



LINGUISTIC CHOICES IN THE CONTEMPORARY CITY

Postmodern Individuals in Urban
Communicative Settings

Edited by Dick Smakman, Jiří Nekvapil
and Kapitolina Fedorova

ROUTLEDGE STUDIES IN LANGUAGE AND IDENTITY



Linguistic Choices in the Contemporary City

Linguistic Choices in the Contemporary City focuses on how individuals navigate conversation in highly diversified contexts and provides a broad overview of state of the art research in urban sociolinguistics across the globe. Bearing in mind the impact of international travel and migration, the book accounts for the shifting contemporary studies to the workings of language choices in places where people with many different backgrounds meet and exchange ideas. It specifically addresses how people handle language use challenges in a broad range of settings to present themselves positively and meet their information and identity goals.

While a speaker's experience runs like a thread through this volume, the linguistic, cultural and situational focus is as broad as possible. It runs from the language choices of Chinese immigrants to Beijing and Finnish immigrants to Japan to the use of the local lingua franca by motor taxi drivers in Ngaoundéré, Cameroon, and how Hungarian students in their dorm rooms express views on political correctness uninhibitedly. As it turns out, language play, improvisation, humour, lies, as well as highly marked subconscious pronunciation choices, are natural parts of the discourses, and this volume provides numerous and extensive examples of these techniques. For each of the settings discussed, the perspective is taken of personalised linguistic and extra-linguistic styles in tackling communicative challenges. This way, a picture is drawn of how postmodern individuals in extremely different cultural and situational circumstances turn out to have strikingly similar human behaviours and intentions.

Linguistic Choices in the Contemporary City is of interest to all those who follow theoretical and methodological developments in this field. It will be of use for upper level students in the fields of Sociolinguistics, Pragmatics, Linguistic Anthropology and related fields in which urban communicative settings are the focus.

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**Edited by
Dick Smakman, Jiří Nekvapil and
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A language management study

V. Dovalil

12.1 Introduction: Background information and research questions

This chapter aims at analyzing the language use and language choices in the area of international tourism in the capital of the Czech Republic, which – along with the current migration and economic development – contributes to superdiversification of this country.¹ First, an overview of tourism is sketched drawing upon statistical data, which show the macro-perspective. Then, the micro-perspective is the focus. It concentrates on individual interactions in cafés and restaurants, including the problems and language management processes in which these problems are solved.

Generally speaking, the total number of tourists coming to the Czech Republic from abroad has been constantly growing since 1989. Disruptions of this global tendency in the late 1990s and after 2000 were only short interruptions of a continuous development as is shown in Figure 12.1.

Although the Czech Republic is not as prominent a member of the European group of international tourist destinations as are France, Italy, the Canary Islands, Spain or Croatia, tourism represents a stable source of income of the Czech economy in the tertiary sector. Its proportion amounts to 2.9% of the GDP, which is a higher proportion than in the case of agriculture. The average foreign exchange revenues from tourism have been reaching more than 7 billion USD every year since 2008 (Palatková and Zichová 2014: 209). Before the corona pandemic in 2020, which will have a severe impact on the economy of international tourism, this income amounted to 164.9 billion Czech crowns (CZK) in 2018 and to 168.5 billion CZK (= 7.5 billion USD) in 2019.²

According to the Czech Statistical Office, 10.9 million foreign tourists visited the Czech Republic in 2019, which slightly exceeded the total population of the country with 10.639.939 inhabitants (as of December 31, 2019). The corresponding total number of foreign tourists for 2018 amounted to 10.635.645, which represented an increase by 5.6% in comparison with 2017. More than 2 million tourists came from Germany in 2019, representing almost one fifth of all foreign tourists. This proportion has remained stable for many

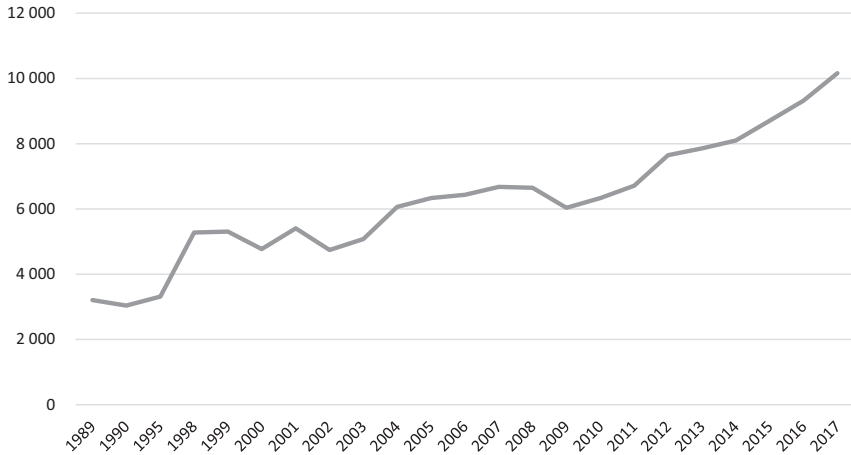


Figure 12.1 Foreign tourists in the Czech Republic since 1989 (in thousands).
(Source: Czech Statistical Office).

years. Two other neighboring countries follow with a substantial distance – Slovakia with almost 750.000 and Poland with over 670.000 visitors. The last neighboring country, Austria, was represented among the top ten countries with almost 300.000 tourists only in 2018. Ukraine, from where almost 272.000 tourists arrived, occupied the tenth position in 2019. This country recorded the most dynamic increase in 2019 (by more than one quarter). In contrast to the stable growth during the previous years, the total number of visitors coming from China and South Korea decreased by 1% and 7.4% respectively.

The regional distribution of foreign visitors within the Czech Republic is far from balanced. The capital Prague was the most visited administrative unit with 6.786.151 tourists in 2019. This is an increase by 1.4 % when compared with the year 2018. Related to the total number of 1.324.277 inhabitants as of March 2020, Prague is one of the most visited cities in Europe ever, with one resident getting more than five foreign tourists. Thus, two out of three foreign tourists coming to the Czech Republic visit its capital. The second, third and fourth regions were the South-Moravian (756.416 tourists), the Karlsbad (719.328 tourists) and the South-Bohemian regions (636.206 tourists) respectively.

As these basic statistics show, it can be expected that everyday interactions between tourists and the local staff of restaurants and cafés have become commonplace, which may generate manifold language problems. Regarding language management theory, language problems are defined by social actors' noting a deviation from their expectations and by evaluating these noted deviations negatively.³ Hence, language problems are not objective phenomena. Drawing upon these circumstances, the following research questions are raised:

Table 12.1 Foreign tourists in the Czech Republic in 2019 and in 2018 (top 10 countries)

Country	Number of tourists 2019 (in total)	Number of tourists 2018 (in total)	Change (%) 2019/2018	Change (%) 2018/2017
Germany	2.075.956	2.033.065	2.2	3.6
Slovakia	749.977	734.910	2.6	7.8
Poland	672.571	620.414	8.4	7.8
China	612.048	619.877	-1.0	26.5
USA	583.614	555.736	5.3	2.8
Russia	564.794	545.406	3.8	-0.5
Great Britain	495.572	496.807	0.1	5.7
Italy	409.623	409.903	0.3	5.2
South Korea	384.532	416.243	-7.4	0.2
Ukraine	271.933	211.292	28.7	
Austria	not among top 10	299.162		2.8

(Source: Czech Statistical Office, March 2020).

- 1) How do foreign tourists solve their language problems in Prague when they need to communicate with local employees of restaurants, cafés or tourism agencies, and vice versa?
- 2) Which languages are chosen, or preferred in these interactions?

12.2 Theoretical basis and method of data collection: Participant observation

Language choices are results of decision-making processes, which are influenced both by individual experiences and by social structures. Therefore, it is necessary to have a theoretical framework that is able to cover the dynamics of such processes, and to structure them in transparent phases. For these reasons, language management theory is particularly useful (Nekvapil and Sherman 2015; Nekvapil 2016; Dovalil and Šichová 2017; Fairbrother et al. 2018; Kimura and Fairbrother 2020; Marriott 1991). It is sometimes designated as a theory concerning language problems.

The crucial notion of language management is defined as behavior toward language, which is metalinguistic in nature. Language management theory differentiates between the generation of utterances (including their perception) on the one hand, and their management on the other. Language management processes are based on the actors' mutual expectations – if they are fulfilled, there is nothing to manage and the actors achieve their communication goals. The management process is triggered when a deviation from these expectations is noted. Once it is noted, it may be evaluated, or not. The evaluative phase may turn out positive (gratification of the deviation) or negative. The latter may bring about the necessity to design an adjustment to solve the problem. And if adjustments are designed, they may be implemented in interactions, or

not. This concise description indicates that the management process may finish in each phase, and it also manifests its cyclic nature. Given this overview, it is useful to add that language problems may also be anticipated before the actors experience them (more details concerning this pre-interaction management are provided by Nekvapil and Sherman 2009).

The whole process may take place both at the micro-level (simple management), or it may involve institutions at the macro-level in some phases (organised management). Three levels influencing the successful course in terms of accomplishing the actors' goals are identified – (1) management of socioeconomic circumstances, under which the process takes place, (2) communicative management, and (3) management of the language structures, i.e. linguistic management in the narrow sense. The linguistic management (third level) – which applies to the knowledge of vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation, or spelling – may fail when it is blocked by circumstances at the first or second level (for more details elaborating on the aspects as sketched above, see Nekvapil and Sherman 2015; Nekvapil 2016; Dovalil and Šichová 2017; Fairbrother et al. 2018; Kimura and Fairbrother 2020; Marriott 1991).⁴

All these crucial features of language management are present in the decision-making processes in which individual actors at the micro-level choose a language to accomplish their communication goals in their individual interactions. To project the aforementioned theoretical basis into the research questions, the analysis concentrates on the simple management of language problems occurring in communication between foreign tourists and the staff of restaurants (cafés) as the main actors participating in these processes. Their fundamental expectations consist in making themselves understood. In terms of their social status, these actors are endowed with approximately equal power. However, this equality may be disrupted, e.g., in critical situations in which the staff depends on the customers' cooperative behavior. What is referred to in this context are disputes between the customers and the staff in which a customer is not willing to pay the bill and the staff has to call in police to restore the power relations. This kind of dependence may also have an impact on the language choices.

The data consists of 30 participant observations of interactions, 19 interactions with the actors of the participant observations and three conversations with tourism agency employees. 27 observations were conducted in the city and three observations in a restaurant in a shopping mall in the outskirts of Prague.

In terms of the classification of this method, my role mostly corresponded to the concealed observer (Lamnek 2010: 511). My identity as a researcher, including the real purpose of my presence in these situations, did not have to be revealed. I entered the easily accessible field of observation of cafés and restaurants (Lamnek 2010: 531–534) and acted like a regular customer. Having sat down at a table and ordered some meal or drink, I usually started reading a book or a newspaper, or working with my computer. Behaving like a normal customer, I could begin to observe what was happening around me. I was able to maintain both a necessary detachment and personal involvement (Lamnek

2010: 529). In this respect, my role can be classified as complete identification with the field, or complete participation ('vollständige Identifikation mit dem Feld (vollständige Teilnahme)' in German; Lamnek 2010: 524), according to which the observed persons do not know the real identity of the researcher. In this situation, the researcher is allowed to interact with the observed persons in as natural a way as possible.⁵ I usually remained passive and did not intervene in interactions of the observed persons. I concentrated on their language use and foreign-language choices. Hence, no sociological data characterising the observed persons were gathered. The relevant data were recorded by means of field notes, which could be written down immediately during the observation. According to the recommendations summarised by Lamnek (2010: 559–560), the usual data were recorded: time and place of the observation and the main points of the summary of the event. Particularly important parts of sequences or expressions were noted down as exactly as possible. However, not each of the observations turned out to be equally relevant, of course. The length of a typical observation depended on suitable opportunities and varied between 15 minutes and one hour and a half.

Another set of important data represents my own occasional interactions with the actors of the participant observations. In such situations, the focus of my role moved toward the type of the participator as observer: I became primarily participator of the situation and secondarily observer (Lamnek 2010: 525). These interactions could not be planned in advance and depended on appropriate situations. Overall, this happened 19 times. The interactions with the tourists took place in English as a lingua franca, with the exception of German-speaking persons, which I addressed in German.⁶ Conversations with the Czech employees were held in Czech. Opportunities to enter the interactions between waiters and tourists arose typically when a problem was being solved. I could take advantage of acting like a regular customer who was willing to help, which enabled me to maintain a relatively natural contact with both actors (staff and tourists) after the problem had been solved. In this way, it was possible to continue communicating and to add several questions to gather some more data.

Surprisingly enough, some Asian or German-speaking tourists as well as waiters who were not too busy outside lunch or dinner time were quite talkative. In such situations, I asked the employees about how often they needed to use foreign languages and which ones, or which language problems they had experienced. Continuing the talks with tourists, I concentrated on their experiences with foreign languages in the Czech Republic. In order to legitimise my interest in nine cases, I just said I worked as a linguist in the end. Thus, I revealed a part of my real identity, but I did not communicate the main purpose of the small talk anyway. After that, I said goodbye, left the situation and put down the field notes.

The smallest part of the data comes from my conversations with employees of three tourism agencies operating in Prague. I addressed them as a person organising a program on behalf of a group of foreign tourists coming from

various countries. With this identity of a complete participator, I was interested in sightseeing tours in Prague and a trip to the Karlštejn castle. I focused on how flexible the agencies were in terms of language accommodation.

The data were collected in two phases. The first period took place in the spring and summer of 2017, the second one in December 2018 and January 2019. Several individual observations were added accidentally in October, November and December 2019.

12.3 Language accommodation in international tourism: Language problems and language choices

International tourism represents one of the largest international trades in the world; it is a global cultural industry, mobilising people, culture and money (Heller et al. 2014: 427). Since this branch is essentially influenced by the interplay of demand and supply, we can raise the question of the extent to which a country comes up with which competitive advances. Heller et al. (2014: 430) refer to ‘monetizing the touristic potential’ in this context. As aforementioned, foreign tourists come to the Czech Republic in order to visit Prague above all. Apart from its capital, they visit other historical towns, castles, chateaus, galleries and museums.⁷ Yet another important reason is doing shopping.⁸ In terms of such competitive advances, Austria is taken to be the main competitor of the Czech Republic (Palatková and Zichová 2014: 210).

The findings of the research are structured as follows: First, the economic basis of the supply–demand–interplay is discussed in connection with the socio-economic management. Then, concrete results of the observations showing specific patterns of language use are analyzed. They start with the issue of the language of the first contact and go on to German-related aspects. Findings concerning interactions with Russian- and Slovak-speaking tourists are presented afterwards. The next part is devoted to observations of the interactions of persons coming from Asian countries, after which avoidance strategies are analyzed. The last part of the analyses deals with various functions of Czech.

12.3.1 Supply and demand as crucial features of socio-economic management

It is evident that foreign language skills play an important role as a part of this competition in the post-modern era of globalisation and that international tourism represents one of the prototypical domains in which languages are commodified (Heller, Pujolar and Duchêne 2014; Heller 2010: 108). The economic value of foreign language skills plays a prominent role in these processes (Ammon 2015: 853–864; Costa 2019: 201–202; Marriott 1991). Heller, Pujolar and Duchêne (2014) point out that not only (foreign) languages, but also local identities and cultures are commodified. Heller et al. (2014: 441) see local languages ‘being, in the first instance, fully commodified as an exotic marker of Otherness, and, in the second instance, “spectacularised” as a performance of place-based authenticity by a local’.

Good supply-sided foreign language knowledge is an unambiguous expression of the socioeconomic management which stimulates the establishment of (not necessarily only short-term) social networks of entrepreneurs/employees and their customers (level of communicative management; see Dovalil and Šichová 2017: 22–23).⁹ As it does pay off to have a good command of foreign languages in these networks, it often makes the people working in international tourism improve their competence in foreign languages. In other words, the linguistic management in the narrow sense is further driven.

Using the customers' language in terms of *the customer is the king* represents a stable component of polite behavior toward foreign tourists, which substantially influences their contentment and comfort (Ammon 2018: 14–15). At the same time, Ammon (2018: 17) warns against any simplistic interpretation of this principle, because foreign visitors may also want to use local languages, or do not wish to be discouraged from speaking them (for approaches applying the concept of face, see O'Driscoll 2001). Politeness depends on individual contexts, and it is a standard factor of the economics of tourism (Palatková and Zichová 2014: 210). These authors refer to their qualitative research according to which foreign visitors coming to the Czech Republic consider as factors of satisfaction above all the culture-related activities, sport events, quality of catering, and the attitudes of local people toward the foreign tourists. On the other hand, the most frequent causes of dissatisfaction on the part of tourists are the relatively low foreign language skills of the local population, quality of communication services, the price level in terms of the price-performance ratio, and the quality of information services (*ibid.*). All these aspects co-determine the socioeconomic management.

The language accommodation strategies are considered by Prague tourism agencies as obvious. If possible, they try to avoid lingua franca communication (for details, see Costa 2019: 202). They operate – not only online – in the following 10 languages: English, German, Chinese, Japanese, Russian, Italian, Spanish, French, Portuguese and Polish. However, guided sightseeing tours and other parts of programs for tourists in Prague (trips, organisation of visits of culture events such as concerts, exhibitions etc.) are available in several more additional languages (e.g., in Dutch, Hungarian, Korean or Danish). Electronic devices with recorded basic information as well as detailed lectures and commentaries about historic sights and works of art in the form of apps have become a part of standard equipment of big agencies. These apps no longer represent additional costs for the suppliers of these services.

Entrepreneurs in other branches which primarily depend on tourism (restaurant services) act similarly. As an expression of pre-interaction management, menus in restaurants and cafés are – not only in the city of Prague – regularly translated into English, approximately in every fifth restaurant also into German and/or Russian.¹⁰ This goes hand in hand with the required foreign language skills on the part of local employees. Prague waiters consider basic knowledge of English as 'standard' or 'obvious'.¹¹ From time to time, the employees also have some knowledge of German or Russian, because 'it also pays off'. Combinations

of languages without English were not encountered. Interestingly enough, the knowledge of German is commented on with restraint and its command seems to be underestimated. This also holds for domains other than the language use in restaurant services in which restrained attitudes toward German come out (more details concerning, e.g., international research projects can be found in Dovalil and Sherman 2010).

12.3.2 Language of the first contact as a problem and German-related observations

What may cause problems at the very beginning is the question ‘how one is supposed to recognise at all’ which tourists are going to use which language. Obviously, this applies to the German-related cases, particularly when the local staff is willing to speak German. The employees mentioned the habits of German-speaking tourists to start the conversation in English and to switch – potentially – to German on the initiative of the staff. The problem of choosing a language other than English for the first contact does not arise in such situations in which a waiter hears (and understands) the language of those who are entering the restaurant and he himself prefers German to English. This pattern can also be observed in the case of Russian.

However, with the exceptions mentioned above, the language of the first contact is regularly English. Foreign tourists as well as the employees of the restaurants and cafés share the general expectation that English as a *lingua franca* will be the most reliable language to start communication. Mutual interactions begin with greetings ‘hi’ or ‘hello’. German-speaking tourists fall into this type of behavior toward language, too. What might play a specific role in their case are their relatively weak language loyalty to German and its rather low prestige abroad. They think that it would look ‘impolite’ if they expected the command of German on the part of the Czech population to be good enough to communicate fluently in German.¹² The asymmetric relations between Czechs and German-speaking tourists underlied one remarkable commentary according to which ‘Germans do not learn Czech at all, do they? So why should Czechs learn German?’ English is believed to be ‘equally foreign’ for both and it does not bring any communicative advance for anyone. A relatively low command of German is considered to be ‘absolutely normal’ overall, which also applies to the Czech Republic as a neighboring country of Germany and Austria.

What can be observed as common practice is the fact that although Czech employees open their conversations with German-speaking customers in German in some cases, these customers indicate that ‘We can speak English’ and prefer English to German. However, re-negotiations of languages are definitely possible. They depend on tenacity on the part of the local staff. If a waiter continues using German and his command of this language sounds good enough, then the German-speaking customers switch back to German. Moreover,

Czech staff with a good command of German got compliments from German-speaking customers.

12.3.3 *Slavic contexts*

Russian-speaking tourists represent another specific group of customers. Referring to Russian, it needs to be taken into consideration that this language is used not only by Russians, but also by many other citizens of the former Soviet Union. Thus, Ukrainians, Belorussians, Kazakhs, and members of other nationalities coming from this region usually speak Russian abroad (Sloboda 2016: 158).

Although many Russian-speaking tourists also use English as the language of the first contact, it is possible in some cases for Czechs and Russians to interact ‘in their own respective language’, as was mentioned by one Czech waitress. This constellation, designated as semicommunication, can be regularly observed in interactions with Slovaks. Semicommunication takes place when a Czech speaker addresses a Slovak in Czech and is able to understand his/her counterpart’s Slovak. This holds for the other way around as well (for more details concerning the question of mutual intelligibility, see Gooskens et al. 2018: 174–175 and 182–187). However, in spite of the structural proximity of Czech and Slovak, it cannot be claimed that Czech–Slovak receptive bilingualism would work without any problems (Sloboda 2004; Nábělková 2016; Sloboda and Nábělková 2013: 203–205).

Unlike Slovak, which is not systematically taught as a foreign language in the Czech education system, Russian is one of such languages. As for the sociocultural management of Russian, it had the status of the first mandatory foreign language in Czechoslovakia before 1990. This may still explain the remnants of the knowledge of Russian among the older and middle-aged people in the Czech Republic. In most cases though, Czech employees rather tend to mix both languages in that they try to accommodate Czech to Russian (and vice versa) on the phonetical, morphological as well as lexical level. Somewhat more rarely, this also applies to mixing Czech and Slovak (for more details concerning ‘Czechoslovak’, see Nábělková 2007). However, when compared with Slovak, the structural distance between Czech and Russian is much bigger. Hence, the Czech–Russian semicommunication is only possible in limited lexical areas.

A group of Russian-speaking tourists noted that Russian was ‘quite present’ in the public space. From their point of view, this perception aroused an impression that ‘Czechs seem to be willing’ to communicate in Russian.¹³ This impression may lead to misunderstandings in individual cases, which a waiter experienced in a café. A group of tourists – categorised as Russians by him – was said to have insisted on Russian in interactions with this employee, although he ‘signaled that he does not speak Russian’ and ‘asked them to switch to English’. It was very difficult for this waiter to re-negotiate ‘broken English’ instead of Russian in order to make these tourists pay the bill in the end. The

waiter recalled this situation as a very ‘stressful experience’, because he was afraid of the tourists leaving without paying.

12.3.4 Language problems in interactions with tourists coming from Asia

The problems occurring in English-based interactions with visitors who come from East and South East Asia are more often phonetic in nature. In these cases, in which communication fails due to an incomprehensible foreign accent, the interlocutors reach for a piece of paper or an electronic device. Otherwise, no difficulties emerge when the language problems have to do with a sum of money, because the customers see the bills. Local staff of restaurants and cafés also refer to Asian tourists who use various translation applications to solve language problems. They show a phrase that is translated from the respective language either into English, or even into Czech. Using electronic devices represents an adjustment design which enables rapid implementation.

12.3.5 Topics of unsolved problems and avoidance strategies

As for the topics which are communicated in foreign languages, the waitresses and waiters claim that the repertoire is ‘quite small’ and that they need to be able to speak about orders and payments. Many problems are solved immediately by a reference to the menu. Lexically difficult explanations concerning ingredients or somewhat more precise descriptions of meals are not communicated under all circumstances. If a first attempt to explain such contents fails, further efforts to provide the customer with the adequate information are often given up. Although these – mostly lexical – problems remain unsolved, new cycles of simple management with more appropriate adjustment designs are not triggered. The staff member is not always interested in, or showing willingness towards, answering the customers’ questions, because it is quite busy anyway and ‘does not have enough time to explain all details’. The staff indirectly counts upon the fact that ‘it will always turn out fine’, because the foreign tourists ‘will see soon what they have ordered anyway’. Such forms of behavior correspond to a strategy of not dealing with the identified deviations from the expectations: the management process is interrupted in the phase of negative evaluation, but no adjustment designs follow. Rather exceptionally, adjustment design and implementation may consist in calling a colleague for help. Obviously, this interaction between two Czech employees takes place in Czech. However, their critical remarks concerning ‘how demanding the tourists are’ illustrate the function of Czech as a secret language, because the tourists are not supposed to understand them.

Other topics appearing in interactions are more rare. The tourists sometimes ask for a taxi or inquire about the direction how to get to a certain place.

12.3.6 Further aspects of the use of Czech as a local language

The reversed perspective according to which foreign tourists would like to open their interactions in Czech can also be observed. Given this happens and

the Czech employees hear non-native Czech, they almost immediately switch into English. A German tourist with a good command of Czech experienced in one situation how intensely a waitress refused to accept his 'non-native Czech', no matter how much this German wished to continue speaking Czech. He had expected that it would have been 'normal to speak Czech in Prague' and evaluated this deviation negatively as 'quite impolite' (for analyses of several cases of this kind, reproducing the hegemonic position of English, see Sherman 2009: 85–93). O'Driscoll (2001: 256) interprets this kind of behavior consisting in 'the desire to practice' the other interlocutor's language as 'selfish'. That corresponds to Ammon's (2018: 17) argument. He exemplifies this constellation by means of an Italian hotelier who insists on speaking German with a German-speaking guest who would like to speak Italian:

So wirkt z. B. ein italienischer Hotelier nicht wirklich höflich, wenn er mit einem deutschsprachigen Gast hartnäckig Deutsch spricht, der seine mühsam erlernten Italienischkenntnisse anwenden möchte (Ammon 2018: 17).

[Thus, an Italian hotel manager does not sound very polite when he obstinately insists on speaking German with a German-speaking guest who would like to use Italian which he has acquired with difficulties.]

(my translation, V.D.)

In Ammon's opinion, a lingua franca could be a compromise.

Apparently, the Czech people's competence in foreigner talk is still rather low. Many Czechs do not know how exactly they should accommodate linguistically to non-native speakers in terms of reducing the lexical and grammatical complexity of their utterances. This also holds true for slower and more careful pronunciation, which would be another appropriate component of an adjustment design. Nekvapil (2013) connects this behavior with the language ideology of Czech being believed to be a small language used only by Czechs:

Czechs [...] do not expect the foreigners (tourists and expatriates, in particular) to be able to communicate in Czech. Consequently, Czechs find it difficult to communicate with foreigners who are trying to use the Czech language. [...] They do not feel that they should communicate in Czech with foreigners, offering them (or even forcing upon them) their English or German, [no matter how] poor it may be. In the last instance, this means that Czechs indirectly discourage foreigners from learning their language, something that is occasionally noted by the foreigners themselves.

(Nekvapil 2013: 26)

On the other hand, Czech does not have to be enough for someone to succeed in interacting with the employees of the restaurants and cafés under all circumstances. One café might seek out employees with English as the first language (my estimation, V.D.). A waitress who claimed that she did not understand

either Czech or Slovak insisted on using English only. She argued that ‘everybody speaks English after all’ these days, which was believed to mitigate the negative evaluation. Thus, this case was noted as a clear deviation from the expectation of what is polite behavior.

Suffice it to note that difficulties in making oneself understood in the official language of the respective country are by no means specifically Czech. They are recorded in bigger language communities as well, e.g., in the German one. One example for others in which a German with good knowledge of English complains about the necessity to use English in a hostel in Berlin:

Ich fand es leicht sonderbar, dass wenn man in Deutschland (wo Deutsch gesprochen wird), in die JH [Jugendherberge] eincheckt, von Personal empfangen wird, das[s] die deutsche Sprache nicht wirklich beherrscht hat und beinahe darauf bestanden wurde, dass ich hier in Deutschland, meinem Heimatland, das Gefühl vermittelt bekomme, nicht Deutsch sprechen zu ‘dürfen’[,] sondern Englisch im deutschen Hostel[.] Ich spreche gut und gerne Englisch, aber ich sollte hier problemlos meine Sprache sprechen dürfen in einer öffentlichen Einrichtung! (booking.com, Berlin, August 19, 2018).

[I considered it slightly weird that when someone checks in at a youth hostel in Germany (where German is spoken) one is received by staff whose command of German is not good and who almost insists on that I get an impression here in Germany, in my homeland, not to be ‘allowed’ to speak German, but English in a German hostel. I like speaking English and I speak it well, but I should be allowed to speak my language without problems here, in a public facility.]

(my translation, V.D.)

12.4 Conclusion and prospects for future research

The global character of tourism in the twenty-first century gives rise to enormously heterogeneous language problems and language contacts among people with very different mother tongues. As a solution in terms of pre-interaction management, this heterogeneity is usually overcome by choosing English as a *lingua franca*. Socio-economic features of international tourism bolster up the necessity of learning this as well as other foreign languages (particularly in the case of tourism agencies). This, in turn, is reflected in very easy establishment of rather short-term networks (or communities of contact) in which English and other foreign language knowledge does pay off. The communicative management stimulates the linguistic management in the narrow sense. However, differences in the implementation at this third level are obvious. Although the foreign language skills of the Czech population are reported to be relatively modest in the European context, this branch of the national economy does not seem to suffer from this level immediately.¹⁴ This observation applies

to such occupations which are important for tourism, but which – at the same time – are not primarily conditioned by high proficiency in foreign languages. Unlike employees of cafés and restaurants, tourist guides' command of foreign languages is expected to be very high (Costa 2018: 4).

The dominant position of English in international tourism in Prague goes hand in hand with expectations toward this language both on the part of the local staff and on the part of the visitors coming from abroad. Complying with one of language ideologies, English is enough in the vast majority of situations, indeed. This observation can be projected onto the gradually harmonised expectations of both groups of actors. Mutually harmonised expectations in favor of English limit potential deviations and essentially reduce the necessity of triggering language management activities. The use of a language other than English in terms of a lingua franca could not be reliably proven in the collected data.

By choosing English as a lingua franca, foreign tourists intend to avoid potential language problems. Related to language management theory, tourists' behavior allows us to infer that they expect this language to be the most frequently chosen foreign language in the Czech Republic. This inference corresponds to the aforementioned pre-interaction management. Choosing English as a lingua franca means designing an optimal adjustment whose implementation most often enables avoidance of difficulties. However, this choice does not have to guarantee communicative success in all circumstances (Phillipson 2003: 167; Phillipson 2017). German and Russian are negotiable alternative adjustment designs in interactions with German-speaking or Russian-speaking customers.

When interlocutors encounter phonetic problems, they try to use written media. They count on electronic translators nowadays. These implemented adjustments confirm that writing represents a reliable basis for solutions to problems occurring in spoken language. Electronic devices with translators enormously extend the possibilities of designing adjustments in various languages, including the implementation thereof. Using electronic devices in these interactions definitely deserves further research.

As an element of socio-cultural management working in favor of German, no specific impact of neighborhood can be proven, which would potentially reflect, e.g., the fact that the Czech Republic, Austria and Germany are geographically as well as culturally closely related neighbors, and that this should preferably play a role in the process of language choices. This can partially be explained by the fact that the participant observations took place only in Prague, and not in the border regions, which would have been more germane to such a question. With the exception of the aforementioned spa triangle in West Bohemia, there are no comparable hotspots of international tourism located along the Czech-German or Czech-Austrian border. Seemingly paradoxically enough, this spa triangle was mentioned in one case in connection with the influence of the linguistic landscape on the foreign language choices (in favor of Russian, and not of German, though).

Leaving language problems unsolved means that interlocutors are not able to find an appropriate adjustment design. In other words, the management process finishes in the phase of negative evaluation in such cases. If customers do not express their dissatisfaction sufficiently, they often do not make the staff deal with their problems. The management process finishes by noting a deviation, or unclear evaluation.

Obviously, the insight into the choices of foreign languages in international tourism in the capital of the Czech Republic, as presented in this chapter, could not cover many other branches of services and communication domains, which play an essential role in feelings of contentment of every foreign tourist. Thus, future research should explore their interactions with employees of public transportation services (bus drivers, conductors, ticket inspectors), but also with policemen, or with shop assistants. Another very important communication domain is represented by medical staff.

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Notes

- 1 For a recent overview of the gradual development of superdiversity in the Czech Republic during the last 25 years as well as the factors working against this general tendency, see Sloboda 2016.
- 2 This sum is derived from the current exchange rate 1 USD = 22,5 CZK. However, this rate has been moving between approximately 1:40 and 1:16 since 2000.
- 3 This is only a simplified version of the conceptualisation of language problems drawing upon the management process. Elaborating on this issue, Lanstyák (2014: 327–328) refers to a difference between a 'problem token' in terms of *hic et nunc*, which is designated as language inadequacy in this theoretical framework, and a more generalized 'problem type'. More thorough discussions on the concept of language problem can be found in Neustupný (2002: 432–436), Nekvapil (2009: 5–6) and Jernudd (2020: 39–43).
- 4 An overview of this theory including an extensive bibliography is also available at the website linguagemanagement.ff.cuni.cz. It is administered by the Language Management Research Group at the Faculty of Arts of Charles University in Prague.
- 5 Describing the roles of the observer, Lamnek (2010: 523–531) classifies four possibilities: complete participation, participator as observer, observer as participator, and complete observation. However, he points out that these roles are primarily only prototypes, which hardly occur in social reality as such. Rather, they should be interpreted as specific points of a continuum with several well identifiable grades.
- 6 Considering the issue of accentedness, I realize that having 'an accent' may be an important factor in how people react. Admittedly, a German tourist might praise,

- or complain about, different matters when speaking with another German in a restaurant in Prague than when speaking with a Czech. For more details concerning the significance of phonetic vs. grammatic variation for speakers' evaluation, see Hanulíková (2019) or Hendriks et al. (2018).
- 7 The aspects of organisation of tourism in the Czech Republic, its administration as well as its government and regional policies cannot be described thoroughly in this chapter. For more details, see www.czechtourism.com and Palatková and Zichová (2014: 224–240).
 - 8 See the overviews put together by the Czech Statistical Office: www.czso.cz/csu/czso/cestovni_ruch. As Sloboda (2016: 144–145) points out, the motivation of foreign tourists to visit the Czech Republic may be manifold, indeed. Tourists coming from East Asia are attracted, e.g., by movies which are shot in the Old Town or the Lesser Town of the city of Prague.
 - 9 The duration and stability of contacts between foreign tourists and locals within these networks, or the establishment of 'communities of contact', are discussed by Heller et al. (2014: 426 and 428) and Costa (2018: 3–4). Without having elaborated on this issue, I take the contacts in cafés and restaurants for rather fleeting and fugitive moments.
 - 10 This estimation is based on personal experience (V.D.). The quality of the translation would deserve a specific inquiry, though. It varies considerably. Interestingly enough, my participant observation does not contain any situations in which language mistakes in the menus would have been commented on negatively.
 - 11 Here as well as in the following passages of the chapter, the quotation marks indicate that the expressions or parts of utterances are authentic and were used by the persons themselves. If originally uttered in German or Czech, these words are translated into English.
 - 12 The evaluation as impolite is relative, of course. In one case, a German-speaking tourist even said that she would experience 'unpleasant feelings' if she should 'impose' her language on Czechs.
 - 13 This utterance was recorded in Prague, but the remark about the presence of Russian in the public space applied to the West-Bohemian spa triangle (Karlsbad, Marienbad and Franzensbad). Sloboda (2016: 158) also refers to the evident presence of this language in the tourist hotspots in the Czech Republic: '[...] Russian is probably most frequently heard in tourist sites and tourism-related services [...]']'.
 - 14 More details concerning the foreign language competence in the European comparison are available at http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Foreign_language_skills_statistics. The results of this survey were published in April 2019. An overview of foreign language teaching in the educational systems of various European countries, which is one of the general preconditions of foreign language skills, is provided by Ammon and Wright (2010). Dovalil (2018) and Dovalil (2017) deal with the position of English and German in the Czech Republic.

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