Notice of the Final Oral Examination
for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

of

KOMAL KALRA

BCom Hons. (University of Delhi, 2010)


Peter B. Gustavson School of Business

Monday, August 24, 2020
12:00 P.M.
Conducted Remotely

Supervisory Committee:
Dr. Wade Danis, Peter B. Gustavson School of Business, University of Victoria (Supervisor)
Dr. Raveendra Chittoor, Peter B. Gustavson School of Business, UVic (Member)
Dr. Stacey Fitzsimmons, Peter B. Gustavson School of Business, UVic (Member)
Dr. Dan Caprar, University of Sydney Business School (Outside Member)

External Examiner:
Dr. Helene Tenzer, Department of International Business, Eberhard Karls Universität Tübingen

Chair of Oral Examination:
Dr. Li-Shih Huang, Department of Linguistics, UVic

Dr. Stephen Evans, Acting Dean, Faculty of Graduate Studies
Abstract
This dissertation examined the relationship between language diversity and the implementation of on-the-job training programs. Using India as the empirical context, I conducted a multi-case study research, which involved semi-structured interviews and direct observations in the headquarters of two Indian multinational enterprises. Drawing from social identity theory, I first examined the factors that influence the emergence and transformation of two types of language-based clusters, coping clusters and clusters of convenience. The two types of clusters display distinct mechanisms related to arousal, ingroup favoritism and outgroup bias, which questions one of the key assumptions of social identity theory related to the role of affect. Additionally, I found that language diversity can create cognitive anxiety for training recipients, and emotional anxiety for both training facilitators and recipients. However, training recipients, training facilitators, and the executive management, (i.e., the firm) can utilize certain language accommodation approaches that can reduce the emotional and cognitive anxiety experienced by employees. Using communication accommodation theory, I discuss that the influence of each language accommodation approach depends on its source and time of implementation. As well, language-based clusters can facilitate the exchange of interpersonal information during on-the-job training programs. The emergent findings also suggest that linguistic identity seldom operates in isolation. It often intersects with other dimensions of social identity, specifically, the status differentials attached to gender, education and regional dialects. The findings have implications for research on language diversity and language management in international business, and social identity theory.