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Language consulting: a brief European overview

Zsófia Ludányi

Abstract

As a branch of organized language management, language consulting plays a prominent role in linguistic popularization and in L1 education (broadly conceived). The goal of the paper is to present language consulting activities and associated institutions in select European countries. The countries under study include Sweden, Norway, Denmark, Finland, Estonia, the Netherlands and Belgium, Germany, the Czech Republic and Hungary.

Keywords: sociolinguistics; Language Management Theory; organized language management; language consulting; language cultivation; style of codification

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1 Introduction

In a Hungarian context, language cultivation is the most well-known type of organized language management with the highest prestige among the general public. This is in contrast with the Czech Republic, for example, where language cultivation is not only considered useful for society but also has the same standing as any other linguistic discipline (cf. Nekvapil 2008). In Hungary, the prestige of language cultivation has decreased dramatically among linguists as a result of heated debates that took place in the the second half of the 1990's and at the beginning of the new millenium (see e.g. Minya 2005; Kis 2006–2020). Some scholars (e.g. Sándor 2001; Kálmán 2004) went as far as to suggest that language cultivation was a pseudo-science, an activity that was harmful for speakers, serving as a tool for linguistic discrimination. Although domains of language cultivation do exist for which this may well be true, such sweeping generalizations are not valid for language cultivation *in toto*. For one thing, it is crucial to bear in mind that what is meant by *language cultivation* varies considerably with nations, speech communities and historical eras (Lanstyák 2014, 20).

The notion of *language cultivation* is also known in other European language communities, cf. Czech *jazyková kultura*, Slovakian *jazyková kultúra*, German *Sprachkultur* or *Sprachpflege*, and Swedish *språkvård* (Nekvapil 2008, 251).

In the English-speaking world, where the phenomenon does not have a similar long-standing tradition, the notion *language cultivation* is used as an equivalent of the above (Lanstyák, 2014, 20). Owing to the vagueness of the term *language cultivation*, I will henceforth adopt the expression *language management* to refer to activities aimed at changing discursive practices or the linguistic system. In doing so, I also evoke the theoretical framework being adopted here, namely Language Management Theory (LMT).

Forming part of a more comprehensive study, the paper offers a contrastive survey of language consulting activities and associated institutions in select European countries. As the overall research is in progress, the picture presented in this paper makes no claim on exhaustivity; rather, it merely serves as a snapshot of the current phase of research. It goes without saying that language consulting institutions also exist in a variety of other European and non-European countries beyond those discussed in the present paper.

In addition to offering an overview, the study has the potential benefit that good practices found in other countries may be adapted in Hungary too, which may in the long run contribute to a general reform of Hungarian language consulting activities.

1.1 Theoretical background, underlying assumptions

The research is couched in the framework of Language Management Theory (LMT, Jernudd–Neustupný 1987), which supersedes language planning theory (Nekvapil 2006), and serves as an alternative to language cultivation (Szabó Mihály 2005, 2007). LMT is a comprehensive theoretical framework aimed at the detection, analysis and treatment of linguistic and communicative problems. It has a growing body of international literature. In Hungarian linguistics, the theory and its possible applications are primarily explored by István Lanstyák and Gizella Szabó Mihály (e.g. Szabó Mihály 2005, 2007; Lanstyák 2018; see also Bari 2019).

The key term of Language Management Theory is that of a **language problem**, which originally meant a negative divergence from the norm within a given discourse. However, a more recent approach foregrounds the fact that speakers may evaluate a divergence (in broader terms: the given linguistic phenomenon) not just negatively but also positively or neutrally (Nekvapil–Sherman 2013, 86). The ‘classic’ process model of language management is as follows (Jernudd–Neustupný 1987, 78–80; Nekvapil 2009, 3–4): 1. language is monitored by the speaker and deviations from norms are noted (**noting**); 2. deviations from norms are evaluated, (**evaluation**); 3. an action plan is designed (**adjustment design**); 4. the process is completed when correction is implemented (**implementation**). A 5th step was later added to the classic process model: **feedback**, which is practically a repetition of the first step (Sherman 2007). Under the cyclical model, a new language management process begins when a language problem has not been successfully solved; or has been solved in a way that gave rise to a new problem (Kimura 2014).

In LMT, a distinction is made between simple and organized language management (Jernudd–Neustupný 1987, 76). Simple language management (micro-man-

agement) happens on the level of an individual, often times it is only concerned with discourses “here and now” (i.e. correcting oneself after incorrect language use). According to Nekvapil (2012, 167), organized management (macro-management) can be defined by the following features: a) Management acts are trans-interactional. b) A social network or even an institution (organization) with the requisite authority is involved. c) There is communication going on about management activities. d) Theorising and ideologies are at play to a greater degree and more explicitly. d) In addition to language as discourse, the object of management is language as a system.

An important branch of organized language management is language consulting, i.e. guidance offered to everyday speakers in concrete issues of general language use. According to Lanstyák’s (2014, 11) classification, language consulting is a form of discourse management (on the definition of language consulting, see also Riegel 2007, 26). Beneš and his colleagues (2018, 122–123) interpret dialogues between inquirers and linguistic advisors in terms of the language management cycle (Kimura 2014), which can be schematically represented as follows: micro macro micro (Nekvapil 2009, 6). Problems are perceived and evaluated by everyday speakers (micro-management), then linguists elaborate an action plan known as adjustment design (macro-management), which is in turn accepted and (supposedly) implemented by speakers (micro-management)

In this paper, I start off with the following background assumptions: 1) The situation of language consulting services, linguistic advisory boards varies from one country to the next, determined by the ethnic, social, cultural and political situation of the countries in question, and affected by the linguistic demands, styles of codification at work in particular communities (cf. Garvin 1993, 17–19; Uhlířová 1997, 82). 2) The selection of European countries for the present survey was carried out accordingly. I assumed that in countries in which an academy-governed style of codification (Garvin 1993, 17–18) existed (e.g. the Czech Republic), or had existed in the past (Germany), there was an increased demand among speakers for professional guidance, thus these countries would be more likely to have institutions engaged in language consulting.

1.2 Research questions

In view of the above, the research seeks to answer the following questions:

1. What institutions offer language consulting in the European countries under study, namely Sweden, Norway, Denmark, Finland, Estonia, the Netherlands and Belgium, Germany, the Czech Republic and Hungary?
2. What similarities and differences can be observed across countries in the practice of institutions engaged in language consulting?
3. Looking at the language consulting activities found in various countries, what are the good practices that can be adopted by language consulting in Hungary?
4. Does the linguistic material of language consulting interactions with the public form the basis of an open-access or classified database? If such a data-

base exists, is it used for scientific purposes or does it hold purely practical, social benefits, serving as a guideline for the orientation of speakers who are uncertain about questions of language use?

1.2 Research precedents

Language cultivation, language planning and language management activities in other countries have been discussed by several surveys, and these also provide a point of departure for the present paper. Domínguez and López (1995) compiled a list of institutions addressing issues of sociolinguistics and language planning, in both domestic (Catalan) and international dimensions. Their data were primarily collected by questionnaires that, besides eliciting basic information about particular institutions (name, abbreviation, address, contact details), also inquired about the type of each institution (e.g. research institute), the institutions' departments and units, number of employees, domains of language planning, services on offer (e.g. summary reports, databases), major recent publications (books, periodicals, CDs, etc.), work in progress and plans for the future.

Klára Sándor was the editor of an English-language volume of papers (Sándor ed. 2000), produced in the framework of an international project titled *From Stigmatization to Tolerance* (Autumn 1998 to Autumn 1999). The international research group used uniform criteria to offer a comparative analysis of how linguistic discrimination manifested itself in various European countries. In this context, the relevant institutions of Greece, Norway, Sweden and Hungary were presented by researchers coming from these countries.

In a German handbook edited by Janich and Greule, European language cultures are presented country by country (Janich–Greule eds. 2002). Each article focuses on language cultivating activities in a given country, describing the relevant institutions and initiatives taken by language cultivating associations.

A Hungarian volume edited by Géza Balázs and Éva Dede (Balázs–Dede eds. 2008) had the goal of surveying activities of language cultivation and language planning in Europe as comprehensively as possible, consistently using the term “linguistic culture” to describe them.

In addition to these works, it is worth mentioning the Wikipedia article “List of language regulators” (W1), which presents a list of institutions engaged in the regulation of languages that have standard varieties.

Although the works listed above serve as a basis for the present survey, their information is in need of updating in view of the time that has passed since their publication; moreover, they only discuss language consulting to a limited extent.

2 Material and method

As a first step of the survey, I relied on internet search engines to retrieve information about language consulting bureaus and services in various countries, based on the available literature (Domínguez–López 1995; Sándor ed. 2001; Janich–

Greule eds. 2002; Balázs–Dede eds. 2008). A key aspect of the research is to establish contact with institutions engaged in language consulting. This work is in progress; by the time of writing the present paper, I have started correspondence with linguists working at the Czech and Estonian language consulting services.

After finding out about institutions, I examined the language consulting activities they offered by looking at public information on their websites, reports published by their language consultants, and scholarly works addressing topics of language consulting. In the course of this survey, I mainly focused on the following criteria: a) the channel of language consulting: telephone, email or other (e.g. personal consultation); b) duration for which on-demand, instant consulting is available (hour/week); c) number of employees involved in language consulting; d) whether or not the institution publishes queries and answers; and if so, in what form; e) whether or not the collected linguistic material is used for research purposes.

3 Language consulting in specific countries

3.1 Sweden

In this section, I present the situation and institutional background of language management in Sweden on the basis of Andersson (2000), Jernudd (2018), as well as Sándor (2001) and Péteri (2008) from the Hungarian literature, also relying on information published on the websites of particular institutions.

In Sweden, several institutions are involved in language management. One is the Swedish Academy, founded in 1786, whose main activity concerns the description of Swedish vocabulary and grammar. From the perspective of the present paper, the most important institution is the The Language Council of Sweden (Språkrådet) based in Stockholm, which has been operating since 1944, with its budget mostly coming from state funding and to a lesser extent from private companies and organizations. It constitutes a department of the Institute for Language and Folklore, whose main activities consist in the publication of books and periodicals about linguistics and language use, the simplification of official language, and language consulting with regard to the use of Swedish and official minority languages (including Swedish Sign Language).

On the website of the Language Council of Sweden (W2), there is a detailed description of how the language consulting service operates. The categorization of question types is remarkably well thought-out, and each category is assigned to a unit within the consulting service, with its designated email address and phone number. In what follows, I give a detailed presentation of the activities offered by this language consulting service.

I. Swedish language consulting

5. General matters of the Swedish language (spelling rules, grammar, pronunciation, the spelling of foreign place names, issues of language use).
6. The database of questions collected so far can be browsed freely on the

Language Council's website (W3); the institution asks members of the public to turn to them only when their question is not already in the database. In the Q&A database, full-text search and keyword search are both available. Users of the database can evaluate answers for their usefulness, and may also add comments to them. Linguistic advice can be requested by email and on the phone. The phone service can be accessed from 10 to 12am on Mondays, Wednesday and Fridays (6 hours/week).

7. Questions concerning Swedish dialects: dialectal words, expressions, cross-dialectal differences, language change. The phone service can be accessed from 10 to 12am and from 1 to 3pm on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays (12 hours/week).
8. Queries pertaining to the simplification of texts of public interest can be sent to a designated email address, and a designated phone number is also available.
9. Onomastic consulting: inquiries can be placed with regard to the origin, significance and frequency of Swedish geographical names, personal names and other types of proper names. The phone service can be called from 10 to 12am and from 1 to 3pm from Tuesday to Thursday (12 hours/week).

II. Language consulting with regard to minority languages

10. Finnish: besides consulting by email, a phone service is also available from 9 to 12am on weekdays (15 hours/week).
11. Yiddish: by email, and by phone from 1 to 5pm on Wednesdays (4 hours/week).
12. Meänkieli (a Finno-Ugric language): by email and by phone from 9 to 12am on Tuesdays and Thursdays (6 hours/week).
13. Romani: by email and by phone from 9 to 12am on Tuesdays (3 hours/week).
14. Sámi: questions are answered by the Sámi Parliament, thus they need to be addressed directly to this institution.
15. Swedish Sign Language: by email and by phone every weekday from 9am to 3pm. Video calls are also available (30 hours/week).

The consulting service also produces various publications including dictionaries, glossaries, regulations and handbooks. They have two periodicals. One is the quarterly *Klarspråk* dedicated to easily accessible Swedish, the other is the quarterly *Kieliviesti* (with an insert in written in Meänkieli), a journal of minority speakers of Finnish living in Sweden (W4).

Discussing the practice of language consulting, Andersson (2000, 88–89) calls attention to the fact that consultants always give “conditioned” advice (contingent on certain conditions) rather than categorical “right/wrong” advice. They offer suggestions as to which contexts a particular expression can be used in, what alternatives are available in formal or informal situations, in spoken or written discourse, etc. Also frequent are questions about foreign words, for example what is the gender of a new word, how is its plural forms, what inflectional paradigm it follows,

how is it to be spelt, etc. Jernudd (2018, 109–113) assigned 350 emails received in March 2013 into the following categories (percentages are not representative, they are valid only for the sample): a) requests of detailed explanation about particular words (e.g. etymology, variants) (15%); b) spelling (normal or capital letters, spelling variants, the spelling of foreign words) (22%); c) the use of prepositions (7%); d) the use of nouns and adjectives (grammatical gender, definiteness, plural, whether a given noun exists, which is the correct one of the two, etc.) (15%); e) the use of verbs (e.g. preverbs, whether a given verb exists, whether it can be used in a particular context); f) inquiries requesting the linguistic evaluation of texts, linguistic products (4%); g) other. Among these 350 email inquiries, surprisingly few questions were about English or foreign words, which goes against a remark made by Andersson (2000, 89).

Sweden's third major organization engaged in language management was the Terminologiecetrum founded in 1941, whose work has been taken over by the Language Council of Sweden. The same institution has also taken over the management of Sweden's national terminological database (Rikstermbanken). On the Terminologiecetrum's website, a collection of terminological inquiries was previously available; at present, the database maintained by the Language Council of Sweden also includes terminological questions. Jernudd (2018, 103–108) distinguishes between the following major question types: a) what a given term means; b) difference between formal variants (are they synonymous, is there any semantic difference between them, which is the correct spelling of the two); inquiries about what is the Swedish equivalent of a foreign term; remarks that there is no term for a given concept; d) "Swenglish", i.e. questions about Swedish–English "mixed terms".

3.2 Norway

Norway is often celebrated as a model country for linguistic tolerance, due to its peculiar linguistic situation (Jahr 2000; Omdal 2000; Sándor 2002; Baksy 2008). It has two written standard language varieties, which are mutually intelligible and are primarily different in their morphology. One is bokmål ('book language'), which is close to Danish, the other is nynorsk ('new Norwegian'), which is based on Norwegian dialects. No official spoken standard exists in Norway; the use of dialects is completely accepted both in the media and in official communication.

The main institution for language management, based in Oslo, is The Language Council of Norway (Språkrådet) (W5), which offers official advice concerning both standard varieties for state bodies and the broader public alike. Its key task is to strengthen linguistic competence and tolerance with regard to various spoken and written language varieties (Baksy 2008, 234). The Language Council has several departments (focusing on terminology, education, communication, etc.), one of which offers language consulting. According to the institution's website (W6), the consulting department has ten employees at present, whose main tasks are the following: language and spelling consulting (nynorsk és bokmål) by email, by phone and on social media platforms; enhancing people's sense of responsibility

for Norwegian Sign Language and national minority languages (Kven, Romani and more recent ones), cooperation with the speech communities; language management pertaining to geographical names; monitoring of language documentation activities.

On the language consulting service's website (W7) a range of information can be found in the following three major domains: 1) spelling rules (what is written in one word or in two, interpunctuation, abbreviations, normal vs. capital letters, etc.); 2) practical grammar (basic grammatical concepts, imperative, the use of pronouns); 3) advice on written style (e.g. how official letters are to be formulated, what are the linguistic politeness forms of written exchanges, stb.).

Based on information on the website, language consulting is predominantly conducted in writing, there is no mention of any phone service. Consultants recommend that before making an inquiry, members of the public check the website's database (W8) to see if the answer can be found amongst replies to previous questions. As highlighted on the website, all questions find their way into the public database. In addition to the Q&A archive, several other useful databases can also be found here. These include online dictionaries, terminological databases, and information on geographical and personal names.

3.3 Denmark

The situation of language management in Denmark is described in detail by Galberg (2003). The Danish Language Council is a governmental research institution under the Danish Ministry of Culture which was established in 1955. The Council has functions in research, consulting, and official language management alike. The three main functions are: 1. to monitor the development of the Danish language, for example, by registering new words; 2. to answer questions about the Danish language and language use; 3. to investigate the accepted conventions regarding Danish orthography, and to edit and publish the official dictionary of Danish standard orthography (Retskrivningsordbogen) (W9).

The Council has approximately 30 members, representing institutions and associations with a special stake in the Danish language. For example, These include the prime minister's office, the ministries of education, culture and justice, Danish universities, and associations of Danish radio and television. Daily work is carried out by a staff involving around 10 researchers and a secretariat (Szamos 2008).

Language consulting is done by email and by phone. The phone service can be called on Mondays, Thursdays and Fridays between 9.30am and 12.30pm, and on Wednesdays between 9.30am and 12.30pm as well as from 2pm to 3pm (13 hours/week). On Tuesdays, the phone service is not available (W10). Council members prefer language consulting by phone for several reasons: because they can answer language questions faster, they can serve far more inquiries on the phone and thus provide far more answers, moreover, they can answer more precisely because in the phone it is easier to identify what the question is about. Nevertheless, language consulting is also offered in writing (W11).

Since 1955, the linguistic consulting service has stored answers to linguistic

questions in a database, which is expanded by around 120 new answers every year. At present, 600 answers are accessible to the public. The database makes for a valuable resource for research on linguistic norms (W12).

Employees of the language consulting service occasionally conduct questionnaire research in order to find out how satisfied their clients are. The results of studies of this kind are reported in Kjærgaard–Mørch–Jensen (2007) and Andersen (2014).

3.4. Finland

In Finland, the Council of the Institute for the Languages of Finland (Kotimaisten kielten tutkimuskeskus, Kotus) is currently the most important institution of organized language management (Minya 2008; Laihonon 2010; Takács 2019). In its database (Kielitoimiston ohjepankki) (W13), it is possible to search for topics within the domains of orthography (e.g. characters, numbers, abbreviations; names; words; sentences; text) and language use; moreover, full-text search is also available. When it comes to topics of language use, inquiries can be made about such issues as what closing formula to use at the end of a letter, and how to abbreviate titles, academic degrees. Two links from the website offer information about the spelling of proper names; these specify the most important inflected forms (generally the nominative, genitive, partitive and allative cases) of the most frequent first names and surnames. Those in need of instant assistance may also reach the language consulting service by phone.

According to the institution's website (W14), the three main areas of language consulting by phone (each with a designated phone number) are as follows: 1) general questions about Finnish (in Finnish, available from 10 to 12am on weekdays; 10 hours/week); 2) questions about name use (from 10 to 12am on Thursdays and Fridays; 4 hours/week); 3) questions about Swedish (in Swedish, between 1pm and 3pm from Tuesday to Friday; 8 hours/week). Employees of the institute also offer on-demand expert's reports on issues of language use and onomastics in Finnish and in Swedish; this service typically needs to be paid for. Additionally, staff members also offer training courses in the topics of accessible writing, language use and orthography. The language bureau publishes the journal *Kielikello*, in which guidelines produced by the Institute for the Languages of Finland are issued, and questions from the public are answered.

3.5 Estonia

The Institute of the Estonian Language (Eesti Keele Instituut), based in Tallin, is a governmental research and development institution whose main task is to conduct research on the Estonian written standard, on dialects and on other Finno-Ugric languages, and to produce dictionaries. In addition, it also offers a language consulting service (Vighné Szabó 2008). As described on the website (W15), the institute has engaged in language consulting continuously ever since its foundation in 1947; first, this function was fulfilled by the dictionary department, then from

1973 by the department of terminology and orthography. Since the institute's organizational reform in 2008, the department of language management is in charge of language consulting.

Language consulting is offered by phone and since 2004, also by email. The consultants are all employees of the Institute of the Estonian Language, performing their duties besides many other tasks. Linguistic advice can be asked for by phone and via email. The Institute's staff members prefer inquiries by phone, partly because they can be resolved faster and partly because this way it is easier to clarify the context in which a given linguistic form is (in)appropriate. On each weekday a different consultant answers inquiries by phone, and their schedule can be found on the website (W16).

Members of the public can primarily turn to consultants with issues such as orthography (normal or capital letters, the spelling of proper names, interpunctuation, etc.), the suffixing of words, their meanings, and wording problems.

On the institute's website (W17), previously asked questions and responses given to them are freely available. Questions and associated answers from the period between May 1991 and November 2003 were registered in the internet database in a post hoc manner. Since November 2003, questions and answers are directly recorded there.

Consultants recommend that before asking a question, inquirers should browse the database thoroughly for similar inquiries. Emails can be sent by filling in a form on the website, the length of an email can be 2000 characters at most. Questions are generally answered within 1-3 working days. The form requires keywords to be specified for each inquiry; furthermore, inquirers are asked to describe the context of their questions in detail.

One special area of written language consulting is the production of language expert's reports specifically at the request of such bodies as the police, courts, etc. Language expert's reports are not issued in cases where the inquirer is the participant of a lawsuit.

Language consultants have a high public reputation in Estonian society. Their importance is shown by the fact that they have reviewed such official documents of national significance as the text of the Estonian constitution. As a further sign of the popularity of language consulting, it is remarkable that their contact number is listed among emergency phone numbers in telephone directories.

It is not only the public that benefits from language consulting; the linguists themselves learn a great deal in this way about which linguistic forms and changes are the most likely to pose problems to speakers. Language consultants are in partnership with several governmental research and educational institutions, they offer trainings for their employees and also review the texts they produce.

3.6. Netherlands

As a bilateral agreement between the Netherlands and Flanders, The Dutch Language Union (Nederlandse Taalunie) was formed in 1980. Since 2004, Suriname has also been a member. Based in the Hague, the institution primarily focuses on

educational and translation-related aspects of Dutch (Gúti-Varga 2008). At the same time, those seeking linguistic advice may also turn to the Union. In the Q&A database available on the institution's website, it is possible to search for various topics of language use and spelling (e.g. compounds, word classes, punctuation marks) on the basis of keywords, and full-text search is also available (W18). Questions found in the database have been put together by drawing on the experience of language consulting services operating in the Netherlands and in Belgium, and the database is constantly improved and expanded. Through a questionnaire posted on the website, users can share their suggestions and feedback with the developers (W19).

When a user does not find any answer to their question in the database, it is possible to submit a new question by filling in a form on the website. Questions about Dutch are answered by employees of the Society of Our Language (Het Genootschap Onze Taal) and those about Flemish by the Taaltelefoon service (W20).

With its headquarters in the Netherlands, The Society of Our Language is involved in linguistic popularization. Anyone can join it who is interested in Dutch. The language consulting service of the society has replied to inquiries about linguistic matters since 1985 (W21). The language consulting service (available by phone and in writing) is used not only by individuals but also by various institutions and firms. The service responds to around 3000 phone-based inquiries every year. Consulting by email is free of charge for members of the society. Linguistic suggestions posted on the website are authored by employees engaged in language consulting. These employees also maintain the website Spellingsite.nu (W22), which was created in cooperation with the publishing house Prisma. The website supplies the correct spelling of around 100.000 words, abbreviations and proper names, and also gives access to all orthographical rules.

Beyond all this, language consultants give trainings for the workers of various firms and companies, and publish the journal *Our Language (Onze Taal)* ten times every year. The journal discusses questions of language use in accessible style, touching on such topics as writing in an easy-to-read manner, giving presentations, language and the computer, argumentation, dictionaries, new words, etymology, orthography, the language of youth, etc. (W23). Besides editors, trainers and administrative staff, five language consultants also work at the institution (W24).

Language consulting by phone is available on weekdays between 9.30am and 12am and between 1.30pm and 4pm (25 hours/week). Inquiries can also be made in writing, via Twitter, Facebook and (through a form on the website) by email. Consultants reply within five working days (W25).

In Belgium, a governmental authority is in charge of language consulting. The Flemish government's official language consulting service is the Brussels-based *Taaltelefoon* (literally, linguistic telephone). The service was created in 1998, and beyond language consulting, it is also involved in linguistic popularization (through its website and various information campaigns). The service is used not only by citizens but also by the Flemish government; in particular, various government decrees receive linguistic proofreading by the consulting service (W26). The website also includes a thematic search engine allowing users to read about various issues

of spelling, word choice, style and grammar; moreover, Flemish spelling rules and several spelling tests can also be found on the website (W27).

Contrary to what its name might suggest, Taaltelefoon receives inquiries not only by phone but also in writing. The phone service can be called on weekdays between 9 and 12am (15 hours/week). Incoming calls outside working hours are also recorded and the clients are called back (W28).

3.7 Germany

As one of the oldest languages of civilized Europe, German has an old tradition language management (in the German-speaking world, the terms *Sprachkultur* 'language culture' and *Sprachpflege* 'language cultivation' are in currency). This multi-faceted tradition is presented in German by Greule–Ahlers–Liebel (1986) and Bickes–Trabold (1994); for a concise overview in Hungarian, see Földes (2008).

Research on, and documentation of, present-day German is undertaken by The Leibniz Institute for the German Language (Das Leibniz-Institut für Deutsche Sprache) (W29), which provides open access to a variety of databases, corpora. Although it is not engaged in language consulting, hyperlinks on its website point to the German language consulting bureaus which are currently active (W30).

While language management as such is not funded by the state in Germany, some institutions working in this area are almost exclusively financed from the state budget (Földes 2008, 198).

One of the key institutions of organized language management is Society for the German Language (Gesellschaft für deutsche Sprache, GfdS) based in Wiesbaden, whose focal activity is language consulting. On the institution's website (W31), previously asked questions and associated responses can be found, organized into categories such as abbreviations, pronunciation, anglicisms, one-word vs. two-word spelling, etc.

Language consulting is available for both individuals and various firms, authorities and institutions. The service mostly welcomes inquiries about grammar and orthography, the origin and meaning of words, and text style.

Phone-based consulting is offered for free for members of the Society for the German Language, for ministries and for foreigners (8.30 to 12.30 and 2pm to 3.30pm from Monday to Thursday, 8.30 to 12.30 on Friday; 26 hours/week). Those who are not members of the Society may call the toll telephone number.

Advice can also be requested in writing; this involves not only language consulting but also the proofreading of texts. These services must be paid for; however, discounts and exemptions apply to members of the Society (W31).

The institution also supplies onomastic consulting, which again is a service subject to charges (W32).

The Society publishes the quarterly *Muttersprache*, which was founded in 1890.

Besides the GfdS, several other language consulting bureaus also operate or used to operate in Germany (for details, see Lehr 1998; Riegel 2007, 38–41). One service worth mentioning here is the website Grammatikfragen.de (W33) launched in 2011, which specializes in answering grammatical questions. The website's cre-

ator is Mathilde Hennig, and in 2014 she was joined by Dennis Koch. Since questions and answers posted on the website's forums are permanently accessible, the website also serves as a database. In a survey conducted in 2015, 610 questions were analysed by the SPSS software (Hennig–Koch 2016). The highest proportion of questions (32.5%) are about syntax (e.g. the complements of prepositions, subject–verb agreement). Linguistic problems associated with various word classes (e.g. pronouns and articles) account for 16.7% of questions. Issues which are not strictly speaking grammatical (14.6%) mostly concern spelling. Finally, the category of meta-language (13.3%) subsumes such issues as sentence analysis and terminology. According to the information found on Grammatikfragen.de, the language consulting service stopped operating after 9 years, owing to the high number of inquiries. However, previous questions and answers are still available.

Additional currently active German language consulting services include the following: Linguistic Consulting Service of Duden (W34), German Language Association (Verein Deutsche Sprache, VDS) (W35), Linguistic Consulting Service of the University of Siegen (W36).

3.8 Czech Republic

The history and situation of language cultivation in the Czech Republic are presented here in detail on the basis of Nekvapil (2008, 253–255), Lanstyák (2014, 21–22) and Tölgyesi (2008). In the Czech Republic, language cultivation is not only highly prestigious among the general public but it is also an acknowledged and well-researched area of linguistics. Modern Czech language management was first initiated by the Prague School, especially Bohuslav Havránek, Vilém Mathesius and Roman Jakobson. In the 1930s, they reformed what had previously been a highly purist form of language cultivation, and regarded intervention into linguistic processes as a scientifically justifiable and socially useful activity. The Prague School focussed on present-day standard Czech, and held that its cultivation (by which they primarily meant corpus design) should be based on the precise description of the standard language variety. They considered the goal of language cultivation to be two-fold. Firstly, it should support the stability of the standard language variety. Secondly, it should facilitate its functional differentiation and stylistic enrichment (Havránek 1932, quoted by Nekvapil 2008, 253–254). Notably, by stability they meant flexible stability, and by no means an effort at preventing language change.

The situation of the Czech Republic is in many ways similar to what we find in Hungary. The key body of language consulting, the Language Consulting Centre (Jazyková poradna) belongs to the Czech Academy of Sciences, just as up until 2019 a Hungarian language consulting service operated under the realm of the Research Institute for Linguistics of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences.¹ (For more about the situation in Hungary, see Section 3.9.) The Institute of the Czech Language of the Czech Academy of Sciences studies the state and evolution of the Czech language from the Middle Ages up to the present. Research activities

¹ Due to an organizational overhaul, since 1 September 2019 the Research Institute for Linguistics no longer belongs to the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, rather it is subsumed by the Loránd Eötvös Research Network. Its new official English name is Hungarian Research Institute for Linguistics.

extend to both written and spoken, standard and non-standard language varieties. The institute has designated departments for the following domains of linguistics: dialectology, etymology, descriptive grammar, onomastics, lexicography, sociolinguistics, historical linguistics and language cultivation. The department of language cultivation numbers 12 staff members at present. Their main task is to conduct scientific research, which is closely intertwined with practical language consulting. Members of the department cooperate with the Czech radio and television as well as daily newspapers and magazines, also giving lectures of linguistic popularization about Czech. On top of this, they operate the Language Consulting Centre (LCC), which has served language users since 1946 (W37).

Language consulting is exclusively carried out by phone, for 4 hours on every weekday (10 to 12am and 1 to 3pm) (20 hours/week). The consultant in charge receives phonecalls in a separate room equipped with a library and a computer. The computer provides access to various linguistic databases. The consultants reply to 70 inquires per day on average (Beneš et al. 2018, 120). From 1999 to 2011, consulting by email was also available (Černá 2017, 268).

In their paper, Beneš and his colleagues (2018, 120–121) listed the following as the most frequent question types:

16. New loanwords not (yet) codified.
17. Alternative forms of domestic language items not codified.
18. The (non-)existence of a word or a word form.
19. Wording enquiries – formal aspect.
20. Wording enquiries – semantic aspect.

An online language guide consisting of received and answered questions was created in 2009 (Internetová jazyková příručka). It comprises a dictionary (60.000 entries) and a collection of detailed explanations for linguistic phenomena frequently brought up by inquirers. In the database, searches can be carried out in a range of topics including orthography (one-word vs. two-word spelling, interpunctuation, normal vs. capital letters), derivational and inflectional morphology; the inflection of various types of proper name (personal names, geographical names, names of institutions), sentence structure, abbreviations, numbers, etc. (W38).

Since language consulting in the Czech Republic is anchored to research institute within the Czech Academy, practical language consulting is closely intertwined with research activities. For example, Woldt (2010) investigates how linguistic awareness and knowledge of language express themselves on the part of everyday language users and experts in the official language advice of the LCC.

In linguistic research, language consulting is interpreted as a dialogue between linguists and the broader public, in which both parties have important (albeit different) roles. Language users pose questions, linguists are offering official linguistic advice or recommendations, which the inquirers then (mostly) follow. At the same time, the linguists themselves also gain information in this process: the inquiries supply valuable sociolinguistic data about language use and the speakers themselves, including their linguistic attitudes. One advantage inherent in such data is that in contrast with those produced by questionnaire studies, they can be consid-

ered as spontaneous data, as it is the speakers rather than the linguists who initiate dialogue. At the same time, language consulting as a source of information is not without limitations, as information is received only from speakers who turn to the LCC with their problems. It cannot be guaranteed, however, that they represent the entire speech community (Uhlířová 1997, 83).

Employees of the LCC maintain an extensive database that contains inquiries of previous years. Ever since the beginning of the 1990's, questions and answers are archived in a digital form. The database was created in 1992 and by the end of 1996 it contained 1400 records, including all letters and faxes received from 1992, and also transcriptions of selected phonecalls and personal consultations. Besides specifying technical and bibliographical data (the dates of the question and the answer, the name and address of the inquirer, the name of the respondent), records of the database also include sociological data (the inquirer's profession), the linguistic problem (described by keywords) and its solution, and sometimes also the pragmatic context of the linguistic problem (motivations, attitudes, criticism, emotions) (Uhlířová 1997, 83–84).

Since 2016, all incoming phonecalls have been recorded, and the recorded data are continuously being processed. The goal is to create a linguistic structure that facilitates the categorization and description of recorded phone-based inquiries. The linguistic part of the linguistically structured database is maintained by members of the department of language cultivation, whereas the IT part is handled by employees of the Faculty of Applied Sciences at the University of West Bohemia in Pilsen. From 2016 to 2018, more than 8000 phonecalls were included in the database. The audio recordings are transcribed by a software developed by the IT staff (Zajíc et al. 2019), and are annotated by various keywords (Černá 2017). The corpus so created can be subjected to various kinds of linguistic investigations. For example, Dufek (2020) deals with the ways of conceptualizing language and phenomena related to it in phonecall dialogues between enquirers and linguists within the Czech language consulting service.

3.9 Hungary

In Hungary, two institutions are currently involved in language consulting.

In the Institute for Linguistics of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, a language consulting service has been in place since the very foundation of the Institute (1949). Firstly the service was offered on demand, then, since 1957, it has been working on a continuous basis. The service plays a key role in linguistic popularization, in L1 education (broadly conceived). At present 4 persons are in charge of language consulting. Consulting is mainly given via email; letters are answered continuously. Also popular is the phone service that provides instant assistance. It is available from 10am to 2pm on Tuesdays and Thursdays (8 hours/week). In 2013, the language consulting service was supplemented by the Institute's online portal offering guidance in spelling, helyesiras.mta.hu. A paid service of the Institute is the issuing of linguistic experts' reports, which concerns the interpretation of complex legal texts.

In the past decades, employees of the Institute have continuously recorded and archived phone-based inquiries in the form of so-called public service diaries. The most frequent linguistic questions and consultants' answers about present-day Hungarian can be found on the Institute's website (W39). Additionally, a database of questions and answers from the past few years can be accessed via the "Archive" menu of the portal helyesira.mta.hu; here, keyword search and full-text search are both available (W40). Language consulting in the Institute is closely intertwined with research on present-day Hungarian norms of language use and spelling, and also on myths, attitudes and ideologies. Staff members of the language consulting service have published several papers about these topics, also in the past decade (in Hungarian, see e.g. Kardos 2007; Heltainé Nagy 2014; in English, Ludányi 2019).

The other important Hungarian institution for organized language management is the Hungarian Linguistic Service Bureau, founded in 2006 (Magyar Nyelvi Szolgáltató Iroda, MANYSZI). The bureau offers a variety of language-related services: expert's reports, text interpretation, proofreading, text editing, improving the accessibility of public texts, speech writing, translation and the proofreading of translated texts, linguistic and communicative trainings (W41). One of the most popular services of the bureau is linguistic express service. Questions can be submitted through a form on the bureau's website, and consultants reply within 24 hours (W42). Consultants (at present 9 people) perform their duties on a voluntary basis, without salary, and they replace each other every two weeks (W43). Replies given so far can be accessed by anyone in the form of online lexical entries, with the database currently including 20.000 such entries (W44). The journal *Édes Anyanyelvünk*, a periodical for language cultivation and linguistic popularization, regularly publishes a selection of questions and answers; moreover, scholarly publications are also occasionally produced in this topic (for a recent example, see Minya 2019).

Beyond the borders of Hungary, there are also several Hungarian language offices (in Romania, Slovakia, Ukraine, Austria, Serbia and Croatia), which are coordinated by the Termini Hungarian Linguistic Research Network (Cserniczkó et al. 2005; Péntek 2008). However, these are only engaged in language consulting on an irregular basis. Deserving special mention is the Gramma Language Office in Slovakia, which operated as an independent institution in Dunaszerdahely (Dunajská Streda) from 2001 to 2015. In 2006, it hosted the Language Management Workshop (Sherman 2007). From 2002, Gramma Language Office also offered language consulting, with linguists from Bratislava and Nitra working as consultants. From 2002, consulting by phone was also offered but from 2010, only email correspondence was available. At present, the institution forms part of the Forum Minority Research Institute in Šamorín (W45).

4 Summary

In the European countries reviewed in this paper, several kinds of institution are engaged in language consulting: governmental offices (Sweden, Norway, Denmark, Finland, Estonia, Belgium), academic research institutes (Czech Republic, Hungary), language bureaus (Netherlands, Germany, Hungary). The situation of language consulting services lends support to Nekvapil's (2008, 260) observation: in Europe, the codification of standard language varieties is becoming increasingly de-centralized. To adopt Garvin's (1993, 17–19) terminology, it seems to be moving away from an academy-governed style of codification toward a freeenterprise style of codification.

Although language consulting services vary in their styles of codification from one country to the other, they also display a number of similarities. In most cases, linguistic advice can be requested via multiple channels, both in writing (email) and by the phone. Personal consulting is typically not available. It seems to constitute an exception when a consulting service only uses a single channel for communication, such as the Language Consulting Centre in the Czech Republic (which only has a phone service) and the Language Council in Norway (which prefers consulting by email). Language consulting is typically free of charge, although in some cases, for example at non-governmental organizations (such as the German GfdS), it can also be a paid service. The preparation of expert's reports, aimed at the resolution of more complex linguistic problems, is a paid service in several countries (Finland, Germany, Hungary). It is characteristic of all language consulting services reviewed here that they make previously posed questions and their answers available in some sort of database, mostly on an open access basis, and with annotation by keywords. Databases mostly serve to offer guidance to language users, generally without research purposes. However, some database descriptions do suggest that this type of use is also possible (this is the case, for example, with databases of the Danish Language Council, the Institute of the Estonian Language and the Hungarian website e-nyelv.hu). The Czech Republic stands out in this regard. Here, language consulting is academy-based, and besides a database giving assistance to language users, there exists a language consultants' corpus as well that includes transcriptions of spoken language data, and is specifically designed to serve research purposes. The creation of such a corpus would be useful in a Hungarian context too, as it would be an invaluable resource for mapping the linguistic problems of the Hungarian speech community.

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