

The interaction of language schools and multinational companies in the management of multilingual practices¹

Tamah Sherman,^a Jenny Carl,^b Oliver Engelhardt,^c
Erzsébet Balogh^d and Ágnes T. Balla^e

^a*Charles University, Czech Republic* (tamah.sherman@ff.cuni.cz) ^b*University of Southampton, UK* (j.carl@soton.ac.uk) ^c*Charles University in Prague, Czech Republic* (oliver.engelhardt@linee.info) ^d*University of Szeged, Hungary* (baloghzs@lit.u-szeged.hu) ^e*University of Szeged, Hungary* (agnes.tapai-balla@linee.info)

Abstract

This paper explores the ways in which two types of organisations – multinational companies and language schools – cooperate with one another. At first glance, there is a clear unidirectional relationship: the presence of multinational companies in a given region or country often creates demand for the services of language schools, as employees in the given companies may need to learn either the local language, the language of the company, or the language spoken with clientele. These facts encompass an extensive network of social practices aimed at ensuring the most efficient as well as effective utilisation of financial resources and knowledge. In this paper, using Language Management Theory (Jernudd and Neustupný 1987), we will examine the practices of organised language management that occur in the interaction between these two types of organisations and the way in which each type of organisation legitimises and explains its business with the other. Based, above all, on semi-structured interviews, these phenomena are described and compared in three countries: the Czech Republic, the United Kingdom and Hungary. Focus is placed upon the changing economic climate in these countries and the acts of language management that are undertaken in response.

Keywords: Language Management Theory, multinational companies, language schools, multilingualism, Czech, German, Hungarian

In the contemporary globalising world, large multinational companies establish branches and plants abroad in order to gain the highest quality of manufacturing, services or other activities for the most reasonable price. The presence of these branches and plants often establishes a new linguistic order and new

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sets of language problems for the company, which must then establish policies not only for the use of the language within it but also for the filling of gaps in language knowledge that are essential to the company's operations. In some such situations, the presence of multinational companies in a given region or country not only provides opportunities for local employees in the company directly, but it often influences other sectors of the economy in that location. One particular sphere in which this occurs is the language industry, in particular language schools, as employees in the given companies may need to learn either the local language, the language of the company, or other languages in preparation for being sent abroad.

These conditions invoke an extensive network of social practices aimed at ensuring the most efficient and effective utilisation of financial resources and knowledge. Very often, one of two phenomena occurs: company policy measures are newly created or altered in reaction to the observed non-functioning of a current practice; or company policy measures are not formed at all in relation to a specific problem and the problem is dealt with on an ad-hoc basis. Because it is necessary to describe the circumstances under which these problems are solved, as well as the solutions that were devised, we have deemed it appropriate to utilise Language Management Theory (LMT) (Jernudd and Neustupný 1987), which can be understood as an approach which examines *behaviour towards language* (as opposed to the generation of language) in general. LMT differs from theories of Language Policy and Planning in that begins from the perspective of language problems, not only in large institutions (such as state governments) but also in units of varying sizes, such as civic organisations, schools or families, acknowledging the multiplicity of interests in any given situation. LMT focuses on the presumed existence of norms for linguistic behaviour which different participants possess in different situations. The process of management starts only when participants begin paying attention to the language – when they *note* a language phenomenon such as an employee's insufficient knowledge of English. Still more importantly, the participants may not only *note*, but also *evaluate* a language phenomenon – and if they *evaluate* the phenomenon negatively they face a *language problem*. Management includes further phases as the participants may also deal with the problems, whether they merely *design* solutions to the problems or actually *implement* them. In certain contexts, the implementation of these designs is what is typically understood as policy.

The research conducted for this article was supported by the LINEE project (www.linee.info), the focus of which was to examine practices of multilingualism in Europe, in particular in relation to the knowledge-based economy (see

e.g. Williams 2006). The study of multinationals as economic contexts was thus contrasted in the larger project (see the other articles in this volume) with approaches such as those focusing on culture and identity, language policy and planning and education, with each context having a specific relationship to multilingualism. The specificity of the multinationals rests on the fact that, as opposed to the other contexts, *economic concerns are first and foremost*, and may thus supersede other concerns (e.g. cultural equality of individuals).

We will thus address the following questions:

1. Which practices of organised language management occur in the interaction between these two types of organisations?
 2. How do the participants in these practices relate them to economic concerns?
- These phenomena are described and compared in three countries: the Czech Republic, the United Kingdom and Hungary; the relevance of this comparison is that: a) it is necessary to compare the perspective of old and new EU member states regarding these types of organisations; and b) German in particular is among the languages offered by the schools to companies in these countries, and its more general decline in favour of English in various contexts is a widely observed phenomenon. Focus will be placed upon the changing economic climate in these countries and the acts of language management that are undertaken in response.

Organised management in the interaction between institutions

As is mentioned above, this paper will view the interaction between multinationals and language schools in terms of Language Management Theory (LMT), which serves as a framework for examining behaviour towards language. This behaviour may be executed by individuals or small units such as families, but may also be conducted by larger institutions such as national governments or large companies.

Extensive research has been done on language management in multinationals, whether it has used this framework directly (e.g. Nekvapil and Nekula 2006, Nekvapil and Sherman 2009a, 2009b, Sherman et al. forthcoming), or not (e.g. Ammon et al. 2009, Vaara et al. 2005 and the ELAN report 2007). However, language schools have not yet been researched using this framework, much less in combination with other institutions such as multinationals. Yet from the economic perspective, especially as concerns European regions and their innovative potential (cf. Braczyk et al. 1998), this form of cooperation is a highly relevant one.

LMT considers two types of management – simple (at the level of individual utterances) and organised (everything else). This paper will examine organised management and attempt to develop its theoretical framework even further, in posing the question of how two types of organisations manage language, socio-cultural and economic problems, and how each utilises the (physical or discursive) presence of the other in order to do so.

In terms of organised management, multinational companies operate on several levels. At the level of the company headquarters, the management consists of the introduction and implementation of an official corporate language. As has been discussed before (e.g. in Nekvapil and Sherman 2009a, 2009b), in terms of the interaction between the headquarters and the branches, plants and subsidiaries of the companies, this means that the official corporate language is the one used for (primarily written) reporting. In other forms of communication, e.g. telephone and email communication, languages are selected based on the negotiation that is at least in part concerned with which languages the speakers know. For example, employees at headquarters of a multinational company in Germany observed that either German or English is used with individual colleagues in Central European countries, based on the routine established with those given individuals.

As the forms of language management that occur in multinationals and in language schools are too numerous to capture here, we will focus on the management of one specific language problem, i.e. the noting and negative evaluation of the insufficient functional competence in a given language. That is the inability to use the language in the function or functions required for one's job (on the functions of various languages in the companies, see Nekvapil and Sherman 2009a, 2009b).

Because the large part of the data collected from the companies and schools was in the form of semi-structured interviews, the language management practices observed typically take the form of what we can call 'management accounts'. In these accounts, the various phases of management can be observed. In the following example from the UK, for instance, the interviewed language school representative provides an account of the process through which an employee at certain companies is assigned to a language course.

Example 1

- 01 B: I mean they may well say you know somebody is moving to a different job or is being promoted or is going
02 abroad or whatever and therefore needs to improve their English language capacity for that new function/ but

- 03 generally not/ they generally say that you know so and so is coming on a course and that's it/
04 I: oh right/ so there is
05 no sort of... detailed communication –
06 B: not from them initially/ I mean WE carry out a lot of eh pre-programme work and (XXX) there's a pre-programme questionnaire on the – on the website and our trainee manager tries to
08 telephone them that sort of thing/ so WE try to find out as much as possible but frequently – eh there are one or
09 two companies that are quite good and will send us a couple of paragraphs about what they need it for and what
10 their current level is/ but mostly it is – they're just booked in/
11 I: right/ and you know when the participants come to do
12 their course do THEY talk about what their motivation is? Or –
13 B: sure/ sure/ and I mean as I say we try to get THAT
14 as much as possible (xx) before they arrive/
15 I: can you summarise what they – what the reasons are that they give?
16 B: oh
17 they will be exactly as I've been saying just now/ I mean they're moving to a new job or or – well usually moving
18 to a new job/ OR their role has changed or something like that/ but basically it's a it's you know a requirement
19 for better English in whatever field it is that they're working/
20 I: right/ and is it left to them to make the decision to
21 book a course or are they SENT on a course?
22 B: both/ it depends/ I mean I can't generalise/ I mean I suppose the
23 majority would say to their boss 'but I – you know my English isn't good enough for what it is they're re – required
24 to do – eh you know. I need an english language training/ but sometimes they'd be sent and they're sometimes
25 slightly reluctant to –²

If, given the LMT perspective, we consider the idea that a language problem consists of a deviation from a norm which is subsequently noted and evaluated negatively, then an adjustment is designed and subsequently implemented. We can use, for example, accounts like this one from semi-structured interviews to reconstruct the management process. As for the first phase of management, the noting of insufficient functional competence, the questions of what specifically is noted, who does this noting (i.e. who sets the process of management in motion), and which situations are relevant. In this example, the prototypical process is described by a language school representative as beginning with

2. From an interview conducted in English with a teacher and client manager for German corporations at language school BB.

a change in the individual's work situation – e.g. a promotion or a transfer (lines 1–3) – but the noting and evaluation is often invoked by the language schools themselves (lines 6–10) in the interest of creating demand for their products (in LMT terms, the adjustment design and its implementation). Often, however, the schools are not aware of the details of this noting and evaluation process either from the side of the company management or from the individuals taking the courses (lines 8–19), and the language schools are left to speculate on their motivation (lines 22–25).

As we will observe in the rest of the paper, the issue of who generates the management process is directly related to the economic principles of supply and demand and the discourse in which they are embedded.

The research

The origin and subsequent development of the research are required here for the explanation of why these three particular countries were chosen. The original stimulus came from Central Europe, beginning in the Czech Republic (see Nekvapil 1997a, 1997b; Nekula, Nekvapil and Šichová 2005), and was then applied to Hungary (see Nekvapil and Sherman 2009b). The specific situation of these countries is connected to the fact that both have languages which in the context of the expanded European Union can be considered “medium-sized” (see Nekvapil forthcoming). Both countries have been making the transition from a government system of state socialism since late 1989, the period after which was marked by, among other things, by an influx of capital from West Europe and other economically strong countries (the United States, Japan, South Korea, etc.). Russian and German were the primary foreign languages taught up until 1989, after which Russian declined (primarily in Hungary, though in the Czech Republic it later began making a modest comeback) and English overtook German as the most commonly taught foreign language. Based on this, it can be stated that knowledge of foreign languages in both countries has a strong generational basis. Through the 1990s and beyond, state-run schools and language schools (which were experiencing a boom at that time) scrambled to find and keep qualified teachers of English (and, in some cases, German), outside major cities particularly. Hungary and the Czech Republic both entered the European Union in 2004.

Given these common characteristics, a prototypical situation for multinationals in both countries can be sketched as follows. When companies from abroad entered these new markets, they imported much of the top management from

their headquarters. Over time, due to rising costs, the composition of this top management gradually changed from predominantly expatriates to predominantly locals. In the case of German companies, of which there were many, the official corporate language was German, but as the parent company expanded this was often replaced by English. Very few members of the local older generation were competent in English, though some were competent in German. As a result, many of them began learning English at the age of 40 or older. Also, many people were hired to do office jobs primarily due to their pre-existing foreign language proficiency. It was only rarely the case that delegates from the company headquarters learned the local languages on a working level; rather, their acquisition was more symbolic, though in many cases it did involve the hiring of teachers of Czech as a second/foreign language in the Czech Republic (which was not observed in Hungary). And in the case of production companies, above all in the automotive industry, the majority of employees consisted of manual labourers working on the production floor, many of whom were monolingual in their national language.

Hence language barriers were present at a number of levels, and various means were used to overcome them. One of these was interpretation and translation, and another was language teaching. Some companies hired in-house employees to do this work while others outsourced it. There were three primary purposes for the language training: to communicate with the delegates working directly at the branch or plant; to communicate with the headquarters or parent company or with other branches; and to communicate with customers, above all in logistics or the organisation of delivery of products.

Some of the initial research in this area thus produced results which focused on linguistic and cultural barriers, with a very clear delineation between the local employees and the so-called expatriates and, above all, a focus on the imbalance of power created in these situations and the various types of management used to gradually overcome this imbalance (see Nekvapil and Sherman 2009a, 2009b; Nekvapil and Sherman 2009b). An important aspect of this research also concerned the use of English as a *lingua franca* (see Cogo and Jenkins, in this issue). However, it became clear to us that these issues of management were very specific to the prototypical language situations described above, and that the research needed expansion. That is, it required situations which had *not* been researched from the perspective of a new EU member state into which the multinational company was bringing essential foreign capital, and where the local employees were initially expected to speak the company language (e.g. German). For this reason the UK was included. More specifically, language schools in the UK where German was one of the languages

taught were selected so that the perspective on the German language could be compared between regions.

In the following sections, we will characterise the management processes in selected regions of the individual countries.

The Czech Republic

In this section, we will discuss the case of a regional capital city in which there is a large multinational company based in Germany. T is located in region R, in which it is the largest town. Whereas R has a lot of agriculture, the towns have usually some industrial tradition. In Czechoslovakia before the Second World War, T was a town with mainly German-speaking inhabitants. It is located not far from the Austrian border, so that also for purposes of regional tourism, German remains (according to representatives of language schools) an important language today.

Company C belongs to a German business group. The factories of C located in T produce small parts for engines and they are sold and used all over the world. C therefore has to be in contact with many places in the world, but mainly with the German headquarters. With about 6,000 workers prior to the world financial crisis of 2008 and about 4,000 workers after it, company C is one of the largest businesses in region R and regularly wins regional economic awards, for example 'Best Exporter of R'. Several expatriates (estimated at 1 per cent of the employees) are working in management and special technical functions. They come mainly from Germany and tend to have only basic knowledge of Czech.

The schools in town T report changing trends in foreign-language learning: for example, one-year French courses are in demand, and the next year Italian or Spanish. However, each of these languages is taught to a much lesser degree than English. According to the estimation of the owner of one private language school in T, about 80 per cent of all language courses are English courses (according to other, bigger language schools, the percentage of English courses is between 40 and 70 per cent). When asked about the demand for German, she answered:

Example 2

It decreases every year. We're waiting for it to disappear completely. So I'd say that it's still holding up because we're [in region R] and we're not far. . . and the main thing is that {com-

pany C) is still here, [another company name] and there are still companies that are interested in German. . . or work with the German market, right? But. . . but I think that it's a question of time.³

German therefore occupies a position between the global and most demanded foreign language, English, and languages popular with individual clients (i.e., those not from multinationals) like Italian, Spanish and French. This is also reflected by the fact that it is the subject of courses for special business purposes (e.g. Business German, similar to Business English).

Language schools in T report that about half of their courses are open to individual learners, whereas the other half are commissioned by companies, although this ratio is variable. One language school reported that the price level for courses in T is considerably lower than in Prague, so that it is profitable for Prague companies to have intensive courses for a weekend in T.

Some of the interviewed language schools mentioned that German companies were among their customers. As all of them mentioned Czech as a foreign language, we may assume that expatriates of multinational companies like C are among their clients. The Czech workers of multinational companies are certainly the main business for private language schools. Here the demand is mainly for English and for German. The situation of language schools shows that C is an important player in the economy of T; one of the language schools we interviewed is part of a larger company operating throughout the Czech Republic, and they opened their school in T specifically to coincide with the arrival there of C.

Some expatriates live in T together with their families, including school-age children. Company C established a German-language kindergarten. In addition, it gives financial support to German teaching in another kindergarten and an elementary school. The company emphasises that this support is for state institutions, which means that the classes in both kindergarten and elementary school are open to other children from T as well.

As the economic crisis beginning in 2008 did not bypass T, some companies had to make significant savings. They therefore released people and stopped language courses. However, at the time of writing, in early 2010, the economic situation seems to be easing. Language schools reported that companies stopped courses completely but later resumed them under a different set of conditions. Companies now seem to carefully select what kind of language courses they will support. Before the crisis, companies paid for a huge number of language

3. From an interview conducted in Czech with the head of a language school in Town T; translation by the authors.

courses without exercising much control over the results. Now companies are booking fewer courses and put more responsibility on the employees. In company C we were told that it is the employees who have to organise and to some extent pay for the courses, and they are expected to be successful in reaching specific goals in language training.

Overall, the case of company C in town T reveals that the language management carried out by companies directly reflects and expands LMT in the following ways:

1. Concerning the relationship between different types of management discussed by Neustupný (2002), i.e. the idea that in order to manage language problems, it is necessary to deal with them first on a socio-economic level and then on a communicative one. In other words, in order to make the decision as to precisely how (and if) company employees should be educated in foreign languages, it is necessary consider the costs and benefits of individual strategies. The shortage of these resources due to the crisis led to an adjustment design in the form of optimisation of language courses, i.e. the maximisation of their quality and effectiveness in relation to the costs they incur.
2. The economic situation in this case serves as a key determinant in the issue of who is permitted or expected to explicitly note and evaluate deviations, formulate adjustment designs, and implement them. Prior to the crisis, the management was a highly top-down process, with top management employees determining where language training was needed and, above all, organising the courses. After the crisis, the implementation of adjustments (again, top down) was deemed to be the responsibility of the employees.

Hungary

In Hungary, two companies and two language schools, all located in the south-east corner of the country, near the borders with Serbia and Romania, were the object of study. The first of these, company HC, manufactures rubber products and was formerly a German company with headquarters in Hamburg. In 2004 it was bought by another German multinational company with English as its corporate language. There were no expatriate employees in the company, but rather, the local employees were responsible for communication with the parent company and with other companies throughout Europe. The second, company HD, is an electricity supply company founded in 1951, which remained in Hungarian state ownership until 1995, when it was privatised and bought

by a French company. Since then French and Hungarian experts execute the management tasks at various levels in the company. There has thus far been no official declaration about an official corporate language, though English (by the HR department) and Hungarian (by the local employees) have been mentioned as candidates for this classification.

The first language school, HP, was founded in 2006 in a small town near the regional capital. At that time the language school did not operate in the same way as it does now, since it only became a state-accredited institution in 2007. The school started in this small town, because there was a great demand for quality language education, while there seems to have been a lack of qualified language teachers. In 2007 the school started to run courses in the regional capital as well.

HP has provided English and German language courses to company HC since 2006. Although the language school also offers translating and interpreting services, the company rarely requested them. When the cooperation began, the language school was much smaller than it is today. The growth of the language school can partly be connected to the cooperation with the company in the sense that HP was the school's first major company customer and the school provided students from the company with practice and good references, and owing to the administrative expectations of the company, the language school underwent accreditation, which was necessary for the cooperation.

HP offers a service which they call Total Language Management, which has not been requested by any of the clients HP is working with. This is a complex programme, which would include doing translation and interpretation tasks for the client company and teaching foreign languages to its employees. The idea behind the service is that this combination would provide professional benefits to both the company and the language school, namely that the experiences of the translators and the interpreters can be utilised in the language classes in such a way that language experts have a perfect view of the specific terminology that the company uses. Therefore glossaries can be prepared to make translations and interpretations less time-consuming and more precise, and at the same time the glossaries can be turned into course material for the language learners at the company.

There are 15–20 teachers working for the language school, some of whom are employees, others are subcontractors, while others have temporary contracts. The school offers English, German, Spanish, Italian, Serbian, Hungarian as a FL and Japanese; 85 per cent of its courses are English courses, 10 per cent are German and 5 per cent are other languages. Courses for private individuals are usually held at the language school, while teachers commute to companies to

deliver in-house courses. The school's advertising slogan is "We understand each other", which reflects their intention as regards the language courses and the fact that they also provide translation and interpreting services.

The school's teachers are mainly Hungarians and a bilingual German and English speaker, all of whom have an MA degree in teaching, except for those teaching young learners, who have different college degrees and those who are in the process of acquiring their teaching MAs. Teachers teaching business courses are also qualified in economics or finance.

The school's main clients are individuals, as well as companies. Among the companies (approximately 60 per cent of its clientele) there are larger and smaller businesses. The owners of the school had been working together with its first major client, a large multinational company, and one smaller company since before the language school was established. The other companies became clients in and after 2007, when the language school was founded.

The second language school, HQ, was founded in the mid-1990s. It is located in the southern part of Hungary, with branches in some larger and smaller towns. It teaches mainly English in various formats: for individual students, for groups and for companies. English is its main language, since it is the most foreign language in Hungary today. Students include secondary school and university students, but there are also general adult education programmes. Besides teaching languages, the school's main profile is to prepare language learners for many kinds of language certificate exams.

As for company HD, language school HQ hires private teachers (for whom teaching may be a second job, in addition to one they may have, for example, in a state school or in business), to teach English to top and middle management in small groups or individually. English courses are thus taught not only to the local Hungarian managers but also to French employees. The local language schools have always offered general courses, as well as those suiting individual or company needs.

HQ adapts to the special needs of the companies that hire their services. For example, it is the companies that define the size of the groups, typically from individuals to small groups of four or five people. One of the teachers was teaching one French person, another was teaching a group of two and a group of four. The composition of groups is usually based on the group members' knowledge of the language. As one teacher stated: "even if it might sound more economical to have more people in the groups, the level of the group members counts". Companies can also define the necessary number of lessons per week. For example, in one case the company organised an intensive course with English lessons every morning, while in another case, lessons were held

twice a week at the beginning of the course, and later the number of lessons was specified as one meeting per week.

Overall, the company organised different courses to suit the employees' needs regarding their level of knowledge of the English language, the type of course they need (general English or business English), the timing of the courses (in the mornings, in the evenings) and the frequency of the courses (once or twice a week, an intensive course every morning).

The interview data revealed that language teachers usually work for language schools part-time since, as they state, it is difficult to get a good, well-paid English teaching job in the region (which is also true for Hungary as a whole, except in the region of the capital, Budapest). If the company is satisfied with the teacher, it might assign additional groups to that teacher: one teacher was teaching a manager for a short time, and when the company was taken over by a multinational company and the manager was replaced by a non-Hungarian person, the same teacher continued to teach the second manager as well.

From the interview data, the management of which languages are taught and learned and in what form can be observed.

Example 3

T: And you know in what situations he uses the English or what motivated him to ...

I: Well, he, so he a Frenchman but he's been he's been working all over the world. So he spent several years in South America and there he he used Spanish and also some of his English but as he told me there it was mainly Spanish and then by the time he got back to France he's forgotten most of his English he said. Which was not true but definitely it just got into this passive field.

T: Yes.

I: So he didn't really use that or he hadn't used that at the time. And now that he came to France, I mean by now I mean last summer, he realised that not many people in the company spoke French. So he needed English. And that's why he started, or restarted his studies in English. And well, he uses it during the day, as I heard, all their meetings well practically all the meetings are in English.

Example 4

T: And the Hungarian employees in the company how long have they been learning English typically? Do you think the Hungarian employees have a disadvantage in this respect or?

I: Well, this middle-aged generation so well I would say the managers or most of the managers I think that yes they do have a disadvantage because in their day it wasn't compulsory to learn English well it's not compulsory now either but so it wasn't something so common to speak English. Tough, there is also this younger generation coming up and they speak very good English. Many of them are able to speak French, German sometimes and English above all.⁴

Examples 3 and 4 show from two different angles why English is taught in these companies. Example 3 shows that those groups of managers from the parent company might also recognise the need for learning English simply because their own native language is not spoken in the company any longer, when the company has been extended worldwide. From Example 4 we can see that the middle-aged generation needs English lessons organised by language schools (so it might be just a temporary situation). First of all, this stems from the fact that when they were in primary and secondary schools, they did not learn English (the language which is needed now in their workplaces) but mainly Russian. At the same time, the younger generation now has the opportunity to learn more widely spoken languages such as English, German and French. As this younger generation will soon be in the majority in the workplace, language courses may lose their relevance as this younger generation can speak the necessary languages, which they have learnt at school.

Overall, the Hungarian cases offer the following points of discussion from the perspective of LMT:

1. Who does the managing: it is very clear in this case that the schools adapt to the companies, the company notes the deviation and designs an adjustment, while the school is responsible for carrying out the adjustment.
2. However, the opposite may not be the case: when schools themselves define the language problem and design an adjustment, it may be difficult to convince the companies of the legitimacy of the adjustment, as is evident from the case of 'Total Language Management' in one company.

The United Kingdom

The schools in question were four language academies specialising in business and corporate clients, as well as multinational corporations. The language academies all specialised in corporate clients, in the sense that they offer business

language training to employees who need that language training for a business-related purpose, because they are moved to a different branch in a different country, or because they come to supervise business in a different branch and have to travel there and get involved in the local processes in the other branch. However, within this specialisation the academies operate in different ways. Some offer courses to employees who are sent there by their management, others operate on a one-to-one basis on demand from the corporation.

This specialisation is also the reason why they are very dependent on their clients, because they do not have an alternative student population to fall back on. All of them report that their European (including British) clients are generally still supportive and keen on language training, although perhaps more discerning, whereas American client companies seem to be more ready to cut down on things such as language training if their own business gets tighter.

Language academy BA offers business English (for corporate clients) and general English courses. All language training takes place in the UK (although not necessarily all of it in Portsmouth). The academy has about 20 to 25 language trainers, and in it corporate language training 10–15 per cent of the business is with German corporate clients, which is the second largest share of their business (after the business with French clients).

Language academy BB (Shropshire) conducts about 30 per cent of its business with German clients. It offers English language training to business/professional clients, and it also sends second-language trainers abroad if a corporate client asks for it. It has worked with and for a range of large corporate clients from Germany, among others with Deutsche Telekom and Siemens.

Language academy BC (Derbyshire) offers business English and foreign language training for corporate clients. However, business with German clients seems to be shrinking, and at the moment the academy does not run any German language training for British clients as the focus has shifted to other languages (Spanish, French, Brazilian Portuguese).

Language academy BD is in London, but has a network of offices (and cooperation with language schools) across the world, especially in Europe, including Central Europe and former Soviet countries (such as Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan) and the Middle East. The focus is on clients from the finance and law sectors. The academy offers language training in the UK, but also in other countries. If it does not have a local branch, the academy will recruit freelance/part-time language tutors where they are required by their clients. It also offers German language training, due to the nature of the clients' businesses: employees who move up the hierarchy might come to supervise business in the German branch, where the reporting/work/research needs to be conducted in German (which is

4. Examples 3 and 4 taken from an interview conducted in English with a language teacher at company HD, employed by language schools HQ.

certainly the case in finance and law) so the supervisor needs to be functionally able to communicate in German.

The interview data from the language schools revealed that there seems to be no organised management in the form of corporate language policies, in the sense of a publicly documented and transparent corporate policy. Instead, the 'policies' are practices that are comprehensive and binding to the individual employees. The de facto, but informal, language policies stipulate, however, that all intercultural communication is conducted in English, not just in meetings and communications on technical processes, but also in communications on intranets and so forth.

Example 5

(++) In Germany offers many kinds of language training, especially in the English language, through its own training academy (++)-Training. The supply is structured by the demand from within the corporation. But there exists no overarching strategy to encourage employees to learn foreign languages beyond the requirements of their individual roles. This would entail a substantial risk of misallocation, because only a small percentage of German employees actually has international contacts. Of course, it is in the discretion of management staff to grant their colleagues language training as part of their individual staff development plans.

But in the departments that operate internationally as well as in the central office(s) it is taken for granted that people employed there have a firm command of the English language. If the language competence is not sufficient, it is the responsibility of the direct line manager (maybe in consultation with their relevant HR business partner) and the employee to book the language training with (++)-Training that is necessary to achieve the required level of language competence. At the senior management level it is taken for granted anyway that people have a firm command of English. All the training courses necessary for promotion and staff development are held in English, as are all the network meetings. Again, it is the responsibility of the management staff themselves to gauge their level of competence and need for training, whereas (++)-Training offers advice on choosing training courses and delivers them.

Therefore the coordination is decentralized, depending on the needs in individual positions and the existing competencies of employees. The top-management is aware of the rising need for language competence: in technical areas there has always been strong international cooperation. Herr (X) – Chief Human Resources Officer – has recently asked his colleagues to adapt their knowledge of the English language to the requirements of an internationally active corporation.

Moreover, in one corporation all internal training modules that are necessary for employee promotion are conducted in English. In this vein, there is certainly an implicit expectation of English competence, and employees are encouraged to

review their own qualifications and to seek training if they require it. The same corporation has an in-house training academy, which organises such training and development courses, and seeks to contract out any training if they do not have the relevant expertise in-house. They also offer support or appraisals to employees where possible training needs are discussed. However, language training in particular is often organised on the basis of individual needs and requirements, especially among higher-ranking employees, for example when their functions or posts change and their competences need patching up. Offering language courses indiscriminately is seen as a possible misallocation of resources, because not everyone needs the same level of language competence, based on their position or function within the corporation (not everyone has international contacts with employees in other branches in other countries).

The knowledge of German among British employees of multinational corporations is not relevant in terms of internal language policies. It exists, and where it exists it is often called upon on an ad hoc and pragmatic basis, for example when someone is needed to resolve a tricky instance of communication. But there is barely any German-language teaching. It has been said that while it is inconceivable to send someone from the German branches to the UK without the necessary proficiency in English, it often happens that someone is sent from the UK (or the United States) to Germany without a working knowledge of German. But there are exceptions, based on the tasks the relevant employee has to perform: it may be that someone who has to sort out technical processes and communicate with German employees who have otherwise very little contact with the 'internationalised' spheres of the corporation will be taught an appropriate level of German in order to make sure that communication is successful. As one company representative said:

Example 6

I have asked around our British office whether there has been any German language training. In fact there has been no direct training in German in the last two years. But that says nothing about the possible training that individual employees follow outside the intra-corporation language training, and which they pay for with their individual budgets. On the whole, the number of employees who know German is very low. In most cases these are people who have studied German at university and subsequently worked for the corporation in Germany. Therefore I personally would say: Whereas learning English is very important in Germany, learning German is practically irrelevant for employees in the British office.

Since all the international votes in (++) are held in English, as is common practice, there is no acute need for German language competence. Again the question would be whether

this level of investment would actually create 'value' for the corporation, since all international documents, etc. are only published in English anyway. In order to guarantee the communication with the central office, there are a few Germans among the top managers in the British office.⁵

The UK data offer the following implications for LMT:

1. A key concept introduced by the UK data is that of 'decentralisation' of language management. As in the Czech Republic, placing the emphasis on the individual as language manager (particularly in the noting phase) is viewed as a strong contribution to economic optimisation, i.e. the top-down implementation of language training is seen as potentially wasteful without a proper needs analysis.
2. In the vein of 1), there is a very strong economic discourse used to legitimise acts of management. Conversely, there is little or no mention of representative functions of language, e.g. of the identity of the company as one in which individuals should be multilingual to promote diversity, creativity, etc.

Concluding remarks

In this paper, we have examined two types of organisations, both of which engage in organised language management. While the multinationals do so in order to make their operations more effective and go through all phases, the language schools serve, in relation to the multinationals, above all, as a part of the implementation phase. This is exemplified, above all, by some of the responses of language-school representatives in interviews. One school director in Hungary, for example, when asked about the school's basic philosophy, responded, "Our aim is to provide our students with the knowledge they actually need". This aim was also brought up later as an explanation for why the school taught the specific languages which made up its offer.

At all of the sites studied, from the perspective of the companies, internal language policies/management are governed by considerations of economic efficiency and by cultural questions of appropriateness, and both motivations seem to influence one another. Both of these issues influence the degree to which the companies utilise the services of language schools, and both appear in the discourses of the companies in order to legitimise their utilisation or non-utilisation of the services offered by the schools. In each region studied, the specific (and, above all, regional) economic circumstances ultimately deter-

5. Examples 5 and 6 taken from interviews conducted in German with an HR assistant in a multinational company based in Germany with a British subsidiary; translation by the authors.

mine whether there is a market for these services. It should also be pointed out that the 'cultural questions of appropriateness' seem to come out more in the companies in Central Europe than in the UK.

As for the schools, they legitimise the business they do with the multinational companies through a discourse of *flexibility* and of the *individualisation* and *tailoring* of a) the language management of entire companies and b) the language management of individuals or job positions within those companies. This flexibility is depicted as market-driven. In considering the ideologies in the background of the management of each type of institution, it is not common to find the 'cultural questions of appropriateness' in the discourse of the language schools. In other words, language-school representatives do not make statements legitimising or de-legitimising the use or popularity of a given language (e.g. German). Rather, they emphasise their ability to provide teaching of whatever language may become fashionable among individual clients (as opposed to companies) or economically desirable, and in whatever functional variety. This fact differentiates the schools from the individual teachers working within them, as the teachers are usually qualified to teach specific languages and are dependent on the presence of appropriate clientele.

The comparative aspect of this paper has demonstrated several points. These are:

1. A topical observation: the rise of the practice of LSP (Languages for Specific Purposes) as an adjustment design and implementation in the LM process. This is particularly visible through the changing role of German across European countries – moving from general demand to a more specific skill required for particular jobs – in Central Europe and in the United Kingdom.
2. An implication for LMT: acts of language management on the organised level require a *legitimising discourse*, one which usually contains the intervention of theorising and ideology which is often mentioned in the LMT literature (e.g. Neustupný 2002). This discourse can be differentiated among different types of organisations, and the range that it can take is directly related to the amount of economic power an organisation has. For example, if a language school in a given region is mostly dependent upon the presence of a multinational company, it is difficult for the school to legitimise its actions on any other basis than an economic one.

In considering areas for future research, it is important to observe that language schools themselves are capable of operating in a 'multinational' manner; for example, with the eastward movement of the manufacturing industry (particularly from Europe to Asia), schools operating internationally are able to follow them. However, this act of socio-economic management is only possible

for a small handful of schools and, ultimately, an even smaller group of their employees. The question at hand, then, is what effects this move will have on regional and national economies as concerns the language industry, and how locally based schools, themselves SMEs, will adapt.

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Résumé

Cet article explore la façon dont deux types d'organisations – des compagnies multinationales et des écoles de langues – coopèrent l'un avec l'autre. D'une part, il existe une relation clairement unidirectionnelle: la présence de compagnies multinationales dans une région ou un pays donné crée souvent une demande pour les services proposés par les écoles de langues, dans la mesure où les employés desdites compagnies peuvent éprouver le besoin d'apprendre soit la langue locale, soit la langue de la compagnie, soit enfin la langue parlée avec les clients. Ces faits incluent un réseau extensif de pratiques sociales dont le but est d'assurer une utilisation efficace et effective des connaissances et des ressources financières. Dans cet article, nous nous baserons sur la théorie de la gestion linguistique (Jernuud and Neustupný 1987) afin d'examiner les pratiques de gestion linguistique organisée qui résultent de l'interaction entre ces deux types d'organisations, ainsi que les méthodes utilisées par chacun afin de légitimer et d'expliquer ses relations commerciales avec l'autre. On s'appuiera principalement sur des entretiens semi structurés afin de décrire et de comparer ces phénomènes dans trois pays: la République Tchèque, le Royaume-Uni et la Hongrie. On placera l'accent sur les changements dans le climat économique de ces trois pays, et les stratégies de gestion linguistique mises en place en réponse à ces changements.

Mots clés : théorie de la gestion linguistique, compagnies multinationales, écoles de langues, multilinguisme, Tchéquie, Allemagne, Hongrie