

LINEE News

5th Issue – October 2009

Editorial

It was a strange sort of coincidence: the day when Thomas, our communication officer, asked me to write this editorial, I learned that Patrick Stevenson (Southampton) had been awarded the renowned Jacob- and Wilhelm-Grimm award of the German academic exchange service (DAAD). We all feel very happy for Patrick and we congratulate him: this will be a source of motivation for everybody who works in LINEE.

At the end of this third year of LINEE, most members are busy writing reports and papers about the outcomes of their research. There will be answers to many questions on multilingualism in Europe, but, of course, many more will be raised. For the immediate future, researchers have made plans for new research projects that build on LINEE's work during the past few years. Proposals for such research projects (answering the call for the new Work Package WP0a) will be evaluated during the next weeks and then put into practice during the next year.

A second important evaluation task during the next weeks is the one for the abstracts submitted for the LINEE Final

Conference in Dubrovnik on 11 to 15 April 2010. A lot of abstracts both from within and from outside LINEE have been submitted and will be thoroughly assessed. Dubrovnik will be the culminating point of LINEE's work in the last years.

It's a very intense phase for everybody in LINEE: research results need to be summed up and disseminated, new research projects are emerging and the Final Conference entails a lot of exchange with other researchers, policy makers and other stakeholders. But do not forget our next (and, alas, last) Research and Training Workshop to be held in November at our partner university in Szeged: I am sure that we all will have engaging discussions which will spark good ideas for the future of LINEE in particular and research on multilingualism in general.

This newsletter contains a small portion of such research. In this issue, we present the outcomes of LINEE's research in the field of language and economy. During the next weeks, they will be complemented by new results, which will then be presented in the next issue.

Prof. Dr Iwar Werlen, Project Coordinator

Results

European courts do not allow prescriptions on language use (on product labels or in connection with job qualifications, for example) unless they see a good reason for it. **pages 4–5**

Some low-level jobs need no sophisticated language skills, and therefore migrants doing these jobs have difficulties with improving their language competence and lack the motivation to do so. **pages 6–7**

Multilingual companies value English as a widespread language, but they also value local languages, especially if their customers use them. **pages 8–9**

Ongoing Research

Some questions of ongoing research include: How do parent companies and their subsidiaries in other countries communicate with each other? What are the language related problems of Vietnamese migrants in the Czech Republic and of Subsaharan African migrants in Germany? How do migrants participate and integrate in the economy and society?

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What LINEE Is

LINEE is a scientific network, consisting of 9 universities in 9 countries and around 80 researchers (see bottom of this page). Together, they do research in four fields: “Language, Identity and Culture”, “Language Policy and Planning”, “Multilingualism and Education” and “Language and Economy”.

In each of these fields, research projects address the European, national and regional level. Simultaneously, an overarching research platform collects theories, methods and approaches of all these research projects and aims to find common topics, differences, similarities, concepts etc.

What LINEE Does

LINEE researchers analyse various texts (e.g. speeches of European policy makers, official documents, laws, photos, brochures), they conduct and analyse interviews and surveys in order to find answers to questions in four thematic areas (every thematic area contains research projects on European, national and regional level):

Language, Identity and Culture

Researchers in this area investigate how (or whether) language, identity and culture depend on each other, how important they are and what problems and opportunities arise of their relations. The questions are, for example: How important is your language for defining who you are? What are the central attributes for a nation’s identity: the culture, the language, or something else? Is a culture without a unique language actually a culture? Does a common, international language threaten cultural diversity?

LINEE is co-funded for four years by the European Commission (under the 6th Framework Programme). The purpose of LINEE is twofold: firstly, the research done within LINEE is supposed to be more multifaceted, interdisciplinary and comparable than it would be if the partners worked alone. Secondly, LINEE is supposed to become a persistent network of researchers and universities that continue to collaborate even after funding from the European Commission has ended.

LINEE has started in November 2006 and will end (at least within the framework of the European Commission) in November 2010.

Language Policy and Planning

Researchers in this thematic area investigate policies on language, their effects, adequacy and their perceptions by citizens.

Multilingualism and Education

Researchers in this area investigate, for example, how pupils, students and adults learn (or fail to learn) languages, how they behave in multilingual contexts, what the goals of different school systems are and how they achieve or fail to achieve their goals.

Language and Economy

Researchers in this thematic area investigate, for example, what the goals of immigrants or employees of multinational enterprises are, how they achieve their goals, which problems they encounter, how they solve them or how valuable multilingualism is on the job market.

► www.linee.info/researchstructure.htm

Who LINEE Is

Nine European universities in nine countries form the LINEE network, coordinated by the University of Bern:

- Adam Mickiewicz University, Poznan (Poland)
- Charles University Prague (Czech Republic)
- Free University of Bozen (Italy)
- Institute for Anthropological Research,

Zagreb (Croatia)

- University of Applied Languages, Munich (Germany)
- University of Bern (Switzerland)
- University of Southampton (England)
- University of Szeged (Hungary)
- University of Vienna (Austria)

► www.linee.info/partners.htm

Award for LINEE Researcher

Patrick Stevenson, professor at the University of Southampton and member of LINEE, has received the distinguished Jacob- und Wilhelm-Grimm-Preis 2009 by the German Academic Exchange Service (Deutscher Akademischer Austausch Dienst: DAAD). Patrick Stevenson’s research of the German language is considered the most outstanding and multi-faceted outside of Germany. The DAAD furthermore highly estimates his efforts to integrate and connect German linguistics in international sociolinguistics and linguistics in general.

LINEE congratulates Patrick Stevenson on his achievement and award.

New Corresponding Member

Prof. Erika Werlen (Bergische Universität Wuppertal, BUW) is the first “corresponding member” of LINEE. She contributes to research in the area of “Language and Economy”. In addition to Erika Werlen, the following researchers have been offered the status of corresponding members:

- Elena Ioannidou (University of Cyprus) and
- Werner Wiater (Universität Augsburg).

LINEE Training

Doctoral students gathered during a LINEE Training Institute in Prague and received inputs from renowned experts: Richard Baldauf, Miroslav Hroch, Aneta Pavlenko, Ingrid Piller, Leoš Šatava and Glyn Williams. Their talks and other activities are summarized in a report available at:

► www.linee.info/ti.htm

Summary of Research Results:

Thematic Area “Language and Economy”

How Language and Economy Influence Each Other

One LINEE study indicates that Vietnamese immigrants in the Czech Republic and African immigrants in Germany can neither exploit nor improve their multilingualism at work. A second study shows that multinational companies value English as a widespread language, but they also value local languages, especially if their customers use them. A third study shows that European courts do not allow prescriptions on language use (on product labels, for example) unless they see a good reason for it.

For the study “Multilingualism amongst minority populations: a case of trans-cultural capital or social exclusion”, researchers observed and interviewed Vietnamese migrants in the Czech Republic and African immigrants in Germany, concentrating on how their language competence influenced their economic situation and vice versa.

Learning the language “on the job”

Both Vietnamese and African immigrants apparently often have jobs which do not need a sophisticated knowledge of the host country’s language. This prevents them from learning their host country’s language “on the job” and also curbs their motivation to do so.

Neither the African nor the Vietnamese immigrants could turn their multilingualism into an economic asset, but their mother tongues remained important for relationships with their families and friends.

Members of the Vietnamese community also built many business networks not only with their relations in Vietnam but also across the Vietnamese communities in Czech Republic and the Vietnamese diaspora, especially in Germany, France and the USA.

English as “neutral” language

Another LINEE study indicates that multinational companies in Central Europe which are not branches of American or British companies but which use English as a corporate language do this partly because English is widespread among employees, but also because they value English as a language that is relatively free from national identities: while Czech is connected with the Czech Republic and German with Germany, English is relatively neutral.

However, local languages remain important in multinational companies:

On the one hand, it is the customers who influence the language in which the employees of a company communicate with them. On the other hand, local languages are used in situations where people with the same mother tongue communicate.

Language or market protection?

Another LINEE study investigated court cases in which one party felt that language requirements (for product labels or employment) were unjustified.

When it came to product labelling, the courts decided that the use of an official national language could not be imposed. The language on the labels just had to be comprehensible for the consumers in the respective region. They also ruled that language requirements for employment were only legal if they were proportionate and free of discriminatory effects.

Projects of “Language and Economy”

Six research projects are grouped under the title “Thematic Area D: Language and Economy”. They investigate, for example, what the goals of immigrants or employees of multinational enterprises are, how they achieve their goals, which problems they encounter, how they solve them or how valuable multilingualism is on the job market.

They address this area on three levels: European, national and local level. Three research projects of Thematic Area D are finished, three new ones will soon publish their results.

The “new” and “old” projects are presented on the following pages. The next Newsletter will present the results of newly finished research in all Thematic Areas (see page 2).

For Details See

Labour markets, the Knowledge Economy, language and mobility in Europe **4–5**

Multilingualism amongst minority populations: a case of trans-cultural capital or social exclusion **6–7**

Linguistic diversity in large multinational companies and their regional allocation **8–9**

Research Report on Language and Economy:

► www.linee.info/downloads

Results: Thematic Area “Language and Economy”
European Level

Between Protection of the Market, Consumer and Language

LINEE researchers looked into language related problems that eventually lead to lawsuits before a European court. They concentrated on cases where one party suspected certain language requirements to be a pretext to protect national markets.

Basically, employers are free to define whatever language requirements they deem adequate for their employees; however, European and national laws aim to prevent them from defining language requirements as a mere pretext to exclude a group of people from the labour market and therefore inhibiting the free movement of labour and know-how within the EU. Furthermore, there are laws preventing countries, for example, from establishing regulations about the language(s) of product labels as a mere pretext to “protect” the country’s market from foreign products.

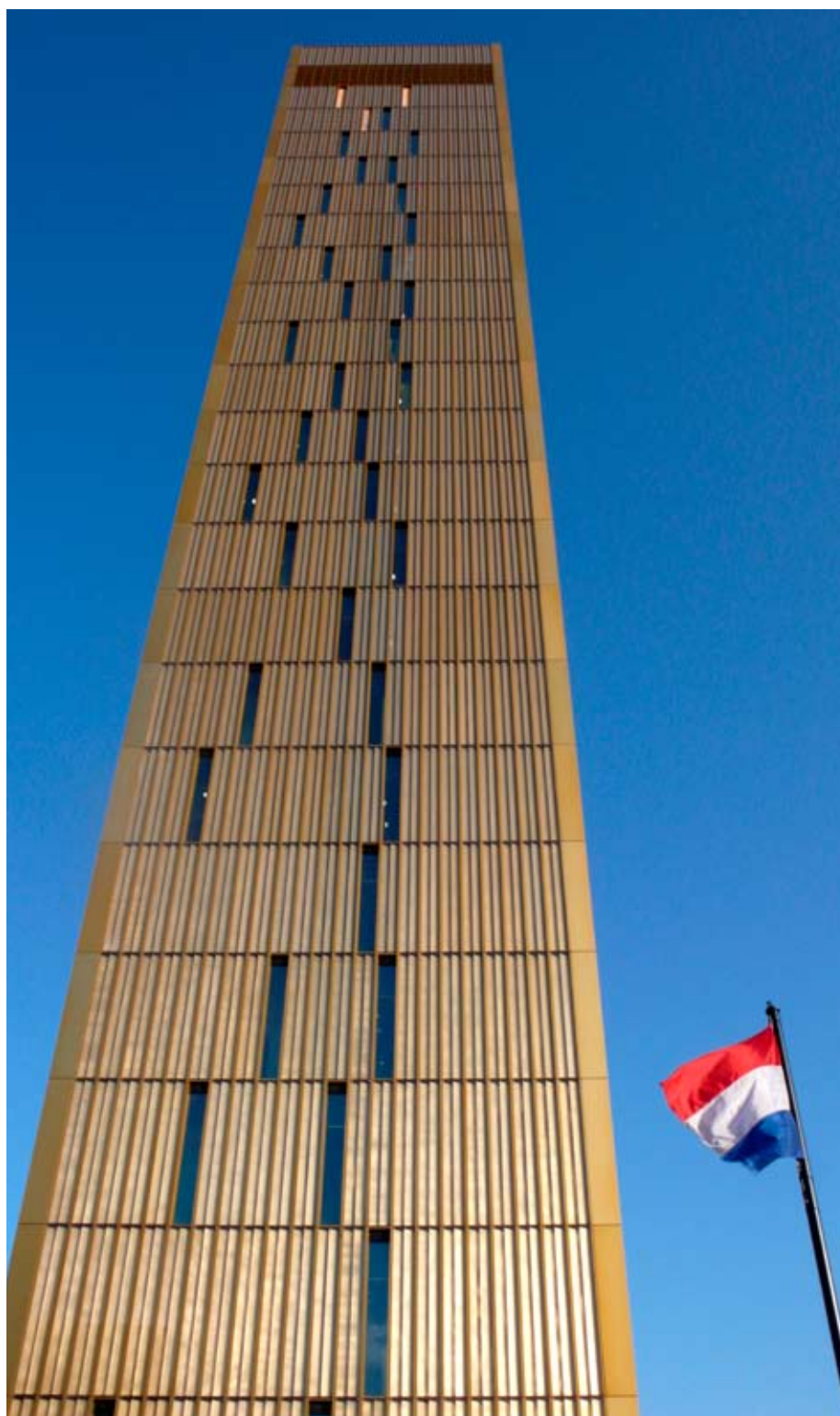
It is comprehensibility that counts

The LINEE study “Labour markets, the Knowledge Economy, language and mobility in Europe” scrutinized court cases concerning the violation of such laws. In two cases, the European Court of Justice (ECJ) decided that labels of food do not need to be in any official language of a region, they only have to be intelligible. The label “Pasta sauce with olives and capers”, for example, is very intelligible for German speaking people. Therefore, consumers in Germany are sufficiently informed by such a label, which means that such labelling is legal.

In other cases, the ECJ confirmed that making a specific language, nationality or language diploma a precondition to get an employment is only legal if these requirements do not have discriminatory effects. Whether something has such effects or not, however, is not always easy to decide.

It is the member states who implement policies

The selected cases illustrated a major problem of language policies in the EU:



One building of the European Court of Justice: However impressive the building is, the actual implementation of laws and the resulting impact remains on the national level.

The European law partly constrains national language policy and law, but, at the same time, the active creation and implementation of the language policy is beyond the competence of the European Union. This severely limits the impact of the laws and judgements of the European Court of Justice on the language policies of the EU.

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Researcher involved:
Vít Dovalil (WP leader), Mar-
ián Sloboda, Peter Weber

Study Outline

The researchers conducting the study "Labour markets, the Knowledge Economy, language and mobility in Europe" analysed the decisions of EU institutions on selected cases (primarily the European Court of Justice [ECJ]), the corresponding suits,

analyses of the general advocates, textbooks and texts of legal norms.

Court cases present an opportunity to investigate language problems concerning linguistic diversity and the way in which these problems are managed.

Labor market, the knowledge economy, language and mobility in Europe

some remarks ex post

The research showed that the approaches promoting the language diversity which would primarily draw upon the supply could not be successful. Language courses for improving the competence may be offered but they will not pay off in the end if the real demand for other languages than English fails.

To some extent, the demand for foreign languages could be influenced by the European language policy if it created more opportunities to use the languages in as many communicative domains as possible.

The media play a crucial role in the language policy. Thus, the receptive multilingualism could be further promoted. Let us learn/teach our neighbour's language/s: neighbours should be able to make themselves understood in their own respective languages. However, what else would

have to happen so that most EU-citizens would really like to learn more foreign languages than English?

Discrimination in the labour market of the member states by abusing the language as a pretext should not happen. The language policy promoting foreign language/s would not be trustworthy if foreigners were not allowed to work in a member state primarily for economic reasons that would be, however, veiled by any language reasons. (The language skills needed for specific professions are not concerned here.) Thus, the general principles of the European integration (e.g. the free movement of the employees/employers) and their real implementation should be deepened.

It can be pointed out in this context that e.g. on the one hand, Germany and Austria are believed to support the spread of German in the new

member states (by means of various cultural activities), but on the other hand these countries inhibit the demand for German in that they are not willing to stop discriminating the citizens of the new member states and to open the Austrian and German labour market. Related to the position of German in Central Europe, such adjustment strategies seem to fight against one another.

The foreign language acquisition is conditioned by successful communicative management, i.e. the establishment of social networks that create the opportunities to use the foreign language/s as mentioned above. This, in turn, is conditioned by successful socio-economic management (providing jobs which could lead to the establishment of networks among the users of the languages).

Vít Dovalil, Charles University, Prague

Results: Thematic Area “Language and Economy”
National Level

Language Competence of Immigrants: Neither Appreciated Nor Advanced

It is a common belief that people with lacking language skills risk getting low-level jobs. However, LINEE researchers showed that the relation works the other way round, too: some low-level jobs need no sophisticated language skills, and therefore migrants doing these jobs have difficulties with improving their language competence and lack the motivation to do so.

LINEE researchers investigated two groups of migrants: Vietnamese immigrants in the Czech Republic and African immigrants in Germany. The two groups have a very different status in their host countries. On the one hand, the Vietnamese in the Czech Republic are an established community with a relatively secure residency status. Some of these immigrants started with little businesses in the Czech Republic, became rich and then formed larger companies, providing business opportunities, language services and jobs for many more compatriots. On the other hand, the sample of franco-phone African immigrants in Germany suffered from isolation and insecurity of residency as part of their refugee status.

African immigrants frustrated with lack of job opportunities

Among the immigrants whom the researchers interviewed, there are highly educated Africans who landed in low-level jobs because their diplomas were not recognised in Germany. Most of them felt frustrated in their search for adequate jobs in Germany and thought of leaving or have already left for other European or overseas countries.

Low-level jobs do not need the immigrants to have much language competence in German and the salaries are not sufficient to pay language courses. Consequently, their knowledge of German remains limited. Many spoke other languages beside their mother-tongue, French in particular, but this language competence was not rewarded in the jobs they were doing either.

The first generation of immigrants



Working on an assembly line: Such work does neither enable nor encourage immigrants to learn the language of their host country.

mostly retained their African mother tongue because the relationships with their families “at home” or in other

countries remained important. The second generation also had a good understanding of the African fam-

ily language; however, in their active communication with their parents this language was increasingly mixed with German, and they preferred to speak German among themselves. The second generation's French competence was mostly passive, but activated during holiday visits to relations in France and Belgium.

Vietnamese risk losing their mother tongue

The first generation of Vietnamese immigrants in the Czech Republic invested everything they could into the education of their children at Czech schools, which includes knowledge of Czech and foreign languages taught within the Czech school curricula (English first, German second).

However, in most cases, there were no possibilities for formal education in Vietnamese and many parents were too busy to teach or to even communicate with their children. Therefore, a part of the second generation runs the risk of losing Vietnamese language competence. In fact, some parents can't even properly communicate with their children because they can't speak Czech and the children's spoken Vietnamese is rather limited, not to mention their inability to read and write in Vietnamese.

The first generation of Vietnamese immigrants mostly started as petty

Study Outline

For the study "Multilingualism amongst minority populations: a case of trans-cultural capital or social exclusion", researchers concentrated on Vietnamese immigrants in the Czech Republic and Francophone African immigrants in Germany.

They have interviewed the first generation of Francophone African immigrants in Germany and their children aged 12 to 17 years. In addition, data were obtained from documents collected during fieldwork such as materials from various African and Afro-German associations, and from desk research (relevant articles in German newspapers, refugee-focused magazines, African-edited

magazines). Researchers also analysed memory protocols of informal conversations and a fieldwork diary kept from May 2007 to April 2008.

For the Vietnamese immigrants in the Czech Republic, researchers analysed a fieldwork diary kept from November 2006 to April 2008, they interviewed second generation Vietnamese students at Czech high schools as well as several first generation Vietnamese shopkeepers. Statistical data about Vietnamese students, and data from documents such as relevant magazine articles in Czech press and Vietnamese magazines and on-line resources published in Czech Republic were also collected and analysed.

business people selling garments and cheap goods to Czech people at the lower end of the market and to German and Austrian shoppers in the border regions. Similarly to the African immigrants in Germany, their job did not offer many opportunities and inducement for language acquisition and use, and the learning of languages as well as the costs for it were left to the individual initiative. In contrast to the Africans in Germany, however, their

limited language knowledge did not prevent them from being economically successful. This is due to several factors, mainly the history of the Vietnamese community (see blue box below).

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History of the Vietnamese Community In the Czech Republic

Several factors contributed to the economic success of the Vietnamese in the Czech republic: when the Vietnamese community gradually developed after the political revolution of November 1989, it was deeply rooted in the thousands of educated Vietnamese students who graduated at Czech universities, postgraduate courses and vocational schools in the 1960 through 1980, many of whom had sufficient working knowledge of Czech and many contacts in Czech society

at the grass root level throughout the country. They also had numerous contacts to their families who were doing private business in Vietnam and to many enterprises in Vietnam interested in exporting goods.

The Czech authorities continually issued private business licences and reunited families, which resulted in a rapidly growing Vietnamese community (9000 persons in the early 1990s; 45000 by 2006), becoming the 3rd largest immigration group in the Czech

Republic. With several thousands students at Czech schools throughout the Czech Republic, the Vietnamese are the No. 1 immigrant student population at Czech schools, often achieving high performance marks.

The education of Vietnamese at Czech schools is being considered a unique window of opportunity for social advancement of Vietnamese immigrants in the Czech republic and for their more positive recognition by the Czech society.

Results: Thematic Area “Language and Economy”
Regional Level

Why Multinational Companies Prefer English (But Not English Only)

Multinational companies in Central Europe are inevitably faced with multilingualism. LINEE researchers have looked into 9 such companies with branches in the Czech Republic or Hungary in order to find out what role certain languages play within the company, what language problems arise and how they are managed.

Several of the investigated companies have established an official corporate language: English. However, employees only have to be able to speak English in given situations like management meetings. Local languages and the dominant language of the company's head office remain important.

English as a “neutral” language

The motivation for using English is not only to ensure communication between collaborators with different mother tongues. For example, Eng-

lish can serve as a “neutral” language: while German, Hungarian and Czech symbolize national identities, English is used as a means of communication that is not so closely linked with nations and identity, thus aiming to contribute to the creation of transnational identities.

Of course, this holds in companies which are not branches of American or British companies, that is, particularly in multinationals with headquarters in Germany.

However, English is not a perfectly “neutral” language even in these com-

panies: English is not equally easy to learn, for example, for Czechs as it is for Germans, and education in English is not equally well established in all countries.

Speak English to avoid chat

In one company, English was used in meetings even if nearly all participants were native speakers of Czech. The interviewees gave one main reason for this: according to them, employees are less likely to chat and waste time when speaking a foreign language (English). The top management hypothesized



English is considered useful for meetings of a multilingual staff.

that they would "use less words" than in Czech, and that they would have to get to the point and stick to it.

Customers influence language policy

What languages are used in a company in which situations depends also on the customers. One of the investigated companies has many customers who prefer speaking German, and it consequently offers German language courses.

Companies also consider the language knowledge of actual and potential employees when defining a corporate language. In a German company, for example, the use of Czech was

not even considered, as Czech is not widely taught in Germany and Austria. Consequently, expatriates sent from those countries know little or no Czech or Hungarian prior to their arrival at the subsidiary (with a few exceptions). Furthermore, they do not intend to remain in the Czech Republic or Hungary for more than a few years (also with some exceptions). Their economic or other motivation for learning the local language is thus quite low.

However, a few of these employees visited the local language courses offered by the company because they considered it to be polite to be able to use a few basic phrases in the language of the subsidiary's local employees.

Study Outline

The researchers conducting the study "Linguistic diversity in large multinational companies and their regional allocation" investigated language use and language management of 9 multinational companies with branches in the Czech Republic or Hungary.

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Researchers involved:
Tamah Sherman (WP leader), Erzsébet Balogh, Oliver Engelhardt, Maria Kagush-eva, Jiří Nekvapil, Ágnes Tápai-Balla

Multilingualism in Companies: Good, but How?

The research within the project "Linguistic diversity in large multinational companies and their regional allocation" (WP12) focused on the relationships between multinational companies and the knowledge-based economy. During the first months of fieldwork, it was confirmed that companies are indeed the sites of many types of multilingual encounters, with contexts extending far beyond the traditional areas of language policy. While policy may cover issues such as official corporate languages, translation and languages used for reporting, WP12 research revealed the often functionally-differentiated use of multiple languages (e.g. Czech, German and English) over the course of encounters such as telephone conversations and meetings. Given this, the next step (which has extended into WP12's successor

project, WP10a [see page 10]) is to show just how this multilingual reality can have positive effects. For this task, the team members have sought to check the following ideas formulated by Glyn Williams.

"The generation of knowledge is maximised within contexts of linguistic diversity. This is because of how communities of practice rely heavily upon shared meaning. The negotiation of meaning within bi- or multilingual contexts leads to a form of reflexive learning wherein meaning is negotiated. Negotiating meaning in languages which are not the mother tongue requires a much greater degree of reflexivity than is found by reference to negotiating meaning in the mother tongue."

Methodologically, LINEE researchers changed the epistemological status of Williams' formulation from fact

to hypothesis and have been using it as a basis for interview questions. One particular area for its testing is departments of Research and Development (R&D) in the companies. R&D employees are most commonly made up of international teams, including individuals who originate neither in the country of the parent company or in that of the research site, e.g. a Mexican working in a German company in the Czech Republic. R&D employees reported using each language based on the need at any given moment. One minute, an R&D employee may be using Spanish, another minute English or Czech. So it seems that one might encourage multilingualism in such settings, though a direct link between multilingualism and creativity has been difficult to prove. Further research using an expanded set of methods is needed.

Tamah Sherman, Charles University, Prague

Ongoing Research Projects

The following three articles present the three ongoing research projects in the thematic area of Language and Economy. The results of these research projects will be available in November.

Ongoing Research: Thematic Area “Language and Economy”
European Level

Linguistic Diversity and Communication in Multinational Companies

How do parent companies and their subsidiaries in other countries communicate with each other? In which language(s)? What linguistic or cultural problems arise and how are they managed? Is the companies' linguistic diversity restricted or promoted by national laws? LINEE researchers are investigating these questions in 5 parent and 5 daughter companies in the Czech Republic, Hungary, Germany, the United Kingdom and Switzerland.

A central concept of within this research project is the “knowledge-based economy”. This term reflects the shift from the industrial age towards an economy that encourages its organisations and people to acquire, create, disseminate and use (codified

and tacit) knowledge more effectively for greater economic and social development. In this context, the overall questions that researchers are asking are: how does the knowledge-based economy manifest itself in the use of languages in multinational companies, and how and to what degree linguistic diversity of multinational companies contribute to the promotion of the knowledge-based economy?

The research results can be used in the forming of policies of multinational companies under study and of policies of the authorities at various levels. They can also be used for the preparation of courses of intercultural training, and in both theoretical and applied sociology and sociolinguistics.

Research consists of interviewing all types of employees, i.e. people in the management, employees from the public relations department or from the administration, language course organizers or language teachers.

Furthermore, researchers observe and record or make notes about how employees speak and behave, for example during meetings, informal conversations or in-house language instruction.

They also take pictures about the signs in the building (like signposts or doorplates), analyse written material like brochures, e-mails or letters, and they assess the legislation that might influence the language use in the companies in question.

Ongoing Research: Thematic Area “Language and Economy”
National Level

Language Related Problems of Migrants

Researchers investigate the language-related problems of Vietnamese migrants in the Czech Republic and of Subsaharan African immigrants in Germany. A study, limited in scope, is also conducted on Vietnamese residents in Szeged (Hungary) for the sake of comparison.

The researchers also look into the role of these migrants' multilingualism in their economic future, their strategies to improve their lives and create job opportunities, how they assess the importance of their language skills for finding jobs and for integration, and how language skills influence their decisions on where to work or where to

live (and vice versa). Finally, they analyse the legal and structural situation in the Czech Republic and in Germany regarding the immigrants in question.

Vietnamese in trouble

Preliminary results show that the Vietnamese immigrants in Czech Republic do private business long enough to be granted the status of permanent residents so that they can send their children to Czech schools. For them, this is the only window of opportunity to get higher education and good multilingual skills, an achievement that for adults is almost impossible to achieve due to the difficulty of the Czech lan-

guage and to the lack of opportunities to learn it.

Doing business became increasingly difficult especially since the Czech Republic joined the European Union. Some less well-off business people turned to Czech factories to be hired as unskilled factory hands. Other people changed their original business of selling garments and started food shops (working into late evening even on weekends), street fast food stalls and nail studios introduced by Vietnamese diaspora members from the U.S.A. In 2007 and 2008, about 14 000 more immigrants arrived, seeking work as guest workers in Czech factories.

With the depression striking during autumn 2008, the majority of them lost their employment, but most of them did not go back to Vietnam despite an official Czech government programme offering free air tickets and a financial subsidy. They try to survive the depression period as helpers in existing Vietnamese businesses.

African migrants can't exploit their multilingualism

As for the African immigrants, the preliminary results show that they can't use their knowledge of African lan-

guages on the job market; however, highly educated African immigrants value competencies in a former colonial language such as English, French or Portuguese as a social and economic asset.

The first generation of African immigrants considers African languages to be important for maintaining contact with friends and relatives in the country of origin. Knowledge of German is generally considered vital for both economic and social integration. However, for social life outside the work place, German is often of little importance for

the first generation of immigrants.

The interviewed African immigrants have difficulties in finding a job adequate to their level of education because their diplomas are often not recognized by the state. Sometimes, they think of moving to a country where the language of their country of origin is spoken: France and Walloon Belgium for the francophone Africans and Great Britain and Ireland for the anglophone Africans. However, most of them stay, often because they don't want their children to move to another country with them.

Ongoing Research: Thematic Area "Language and Economy"
Regional Level

Integration and Participation of Urban Migrant Communities

LINEE researchers investigate migrants' lives in cities in Austria, Croatia, in the UK, the Channel Islands and the Czech Republic. They are interested in two aspects: how do migrants participate and integrate in the economy and society, and how do they use (or not) their language(s) as economic or symbolic capital?

As far as economic participation and integration are concerned, researchers aim to find out how issues regarding status (refugee, migrant etc.) and residency (permanent, temporary, seasonal) influence integration and economic participation.

As far as language as economic and symbolic capital is concerned, researchers want to know how communication works at workplaces of migrants, how far language competencies affect their economic integration, whether language related problems arise and how they are resolved.

Finally, they are interested in the visibility of migrants' languages in the linguistic landscape of the city (shop signs, billboards, street names, posters, graffiti, for example) and in the relationship of this linguistic landscape and the the status, residency and economic partici-

pation of these migrants.

In order to answer their research questions, researchers have interviewed representatives of the migrant communities, representatives of the host communities, migrant workers themselves and employers.

They also have observed communicative practices of workers, they have analysed texts such as official and legal documents and media texts relating to migrant communities, and finally, they have analysed photographs of public and private signage in the city.

Most EU students learn two foreign languages

“In the EU in 2007, 60% of students in upper secondary education studied two or more foreign languages”, says a news release issued by Eurostat, the Statistical Office of the European Communities. One third studied one foreign language, while 6% did not study any foreign language at all.

In the Czech Republic, Luxembourg, the Netherlands and Finland, all students in upper secondary education study two or more foreign languages.

At the other end of the scale, 51% of upper secondary school students in the UK do not study any foreign language.

The Eurostat study also shows the dominance of English in EU states: “in all Member States for which data are

available, English is the most studied foreign language in upper secondary education, except for Luxembourg, where English, French and German are equal and Ireland and the United Kingdom, where French is most common.”

Furthermore, “in fourteen of the twenty one Member States for which data are available, English is the most commonly spoken foreign language among adults aged 25 to 64 years. Russian is most common in Bulgaria, the Baltic States and Poland.”

More figures are included in the news release available at

► <http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat> (section “Latest news releases” – “full list”, published on 27 September 2009).



Learning Mobility of Young People

The European Commission has launched a public consultation on mobility with the aim of boosting the opportunities for young people in Europe to develop their skills and knowledge by going abroad.

The EC will take into account the results of this public consultation to shape future policies in this domain.

EU citizens who have experienced mobility in their career are invited to take part in this consultation and give their feedback on essential questions such as: How can we convince more young people to go abroad for learning? What obstacles there are at present?

► http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/education_culture/consult/index_en.html

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