

Course: SKOM12
Term: Spring 2021
Supervisor: Henrik Merckelsen
Examiner:

The complexities of organizational coordination's communicative constitution: A qualitative study on coordinators activities in BPO-environments

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Master's thesis



Abstract

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The notion of organizational coordination has a limited view of language and communication since scholars usually refer to communication purely as a referential system. Rather problematic is that the notion of business process outsourcing refers to organizational coordination to mitigate its issues when the field of organizational coordination does not have a complete understanding of its constitution. Therefore, this study investigated how coordinators activities were communicatively constituted within a business process outsourcing (BPO) environment. The study utilized a qualitative research approach, more specifically semi-structured interviews, in order to explore how the communicative constitutive nature of organizational coordination was constructed. The findings of this study suggested that organizational coordination was constituted through several aspects lying within the translations developed by Taylor and his colleagues (1996). In addition to these findings, this study suggested that Taylor and his colleagues (1996) framework could be altered or developed by replacing the aspect of common ground with the hermeneutical perspective 'fusion of horizons'.

Keyword: communication constitution of organizations (CCO), business process outsourcing (BPO), organizational coordination.

Word count: 19242

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1. Introduction

Today's post-bureaucratic and interconnected society has led to more complex organizational structures and business strategies. As a result, over the past decades, an ever-growing need for effective and relevant organizational coordination was constructed. Organizational coordination has been described as an essential and complex activity to manage, improve, and ensure organizational performance (Hillebrand and Biemans, 2003; Zaltman et al., 1973). However, within organizational research, coordination is one of the most conspicuous, oldest, and fundamental issues (Bouckaert, et al., 2010; Kettl, 2003). Coordination, especially between organizations, could be viewed as problematic due to the nature of resources being operated by different organizations (or departments) with different core objectives. This means that neither organization could work truly in isolation if one wants a successful partnership (Zafurullah, 1998). Additionally, coordination events and activities are interconnected, which highlights the problem of continuous trade-offs and compromises (Sørensen, 2018; Lægread and Rykkja, 2015). It further displays the possibility of external factors affecting the internal coordination activities, through for example different formal mechanisms such as written laws or standardised procedures (Brinkerhoff, 1996; Farrell and Saloner, 1988; Thompson et al., 1991). However, the need for coordination is thoroughly established in such settings, since branched and detached functions can lead to difficulties in focus on a common goal, increased role ambiguity and professional isolation (Rigopoulou, et al., 2011; Golden et al., 2008). While low levels of coordination between organizations in an inter-organizational context leads to conflicting plans and higher vulnerability in the organizational networks (Berardo and Lubell, 2016). The increased physical distance between functions leads to a lower likelihood of forming informal networks and interactions (Gajendran and Harrison, 2007). Consequently, existing researchers advocate that coordination contains communication and information exchanges and presupposes the existence of communication (Castañer and Oliveira, 2020). This phenomenon can be seen through the fact that coordination's central objective is to support information sharing and enable faster communication (Tay and Tay, 2007; Atuahene-Gima, 2005; Inglis, 2008). In addition, communication practices are seen as fundamental when forming and maintaining interorganizational aspects and elements (Shumate and

O'Connor (2010). Organizational coordination, in this study, is partially conceptualized as a mutual and communicative exchange of information and the management of implementations and dependencies in day-to-day collaborative and continuous activities (Sobrero and Schrader, 1998; Mirani, 2007; Malone and Crowston, 1994).

Moreover, to investigate the complex nature and communicative processes of organizational coordination this study has chosen to focus on organizations that utilize a business process outsourcing (BPO) strategy. The utilization of this strategy is one of the fastest growing trends within organizational structures and business strategies (Taube, 2020; Managed Outsourced Solutions, 2020). A relevant example of this phenomenon could be that a majority of organizations partially or completely outsource their marketing activities in 2020 (Sagefrog Marketing Group, 2020). Furthermore, BPO is in short defined as a process replacing an in-house generated activity by letting an externally contracted partner perform that or those activities instead. The basic concept of BPO suggests that one is outsourcing a non-primary business function or activity to focus more resources on core-competencies (Adeyemi et al., 2012; Techopedia, 2020). A crucial issue with BPO is that a vast amount of these projects can be classified as failures (Hui et al., 2008; Ozanne, 2000). Some argue that the plethora of failed outsourcing projects are grounded in coordination and control issues, such as social, cultural, and institutional differences, across organizational boundaries (Hui et al., 2008). However, current scholars suggest, paradoxically, that organizational coordination and its accompanied communication is an essential tool to mitigate and meet these potential risks and uncertainties, and to ensure the performance of an outsourcing project (Aron and Singh, 2005; Narayanan et al., 2011; Van de Ven et al., 1976; Kim, 2008; Fuchs, 2007; Tumkur, 2005). How can outsourcing scholars and researchers agree that organizational coordination, ultimately its communication, is the solution for these issues when in fact that organizational coordination has a limited view and refers to communication purely as a referential system. The limited view of emphasizing and utilizing a referential approach to communication and language is its inability to account for the generative aspects of language. This means, in other words, that through language one does not only describe an already given reality, but one also constitutes reality through one's own speech acts (Searle, 1968; Chen, 2009).

Moreover, such a narrow understanding of communication generates the problem of what this study conceptualizes as a coordination problem between actors in BPO. The actors are from here on forward conceptualized as coordinators, meaning individuals that are engaging and are operational in BPO. Investigating organizational coordination through the lens of modern theories and concepts of language, which display that communication not only refers

to reality but also constitutes reality (Cooren et al., 2011; Schoeneborn et al., 2018; Putnam and Nicotera, 2009; 2010), can yield some novel insights that can help explain why communication as an idealized solution and as a referential system can be problematic. To clarify, from this more comprehensive understanding of communication, the problems with BPO can no longer be solved with communication as a means of coordination. This means that the perspective of communication constitutes the organizational (CCO) reality and the detachment of organizational functions in a BPO-strategy can affect the organizational coordination and its communication in its constitutive function.

1.1 Aim

As already indicated, there is very little research into the constitutive implications of communication in organizational coordination studies, especially in BPO-contexts. The study's aim is therefore to explore how organizational coordination activities are communicatively constituted in a BPO-environment. In addition, to add more complexity, the study will investigate organizations that outsource communicative business processes such as marketing, since external forces can play a significant role in how organizational coordination is constituted. The study can, through its focus in BPO, possibly enhance and broaden the CCO-perspective's view of organizational boundaries. Consequently, the study will further through its qualitative methodology develop a more comprehensive understanding of organizational coordination and thereby provide practitioners and researchers with novel insights into its communicative constitution.

1.2 Research question

The study seeks answers for the following research question:

- How is organizational coordination communicatively constituted within Swedish BPO-environments?

1.3 Relevance to the field of Strategic Communication

The article by Hallahan and his colleagues (2007) laid the foundation for strategic communication insofar that it conceptualized strategic communication as purposeful communication activities by organizational members to advance the organization's mission. These pioneers further suggested that communication should be the focal interest, and in regard to the con-

ceptualization of strategic communication have subsequently brought new discussions to the disciplinary field of strategic communication. These discussions could arguably and partially be that it is difficult to determine clear boundaries for strategic communication. Furthermore, this study analysed communication within a strategic framework of outsourcing and its connected organizational coordination. In addition, the organizational coordination contains purposeful coordination and communication activities to achieve the desired objective of the outsourcing project. Thus, the studied communication, present in the aforementioned strategic processes, is therefore of strategic interest and of utmost relevance for the actors engaged in this process of communication.

1.4 Delimitations

This qualitative study has a clear focus on the perceived experience of BPO, coordination and communication from a coordinator's perspective. These perceptions will yield an incomplete and non-representative view of the full communicative constitution since the study does not focus on all aspects of the constitution. The study does not, for example, include communication with and from external audiences, other than the outsourced organization, and does therefore not capture the external perceptions of the outsourced communication. These perceptions might arguably contribute to the overall communicative constitution of organizational coordination and does therefore highlight one of the delimitations present in this study. In addition, the study does not emphasize or measure the effectiveness of communication in the economic or strategic performance of BPO-environments. These aspects might have an impact on the overall outsourcing outcome and could provide fruitful indications for the high failure rate. Furthermore, the study does not emphasize the various communication channels and the difference in importance as well as its impact on organizational coordination, which further highlights another delimitation of this study.

1.5 Disposition

The study proceeds with the following structure: the literature review provides a comprehensive overview of relevant coordination literature. Furthermore, the literature review acts as a point of departure and exposes contemporary literature gaps. Thereafter, the theoretical framework presents the CCO-perspective, the Montreal School, and how the study intends to use these in order to analyse the empirical data. The fourth chapter, methodology and research

design, describes and argues for the chosen method. The fifth chapter, findings and analysis, contains the analysis of the empirical material gathered during the semi-structured in-depth interviews. The chapter is structured around, and aimed at answering, the study's research question. Lastly, the sixth chapter, discussion, and conclusion, makes some concluding remarks, presents recommendations and suggestions for future research as well as some research limitations and implications.

2. Literature review

This chapter provides an overview of the current discussions and findings regarding organizational coordination literature and its connection to communication and the organization as a whole.

2.1 Coordination

Organizational coordination acts as an overarching concept containing inter- and intra-functional coordination as well as interorganizational coordination. A generic explanation of how to differentiate these different concepts are by the level of complexity and coordination difficulty involved. This means that an organizational activity could be performed and coordinated in various ways ranging from within a functional area to between several functional departments and nowadays even beyond organizational boundaries (Ballou et al., 2000). Coordination can further be conceptualized as what some scholars suggest are procedural coordination. Procedural coordination could be explained as a mutual exchange of information and governing of implementations in day-to-day collaborative activities. This view on coordination is process-oriented and concerns issues that are continuous in its very nature and is managed by what this study considers as coordinators (Sobrero and Schrader, 1998; Mirani, 2007). The notion of organizational coordination and previous syntheses on literature could be understood to have its foundation in the realm of organizational economics and sociology. The former includes theories such as transaction cost economics, agency theory, and the resource-based view and its associated perspectives, meanwhile the latter contain theories such as resource dependence, stakeholder theory, institutional theory, and social networks (Parmigiani and Rivera-Santos, 2011; Castañer and Oliveira, 2020). Organizational sociologists suggest that coordination is a complex activity consisting of connecting and integrating different departments and elements of an organization to work collectively towards a set of goals (Van de Ven et al., 1976). A possibility of effective coordination of tasks and guidelines across departments can allow the organization to respond to wants and needs of external associates and partners faster (Hillebrand and Biemans, 2003). This is further expressed in Zaltman and

his colleagues (1973) book; ‘Innovations and organizations’, that employees from different departments working in unison and towards similar objectives could create organizational wide improvements, such as increased problem-solving capabilities and reaction times. In addition, a well-known approach and attempt to describe coordination is through assigning a set or sets of mechanisms. One of the most renowned sets of mechanisms is present in Mintzberg’s (1992) book; ‘Structure in fives: Designing effective organizations’, which highlights the following mechanisms: mutual adjustment, direct supervision and standardization of skills, norms, work processes and results. These mechanisms are presumably based or found inspirations from March and Simon’s (1958) pioneering book ‘Organizations’ and its set of activities and mechanisms, i.e coordination through standardisation, coordination through planning, and coordination through feedback. Meanwhile, Sørensen’s (2018) study about coordination mechanisms in public transport settings emphasizes that coordination mechanisms are rarely working in seclusion, meaning that the mechanisms usually support each other. This is further elaborated in Læg Reid and Rykkja (2015) article about coordination problems; coordination in one situation could negatively affect coordination in another, which consequently implies that coordination involves dilemmas and trade-offs. Furthermore, the literature and research have a strong managerial bias (Blau, 1968; Thompson, 1967), since coordination is seen as a tool for managers to realize organizational activities more effectively and all characteristics of managers are important to efficient coordination (Hübnerová et al., (2020). It could be understood that organizational coordination lives within the sphere of bounded rationality, since Simon's articles regarding ‘decision making’ and ‘rational choice’ emphasizes that bounded rationality and coordinators (in this case) are limited in their ability to gather and process information, and to a large extent search only for satisfactory solutions (Simon, 1955; Simon, 1959).

2.2 Coordination in organizations

Intra-functional coordination research refers to coordination and management of activities within an organization’s specific function, such as marketing or as often suggested within the literature, the logistics function. The coordination is solely between activities under an apparent responsibility, surveillance, and functional manager’s role, and is rather straightforward. Intra-functional coordination would in generic terms concern continuous trade-offs, analysis, and optimization, between pros and cons of every activity, and how these activities affect costs in order to ensure the best and most effective alternative is chosen (Solis et al., 2003;

Ballou et al., 2000; Nobeoka and Cusumano, 1994; Kim, 2018). According to Ballou and his colleagues (2000) this type of coordination is most likely not becoming obsolete due to its central role in cost control and effectiveness. This is further amplified by Nobeoka and Cusumano (1994) which convey that intra-functional coordination can enhance one specific item or activity's quality by coordinating individuals and efforts towards that activity more efficiently.

Moreover, Tomaskova (2018) expresses that inter-functional coordination is a rather extensive concept with a vast history. Inter-functional coordination could be characterized as the harmonization of all processes and functions within an organization, where its main purpose is to aid an effective flow of information and coordination of all processes and activities (Tay and Tay, 2007) and to encourage sharing of resources (Bouranta et al., 2005; Peng and George, 2011). This is further elaborated by Atuahene-Gima (2005) who described it as organizations whose functional units systematically interact, communicate, and collaborate with each other in order to gather and disseminate information. The communicative aspect is further expanded by Zahra and George (2002) who emphasize that inter-functional coordination combines formal and informal mechanisms of social adaptation. Inter-functional coordination is an important channel for communication and harmonization (Woodside, 2005) and enables faster communication and less likelihood of misinterpretations between departments (Inglis, 2008). Inter-functional coordination could further be described as, to act and to communicate is to coordinate (Melin and Axelsson, 2005).

The findings in St. John and Young's (1995) article suggests that the choice of coordination mechanisms between departments is highly situational and with more complex coordination systems in place consequently demands more complex strategies and organizations, usually seen in global organizations. The complex nature of knowledge and information makes it rather difficult to create and exchange within the boundaries of the organization (Galunic and Rodan 1998; Kogut and Zander 1992). Thereby, the integration mechanisms play a key role in converting and coordinating it into value-creating processes (Grant, 1996). Inter-functional coordination can therefore facilitate integration and application of externally captured information into the organization (Henderson and Cockburn 1994; Kogut and Zander 1992). It further implies lateral communication and increased trust between functionalities and thus enables deepened knowledge beyond functional boundaries within an organization (Grant 1996; Kohli and Jaworski 1990; Narver and Slater 1990). Consequently, inter-functional coordination results in collective adjustments of efforts of different functional departments (Atuahene-Gima, 2005).

According to Hübnerová and her colleagues (2020) the efficiency of inter-functional coordination within the organization and its associated activities depend on formal and informal contacts. This means that the possibility of increased dissemination of experience and information increases in a setting where individuals within an organization interact in both formal and informal ways. Additionally, organizations are not able to utilize its resources efficiently without any planning, coordinating, and organizing of all activities and processes (Hübnerová et al., 2020). The complexity and importance of inter-functional coordination could further be explained by that departments are interacting with each other more and more every day. One example of this phenomenon is the increasing customer demand has led to more departments becoming immersed in the customer relationship and its related duties (Flint and Mentzer, 2000). This correlates with findings from Ruiz-Alba and his colleagues (2019) who suggest that setting clear boundaries between functional departments makes no sense, since all organizations functions should create, co-create and dispense value in order to facilitate a superior organization. The findings from Ruiz-Alba and his colleagues (2019) further suggest that this is enabled through digitalization and inter-functional coordination.

Moreover, Wang and his colleagues (2017) builds further on the concept of efficiency by suggesting and expressing a need for an improved arrangement, coined streamlined inter-functional coordination, in order to increase efficiency and to exploit all benefits of inter-functional coordination without getting the resulting negatives. The streamlined inter-functional coordination implies a simplified work process by arranging functional departments accordingly, i.e the coordination should be organized and grouped in a clear succession from order realization to fulfilment. This approach could be accomplished by reducing the coordinative intensity in information transfer and to promote relational flow in relationship transfers. This means that interactions between functional departments should be based solely on their functionality and only certain key units should interact with other departments outside their own functionality. Furthermore, departments should have clear and well-defined relational roles in order to more efficiently coordinate organizational activities (Wang et al., 2017).

2.3 Coordination between organizations

In today's technological and advanced business environment, new ways of structuring an organization have enabled and resulted in coordination across organizational boundaries (Ballou et al., 2000). Drugbert and his colleagues (2018) study on inter-organizational coordi-

nation suggests that inter-organizational coordination is an intricate and complicated sociotechnical accomplishment that is not exclusively based on characteristics of the tools available to coordinators. Gilfillan and his colleagues (2020) elaborate by expressing that inter-organizational coordination becomes even more complex and difficult the longer the geographical distance is between organizations. Whereas Seidman and Gilmour's (1986) book convey that inter-organizational coordination emphasizes and signifies as a process, as an act of coordinating and as a goal of uniting diverse aspects and activities into a harmonious relationship that supports shared objectives. This could further be explained as managing the interconnection of organizational responsibilities, namely to affirm the harmony and coherence between detached functions (Christensen and Lægheid, 2008; Peters, 2015; Popp, et al., 2014). Meanwhile, Brinkerhoff's (1996) article about coordination issues explain that interdependencies can be managed if the participating organizations are and stay aware of who will do what, when and how, who needs what and when, and what consequences each action creates (Brinkerhoff, 1996). This conclusion is expanded by Drugbert's and his colleagues (2018) findings, i.e. that inter-organizational coordination is eased and made easier if the organizations involved utilizes a shared coordination platform. A shared platform makes it easier to articulate work among the involved organizations in order to answer questions such as when? who? do what?. The platform should aim at fulfilling necessary and solely essential amounts of information sharing in order to ease the coordination and not add complexity (Drugbert et al., 2018).

Formal mechanisms are often utilized in and shaping coordination activities, such examples could be written laws, standardised procedures, and suitable levels of hierarchy, etc (Brinkerhoff, 1996; Farrell and Saloner, 1988; Thompson et al., 1991). Management usually implements formal mechanisms in order to overcome structural challenges (Madsen and Bureau, 2021). Considering that, Liu and Yu's (2006) article about coordination mechanisms in inter-organizational transactions convey that inter-organizational coordination mechanisms is a collection of rules and norms endorsed by organizations when managing and coordinating inter-organizational transactions. However, according to Ballou and his colleagues (2000) the inter-organizational coordination's benefits must adhere to all involved parties in order for the coalition to prevail and for long term success. One of the dangers of inter-organizational coordination is if one of the partners is benefiting at the expense of the other. This potentiality will most likely contribute to the partnership between the organizations to fail. The coalition needs to be coordinated to remain sound, more specifically the partnership needs to possess three elements; first, establish new types of metrics in order to gather inter-organizational data

and be able to analyse it, second, an information sharing mechanism to transfer information between entities and third, an allocation method to redistribute rewards in order to ensure a fair partnership (Ballou et al., 2000).

The interoperability between organizations is seen as an essential element for long-term inter-organizational coordination functionality (Drugbert et al., 2018). Considering that organizations possess different cultures, norms, beliefs, and values specific for each organization's operations and processes, highlights the importance of cultural compatibility in order to ensure success (Peters, 1998). In this instance, cultural compatibility emphasizes a harmonization, fusion and blending of norms, beliefs, and activities, which lays the foundation for organizational unison and a predictable behaviour (Meek, 1994). Therefore, according to Ahsan and Panday (2013) organizations need to facilitate coordination by means of informal elements, such as face-to-face conversations and promote lateral relationships and mutual adjustments. This approach, which includes high levels of trust, aims at achieving mutual and agreed outcomes (Ahsan and Panday, 2013; Christensen and Lægheid, 2008; Peters, 1998). Whereas, according to Panteli and Sockalingam (2005), inter-organizational trust emphasizes and facilitates inter-organizational communication and interactions and determines to what extent information is shared. The issues of organizational cultures are further expanded upon by Almklov and his colleagues (2018) findings, which suggests that organizational cultures highlight issues with inter-organizational compatibility and collaboration. The organizational culture boundaries can enhance issues of power, failure to communicate and issues of implementing changes. It can further reinforce and exaggerate issues of formal boundaries, and significantly, cultural boundaries traverse and spans over formal structures. In addition, culture changes and develops at a slower rate than organizational structures, since structures could be changed by a purposeful decision at any time. This means that cultural boundaries can continue and stay in place even when structures are changed and consequently illuminates an organizational slowness and sluggishness which impact coordination efforts between organizations (Almklov et al., 2018). To increase the efficiency of inter-organizational coordination between organizations one needs to establish a possibility of interactions, this is especially true when organizations are immersed in several organizational systems. A relevant example of establishing good possibilities for interaction are forums and workshops in which different and diverse coordinators could engage in (Berardo and Lubell, 2016).

2.4 Synthesis

To sum up, as previously mentioned and indicated, the literature and findings in organizational coordination suggest a clear literature gap and a limited understanding of communication and its importance and fundamental impact in a communicatively intense organizational activity and process. Previous literature highlights the urgent need for an in-depth study covering organizational coordination from a CCO-perspective in order to explore the communicative complexities, problems, dilemmas, paradoxes, difficulties and ultimately its communicative constitution. Investigating organizational coordination through the lens of modern theories of language (in this case via the CCO-perspective) can yield some novel insights that could help practitioners with their high failure rate in BPO-environments. It can further aid researchers' understanding of how organizational coordination is fundamentally and communicatively constituted and what communication processes produce contributions to organizational coordination. In the following chapter, the CCO-perspective and its accompanying concepts will therefore be presented.

3. Theory

This chapter presents the CCO-theoretical framework, a concise description of its three major schools of thought and an extensive description of the Montreal school and its speech act theory and narrative theory.

3.1 CCO – The Montreal School

The communication constitute organization (CCO) approach has since its initiation strived to answer ontological questions and dilemmas in order to bring significant conceptual advancement and insights (Schoeneborn et al., 2018), and to question the glorified and idealized traditional view on organizations. The CCO-framework is an assortment of theoretical perspectives that highlight and demonstrate the fundamental function of communication in an organization (Putnam and Nicotera, 2009, 2010). It has its constitutional foundation in the interdisciplinary field of organizational studies (Putnam and Nicotera, 2009) and does not reduce organizations to social interactions, language, discourse or that communication and organization are identical. Alternatively, the perspective emphasizes how complex processes constitute organizing and organizations, and how these processes consequently form communication (Putnam and Nicotera, 2010). Communication is seen as the means through which organizations are constructed, sustained, and developed (Cooren et al., 2011). Consequently, the CCO-perspective further assists in viewing organizations as processes unlike traditional literature which view organizations more as static entities. The process-based view focuses on the doings, how organizations as activities develop and appear, and how ongoing accomplishments are executed, experienced, and identified in communication processes (Putnam and Nicotera, 2010; Cooren et al., 2011). Organizations are consequently viewed as an effect and result of communication rather than its predecessor (Putnam and Nicotera, 2009), and therefore exists and transforms solely through interconnected communication practices (Schoeneborn et al., 2018), where human and non-human engage in (Kuhn et al., 2017).

Moreover, the CCO-perspective consists mainly of three different schools of thought, namely the Montreal School, the Four-flows model and the Luhmannian system theory (Boivin et al., 2017; Cooren et al., 2011; Schoeneborn et al., 2014; Schoeneborn and Vás-

quez, 2017; Cooren and Martine, 2016). The three major schools of thoughts highlight different elements of social, communicative and language aspects within organizations. The most relevant perspective for this study is the Montreal School, since it problematizes and concentrates on the linguistic aspects (Cooren and Martine, 2016) that organizational coordination scholars have an inadequate understanding about. In addition, the Montreal School of thought is one of the most influential approaches within the CCO-framework (Schoeneborn and Vásquez, 2017; Brummans et al., 2014). The Montreal School itself contains extensive and thorough concepts that investigate different elements. These elements are ranging from *agency*, *ventriloquism*, *presentification*, *co-orientation* and, what this study will utilize as its foundation, *text* and *conversations* (Boivin et al., 2017). The latter approach concentrates on linguistics elements such as texts, narratives, speech, conversations etc, in order to examine an organization's characteristics and communicative constitution (Schoeneborn and Vásquez, 2017; Brummans et al., 2014). Furthermore, the text and conversations approach were founded by James R. Taylor and his colleagues (1996) during a research program in 1996. The group of researchers consequently published a breakthrough article called 'The Communicational Basis of Organization: Between the Conversation and the Text'. The article suggested a theoretical framework based on two key translations that take place in communication processes, these are from text to conversation and from conversation to text (Cooren and Martine, 2016). The framework finds inspiration from hermeneutics and utilizes the concepts of speech act theory and narrative theory as point of departure and foundation (Taylor et al., 1996). Therefore, in order to gain a comprehensive understanding of what these translations mean and imply the study will dive into and explain how the two fundamental aspects of the theoretical framework are utilized and integrated as well as explain the overall functionality of the framework.

3.2 Texts and conversations

The framework, as mentioned, is fundamentally constructed out of two circular and key translations, these are from text to conversation and from conversation to text. However, in order to understand these translations, one needs to know what these aspects imply by themselves. In conversations the text is what is being said, more specifically, it is the content of the conversation, which means ideas expressed in language (syntactics or semantics) and accomplished via speech or other similar channels (pragmatics) (Taylor et al., 1996). Pragmatics is concerning the relationship between the linguistic shapes and the users of those linguistic el-

ements (Yule, 1996). Furthermore, there must be a physical support system in place in order for texts to be produced. The system enables texts to be inscribed (spoken or written) and consequently yield results in a material format which is accessible for other actors. In face-to-face speech circumstances the support system is the human body, such as the voice, phrasing, gestures, and body language. Other systems can be papers, blackboards, or digital screens. However, this does not imply that text is text just because of its materialization. Text is first moderated and based on language, meaning that it is only when text is being generated when it becomes text, no matter its physical appearance. Before that it is just considered a thought or an idea. Additionally, there is another connection between the modalities (the translations) and it is through text where conversations are apprehended and formed. However, that does not mean that conversation in its significance is text at all. Conversations are actions such as interactions and transactions. Conversational translations surpass but at the same time requires and needs texts. A conversation is constituted out of speech acts and lies the foundation of the actual conversations (Taylor et al., 1996).

3.2.1 Background and integration of speech act theory

In its most generic form, actions performed through utterances are referred to as speech acts. Speech acts can appear in different forms based on the speaker's communicative intentions. The speaker's intentions are usually aided by the situational circumstances encompassing the utterance. These circumstances together with other utterances are better known as speech events. Speech events consequently affect and decide the interpretation of the utterance to perform a specific speech act (Yule, 1996). Every action performed by producing an utterance consists of three connected acts, locutionary, illocutionary and perlocutionary acts. A locutionary act is the basic act of utterance and generating a meaningful linguistic utterance. An example of failing to produce a locutionary act could be when having difficulties in constructing meaningful utterances in a foreign language. Individuals do not generate well-formed utterances with no purpose, instead individuals construct utterances with some sort of function in mind, this phenomenon is better known as an illocutionary act. The illocutionary act is expressed with a communicative or illocutionary force of an utterance, meaning that an illocutionary act can perform different illocutionary forces. The importance of the illocutionary act can be exemplified by a short example; the utterance of "it is cold in here" can be misunderstood on grounds of its locutionary meaning, since the illocutionary meaning (depending on the context) could be everything from "close the door", "turn up the heat" or "give me a blan-

ket”, etc. Lastly, the perlocutionary act refers to that an utterance is not constructed with a function in mind without an intention to have an effect. Depending on the situation, an individual will assume that the hearer will identify and acknowledge the intended effect of the utterance. This phenomenon is the perlocutionary effect (Yule, 1996; Searle, 1968).

Moreover, in order for the performance of a speech act to be perceived as the individual intended there must be certain suitable circumstances in place, often referred to as felicity conditions. A felicity condition emphasizes that a speaker should be a certain person in a specific context or situation in order to be felicitous (appropriate), a relevant example can be a judge in a courtroom. The felicity conditions are demarcated into five different categories: general conditions, content conditions, preparatory conditions, sincerity conditions and essential conditions. The general conditions refer to the participants not being nonsensical and play-acting, such an example can be that the participants understand each other's language. The content condition on the other hand can be a promise. Thus, the content of the utterance must be about future events, meaning that the future event must be a future act of the speaker. The preparatory conditions are very different depending on the utterance. The preparatory conditions for a promise and a warning are very different. A promise has two preparatory conditions, the event will not happen by itself and the event will be beneficial. A warning on the other hand emphasizes that the speaker thinks the event will happen, it is not obvious that the hearer knows that it will happen, and the event is not beneficial. In close relation are the sincerity conditions, continuing of the promise and warning example, for a promise the speaker genuinely and honestly intends to execute the promise, for a warning the speaker genuinely and honestly believes that the future event is going to happen and not be beneficial. Lastly, the essential condition means that by uttering an act of promise the speaker intends and is obligated to execute the action of the promise. It means that the speaker changes from non-obligation to obligation and implies that the content condition, context and the speaker's intention must have a certain specification in order for the speech act to be felicitously performed (Ogborn, 2020; Yule, 1996).

Moreover, speech acts perform five different general functions classified as declarations, representatives, expressives, directives and commissives (Yule, 1996; Searle, 1976). These categories are seen as a basis for discussion (Searle, 1976), hence only examples will be presented. Declaration, are those acts that change the world through their actions, meaning that in order to appropriately execute a declaration act the speaker must have an institutional role in a specific context. While the commissives, for example, concern speech acts that speakers utilize in order to commit themselves to future actions. These can be performed ei-

ther as a member of a group or alone and means that the speaker attempts to, through the speaker, make the world fit the words (Yule, 1996; Searle, 1976). When there is a direct relationship between a structure and a function it is referred to as a direct speech act, such as “move out of the way!”. Meanwhile, when there is an indirect relationship between a structure and a function it is referred to as an indirect speech act, such as “you are standing in front of the TV”. Indirect speech acts are commonly referred to as more polite and friendly. This phenomenon highlights the fact that different structures can perform the same illocutionary function. An important element is the speech event, which can be generally understood as a set of utterances produced in a social situation with someone that you have a social relationship with and on occasions share goals with. It is further demarcated to an activity in which the participants interact through language in order to achieve an outcome. A speech event can include obvious speech acts, however usually it is a series of utterances that lead up to and subsequently responding to the main action. For example, a request is typically seen as a speech event, since it is not commonly uttered as one speech act and is not directly uttered. Instead, it is a series of utterances that imply that a request is wanted by the speaker. Speech events analysis further highlights that more is communicated than what is said and the need to consider the extended interaction in order to fully understand how actions are executed and interpreted (Yule, 1996).

Taylor and his colleagues (1996) integrate speech act theory and argue for what transforms a locution into an illocution, and translates text into conversation, is the assumption of intentions. This means that in normal conversations intentions behind a statement counts as part of the statements meaning. Although the speaker and the hearer can have different intentions about the same locution and are contextually dependent. Communicating or expressing intentions set interpretation in motion. The relationship between locution and illocution is further described; locution is seen to be embedded in the overall structure of speech acts. The text or locution happens in situations (the illocutionary embedding), whereas the situation itself has a minimum of four different elements. These are firstly, antecedent circumstances during the act, secondly, where the individuals are in the interaction, thirdly, assumed intentions of the speaker, fourthly, an agreement of which procedures will dictate the interactive flow during the exchange. Additionally, the illocutionary effect is specified and determined by the uptake of the hearer. While the performance of the speech act can be understood by the perlocutionary effect. Taylor and his colleagues (1996) further emphasize that these additional elements are what is usually meant by organizations. This means that an organization is composed of different individuals in certain situations. Exemplified as a set of transactional rela-

tionships, moderated by interactions, making requests, promising certain things, judging others performance, promoting and demoting, hiring and firing, establishing contractual arrangements. In addition, an organization is essentially about causing and having effects, that can be quite concrete, such examples could be organizational members in manufacturing or who are writing reports, ultimately elements that need to be organized (via communication) to happen. Organizational communication is not solely information but rather actions in a context, whereas the context is the organizational frame. Furthermore, the event of organizational communications are the speaking and hearing of a locution, which in other words can be expressed as this is what is made material. Thereby, by expressing that it also can be an action, exerting a force on the recipient, is possible due to the intervening interpretations. Those interpretations draw upon assumptions of identity, situations, activities, motives and procedures, and these assumptions are not generally and specifically stated or expressed. Thus, if the text transaction is seen as a figure of communication, then the other elements that go into interpreting the utterances as action constitute a taken-for-granted foundation. It is the integration of figure and foundation that transforms text into conversation (Taylor et al., 1996).

3.2.2 Background and integration of narrative theory

A narrative could, in its most generic form and within the realm of structuralist narratology, be defined as a representation of a causally or generally connected series and sequence of events (Richardson, 2000). These series and sequences can be analysed by the infamous actantial model, which helps through a semantic lens to uncover how narratives are created and enable analysis of larger structures in texts (Moto, 2001). Semantic research is concerned with relationships between linguistic forms and entities (Yule, 1996). The actantial model found inspiration from the Proppian narrative scheme and is a beneficial heuristic instrument in order to understand the multifaceted dimensions of values in a narrative (Sulkunen and Törrönen, 1997). The model emphasizes that the perceived opposition belongs to the elementary structure of signification and is situated in semantic theories. The structures are, in its very nature, deep and formative. This means that the structures form aspects of language, its syntax and experience which in turn are expressed in the shape of a narrative (Moto, 2001). Syntax, according to Yule (1996), is studies about relationships between linguistic forms, how these are organized in a sequence and which sequences are well constructed.

The model further displays that all individual's narratives are converted from the deep lying structure to the surface level structure, where the surface structure refers to exterior and

superficial appearances. The deep element of the structure on the other hand emphasizes an extension inward from the surface. In addition, the model can be explained as a set of binary oppositions (actantial categories), three to be precise, that contain six actants and produce all the actors within a narrative. The actants are paired as binary opposites, i.e subject - object, helper - opponent, and sender - receiver (Moto, 2001). The relationships between the actants can be explained as follows; the subject is connected with the object s/he seeks, the sender then sends the subject on a quest to get the object, while the receiver of the object is secured by the subject, helper of the subject and the opponent of the subject (Mambrol, 2016). The actantial categories are important in order to enunciate why an action is valuable and from whose point of view that value is appointed (Sulkunen and Törrönen, 1997). Furthermore, the actants perform and describe three patterns in narratives, these are firstly a desire, search and aim (seen in subject and object), the second are communication (seen in sender and receiver) and thirdly support or hindrance (seen in helper and opponent) (Mambrol, 2016). The model can be further explained as follows; the starting point of the model lies in the deep structure, and in there is the subject which seeks to accomplish a certain objective or goal (Moto, 2001). A narrative is a deep structure in its presentational form, meaning that a certain point of view or time aspect has been introduced (Landa and Onega, 1996). A subject recognizes the thematic forces of drama that exist within the protagonist. The protagonist is the focal point of the narrative and portrays positive and conservative elements of life. The protagonist is aided by, the first binary opposition, the helper and opposed by the antagonist/opponent in its attempt to accomplish its objectives. The antagonist represents negative and lawless elements of life and opposes the protagonist in order to create a crisis for him. The sender also rests in the deep structure and often serves as a mediator between situations and whose role is to assign the good to, for example the subject and/or the antagonist. An example of a sender could be everything from god and a ruler of a community to the representative of good itself, as when the object of love for example chooses between the antagonist and protagonist. The receiver side desires the good, for himself, the organization, and the community. The emphasis is aimed at the individuals which are contained within the drama and the relationships between them (Moto, 2001).

The concept of modality and modalization is fundamental when it comes to structuralist narratology and it is the element that characterizes any situation of the actant or in other terms; it is the given in any situation (Mambrol, 2016). Modality particularly means the ways the speaker animates his speech towards and together with his hopes, wishes, certainties, uncertainties, abilities etc (Tarasti, 2017). According to Taylor and his colleagues (1996) struc-

turalist narratology identified two kinds of modalization, the modalization of doing or action and the modalization of being or state of affairs. For example, “the queen wants to go home” or “she is angry”, the former refers to the modality of obligation and the latter refers to the modality of temporal modality condition. Meanwhile, the utterances of “wanting to,” “having to, ” refers to the specific levels of existence, the “knowing” or “being able to” refers to the level of actuality, while the “doing” or “being” refers to the level of realization (Mambrol, 2016). Another example, the complete utterance of X wants Y to do, can explain how modalities function. The “wanting to”, in this case, is formulated on the left side of the complete utterance and modalizes the narrative utterance, which consequently becomes the object of wanting. It modalizes it by making it possible and thereby causing it to go through the sequence of the possible, the real and the necessary modalities (Ricoeur et al., 1989). Thus, emphasizing that modalities are related to actions and are discontinuous and momentary (Mambrol, 2016). Consequently, modalities further contribute to an important source of meaning in any communication. It can be explained as before any act of communication or utterance is executed between the interacting individuals the modalities fill the “empty space”, highlighting that modalities have a penetrative ability in discourse (Tarasti, 2017).

Moreover, Taylor and his colleagues (1996) integrate narrative theory in the second translation and argue that to a distant observer the communication event is solely a text, since that is all that can be recorded objectively. However, the text is not the action itself, in order to understand the action’s meaning in a communication event the observer needs to interpret. This phenomenon highlights the limitations of the speech act theory since it is very difficult to identify speech acts in a recorded conversation. There is no direct correlation between the locutionary shapes of utterances and the illocutionary imports. The hearer can make sense of the flow of interaction through bracketing, punctuating, and framing. These principles have its foundation in a narrative perspective and implies that a conversation must be transferred into a narrative in order to be understood. This enables the possibility of it to have a beginning, a development, and an end. It is through this that action is transformed back into text (interpretation). The narrative framing of the communicational event generates a comprehensible representation, in textual form and assumes a portion of elements. These elements are that it is always circumstances, communicative interactions happen in reaction to an event, the initiating protagonist is motivated by an intention and form an objective, the result of actions is moderated by partners reaction and these construct the main event and underpins the development of the episode, as well as it is a recognizable outcome of state of affairs. This is a retrospectively composed and recalled summary and not the conversation anymore. The

summary helps to make sense of the interactions that have occurred over a period of time, but perhaps might not be as coherent as they are now appearing (Taylor et al., 1996).

The circular process of the framework is now displayed, which in short can be expressed as the process from text production, where intentions are expressed, into a framework of actions and conversations, and then back to the virtual text production (interpretation). These elements together have to be completed in order for an understanding of the action to occur. The hearer's interpretation acts and becomes a text when it is produced in another conversation or the same but at a different time. Therefore, the possibility of what was an illocutionary background in the first conversation can now be an explicit locutionary content in the other (Taylor et al., 1996).

3.2.3 The framework – How everything is combined

The translations, from text to conversation and from conversation to text, emphasize that organizations are constructed via organizational members' interpretations, i.e. through an ongoing circular, interpretative and hermeneutical process of negotiation of perspectives. If a common ground is established it would not mean that it is fixed, on the contrary it is viewed as hypothetical and tentative and emphasizes that it is subject for future revisions if new communicational contexts appear. Hence, it is the continuing creation, located in networks of communication, in the interpretative activities of the organizational members that is interesting. During this social and interpretative process (communication) organizational members develop a tentative understanding of organizational events, establish their role during the process and position within the organization. The interpretations are themselves not constant, meaning that they vary depending on the communicational context and situation. The organizations are therefore a potentiality and a container of multiple meanings. The circular element emphasizes that an organizational member's interpretation causes itself a possibility for interpretation and means that the interpretative activities construct a conversation, although the subject matter and aim of the interpretations themselves are producing texts. It could be further explained as conversations develop and begin as a gathering of texts, since the activity of interpretation is itself interpretable and it means that the conversations are in fact a subject matter and aim of texts. This highlights that each modality enfolds and captures the other. It is in this dialectic process where organizing appears and happens. Conversations are mediated by texts and vice versa, explaining the double translation (Taylor et al., 1996).

Moreover, in order for the framework to comprehend inter-conversational dynamics and discourses, also referred to as the loosely coupled elements of organizational communication, the theory considers the locally grounded conversational interaction and extended networks of conversation. Furthermore, in order to achieve the unification of these perspectives the framework utilizes the concept of modalization. However, it is not referred to as the other action-based theories of communication, instead, in order to apply modalization to explain more than interpersonal exchanges another phenomenon needs to be explained, i.e. the possibility of multiple organizational members with different interests can speak with a single voice. This is enabled and executed by a sequence of succeeding and successive translations of the modalities (text and conversation) which in turn results in, from each translation, the generation of a larger detachment between the particular to the general. In other words, an organization can be a version of the so-called hermeneutical circle insofar that a network of successive interpretations is included (Taylor et al., 1996). The hermeneutical circle emphasizes that different actors possess different pre-understandings and is seen as a process of coming to an agreement, whereas coming to such an agreement establishes a common horizon or better known as 'fusion of horizons' (Gadamer, 1989). This phenomenon consequently yields the possibility of an organizational identity to appear and emphasizes that organizations can be complex but still be grounded in conversations and moderated by the production and interpretation of texts. Additionally, the 'real' organizations are conversationally moderated, meanwhile the perception of organizations is a component of the interpretative process that those conversations depend on. The organization is a network of conversations and symbolic, whereas the symbolic components are text moderated (Taylor et al., 1996).

The essential element to construct an organization lies in the organizing of the illocutionary force. The illocutionary force is the act's force that generates its illocutionary and perlocutionary effect and enables direct coordinated actions possible. During the translation from text to conversation the speaker of the text is transformed into an actor of an act. Although the performed act is motivated and defined by an intention, it is not the intention itself, since the act is moderated via the text the latter simply becomes a token of the intention. The actor is thus accountable for the performance of the speech act and is viewed as an agent serving a principal's intention. Usually, the agent and the principal are the same physical individual, however in the organizational environment it is common for the actor to be an agent of someone else. Thereby, it is not the actor's own intention that must be transformed but rather that of the principal. This phenomenon becomes one of the elements in the semantic characterization of the organizational roles and statuses, and which means that an organiza-

tional member is qualified to represent certain voices in specific situations. It can further mean that an individual's qualifications, i.e. what enables a person to speak with authority, is at the same time, but from another perspective, a limitation to others' performances. For example, the authoritative individual's speech act gets an additional punch, since he speaks as an authentic agent of the organization, whereas the extra punch is what Taylor and his colleagues (1996) mean by illocutionary force. In addition, an organization as a collective can never speak in its own name, meaning that only its members can perform speech acts. The organizations are therefore always speaking through agents and possess no other voice. This phenomenon enables the possibility of agents incorrectly representing the principal. According to Taylor and his colleagues (1996) it is not possible to know for a fact if the agent is correctly representing the principal. Members start speaking as an agent of the organization when they are granted the credibility to perform those acts. In theory every member of the organization is a potential agent for the collective, however in reality those privileges are unequally assigned, whereas the uneven distribution of rights is accomplished via communication. Lastly, the force of an act expresses the magnitude of which a specific agent's voice can legitimately, taken by the organization, to express the collective intentions of the community. It is through this moment where the collective has become structured (Taylor et al., 1996).

3.3 Reflections

The chapter's aim was to present Taylor and his colleagues' (1996) approach, within the realm of the Montreal School and the CCO-perspective, and thereby describe how something can be communicatively constituted. In addition, the chapter further acted as a clarification of how the different concepts relate and interconnect with each other. The choice of the Montreal school was argued to best suit the study due to its nature of problematizing and concentrating on the linguistic elements. The theoretical approach taken in this study enables an advancement and deeper understanding of how organizational coordination is communicatively constituted through the communicative processes utilized in the organization's coordination activities. The translations found in the communicative processes essentially allows the researcher to uncover and capture the difficulty, complexity and the multi-layered nature of communication as well as the extensive possibilities of different elements, interpretations, intentions, characters involved and environments affecting the perceived result of organizational coordination. The perspective further allows the researcher to view organizations and organizational

coordination as an ongoing and continuous communicative process rather than as a static entity.

4. Methodology

The following methodology chapter demonstrates and argues, in a detailed fashion, for the chosen method, how the study was conducted and how the method was utilized in order to analyse the gathered material.

4.1 Research paradigm

A researcher's desire to ask certain questions, to find the answers to those questions and to investigate certain phenomenon's are influenced by how the researcher is philosophically situated (Mills, 2014). The study adheres to the ontology and epistemology of positivism and pragmatism. In generic terms epistemology refers to how knowledge can be obtained and signifies the methods used to understand reality (Van de Ven, 2007; Rawnsley, 1998). While ontology refers to the structure and nature of being, and emphasis is put on what exists (Rawnsley, 1998). However, as indicated in the theory, the dynamic ontology of the CCO-perspective emphasizes 'becoming' rather than 'existence' and is highlighted by the fact that organizations are constituted in a continuous and never-ending communicative process (Putnam and Nicotera, 2009, 2010; Cooren et al., 2011). The foundation of the utilized framework, i.e. speech act theory and the utilized narrative theory is arguably more ontologically situated since words construct reality and that reality is processily constructed on different levels. Meanwhile, it is epistemologically situated in pragmatics and positivism since speech act theory arguably adheres to pragmatics and narrative theory is predominantly positivistic. These two paradigms affect the overall paradigm and philosophy of this study since it utilizes the aforementioned theoretical concepts as its foundation and point of departure. According to Yule (1996) the pragmatic approach emphasizes the communicated meaning by a speaker and is interpreted by a listener. Whilst the positivistic approach emphasizes that the social universe could be explained as a set of abstract laws that describe the operative dynamics of human organizations and are examined against systematically gathered empirical data (Turner, 2001). The two paradigms share an empiricist foundation, the positivist paradigm emphasizes the universality of objective knowledge while pragmatics acknowledge that knowledge is never interest-free, and that context is of significance in communication. Hence, the study is a

combination of these paradigms insofar that knowledge should be empirically testable, yet the study leans more towards pragmatics insofar that the study acknowledges that the researcher is never free from interests. Therefore, this study argues that knowledge is created when one is facing issues of understanding, which in other words could be expressed as the study further utilizes an abductive approach. The researcher utilized, and acted within the realm of, an abductive approach when the gathered data was analysed for the qualitative reflective analysis (Eksell and Thelander, 2014; Bryman and Bell, 2011). The iterative abductive approach highlighted and allowed the researcher to keep an open mind and consider novel perspectives, findings, ideas, problems while still taking on theoretical assumptions. The approach further expressed that the researcher might possess pre-existing ideas and that the researcher's observations, interpretations and findings are based on theory (Van de Ven, 2007; Bryman and Bell, 2011).

4.2 Research design and sample

This study applies and utilizes a qualitative research method in order to investigate the complex phenomenon of how organizational coordination is communicatively constituted in a BPO-environment. The chosen qualitative research method, more specifically semi-structured interviews, enabled and developed the understanding and knowledge of organizational coordination and were chosen as a suitable method for gathering information and empirical data (Brinkmann and Kvale, 2015; Alvesson and Sandberg, 2013).

4.2.1 Sample and selection of participants

The selection process of determining who and with what experience were suitable and relevant for the study highlighted the need for establishing certain criteria in order to assure that the study corresponded and fitted the interest and the phenomenon present in this study. The criteria were further established in order to pursue consistency of participants. The criteria emphasized certain requirements that the participants needed to exceed in order to be eligible for the interviews. *The first requirement* expressed the need for current relevance, meaning that the interviewed participants should be actively engaged in a project that out-sources external communicative elements. Where 'actively engaged' is, in this study, defined as participants that are currently working in such configuration or have done so in the past 2 years. This emphasizes that the gained insights are relevant in today's society and academic

field. However, this could possibly mean that individuals with large experiences within the field of organizational coordination in BPO-projects were discarded, if not determined to be actively engaged. Although these individuals would most likely highlight some fruitful insights, the research aim is to investigate and explore the current status of organizational coordination in a BPO-environment. *The second requirement* was that the participants should actively work in organizations located in Sweden and organizations that are at least a size of 50 employees. This criterion acted as an enabler to gain a variety of perspectives and perceptions as well as to ensure a baseline complexity. The interviewees came from different organizations, with different backgrounds, positions and were working in organizations in Sweden. In addition, due to the nature of these requirements it enabled the study to gain large variances in age (27-57), which consequently and arguably emphasized a difference in how used the participants are to large amounts of communicative interactions and data in everyday activities and happenings. Lastly, participants with large experiences in the field of organizational coordination were prioritized, however the researcher made sure that the sample was diversified in every aspect.

These requirements emphasized the purposive sampling technique and made sure that the interviewed participants were suitable and whose experiences were analysable by the theoretical stance taken by this study (Bryman and Bell, 2011). How these specific individuals were approached and found was mainly through LinkedIn and email. Where search words ranged from marketers and marketing, to outsourcing and coordination. Thereafter, the researcher investigated if their experiences were of relevance for the study and if found relevant, the participants were approached. In some cases, potential participants were even asked some control questions in order to legitimately determine if the required requirements were met. When set and done, all of the interviews were held online for practical and safety reasons, i.e. the participants were spread out all over Sweden and due to the nature of the current pandemic and its accompanying restrictions. The interviewed participants were 11 in total, and all met the chosen criterias, and according to Brinkmann and Kvale (2015) achieves the relevant number of qualitative interviews, even though it is relative, in order to generate grounds for an appropriate analysis. This is further elaborated by Cleary et al. (2014), which expresses that too small or too high of a number of participants in a qualitative research can affect the quality of the gathered data negatively. Furthermore, the participants had its foundation in and past experiences mainly from a Swedish geographical area. The organizations themselves were ranging from medium sized to large organizations - which met the wanted requirements of baseline complexity.

4.2.2 Qualitative interviews

As indicated above, the chosen semi-structured in-depth interview method brought several benefits and was selected based on different factors. Qualitative interviews are a suitable instrument for researchers that strive to achieve deeper understanding when gathering information, since participative interviewees are able to share in-depth descriptions, sensemaking, reasoning, their perception and explanations of certain phenomenon's. In addition, interviews are arguably better suited when studies investigate sensitive areas and issues since semi-structured interviews can most likely establish trust between the participating characters. However, qualitative interviews also involve some weaknesses that need to be addressed, these are for example that interviews are person-dependent and context sensitive (Bryman and Bell, 2011). This study aimed to collect each participant's perceptions and by investigating multiple individual's perceptions one can limit the person-dependency to some degree. In addition, the context sensitivity of qualitative interviews was restricted and controlled to the best of the researcher's ability by enabling interviews to be held off office hours and via online video calls. That meant, in most cases, that the participants were in their home environment where the participants felt comfortable, safe, and calm. That was further motivated due to the possibility of gaining fuller, more open, and honest answers. Furthermore, another limitation in qualitative interviews could be the central role of the researcher, meaning that the researcher needs to be careful and cautious asking any leading questions that can influence the outcome of the participants' answers. Instead, the researcher should be as neutral as possible and be open to new possibilities and unexpected findings. Therefore, the researcher tried its best to escape its own subjectivity and occupy a reflexive viewpoint by utilizing a qualitative interview-guide. That made sure that each interview covered essentially the same topics and themes albeit enabling some room for maneuver to capture novel aspects and perspectives (Brinkmann and Kvale, 2015; Stake, 2010). The interview-guide acted as a point of departure for the researcher since there was no need for the interviews to be identical due to the purpose and nature of this study. Alternatively, general themes and dimensions were drawn from the literature and divided into different conceptual categories. In addition, certain probing questions and follow up questions were utilized and asked when necessary, i.e. if the participants went too far off topic or not getting into the intended and wanted depth of certain concepts (Bryman and Bell, 2011).

4.3 Analysis and coding

The study's analysis of the gathered data emphasized a reflexive standpoint, meaning an iterative process of going back and forth between the empirical data and the theoretical framework, and constantly questioning how the material was utilized. This enabled the researcher to investigate the gathered material several times in order to find and examine emerging issues and information, and thereby provide an augmented and more developed explanation of each issue. This consequently led to introductions of new insights. The reflexive analysis was further realized through a flexible coding strategy, meaning that the foundation was laid by that the study's interviews and were operationalized into an interview-guide (see appendix 1). The interview-guide covered various themes deducted from existing literature, in order to generate and collect the intended information. These themes were broadly categorized according to the different organizational coordination characteristics; general coordination, coordination in organizations and coordination between organizations. These analytical categories were later modified based on the gathered material, which meant that the transcribed interviews were carefully read through and certain statements were, based on the participants' perceptions and interpretations of coordination, interpreted, and connected further to different theoretical categories as the reflexive analysis progressed. These theoretical categories covered the essential concepts within the linguistic and communicative aspects such as speech acts, underlying meanings, values, the translations, and its illocutionary forces in order to understand the coordinators perception of coordination in a BPO-environment. In addition, the analysis demonstrated its difficulties since interviewees gave different depth in their answers, which according to Brinkmann and Kvale (2015) is a common case with qualitative interviews. When analysing the gathered material, it was not always clear what elements of the coordinators activities that communicatively constituted the organizational coordination. Many of the aspects provided by the interviewees' reasoning regarding their own coordination was rather dualistic and multiplistic, meaning that each statement could emphasize several aspects of the communicative constitution. However, in order to meet these difficulties and help the coding of answers the researcher carefully and cautiously utilized the definitions, covered in the previous chapter, of the communicative aspects.

4.4 Translations

The interviews were held both in Swedish and English and had an even distribution between the two languages. The participants decided what language the interviews were held in based

on their language proficiency and the overall comfort level with the chosen language. The possibility to allow interviewees to answer in both languages was important since it can enable a more natural flow and more detailed answers if the interviewees felt comfortable. Therefore, depending on the chosen language, a translation was executed when insightful and relevant statements were found and chosen for the analysis. However, the original transcripts in both languages were maintained in order to facilitate the possibility to go back and examine the statements in its purest form. One noteworthy remark to make is that translations can yield some challenges, for example certain words or definitions in one language cannot be efficiently translated to the other (Bryman and Bell, 2011). To mitigate this risk, the researcher consulted an English language specialist for some of the utilized translations syntax. The researcher was careful with the suggestions in order to not lose the semantic and overall meaning of the statement (Bryman and Bell, 2011; Yule, 1996).

4.5 Validity and reliability

The naturalistic approach emphasizes a translation from the traditional validity and reliability terms into four naturalistic terms: credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. This approach highlights the importance of an isomorphism between the data and the phenomenon that data represent. This could arguably be rather hard to control and determine due to the nature of the semi-structured interviews and its ability to enable the respondents to answer freely. However, true isomorphism can arguably never be achieved in any paradigm, nevertheless the naturalistic approach can gain indirect access to multiple realities since reality lies within the minds of individuals. This phenomenon enabled the researcher to ask each participant if their realities are represented appropriately, and then arguably gain more sound and credible research results. The researcher further ensured that the transferability of the study was accomplished by making sure that the participant and the researcher understood each other, which could be seen when asking clarifying questions etc. However, the issue of generalizability in qualitative studies is addressed by expressing that the results of this study can be transferable under certain circumstances. These are to provide comprehensive amounts of information regarding the context and to facilitate judgment of what extent the conclusions made within the context are transferable to similar contexts. This was arguably facilitated by the thorough and detailed description of the context throughout the study as well as the comprehensive description of how conclusions and analysis were drawn. Furthermore, the researcher ensured that the study utilized an emergent design in order to facilitate that changes

can be built in with conscious intent, since another researcher might choose a different path from the exact same data. Thereby, the dependability of this study emphasized a stability while discounting such intentional and unpredictable changes. In addition, the objectivity of the study was not placed on the researcher but on the data, thus it is the confirmability of the data that is interesting. The researcher has therefore practised reflexivity in order to discover the underlying assumptions that might have impacted the data as well as making sure that the data found in the findings could be traced back through the various steps in the analysis (Guba and Lincoln, 1982).

4.6 Ethical considerations

Conducting qualitative research and the nature of semi-structured interviews meant that some ethical considerations needed to be made. The researcher assured that the interviewees anonymity and privacy were maintained throughout the work process and final publication. That meant that the researcher excluded any specific professional titles, the participants' employer's name, and any dates of when the interviews were conducted. In addition, the researcher decided not to include any 'real' names and thereby the interviewees names utilized in the analysis were fictitious. This privacy was guaranteed and explained in the contract, which specified the terms and conditions for the usage of data (see appendix 3). The researcher took further into account the possibility of asking certain sensitive questions concerning the participants personal and professional lives, which meant that the researcher asked the questions in its most neutral form in order to not offend anyone. The participants were informed in the beginning of each interview that it was fully voluntary, meaning that they could end the interview at any time if they felt uncomfortable. However, as stated above, the interviewees were protected by the confidentiality reinforced by the contract, which arguably emphasized that they could speak more freely, truthfully, and honestly (Brinkmann and Kvale, 2015).

5. Analysis and findings

The purpose of this study was to deepen the understanding of the aspects of language in organizational coordination as well as uncover how coordination activities in a BPO-environment are communicatively constituted. The chapter was structured around and aimed at analysing the gathered data in order to answer the study's research question.

5.1 Translation; text into conversation

The interviews showed that the coordinator's activities were highly interactive and contained several aspects of translating text into actions. However, the gathered material in relation to this translation was centered around two interactive themes, formal interactions as well as informal interactions during the organizational coordination activities.

5.1.1 Formal interactions

In regard to the first theme, the formal interactions in the coordination activities fluctuated between the interviewed coordinators and their organizations. However, a common way of how the formal interactions in coordination activities facilitated the first translation were seen in the assigned meetings where the involved parties discussed certain ideas, thoughts, and information etc. These meetings could be viewed as speech events, since the meetings facilitated a set of utterances in a social situation and the involved individuals shared a common goal (Yule, 1996). The shared goals were salient in that the involved parties wanted to move forward and construct a well-produced end-product. This peculiarity could be seen through statements such as:

“During the initial meetings we expressed our ideas and objectives, so everyone has a foundation to stand on. We further emphasized what was important, our, our demands and kind of our philosophy was or is that everyone in a partnership does their best to create a good outcome” - Amanda.

This statement can further demonstrate that the formal meetings is a container of all versions of speech acts, however most notably the perlocutionary acts, since the utterances during the meeting were all constructed on the basis of a function, i.e. to aid the coordination of the project, but also each utterance was constructed in order to gain a better end-product (effect) (Yule, 1996; Searle, 1968).

The importance of these speech events was emphasized by the coordinators in order to facilitate and enable each speaker to share their intentions. The speech events, i.e. the meetings in this case, were implemented in order to ensure that everyone's intentions and the performance of the speech acts were perceived as wanted (Ogborn, 2020; Yule, 1996). Hence, the meetings could be viewed as a container of certain felicity conditions that specify how the speakers should behave and could be salient in this statement:

“A business meeting carries with it much more unwritten rules of conduct, like you pay attention to what your fellow businessman presents. You listen closely and, and you carry with you that professional setting, into the discussions [...] if I'm meeting them in an office, it is way more formal” - Emma.

This phenomenon is salient due to the nature of the meetings not being nonsensical. The meetings always utilize a shared natural language (general conditions) and usually conclude with what the involved parties had to do until the next meeting (content condition). The activities got divided amongst the parties and therefore obligated the parties to specify the intentions clearly in order for it to be executed (essential condition) (Ogborn, 2020; Yule, 1996). This could be demonstrated by the following statement:

“The meetings are where we present ideas face-to-face, divide tasks and do the overall coordination of the activities, like you do that and I do this, it should be done by this date [...] those tasks can be everything from creating a presentation to creating a portion of the campaign...” - Sofie.

This statement further indicated the difference between the locutionary and illocutionary acts during formal meetings, since the basic and meaningful utterances are clearly shown by e.g. “I do this” and contain no performative elements. However, the illocutionary utterances of e.g. “You do that” clearly display a function and an apparent illocutionary performative force

that urges the opponent to do something (Yule, 1996; Searle, 1968). These meetings can be viewed as an example of what Taylor and his colleagues (1996) suggests are the cause and effect (transactional) relationship, meaning that the meetings are situations for interactions, making requests, promising certain things, judging others performance etc, and are elements that are dependent on communication to happen. The meetings could therefore be viewed as establishing the necessary grounds for locutions to be uttered into actions, since the communication can be viewed as an action exerting a force on the recipient (Taylor et al., 1996).

In addition, the formal aspects of the interactions were a major contributor to the translation since texts happen in situations. The formal setting in the interactions constructed a structure of which all the four elements of the illocutionary embedding were accomplished (Taylor et al., 1996). This phenomenon was noticeable in various aspects and was a recurring theme within formal interactions. During meetings previous actions were systematically impacting the current ones, since at the start of each meeting the respondents emphasized that they went through what they had discussed previously in order to set a baseline. The second element of the illocutionary embedding was salient in the coordinators desire to have the interactions at physical locations where disruptions were held to a minimum. These physical locations were usually office spaces and were highlighted to boost professionalism. The third element, the assumed intentions of the other party, were clearly shown in formal interactions, since the involved parties acted upon what yielded the most benefits for their own organization. Another recurring theme within the gathered material was that the initial meetings in a coordination project facilitated the procedures going forward and determined how the interactive flow of the activities and exchanges were going to look like. The first meeting usually established an agreement of who does what and when certain activities were going to happen. Furthermore, this sequence of elements clearly displays the transformation of locutions into illocutions since these can together establish grounds for easier execution of assumptions of intentions which according to Taylor and his colleagues (1996) is fundamental for the translation.

5.1.2 Informal interactions

The second theme of the text to conversation translation is, as identified above, the informal interactions. The informal interactions facilitated the translation through different complex and abstract aspects. The coordinators established, during successful coordination projects,

these informal elements in order to better construct meaningful utterances (locutions) amongst each other and could be exemplified in the following statement:

“When we outsourced elements, we decided to pay the outsourcer to be fully included and treated as one of our own. It made sure that the way of talking, socializing, and working was conveyed seamlessly to the partner. Examples of these informal interactions could be after works, playing floorball on Thursdays, or other informal gatherings. That was quite expensive but very effective to build the necessary and mutual relationships” - Knut.

The informal interactions could arguably be a facilitator for creating a platform on which the involved parties construct a shared language. According to Yule (1996) and Searle (1968) some kind of common ground (as a shared language) is necessary in order to construct a meaningful linguistic utterance. Nevertheless, one counterargument could be that the involved parties in this establishment had the same natural language and thus already possessed the ability to construct meaningful utterances. However, one noteworthy remark to make is that these coordinators were acting within different corporate languages and thus a similar linguistic utterance could have very different illocutionary functions. Thereby, when these elements of locutionary ground was established, the illocutionary acts and its intentions became arguably easier to recognize, since when these abstract aspects were expressed, facilitated the recognition of each other's assumptions and intentions (Taylor et al., 1996).

In close relation to the previous thought, the informal elements of coordination activities displayed its importance during the coordination process, since the informal interactions arguably enabled more indirect relationships between the structure and the function of speech acts, better known as indirect speech acts. This relationship is of importance since according to Taylor and his colleagues (1996) it facilitates more polite and friendly interactions and is exemplified in the following statement:

“I believe that the informal communication impacted the coordination positively. The informal nature of the discussions gave a more friendly and attentive atmosphere, while at the same time making the communication flow easier” - Agnes.

The statement indicates that the indirect speech acts performed the same basic function as direct speech acts but still enabled a friendly environment. The utilization of indirect speech

acts could therefore be viewed to be as efficient as direct speech acts in its ability to create the illocutionary forces. Thereby, implementing informal interactions in the coordination process could facilitate the translation, due to the involved parties being more keen to express their texts into illocutionary speech acts. Most importantly is the fact that the assumptions of each other's intentions are through indirect speech acts easier to apprehend, and the involved parties are, as seen above, more attentive and compliant to the function of the given statement (Taylor et al., 1996) and could further be exemplified in the following statement:

“It is through informal communication you build relationships and I'm a firm believer that if you've got a good relationship then it does help things out enormously, your counterpart will hopefully go the extra mile...” - Elin.

This statement further highlights the various general functions of speech acts, meaning that a sequence of informal interactions needs to occur if said phenomenon were to happen. The informal interactions and its indirect structures facilitated a declarational function. This means that the sequential nature of the informal aspects, over time, changed the outsourcing environment and the involved individual's actions, and made the actions in the coordination arguably more efficient by enabling easier execution of alteration. This phenomenon might be a cause of coordinators gaining better knowledge about the various institutional roles within the outsourcing environment and that the informal interaction can make the involved parties more committed to future actions (commissives) (Yule, 1996; Searle, 1976). This phenomenon can exert a force on the involved parties, where the accustomed assumptions are not specifically stated generating a taken-for-granted foundation that impacts the speaking and hearing of locutions and has therefore facilitated the necessary grounds for the translation (Taylor et al., 1996).

5.2 Translation; conversation into text

The interviews displayed that organizational coordination within BPO-environments contained various aspects of translating conversations back into texts. The material conveyed two main patterns of narratology in the coordination process, the first being that BPO as a solution can be viewed containing a narrative structure and the second being that the discussions during the coordinator's activities could be viewed as a container of several narrative structures.

5.2.1 The BPO-structure

Concerning the first discovered theme, the BPO-environment itself could be understood to accommodate a narrative structure and thereby facilitate the translation process. The BPO-environment facilitated this translation by several sequential and complex elements that interconnect in some way or another, i.e. having a narrative structure, which in other words mean that the BPO-environment can be understood to contain several binary oppositions. The binary oppositions are salient in the BPO-environment due to that organizations, when deciding to outsource, make an interpretation of their current state and find that BPO is the best solution. If restated, the organization, i.e. the protagonist, is sending the appropriate department (subject) on a quest to find the best solution (object) for the organization. The organization could further be viewed as the receiver of the object, since it is secured by the appropriate department, aided by all the organizational means, and hindered by various problems, such as different corporate cultures or that the protagonist is for example conservative towards the external partner, that hinder the appropriate department to secure the objective fast or efficiently enough. Therefore, the BPO-environment can be understood to contain all three of the patterns in narratives, since there is a desire, search and an aim, communication and support and hindrance (Mambrol, 2016; Moto, 2001). This was visible in various statements throughout the gathered material and can be exemplified by the following statement:

“Before we met the outsourcer we determined and specified our needs inhouse, you displayed all the elements of each project, a mind map that uncovers the objectives, content, purpose, dispersion, leads, and final outcome. When, when there is a very clear goal from the beginning it increases the level of clarity throughout the process [...] Yes, all the coordination activities were based on our strategic goal of the organization. In this case to make the best product launch in history. So, all coordination efforts reflected that strategy of aligning the activities towards that main objective - Erik.

This statement shows that the BPO-environment and all coordination activities within the environment emphasize continuous interpretations of each other’s speech acts, since establishing an understanding inhouse facilitated a clarity throughout the process. In addition, the coordinators were continuously aligning the actions based on the initial understanding. The BPO-environment can therefore be understood to facilitate the second translation, since Tay-

lor and his colleagues (1996) argued that the second translation happens through individual interpretation of speech acts, and it is through these interpretations that an understanding can emerge and that ultimately constructs the ability for text production to occur if being uttered.

In addition, some successful coordination projects arguably had the BPO-supplier as an antagonist, since the external partner was an outsider and did not know the business, context, industry, and the know-how of the organization. The external partner could therefore be viewed as an opponent since they arguably hindered a fast and efficient journey to the object. However, that was turned around in most successful BPO-cases and was viewed as a helper and facilitator in the narrative, because of the nature of the context. The external partner, due to their lack of understanding, forced the organization to clarify, be more transparent and open to new perspectives. This consequently made the conversations more concrete and thus easier to narrate and interpret. This could be seen in statements such as:

“The suppliers are not that into the business of our organization compared to oneself, that enables one to get an outside perspective that questions one’s ideas, makes you think twice on certain things, helps you to be more specific and clearer, and possibly get a better end result [...] you tend to explain your thoughts and feelings more regarding the topic compared to your inhouse coordination efforts. It forces you to become more precise with what you are asking for...” - Adam.

In addition, this perspective forces the protagonist to make interpretations that it would not otherwise do and could therefore be seen enabling a better understanding of the conversation and what the object is. Thereby, through the process of interpretation, meaning is constantly created and re-created by new narratives with different actants. These interpretations lead thereafter to the involved coordinator to utter interpretation into the conversation, i.e. producing texts once again (Taylor et al., 1996).

5.2.2 The Discussion structure

In accordance with the first theme, the discussions during the coordination activities were seen unfolding within the realm of a narrative structure. Each formal encounter throughout the coordination projects possessed narrative elements and could be seen when applying the act-antial model. The subject of the coordination activities and projects are the individuals involved in the project, the object where to get a perfect end-product and, usually in this case,

clear marketing campaigns or marketing materials. The sender and receiver of the object were usually the organization that ‘buys’ the outsourcing capacity of the supplier. The helper of these narratives was usually strong and effective communication, while the opponents were; lack of clear structure and general and unsaid elements that negatively affected the communication effectiveness (Mambrol, 2016; Moto, 2001). An example of this potentiality, in a successful outsourcing context, being and having narrative elements could be seen in the following statement:

“Every meeting ends with the following question: what in this meeting shall be communicated? To whom? When? [...] That enables everyone that is eligible to execute a task is let know of that directly. We further inform the ones that were not there via a short description/protocol of the meeting and send that to them via email” - Knut.

This statement is further a suitable example of what Taylor and his colleagues (1996) are describing as their second translation, i.e. in order to understand the action’s meaning the observer needs to interpret. Thus, for example the individual that summarizes (virtual text production) the speech acts during the meeting gains a better understanding of the actions since she or he was forced to interpret. That applies to the other coordinators as well since they help the individual by discussing the matter and making interpretations of the previous speech acts at the end of the meeting. While discussing their different interpretations they further produce text on those assumptions (Taylor et.al, 1996). Therefore, the interpretations of various speech acts in the coordination processes displayed its importance in order to make each actor and coordinator aware of each other's action’s value and whose value should be appointed moving forward (Sulkunen and Törrönen, 1997).

Moreover, the abstract aspects within coordination activities can further highlight the narrative structure as well as impacting the understanding of speech acts. The abstract aspects can be expanded and explained by the concept of modality, since modalities characterize the situations and could be described as the given in any situation (Mambrol, 2016). The most notable aspect of the abstract elements apparent in the coordination process is the modality of corporate cultures. The different corporate cultures could be understood to modalize the meaning in communication by being containers of different value systems, which affect the coordinators narrative utterance, object, how work methods are carried out and what each member knows. In other words, the difference in corporate culture could modalize the communication in the sense of what is widely known in one organization could be alien in another.

er, i.e depending on the value system it modalizes the knowing, wanting and what one is able to, differently. In addition, the difference in corporate cultures further modalized the coordination process by impacting the way the speakers animated his or her speech together with his hopes, wishes, abilities etc (Tarasti, 2017). A relevant statement that displays the affect the modality of corporate culture has on the interpretations are:

“The organizational culture impacts the way we do certain things and, and how we interact or speak, it is not something you can touch, it kind of impacts the way you view the world. That view may be communal, or it's common for every department, but still there's also specificity within each department so there's different layers of culture, so one can say that the main corporate culture is therefore expressed in different ways depending on the department” - Johan.

The statement highlights that the modality of corporate culture modalizes the interpretation and narrative of each other's speech acts through its ability to fill the “empty space” (Tarasti, 2017). Where the empty space can in connection to corporate culture be the unsaid assumptions, know-how or implicit work methods that impact the interpretation of the speech acts and could therefore be seen as having a penetrative ability on the conversation. A generic and practical example of such an element could be common utterances such as ‘this is what we always have done here’. The empty space could arguably facilitate the interpretations of the speech acts, since the involved coordinators are acting within its realm and therefore the modality can be seen making interpretations possible (Ricoeur et al., 1989). The importance of this modality can further be salient in that different understandings of the same speech acts could very easily happen, however that should in that case be apparent in the coming text productions (Taylor et.al, 1996). Therefore, in order to achieve mutual understanding between the different modalities the involved parties needed to emphasize and adapt each other's interpretations in order to achieve future efficiency within the BPO-project. One can therefore argue that the involved coordinators constructed a new modality that only animated the speech and facilitated the interpretations within that new ‘department’, which further displays the highly situational basis in which the BPO-coordination operates within (Tarasti, 2017; Mambrol, 2016).

A common issue discovered in the gathered material, especially for the larger participating organizations in the study, was found to be that managers or decision makers were not

participating in all coordination activities but were still the ones that made the decisions. This phenomenon could be seen in statements such as:

“...usually, we have specific gateways in each project that the managers are joining, but they are not active in the very process of coordinating, they just make the decisions based on what we present” - Amanda.

This statement could explain why managers can be viewed as antagonists in the narrative structure and during the discussions, since the managers make interpretations on other's interpretations and produce texts based on those interpretations. That could be viewed as opposing the protagonist's (the organization) object in gaining a good end-product by not being continuously part of the actual events (Mambrol, 2016; Taylor et.al, 1996). To understand an action one needs to interpret, however since the action in these cases is an interpretation of the actual actions it constructs an in-efficient environment that facilitates possibilities for misinterpretations (Taylor et.al, 1996). This fictitious text production can therefore most likely cause other coordinators to act or seek other elements within the BPO-environment that might not be relevant for the protagonist or the overall desire of the project. The manager's text productions are consequently produced based on portions of assumptions, such as specific circumstances or reactions, that cannot be sufficiently conveyed through narratives (Mambrol, 2016; Taylor et.al, 1996). It could explain why the process of coordination gets longer and more inefficient, since more steps need to be narrated to the manager in order to describe the value and from whose point of view that value is appointed (Sulkunen and Törrönen, 1997). However, a similar paradox as mentioned above could be that this phenomenon could equally be seen as a helper in making the involved coordinators express and clarify certain elements of the coordination project. However, the fact still remains that the manager's produce text based on other's interpretations and therefore can deceive the coordinators in their journey to the object.

5.3 The circular framework

The ongoing circular pattern expressed by Taylor and his colleagues (1996) can be clearly seen in the gathered material, since the thoughts, ideas, intentions, and feelings expressed in the speech acts were later interpreted by both parties in order to facilitate an understanding. Most importantly however was the fact that a clear majority of the successful coordination projects all forced the external partner to restate what the organization expressed with their

own words in order to see if the involved coordinators shared understandings. Consequently, the generated texts and interpretations of the speech acts were utilized and translated back into new speech acts. This phenomenon could be visualized with the following statement:

“...through clarity and through restating. So first, we present our ideas clearly, saying, this is what we envision, this is what we want, and then asking or forcing the outsourcing partner to restate, okay tell us now what we said with your own words. And in that sense, then coordinating between each other to make sure that they're leaving this meeting with the same idea we pitched to them” - Johan.

While analysing the above statement one can understand that some kind of mutual understanding between the organizations was preferred and established in order to move forward in the coordination process. One can therefore argue that the organizations are partially one organization, however with extensions unknown for the other party since the organizations through discussions and continuous process of interpretations of each other's speech acts establish some kind of common ground. However, the common ground is not fixed, since the various coordinators interpretations was continuously up for discussion and revision at each meeting and could be seen in this concise statement:

“Everything was documented during the meetings in order to more easily go back and see what we decided and discussed in order to limit any misinterpretations” - Emma.

This statement perfectly captures the essential elements and circular pattern of the two translations, but most importantly it displays that the common ground is subject for future revision due to new communicational contexts. The established common ground could be understood to communicatively constitute the coordinators environment by being viewed as an illocutionary force upon the involved parties. This can be seen by the fact that the involved parties continuously go back to previous actions and therefore at the start of each meeting reimburse the common ground and its force. It further facilitates a sequence of successive translations, or inter-conversational dynamics, to occur and could therefore arguably yield a larger detachment from the particular to the general. This amplifies the BPO-environment's own identity, the community feeling and the ability to express the collective intentions within the coordinator activities legitimately. Therefore, one can argue that the collective has become structured (Taylor et al., 1996).

Moreover, Taylor and his colleagues (1996) expressed that the organization is a potentiality and a container of multiple meanings, which can be clearly seen in the context of the BPO-environment and can further explain why the two distant and different organizations can be considered as one. This can be exemplified by the following statement:

“There's also different, always different agendas between two kinds of companies. The two organizations occasionally have different wants and needs, and coordination can fix that...” - Agnes.

This once again highlights the importance of facilitating the translation from interpretation to text in order to establish a common ground and ultimately enabling the communicative constitution of organizational coordination. However, one noteworthy remark is that the interpretations fundamentally belong to two distinct organizations (due to the BPO-environment) and that this arguably constructs some instabilities in the common ground. This emphasizes that the interpretations are irregular, constantly evolving and moderating the common ground, but also that the common ground is complex and grounded in conversations. Yet, the different interpretations are modified by a shared or similar narrative of the existing business environment, where in this case the desired business objective (satisfied customers) play an important role and seen in the following statement:

“Even if the organizations are different, they have the same focus to some degree, everyone wants satisfied customers. Everyone in a partnership does everything they can to facilitate and enable good coordination and satisfy the customers. Without that, no organization exists in today's highly competitive market” - Sven.

This statement expresses that the organizations can still have different agendas, subcultures and focuses but still be considered as one (Taylor et al., 1996). This phenomenon could therefore share some similarities with that of different functional departments in large organizations whose focus and agenda are vastly different but at the same time is arguably determined by the CCO-framework to be communicatively constituted. The occurrence of two different entities being communicatively constituted goes against the overall norm within the CCO-framework. However, the dynamic ontology, the never-ending process of being constituted, in the CCO-framework facilitates the necessary grounds to enable this phenomenon to happen (Putnam and Nicotera, 2009, 2010; Cooren et al., 2011). Furthermore, the statement demon-

strates that the BPO-environment, its coordination activities, and its many translations are not in full alignment with each other; instead, they are in more of a pragmatic balance. This means that the communicated meaning and its consequent interpretation are in line with each other (Yule, 1996) and taken by the hermeneutical-circle perspective included by Taylor and his colleagues (1996), one can argue that each of the two organizations possess some kind of pre-understanding and thereby possesses one ground each. However, via the aforementioned dynamic unfolding and the nature of the BPO-environment one can claim that the two organizations are constantly moving towards a common horizon, which in other words are a non-fixed mutually shared understanding. This phenomenon highlights the possibility that different entities can speak with and share the same voice, that who is included can constantly change (e.g. new BPO-organizations) and that the organization is grounded in conversations and moderated by the production and interpretation of texts. It further means that deviations for each ground can occur, which explains that new fruitful perspectives, opportunities, and ideas can develop in BPO-environments, however only if a successful merging of each other's understandings are established. Lastly, this phenomenon could indicate that the communicative constitution of an organization is enabled by constructing texts through organizational horizons, which in turn might facilitate limitations for individual interpretations in the circular translation process (Taylor et al., 1996), however this indication and potentiality is outside the scope and focus of this study but would be interesting to investigate further.

Moreover, another aspect worth mentioning, and closely connected to the previous phenomenon, is that the continuous coordination processes utilized by the interviewees enabled the involved coordinators in the BPO-environment to gain a single voice. The succeeding translations found in the various elements of the coordination activities, mentioned previously, facilitated this possibility, and made the detachment from the particular to the general possible. Therefore, the coordinator's activities and its environment could be seen as an organizational identity, a sub-identity or at least an extension of the organization at large. This shared identity enabled the involved coordinators to speak with the correct voice and could be seen in the following concise statement:

“The longer into the project we went, the better representation of us the supplier did, maybe that was because we got to know each other better and better...” - Filip.

The statement highlights that the BPO-environment is highly complex, located in a series of networks of communication and are conversationally moderated. The success of this phenom-

enon might lie in that ‘real’ organizations are dependent on the interpretative process. The interpretative process contains the organizations perception and since the perception of each other’s organization in a BPO-environment is arguably and logically positive (otherwise no coordination would happen) can imply that an identity might be developed easier and ultimately facilitate a communicatively constitutive environment. This (the BPO-environment) in turn highlights that an urge to establish this identity or common horizon exists and that coordinators are adaptable and agile in their role. That further demonstrates that it is the loosely coupled elements of organizational communication within coordinators activities that constitute the organizational coordination (Taylor et al., 1996).

In addition, the common ground or common horizon established throughout the coordination process and highlighted during the various interactive speech events can further show its importance and appearance in the following statement:

“We have the meetings to check in. They need to be quite frequent in order to not enable them to get too far off while working with it. These checks get looser and looser for long term partnerships and coordination projects” - Adam.

This statement indicates that as time passes and the more coordination the partners endure the common horizon gets easier and easier to reach, indicating that, through successive and endless amounts of translations, facilitate an identity to appear. Thus, implying that there is no need, to the same degree, to discuss the various interpretations since the involved parties know each other. That arguably enables the involved parties to spend more time and energy on the activities itself, which can possibly yield a better end-result. However, the statement might as well indicate the opposite, since the involved parties get less and less opportunities to discuss their interpretations and reach consensus, and possibly find new ways of moving forward. Therefore, paradoxically, the external partner needs to continuously be involved in order to develop in conjunction with the other party and facilitate an understanding of each specific coordination project (Taylor et al., 1996), seen through this statement:

“Coordination facilitates a dialogue between all the different parties in order to highlight the potential issues and how we meet them. It is very situational, and context based, depending on the complexity, individuals, who and different logics that changes thereafter” - Adam.

This statement further reveals that each dialogue and coordination activity is highly contextual and situational, due to that each speech event is not entirely the same as another and is an assortment of utterances in a social context (Yule, 1996).

Moreover, the interviews revealed complex circumstances in which organizational coordination, in a BPO-environment, constructed possibilities for the agent and the principal to not be the same physical individual. The coordinators within the coordination activities carried the intentions from each principal and still managed to find common ground or a common horizon (seen in the analysis above). At one hand, during the successful coordination projects, the outsourced organization was in the long run granted full integration into the organization, which meant that the outsourced organization could start representing and acting on the behalf of the other organization and principal. This phenomenon was salient in this statement:

“The longer the coordination project went the better the external partner got [...] and it was not as important to keep having frequent checks because they already knew us, our objectives and our tonality...” - Sofie.

This phenomenon clearly highlights Taylor and his colleagues (1996) suggestion; that the organizational members, i.e. the outsourced coordinators, qualified, gained the trust and credibility to represent the organizational voice in situations connected to the coordination activity. It further indicated that the outsourced organization did not become an agent of the other principal directly, instead it was through a sequence of events and coordination that facilitated that qualification. Another corresponding element to what Taylor and his colleagues (1996) suggests is the fact that this ability, to represent the other organization, only lasted for the duration of the coordination project and emphasize that the organization itself and its principal is constantly adapting due to contextual environments. However, at the other side of the spectrum is the fact that the outsourced organization’s agents could act on the other principals’ intentions without any credibility or trust to do so. The lack of complete trust could be clearly visible in some of the cases in the gathered material, since the outsourced organization was constantly supervised and was forced to wait for approval in order to move forward, even though the coordination project was considered a success. This phenomenon could be visualized through the following statement:

“During the coordination process we had approval gates, where the outsourcer needed our permission to move forward, [...] that made sure that we had control of the situation and the end-product” - Sven.

This statement indicates that the external agents still got to represent the organization, however with strict control measures in-place in order to see if their interpretations of the principal intentions corresponded with the internal agent's. The external agents being entitled to represent the other's principal intentions, although with a small authority and force, by for example drafting illustrations and coming up with overall proposals that later the internal agent determined were reasonable or not. However, this might be problematic in the sense of basing the coordination efforts on lack of trust and neglect. It can imply a fragmentary coordination and could harm the outcome and the overall experienced efficiency, since the perception of organizations is a component of the interpretative process that moderates the actual conversations. In other words, it could mean that the explicitly expressed lack of trust can make the external agents' perception of the principal organizations worse, which consequently have an impact on the overall discussions and interpretations during the meetings. In addition, as exemplified above, when the mutual understanding within the coordination project was reached one can, in contrast, argue that the involved coordinators all gained some credibility and legitimacy to express the collective intentions within that project. Furthermore, the phenomenon of the ability to still act upon the other principals' intentions without any explicit trust towards the external agents might be caused or shadowed by a strong authoritative agent within the principal organization. This authoritative agent could have limited the performance of the other external agents of the outsourced coordinators or organization. This could further be a possible pitfall in an outsourcing environment, since the lack of enabling the other organization and its members to develop into an institutional role in order to create and make meaningful change could cause the organizational coordination to fail or to not function at its ultimate potential (Taylor et al., 1996).

6. Discussion and conclusion

The following chapter draws some concluding remarks of the study, it discusses the various contributions to research and practise along with acknowledgements of limitations. Lastly, the chapter sums up with suggestions for future research within the realm of organizational coordination and the CCO-framework.

6.1 Discussion

The study attempted to explore *how* organizational coordination and its accompanied coordination activities are communicatively constituted in a BPO-environment. The study problematized how the notion of BPO could refer to organizational coordination as its guardian angel if organizational coordination itself refers to communication purely as a referential system. The notion of organizational coordination presupposed the existence of communication, referred to communication as a tool or support to accomplish certain objectives and as a container of information exchanges (Castañer and Oliveira, 2020; Tay and Tay, 2007; Atuahene-Gima, 2005; Inglis, 2008). It further referred to communication as a mechanism to mitigate potential risks of an outsourcing project (Aron and Singh, 2005; Narayanan et al., 2011; Van de Ven et al., 1976; Kim, 2008; Fuchs, 2007; Tumkur, 2005). The framework of the CCO-perspective was therefore utilized in order to capture novel views on communication and to provide an alternative perspective on organizational coordination. The main assumptions of this study were that the communicative constitution lied within two circular translations (Taylor et al., 1996). The complex environment of BPO and the analysis revealed the communicative constitution of organizational coordination along with its paradoxes, challenges, and the varied importance of different aspects within coordination. It further captured, while acknowledging the theoretical assumptions, that the highly interactive nature of organizational coordination had a figurative importance for the practitioner's coordination.

The analysis disclosed how organizational coordination was communicatively constituted and was displayed by the circular pattern of the translations. It demonstrated that the formal interactions facilitated opportunities for uttering texts, constructing conversations, and ultimately expressing one's intentions. The informal interactions on the other hand facili-

tated the dialogues to be meaningful, the intentions more recognizable and the overall conversation to be more efficient. Meanwhile, the BPO-environment itself constituted a narrative structure in which all of the actions were executed. The continuous interpretative process was seen enabling the possibility for two different organizations to have one object, while the discussion structure was seen enabling the essential interpretations in order to facilitate an understanding of the various speech acts present in the speech events. These occurrences in connection with each other brought together the two distinct organizations into being one communicative constituted processual entity for the duration of the coordination project by the compelling urge to establish some kind of common ground (as Taylor et. al, 1996 suggests) or common horizon as this study suggests. The concept of common horizon emerged and explained that each organization had some kind of pre-understanding (e.g. different value systems) before any coordination began and the desire to establish a mutual understanding during the coordination process was apparent. The concept corresponds better with the overall dynamic ontology, since it implies a flexibility, resilience, and processual approach. Meanwhile, the concept of common ground can on the other hand, even though its processual nature, be contradicting to the CCO-framework since the word 'ground' arguably signifies stability. The concept of common ground might therefore be better suited for the current state of organizational coordination, due to their view of communication as pre-existent and not constitutive in its very nature. The phenomenon, found in this study, further displayed the importance of establishing continuous involvement in order to develop together, facilitate a deeper understanding of each other and enable the principal to be properly represented. In addition, one can determine that the language and communication in organizational coordination is more than a referential system, instead it is the very essence of coordination. This means that the dominant scholars and theories within BPO possess a limited and incomplete view or conceptualization of organizational coordination. The notion of BPO and organizational coordination should instead embrace the perspective that organizational coordination is in a continuous process of becoming and ultimately communicatively constituted. This means that organizational coordination as a solution could be problematic. The organizations that utilize BPO as an attempt to solve any issues should facilitate opportunities for and acknowledge the aforementioned aspects of the constitutive and circular translations in order to gain higher possibilities for success or to reverse the high failure rates. In addition, a great start towards that journey would be to allow continuous acknowledgement of organizational coordination and communication as a constitutive process rather than as a tool to mitigate potential risks.

In addition, by acting in the realm of a continuous process of becoming suggests several implications, where one implication is that the successful coordination projects were commonly found to have integrated an interpretative process in which the involved parties expressed the intentions of the project with their own words in order to facilitate a common horizon, i.e. a mutual understanding. This interpretative process highlighted that the organizational coordination was in fact acting in a complex narrative structure that in turn had a major impact on the involved coordinators' understanding of the activities and facilitated a shared understanding. This in turn implied that the coordinators most likely made less mistakes. Thus, one of the issues with BPO and its high failure rate might be if the involved parties do not integrate this process into the coordination process since it forces the involved parties to be engaged and discuss the different elements more actively. The process further reveals if any misunderstandings have occurred and enables therefore the involved parties to make necessary corrections directly instead of waiting until any deliverables show that misinterpretation, which in the long run imply an increased efficiency.

The analysis and its presented findings suggested that the manager was seen as an antagonist, however in accordance with previous literature it can be a classic case of managers acting within the sphere of bounded rationality. This means that if the 'active' coordinators provided a satisfactory presentation of previous events it led to the manager taking action based on that fictitious understanding (Simon, 1955; Simon, 1959), which is obviously problematic. The analysis further revealed that some of the coordination projects had a strong managerial bias and that the managers were not fully integrated into the coordination process (Blau, 1968; Thompson, 1967). Thus, in order to gain a better overview and understanding of the actual events the decision makers need to participate in every coordination activity in order to facilitate an interpretation and understanding of the actual events and not make an interpretation of interpretations and not construct texts based on other's interpretations.

6.2 Conclusion

The aim of this study was to explore and analyse *how* organizational coordination activities are communicatively constituted in a BPO-environment and its impact on the organization's constitution. This was further operationalized into the research question; *How is organizational coordination communicatively constituted within Swedish BPO-environments?*. The findings and analysis revealed the answers to this question and suggested that organizational coordination is communicatively constituted through the circular patterns of the translations.

These patterns were located and were apparent in various speech acts, events and interactions as well as in various narrative structures and interpretative processes that together constituted a common horizon. In addition, the analysis disclosed that any mishaps made by the outsourced organizations were coordinated and dealt with before the possibility of any external forces could cause harm to the principal organization and its perception. To conclude, organizational coordination in a BPO-environment and its accompanying communication is more than a referential language system; instead, it is constitutive in its very nature and has effects on the overall constitution of an organization.

6.3 Contribution of study

This study has enhanced the understanding of organizational coordination in a BPO-environment by utilizing the CCO-framework and the Montreal School's circular translations. This research has constructed novel insights regarding coordinators activities by emphasizing the highly communicative environment in the coordination process as well as demonstrating compelling indications of the fact that it is communicatively constituted. In addition, the study further develops the notion of CCO by displaying that an organization can be communicatively constituted out of two or more distinct organizations. Meanwhile, the Montreal School's circular translations were enhanced by introducing and displaying the possibility that the concept of common horizons, found in the hermeneutical circle perspective, could replace, or explain the constitutional 'ground' better than Taylor and his colleagues' (1996) emphasis on 'common ground'. However, it is unknown to which extent the overall communicative constitution of an organization is impacted by the continuous merging of horizons with other organizations. Lastly, coordinators and practitioners within BPO-environments have gained fruitful strategic insights into how successful coordination projects should function in order to enable promising results as well as how various aspects of communication impacts the coordination activities.

6.4 Limitations and future research

The nature of the qualitative study allowed one to explore the notion of organizational coordination in a BPO-environment from a holistic perspective and investigate how it was communicatively constituted. However, as the analysis and discussion progressed one can understand that new unexplored questions and phenomenon's emerged. The analysis provided indications

that there might be more to the communicative constitution than what was covered in this study, even though the circular framework arguably covered the essential aspects. This consequently highlighted some of the study's restrictions since the demarcations and the scope of the study did not allow the researcher to fully integrate and investigate these to their full potential. The study therefore suggests that the notion of organizational coordination and the CCO-perspective investigate its constitution further in order to explore the potentials, novel perspectives and insights gained in this study further. More investigation needs to be emphasized towards the hermeneutical-circle perspective and the coordinators' urge for common horizons, since it might uncover, better than what Taylor and his colleagues (1996) suggests, to which degree two distinct organizations can become one communicative constitution and if other circumstances might affect it. A more in-depth investigation into this finding can possibly reveal if the concept of common ground, coined by Taylor and his colleagues (1996), can be fully replaced by the concept of "fusion of horizons" or if a unification of these concepts is a better representation. Thus, these implications need to be investigated purely from a hermeneutical-circle perspective. In addition, the empirical study of organizations within BPO-environments highlighted that there was a need for 'fusion of horizons', however this is a common challenge in all interpretative activities and therefore implies that it is relevant within single organizations. However, it is yet to be demonstrated if the concept of 'fusion of horizons' can be utilized to fruitfully investigate organizational coordination within a single organization and is therefore another suggestion for future research.

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Appendix

Appendix 1

Interview-guide

Dimensions	Questions/probing questions
Intro questions	Do you understand the context of this interview? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consent? • Rules? • Structure?
Background information	Describe yourself? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nationality? • Position/role? • Educational background? • Professional background? • Type/size of organization? • Your role in BPO?
Coordination	How do you define coordination? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In organizations? • Between organizations? • How does it generate value?
	Tell me about a coordination project that went really good. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Did you communicate/act in a specific way? • What communication processes did you use? Any specific activities? • How did the situation/interaction while communicating look? • How did you make sure your partners understand and in-

	<p>interpret your intentions/ideas correctly?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How did you make sure that the outsourcers spoke with the ‘correct voice’ of your organization?
	<p>What communicative processes are negatively impacting the organizational coordination?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why? • How are these processes constructed?
Coordination in organizations	<p>How do you coordinate an activity/task under your apparent responsibility?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What type of coordination mechanisms do you use? • How do you determine which mechanism or solution to use for a specific activity?
	<p>How does your organization coordinate activities between/across different functional departments?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What type of coordination mechanisms do you use? • How do you interact? Who? • How do you communicate and share information? • Coherent/closely connected with strategies?
Coordination between organizations	<p>How does your organization coordinate activities with an external organization/partner?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What type of coordination mechanisms/structure do you use? • How do you communicate and share information? • How do you manage/coordinate any wrong doings? • How did the coordination evolve? • The role of communication?
	<p>How does cultural differences impact your coordination activity?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Compatibility? • Consequences? • Other macro/external elements that can affect the commu-

	nication in organizational coordination?
Closing questions	<p>Is there anything you would like to add?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Would you like a copy of the final version of the study?

Appendix 2

Information sheet - Invitation

The complexities of organizational coordination's communicative constitution: A qualitative study concerning coordinators activities in BPO-environments.

Dear Participant,

I am Alexander Andersson, a Strategic Communication master's student at Lund University, currently writing my master thesis concerning organizational coordination.

You have been invited to participate in my master thesis study. However, before you decide to participate, it is of importance that you understand why this study is executed and what it will cover. Read carefully through the following information and if you have any questions feel free to contact me.

Kind regards

Alexander Andersson

The study

Essentially the study concentrates on individual's perceptions of their organizational coordination in a business process outsourcing environment.

As you might already know, organizational coordination is in general a vital organizational activity in order to organize, align objectives and to ultimately ensure organizational performance. Today's organizations that utilize a business process outsourcing strategy are facing high failure rates and difficulties. The organizational coordination process contains high levels of information and communication exchanges and are seen as fundamental for the success of business process outsourcing projects. This study seeks therefore to investigate how this fundamental organizational activity is communicatively constituted in order to better under-

stand what is going wrong in the business process outsourcing as well as ultimately gain a better understanding of how organizations are constituted and coordinated.

The study's research methodology and its primary data gathering method are semi-structured interviews. The participants have different backgrounds, ages, gender, employment length, culture, educational background etc. The interviews will be either held in Swedish or English, based on the participant's language proficiency and comfortability.

Data gathering process

In order to achieve the study's objectives the following data gathering process will take place:

1. Interviewee are invited to participate in an in-depth interview.
2. Interviewee will upon acceptance be sent a formal invitation.
3. Interviewee can at any time decline its participation, although prior consent has been given.
4. The interview will, based on consent from interviewee, be audio recorded.
5. The questions are open ended.
6. The interview will be transcribed and any specific details regarding who the interviewee are will be left out due to confidentiality reasons.
7. Statements, based on the transcripts, will be utilized in the analysis and ultimately the study.

Ethical concerns

- Confidentiality

In all cases, specific organizational and personal information that can reveal the identity of the interviewee will be deleted. The privacy of the interviewee will be safeguarded.

- Risks and costs

There are no foreseeable risks for any physical or psychological harm to the interviewee nor the organization. No compensation will be offered to the organization or the interviewee.

Contact information

Alexander Andersson

Email: al7135an-s@student.lu.se

Appendix 3

Participant consent form

The complexities of organizational coordination's communicative constitution: A qualitative study concerning coordinators activities in BPO-environments. |

Researcher: Alexander Andersson

Please
tick the
boxes

1. I understand that this research is confidential, that my anonymity will be maintained throughout the process and it will not be possible to identify me in any publications.
2. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I can withdraw my consent at any time without providing any reason. Additionally, I am not obligated to answer all of the questions if I do not want to.
3. I understand that the information that I provide will be analyzed and might be utilized and published in the analysis
4. I understand that the interview will be audio recorded and deleted upon completion of the study

Participant - Name

Date

Signature

Alexander Andersson

Researcher - Name

Date

Signature