

WORKING VALUES: AN ANALYSIS OF LANGUAGE POLICIES AND THEIR  
ALIGNMENT WITH ORGANIZATIONAL VALUES

by

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## **Abstract**

Previous language policy research and lawsuit rulings have shown that employers will implement language policies as a means to unify the workplace in hopes of creating a less hostile and more productive environment, which in turn, they believe will increase profits (Bergman, Watrous-Rodriguez, & Chalkely 2007; Crowe 2005; Pakiela 2002; Scott 2007). This study examined the values of an organization in order to determine how they are implemented and perceived by their employees in relationship to language policies. The reason this study looks to values is because they provide a foundation for culture and, subsequently, identity.

A three part qualitative analysis utilizing Glaser and Strauss's (1967) constant comparative method (CCM) was conducted to identify the values within the culture of one organization. It was uncovered that the current climate of the organization was not the result of the implementation of language policies. Instead, the language barriers and complications within the organization were the result of merging companies and the lack of one cohesive culture.

**KEYWORDS:** Language Policies, Organizational Communication, Values, Identity, Close Textual Analysis, Constant Comparative Method

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## CHAPTER 1 - Introduction

A survey conducted in 2008 by the National Association of Colleges and Employers found “that employers named [and ranked] ‘communication skills, a strong work ethic, teamwork skills, initiative, and interpersonal skills’ as the most sought after qualities in new hires” (Di Meglio 2007 c.f. Bowers and Metcalf 2008, p. 2). Additionally, employers seek a diverse work environment; they recognize the benefits of having individuals from other countries contributing to the workplace (Goll & Sambharya 1995; Pakielia 2002; Scott 2007). In other words, employers demand effective communication and teamwork skills because they depend on their employees to work well with each other in order to maximize profits; hence, employers seek out such skills because they focus on the bottom line.

Similarly, Keyton and Beck (2008) suggest, “Teams are presumed to make better decisions than individuals (Hollenbeck et al. 1995), and team decision making has long been lauded as a vehicle for increasing participation, perceptions of fairness, and acceptance of decision outcomes (Brodbeck et al., 2007)” (p. 488). However, diversity in the workplace can lead to problems in establishing group attributes – “Groups and teams are defined by group size, group goal, group member interdependence, group structure, and group identity” (Keyton & Beck 2008, p. 489). Effectively, group identity may be hindered because of diversity.

Group identity is only established “when they behave as a group, believe they belong to the group, and like being in the group” (Henry, Arrow, & Carini 1999 c.f. in Keyton & Beck 2008, p. 491). Leonard, Mehra, and Katerberg (2008), in their study of the influence of ethnic diversity on relations in the organizational setting, note that members within the minority group form relationships and identify best with others within the same group. These members have a much harder time establishing connections with those who are not in the same ethnic minority

group. In other words, an employee who belongs to the minority group of the organization may feel out of place in a group of non-minorities; therefore, they will not be able to fully develop an identity with that group.

In addition to not being of the same ethnicity, another issue of group identity in the United States is that an employee may not speak English as well as the native speakers in their group. Non-native English-speaking employees are rising as an issue in today's U.S. organizations because, "among people ages 5 to 17 – the U.S. workforce of tomorrow – English as a second language is even more common, as approximately 18% speak a language other than English at home" (Dietz & Pugh 2004, p. 365). The inability to establish connections with everyone because of a cultural or language difference hinders the group's ability to create one unified group culture or identity. To remedy this situation, employers have turned to the implementation of language policies.

Research explains that explicitly written language policies in the workplace prohibit the use of any language other than English (Callahan 2006; Crowe 2005; DeValle 2003; Dietz & Pugh 2004; Lu 2006; Pakiela 2002; Rodriquez 2006; Thorpe-Lopez 2007). This same research indicates that not only do these policies outline what is considered the appropriate, primary language (English) to be spoken in the workplace, they also outline when it is acceptable to use a second language (never on the premises, never in front of customers, only during breaks, or only when a customer initiates conversation in the second language first).

Although the Equal Employment Opportunities Commission (EEOC) under Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 has set guidelines that address language policies (the guidelines restrict the usage of said policies to only in matters of safety) employers still implement them. "In its Compliance Manual, the EEOC has indicated that such a rule will be justified only if



‘necessary for the safe and efficient job performance or the safe and efficient operation of the business,’” (Del Valle 2003, p. 133). In other words, Title VII prohibits employers from mandating language policies without the specific justification for safety reasons.

Previous language policy research and lawsuit rulings have shown, though, that employers will implement language policies as a means to unify the workplace in hopes of creating a less hostile and more productive environment, which in turn, they believe will increase profits (Bergman, Watrous-Rodriquez, & Chalkely 2007; Crowe 2005; Pakiela 2002; Scott 2007). However, this same research also indicates a negative response to language policies and has even shown the opposite effects resulting from the implementation of these policies.

Although currently unclear, an explanation for why these policies are failing may exist within the value structure of the organization as whole. That is, the values at the core of the organization that have been established to guide the actions of the organization; these are the values that employees work under and, thus, identify with. According to Keyton and Beck (2008),

Values are more important than attitudes or beliefs in explaining human behavior (Rokeach, 1969). Values guide choices about daily behavior (instrumental values, such as working hard) as well as influence lifelong objectives (terminal values, such as wealth accumulation). Both value types comprise a type of deep-level diversity, which is not explicit or easily apparent, but which is more likely to influence social integration than surface-level demographic characteristics (Lankau et al., 2007). (p. 495)

While research has indicated that the language policy itself is responsible for the hostile behavior of employees, this study focuses on another path as a possible explanation of the behavior resulting from language policies. This study examined the values of an organization in order to determine how they are implemented and perceived by their employees in relationship to language policies. The reason this study looks to values is because they provide a foundation for culture and, subsequently, identity.

If the formally written language policy does not align with the pre-existing values that establish the culture of the organization, it may result in employees no longer being able to identify with the culture of their organization; thus, the policy disrupts their organizational identity and even their individual identity. This identity clash then yields a decrease in worker satisfaction, which, in turn, decreases productivity. This argument can be seen in previous research that indicates an identity clash results in a decrease in worker satisfaction (for example, Ashforth & Mael 1989; Bergman, Watrous-Rodriquez, & Chalkely 2007) as well as previous research that indicates that a decrease in worker satisfaction yields a decrease in productivity (for example, Jurkiewicz and Giacalone 2004; Cheney, Zorn Jr., Planalp, and Lair 2008). This is to say that a formally written language policy that does not align with the values established within the culture is a lose-lose situation for both employee and employer. With that said, values in the organizational setting (i.e. the work life) are the primary focus of this study.

Values (and culture) are established by employers through mission statements (Falsey 1989; Fekete 2003; Roach 2009). Employees, then, establish a workplace identity through that culture (Keyton & Beck 2008). Additionally, individuals establish their personal identities through associating themselves with others. This association is often referred to as the organization's social identity.

“Social identity is defined as ‘the individual’s knowledge that he/she belongs to certain social groups together with some emotional and value significance to him/her of the group membership’” (Tajfel 1972: 31 c.f. Abrams and Hogg 1990, p. 2). Social Identity Theory (SIT), then, asserts, “One’s social identity is also clarified through social comparison....Individuals’ desire for positive self-evaluation provides a motivational basis for differentiation between social groups” (Abrams & Hogg 1990, p. 3). SIT explains how people are more likely to associate

themselves with groups that are considered the “in-groups”. That is, these groups are positively viewed by others and, thus, a large number of individuals are willing to associate themselves with that group. Included within the groups people affiliate themselves with is the workplace; the organization where one works has an impact on how they perceive themselves. Because of this, “SIT has become firmly entrenched as a vital lens through which to understand issues of identity and identification as they relate to organizations” (Scott 2007, p. 124). In other words, SIT contributes to the understanding of why people behave in certain ways and suggests members establish their identities and, subsequently, the identities are entrenched in their values.

“Organizational membership creates a very important social identity for many individuals. Organizational identification is thus a specific form of social identification where we refer to the self in terms of our organizational membership” (Scott 2007 p. 125). That is to say that people define themselves not as who they are, but what they do and who they do it for. Furthermore, individuals want to work for organizations with a positive image and values that align with their own (Bourne, Wilson, Lester, and Kickul 2009; Cheney, Christensen, Zorn Jr., and Ganesh 2004; Jurkiewicz and Giacalone 2004). This means they want their identity outside of the workplace to correspond with their identity within the workplace; it allows the individual to manage their multiple identities with greater ease. Essentially, there would not be multiple identities at all; their work life and home life identities would be one in the same. However, while this is desired by employees, it may be something that is sacrificed for the sake of maintaining a steady income.

Gossett (2002) explains that previous studies “have examined the impact of multiple and simultaneous identification pulls (such as work groups, professions, family etc.) upon a single worker” (p. 387). These studies have indicated that, “Each of these targets wants the member to

identify with their specific interests, but not all of the targets are necessarily compatible with each other” (p. 387). Gossett (2002) also indicates that previous research illustrates “the complexity of managing and manipulating the organizational identification process” for each worker (p. 386); each person has different forces vying for the employee to identify with it (or them). Thus, the less the employee has to adapt to the organization, the better because they already have other areas of their lives they have to which they adapt.

To clarify, whether these formal language policies are right or wrong is not of interest to this study. What is of interest is understanding why these policies are not yielding the desired effect employer’s intended – a united workplace. Currently language policies are perpetuating division and hostility (Bergman, Watrous-Rodriguez, & Chalkely 2007; Callahan 2006; Dietz & Pugh 2004; Parlman and Shoeman 1994; Thorpe-Lopez 2007). To develop a better understanding of why this division and hostility is occurring, the following question demands further exploration: *How do language policies align with the values of an organization?*

In order to answer this question, this study looked to one organization, D.S. Technologies<sup>i</sup>, as a case study. D.S. Technologies was chosen because it is the largest telecommunications company in the world; it offers services to nearly every country. Additionally, it employs individuals from a number of the countries it provides services to. A comparative analysis of D.S. Technologies’ formal and informal policies was conducted.

A qualitative analysis is important for the field of communication studies “because texts produce a stable representation of shifting reality, they are tools that heterogeneous groups of people use to regulate on another’s actions so they can work together” (Winsor 2007, p. 3). Furthermore, “...understanding texts-within-context would help to bridge macro accounts and

descriptions of workplace cultures with the micro practices that function within and constitute these sites” (Faber 2007, p. 204).

In other words, taking a more critical look at the texts that establish culture and identity only enables a better understanding of the behavior within the organizational setting. To further clarify, Goll and Smabharya (1995) explain,

An organization’s culture guides its behavior (Beyer 1981; Smircich 1983) and is expected to influence firm performance. In theory, it contributes to the coherence of a firm’s behavior, to the energy that employees bring, and to the performance of the company (Ansoff and Baker 1986). Several researchers have suggested that a strong culture leads to organizational excellence (e.g. Barney 1986). (p. 824)

Based on this, it can be said that if an organization has an unstable or inconsistent culture, it will be reflected in the performance, or even attitudes, of its employees.

“Critical text analysis provides a method for denaturalizing technologized regulatory processes, challenging such processes for a more transparent accountability of the specific reasons agents provide for their regulatory actions” (Faber 2007). Examining the texts of both the mission statement and the language policy as well as conducting interviews with employees reveals motives and tests for consistency of values uncovered from both methods. Lastly, this research is necessary because, much like the research of Dietz and Pugh (2004), it “draws attention to a social group that organizational behavior researchers have under-attended to immigrants and their issues in the workplace, such as English-only policies” (p. 378).

In order to answer all aspects of this question, this study will first look to a review of literature that has explored three areas: 1) the construction of values and culture within an organization, 2) values in mission statements, and 3) reactions to and impacts of the implementation of language policies in the workplace. Then, the qualitative methodology employed by this study will be described in greater detail and the findings of this study will be revealed. Finally, this study will conclude with a discussion of what the findings mean for D.S.

Technologies, how this study contributes to the field of organizational communication, and why it is necessary for this topic to be explored even further in future studies.

## **CHAPTER 2 - Literature Review**

### **Construction of values, culture, and identity**

#### *Values*

As mentioned in the introduction, Keyton and Beck (2008) explain that values consist of more than just beliefs and attitudes. Their research turns to Rokeach (1969) for a definition of values. They write, “Values are more important than attitudes or beliefs in explaining human behavior (Rokeach 1969). Values guide choices about daily behavior (instrumental values, such as working hard) as well as influence lifelong objectives (terminal values, such as wealth accumulation)” (p. 495). While Rokeach’s research applied the definition to individual values, Keyton and Beck (2008) apply it to individuals within the organizational context as part of teams. This can be seen when they note, “Consideration of values has been explored at the individual and organizational levels but not at the team level, where employees (or students) are more likely to engage in conversations that reveal value dissimilarity” (p. 495). However, Schwartz (1992, 1994), a successor to Rokeach, expanded the definition and established a theory regarding universal value sets that apply to the construction of individuals’ values and, in turn, their identity. This is the identity that is constructed outside of the organizational context, but wants to be maintained by the individual employees even when they are in the workplace. Moreover, these are the values they want to share with those they work with.

Schwartz defines values as “desirable transsituational goals, varying in importance, that serve as guiding principles in the life of a person or other social entity” (p. 21). Schwartz breaks down how values work as goals in four ways. He writes,

(1) they serve the interests of some social entity, (2) they can motivate action – giving it direction and emotional intensity, (3) they function as standards for judging and justifying action, and (4) they are acquired both through socialization to dominant group values and through the unique learning experiences of individuals. (p. 21)

In other words, through Schwartz’s psychological studies of values, he was able to determine that values established outside of the workplace provide motivation and/or justification for actions. Additionally, values are learned through group membership. Arguably, then, priorities are reflective of one’s values. While Schwartz’s definition is over a decade old, it continues to provide a foundation for value studies within the psychology field. For example, Anne (2007) looks to Schwartz’s definition of values and his values scale in order to provide an alternative means of measuring values.

While Schwartz’s definition only conveys the definition of individual values, organizational values are relatively similar constructs. In her book, Fekete (2003) explains not only why it is important for an organization to develop their personality, but also how to do it. She writes, “Values, like value systems, cannot be manufactured. They either exist or they don’t. Many times, we’ve seen companies in our workshops list a value that couldn’t pass the ultimate test: If you aren’t already doing it, it’s not a core value!” (p. 168). Fekete argues that actions of an organization should reflect the core values of that organization, not the other way around. Thus, it is the organization’s obligation to capture the values that motivate behaviors within their mission statement. Fekete (2003) continues to explain that values vary depending on the “personality” of the company. She provides lists within her book that outline what values may be embedded within mission statements and what personality they would correlate with. Among these values are: customers, loyalty, tradition, responsibility, innovation, and diversity, just to name a few (see Appendix A for the complete list).



Similar to Fekete (2003), Francis and Woodcock (1990) discuss in their book how an organization should go about establishing their values. They argue, “Values beget attitudes which specify behavior. The values of those who hold power fundamentally shape the character of an organization” (p. 4). Values within an organization, then, are established by whoever is in charge at the foundation of the company. Based on what both Fekete (2003) and Francis and Woodcock (1990) explain in the books, these values should not change over time.

According to Fekete (2003), “Statements of values should convey a timeless commitment – these are principles that you hold dear even when prevailing trends would nudge them aside” (p. 166). Values should remain consistent over time; once they are written in a mission statement they should not fluctuate from what is written in that statement. Francis and Woodcock (1990) also note with the necessity of an organization establishing their values through a statement. They write, “Without a shared understanding of mission, an organization is in peril of being figuratively, and perhaps literally, torn apart. Finally, Francis and Woodcock, like Fekete, provide a breakdown of values that may exist within an organization. Amongst these include: power, elitism, teamwork, opportunism, and so on (see Appendix B for full diagram).

While Fekete (2003) and Francis and Woodcock (1990) explain the overall construction of organizational values well, they neglect to show how poorly constructed values may be detrimental to the organization. Furthermore, they do not explain how organizational values coincide with individual values. Enz (1986) explains that in order for values to truly work in the organizational context, they must not only be shared by employees, they must be seen as important. This is clear when she writes,

Two necessary conditions must be met for value congruity to exist in an organization. First the same set of values must be shared by different organizational members. Similarity on organizational values, while necessary, is not sufficient. The second condition is that the set of organizational values must

be regarded as important or desirable. Thus value congruity encompasses both the sharing of values and the importance of values. (p. 48).

Enz (1986) also explains that if values of the organization are incongruent amongst the employees, it may result in each department having their own set of values. This means that if one department (e.g. marketing) believes the organizational value of teamwork is very important, but another department (e.g. sales) does not believe this, the organizational values will not be consistent and may lead to confusion amongst employees.

The research in this section showed how values are established in both the individual context and the organizational context. Furthermore, the research indicated why it is important for these values to be congruent not just from the individual and organizational contexts but also within the organizational context between departments. Finally, it is now clear how values in the organizational setting depend on the formal mission statement. These values captured in a mission statement, in turn, create and maintain the culture of the organization.

### *Culture*

Cheney, Christensen, Zorn Jr., and Ganesh (2004) write, “Cultures create and maintain patterns of similarities and difference largely through language...language is not a passive medium by which we simply record our experiences. It is a dynamic system of meaning through which we construct our world” (p. 84). It could be said, then, that the culture of an organization is actually constructed through the language used to articulate the values and goals; that is, the mission statements and policies of the organization. Also, it could be said that the behavior that exists within that organization is the result of those defined values and goals. Therefore, in order to understand the culture of an organization it is necessary to look to the language of these documents from which employees may develop their identities. Furthermore, mission statements are accessible by the public and allow them to understand what the organization stands for.

“Organizational theorists have maintained that members commonly define themselves in terms of what their organization represents (Ashforth & Mael 1989; Dutton, Dukerich & Harquail 1994; Elsbach 1999)...In other words, many of the associations that make up a company’s distinctiveness as an employer go beyond the perceived quality of its pay, benefits, and opportunities for promotion, and deal with less tangible properties of the corporation (e.g. Apple is ‘hip,’ IKEA is ‘fashionable’)” (Highhouse, Thornbury and Little 2005, p. 134). How the company is perceived by the public matters to the employee, and these perceptions can be established through public displays of the company’s mission statements; the culture of the company.

Cheney, et al. (2004) explain, “According to sociologist Talcott Parsons, culture is one of the basic institutions of society, and studying culture helps us see how a society perpetuates itself. To survive, a culture must ensure that individual members internalize its values, beliefs, and norms...” (p. 76). This means that an organization must reinforce and uphold the values, upon which it has been constructed, in order to maintain its culture. In other words, the mission statement provides the foundation upon which the company makes its decisions and management must follow. It is not the specific language within the mission statement that is of importance, it is how that mission statement is enacted that provides the true meaning to otherwise ambiguous statements.

According to Fekete (2003), “Culture is the sum of an organization’s behaviors, values, and goals. Culture is the environment a corporate entity creates for itself and operates within” (p. 137). It is also said that culture is what makes humans human and what allows humans to establish groups, or communities. “[Culture] helps communities make sense of themselves and their surroundings...[It], thus, is both the cause and the effect of human activity” (Cheney et al.

2004, p. 77). So, if an organization neglects to maintain a culture, it is impossible for its employees to come together as a team.

Each individual employee has their own culture that they identify with before they enter into an organizational setting; values, beliefs, and norms are developed in the private sphere, but are carried within the individual into the public sphere. This can be seen when Jurkiewicz and Giacalone (2004) discuss, “Consequently, individuals are seeking to merge their personal and professional values, desiring to achieve personal fulfillment through their labor (Block 1993)... Increasingly, the desired work experience has shifted from a career to earn a living to a vocation through which employees can express themselves and make a positive difference in the world (Neal 2000)” (p.129). In many cases, then, individuals find more satisfaction within workplaces established on a similar, if not the same, cultural framework. When that culture becomes inconsistent, they are more likely to become unsatisfied and leave to then seek out another organization they believe has a better aligned cultural framework with their own.

Jurkiewicz and Giacalone (2004) also explain how the culture of an organization is important because people want to be able to work within an environment where they not only make money but they establish relationships with others. They call this workplace spirituality. Workplace spirituality “has been defined as a framework of organizational values evidenced in the culture that promote employees’ experience of transcendence through the work process, facilitating their sense of being connected to others in a way that provides feelings of completeness and joy” (p.129). Essentially, then, if employees are not feeling as though they are connected with their organization by means of their shared values, they are unsatisfied.

Furthermore, Jurkiewicz and Giacalone (2004) paraphrase Altman (2001) to further elaborate on the importance of culture in the organization. They write, “Culture is a causal

variable in the growth and development of an organization, and more specifically, is a determinant of labor productivity essential to the predictive power of economic theory in competitive markets” (p. 130). Cheney, Zorn Jr., Planalp, and Lair (2008) make a similar argument. They cite Hamilton (2003) saying, “‘Purposeful work, rather than paid employment, provides the rewards most people crave’ (p. 157)” (p. 141).

To summarize, people seek satisfaction or fulfillment with their employment, more so from the relationships between employees and the culture of the organization than the actual responsibilities of their job. If the employer fails to provide this, then the employee’s well-being decreases and, subsequently, so does their productivity. As noted earlier, these inconsistencies are more likely to result in individuals leaving the organization or not join the staff to begin with.

### *Identity*

It has been established that organizational values yield organizational culture, but it is also important to examine how organizational culture yields personal and professional identity. This study is concerned with both organizational identity and individual identity within the organization. That is, how does the organization portray themselves to the public and how well is the individual able to identify with the organization’s values and culture with their personal set of values and culture. While it has already been implied in the previous discussion of culture, it should be clarified, and discussed further, that employees want to work for an employer with a cultural framework that aligns with theirs because they want to create an identity for themselves inside the company that aligns with their identity outside of the company.

Gossett (2002) notes,

Identification provides a feeling of connection or consubstantiality (shared substance) between two otherwise separate individuals. These identifying bonds facilitate communication, understanding, and a sense of common purpose. Identification is more than simply engaging in cooperative activity. It is a feeling

of mutuality that enables individuals to share the emotions, values, and decisions that allow them to act together. Identification is therefore a necessary social process. (p. 386)

In other words, lack of identification among employees would hinder productivity within a workplace. That is to say, it is critical for an organization to establish a culture with which its employees can identify and feel comfortable doing so. Furthermore, individuals want to work for a company, as Social Identity Theory discusses, that is in good standing with a large group of people.

Cheney, et al. (2004), describe corporate identity in “the context of everyday language” and they write, “We typically talk about identity when we want to refer to something special or unique that characterizes a social entity and sets it apart from its surroundings” (p. 108). That is an “identity is what makes it possible for us to recognize an individual or an organization as distinct” (p. 108). In order to make themselves more distinct, organizations tend to turn to language and the use of mission statements to manage their image, or their identity, to the public and to their employees.

Fekete (2004) takes it one step further and explains that a corporate identity consists of personality (“the fundamental basis of corporate identity, encompassing a company’s origins, experience, and infrastructure and the current composition of its employees, clients, products, services, and physical plant), culture (“the sum of an organization’s behaviors, values, and goals”), and brand (“the face an organization projects to the outside world”). Additionally, Fekete writes, “successful companies acknowledge a high degree of interdependence among the three” (p. 137). Essentially, then, if a company neglects to acknowledge these elements when attempting to establish an identity, they run the risk of failing all together; the public will not recognize them, thus making it an undesirable place to work.

The research presented here indicates that the organization must not only create an environment that employees can identify with through its values and culture, they must maintain that environment over the years. So, when implementing new rules or policies, they must align with the identity that has already been established. Otherwise, “given enough time, a lack of common values will paralyze an organization’s ability to do business” (Morin 1995). This only provides further justification for the present study and illustrates the need to look to company mission statements in order to understand their culture.

### **Organizational Values in Mission Statements**

Eisenberg, Goodall, and Trethewey (2007) argue that culture is developed within organizations unconsciously through their ideologies. They suggest, “ideology is the medium through which social reality is constructed – it shapes what seems ‘natural’ and it makes what we think and do seem ‘right’” (cf. Deetz & Kersten 1983, p. 170). Fagiano (1995) argues that organizations consciously capture their culture through the articulation of values in their mission statements. He writes, “Personalities and cultures are formed by values because, quite simply, values state what is important to individuals or businesses” (p. 5). That is to say that capturing their values helps an organization establish their culture and, in turn, their identity.

In order to capture these values, it is recommended that organizations develop a mission statement. An article that discusses why organizations should write mission statements says, “Awareness of an organization’s values and the assumptions the organization makes about the external and internal environment are elements of an overall strategic plan. Planning is a way of influencing future events so that the organization is more successful” (Ives 1991, p. 38). A mission statement takes the guesswork out of determining the purpose and values of the organization for its employees as well as its customers. However, organizations must take great

care in writing their mission statements as “members of any organization will be particularly vigilant for, and sensitive to, information about critical issues that will vary across companies and across time” (Fairhurst, Jordan, and Neuwirth 1997, p. 247). Furthermore, organizations cannot just stop at writing their mission statement; they must manage their meanings and align their actions with them.

In their study, Fairhurst, et al. (1997) identified how companies manage the meaning of mission statements (interchangeable with vision statements). They write, “According to Swales and Rogers (1995), Mission Statements stress ‘values, *positive* behaviors, and guiding principles within the framework of the corporation’s *announced* belief system and ideology’ (p. 227; emphasis in the original)” (p. 243). It is clear that mission statements consciously capture the organization’s values and provide a significant foundation for the corporate culture, but other elements can contribute to the overall culture and ideology. This is particularly noteworthy for this study because it provides an resource for identifying the core values of an organization<sup>ii</sup>.

In short, it has been seen in this section that if an organization wants to establish a certain culture and identity, they must do so by capturing their values through a mission statement. However, the implementation of a mission statement is not effective unless they also manage the meaning of it and align their actions with it, simultaneously. So, if the values of the organization are at the forefront of every workday with a mission statement, then it would be expected that all other policies in the workplace also reflect those values.

### **Organizational Language Policies**

As previously indicated, the number of non-English, multilingual speakers in the United States is rapidly growing; thus, the number of multilingual employees in the workforce is also growing. Parlman and Shoeman (1994) write that because of this, “A growing trend that seeks



to preserve the English language has been born” (p. 551). This trend can be seen with the existence of groups such as U.S. English and English-First, both of which fight for the declaration of English as the standard language of the United States<sup>iii</sup>. Although the implementation of language policies in the workplace is the result of these social movement organizations, this study argues that workplaces do not implement language policies under political motives, but instead under profit motives. Parlman and Shoeman (1994) write,

The imposition of English-only workplace rules is a recent phenomenon among employers. Largely due to the wave of immigration and the concomitant increase in the population of multilingual speakers, many employers are adopting some form of English-only rules....The adoption of the rule is usually premised on an intention to alleviate some actual or perceived potential disharmony among their staff involving large controversies. (p. 552)

There are two important things to note from this excerpt as they directly contribute to the present study. First, language policies (interchangeable with English-only policies) have existed for the past twenty years, but very little research actually exists on the impacts of these policies in the workplace. Secondly, workplaces have been justifying language policies as a means to alleviate tensions and resurrect harmony between employee to employee as well as employee to customer interactions since, what appears to be, the beginning of implementing such policies.

Despite the justifications employers were giving for implementing these policies, the end result was not occurring. Stoter (2008) discusses incidences of disgruntled employees as a result of language policy implementation. She writes, “English-only rules seem to be the natural response to the growing uneasiness many Americans feel about the recent flux of immigrants....Cloaked in terms like ‘business necessity’ and ‘workplace harmony,’ English-only rules commonly pass judicial scrutiny...” (line 598-599). Stoter continues to explain that law suits regarding English-only policies are often overlooked because of the justifications provided by the employer.

Additionally, Dietz and Pugh (2004) conducted research in which they surveyed non-immigrants and immigrant families about their opinions on English-only policies and the corresponding justifications that were provided by the employers. Within this article, they explain, that despite EEOC standards,

Employers, hence, have the onus of providing justifications for English-only workplace policies. These justifications have included improved communication among employees or between employees and customers, leading to increased operational efficiency, occupational safety, higher sales volumes, or a more unified workforce (cf. Lewis, 2000). (p. 366-367)

This indicates that the employees do not have any say in the implementation of the policies. Instead, it is up to the authority figures of the organizations to decide when it is necessary to implement the policies and how they will justify them to the employees. Ultimately, though, the motivation is efficiency, and in turn, more profits.

Dietz and Pugh (2004) studied 342 participants from a state university in Southern California and found “... that business justifications were successful in influencing the attitudes of non-immigrants toward the English-only policies, but did not influence attitudes of individuals from immigrant families” (p. 365). This means that no matter what justification the employer provides for its employees, individuals are not going to respond to the policies in the same manner. Essentially, then, even “well-intended explanations of [the managers’] actions and policies may yield unintended side-effects in terms of exposing diverse viewpoints among members of their workforce” (p. 378). Based on this research, multilingual employees or employees from multilingual families were unsatisfied by any implementation of the policies. One possible explanation for this may be offered by Callahan’s (2006) research. That is, multilingual employees automatically gauge what language is being used and respond appropriately.

Callahan (2006) looked to interactions between employees of several New York City businesses and customers when English was not the primary shared language between the two. In this study, Callahan explored the application of speech accommodation theory to interactions to determine when and if employees use English versus Spanish when speaking with customers. Callahan's research found that, "Workers base their language choices on both linguistic competence and episode-external ideological factors. Linguistic competence has to do with in what language(s) participants in an exchange can produce utterances, and episode-external ideological factors have to do with questions of allegiance to and ownership of a language" (p. 46-47). In short, employees used the language shared by both parties within the interaction and they allowed the customer to speak first. Furthermore, "this study has established the fact that there is a high percentage of language accommodation during service encounters, regardless of the ethnic constitution of the neighborhood in which the encounter takes place" (p. 47). These conclusions may help provide some reasoning as to why employees are unsatisfied with the implementation of these policies; it is possible that these employees believe the policies, especially those pertaining to employee to customer interactions, are unnecessary.

Although language policies that have mandates for interactions between employees and customers may not be seen as necessary, a 2002 case study explains why language policies could be implemented when handling employee to employee interactions. The case study details the process a human resources employee might have to go through in order to squelch potential law suits brought about by enforced language policies (Pakiela 2002). Within the case study, Pakiela notes, "Having a diverse workforce is a distinct competitive advantage in today's diverse marketplace. Diversity in the workplace improves a company's understanding of customer needs and the ability of the company to meet those needs" (p. 617). However, Pakiela later discusses

that the language policy was initially implemented because of native English-speaking employees complained about non-native English-speaking employees having a conversation in their native language. The employee complained that it made her feel uncomfortable because she thought the others were talking about her (p. 617).

From the research presented here, reactions to and justification for language policies vary. However, what the research presented does not do is try to explain why these reactions and justifications vary. It is for this reason that this study seeks to explore the values articulated in mission statements and whether the language policies align with them.

## CHAPTER 3 - Method

### Research Site

The largest telecommunications company in the world in terms of revenue, hereafter known as D.S. Technologies, was the organization chosen for this case study. According to their website, “Our customers work and live in virtually every country and territory in the world. We serve millions of enterprise and multinational business corporations on six continents.” Recall that previous language policy research identified increased productivity in order to increase profits as the reasoning for implementing language policies. This means D.S. Technologies must manage this diversity and the language barriers that come with it in order to maintain their position as the largest telecommunications company based on revenue.

Finally, in March 2009, D.S. Technologies ranked 34 on a list of the 50 Most Admired Companies in the World by *Fortune* magazine, the first time in the companies’ history. According to companies’ press release on their website, “Companies are rated on attributes that include the ability to attract and retain talented people, quality of products and services, quality of management, innovation, social responsibility, use of corporate assets and long-term investment value.” Given this criteria to receive such recognition, D.S. Technologies was of particular interest to this study in order to determine whether such an admired company’s management of diversity publicly aligned with its management of diversity privately.

## **Data Collection**

### ***Part 1: Mission Statement & Language Policy Texts***

The mission statement of D.S. Technologies was collected from the company's public website, as directed by an employee of their Human Resource department. This same employee provided me with an electronic copy of the company's diversity handbook. This book is distributed to all employees and is also accessible via the company's intranet. Although this book does not specifically contain a formal language policy (that is, one that broke down when employees can speak a language other than English), it does provide strategies on how to cope with language barriers; thus, this indicates that the barriers do exist and are expected to be managed by the employees. These documents, entitled, "When Language Causes a Barrier," and "10 Ways to Create Understanding and Harmony in a Diverse Workplace" are the two that were of primary concern for this study.

### ***Part 2: Interviews***

Interviews of fifteen employees were conducted during non-business hours the last two weeks of February. Interviewees were chosen from a variety of departments and in a variety of positions within the company. All interviewees had to be currently employed by D.S. Technologies. An internal contact of D.S. Technologies sent out a recruiting e-mail on behalf of the researcher to nearly thirty colleagues. Additionally, several of these colleagues passed the e-mail on to their colleagues. A total of nearly fifty employees were contacted. Those willing to help were instructed to contact the primary researcher via e-mail. Only fifteen employees contacted the researcher to participate. In other words, interviewees were determined by who volunteered; they were in no way selected by the researcher. After employees contacted the researcher, interviews were scheduled at the convenience of the interviewee.

Interviews averaged fifteen minutes in length and were conducted over the phone, seeing as many interviewees were from out of state. Every interviewee was asked the same series of open ended questions determined prior to the interview (see Appendix A). These questions were geared towards uncovering how D.S. Technologies manages diversity and how their values are informally communicated. In other words, they were designed to provide an understanding for how employees perceived company policies. For example, interviewees were asked to explain how D.S. Technologies instructs or trains its employees to overcome challenges that may result from language barriers. Furthermore, they were asked to explain an experience where they have had to manage a language barrier and how they did it. These pre-determined questions were followed closely unless further clarification was needed; in which case, questions of clarification were asked.

Interviews were recorded and transcribed for analysis. Upon completion of the interviews, only fourteen of the fifteen interviews were able to be transcribed due to a technology malfunction. However, from those fourteen interviews, nearly 40 typed pages, double spaced, of data were gathered.

### **Data Analysis**

This study consisted of a three part qualitative analysis. A qualitative analysis was chosen because “They engender a different, salient form of understanding. Qualitative methods enable us to investigate situated action, to illuminate the meanings and practices that constitute actual succession events, and, thus, to facilitate fuller awareness of context and process (Anderson, 1987; Lindlof, 1995)” (cf. Ashcraft 1999, p. 252). The first part of this qualitative analysis examined the mission statement and language policy of D.S. Technologies to determine what values were formally communicated. The second part consisted of interviewing employees of

D.S. Technologies to better understand how the formal policies are enforced as well as how they are perceived by employees. Finally, the results from both were compared to determine if they aligned. Essentially, a comparative analysis was performed in order to reveal the congruency of the embedded values from the mission statement, the documents pertaining to the use of language at work, and the responses from the interviews, within D.S. Technologies.

### ***Part 1: Mission Statement & Language Policy Texts***

“Human beings are ‘conditioned’ not directly to belief and behavior, but to a vocabulary of concepts that function as guides, warrants, reasons, or excuses for behavior and belief” (McGee 1980). It is for this reason an analysis of the language used in mission statements and language policies was of particular interest to this study. As previously established in the literature review, words merely represent the already established belief and behavior, they do not *create* the belief and behavior. Furthermore, the implications and power of these words vary from individual to individual.

How this applies to organizational texts is twofold. First, as previously discussed, if people seek employers with similar sets of values and beliefs they can identify with the organization. Then, organizations must present their values and beliefs in a way that attracts employees without putting too many limitations on the types of employees they hope to attract. That is to say that, “mission statements are written in a strategically ambiguous way to maximize interpretive flexibility (Eisenberg 1984)” (cf. Fairhurst, et al. 1997). In other words, mission statements are written specifically to present their specific culture to the public while still being able to attract a wide variety of employees. The mission statement of D.S. Technologies, used in part to identify the values upon which the culture of the organization is based, states:



### Our Mission:

Delivering a valuable customer experience is crucial to the success of any business. At D.S. Technologies, it's at the center of everything we do, every day.

Our goal is to treat all of our customers as if they are our only customer. We do this by providing thoughtful, caring and prompt attention. Our focus is on:

- Connecting people with their world, everywhere they live and work.
- Driving innovation in wireless, entertainment and other communications services.
- Consistently demonstrating a passionate commitment to customer care.
- Listening to our customers and responding to their needs.

In order to determine the values from the mission statement and the formal policies, this study utilized Glaser and Strauss's (1967) constant comparative method (CCM). Glaser and Strauss (1967) explain, "In discovering theory, one generates conceptual categories or their properties from evidence; then the evidence from which the category emerged is used to illustrate the concept" (p. 23). In other words, the coding categories emerged from themes that were seen within the mission statement and the language policies; these themes then revealed what appeared to be the embedded values.

To better articulate these values, Fekete's (2003) chart of values and company personalities was consulted (see Appendix A). That way, random labels for values were not just pulled from thin air and applied to the themes that emerged during coding. From there, these themes were interpreted to determine the values being formally communicated within each text. These interpretations were then used in the final step of the analysis – determining the congruence of the formal organizational texts with the informal employee interview texts.

## ***Part 2: Interviews***

The analysis of the interviews also utilized Glaser and Strauss's (1967) constant comparative method (CCM) and the transcriptions of the interviews were the sources of the coding categories. However, Glaser and Strauss (1967) do not actually breakdown how researchers should go about establishing these theories through using CCM. So, this study turned

to Boeije's (2002) research where she argues that while researchers continue to use Glaser and Strauss's (1967) CCM, they still remain vague as to how exactly they go about doing it. This is the case in several studies specifically pertaining to organizational communication. Gossett (2002) and Ashcraft (1999) both conduct interviews for their studies and rely on Glaser and Strauss's (1967) CCM for analysis of their data. However, while both explain very well how they came to their conclusions, they neglect to explicitly describe their coding process.

Boeije's (2002) article research suggests a step-by-step process that she illustrates by using previous research she conducted involving "couples coping with the chronic illness multiple sclerosis" (p. 392). While the subject matter of her initial research does not directly pertain to the field of organizational communication it still coordinated well with the present study because it utilized interviews as a means to collect data in order to gain an understanding for how individuals react in a certain situation.

The first step of the process is to establish categories through the use of open coding.

Boeije (2002) writes,

In the process of open coding, every passage of the interview is studied to determine what exactly has been said and to label each passage with an adequate code. By comparing different parts of the interview, the consistence of the interview as a whole is examined...If a reference is made to the same category more than once in the course of an interview, the fragments relating to this category are compared in order to find out whether new information about this category is given or whether the same information is repeated. (p. 395)

From this it can be determined that the first step of the data analysis process consisted of an internal comparison that established the initial categories for coding. "In this way it is possible to formulate the core message of the interview with the codes that are attached to it and to understand the interview including any difficulties, highlights, and inconsistencies. It represents an attempt to interpret the parts of the interview in the context of the entire story as it has been told...by the interviewee" (Boeije 2002, p. 395). The emerging themes of each individual

interview were noted, and later, in step two, were collapsed into more universal categories in which all interviews would be classified.

After open coding was used for each set of data, the second step was to follow what Boeije (2002) refers to as axial coding. “This means searching for indicators and characteristics for each concept in order to define that concept. A second aim is to discover the combinations of codes which exist. This produces clusters or a typology” (p. 398). To clarify, axial coding means looking at all of the themes noted from each interview and grouping them together within another, broader coding category. “By comparing it becomes evident that some interviews can be grouped together because they are similar with regard to certain criteria” (Boeije 2002, p. 397). So, the themes established in step one were combined into another set of coding categories. These “clusters” allowed for an interpretation of the transcriptions as a whole and were used in part 3 to determine alignment.

After the interpretations of the transcriptions were established, they went through two more steps. First, a negative case analysis was conducted. A negative case analysis consists of looking to the outliers of the data and provides explanation for them. That is, the interviews that did not fit into the coded clusters and, in turn, do not contribute to the overall interpretations of the transcriptions are then accounted for. For example, if all but one interviewee says diversity is good, then a cluster of “Diversity is good” can be established. However, the one person who does not say diversity is good still needs to be accounted for – why do they say what they say? Thus, conducting a negative analysis increases the credibility of the theory.

Glaser and Strauss (1967) note, “When no codified procedure is used in qualitative analyses the transition from data to theory is difficult, if not impossible to grasp. Without this linking process in mind, the reader is likely to feel that the theory is somewhat impressionistic,

even if the analyst strongly asserts he has based it on hard study of data gathered,” (p. 229). In other words, a negative analysis prevents the primary research from being accused of “cherry picking” the data. Instead, the data that does not fit into the categories established during the coding process are noted in the analysis and an explanation is provided for why they did not fit. For example, if all the employees agree that D.S. Technologies is a bad place to work, but one employee says it is good, further information about that employee was included in order to explain why they said that (e.g. they were in human resources, they were new in the company, etc.). These explanations derived from information gathered during the time of the interviews.

Finally, the interpretations developed from the recurring themes in the interviews were checked with employees who previously participated in interviews to verify the consistency once more. Specifically, two member checks were performed. The first member check was with the friend of the researcher who has been with D.S. Technologies for nearly thirty years. He is based in the Topeka, Kansas office, though. So to gain broader perspective the second member check was conducted by a sales manager who has been with the company for over twenty years and is based in Dallas, Texas.

### ***Part 3: Mission Statement, Language Policy, and Interviews***

The final step of analysis consisted of comparing the results of the first two parts of the analysis. This meant examining the interpretations of the formal texts (mission statement and language policy) and the transcripts of the interviews in order to draw conclusions as to how the two align. In order to accomplish this, the data was combined and sorted under the same labels that were established when they were analyzed separately.

During the close textual analysis of the formal policies, different values (e.g. diversity) emerged. Additionally, the coding of the interview data revealed major themes (e.g. company

dynamics) and subthemes (e.g. “Corporate America” philosophy) that were then applied to the values that had been established from the formal policies. The results from both of these were compared. That is, if the formal policies had a value of diversity and that value was also evident within the themes coded in the interview data, it was considered a match; thus it was evident that the formally communicated values aligned with the informal context. The values evident in the formal texts, but not in the interview data, or vice versa, were noted as not aligning and later re-examined to better understand how this is effecting the workplace.

## **CHAPTER 4 - Findings**

As noted earlier, employers recognize the importance of diversity in the workplace. However, for some, a diverse work environment has resulted in a lack of cohesion amongst their employees. Their employees are unable to work as well in teams because of the inability to identify with the group because of the diversity that exists. This lack of group identity prohibits the establishment of a unified workforce thereby hindering potential profits. In order to remedy this situation, some employers turn to implementing language policies.

Previously cited language policy research indicates that employers implement formal policies that specifically dictate that all employees speak English. This same research also notes that this mandate is actually resulting in the opposite of what the employers intend. Instead of unifying the workplace, these policies are dividing it, and as such are creating a hostile environment. This, in turn, creates unsatisfied employees, a decrease in productivity, and, ultimately, a decrease in profits (Ashforth & Mael 1989; Bergman, Watrous-Rodriquez, & Chalkely 2007; Cheney, Zorn Jr., Planalp, and Lair 2008; Jurkiewicz and Giacalone 2004). So while the employers initially established these policies as a means to unify the workplace and increase profits, research indicates that is just not happening (Bergman, Watrous-Rodriquez, & Chalkely 2007; Callahan 2006; Del Valle 2003; Dietz & Pugh 2004; Parliman and Shoeman 1994; Thorpe-Lopez 2007). It is this end result that is of particular interest to this study. However, while the previously cited research argues the language policy itself is responsible for the hostile behavior of employees, the focus of this study was to explore the values of an organization and to determine how they are implemented and perceived by their employees in relationship to language policies.

Recall that organizational culture is established through the communication of its values within mission statements. Then, employees establish their workplace identity through that culture and they want to work for a place in which their individual values align with those of the organization. As previously noted, “An organization’s culture guides its behavior (Beyer 1981; Smircich 1983) and is expected to influence firm performance,” (Goll and Smabharya 1995, p. 824). So, if policies or behavior of the organization do not align with the values previously established, employees are going to react accordingly. With this said, this study pursued an answer to the following research question: *how do language policies align with the values of an organization?*

This section highlights the findings of the three part method conducted in order to establish an answer to this question. First, the values revealed during the close textual analysis of the mission statement and language policy documents of D.S. Technologies will be discussed. Second, the themes that emerged from the interview transcripts will be reviewed. Finally, the findings of both will be compared and discussed.

### ***Part 1: Formal Policies***

During the first part of this study, a close textual analysis of the mission statement and the diversity policies was conducted. As the analysis was conducted, certain key words were highlighted in order to establish the emerging themes. These emerging themes were then sorted amongst broader categories that were deemed the “value” that should be evident within the culture of D.S. Technologies.

#### ***Mission Statement***

From the 95 word mission statement four core values were uncovered: service, control, innovation, and diversity.

## **Value 1: Service**

It can be concluded that D.S. Technologies puts the needs of their customers and providing for those needs at the forefront of their business. This is to say that D.S. Technologies values service. Upon the first reading of the mission statement, it is very clear that the customer is at the center of everything D.S. Technologies does. The word “customer” is the most recurring word in the mission statement. Furthermore, the first two lines state, “Delivering a valuable customer experience is crucial to the success of any business. At D.S. Technologies, it’s at the center of everything we do, every day.” From just these two lines, it can be concluded that D.S. Technologies values its customers. This is not to say, though, that it is a value that contributes to the foundation of the company; it is not a core value. Instead, it is the basis for their value of service.

D.S. Technologies understands that their customers have a choice of who provides them with the goods and services, but what distinguishes them from their competition is how they choose to treat their customers. D.S. Technologies indirectly refers to their competition when they use “any business.” Essentially, D.S. Technologies is indicating that other businesses recognize it is important for all businesses to provide a quality experience for their customer. What set D.S. Technologies apart from those other businesses (or their competitors) is that the customer is at the core of everything they do; D.S. Technologies is committed to delivering the best service to their customers.

They continue to emphasize that the customer is at the center of attention by stating, “Our goal is to treat all of our customers as if they are our only customer.” D.S. Technologies caters to the customer and only the customer because they are the root to hefty profits; the customer is what makes them better than other organizations. Arguably, this commitment to the customer is



valuable in every company. In the case of D.S. Technologies, though, service is the number one priority and an organizational value.

This value emerged from several aspects of D.S. Technologies' mission statement. First, the repetition of the word "customer" throughout the mission statement reinforces their seriousness with how important the "customer" is to them. Furthermore, they use the phrase "passionate commitment" to describe their relationship with their customers. That is, D.S. Technologies is not just committed to their customer; they are also passionate about this commitment. Having a passion for something indicates a sense of dedication. Typically, one is not going to be dedicated to something they are not passionate about. Furthermore, to facilitate innovation as a means to fulfill customer demands, perseverance is a necessity.

## **Value 2: Control**

It can be concluded from the first two lines of the mission statement that D.S. Technologies values control; it is important to them that they do not merely exist within the telecommunications industry, they want to dominate it.

The first two lines of the mission statement state, "Delivering a valuable customer experience is crucial to the success of any business. At D.S. Technologies, it's at the center of everything we do, every day." Within these two lines it can be interpreted that while other businesses understand that customers yield success, they do not necessarily put them in the top seeded priority. However, D.S. Technologies does it differently because their customers are at the center of their universe. Because D.S. Technologies' main concern is the customer, they are essentially better than the others; they are superior, or so the wording of the mission statement implies. This conclusion alone is not enough to say they value control, to be the best within the telecommunications industry.

The mission statement also states, “We do this by providing thoughtful, caring, and prompt attention.” Again, with the mentioning of “any business” in the first line, it can only be understood that D.S. Technologies is implying that they provide services and support that is unlike that of any other companies’. Furthermore, the use of the adjectives “thoughtful,” “caring,” and “prompt” adds a stylistic element to the mission statement. By opting to use these words, the mission statement is given a more sophisticated tone, and implies that the people who are working for the company are capable of providing such services to their customers, unlike other companies.

It is important to note the word choices of the mission statement. In this particular line, the words to note are “thoughtful,” “caring,” and “prompt.” Other phrases found throughout the mission statement include: “driving innovation,” “consistently demonstrating,” and “passionate commitment.” These words and phrases only point to the value of striving to be the best, to dominate the telecommunications industry, in order to serve their first priority and their first core value, the customer.

### **Value 3: Innovation**

Much like the service, the value of innovation – to be creative and develop new technology to suit their customer’s needs – was relatively obvious. D.S. Technologies states that they intend “to treat all of [their] customers as if they are [their] only customer” is by “connecting people with their world, everywhere they live and work.” To accomplish this requires D.S. Technologies to continue to develop and offer the latest and greatest in telecommunications – a quality of the company that has been admired and even awarded for. Furthermore, they must also do this to maintain their prestige amongst the telecommunications industry. This requires innovation.

This value is evident in two other places in the mission statement. First, D.S. Technologies explicitly recognizes innovation in their second bullet point of how they plan to achieve their overall goal, “driving innovation in wireless, entertainment and other communications services.” It is also implied in their final bullet point when they say, “Listening to our customers and responding to their needs.” In other words, to maintain their customer base, they must continuously improve the goods and services they offer, and the best way to do this is through innovation spurred by customers. This, then, keeps the customer happy and fulfills D.S. Technologies’ overall goal. In other words, it is arguable that innovation is a value in and of itself because of the critical role it plays in upholding other values of D.S. Technologies, not to mention the reason for its existence to begin with.

#### **Value 4: Diversity**

Aside from knowing that D.S. Technologies is a world leader in telecommunications, serves over 80 million customers worldwide, and has won a number of awards for their diversity, it is evident through their mission statement that they value diversity (i.e. having a workforce that consists of individuals from different backgrounds with different experiences and knowledge to contribute to the organization). They recognize they have customers in all areas of the world from different cultures and they embrace this. This can be seen when they say, “Our focus is on connecting people with their world, everywhere they live and work.” By saying their focus is on “their world,” D.S. Technologies implies that they are willing to embrace the differences that exist between the cultures of their customers. Arguably, this statement also indicates that D.S. Technologies further embraces diversity because it is their goods and services that are responsible for “connecting” these people together despite whatever cultural differences may exist between them. In essence, then, D.S. Technologies values unity through diversity.

This value of diversity also ties in with the value of innovation. Without diversity, there would be no need to push the envelope and develop newer, better technologies in order to better “connect” the global population. This in turn creates a greater customer base and increases profits, thereby perpetuating their superiority amongst other telecommunications companies; i.e. their ultimate goal and a compilation of all of the values mentioned thus far.

### *Language Policies*

D.S. Technologies did not have a policy that explicitly states what language employees must speak and whether language must be spoken during normal business hours. However, the documents that were used for this analysis did provide strategies for how to overcome language barriers or barriers that may arise as a result of an increase in diversity in the workplace. Much like the mission statement, upon completion of analysis, these documents, “When Language Causes a Barrier,” and “10 Ways to Create Understanding and Harmony in a Diverse Workplace,” revealed a set of values.

What is important to note here is that these policies are not openly available to the public eye like the mission statement. So, while some of the same values found in the mission statement are apparent in these documents, other values were revealed as well. Arguably, those values revealed that do not exist in the mission statement, are more of the values the company looks for within its individual employees whereas the mission statement reveals values that are symbolic of the company as a whole.

The values of these diversity documents include: teamwork, dedication, control, diversity, and initiative.

## **Value 1: Teamwork**

In order to overcome language barriers, D.S. Technologies devotes their fourth and final item on the list of suggestions to building relationships. This item states,

It's often amazing to see that language becomes less and less of an issue when people begin to get to know and care about one another. The more time you spend with coworkers of different language backgrounds, the easier you will find it is to understand each other. The language of caring and respect knows no nationality.

D.S. Technologies believes that if their employees build relationships with one another they will feel more comfortable around each other, thereby defusing any hostility that may arise with their differences in cultures and/or languages.

The value of interpersonal relationships between employees is also evident in D.S. Technologies' "10 Ways to Create Understanding and Harmony in a Diverse Workplace." In fact, half of the items on the list recommend employees establish relationships. These items are:

- 1:** Get to know some of your colleagues who are from different backgrounds by spending time with them at lunches or breaks.
- 4:** Look for areas of common ground, not just differences. Almost everyone has something to say about topics such as parenting, family, illness, sports, the business or industry in which you work, or the economy.
- 8:** Take part in recreational activities with coworkers that involve people of different backgrounds, for example bowling, aerobics, baseball, soccer, or hiking.
- 9:** Invite colleagues of different backgrounds to your home for dinner or an evening of conversation.
- 10:** Explore different ethnic restaurants with your multicultural coworkers.

Clearly, D.S. Technologies values interpersonal relationships, but only as a means for their employees to overcome the barriers that come with having diversity – a value established within the mission statement. Furthermore, while it is evident that these interpersonal relationships are deemed important, they are not important enough to get company time.

## **Value 2: Dedication**

As discussed in the previous value, both policies illustrate the necessity of getting to know one another as a strategy to overcome diversity barriers. However, note how the items previously mentioned indicate when these relationships between coworkers should be developed – at home, during the evening, during lunch, or during a break. Never is it suggested that employees take the time to have these types of “bonding moments” on company time.

This illustrates the value of dedication as established within the mission statement. D.S. Technologies believes its employees should do their job first and build relationships later. That is, they should be dedicated enough to their job that they get it done during business hours and build relationships with coworkers (who will help them get their jobs done better) during non-business hours. In other words, D.S. Technologies expects its employees to use their personal time to develop relationships with their coworkers from different backgrounds so that they can go back to work understanding each other enough to complete their jobs better and make the company more money.

## **Value 3: Control**

It was established in the mission statement that D.S. Technologies values superiority through its mentioning of “other businesses” as a comparison of how their services are superior to others. Alternatively, in their document, “When Language Causes a Barrier,” one word establishes this value – “controlling.”

In the introductory portion of the document, D.S. Technologies states, “Language, one of the main tools for controlling our world, can also produce obstacles that limit our ability to communicate.” This statement in particular stuck out to me because of the use of the word “controlling.” Why not use “connect” or “unite” to better correlate with their mission statement?

The use of the “control” actually correlates with how D.S. Technologies is amongst the largest telecommunications companies in the world. They, in essence, ‘control’ the market in which the most technology is demanded in order to use language to communicate with one another all across the world.

So, by using the word ‘control’ in an internal piece of literature, it can only be recognized that D.S. Technologies prides themselves on being the best and dominating the world’s communication technology. Thus, it can only be relevant for them to value superiority.

#### **Value 4: Diversity**

It is clear that D.S. Technologies understands that diversity enhances the workplace and that diversity allows for greater opportunity for innovation. However, this diversity cannot be fruitful unless these groups can actually work together. In addition to the previously mentioned recommendations, this value of diversity can be seen in “When Language Causes a Barrier” when they say,

In today’s workplace, where it is not uncommon for employees of ten or more ethnic groups work together, differences in language often add another hurdle to the communication process. As an employee in such an environment, how can you prevent language differences from hindering your interactions and blocking your work relationships?

It is clear from this statement that is made in the introduction of “When Language Causes a Barrier” that D.S. Technologies has no intentions of eliminating diversity. This is particularly clear in the first line. They are indicating that diversity is a common staple of every workplace and is not going anywhere. Moreover, this excerpt indicates that D.S. Technologies recognizes that with diversity, barriers do arise and it is important for everyone to learn how to overcome those barriers.

Merely choosing to implement these documents, they are further embracing the diversity, even if it is for the greater good of their company. If they did not value diversity and recognize

that diversity is commonplace in modern workplaces, these policies would not exist; the company would not see it as necessary to overcome these barriers. Since they do, however, it is clear that D.S. Technologies values diversity in their workplace.

### **Value 5: Initiative**

The existence of these policies may indicate that D.S. Technologies values diversity and recognizes that with diversity comes some challenges. However, D.S. Technologies neglects to actually point to specific programs or provide additional training manuals for how to overcome these challenges. Instead, they simply provide the two documents that are the subject of this particular section of analysis. All recommendations made within these diversity policies suggest that the individual employee do something about the situation, to take it upon themselves to learn, teach, or understand. This reveals that D.S. Technologies values initiative. That is, they want employees to work for them who are willing to accept the challenges of diversity, but seek out the answers themselves. In other words, D.S. Technologies does not want to enable its employees by providing them with the necessary means to overcome the challenges, they want their employees to discover solutions themselves.

This is evident in the following section of their document “When Language Causes a Barrier,” “3. Create options and alternatives. Ask yourself what you can do to overcome the obstacle. Finding ways to deal with the blocks you are experiencing can reduce frustration and help you gain control....” This can also be seen in several of the excerpts previously mentioned. For example, the advice that recommends the employees get to know one another through social gatherings outside of work still requires two things. First, the employee must be able to recognize the barrier and, second, the employee has to take the initiative to overcome that barrier



by implementing this suggestion. Thus, the text of these language policy documents indicates the value of initiative.

To review, it was established by a close reading of the mission statement that D.S. Technologies has four core values – service, control, innovation, and diversity. Based on previous discussed research, these core values are supposed to be the basis of the culture at D.S. Technologies. Additionally, this section identified the values that were uncovered in the diversity documents pertaining to language policies. These values included teamwork, dedication, control, diversity, and initiative. All of these values were used in part three of the analysis of this study to determine whether how all of the values aligned.

### ***Part 2: Interviews***

During the process of open coding, a number of categories emerged. These categories were then collapsed into groupings. From these groupings several things were established. First, the current climate of D.S. Technologies was determined. Second, the internal (those that are mostly visible to just employees) values and informal policies emerged. Finally, when compared with the previously establish values, the noticeable complications and barriers within the company were revealed.

#### **Current Company Climate**

To better understand the themes that emerged from the interviews, the current climate of D.S. Technologies must be addressed first. The interviews revealed that D.S. Technologies is composed of employees from five different companies. Originally, there existed D.S. Technologies, Southern Technologies, Western Technologies, Northern Tec, and South East Tec all independent of each other. As pieced together from employee interviews and verified by member checks, Southern Technologies purchased Western Technologies in 1996 and changed

their name to ABC. Then, around 2000, Southern Technologies purchased Northern Tec, but maintained the name ABC. In December 2005, ABC bought D.S. Technologies and took on their name and their New York Stock Exchange symbol changed from ABC to D. Finally in 2006, D.S. Technologies acquired South East Tec to become the corporation known today as D.S. Technologies.

The mergers have created a shift in cultures and it has caused a rift between employees.

One employee explains,

Ok, so, diversity in D.S. Technologies is pretty complex because it's not just male or female black, yellow, red, black, it is also in nationality and where your heritage is – you could be legacy ABC or legacy D and with that, diversity is our biggest benefit because we come from such a broad range of experiences so we have to harvest that but because we're molding into one company we've got a lot of biases and that's one of the biggest challenges we have to overcome.

Additionally, as a result of the mergers, some employees have had to learn how to cope with or overcome diversity, in regards to ethnicities, more so than others because their legacy company had less diversity than D.S. Technologies. One interviewee, who had originally worked for ABC, notes, "The telephone company is probably one of the most diverse workforces...especially since we picked up D.S. Technologies – they're worldwide -- ABC was just in the states, so I'm talking to people from England and India." Since the mergers, employees of D.S. Technologies have had to adjust to diversity in regard to legacy differences as well as diversity between different ethnicities.

Finally, between the mergers and the current state of the economy, D.S. Technologies has resorted to surplus and/or shuffling employees. Two employees estimated that 20,000 employees have been relieved of their duties since 2008. Employees, who have been spared their jobs, may not have been able to stay in the same position or have received changes in their

salaries or compensation plans. These changes have resulted in an increase in stress and uncertainty levels.

Every interviewee was asked to describe what it is like to work for D.S. Technologies. Even if they did not directly say it, it was implied that there were definite complications with the current climate. This can be seen when an interviewee explains, “It’s a good company; interesting work. Probably with my longevity with the company, it has changed dramatically since I started with them.” This employee had been with the company for nearly forty years. While change is inevitable in that time frame, this employee alluded to the fact that it had changed more than they ever thought it would.

Another employee expressed the similar sentiments for the company; that D.S. Technologies is a good place to work and given the current state of the economy it is understandable to have some turmoil. However, this employee indicated that they were very uncomfortable with the instability resulting from the change. She says,

Well considering I was just surplused in December, it’s probably a lot like many of the places that are employed with people right now – it’s pretty unstable, but they pay very well and benefits are good; you’re just lucky to be there. It’s a great job, I really can’t complain except that it’s just not something that – I mean I hope to retire from in ten years, but I just never know; I just don’t feel stable there.

This employee is a little more open about the tense climate of D.S. Technologies, but she still softened her negative statements by expressing good aspects of the company and her gratefulness to have a job in general. Furthermore, these employees implied the tensions were being caused by external forces. Other employees, however, were not so diplomatic about the company climate.

Several employees openly expressed the negatives of the current climate and placed blame on internal issues for making things difficult to manage. For example, one responded, “[D.S. Technologies is] very confusing lately....because of our acquisitions, change overs, and

transitions with the multiple companies we've brought in the past five years, we're in constant turmoil in processes and procedures.”

The final type of response about company climate involved the use of sarcasm. One employee in particular was very specific in his word choice when responding to the question. He has been with D.S. Technologies for twenty-seven years and he explained how the company had drastically changed since he first started working there. He says,

So when I started it was just really different, it was a career.... Today, I would testify that it is a very exciting place to work, it's very challenging. I would also go to say that with my tenure, I don't see it changing for the better. I think it is not as good as it used to be only because that family-ness or – I don't know what adjective to use – it's just not the place I came to work for. But, it's still very exciting, very challenging.

This interviewee placed an emphasis on “exciting” and “challenging” that implied he was using these words lightly and did not actually mean them in a positive manner. The employee never specified problems or reasons for this, but it was definitely obvious that he had something in mind.

As a whole, the majority of the interviews fit within the theme that D.S. Technologies' current climate is unstable and tense. However, one employee's response could not be categorized within this theme. This employee had been with the company for over thirty years and described the company in the opposite way others had. He said,

[D.S. Technologies is] very family oriented; matter of fact my father is a former employee, he's retired. I have a brother-in-law who's with the company, my sister left the company after she started having children so it's very close knit, even though it's a very large corporation. We're fairly close knit and we do a lot of – since we are so large – we do depend on one another and build networks. Like myself, for example, even though I work on a staff position, I have to get other folks to buy in. Even though other people don't report to me, I have to form bonds with them in order for them to do what I need for them to do.

In this instance, the interviewee's response did not correlate with the majority, but in other instances within the interview, his responses did. In several of his other responses he alluded to

the same issues existing within the company that the others had outright expressed in the answer to this question. Additionally, it can be argued that this response is merely sugar coated; it is avoiding any kind of negative representation of the company. However, taking a closer look at this response reveals something else.

Notice how this employee uses “family-oriented” as a descriptor of the company, but his explanation following this descriptor simply indicates that he is referring to the fact that a number of his family members work there. He does not necessarily use it to actually describe the “close knit” ties created between employees. Instead, the explanation of employee interactions implies a survival mechanism. That is, this “close knit” characteristic is actually a necessity for survival within this big company. If employees do not “bond” together, they will achieve nothing for the company. In other words, at first glance this employee’s response appears to be an outlier. In reality, it is just a negative implication of the company in disguise.

No matter how the employee truly responded, whether it was direct or indirect, it was very obvious that the current state of the company is creating unsatisfied employees. The data from the interviews go on to reveal the values and complications that employees have to cope with on a regular basis.

## **Values & Complications**

The larger clusters of data revealed a number of values that were similar to those established by the formal documents. Unlike the mission statement and formal documents, this data provided further explanation of the values held by the company. That is, it could be established what values of the mission statement were just there for the public and which were actually in existence internally amongst the employees.

The values that emerged from the interview data include: diversity, initiative, prestige, and dedication.

### **Value 1: Diversity**

D.S. Technologies values diversity. This is evident in nearly all of the interviewees' responses. That is, they believe that diversity is good. For example, one employee says, "I think there's a lot more opportunities...as a company [that] recognizes different diversity in the workplace – there's many more opportunities for folks to excel regardless of their background. I've noticed that and it's good to see because I think everyone brings something a little bit different to the table." This type of response was typical amongst all of the interviewees; they all recognized that diversity provided more opportunities within the company and allowed for greater innovation because with diversity comes a variety of perspectives to contribute.

Additionally, many of the employees noted that within D.S. Technologies, diversity does not just stop at different nationalities. A few explained diversity in terms of handicaps and gender as well as nationalities. Finally, many of them considered the differences in legacies (which company they originally worked for prior to mergers). Regardless of how they described different aspects of diversity, nearly all of them noted some kind of complication or barrier that resulted from having this diversity. One employee explains,

The biggest issue that we as a corporation face today is that we're trying to do more with less and more with technology, but we also suffer greatly because we're not one company. We're trying to become one company. The buzz words today are one D.S. Technologies. There's a lot of diversity, which is a tremendous asset, but it's also a hindrance.

In other words, while diversity is valuable to the company, it results in problems that make it difficult for employees to unite.

Another employee provides additional insight into how diversity creates complications that prevent a united workforce. He says,

Because we've got so many more infrastructure pieces that come together, it's having to balance different people with different thought processes and different policies and procedures. So combining those processes together into one uniform method to get to one end point is sometimes difficult.

Here the employee implies that the complications are tied into all areas of diversity, not just the diversity that comes from having multiple companies merged into one with the employees from those companies still working under that original culture.

While the previously mentioned employees simply mentioned there were complications, they did not give specifics. Other employees, however, explained that biases and differences in language are the complications. A regional sales manager explains that one challenge from diversity that has to be overcome is the divide between the employees from the merged companies. He explains,

Surprisingly, though, the first one that's the hardest one is that's to recognize that you do have a bias, especially when we're talking about a company bias. I listen to my folks and one of the things I've been coaching them on is – and it's really a subtle bias – is the processes. They'll say "this legacy D process" like it's a bad thing and so what we're trying to overcome is that it's not a "legacy D process," it's just a process to do this and where its roots are have nothing to do with anything.

In this particular instance, the complications from language occur not because the employees are not all speaking English, but because of the differences in how each employee refer to different things. He continues to explain that introducing languages other than English just perpetuates the problem. He says,

Well, part of it is that we do different things because of our internal – how we were built as a company – we'll do different things in different parts of the world. So something you would do one way in Texas if you were talking to someone else in another country, we're going to do it totally different. I mean we do it different even between Texas and Louisiana. So, overcoming those barriers and language is a big part of it. I talked to a lady last night, we have 300,000 people working in D.S. Technologies and are all separated by a common language. Just beyond English, when you start adding other languages, it becomes much worse.

Another employee, who was shuffled to a new job in September, is having to adjust not only to understanding a new job, but is having to learn how to communicate with his counterpart who his training him. His counterpart is originally from China and can speak English, but through a very thick accent. He says,

I talk to my coworker on a regular basis, if not daily at least a couple times a week, and frequently I have to ask him – you know, he will say something and I will have to have him repeat it once, maybe a couple times before I actually understand what he’s saying because he has that heavy of an accent and I’ve actually on some occasions have had to say “send me an e-mail” and then I can understand because when he writes it, I can read it, no problem. But yeah, I do have a challenge with that on a regular basis.

Several other employees noted that when dealing with different languages internally, the most common challenge is with understanding the English through accents. Nearly all of the interviewees explained that there are many employees who speak English as a second language; their first languages may be Spanish, French, German, or a language from the Middle East. However, these interviewees explained that it is uncommon to hear these languages during work hours unless they are walking by a call center housed in their building. Anytime a language other than English has been heard on the premises of D.S. Technologies, it is during a time that is not company time – during breaks, at lunch, in the elevators, and so on.

One interviewee is a global business manager who has been with the company for ten years. His job requires him to work on projects outside of the U.S. in nearly all of the 120 countries D.S. Technologies is present in. His position requires him to be very human resource oriented for the company, and his interview responses reflected that; they were very “corporately correct.” He explains that D.S. Technologies prides itself on their diversity and has very little complications with it internally because everyone is required to speak English. He says,

One of the prerequisites for working for D.S. Technologies is speaking English. So, regardless of where they work, they have to speak some level of English, be literate, so I hear a lot of English regardless of where I am. The only time I’ve



heard native language used was in a meeting with customers; being in Mexico they spoke Spanish, being in France they asked me if it was okay if they spoke French and I told them go ahead. However, mostly I hear English.

He later indicated that this prerequisite was not a formal policy and one that was not openly encouraged, but was still considered when hiring new employees. This informal policy may be the reason for the challenges employees must overcome; the company believes that since all of its employees speak English, there are seldom cases of language barriers occurring. However, this does not account for those who work with customers or vendors outside the company who speak other languages.

This challenge became evident among several of the interviewees. All of whom worked in some area of sales for D.S. Technologies. For example, a regional sales manager in Texas explains that challenges occur not just in the physical language being spoken, but also with the definitions of terms used and the time zone differences. He says,

One of the things I'm still working on is a nearly completed project out of Jerusalem; they're time frame and our time frames, when we engage product people from the west coast, we've got seven different time zones working. Plus sometimes we have communication errors in that we don't use the same language or the same definitions for the same words, especially technical terms. Sometimes if you run into an impasse where you think you're saying one thing and you're not getting your point across, you have to re-ask the question in a different way. Sometimes, "explain to me how that works" or "tell me in more detail how that functions".

The majority of the interviewees who worked primarily with customers or vendors had stories similar to this. They all have to overcome challenges such as these on a regular basis in order to get their jobs done. Many mentioned that overcoming these challenges is very time consuming and prolongs the completion of the projects. Those not in sales indicated that they could see these problems existing, but that they did not work with them first hand; thus, their responses did not correlate with this major theme.

Regardless of where the employees encounter diversity (internally or externally), it seems as though there are obvious challenges that must be overcome. These challenges, in turn, create tensions and the employees are required to take the personal motivation to overcome in order to get their jobs done.

## **Value 2: Initiative**

Every interviewee was asked whether the company provided resources or training for employees on how to overcome the complications that are the result of diversity. The most common answers to this question included “no” or “not that I am aware of”. This question was then followed up with, “How do you overcome language barriers?” Many responded with examples of things they have come up with on their own to overcome them. For example, one employee explained he taught himself how to listen more intently and ask better questions. He said,

I started my career in directory assistance as an operator so early on in my career I learned how to pay a little more attention – block out everything and listen more intently to what these people were saying so I could understand what they’re saying. You’ve got to block out all distraction and sometimes you’ve got to play it back in your head and go, ‘Ok, let me rephrase this, is this what you’re trying to say?’ ...this is something I learned on my own.

The lack of resources or training only increases the amount of time it takes for them to complete a project. This is evident when one interviewee explains,

I won’t say it impedes progress – but it does prolong some projects, but that really is a tough one, especially when it comes to someone who might have a heavy accent; so, short of them improving their accent or everyone else being able to understand another individual’s language, I just don’t see how we can improve very much with something like that.

Another employee explained that he was unaware of any training or tools that were available for him when attempting to overcome diversity challenges. He said that he was responsible for having to figure it out on his own. He says, “I’m not aware of them offering anything for me to

help me with that. We do have diversity training and we have all types of awareness training, but when it comes to overcoming a language barrier....To my knowledge, I don't know of the company offering anything – resources or otherwise – that I could use to overcome that.”

Several employees, however, did mention tools that are just now becoming available. For example, one explains,

Actually, the best thing they've done is began to put collaboration tools out there and a lot of times I'm able to overcome a language barrier by using some of those tools so we can draw and get it across that way or we can share documents and get across that way. As a matter of fact, when I was in Dallas for kick-off that was one of the ways that one of the guys I visited with from Japan – his English was rough and my Japanese was worse – but between us both really focusing on what we were doing, we actually carried on a good conversation. But, it took effort and we also needed to write some things down and be able to draw and things like that.

This employee described these tools as web based programs that allow the sharing of documents as well as provide a “white board” feature that allows pictures to be drawn to better explain what is being discussed. These tools were briefly mentioned by another employee who said these tools were utilized especially during conference calls. He mentioned that because of the economy, the company budgets have been cut and traveling has been significantly reduced. He notes,

We don't travel as much as we used to with the economy like it's been, the company has cut back on its travel, so most of the business is conducted via conference call. So, you can imagine someone with a very strong accent, whether it's Spanish or Asian or Indian, you have to have them repeat something quite often so you can understand one another, but it works. And we do things not only via conference call, but also via live meeting or some other type of connection where we can also view the material that's being discussed, but it is challenging.

Both of these employees, however, noted that the company provided no formal training on these collaboration tools nor did they include them in the diversity training modules. They also explained that it is possible that training exists, they were just not aware of it. The bottom line to draw from all of this, though, is that even with these tools becoming available, it is ultimately up

to the individual employees to take it upon themselves to recognize the problem, seek out the tools, and then implement them.

D.S. Technologies also offers interpreters for employees to utilize for their meetings with customers or vendors who may not speak English very well. Furthermore, D.S. Technologies has training modules available online for its employees, but the employees who mentioned these noted that most of those modules are voluntarily taken and that they did not know of any training that directly addressed how to overcome the language barriers. In other words, D.S. Technologies could have all kinds of services available, but either a) no one actually knows about them or b) they still have to take the initiative to actually implement them. Ergo, D.S. Technologies values initiative amongst its employees.

### **Value 3: Control**

Many times throughout the interviews, employees used the term “corporate America” or “Wall Street” to describe aspects of the company. In many cases, it was when they were explaining how the company had changed over the years. One employee says,

It’s a lot more stressful now than it used to be but I think that’s kind of the case in corporate world in general – it’s all about the bottom line, it’s no longer about loyalty or any of that so you really have to produce. There really is no company loyalty anymore.... I think employees, especially it seems like working at what used to be Southern Technologies then ABC now D.S. Technologies, they used to feel like the company had their best interest at heart and they tried to do everything they could to help their employees and vice versa – I feel like the employees worked hard to help the company and I feel that there is becoming a trend for the more things that companies expect you to do and the more things that they take away....

In other words, D.S. Technologies has transitioned from having their employees as a priority to having the customer as their priority. Furthermore, they will do whatever it takes for the company to be number one; to remain superior in the telecommunications industry, even if that means treating their employees like commodities.

This same mentality is explained again when another employee explains,

They were a family oriented business and today, I think with how most corporate America is, they are run by Wall Street and their interests are more the bottom line interests; I don't think it's a family environment or an employer/employee relations aren't what they used to be when I started.

It was evident by the tone of their voices when they explained these happenings that these employees were no longer satisfied with how the company was being run. Recall the employee previously mentioned who discussed the climate of the company as family oriented. Even he did not mean the company acted as a family. He also implied that the bonds created were done so as a survival mechanism. With the company turning its focus to control of the telecommunications industry, it has abandoned its relationships with its employees. Thus, there is no more company loyalty.

#### **Value 4: Dedication**

Despite the changes with the company becoming more "corporate," as previously described, employees still stay with their jobs for a long time. Every interviewee had at least ten years of service with the company and had every intention of being there until they retired. This is not to say that all employees feel that one. This can be seen when one employee explains her observations of the company changes. She says,

[Some] are only going to do what they need to do and some people – I just think they feel like the company doesn't care about them like they used to and I think it effects how some people work. There are some people who can't help but do the best that they can no matter what the circumstances, but there are a lot of people who don't feel that way.

From what I could tell with the interviewees, they all fit into category of doing their best regardless of the circumstances. However, some could argue the reason for this is that they already have so much time invested and with the state of the economy, they feel obligated to stay. Regardless, these employees are still dedicated to their jobs. They are personally motivated

to embrace the diversity and attempt to overcome because they recognize that while it may be an encumbrance right now, in the long run it is very beneficial for the success of the company.

Arguably, then, these employees have the tenure with the company that they have because they are dedicated. If they did not have that quality, it is plausible to suggest the company may not have kept them under employment.

### ***Findings Conclusion***

It can be seen within these findings that there are some discrepancies between the values that are formally communicated and those that are understood by D.S. Technologies' employees. From the mission statement, four values emerged (service, control, innovation, and diversity) while the language policy texts revealed five values (teamwork, dedication, control, diversity, and initiative). Between these two texts it was discovered that they shared the values of control and diversity. Then, the interviews revealed the values of diversity, initiative, prestige, and dedication as well as the current state of the company (i.e. the effects of the mergers on the culture).

From all of this, what seems to be at the heart of the complications that exist within the organizational culture of D.S. Technologies is not necessarily the inconsistency of values because of language policies and diversity, but instead because of the mergers. In the next chapter, these complications will be discussed in further detail and a possible solution for these complications will be proposed.

## **CHAPTER 5 - Discussion**

Language is at the core of an organization's culture and the lack of a shared language causes a divided workplace. The findings of this study suggest that D.S. Technologies has an organizational cultural divide within the company because of the mergers over the years. This divide could be attributed to the lack of alignment of values held by employees from different legacies (i.e. where their initial employment began) and the current values of D.S. Technologies.

This means that the behavior of employees is not the result of the informal language policy (it is implied that all employees, regardless of physical location, speak English when conducting business for the company), as previous language policy research tried to imply about other organizations with language policies. In fact, the findings indicate that, despite frustrations from coping with external language barriers, diversity is greatly embraced and no one indicated any kind of conflict arising from the implied language policy. Additionally, the behavior is not the result of the informal language policy not aligning with the values of the company or the individual employees. Instead, the use of the informal language policy seemed to align with the values of the organization.

While the company has been acquiring other companies, it appears as though its employees have been unable unite as one workforce under the name D.S. Technologies. Instead, they exist as five companies working under one name. Based on the interviews, it does not seem like D.S. Technologies has done anything to ease its employees into a new culture (partially because a "new" culture does not exist); there has been little help provided to employees as they cope with these changes. In other words, D.S. Technologies has created a set of values that can be seen internally and externally, but, in many cases, employees are behaving as if they are still

part of their original company. Although this is not ethnic diversity, it is still diversity that creates a language problem. Recall that individuals have a hard time establishing connections with those who are not in the same minority group. Because D.S. Technologies has not established one common thread for all of its employees after the mergers, the employees lack the ability to develop a group identity with those who are not from their original group.

According to Gossett (2002), “Identification is a complex process in which people are determining constantly how to define themselves in order to interact with others” (p. 387). In the case of D.S. Technologies, identification is not just complex, it is nearly impossible. The company has a set of values that are evident in both formal and informal settings, but employees still use methods, processes, and jargon leftover from their previous company’s culture. Since it was apparent in the interviews that D.S. Technologies has not done anything to establish its own culture, one that encompasses all five companies, employees do not know which culture to identify with.

Arguably, D.S. Technologies has a culture given the values that were revealed in the findings. However, employees are struggling to create a group identity because the company has not abolished the language of the employees from different legacies. That is, employees still refer to each other based on their legacy or will refer to aspects of their jobs in the original company’s lingo. So, in order to create a unified workplace, D.S. Technologies must establish its own culture; one that is distinct from any one of the five that may have already existed. A single culture is beginning to emerge as it was mentioned briefly by two interviewees, both of work in offices in Texas. One specifically mentioned, “You know we’ve been talking about diversity internal to the company, but part of our challenge in the roll that I have is that we’re part of the – diversity is a huge pillar of D.S. Technologies corporation culture, but it is both internal and



external.” However, no other interviewees outside of these two Texans mentioned this culture shift. In order to make this culture change occur across all of their offices, D.S. Technologies should implement a language policy in which every employee is asked to drop their legacy and take on the identity of just D.S. Technologies.

As discussed in the literature review, language is at the core of a culture. So, in order for D.S. Technologies to re-establish its culture, it needs to establish its own language and require every employee to speak it. This is not to say that D.S. Technologies needs to create its own language like gibberish or one of Tolkien’s many languages. Instead, this alternative language would be a social-stratification, as discussed by Bakhtin (1981).

Based on Bakhtin’s essay, “Discourse in the Novel,” stratifications naturally exist within a group, regardless of the size; they are much like ideologies in that they are unconsciously developed. Bakhtin specifically looks at “intentional dimensions, that is, the denotative and expressive dimension of the ‘shared’ language’s stratification” (p. 289). Furthermore, he argues,

It is not the neutral linguistic components of language being stratified and differentiated, but rather a situation in which the intentional possibilities of language are being expropriated: these possibilities are realized in specific directions, filled with specific content, they are made concrete, particular, and are permeated with concrete value judgments; they knit together with specific objects and with the belief systems of certain genres of expression and points of view peculiar to particular professions. (p. 289)

In other words, while stratifications are naturally used, they develop within a specific context intentionally; therefore any group is capable of stratifying a language. Bakhtin writes,

Various tendencies (artistic and otherwise), circles, journals, particular newspapers, even particular significant artistic works and individual persons are all capable of stratifying language, in proportion to their social significance; they are capable of attracting its words and forms into their orbit by means of their own characteristic intentions and accents, and in so doing to a certain extent alienating these words and forms from other tendencies, parties, artistic works and persons. (p. 290)

So, according to Bakhtin, organizations are completely capable of consciously creating their own stratification of English. Thus, it is not impractical to suggest that D.S. Technologies develop its own stratification of English that can be utilized by all employees. While this would not solve the complications that arise externally with customers and vendors, it would help unite the company internally.

The use of stratified language to unite a group can be seen within the military. Each level of the hierarchy speaks different stratifications of English depending on whether they are speaking to peers, superiors, or subordinates (Burke 2004). These stratified languages are evident in all branches of the military. While they may not have been originated on a conscious level, they have transcended and evolved at a conscious level. These languages create the military culture and are used to ensure safety as well as provide a sense of unity (Burke 2004). Despite the fact that everyone speaks a form of English, the adoption of military culture is required by all soldiers regardless of their original culture affiliation.

As previously noted, Keyton and Beck (2008) argue that group identity is only established if individuals within the group actually act and believe they are in the group. Moreover, they must like being in the group. Consciously creating a stratified language establishes a group identity. Having everyone speak the same language under the same policy requires everyone to behave in the same way – there would be no more “this is a Southern Tech process”; it would just be a process used within the company. Arguably, the final variable of Keyton and Beck’s statement may be difficult to achieve; there is always someone who dislikes being at work. However, if a culture is developed and group identity is strong enough, employees could bond. Then, perhaps, those who say they dislike work will actually say the dislike their job, but like their colleagues. In other words, a conscious creation of language and culture in the

workplace could yield a higher level of employee satisfaction despite the actual work their jobs entail.

## **CHAPTER 6 - Conclusion**

In the case of D.S. Technologies, it was evident that the results of previous language policy research did not apply. The previous research pointed just to the language policies as the reason for why employees were behaving in a hostile manner. This study suggested that it was not the language policy specifically, but the alignment of the language policy with the values of the company. It was discovered, though, that the lack of alignment of values with the language policy was not creating the current company climate; it was the lack of shared culture amongst merged companies. As argued, the inability to establish connections with everyone because of a cultural or language difference hinders the group's ability to create one unified group culture or identity. Previous language policy research indicated that organizations recognized this need and though the implementation of a language policy would eliminate this. However, it was not doing this.

This study was able to determine that in the case of D.S. Technologies, the language policies were not the reason for its current climate. In fact, all of the employees interviewed agreed that diversity in all forms (i.e. gender, ethnic, legacy, etc.) benefit the company. Moreover, none of the employees indicated any negative responses towards language policies – arguably because they did not know of their existence. Based on this, it can be said that the previous language policy research should be re-examined to look at other possible causes of the company climate indicated within the research as a direct result of language policy implementation. In other words, the implementation of language policies may be one aspect of the division and hostility of the workplaces in the previous research, but it may not be the only

aspect. Additionally, it is clear from this study that employees do desire a workplace with consistent values and a unified culture.

With all of that said, the findings of the present study indicate the need for additional research in the field of organizational communication that focuses on the values, culture, and identity of the organization and how it correlates with its employees. Currently, as discussed in the literature review, research exists on just values, just culture, or just identity. However, very little research exists that looks to all of them in order to provide an understanding of a current company climate. Moreover, much research in the way of mission statements exists, but very little of it actually indicates the impact it has on an organization in the way of establishing values. Thus, additional research that encompasses the same aspects of the present study would be beneficial to the field of organizational communication because it would reveal more about the establishment of values and culture within the organizational setting and how they impact the employees.

Given that employers are continuously demanding effective communication and teamwork skills amongst their employees and that the rate of English as a second language is increasing, it is important for future organizational communication research to explore possibilities of uniting the workplace. It is understood that problems within the workplace are always going to exist. No matter how well the individuals who run the companies communicate or how much diversity the company has, there will never be perfection. However, additional organizational communication research should explore what previous language policy research did not – why the employees were not behaving the way employers anticipated with the implementation of a language policy; they should look at the organization as a whole to determine what else might be causing the problems. Doing this would lead to a greater

understanding of how organizations operate in the wake of diversity and provide insight into organizational expectations of employees.

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## Appendix A - Fekete's (2003) Values Table

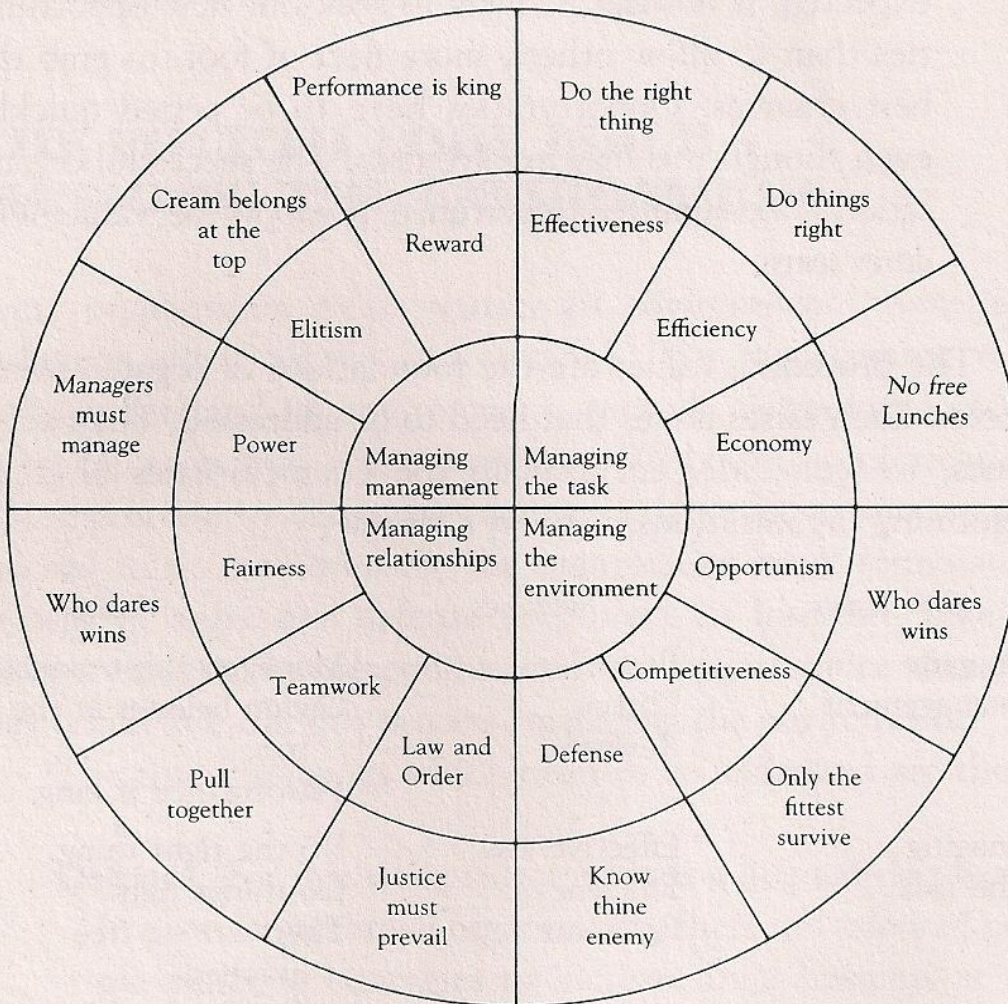
Fekete provides worksheets and charts to help the process of establishing and capturing the values of an organization. The worksheets are questionnaires that require the organization to think about their culture. From these, they can determine what kind of culture (or personality) that would fit the organization best. In addition to the questionnaires, Fekete provides charts that explain what kind of values are associated with personalities. Others consist of additional descriptions of these personalities, and another chart breaks down the communication styles for each personality and their core values. The chart most relevant to this study is the one that breaks down the types of values that may exist in an organization. Fekete has organized these with each personality label at the top with the values that would fit within that personality.

Table 1. A Combination of Charts from Fekete (2003)  
Values Common to CAP2 Personalities from pg. 170-171

Personality Type	Core Values	Personality Type	Core Values
<b>Solid as a Rock</b>	Excellence, hard work, tradition, achievement, customers, efficiency, control, responsibility	<b>We Aim to Please</b>	Customers, spontaneity, fun, excellence, equality, harmony
<b>You Can Count on Us</b>	Customers, responsibility, tradition, loyalty, quality, harmony, control, family	<b>It's Fun to Do Good Work</b>	Cooperation, diversity, teamwork, fun, innovation, integrity, harmony, creativity, equality, relationships, freedom
<b>Vision Driven by Values</b>	Innovation, learning, harmony, sensitivity, commitment, insight	<b>If We Can't Do It, No One Can</b>	Intelligence, creativity, improvisation, innovation, logic, learning, efficiency, excellence, risk taking
<b>Going All Out for Greatness</b>	Learning, logic, innovation, achievement, competence, independence, pragmatism, uniqueness, what could be	<b>Playing by the Rules</b>	Logic, efficiency, tradition, achievement, accuracy, caution, predictability
<b>Action, Action – We Want Action!</b>	Excellence, autonomy, quality, efficiency, logic, spontaneity, independence, risk taking, integrity, challenge	<b>Doing the Right Thing</b>	Customers, community, teamwork, dependability, harmony, family, fun, loyalty, efficiency, integrity, tradition
<b>Working to Make a Difference</b>	Excellence, action, harmony, personal dignity, hard work, cooperation	<b>Seeing the Big Picture in Human Terms</b>	Relationships, creativity, structure, teamwork, uniqueness, harmony, integrity
<b>Quest for Meaningful Work</b>	Innovation, community, diversity, teamwork, fun, harmony, integrity, insight, sensitivity	<b>Driven to Lead</b>	Intelligence, logic, efficiency, excellence, learning, instinct, innovation
<b>In Pursuit of Intellectual Solutions</b>	Learning, logic, curiosity, achievement, creativity, independence	<b>Thriving on Risky Business</b>	Logic, fun, spontaneity, risk taking, autonomy, challenge, hands-on, experience

## Appendix B - Francis and Woodcock (1990) Values Wheel

**Figure 1**  
**The Values Wheel**



Inner Circle = Core Issues  
 Middle Circle = Subissues Arising from Core Issues  
 Outer Circle = Values

## Appendix C - Interview Questions

- 1) How long have you worked here?
  - a. Can you tell me a little bit about what you do?
- 2) How would you describe (say to a family member or a new employee) what it's like to work here?
- 3) How would you describe the diversity here?
- 4) What is your primary language?
- 5) In your experience, are there employees who speak a variety of languages? If so, what are they?
- 6) Do you know of customers who speak other languages?
  - a. What can you tell about your experience with that?
- 7) How often do hear a language other than English being spoken in the workplace? When do you hear these conversations? (lunch, breaks, after hours, etc.)
- 8) What challenges have you had to overcome through having multi-lingual coworkers and/or customers?
- 9) In what ways does the company instruct/train you to overcome these challenges? How effective are these?
  - a. How could this company improve what they do in regards to this issue?
- 10) How would you describe the support this company provides for its employees who speak other languages?
- 11) In what ways, if at all, does the company accommodate a diverse customer/employee base?
  - a. Have you seen any changes over the years with how the company makes these accommodations?
- 12) In what ways is diversity enriching to this company?
- 13) Is there anything you would like to add about the workplace becoming a multi-lingual place and the way that your organization manages this issue?
- 14) Do you have any questions for me?

## End Notes

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<sup>i</sup> For the sake of privacy, this is the pseudonym used for the actual organization.

<sup>ii</sup> As part of managing the meanings of mission statements, organizations must be conscious of their behavior or actions. Fagiano (1995) writes, “Values are important, but that importance is contingent on the values being lived. If they are dusted off once a year, then they are a total waste of time. To be meaningful, values must play out in behavior” (p. 5). Additionally, Fekete (2004) writes, “...too many businesses have embraced statements of purpose or values that have no organic connection to the heart and soul of the organization. What’s more, too many managers have failed to link their idealistic precepts to concrete behaviors that bring ideals to life” (p. 162). This means that organizations must not only illuminate the presence of their values regularly to their employees, but they must also incorporate the values of their mission statement into their daily routines; managers must apply different aspects of the mission statement to meetings and projects (Fairhurst et. al., 1997; Roach, 2009). If an organization neglects to continuously reinforce the values of the company, they lose meaning and importance. This may result in a wayward evolution of the culture or identity of the company.

<sup>iii</sup> Movements for the declaration of English as the standard language of the United States date back to the ages of John Adams (Lu, 2006). “In a series of letters to the Continental Congress...[Adams] proposed that an institution be formed and charged with two responsibilities: to prescribe a language standard and to consider political and economic forces critical to the international spread of American English,” (Heath p. 220-221 as cited in Lu, 2006, p.605). In other words, Adams not only wanted English to be declared as the official language of the United States, he also wanted a committee to be organized to help influence the spread of American English across the world.

Today, many organizations work under the same ideology. For example, with 1.8 million members, U.S. English is not only the oldest English-only organization within the movement, but it is the largest in the nation (USEnglish.org). Ironically, U.S. English was founded by an immigrant to the U.S. in 1983 and, according to its website, “believes that the passage of English as the official language will help to expand opportunities for immigrants to learn and speak English, the single greatest empowering tool that immigrants must have to succeed.” While Adams did not provide reasoning for his proposal, U.S. English does. That is, the organization thinks English should become a standard language because it would force immigrants to learn the language instead of enabling them; therefore, leading to more opportunities for success and, in turn, betterment for society.

Alternatively, English First, another organization within the English-only movement, boasts 150,000 members and strives to achieve three goals: “make English America’s official language, give every child the chance to learn English, and eliminate costly and ineffective multilingual policies” (EnglishFirst.org). Unlike U.S. English, English First believes that the lack of a formal law outlining English as the standard language prohibits unity within the country and is wasteful of taxpayer’s money (money is used through government services such providing translators or printing documents in multiple languages, instead of forcing them to learn English).

While these two organizations provide different reasons as to why English should be made the primary language of the United States, neither organization actually states that immigration is bad for the country. Thus, it could be inferred that these organizations recognize the importance of diversity in the country; they just believe that if everyone can communicate using the same language there would be more opportunities for immigrants, and the country could potentially be more united. While this does parallel with the justifications for language policies being implemented in the workplace, it cannot be argued that these movements have motivated the implementation. Instead, employers want to unite the workplace in order to maximize profits, not just for the sake of being united.