

Communicative Perspectives on Strategic Organization

By

Eero Vaara,
Saïd Business School
University of Oxford
United Kingdom
Eero.Vaara@sbs.ox.ac.uk

Ann Langley,
HEC Montréal
Canada
ann.langley@hec.ca

Forthcoming in Strategic Organization

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Abstract

While in the past, perspectives that focus on language and communication have perhaps not received the attention they deserve in the mainstream literature in strategy and organization, interest in this area has been growing in recent years. The present essay serves to introduce a collection of insightful papers (independently submitted and reviewed, but brought together in this themed issue) that offer an opportunity to reflect on the contributions of a rich variety of research perspectives on communication to research in strategic organization. Building on the seven contributions featured in this issue, we show how communicative perspectives speak to questions of the who, how, what, and what then, of strategy. We then discuss dualisms that underpin research on strategic organization adopting a communicative lens and propose directions for future work that might bridge these divides.

Communication is central to strategic decision-making and organizational and strategic change. Thus, it is no wonder that we have seen increasing scholarly attention given to language use in strategic decision-making or strategizing (Balogun et al., 2014; Fenton and Langley, 2011; Spee and Jarzabkowski, 2011; Cooren et al., 2011) as well as organizational and strategic change more generally (Sonenshein, 2010; Heracleous and Barrett, 2001; Vaara et al., 2016; Dalpiaz and Di Stefano, 2018). Despite this increasing interest, our understanding of the concrete ways in which language is used in strategizing or in promoting specific strategic issues or initiatives is only partial and characterized by a fragmentation of theoretical and methodological perspectives and streams of research. In recent years, we have, however, seen increasingly focused and sophisticated analyses that highlight different aspects of language use in strategy and strategic change. This is notably the case with recent papers published in or submitted to *Strategic Organization*, including those in the current themed issue but also other contributions (e.g., Manning and Bejarano, 2017; Holstein et al., 2018; Blevins et al., 2019; Sinha et al., 2015). This offers an opportunity to reflect on the potential contributions of a rich variety of research perspectives on communication to research in strategic organization.

The purpose of this essay is thus to serve as an introduction to a selected set of papers that place communication front and center to strategy, but also to offer more general reflections about this body of work and to outline ideas for future research. In introducing this collection, it is important to note that we embrace a broad view of communication or language use. This is, in our view, essential to be able to bring together and learn from a variety of communicative perspectives drawing on different theoretical and methodological traditions. This is an opportunity for us as organization and strategy scholars: we are dealing with organizational and strategic phenomena and can benefit from the insights of many perspectives developed in other disciplines. When

applying such perspectives, the central focus is on *how communication or language is used*, whatever the specific theoretical angle or methodology adopted. This is this overall approach that we pursue here, as do the papers we present, and it is by locating communication and language at the heart of organizational and strategic phenomena that we can develop new theoretical insights and potentially give back to other areas such as applied linguistics or communication studies.

Another key assumption driving this essay is that *communication or language plays a constitutive* role in strategy and strategic change. Thus, rather than seeing communication as simply reflecting cognition, emotions, materiality, interests, identities or the like, we – like many others – are convinced that language plays a central role in the social construction of organizational and strategic phenomena. This is the spirit also of the papers included in this selection, which enables them to dig deep into the core phenomena we are interested in.

In what follows, we first offer an overview of the papers included in this themed issue, highlighting the plurality of theoretical and methodological perspectives taken, and identifying how these papers speak to questions of the who, how, what, and what then, of strategy. This leads to examine five dualisms that underpin the diversity of perspectives on research adopting a communicative lens: reflective vs. performative view of communication, focus on text vs. context, Bid D vs. small d in discourse analysis, communication in the moment vs. over time, and convergence vs. divergence in strategic communication. We build on these issues to propose directions for future research.

Language Use at Front and Center of Strategy and Strategic Change: Key Themes

We selected seven papers for this special themed issue. All of these were submitted independently, and are each exemplary pieces of work that draw on specific theoretical and methodological traditions relating to key issues in strategy and strategic change. They specifically

offer us insights into identity and participation in strategy work (who?), the processes and practices of strategy-making (what and how?), and the communicative construction of strategic change and its implications (then what?). Table 1 below summarizes the key characteristics of these papers, revealing the range of theories and methods used, topics covered, and key contributions to our understanding of communication in strategizing and strategic change.

Insert Table 1 about here

Who?: Identity and participation in strategy work

The first two papers deal with the actors involved in strategy work. In particular, the papers by Saku Mantere and Richard Whittington (2021) and Elena Tavella (2021) focus on actorhood in terms of identity and participation. Mantere and Whittington examine a key issue in strategy work: becoming a strategist. They adopt an identity work perspective to illuminate how managers use three specific tactics to portray themselves as strategists: self-measurement (strategist identity as an external norm against which managers evaluated their sense of self-worth as managers), self-construction (the use of strategy discourse as a source of ‘blueprints’ in a reflexive process of career development) and self-actualization (use of strategy discourse as a source of meaning in their (working) lives). On this basis, they argue that strategy discourse can play either a more disciplinary or emancipatory role in identity-building. In particular, they explain how this identity work draws on societal-level strategy discourse to establish individual-level ontological security. By so doing, their analysis adds an important facet to our understanding of strategy work at the individual level.

Tavella in turn offers an intriguing analysis of participation. Her study examines the discursive practices used to include or exclude people in strategy work. She focuses on two practices: assigning responsibility for project tasks and justifying responsibility assignments. This

helps to illuminate the ways in which participation is enabled or impeded and the implications thereof in terms of ‘persistent exclusivity’ or ‘oscillating inclusion.’ The paper reveals in particular how in their interactions with middle managers, top managers subtly protect their status by engaging in more elaborate justifications when participation is widened than when it is narrowed. Methodologically, the paper offers a rich illustration of in-depth analysis of the linguistic expressions used in conversations, which often pass unnoticed in more conventional studies.

What and how?: Processes and practices of strategy-making

The next two papers by Nicolas Bencherki, Viviane Sergi, François Cooren and Consuelo Vasquéz (2021) and by Andrea Whittle, Alan Gilchrist, Frank Mueller and Peter Lenney (2021) focus on key processes and practices of strategy-making. Bencherki et al. address an important question that is at the heart of strategy work: how specific issues become *strategic* issues (for an alternative view, see Gond et al., 2018). They draw on the ‘communication as constitutive of organizations’ (CCO) approach to organizational communication (Taylor and Van Every, 1999; Schoeneborn et al., 2014) which argues that organizations themselves are constituted through communication. Specifically, Bencherki et al. zoom in on the communicative practices that are used to decide which issues – or ‘matters of concern’ – become the ones to focus on in the beginning of a strategic planning process. In the CCO perspective they adopt, communication is seen as material, and materialization refers to the very process in which issues become pertinent and important, which is obviously a key part of strategy-making that is difficult to pin down or understand with more conventional approaches to strategy (Cooren, 2020). Based on a detailed analysis of strategy conversations, Bencherki et al. identify and elaborate on ‘presentifying,’ ‘substantiating,’ ‘attributing, and ‘crystallizing. matters of concern as the key communicative

practices that are used in materialization. By so doing, their analysis helps to elucidate the communicative foundations of strategy-as-practice research more generally.

Whittle et al. in turn offer an illuminating analysis of the front- and back-stage practices of strategy-making. They focus on a change in the ‘strategy arrangement,’ i.e. the practices used in strategy work and the people in the strategy team. Drawing on Goffman-inspired dramaturgical perspective, they elaborate on front- and back-stage practices and their interrelationships. What they find is that front-stage impressions need to be maintained through preventive and corrective practices, and that the backstage practices may involve both ‘behind-the-scenes’ work and conspiring. More generally, their paper offers an important contribution to strategy-as-practice research by illuminating the dramaturgical dynamics at play. Like Tavella and Bencherki et al., this paper also serves as an excellent example of fine-grained analysis of communication, thereby showing us in detail how these practices are enacted and to what effect.

What then?: Communicative construction of strategic change and its implications

The final three papers then deal with the communicative construction of strategic change in distinctively different ways and especially highlight the organizational implications thereof. First, in their theoretical paper, Marc Krautzberger, Emamdeen Fohim, François Cooren and Thomas Schumacher (2021) examine the communicative constitution of institutional change. They draw on communicative and rhetorical institutionalism (Cornelissen et al., 2015) to offer a novel perspective on institutional and strategic change and specifically use Goffman’s ideas about ‘expression games’ to understand the dynamics of concealing and revealing intentions. Thus, they focus on the interactive processes of ‘secretive coalition building’ that is needed to promote change in conditions where the actors lack legitimacy in promoting their ideas. They develop a theoretical model that demonstrates how change agents first conceal and then reveal their intentions over time

in order to manage potential negative reactions and to protect their strategic initiatives. This helps to understand an important issue in strategic change: how initially masked strategic intentions can be transformed into initiatives that can finally bring about institutional change.

For their part, Mairi Maclean, Charles Harvey, Benjamin Golant and John Sillince (2021) offer a historical perspective on how narratives play a key role in strategic change. More specifically, they focus on innovation narratives and how they are used in accomplishing organizational ambidexterity. Their historical analysis of top management team speeches at Procter & Gamble between 1987 and 2001 reveals four innovation narratives: ‘contextualizing,’ ‘mutualizing,’ ‘dramatizing,’ and ‘focalizing.’ Each of these narratives played an important role in dealing with the in-built tensions of change and enabled the maintenance of ambidexterity at Procter & Gable in specific time periods. Their analysis specifically shows how it is through a process of ongoing critique and resolution that a narrative infrastructure of organizational ambidexterity emerges – both enabling and constraining the actors. By so doing, their study helps to better understand the ongoing and dynamic nature of communication that is required to both maintain what has been accomplished in previous change efforts and to promote new priorities. This analysis has also specific implications for narrative strategy work as it highlights the polyphonic nature of strategy narratives, another topic requiring more attention.

The final article by Joep Cornelissen and Magdalena Cholakova (2021) is a So!apbox Essay, i.e., an opinion piece with a distinctive point of view about a critical issue, rather than an empirical or conceptual paper. We have included it in this collection because it illustrates how a focus on language and communication can offer a critical perspective that might otherwise be missed. Specifically, the essay focuses on how the strategic activities of new kinds of sharing economy companies (“gig economy”) such as Uber are constructed. They adopt a categorization

perspective that helps them unravel the ways in which contested issues, such as the role of ‘individual workers’ is dealt with. Their analysis in particular illuminates how acts of ‘categorization’ (i.e., labelling), based on discursive constructions, are in fact moral and political in nature. This, they argue, has important implications for how we view strategic and institutional change and the actors involved in contemporary society.

Beyond Dualisms in Communicative Perspectives on Strategy

This leads us to turn to dualisms that have characterized research on the communicative aspects of strategizing and strategic change in the past: reflective vs. performative view of communication, focus on text vs. context, Big D vs. small d in discourse analysis, communication in the moment vs. over time, and convergence vs. divergence in strategic communication. The papers in this themed issue not only exemplify advances in specific perspectives and sophistication in methods but also show how studies of strategic communication can go beyond these dualisms – thus paving the way for future research in this area.

Reflective vs. performative language

Traditionally, language has not played a key role in strategy research, and the conventional views of communication also see language mainly as a reflection of other things – especially cognition, emotions or political interests. In this view, strategic ideas are developed first and then communicated to others. With the increasing interest in discourse and communication, scholars have started to embrace perspectives that – to a varying degree – emphasize the performative effects of language (for an overview, see Balogun et al., 2014). In essence, this means a performative view of communication: communication constructs reality, does things and leads to strategic implications.

If anything, this themed issue shows how the performative view has become in-built into increasingly sophisticated analysis of language use in the strategy context. This is theoretically most pronounced in the two papers – Bencherki et al. and Krautzberger et al. – drawing on the CCO perspective. This is a fruitful perspective that by definition sees language as constitutive and performative. However, the other papers also draw on different theoretical and methodological premises that include strong performative elements. This is especially the case with Mantere and Whittington's analysis of identity work where identity is constructed as individuals speak about and reflect on their experiences, Tavella's study of inclusion and exclusion as it takes place in conversations, and Cornelissen and Cholakova's analysis of how strategic categories are discursively constructed in society.

However, the position taken in all these papers is nuanced in the sense that while language does things, these effects are seen as part of a myriad of other cognitive, emotional and political processes. We see great value in continuing this line of work that embraces a performative view of communication. Such a view does not have to imply a stance that would place language above anything else, but it helps highlight the key point that communication matters and shows how this happens.

Focus on text vs. context

A divide in relation to strategy research involves whether the focus is on either 'text' (i.e., specific linguistic expressions used in incidents of communication) or 'context' (the situation in which language use occurs). Much strategy research has generally emphasized context with limited attention to the specifics of language. This is the case with the seminal process study papers (Burgelman, 1983; Mintzberg, 1978; Pettigrew, 1992) as well as newer analyses in strategy-as-practice (Balogun and Johnson, 2004; Jarzabkowski, 2005) research. These studies have

emphasized the contextual nature of strategic phenomena – with little attention placed on actual examples of communication. Newer studies focusing on strategic communication have in contrast brought with them detailed attention to specific language or ‘text’ – be this expressed in strategy conversations (Kwon et al., 2014; Samra-Fredericks, 2003) or strategy documents (Cornut et al., 2012; Spee and Jarzabkowski, 2011). This focus on the microlevel analysis of text has been particularly pronounced in linguistic approaches such as critical discourse analysis (CDA) or conversation analysis. Some communication scholars, especially conversation analysts, argue in fact that the interpretation of ‘texts,’ or in this case conversations, does not require anything outside itself because context is always somehow expressed within it (Maynard and Clayman, 1991).

The papers in this themed issue offer illuminating examples of how to do both: engage in in-depth analysis of ‘text’ (language) in a specific context. In particular, Tavella, Bencherki et al., and Whittle et al. offer wonderful examples of discourse analysis that focuses on specific conversations and texts, which are then placed in the broader organizational and social context. Tavella’s study does that by analyzing the discursive practices of inclusion and exclusion in the specific context of strategy meetings where the hierarchical relationships among protagonists is critical to the interpretation, thus contributing to our theoretical understanding of participation in this context. Bencherki et al. offer an illuminating study of materialization – how issues become matters of concern – which combines both the linguistic and material aspects of the process. Whittle et al. in turn make frontstage and backstage key parts of their analysis and argument, and their point is precisely to elucidate the role of these practices in these different contexts. By so doing, these papers are examples of what we call a ‘text-in-context’ approach, which seems like a way forward towards increasingly targeted analysis of language use in strategy.

Big D vs. little d

Communicative perspectives can be linked with more macro-level discursive phenomena sometimes called ‘Big D’ or focus on more micro-level interactions called ‘little d’ (Alvesson and Kärreman, 2000). Analysing Big D ideas can help us to understand how strategy-making or strategic change are linked with broader social and societal norms and values. This is exemplified by Foucauldian (Ezzamel and Willmott, 2008; Knights and Morgan, 1991) or Bourdieusian (Oakes et al., 1998) analysis bringing critical perspectives into strategy research. In this collection, Cornelissen and Cholakova offer the clearest example of Big D oriented analysis as they elucidate how the category of individual workers is constructed and subject to struggle when dealing with the strategic activities of new sharing economy companies. This kind of analysis is needed to place communication in its broader context, and it specifically allows critical reflection.

In contrast, studies focusing on language use within organizations exemplify a ‘little d’ orientation. Such studies have focused on strategy conversations (Kwon et al., 2014; Samra-Fredericks, 2003), use of rhetoric in strategy work (Jarzabkowski and Sillince, 2007; Sorsa and Vaara, 2020) and strategy texts (Kornberger and Clegg, 2011; Spee and Jarzabkowski, 2011). Following and enriching this line of inquiry, several papers in this collection concentrate on the micro-level discursive practices. Tavella identifies discursive practices (assigning responsibility, justifying assignments) that enable or impede participation, Bencherki et al. elaborate communicative practices (presentifying, ‘substantiating,’ ‘attributing,’ and ‘crystallizing’) used in constructing ‘matters of concern’ in a strategic planning process, and Whittle et al. reveal specific frontstage and backstage practices in strategy work. Such work is important as it helps us better understand language use in concrete situations, and these papers are remarkable examples of careful analysis that add to our understanding of key issues in strategy.

Interestingly, some papers also combine Big D and little d approaches. Mantere and Whittington's detailed analysis of individual managers' narratives (little d) links managers' identity work to societal-level strategy discourse about strategy (big D), which helps the managers to see their work as appropriate and important. Krautzberger et al. in focus on how change agents first conceal and then reveal their intentions to manage potential negative reactions and to protect their strategic initiatives about institutional change – thus combining microlevel practices with the broader institutional change efforts. Maclean et al. in turn zoom in on narrative practices when illuminating key dynamics in major changes over time.

In our view, these papers offer inspiring examples of how communicative perspectives can be used differently to focus on specific issues, Big D or little d, but we especially value analyses that are able to combine both elements in increasingly targeted analyses of specific communicative phenomena. This seems to be a particularly fruitful direction for future research. For instance, the CCO or CDA perspectives offer tools to engage in detailed micro-level analysis (little d) that links with broader organizational and societal discourses (Big D).

In the moment vs. over time

As we see from the articles in this themed issue, studying strategy using a communicative perspective often involves focusing on the language used in specific moments and incidents examined in fine-grained detail so that the significance of particular expressions and their sequencing within these incidents can be fully captured and understood. Indeed, several studies in our collection dive deeply into short strips of interaction (lasting no more than a few minutes each) where we see how different linguistic elements are brought together to constitute strategy-relevant concepts such as participation or matters of concern (e.g., Tavella, Bencherki et al.). This kind of fine-grained analysis of communicative practices and their potentially important effects in the

moment is a unique strength of these studies, and something that is cruelly missing from much of mainstream strategy research.

In contrast, while some of the communication-based studies presented here dive deeply into micro-incidents, others (e.g., notably, for example Maclean et al.) take a much longer perspective, drawing attention to the way in which organizational level narratives generated in top management level communications project a consistent strategic orientation, over long periods of time (in Maclean et al.'s case oriented toward ambidextrous innovation over a 15-year historical period). While still focusing on the use of language, this is a very different perspective on the relation between communication and strategy, where the focus is on continuity and discontinuity over long periods of time rather in the moment. This longer term perspective on organizational communication recalls Kuhn's (2008: 1227) proposal for a "*communicative theory of the firm*" in which a firm's strategic trajectory is continually authored and reauthored through the overlaying, exchange and accumulation of texts and conversations as firms "*marshal consent and attract capital through textually mediated practice.*"

Both these foci for analyzing communication (in the moment vs. over time) can offer important insights in themselves, but they clearly present very different images of how communication relates to strategy and strategic change. They also create different conceptual and methodological challenges for researchers. In the first case, readers might ask how the description of micro-incidents in the moment relate to a more mainstream notion of strategy which covers a much longer temporal sweep. In the second case, readers might ask how the broad narratives constructed by managers over time relate to strategically important actions and interactions that organizations might be undertaking in the every day.

Interestingly, the two perspectives are complementary, although not always easy to combine explicitly in the same study. Nevertheless, Tavella, Bencherki et al., and Maclean et al. take care to contextualize the specific linguistic elements they analyse in depth by using broader datasets that serve as a ground or backdrop for their studies. As Samra-Fredericks (2003) points out, complementary sources of data to those analysed in detail (e.g., ethnographic observations over time in the cases of Tavella and Bencherki et al., or complementary archival records for Maclean et al.) are important to illuminate interpretations of textual or conversational sources. Alternatively, studies such as that of Whittle et al. and Krautzberger et al. suggest ways in which the meanings of specific conversations (communication in the moment) can be better understood when their positioning within a chain of other conversations spreading out over time is considered. Since strategy is a phenomenon that emerges over the longer term, but may be influenced by activities in the moment, more studies that combine these two perspectives would be warranted.

Convergence vs. divergence

One of the traditional assumptions in strategy research has been the need to create shared understanding and commitment (Floyd and Wooldridge, 1992). Thus, research focusing on communication has often dealt with the processes and practices concerned with achieving such alignment or convergence. Divergence has in turn been given less attention in the sense that different perspectives or resistance have been typically considered problems to be overcome in reaching consensus. However, studies on resistance have started to unravel this side of strategy work or strategic change, too (Ezzamel and Willmott, 2008; Thomas et al., 2011; Rantakari and Vaara, 2016).

Interestingly, the papers in this collection help to highlight this divergence in detailing practices used in strategy work, including Tavella's analysis of inclusion vs. exclusion and Whittle

et al.'s elaboration of the tensions involved in having a specific team in charge of strategy-making. Such a political view is even more pronounced in Krautzberger et al.'s analysis of institutional change, and it is the focal point in Maclean et al.'s study of ambidexterity in narratives. However, rather than only looking at divergence, these papers offer insights into how convergence and divergence are both at play in strategy work and strategic change. In particular, these contributions highlight how the achieved consensus or compromise oftentimes also includes suppressed ideas or marginalized voices.

An opportunity for future research would be to go even deeper into the pluralism and polyphony in these processes. In particular, narrative perspectives, such as work on narrative infrastructure (Fenton and Langley, 2011) or Maclean et al.'s analysis here, can illuminate how different ways of representing strategic ideas may be seen as alternatives that co-exist in organizational strategizing. Such narrative analysis could also draw from Bakhtin-inspired work that zooms in on dialogicality and polyphony (Boje, 2008; Vaara et al., 2016).

Looking Ahead

We have learned a lot about the role of communication in strategic organization, but a closer look at this area of research also shows a need to develop ways in which we can capture key aspects of language use in specific contexts. This themed issue has given us an opportunity to take stock of recent papers, which offer exciting theoretical contributions and inspiring examples for future research. While there are many kinds of opportunities for future work, we wish in closing to highlight three themes inspired by these papers: (1) The need to focus on issues and problems that matter strategically (e.g. becoming and acting as a strategist, participation, emergence of strategic issues, frontstage and backstage strategy work, pushing forward strategic and institutional change, dealing with ambidexterity, and creating categories in strategic activities), (2) The need to

recognize and build on the sophistication and authenticity of theoretical and methodological approaches to communication that often hail from outside the field of mainstream strategy (e.g. using critical discourse analysis, the ‘communication as constitutive of organizations’ perspective, as well as engaging in more widely recognized approaches such as ethnography, or narrative analysis), and (3) The opportunity to think outside the box and thus continue to both challenge and contribute to the agenda of mainstream strategy research.

In terms of the first point, the papers in this issue reveal that what may seem like relatively ‘small’ aspects of communication often matter more than one might imagine. The way in which strategic issues are identified (Bencherki et al.), and who can participate them (Tavella) can for example make all the difference to important outcomes in terms of the nature of strategies pursued and accepted, and ultimately for competitive advantage. The all-important political negotiations that determine strategy (Krautzberger et al., Whittle et al.) occur through communicative interactions. Understanding how this happens is crucial. Moreover, if communication can as we suggest be ‘performative,’ it is important to understand how, why and in what circumstances what is said, written and communicated among strategists contributes to determining firm trajectories. Looking beyond the articles in this issue, there are opportunities to mobilize communicative perspectives more intensively to explore the role of new media and technologies in shaping strategy development and implementation. Some work has begun to emerge in this area (related to the notion of ‘open strategy’), but more would be welcome.

The second point that comes out loud and clear from these papers is the increasing sophistication in drawing on specific theoretical and methodological traditions. For instance, the papers drawing on CCO (Bencherki et al. and Krautzberger et al.) and ethnography (Tavella and Whittle et al.) show in-depth understanding of these approaches and furthermore serve as examples

of how to apply them in way that fits with their specific research question and context. The same can be said about the other papers that draw on several traditions to offer a context-specific lens to help us dig deeper into key issues in strategy research. All the empirical papers also *show* and not only tell how language is used and its implications in a specific context. In our view, this is the way forward in this area of research. Nevertheless, there are also other theories and methods that should be used in future research. For example, materiality and multimodality are important aspects of strategy and strategizing that require specific tools and techniques (Gylfe et al., 2016; Wenzel and Koch, 2018). Although there are detailed analysis of strategy meetings and conversations in them (e.g. Tavella and Whittle et al in this issue), future research could benefit from more specific applications of critical discourse analysis or conversation analysis to highlight the microlevel dynamics of discursive interaction. Finally, it seems that this area thrives from interdisciplinary research efforts, and this is needed also in the future to enrich our understanding of the communicative aspects of strategic decision-making and strategic change.

Finally, we argue that a particular value of communicative perspectives on strategic organization is that they help scholars think outside the box, by throwing new light on taken-for-granted phenomena relevant to strategic management. By digging into the textual traces organizations leave behind, as well as the way in which interactions among people (including the very words they speak) contribute to constructing the world, we defamiliarize that world, enabling us to understand aspects of it that are often invisible (e.g., Whittle et al., Krautzberger et al.), revealing how and why things might have been different, and even potentially opening up that world to critique (e.g., Cornelissen et al. this issue). *Strategic Organization* remains open to further contributions that adopt communicative perspectives to illuminate strategy and organization.

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Table 1: Contributions to the Themed Issue

	Theoretical resources	Methodological approach	Key findings and contributions
Mantere & Whittington: <i>Becoming a strategist: The roles of strategy discourse and ontological security in managerial identity work.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Strategy-as-practice - Narrative lens on identity work - Giddens' notion of ontological security 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Repeated narrative interviews with 19 managers; - Coding, memoing of narrative vignettes 	Shows how ontological security affects how managers draw on societal-level discourses to narrate their identities as 'strategists' using tactics of 'self-measurement,' 'self-construction' and 'self-actualization'
Tavella: <i>The discursive construction of participation: Assigning and justifying responsibility in management meetings</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Strategy-as-practice - Discourse analysis 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Recordings of management meetings - Detailed analysis of language use in meeting conversations 	Illuminates discursive practices ('assigning responsibility,' 'justifying assignments') that differentially enable or impede participation in strategy, generating patterns of 'persistent exclusivity' or 'oscillating inclusion.'
Bencherki et al.: <i>How strategy comes to matter: Strategizing as the communicative materialization of matters of concern</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Communication as constitutive of organization (CCO) - Strategy-as-practice 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Recordings of management meetings - Detailed analysis of language use in strategy conversations 	Elucidates the communicative practices (presentifying,' 'substantiating,' 'attributing, and 'crystallizing') used to settle which topics become 'matters of concern' to be treated as significant 'strategic' issues.
Whittle, Gilchrist, Mueller & Lenney: <i>The art of stage-craft: A dramaturgical perspective on strategic change</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Goffman-inspired dramaturgical perspective - Strategy-as-practice 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ethnographic data; personal diaries - Linguistic analysis of conversations and interviews (narratives) 	Shows the dramaturgical front-stage/ back-stage dynamics at play in determining who leads strategy. Front-stage impressions are maintained through preventive and corrective practices. Back-stage practices involve both 'behind-the-scenes' work and conspiring.
Krautzberger, Fohim, Cooren & Schumacher: <i>The communicative constitution of institutional change in expression games</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Institutional theory - Communication as constitution of organizations (CCO) - Goffman's expression games 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Conceptual paper 	Develops model showing how initially masked strategic intentions can be transformed through "expression games" (successive concealing and revealing) into initiatives that can bring about strategic and institutional change.
Maclean, Harvey, Golant & Sillince: <i>The role of innovation narratives in accomplishing organizational ambidexterity</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Communicative and rhetorical institutionalism - Ambidexterity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Top management team speeches at Proctor & Gamble over 15 years - Narrative analysis 	Shows how innovation narratives (by 'contextualizing,' 'mutualizing,' 'dramatizing,' and 'focalizing) enable ongoing critique of prior initiatives while seeding new ones in accomplishing organizational ambidexterity over time.
Cornelissen & Cholakova: <i>Profits Uber everything? The gig economy and the morality of category work</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Categorization and labelling 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - So!apbox essay - Analysis of the empirical example of Uber 	Illuminates how acts of 'categorization' (i.e., labelling), based on discursive constructions, are moral and political in nature, drawing on the example of the category of 'independent workers' used by sharing economy companies and judged to be misleading