Communication Modes of Exchange and Adaptive Interaction: Towards a Language Perspective on Stability and Change in Business Relationships

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ABSTRACT. Within IMP literature the importance of understanding exchange and adaptive interaction in relationship and network development increasingly gains attention. However, the role of language by actors in exchange and adaptive interaction has so far been overlooked. Embedded in the "linguistic turn", this paper takes a phenomenological perspective on language by taking Heidegger's view point on the existence of being as a starting point. In conceptualizing how language works in each form of interaction, we argue that there are five distinctive modes of language underlying exchange and adaptive interaction and each one has different consequences for understanding stability and change in networks and relationships. Based on our conceptualization, we offer a set of methodological implications for discourse analysts and researchers interested in studying network and business relationship development from the perspective of situated actors. Finally, we offer some managerial implications for practitioners responsible for managing their relationship by underscoring the importance of language in relationship development.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Nowadays, companies are continuously striving to innovate and look for ways to implement innovations in their ongoing business practices. However, in doing so, organizations are highly dependent on other firms with which they have a business relationship (Håkansson and Snehota, 1995). Consequently, innovating as well as adaptions in ongoing business practices also require mutual adaptations of structures developed between organizations For companies cannot innovate in isolation, relationship development is crucial for successful adaptations (Ford, 1996, Brennan & Turnbull, 1994; Loohuis, Raesfeld & Groen, 2012). Human interactions are considered pivotal in adaptations processes and are therefore considered as mutually entwined (Fidler & Johnson, 1984; Hallén, Johanson, & Seyed-Mohammed, 1991; Turnbull, Ford, Cunningham, 1996; Ford, Gadde, Håkansson, Snehota, & Waluszewski, 2008; Loohuis, 2015).

Hallén et al. (1991) describe human interaction as "a process in which two participants carry out activities directed toward one another and exchange valuable resources." (p.31). This definition only concerns the transactional interaction within a dyadic relationship and nothing more. However, as literature has extended in the past decades, it became clear that interaction not only concerns the transactional interaction within the exchange process. Interaction is first and foremost a confrontation process in the context of a relationship that also changes aspects of the activities of the involved companies (Ford et al., 2008). The existence of this confrontation process is also advocated by Andersson and Tuusjärvi (2000), who mention that relationships contain a drive towards a continuous development of the relationship. In this situation, conflicts might be generated through this interactional process on one hand, but on the other hand it can also provide stability in a relationship (Ford et al. 2008).

Accordingly, Johanson and Mattsson (1987) argue that there two basic modes of interaction that lead to change and stability: exchange adaptive. Both are referring to different notions of time and dynamics (Medlin, 2004). Following Loohuis (2015), "adaptive interaction is oriented towards change to enable future interaction" (p.8), whereas routine and experience are the fundamentals of exchange interaction (see also Medlin, 2004; Halinen, 1998). Hence, it can be argued that exchange interaction takes place in a present and mainly oriented towards maintaining the status-quo situation, whereas adaptive interaction concerns change and development (Medlin, 2004). Although literature largely accepts that both modes of interaction are important for change and stability in relationships and networks, its distinctive core dynamics and processes that drives interaction in each mode have not been studied in depth (Loohuis, 2015).

Therefore, in this paper we approach the matter from a communication perspective. Communication is an important part of interaction and also within the organization, as it influences organizational performance through affecting the coordination of exchange activities and the development of strong relationships (Griffith, 2002; Ford et al., 2008). As literature differentiates between the two interaction modes in a respectively status-quo and adaptive situation, it is likely that the communication practices also differ in various ways. For instance, Medlin (2004) notes that whilst exchange interaction deals with norms, established expectations and structuration processes (Giddens, 1984), adaptive interaction concerns the change of norms and expectations and is hence more open to change. Given these differences, so far literature has overlooked the importance of the various forms of language considered as

an instance of communication modes in business relationships. Therefore, this paper argues that it is primarily through language that actors express the state of affairs in their relationship and hence it can be stated that language is an important part over everyday business interaction that drives both stability and change.

Although the subject of exchange and adaptive interaction is not very apparent in research, there are authors that already address the topic. In literature the topic is usually addressed from a time perspective (Medlin, 2004; Loohuis, 2015), meaning that time is used to explain the connection between the interaction states and relationship development. As time plays an important role in both states, it might be assumed that their corresponding communication modes are also influenced by time. Besides the time perspective, Mason and Leek (2012) address communication norms and how these change through critical events. Furthermore, Lowe, Ellis and Purchase (2008) consider the role of language in establishing perceptions and representations of reality in business relationships and networks. These contributions clearly demonstrate that the role of time and language are important to understand business interaction from the perspective of situated actors in business relationships. In this paper, we further develop an conceptualization of language in business relationship with a particular focus on how language relates to exchange and adaptive interaction.

Moreover, this paper conceptualizes how language works in both exchange and adaptive interaction and also how language can be studied to understand stability and change in business relationships form a methodological point of view. The focus is particularly on the development of dyadic relationships, that is relationships between two parties, such as a relationship between a buyer and seller. Therefore, the goal of this paper is to conceptualize how actors in a dyadic relationship interact through language during exchange and adaptive interaction. In doing so, this paper draws on a phenomenological perspective on language provided by Heidegger (1927) interpreted by Dreyfus (1991). Through this perspective a communication framework of language can be developed, which refers to the everyday existence of actors in business relationship and how this is related to exchange and adaptive interaction in the context of business relationships.

The following research question will be addressed:

How can a phenomenological lens on language help understand how exchange and adaptive interaction comes about in a business relationship?

This paper is a stepping stone for further research in this area, as it introduces an integrated description and framework of the two interaction modes from a language perspective. Another aim of this paper is to contribute to the methods of doing empirical research in business relationships and to some extent in networks from a language perspective. Finally, we contribute to practitioners who rely on their everyday use of language in maintaining and changing their business relationships by providing concrete managerial implications.

The remainder of this paper is structured as follows. We start by discussing literature about exchange and adaptive interaction. Next, we look at language and communication within Industrial Marketing and Purchasing (IMP) literature. The chapter ends with a phenomenological perspective on language. Then the paper continues with an evaluation of the interaction types from a phenomenological perspective. The chapter ends with an overview of the various forms of language corresponding to the types of interaction. In the subsequent chapter, the methodological implications for using the framework are

provided and discussed. The paper ends with a conclusion and some managerial implications, and a discussion chapter.

2. THEORY

The purpose of this section is first to discuss the existing literature on exchange and adaptive interaction in business relationship literature. Then we approach language and communication from IMP literature. The remainder of this chapter provides a phenomenological perspective on language based on the work of Heidegger (1927) and Dreyfus (1991).

2.1 Exchange and Adaptive Interaction

As mentioned briefly in the introduction, literature makes a distinction between two types of interaction: exchange and adaptive interaction. In literature, not every author makes the same distinction between exchange and adaptive interaction as is done in this paper. Ford et al. (2008) make a separation between the ideas of exchange and of interaction, by which they separate the exchange process from interaction. According to them, exchange refers to the transference of unchanging entities, namely products, services, or money, between actors. This mechanism is called the "market mechanism" and is based on the underlying assumption that all the essential knowledge is available for the parties and that the objects are exchanged. According to Ford et al. (2008) no intervening process between parties is necessary for exchange. Easton and Araujo (1994) confirm this by pointing out that according to the traditional marketing theory the transactional process underlies a one-time exchange of value between two parties with no prior or subsequent interaction. However, they also mention that even such a simple dyadic economic exchange is intertwined with social relations. They take it one step further by stating that this social context cannot be ignored at firm and market level, as this social context underlies the reasons for the exchange with a specific company. Loohuis (2015) elaborates on these definitions by mentioning that interaction includes the economic exchange, but also the adaptive processes over time. These adaptive processes refer to the changes and adaptions a relationship abides as it advances over time. In order to conceptualize exchange and adaptive interaction in detail in this paper, the definition of Loohuis (2015) is takes as foundation.

Literature states that economic exchange is intertwined with social practices and that these aspects are both parts of the interaction process. As for interaction in general applies, it is an exchange process in which resources, activities and actors take part (Ford et al. 2008). This definition is the fundament for exchange interaction as well as adaptive interaction. However, the interactional process in both exchange and adaptive situation is determined by their context and time perspective.

The object for exchange interaction is in the present (Johanson & Mattsson, 1987). However, the everyday exchange process it underlies is shaped by routines and experience of past events (Loohuis, 2015). Over time prior experience has been gained through past adaption. The resource ties, activity links and actors that have emerged from this process, structure exchange interaction (Håkansson & Snehota, 1995; Medlin, 2004). Andersson and Tuusjärvi (2000) add that structures are required in relationships, and according to Ford et al. (2008) interaction is such a network structure providing stability. This stability serves the development of long-term and established relationships (Andersson & Tuusjärvi, 2000). Hence, it indicates the static circumstances exchange interaction takes place in.

In business relationships structure and stability is reached through having the same understandings. Rules of behaviour underlie these corresponding understandings. In order to

structure the interactional process in each interaction type, the rules of behaviour mentioned by Andersson and Tsuujärvi (2000) can be used. These rules consist of norms, routines, and role expectations. Shared norms define what appropriate behaviour is and what is not, resulting in uniform interaction (Andersson and Tsuujärvi, 2000). Turner (1988) defines routines as "behavioural sequences where, without great mental and interpersonal effort, actors do pretty much the same thing in time and space." Routines coordinate individual activities within the relationship (Håkansson & Snehota, 1995). Role expectations are standards that regulate the behaviour of one specific actor. This 'expected' division of tasks provides predictability and hence a reduction of uncertainty (Andersson and Tsuujärvi, 2000). Medlin (2004) mentions that the degree of mutual expectations together with the states of closeness/distance, conflict/cooperation, and power/dependence influence the way interfirm interaction takes place. In conclusion, in exchange interaction norms, routines, and role expectations are similar for both parties in the relationship and hence creating a stable status-quo situation.

However, established and stable relationships are not unchangeable, as each relationship contains a dynamic feature (Andersson & Tuusjärvi, 2000). In order to develop the relationship and improve its functionality the two parties involved adapt and modify the exchanged product, the process or the organization (Håkansson & Snehota, 1995; Turnbull et al., 1996). These adaptions emerge from present interaction (Medlin, 2004), which implies that adaptive interaction is limited to the present. According to Loohuis (2015), change is driven by critical events, which influence the perceptions of actors and hence shape the interactional process and its outcomes. Medlin (2004) elaborates by stating that adaptive interaction is dependent on and shaped by the past. It stems from the configurations of impulses, emerging from past and present interactions (Turner, 1988; Easton & Araujo, 1994). However, the effect of adaptations occurs in the future and hence will alter future exchange interaction (Medlin, 2004). Medlin (2004) adds that in contrast to the time perspective of exchange interaction, the object of time for adaptive interaction lies in the future, as its central focus is on change. Expectations and potential futures influence the relationship and hence the interaction (Medlin, 2004; Ford et al. 2008).

Because the interaction process is multidimensional, when change occurs, the three dimensions – norms, routines, role expectations – are addressed (Andersson & Tuusjärvi, 2000). As these dimensions provide a framework for interaction, actors use these to signal and interpret the situation. This subject will be elaborated further in Chapter 2.2.

2.2 Language and Communication in IMP Literature

As mentioned earlier, some authors already addressed the topic of exchange and adaptive interaction from a time perspective, conceptualizing the differences between the two interaction types. Mason and Leek (2012) address communication practices and how these are shaped by time, space, actors, tasks, and media. For them, the context in which communication takes place affects what communication practices are most appropriate to perform the task. In addition, they argue that for the exchange of information the speed of response, the content and the importance of the information determine the appropriate communication medium. Mason and Leek (2012) conclude that a lean media, for instance email, is most suitable. On the other hand, problem solving and negotiating practices are best performed through face-to-face communication (Mason & Leek, 2012). Although pointing to various forms of possible

communication practices depending on a situation, Mason & Leek (2012) have not brought the various practices in relation to exchange and adaptive modes of interaction.

Lowe et al. (2008) confirm the ignorance of a perspective on language, or what they call the 'linguistic turn', in IMP literature. They mention that communication, knowledge and language underlie our understanding of reality. Furthermore, it is language that transforms the intangible reality into the tangible through the establishment of perceptions and enactments of it. The deconstruction and reconstruction of perceptions of communication is continually happening in our mind (Lowe et al., 2008). However, "language, and our understanding of it, is often tentative" (Lowe et al., 2008, p.304). Lowe et al. elaborate that this might be the reason why literature has discarded the language perspective so far and prefers the absolute. Concerning the language aspect of communication, literature lacks in-depth insight on its role in communication. Furthermore, the role of language within the two interaction modes is overlooked and not explicitly discussed in literature.

2.3 Phenomenological Perspective on Language

In order to examine the role of language in business interaction, a phenomenological perspective on language is helpful. In doing so, the work of Dreyfus (1991), in which he discusses Heidegger's view on the existence of being, is taken as a starting point. According to Heidegger, language outlines the essence of things. He elaborates that its focus changes in different situations where the entity (an object or subject) that humans interpret is ready-at-hand or present-at-hand. Ready-at-hand implies the primordial mode in which language is used to indicate the familiar, the obvious. At the other extreme, present-at-hand deals with situations where language becomes more explicit just because of a deficit in that what otherwise was considered as familiar or obvious. The change from one to another is usually caused by a breakdown in ongoing practice or by surprise (Dreyfus, 1991; Yanow & Tsoukas, 2009; Sandberg & Tsoukas, 2011; Loohuis, 2015). Between the extremes, Dreyfus (1991) identifies a few deficit modes: malfunction, temporally breakdown, and permanent breakdown with each having different consequences for the use of language. He also mentions the situations in which occurrentness and pure occurrentness take place.

Below we further elaborate how language is linked to each of these four different modes whereas the first one, ready-at-hand or availability is the most primordial way of the use of language. We take a hammer as an example to explain how language is used in each of the four modes.

In ongoing practice the situation can be seen as a status-quo one, in which activities take place as usual and availableness is a central point. "Availableness is a mode of awareness that is characterized by an absorbed intentionality, a 'non-thematic circumspective absorption' in which the being is totally immersed in his/her surroundings" (Chia & Holt, 2006, p.640). This immersion is also called dwelling and refers to the everyday understanding, for instance shared everyday skills and practices, derived from our nonexplicitable background (Dreyfus, 1991). Through this background we experience the world and are able to make sense of it. As the term 'nonexplicitable' already implies, Heidegger mentions that the skills and practices this invisible background consists of, cannot be spelled out or be made explicit. He elaborates by stating that background practices can only be pointed out to people who already share them – who dwell in them. The reason that this background cannot be pointed out, is because it is so pervasive

in our lives that it cannot be made clear. To explain this further, Dreyfus mentions that the background is not a belief system. He elaborates that beliefs, rules, and principles can be explained, but skills and practices cannot. Hence, as the background understanding is embodied in our skills, it cannot be cleared out. For this reason it is that language is used transparently and taken for granted in ongoing practice. In this situation the hammer functions as it is used to. In other words, it is ready-at-hand and therefore language is used simply to direct the ongoing activity.

In contrast to situations in which people dwell, are the ones in which people are consciously aware of the presence and the situation they find themselves in. This is the case in the other deficit modes. In order to interpret this alien discourse and practices, Heidegger suggests an interpretation of everyday structures in which we dwell, such as norms and routines. He calls this 'building', of which dwelling is always a part. In these situations interpretation of new phenomena is guided by the understanding of our everyday background.

According to Heidegger, unavailableness refers to the other three breakdowns (Dreyfus, 1991). Malfunction represents a situation in which a minor breakdown takes place. People encounter a little error, and it can happen that, besides the entity, language is momentarily unavailable, meaning that the error causes an error in communication. However, as this is a minor one, people automatically shift to possible, obvious solutions derived from their pervasive background (Loohuis, 2015). An example here is that the hammer is too heavy. Using another hammer instead and pursuing with the task is an obvious solution. This stresses the readiness-at-hand in this deficit mode.

In a temporary breakdown, or what Loohuis (2015) calls a low temporary breakdown, for some reason the task is disturbed and hence needs to be made explicit. In other words, the transparency from ongoing practices needs to become explicitly apparent in order to continue (Dreyfus, 1991). An example for this situation is when the handle of the hammer breaks. Language focusses on practical deliberation and eliminating the error in order to advance with the task (Dreyfus, 1991).

More than in case of a temporary breakdown, in a permanent breakdown (Dreyfus, 1991) or a persistent temporary breakdown (Loohuis, 2015) that what used to be available is not anymore. An example is not finding the hammer where it used to be. This unavailableness results in the entirely reconsidering patterns and connections (Loohuis, 2015). For language this means that what used to be logical is not anymore, and hence actors must pay conscious attention to their work.

According to Heidegger, occurrentness takes place when normal, everyday practices stop (Dreyfus, 1991). This is the case in a total breakdown situation (Yanow & Tsoukas, 2009; Loohuis, 2015). A complete interruption between the actor and object takes place and causes a de-contextualization of the situation (Loohuis, 2015). "[A] distancing of the individual from the phenomenon apprehended" is needed to theoretically reflect on the situation and make objects explicit (Chia & Holt, 2006, p.641; Dreyfus, 1991; Loohuis, 2015). Heidegger stresses that language is used to explicitly lay out features and properties, which makes them present-at-hand. For example, the hammer weighs 300 grams and the handle is made of plastic.

Where other authors put occurrentness at the end of the scale (Yanow & Tsoukas, 2009; Loohuis, 2015), Heidegger mentions pure occurrentness as being the complete opposite of availableness. It is a mode of being in which cognitivism seems highly impossible and one can only consider the situation from a curiosity point of view (Dreyfus, 1991). What happens is a

kind of inactivity in which the actor experiences "pure contemplation" (Dreyfus, 1991, p.77). For example, a situation in which the hammer earlier mentioned is replaced by another tool with the same function requires obtaining facts, not only about the tool, but also about the context (Dreyfus, 1991). In this period of solely observing, language is not used. However, as in each deficit mode the aim is to return to ongoing practice, language eventually will be used to make objects explicit, as is the case in a total breakdown situation.

3. TOWARDS A LANGUAGE PERSPECTIVE ON EXCHANGE AND ADAPTIVE INTERACTION

After discussing the two interaction modes and the phenomenological perspective on language, in this chapter we conceptualize how language works in each interaction mode. In order to accomplish this, the breakdowns mentioned in Chapter 2 are divided according to the two interaction modes. In order to determine in which deficit modes exchange and adaptive interaction takes place, we return to the discussed literature. An example of a dyadic relationship between a buyer and seller is given and this relationship will continue through all deficit modes in order to explain the role of language in both interaction modes.

Literature stresses that exchange interaction is shaped by routines and experiences. In ongoing practice and malfunction situations, routines and experiences play an important role as they stem from the pervasive background and guide the everyday activities. Norms, routines, and role expectations are well-known and people have the same understandings, resulting in stability. This stability causes language to be very implicit in exchange interaction. Moreover, here, the presence of language is nihil, which is the case in ongoing practice, or almost nihil, which applies to malfunction situations.

In ongoing practice, the relationship between a buyer and seller works according to plan. Especially in buyer-seller relationships, the implicitness of language is expressed through the use of information systems in business. These mainly computer directed systems are used to collect, process, store and communicate information. They support business processes and it can be stated that to some extent they replace the use of language. An example of an information system in this case, is electronic data interchange (EDI). Here, EDI exchanges purchase order, invoices, and many others from one party to the other. In our case, it replaces the buyer's task to order new products at the seller and hence entirely replaces language in this situation. What underlies the principle of EDI, and other information systems, are repeating procedures. In exchange interaction in general, but particularly in ongoing practices, repetition is one of the key characteristics. The repetition of practices is the reason why language is unnecessary and hence absent in this interaction mode.

In case of a malfunction, the buyer receives goods that do not meet all requirements. For instance, the buyer ordered stainless steel, but when processed, it started to stain. This can be a minor deficit when the buyer decides to still use the steel for his products. Here, language is barely used as the production will continue as it is used to. That part of language that is used is past-oriented. This means that it stems from prior experiences and past behavior, from which obvious solutions for the minor breakdown are derived. On the other hand, language can be used to point out the wrong delivery to the supplier.

Literature mentions that adaptive interaction underlies change. This is also the case for temporary, permanent, and total breakdowns, as a critical event underlie these deficit modes. As mentioned earlier, critical events can both be a surprise as well as an arranged adaption, which will be illustrated by the following examples.

The buyer experiences a temporary breakdown when the order is delivered later than was agreed. In this case the error is caused by a failure in EDI. Because the components are not available to proceed with production, the task is disturbed. Within the organization language is used to direct employees to proceed with the alternative, which may be using an alternative component, or producing another product instead of the planned one, resulting in both an altered product and production process. The language used here is not derived from ones pervasive background, as this cannot be pointed out. Therefore, it is a new vocabulary. Then the error is eliminated and the task can continue. Externally, the buyer uses language to deal with the delayed delivery and solve the problem with the seller in order to prevent it from happening again.

When the supplier is, for instance, not willing or able to show how they solve the problem, the buyer's error becomes a permanent breakdown, because he cannot see whether the problem is solved or not. On one hand a feeling of helplessness because of illogicality is faced, but on the other hand the aim of restoring ongoing practice. What happens in this kind of situation is that language is used in arguments and discussions. For instance, the buyer may persuade the supplier to show his solution to the problem. Whether or not arguments will emerge, language is used to reexamine patterns in order to eliminate the illogicality.

An example for a total breakdown situation is when the exchange between the buyer and seller (temporarily) stops. Although the reasons for this termination may differ, the result is eventually the same: everyday practice completely stops. The situation is de-contextualized. Language is used here to make the situation explicit; to determine what factors caused the breakdown and to discuss this with the other party in the relationship. As this breakdown is of such severance that it has damaged the business relationship significantly, the two parties need language to negotiate, whether this negotiation will concern the proceeding of the business relationship or the termination of it.

In the case of a dyadic relationship, it can be questioned to what extent pure occurrentness takes place. It only occurs when something on or without purpose causes complete consternation with at least one of the party. An example for this kind of deficit mode is when one of the parties, take the supplier, appears to have engaged in fraud. Due to this sudden disclosure, the supplier's business activities are immediately stopped resulting in a disrupted flow of supplies for the buying company. During this inactivity the buyer can only observe the situation until he obtained enough facts and data about the context to create a plan in which explicitly is laid out how his firm is going to proceed. Until the planning, language is not used.

In summary, in ongoing practice and malfunction situations exchange interaction takes place, whereas in the other modes – temporary breakdown, permanent breakdown, total breakdown, and pure occurrentness – adaptive interaction is apparent. Table 1 presents an overview on what roles language plays in exchange and adaptive interaction.

	EXCHANGE INTERACTION		ADAPTIVE INTERACTION			
Deficit mode	Ongoing practice	Malfunction	Temporary breakdown	Permanent breakdown	Total breakdown	
Mode of being	Availableness	Unavailableness			Occurrentness	Pure occurrentness
Language is	Available	Momentarily unavailable	Unavailable	Occurrent		
Language as	Object in use		Subject of concern			
Use of language	Implicit		Explicit			
Role of language	Language is not used	Barely used	Direct to proceed with alternative	Discuss and eliminate illogicality	Contextualize situation	Absence of language until enough data is collected to inform
Example of language	Repetition	Obvious solutions	Guidance	Discussion	Negotiation	Silence; informing

Table 1: presents an overview of language in exchange and adaptive interaction.

4. METHODOLOGICAL IMPLICATIONS

The concept of language in each mode of interaction has implications for researchers interested in understanding stability and change in business relationships and both relationship and network development. This chapter elaborates on the methodological implications of the framework shown in Chapter 3. The framework can be used for further research into the area of exchange and adaptive interaction by stressing the focus points of language within these interaction types. This chapter discusses the usage of the framework for further research: how it can be used and what it contributes for researching both interaction types.

The breakdowns mentioned earlier in the paper are caused by, what some authors call, critical events. Critical events are specific events that have a particular impact on the relationship in that it can disrupt its structure (Halinen, Salmi, & Havila, 1999; Loohuis, 2015). It influences relationship processes and outcomes and hence can "cause a shift from routinized exchange interaction to adaptive interaction" (Loohuis, 2015, p.48). That being noted, not every breakdown may be a critical event, because different kinds of breakdowns exist depending on how actors experience them. The framework can be used for researching breakdowns from the perspective of critical events and determining their impact on relationships.

In exchange interaction language is not apparent when everyday practices take place. It is not necessary to point out what needs to be done when tasks are smoothly executed. However, in exchange interaction language is still present, but it is rather non-verbal than verbal communication that is taking place. It can be stated that it is this non-verbal communication that sustains stability in exchange situations. Hence, language can still be researched, but the focus will be on non-verbal communication rather than verbal communication. In the research area of exchange interaction, a suitable data collection method is observation. By observing behaviour researchers are able to determine when language is not used. With the help of the framework researchers can observe under what circumstances unspoken language is used and how this behaviour influences the interactional process.

In contrast to exchange interaction, in adaptive interaction language plays a more important role, particularly the explicitness of language. As a diversification of breakdowns is occurrent in adaptive interaction, the explicitness may differ in each situation. In order to adopt a critical view on language and research this explicitness, an appropriate research technique is a critical discourse analysis (Lowe et al., 2008). The goal of discourse analysis is to "understand how people use language to create and enact identities and activities" (Starks & Trinidad, 2007, p.1373). Starks and Trinidad (2007) note that this method examines how an understanding is created by looking at the actual words, but also at the intertextual meaning created through language. Hence, discourse analysis is most appropriate for studying adaptive interaction as the way language serves to create a new, shared understanding is important in this interaction mode. Discourse analysis can be used to determine the explicitness in order to decide on the type of breakdown.

5. CONCLUSION AND SOME MANAGERIAL IMPLICATIONS

This paper has investigated how communication modes in exchange and adaptive interaction can be understood from a phenomenological perspective. In examining these types of interaction a language perspective was taken. According to the studied literature, exchange interaction is based on one's pervasive background in which we dwell. The deficit modes in which exchange interaction occurs are the ones of ongoing practice and malfunction. Here, language is ready-to-hand and seen as an object in use. In practice in both situations language is completely or almost completely absent, because of the use of EDI.

In contrast to exchange interaction, adaptive interaction stems from changes in one's situation. These changes can be either intended, such as adaptions, or unintended. The deficit modes mentioned are temporary, permanent, or total – otherwise referred to as occurrentness – breakdowns. In these situations, language is present-at-hand and seen as a subject of concern, as it is used to stabilize the situation. In temporary breakdown situations, language is used explicitly to guide others in proceeding with the best alternative. For permanent breakdowns the role of language is to eliminate the illogicality of the situations, which is achieved through discussion. When occurrentness emerges, the situations needs to contextualize again. In this situation the relationship in heavily damaged and explicit language is needed most for negotiation. Also the most extreme deficit mode – pure occurrentness – has been mentioned. In contrast to the other deficit modes in which adaptive interaction takes occurs, in pure occurrentness at first

there is no language or communication at all, which is caused by total consternation. Later, after all data is collected from the context, language is used to inform others.

Regarding the methodological implications for the constructed framework, the paper stresses its significant role in future research into the area of interaction. It helps distinguishing each breakdown from the other and determining their impact on relationships. For exchange interaction the focus of the framework will be on unspoken language, as language is mostly absent in exchange interaction. On the other hand, for adaptive interaction research specifically focusses on language and the framework helps distinguish each deficit mode.

The framework has some managerial implications. In general, it can be used in two ways. On one hand, according to the framework language can be examined. Once this has been done, on the basis of the results a conclusion can be drawn what type of interaction and what kind of breakdown is apparent. Knowing this is useful, as it provides insight on how severe the breakdown is. On the other hand, one can look at the type of breakdown that has occurred and on the basis of this type the framework shows how language is and should be used.

6. LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

While this paper presents only a start of an explanation of language in business interaction, it can already be stated that it plays a significant role in interaction. Hence, future research into this particular area is recommended to generate a deeper comprehension of the role of language in business interaction.

As stated earlier in this paper, business interaction can be divided into two extremes: exchange and adaptive interaction. However, it can be argued whether interaction consists of only these two interaction modes. Between the state of ongoing practices and a total breakdown a few more breakdowns exist (Dreyfus, 1991; Yanow & Tsoukas, 2009), to which literature has not assigned a term yet. Nevertheless, this choice to discuss two interaction modes was made to facilitate a clear distinction within the practice of interaction in order to ease its comprehension.

This paper forms a start into the research of exchange and adaptive interaction. An interesting research area within this subject is the shift from exchange interaction to adaptive interaction. It is likely that within a dyadic relationship the two parties involved do not find themselves in the same stage of adaptation at the same time. Hence, it can be assumed that each party uses a different communication mode. The framework discussed in this paper can be a clear starting point in researching language during this discrepancy.

7. ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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