to do it (Allison-T-interview).[339]

Thus, like in Team G (6.3.1; 6.5.1), but unlike in Team K (5.4.2), Team T handled these asides effectively.

Finally, concerning language differences, even though people may have felt somewhat inhibited at first being in an English-speaking team, Carter-T felt that overall everyone had approximately the same level in English, and that, other than Jordan-T, they were all in the same situation of having to speak a foreign language:[340]

Other than Jordan-T…everyone was in the same situation…to have to use a non-native language. …I think the language levels were…fairly homogenous.

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[337] Allison-T-interview: Original in English. See also footnote in first paragraph of 7.5.1.

[338] *Allison-T-interview: …Quand on organise le groupe et quand on l'encadre…c'est quelque chose de très facile, parce que…celui qui…piloter…peut demander: "est-ce que tu peux répéter pour un tel?"...Quand…c'est la personne qui n'a pas compris qui va dire, on peut passer pour un imbécile et…c'est un peu gênant. …Moi…ça me gêne pas…*

[339] Allison-T-interview: Original in English.

[340] See also similar comments by Jacob-K (5.4.2) and Anna-K (7.3.2) about using English as a common language.

…We all had an effort to make…each of us (Carter-T-interview).[341]

He also expressed he did not find people to be impatient, but felt that everyone was tolerant when others were trying to speak; nor did he feel language challenges caused people to give up trying to join in, unlike in Team K's final task in which people were still annoyed with each other (5.4.2):

> *I felt…everyone…was tolerant; there was no…impatience. …I don't think there was anyone who held back saying: "I don't speak…well enough…I'm not going to say it*" (Carter-T-interview).[342]

7.5.3 Interpersonal Team Relations

Like in Tasks 1-3, during Task 4, the discussions were lightened thanks to funny interludes involving teasing and plays on words (9:12; 9:16; 9:22-24; 9:35; 9:38; 9:41), which contributed towards a positive work climate and a feeling of well-being and comfort within the team. This joking atmosphere was conveyed even during the team debrief, when two people teased Brandon-T about a misunderstanding that had occurred during the interaction:

> *Brandon-T…didn't understand*… (Dylan-T-debrief).
> *…the subject…(laughter)* (Luke-T-debrief).
> *I thought they continued (laughter)* (Brandon-T-debrief).
> *So it was you? (laughter)* (Moniteur-Anita-debrief).

Moreover, throughout the four tasks, the team appeared to have abided by an unwritten code of conduct whereby they let people talk – like the unwritten rule Team G eventually developed (6.5.2); they were respectful of each other; everyone

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[341] *Carter-T-interview: Sauf Jordan-T…tout le monde était dans la même situation de...devoir sortir de sa langue maternelle. …Je pense que les niveaux d'anglais étaient…assez homogènes…on avait…tous un effort à faire…de notre côté."*

[342] *Carter-T-interview: Je pense que…chacun…était compréhensif; il y avait pas…d'impatience. ...Je pense pas qu'on avait quelqu'un qui se bridait en disant: "je parle pas...assez bien…je peux pas le dire."*

listened and tried to understand what the others wanted to say; nobody tried to dominate. Brandon-T described his feelings about the team's friendly, teasing and enjoyable atmosphere, and the people's values of openness, respect and understanding:

> *A lot of respect…it was convivial…relaxed…we teased each other. …Then we created something…we enjoyed ourselves. …As long as you are modest or at least you don't try to outshine anyone…or to take the leadership. …Each person gave others time to speak…to interact. From time to time…you're feeling so strongly that you get…carried away…but it's a friendly atmosphere…as long as you stick to these values…of openness, respect…of trying to understand what the others are saying. …I think we had all the ingredients…with our intrinsic, individual capacities, to manage to be united and to have quality results* (Brandon-T-interview).[343]

Carter-T felt it took him time to integrate into the group. What helped him feel closer to the team was the confidence he eventually developed:

> *What made you feel good*…? (Researcher-interview).
> *…The fact…of ending up in a team where the people were particularly pleasant…and nice and where we felt there was no aggression. …That gave me confidence. …My 'frustration' quote-unquote was linked more…to my own fault, of maybe not getting involved fast enough* (Carter-T-interview).[344]

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[343] *Brandon-T-interview: Beaucoup de respect…c'était convivial…décontracté…on se taquinait. …Alors on a créé des choses…on s'est fait plaisir. …A partir du moment où vous êtes modeste ou tout au moins vous essayez pas d'écraser les personnes...ou de prendre un leadership. ...Chaque individu a laissé le temps aux autres de parler...échanger. De temps en temps…vous vivez tellement fort que vous vous... poussez. ...Mais c'est bon enfant. ...Tant que vous restez sur ces valeurs…d'ouverture, de respect…d'essayer de comprendre ce que disent les gens. …Je pense qu'on a tous les ingrédients…avec nos capacités intrinsèques, individuelles, d'arriver à fédérer et avoir un résultat de qualité.*

[344] *Researcher-interview: Qu'est-ce qui a fait que vous vous êtes senti bien…?*
Carter-T-interview: ...Le fait…d'être tombé dans un groupe où les gens étaient particulièrement agréables...et sympathiques et où on sentait qu'il y avait pas d'agressivité…ça m'a mis en confiance.

7.6 Summary

In spite of their disorganisation and difficulties handling roles, expertise, rules, planning and participation in the first task, Team T agreed on how to approach the topics collectively and worked together smoothly throughout the four tasks. Nobody tried to dominate the group; the people with seniority, experience and expertise did not try to outshine the others or to take over the discussions. The respect and tolerance within the team from the start created a friendly and enjoyable working atmosphere. This climate of trust and harmony eventually led all participants to become confident enough to express themselves and contribute to the group efforts.

Chapter 8 - Analysis and Discussion: Internal Team Dynamics and Processes

8.1 Introduction and Chapter Outline

In this chapter I draw out insights from the case studies on the challenges that the teams experienced in working together, the strategies they used to address them, and the relative effectiveness of these strategies, including their effects on interpersonal team relations. In other words, I address the following research question and sub-questions:

How do newly-formed, short-term multicultural project teams manage their interactions in the formative stages?

1. *What challenges do newly-formed, short-term multicultural project teams experience in their interactions in the formative stages?*
2. *How do teams manage these challenges and to what extent do they learn to do so successfully?*
3. *What factors affect the management processes of different teams?*
4. *What impact do the challenges and strategies have on team processes and dynamics?*

In 8.2 I focus on the challenges the teams experienced, then I deal with the strategies they adopted (8.3), the relative effectiveness of these strategies (8.4) and interpersonal team relations (8.5).

8.2 Challenges Experienced

Based on the findings outlined in Table 3.9 and explained in the case studies, all the teams in my study experienced two broad areas of challenge: task management (9.2.1); and management of language and communication (9.2.2). I deal with each of these in turn.

8.2.1 Challenges in Task Management

The main challenges in task management that the teams experienced were linked to role allocation, role performance and work practices. Concerning role allocation, previous findings have identified roles as essential features of effective international teamwork (Figure 2.4; Earley and Gardner; Snow et al., 1996) to facilitate the attainment of goals (Argyle et al. 1981; Canney Davison, 1994, 1996, with Ward, 1999). Although roles may vary depending on the context, most situations have a number of specified roles which provide individuals with models for interaction and whereby holders of roles are restricted by rules which define the role and prescribe appropriate guidelines (Argyle et al., 1981; Levinson, 1979; Shapiro, 1987; Sundstrom et al., 1990). Despite this identification in the literature of the importance of allocating, specifying and carrying out roles (Earley and Gardner, 2005; Price, 1996; Snow et al., 1996), there is little information on the types of challenges that teams may experience in trying to establish their roles, the strategies they use, and how effective or otherwise their strategies are. For example, the award-winning article by Morgeson, DeRue and Karam (2010) provides a thorough examination of team leadership structures, but does not go far enough into the development of such processes. I now turn to the challenges teams faced in handling roles.

No team in the present study had pre-specified or pre-identified roles when they first started out, unlike in most workplace (rather than training) situations. Thus, not only were roles lacking but there was uncertainty over which roles were needed and what each role should entail. So even when they started allocating roles they did not prescribe duties and responsibilities. For example, Team G did not clearly define the boundaries for the leader, occupied in the first task by the Supply Chain '*expert*' (6.2.1), and did not specify any other roles. As a result, '*creativity*' was inhibited because only one person seemed to be doing everything, which turned out to be '*detrimental*' and '*a catastrophe*' (6.2.1). Moreover, according to two *stagiaires*, in real life a pre-determined '*coordinator*' (5.3.1) usually organises a meeting, prepares a clearly-defined '*agenda*' (5.3.1) and runs the discussions – so people's conduct is '*more…reasonable*' (5.3.1). Overall, the ambiguity created by '*missed roles*' (5.2.1)

constituted one of the weaknesses in each team's performance in the first task (5.2.1; 6.2.1; 7.2.1).

A second challenge linked to role allocation was the discovery and use of expertise. As a matter of fact, findings from the literature claim that to function effectively teams need to concentrate first on becoming familiar with each other by discovering each other's talents (Argyle et al., 1981) and areas of expertise (Argyle et al., 1981; Canney Davison, 1994, 1996, with Ward, 1999; Janssens and Brett, 1997; Mathieu et al., 2000; Maznevski and DiStefano, 2000; Spencer-Oatey and Tang, 2007; Teagarden et al., 2005) before focusing on the problem to solve (Canney Davison, 1994, 1996, with Ward, 1999; Janssens and Brett, 1997; Lau and Murnighan, 1998). This is because members with specific experience or skills may be better equipped to handle certain aspects of the task (Argyle et al., 1981). Thus, a 'sense-making period' (Bettenhausen and Murnighan, 1985, 1991) during the early 'forming' phase (Tuckman 1965, with Jensen, 1977) of group development allows teams to get to know each other to best determine the particular role allocation necessary to complete the task (Canney Davison, 1994, 1996, with Ward, 1999). Although models in the literature establish the centrality of discovering and using team members' individual skills, as far as I know, they do not provide the richness described in the current research of teams becoming aware of people's expertise and working out together how best to apply these competencies to their tasks.

In fact, as we saw in the case studies, the groups were expected to find a solution to each problem within a one-and-a-half hour period. This was perhaps the reason why all teams began analysing the problem immediately without getting to know '*each other*' (5.2.3), identifying '*competencies*', discovering each other's '*expertise*' or fully learning about people's '*background*', which did not enable determining which roles members could adopt to be better involved in team processes (7.2.1). Therefore, there was uncertainty over who had the skills to carry out the roles needed. Moreover, although Team G found out about people's expertise in Task 1, they did not use these competencies wisely, but assumed that the '*expert*' would be the one to find the solution, without fully understanding how the '*others*' would contribute (6.2.1).

Concerning role performance, previous research has posited that when teams focus primarily on the 'task' and ignore 'team' features, interactive team processes are ineffective. The literature reviewed in Chapter 2 addresses the distinction between these two main domains of interactive processes (Baker and Salas, 1992; Cohen and Bailey, 1997; Guzzo and Shea, 1993; Lim and Klein, 2006; Mathieu et al., 2000, 2005; Smith and Berg, 1997). Although previous frameworks have extensively pointed out the significance of the two leadership duties of task and team, these models[345] do not go so far as to describe in detail how teams come to terms with these two leadership features, or what happens when they only deal with the task and not the team-related elements. Conversely, the current research provides such insights by portraying specifically how these processes develop within new teams and underlines the importance for problem-solving teams to handle 'interpersonal processes' (Marks et al., 2001) in addition to focusing on the purpose of the project (Easterby-Smith and Malina, 1999; Teagarden et al., 1995, 2005).

More particularly, data from Team G's first task show that the leadership role was linked to technical expertise and finding a solution to the problem (6.2.1), in other words to the task-based functions, without paying enough attention to such team-based aspects as (a) seeing that everyone participated more evenly (6.2.2; Canney Davison, 1994, 1996, with Ward, 1999; Goodbody, 2005), or (b) managing overlapping conversations (6.2.2). Likewise, since roles were lacking in Team T's first task, more emphasis was given to solving the problem than to getting '*the most from the team*' (7.2.1), so not everyone felt they had the '*opportunity to speak*' (7.2.2). Because of this focus on the 'topical' and 'technical' aspects (Poole, 1983a, 1983b), there was nobody, not even the designated leader, to '*put everyone back in line*' when people were speaking in side dialogues or using French (6.2.2) or to '*pull something more from*' the silent participants (7.2.2). Furthermore, Team K's case study reveals that when a leader was named to manage the task (5.2.1) but when no role existed to manage the team the discussions and interactive aspects became '*frustrating*' (5.2.2) and '*unpleasant*' (5.3.1).

[345] These have been variously named (see 2.2 and 2.3), e.g. Bales and Strodtbeck's (1951) 'task-social division'; Argyle et al.'s (1981) separation of 'affective aspects' from 'task-based aspects'; and the identification of both 'socio-emotional' and 'instrumental' concerns of group work (Baker and Salas, 1992; Guzzo and Shea, 1993).

A second challenge relating to role performance involved the pressure for each particular *stagiaire* to 'perform' in front of the *moniteur* within this leadership integration context. In Team K for example, there was a '*mess*' at the beginning (5.3.1) because people were '*sort of…confused*' and '*stressed*' about the *moniteur*'s role, so everyone had to '*try to shine*' or '*prove themselves*' (5.2.3). This '*competition*' between people, '*trying to position themselves*' to '*take the leadership*' (5.3.1), entailed the presence of '*too many leaders*' (5.2.3), which participants '*didn't appreciate…very much*' (5.3.1). This situation apparently entailed distrust, which was unhealthy since '*people need to trust*' and have '*clear leadership*' (5.3.1) but without competent leadership trust formation was hindered (Tenzer et al., 2014). Owing to this individual pressure, decisions were not shared (5.2.1) and there was a lack of group 'consensus' (Argyle et al., 1981; Easterby-Smith and Malina, 1999; Hackman, 1987; Janssens and Brett, 1997; Maznevski, 1994; Poole, 1983a, 1983b; Teagarden et al., 1995, 2005; Tuckman, 1965, with Jensen, 1977) and 'cooperation' (Argyle et al., 1981; Baker and Salas, 1992; Brannick et al., 1993; DeSanctis and Jiang, 2005; Sitkin and Roth, 1993; Smircich, 1983; Stout et al., 1994), which have been highlighted as being key variables in team effectiveness. In fact, a group-based understanding for approaching the situation (Bettenhausen and Murnighan, 1985, 1991) and for developing shared goals (Earley and Gardner, 2005; Earley and Mosakowski, 2000; Guzzo and Shea, 1993; Price, 1996; Snow et al., 1996; Stout et al., 1994; Sundstrom et al., 1990; Swann et al., 2004) and knowledge (Brett et al., 2006; Canney Davison, 1994, 1996, with Ward, 1999; Earley and Mosakowski, 2000) has been suggested in the literature to enable teams to improve their processes. Yet, this wealth of research, emphasising the positive link between shared processes and effective results reviewed in Chapter 2,[346] tends to provide taxonomies identifying such features without giving a detailed picture of how these procedures manifest themselves within particular teams. The present study seeks to complement and extend these theories by providing rich descriptions of how these shared processes develop and of the effect they have on team functioning.

In terms of work practices, a key challenge involved managing the pressure of time, which led the teams to rush into their tasks. Yet, in the team development literature,

[346] See 2.2 and 2.3.

a number of researchers have emphasised the significance of the early developmental stages (Bettenhausen and Murnighan, 1985, 1991; Brett et al., 2006; Gersick, 1988, 1989; Goodbody, 2005; Hackman, 1987; Swann et al., 2004; Van Der Zee et al., 2004) to enable problem-solving teams to move towards their final phase (Marks et al., 2001; Poole, 1983b; Sundstrom et al., 1990) thanks to a task-preparation period (Argyle et al., 1981), i.e. a 'slow start' (Canney Davison, 1994, 1996, with Ward, 1999).[347] Therefore, when they start out, teams need to first establish guiding principles to determine what the team wishes to accomplish, what roles to adopt and how they will work together (Easterby-Smith and Malina, 1999; Teagarden et al., 1995, 2005). Although models in the literature highlight the usefulness of a planning phase on the start-up of team activities, they do not show the richness of approaches employed by the teams as they were trying to figure out these processes for themselves, nor what happens when they neglect to structure their activities before rushing into the task.

In my study, perhaps owing to the time pressure to perform within an hour and a half, all three teams began focusing on the outcome before structuring the assignment rather than '*organising*' and '*preparing*' their work (5.2.1). More precisely, Team K '*jumped into action*' (5.2.1) and were too '*results-oriented*'; Team G '*tackled it the wrong way*' since they '*headed straight towards the end…without really knowing…what the objectives were overall*' (6.2.1); and because Team T had not '*stepped back*' to take a '*helicopter view*' of the situation, the group moved '*straight to…the final conclusion*' and did not '*break down our time*' or '*talk a little…about method*' (7.2.1). Therefore, all teams made the mistake of '*placing results before…intermediary steps*' (7.2.1), i.e. before establishing common understandings of the task to complete (Bettenhausen and Murnighan, 1985, 1991; Janssens and Brett, 1997; Lau and Murnighan, 1998) or reflecting on the process (Smith and Berg, 1997). For example, in Task 1 Team K did not separate into subgroups (5.2.1) until the final fifteen minutes, which did not allow them to perform more effectively in small groups (Argyle et al., 1981), since their '*solution was not clear enough*' and they '*didn't reply to the main question and objectives*' (5.2.1). Likewise, for Team G immediate work on the solution '*without…being…organised*'

[347] See Figures 2.1 and 2.2.

turned out to be '*a bit of a disaster*' in the first session because they '*only dealt with part of the solution*' (6.2.1) and in their second session, starting too fast without taking the time to '*set the structure*' turned out to be '*a jungle*' because they '*wanted to implement straight away*' and '*didn't have time to…really reflect upon it*' (6.3.1).

I now turn to a second type of challenge the teams in my study faced: managing language use and communication.

8.2.2 Challenges in Managing Language and Communication

Despite considerable attention in the international management literature given to teamwork, little or no detail is provided on the interactional processes team members experience as they move through the different stages of team development. Yet, a handful of scholars (Canney Davison, 1994, 1996, with Ward, 1999; Price, 1996; Schweiger et al., 2003; Spencer-Oatey and Tang, 2007) suggest that language issues and communication challenges need to be managed continually throughout the international collaboration. Furthermore, in spite of numerous theories and strategies suggested by scholars in the field of ELF to facilitate cross-cultural communication in international business settings, to my knowledge, such processes as coordinating participation, regulating turn-taking and managing language differences in international teams have not yet been explored in the ELF literature. Thus, the current research seeks to (1) enrich frameworks for effective interactional teamwork processes suggested by previous international management scholars by showing specifically how these occur within teams, and expand on the ELF literature by extending it to studies involving multicultural teams conducting their business using English as a common language (2).

All teams in my study seemed to be confronted with three main challenges in managing language and communication (Table 3.9): participation, turn-taking and language differences.[348] Participation was cited in all seven debriefs and in my data

[348] See also 9.4 in which language is examined as an influencing factor to shed light on the possible causes for differences across teams.

four people, one from Team G and three from Team T, commented on what participation meant to them. Thus, understanding the different forms of participation and involving everyone seemed to be a key challenge. Joseph-G wondered during the debrief after Team G's first task, '*What is participation? Everyone was speaking with a friend*' (6.2.2). Concerning Team T's interactions, Jordan-T stated that although some people were not speaking up in the first task they were listening, which he considered to be a form of participation (7.2.2). This rather quiet behaviour of two members when Team T first started working together led Allison-T in her interview to explain that participation was not necessarily speaking (7.2.2), although she did try to encourage both of these teammates to speak more (7.2.2; 7.3.2). Then, in his interview, Luke-T defined participation as '*contributing*' and building on the '*reasoning*' of the group in order to help them '*move forward*'; '*speaking to add something*' and not just for the '*pleasure*' of it; while at the same time, not '*staying in a corner*' and saying nothing (7.3.2).

In the present study, turn-taking consisted of four main areas: listening, talking at once and overlapping conversations, speaking and taking the floor, and building on ideas, all of which apparently '*aren't easy*' in '*groups of twelve*' (6.3.2). Indeed, during Team K's first two tasks, everyone was speaking at once (5.2.2; 5.2.3) and listening was poor (5.2.1; 5.2.2; 5.2.3; 5.3.1). In fact, Moniteur-Anita remarked '*there were up to six discussions going on at the same time*' (5.2.2). The second session was even worse since people had '*opposing viewpoints*' and '*responded*' to each other (5.3.1). This was all the more striking since within the same team, while some members overlapped, others asked for permission to speak by raising their hands (5.4.2). Team K's poor turn-taking behaviour was distinguished by numerous incidents that affected the team significantly: Olivia-K took offense when she was interrupted (5.2.2); there were '*too many conversations*' (5.2.2) because people were '*just talking for the heck of talking*' (5.2.3); Emma-K reported how difficult it was to lead the group since there was too much '*discussion*' (5.2.1); Mark-K and Michael-K '*experienced quite badly*' the '*different types of information*' and the '*steady flow*' of suggestions while they were working on the team's PowerPoint presentation and Excel spreadsheet, respectively (5.2.2). This ill-mannered team etiquette with regard to speaking and listening entailed '*tensions*' (5.3.1); and because '*the listening was*

very, very poor' it was '*tough*' for people to '*sell*' their ideas (5.2.3), '*people who weren't heard got offended*' and an '*experienced*' person became '*rather angry*' (5.3.1). In other words, no matter what the intentions were behind the different interruptions and overlaps, members of Team K considered all such utterances as being rude and intrusive (Cogo and Dewey, 2006; Halmari, 1993; Murata, 1994). People thus described the atmosphere as '*messy*' (5.2.1), '*frustrating*' and '*not realistic*' (5.2.2), tense (5.2.2; 5.3.1), uncomfortable (5.2.2), '*storming*' (5.3.1; Tuckman, 1965, with Jensen, 1977), '*unpleasant*' and disrespectful '*in terms…of manners*' (5.3.1). The apparent '*clashes*' in Task 2 (5.3.1) were said to have '*left a mark*' on the group for the remainder of the sessions (5.3.1). Turn-taking was also an issue when Team G began working together. In Task 1, there were frequent side dialogues, overlapping discussions and little listening (6.2.2), which led to a '*complete mess*' (6.4.2) and caused shortcomings in performance during their first session (6.2.2). Again in Task 2, '*talking all the time*' was still a weakness and five people had a hard time taking the floor (6.3.2). On the other hand, turn-taking did not appear to be problematic for Team T (7.2.2; 7.4.2).

For Team K, the consequences of poor turn-taking were two-fold. Firstly, when '*important ideas…were not pushed*' pertinent points could not be captured (5.2.2). For example, '*people who are experts, their ideas aren't taken into consideration*' (5.3.1). A second consequence of Team K's poor turn-taking was going from '*one subject to another without really building on*' previous suggestions (5.3.1). Building on ideas was described by two team members as deciding either to '*continue*' with an idea so as '*to move forward together*' (5.4.2) or to '*give it up*' (5.3.1). Although building on ideas was mentioned during Team K's fourth task by two *stagiaires* (5.4.2), ideas were apparently not built upon; consequently, some things were '*not making any sense*' (5.2.3), the discussions were '*disorganised*' (5.3.1), they were not clear '*in terms of coherence…and moving…the project forward*' (5.4.2) and actions were not put '*into perspective*' so the '*solution was not clear enough*' (5.2.1).

Across all teams, using English as a common language was challenging to both second language speakers (SLSs) and mother-tongue speakers (MTSs). Indeed, language tended to hinder SLSs' comprehension (5.4.2; 6.2.2; 6.3.2) and expression (5.4.2;

6.2.2; 6.5.2; 7.3.2; 7.5.2) and was the first '*excuse*' when misunderstandings took place (5.4.2). And even though some SLSs felt that English was not problematic, that people could follow, that they all spoke more or less adequately, that they were '*rarely…at a standstill*' (5.4.2), that ideas were not lost (7.3.2) and that using English as a *lingua franca* did not inhibit communication (6.5.2), others felt it was '*troublesome*' (5.3.3), '*frustrating*' (5.4.2), an '*obstacle*' (6.2.2), a '*nuisance*' (5.4.2), '*handicap*' (5.4.2), '*hindrance*' (6.5.2), '*difficulty*' (7.5.2), '*constraint*' (7.5.2) and a '*disadvantage*' to '*pinpoint*' what people wanted to say (6.2.2). In fact, more time was needed for SLSs to '*capture*' what was being said and to think about their '*own response*' (6.2.2). People thus reported that teams needed to be aware of how tiring it was to work in a second language (5.4.2); how some members '*struggled with it*' (6.5.2), firstly to understand, owing to the speed and distinctive accents (5.4.2), and then to find the right words (6.2.2), to express complex ideas (6.5.2), to be '*subtle*' (5.4.2) and to explain '*nuances*' (7.5.2); and how SLSs believed that what they had to say was less convincing or powerful (6.5.2). One barrier pointed out by Ryan-G was that '*in groups of twelve*' it was difficult to ask people to repeat, because in the project teams where they needed to be efficient, they could not '*waste time*' explaining something '*over and over again*' (6.3.2).

Consequently, some SLSs felt that language differences prevented them from building on each other's ideas due to a lack of clarity in understanding the thoughts of people who had spoken before them (5.4.2) and four participants, one from Team K and three from Team G, believed '*English fluency*' (5.4.2; 6.2.2; 6.3.2) hindered participation: Sarah-G commented that SLSs tended to speak less since '*the words…don't necessarily come out*' (6.2.2); Benjamin-G felt MTSs spoke so quickly that '*quite a few*' SLSs participated less since they '*follow things less quickly because of the language*' (6.3.2); and because of a lack of linguistic competency, James-G thought that some people participated '*more episodically than they might've wanted*' (6.2.2) and Jacob-K believed some members could not participate '*the way they would've liked to*' (5.4.2). Interestingly, nobody from Team T mentioned the effect of English language fluency on participation.[349]

[349] See 9.4 for a discussion about language differences on the teams' interactions.

Concerning MTSs, they might have had the advantage of being mother-tongue English speakers but they had the disadvantage that not everyone could understand what they had to say (6.5.2; Brannen and Salk, 2000; del Carmen Mendez Garcia and Perez Canado, 2005; Franklin, 2007). In fact, the SLSs in Team G felt the MTSs '*spoke so quickly*' (6.2.2) that it was challenging to follow the discussions (6.2.2; 6.3.2; 6.4.2; 6.5.2) especially when the MTSs got carried away (6.4.2).

A second language challenge across all teams involved language choice, i.e. the use of asides in French, the language of the majority of the members in each team.[350] In spite of the fact that the fundamental rule of verbal communication (Argyle et al., 1981), i.e. using a common language, constituted one of the main features of the project teams investigated, sometimes French was spoken. Indeed, people used French (5.2.2; 5.4.2; 6.2.2; 6.3.2; 6.4.2; 6.5.2; 7.2.2; 7.3.2; 7.4.2; 7.5.2) to choose a role (7.3.2; 7.3.3), aid with understanding (5.4.2; 6.2.2; 7.3.2; 7.4.2), check with their neighbours before speaking (6.3.2; 7.3.2), collaborate to find the right words (6.5.2), encourage fellow teammates to contribute an idea (7.3.2) or express strong convictions (7.5.2). The challenge was to make sure that French was used as little as possible so as not to exclude the non-French speakers.

8.3 Strategies Used to Address the Challenges

Before looking at the particular strategies teams adopted to address their challenges, I start with an analysis and discussion on rules. Theories in the literature on speaking models (Hymes, 1962, 1964, 1972, 1974), communicative events (Saville-Troike, 1989) and activity types (Levinson, 1979) provide behavioural guidelines for turn-taking norms and pragmatic use of speech (Thomas, 1995). Since a specific activity determines the relevant linguistic norms and acceptable procedures (Levinson, 1979), norms governing the appropriate 'communicative competence' (Hymes, 1962, 1964, 1972, 1974) are linked to the particular social context (Ray and Biswas, 2011) for which participants have prior mutual knowledge of the conditions and constraints (Levinson, 1979) which are identifiable (Angouri and Marra, 2010) and with which

[350] As mentioned in the preceding footnote, see 9.4.

they are familiar (Argyle et al., 1981). Indeed, the norms of an established social order enable people to predict social behaviour, cooperate with each other and get along together (Lambrechts et al., 2011; Schein, 2010; Smircich, 1983). Nevertheless, in new groups, such as the teams in the present study, rules emerge gradually (Team T) or are developed through group discussions (Team G) or formal meetings (Team K) as members learn to deal with their internal and external environments, and to develop an appropriate way to interact by finding their 'modus operandi' (Lambrechts et al., 2011: 134) and group norms (Schein, 2010). Therefore, when new teams begin working together, rules for managing interactions and governing conduct (Earley and Gardner, 2005; Klimoski and Mohammed, 1994) need to be created. However, as far as I know, such rule-generating processes have not yet been explored in rich detail. On the other hand, my study not only ties in with these theories but goes one step further and portrays more in-depth how teams devise and apply rules to their own circumstances.

Additionally, the present findings link in with themes examined in the literature to show that the interplay of two elements with regard to rules considerably affect team interactions: the simultaneous need for both (a) structure (Argyle et al., 1981) and strong rules (Canney Davison, 1994, 1996, with Ward, 1999), and (b) the flexibility of rule systems (Larson, 1992; Ouchi, 1979; Shapiro, 1987; Smith and Berg, 1997). While team structure is necessary to reduce fears (Price, 1996) by providing guidelines and boundaries for behaviour, flexibility enhances effectiveness in cross-cultural collaboration (Easterby-Smith and Malina, 1999; Teagarden et al., 2005) since it enables coping with the unexpected, leading to the development of mutual trust and respect. Therefore, strong structure that maintains enough flexibility (Canney Davison, 1994, 1996, with Ward, 1999; Hanges et al., 2005; Larson, 1992; Ouchi, 1979; Shapiro, 1987; Smith and Berg, 1997) to allow individual responsiveness entails successful team processes (Hanges et al., 2005; Peterson, 2001; Smith and Berg, 1997) and builds trust.

In fact, numerous scholars have previously theorised that trust[351] plays a vital role in collaborative processes (Canney Davison, 1994, 1996, with Ward, 1999; Child, 2001;

[351] I return to the notion of trust in 8.4 and 8.5.

DeSanctis and Jiang, 2005; Dirks, 1999; DiStefano and Maznevski, 2000; Earley and Gardner, 2005; Easterby-Smith and Malina, 1999; Gassmann, 2001; Gersick, 1988, 1989; Goodbody, 2005; Govindarajan and Gupta, 2001; Inkpen, 1996; Janssens and Brett, 1997; Jarvenpaa and Leidner, 1999; Langfred, 2004; Leana and Van Buren III, 1999; Meyer, 1993; Shapiro et al., 2008; Sitkin and Roth, 1993; Teagarden et al., 1995, 2005; Tenzer et al., 2014), and more particularly in the development of a system of norms, explicit or implicit (Davis, 1973; Edelman, 1990; Granovetter, 1985; Larson, 1992; Leana and Van Buren III, 1999; Ouchi, 1979; Peterson, 2001; Price, 1996; Schein, 2010; Shapiro, 1987; Sitkin and Roth, 1993), to control and manage team interactions (Peterson, 2001).[352] Yet, although these theories stress the significance of trust in the development of team norms they do not, as far as I know, show what happens within teams in the presence or absence of trust. On the other hand, the current data attempt to complement these theories by providing a more in-depth view of the influence of trust on the management of interactions in the early stages of teamwork. Moreover, to my knowledge, the development of team norms is not something that can be found in the literature. Conversely, rules and norms are exemplified in the present study, they were mentioned in four of the seven debriefs (Table 3.9), and Moniteur-Anita specifically advised all teams in the debriefing sessions after each of their first tasks (5.2.3; 6.2.1; 7.2.1) that they needed to '*define rules*' before working together. Rules were thus important for the three teams observed as well as for teams not observed.[353] In this section I look at the creation of rules and categories of rules, and in 8.3.1 and 8.3.2 at the strategies used to apply these rules.

Firstly, as we have seen in the individual case studies, three types of rule-generation processes took place. At one end of the spectrum, members of Team K, the team with the most explicit set of rules, established these during their 'norming' phase (Tuckman, 1965, with Jensen, 1977) between the second and third tasks, when over half the team got together to '*attempt…to norm*' by setting '*some specific rules for*

[352] A number of norm systems have been suggested, e.g. 'conventions': Argyle et al., 1981; Shapiro, 1987; 'control strategies': Eisenhardt, 1985; 'mechanisms': Larson, 1992; 'repertoire of shared resources': Wenger, 1998.

[353] I interviewed eight *stagiaires* from seven teams not observed, one each from Teams B, D, M, N, P and R, and two from Team C. See 3.4 and Appendices A3 and A4.

operating' spelled out in a written 'social contract' (5.3.2; Figure 5.1; Peterson, 2001). Then, at the beginning of the fourth task, the chairperson read out a selection of seven of these rules that he felt were crucial (5.4.1). Team G relied on both explicit and implicit norms of behaviour to handle their problem-solving activities. In other words, they discussed a number of rules at fairly great length during the debriefs for the first and second sessions (6.2.1; 6.3.1) but after they had agreed upon the appropriate rules, they never went so far as to devise an explicit set of guidelines. Moreover, throughout the tasks, several participants, notably Madelyn-G and Joseph-G, requested that people use English, speak slowly and not hold individual conversations, although these reminders remained oral (6.2.2; 6.3.2; 6.4.2). At the other end of the spectrum, Team T addressed rules only during the debrief after the first task (7.2.1), but they never developed any explicit rules; nor did they make any oral requests for people to follow such-and-such a rule. Thus, their method of structuring the tasks appeared implicit. Moreover, these three types of rule-generating processes occurred within other teams represented in my data: written rules (Team M[354])[355], rules defined orally but never written out (Teams B and P) and implicit rules (Teams C and R).

With regard to categories of rules, for Team K the detailed rules, which were clearly written out in a PowerPoint file (5.3.2; Figure 5.1), focused on three main areas: (1) task management (roles and work practices); (2) language and communication; and (3) interpersonal team relations (trust).[356] Interestingly, the first two categories of rules established by Team K were also included in the written rules adopted by Team M.[357] Not only were these two categories present, but roles, i.e. naming a leader, a timekeeper and a note-taker, was the first rule at the top of Team M's list of '*good practices*', the same as for Team K. These two categories of rules were also identified orally by members of Team G.

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[354] The interviewee from Team M (see previous footnote) reported that the whole group wrote their rules between the first and second tasks, that the team's common working language was French and that its eleven members came from Eastern and Western Europe (France: 4; Germany: 1; Romania: 1; Spain: 1), South America (Brazil: 2) and East Asia (China: 1; Thailand: 1).
[355] See Appendix A9 for Team M's written rules.
[356] I return to the notion of trust later in this chapter.
[357] See footnotes above for more information about Team M.

In the next two subsections I deal with the application of rules thanks to strategies in two major areas of teamwork processes: task management (8.3.1) and managing language and communication (8.3.2).

8.3.1 Strategies for Task Management

In this subsection, I look at role-systems (Argyle et al., 1981) and leadership duties allocated and specified within the three teams, the use of expertise for role allocation and specification, and work practices. As we have seen in the case studies and in the previous subsection, roles and responsibilities appeared at the top of the rules for both Team K (5.3.2) and Team M (Appendix A9), were discussed at great length in Team G's second task (6.3.1), were cited in six debriefs and were addressed directly or indirectly in all team sessions. Concretely, when teams started out, since there were no pre-defined roles, members had to create their own hierarchy of authority, division of labour and particular role-systems, either formal or informal, to attain their goals (Argyle et al., 1981).

Firstly, in terms of role allocation and specification, although participants occupied the roles of leader,[358] timekeeper and PowerPoint writer across all teams, other roles developed informally to assist these main roles (5.4.1; 6.2.1; 6.3.1; 7.2.1). This is because some people in Team K were leaders, while others were more '*back office*' and were thus reluctant to step in and accept a leadership role until they felt more familiar with the group and the task objectives (5.2.1). Interestingly, one of Team K's rules involving roles explicitly stated that everyone should '*have trust in others' job*' (Figure 5.1). Besides the inclusion of trust in the team's written charter of '*best practices*' (5.3.2), it was also among seven key rules highlighted and read out by the leader at the start of Task 4 as being of central importance (5.4.1).[359] In Team G many participants were creative and found their own functions (6.5.1) because people like to feel '*useful*' and to take on jobs '*necessary for the group to function*' (6.4.2). So, apparently everyone occupied a role and people shared the roles of

[358] The different types of leadership responsibilities (e.g. facilitator, moderator) are discussed in the next paragraph.
[359] As indicated in 8.3, trust is also discussed in 8.4 and 8.5.

'*leader, timekeeper, coordinator and global vision*' (6.5.1), which meant there were '*a lot of small leaders who took turns*' (6.5.1). In Team T participants apparently changed leadership naturally without actually allocating or specifying roles, so people adopted '*natural*' responsibilities (7.2.1) to ensure that the work was achieved (7.5.1). In short, the teams handled roles in various ways. More tangibly, Team K required formal roles to be set up and the responsibilities to be specifically defined and explicitly written out (5.3.2), while data from Team G demonstrated that roles tended to be shared, whereby everybody, according to their competence and skills, filled a number of functions necessary for the group to operate (6.2.1; 6.3.1; 6.4.1; 6.5.1). For Team T, people tended to take on their own responsibilities; their role-allocation process was thus intrinsic and indirect (7.2.1; 7.4.1; 7.5.1).

A second strategy linked to role allocation and specification involved the two leadership duties of 'task' and 'team'. More particularly, Team K specified the need to name a '*neutral…facilitator*' and to identify topic '*experts*' whose responsibilities were to be separate from those of the facilitator. For the facilitator's role, the team defined eight leadership components involving both 'task' and 'team' functions but did not specify two separate roles for these two duties (Figure 5.1). Consequently, managing the 'team' became one of the key expectations for Team K's '*facilitator*' (5.3.2), for whom responsibilities included such components as '*interaction between groups*' and '*make sure everybody speaks*'. For Team G, rules dealing with the leadership role and the duties of 'task' and 'team' focused on responsibilities for two main roles: (a) a '*leader*', mainly an '*expert*' in the topic; and (b) a neutral '*moderator*' (6.3.1); and in their second task, while one person was formally named leader for his expertise, another member informally took it upon himself to coordinate team processes (6.3.1). Afterwards, in the debrief, people specifically confirmed that an '*expert in the field cannot…manage the meeting*' but that a different person, a '*moderator*', needed to focus only on the discussion without taking part and was to '*take distance*' and '*be directive*' by '*facilitating the discussion*' and by telling people when to '*speak*', '*listen*' or '*shut up*' (6.3.1); i.e. a moderator was '*not necessarily making decisions but keeping everybody on track*'. On the other hand, for Team T, because the only rule brought up during the first task was the need to be better organised (7.2.1), they never mentioned any rule prescribing particular roles or

leadership duties, although they acknowledged in the debrief that they had no roles in Task 1. Fortunately, the entire team paid attention to such interpersonal 'team' processes as drawing people into the interactions (7.2.1; 7.2.2; 7.3.1; 7.3.3), helping them '*integrate*' (7.3.3), listening to others (7.2.2; 7.3.2), being disciplined with asides in French (7.2.2), building on each other's ideas and collaborating as a team (7.4.1). To sum up, as we have seen in the data, managing 'task' and 'team' leadership functions were not necessarily carried out by the same person, but were performed by either an explicitly-named team leader (Team K), by two specific leaders (Team G) or by the team as a whole (Team T).

A third aspect regarding role allocation concerned the use of expertise, which was cited in five debriefs and was thus important to all teams. That is perhaps why people in Team G felt they needed to proceed cautiously to find their bearings for each specific subject by '*figuring out who…had the most expertise*' (6.5.1). In spite of the importance of expertise, however, findings from the current study indicate that the use of expertise across all teams needed to be well-balanced to allow everyone to become involved, not just the experts. Firstly, although Team K needed to take the time to understand and use '*each other's competencies*' (5.2.1) by allowing those with knowledge and skills to express their opinions, this did not imply that the experts were supposed to be '*getting up…and…imposing*' their solution '*decisively*' or '*automatically*' (5.3.1). Likewise, according to someone in Team G, the project teams '*don't need…just experts*', who '*tend to get locked into their ideas*'; on the contrary, people who were less '*concerned by those issues*', and who could therefore take more of a distance, could contribute a different angle than those who '*master the subject*' (6.5.2). Similarly, when people in Team T did not impose their expertise on the group, this enabled the entire team to determine a solution collectively and for everyone to '*have a voice*', not just those with experience (7.5.1). As we have seen, the significance of discovering and using people's expertise appeared rather consistent across all teams.

With regard to work practices, as we saw in the Methodology chapter, the project teams had approximately an hour and a half to solve each of their four tasks, and all teams seemed to have learned lessons from having rushed into their early sessions

(8.2.1). Therefore, planning, i.e. 'starting slowly' (Canney Davison, 1994, 1996, with Ward, 1999) – cited in six debriefs – seemed to be of crucial importance to enable the three teams to carry out their tasks effectively; and once the teams got started, managing the time was also an essential general group practice[360] throughout the tasks for all teams. Consequently, in the rules that Team K devised, a whole section was devoted to '*global method*', whereby '*understand the objective*' appeared first in the list of six points, followed by other items relating to planning, such as gathering facts and identifying a solution before starting to work on it. Additionally, '*define and respect a planning*' became one of the team's '*common group rules*' (5.3.2) and at the start of Task 4, the leader reminded the team of this key rule, which appeared to be vital since they respected a pre-determined time frame throughout the fourth session (5.4.1). Similarly, by the fourth task, Team G appeared to have found a certain rhythm of managing their task with five distinct work practices: reading and topic review; planning; brainstorming and allocation of roles; division into subgroups; and compilation of their PowerPoint presentation (6.5.1).

In addition to planning and general practices, another strategy related to work practices consisted in establishing shared processes, brought up in six of the seven debriefs. These processes appeared to be important for all three teams and impacted on mutually determining a solution and delivering the team's presentation. For example, '*share PowerPoint presentation*' became one of Team K's rules (5.3.2), and in Task 4, the leader appeared to strive for group consensus and cooperation (5.4.1). People in Team G found '*common ground*' (6.3.1; 6.5.1), attempted to carry out '*a democratic vote*' (6.3.1) and strove for harmony (6.3.3; 6.4.1). Team T's processes also seemed to be shared; for instance, in spite of '*divergent opinions*' (7.3.1; 7.5.1), there appeared to be '*coherence…around the subject*' (7.3.1) and they managed to '*evolve*' towards a joint solution (7.3.1) and reach a '*compromise*' (7.5.1). Moreover, it is important to note that both Teams K and T were asked to present their solutions to Task 1. Consequently, the presentations for these two teams took place during the 'forming' phase of their development (Tuckman, 1965, with Jensen 1977), before their shared processes were fully 'formed'. This influenced the two teams' presentations, for which only one main speaker delivered the results (Emma-K

[360] General practices were cited in six debriefs.

and Jordan-T, respectively). Afterwards, Moniteur-Anita explained that their decisions did not come out clearly and participants also felt '*we got our points across too quickly*' (7.2.1). People thus believed they would have been clearer if they had collaborated in the delivery of the team's proposal (5.2.1; 7.2.1; 7.3.1) to better convey their ideas (7.2.1). On the other hand, members of Team G were asked to present their solution to Task 2 for which four people took turns speaking; the team and the *moniteur* felt their ideas came over clearly and were '*nicely*' presented in the PowerPoint (6.3.1). By the end of the second phase of their development, they had therefore begun to 'norm' their processes (Tuckman, 1965, with Jensen 1977) and to find a more collaborative, and effective, way of working and presenting their results.

8.3.2 Strategies for Managing Language and Communication

Strategies for managing language and communication across all teams involved managing three areas: participation, turn-taking and language differences. As we have seen in 8.2.2, participation was considered multi-dimensional, rather than having just one defining feature; people therefore adopted different strategies to contribute to the project-team workshops in their own distinctive ways. As a matter of fact, some people contributed more to the content and ideas (7.4.2), while others compiled the group's PowerPoint slides (5.2.2; 6.4.2) or helped choose the wording for the presentation (7.4.2). Moreover, small group work allowed everyone to '*make a contribution*' (6.3.1) because people tended to participate more in subgroups (5.2.2; 6.4.2; 7.2.2; 7.4.2).

Additionally, participation was said to be influenced by knowledge (6.2.2; 7.5.1), experience (7.2.1; 7.5.1) competence (6.2.2; 6.5.2), expertise, interest and concern (6.5.2) or by one's professional sector (7.4.2). More precisely, one strategy involved the importance of understanding people's '*background*' and '*past experience*' because '*all of that will play into how they…can participate*' (7.2.1), although everyone with or without expertise had interesting ideas that could '*enrich the debate*' (6.5.2). For that very reason, experienced members in Team T refrained from

imposing their solutions since they thought it was important for everyone to '*have a voice*' (7.5.1).

Other strategies to enhance participation appeared to be linked to roles (6.3.2; 6.4.2; 6.5.2; 7.3.1): (a) the leadership position(s) as well as (b) the particular functions of each member. Firstly, for all teams, they needed a leader and/or '*facilitator*' (5.3.2), '*moderator*' (6.3.1), '*coordinator*' (6.3.1) or '*regulator*' (5.3.3) to oversee not only the task but also the 'individuals' who 'accomplish [the] task' (Poole, 1983b: 327), so as '*not to lose*' certain people's participation (6.3.2), to ensure '*people's voices are heard*' (6.3.1), to '*let people speak*' (6.3.1), '*to get the most from the team*' (7.2.1) and to help people to '*integrate*' and become more involved (7.3.3). Indeed, one of the rules Team K set for themselves was for the leader '*to make sure everybody speaks*' (5.3.2), testifying to the central importance of the leadership role to manage participation. Secondly, people needed to occupy a role to show they were participating (6.3.2), which may explain why some participated less extensively because they did not have '*active roles*' (6.4.2). In fact, Jordan-T, who facilitated Team T's teamwork, said in the debrief after Task 1 that in order to encourage people to contribute they would need a role to enable them to '*take…some control*' (7.2.1).

With regard to strategies for managing turn-taking, one of the pieces of advice Moniteur-Anita gave both Teams K and G during each of their first debriefs (5.2.2; 6.2.2) was that they needed to '*learn to listen*' (5.2.2), one of the central rules of any turn-taking system (Sacks et al., 1974). This contrasted with her comment to Team T after their first task, i.e. that they '*showed respect*' because they were listening (7.2.2). Team K's negative turn-taking behaviour[361] was, in fact, one of the reasons why they got together between Tasks 2 and 3 to establish a set of '*best practices*' (5.3.2). Out of these, the first of the '*common group rules*' was '*listen to others*' (5.3.2), and a reminder of this guideline was given at the start of the fourth task when the facilitator read out a series of seven essential rules (5.4.1).

A second key strategy for handling turn-taking involved the use of roles to manage interactive processes, as we have also seen above involving the need for roles to

[361] See 8.2.2 for a summary of Team K's negative turn-taking behaviour.

manage participation. More tangibly, Emma-K realised in Task 1 that roles were needed to control Team K's behaviour: a '*gatekeeper*' to tell people when to '*shut up*' and a '*policeman*' to make sure the team respected each other's speaking times (5.2.2). Similarly, for Team G, because of '*side groups*' that saw the objectives from '*a totally different angle*', it was '*necessary for someone to put everyone back in line…so roles need to be established*' (6.2.2), and it seems '*Joseph-G played a great role for that*' (6.3.1). Team T apparently did not need strong roles to coordinate 'simultaneous speech' (Argyle et al., 1981: 135) thanks to the respect and discipline within the whole team from the start (7.2.2). In fact, people in this team listened and were respectful (7.2.2; 7.3.2) even during the first task (7.2.2); they built on each other's ideas to produce their solutions together (7.4.1; 7.5.2); everyone seemed to be diplomatic; nobody dominated or imposed their ideas on the group (7.4.1; 7.5.1); they were tolerant (7.3.2), did not interrupt (7.3.2) and were patient (7.5.2) when others were speaking. In other words, Team T appeared to follow a set of basic 'turn-allocation techniques' considered as fundamental features of all conversation (Sacks et al., 1974).

Although the theme of language differences was cited in only one debrief, the three teams I observed all shared a common language, English,[362] and this was one of the criteria GP used to select the MIP project-team sessions as my data-collection site and the particular teams to observe.[363] Thus, managing language differences was of central importance to all teams. I focus first on managing the use of English as a common language and then on managing the use of asides in French, the two elements of the present study related to handling language differences.

Everyone in all teams (both MTSs and SLSs) had to adapt their use of English (Ehrenreich, 2009; Rogerson-Revell, 2007b, 2008, 2010; Sweeney and Hua, 2010; Virkkula-Räisänen, 2010) for everyone to be able to follow and participate. Indeed, Team K's '*speak-English*' rule called for it be spoken '*slowly*' (5.3.2; 5.3.3) and for

[362] GP's two working languages, English and French, were used throughout the MIP sessions, and the project teams were designated as either English- or French-speaking. The three teams I observed were English-speaking, although I also interviewed people from other teams that used either English or French as their common language.
[363] See 3.3.2 for more information about my data collection boundaries.

everyone to use a '*limited*', less '*refined*' vocabulary (5.3.3; Canney Davison, 1994, 1996, with Ward, 1999) to help the team function better and to ensure the less fluent speakers (LFSs) did not '*tune out*' or '*give up*' due to difficulties in comprehension (5.3.3). For Team T, Jordan-T was careful and spoke slowly from the start (7.5.2), while members of Team G asked David-G, a MTS, to slow down when they were getting lost (6.4.2).

Along with these English-language adjustments, participants felt it was the role of the '*facilitator*' or '*regulator*' to make sure everyone was following (5.3.3) and to ask people to '*repeat for so-and-so*' (7.5.2), and to see that each person who wanted to speak could express an opinion (5.3.2; 7.5.2). In addition to this leadership function, further strategies were used to handle language differences. Primarily, people collaborated to find the right wording to convey their suggestions, as was done successfully in Teams G and T (6.2.2; 6.5.2; 7.3.2; 7.4.2; 7.5.2). More precisely, ideas were reformulated (6.2.2; 7.4.2; 7.5.2; Canney Davison, 1994, 1996, with Ward, 1999); for example, Jordan-T was patient and helpful with LFSs (7.5.2) and tried to '*capture*' and '*rephrase*' their ideas when they '*were at a loss for words*' (7.3.2). Additionally, specific questions about vocabulary and expressions were answered (6.2.2; 7.3.2; 7.4.2; Pitzl, 2005); phrases were repeated (7.5.2; Canney Davison, 1994, 1996, with Ward, 1999; Lichtkoppler, 2007); languages were mixed (7.5.2; Brannen and Salk, 2000; Canney Davison, 1994, 1996, with Ward, 1999; Feely and Harzing, 2003); asides in French were made (7.5.2); meanings were explained (7.5.2); spell-check was applied (7.4.2); ideas were translated (7.5.2); gestures were used (7.3.2); language jokes occurred (6.4.2; 7.4.2) and people communicated '*with mistakes*' without expecting '*to be perfect*' or '*just tried*' speaking even if they were '*afraid*' or had doubts about understanding (7.5.2). Other strategies that were beneficial for Team T were that people tended not to be inhibited to admit they had not captured something (7.4.2), or were not too '*embarrassed*' to ask others to repeat (7.5.2) or to get help with expression and understanding (7.3.2). In contrast, someone in Team K felt they should have clarified meanings '*by explaining or re-defining*' statements in order to reduce the likelihood of any possible misunderstandings, which apparently was not the case (5.4.2).

Concerning strategies to manage the use of asides in French, in order to ensure respect for the non-French speakers (5.3.3) and maintain smooth communication, Team K included a '*speak-English*' rule (5.3.2; 5.3.3; 5.4.1) while members of Teams G and T advised people to use English when they had switched languages (6.2.2; 6.4.2; 7.5.2). Therefore, after short dialogues or 'sidebar' conversations (Brett et al., 2006) in French, the '*more culturally aware*' (7.2.2) in these two teams would remind people to revert to English (6.2.2; 6.4.2; 7.2.2; 7.5.2), and some would apologise (7.5.2).

8.4 Effectiveness of Strategies Adopted

In this section I present findings in the data that report on the effectiveness of the strategies teams adopted to address the challenges of task management (8.4.1), and language and communication (8.4.2). Then I look at the overall effects and effectiveness of the rules teams applied (8.4.3).

Table 8.1 summarises the effectiveness of the strategies the teams adopted to address their challenges.[364]

	Effectiveness of Strategies: Similarities across teams	**(In)Effectiveness of Strategies: Differences across teams**
Debrief Themes[365]		
TASK MANAGEMENT		
-Roles and Expertise		
Roles	Across teams, being aware of boundaries and responsibilities, and having defined places reduced ambiguity, improved participation and reassured people	***Role Allocation*** *Team K*: formal roles and specifically-defined responsibilities *Team G*: role sharing; numerous functions to get the work done *Team T*: intrinsic and indirect allocation process ***Role Performance: Task & Team Functions*** *Team K*: the two functions of 'task' and 'team' were carried out by one explicitly-designated leader – the '*facilitator*', who was to remain '*neutral*' (ineffective; this rule was violated in Task 4)

[364] See 8.3, 8.4, 8.5, 9.5 and 10.2 for further details about the findings presented here.
[365] Table 8.1 uses the debrief themes of the coding frame (Table 3.9) to structure the summary.

		Team G: carried out by two separate people – a '*moderator*' and a '*leader*' (effective) *Team T*: carried out by the team as a whole (effective)
Expertise	Using everyone's skills and knowledge to give all participants a voice, not just those with expertise	
-Rules and Practices		
Rules		***Rule-Setting Process*** *Team K*: explicit rules *Team G*: rules discussed verbally *Team T*: implicit rules ***Rule-Implementing*** *Team K*: appeared to be rigid, unnatural and extreme; people were offended by the rule-breaking incidents, which led to an erosion of trust;[366] formal rules aggravated the processes: not flexible enough to restore trust *Teams G and T*: rule-setting and rule-implementing processes were based on trust and respect; more lenient and flexible with regard to any rule alteration; positive impact; led to climate of confidence
Planning	'Starting slowly' (Canney Davison, 1994, 1996, with Ward, 1999) to manage the time pressure	
General practices	By Task 4 all teams appeared to have established general group practices and rules: planning and organising, determining task objectives, managing the time, dividing into sub-groups (if/when appropriate), working toward a joint solution, preparing the team's presentation	
Shared processes	Developing shared methods and processes to find common ground and to reduce the individual pressure to perform in front of the *moniteur*	
LANGUAGE AND COMMUNICATION		
Participation	Strategies for involving everyone: 1) Understanding people's background and expertise 2) Having leadership positions to ensure that all members contributed 3) Occupying a role to become more involved	

[366] Team K's three rule-breaking incidents involved the '*neutrality*' role of the leader, the '*speak-English*' rule and the '*listening*' rule.

Turn-taking	Two types of strategies emerged for managing turn-taking: 1) Listening; showing respect, discipline, patience, diplomacy; building on ideas 2) Having roles to manage interactive processes	*Team K*: overlapping in Task 4 was judged critically and considered to be intrusive and a violation of the team's '*listening*' rule (but Olivia-K was convinced of her positive intentions, which she felt showed she cared by building on ideas) (see Cogo and Dewey, 2006; Halmari, 1993; Murata, 1994) *Team G*: initial turn-taking issues; but gradual development of respectful listening habits and 'meaningful' participation (Janssens and Brett, 1997), i.e. by contributing when relevant *Team T*: respectful, tolerant behaviour from the start; eventually gave everyone confidence to participate
Language differences	***Use of English***: having roles to make sure everyone was following; paying attention to particular language needs; adopting a number of strategies to reduce misunderstandings and to help with expression (see 8.3.2)	***Use of Asides in French***: all teams tried to limit asides in French *Team K*: non-French speakers were offended by a brief aside in French in Task 4; felt their '*speak-English*' rule was violated *Team G*: felt that brief and occasional asides were useful and helpful as a resource to facilitate teamwork *Team T*: Jordan-T was tolerant and understanding of asides as an aid to understanding and expression
INTERPERSONAL TEAM RELATIONS		Interpersonal team relations impacted significantly on team functioning and performance
Respect		*Team K*: trust, respect and positive intentions appeared to be lacking *Teams G and T*: trust and respect were apparently much stronger in these two teams
Trust		*See above*
People and personalities	*All Teams*: group dynamics, people and personalities appeared more salient than national culture	*Team K*: strong personality types appeared to be more dominant than cultural influences
Frustration		*Team K*: discomfort, annoyance, mistrust, and frustrating team dynamics *Teams G and T*: periods of joking and laughter created pleasant atmosphere and positive working environment; people felt relaxed, enthusiastic, satisfied

Table 8.1 – Summary of Findings: Effectiveness of Strategies to Address Challenges

8.4.1 Effectiveness of Strategies for Task Management

I start with roles and expertise and then look at work practices. As we have seen in the case study chapters and in 8.3.1 there were similarities and differences across teams with regard to handling role allocation and specification, discovery and use of expertise and the two leadership duties.[367] I take these areas of teamwork in turn and look at the effectiveness of strategies adopted to deal with each one. Basically, the consequences of allocating and specifying roles were two-fold. Firstly, the resulting clarity pertaining to everyone's boundaries and responsibilities (Hackman, 1987; Mathieu et al., 2000) led to improved task performance by preventing ambiguity (Van de Ven and Delbecq, 1971). Secondly, when team members were aware of their own roles and each other's functions this created a structure of well-being and comfort (McGrath, 1991) since people were able to predict behaviour, thus enhancing positive feelings (Earley and Gardner, 2005) and reducing interpersonal conflict (Earley and Gardner, 2005; Tajfel, 1982; Tsui et al., 1992). More particularly, in Team T because roles were '*complementary*' and functions were '*clear*' (7.3.1), there was '*no infighting*', '*no jockeying…for contrary positions*' (7.2.1) and '*nobody who…positioned themselves to push the group forward*' (7.3.1), so nobody said '*no…it's not working*' (7.3.1). In Team G, while role sharing was considered to be somewhat disorderly and unstructured, it was nevertheless '*rather balanced*' since everyone had a '*defined…place*', which enhanced participation[368] since by doing '*everything and nothing*' everybody had '*roles that evolved…with the different tasks*' (6.5.1). Basically, it appeared that everyone needed to occupy a role; otherwise they did not feel they were contributing (6.3.2). Moreover, being clear on who was to do what not only enabled Team G to '*save time*' but also reassured the team (6.4.1).

Across all teams, people believed finding out about each other's experience and background improved their teamwork in the subsequent sessions (6.3.1; 6.5.1; 7.3.1). For example, identifying professional '*skills*' (6.3.1) and determining what roles people could play impacted positively on Team G's performance (6.3.1; 6.5.1), since

[367] See Table 8.1 for a summary of the findings relative to the effectiveness of the strategies the teams adopted to address their challenges.
[368] See also 8.4.2 in which I return to the link between roles and participation.

people participated in the solution with their '*own competence and knowledge*' (6.2.2). Basically, some members reported that discovering and using people's expertise appeared to enhance efficiency (6.4.1) and improve discussions (6.5.2). Yet one person in Team T still believed he needed more '*legitimacy*' in terms of '*hindsight*' and '*knowledge*' in order to contribute to the solution because he felt he lacked expertise (7.5.1). Hence, Carter-T explained why he was '*cautious*' at first and slow to get involved: he needed time to get used to the group; so when he '*got…to know the people*' (7.5.2) he gained confidence and became more comfortable and thus participated more actively (7.4.2; 7.5.2; 7.5.3).

Overall, data from the present study reveal the importance of the leadership role to fulfil two main functions: (a) managing the technical aspects of the task, i.e. task content (Canney Davison, 1994, 1996, with Ward, 1999) and achievement; and (b) handling team processes, i.e. the affective, interpersonal and interactive aspects of teamwork (Argyle et al., 1981; Canney Davison, 1994, 1996, with Ward, 1999; Poole, 1983b; Sundstrom et al., 1990). Firstly, throughout most of their fourth task, although Team K's facilitator was careful to organise the teamwork, to manage the interactions, to make sure everyone spoke and to establish consensus (5.4.1), when he forgot his neutrality function and became involved in the 'task' in addition to managing the 'team', his behaviour was interpreted as both (a) a severe violation of the team's '*rules of etiquette*' and '*resolutions*' that had been adopted jointly (5.4.1) and included in their written 'social contract' (5.3.2; Peterson, 2001) and as (b) a violation of the trust (Sitkin and Roth, 1993) associated with '*clear leadership*' (5.4.1). This illustrates the importance of, firstly, the separation of the two components of the leadership role, and of, secondly, the emphasis on the requirement for the facilitator not to '*get involved*', but to stay '*on the sidelines*', to be '*useful for the group*' and to '*see that the group was efficient*'; the facilitator was thus not supposed to express an opinion on the topic, provide a solution or '*put his own ideas…forward*' (5.4.1), but to concentrate on the team.[369] The stories were different for Teams G and T with regard to the two leadership duties. As of Team G's second task, people believed the interpersonal facilitator/moderator '*played a key role*' and '*really added something*' to the teamwork (6.3.1) by moderating team processes (6.4.1; 6.5.1) and

[369] I return to the effects of rule-breaking in 8.4.3.

ensuring that participation, communication and language differences were successfully managed (6.4.2). In fact, having two key roles, a '*leader*' and a '*moderator*', and clarifying each participant's duties impacted positively on the team's performance (6.3.1). On the other hand, in Team T, not having particular roles to manage the two leadership duties did not prevent the group from working '*smoothly together*' (7.2.1) throughout the sessions since the general caring attitude and thoughtfulness within the team as a whole (7.3.3), the '*availability*' (7.3.3) of some members to '*guide*' the group (7.5.1), the different strategies adopted to handle language and communication (7.2.2; 7.3.2; 7.4.2; 7.5.2) and the fact that people gradually knew '*each other better*' (7.5.1) created a climate of trust, respect and tolerance (7.2.2; 7.3.2; 7.3.3; 7.4.2; 7.5.1; 7.5.2; 7.5.3). Thus it appeared that the presence of these values replaced the need for the two leadership duties since Team T apparently '*gelled…quickly*' as a group (7.2.3) without a formal leader to manage the 'task' and/or 'team'.

I now deal with the effectiveness of strategies adopted to handle teams' work practices: planning, general practices and shared processes. Firstly, across all teams participants felt that starting with a planning and preparation period, i.e. a 'slow start' (Canney Davison, 1994, 1996, with Ward, 1999) before setting to work on the task entailed more efficient performance (Argyle et al., 1981). In fact, it was not until the third phase of their development whereby they had 'normed' their processes (Tuckman, 1965, with Jensen, 1977) that Team G became '*more structured*' and obtained '*results…higher than average*' because they had determined a '*good plan*' before dealing with the issues (6.4.1). Similarly, having corrected the initial disorganisation of Task 1, in subsequent sessions (7.3.1; 7.4.1; 7.5.1) Team T was better equipped to take '*an earlier step to just say…let's figure out how…we'll do this*' (7.2.1); they thus became more '*organised*' and '*the timing was good*' (7.3.1).

Secondly, findings from the current study across all teams also show that when processes and decisions were shared and team methods were collaborative, members worked more smoothly together, their solutions were more solid and their results were presented more clearly (Argyle et al., 1981; Brett et al., 2006; Canney Davison, 1994, 1996, with Ward, 1999; Earley and Mosakowski, 2000; Snow et al.,

1996). For example, 'collaboration' (7.4.1; 7.4.3; Canney Davison and Ward, 1999; Easterby-Smith and Malina, 1999; Gersick, 1988, 1989; Maznevski and DiStefano, 2000; Teagarden et al., 1995, 2005) enabled participants in Team T to work '*collectively*' and '*smoothly together*' (7.2.1; 7.2.3), to '*be united and have quality results*' (7.5.3) and '*in the end, we succeed*' (7.3.2). Likewise, since nobody in Team G imposed their solutions (6.4.1), everyone was '*aligned with the dynamics of the team*' (6.3.1) and they '*weren't just sharing ideas but constructing*' (6.4.2). This allowed being '*constructive*' (6.3.3) and '*building something…more solid*' collectively (6.5.1) like composing a '*mosaic*' one '*piece*' at a time by placing '*my stone…next to yours*' (6.5.1).

8.4.2 Effectiveness of Strategies for Language and Communication

In this subsection I look at the effectiveness of strategies for managing the three broad areas of language and communication: participation, turn-taking and language differences.[370] I start with two strategies used to manage participation: equal involvement and roles. Firstly, we have seen in the case studies and in 8.3.2 that when people managed participation so that everyone's input was obtained, the teams could take advantage of the diverse perspectives offered by their members to construct solutions collectively (Maznevski and DiStefano, 2000). For example, one strategy that '*worked out really well*' to enhance participation was when teams '*divided up into subgroups*' (6.3.1) because that was '*manageable*' and '*you can hear everyone's opinion and you can actually progress*' (6.5.1). Team effectiveness was thus improved when communication was more evenly shared rather than dominated by a few members and when the contribution of ideas and efforts was equal among team members (DeSanctis and Jiang, 2005). Yet, as we have seen, equal involvement was not necessarily equated with everyone speaking the same amount (Canney Davison, 1994, 1996, with Ward, 1999; Janssens and Brett, 1997). Therefore, in whole-group discussions across all teams, some members were quieter and slower to join in, i.e. they took more '*back office*' roles (5.2.1), while others spoke up more

[370] See Table 3.9 for the full list of themes that emerged in the debrief data and Table 8.1 for a summary of the findings relative to the effectiveness of the strategies the teams adopted to address their challenges.

easily (5.2.2; 5.4.2; 6.2.2; 6.3.2; 6.4.2; 6.5.2; 7.2.2; 7.3.2; 7.4.2; 7.5.1; 7.5.2). Consequently, not everyone participated equally in terms of speaking (6.2.2; 6.5.2; 7.2.2; 7.3.2). Nevertheless, according to Anna-T, one of the members who said the least had interesting points to make when he did speak (7.3.1). And, James-G reported that gradually, as processes evolved, Team G '*managed to give everyone the floor*' (6.5.2), which was also one of the objectives for all teams.

Secondly, by allocating and taking on roles, teams were able to facilitate the level of participation by individual members (Van de Ven and Delbecq, 1971). For example, in Team T, Allison-T said she liked each person '*to say something…and to contribute*' which was her '*personal objective*' to help the group find its '*path*' (7.5.1); and her '*approach*' to help people participate was described as gentle and '*sort of in the background*' (7.2.2). For Team G, as we have seen in 8.4.1, since they all shared roles and were thus the '*leader*' and '*coordinator*' (6.5.1), everyone tried to make sure they each spoke (6.5.2). So, everybody eventually gave their opinion when they wanted to because they '*had a more or less defined…place*' within the team (6.5.1). Thus, when people had a role, it was '*clear*', which meant that '*each person gives their opinion*' (7.3.1).

I now examine two strategies with regard to managing turn-taking: listening habits and roles to regulate speaking and listening. Firstly, in terms of listening habits, although Team K applied their listening rule (5.3.2; 5.3.3) in the third and fourth tasks (5.3.3), and although there was more cooperation and building on others' ideas in Task 4 (5.4.1), people's behaviour did not exactly match what the team expected, and Olivia-K's overlapping was not appreciated (5.4.2). Whereas she felt her '*interrupting*' was a sign that she was listening and '*building*' on other people's ideas and therefore that she '*cared*' about what they were saying, her teammates seemed to feel she had violated the rule. According to her, though, the rule was too '*restraining*' since it did not take into consideration her '*intentions*', which were actually to show '*respect and trust*' by adding to other people's viewpoints. She thus considered the judgements about her speaking and listening habits to be unfair (5.4.2; Cogo and Dewey, 2006; Halmari, 1993; Murata, 1994).

Listening habits were different for people in Teams G and T. For Team G, during the first task, although side dialogues were frequent, when people realised they were '*too dispersed*' they would '*get back*' into the whole group (6.2.2). One factor that influenced this behaviour and that was stated in the debrief after Task 1 was that the team was '*calm*' and '*showed respect*' (6.2.2) even during their first task. Moreover, everyone seemed to have become more self-disciplined by saying only '*things you really thought mattered…and…let go of the others*' (6.5.2), and people said in their interviews that the group was '*respectful*' and '*let people get to the point*' by listening without interrupting (6.4.2; 6.5.2), and that they were no longer speaking '*just to hear our own voice*', but to help the group progress and to '*go forward*' (6.4.2). It thus appeared that the tacit rule put into place was for people to participate only when they had something relevant and 'meaningful' (Janssens and Brett, 1997) to contribute, and to '*deliberately…withdra*w' to '*give everyone the floor*' to avoid a '*complete mess*' (6.5.2). Similarly, Team T seemed to abide by an unwritten code of conduct to remain respectful, tolerant, understanding, '*modest*' and '*friendly*'; nobody tried to '*outshine*' the others and there was '*no aggression*' which made everybody '*feel good*' and gave them '*confidence*' to speak and contribute (7.5.3).

Secondly, the emergence of two roles in Team G to carry out the leadership duties of 'task' and 'team' meant that there was a leader to focus on the problem to solve and a separate interpersonal facilitator/moderator to focus on the interactional team processes. Having these dual leadership functions might shed light on Team G's successful handling of turn-taking as opposed to the situation in Team K, in which only one person, the 'facilitator' (5.3.2) was entrusted with chairing the meeting, even though these two teams had similar turn-taking difficulties at the beginning. Hence, as we have seen above, in spite of Team K's rule for a facilitator to manage their interactive processes and of their 'listening' rule, there were still interruptions – and these were considered as being intrusive (5.4.2; Cogo and Dewey, 2006; Halmari, 1993; Murata, 1994). Team T apparently did not need strong roles to coordinate simultaneous speaking etiquette (Argyle et al., 1981; Duncan, Jr., 1972) or regulate the smooth flow of conversations (Duncan, Jr., 1972; Sacks et al., 1974) thanks to the respect and discipline within the whole team from the start.[371]

[371] See preceding paragraph.

I now deal with the effectiveness of strategies to handle language differences. More particularly, owing to the different levels of language fluency, one of the major strategies was the use of asides in French to enhance SLSs' understanding and improve communication (Brannen and Salk, 2000; Chew, 2005; Ehrenreich, 2010; Feely and Harzing, 2003; Janssens and Brett, 1997; Kankaanranta and Planken, 2010; Louhiala-Salminen et al., 2005; Poncini, 2003; Tenzer et al., 2014; Virkkula-Räisänen, 2010). This practice appeared necessary because requiring the use of only English was apparently tiring (5.4.2) and less efficient (5.4.2; 6.2.2). In fact, members of Team G felt that brief and occasional asides in French were '*useful*' and '*faster*' when fluent speakers spoke back and forth to each other '*like a ping-pong ball*' and that these asides were '*successful*' (6.5.2) since they enabled the group to move forward. Even so, the team still seemed to show respect by using French as little as possible (6.4.2). Likewise, people in Team T used French with humour (7.3.2) and Jordan-T, the team's only non-French speaker, tolerated the need for fellow teammates to resort to French to clarify certain points (7.4.2). In fact, he understood it was '*natural*' for the other members of his team to '*migrate*' to French (7.2.2), so when this happened he did not complain or make an issue of the situation (7.2.2; 7.4.2). Indeed, the respectful and tolerant behaviour with regard to the use of asides in French as a resource to facilitate teamwork in both Teams G and T contrasted sharply with the reaction to the use of French in Team K, in which non-French speakers became '*offended*' and '*frustrated*' when French was spoken in a brief aside, after which several team members shouted '*in English, in English*' since they felt it was a violation of their '*speak-English*' rule. This incident demonstrated that the use of asides in French appeared to have offended the non-French speakers who did not appreciate being left out of the conversations; thus, language-switching as a tool to aid SLSs in Team K apparently was considered as impolite (Harzing and Feely, 2008; Hinds et al., 2014; Neeley et al., 2012; Tenzer et al., 2014), which generated a reverse effect on this team's interactions (5.4.2) compared to the use of French in the other two teams.

8.4.3 Effects and Effectiveness of Rules

Concerning the overall effects and effectiveness of the rules put into place, with regard to Team M, according to the person I interviewed,[372] the explicit rules[373] improved team functioning because '*it was important for everyone to see them written…to agree with them and share them*' and '*once we established these rules…it was very clear and everyone respected them*'.[374] On the other hand, as we have seen, a 'storming' phase (5.3.1; Tuckman, 1965, with Jensen, 1977), marked by a number of 'breakpoints' (Poole, 1983b), led Team K to meet between Tasks 2 and 3 to produce a formal set of written rules for interacting and working together (5.3.1; 5.3.2). Consequently, once the rules were established, when someone broke a rule others felt this to be a strong violation (Bettenhausen and Murnighan, 1985, 1991) of the group's contract (5.4.1; 5.4.2). More tangibly, in the team's fourth task three rules were broken: Olivia-K broke the listening rule by overlapping and she broke the 'speak-English' rule by making a brief aside in French (5.4.2); and Wyatt-K broke the 'neutrality' rule when he began participating in the solution while running the meeting (5.4.1). As a matter of fact, even though team processes seemed to have been resolved thanks to the explicit set of rules the team devised and adopted (5.3.2), the reasons these rules might have been insufficient appeared two-fold. Firstly, one person found them to have created an '*unnatural*' and '*extreme structure*' where there was no '*happy medium*', and another person found they were '*good*' but did not like '*such rigidness*' (5.4.2). Secondly, the rule-breaking incidents offended teammates and added to the erosion of trust that seemed to characterise Team K (5.4.2).

In short, findings from the present study[375] show that trust and respect appeared to have had a direct effect on the enactment of rules for interacting. Basically, we have seen that Team K, the team with the strongest set of rules, experienced the most

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[372] See 8.3 and 8.3.1 for more information about Team M.
[373] See Appendix A9 for Team M's rules.
[374] *Team M-interview: C'était important que…tout le monde les voie écrites et soit d'accord avec et les partage… Une fois qu'on a établit les règles…c'était très clair et tout le monde les a respectées.*
[375] See Table 8.1 for a summary of the findings relative to the effectiveness of the strategies the teams adopted to address their challenges.

difficulties, because trust was apparently absent (5.4.2; 5.4.3), and the strong rules did not seem flexible enough (Larson, 1992; Ouchi, 1979; Shapiro, 1987) to restore the trust that appeared to have disappeared when processes became unmanageable. More precisely, without rules, discussions '*got out of control*' (5.2.2); however, the rules the team set seemed quite extreme and appeared to exacerbate the difficulties rather than alleviate them (5.4.1; 5.4.2). Conversely, in Team G, where at first there were often numerous discussions going on at the same time (6.2.2; 6.3.2), a system of unwritten rules as well as a certain respect within the team (6.2.2; 6.5.2) meant that individual conversations did not hinder teamwork for too long, since the team gradually corrected their lack of listening thanks to self-discipline (6.2.2; 6.4.2; 6.5.2), to the role of the moderator (6.3.1) and to the team's overall practice of sharing roles (6.5.1), even without a set of formal rules. Likewise, Team T apparently operated effectively without strong rules owing to the respect and trust that seemed to prevail (7.2.2; 7.3.2; 7.3.3; 7.5.1; 7.5.2; 7.5.3). Team T's implicit rules thus appeared to be based on trust, mutual respect and strong interpersonal ties (7.5.3; Doney et al., 1998; Easterby-Smith and Malina, 1999; Peterson, 2001). Overall, data from the three teams in the present study clearly depict that the forms of regulatory control that emerged to manage each group's interactions and the effects these had on the teams were linked to the dynamics and social processes within the groups themselves (Peterson, 2001), which is why in the next section I turn to an analysis and discussion of interpersonal team relations.

8.5 Interpersonal Team Relations

After analysing the challenges teams faced and the strategies they applied to address them, I now examine the effects of these challenges and strategies on each team's interpersonal team relations, and the interplay of these three elements. In the project teams investigated, interpersonal team relations consisted of respect, cited in five debriefs; trust, mentioned in two debriefs; people and personalities, brought up

in two debriefs; and frustration, commented on in one debrief.[376] In this section, I draw comparisons across the teams with regard to these aspects of interpersonal team relations identified by members of the three teams.

Basically, the findings from my study are consistent with prior research positing that in addition to structural requirements for team processes, positive relational activities need to be present at each stage of the task-solving activities (Marks et al., 2001; Poole, 1983b; Teagarden et al., 2005). Indeed, interpersonal aspects, such as trust, mutual respect, friendly attitudes and a cooperative manner facilitate team processes and impact on overall group performance and task accomplishments (Guzzo and Shea, 1993; Easterby-Smith and Malina, 1999; Sundstrom et al., 1990; Teagarden et al., 2005) by creating an enjoyable environment and improving confidence (Price, 1996). Furthermore, other streams of literature have also pointed out the importance of laughter (Hüttner, 2009), humour (Holmes, 2006; Holmes and Marra, 2002, 2004; Holmes and Schnurr, 2005; Schnurr, 2008) and good relationships (Kassis Henderson, 2005; Louhiala-Salminen, 2002; Pullin, 2010; Robinson, 2012; St. John, 1996) in the workplace. Nevertheless, as far as I know, in-depth accounts of the development of interpersonal team relations have not yet been explored in the literature. This study builds on and complements previous team research by capturing and embracing the complexities of team dynamics and processes as they evolve, thus depicting a more detailed view of team functioning in the early stages.

As we have seen in the case studies and in this chapter,[377] in Team K, positive and mutual interpersonal team relations seemed minimal. In the debrief after the first task, for instance, Olivia-K mentioned '*personalities*' were '*strong*' and '*outspoken*' and Moniteur-Anita pointed out that these '*personalities*' needed '*regulating*' and that it was '*difficult to work together*' (5.2.3). Then Audrey-K said that '*strong personalities*' were '*again*' a problem in Task 2 (5.3.1). She and Olivia-K additionally emphasised that trust was needed (5.3.1; 5.4.1; 5.4.2), and that people '*could not*

[376] See Table 3.9 for the complete list of themes that emerged in the team debriefs and Table 8.1 for a summary of the findings relative to the effectiveness of the strategies the teams adopted to address their challenges.
[377] See Table 8.1 for a summary of the findings relative to the effectiveness of the strategies the teams adopted to address their challenges.

trust simply some of the other people' and did not seem to be '*convinced of the positive intentions*' or the '*respect*' of their fellow teammates (5.4.2). As we saw in Chapter 5 and in 8.2.2, turn-taking was a major challenge. Various incidents offended people and apparently 'left a mark' on the group (5.3.1). Finally, in the fourth task, the team seemed to be annoyed with the overlapping and the episode concerning the word '*eventual*'. They were '*frustrated*' with the language-switching incident and they did not appreciate the non-neutrality of the leader (5.4.1; 5.4.2). Thus, even the clearly-defined set of rules did not seem to be enough to compensate for or overcome the team's disharmony, discomfort (5.2.2), frustration (5.2.2; 5.4.2), annoyance (5.4.2) and mistrust (5.3.1; 5.4.1; 5.4.2; 5.4.3), and people in Team K said they '*could not really reach the performances…at the last stage*' (5.4.2).

These frustrating interpersonal team relations contrasted with the situations for Teams G and T, in which periods of task handling were interspersed with socio-emotional periods characterised by joking and anecdotes (Poole, 1983b), and accompanied by laughter (Hüttner, 2009) and humour (Holmes, 2006; Holmes and Marra, 2002, 2004; Holmes and Schnurr, 2005; Schnurr, 2008), which created good working relationships (Kassis Henderson, 2005; Louhiala-Salminen, 2002; Pullin, 2010; Robinson, 2012; St. John, 1996) in these two teams. In Team G, there was a positive, cheerful and easy-going atmosphere throughout the sessions (6.2.3; 6.3.1; 6.3.3; 6.4.1; 6.4.3; 6.5.3); people made encouraging remarks about teammates (6.2.3) and teamwork (6.2.3; 6.3.1), and seemed to be having a good time (6.3.1; 6.3.3; 6.4.1); there was a language joke when NSs spoke too quickly and nobody got offended when they were asked to slow down (6.4.2). The humour and joking created a pleasant climate (6.4.3) that made people feel comfortable to contribute (6.4.3) and promoted teamwork since they could be '*serious*' and also '*have funnier moments*' (6.5.3). Moreover, members of Team G felt they had '*learned a lot about the positives and negatives in the group*' so the team was '*fairly close-knit*' and they '*got on very, very well*' (6.5.3) and they appeared satisfied with their performance (6.3.1). Likewise, within Team T, there was a '*pleasing*' (7.3.1) and convivial (7.5.3) environment. For example, people made fun of their roles (7.3.3), joked and laughed about their use of language (7.4.2), teased each other (7.4.3; 7.5.3) and offered each other encouraging praise (7.4.3), all of which relaxed the atmosphere (7.3.3; 7.4.2;

7.4.3; 7.5.3) and created a feeling of enthusiasm (7.4.1), enjoyment (7.5.3) and well-being (7.5.3). The pleasant and unaggressive (7.5.3) atmosphere created a climate of '*trust*' (7.3.2; 7.3.3; 7.4.2; 7.5.3), which led to '*good results*' (7.3.2) and '*good work*' (7.5.1).

One aspect of interactional team processes affected by the interpersonal team relations within these multicultural, multilingual teams appeared to be participation. Basically, across all teams participants reported that one of the advantages of international teams was the use of '*English as a common language*' since '*it was much simpler*' (6.5.2) and tended to put everyone on an equal footing (5.4.2; 7.3.2). This was because when people sensed they had '*fairly homogenous*' language levels and were '*in the same situation*' of speaking a '*non-native language*' (7.5.2), there was '*a more relaxed atmosphere*' (5.4.2) and they thus felt more at ease to contribute (7.3.2), even though the levels were '*very different between participants*' (6.2.2). Interestingly, in spite of this seemingly level playing field created by the use of a common language, it was reported that several people in Team K apparently '*dropped out of the game*' when the team's atmosphere '*got out of control*' (5.3.1). In the other two teams, however, as we have seen, the interpersonal team relations appeared more conducive to participation. For example, owing to the comfortable environment within Team T, one member claimed she felt '*at ease…to say things*' (7.3.2), and in Team G, Sarah-G thought that '*the…climate…encouraged…expression*' (6.5.2).

To sum up, the feelings of respect and trust in Teams G and T (6.2.2; 6.4.2; 6.5.2; 7.3.2; 7.3.3; 7.4.2; 7.5.3) contrasted with the frustration within Team K (5.2.2; 5.4.2) and, as we have seen, these interpersonal team relations clearly influenced team operations and performance. Therefore, in addition to task management and managing language and communication, interpersonal team relations also impacted significantly on team functioning and can also help explain differences across teams.

Chapter 9 - Analysis and Discussion: Factors Influencing Teamwork Processes

9.1 Introduction and Chapter Outline

In the chronological presentations of the project-team sessions for the three teams investigated – and in the preceding chapter in which I analyse and discuss the dynamic and complex processes that all teams experienced – we have seen that Team K experienced the most problems with regard to team dynamics and processes, that Team G appeared to experience difficulties in interactional processes in the first two workshops before eventually developing successful teamwork processes, and that Team T seemed to have had the fewest difficulties collaborating effectively. In this chapter I explore participants' perspectives on the variables that can affect performance and which might account for differences in team and task processes in the early stages of project-team meetings in order to address my third research sub-question: *What factors affect the management processes of different teams?* To address this question I analyse contextual components (9.2), demographic characteristics (9.3) and language diversity (9.4), followed by overall remarks (9.5).

9.2 Contextual Components

As indicated in Chapters 3 and 4, all three teams operated under the same conditions in the project-team workshops. These conditions consisted of seven similar contextual factors: multicultural composition; English-speaking; four management dilemmas that had already been solved by the company, introduced by task presenters; one-and-a-half-hour project-team meetings to find a solution to each dilemma; observation by a *moniteur*; preparation of a presentation of the team's results; and when selected, presentation of these results in the auditorium to the task presenter and the entire cohort. An eighth factor, group size, was not identical

for all three teams since there were thirteen members in Team K during the first two sessions[378] and twelve in Team G, whereas there were eight members in Team T.

In spite of the overall contextual similarities, team size apparently had a negative effect on both Teams K and G, especially in terms of participation and turn-taking, as we have seen in Chapters 5 and 6. More particularly, both Ethan-K and Michael-K explicitly reported that people in Team K were frustrated because they felt that, in the short time frame allotted to complete the problem-solving tasks, granting speaking-time to all thirteen members[379] restricted the extent to which each person could contribute (5.2.2). Likewise, Ryan-G claimed that in a group of twelve, there would inevitably be a quarter of the team who could not participate (6.2.2) and, consequently, everyone needed to be selective about what they ought to say (6.3.2). Similarly, for Tyler-G, owing to group size, the particular roles people occupied determined how actively they would participate (6.4.2). Finally, Joseph-G underlined that team size also influenced Team G's '*attention*' and '*listening*' which '*aren't easy*' in a group of twelve (6.3.2).

These comments seem to shed light on some of the difficulties Teams K and G may have experienced managing their team interactions. More tangibly, the frustration resulting from the limits on speaking as well as the poor communicative behaviour due to hardships taking the floor and a lack of listening, apparently all linked to team size, might explain to some degree why these two teams developed more precise roles and established more explicit rules, either written (K) or verbal (G), for handling their team processes, compared with Team T in which interactional practices were less problematic and rules were more implicit owing to a smaller team size. In fact, as Olivia-K reported, '*in order to work together effectively…there need to be eight; …above ten it gets to be…tricky*'.[380]

[378] There were twelve members during Team K's last two sessions (see 5.1.1).
[379] See 5.1.1 and first paragraph of this section.
[380] *Olivia-K-interview: Dans la capacité à travailler ensemble de façon efficace…il faut être huit;…à partir de dix ça devient…délicat.*

9.3 Demographic Variables

In addition to team size, a major difference between the three teams concerned their individual make-up. In order to explore to what extent the particular composition of the teams seemed to affect their project-team meetings, I look at six demographic variables that characterised the members of each team: nationality (9.3.1), professional sector (9.3.2), gender (9.3.3), age and professional experience (9.3.4) and GP corporate tenure (9.3.5).[381] I begin each subsection that follows with a comparison across teams of the five demographic variables within the three teams before providing interviewees' perceptions regarding the impact of the teams' demographic composition on team dynamics and processes.[382]

9.3.1 Nationality

All teams in the MIP sessions had a majority of members from France, but the size of this majority varied across teams as indicated in Figure 9.1.[383] With nine French nationals representing 69.23% of the team, Team K had the highest percentage of French nationals,[384] while the five French nationals in Team T represented 62.5% of the team's membership. The seven French nationals in Team G represented 58.33%, the lowest percentage of French nationals in the three teams I observed. The remaining members in the teams each came from a different country.[385]

[381] See Tables 5.1 for Team K, 6.1 for Team G and 7.1 for Team T, as well as Appendix A8 for all teams for more details about these specific demographic variables.
[382] Four members from Team K, ten from Team G and seven from Team T discussed the role of culture on their four project-team workshops.
[383] The decimal points in all charts in this section are shown as commas since in France, where this thesis has been typed, commas are used as decimal points.
[384] The eight French nationals in the twelve-member team represented 66.66% of its participants, which was still the highest percentage across all three teams.
[385] See Tables 5.1, 6.1 and 7.1; and Appendix A8.

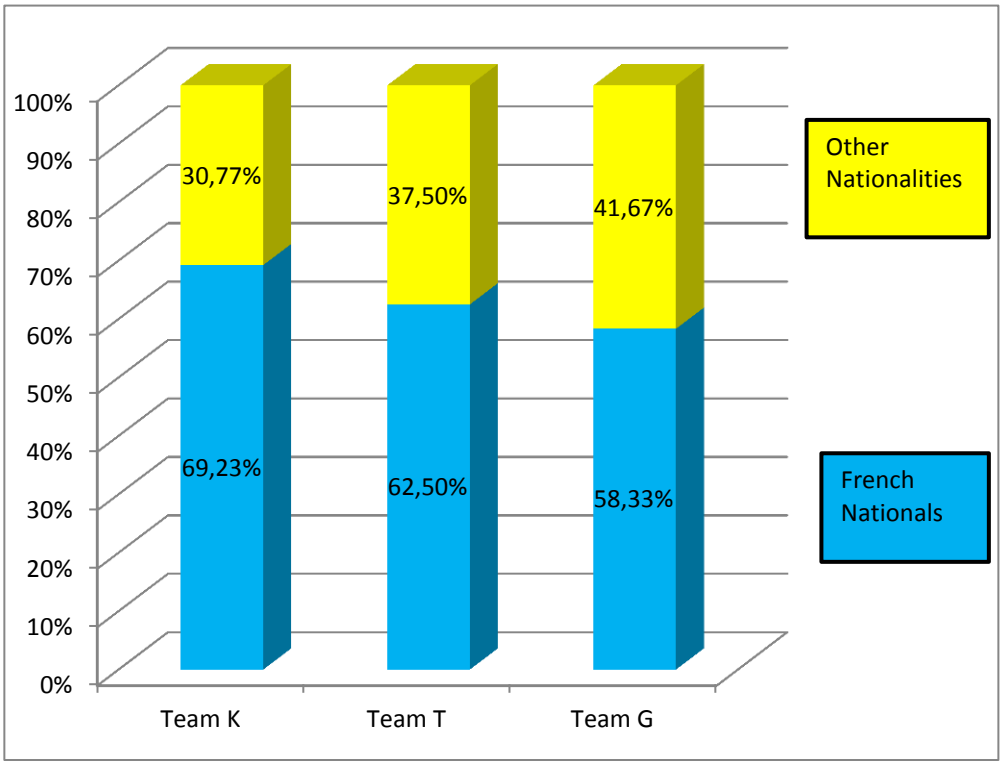

Figure 9.1 – Nationality

In spite of the multicultural composition of the project teams, the bulk of the participants across the teams did not feel that nationality had a strong influence. First of all, James-G felt that '*national cultures were very rapidly overshadowed*' and that '*it's not a barrier*'.[386] David-G had a similar view and added that it was difficult to establish a specific trend in national cultural behaviour because '*when you've only got one from the country...it's hard to know…what is...the norm for that country*'.[387] Another aspect relating to national culture mentioned by several interviewees concerned the fact that the different nationalities were not perceived as being so different. Tyler-G believed the team was quite '*homogenous*' in spite of the fact that '*we're very diversified*'[388] while for David-G '*some nationalities are closer in style than others*'.[389] More particularly, Sarah-G highlighted that the team '*was in fact*

[386] *James-G-interview: Pour moi les nationalités ont été occultées très rapidement; …c'est pas une barrière.*
[387] David-G-interview: Original in English.
[388] Tyler-G-interview: Original in English
[389] David-G-interview: Original in English.

"Western"; …the difference is not huge; we feel it more with…Asia or…Russians'.[390] Additionally, both Olivia-K and Luke-T believed that the different nationalities in their project teams were culturally fairly similar but felt the gap in the way of handling the subjects to be wider in '*the other team*[391]*...with more Asians*':[392]

> *In the project…team…Italian, French…Brazilian…American. …We are different but we have cultures that are close. …In the second team…it's different with…Chinese people; …there is…a much wider gap in terms of…ways of…approaching subjects* (Luke-T-interview).[393]

Basically, the *stagiaires* commented that national cultural differences had little impact on the project-team interactions in which they took part. To sum up, Olivia-K found it '*strange*' to discover that national '*cultural diversity*' neither posed '*a problem*' nor was '*an enrichment*' but felt it to be '*neutral*'.[394]

On the other hand, David-G commented on the French that, due to their greater numbers, '*then of course they're gonna have a guided influence on the way the group operates*',[395] while for Audrey-K, the difficulties Team K experienced seemed to arise among members of the French nationals in the team, not necessarily among people of different national origins:

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[390] *Sarah-G-interview: Ca reste en fait occidental; ...la différence est pas énorme. On le ressent plus avec…l'Asie...ou les russes.*

[391] See section 3.3.2 for a description of the three types of teams in the MIP sessions. The '*other*' teams to which Sarah-G, Olivia-K and Luke-T refer are the consumer teams in which the composition was apparently less '*Western*' owing to the presence of '*Russians*' and '*Asians*'.

[392] *Olivia-K-interview: Dans ce groupe là…la diversité pays, ne m'a pas frappée. ...Vraiment pas. Beaucoup plus dans l'autre groupe…avec plus d'asiatiques…. Je n'ai pas senti la diversité culturelle comme un problème. …Ni un enrichissement. ...Je l'ai senti neutre. …C'est drôle.*

[393] *Luke-T-interview: Dans le groupe…cas management…italien, français…brésilienne… américain; …on est différents mais on a…des cultures proches. …Dans le deuxième groupe…c'est différent avec…les chinois; ...il y a…un plus gros écart, en terme…de façon…d'aborder les sujets.*

[394] *Olivia-K-interview: Dans ce groupe là…la diversité pays, ne m'a pas frappée. ...Vraiment pas. Beaucoup plus dans l'autre groupe…avec plus d'asiatiques…. Je n'ai pas senti la diversité culturelle comme un problème. …Ni un enrichissement. ...Je l'ai senti neutre. …C'est drôle.*

[395] David-G-interview: Original in English.

> *I realised that…something that…actually did not work out well, because there were people...who were unhappy with each other, were the French* (Audrey-K-interview).[396]

In fact, several participants across all teams, felt that people and personalities had a greater impact than national culture, especially since '*people are different in the countries; …there are not sixty million identical French; …there are not one billion...identical Indians; ...there are not three hundred million identical Americans*' (Ethan-K-interview).[397]

Firstly, concerning Team K's difficulties, Wyatt-K indicated both cultural and personal reasons for not listening, although according to him, interrupting was '*typically French...but it was more linked to the person than...culture*'.[398] Additionally, Ethan-K reported that in Team K '*the root of the problem is…group dynamics*' although he felt '*the intercultural side…amplifies*' the situation:

> *If there had been thirteen Americans or thirteen French people, there would have been difficulties as well. ...The difficulties…are certainly problems related three-fourths to group problems and one fourth…the intercultural aspect* (Ethan-K-interview).[399]

Thus, with regard to Team K's '*group problems*', Audrey-K posited that there was a shortage of trust related to individual '*chemistry*':

> *There were people who were…trusting, but there were people who could not trust…some of the other people because...maybe they didn't like*

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[396] Audrey-K-interview: Original in English.

[397] *Ethan-K-interview: Les gens sont différents dans les pays; …on a pas 60 million de français identiques...il y a pas un milliard…d'indiens identiques...il y a pas trois cents millions d'américains identiques.*

[398] Wyatt-K-interview: Notes taken from unrecorded phone interview.

[399] *Ethan-K-interview: …Il y aurait eu treize américains ou treize français, il y aurait eu des difficultés aussi. …Par contre ça amplifie le phénomène. …Les difficultés…c'est certainement trois-quarts de problèmes liés aux problèmes de groupe et un quart…le côté interculturel. Mais c'est pas…le principal problème l'interculturel. Ca va en rajouter. ...A la base c'est…des problèmes de groupe.*

their...ideology of doing things...so...the chemistry between people wasn't working well; ...nobody trusted each other (Audrey-K-interview).[400]

Secondly, for Team T, the impact of people and personalities also appeared strong. In particular, as we have already seen, they functioned smoothly and '*gelled…quickly*' as a team (7.2.3) which two people attributed to human qualities:

> *I think it was the nature of the people; …we didn't have anybody who wanted to take over; …there wasn't anybody who wanted to…dominate the others; …everybody respected one another* (Dylan-T-interview).[401]

> *I feel that…individually…people…had…high moral values…in this team* (Brandon-T-interview).[402]

Thirdly, with regard to Team G, Tyler-G minimised the role of national culture and highlighted the influence of people and shared processes:

> *I don't think it's nationality; …it's…people. …Still…we're all going the same way and I think we did that from Day One. …When you work…you have more or less the same agenda, and it doesn't really matter where you're from. …Of course it will be differences…but…we have the same goal* (Tyler-G-interview).[403]

Likewise, Samuel-G also believed that national culture did not play a major role since, '*at the base, people are people…it's personalities*' which is why he felt '*the worst thing...it's to generalise this*'. In fact, for him, what appeared to matter in Team G's meetings were the '*details and procedures*'.[404]

This subsection has illustrated that although national cultural differences may have

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[400] Audrey-K-interview: Original in English.

[401] *Dylan-T-interview: Je pense c'est les caractères des personnes...on avait pas de gens qui voulaient prendre le lead...il y avait pas de gens qui voulaient…écraser l'autre; …chacun respectait l'autre.*

[402] *Brandon-T-interview: Je pense que…individuellement…les gens…étaient…de grande valeur…dans ce groupe.*

[403] Tyler-G-interview: Original in English.

[404] Samuel-G-interview: Original in English.

amplified the difficulties of working in these multicultural teams, the majority of participants across teams did not find national culture to have had a dominant effect on their interactions for several reasons: having one national from each of the other countries in the teams was insufficient to determine any representative national cultural patterns; and because the composition of the groups was basically 'Western', *stagiaires* felt their styles were quite similar. In fact, some of the problems within Team K, the team with the highest percentage of French nationals, seemed to involve only the French nationals rather than different nationalities. Additionally, group dynamics, i.e., people and individual personalities, within all teams were brought up as having considerable influence, and procedures and shared processes in Team G, as well as the values of trust and respect in Teams T and K were also underlined as being key factors. More precisely, the presence of high moral values and respect in Team T and the absence of trust in Team K appeared to impact these two teams in both positive and negative ways, respectively, as we have seen in the case studies and in Chapter 8.

9.3.2 Professional Sector

Figure 9.2 shows the percentages of different professions represented in the teams. Team G had the lowest number of professional sectors, with a percentage of 50% of its twelve members in six professions (three each in Finance and Marketing-Sales; two each in Communication and Industry; and one each in Supply Chain and Tax Law). With seven professional fields, Team K had a percentage of 53.85% of its thirteen members in different sectors[405] (four in Personnel, three in Industry in Tasks 1 and 2, two in R&D, and one each in Agronomy, Finance, Logistics and Marketing-Sales). Team T had the highest number of professional fields with a percentage of 62.5% of its eight members coming from five different sectors (three in Industry, two in Communication, and one each in Finance, Marketing-Sales and Supply Chain).

[405] 58.33% of its twelve members were in different professional sectors.

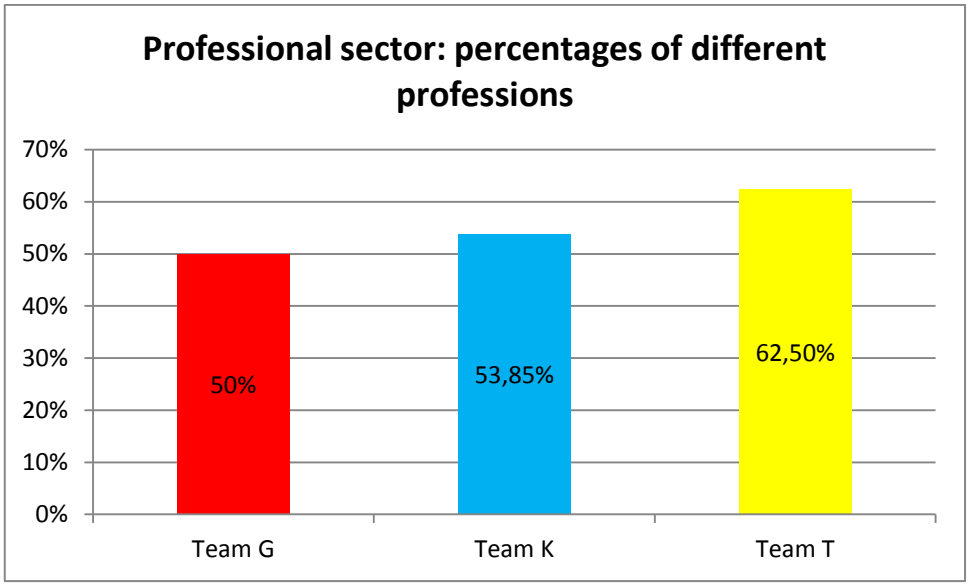

Figure 9.2 – Professional Sector

People across all teams seemed to feel that professional culture influenced the MIP project-team interactions. More particularly, two people in Communication within Team T, the team with the highest number of professional fields, emphasised the contrast they felt between those in Communication and those in Industry. Firstly, Anna-T found it '*really difficult…working with engineers…at the beginning*' but thought that '*finally they saw that everyone has a role and that it's complementary*'.[406]

Secondly, Dylan-T claimed teamwork was generally more effective between people in the same professional sector. Thus, for him, working with the different professional cultures in Team T was more of a '*lesson*' than working with other national cultures:

> *Working in…multicultural teams…I had already done that, but…always with people in Communication. …What I learned is that…even with the French…teamwork turns out very well…simply when it's…either engineers…or people in Communication; …they obviously don't see the same things as you if*

[406] *Anna-T-interview: Travailler toujours avec les ingénieurs c'est quand même difficile, parce que quand ils voient les gens de la communication: …'elle va rien nous donner; elle va rien apporter'; …dans ce groupe là c'était ça la difficulté; …et finalement, ils ont vu que tout le monde a un rôle et que ça c'est complémentaire. …Mais…c'était pas ça au tout début.*

you're in Communication (Dylan-T-interview).[407]

Similarly, Olivia-K expressed that as a Personnel manager she found a gap in the '*way of operating*' and '*reasoning*' compared with that of '*an engineer*', Team K's '*dominant way of thinking*'; she claimed the differences between these two professional approaches were '*frustrating*'.[408] Audrey-K also spoke of professional culture and brought up the '*common ideologies and…methods of doing things*' between the four members of the team who were in Personnel. She found they were all '*very much in sync*' regardless of the fact they were of different nationalities. Yet, she could not pinpoint whether their similar '*approach*' was because of their shared '*human resources professions*' or because their '*personalities were the same*'.[409] In fact, Ethan-K claimed the '*human*' rather than '*professional…dimension*' was '*certainly more…important, that's undeniable*'.[410] Moreover, David-G found that the different ways of working were '*due more to nationality than the professional sector*'[411] and for Samuel-G the various demographic differences were all interrelated and '*the professional sectors just…compound that difference*'.[412]

In spite of these nuanced views of professional diversity reported by Audrey-K, Ethan-K, David-G and Samuel-G, five interviewees in Team G seemed to feel the influence of professional culture, even though Team G was the group with the lowest number of professional sectors:

> *What emerged was more in terms of professional cultures…than national cultures; …I've rather got the Finance…and Legal culture. …We see the difference with those…in Sales or…Industry; …when I wanted…to…get a…point*

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[407] *Dylan-T-interview: Travailler en équipes…multiculturelles, j'avais déjà fait, mais…toujours avec des gens de la communication. …Ce que j'ai appris, c'est que…même avec des français...travailler en équipe ça marche très bien…simplement quand sont…ou des ingénieurs…ou des gens qui sont pas dans la com; …ils voient évidemment pas les même choses que vous qui êtes dans la com. …C'était une leçon.*

[408] *Olivia-K-interview: Mon mode…est certainement pas un mode de fonctionnement…d'ingénieur; …c'est frustrant; …ils sont…dans la pensée dominante. …Ma logique n'est pas la même (rires).*

[409] Audrey-K-interview: Original in English.

[410] *Ethan-K-interview: C'est forcément plus intéressant puisqu'il y a une dimension, non professionnelle, enfin, humaine, qui est importante, ça c'est indéniable.*

[411] David-G-interview: Original in English.

[412] Samuel-G-interview: Original in English.

across…I had to…sort of…get on…their wavelength. …I'd say perhaps they were more pragmatic; …I was sometimes more…into concepts (Sarah-G-interview).[413]

[Professional culture]...I think with this group it seems to be stronger. …The role you play in your job…that's what you do every day (Madelyn-G-interview).[414]

I felt a much greater cultural…diversity coming from the…professional sector than the…origins or the cultures or the…ages (Nathan-G-interview).[415]

Moreover, for Logan-G, professional knowledge and expertise had a direct effect on participation and involvement since '*some people who were…more competent put themselves forward more…in some tasks more than in others*'.[416] Similarly, James-G expressed that '*the problem*' for him '*was that as a pure engineer…there were really no fields in which…I had expertise*.[417]

Likewise, three people in Team G believed professional culture had a moderating effect on national cultural traits. Firstly, Nathan-G felt the French were '*not all alike*' owing to the '*professional…aspect*'.[418] Benjamin-G also believed that because of '*professional culture*' some French people '*reacted much faster…than…the other [French people]*'.[419] Thirdly, for Joseph-G '*it's obvious it depends on…the experience…of [national] culture but also professional of each person* (Joseph-G-

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[413] *Sarah-G-interview: Ce qui ressortait c'est plus les cultures métier…que les cultures pays; …je suis plutôt culture finance...et juridique. …On voit la différence avec ceux qui sont commerciaux ou…dans l'industrie; …quand je voulais…faire…entendre…un élément, faut se mettre…un peu…sur leur longueur d'ondes. …Je dirais peut-être ils étaient plus pragmatiques; …j'étais plus des fois…dans les concepts.*

[414] Madelyn-G-interview: Original in English.

[415] *Nathan-G-interview: J'ai senti une plus grande diversité…culturelle provenant…du métier que...des origines ou des cultures ou…des âges.*

[416] *Logan-G-interview: Certaines personnes qui étaient…plus compétentes, se sont plus mises en avant…dans un cas plutôt que dans un autre.*

[417] *James-G-interview: Forcément…quand on maîtrise le sujet c'est beaucoup plus facile d'intervenir et de participer que quand on est complètement étranger. …Le souci c'est que moi en tant que industriel pur…j'ai pas eu de domaine dans lequel…j'étais vraiment expert.*

[418] *Nathan-G-interview: C'est pas homogène…mais déjà il y a l'aspect…métier…c'est plus l'aspect métier.*

[419] *Benjamin-G-interview: Moi, sur le premier groupe il y a Ryan-G qui est français, mais…la Supply Chain c'est son métier donc…je pense qu'il a percuté plus vite…que…les autres. …J'ai pas l'impression qu'on allait tous à la même vitesse.*

interview).[420]

In fact, people from Teams G and T expressed that overall the professional mix within the groups contributed positively to the interactions. For Sarah-G professional diversity was '*a source of enrichment*' since everyone seemed '*complementary*'.[421] David-G also found professional '*heterogeneity*' to be an asset owing to the '*different angles*' this diversity brought to the team. For him, having the diverse professions also prevented '*group-think*' thus enabling the team to produce '*a better result*' and '*a good conclusion*'.[422] Similarly, Carter-T found the '*differences in [professional] experience and national origins*' to be '*a good point*'.[423]

On the other hand, there were some contradictory perceptions in this same team. For example, Tyler-G, felt that professional diversity had '*very little impact*' because firstly, the tasks were '*so general*' and short, and secondly, the people were '*on such a high level*' of '*professional skills*'.[424]

As we have seen in this subsection, although people across teams felt a gap in the way of working between the different professional sectors and some in Team G were frustrated since they did not seem to feel they had the necessary professional background to enable them to participate more actively, professional diversity was perceived as being complementary and leading to positive outcomes in Teams G and T. Yet, in spite of the fact that, according to many participants, especially in Team G, professional culture appeared to have a significant effect on the project-team workshops, these opinions were not unanimous. More particularly, several people believed other factors such as personality and nationality were stronger, while someone else felt all these factors were linked, and another person mentioned that due to the nature of the tasks and to everyone's high level of professional expertise,

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[420] *Joseph-G-interview: C'est clair que ça dépend de…l'expérience…de culture mais aussi professionnelle de chacun.*
[421] *Sarah-G-interview: Ca se complète finalement…une source d'enrichissement.*
[422] David-G-interview: Original in English.
[423] *Carter-T-interview: Je trouve que…c'était…un bon point d'avoir justement…des expériences [professionnelles] et des pays différents.*
[424] Tyler-G-interview: Original in English.

professional diversity was not problematic and had little influence on the team processes.

9.3.3 Gender

Figure 9.3 shows the percentages of females in each team. Team K had three females and ten males in the first two sessions, with females representing 23.08% of the thirteen-member team, which was the lowest gender diversity of all three teams.[425] The three females in Team G and the two females in Team T represented 25% of these two teams' membership.

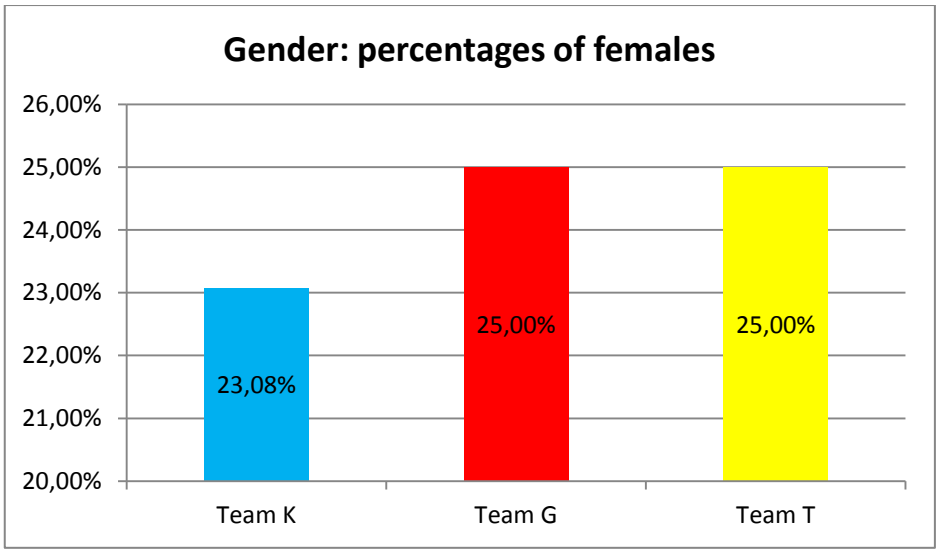

Figure 9.3 – Gender

No-one in Teams G and K discussed gender. In fact, out of all my interviews with participants in teams both observed and not observed, only two people throughout the three MIP sessions spoke of gender diversity, and they were both in Team T. Although Kevin-T '*didn't notice*' the '*men-women diversity*' because he felt everyone contributed '*with…the same level…of respect [and]…competence*', he felt '*the difference*' had a '*very, very, very positive*' impact on teamwork.[426]

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[425] Females represented 25% of the twelve-member team, which was the same percentage as for both Teams G and T.

[426] *Kevin-T-interview: La diversité homme, femme, j'ai pas l'aperçue, personnellement….Anna-T...Allison-T…Brandon-T, Carter-T, Luke-T c'était tout avec…le même niveau…de respect...de*

A second person, Allison-T, discussed at great length the difficulties of working on a probationary-period assignment with two French men who were new to the company. In contrast, she felt a difference working in the project team with a diversity of cultures, since '*they are more respectful of what girls say*' compared to working with these '*two guys*'. The problems she seemed to be facing appeared to stem from gender as well as French national character traits and the lack of GP corporate culture:

> *They're two men and me…and in fact…it becomes a power struggle. …It's rather difficult to handle. …It was really, really different [in the project team]. …I think it's something French. …I think…in the…other teams and in the other…meetings…I never felt that in GP* (Allison-T-interview).[427]

The statements by both Kevin-T and Allison-T above have shown gender diversity as impacting positively on Team T's project-team interactions. In the second example, gender was intertwined with elements of nationality and corporate culture. Nevertheless, the gender factor was rarely discussed in my interviews – providing few insights into the MIP project-team meetings – and thus does not appear to shed much light on why the three teams may have operated differently.

9.3.4 Age and Professional Experience

Figures 9.4 and 9.5 respectively show the average age and the age dispersion in each team. Team G was the youngest team with an average age of 34.66; it also had the lowest age dispersion, with a twenty-one-year difference between the youngest and eldest members, who were twenty-five and forty-six, respectively. The average age for Team K's thirteen-member team was 36.39 years,[428] with an age dispersion of twenty-seven years between the youngest and eldest members, who were twenty-

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compétences. ...La différence...je peux dire que…chacun il peut apporter…son esprit…son expérience, son façon de voir les choses et donc ça je le vois vraiment comme une chose très, très, très positif…la diversité au niveau...de sexe.

[427] Allison-T-interview: Original in English.

[428] The average age of the twelve-member team was 35.33 years.

five and fifty-two, respectively. Members of Team T were the oldest, with an average age of 39.5 years. Team T also had the highest age dispersion, with a difference of thirty years between the youngest and eldest members, who were twenty-five and fifty-five, respectively.

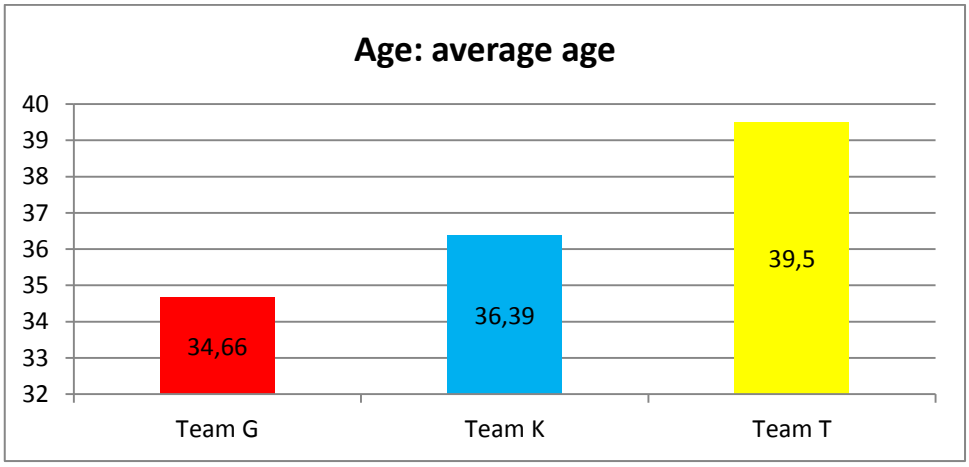

Figure 9.4 – Average Age

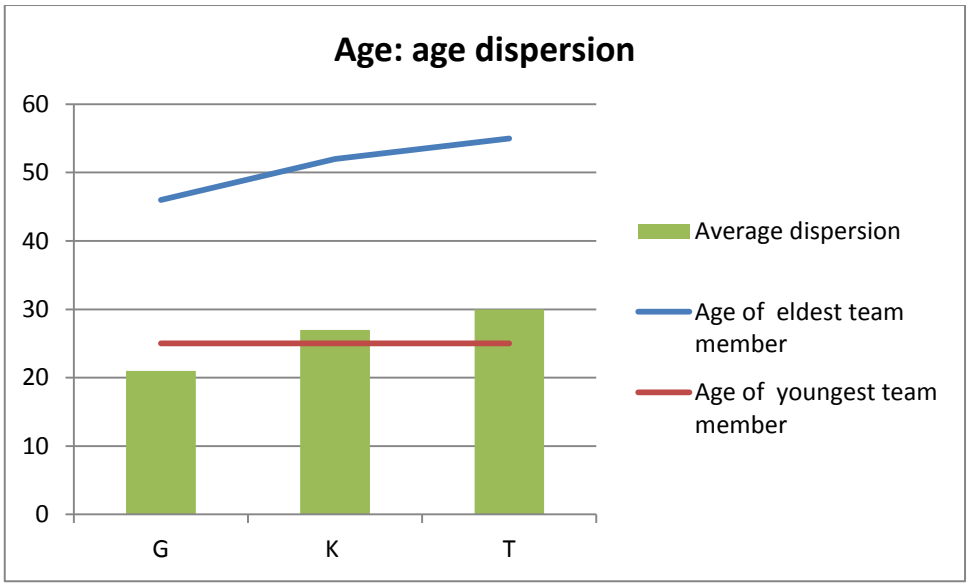

Figure 9.5 – Age Dispersion

Figure 9.6 shows the aggregate number of years of pre-GP experience per team. Out of the three teams studied, the members of Team G had the lowest number of years of pre-GP professional experience, that of 6.5 years, while the aggregate number of years that members of Team K had previously worked prior to joining GP totalled

10.11 years for the thirteen-member team.[429] With an average of 10.8 years of pre-GP experience, Team T was the team whose members had the highest number of years of pre-GP professional activity.

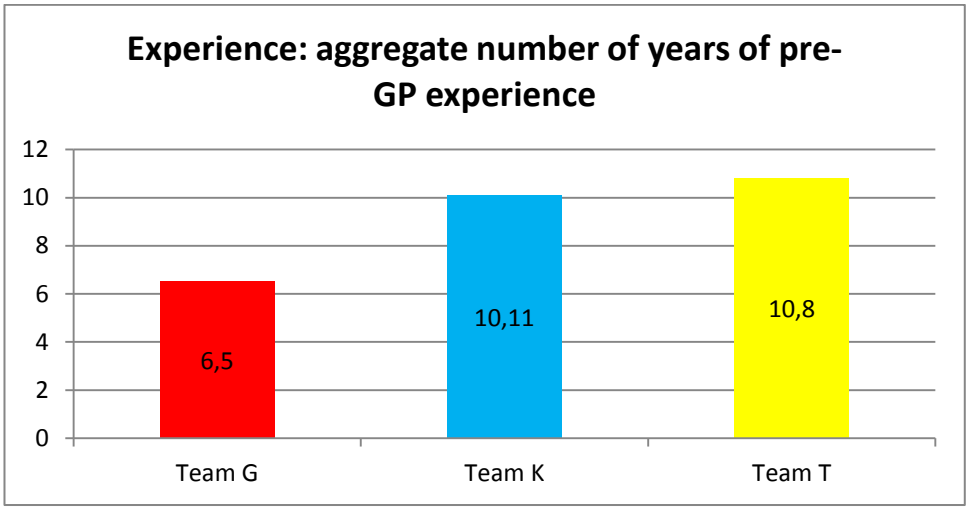

Figure 9.6 – Pre-GP Experience

Moreover, as indicated in Figure 9.7 – which provides the total corporate experience for each team (i.e., the total number of years of both pre-GP and GP professional experience)[430] – we can see that, again, Team G was the team with the lowest number of years of total corporate experience with an average of 12.15 years. Likewise, next was Team K, with an average of 13.16 years for the thirteen-member team[431] followed by Team T, with an average of 15.22 years, the highest number of years of corporate experience across all three teams.

[429] For the twelve-member team the aggregate number of years of pre-GP experience totalled 8.88 years.
[430] See also section 9.3.5 and Figure 9.8 for more details pertaining to GP corporate experience and culture.
[431] For the twelve-member team the average mean comes to 12.15 years, the same figure as for Team G, also with twelve members.

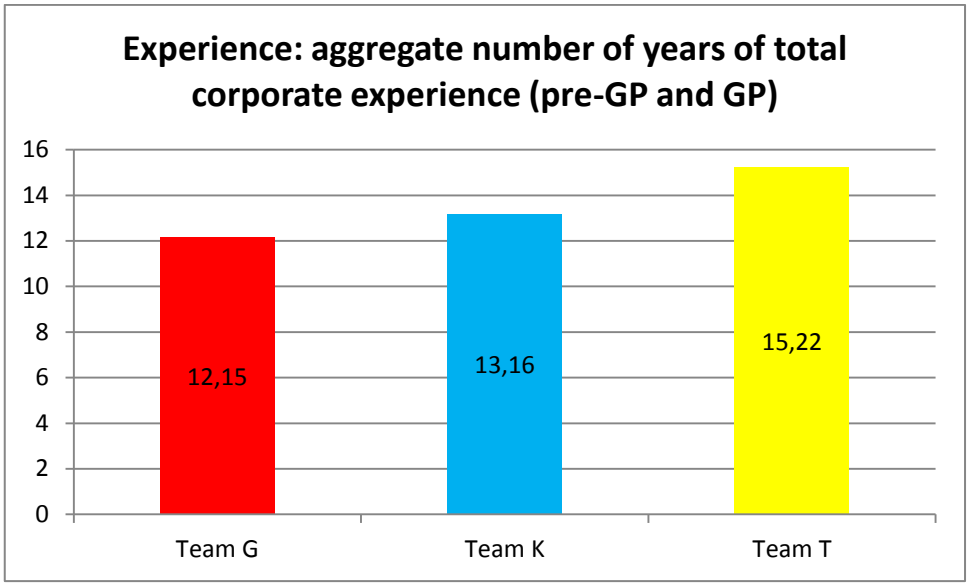

Figure 9.7 – Total Corporate Experience

Seven people in the teams investigated (three each in Teams G and T, and one in Team K) discussed both positive and negative effects of age and experience on the project-team interactions. Firstly, Madelyn-G seemed to think that the lack of listening in Team G's early stages was due to the fact that nobody in the group was '*particularly…brand new to the company*' and most were '*generally managing people*' (6.2.2)[432] and thus had numerous ideas they wished to contribute. Therefore, she tended to think people's active participation and overlapping speaking in the first two tasks were due to the corporate experience and knowledge they wanted to share. In fact, David-G felt their speaking habits were respectful, and claimed the '*respect*' within the team resulted from the experience of the people in the group, because when they did have something to say, it was fortunately '*well thought-out*' so the team was '*willing*' to listen (6.5.2). [433]

Moreover, even though the average age and the aggregate years of experience were the lowest in Team G, a further comment linked to experience may also shed light on this team's interactional behaviour, which had evolved by the last two tasks (6.4; 6.5; 6.6). In fact, Samuel-G, the second eldest team member, believed that thanks to age and experience, he had learned to be more tempered and self-controlled, thus

[432] Madelyn-G-interview: Original in English
[433] David-G-interview: Original in English.

revealing the advantages of maturity:

> *Over time and I guess with age…you learn…how to pick your battles and which ones are worth debating and…will bring…output greater than the input required to argue, and which ones are just better left alone, because they won't change or negatively impact anything* (Samuel-G-interview).[434]

However, the situation was different for Team K. More particularly, as we have seen in 5.3.1, Michael-K recounted how an older, more experienced person took it badly to be interrupted, whereas he himself, owing to his young age, made an effort to put his '*ego to one side*' since his '*priority was…for the team to solve the problem*'.[435] This testimony reveals the contrast between the differing effects of age and experience on the behaviour of people in Teams G and K, even though the figures show that Team K's average age and experience were higher than those of Team G.

Three *stagiaires* in Team T reported other influences of the age factor and age dispersion. Firstly, Carter-T called attention to the lack of credibility he felt owing to his young age, low corporate seniority and absence of experience. Even though he recognised that the team took everyone's ideas into account, for him people should be aware of the inadequate legitimacy perceived by younger team members, especially in the early stages of teamwork:

> *[I'm] twenty-six. …I don't have any seniority. …I'm brand new in the company, I'm young. …What is my legitimacy compared with someone who's…been at GP for twenty years? …Jordan-T I think he's been…[at GP] twenty-eight years; …or compared with Brandon-T who's got thirty years of experience…in Industry. …I know quite well I was in a group where…everyone's opinion counted but…you can't overlook this type of thing…at least not when [the team] gets started* (Carter-T-interview).[436]

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[434] Samuel-G-interview: Original in English.

[435] See Michael-K's first interview comment in 5.3.1.

[436] *Carter-T-interview: [J'ai] vingt-six [ans]. …J'ai pas d'ancienneté…je suis tout frais dans l'entreprise, je suis jeune. …Quelle est ma légitimité par rapport à quelqu'un qui a…vingt ans chez [GP]? …[Jordan-T] je crois que ça fait vingt-huit ans…qu'il travaille à [GP], ou par rapport à [Brandon-T] qui a une expérience de trente ans…dans l'industrie. …Je sais bien que j'étais*

Nevertheless, Luke-T, the youngest member, emphasised the complementarities that the different age groups brought to the interactions. He thus felt the age gap was a benefit rather than an obstacle, and that working with more experienced people allowed him to learn '*much faster than if I were only with twenty-five-year-olds*':

> *I'm…one of the youngest; …[I'm] twenty-five. …It's not an obstacle at all, and on the contrary. …They've got experience in the company and in life in general. …It's more of a complement than a [barrier]* (Luke-T-interview).[437]

Brandon-T, one of Team T's senior members, described how he felt about the age span. For him, the people with experience did not try to outshine anyone. Instead, each person tried to make everyone feel at ease:

> *That…didn't…mean…the senior people who knew everything said…'hey, wait, get out of the way, I'm going to explain'. …I think everyone…was…of a very high level. …There was not one person who was going to try to show they were better than anyone else. I think that was…a necessary precondition for us to feel…comfortable* (Brandon-T-interview).[438]

This subsection has revealed the link that age has with maturity, experience and legitimacy, and the effects of these on the three teams. Basically, Team G benefitted from the advantages of the age factor, i.e. experienced people knew '*how to pick [their] battles*', showed '*respect*', and contributed '*well thought-out*' ideas. On the other hand, this mature behaviour in Team G contrasted with that in Team K in which age and experience did not appear to override personal sensitivities. Concerning Team T, even though the youngest member perceived the age gap as a '*complement*'

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dans un groupe où…l'avis de tout le monde comptait, mais…on peut pas…en tout cas au départ…omettre ce genre de chose.

[437] *Luke-T-interview: Je suis…un des plus jeunes; …[j'ai] 25 ans. …C'est pas un frein du tout, et au contraire…ça me permet d'apprendre beaucoup plus vite que si j'étais qu'avec des gens de 25 ans. …Ils ont de l'expérience dans l'entreprise et puis dans la vie globalement. …C'est plus une complémentarité qu'un...[frein].*

[438] *Brandon-T-interview: Ca n'a pas…amené…l'ancien qui connaît tout qui dit...'bon, attends, pousse-toi, je vais t'expliquer'. …Je pense que les gens…étaient…de grande valeur; …il y en avait pas un qui allait essayer de montrer qu'il était plus fort que l'autre. Je pense que…c'était…un préalable nécessaire, pour qu'on soit…décontractés.*

rather than a '*barrier*', for another young participant, this same age dispersion was perceived as providing the older, more experienced participants with greater legitimacy, especially early in the team's life cycle, even though the '*senior people*' in Team T did not try to outshine anyone but instead tried to make everyone feel '*comfortable*'. Overall, then, although age did influence the project-team interactions, it did so in differing ways, for example: wise and mature behaviour in Team G, offense or humility in Team K, or the sense of lacking credibility or being complementary in Team T. Thus, views about the impact of age and experience were not so clear-cut.

9.3.5 Corporate Culture

In order to examine corporate culture, I consider GP corporate tenure[439] within the three teams, as well as the percentage of people with 'high' tenure per team.[440] Figures 9.8 and 9.9 respectively show the aggregate number of years of GP corporate tenure and the percentages of people with 'high' tenure in each team. For Team K's thirteen-member team, corporate tenure averaged 3.05 years of service, which was below the aggregate mean of 4.37 years for all three teams[441] and was the lowest across teams,[442] and only three people, i.e. 23.08%, had 'high' tenure.[443] Team T's GP corporate tenure of 4.41 years was situated right above the mean corporate tenure of 4.37 years, while three members, i.e. 37.5%, had 'high' tenure. Team G, with an average corporate tenure of 5.65 years, had the highest GP tenure of the three teams as well as the most members – five people, i.e. 41.6% – with 'high' tenure.

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[439] I calculated corporate tenure for each of the three teams by working out the mean length of tenure of the members of each team. I also calculated overall corporate tenure by working out the overall mean (Wiersema & Bantel, 1992). See Appendix A8.6.

[440] In this thesis, 'high' tenure refers to figures that are above the corporate tenure overall mean.

[441] The aggregate number of years of corporate tenure for all three teams includes the values for Team K's thirteen-member team; when the twelve-member team is used in the calculations, the aggregate corporate tenure for the three teams comes to 4.45 years.

[442] The corporate tenure for the twelve-member team was 3.28 years, which was still below the aggregate mean and was still the lowest of all three teams.

[443] For the twelve-member team, 25% of the members had 'high' tenure.

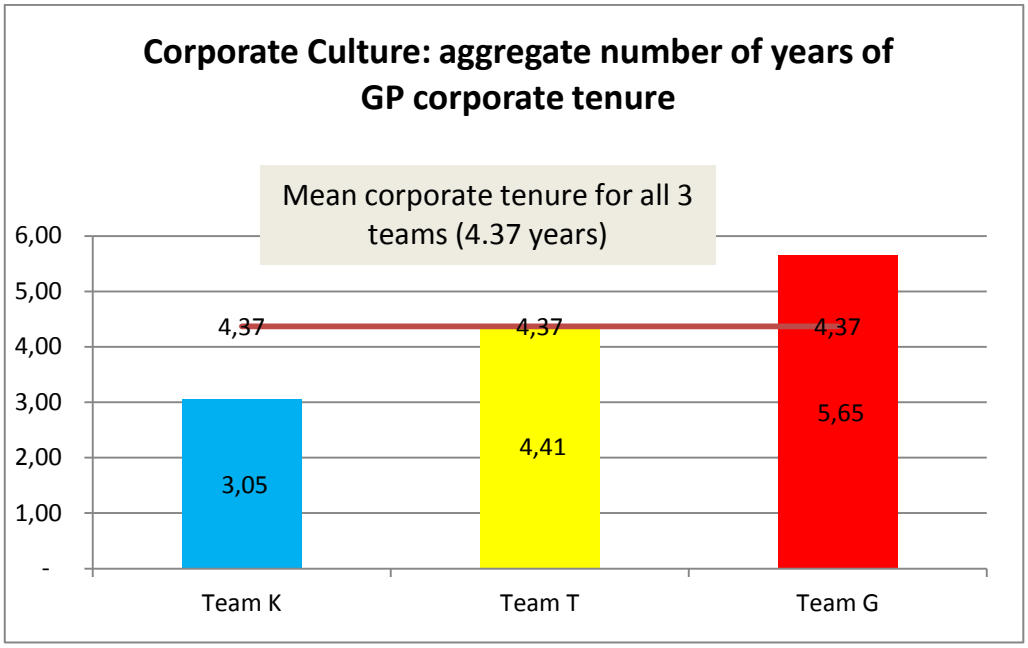

Figure 9.8 – GP Corporate Tenure

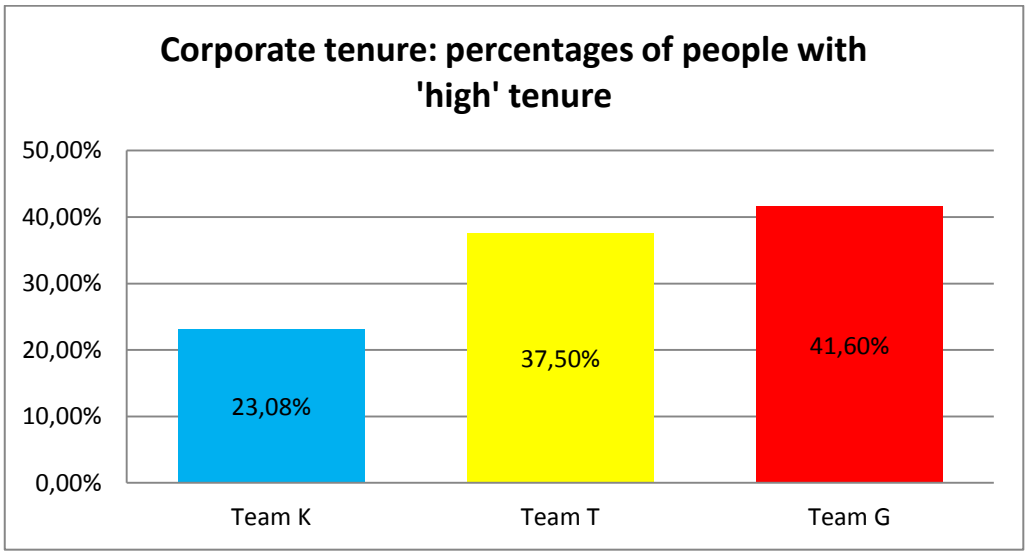

Figure 9.9 – 'High' Corporate Tenure

Additionally, while the disparity between the longest and shortest number of years of GP tenure was quite wide in each team, it was fairly similar across teams. In Team T there was a seventeen-year gap between the longest and shortest years of corporate service, while within both Teams K and G – the teams with the lowest and highest average corporate tenure, respectively – there was roughly a twenty-year span.

The implications of various aspects of corporate culture, including corporate tenure,

are analysed and discussed in the subsequent paragraphs dealing with interviewees' perceptions of its impact on the project-team sessions. With regard to Team K, the team with the lowest aggregate corporate tenure, Audrey-K tended to believe the difficulties Team K experienced were due to the fact that other than Emma-K with '*more than twenty years*' of GP experience, herself '*for five*', there were no other long-standing corporate '*veterans*' since '*it was less than five all of them*'. Consequently, the '*full trust and respect*' that would have been shared in such a '*very cultural value-based organisation*' as GP were insufficient. Therefore, for Audrey-K the team's corporate tenure determined the degree of corporate culture shared by the participants, which she found to be '*missing there*':

> *That could be that...there were not some of the...GP veterans...who...because...when you work with an organisation...for more than twenty years...I think it gets into your blood...and you really practice the values of the organisation, so...it wasn't there* (Audrey-K-interview).[444]

Audrey-K thus found the problematic team dynamics to be unusual within Team K because, generally speaking, she would have no reason to question the '*credibility*' of anyone at GP owing to the shared culture and trust, which for her were '*collective*' throughout the company:

> *This is something I found strange [in Team K] because I have gone into groups [at GP] where people don't know each other, they are from various countries, various nationalities, they come together and they work towards...a collective measure...a collective mission...a collective objective and they trust each other. ...Having something like this [in Team K] within GP was very new...and...surprising...because...it's normal when I get to a GP meeting...I have no reasons to...question the person in front of me because...I trust him, what he's saying. ...I can question him...on the 'whys' and the 'buts', but I would really not question…his credibility* (Audrey-K-interview).[445]

[444] Audrey-K-interview: Original in English.
[445] Audrey-K-interview: Original in English.

The so-called '*missing*' GP corporate values in Team K contrasted to the apparently strong corporate culture within Teams G and T. Firstly, seven members of Team G, the team with the highest aggregate corporate tenure, discussed the positive impact of corporate culture on their project-team's interactions. More tangibly, Joseph-G believed that nationality did not have much influence on the project team thanks to corporate culture which he found to have an equalising effect by providing everyone with a similar overall vision:

> *In terms of [national] culture…I would say not very much [impact]. …That's because…working here, in the company, gives the possibility of having a rather…general uniform culture; …we…have the same ways of…seeing things. …Compared with other companies, I think the GP culture…gives straight away the methods…the way…of working* (Joseph-G-interview).[446]

Tyler-G believed that owing to this shared culture, team members had fewer difficulties working together in spite of diversity:

> *I think we blend in and become…GP people…(laughs)…yeah…if we were just being put there in the room and we were not from GP, I think we would have...more difficulties* (Tyler-G-interview).[447]

According to Logan-G, a newcomer to the company, coherence was conveyed through both corporate culture and processes and enabled the project teams to function smoothly despite differing backgrounds, methods and personalities:

> *Here there is a…very strong, very powerful corporate culture. …It seems coherent. …[In the project teams] we come from very different horizons…with very different ways of functioning. Then there's…personality. …I find that the GP culture enables being homogenous; this uniformity has been conveyed*

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[446] *Joseph-G-interview: Au niveau de la culture…je dirais pas beaucoup [d'impact]. …C'est perque…travailler ici, dans le groupe, donne la possibilité d'avoir la culture plutôt…générale égale; …on a…les mêmes façons…de regarder les choses; …par rapport à d'autres entreprises, je pense que la culture GP…donne tout de suite les moyens…la façon de faire.*

[447] Tyler-G-interview: Original in English.

through the culture…through processes…and…plays a very important role…no matter who the people are (Logan-G-interview).[448]

Nathan-G also believed participants understood and endorsed the same ideas owing to the common corporate culture which, although not necessarily conscious, led to shared values and mindsets. For him, corporate culture was not alone in facilitating Team G's effective group work; individual personalities, comprised of both national and professional cultures, were a secondary factor:

> *We quickly came to joint agreements…in all the problem-solving tasks. There wasn't a…cultural shock…there wasn't any…incomprehension; …each time…somebody brought up an idea it was…quickly understood and shared. …I don't think it's necessarily…something conscious but…we found ourselves backing the same ideas…quite quickly. What might have made the group work well together…first I think there's probably the GP values…state of mind…culture, and then…the individual cultures which originate…from professional components or from…country of…origin…components* (Nathan-G-interview).[449]

For Elizabeth-G, the company's values of respect and listening were real and had a positive effect on Team G's project-team workshops:

> *The company's values like respecting people…that's what brings us together because…right away…people wanted to listen to each other. …Respect for people is a real value that's shared at GP; …to have worked at other*

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[448] *Logan-G-interview: Ici il y a une culture…très forte, très marquée. …Ca me semble cohérent. …On vient d'horizons très différents…avec des modes de fonctionnement très différents. Après c'est une question de personnalité. …Je crois que la culture GP elle permet d'homogénéiser; une homogénéisation qui était véhiculée par la culture, …elle est aussi véhiculée…par…les process…et…[qui] prennent une place très importante...quelques soient les personnes.*

[449] *Nathan-G-interview: On s'est rapidement rejoints…sur tous les cas management, il y a pas eu de…choc culturel, il y a pas eu…d'incompréhension, …chaque fois que…quelqu'un amenait une idée, elle était…rapidement comprise et partagée. …Je pense que c'est pas forcément…conscient, mais…on s'est retrouvés derrière les mêmes idées...assez rapidement. …Peut-être ce qui a fait que le groupe a bien fonctionné ensemble…d'abord je pense qu'il y a probablement les valeurs…l'esprit…la culture GP, et puis…les cultures individuelles…qu'elles trouvent leur origine…dans la partie métier ou dans la partie…origine…pays.*

companies…it's not at all the same…it's a lot more…individualistic [elsewhere]; …here…there's a real mutual support (Elizabeth-G-interview).[450]

Similarly, James-G believed this general attitude of respect – passed on to everyone within the company by all corporate managers – facilitated the team's interactions:

There was a lot of respect in that team…something vital in a group, especially when we are so different. …When someone was speaking, generally…we managed to listen to each other. …Rarely were there several people…speaking at the same time. …We spent one month…and even within the same nationalities there were very different people. …I didn't see anybody…quarrelling. The least little conflicts…it's always with a joking tone. …Everyone spoke to each other…seemed happy to be here. Those are values that are passed on by all senior managers…not just the top three…but all our managers (James-G-interview).[451]

Finally, Sarah-G thought the wholesome and sound behaviour in Team G was encouraged by the company, and that during the recruitment process GP selected people with the corresponding human qualities:

My interpretation of the session is that it was mainly…people with great human qualities…and…that the company…didn't…encourage…unhealthy…competition for people; …for example in the…firm where I was before…there were…fewer people with…such human qualities. …I think that…GP encourages…develops [healthy behaviour] when they hire…they sort of select [certain profiles] (Sarah-

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[450] *Elizabeth-G-interview: Les valeurs du groupe que sont le respect des personnes...c'est ça qui rapproche parce que…tout de suite…les gens ont eu envie de s'écouter. …Le respect des personnes c'est une vraie valeur partagée chez GP…pour avoir fait d'autres entreprises…c'est pas du tout pareil; …c'était beaucoup plus…individualiste; …là...il y a vraiment de l'entraide.*

[451] *James-G-interview: Il y avait beaucoup de respect dans ce groupe là…quelque chose de primordial dans un groupe, surtout quand on est aussi différents. …Quand quelqu'un prenait la parole, de manière générale, …on arrivait à s'écouter. ...Rarement plusieurs personnes...discutaient en même temps. ...On a passé un mois...et même dans les nationalités communes c'est des gens très différents. …J'ai vu personne s'engueuler. ...Les moindres conflits…c'est toujours sur le ton de la plaisanterie. …Tous les gens se disent bonjour…ont l'air contents d'être là. …Ce sont des valeurs qui sont communiquées par tous nos dirigeants; …je parle pas que des trois dirigeants du groupe...mais de tous nos dirigeants.*

G-interview).[452]

With regard to Team T, Luke-T came to the conclusion that despite their diverse backgrounds and opinions, they all managed to come to joint agreements in a '*democratic…way*'. For him, the common corporate culture was what facilitated this shared method of working and solving problems:

> *I can't really measure it. …We all have pretty much the same way…of handling problems, of dealing with things. …I think it's not really by chance so I think that if…we all manage to work together like that…we had the same corporate culture that facilitated this. The fact of having all these people…who have different opinions and who manage to converge towards an opinion…and to all back it, it's rare that this happens…in the conditions that…we have in the teams* (Luke-T-interview).[453]

This subsection has revealed that corporate culture is the cultural variable which seems to have had the greatest impact on the project-team meetings. More particularly, members of Teams G and T felt the tasks went well in their teams because everyone was working toward a collective mission thanks to the common corporate culture that permeated the company and extended to all corporate activities, including the MIP sessions. Thus the GP culture provided everyone with a common thread and value system which had a positive influence on the project-team interactions for these two teams. On the other hand, Audrey-K maintained that Team K's composition with few people having long-standing corporate tenure lessened the effects of GP's corporate culture on the team's interactions. This low

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[452] *Sarah-G-interview: Mon interprétation là de la session c'est que c'était surtout…des gens avec des belles qualités humaines…et …que l'entreprise…ne favorisait pas…la compétition…malsaine pour les gens. …Par exemple, en cabinet…où j'étais avant…il y avait…moins de gens avec…des qualités humaines comme ça. …Je pense que …GP…favorise…construit [un comportement sain]; ...à l'embauche…on sélectionne un peu comme ça.*

[453] *Luke-T-interview: J'arrive pas vraiment à mesurer. …On a tous à peu près la même façon…d'aborder les problèmes, de traiter la chose. …Je crois pas vraiment au hasard, donc je pense que si…on arrive tous à travailler comme ça …on a été dans une culture d'entreprise qui l'a favorisé. …Le fait d'avoir des gens…qui ont tous un avis différent et qui arrivent à converger vers un avis et…à se retrouver tous derrière, c'est rare que ça se passe…dans des conditions comme…je le vois là dans les groupes. …C'est un peu démocratique…comme façon…d'aborder les choses.*

corporate tenure may therefore explain to some extent the apparent lack of trust and respect within Team K which may in turn account for the difficulties the team encountered in handling their interactions.

9.4 Language Diversity

In order to analyse language diversity,[454] I present each team's composition with regard to fluency levels in both English (9.4.1) and French (9.4.2). In both subsections, I examine the effects of the differing linguistic competency and styles across teams and attempt to explain the influence of these language elements on the team dynamics and processes of the project-team meetings. I then provide overall remarks about language diversity (9.4.3).

9.4.1 English Fluency and Styles

Figure 9.10 shows the percentages of fluent English speakers per team. Team G was composed of the highest number of fluent English speakers: three mother-tongue speakers (MTSs) – David-G (Australia), Madelyn-G (USA) and Samuel-G (Canada) – and one second-language speaker (SLS) who was a fluent speaker (FS) – Tyler-G (Sweden).[455] This meant that 33.33% of the team's participants were fluent speakers. Team K was composed of the second highest number of fluent English speakers: two MTSs – Audrey-K (India) and Emma-K (USA) – and two SLSs who were FSs – Olivia-K (France) and Zachary-K (The Netherlands). Thus, fluent speakers represented 30.77% of the members in Team K's first two tasks.[456] Team T was composed of only one fluent English speaker – Jordan-T (USA), a MTS – thus representing only 12.5% of the team.

[454] See 8.4.2 for an analysis and discussion on managing language and communication.
[455] See 3.6.2 under Language coding frame descriptors for a description of how English fluency was assessed; see also Tables 5.1, 6.1 and 7.1 for the English fluency of the members in each team.
[456] For the twelve-member team, 33.33% of the members were fluent English speakers.

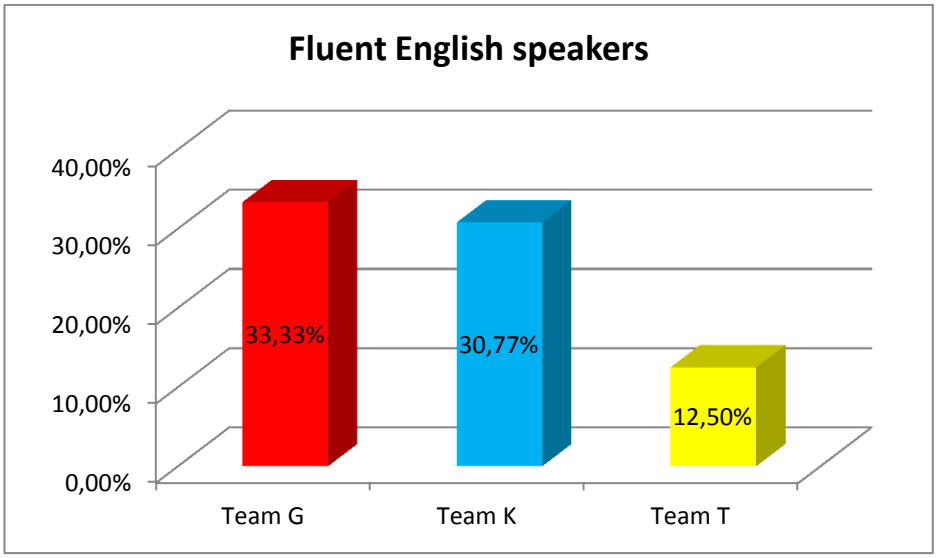

Figure 9.10 – English Fluency

In Team G, the high number of fluent vs. non-fluent speakers impacted negatively on the project-team meetings in the first two sessions in which several people had problems taking the floor (6.2; 6.3). More tangibly, when the strong speakers of English began conversing together, it was sometimes difficult for others to follow, much less to contribute (6.2.2; 6.3.2). For example, Sarah-G pointed out that SLSs spoke less because they had trouble finding their words (6.2.2) and Elizabeth-G felt the MTSs were more '*powerful*' and convincing (6.5.2) in their own language than she was in a foreign language. Likewise, James-G found that when the strong speakers carried on conversations among themselves it was like a '*ping-pong ball*' (6.5.2). Even worse Benjamin-G sometimes had the impression that the MTSs talked so quickly that people had a hard time following so participated less '*because of the language*' (6.3.2).

Similarly, there appeared to be a wide difference in fluency levels within Team K. In particular, Audrey-K felt that one of the French nationals apparently '*could not speak*' (5.4.2),[457] while another team member thought that Olivia-K '*spoke excellent English*'.[458] In spite of this disparity, however, people asserted when interviewed that English was not a difficulty and that using it as a common language led to '*a more*

[457] Audrey-K-interview: Original in English.
[458] *Jacob-K-interview: Olivia-K...parle un anglais excellent je trouve.*

relaxed atmosphere' (5.4.2). Nevertheless, the language factor was considered as slowing down Team K's teamwork processes and hindering participation (5.4.2).

The difficulties due to differing fluency levels in Teams G and K contrasted with the situation in Team T. In short, having only one fluent speaker (a MTS) in the team made it easier for the other seven members to take the floor and tended to put everyone on an equal footing (7.3.2). This was apparently one of the reasons which added to the comfort within the team as well as to the effectiveness of the interactions. More tangibly, as Anna-T expressed, owing to the mix of languages and cultures, people seemed to feel that '*everyone's at the same level*' which made them '*feel…at ease to contribute*' (7.3.2).

In addition to the linguistic competency of the fluent speakers of English (MTSs and FSs), their communication patterns also appeared to influence the discussions in different ways. Within Team K, Emma-K's English seemed to be fairly clear and easy to comprehend; and even though Jacob-K claimed that the general perception of Americans held by French people was for them to be loud and direct, he felt Emma-K was unlike the stereotype and was '*nice to work with*'[459] and he and his fellow teammates were impressed by her '*speaking…talents*'.[460] In contrast, members of the team seemed to have difficulty understanding Audrey-K, who seemed to be mumbling, as pointed out by Wyatt-K when he facilitated Task 4. Her way of talking and distinctive accent were apparently not easy for many of the less-fluent speakers (LFSs) to follow and consequently did not facilitate the discussions (5.4.2). Additionally in Team K, Olivia-K tended to talk a lot and overlap. Her turn-taking style was thus judged by others as poor listening and interrupting, which had a negative effect on the team dynamics and interactions (5.4.2). Besides, Olivia-K's communicative behaviour contrasted with that of Zachary-K, who sometimes raised his hand and whose speaking etiquette was at times considered to be overly polite and unnatural (5.4.2). Therefore, while people were annoyed with Olivia-K's speaking habits, they found Zachary-K's communicative practices to be somewhat artificial.

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[459] *Jacob-K-interview: C'était agréable de travailler avec elle.*
[460] *Jacob-K-interview: Talents…d'oratrice.*

In contrast, with regard to Team G, in spite of the difficulties experienced in the first two tasks, fortunately, the group seemed to have adopted an ethical code for speaking and interacting by carefully selecting what they wanted to say and only contributing when they felt it was relevant. This code of conduct was described in interview comments by two participants: David-G: '*you pick the things you really thought mattered…and you let go of the others*' (6.5.2) and Samuel-G: '*you learn…how to pick your battles…and which ones are just better left alone*' (see 8.4.2; 9.3.4).

Likewise, in Team T, when people did not have the exact language to convey their points, Jordan-T helped the team '*capture [their] ideas and rephrase them in English for clarity*' (7.3.2). In addition to assisting the team by reformulating their ideas, Jordan-T, in Allison-T's words, was careful to '*pay attention…to speak slowly*' and to make people '*comfortable*' enough '*to ask him to repeat*' (7.5.2).

9.4.2 French Fluency and the Use of Asides in French[461]

In spite of the high number of French nationals per team,[462] the linguistic composition across teams required English to be used as a common language in order not to exclude anyone. Figure 9.11 shows the percentages of non-French speakers per team. For example, out of the four other nationals in Team K and the five other nationals in Team G,[463] only Parker-K (Romania); and Joseph-G (Italy) and Samuel-G (Canada) could speak and understand French. Consequently, these two teams needed to use English so as to include the other three non-French speakers in each team: Audrey-K (India), Emma-K (USA) and Zachary-K (The Netherlands);[464] David-G (Australia), Madelyn-G (USA) and Tyler-G (Sweden).[465] Likewise, in Team T, since Jordan-T (USA) was a non-French speaker, the other seven members, all of

[461] See Language coding frame descriptors in 3.6.2 for a description of this language-fluency component.
[462] See 9.3.1.
[463] See Tables 5.1 and 6.1; see also 9.3.1.
[464] 23% of the thirteen-member team and 25% of the twelve-member team.
[465] 25% of the team.

whom could speak French, had to speak English for him to understand and participate.[466]

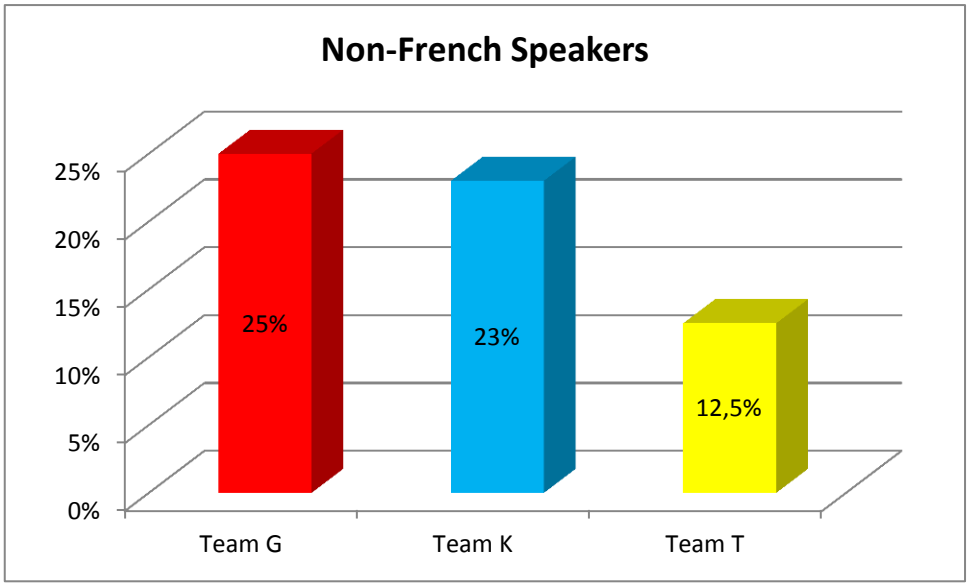

Figure 9.11 – Non-French Speakers

In spite of this linguistic discrepancy, Team G used asides in French carefully and successfully (6.5.2) so as to show respect for the non-French speakers. Team T also appeared to handle asides in French quite well. Firstly, Jordan-T was patient and realised it was natural for people to occasionally speak in their own language (7.2.2; 7.4.2). Secondly, the team encouraged participants to revert to English when they got carried away in French; other times they were apologetic or translated for him (7.5.2). The behaviour in these two teams – the teams with the highest and lowest percentages of non-French speakers, respectively – contrasted with that in Team K, in which non-French speakers became offended when Olivia-K used French in a brief aside (5.4.3).[467]

[466] 12.5% of the team.
[467] See also 8.4.2.

9.4.3 Language Diversity: Overall Remarks

Overall, this section has shown that language diversity had a definite effect on the project-team meetings. For Team K, the particular styles and patterns of the four fluent speakers of English (two MTSs and two SLSs who were FSs) seemed to increase the frustrations in spite of Emma-K's articulate speech; the language levels of the LFSs appeared to have slowed down team processes; and the use of French apparently led to offense. Team G started out with difficulties handling participation and turn-taking, especially with four fluent speakers of English (three MTSs and one SLS who was a FS), but gradually a system was put into place and people learned how to control their speaking behaviour in both English and French, which enabled everyone to eventually contribute their ideas. For Team T, having only one strong English speaker, in addition to patience and respect in both languages, appeared to enhance the team's effectiveness in managing the task and team.

9.5 External Influencing Factors: Concluding Remarks

With regard to nationality as an influencing factor, although my original thought had been to investigate language and national culture, when the company did not allow the observation of a greater mix of nationalities, the scope of my investigation had to be adjusted. Indeed, for the present study, the MIP *moniteurs* put together teams of *stagiaires* from particular countries that they identified, primarily from North America and Western Europe, while deliberately excluding people from East Asia and Russia (5.1.1; 6.1.1; 7.1.1). Moreover, other than the French nationals, only one national per country was present in each team, which is hardly representative of a national culture (6.1.1; 9.3.1). Finally, since the teams spent a limited time together (four project-team sessions within a four-week period) cultural patterns could not be studied over a longer period. Therefore, national culture did not emerge as salient; it was not something people talked about in the team debriefing sessions (Table 3.9), and the comments on nationality in the interviews proved inconsistent (9.3.1).

Nevertheless, researchers frequently attribute difficulties in multicultural situations to national culture (e.g., Hall, 1959; Hofstede, 1980; Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner, 1997), and posit that national culture either facilitates (Merkin et al., 2014; Smith et al., 2011) or hinders exchanges (Corder and Meyerhoff, 2009) and may increase the challenges experienced by members of heterogeneous groups (Canney Davison, 1994, 1996, with Ward, 1999; Chevrier, 2003; Iles and Hayers, 1997; Janssens and Brett, 1997; Shachaf, 2008). However, findings from the current study indicate that the challenges of working in groups with people from different cultural backgrounds are more complex (Brannen and Salk, 2000; Milliken and Martins, 1996; Rogerson-Revell, 2007a; Salk and Brannen, 2000; Sarangi, 1994; Stahl et al., 2010; Thompson et al., 1996). This is because it depends on how culture is defined and which variables are involved. Moreover, language constitutes an additional influencing factor, and culture and personality are intertwined (Brett et al., 2006; Canney Davison, 1994, 1996, with Ward, 1999). In fact, while it might be easier to blame difficulties within groups on language or culture than on personalities or interpersonal relations, as the latter are considered to be more sensitive areas than the former (Brett et al., 2006; Canney Davison, 1994, 1996, with Ward, 1999), research has shown that personality type is more dominant than cultural influences (Canney Davison, 1994, 1996, with Ward, 1999).

As a matter of fact, other factors, such as people and personalities, seemed to be more salient in the current study than nationality (9.3). For example, during Team K's debrief after Task 1, while national culture was not mentioned (Table 3.9), three people (Moniteur-Anita, Olivia-K and Audrey-K) explicitly used the term '*personalities*' (5.2.3). More explicitly, the two *stagiaires* both emphasised the '*strong*' personalities in the group and the *moniteur* underlined the need for '*regulating*' these different '*personalities*'. Moniteur-Anita thus spoke about managing the people within the '*international*' team rather than the different cultures (5.2.3). Moreover, Ethan-K expressed the view that the difficulties in multicultural teams are related '*three-fourths to group problems*' and '*one-fourth…the intercultural aspect*'; for him the '*root of the problem…is group dynamics*', i.e. people, rather than culture. Samuel-G also shared this viewpoint (9.3.1).

Additionally, as we have already seen, Michael-K expressed the need for a '*stable and well-defined…environment*' (5.2.3) as a variable to improve Team K's dynamics and methods. Interestingly, in the literature one form of stability and 'control' (Chatman, 1989; Schneider, 1988; Schneider et al., 1995; Wiersema and Bantel, 1992) is said to come from organisational culture, which impacts positively on workplace processes (Adler and Jelinek, 1986; Deal and Kennedy, 1982; Smircich, 1983). In new groups where no behavioural norms exist, this corporate culture may even have a stronger impact owing to the shared norms and assumptions provided by such an established social order (Lambrechts et al., 2011; Schein, 2010; Smircich, 1983) about what constitutes appropriate behaviour (O'Reilly, 1989; Schein, 1990). This homogenising force may also reduce national cultural differences in heterogeneous groups (Earley and Mosakowski, 2000; Hanges et al., 2005). In fact, as we have seen in 4.3, Moniteur-Hunter's perspective was that thanks to its '*norming effect*' and its '*values*' such as '*listening*' and '*respect*', GP's corporate culture reduces the impact of the different cultures and personalities by making them '*uniform*', which enables the teams to collaborate more effectively.

Consequently, as we have seen in 9.3.5, because Team K was the team in the current study with the lowest aggregate corporate tenure of its members, e.g. '*there were not some of the…[GP] veterans*', this stability therefore appeared weak since according to Audrey-K '*the full trust and respect*' was '*missing there*', which she found to be '*strange*' in such a '*cultural value-based organisation*' as GP. On the other hand, this contrasted with the '*powerful corporate culture*' that provided members of Team G with a '*general uniform culture*', '*the same ways of…seeing things*', '*coherent…processes*', a '*GP…state of mind*', '*company…values…like respecting people*', '*a real mutual support*' and '*great human qualities…that…GP encourages…when they hire*'. Similarly, Luke-T summed up the situation for Team T: '*what makes the team work together is certainly…not…by chance; ...if…we…work together like that…we had the same corporate culture that facilitated this*'. More precisely, across all teams, two key corporate values seemed to be of crucial importance: trust and respect (Table 3.9), which were apparently much stronger in Teams G and T than in Team K. In James-G's words, the '*respect*' in Team G was '*something vital…when we are so different*', while for Kevin-T and Brandon-T, mutual

'*respect*' in Team T was '*something positive*' and a '*precondition…to feel…comfortable*'. This contrasted with what Audrey-K said about Team K, whereby '*nobody trusted each other*'. Thus, data findings show that corporate culture has a 'norming' (Tuckman 1965, with Jensen, 1977), equalising and homogenising effect and provides a '*collective objective*'; builds trust; conveys corporate processes and work methods; helps people '*blend in*'; and leads to shared values and mindsets as well as '*healthy*' behaviour (4.3; 9.3.5).

Clearly, the fact that some team members in the current study may have had a greater 'history' within the company (Poole, 1983b; Wenger, 1998), i.e. a longer corporate tenure (Wiersema and Bantel, 1992), thus a stronger sense of corporate culture (Chatman, 1989; Deal and Kennedy, 1982; Sagiv and Schwartz, 2007; Schein, 1984, 2010; Schneider, 1988; Smircich, 1983; Sorensen, 2002), provided these people with a set of guidelines for behaviour. Such norms[468] and values, conveyed through organisational culture (Hymes, 1962; Sundstrom et al., 1990; Wenger, 1998), apparently facilitated group performance and goal achievement, depending on the strength of the corporate culture present in the particular team.

To sum up, as we have seen in this chapter, in my observations of team interactions and debriefs, as well as in my interviews with *stagiaires* and *moniteurs*, nationality did not appear to have had a dominant effect. Moreover, I did not find any significant patterns with regard to professional sector or age and experience, and gender was rarely discussed. However, I found that two of the six independent variables seemed to affect the project-team meetings more consistently: GP corporate tenure, and by extension corporate culture, and language – more specifically, the differing language fluency levels and communication styles of individual team members. Finally, people and personalities were a third element that affected the functioning across teams, although that area is outside the scope of this study. Nevertheless, as previously pointed out by Samuel-G (8.3.1), owing to the interplay of a number of components, no single factor can explain behavioural differences between teams, and we therefore should not make generalisations.

[468] Here I feel it makes sense to talk about norms (as opposed to rules which one team agrees on), since I would argue that it takes a long time for rules to become shared norms.

In this chapter, I have examined three types of 'external' characteristics which were 'given variables' for the teams: contextual components, demographic characteristics and linguistic diversity. Although these independent variables did have an effect on the teams, they did not appear to influence team dynamics and processes in a simple manner. They interacted in complex ways with the strategies and processes that the teams used to solve the problems they had been set, which I have previously analysed and discussed in the preceding chapters.

Chapter 10 - Conclusion

10.1 Introduction and Outline to Chapter

A number of findings have emerged from this study and these are summarised in section 10.2. The following section (10.3) considers the implications to the field, both theoretically and in terms of practical implications for teaching and training. After this the limitations of the study are acknowledged (10.4) and the chapter then ends with a consideration of issues for further research (10.5).

10.2 Summary of the Case Study Findings

In this section I first provide an overview of my findings with regard to the challenges newly-formed, short-term multicultural project teams experienced in their interactions in the formative stages (10.2.1). I then sum up how the teams managed these challenges and explain the extent to which they did so successfully (10.2.2). Next I give an overview of the impact the challenges and strategies had on team processes and interpersonal team relations (10.2.3) before summarising the factors that affected team processes and interpersonal team relations (10.2.4).

10.2.1 Challenges Experienced

The newly-formed short-term multicultural project teams faced a number of similar challenges in the formative stages of their collaboration. These pertained to two broad areas: task management; and management of language and communication.

Three main challenges emerged with regard to task management: role allocation, role performance and context-specific challenges of task management (8.2.1). Firstly, when the teams started out, because there were no pre-specified or pre-identified roles or duties, teams were responsible for making these decisions

themselves as to who should be doing what. This, however, proved to be a challenge because they did not know each other so were unaware of each other's background or competencies and were therefore unable to determine who had the skills necessary to complete the assignments or how best to use each member's individual expertise. A second challenge when teams started out involved role performance, and more specifically the leadership functions. In fact, the teams were challenged by the importance of focusing on both task- and team-based aspects. This meant that in addition to roles for finding solutions to the tasks, teams also needed roles and/or responsibilities for paying attention to the interpersonal and interactive elements. The third challenge with which the teams were confronted related to the nature and context of the particular tasks. More particularly, the groups were under pressure to complete their assignments within an hour and a half, and people within the groups were also under pressure to 'perform' in front of the *moniteur*, who was evaluating and coaching them both individually and as a team. Both of these elements were challenging for team members.

With respect to language and communication, all teams experienced three broad challenges: participation, turn-taking and language differences (8.2.2). Firstly, in terms of participation, teams were challenged by understanding the different forms of participation and also by making sure everyone was involved. Secondly, in my study, four main aspects of turn-taking were particularly crucial: listening, overlapping, speaking and building on ideas. It was important for teams to handle these issues to enhance not only teamwork processes but also interpersonal team relations. Thirdly, language differences related to the use of English and French. Across all teams, using English as a common language was challenging to both second-language speakers (SLSs) and mother-tongue speakers (MTSs); teams therefore needed to manage the interactions to make sure that comprehension, expression and participation were not hindered by the use of English as a *lingua franca*. A second language challenge in my teams involved the use of asides in French, the language of the majority of the members of all teams, as an aid to understanding or expressing thoughts and convictions. The challenge was to make sure that these asides were handled carefully so as not to offend or exclude the non-French speakers within each team.

10.2.2 Strategies and their Effectiveness in Managing the Challenges

In this section, I summarise the strategies that the teams adopted and evaluate their effectiveness. As we have seen in the case studies and in 8.3 and 8.4, although all teams basically succeeded in gradually developing fairly similar approaches to handling five areas (expertise, the time pressure, the pressure to perform in front of the *moniteur*, participation and the use of English),[469] greater differences occurred across teams with regard to dealing with role allocation, role performance, turn-taking and asides in French, and in this section I focus on these four differences. Firstly, the teams handled role allocation in various ways. Whereas Team K established formal roles with specifically-defined responsibilities, Team T's role allocation process was more intrinsic and indirect; for Team G, people tended to take on a number of functions to get the job done and roles tended to be shared. Regardless of these differences, it appeared that having defined places and responsibilities (Hackman, 1987; Mathieu et al., 2000) reduced ambiguity (Van de Ven and Delbecq, 1971), improved participation and reassured people thanks to the clear behavioural guidelines and 'scripts for performance' (Argyle et al., 1981: 172) provided for everyone in the situation.

A second difference, in role performance, involved the distinction between the two leadership duties of 'task' and 'team'. For Team K these two functions were carried out by an explicitly-designated leader, for Team G by two separate leaders and for Team T by the team as a whole. Findings from the data have revealed that having a 'socio-emotional leader' (Argyle et al., 1981) to concentrate on the team-based aspects – regardless of the different ways in which these were handled – improved participation, facilitated the management of language and turn-taking and held the groups together. In fact, in order to reinforce the task-social division (Argyle et al., 1981; Bales and Strodtbeck, 1951), Team K's rules specified that the leader was expected to remain '*neutral*' and to focus only on the 'team' but not to contribute to the 'task'. As we saw in Team K's case study (5.4.1), when the leader became

[469] Overall strategies for these areas included using everyone's skills and knowledge, planning and 'starting slowly' (Canney Davison, 1994, 1996, with Ward, 1999), adopting shared processes, involving everyone and paying attention to particular language needs, respectively.

involved in the 'task' rather than remaining '*neutral*' throughout Task 4, this behaviour was not appreciated since it was interpreted as a strong violation of the team's '*neutrality*' rule and therefore of the trust (Sitkin and Roth, 1993) associated with their written 'social contract' (Peterson, 2001).

A third difference in managing the challenges pertained to the two types of strategies for managing turn-taking: (1) listening, showing respect when others were speaking and building on each other's ideas; and (2) having roles to manage interactive processes. More precisely, throughout their sessions Team T remained respectful and tolerant when others were speaking, which gave everyone confidence to contribute; and in spite of Team G's initial turn-taking issues, people gradually developed more respectful listening habits by speaking only when they had something relevant and 'meaningful' (Janssens and Brett, 1997) to contribute. In contrast, Olivia-K's overlapping in the fourth task was judged critically and was viewed as a violation of the team's '*listening*' rule, although she was convinced of her positive intentions and believed her overlapping was to show she cared about what the others were saying by building on their ideas. Additionally, in spite of Team K's rule for the facilitator to regulate talking out of turn, there were still interruptions (e.g. Olivia-K) and these were considered to be intrusive (Cogo and Dewey, 2006; Halmari, 1993; Murata, 1994).

Finally, a fourth difference in the strategies across teams involved the management of the use of asides in French. Although all teams strove to maintain smooth communication by reducing both the frequency and the length of their switches to French in whole-group or 'sidebar' (Brett et al., 2006) conversations, members of Team G felt that brief and occasional asides were helpful (Brannen and Salk, 2000; Chew, 2005; Ehrenreich, 2010; Feely and Harzing, 2003; Janssens and Brett, 1997; Kankaanranta and Planken, 2010; Louhiala-Salminen et al., 2005; Poncini, 2003; Tenzer et al., 2014; Virkkula-Räisänen, 2010) when the fluent speakers spoke back and forth to each other '*like a ping-pong ball*' (6.5.2), even though they tried to limit these asides as much as possible. Likewise, Jordan-T, the only non-French speaker in Team T, was tolerant and understanding when the other members of his team used French to clarify certain points. In contrast, the non-French speakers in Team K

appeared to be offended (Harzing and Feely, 2008; Hinds et al., 2014; Neeley et al., 2012; Tenzer et al., 2014) when French was spoken in a brief aside since they felt this to be a violation of their '*speak-English*' rule.

Because three of the four differences mentioned above pertained to rule violation, this leads me to discuss the overall effectiveness of each team's rules (8.4.3), not only in reference to the challenges mentioned above but also from a general standpoint.

10.2.3 The Impact of the Challenges and Strategies

My investigation has revealed that it was necessary for the teams to establish rules – through a direct or indirect process – to deal with challenges, to structure interactions and, ultimately, to ensure that decisions were made and outcomes provided (8.3). The teams went about defining their 'modus operandi' (Lambrechts et al., 2011: 134) in their own ways so as to organise their teamwork around shared goals and a common agenda to facilitate achieving their objectives. Nevertheless, although people's behaviour may have been influenced positively by these rules, their presence did not necessarily enable the prediction of behaviour (Argyle et al., 1981) since people reacted differently to the rules once they were in place. In fact, as we have seen in the case studies and in Chapter 8, although all teams had their own rule-setting processes and structures (explicit for Team K, verbal for Team G and implicit for Team T), people in both Teams G and T were tolerant of any alteration to these rules with regard to task/team leadership functions, turn-taking and asides in French, whereas Team K's rule-breaking incidents in these three areas offended and annoyed team members, as indicated in the preceding section.

Several characteristics might account for these differences. Basically, Team K's rules appeared to be '*rigid*', '*unnatural*' and '*extreme*' (8.4.3) so were apparently not flexible enough (Larson, 1992; Ouchi, 1979; Shapiro, 1987; Smith and Berg, 1997) to allow for any exceptions once they were in place. This actually worsened the situation by not enabling a restoration of the trust that seemed to have disappeared when the interactive processes '*got out of control*' (8.4.3) and led to the

establishment of rules in the first place. On the other hand, in Teams G and T, both rule-setting and rule-implementing processes seemed to be based on trust, mutual respect and strong interpersonal ties (Doney et al., 1998; Easterby-Smith and Malina, 1999; Peterson, 2001; Sitkin and Roth, 1993) so were more lenient and flexible. This in turn had a positive impact on the functioning of Teams G and T thanks to a pleasant environment and a climate of confidence as opposed to the frustration and distrust that prevailed in Team K. Thus, although Team K's formal rules were devised to improve dysfunctional team operations, they actually aggravated processes by being too strong to allow for any individual responsiveness (Hanges et al., 2005; Peterson, 2001; Smith and Berg, 1997).

10.2.4 Factors that Affected Team Dynamics and Processes

This study has shown that although there were different approaches to problem-solving and decision-making, as well as different styles of communication and expression, this was not necessarily linked to national culture or demographic diversity (9.3). Team members were unique individuals, and so sweeping generalisations about national cultural traits, professional culture, gender, age and experience – and their influence on multicultural teams – cannot be made. Consequently we may draw the conclusion that the teambuilding processes in my study were affected by a combination of interacting cultural and personal factors.

On the other hand, this study has also revealed that corporate culture (9.3.5) provided a homogenising force in the multicultural teams (Earley and Mosakowski, 2000; Hanges et al., 2005) and that differing levels of language proficiency and the specific linguistic composition of each team had a definite effect on the project-team meetings (9.4).

In addition to the impact of corporate culture and language, the present study has highlighted that key values and principles, notably respect, trust, positive intentions and cheerful interpersonal relations (8.4) facilitated team processes and impacted on overall team functioning (Guzzo and Shea, 1993; Easterby-Smith and Malina, 1999;

Marks et al., 2001; Sundstrom et al., 1990; Teagarden et al., 2005) by creating an enjoyable working atmosphere and improving confidence (Price, 1996).

10.3 Implications of the Study

In this section I consider the implications of my study, first theoretical (10.3.1) and then practical (10.3.2).

10.3.1 Theoretical Implications

As we have seen in the preceding section, the key findings that have emerged from this study are the importance for new teams to devise processes for managing four critical challenges to better handle their interactions: role allocation and performance, rules, turn-taking difficulties and language choice issues (i.e., the use of asides in a second language, in this case French). In this section I consider these findings in relation to models of international teamwork.

With regard to role allocation and performance, i.e., 'roles and expertise',[470] these are mentioned in all three models reviewed in Chapter 2. Firstly, concerning role allocation, Canney Davison (1994, 1996, with Ward, 1999) suggests that initial clarity of skills, knowledge and roles contributes to leveling the playing field for team members (phase one, procedure four); Earley and Gardner (2005) argue that awareness of each other's roles, duties, and technical and group skills is a core team characteristic leading to effective outcomes; and Maznevski and DiStefano (2000) advocate that 'mapping' different members' skills and expertise enables understanding differences and subsequently developing shared procedures.

Secondly, concerning role performance, and more specifically managing not only task content but also the interpersonal team-related features of the interactions, Canney

[470] 'Roles and Expertise' constitute the first category of themes within 'Task Management' in Table 3.9. The sub-themes consist of: 'roles' (cited in six debriefs) and 'expertise' (cited in five).

Davison (with Ward, 1999) recommends to 'know your task and team' (phase one motto), to decide whether a neutral person is needed to manage process if the leader is too 'heavily involved in the technical detail' (phase one, procedure four), to understand and manage eight sources of cultural and organisational similarities and differences (Figure 2.1; phase two, procedure nine), to emphasise building interrelationships and establishing trust (phase two, procedure eight), to 'work through strategic moments' (phase three, procedure eleven), to maintain motivation (phase three, procedure fourteen) and to make sure everyone stays involved until the end (phase four, procedure sixteen). Maznevski and DiStefano (2000; DiStefano and Maznevski, 2000) argue that 'mapping' involves understanding differences and building relationships, 'bridging' involves a mutual understanding of different worldviews to enable building trust and developing shared norms for interaction, and that 'integrating' involves both managing participation to obtain everyone's input and resolving disagreements and conflicts to enable constructive collaboration; moreover, one of the 'tools and techniques' they suggest for making meetings more productive might be to assign 'one member the role of "process leader"' to manage participation and turn-taking (DiStefano and Maznevski, 2000: 55-56). In Earley and Gardner's (2005) model managing both task- and team-related aspects is included among the 'core characteristics', 'intervening states' and 'team outcomes'. For example: task-related monitoring and reporting lead to enhanced task understanding and team performance; while having shared goals, roles and rules for social interaction lead to trust and commitment, collective efficacy, member motivation and satisfaction, a common identity, a shared culture and reduced interpersonal conflict.

Although managing the challenges involved with role allocation and performance are crucial elements of these three models, little interactional detail is included in these models. What I have contributed is not simply to suggest the importance of role allocation and performance but to provide in-depth accounts demonstrating the different ways teams learned how vital it was to clarify roles, to use everyone's expertise and to manage both task and team-related aspects, and showing what happens within teams when there are no clear roles, when expertise is not used

effectively and when teams only deal with the task-based elements without fully paying attention to the interpersonal component.

Likewise, the establishment of 'rules and practices'[471] for managing interactions have also been suggested in the three models as being key process variables in multinational teams (Earley and Gardner, 2005; Earley and Mosakowski, 2000). For example, in Canney Davison's (1994, 1996, with Ward, 1999) framework, many of the nineteen procedures fall under this particular theme of 'task management' (i.e., plan the first meetings, '3x1 preparation', [phase one], 'start slowly', agree the 'ground rules', and plan a common working approach [phase two]), while in Maznevski and DiStefano's (2000; DiStefano and Maznevski, 2000) model, 'bridging' involves adopting common viewpoints and developing shared norms for interaction and 'integrating' includes determining a variety of 'modes' for gathering information and managing discussions. Yet, with the exception of some brief, but concrete, examples in Canney Davison and Ward (1999) and in Maznevski and DiStefano's (2000; DiStefano and Maznevski, 2000) work, these studies provide little detail as to how the particular teams put these procedures into place. On the other hand, the present research, exploring the early stages of multicultural project-team meetings, provides rich data showing how teams struggled to come to terms with their challenges of 'task management' and how they learned to implement the necessary 'rules and practices' to carry out their tasks.

I now look at the two critical challenges involving the management of 'language and communication'[472]: managing turn-taking and language choice issues, i.e. the use of asides in French. Although Earley and Gardner's (2005) model does not appear to include managing either turn-taking or language choice as one of the features of multinational team functioning, the other two models do. With regard to turn-taking, Canney Davison (1994, 1996, with Ward, 1999) incorporates managing turn-

[471] 'Rules and Practices' constitute the second category of themes within 'Task Management' in Table 3.9. The sub-themes consist of: 'rules' (cited in four debriefs), 'planning', 'general practices' and 'shared processes' (each cited in six debriefs).

[472] The sub-themes of 'Language and Communication' in Table 3.9 consist of: 'participation' (cited in seven debriefs), turn-taking (cited in six) and 'language differences' (cited in one). Handling 'language differences' involves managing two main aspects: the use of English and asides in French.

taking and interrupting into her framework (phase three, procedure twelve), and it is included in her set of rules for effective language use, e.g. 'be careful about interruption patterns'.[473] In Maznevski and DiStefano's (2000; DiStefano and Maznevski, 2000) model, one of the 'tools and techniques' for managing participation, a component of 'integrating', might be to have a 'process leader' (DiStefano and Maznevski, 2000: 55) to 'curb the dominance' of some individuals and to 'interrupt those talking freely on behalf of more reserved members hesitant to interrupt'.

Concerning managing language choice issues, one of Canney Davison's guidelines for leading international teams includes using other languages when English is used as the business language (phase three, procedure twelve). While Maznevski and DiStefano (2000; DiStefano and Maznevski, 2000) briefly mention 'the need to pay attention to differences in language' (DiStefano and Maznevski, 2000: 55) as a way of managing participation, a component of 'integrating', they do not say anything about language choice. Nor do Earley and Gardner (2005) as we have seen above.

These two critical areas of managing interaction in the early stages of multicultural project-teams (turn-taking and language choice) thus appear to be lacking (Earley and Gardner, 2005), to be vaguely present (Maznevski and DiStefano, 2000; DiStefano and Maznevski, 2000) or to be present but without any detail as to how managing these issues occurs in practice (Canney Davison, 1994, 1996, with Ward, 1999). In contrast, the present research has enriched these theories by describing in detail the challenges teams faced in trying to manage turn-taking and to handle asides in French, and the strategies they implemented to manage these.

I would argue therefore that the findings from my study not only support key models in the literature, which describe the core features of successful multicultural teams and suggest guidelines for them, but go beyond this by showing how processes are put into practice and how difficult it is for this to happen. Moreover, the particular methodology I used enabled me to present in-depth case studies showing how three

[473] See the extract from Canney Davison and Ward (1999: 77) in Chapter 2, which lists ten rules for effective language use.

separate teams developed in their own unique ways. Yet, in spite of their varying developmental processes, my study shows how all teams experienced similar challenges and how each of them struggled to find strategies to handle these difficulties. Thus, one of the advantages of my case study methodology was that this variation comes out clearly across teams.

10.3.2 Practical Implications for Teaching and Corporate Training

These theoretical implications raise a number of practical questions. Firstly, if these recommendations and procedures have been suggested in the models and put forward by the team members and *moniteurs* in this study, why do teams have such difficulties putting these guidelines into practice and working out their own processes? And since following these best practices seems so difficult, should putting them in place be left up to project-team leaders or facilitators and not the teams themselves? Or should teams experience problems first before they become aware they need to deal with these issues? For example, even after the teams in this study had discussed their problems in the team debriefs they could not always apply the advice in the subsequent sessions. It thus would appear that being aware of the issues and putting this knowledge into practice are two different things. Secondly, since teams are unique and demonstrate variations in their developmental processes, should there be several models to apply or just one generic model with key steps for all teams? Finally, if we wanted to apply Canney Davison and Ward's (1999) procedures to classroom and training situations, how should this be done so that these teams could overcome their difficulties and carry out their tasks effectively?

These questions pave the way for further research on a more practical level for teaching and corporate training. In the meantime, we must continue emphasising the practical implications that have been suggested in the models and that have emerged from this case study.

Firstly, teaching and training should focus on the need to implement a set of rules and practices to enable newly-formed classroom or corporate teams to work effectively. These include:

- allocate different types of roles, responsibilities and duties to coordinate task and team processes
- identify and use the skills, knowledge and expertise within the team to gain everyone's input, involvement and participation throughout the task
- plan and prepare the work before rushing into the task
- clearly review the task objectives and align the work accordingly
- manage the time
- allocate subgroup work so that everyone is able to participate
- organise discussions around shared goals and processes
- ensure that communication is carried out in a climate of mutual respect, trust and positive intentions so as to enhance team processes and prevent any discomfort, dissatisfaction or frustration

Secondly, teaching and training need to draw attention to a number of communicative skills. These include:

- ensure that everyone is able to participate
- work on improving respectful listening and turn-taking habits; build on people's ideas
- be prepared to be confronted with a wide range of accents and levels of fluency; and be tolerant and understanding of such language differences by accommodating others and staying attuned to everyone's linguistic needs

Finally, while teaching and training do need to raise awareness as to the impact of culture in business contexts, at the same time, emphasis should be given to the fact that individual differences also exist and people and personalities may have an even greater influence on teamwork than do cultural differences.

10.4 Assessment of Limitations

The present research has revealed a number of limitations which I express here. The first limitation concerns the fact that, although I was investigating multicultural teams, I was not allowed to observe very culturally diverse teams. As previously mentioned, the *moniteurs* constituted my three teams primarily with 'Westerners', and did not allow a greater mix of nationalities, lest some be negatively affected by my presence. I was therefore unable to observe the potential effect of large differences in national culture and this may have affected my findings that national culture had little impact.

A second limitation involves the types of teams I investigated. I was not looking at the management processes of on-going teams but at short-term teams in the formative stages. The implications of an investigation of newly-formed, temporary teams were that they did not have a pre-defined leader or any pre-designated roles or practices when they started out. Therefore, the particular teams examined had different ways of managing their processes than established teams would have had. Roles in such teams are typically already in place when the team members start interacting. Thus, in relation to the practical implications suggested for teaching and training in 10.3.2, the allocation of roles and duties may not be necessary.

A third limitation concerns the fact that the teams I studied were somewhat artificial in that they were created for an internal corporate programme. In particular, this study examined team assignments within a management integration programme rather than authentic interactions of 'real' project teams, because there were confidentiality issues with the latter. Nevertheless, the teams I investigated were participating in a 'real' integration programme,[474] with 'real' objectives and career goals for a 'real' company. The members of the teams therefore took the project-team meetings seriously, all the more so as they were assessed with regard to their involvement and participation. In fact, a fourth limitation constitutes the fact that the participants were evaluated and coached by a *moniteur*. Consequently, their behaviour may have differed from that of members of authentic teams since many of

[474] For which I have given the pseudonym 'MIP'.

the people in my teams were worried about how to behave in front of the *moniteur* and some showed off or were confused and/or frustrated by her presence. This may or may not have any influence on the applicability of the rules and practices outlined in 10.3.2, since team members should all adopt a respectful code of communicative behaviour regardless of whether they are observed by a coach or not.

A fifth type of limitation involves my methodology, and more precisely, the corporate constraints to which I was subject. For example, in giving authorisation to observe the MIP teams, GP did not allow me to audio- or video-record the team interactions. Moreover, since the data collection boundaries were defined by the company, I had no choice over the number or the length of the project-team meetings or of the particular dates. Thus, for the first cohort, since I was caught at short notice, I was unable to observe Tasks 2 and 3 and only managed to interview seven people out of the thirteen-member team I observed.

Nevertheless, in spite of these limitations, I feel my study enabled me to obtain a plurality of perspectives from six *moniteurs*, seven members from Team K, twelve members from Team G, and eight members from Team T, through observational narratives, team debriefing remarks and interview comments in order to shed light on how short-term multicultural project teams handle their interactions in the formative stages. To enlarge the scope of my investigation and to add depth to my understanding of the project-team workshops, eight *stagiaires* from teams not observed also participated in interviews and expressed their perceptions as to the development and processes of newly-formed multicultural project teams.

10.5 Future Research

Owing to the limitations assessed in the previous section, further research could examine several areas related to multicultural teams more extensively.

Firstly, studies could be carried out to investigate language and communication in authentic international teams. Qualitative data could be obtained through

observation and interviewing of real-life multicultural team interaction; and perhaps authorisation could be obtained from companies to video-record the authentic speaking events. Such studies on language and communication in real teams would enable building on the growing body of research on 'language in international business' (Brannen, Piekkari and Tietze, 2014), with a precise emphasis on global teams. In fact, out of the six articles published in the Special Issue of the Journal of International Business Studies (2014) on the 'multifaceted role of language in international business' the first two focus on the impact of language issues on multinational teams. The language issues addressed in these two studies deal with the effect of language barriers on the formation of trust in global teams (Tenzer et al., 2014), and the role of asymmetries in language fluency on subgroup dynamics such as '*us* vs. *them*' attitudes in multinational teams (Hinds et al., 2014).

Researchers could also carry out studies with a particular focus on isolated process variables, such as the effects of diverse types of rules[475] and/or of leadership roles[476] on internal team dynamics within established multicultural project teams. Using mixed methods at various points in time (observations, interviews, communication logs, questionnaires, company documentation; e.g., Maznevski and Chudoba, 2000) would add richness and depth to the data collection. Different forms of data analysis would enable building grounded theory of distinct patterns of behaviour within global teams.

Further studies could also be conducted to better understand the extent to which members of multicultural groups feel that specific cultural components and/or demographic variables (e.g. nationality, professional sector, gender, age, prior experience and/or corporate culture) impact on their team interactions. Multicultural process events, emotions and issues reported in participant journals, discussion forums and in semi-structured interviews would constitute the data. Qualitative analysis would consist of open coding broken down into thematic

[475] See, for example, the different guidelines and procedures outlined in the practical implications for teaching and training in 10.3.2.

[476] For example, a strong leader in charge of the task activities but not the team processes; two leaders: one in charge of the task and the other in charge of the team, etc.

categorisation of comprehensive dimensions (e.g., Bieschke, Gehlert, Wilson, Matthews and Wade, 2010).

Another area of research which could be undertaken involves longitudinal studies of authentic multicultural project teams to follow team development from the early stages to the completion of projects. Using an ethnographic-like case study design (observations, interviews, participant logs, surveys and company documentation) would enable examining the effects of time and tenure on multicultural team processes. This approach would yield a variety of descriptions, interpretations and reflections from multiple sources.

The overall findings from any of the research studies outlined above would lead to practical recommendations and guidelines for managers and professionals in international business.

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Appendices

Appendix A1[477]: Information Fact Sheet (English version used in October 2010)

Information Sheet for Participants in Research Project

Provisional Title of Research:
Intercultural interaction in the Global Workplace

Researcher:
Mary Vigier
University of Warwick:

- PhD Student, Centre for Applied Linguistics

University xxxx:

- Title xxx and Department xxx
- Professor of xxx

Note to participants: Your participation in this study is entirely voluntary; you may refuse to participate from the very beginning, or withdraw at any time; your refusal to participate or your withdrawal will not have any negative consequences for you or your company.

Nature and aims of the project:

- The present research aims to explore the interaction processes that occur in a multicultural professional environment.
- The data collected from such intercultural encounters in the business world will provide valuable insights to enhance the business school curriculum at University xxxx and to contribute to preparing managers for successful cross-cultural business activities.
- The methodology used will be to obtain data from concrete situations in the field. The precise data taken from real-life situations will be analysed inductively to obtain a synthetic report of interaction processes in multicultural teams in the global workplace.
- Length of research project on-site in company: between 1 to 2 years
- Profile of potential participants:
    - Management Integration Programme 2010
    - 3 cohorts: March, June and October 2010
    - October cohort
        - 83 participants: current and potential managers
        - 14 nationalities
        - multicultural and multilingual
        - 10 teams

[477] The Information Fact Sheet (Appendix A1) and the Company Consent Form (Appendix A2) were written in French to submit to the company. To appear more formal, the fact sheet and the consent form were printed with the logos of the University of Warwick and my university. The versions that are included here have been translated into English and appear on plain paper without the logos. Some information (in red) has been removed or replaced by aliases for reasons of confidentiality.

        - observations of 4 project-team workshops with head *moniteur*'s team (Team T)
    - October 2010 dates:
        - 1st October: Task 1
            - 13.30 to 17.30
        - 8th October: Task 2
            - 8.00 to 12.00
        - 13th October: Task 3
            - 13.30 to 17.30
        - 21st October: Task 4
            - 8.00 to 11.00

Company consent:

- The potential participants in the present study will be notified by the head *moniteur* of the Management Integration Programme, i.e. *xxxx*, that a research project is being conducted during the 4 project-team workshops.
- Members of Team T will be informed of the presence of a non-participant observer during the workshop interactions of their team, of which the head *moniteur* is the coach, or *moniteur*.
- Participants of the October cohort, primarily members of Team T, will be invited to participate in an interview lasting between 30 minutes to 1 hour.

The in-depth study will involve:

- Observation of the 4 workshops, with specific focus on the interactions of Team T involving 8 participants of 4 nationalities and cultures, on the 4 dates specified above.
- Interviews (*possibly* audio-recorded): semi-directive, lasting between 30 minutes to 1 hour.
- Access to written documents of a non-confidential nature to supplement the observation and interview data (e.g., integration programme timetable and other programme-related documents).
- Relevant corporate documents (e.g., Performance and Responsibility Charter).

The benefits to the participant and the company will be as follows:

- Interaction processes will be analysed and submitted in a written report upon completion of the research project.

The foreseeable risks, inconvenience or discomfort to the participant are as follows:

- Being observed (workshop interactions);
- Participating in interviews and possibly being recorded.

The level of confidentiality that can realistically be guaranteed is as follows:

- All names of people and places will remain anonymous.
- All information acquired will remain confidential.
- Records will be stored in a secure location and destroyed on completion of the research project if requested.

Each participant can expect a debriefing/feedback as follows:

- The written report will be submitted to the company for approval if requested.
- The team *moniteur* will receive a copy.
- The participants who have participated in the study may also request a copy.

Further information:

- The research interviews will be conducted in English or French depending on the context and/or the desires of the participants. If English is used, where a participant is not confident in the English language, a translation into French will be provided if necessary.
- Permission may be sought for the final data to be used for other purposes such as publication in academic and/or professional journals.
- Compensation arrangements for participants who suffer harm or injury from the research will be determined on a case-to-case basis.

Contact details for queries about the research:

- Mary VIGIER (University of Warwick / University xxxx)
    - 06 03 54 39 12
- Contact details for 8 people at Global Player

****

Mary Vigier
University xxxx
Address xxxx
City xxxx
Telephone xxxx
Fax xxxx
xxxx

Appendix A2: Company Consent Form

Research Project Title:
Intercultural Interaction in the Global Workplace

Name of Researcher:
Mary Vigier
University of Warwick:

- PhD Student, Centre for Applied Linguistics

University xxxx:

- Title xxx and Department xxx
- Professor of xxx

On behalf of the company:

I confirm that I have read and understood the Information Fact Sheet dated ……. for the above project which I may keep for company records, and that I have had the opportunity to ask any questions that I may have.

I give authorisation to Mary Vigier to conduct her research which will involve the following procedures:

- Observation of oral exchanges or interactions involving participants of different nationalities and cultures (***possibly*** audio- and/or video-recorded), upon invitation and where relevant.
- Interviews (***possibly*** audio-recorded): semi-directive, lasting between 30 minutes to 1 hour.
- Access to written emails and and/or letters of a non-confidential nature to supplement the data.

I understand that company information will be held and processed for the following purposes, including possible future use:

- Full report submitted to company
- PhD Thesis submitted to University of Warwick
- Academic publications and/or conference papers

I understand that the following organisations may need access to company information, including possible future use:

- University of Warwick
- University xxxx

I understand that participation is voluntary and that participants are free to withdraw at any time without giving any reason without being penalised or disadvantaged in any way.

I understand that privacy and confidentiality will be guaranteed as explained in the information sheet.

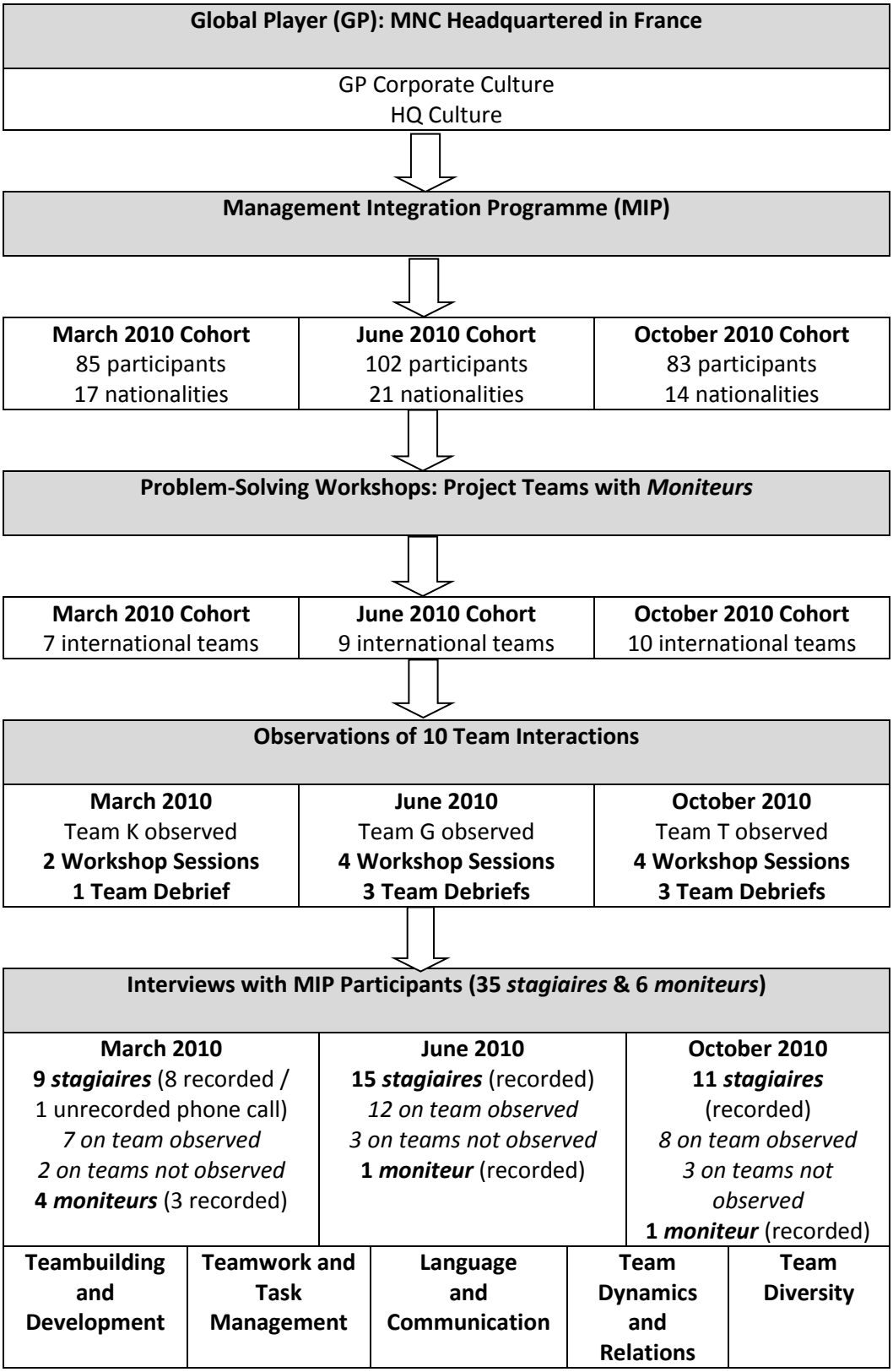
_____	_____	_____
Name / Position	**Date**	**Signature (Signed on behalf of GP)**

_____	_____	_____
Researcher	**Date**	**Signature**

****

Mary Vigier
University xxxx
Address xxxx
City xxxx
Telephone xxxx
Fax xxxx
xxxx

Appendix A3: Overview of Data Gathering



Appendix A4: Interview Facts and Figures[478]

A4.1: March Cohort (Team K: observed; Teams B and R: unobserved)

Alias and Team	Date of interview	Language of interview	Length of audio-recorded interview	Time spent in interview
Audrey-K	21 April 2010	English	00:59:28	01:00:00 *(at my school, not at GP)*
Emma-K	13 March 2010	English	Part 1: 00:15:44 Part 2: 01:07:45 **Total recorded:** 01:23:29	02:00:00 *(at my school, not at GP)*
Ethan-K	15 April 2010	French	00:51:28	01:00:00
Jacob-K	13 April 2010	French	01:00:10	01:00:00
Michael-K	19 April 2010	French	00:48:32	01:00:00
Olivia-K	14 April 2010	French	01:32:33	01:30:00
Wyatt-K	21 April 2010	French	Phone call 2:44 + 20:41 **Total call**: 00:23:25 Not recorded	00:20:00 *(phone call)*
Daniel-R team unobserved	12 April 2010	French	00:42:42	01:00:00
Joshua-B team unobserved	26 April 2010	French	01:13:58	01:30:00
Total			**08:32:20**	**10:20:00**

[478] See section 3.4.5 for details about the acronym IDs of the interviewees.

A4.2: June Cohort (Team G: observed; Teams C and M: unobserved)

Alias and Team	Date of interview	Language of interview	Length of audio-recorded interview	Time spent in interview
Benjamin-G	18 June 2010	French	00:34:33	00:45:00
David-G	29 June 2010	English	00:33:42	00:45:00
Elizabeth-G	29 June 2010	French	00:25:00	00:30:00
James-G	1 July 2010	French	01:17:54	01:30:00
Joseph-G	16 June 2010	French	00:48:48	01:00:00
Logan-G	1 July 2010	French	00:36:18	01:30:00
Madelyn-G	15 June 2010	English	00:38:22	01:00:00
Nathan-G	29 June 2010	French	Part 1: 00:12:33 Part 2: 00:27:44 **Total recorded :** 00:40:17	01:00:00
Ryan-G	21 June 2010	French	00:40:55	00:45:00
Samuel-G	30 June 2010	English	00:30:35	01:00:00
Sarah-G	8 July 2010	French	00:42:58	01:30:00
Tyler-G	25 June 2010	English	00:36:33	00:45:00
Hannah-C team unobserved	22 June 2010	English	Part 1: 00:20:05 Part 2: 00:12:58 **Total recorded :** 00:33:03	00:45:00
Jackson-C team unobserved	8 July 2010	French	00:36:58	01:30:00
Leah-M team unobserved	8 July 2010	French	00:27:03	01:00:00
Total			**09:42:59**	**15:15:00**

A4.3: October Cohort (Team T: observed; Teams D, N, P: unobserved)

Alias and Team	Date of interview	Language of interview	Length of audio-recorded interview	Time spent in interview
Allison-T	27 October 2010	English	01:00:24	01:30:00
Anna-T	12 October 2010	French	00:41:22	01:00:00
Brandon-T	26 October 2010	French	01:12:40	01:30:00
Carter-T	26 October 2010	French	00:56:11	01:30:00
Dylan-T	27 October 2010	French	00:52:05	02:30:00
Jordan-T	4 October 2010	English	00:37:55	01:00:00
Kevin-T	28 October 2010	French	00:53:16	01:30:00
Luke-T	12 October 2010	French	00:37:15	01:00:00
Jack-D team unobserved	21 October 2010	English	01:00:26	03:00:00
Owen-N team unobserved	2 December 2010	English	00:50:55	01:00:00 *(at my school, not at GP)*
Robert-P team unobserved	6 January 2011		00:26:24 00:01:16 00:02:16 **TOTAL: 00:29:56**	01:30:00
Total			**09:12:25**	**17:00:00**

A4.4: Moniteurs (Moniteur-Anita: 3 teams observed; other *moniteurs*: teams unobserved)

Alias and Team	Date of interview	Language of interview	Length of audio-recorded interview	Time spent in interview
Moniteur-Anita	3 May 2010	French	Not recorded	01:30:00
Moniteur-Kayla	10 May 2010	French	00:51:25	01:00:00
Moniteur-Hunter	20 May 2010	French	01:00:42	01:15:00
Moniteur-Julia	3 June 2010	French	00:46:43	01:00:00
Moniteur-Thomas	8 July 2010	French	00:41:01	01:00:00
Moniteur-Audrey-K	4 January 2011	English	*00:09:02 Unrecorded* 00:30:14 Recorded **Total time:** 00:39:16	*00:45:00 (phone call)*
Total			**03:50:05**	**06:30:00**

A4.5: Overall Interview Facts and Figures

Total Length of Audio-recordings	Total Number of Pages in Transcripts/Notes	Total Number of Words in Transcripts/Notes	Total Time Spent in Interviews
31:17:49 hours	1,356 pages	357,402 words	49:05:00 hours

Appendix A5: Sample Semi-Structured Interview Guide (adjusted for October interviews)

BRIEF BACKGROUND

- Define your background and professional profile.

TEAMBUILDING AND DEVELOPMENT

- How important was the "getting to know you" phase?
- Describe how your team went through the four phases of teambuilding: forming, storming, norming, performing (Tuckman, 1965)?
- How did your team learn to manage the challenges of defining roles, managing tasks, talking over the issues and deciding how to present?

TEAMWORK AND TASK MANAGEMENT

- What were the strengths and weaknesses, successes and failures of your project team?
- Were you satisfied or dissatisfied with your team's performance?
- What could improve your group's teamwork and interactions?
- Was it helpful when roles were defined?
- What is the difference between a leader and a moderator/facilitator?
- Did you determine the expertise & skills of each person?
- Was it necessary to establish rules for the group to work effectively?
- Which rules were needed for the interactions to be more effective?
- Did the pressure of time have an impact?
- Was twelve/eight a good number for effective teamwork?
- Did you work better in small groups as opposed to the whole group?

LANGUAGE AND COMMUNICATION

- How would you describe/define the participation, listening, speaking and accommodating in your team?
- What were the difficulties/challenges of using English as a common working language?
- What issues were involved with different language levels and how were these dealt with?
- How did you feel about language switching and overlapping conversations in French and English?

TEAM DYNAMICS: INTERPERSONAL TEAM RELATIONS

- How did you experience the problem-solving tasks in your project team?
- How do you feel you collaborated as a team member (to enable the team to progress, to cooperate and work in harmony and/or to be productive and creative)?

TEAM DIVERSITY

- What did you notice about the different ways of behaving and working?
- How did you deal with cultural, linguistic and individual differences? With differences in management styles and behaviour?
- What was the impact of these differences on team processes/dynamics?

CORPORATE CULTURE

- What are the management values and assumptions at Global Player?
- Was GP's corporate culture a unifier bringing people together? Why/how?
- Has this session helped you feel part of a global 'family'? Why/how?

Appendix A6: Summary of NVivo Coding Clusters – Interview with Benjamin-G[479]

18 June 2010 (32 Nodes, 74 References)
Interview Recording: 00:34:33 minutes
Nationality: French
Interview in French[480]

Stagiaire: Bckground and Profile (xxxx[481])

I. TEAM DEVELOPMENT, TASK MANAGEMENT AND TEAM DYNAMICS

Teambuilding: Phases (teamwork improved from 1st to 2nd session)

Teamwork: Defining & Respecting Rules (defining repertoire & structure; need for rules & structure; not satisfied with organisation; rule to read topic at very beginning and grasp understanding not respected; in society we need law & order + the police to enforce the rules; otherwise it's a jungle; it was a mess when Moniteur-Anita left the room but 20 mins later she came back and the work had been structured; order had been brought back after a period of disorder)
Teamwork: Defining & Assigning Roles (need for clear leadership to ensure rules are respected to enable mutual engagement; to make sure everyone is following group's solution & decision; leader has a mission to structure the interactions)
Teamwork: Contributing & Using Expertise (contributing to group)
Teamwork: Reading Texts (reflecting on subject)
Teamwork: Planning & Organising (need rules to plan & organise teamwork)
Teamwork: Shared Objectives & Strategy (group should make sure everyone has understood objectives and everyone is following; importance of involving everyone)
Teamwork: Integrating & Involving Others (Joseph-G felt the need to provide structure & make sure everyone was following the objectives & decisions)
Teamwork: Forming Subgroups (effective for working on separate tasks; depends on subject & context; subgroups necessary for 2nd project-team task but not for consumer group)

Team Dynamics: Leadership Skills & Styles (personal management style)

II. LANGUAGE AND COMMUNICATION

Language: Barrier (NSs speak quickly; doesn't understand everything said by NSs; only understood 50% of what Australian said; need for leader to make sure everyone is following objectives & decision, and to structure the interactions)

[479] See section 3.6.2 for more information about the summaries I created for each participant interviewed.
[480] My paraphrasing of main points, translated into English for interviews conducted in French, is provided for each summary.
[481] Information removed for anonymity.

Language: Switching (asides in French: barrier to effective teamwork; need for leader to coordinate discussions so as not to have several conversations going on simultaneously)
Language: Strategies (asking to repeat)

III. INFUENCING FACTORS: TEAM DIVERSITY AND CORPORATE CULTURE

Team Diversity: National Cultures (not stereotypes; different styles; but not enough "*recul*" [distance] to analyse differences)
Team Diversity: Cultural Styles (different ways of reasoning)
Team Diversity: Professional Cultures (understanding subject depends on *métier*)
Team Diversity: Team Composition (background = culture "*fac*" [university], not culture "*école de commerce*" [specialised management schools])

Corporate Culture: Shared Values ("*notable*" [fine], valuable and strong values of respect; people are proud to work for GP and are attached to the company; a strength of the company; these values should be safeguarded, protected, developed)
Corporate Culture: Recruitment Profile (when recruiting, GP takes into consideration the values of their future workforce to ensure they share these values)

IV. INFUENCING FACTORS: PROGRAMME CONTEXT

Workshop Context: Training Task vs. Workplace Reality (real-life meetings are prepared in advance; more time to reflect & make decision)
Workshop Context: Time Pressure (not a pressure, but a factor)
Workshop Context: Team Composition (equal status = everyone at the same level)

V. INTERVIEW METHODOLOGY

Silence (some silence)

Appendix A7: Observation Notes[482] – Team K: Task 1 (Period 2: Project-Team Meeting)

Emma-K started out as the leader and asked for people to have roles, i.e. someone to write on the board, someone as timekeeper, and someone with supply chain experience. Leo-K expressed that he had had supply chain experience. Zachary-K went to the board and began writing the key facts, explaining the scenario and providing an outline involving the people and the process. Wyatt-K offered to be the timekeeper and began making suggestions and asking questions.

James-K tried to speak, but was unable to make himself heard. Olivia-K, at one point tried to involve him by saying, "let James-K speak." James-K suggested that since there were many people, they should organise themselves into small groups focusing on management decisions, sales forecasts and import/export issues. Emma-K took over and clarified that they needed to all have the same basic understanding and assumptions. Olivia-K suggested that someone get a computer.

The following people took turns adding their comments: James-K, Wyatt-K, Audrey-K, Ethan-K, Jacob-K, Emma-K, Zachary-K, Leo-K, Emma-K, Ethan-K, Leo-K, (Leo-K and Lucas-K an aside in French), Olivia-K, Audrey-K, Wyatt-K, Jacob-K, Emma-K, Zachary-K, Ethan-K, Emma-K, Olivia-K, Parker-K, Michael-K, Parker-K, Jacob-K, Christain, Wyatt-K, Olivia-K, Mark-K, Emma-K, Parker-K, Ethan-K, Mark-K, Emma-K, and Wyatt-K.

Emma-K spoke about the actions and consequences, about people and social issues; about working in two separate groups on the model and the impacts; Parker-K about the time frame for working and making decisions, and about how to organise, for instance to work in three groups; Michael-K about major actions and objectives; Jacob-K about first concentrating on how to work and worrying about the technical stuff later; Olivia-K about problems and opportunities. Zachary-K asked for orders as to what to write on the board. Emma-K clarified statements and confirmed ideas, using the direct style "we need to express our actions and explain the consequences; we do need to have numbers and details." Wyatt-K explained that they should finish what they were doing before moving to a new point, and that they should organise themselves into teams.

Moniteur-Anita announced she was leaving them on their own to work things out and that she would be back. They finally broke up into two separate groups, nine in one group discussing actions in English, while a group of four French people were working at a computer and discussing figures in French. In the large group, Olivia-K said they shouldn't talk too much about objectives but about solutions.

About this time, the Supply Chain Manager, making his rounds, arrived in room 217 to discuss the group's progress. Olivia-K interrupted him by asking several questions. Emma-K clarified that the group needed to make a decision and assume the consequences.

After the Supply Chain Manager left the room, the group became aware of the short amount of time remaining. Several allusions were made to this timing by Emma-K as the leader and Wyatt-K as the timekeeper.

With only fifteen minutes left, there seemed to be a turning point. Emma-K claimed they needed to have two scenarios with the target actions and consequences, and the alternative actions and consequences. Wyatt-K began making a chart on the paper board. Comments about this process for organising their work came from Emma-K, Zachary-K, Wyatt-K, Emma-K, Olivia-K, and Emma-K again. Emma-K, using directives, made such statements as "let's choose some actions, let's decide, let's do this, let's split up half and half, we need actions." Jacob-K was quiet in the large group but participated in a group of five.

They finally split up in the following way:
-- Three people went to the board (Zachary-K, Audrey-K, Wyatt-K) speaking in English.

[482] See 3.6.2 for an extract from NVivo showing how I coded "General Practices: Time Mangement" from my observation notes of Team K's Task 4.

-- Four people worked at the computer in French (Michael-K, Lucas-K, Leo-K, Mark-K)
-- Six people worked around a table in English (Emma-K, Parker-K, Olivia-K, Ethan-K, Jacob-K, James-K)

After a short time, they began sharing their ideas with the other groups, from sub-group to sub-group, rather than to the entire group at large; it became quite noisy in the room. Emma-K's language often included statements such as: "we don't necessarily need all the numbers; we need to tell them; we need to decide; have you guys come up with solutions? OK, guys, we need to get back to the team; we need to make adjustments; let's keep the PowerPoint simple with actions and a couple of bullet points with the consequences; you are right, Audrey-K; what we have to do is plug in some figures." Leo-K agreed. Emma-K continued: "we'll have to plug in some numbers: we're not going to have anything to present; let's focus together as a team; I think it looks good; if we do this simply, we still have time to look at it." There was no doubt that Emma-K was the leader right from the start.

During the sub-group work, Mark-K acted as the bridge between the financial group (at the computer) and Emma-K's group (around the table). Mark-K to Emma-K, "it's impossible; how come we are still on the first scenario?" Acknowledging Emma-K as the leader, Wyatt-K addressed the large group with "our target is for the short term, is that correct, Emma-K? Emma-K, are we still working on Scenario 1?" The three members of the group preparing the chart were standing up in front of the paper board. Wyatt-K began explaining the chart to the others and at one point, he exclaimed "Please not everybody at the same time; I would like to finish; we only have ten minutes; it's time; there's only two minutes before starting." Olivia-K expressed "I'm sorry, there's only one scenario; let's stick to the model." James-K used French more often than English in his sub-group.

During the remaining minutes, Emma-K as the team leader, gave the following orders: "there are too many conversations; let's come back together; we're saying too many things" and made clarifications about the three scenarios involving doing nothing, doing something drastic, and taking the middle ground. She shouted over to Michael-K, working on the Excel file with figures, "put in the numbers." Michael-K spoke back just to Emma-K, "I'm listening to you."

Mark-K was typing the scenario on PowerPoint slides while Michael-K was putting figures into the Excel file. Audrey-K and Olivia-K were talking at the same time. Emma-K claimed, "Here's what we're going to do, shut the plant down and assume the social consequences." Olivia-K started talking and was interrupted, but requested "can I finish my sentence?" Emma-K then suggested "let's come back together to see what the action is; we should listen." Ethan-K, who had taken a back-stage role, made a pertinent comment, "the figures are not important; we've forgotten three points, the management, frustrations, and…." but none of the others seemed to pick up on this comment. Emma-K continued, "Now at least we've made a decision; we now need to work on an analysis."

In the final minutes, there were two main speakers, Emma-K and Mark-K (working on the PowerPoint), although the others also contributed to the conversations in the following speech sequence: Olivia-K, Leo-K, Mark-K, Mark-K, Michael-K, Mark-K, Emma-K, Emma-K, Emma-K, Wyatt-K, Ethan-K, Emma-K, Emma-K. The atmosphere was becoming tense, given the time pressure they were under to finish their work. Leo-K asked, "How are we on the model? Did we get there? Do we still have time?" Mark-K asserted "only one person speaking; it's not realistic; please no questions." While Mark-K was typing the PPT, Michael-K entering the figures in the Excel spreadsheet, and Emma-K directing, the others were commenting and adding information. Mark-K affirmed "there is no time for change anymore." Emma-K justified, "we've got to make a decision, even if it's a bad one." Jokingly, she added "it's the carnival; we'll let them have a party." During this time, there were some asides in French in small groups.

Wyatt-K pointed out that they only had two minutes left. Emma-K recognised, "we need to add some more risks." Ethan-K remarked "it's important to have the involvement of the managers."

When their preparation time was up, Emma-K asked "Who's going to present?" but without waiting for a response, carried on, "I don't care, I'll present."

At 10.45, Team K was asked to present their solution. Emma-K showed PowerPoint slides giving action plans for the two scenarios the team had devised; Michael-K explained figures in an Excel spreadsheet.

Appendix A8 Measures of Cultural Components within the Three Teams Investigated

Table A8.1 – Nationality: numbers and percentages of different nationalities and French nationals per team.

Team	Number on team	Total nationalities	Regions/countries	% of French	% of other nationalities
K	13 [12][483]	5	10 [9] Western Europe = 9 [8][484] France, 1 Netherlands 1 North America = 1 US 1 Asia =1 India 1 Eastern Europe = 1 Romania	69.23% [66.66%]	30.77% *[33.34%]*
T	8	4	6 Western Europe = 5 France, 1 Italy 1 North America = 1 US 1 South America = 1 Brazil	62.5%	37.5%
G	12	6	9 Western Europe = 7 France, 1 Italy, 1 Sweden 2 North America = 1 Canada, 1 US 1 Australia	58.33%	41.67%

Table A8.2 – Professional Sector: numbers and percentages of different professions per team.

Team	Number on team	Total professions	Percentage	Professional sectors[485]
G	12	6	50%	3 Finance 3 Marketing-Sales 2 Communication 2 Industry 1 each Supply Chain, Tax Law
K	13 [12]	7	53.85% [58.33%]	4 Personnel 3[2] Industry[486] 2 R&D 1 each Agronomy, Finance, Logistics, Marketing-Sales
T	8	5	62.5%	3 Industry 2 Communication 1 each Finance, Marketing-Sales, Supply Chain

[483] During Team K's first two tasks, there were thirteen members in the team. After one person left the team, there were twelve members for the remaining two tasks (see Table 5.1). All figures in brackets refer to values for the twelve-member team.
[484] The person who left Team K after the first two tasks was from France.
[485] See Table 5.1.
[486] The person who left Team K after the first two tasks was in Industry.

Table A8.3 – Gender: number of males and females per team and percentages of females per team

Team	Number on team	Males	Females	% of females
K	13 [12]	10 [9][487]	3	23.08% [25%]
G	12	9	3	25%
T	8	6	2	25%

Tables A8.4. – The Age Factor

Table A8.4.1 – Age Range: age range and average age per team

Team	Number on team	20's	30's	40's	50's	Average age (in years)
G	12	25, 27, 27	31, 33, 33, 35, 37, 37	41, 44, 46		34.66
K	13 [12]	25, 25, 27, 27	31, 32, 33, 35	43, 46, 48, (49)[488]	52	36.39 [35.33]
T	8	25, 26, 27	36	48, 49	50, 55	39.5

Table A8.4.2 – Age Dispersion: age difference between the eldest and youngest per team

Team	Number on team	Age of eldest member	Age of youngest member	Average dispersion
G	12	46	25	21 years
K	13 [12]	52	25	27 years
T	8	55	25	30 years

[487] The person who left Team K after the first two tasks was a male.
[488] The person who left Team K after the first two tasks was 49.

<u>Table A8.5 – Pre-GP Experience</u>: aggregate number of years of professional experience prior to working at GP; measured in the number of months/years *stagiaires* had previously worked prior to GP

Team	Number on team	Mean in months	Mean in years
G	12	78	6.5
K	13 [12]	121.39 [106.5][489]	10.11 [8.88]
T	8	129.75	10.8
	Total = 33[32] *stagiaires*	Average mean of all 3 teams = 107.64 [101.63] months	Average mean of all 3 teams = 8.97 [8.45] years

<u>Table A8.6 – GP Corporate Tenure</u>: aggregate number of years of GP corporate service per team; measured in the number of months/years the *stagiaires* had worked at GP at the start of the MIP

Team	Number on team	Mean in months	Mean in years
K	13 [12]	36.54 [39.33][490]	3.05 [3.28]
T	8	52.88	4.41
G	12	67.75	5.65
	Total = 33 [32] *stagiaires*	Average mean of all 3 teams = 52.39 [53.32] months	Average mean of all 3 teams = 4.37 [4.45] years

<u>Table A8.7 – Total Corporate Experience (Pre-GP and GP)</u>: total number of years of pre-GP and GP professional experience per team; measured in the number of months/years *stagiaires* had previously worked[491]

Team	Number on team	Mean in months	Mean in years
G	12	145.75	12.15
K	13 [12]	157.93 [145.83]	13.16 [12.15]
T	8	182.63	15.22
	Total = 33[32] *stagiaires*	Average mean of all 3 teams = 162.10 [158.07] months	Average mean of all 3 teams = 13.51 [13.17] years

[489] The person who left Team K had 25 years of pre-GP corporate experience.
[490] The person who left Team K had 3 months of GP corporate tenure.
[491] These figures take the average mean in months/years per team using the calculations in Tables A8.5 and A8.6.

Table A8.8 – Language Fluency

<u>Table A8.8.1 – English Fluency</u>: numbers and percentages of fluent English speakers per team

Team	Number on team	Number of fluent speakers	Percentage
G	12	4	33.33
K	13 [12]	4 [4] [492]	30.37 [33.33]
T	8	1	12.5

<u>Table A8.8.2 – French Fluency</u>: numbers and percentages of non-French speakers per team

Team	Number on team	Number of non-French speakers	Percentage
G	12	3	25
K	13 [12]	3 [3] [493]	23 [25]
T	8	1	12.5

[492] The person who left the team was a less-fluent speaker (LFS).
[493] The person who left the team was a French speaker.

Appendix A9 – Written Rules from Team M

Team M's Bilingual Rules[494]

Bonnes pratiques de groupe Cas Management – Groupe 8

Good practices for Management Case group – Group 8

- Nommer un leader, un time-keeper, 1 preneur de notes (1 différent par cas, à définir ensemble) : 5'.
  To name a leader, a time-keeper, 1 notes writter (1 different by case, to be defined together): 5'

- Définir un timing et une méthodologie : 10'.
  Define a timing and a methodology: 10'

- Lancer les cas en sous-groupes.
  Launch the cases work per group

- Partage de la synthèse des résultats des sous-groupes : debriefing.
  Share summary of results per sub-groups: debriefing

- Les participants doivent exprimer les problèmes rencontrés au leader et le leader décide en cas de différents.
  The participants must express the problems to the leader who decides in case of disagreements.

- Préparation de la restitution : répartir les paragraphes pour que chacun s'exprime.
  Preparation of the restitution: distribute the paragraphs so that everyone can speak.

- Ne pas faire de discussions croisées, 1 seule personne s'exprime à la fois : Ecouter les personnes ayant la parole.
  Avoid double discussions, one person speak at the time: Listen to people who are speaking.

- Langue parlée : Français, seules les personnes plus l'aise en anglais peuvent s'exprimer en anglais ; support écrit en anglais.
  Spoken language: French, only the people more at ease with English can express themselves in English; written support in English.

[494] The original punctuation and wording in English and French have not been altered.