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LEAN diversity management in practice: The multi-functionality of questions as a resource to ensure understanding, participation and procedural compliance in a diverse workplace

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Abstract: This paper explores the way that team managers in an industrial laundry facility use questions in weekly whiteboard meetings to simultaneously manage the diversity and potential language difficulties of the employees and the LEAN based management goals of improved production through employee participation. The paper argues that the multi-functionality of questions provides a resource for balancing for the competing goals of securing intersubjectivity and progressivity in the brief and yet essential meetings, and that this management has both affective and epistemic dimensions.

1. Introduction: Questions as a resource for diversity management and LEAN management

This paper explores the use and function of questions in a workplace setting from a conversation analytical perspective (See also Graf, Dionne, and Spranz-Fogazy, 2020 ; Mayes, 2020 ; Worsøe and Jensen, 2020 in this volume), looking at how they are used as management resources within a production setting in Denmark, namely an industrial laundry facility. In this facility, 80% of the employees in production come from a range of other countries than Denmark and speak only little Danish, whereas management employees are predominantly ethnically Danish. Given the linguistic, cultural and professional diversity of the employees in this production site, a central part of daily management is securing understanding and intersubjectivity among managers and employees. The official language used in this workplace is Danish and this creates some challenges, specifically during the weekly whiteboard meetings held between team leaders and team employees, who similarly have, respectively, a Danish and a migrant background. These meetings form the key site for team leaders to discuss challenges and goals of production as well as providing a space for establishing intersubjectivity and agreement about workplace procedures and regulations. While other spaces of interaction would open up for interaction between employees and management during the day, the noise within the workplace and the high-speed type of manual labor carried out mean that there is little opportunity for more lengthy discussions about issues of production on site. Furthermore, employees within the teams are to a large extent physically dispersed in different laundry 'stations' with little opportunity for discussing ideas and problems with more than perhaps one or two other colleagues. This adds to the importance of weekly white board meetings as potential sites of efficient information exchange and dialogue within the team. As the whiteboard meetings are brief and involve many items on the agenda they are case-in-point exemplary of how interactions involve the continual management of the opposing goals of achieving intersubjectivity and progressivity (Heritage, 2007; see also Mayes, 2020 in this volume). As questions are prevalently used by team leaders as a resource for achieving these interactional goals, the paper addresses the following research question: How are questions used as resources for the diversity management strategies of team leaders in whiteboard meetings?

Studies of diversity management (DM) typically focus on issues related to the implementation, translation and effects of diversity management as an ideology and a declaration of intent within corporations (Boxenbaum, 2006; Holvino and Kamp, 2009). This tendency stems from the ideological rooting of DM, which grew out of discussions about affirmative action in the United States during the 1980s. The backcloth of instantiating DM as a corporate goal was in this way an equal opportunities agenda that sought to ensure that all employees within a company were given equal opportunities and equal treatment rather than being institutionally sanctioned on grounds of race, gender, sexuality and disabilities (Özbilgin and Tatli, 2011). This inclusive aspect is clear in the definition of diversity management offered by Gilbert and Ivancevich as "*a voluntary organizational program designed to create greater inclusion of all individuals into informal social networks and formal company programs*." (Gilbert and Ivancevich, 1999).

Another strand of DM studies have taken a slightly different perspective on diversity management, informed by discussions about inclusion and integration of migrant employees in various companies and the labor market more generally (Tatli, 2011). The emphasis of many of these studies is how everyday work-practices of employees and managers can work to marginalize or include minority employees (Holck, 2016). These studies typically focus on the notion of inclusion and illuminate how it is either facilitated or potentially limited by managers and employees as part of the daily work or as a result of the structural organization of workplaces and institutions. Many of these studies are based on ethnographic methods of interviews and participant observations and seek to "*follow diversity around*" (Ahmed, 2012) in organizations in order to reveal implicit processes of inclusion and exclusion (Holck, 2018), sometimes involving action research as a means to improve conditions for marginalized employees and increase workplace integration. Both strands of studies pursue an interest in how DM functions as part of the practices of organizations and companies and the consequences that DM initiatives have for employees and organizations.

Inclusion as an organizational and managerial goal is, however, not merely accentuated because of the diversity of employees, it is also a key tenet in LEAN management ideology (Fujimoto, 1999; Inamizu, Fukuzawa, Fujimoto, Shintaku, and Suzuki, 2014), which was originally developed in the Japanese car industry and has influenced the management and structuring of work in many parts of the world since the beginning of the millennium. LEAN emphasizes, to a varying degree, the need for bottom-up input from employees on how to increase and improve production. In this particular factory the need for bottom-up input from employees was particularly salient and as will be shown in this paper this manifests itself clearly in the way that meetings are carried out and also, in questioning practices of team leaders. When questions are used in team meetings as part of strategies of inclusion this manifests a paradoxical conversion of two different agendas for securing the inclusion of migrant employees. On the one hand, questions form a resource for ensuring the integration and empowerment of migrants, and on the other, they work to pursue the management agenda of ensuring the efficiency of production.

Paradoxically, LEAN presents both a potential and a challenge in terms of diversity management in the sense that it on the one hand presents an opportunity for organized cultural encounters and dialogue between management and employees in the workplace (Christiansen, Galal, and Hvenegård-Lassen, 2017) and on the other hand, such meetings are potentially challenged by differences in cultural and linguistic resources. In other words, while the goal of management is increased participation and dialogue about production efficiency and improvement, the mutuality and co-constructed sense-making between team leaders and employees can be said to be limited. Such limitation is partially due to the difficulties of understanding and participation of migrant employees but also a result of team leaders' limited knowledge of how to best facilitate and invite such understanding and participation. The questions explored in this paper in different ways manifest this challenge of facilitating the perspectives and participation of migrant workers while at the same time ensuring compliance with efficient work procedures as defined by management. While the role of leadership and management for the implementation and long-term endurance of LEAN within an organization has lately been emphasized within literature on LEAN (Mann, 2009), only few studies illuminate the nature of such leadership. Those that do, pay no attention to the communicative and interactional dimensions of leadership but rather focus on developing overall guides for management (Liker and Convis, 2013; Dombrowski and Mielke, 2013) and types of leadership styles (Emiliani, 2003; Poksinska, Swartling, and Drotz, 2013).

This paper takes a different approach to diversity management and LEAN management by focusing on the communicative dimension and exploring strategies of inclusion as 'interactional' practices that employees and managers engage in, focusing on how questions are used as an interactional resource employed by team leaders (See also Mayes, 2020 in this volume). This interactional perspective is drawing on conversation analytical studies of management, leadership and meetings (Asmus and Svennevig, 2009; Clifton, 2009; Nielsen, 2009; Svennevig, 2011; Svennevig and Hazel, 2018) focusing on the action dimension of diversity management in multilingual and multicultural settings (Day, 1998, 1999; Markaki et al., 2010, Merlino, Mondada, and Oloff, 2010; Mondada, 2012). The paper will focus more specifically on three different types of actions related to strategies of doing diversity management in practice, namely (1) ensuring understanding, (2) participation and (3) procedural compliance of the employees. It will be argued, that the multifunctionality of questions provide an important resource for simultaneously performing several of these actions at once.

2. The context in question – whiteboard meetings in diverse production companies

Before investigating questions as interactional strategies for LEAN diversity management, a few words about the institutional context of the whiteboard meeting is needed as it provides the particular "semiotic ecology" (Van Lier, 2000) and "multimodal space" (Goodwin, 2006) that frames the production and interpretation of these questions.

As mentioned previously, the management and organization of work in most production or industrial companies such as a laundry facility is influenced by the management ideology LEAN (Fujimoto, 1999; Inamizu et al., 2014; Toledo, Gonzalez, Lizarelli, and Pelegrino, 2019), which is an instrument to ensure the increasing efficiency and improvement of production by working 'smarter'. The implementation of LEAN has three central implications for the management of employees in organizations: 1) A team-based workplace organization where individual teams are responsible for particular production goals under supervision and guidance by an appointed team leader, who is also working as part of the daily production. 2) An increased emphasis on weekly meetings between employees and a team leader or production leader, inspired by the Kaizen meeting, which is a type of meeting used in the Japanese Toyota car factories with the aim of securing a continual improvement (the meaning of Kaizen in Japanese) of production through generating input from employees. 3) Increased emphasis on improving production efficiency through employee participation and input. In diverse workplaces such as the laundry facility in question, these management conditions present both potentials and problems for migrant workers. On the one hand, the frequency of meetings and the team-based management structure presents an opportunity for migrant workers to have more contact and interaction with management and other employees within the team. On the other hand, the format of the meetings, that is the brief, goal-oriented and formally structure, potentially presents a barrier for migrant workers to understand what is going on, let alone contribute and participate as intended.

The production was organized in 5 different teams that each had a team leader. The first and primary topic on the agenda was typically the production levels that were tracked and visually represented on a "KPI" (Key Performance Index) chart. Other recurrent topics were ongoing challenges and problems in production as well as ideas for improvement.

The team meetings would all take place in the cafeteria, where whiteboards for each team were placed side by side on one of the walls, creating a space for gathering for each team. The team employees would sit round the table that was closest to their whiteboard, and the team leader would stand in front of the whiteboard, facing the employees.

Returning to the issue of diversity management within LEAN based organizational setting one could say that while the ideology of LEAN and Kaizen thinking entails an emphasis on inclusion and participation of employees, the structure of the whiteboard meeting structure prevalently used in LEAN based organizations involves an "interaction order" (Goffman, 1981) and a "semiotic ecology" (Due et al., 2019) that might be counterproductive to the goal of securing the inclusion and participation of migrant workers with limited Danish language skills.

In light of the different aspects of the institutional context of the whiteboard production meeting, the questions and questioning strategies of the team leader should be understood as part of a routinized and relatively formalized practice characterized by an interaction order defined by an institutionally anchored uneven distribution of rights, status and knowledge with respect to organizational procedures and roles (Drew and Heritage, 1992). The team leader is the one who opens the meetings, controls the points on the agenda and determines when the various topics and meetings are to be closed down, which is an organization of roles and actions previously described in interactional studies of meetings. This will be presented in one of the following section discussing previous findings about questioning and questions in institutional settings.

3. The data

The empirical basis of this paper are 12 video recordings of whiteboard meetings from 4 different workplace teams (sorting, steaming, rolling and packing) with a varying length of 10-30 minutes. The recordings were made as part of a collaboration initiated by the site manager of the company, who wanted to improve the management of diversity within the company. The purpose of the research and the recordings was presented to the employees by the researcher and the site manager during a lunch break and during team meetings and consent forms were distributed to all employees with information about the project and the handling of data. The wording of the consent form was discussed in detail with the site manager in order to ensure that it was simple and as easy to understand as possible. Before and during the period of recording, the researcher visited the site frequently, participated in team meetings without recording, worked in the cafeteria, talked to employees and answered questions about the research. The team leaders played a central role in securing the trust of the employees, as they would assist in explanations about the project and the making of recordings when the researcher was not able to set up the equipment herself. This arrangement proved quite important, since the timing of the weekly meetings would often change last minute. The employees were generally very enthusiastic about contributing to the project and only a few employees expressed concerns. These employees were given additional explanations face to face by the researcher and all employees were told that they could decline from participating in a recording at any time. Each team has their own team leader, and around 10-15 employees in their team. The meetings took place in the cafeteria in front of a whiteboard placed on the wall. The camera was set up for each meeting facing the whiteboard and there was no opportunity for filming the meeting from an angle showing the faces of the employees, which presented a limitation in terms of capturing all of the visual responses and contributions of the employees. A separate microphone was placed in the middle of the table in order to alleviate the bias caused by the placement of the video camera.

All video recordings were transcribed using the software CLAN, based on the conventions developed by Gail Jefferson and described by Atkinson andand Heritage (Atkinson and Heritage, 1984).[1] On this basis, a collection of questions posed by the team leader was compiled, as these appeared to be recurrent and central to the ongoing activities in the meetings. The extracts used in this paper are exemplary of the different functions of the questions identified in the collection as a whole. In the following section, the definition of questions used in this paper will be presented and discussed.

4. Questions and questioning in institutional contexts

The amount of studies dealing with questions is vast but elegantly summarized by Steensig and Drew (Steensig and Drew, 2008a) as constituted by 5 different sub-areas of research (See also Archer, 2020 this volume). These sub-areas focus on 1) the linguistic resources employed for posing questions, 2) the various actions that questions are used to perform, 3) additional functions of questions other than eliciting information, 4) developmental aspects, that is, the issue of how we learn to ask and format questions, and finally, 5) the constraining force of questions, i.e. question formulations always contain normative expectations to possible answers. This is in part due to their frequent position as first pair part in adjacency pairs, which is a conversation analytical term referring to action-pairs, such as question-answer, proposal-acceptance etc. where the first part of the action-pair set up a normative expectation for another participant to follow with the second part of the action-pair (Schegloff and Sacks, 1973).

The present paper focuses on the use of questions within a work-place context and deals with some of the functions that questions have besides eliciting information, taking a point of departure in an interactional definition of questions, rather than a grammatical one. Following Steensig and Drew, questions are defined as "*utterances which form the first pair part of a question-answer adjacency pair. It thus denotes the interactional function.*" (Steensig and Drew, 2008a, p. 8)

An interactional approach also involves an emphasis on questions as first pair parts of an adjacency pair and not least an interpretation of their function in terms of the second pair part that follows, which is what Steensig and Drew refer to as research on the constraining force of questions. As they describe, questions have a coercive or controlling force by nature of the normative expectations of a response that they entail (See also Mortensen, 2020 in this volume). The study of the response is in this way as important as the study of the actual posing and formatting of the question, as it indicates how hearers interpret the function of the question. In this way, while patterns have been established empirically in terms of how a particular formatting or design of a question provides for or prevents particular responses and even have particular interactional consequences beyond the next term in terms of the behavior or the other participants (Brown, 2003; Kasper and Ross, 2007; Stivers, Sidnell, and Bergen, 2018), the meaning and function of any given question is always co-constructed by the respondent and the given response.

Contrary to many studies within conversation analysis and interactional linguistics (Drew and Couper-Kuhlen, 2014; Fox and Heineman, 2016; Heineman, 2017; Heritage, 2009; Steensig and Heineman, 2013; Stivers et al., 2018), the present paper does not provide a corpus-based analysis of different types of question formats or functions and their interactional consequences. Rather, it contributes to these studies by pointing to how the multi-functionality of questions can be used as a resource in diverse institutional contexts that demand a simultaneous orientation towards a diversity amongst the participants and the potential respondents, in terms of institutional roles, language proficiency, and work-place knowledge. Drawing on previous studies of questions, as well as studies of directive utterances (such as commands, orders, requests, instructions, advice and proposals) the paper points to the grey zones between these phenomena. It is argued, that in some cases the power, or the "performative force" (Steensig and Drew, 2008a) of a question or a proposals is exactly its multi-functionality and the ambiguity for respondents in determining whether it is one or the other.

As pointed out in previous studies that take an interactional approach to phenomena such as questions and directives (Freed and Ehrlich, 2009; Sorjonen, Raevaara, and Couper-Kuhlen, 2017; Steensig and Drew, 2008b; Steensig, Heineman, and Lindström, 2011), the contextual factors are central to determining the function of any first pair part and the response it projects (See also Graf et al., 2020; Mayes, 2020; Worsøe and Jensen, 2020). Contextual factors previously described, such as who has the deontic authority in the interaction (Stevanovic and Peräkylä, 2012), issues of entitlement and contingency (Curl and Drew, 2008; Heineman, 2006) and relations of power in any given situation (Clayman and Heritage, 2014) have so far been addressed in isolation from one another and as such been used to illuminate differences in function. In contrast to these studies, this article demonstrates how questions are multifunctional in the diverse institutional context of the laundry. Here, multiple contexts impact the whiteboard interactions resulting in questions becoming a premise as well as a resource for addressing several agendas and the diversity of the respondents simultaneously.

In the industrial whiteboard meetings studied in this paper, this empirical but also methodological point presents an analytical challenge, since the questions posed by the team leader are often not responded to or only responded to minimally. While returning to this point later in the analysis, it is relevant to mention here how the combination of the institutional setup and the fact that many of the team employees speak only relatively or even very little Danish means that the usual controlling force of the first pair part question is differently actualized in these whiteboard meetings. This means that the analytical emphasis will be on formatting, prosody, interactional trajectories and contextual factors in general when determining the function of the questions analyzed.

What this paper contributes with in terms of previous studies of questioning and questions in institutional interactions is an emphasis on the multifunctionality of some questions, that is, the extent to which questions can be used to conflate actions relating to both the epistemological and affective dimensions and that this provides a rich resource in terms of DM. Before unpacking and demonstrating this in the analysis, an explanation of what is meant by these dimensions of questions is needed.

The first of these dimensions, the epistemological, is perhaps the most obvious when considering the function of questions, in the sense that questions are typically resources for acquiring knowledge about someone or something that one does not have already. Or, in some cases, confirming knowledge that one already has but is uncertain about or potentially wants to give the impression of not having. This dimension of questions has recently been described extensively in terms of epistemic negotiations within CA and the central argument presented in this field of work is that negotiations about who knows what and who is entitled to know what play a central role in interactional organization and sense-making practices of 'members' within any given context (Heritage, 2012a, 2012b; Heritage and Raymond, 2005; Raymond and Heritage, 2006; Stivers, 2011). For example, as described by Heritage (2012b), the epistemic status of the speaker determines whether an utterance that is morphosyntactically formatted as a question, is indeed heard as a question, or something else, such as a request for confirmation. Heritage furthermore argues that epistemic stance, that is, the positioning of a speaker or hearer with respect to what they know or do not know, is consequential to the development of ongoing talk, such as whether the participants initiate closings of a topic or whether a topic is reopened for negotiation (Heritage, 2012a).

The second dimension of questions explored in this paper is the affective, which covers the affiliative and disaffiliative (Stivers, 2008) functions of questions that seek to either establish, maintain or challenge social relations with others. As argued by Steensig and Drew (2008a) questions are never innocent and often involve either affiliation or disaffiliation. Affiliation and disaffiliation are terms used within conversation analysis to refer to the relational functions of what interactants 'do with words'. In both cases it involves 'work' on the part of the questioner and that "*[q]uestioners design questions to warrant their occurrence*." (Steensig and Drew, 2008a, p. 12) Steensig and Drew argue that both lexical items and prosody contribute to marking questions as affiliative and disaffiliative. They also argue, based on the findings of previous studies of both polar yes-no questions and wh-questions, that it is not the syntactic format of questions that determines whether they are affiliative or disaffiliative, since both types of questions have previously been found to be both affiliative as well as disaffiliative (Steensig and Drew, 2008a, p. 12).

The following analysis will demonstrate how the questions and questioning found in the industrial laundry facility whiteboard meeting involve both elements of affiliation and disaffiliation and that this ambiguity works as a resource to manage the diversity of employees and the somewhat contradictory agendas of LEAN management - namely on the one hand eliciting participation and input from the employees and on the other ensuring compliance with institutional procedures and professional practices.

5. Analysis

The following analysis explores how the multifunctionality of questions is used as a resource by team leaders to seek and secure the understanding, participation, contribution and compliance of the employees in the industrial laundry facility, which can be described as some of the central goals of the whiteboard meeting. The epistemological and affective dimensions of questions described above can be said to represent drivers (Heritage, 2012a) in the achievement of these interactional goals. The goals of the whiteboard meeting in this way involve epistemic and affective work in terms of establishing common ground and in terms of maintaining good and sustainable social relations between team leaders and employees. Questions that seek to secure understanding, compliance or participation will, in this way, involve affiliation or disaffiliation as well as negotiations and assumptions about who knows what and who is expected to know what.

For sake of overview and clarity of the various forms of multifunctionality explored in this analysis, the following matrix will serve as a graphic illustration:

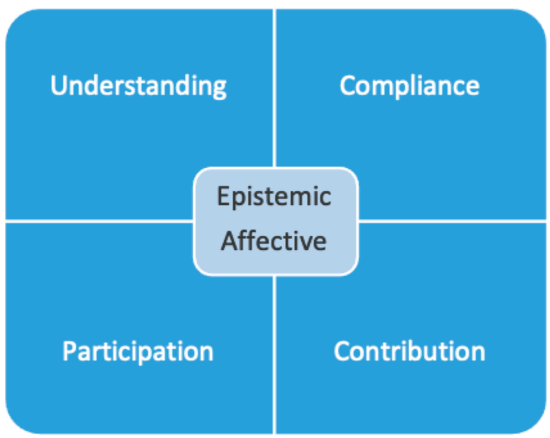

Figure 1: The multifunctionality of questions

The analysis begins by investigating two examples of multifunctionality that could be placed in the top part of the matrix that is, questions that work to secure understanding and compliance. The second part of the analysis will investigate three examples of questions, that can be placed in the left half and the bottom half of the matrix, namely, questions that have the double function of securing understanding and participation and questions that seek participation and contribution. The distinction between participation and contribution would within any other context be difficult to make, however, within the context of LEAN based industries and Kaizen meetings, contribution refers not only to types of participation such as producing a response token or responding to a question. Rather, contribution is understood and treated by members as providing input and suggestions about the daily production, which is then noted down and employed as 'items' for future discussions and practices. In that sense, I employ an emically based analysis on the functions of questions that draws, however, on previous conversation analytical findings about questions as resources for securing understanding, participation and compliance. In the second part of the analysis I will describe how the particular distinction between the function of securing participation and contribution is achieved and manifested.

6. Directive questions that seek to ensure compliance and understanding

The first part of the analysis will focus on the type of multifunctional questions that use different variations of the format "*do you understand*" as a resource for not only checking or ensuring understanding but also seeking compliance or giving directives. While scolding someone or giving orders can be a face-threatening act, the following examples suggest that the questions about understanding can be used as a resource for a more covert means of telling people off or telling them what to do. This strategy of using the multifunctionality of the question "*do you understand*" is accommodating the needs and dilemmas of both the questioner and the respondent. On the one hand, it allows the team leaders to seek compliance while avoiding to act 'bossy'. On the other hand, it provides an opportunity for the respondents, the second language speaking employees, to produce a meaningful and acceptable excuse for their lack of compliance, namely 'not understanding' or language difficulties. Finally, the question "*do you understand*" provides all employees with the opportunity to show compliance and contribute to the swift progression of the interaction into different matters by providing a positive response or acknowledgement token, regardless of whether they have understood or not.

The first example from the whiteboard meetings in the laundry facility is taken from the beginning of a meeting, where the team leader (TL) has just introduced a point on the agenda, namely mess on the production floor, and the first part of the extract unfolds a complaint about the messiness of leaving laundry trolleys all over the place.

Example 1: Question about understanding that works to seek compliance

46	TL:	øh jeg synes der roder rigtig mange steder øhm
47		*eh I think it is messy in a lot of places ehm*
48		nogle pakker flere vogne
49		*some pack several trolleys*
50		så der står nogle vogne der og så står der nogle der
51		*so there are some trolleys standing there and then some are standing there*
52		og så er man i gang med en her.
53		*and then you are working on one here*
54	%com:	TL points to the left and right with both hands
55	**TL:**	**det dur ikke (.) en vogn af gangen**
56		*that is no good (.) one trolley at a time*
57	%com:	TL points with one finger
58	TL:	pakker man to vogne så er det fordi man har nogle små ordrer
59		*if you are packing two trolleys then it is because you has some small orders*
60		øhm og man lige tager to vogne sammen bum så er man videre
61		*ehm and you (part.) take two trolleys together boom and then you move on*
62	%com:	TL makes gestures with her hands to symbolize the wagons
63	TL:	man lader ikke en hel masse stå (0.4)
64		*you do not leave a pile standing*
65		man lader det heller ikke stå ovre ved bagvæggen
66		*you do not leave it standing over by the back wall either*
67	%com:	TL points with marker at the employees
68	TL:	øhm fordi man lige venter på noget
69		*ehm because you are (part.) just waiting for something*

70		så tager man det med ned på sin pind
71		*then you take it to your place*
72	PPP:	(3.0)
73	%com:	Tl looks back and forth between the whiteboard and the employees
74		and points the marker at the employees
75	**TL:**	**kan vi ↑alle sammen forstå det**
76		*can we all understand that*
77	%com:	TL smiles and looks around at employees
78	PPP:	(1.6)

The gist of the complaint that contextualizes the question about understanding in line 75, is produced in line 46 in the form of a declarative utterance. While the complaint is mitigated by adding "*I think*" and hesitation markers in the beginning and end, the team leader's privilege in terms of institutional role and status, access to organizational procedures and knowledge leaves no doubt of TL's legitimacy and entitlement in making a claim to knowledge about the messiness and thereby the wrongdoings of the employees. The status of the team leader as "the boss" is supported and emphasized by the semiotic ecology of the physical layout of the meeting space, where the team leader is the one standing in front of the whiteboard facing the employees who are sitting.

This status is confirmed in the following turn where TL elaborates and supports her claim to knowledge with a description of the cause of the messiness, namely that *"some"* (pl.) employees pack more trolleys than one at a time and leave them here and there. Note that TL continues her turn after the first completion point in line 46 rather than allowing for a response from the employees to the complaint. This lengthy elaboration and substantiation of her claim continues until line 73, where she leaves a 3 second pause, during which TL is smiling and pointing her pen at the employees. As they refrain from responding to her complaint, TL then presents the employees with a specific question, "*kan vi allesammen forstå det*" ('*can we all understand that*') in line 75.

Based on the previously mentioned controlling and coercive powers of questions as first pair parts that project a particular response, one can say that this polar question, given the institutional setting and the sequential environment of the complaint has a strong preference for a positive response, which would simultaneously work as an acceptance of TL's complaint.

In relation to the notion that no questions are innocent there is an interesting tension between an affiliative and a disaffiliative potential in the question, which is central to determining its function. On the one hand, the question appears disaffiliative due to its embedding in the sequential context of the complaint, which is reinforced by the fact that the questioner in this case should know or suspect the answer to the question, which, according to Steensig and Drew, contributes to the disaffiliative potential of questions (Steensig and Drew, 2008a, p. 12). On the other hand, the disaffiliative potential of the question is mitigated by the affiliative use of smile voice, smiling and high pitch at the end of the utterance, that in a sense exaggerates the projection of the positive response in such a way that it suggests that the question is rhetorical and an actual response superfluous. This impression is potentially supported by the marked shift in personal pronoun from the complaining turns, where TL uses "*man*" ('*you*') and *nogle* ('*some*') to the question where TL uses the self-inclusive pronoun "*vi*" ('*we*'), which can be heard as more affiliative by including herself in the group of "employees" who should not only understand but also be less messy.

It is interesting to compare this example with the study by Monzoni (2008), which shows how polar questions can sometimes be used to clear the path for direct complaints in the third turn. In this example, we somehow see the opposite, namely that a very direct complaint seems to clear the path for a polar question that in a sense works to underline the complaint. Given the coercive force of questions, TL in this way seems to upgrade her pursuit of a response from the employees to the previous complaint.

Much more in line with the findings of the study by Vöge and Egbert, who point to the disaffiliative function of questions formatted with *warum* ('why') in business meetings, a central part of the function of the question in this example seems to be casting blame and placing responsibility on the employees regardless of the *we*-formatting of the question.

In the following extract, we find another example of a question about understanding that functions as a directive seeking compliance based on a previous complaint about the actions of the employees. The employees and the team leader is talking about a part of the laundry process, "*klippe*" ('cutting'), which takes place in the sorting department and the proper allocation of workers to that task in relation to the amount of clothes coming in. What is ultimately being addressed, is the need to avoid having employees standing around in sorting without work to do.

Example 2: Question about understanding that functions as a directive

129	**TL:**	**vi skal klippe hele tiden**
130		*We have to cut all the time*
131		vi skal det
132		*we have to*
133		og når vi ikke kan det
134		*and when we cannot do that*
135		så må vi afgive nogle folk
136		*then we must give away some people*
137	%com:	TL makes gestures with her arms

138	PPP:	(.)
139	TL:	det bliver vi nødt til
140		*we need to*
141		ellers så kommer vi ikke derop
142		*otherwise we will not get up there*
143	%com:	TL points at the Key Performance Index chart on the whiteboard, with a line marking the desired level of performance.
144	EM5:	ja
145		*yes*
146	**TL:**	**og har alle forstået (.) det her**
147		*and has everyone understood this*
148	%com:	Tl moves both her hands up and down
149	TL:	okay
150		*okay*
151	EM3:	yes
152		*yes*
153	TL:	fordi vi har ligget rigtig godt da jeg gik på ferie
154		*Because we have been placed really well when I went on holiday*
155		så vi kan godt komme op igen
156		*so we can get up again*
157		vi skal bare tænke på de her ting
158		*we just need to think about these things*

In the beginning of the extract, line 129, TL is providing the summarizing part of a complaint, which is formatted as a directive telling the employees what they are to do, "*vi skal klippe hele tiden*" ('we have to cut all the time'). Following the first directive is an upgrading repeat "*vi skal det*" ('we have to') which accentuates the non-negotiable nature of the previous directive, though slightly mitigated in the immediately following turn by a description of what the consequences are of not "cutting all the time". What TL is indirectly complaining about here is the inefficiency of employees in the sorting department simply standing around, not cutting and waiting for clothes to come through the funnel to the converter belt, when they could then be used elsewhere in production.

Following a micropause in the turn completion point, which is not filled by a response from the employees, TL provides yet another repeat of the directive, now emphasizing the directive as a requirement. She immediately supplies the account for this requirement, namely that they will otherwise not meet their production goals "*ellers så kommer vi ikke derop*", ('otherwise we will not get up there'), referring to a specific level on the KPI charts. As TL turns to point to the chart on the whiteboard, one of the employees provides an acknowledgement token responding to the directive produced by TL in the turn preceding the account, which could be said to display the alignment that TL is seeking. However, this response appears to be insufficient, as she uses the following interrogative as a resource to for a more explicit pursuit of a response in line 146, "*og har alle forstået det her*" ('and has everyone understood this'). The use of the word "*alle*" ('everyone') addresses the previous response from EM5 while pointing to the possibility that the other employees have failed to respond or respond sufficiently. Furthermore the emphasis on "everyone" works to emphasize or assert that she is not merely inquiring about understanding but rather 'requiring' understanding from all the employees. This is clear from her response to the limited uptake from the employees in the sense that if the question had merely been an inquiry about the understanding of all employees, she would not hardly have settled with the acknowledgement tokens of two employees. In this way, we see the same compliance seeking function of the question found in the previous extract.

As in the previous example, the complaint and the directive seems to pave the way for the interrogatively formatted directive in line 146, which projects and demands a response in a more explicit way than the complaint or the directive. There are a couple of interesting differences, however, between the formatting and sequential context of the interrogative in this example compared to the previous one, which deserve some attention. The first of these, the turn-initial addition of "*og*" ('and') works to format the interrogative as a continuation of TL's previous turn, and also works as a follow-up response to the confirmation produced by EM5. The addition of this "and" makes it appear as less of an action in its own right and thereby less intrusive and face-threatening as in the previous example. The second difference to note, is that in the first example TL used the inclusive plural pronoun "we", the interrogative in this example is formatted with the word "*alle*" ('all') that could be inclusive of TL but could also be heard as indexing 'all' rather than only 'one' employee, hereby addressing all of the employees, who have not yet responded. In this way, the preference for a response to the previous complaint is displayed. The final difference from the previous example is that TL in this case, following a gesturing movement of her hands up and down, provides the preferred positive, third pair part response to her question, namely the response token 'okay'. This response works not only as a substitute to the lacking response from the employees, it works also as an acknowledgement of this lacking response as sufficient, and in this way a topic-closure initiation. This topic-closure elicits a repeat from another employee, who hereby contributes to closing the issue by displaying understanding and compliance on behalf of 'all' the others.

What the two extracts illustrate is how, within an diverse workplace settings, the potential lack of understanding of some employees means that questions can be used as a resource for securing understanding while also seeing compliance in a covert and less face-threatening manner than if they were giving direct orders or explicit scolding. However, in both cases, the team leader somewhat fails in this attempt since the uptake consists only in a limited and minimal claim of understanding by a few employees.

7. Questions that simultaneously open up a space for participation and securing understanding

The following extracts differ from the previous two by not using questions about understanding as resources to seek compliance with procedures or rules, and yet they are equally multi-functional in the sense that they simultaneously address the continually present potential lack of understanding and yet do more than merely seek or elicit confirmation of intersubjectivity. What the following extracts show is questions that are simultaneously used to invite or elicit participation and contributions from employees while opening up a space for clearing out misunderstandings. While the attempt to elicit participation and contributions from employees can on the one hand be seen as an attempt by Team Leaders to include and engage migrant employees in production issues, it can also be seen as a reflection of ideologies and goals related to LEAN management. A central goal in such management ideology is to encourage the participation and engagement of employees in the creation and implementation of ideas for production improvement (Toledo et al., 2019; Toma and Naruo, 2017; Van Dun and Wilderom, 2016). What will be shown in the following part of the analysis is that within a diverse industrial setting such as the one studied here, questions can be used as a strategy to open up a space for participation that on the one hand involves an orientation towards LEAN management goals of generally securing employee input and on the other enables and orientation towards diversity management goals of securing understanding and inclusion of migrant employees.

The first example of this type of questions is topic-specifically formatted in the sense that it invites the other employees to voice their potential confusion or lack of understanding in relation to the topic that has just been covered by TL, namely a required procedure for handling the trolleys.

Example 3: Topic specific question inviting follow-up questions but eliciting other-topic contribution

111	**TL:**	**er der nogen spørgsmål til det**
112		*Are there any questions about that*
113		jeg vil også gerne vise hvordan det foregår
114		*i will also like to show how it works*
115		hvis der er nogen der er i tvivl.
116		*if anyone is in doubt*
117	**EM2:**	**xxx vaskeklude ??og poser med sække??**
118		*xxx tea towels and bags of sacks*
119	TL:	ja
120		*yes*
121	EM2:	xxx vaskeklude og og det er xxx
122		*xxx tea towels and and that is xxx*
123	%com:	TL moves towards EM2
124	**TL:**	**nå**
125		*oh*
126	EM2:	xxx
127	TL:	okay
128		*okay*
129	PPP:	(1.7)
130	%com:	TL nods and moves back to the whiteboard
131	TL:	det må jeg [lige have tage med xxx]
132		*that i will have to (part.) take with xxx*
133	EM3:	[xxx største xxx]
134		*xxx biggest xxx*]
135	EM5:	[xxx]
136	%com:	TL writes on the whiteboard
137	EM3:	[xxx]
138	EM5:	[xxx]
139	TL:	ja [??sådan??]
140		*yes ??like that??*
141	EM3:	??poser??
142		*??bags??*
143		[xxx]
144	TL:	[ja].
145		*yes*
146	EM3:	??man kan jo godt tage flere steder??
147		*??one can (part.) take several places??*
148	TL:	ja ja hvis der mangler [fem i hver ikke]
149		*yes yes if there is shortage five in each right*
150	EM3:	[xxx]
151	TL:	det tager jeg med Ging (.) øhm
152		*i will take that up with Ging ehm*
153		så må de få maskinen til at xxx være sikker på at ??det kører??

then they must make the machine to be sure that it is running
det er rigtig godt du siger det
it is really good that you say it

This example demonstrates a type of question that is not aiming as specifically as the previous ones at clarifying problems of understanding nor at ensuring compliance in the form of a covert directive, but are rather focused on eliciting participation. However, in this example, the issue of understanding or rather potential lack of understanding is nevertheless maintained as relevant in the sense that the invitation made for employees to pose additional questions is specified in relation to the topic that has just been covered. In this way, the invitation to contribute is projecting a joint clarification of what has been said and explained.

The extract is relatively long, and the following analysis will not engage with the entire extract in detail but rather emphasize the following notable points (emphasized by bold font): 1) The formatting of the question, 2) the function of the question in terms of eliciting engagement from the employees and 3) the uptake of TL to the response given by the employees, which demonstrates the multifunctionality of the question and its openendedness in terms of the responses it projects.

Beginning with the first pair part of the sequence, the question by TL in line 111, it is noteworthy in comparison to the previous examples that this is not formatted as an explicit question about understanding but rather as a more general invitation for the employees to ask clarifying questions about what TL has just presented. This difference is relevant because it indicates a distinction between the types of questions that are more specifically seeking to secure understanding and those questions that are more specifically aiming towards securing participation, while simultaneously opening up a space for securing understanding. The addition of the specification "*til det*" ('about that') at the end of the first turn completion unit, question shows this double orientation towards not only general participation but also intersubjectivity and securing understanding. Had this addition been left out, the question would have provided a more open invitation to participation.

While the question could have been responded to after the first TCU, TL leaves only little space for doing so and immediately follows up her question with an offer to demonstrate what she has just presented. This addition to her question, which again points to the particular matter presented by the wording *"hvordan det foregår"* ('how it works'), indicates that the invitation for clarifying questions entails an expectation that such questions could spring from an actual lack of understanding, presenting the need for gestural support. It points, in other words, to TL's expectations and knowledge about the limited language abilities and the challenges of understanding amongst the employees that she is addressing. The multifunctionality of her question is in this way reflected in the simultaneous invitation to ask follow-up questions about the content of what she has presented and to clarify or solve potential misunderstandings or a lack of understanding about what she said altogether. It is worth noting that by formatting the question in this multifunctional and ambiguous way TL avoids demonstrating expectations of lack of understanding while providing the opportunity for employees to seek additional explanation or repetition of what has been presented. This is markedly different from the function of the formatting "does everyone understand" which explicitly implies and accentuates the assumed language difficulties of the employees.

Looking at the second pair part response to TL's question, which is provided by EM2 in line 117, it is notable that the response is not formatted as a question, which would be the preferred response projected by the first pair part. Rather, EM2 seems to be introducing a new topic or issue to do with tea towels and "bags of the sacks" (most likely the ones used to pack the laundry). EM2's response in this way seems to misalign with the projected action following from TL's invitation for follow-up questions to the particular issue presented, namely the trolleys. This misalignment could account for the first uptake by TL in line 119, which is not an elaborated or repeated explanation of the procedure with the trolleys but simply a minimal acknowledgement prompting EM2 to elaborate on the issue raised in line 21. Most of this elaboration is inaudible due to a lot of noise coming from the room as people step into the cafeteria, but what is noticeable is that TL responds to this elaboration with the change-of-state token "*nå*" ('oh'), which once again indicates that EM2's contribution is unexpected. This unexpectedness could relate to the issue of tea towels being surprising or new to TL but sequentially the unexpectedness relates to EM2 presenting a new and different issue altogether in relation to the presently relevant topic of the trolleys.

It is important to notice, however, that the misaligned response by EM2 is not sanctioned or repaired by TL, but rather encouraged and supported. First she displays engagement with the content of the issue raised by moving closer to EM2 (line 123) and then she provides physical and verbal acknowledgement tokens ("okay" in line 127, "nodding" in line 130). Finally, she signals the importance of the issue by stating "*det må jeg lige have med*" ('that I must have with') in line 131 and writes it on the whiteboard behind her in line 136. This encouragement and support by TL prompt a rather lengthy co-construction between the employees about the issue and how it can be addressed, which I will not go into here, but which is important as an illustration of the typical uptake and exchange following from this multi-functional open-ended type of question posed by TL. The following co-construction and support by TL of the participation and contribution of the employee (lines 139, 144 and 148) can in this way be seen as type of dialogue, engagement and mutuality that TL is seeking and inviting by this type of question as it works to not only open up a space for clarification and ensuring understanding but for the participation and contribution from the employees. The topic is brought to an end with a topic closure initiation by TL stating that she will take this issue further by bringing it to another member of staff (line 151-154) who will then make sure that the issue is resolved. TL then finally closes the topic by providing a positive evaluation of the EM2's response to her question, which works to simultaneously display the importance of the issue raised and praise EM2 for contributing and thereby responding to her initial invitation. The positive evaluation by TL can in this way be seen as a response to EM2's contribution and participation as an appropriate and desired response to the invitation provided by the question.

The following example is similar in the sense that the question provided as the first pair part does not explicitly enquire about understanding but rather presents an invitation for employees to voice their questions and participate by providing some sort of contribution. The central difference in this example is that the invitation is "not" topic specific in the sense of referring back to a previously discussed issue but is rather completely open-ended in terms of the responses it projects. However, within the particular given context of a diverse workplace, where the membership category of 'second language speaker' is omni-relevant and constantly *hanging in the air* (Day, 1998), it can be argued that an invitation to ask questions provides a space for employees to seek understanding or clarification on matters that have not been understood or understood fully. While this will also be the case in meetings where language difficulties are not an issue, securing such a space can be said to be particularly important for managers having to navigate in and orient to employees with diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds.

To summarize, what is argued here in relation to example 3 is that the topic-oriented specification of question enables a simultaneous realization of the different interactional goals of securing participation and securing understanding. In the following example. In the following example, this multifunctionality of questions is realized without topic-orientation, which means that the space for participation, contribution and potential clarification of understanding is opened up in a more general way, without pointing to a potential problem of understanding with the previous talk. And yet, the contributions projected by the question are guided by the team leader in the direction of a recurrent theme that is covered in the meetings and has been explained to the employees several times, the notion of "*spild*" ('waste') and the need for 'waste reduction', a central aspect of LEAN management. Once again, the conflating agendas of securing understanding of central issues and concepts used within the meetings and securing participation in terms of LEAN management goals are clear.

Example 4: Open question that invites participation and provides an opportunity for clarification

171	**TL:**	**er der nogen der har (0.8) noget at spørge om eller**
172		*is there anyone who has anything to ask about or*
173	PPP:	(1.6).
174	**TL:**	**allerede noget spild (.) nogen der har tænkt lidt over det**
175		*already some waste anyone who has thought a bit about that*
176		(0.8) ja (0.6)
177		yes
178	**EM1:**	**der er tit xxx vogn xxx**
179		*there is often xxx cart*
180	TL:	i stedet for på en
181		*in stead of on one*
182	EM1:	ja xxx så tager de bare
183		yes xx then they just take
184	%com:	EM1 makes gestures with her hands. TL nods and writes with the marker on the whiteboard
185		
186	EM3:	xxx
187	EM1:	ja ja xxx
188		*yes yes xxx*
189	EM3:	xxx
190	EM1:	det gør vi alle sammen
191		*we all do that*
192	EM3:	xxx der er nogen der bliver sure fordi xxx
193		*xxx there are some who get mad because xxx*
194	EM1:	xxx
195	PPP:	(1.6)
196	EM3:	det er lige ved at blive xxx mange vogne xxx
197		*it is just about to become xxx a lot of carts xxx*
198	PPP:	(5.0).
199	**TL:**	**yes (1.6) nå ja men det var en god en (.) hm m**
		Yes oh yeah well that was a good one

The formatting of the question in line 171 is quite similar to the previous example except for the lack of specification in terms of the previous topic and the slightly more personified use of "*anyone*" rather than the previous neutral use of "are there any questions". This personification works to increase the pressure on the employees to respond and the addition of the "*eller*" ('or') has a double function of on the one hand suggesting the alternative, namely that no one has any questions, and on the other broadening the scope of possible contributions to not only questions. In other words, the employees are asked whether they have questions or something else they would like to contribute with.

Since the question does not immediately elicit a response, TL elaborates and renews her request for a response in line 174 by providing a candidate example of what the employees might offer as a contribution, namely reflections on the reduction of "*spild*" ('*waste*'), which is a recurrent theme in the meetings and a central aspect of the LEAN ideology.

After a long pause, TL adds a yes, and allows another long pause, which works to add additional pressure on the employees to respond, in that it displays her determination to give the floor to the employees and have them produce a contribution. Finally, EM1 contributes with an issue about the trolleys, which is difficult to hear but which is responded to by TL as a description of a practice or behavior that has an alternative, which she provides, namely *"I stedet for på en*" ('instead of on one'*)*. In this way, TL links the utterance by EM1 to her request for suggestions for waste reduction, and in line 178 she underlines the relevance of this contribution by writing on the whiteboard. From line 180 to 187 EM1, EM3 and TL cooperate in formulating the issue and the topic is closed by TL in line 189, where she provides a positive evaluation of the contribution by the employees that displays its alignment with the response projected from her initial request. The example in this way shows, that the open-ended request for "*questions or …*" and the following candidate example specification of what those contributions might be, works to elicit input from the employees, which aligns with the expectations of the team leader. This indicates that the mentioning of questions in the initial interrogative utterance of TL, while projecting and allowing for clarifying questions and clarification of misunderstandings, can be used as a resource for eliciting participation and contributions of a different nature.

The following and final example is even more open-ended than the previous one as it includes no mentioning of 'asking questions', and thereby does not in any way allude to a potential problem of understanding. As such, it appears less multifunctional than the questions previously examined because it seems to invite the contributions and input of employees while not, at the same time, seeking clarification of potential misunderstandings. Given that the focus of this paper is how the multifunctionality of questions can serve as a resource for managing diverse agendas and diversity among the audience, this example will merely serve a comparative purpose to the previous examples where multifunctionality is central. What is interesting as a comparative point is that the space for participation, which is opened up by the team leader's question, is used by employees for exactly the type of participation that it is not explicitly inviting, namely asking clarifying questions. Worth noting, in that respect, is that the employee responding is a native-speaker of Danish and that the question posed is of a general nature, rather than topic-oriented or related to a lack of understanding of the previous talk.

Example 5: Alternative question formatting that invites and elicits participation and contribution

529	**TL:**	**er der noget i:: har lyst til at sige til os**
530		*is there anything you feel like saying to us*
531	PPP:	(1.7)
532	%com:	EM9 raises her hand
533	**EM9:**	**jeg vil bare stille et hurtigt spørgsmål**
534		*I would (part.) like to pose a quick question*
535	TL:	hm (0.3)
536	EM9:	de der viskestykker der (0.2)
537		*Those teatowels there*
538		der er rigtig mange som øh skal vaskes igen (0.3)
539		*there are real many that eh need rewashing*
540		xxx meget beskidte (0.2)
541		*very dirty*
542	TL:	hm
543	EM9:	kan man xxx
544		*can one*
545	PPP:	(0.6)
546	EM9:	nu spørger jeg bare
547		now i am just asking
548		**hvorfor giver man ikke dem sådan en kemisk rens eller**
549		*why does one not give them one of those chemical cleanings or*

550	PPP:	(0.6)
551	EM9:	sådan en omvask fra start
552		*such a rewash from the beginning*
553	PPP:	(1.1)
554	**TL:**	**det gør man ikke fordi en omvask den for det første**
555		*that one does not do because a rewash it first of all*
556		**den er meget meget meget meget skrap (0.3)**
557		*it is very very very hard*
558	EM9:	ja (0.2)
559		*yes*
560	TL:	øh::m så hvis vi gjorde det hver gang
561		*eehm so if we did that every time*
562		så ville vi slide det tøj alt for hurtigt
563		*then we would wear out those clothes much too fast*
564	EM9:	mhm
565	TL:	ja
566		*yes*
567	PPP:	(0.5)
. . .	}	Omitted part of extract
568	TL:	så så øhm:: men fint du spørger
569		*so so ehm but good that you ask*

There are two central things to notice about the formatting of the question by TL in line 529, that differs from the previous examples, namely the fact that the question does not enquire about understanding and that it does not explicitly invite the employees to ask questions. Instead, the question much more openly encourages participation and input by inviting employees ("*you*") to 'say' something to TL and her associate standing by her ('us') with a distinctive addition of the word "*lyst*" ('feel like') which is affiliative in displaying empathy or regard for the needs and wishes of the employees. This is markedly different from the directive request for confirmation of understanding found in the first example and also from the request for clarification of the employees' understanding about previous utterances and issues presented by TL found in the second and third examples. The primary function of this question, besides from displaying affiliation, seems in this way to be opening up a space for participation and contribution from the employees on "their" terms.

The second pair part response to this invitation is provided by EM9 who raises her hand (line 132) and produces a rather lengthy preliminary (Schegloff, 1980) in line 133-147, followed by a question in line 148, which concerns the rewash of tea-towels that are extraordinarily dirty. While the question of EM9 can be said to align with the open proposition for participation and contributions the mitigation strategy of producing the lengthy preliminary to the question can be said to orient to the fact that TL's formatting of question does NOT invite questions, as it did in the previous examples, but rather invites "speaking your mind" and what EM9 is offering is a question about the procedures of "*omvask*" ('rewash'). While EM9's response is possible as a meaningful response it is not the most obvious or preferred type of uptake from the employees within this particular context. What might also explain the mitigation and displays of misalignment with TL's question is the asymmetric distribution of knowledge and status between the participants, which potentially makes the somewhat polemic challenge to the way things are done, a face-threatening and disaffiliative act. This can be said to be reflected in line 546 *"nu spørger jeg bare"* ('now I am just asking'), which suggests that what is to come might be heard as controversial or bold in some way. Such mitigation and face-work suggests that the "open floor", that TL has attempted to establish with her question might not be considered equally open to the other employees.

The response to the employee's question is provided by TL without delay or mitigation in line 554-563 and this response is acknowledged and accepted by EM9 in line 558 and 565, allowing TL to initiate topic closure in line 566. The exchange continues further with another explanatory account produced by TL about the reasons for this particular procedure with *"omvask"* ('rewash'), which I will not engage with here, and the topic is finally closed in line 576 by TL providing an evaluation of EM9's contribution which is similar to the one found in the previous example. Worth noting is the emphasis on the fact that EM9's contribution was in fact a question, whereas in the previous example, TL invited a question but received a 'contribution'. This evaluative response by TL to EM9's question can be said to work to acknowledge and accept the misalignment that EM9's non type-conforming contribution represents.

8. Conclusion

In this paper, it has been argued that the multifunctionality of questions is not merely a premise in the sense of the contextual contingency of their performative force but that their multifunctionality provides a resource for pursuing various interactional goals at the same time, some of which relate to addressing a diverse workplace context. Within the setting of the industrial Kaizen whiteboard meeting where 80% of the employees speak little Danish, the multifunctionality of questions is used as a tool by team leaders to simultaneously address the potential problems of understanding among employees and the problem of securing the compliance and participation of employees with respect to production procedures and improvement. It is argued that the use of questions, in this way, manifests a double orientation towards the ideologies of diversity management and LEAN management.

With respect to the goal of managing a diverse team, the challenge for team leaders is how to address problems with the efficiency of production and the work of team members as a result of, in some cases, a lack of understanding, and in other cases, unwillingness, disagreement or failure to see the purpose of particular procedures, goals and rules. In addition to a high level of diversity in terms of language proficiency, these employees are diverse in terms of nationality, previous work experiences, educational background and number of years spent in the firm, which means that the team leaders are facing a great deal of variation amongst employees in terms of the knowledge and understanding of workplace procedures and goals. While negotiations about the epistemological status of participants play a central role in any interaction (Heritage, 2012a), the management of a production consisting of such a diverse group of employees requires that team leaders orient to significant differences in the territories of knowledge among employees when they request, direct and prescribe particular actions of their team. The multifunctionality of questions provides an opportunity to address this heterogeneity in territories of knowledge without singling out particular employees and putting them on the spot. What the analysis has shown, however, in relation to questions that seek to ensure intersubjectivity as well as compliance, is that they do get very minimal uptake, if any at, all from migrant employees and native speaking employees alike. While the focus of this paper has not been the systematic analysis of different strategies for securing understanding and the relative success or failure of these (Tranekjær, 2018), the findings invite reflection on the relative success of using the multifunctionality of questions to these particular, and quite different, interactional goals. It may seem, that by formatting the question about understanding in a way that can be heard as seeking compliance or 'doing scolding' might make some employees refrain from revealing their lack of understanding, which in itself is an interactionally difficult thing to do.

In contrast, the multi-functionality of questions might be more productive and useful as a resource for managing the ambiguous role-distribution between team leaders and employees that on the one hand work side by side on the production floor as colleagues and on the other are positioned in a hierarchical employee-manager relationship (Rasmussen, 2017). As suggested by the examples, the multi-functionality of questions provides a resource for "doing being a manager" that seeks compliance with procedures while at the same time maintaining good relations and affiliation with the team members. When posing questions about understanding that also work to prescribe a particular behavior in a less face-threatening way than explicit demands, orders or scolding, the team leader is in less danger of ostracizing herself from the group. The multifunctional property of the question in this way works to veil the pursuit of compliance as a pursuit for understanding, hereby clouding the distinction between the role of manager and fellow employee.

With respect to the goal of implementing LEAN as a production ideology and a type of management supported and manifested by the whiteboard meeting format, the paper has shown how the multifunctionality of questions is used by team leaders to open up a space for employees to participate in, and contribute to, production improvement and efficiency while at the same time providing the opportunity for securing intersubjectivity. While a central goal of the Kaizen meeting is to elicit contributions and insight from employees about how to potentially improve production, the first two examples leave no doubt of the asymmetric distribution of rights to determine what qualifies as the better way of doing things. As such, the question about understanding in these two cases involves a strong preference for agreement and, in effect, leave very little room for a negative response. In this way this type of question bear close resemblance to the Egbert and Vöges (Egbert and Vöge, 2008) findings on the disaffiliative and hierarchical "*warum*" ('why') found in business meetings.

While in the first two examples understanding seems to be employed as a Trojan horse for seeking compliance and giving directives, the following three examples provide a space for asking clarifying questions about what has been said and presented. In this way, these types of questions, although they paradoxically do not explicitly topicalize "understanding", they in some ways provide a safer space for bringing up problems of understanding or seeking repetition of things that have not been understood fully. This is due to the fact, that they do not sequentially follow from a complaint and in this way have no directive element to them. However, despite the fact that these questions that request or invite questions from employees provide an opportunity for clarification, they are not heard as such by employees. Rather, they are used as spaces for other types of participation, such as asking about other issues than the ones topicalized, and not least for contribution in the form of input and issues that can potentially improve production and cooperation between the employees. This suggests that the type of questions that request or invite questions are in fact used to elicit participation more generally, rather than merely seeking to secure intersubjectivity, which shows an orientation towards the LEAN management goal of bottom-up improvement of production from employees. Some of these participation-eliciting questions are more specifically aiming towards a particular type of participation than others, which was illustrated by the two final examples. Here, it was argued, that the manifestation of LEAN ideology was particularly salient in the way that the explicit and yet very open requests for contributions were used as a resource to include, engage and benefit from the knowledge of the employees, illuminating a wish for bottom-up knowledge elicitation and innovation.

In relation to the issue of diversity management and the contributions of this paper to previous studies one can say that the findings point to a paradox. On the one hand the institutional organization of a weekly Kaizen whiteboard meetings potentially opens up a space for dialogue and interaction, that could potentially work to include and engage those migrant employees who would otherwise potentially be marginalized because of language difficulties or because a particular workplace would otherwise not provide opportunities for interaction or speaking the majority language (Bramm and Kirilova, 2018; Tranekjær and Kirkebæk, 2017). On the other hand, the paper suggests that the foregrounding of difference in terms of language and knowledge territories achieved through questions about understanding that can simultaneously be heard to seek compliance are counterproductive to overcoming difference and establishing intersubjectivity and participation. As such, the questioning practices used in the whiteboard meeting could be seen as counterproductive to its dialogic potential as a joint space of interaction and exchange.

Another, perhaps seemingly banal, but central contribution of this paper in terms of diversity management, is the way that the presented analysis illuminates some of the specific activities and strategies involved in the daily orientation towards and management of a diverse production team. In diverse production settings, issues of potential misunderstanding are omnirelevant and the need to secure intersubjectivity, understanding and compliance in terms of daily production procedures is no less acute but much more challenging. One of the interesting findings presented in this paper is that the fundamental contextuality in the meaning and function of questions can be employed as a specific resource in meetings of the Kaizen type. In these meetings, many agendas and goals have to be addressed in a very short time and the multifunctional properties of questions allow leaders to address different interactional goals simultaneously to different groups of employees, who, depending on their language ability, their professional knowledge and status might understand, interpret and respond differently to the same question. What could be heard and meaningfully responded to as a request for clarifying questions for some might be heard as a request for contribution by others, and as shown by the third turn response by the team leader in example 4, this ambiguity in the question and the potential response is seemingly unproblematic and most likely expected.

What the paper has argued is that the fundamental ambiguity in the function of questions and the versatile performative force that they entail can be used as a management resource to address different and sometimes conflictual interactional goals. More specifically it was shown that within the context of the diverse industrial production sites, the multi-functionality of questions were used as a tool to simultaneously follow the logics of diversity management and the logics of LEAN and a resource to addressing the goals of ensuring understanding and participation while also seeking compliance with effective production procedures.

Note
1

Transcription notations: (Based on Atkinson and Heritage, 1984)

(0.3)	pause measured in seconds
Word	word stress
↑ ↓	rising/falling pitch
◦ word ◦	quiet speach
?? ??	unclear speech
xx word xx	inaudible speech
wo::rd	prolonged words/sounds

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