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A Case Study on Bank Austria and its Subsidiary Companies

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Jelena Stajic

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Univ.-Prof. Dr. Barbara Seidlhofer

To my mom and dad
For supporting even the most difficult choices

У мом срцу поноћ. У њој каткад тиња
Мис'о да још живиш, мој пределе млади.
Моја лепа звезда, мајка и робиња,
Боже! шта ли данас у Србији ради?

Владислав Петковић Дис - Међу својима (1916)

Abstract

English as a lingua franca (ELF) represents the most prominent role the English language has occupied today. It is used in a wide variety of contexts like no other language before. A particularly notable context in which ELF is used is that of the international business. Multinational corporations, which operate internationally, in their language policies often opt for using ELF as their common corporate language. This thesis is an empirical case study on a multinational corporation, Bank Austria, and its subsidiary companies in Bulgaria, Czech Republic and Slovakia, Hungary, Romania, Serbia and Slovenia. The study focuses on forms and situations in which ELF is used, employees' difficulties understanding and making themselves understood. The communicative difficulties as distributed across different communication channels are also explored (email, telephone calls, conference calls, official work documents and meetings). Finally, attitudes towards using ELF for work of Bank Austria employees are addressed. More specifically, participants in the research assessed the impact of using ELF on their performance and careers. The study results indicate that Bank Austria employees are active, proficient communicators whose communicative interactions at work in ELF are issue free. Additionally, Bank Austria employees have overall positive attitudes towards using ELF in their professional lives without ELF affecting their work performance and careers negatively. They rather perceive ELF as a job requirement. Further studies should address the use of ELF in other companies in order to make generalizations of the results.

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List of Abbreviations

NNS	Non-native speaker
NS	Native speaker
ELF	English as a Lingua Franca
EIL	English as an International Language
WE	World Englishes
L1	First Language
L2	Second Language
EFL	English as a Foreign Language
ESL	English as a Second Language
EIB	English for International Business
BELF	Business English as a Lingua Franca
VOICE	The Vienna-Oxford International Corpus of English
GCC	Global Communicative Competence
CEE	Central and Easter Europe
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
EU	European Union
BA-CA	Bank Austria Creditanstalt
HVB	HypoVerainsbank
SPSS	Statistical Package for the Social Sciences

1. Introduction

The need for one language to be used in the international and intercultural communication has always been present. Lingua francas have existed for centuries, for instance Latin, Greek, French and artificial languages such as Esperanto. In the 21st century English has become a widely adopted lingua franca. It is worth noting that in the past lingua francas were normally limited to particular regions. However, with developments in technology, particularly communication technology, global economy and science English was placed on the world map. Additionally, the colonial history of the United Kingdom, the economic and political strength of the USA, led English to the places outside of its countries of origin. The strong position of English was also enhanced through its users, who adopted it worldwide and recognized its global relevance. That is why English today is a global means of communication, an international language and a global lingua franca.

As a world lingua franca, English grew to have more non-native speaker (NSs) than native speakers (NSs) (Crystal 2003). This is the first time in history that a language is that widely adopted by the NNSs across the globe. Not only that English is used across the globe by many, and even more NNSs than NSs, but today English is used in a large spectrum of contexts. More precisely, English, today, is the language of science, technology, medicine, education, business and many other fields. It is no longer relevant to conceptualize the English language in the framework of NS Standard, but new concepts were called in to capture its new role. The English as a Lingua Franca (ELF) paradigm recognized this new role and closed the *conceptual gap* (Seidlhofer 2001:26).

English has become the language of different fields, business being one of them. As business enterprises follow the global trends they become more internationally oriented. New kinds of companies surface, namely multinational corporations. The term multinational corporation itself clearly denotes a company that features national diversity and which has the international presence, in different countries or even continents. In multinational corporations national diversity involves also cultural and linguistic diversity. In these new linguistically rich environments a need for a universal means of communication appeared, and English occupied this space. As the English

language gained presence in the international business world, new concept, namely Business English as a Lingua Franca followed (BELF).

In the international business context using English as a common corporate language is seen as a pragmatic and neutral mediator among nationally diverse business professionals. However, the research has shown that even though ELF communication is useful, communicative issues may appear. In order to deal with communication issues multinational corporations introduce language policies to deal with linguistic assets in the company. English is often introduced as the common corporate language through a company's language policy. The language policy should enable communication flow, organize the direction of communication and cater for the communication difficulties. However, even with the existence of language policies problems are present.

Having in mind that multinational corporations are such specific international environments, it is of particular interest for this thesis to understand the place of English in them. Therefore, this thesis is an empirical case study on a multinational corporation, Bank Austria, and its subsidiary companies in Bulgaria, the Czech Republic and Slovakia, Hungary, Romania, Serbia and Slovenia. The principal aim of this paper is to uncover how ELF is used in the context of multinational corporations. Firstly, forms and situations in which English is used will be investigated. Furthermore, difficulties understanding and making oneself understood will be explored as related to different communication channels relevant for the business environment, namely email, telephone calls, conference calls, official work documents and meetings. Finally, research into attitudes towards using English for work purposes of Bank Austria employees will be addressed. More precisely, participants in the research will be asked to assess the impact of the English language on their performance and careers.

The second chapter of the thesis will deal with different notions as related to the ELF paradigm that tries to capture the role of English as the globally used language. The paradigms addressed will be World Englishes (WE) and English as an International Language (EIL). A detailed account of ELF notion, what it involves and how it is conceptualized will be offered. Given that the primary objective of this thesis is English used in the business context the concept of BELF will be presented.

In the third chapter the position of English in the international business will be evaluated. This is followed by a chapter on language policies as understood in the context of sociological research and further narrowed down to the context of multinational corporations. Issues related to language policy decisions will also be addressed. Language in a multinational corporation can act as a resource, barrier and source of power. This topic will be explored in the third chapter. Additionally, strategies that can be employed, both on the side of the individuals working in a multinational corporation and the management of the company, will be addressed.

The detailed problem outline of this thesis will be offered in the fourth chapter. The multinational corporation Bank Austria will be investigated in detail. A brief historical overview of the events that led to the creation of the nationally rich Bank Austria will be presented. The organization of the company and the communication flow will be reviewed. Additionally, the company's language policies will be explored in more detail. The second half of this chapter will give a thorough overview of the aims of the case study and the method. Finally, demographic data will be presented, followed by linguistic background data of the survey participants.

The fifth chapter of the paper will give a detailed representation of the study findings as organized through topic units. Namely, purposes, situations and forms in which English is used, difficulties in communication across different communication channels, attitudes towards using English for work purposes and its career and performance impact. A statistical analysis of differences in responses between gender and age of the participants will be considered in this chapter. The distinctions will be also explored as to the subsidiary in which the participants are working. A discussion of the study findings will be presented in this chapter.

The sixth chapter of the thesis will offer suggestions for any issues that surfaced over the course of the research. Additionally, implication for further research will be given. The findings will be summarized in this chapter. The very final chapter of this thesis will deal with presenting the conclusions.

2. ELF: The why and the what

2.1. World Englishes and English as a lingua franca

The role of the English language has changed. English ceased to be a national language tied to a particular territory where it is spoken as a first language (L1)¹, more precisely in The United Kingdom, The United States, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand. The English language moved from borders of countries where it is spoken as L1 and spread worldwide. Today it is a global means of communication, an international language and a lingua franca. The omnipresence and use of English is notable in a variety of contexts.

The position of English in the world evolved as it became widely adopted. With the changed face and functions of the English language, notions conceptualizing these changes followed. This section aims to clarify concepts and terms applied to the new roles that English has occupied, which caused, and still keep causing, quite a stir in the scientific community. More precisely, the focus will be placed on concepts such as World Englishes (WE), English as an International Language (EIL) and English as a Lingua Franca (ELF).

The WE paradigm, founded by Kachru (1992), seeks to demonstrate how the English language has spread in the world. Kachru's idea is based on a model of three concentric circles. The model shows how the English language has expanded in the world based on the historical relationship certain countries share with the English language. He termed the circles respectively: Inner, Outer and Expanding (Kachru 1997). According to Kachru, Inner Circle includes the countries in which English is used as L1, namely the United Kingdom, the United States, Canada, Australia and New Zealand. Furthermore, Outer Circle includes those countries in which English is spoken as L2. English was introduced in these countries as a result of the imperial power of the United Kingdom. Therefore, the countries that fall under this category include the former colonies such as Kenya, Nigeria, India and alike. Finally, according to Kachru (1997), the Expanding Circle covers all the countries in which English is used, and taught as a foreign language such as China, most of Europe, Russia etc.

¹ A distinction is made between English spoken as the first language (L1), English spoken as the second language (L2), and English spoken as a foreign language (EFL).

The value of Kachru's paradigm is that it enabled thinking about different kinds of Englishes that involve, not only L1 Englishes, such as British English and American English, but also L2 and Expanding Circle Englishes, such as Indian English, Nigerian English, Chinese English and alike. The model allowed for the Englishes of the L1, L2, and the speakers in the Expanding Circles to be recognized. Kachru's model clearly sketches how English occupies many positions outside of the territories of its origin. English, today, is present not only in the countries where it is spoken as L1 and L2, but also in the countries that do not share any history with the English language speaking countries, and where English is spoken as a foreign language, more precisely, in the Expanding Circle countries.

The worldwide presence of English serves to show the global face of the English language. As Crystal (2003:3) notes, a global language "develops a special role that is recognized in every country". Indeed, Kachru's WE paradigm captured the global presence of the English language and its international acknowledgment. English spread from the Inner, to the Outer and further into the Expanding Circle countries. Its mere presence in such culturally different, and territorially distant places confirms its importance and likewise recognition. This is precisely why English, today, truly is a global language (Crystal 2003).

It was mentioned previously that the perspective Kachru takes is the WE perspective, which is also forwarded by Berns (2009). WE paradigm stands in contrast to ELF. Although distinctive, WE and ELF share similarities. Namely, the emphasis is placed on the recognition of the contribution and value of the NNSs of English. However, what makes the two distinctive is that Kachru's model fails to position English used as a lingua franca within itself (Seidlhofer 2001:2). ELF is overlooked in the Three Circle model.

The principal focus of the WE paradigm is the native varieties, the nativized ones, and EFL. Viewed in terms of Kachru's model, EFL could be equated with ELF, but still a substantial difference exists. Specifically, ELF and EFL differ in that the latter is based, and governed by NS Standard. Seidlhofer (2011:17) explains that EFL speakers "are encouraged to strive to do 'as the natives do', [they] accept their authority as distributors of their language, on which they have sort of franchise". In contrast ELF is focused on how the ELF discourse community appropriates the

English language through negotiation and accommodation (Seidlhofer 2011:18,19). Seidlhofer notes (2011:18) that ELF speakers establish their norms in the process of interaction and “are primarily regulated by interactional exigencies, rather than by what native speakers would say, would find correct, or ‘normal’, or appropriate”. ELF speakers use the English language for their own communicative purposes by disagreeing with NS Standard of use, and still achieving a desired communicative success. Another respect in which the two differ is in the community of users. As Seidlhofer (2009a:239) notes “[i]n the 21st century, it seems clear that there are English using communities not only in Inner and Outer Circle but also English-using local, regional and global communities of practice communicating via ELF in the Expanding Circle and, importantly across all three circles”. According to Seidlhofer ELF is tied not only to the Expanding Circle countries, but, more importantly, it is also found in the communication of speakers coming from all three circles. More precisely, ELF places in its center the communication of the global community of speakers in the English language. The global community of speakers involves the speakers coming from all three Kachru’s Circles. In contrast, Kachru’s model does not address English used as the global means of communication in the international encounters across all three circles.

Even though opposing, Kachru’s WE paradigm opened an important space for the acknowledgement of the non-native varieties and it paved the way for the recognition of other functions of the English language, namely, its most prominent use as a lingua franca (Seidlhofer 2001; 2009a; 2009b; 2011). Having in mind that Kachru’s model does not recognize English as a modern-day lingua franca Seidlhofer (2001:26) asserts that the *conceptual gap* is to be closed by ELF. The notion of ELF will be further explored in the following chapters of this thesis.

2.2. Highly national International English

Today, the English language is used for a variety of purposes across the globe. The notion of English as an International Language (EIL) emphasizes the international character of English. However, an important aspect to take note of is that, albeit IEL might focus on the international use of the English language, below the surface it denotes an opposite idea. This chapter will look into the inadequacy of IEL and how it relates to ELF.

In order to understand the controversy behind the term IEL defining it is a good starting point. Firstly, Jenkins (2006) employs two-way approach to the definition of IEL. She explains “*international English* [original emphasis] is used to refer to the local Englishes of those non-mother tongue countries where it has an international institutional role” (Jenkins 2006:160). Furthermore, Jenkins adds that the IEL is used “to refer to the use of English as a means of communication across national and linguistic boundaries” (Jenkins 2006:160). It can be concluded that the IEL perspective involves L2 Englishes, but also communication in English as used across all three Kachru’s Circles i.e. English used as the international means of communication. The term IEL seems to be straightforward, however it is its connotation that is problematic as it involves more than Jenkins’ definition reveals.

Similarly to Jenkins, Seidlhofer (2001) understands IEL as communication of L1, L2 and the Expanding Circle speakers. However, Seidlhofer offers a more detailed account of IEL. Seidlhofer (2001:3) explains that EIL:

[...] is usually understood as covering uses of English within and across Kachru’s ‘Circles’, for intranational as well as international communication. But English is international in two very different ways: it has been ‘exported’ to many regions of the world by its native speakers, primarily through colonization, and so has invaded these places. It has, however, to an even larger extent been ‘imported’ by people all over the world who decided to learn it as a useful language in addition to their first language(s).

Here, a distinction is made between two versions of EIL. More precisely, the *localized* and *globalized* IEL. Namely, the *localized* IEL would include speakers from Kachru’s Outer Circle i.e. intranational use, whereas the *globalized* IEL involves the use of English as a global means of communication, i.e. the international use (Seidlhofer 2001:4). Seidlhofer’s account of IEL indeed confirms Jenkins’ approach, but offers more detail. However, the two definitions do not point to the controversy of IEL that is hidden in its connotation.

IEL, as explained earlier, denotes the international role the English language has, still it is *uninternational* in its essence. More precisely, as Seidlhofer (2009a:237) notes IEL “is indeed generally interpreted as the distribution of native-speaker Standard English rather than the way English has changed to meet the international needs”. The biggest issue with EIL is that it essentially denotes NS Standard variety of the English language, as spread and used by L2 and the NNSs across the world. It

involves the English language as exported by the NSs, and imported by the NNSs, and used following the NS norms by the NNSs across the world. IEL is only international in the sense that it depicts English used by nationally, territorially and culturally remote communities of speakers. However, it is also very *uninternational* in that it is firmly tied to the NS community.

Another important perspective excluded from IEL is that of how the global community of speakers in the international communication appropriates the English language for their own needs, and deviate in their use from Standard English, while still achieving communicative success. In relation to this, Seidlhofer (2009a:238) explains that:

English in the Expanding Circle is by and large approached, from both inside and outside the circle, from a tenacious deficit perspective in which variation is perceived as a deviation from ENL norms and described in terms of ‘errors’ and ‘fossilization’

The IEL paradigm treats all the deviations from Standard English as insufficient and faulty. The norms of Standard English are deeply rooted in the IEL notion. More accurately, the term IEL excludes from its perspective those appropriations of the English language made by NNSs as devoid of Standard norms that ELF acknowledges, namely the creative use of the English language (Seidlhofer 2011:21). The NNS contribution to the English language is valued and explored by the ELF researchers. Given that IEL paradigm fails to acknowledge this creativity, it does not suffice to capture, and conceptualize the modern-day use of English as an global means of communication.

In some respect IEL and ELF correspond, namely in the international communicative function, it is the denotation of the term IEL that promotes NS Standard English that is problematic. With regard to this Jenkins (2006:160) notes, that “ELF researchers prefer the term *English as a lingua franca* to *English as an international language* [original emphasis]”. It is precisely this perspective of the English language used as a lingua franca that is adopted in this thesis.

The global world uniting the speakers of all three Circles depends on English to fulfill the communicative needs. The monopoly over the English language can no longer be exclusively in the hands of the NS², but the contributions ELF speakers have become

² The topic of linguistic imperialism of the English language is explored by Phillipson (1992)

equally relevant. Kachru made the acknowledgement of the non-native Englishes possible. He managed to draw the attention to the study of the Outer Circle varieties. However, Kachru's model failed to capture the most prominent use of English (Molin 2006:42). The ELF perspective that values unique contribution its users make. Similarly, the notion of IEL is inadequate as it distributes Standard English across nationally, culturally, linguistically and territorially distant communities of users, the very users who use the English language use the English language creatively. In what follows the notion of ELF, what it represents and how it is understood will be examined.

2.3. English as a lingua franca

ELF is most commonly defined as "a 'contact language' between persons who share neither a common native tongue nor a common (national) culture, and for whom English is the chosen foreign language of communication" (Firth 1996:240). In the same vein, Seidlhofer (2011:7) asserts that ELF involves "any use of English among speakers of different first languages for whom English is the communicative medium of choice, and often the only option". It can be concluded that ELF, in its essence, captures the use of English as a global communicative medium by speakers coming from nationally, linguistically and culturally distinct places.

In her account of ELF Jenkins (2006:160) asserts that "in its purest form, ELF is defined as a contact language used only among non-mother tongue speakers". Unlike Jenkins (2006), Seidlhofer (2011) understands the ELF community of speakers in slightly different terms. Seidlhofer argues that "the majority of its [ELF] users are not native speakers of English, [however] it has to be remembered that of course ELF interactions include interlocutors from Inner and Outer Circles" (Seidlhofer 2011:7). With regard to this Jenkins' (2006) *pure* definition of ELF seems rather inadequate because the ELF community of users is not homogenous, but involves the users of all three Kachru's circles. Indeed, as Seidlhofer (2009a:237) maintains ELF involves "interactions in which more often than not no native speakers participate" but it is still impossible to exclude the NSs from this equation and speak of *pure* ELF forms when the ELF speaker community itself is not *pure*. This perspective has also been supported by Rogerson-Ravell (2007:105) who explains that ELF is "used as a common language between ELF speakers and between EFL

and English as a mother tongue speakers". Therefore, it can be concluded that ELF as a global means of communication includes not only and exclusively NNSs of English, in their communicative actions among themselves, but also the communication of NNSs and NSs. ELF involves both communication of NNSs and NSs of English, but even more so of NNSs, as they outnumber the speakers from the Inner and Outer Circles according to Crystal (2003:61).

As English became widely adopted and spoken, issues with the 'ownership' and forcing the high, unachievable Standard English norms upon NNSs emerged. Linguists such as Quirk (2003) pushed hard for the reign of Standard, especially in the context of English language teaching. The question of how ELF is positioned in relation to Standard English arises. In the previous chapter it has been discussed that IEL involves distribution of the NS Standard English in the international communication. In contrast, ELF researchers have called in a different approach. Seidlhofer (2001:138) argues that ELF cannot be considered as "globally distributed, franchised copy of ENL [...] it is being spread, developed independently, with a great deal of variation but enough stability". Furthermore, Seidlhofer (2009a:242) holds that "ELF does not denote an 'impoverished', purely expedient and makeshift code for lack of something better, but a vibrant, powerful, and versatile shared resource that enables communication across linguistic and geographic boundaries". ELF speakers appropriate the English language for their own purposes, they bring to their English use their native cultures and allow native language influence. With regard to this Widdowson (2013:190) maintains that "ELF is the communicative use of linguistic resources [...] [c]ommunicative function is primary, and linguistic forms, whether they conform to NS norms or not, will be used as and when they are functionally motivated". Communicative success is the primary goal, even when the formal properties of Standard English, as we know it, are not followed. Hence, it can be concluded that ELF is above all functionally defined (Seidlhofer 2009a). ELF speakers are focused on achieving the basic goal of communicative success through accommodation³ (Seidlhofer 2009b). ELF speakers negotiate the meaning and work towards mutual understanding. The speakers employ strategies to achieve a communicative goal.

³ In sociolinguistic research "in conversation between people with differing pronunciation, it has been noticed that there is a common tendency for the pronunciation of the two to move slightly closer together" (Spolsky 1998:42). This process is referred to as accommodation.

The VOICE⁴ corpus of spoken English aims to record individual instances and point to “the pragmatic strategies speakers draw on as they collaboratively engage in communication” (Cogo 2012:99). In the academic community there have been assumptions by certain researchers (Sowden 2012a; Sowden 2012b; Berns 2009:192) that corpus projects such as VOICE are created with the aim of formalizing ELF variety. However, ELF is not considered to be a variety by ELF researchers. ELF speakers are versatile and variable that it would be very difficult to speak of ELF variety in the traditional framework of sociological research. In order for a particular language instance to be considered a variety it should have stability in the terms of geographical location and community of users (Seidlhofer 2009b). Given that, as Cogo (2012:98) argues, ELF “is spoken as a contact language by speakers from varying linguacultural backgrounds, where both the community of speakers and the location can be changing and are often not associated with the specific nation” it is very difficult to classify ELF as a variety. As Cogo (2012:98) maintains ELF speakers are very different in terms of their culture, territory and their L1s and hence they cannot be seen as a community in the traditional sense, but as a *community of practice* (Seidlhofer 2007). It is the *functional purpose* that unites the ELF speakers which allows for the term *community of practice* to be used.

This completes the picture of ELF more fully. ELF is not a language variety of a finite community of speakers tied by a particular territory. ELF speakers are a *community of practice* with a communicative purpose, who rely on using the English language to achieve the communicative success. The goal of the ELF project is not to formalize the distinctive features of the ELF talk, but to understand how ELF users appropriate this linguistic tool to achieve the communicative success in their interactions, through the process of accommodation, all the while along misusing the rules of Standard English.

Previously, it has been pointed out that contexts of ELF use involve anything from casual social encounters, to science, medicine, education, technology and alike. But one particular context this paper aims to focus on is the one of business. More precisely, ELF as used for the international business purposes in multinational

⁴ Vienna-Oxford International Corpus of English is a corpus of spoken ELF English

corporations. The following chapter of this thesis is dealing with the emerging concept of BELF i.e. English used as a lingua franca of business.

2.4. ELF put to business

Businesses normally start operating globally through processes of acquisitions and mergers. Some businesses become international by cooperating with partners in remote countries. Once a business becomes international, the linguistic matters need to be dealt with in order to maintain successful communication. It is not rare that companies opt out to communicate in language of their partners, as shown in European study by Vandermeeren (1999), but often it is English that is chosen for this purpose because of its worldwide recognition. As the use of English spread globally in the general context, it has in parallel spread in the business world. In order to capture the use of ELF in the context of business, the concept of BELF was introduced i.e. ELF for the purposes of the international business. The special attention to the concept of BELF particularly with regard to teaching implications was given in the special issue of *Journal of English as a Lingua Franca* (Pitzl & Ehrenreich 2015; Pullin 2015; Pitzl 2015; Kankaanranta et al. 2015). In what follows BELF and its relevance will be addressed.

The communication skills are essential in the context of the international business, Victor (1992:246), argues that in the context of international business “[i]t is probably better to have mediocre technical skills and excellent international business communication skills”. Similarly, Kankaanranta and Louhiala-Salminen assert that (2010:205):

[...] traditionally, business know-how resides in innovations, entrepreneurship, marketing, business processes, and management strategy, but as all these require the ability to build networks and create knowledge, we argue that the communication know-how of today’s business practitioners is an integral part of their business know-how. Since much of the communication in globalized business takes place between non-native speakers of English (NNS), we further argue that an integral part of the communication know-how and expertise of today’s business professionals is competence in BELF.

Today, the skills relevant for the international business involve, not only the knowledge of business management, but also the linguistic knowledge, particularly of English, as the international business community is diverse in terms of territory,

culture and language. According to Lesznyák (2004) 80% of all communication in the business context happens in the English language between NNSs. Here, a question of BELF discourse community poses itself.

BELF is used by a particular *community of practice*. Namely, globally operating business professionals (Kankaanranta & Lu 2013:291). However, there is still some disagreement between various authors as to the nature of BELF community of practice. Gerritsen and Nickerson (2009:181) see BELF as covering only communication of NNSs of English. Gerritsen and Nickerson (2009:181) assert that BELF communication takes place “between ESL and EFL speakers with other non-native speakers”. Ehrenreich (2010: 410), on the other hand, approaches BELF discourse community slightly differently in that she claims that “[t]here is general agreement in both ELF and BELF research that English used for international communication purposes is not the same as the English language used by its native speakers locally in their home countries”. Therefore, as Ehrenreich notes, ELF is not the same English language as used by the NSs, BELF is, therefore, not either business English as used by its NSs. Hence, the approach to BELF is very similar to the one of ELF, only placed in a different context, namely, that of international business. As ELF is defined in terms of communication across all 3 Kachru’s circles to include NSs, ESL speakers and NNSs, BELF should also be defined on this basis. The distinction made by Gerritsen and Nickerson (2009) is slightly problematic, as ELF generally involves English used in the international communication to include the interactions of NSs, ESL speakers and NNSs respectively. There are no grounds to approach the definition of BELF any differently. This is the perspective this paper adopts. Additionally, albeit, BELF is a term used to assign ELF communication in the international business, this paper will adopt term ELF to avoid confusion.

In simple terms, BELF is defined as “ELF for business communication purposes” (Kankaanranta and Louhiala-Salminen 2007:56). However, the concept of BELF is far more complex than this, especially in terms of culture. Louhiala-Salminen et al. (2005:403-404) argue that:

BELF refers to English used as a ‘neutral’ and shared communication code. BELF is neutral in the sense that none of the speakers can claim it as her/his mother tongue; it is shared in the sense that it is used for conducting business within the global business discourse community, whose members are BELF

users and communicators in their own right – not non-native speakers or learners.

Although BELF is seen as neutral, in terms of ownership, in the sense of culture it is not. In its essence “BELF discourse communication is inherently intercultural and the context is necessarily multilingual” (Kankaanranta & Louhiala-Salminen 2010:205). With regard to this, Gerritsen and Nickerson (2009:182) point “the fact that BELF users are also non-native speakers impacts on the interaction both in terms of the (cultural) discourse strategies that are chosen, and in the language that is used to realize them”. Gerritsen and Nickerson (2009:182) add that “BELF encounters may fail where there are differences either in cultural discourse strategies between the interactants and/or in the language that is used to realise them”. Similarly, Louhiala-Salminen et al. (2005:404) conclude that “not only do BELF speakers bring into business interaction their own culture-bound views of how encounters should be conducted but also discourse practices stemming from their respective mother tongues”. Here, it can be concluded that BELF users bring to the table their cultures and for this reason BEFL interactions cannot be seen as neutral. Having in mind the very essence of BELF, it is precisely the cultural capital and discourse markers that can inhibit the communication. However, it is not only the cultural and L1 discourse capital that can pose communicative difficulties, in the context of multinational corporations, language policy choices play a major role. In the global business community the use of BELF has been seen as “functional realism” (Rogerson-Ravell 2008). It is above all seen as a practical choice when there is no other option.

With expansion of multinational corporations a need for a language of *global operations*⁵ surfaced, and it is often English that is chosen to serve this practical purpose. The language choice in the context of multinational corporations, which are nationally and linguistically diverse communities, is a complex task and a crucial one. The following chapter of the thesis will deal with multinational corporations and language choice in such environments.

⁵ Language of global operations is “the language in which official information is transferred between subsidiaries and their parent organizations” (Thomas 2007:83).

3. Language management in multinational corporations

3.1. Position of English in the international business arena

A multinational corporation is defined as “a corporation consisting of a parent organization (headquarters) and at least one subsidiary organization in a foreign country” (Thomas 2007:82). Multinational corporations are formed through processes of acquisition of other businesses, or mergers of already established organizations. The mergers and acquisitions take place with a purpose of securing the market presence and they result in the creation of multinational workforce. Often, a multinational corporation operates in several countries, or even continents. Therefore, multinational corporations are by default nationally diverse environments.

Particularly notable national versatility can be found in companies operating in Europe, which is nationally and linguistically rich. The establishment of the European Union in 1993 had an aim of uniting the European continent, securing free trading market and establishing the European Single Labor Market. The European Single Labor Market “allows citizens of the EU to work in other EU countries without the necessity of labor permit” (Sherman, Engelhard & Nekvapil 2012:287). In the European context this led to the workforce migrations and resulted in the creation of multinational companies. Although the project of the European Single Labor Market is not fully completed to include all Europe country members, and it places limitations to some of its member states, it still allowed for the migration of the workforce within Europe to some extent (Dhéret et al. 2013). Workers across the European Union country member states migrated and thus further contributed to the national diversity within Europe in the business world. Charles (1998:85) refers to the situation in Europe as “the multicultural and multilingual reality”. For this reason precisely the European business professionals are required to possess the knowledge of another language besides their native language.

The structural organization of multinational corporations, which today dominate the international business community, has to be taken into consideration. A multinational corporation consists primarily of the headquarters, often located in one country, and a subsidiary company, or companies, located in another, or other foreign countries. Clearly such structural organization influences other work organization aspects, more precisely, the workforce organization, workload designation and the overall

communication flow. In a multinational corporation “internal communication involves crossing language boundaries and operating at the interface between several languages including those of home country and the host country” (Fredriksson et. at. 2006:407). Having in mind, the structural, national and linguistic diversity of a multinational organization, it is of the essence that its employees have communicative competence⁶ in another language, but their native language, along with the knowledge of the technical business skills.

An explorative research by Louhiala-Salminen and Kankaanranta (2011) on internationally operating business professionals employed in 5 Finnish companies reveals the importance of other skills besides the technical business skills. The authors coin the term Global Communicative Competence (GCC) to designate the skillset relevant for the international business, where the business know-how is not sufficient. The authors defined the GCC as involving “multicultural competence, competence in English as a Business Lingua Franca (BELF) and the communicator’s business know-how” (Louhiala-Salminen & Kankaanranta 2011:244). It can be noted that the communication skills in the international business are considered important. The knowledge of English is cited as one of the key elements of a business professional’s communication skillset. However, the knowledge of BELF is not just a random choice.

It was clarified in the previous chapter of this thesis that English occupies the position of a global lingua franca used to bridge the communication gaps in intercultural and international communication. Therefore, the necessity of ELF in the business contexts appears fairly natural. To support this argument a study was conducted by Louhiala-Salminen (2002). The study gives a sneak peak into a workday of a business manager to investigate the discourse in his work place. The study shows the large extent to which English is used in daily communication by the business manager. The findings go to confirm the central position the English language has in the business professional’s work life.

⁶ The notion of communicative competence was introduced by Dell Hymes to stand in opposition to Chomsky’s idea of competence and performance as innate qualities. Communicative competence designates that knowledge of a language involves the awareness of what is formally possible, feasible, appropriate and performed in a language (Hymes 1979:281).

Multinational corporations all over the world manage their businesses in geographically distinct and remote environments, which on its own is a sizable task. Linguistic diversity puts more pressure on the business management. In order to deal with linguistic resources multinational corporations draft language policies where they often opt out for an official language, or a common corporate language. Frequently, a whole spectrum of languages is used to facilitate communication in a company. The language choice and the general communication flow in the company is regulated by a language policy. In what follows language policies will be discussed, namely, what they involve, why they are needed and the issues related to them.

3.2. Language policy

3.2.1. Language policy in general

Traditionally, language policies have been studied in the area of sociolinguistics. Language planning and language policies are often considered in the context of the conscious effort governments and states put to affect a language change. Lo Bianco (2010:144) understands language policy and planning in the following way:

[...] classifying the choices government authorities make regarding language and social life. Classifying these choices involves identification of a language or communication problem, the formulation of the alternative ways of resolving this problem, deciding the norm to be promoted, and implementing it via education system: *a language problem leads to a language policy, which leads to LP* [my emphasis].

Language policies and language planning are done with the purpose of addressing a linguistic *problem*. For instance, pushing for a preference of one language variety over another, or prescribing usage to prevent foreign language borrowing, also official language choice of a country is covered by language policies. Language policies are normally drafted to address an issue and facilitate successful communication.

A more detailed definition of a language policy has been offered by Kaplan and Baldauf (1997:ix) who argue that a language policy involves “a body of ideas, laws, regulations, rules and practices, intended to achieve a planned change in the society, group or system”. Similarly, in relation to language policies, Spolsky (2004:5) mentions “three components of the language policy of a speech community: its practices, its beliefs and any attempts to influence practices by any type of language intervention, planning or management”. Albeit, language policies and language

planning are conducted with the purpose of controlling language use and resolving an issue, following a set of *practices* and *beliefs* of a community in question.

There are different kinds of language policies. Language policies involving an official language choice in a country can be monolingual or polylingual. More precisely, a country can proclaim one official language for all its political, cultural and official documents. Such policy can be found in countries such as Serbia, where Serbian is cited as its official language in its constitution (Constitution of Republic of Serbia 2006:3):

The official language in use in the Republic of Serbia is the Serbian language and the Cyrillic alphabet [my translation]

On the other hand, in countries such as India, Hindi is cited as the official language, however English plays an important role (Constitution of India 2007:212). This is a case of a polylingual language policy. In the context of multinational corporations a company can proclaim a language of official operations i.e. a common corporate language. ELF is often chosen to occupy the position of a common corporate language based on its assumed neutrality. Additionally, a corporation can have a polylingual language policy to encourage diversity and pertain using several languages in which to conduct its business.

The complexity of the matter of language policies goes far beyond the choice of an official linguistic medium in a country. Bergenholtz and Johnsen (2006:100,101) distinguish between two kinds of language policy:

(1) General language policy:

- language selection in an international context;
- language selection in groups, companies and organisations;
- language selection in a national or regional context;
- language selection in a national context in relation to language teaching;
- defence of a national language; and
- attacks on a national language.

(2) Specific language policy:

- general suggestions on how to optimise communication in a certain language; and
- descriptive, proscriptive or prescriptive suggestions on specific linguistic units.

It can be concluded that general language policies approach the issue of language in a more general way. More precisely, they deal with language selection in different organizations and groups, but also with the attacks and defense of national languages. In contrast, specific language policies specify details of a language change. They offer linguistic description, prescription or proscription. The general language policy is of particular interest for this paper as it is narrowly related to the topic of this thesis, namely language choice in multinational corporations.

Language policies involve an official document, however their content often does not control the real life situation. Certain authors (Spolsky 2004; Kingsley 2009) point out different dimensions language policies can have, namely, language policies can be explicit or implicit. Kingsley (2009:154) explains that “policies have been described as explicit (or overt, official, de jure, planned) or implicit (or covert, informal, de facto, unplanned)”. Spolsky (2004:11) claims that explicit language policies normally involve a written document, but not always, as he points out “the existence of such an explicit policy does not guarantee that it will be implemented, nor does the implementation guarantee success”. In contrast, implicit language policies, as previously mentioned, are informal and unplanned. More specifically, even if there is an official, prescribed, explicit language policy of a country or a company, still, members of the community can perform divergently from the prescribed norm. The explicit and implicit language policy can be to some extent compared to Chomsky’s notion of competence and performance. Competence is defined as “the knowledge that native speakers have of their language as a system of abstract formal relations, and performance, their actual behavior” (Widdowson 1996:24). Clearly, there are quite a few discrepancies between what is encoded in the grammar of language and what is actually performed. Similarly, with explicit and implicit policies, even though there is an explicit policy, still an implicit dimension can be present. Explicit language policy does not guarantee explicit use by a community for which the policy is intended.

Language policy choices can be complex especially in culturally, nationally and linguistically complex environments. Choosing a language of a nation can be seen as fairly uncomplicated when the choice is often imposed by itself. However, the matter is more complex when the pool of choices offers a variety of options. The following chapter of this thesis will focus on explaining the relevance and the importance of language policies in multinational corporations.

3.2.2. Need for language policies in multinational corporations

Language policies in corporations are introduced for “so-called ‘pragmatic’ reasons and are intended to address language needs by enhancing linguistic resources and removing linguistic barriers” (Thomas 2008:310). Language needs in the context of multinational corporations often involve a selection of an appropriate linguistic medium i.e. a language of global operations, or an official company’s language.

Ideally, when choosing a language, or languages for a corporation to do its business in “[a] corporate planner’s mission is to maximize the organization’s competitive advantage within the strategic environment in which it operates” (Dhir & Gòkè-Paríolá 2002:246). More precisely, the chosen language should facilitate communication and act as a resource in a multinational organization and not as a barrier. Furthermore, language policies “are important in ensuring that language competent staff are strategically positioned throughout the global organization” (Marschan et al. 1997:596). When an official language of a multinational corporation is selected it can happen that not all its employees are proficient in it, by positioning language competent staff to act as language nodes, where needed, the flow of communication is enabled. Finally, language policies regulate that language does not act as *barrier* within the company (Feely & Harzing 2003:41). Strategic organization of communication in a multinational organization ensures clear ways of communication and hence provides a good foundation for barrier free business.

The number of languages used in a multinational corporation is governed by the structural organization of the company itself i.e. if a company’s headquarters are in Germany and its subsidiaries are located in Austria, Hungary and Slovakia the languages used might be German, Hungarian, Slovakian and often English. Therefore, a multinational corporation may rely on the use of “the local language, [...] the language of headquarters, [...] and the international language of business, English” (Sherman, Engelhardt & Nekvapil 2012:300). National and linguistic diversity is often seen as a resource and it gives a company an advantage. Therefore, many companies have polylingual language policy that includes the language of the subsidiaries, the language of the headquarters and ELF.

However, companies opt out for a monolingual language policy for pragmatic reasons. More precisely, a company chooses a language of global operations i.e. a

common corporate language. The choice of a common corporate language is referred to as 'language standardization' (Marschan-Piekkari et al. 1999a:379). Language standardization in a multinational corporation is conducted because:

1. It facilitates formal reporting between units in the various foreign locations, thus minimizing the potential for miscommunication and allowing for ease of access to company documents such as technical and product manuals; operating procedures; and record-keeping.
2. It enhances informal communication and information flow between subsidiaries.
3. It assists in fostering a sense of belonging to a global 'family', which has been suggested as an important element in the multinational's use of soft control mechanisms such as corporate culture (Ferner et al., 1995)

Marschan-Piekkari et al. (1999a:379)

A multinational corporation's management through a common corporate language aims to facilitate communication in the work place, but also to create a feeling of belonging in the organization and its ideology. The aim is to unite the employees in a common goal through one linguistic medium. Additionally, a multinational may want to decrease the costs of translation (Welch et al. 2001:199). Therefore, choosing common corporate language will enable efficiency. Today, ELF is often chosen to take over the role of a common corporate language in a corporation because of its widespread use and assumed neutrality. Welch et al. (2001:195) suggest that "English has evolved as the most commonly used corporate language reflecting its more general position as a type of a *lingua franca* of international business" [original emphasis]. Another study findings on use of English in a German multinational company show that 90% of the respondents who took part in the study used and needed English to do their work (Swift & Wallace 2011:892). The use of English seems to be a logical and a pragmatic choice, however it is rarely problem free. The issues with using English for work purposes mentioned involve the fact that English is used in companies where it is nobody's native language, also difficulties might exist in communication with NSs and NNSs of English (Welch et al. 2001:201; Rogerson-Ravell 2007; 2008). The issues related to language policies will be explored in the following chapter.

3.2.3. Language policy issues

The principle aim of language policies is to facilitate communication and remove language barriers. However, the mere existence a language policy does not guarantee success. The explicit and implicit dimensions of a language policy were mentioned in the earlier chapter. Even though, language policies are aimed to address a linguistic problem, deviations from the prescribed norm may exist. In multinational corporations language policies and language planning have been addressed “on a “fly by the seat of the pants” ad hoc basis” as Thomas points out (2007:98). Corporate language planners⁷ in multinational corporations sometimes approach language policies superficially which can result in an issue. Additionally, many language policies are vague and not detailed enough. This chapter will look into language policy choices that caused problems.

The vagueness of language policies has been explored in a study by Fredriksson et al. (2006). The study dealt with the use of a common corporate language in Siemens and revealed some discrepancies. Siemens pronounced English its common corporate language, however other languages are reported to be used. The source of issue is not that local languages were used, but that Siemens employees could not agree on what the official common corporate language was. As Fredriksson et al. (2006:416) remark “[v]iews on the corporate language seemed to differ to a significant extent depending on the geographical location, the managerial level as well as the native language of the respondents”. On the one hand, such disagreement as to what language is used in the official report in the company can cause misunderstandings and communication issues. The company’s management might have on purpose failed to emphasize the chosen official language not to underestimate other languages used. Nevertheless, the vagueness can pose serious communication problems.

With regard to previously mentioned distinction between explicit and implicit language policies, Kingsley (2009:168) in her study gave an example of a bank that has three official working languages (English, German and French). The language policy of the company emphasizes the importance of the German language and English, however

⁷ Language planners are individuals, often linguists, involved in language planning process, language policy design, and corpus planning whether in a country or organization.

the analysis of the practices in the company shows the importance of the French language that is not captured by the policy. This oversight by the multinational corporation's management might point to linguistic resources not being fully used. It is possible that the company could use the French language as a resource if the relevance of it was recognized by the policy and the French language approached as an asset.

In multinational corporations common corporate language is often "imposed from the top, [and] there may be a tendency for top management to regard the language issue as having been addressed and handled" (Welch et al. 2001:202) without assessing the language policy impact. The mere existence of a language policy does not ensure problem free communication. Language choice bares its own structures and it may "create issues of inclusion or exclusion that have serious repercussions" (Angouri 2013:547). In the past there have been numerous examples of language policies that caused serious communicative issues and have affected the performance of the employees and the business prosperity.

Probably one of the most notable examples of the severe impact of a language choice was seen in the merger of the Finnish Merita and the Swedish Nordbanken (Vaara et al. 2005). Mergers generally "introduce complex leadership challenges" (Piekkari et al. 2005:332) even though the two organization merging should be seen as equal (Piekkari et al. 2005). After a merger of the two corporations into one enterprise, Swedish was chosen as a common corporate language on the grounds of practicality. More precisely, the Finnish staff was able to speak Swedish, as it is taught in Finnish schools. Additionally, the majority of Merita Bank documentation was already written in both Finnish and Swedish. The aim of this decision was to prevent costly translations into a third language, for instance, English. However, instead of enabling clear communication "language skills [in the new company were] seen as empowering and disempowering" (Vaara et al. 2005:608). The findings of the study show that "Finnish managers and members of staff felt handicapped by their limited communication skills" (Vaara et al. 2005:608). The lack of language skills "created a strong sense of professional incompetence among many Finns" (Vaara et al. 2005:608). Clearly, in the business context, feeling communicatively and hence

professionally incompetent can have a serious impact on the *professional face*⁸. Additionally, “[s]uch a choice of corporate language was considered a clear message from the top management regarding the division of power” (Vaara et al. 2005:612). The linguistic choices then impacted the power structures in the company. In order to remove the language problems, the management of the MeritaNorbanken moved to a common corporate language, English, which was seen as neutral and was to resolve the tensions created by previous language choice.

A study on Kone Elevators by Marschan-Piekkari et al. (1999b) has shown how language imposes its own structures within an organization. English was chosen as a common corporate language in a Finnish owned multinational Kone Elevators. English, as seen as neutral, was selected in order to remove linguistic issues in the company. However, the findings of the study show that language, i.e. English, in this particular case, acted as a barrier, facilitator and the source of power (Marschan-Piekkari et al. 1999b). In simple terms “those who possess relevant language competence may find themselves in more powerful positions than would normally be the case” (Marschan-Piekkari et al. 1999b:436). Additionally, language in this company created kind of “a shadow structure, based on the language clusters and individuals who were language nodes and mediators” (Marschan-Piekkari et al. 1999b:437). Ultimately, the language proficiency and competence can, in such organizations, have an impact on the career progress and professional performance. More opportunities and more power were available to those with language competence and less power and opportunities were presented to those with limited language skills. This all goes to show that language choice is not a simple matter that it appears to be. It can deeply affect the organization’s structure, pose its own order and influence the moral of the employees of the organization.

Two studies by Rogerson-Ravell (2007; 2008) focused on participation and performance in the international business meetings taking place in English. The study shows some of the challenges business professionals are facing and the damage

⁸ The notion of the *professional face* was introduced by Charles (1996). The *professional face* strategies involve “[b]ehaviour aiming to save Professional Face links up with the status-bound expectations, rights and obligations of Buyers and Sellers. As we have seen, it befits a Buyer to put on a disinterested facade. This facade is part of the Buyer's professional face and he or she will be protecting that professional face when showing this disinterest towards the Seller. Similarly the Seller will be protecting his or her professional face when showing interest towards the deal in general” (Charles 1996:25).

done to their *professional face* (Charles 1996). Some of the issues listed involve problems related to understanding different accents, limited vocabulary, speech processing, but also problems in communication with NSs of English have been pointed out (Rogerson-Ravell 2007:117). Even though, these issues can be seen as minor, generally, in the context of business meetings these issues can have a major impact, particularly because NSs are seen as being more advantageous in this context than NNSs (Rogerson-Ravell 2007:117). A more detailed account of the same study reveals that, overall communication in English in the business meetings was seen as positive. However, NSs of English proved to be more active in meetings than NNSs, which instantly gives them an advantage.

This chapter demonstrated that language choice in multinational corporations is not a simple task and that language management should be taken seriously and approached with caution. Managers in multinational corporations can appoint an official language and consider the language issue handled, but serious consequences can surface when language policy is not explicit enough, or when it does not address the real-life situation in a multinational corporation. Additionally, serious impact can be caused in situations when an official language acts as empowering or disempowering tool imposing its own structure. The employees with limited business skills can find themselves in positions of power solely based on language proficiency and vice versa. Finally, linguistic problems can have self-esteem impact and influence the *professional face* and professional authority. As the result language in a multinational corporation can act as a barrier, resource and source of power. These three positions will be examined in the following chapter.

3.3. Language as a barrier, resource and source of power in multinational corporations

In the language management studies it has been found that language in a multinational corporation can take several positions, namely, it can act as a barrier, resource and source of power (Marschan-Piekkari et al. 1999b; Thomas 2008; Vaara et al. 2005; Sherman, Engelhardt & Nekvapil 2012). This chapter will explore these three positions and the effect language has on the multinational corporation staff.

Previously it was explained that in a multinational corporation there are often three kinds of languages involved, namely, common corporate language, subsidiary or local languages, and parent company language or language of the headquarters. Some companies opt out for a monolingual language policy and rely on the use of the common corporate language. Other companies introduce polylingual language policy that allows use of the common corporate language, parent company language and subsidiary languages. Each of these choices a multinational corporation management makes will have positive and negative sides.

Thomas (2008:311) pointed out how each of the languages used in a company can act as a resource on the one side, and as a barrier, on the other as shown in figure 1. For instance, choosing a common corporate language, on the one hand, can be resourceful in that it will improve communication on the global level and create sense of belonging in a corporate family. On the other hand, common corporate language may limit availability of information, expansion into foreign markets and create issues and place limitations on employees who have limited language proficiency in the common corporate language. An example from study on Kone Elevators (Marschan-Piekkari 1999b:427) shows that “lack of English skill prevented staff at middle management and operating levels from attending Kone training programs”. Although, this example shows how language can pose limitations, not attending training programs is just a small part of the problems that might arise.

	<i>Resource</i>	<i>Barrier</i>
Common corporate language	Improves global corporate-wide communication Facilitates a shared global corporate culture	a) May restrict access to information in other languages b) May restrict access to foreign markets c) May result in communication barriers between employees with limited proficiency in the CCL
Subsidiary languages	Improves access to information in foreign languages Improves access to foreign markets	a) May result in communication problems between employees and expatriates b) Often does not facilitate development of a shared corporate culture c) High cost of expatriate training
Parent company language	Maintains strong corporate culture in the home country Facilitates top-down decision-making	a) Limits communication with local management b) May increase cultural conflict in parent–subsidiary relations

Figure 1 Language as a resource and barrier (Thomas 2008:311)

Similarly, a parent company language can work well to keep the moral high in the headquarters and ease top-down communication processes (Thomas 2008:311), but it can affect the relationship of the subsidiary and the parent company negatively. In Europe, which is linguistically very diverse, particularly in the EU, language of parent company can have serious cultural impact. Sherman, Engelhard and Nekvapil (2012) point out to the historical relationships between languages. In the context of the EU “[o]ne important distinction is that between language of parent company, which symbolizes economic power, and the language of the most of the employees in the subsidiary, particularly when two languages belong to an older EU state and an EU new member state” (Sherman, Engelhard & Nekvapil 2012:301). The historical and cultural relationship of a country will be transferred on the companies in those countries. Therefore, choosing a parent company language from an older EU member state as the common corporate language will bring with itself complex relationships and hierarchies. The effect of such language policy was seen in the merger of MeritaNordbanken (Vaara et al. 2005).

In sociology, language and identity are inseparable. Vaara et al. (2005) explain that:

national identities symbolized by language easily become specifically salient and significant social categories and identities. In fact, one can assume that a selection of a particular language will inadvertently create superiority-inferiority relationships between the people belonging or not belonging to the group that shares the language and the culture symbolized by it.

Therefore, through creation of dichotomous superiority – inferiority relationships language can be an empowering, or disempowering tool in the setting of multinational corporations. This is particularly true in the case of common corporate language being the parent company language. The topic of power division as influenced by language was explored in Vaara et al. (2005) and Marschan-Piekkari et al. (1999b). In Vaara et al. (2005:612) using Swedish as common corporate language “was considered a clear message from top management regarding division of power”. Finnish employees found themselves immediately in the weaker position due to limited language proficiency.

Similarly, in Marschan-Piekkari et al. (1999b) it was shown how individuals can find themselves in a position of power solely based on the language skills as shown in figure 2. Marschan-Piekkari et al. (1999b:432) in Kone Elevators study found that

individuals who were fluent in the common corporate language, the subsidiary language and the parent company language were in the position of more power, as more information were available to such individuals, also they are seen as an asset to the company because of their skills. Such approach aligns with Victor's notion (1992) that for the international business having good communication skills is more relevant than having technical business knowledge.

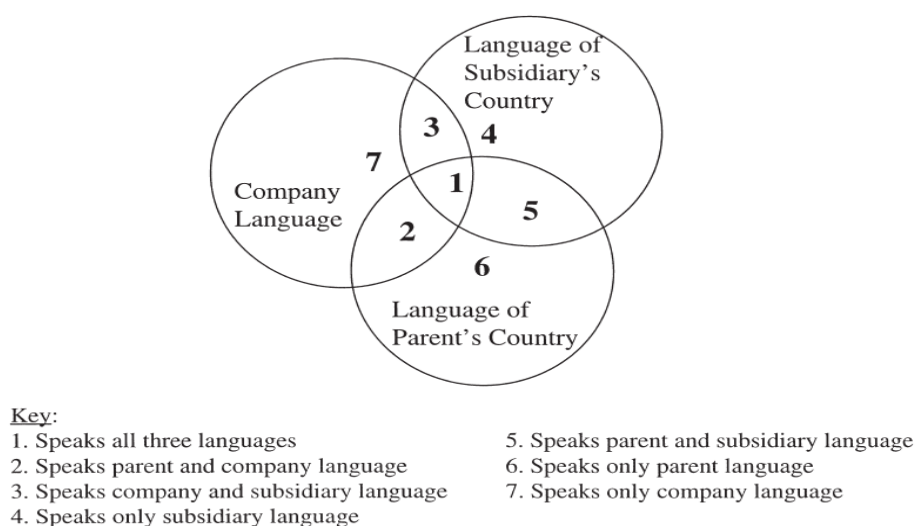


Figure 2 Language as power (Marschan-Piekkari et al. 1999b:432)

When designing a corporate language policy, a corporate language planner needs to be aware of all the positions language can take. However, even when there is a language policy in a multinational corporation, language can still act as a barrier, resource or source of power. Probably, the most serious of the three positions language can occupy is the one of a barrier. When language acts as a barrier it directly impedes communication process, which can have a direct impact on the business prosperity. In order to deal with linguistic barrier there is a spectrum of strategies to be employed, both on the personal level and on the level of corporation management. The following chapter will take a deeper look into these strategies.

3.4. Dealing with a linguistic barrier: the strategies to employ

Once a language starts to act as a barrier in communication, different strategies may be used. In the context of multinational corporations there are strategies that are employed as a part of individual language management and strategies that can be used by the management of a corporation. There are many strategies that are used to deal with the linguistic obstacles, but this paper will particularly focus on three that

are relevant for the topic of this thesis. Nekvapil and Sherman (2009:187) point out three most prominent strategies used as a part of the individual management, namely avoidance strategies, foreigner talk and the use of the native language. Besides the individual strategies, in order for companies to deal with the linguistic issues, language nodes can be designated to resolve miscommunication, language training can be organized and common corporate language can be assigned.

The avoidance strategies are “defined as management strategies that involve not performing a communicative act due to the difficulties associated with it, or selecting a communicative act that requires less work, less confrontation or does not threaten one’s professional image” (Nekvapil & Sherman 2009:187). An example of an avoidance strategy involves preference of email communication, or written communication in general, over telephone communication, or oral communication. If an employee feels insecure or not proficient enough in a language, it is worth mentioning that it is normally the common corporate language that is the source of issues, then the employee will try to avoid a direct confrontation and will refer to less invasive communication medium, such as any of the written communication channels.

A more extreme example of an avoidance strategy is given by Marschan et al. (1997:593) where one Kone Elevators employee chooses to ignore information sent to him from the headquarters because of his inability to understand the information in Finnish. The danger of the avoidance strategy is related to the complete disregard of the information given in a language that seems to be the issue, as seen in the example of Kone Elevators employee. Another problem that presents itself is that avoiding oral communication can be time consuming. For instance, if information is required urgently and an employee refuses to provide the information via oral medium of communication, this can cause the delay and impact the work. In contrast, the avoidance strategy can be beneficial in that if an employee feels more comfortable using written communication over oral, the possibility of an error is reduced.

Nekvapil and Sherman (2009) point out to another strategy employed i.e. the foreigner talk. This strategy involves speech moderation such as “slowing down the speech tempo, using more simple vocabulary and many other features” (Nekvapil & Sherman 2009:188). NSs normally employ this strategy and speakers who have high proficiency in a language. Moderating speech especially in communication with NNSs

will ensure better understanding. Additionally, when foreigner talk falls short, Nekvapil and Sherman (2009) mention the native language inserts as one of the strategies used for successful communication. Similarly, Feely and Harzing (2003) recognize *functional multilingualism* as mixture of different languages used to achieve communicative success. More precisely, in business interactions participants would rely on languages at their disposal to get their message across.

In order to deal with the language barrier, a multinational corporation's management may employ different strategies as well. A way to go about linguistic barriers is to use language nodes (Feely & Harzing 2003:46). Language nodes are employees who possess language proficiency and who "establish themselves as the default communication channel between the company and the external world" (Feely & Harzing 2003:46). Often it is expatriate workers who take over the role of language nodes. Welch et al. (2001). Marschan et al. (1997:593) point out:

the expatriate's role as a 'language nod' may continue after the person has been moved from a subsidiary. Thus, the use of language intermediaries may be initially an individual's coping behaviour to a specific translation requirement, but ultimately this action may enhance horizontal communication as part of a network of personal contacts facilitated by language connections.

Even though, the role of expatriates is to act as cultural and often linguistic mediators, their service maybe flawed. As Welch et al. (2001:198) argue "[i]t maybe that expatriate employee lacks sufficient fluency in the local language, which inhibits his/her ability to transfer information or communicate effectively". Another issues Welch et al. (2001) list is that an expatriate may be "excluded, either deliberately or otherwise, from vital subsidiary information because of the lack of the language skills" (Welch et al. 2001:199). Clearly, language will not act as a barrier in communication between a subsidiary and the headquarters where the expatriate acts as a mediator i.e. a language node, when the expatriate possesses the relevant language knowledge. However, the existence of an expatriate does not remove the issue of the linguistic barrier if the very expatriate is not skillful in a subsidiary language. The information can be withheld from the expatriate in the case of the second.

Additionally, MNS's management can offer language-training courses to their staff. Organizing language-training courses for the staff of multinational corporations is a logical choice. As Feely and Harzing (2003:44) explain:

[although] [t]he immediate and understandable reaction to any skills-shortage in a business is to consider personnel development and certainly the language training industry is well developed, offering programmes at almost every level and in numerous languages. However, without doubting the value of language training no company should be deluded into believing this to be assured of success. Training in most companies is geared to the economic cycle. When times are good money is invested in training. When belts get tightened training is one of the first “luxuries” to be pared down.

Today, the majority of companies are offering language courses. The result of a study on solutions to language barrier in multinational corporations by Harzing, Köster and Magner (2011) show that in half of the companies they investigated in their study, language training costs were covered by the company itself. However, it is questionable how much funding in a multinational corporation is assigned for such courses. As Feely and Harzing (2003) note, language training does not guarantee successful acquisition of a language. The training still creates conditions for the acquisition and improvement to take place.

Finally, it was mentioned in the earlier chapters that a multinational corporation can choose a common corporate language in which to do its business. As seen in the study by Marschan-Piekkari et al. (1999b), which has been discussed earlier, common corporate language does not always resolve all the linguistic barrier issues, it can, what is more, deepen the problem further. English is often chosen to be a common corporate language as it is a business lingua franca. Being a lingua franca, English is seen as neutral. Study by Vaara et al. (2005) shows that it is English that was chosen as a neutral, impartial medium of communication after Swedish was used as a common corporate language in the merged MeritaNordbanken.

As a major downside of a common corporate language Feely and Harzing (2003:46) point out that “a common corporate language may well enhance intra-company communication, it does nothing to ease the language barrier with external bodies”. Common corporate language does not promote linguistic diversity in a multinational corporation, while it may solve communication issues in the company, it may close doors in external relationships and company development. A study by Welch et al. (2001:193) shows how language of a company “influences the pattern of foreign market expansion”. Welch et al. (2001:195) add that “there is a strong tendency for companies to stay within the same language group”. This would mean that a company from Germany will probably try to expand its business in Austria or

Switzerland as they are both German speaking countries. Therefore, language choices companies make have influence on the development of their business.

Language policy decisions are never naive, or simple. No matter how carefully planned, an official language of a multinational corporation can in the end act as a barrier. On the personal management level employees can rely on the avoidance strategy and opt out for a communicative channel they feel the most comfortable with. However, even such strategy is not without repercussions. Avoidance strategy can be costly, time-consuming and not very effective. Additionally, ignoring set of information fully can lead to more serious consequences. When it comes to NSs and more advanced communicators, foreigner talk i.e. language moderation can come in handy to control what is being communicated and make certain the message is understood properly. In contrast, the speakers who are not fluent will resolve to use of the native language to cope with the linguistic the barrier.

To deal with linguistic obstacles a multinational corporation can appoint language nods, often expatriate employees, to facilitate communication flow. However, even this choice is not risk-free. Expatriates employees may not be skillful enough in the local language or they cannot access certain information. More effective way to go about this is for a multinational corporation to offer language training or designate a common corporate language. Still even the two are not without liability. Language training can be costly, and common corporate language can impact the direction the business takes. This all goes to show that multinational corporations have far more on their plates to think about than how to manage their business affairs.

4. The case study

4.1. Problem outline

This thesis is a study on UniCredit Bank Austria AG⁹ and its subsidiary companies in Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic and Slovakia, Hungary, Romania, Serbia, and Slovenia. English has been chosen as the official language of UniCredit Group, the holding, parent company of Bank Austria, and its daughter, subsidiary, companies. The principal objective of the study is to understand how the communication in English is organized in this multinational company. Furthermore, an empirical study is

⁹ UniCredit Bank Austria AG will be in the further text referred to as Bank Austria

conducted in order to comprehend the purposes in which English is used, possible difficulties following the choice of English as the common corporate language of this company, and finally attitudes towards the use of English for work purposes and its impact on the professional performance and career direction.

Firstly, a brief historical overview of Bank Austria multinational company will be given with the purpose of understanding its national and linguistic diversity. Furthermore, the communication organization and the language policy will be examined. Finally, the aims, the method and the procedure of the empirical case study will be specified, following the findings, discussion of the findings and the concluding remarks.

4.2. Bank Austria

4.2.1. History

In order to understand the national diversity of Bank Austria a brief historical and organizational overview will be given. The historical overview will not go into a detailed description of the events that led to the creation of Bank Austria, but will focus only on those events that are relevant for the topic of this thesis. The relevant events that are going to be mentioned in this section involve those historical moments that led to the national and linguistic abundance of this company.

The company history and corporate structure of Bank Austria traces back to the 19th century. The structure the bank has today is the result of various merger and acquisition processes. Bank Austria was established in 1991 through the merger of Österreichische Länderbank AG (founded originally in 1880) and Zentralsparkasse und Kommerzialbank AG, which was founded in 1907 (Bank Austria Annual Report 1999; Bank Austria Website). Later, in 1997, Bank Austria began acquiring shares of the former state owned bank Creditanstalt, finalizing the acquisition in 2003 when Bank Austria Creditanstalt was officially established. Based on the Bank Austria Creditanstalt Annual Report from 1999, already at that time Bank Austria had an international character. It had a wide presence in countries of Central and Eastern Europe,¹⁰ more precisely in Poland, Ukraine, Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary, Slovenia, Croatia and Romania. Additionally, at the time there were plans for further expansion into other CEE markets as demonstrated by the figure 3.

¹⁰ Countries of Central and Eastern Europe where Bank Austria has its business will be in the further text referred to as CEE countries.

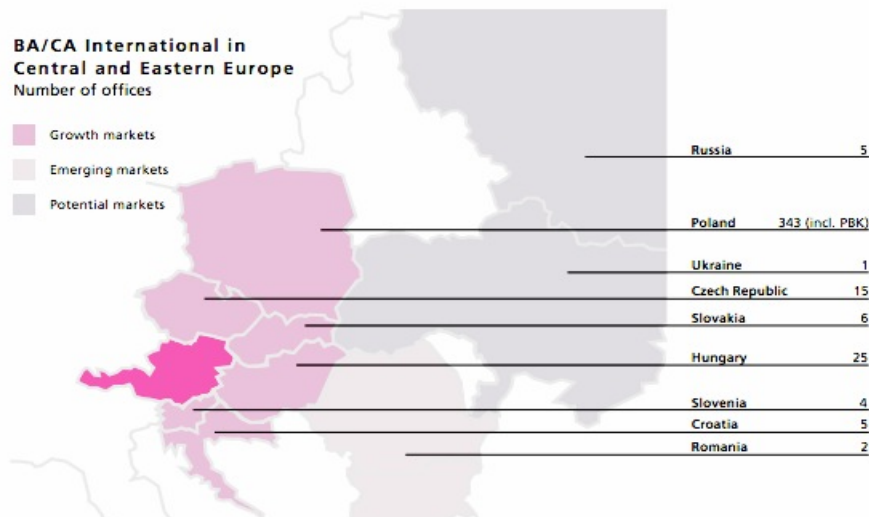


Figure 3 Bank Austria presence in the CEE countries in 1999 (Bank Austria Annual Report 1999:64)

In 2000, Bank Austria and HypoVereinsbank AG ¹¹merged and exchanged shares. In this process, businesses in Central and Eastern Europe of HVB Group were transferred to Bank Austria Creditanstalt. Gerhard Randa, Chairman and CEO of Bank Austria, in 2000, stated that “Within the HVB Group, we as Bank Austria have been entrusted with the important responsibility for the growth market of Central and Eastern Europe” (Bank Austria Annual Report 2000:15). Additionally, the merger clearly further strengthened Bank Austria Creditanstalt’s presence in the CEE markets as demonstrated by the following quotation (Bank Austria Annual Report 2000:65):

Given its excellent starting position, Bank Austria will be responsible for the business development of the HVB Group in the CEE market, where it will combine its units with those of HVB in line with the “Bank of the Regions” concept. Global operations outside CEE will be directed by HVB and the Bank Austria units will be integrated into HVB together with their existing business and staff base.

The very same year Bank Austria took its operations into another CEE country, namely Bulgaria as shown in figure 4 (Bank Austria Annual Report 2000:64).

¹¹ HypoVereinsbank AG will be in the further text referred to as HVB Group

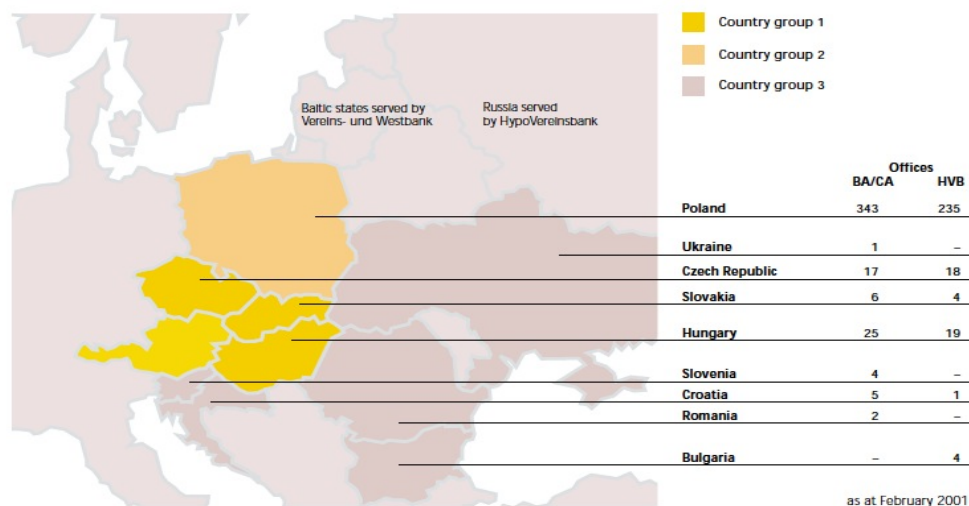


Figure 4 Bank Austria presence in the CEE countries in 2000 (Bank Austria Annual Report 2000:64)

UniCredit Group acquired HVB Group and in the same process Bank Austria Creditanstalt in 2005 (Bank Austria Creditanstalt Annual Report 2005). All entities now being part of UniCredit Group, as the result of the acquisition HVB Group was left in charge of the German market, while Bank Austria Creditanstalt was left with the Austrian and, more importantly, was put in charge of all the CEE markets. Bank Austria Creditanstalt was not only left in charge of CEE markets it was previously responsible for, but additionally took over UniCredit Group interests in these markets as asserted in the Bank Austria Creditanstalt Annual Report (2005:18):

BA-CA¹² will perform the sub-holding company function for UniCredit Group's operations in CEE. It will manage, within UniCredit Group guidelines, the Group's banking network in this region, excluding Poland, which will be directly managed by UniCredit. The responsibility for Turkey and Ukraine is subject to further consideration. BA-CA will take over the banking subsidiaries and branches of UniCredit and of HypoVereinsbank in this region.

Already before the merger with UniCredit Group, Bank Austria was present in many CEE countries with offices in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Romania, Serbia, Slovakia and Slovenia. However, after the merger, Bank Austria Creditanstalt's position in these markets was secured and extended. During the re-organization process within UniCredit Group starting from 2006, Bank Austria took over businesses in Russia and Turkey (Bank Austria Annual Report 2006:28). Finally, in 2007 HVB Group sold all its shares of Bank Austria

¹² Bank Austria Creditanstalt

Creditanstalt to UniCredit Group leaving 95 % of Bank Austria Creditanstalt shares in possession of UniCredit Group (Bank Austria UniCredit Group Annual Report 2007:25). After the sale of Bank Austria Creditanstalt shares to UniCredit Group, Bank Austria took over the operations in: Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and Kazakhstan (Bank Austria UniCredit Group Annual Report 2007:25). The very same year the rebranding process took place, which led to the creation of the Bank Austria brand.

Today, in 2015, Bank Austria operates in 14 countries, namely: Austria, Azerbaijan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Hungary, Romania, Russia, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Turkey and Ukraine. German, Polish and Italian markets are under the supervision of UniCredit Group (Bank Austria Annual Report 2013). There are total of 13 CEE countries under the supervision of Bank Austria as shown in figure 5.

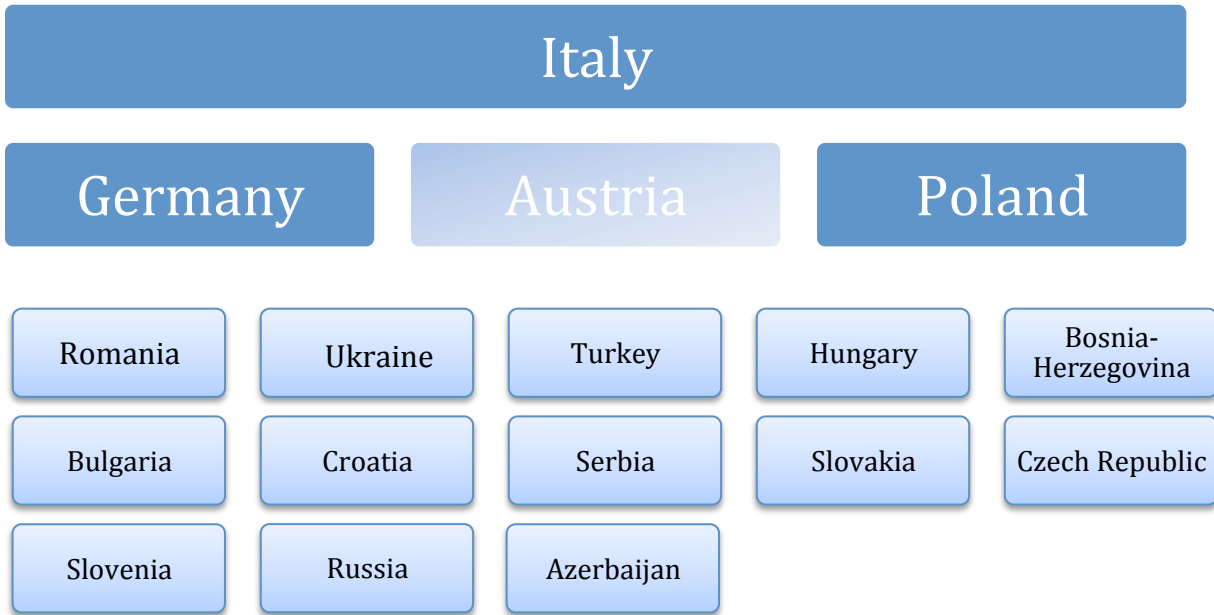


Figure 5 The CEE countries under the supervision of Bank Austria

The acquisition of the HVB Group in 2005, and further acquisition of Bank Austria Creditanstalt in 2007, resulted in UniCredit Group having the biggest banking network in the CEE region. All operations of UniCredit Group in the CEE region were reorganized and are all now under the responsibility of Bank Austria headquarters in Vienna. This is the reason why Bank Austria today is one of the most international Austrian companies employing people from all over its network in CEE and doing

business in a number of CEE countries. In the following chapter communication flow organization of this multinational will be examined in more detail.

4.2.2. Bank Austria communication organization

After UniCredit Group acquired HVB Group and Bank Austria in 2005 a new business model was necessary in order to restructure the operations within the new company. HVB Group was left in charge of the market in Germany, and Bank Austria, at the time Bank Austria Creditanstalt, was to have control over the CEE markets it already represented earlier, along with UniCredit Group’s CEE interests. In 2005 UniCredit Group started to implement a new business model of organization, as pointed out in Bank Austria Creditanstalt Annual Report (2006:10) “UniCredit has adopted a division based organizational model”. The division based model introduced different divisions in charge of certain areas of business, namely, Retail Division, CEE Division, Corporate Division as shown in figure 6.

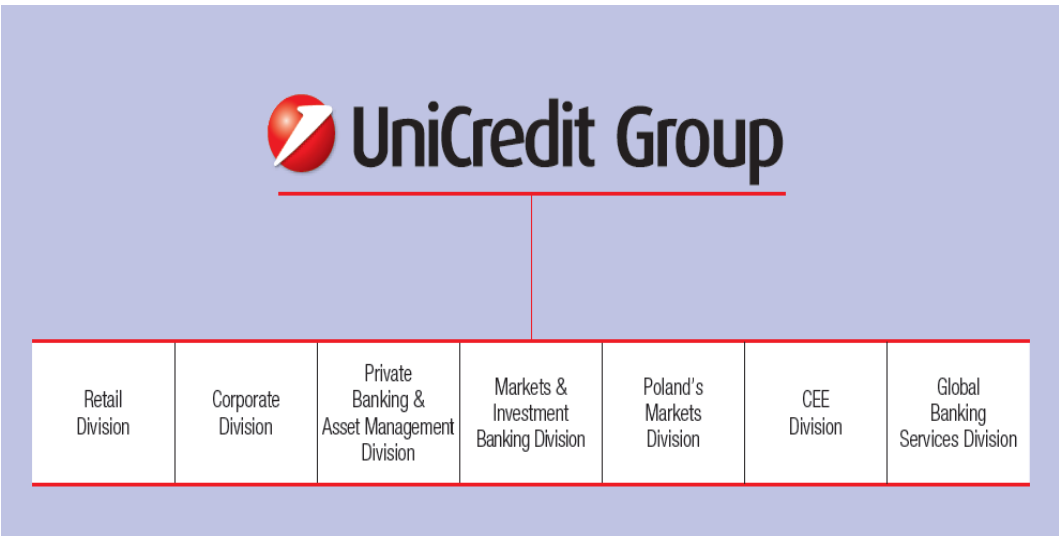


Figure 6 UniCredit Division business model (Bank Austria Creditanstalt Annual Report 2006:10)

In the Annual Report (2006:24) this decision is justified by the fact that “The CEE subsidiaries are combined in a separate Division because market maturity, product penetration and the respective starting position in the individual markets still differ considerably”. It can be concluded that CEE division was seen as an entity in itself, and as such it was supervised by Bank Austria. Bank Austria Annual Report (2007:63) confirms that “Bank Austria took over the sub-holding company function for the CEE banking subsidiaries of UniCredit Group [...] with the exception of operations managed within Poland’s Markets, the banking subsidiaries in CEE countries form

Bank Austria's CEE business segment and the CEE Division of UniCredit". Moreover, in order to further advance the connection between the divisions, in 2007, UniCredit Group assigned 3 managerial area with a deputy CEO as a head of each (Bank Austria Annual Report 2007:12). The CEO reports to the managing board of UniCredit Group. Additionally, the CEO acts as "Country Chairman representing Bank Austria within UniCredit" (Bank Austria Annual Report 2013:23).

It is clear that close-knit structural organization controls communication direction. In simple terms, the CEOs of the CEE countries under supervision of Bank Austria report to Bank Austria, furthermore Bank Austria CEO reports back to UniCredit Group managerial board. Clearly, communication is taking place between the specific departments in Bank Austria and in the CEE countries. Important is that communication is mostly streamlined from the CEE countries, passed on to Bank Austria, and then to UniCredit Group and vice versa. Similar principle is followed in the communication flow between the departments.

Given that structural reorganization was one of the first steps taken after the acquisition of Bank Austria it is obvious how proper structuring is crucial for a successful business. Restructuring and constant updates of the business model contribute even more to this fact. Along with the clear organizational structure and roles that are to be occupied by the employees, the direction of the communication is achieved. Clear and streamlined ways of communication and reporting enable striving business. However, having in mind the national and above all linguistic diversity, the question of what language, or languages, to use to achieve free flowing communication arises. The following chapter will take a more detailed look at languages used in this multinational company.

4.2.3. Bank Austria language choice

In the previous chapter it has been clarified that Bank Austria is nationally very diverse environment, and therefore, it is linguistically diverse as well. Diversity, in terms of nationality, race, gender, religion, age and language, is valued by UniCredit Group and Bank Austria. The importance of such diversity is pointed out in almost every Bank Austria Annual Report published. When a company involves as many as 14 countries, and 14 different national languages, the question of what languages, or language to use in internal communication arises. Normally, language choice is

regulated by an official document i.e. language policy. However, on the course of this research it was not possible to get hold of such a document in Bank Austria. However, chunks of information related to language choice could be found in Annual Reports and will be presented here.

Based on the information collected from the Annual Reports it can be concluded that UniCredit Group and Bank Austria give the importance to language training. More precisely, in the Bank Austria Annual Reports from 2002, 2004, and 2008 it could be seen that language training, that is foreign language training occupied, 6-9% of all the training that took place. This number is indeed not high, however, the recognition given to the foreign language training is what is relevant. The Bank Austria Annual Reports do not specify the type of language training, more precisely what languages were taught in the language training program. Bank Austria Annual Report from 2008 is more specific on this matter by stating that during 2008 “[t]he broad range of courses offered by the bank in terms of content and method further raised the level of general competency in English” (2008:79). This goes to prove that the knowledge of languages is valued in this multinational, and even more so of the English language.

Besides language the training courses Bank Austria offers its employees a possibility of participating in a trainee program. The trainee program is aimed at young professionals with the potential to occupy the managerial positions in the future (Bank Austria Creditanstalt Annual Report 2005:102). The main focus of this program is to enable the participants gain the experience and knowledge of the essential elements such as “[g]eneral management skills such as presentation techniques, negotiating, project management and **financial English**” [my emphasis] (Bank Austria Creditanstalt Annual Report 2005:102). The trainee program prepares the young professionals for the leadership positions they might take over in the future. Clearly, for the leadership positions in the company business know-how is of the utmost importance, however the relevance of the English language skills is not overlooked. The knowledge of English, more precisely, financial English, goes hand in hand with the skillfulness and knowledge of the banking business.

Furthermore, the importance of the knowledge of the English language is emphasized in the Bank Austria Annual Report from 2007. The report states (2007:98):

[i]n order to continually raise the level of general competency in English, **the official Group language**, “English Guidelines for UniCredit Group” were introduced. These guidelines call for obligatory proficiency tests to diagnose individual levels of language proficiency, which make it possible to create participant groups with similar ability levels, on the one hand, and to document individual language progress on the other [my emphasis]

A language policy normally exists in a form of an explicit document (Kingsley 2009). In the case of Bank Austria and UniCredit Group an explicit document was not located, however it does not mean that language policy is completely absent. With regard to this, Spolsky (2004:11) notes that “the easiest to recognize are policies that exist in clear-cut labeled statements in official documents. They might, for example, take the form of a clause in a national constitution, or a language law, or a cabinet document or an administrative regulation”. This is a perspective that is adopted by this paper. Having in mind that annual reports are official documents, then the earlier quotation from Bank Austria Annual Report 2007 clearly serves as a language policy. In this annual report it is clearly specified that the official language of UniCredit Group, and hence of Bank Austria, is English. This is a case of a general language policy (Bergenholtz & Johnsen 2006). Additionally, English language proficiency in UniCredit Group is graded and employees are given an opportunity to improve their language skills. This all goes to show the central position the English language has within this multinational corporation. However, over the course of this research it was not possible to get hold of English Guidelines for UniCredit Group document and get a more detailed overview of the way English language is accounted for in this company.

Even though, Bank Austria Annual Report from year 2007 states that the official language of UniCredit Group is English, still this multinational does not have a monolingual language policy. The lack of monolingual language policy differentiates UniCredit Group and Bank Austria from companies such as Finish Kone Elevators, which opted out for one language to fit all the needs (Marschan et al. 1997). It has been mentioned previously that local languages of the subsidiaries are used for a variety of reasons within the company, such as customer relations, or due to legal matters that involve the production of official documents in local languages of the subsidiaries. It appears that language choice is governed by the purpose of use. In this respect UniCredit Group and Bank Austria are not sole examples, Nestlé, for instance, also does not have a common corporate language, but relies on an array of languages of its subsidiaries (Marschan-Piekkari et al. 1999a:380). English-only, or

any other monolingual language policies can result in a variety of problems (Vaara et al. 2005; Marschan-Piekkari et al. 1999a:380) one of which is discrimination (Thomas 2007:95). It is more common for companies to establish a language of global operations, or a common corporate language, but still to persevere using languages of its subsidiaries for practical purposes, but also as a way of demonstrating cultural respect and appreciation.

In conclusion, UniCredit Group acknowledges importance of languages through language training, and furthermore, recognizes the role of English as global lingua franca and business lingua franca. UniCredit Group positions relevance of English in banking business hand in hand with business know-how by making it one of the key foci of its leadership-training program. Although, Bank Austria does not have an explicit language policy that organizes communication flow, the information offered by the Bank Austria 2007 Annual Report demonstrates in a straightforward manner the position of the company when it comes to language choice. Albeit, the English language is the official language of UniCredit Group and Bank Austria, local, subsidiary languages are also used. The following chapter of this thesis will focus on specifying the aims of this study.

4.3. Case study aims

The official language of UniCredit Group is English, however, in practice, for a variety of reasons, for instance, legal purposes, customer relations and alike, languages of UniCredit Group subsidiaries are also used. Having in mind the language policy of Bank Austria is general and implicit, a variety of issues can come about with regard to the use of English in this multinational corporation. Therefore, this research is principally interested in the use of the English language in Bank Austria and its subsidiary companies. More precisely, this research is set on investigating for what purposes English is used, in what forms and situations and how frequently it is used in this multinational corporation. Furthermore, difficulties and attitudes related to use of English for work purposes, in this multinational corporation, will be examined.

The objectives of this research can be organized into 3 main groups of aims with further sub-aims, as follows:

1. Forms, situations, and channels English is used for:

- Spoken/written
- Work/social situations at work/private life
- Channels (emails, documentation, phone calls, conference calls, meetings)

2. Difficulties

- Difficulties understanding other speakers when they speak English
- Difficulties making oneself understood when speaking English
- Difficulties across key channels of communication in a corporate environment (emails, documentation, phone calls, conference calls, meetings)

3. Attitudes towards

- The use of English for work purposes
- Career and performance impact
- Attitudes towards English being used as a common corporate language

4.4. Research method

The method used for data gathering was a questionnaire. The questionnaire was aimed at collecting qualitative and quantitative data, therefore it contained close-ended, open-ended and scale based questions. The survey compiled consists of 55 questions, however, all questions were not shown to the participants as some of the questions were conditioned, in cases when more detailed information was required. An online-based tool Qualtrics (www.qualtrics.com) was used for the compilation of the questions, distribution of the survey, response collection and later, data analysis. Additionally, a more in-depth data analysis was conducted using SPSS.

In its inquiry of the particular issues caused by the use of English for work in Bank Austria and its subsidiaries this research builds upon findings of the previous studies related to the use of English in multinational corporations by Louhiala-Salminen et al. 2005; Poncini 2002, Rogerson-Ravell 2007; Rogerson-Ravell 2008; Fredriksson et al. 2006; Vaara et al. 2005; Piekkari et al. 2005; Kankaanranta & Louhiala-Salminen 2010. The survey questions are to a large extent based on the findings of the aforementioned studies.

4.5. Sampling

The survey was distributed to the CEE Controlling unit of Bank Austria in Vienna, and the equivalent Controlling units in the subsidiaries in Bulgaria, Czech Republic and Slovakia, Hungary, Romania, Serbia and Slovenia. The CEE Controlling unit of Bank Austria in Vienna is in charge of monitoring the performance and sustainable development of the subsidiaries, which are required to report back on their own performance and development to Bank Austria. The nature of the controlling work requires the unit members of Bank Austria and the subsidiaries to be in a daily contact. Therefore, given the close-knit work relationship of the controlling unit members, and the national and linguistic diversity of the employees in this unit, it is English that is used in communication. The employees in the unit often do not share a mutual culture, or a language, but they rely on English as a global means of communication, that is English as a lingua franca. There are other departments in the bank that use English as well, however CEE Controlling unit is chosen for the purposes of this research because of its size, as it is the largest department with regard to the number of employees working in it who rely on the use of English on a daily basis.

The controlling unit counts total of 90 members. There are 31 employees working in subsidiary in Austria, 7 in Bulgaria, 8 in Czech Republic and Slovakia¹³, 11 Hungary, 16 in Romania, 8 in Serbia and 8 in Slovenia. The survey was distributed online via circular email by the heads of the CEE Controlling units. The survey was sent to all 90 employees. The participants took the survey voluntarily and anonymously. 83 employees took the survey, however 14 participants dropped out of the survey, therefore the dropout rate was 16%. Finally, 83% of the responses, that is, 69 responses were valid and were used for the analysis. The following chapter will be focused on the presentation of the demographic and linguistic data of the survey participants.

¹³ UniCredit Slovakia was integrated with UniCredit Czech Republic in December 2013

4.6. Demographic data

The participants in the survey are 27 to 51 years old. 55% of the participants are 31 – 40 years old, 29% of the participants are 27-30 years old, and 16% of the participants were 41-51 years old as it can be seen in figure 7.

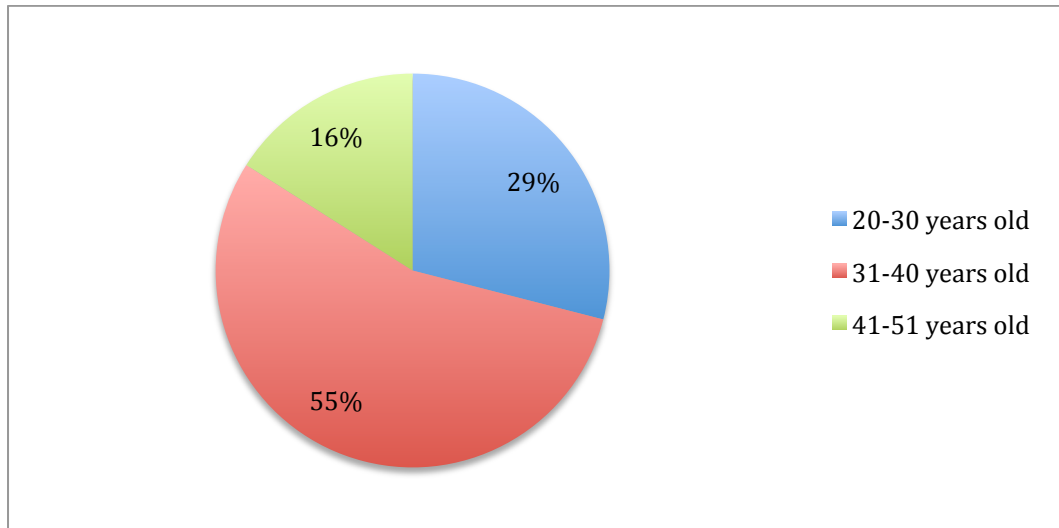


Figure 7 The age of the participants

Furthermore, there were 32 male participants, 46%, and 37 female participants, 54%. It can be noted that the number of male and female participants is almost equally distributed.

Figure 8 shows that 67% of the participants have been working for UniCredit Group for more than 5 years, 25% from 3-5 years, 7% for 1-3 years, and finally 1% for less than 1 year.

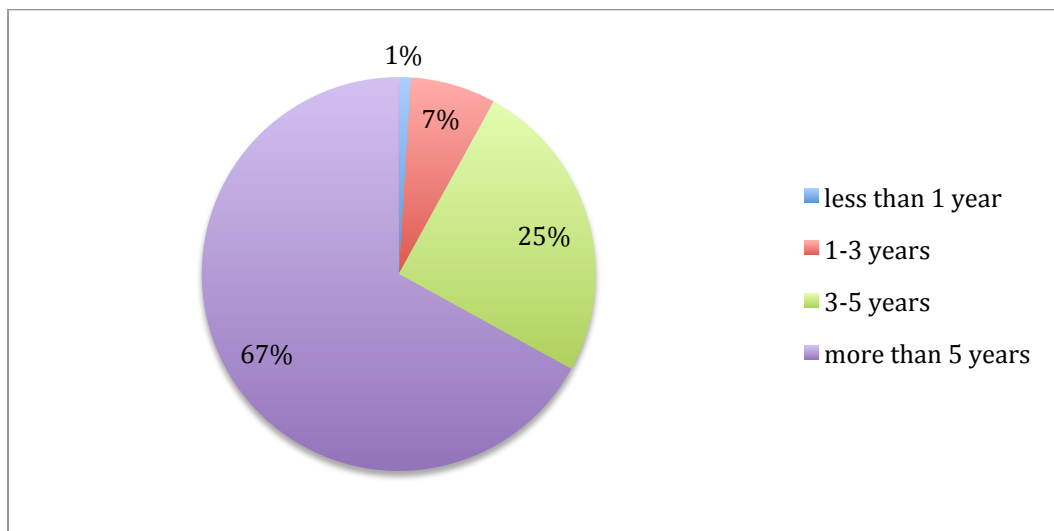


Figure 8 The length of the employment in Bank Austria

It is relevant to point out that certain CEE Controlling unit departments are bigger than the others, therefore there were more participants taking part in this survey in some countries than in the others. In figure 9 it is shown that 38% of the participants work in the subsidiary in Austria. The Romanian subsidiary accounts for 22% of the participants. 13% of the survey respondents work in Slovenia. 7% of the participants are working in the Czech Republic and Slovakian subsidiary. Another 7% are employed in Serbia. The Hungarian subsidiary also accounts for 7% of the respondents who took part in the survey. Finally, employees working in Bulgaria account for 6%.

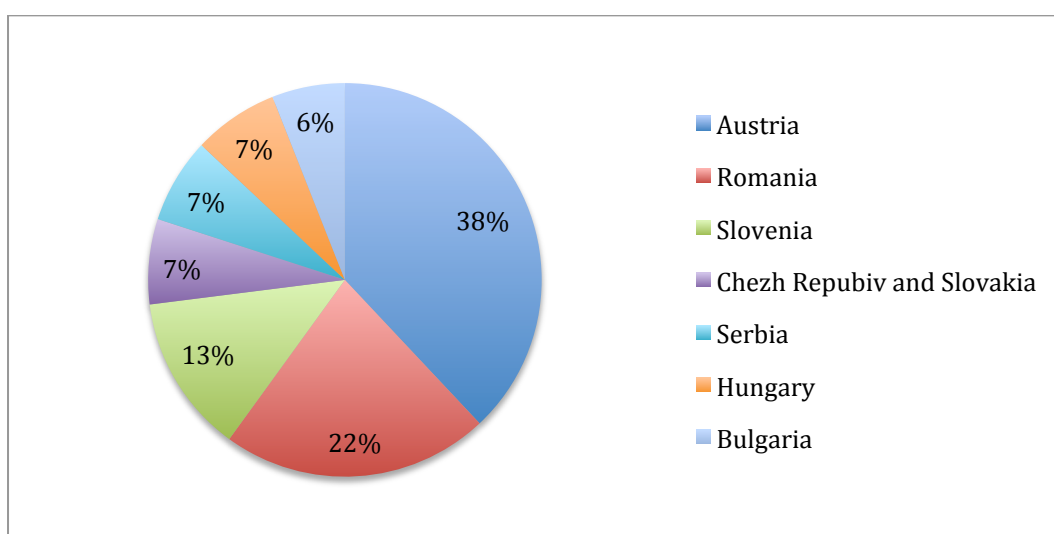


Figure 9 The country of work

It is interesting to note the discrepancy between the countries respondents originate from as compared to countries they are working in. Figure 10 shows that only 10% of the employees are coming from Austria. 26% respondents are from Romania. Furthermore, 12% of the respondents state they are from Slovenia, 10% of the respondents come from Hungary. 9% of the employees are from Bulgaria. Another 9% come from Czech Republic. 7% of the employees are form Serbia. There are less than 13 employees coming from Croatia, Germany, Italy, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Latvia, Moldova, Poland, Russia and Ukraine, together they account for 20%. The discrepancy mentioned indicates the presence of the expatriate employees in Bank Austria and its subsidiaries.

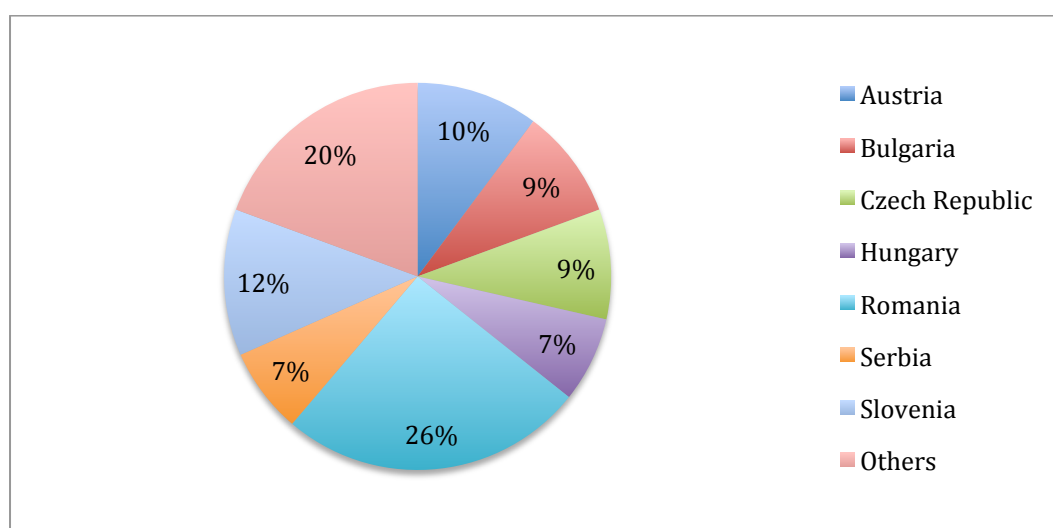


Figure 10 The country of origin

4.7. Linguistic Background

Given the national diversity of Bank Austria employees, linguistic diversity is not at all surprising. When it comes to native languages of the survey participants figure 11 shows that 26 % of the participants have Romanian as their native language, 14% speak German as their mother tongue. 11% of the participants' native language is Slovenian. 7% speak Serbian as their L1, and another 7% speak Bulgarian as their L1. Native speakers of Croatian, Italian, Polish and Russian together account for 16% of the survey respondents.

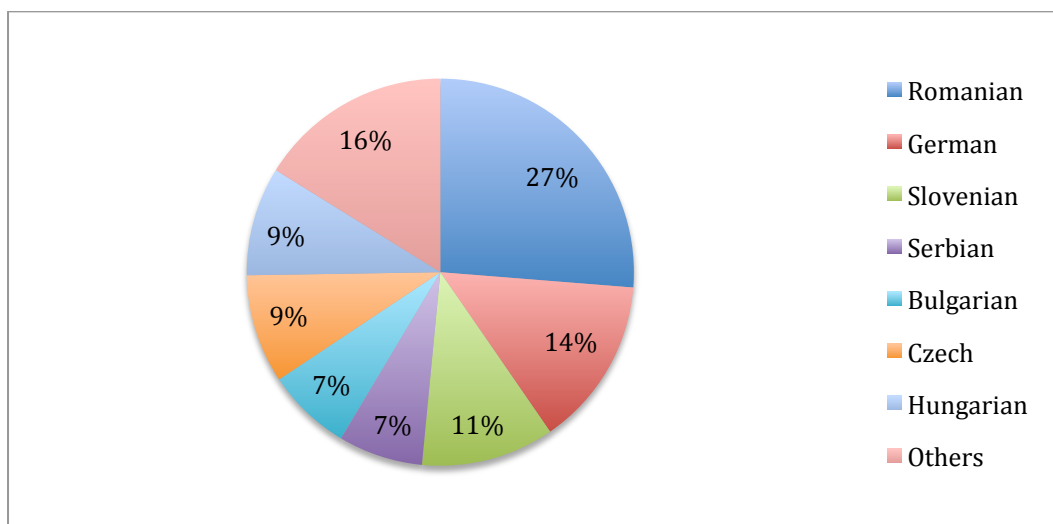


Figure 11 The native languages spoken

When it comes to foreign languages spoken, 81% of the participants surveyed stated they speak foreign languages. More precisely, as is demonstrated in figure 12, 44% participants speak 1 foreign language, 32% speak 2 foreign languages and 24% speak 3 foreign languages.

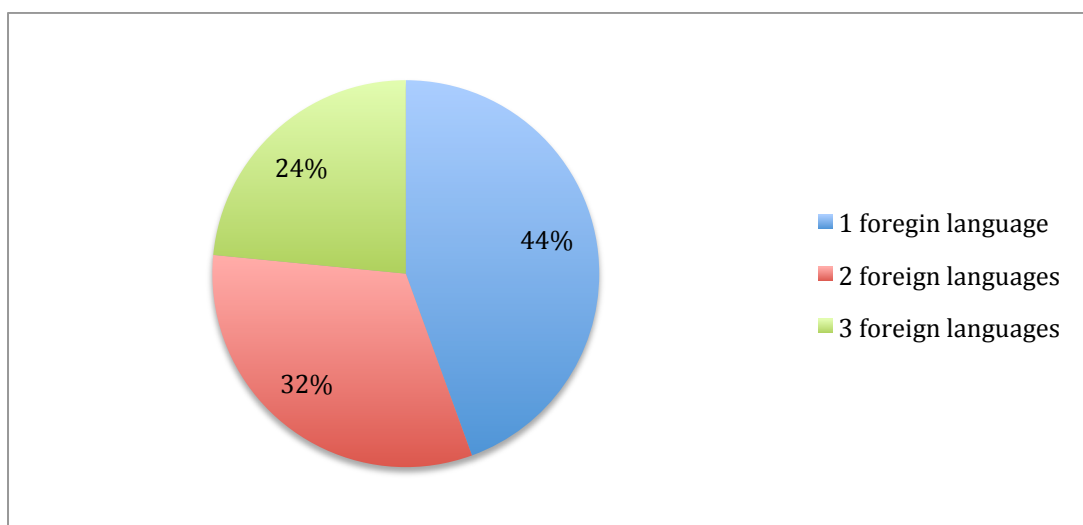


Figure 12 The number of languages spoken

Having in mind that this research is particularly focused on the English language, it is, therefore, relevant to understand the participants' history with the English language. In figure 13 it can be seen that 86% of participants state they have been using English regularly for more than 5 years, furthermore 10% stated they have been using English regularly for 3-5 years, and finally 4% have been using English for 1-3

years. None of the participants in the survey stated they use English for less than a year.

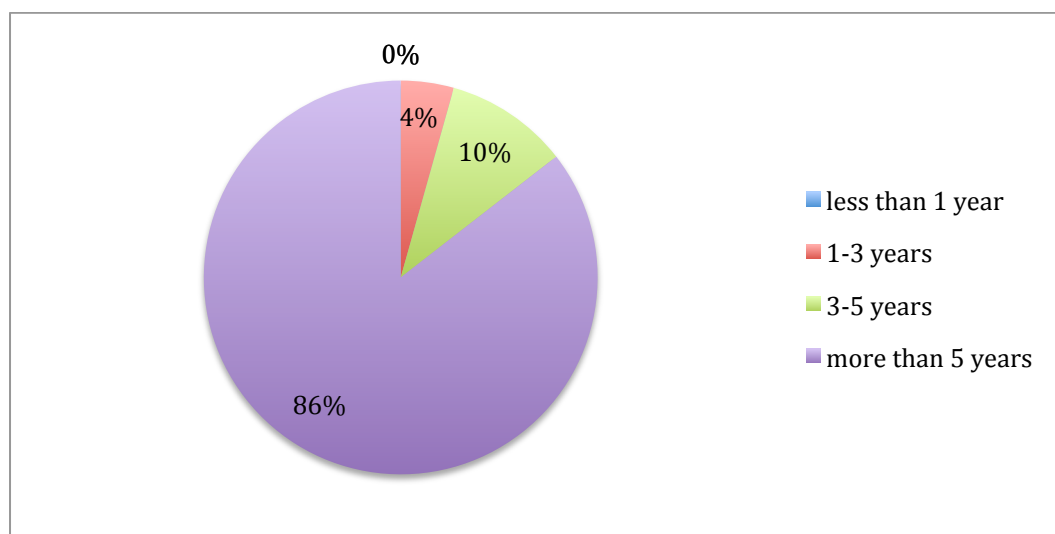


Figure 13 How long have you been regularly using English?

Moreover, it was relevant to understand how often do the survey respondents use English. In relation to this 45% of participants use English often. Additional 45% use English most of the time. 7% sometimes use English and 3% of the participants stated they rarely use English as shown in figure 14.

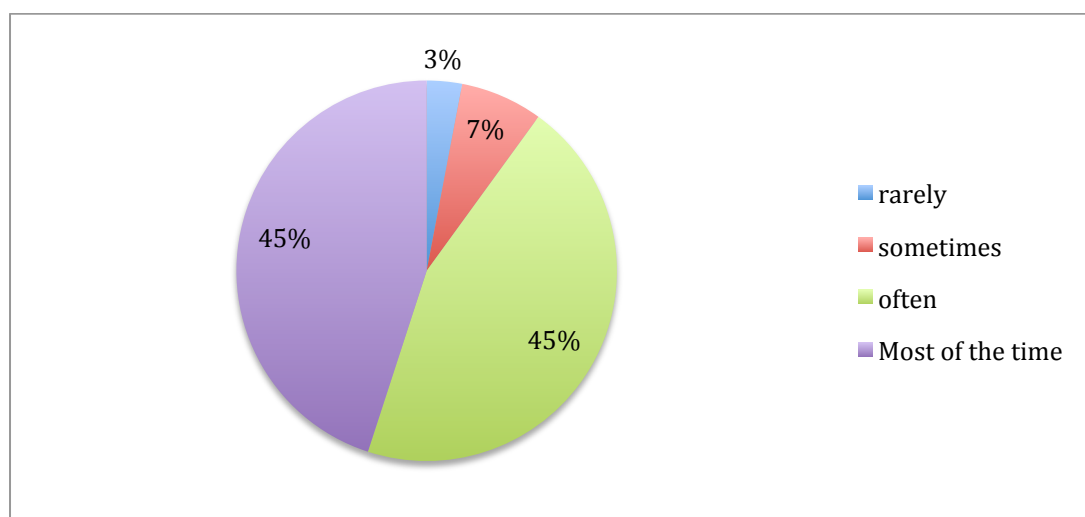


Figure 14 How often do you use English?

In order to grasp better the level of proficiency in English, understanding if participants have ever had the experience of studying in English is pertinent. 59% of the respondents had studied in English in the past. In figure 15 it is presented that

40% of the participants have studied in English for 1-3 years, 21% for more than 5 years and less than 1 year respectively, 11% of the participants have studied in English for 3-5 years, and 7% of the participants had the experience of studying in English for 3 years.

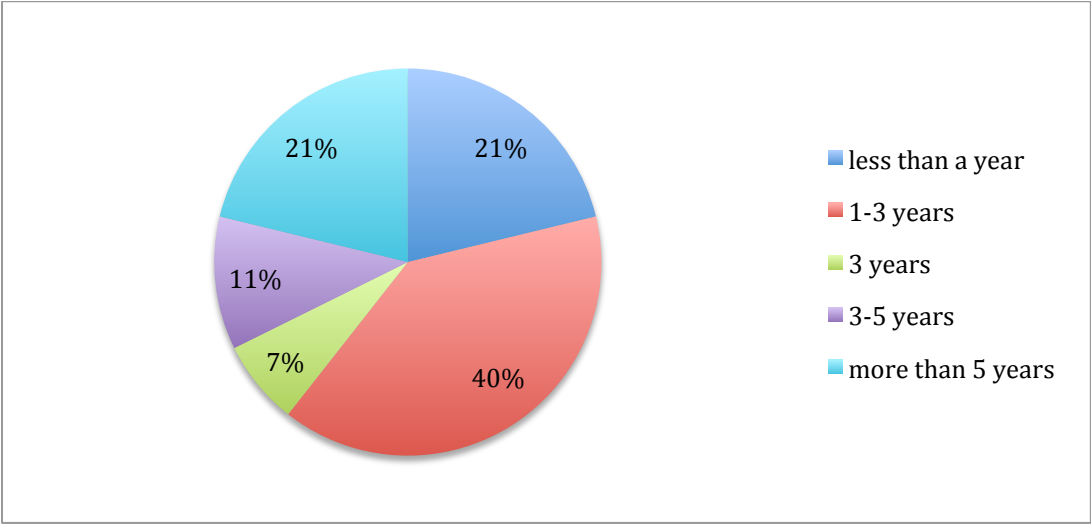


Figure 15 How long have you studied in English?

Finally, when it comes to the personal judgment of the level of English proficiency, 47% of the participants believe their knowledge of the English language is very good, 20% state their knowledge is excellent, and 31% believe they speak good English. Only 2% of the respondents graded their knowledge of English as poor or fair as it is depicted in figure 16.

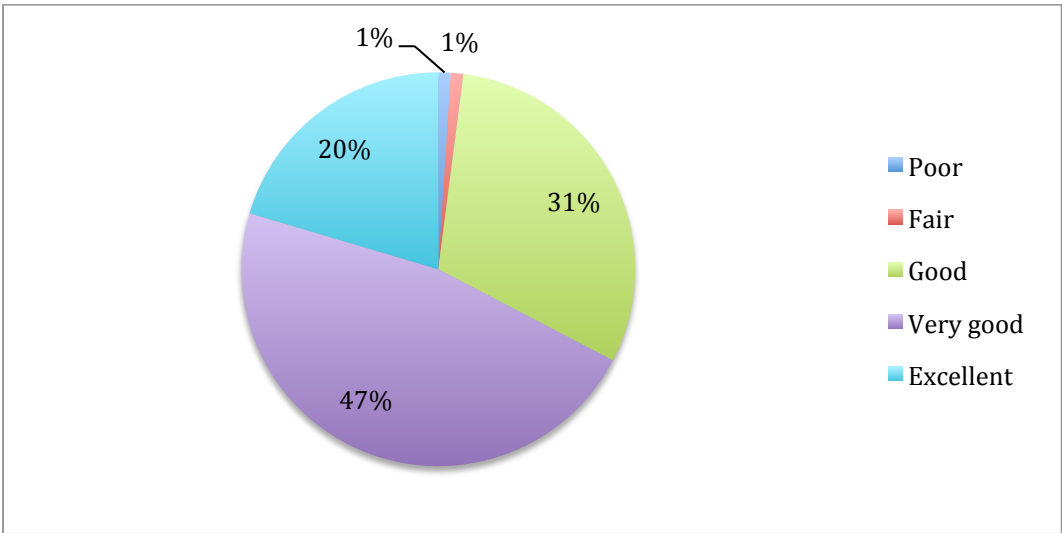


Figure 16 How would you rate your knowledge of English?

From the data collected a conclusion can be drawn that Bank Austria employees surveyed are of distinctive linguistic backgrounds. Although, diverse in terms of their native languages, using English is a feature they all share. They are active users of the English language for many years. Additionally, more than a half of the respondents had the experience of studying in English in the past for a number of years. Finally, the majority of the survey participants believe they are proficient users of the English language as they mostly regarded their English language knowledge as good, very good and excellent.

The following chapter of the paper will present more detailed findings related to the principal aims of this research, namely, forms and situations in which English is used. Different channels of communication as they relate to English will be examined. Following are the difficulties related to understanding and making oneself understood when speaking English. The attitudes towards using English for work purposes, career and performance impact will be addressed.

5. The findings

5.1. Purposes, situations and forms of use of English

The study by Fredriksson et al. (2006) on Kone Elevators has shown that the staff of the company could not agree on what the official language of the company is, therefore understanding the position English has in the eyes of Bank Austria employees was one of the main foci. Additionally, the information was offered in the Bank Austria language policy as to the purposes, situations and forms in which English is used. In order to gain a better understanding of how English is used in Bank Austria CEE Controlling unit, it is relevant to grasp precisely in what situations and forms and for what purposes English is used.

To be more precise, it is important to comprehend fully CEE Controlling unit staff by investigating whether they use English both privately and for work purposes. Moreover, it is essential to get an overview of how often English is used at the workplace and in what situations. The aim is to find out whether the communication taking place in English is limited to the professional matters or if English is also used in the social situations. It is necessary to grasp whether the communication in English at work is limited to interactions with the colleagues in other subsidiaries, or if

interactions in English also involve the immediate colleagues. Finally, it is of interest to understand in what forms (spoken and/or written) English is normally used, as some of the previous studies mention preference of the written communication as an avoidance strategy when having limited language skills (Nekvapil & Sherman 2009:187).

Questions 13 – 20 of the questionnaire dealt with the topic of how English is used by Bank Austria CEE Controlling unit staff. For the list of questions refer to the Appendix A of this thesis.

Findings show that unanimously 100% of respondents use English for work purposes. The findings confirm UniCredit Group's choice of English as an official company language (Bank Austria Annual Report 2007:98). In contrast, 57% of the employees state they use English in their private lives.

When it comes to the use of English at the work place, as it can be seen in figure 17, 48% of the respondents claim they communicate in English most of the time at work, another 41% state they often use English in their communication at work. 9% of the respondents admit they sometimes use English and only 3% of the respondents rarely use English for work. The results suggest that CEE Controlling unit employees are required and do use English in their professional lives, as 100% of the respondents use English for work. In contrast, 57% of the respondents use English privately. This goes to show that English might not have a central role in the respondents' private lives, but it, in fact, has an important role in their professional engagements.

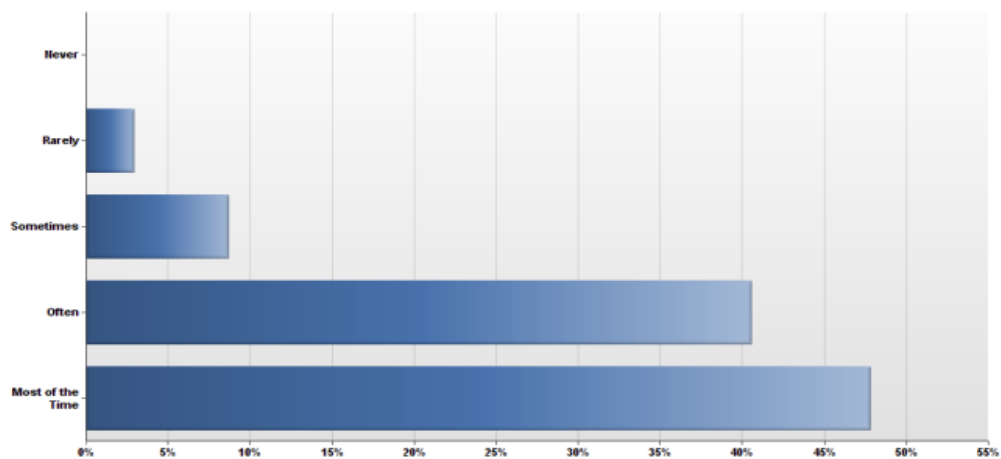


Figure 17 How often do you use English for work?

Related to the situations in which English is used, vast majority, that is, 70% of the participants in the survey state they use English to communicate with their immediate colleagues. Another 83% rely on using English when communicating with colleagues in other UniCredit Group branches. Furthermore, in social interactions with colleagues 68% of the participants in the research reveal they use English in such contexts.

The use of English in interactions with the colleagues could be explained as the lack of other options. More precisely, Bank Austria operates in 14 different countries for employees to find another mutual language might be quite a challenge. The use of English is also required due to the overall organization of UniCredit Group and Bank Austria. Namely, Bank Austria reports progress from the subsidiaries to its holding company, UniCredit Group. Often, the employees are of different national and linguistic backgrounds and they do not share a mutual language. Therefore, in their interactions they are often left with English as their only option.

Additionally, the role of expatriate workers as cultural and professional mediators has been emphasized in this paper earlier. It is then worth noting that UniCredit Group relies on the expatriate employees to mediate between the subsidiaries and the headquarters. Naturally, given the national diversity of the European continent where Bank Austria is mostly doing its work, it might be difficult for the expatriate employees to find a common means of communication with their colleagues other than English. Similarly, in communication with colleagues in other UniCredit Group branches

English is mostly used for the same reason. This only goes to show the central position of ELF in communication among people who do not share a native language or a culture.

The final focus was to understand the forms in which English is used. Figure 18 shows that 83% of the respondents use both spoken and written forms when communicating in English. 16% of the respondents use only written form when communication in English. Only 1% of the participants who took part in the survey use only spoken form.

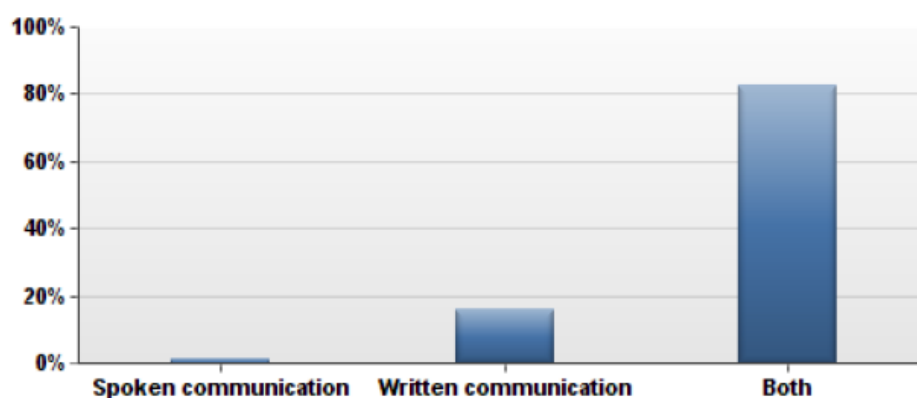


Figure 18 In what forms do you use English normally?

It is relevant to take into consideration the channels of communication because earlier studies (Nekvapil & Sherman 2009:187; Marschan et al. 1997:593) have shown that employees can rely on the avoidance strategies when having issues with fluency in a common corporate language. The avoidance strategy frequently employed involves preference of the written communication mediums over spoken communication. Here, it can be concluded that the majority (83%) of Bank Austria CEE Controlling unit employees do not employ such strategy as they use English in both forms. In contrast, 16% of the respondents rely exclusively on the written communication when using English. This choice could indicate an avoidance strategy due to lack of fluency in English, but it could also be due to the nature of the work they do. Before making any final conclusions, gaining more insights on this matter is needed. Therefore, the following section will place focus on possible difficulties in communication in English in Bank Austria.

5.2. Reported difficulties

5.2.1. Difficulties understanding

Maintaining a *professional face* (Charles 1996) and conducting oneself professionally are the key features when working in a multinational corporation. Working in the field of business often involves communication with other members of the corporate community where ideas and meanings are negotiated. Such interactions are often complex and sensitive in one's native language, and they are certainly even more complex in a foreign language. Difficulties understanding other speakers and making oneself understood can inhibit communication, and hence affect the success of a work project and ultimately have an impact on one's career. Therefore, it is essential for this research to gain understanding of the difficulties employees in Bank Austria CEE Controlling face. The topic of difficulties is covered in the survey through questions 21 – 44 in the Appendix A.

With regard to difficulties understanding, according to the data collected, the majority, that is, 94% employees who have participated in this survey, do not experience any difficulties understanding other speakers when they speak English. Only 6% of the respondents state they do experience difficulties understanding others speaking English. The results indicate that Bank Austria employees do not experience issues in understanding other speakers when they speak English.

6% of the respondents state they do face challenges in understanding others speaking English. Although statistically insignificant, their responses can offer insights into the nature of difficulties they have. Figure 19 demonstrates that the 4 participants, who do experience difficulties understanding, relate their problems to different accents, specific vocabulary and unfamiliar contexts. Vocabulary issues and problems with grammatical structures stand out. Rogerson-Revell's (2007) study points to similar communication problems in the context of meetings. Clearly, from this limited set of data it is not possible to draw any general conclusions. Therefore, the findings related to difficulties when communicating in English stay limited to these particular cases.

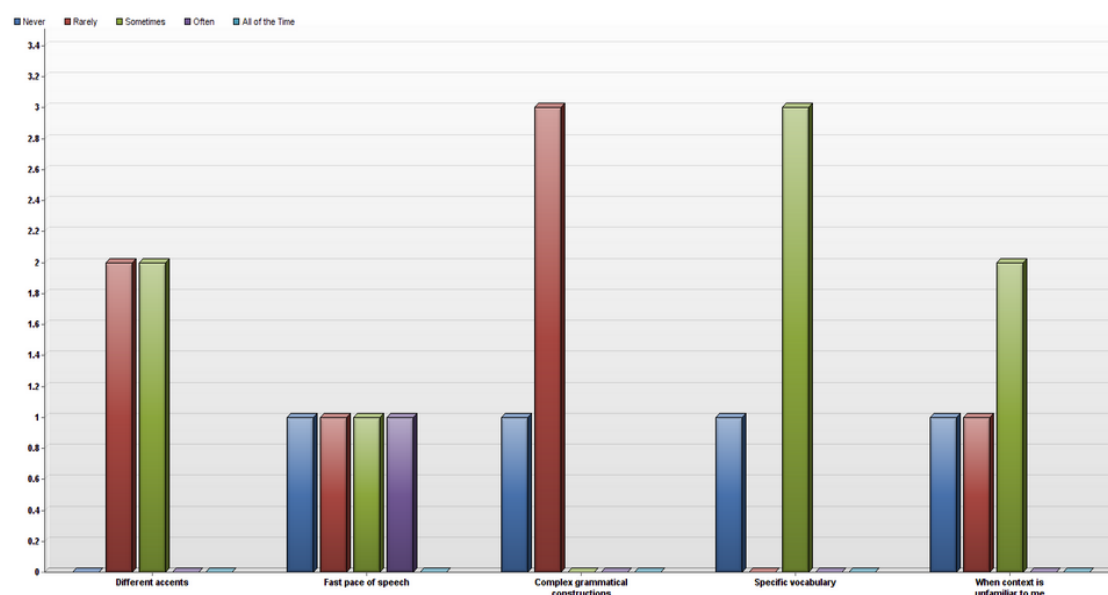


Figure 19 I have difficulties understanding

5.2.2. Difficulties making oneself understood

The majority, that is, 96% of the participants claim they do not experience any difficulties in making themselves understood. Only, 4% claim they experience issues in getting their message across. The results show that the participants do not have problems in making themselves understood.

The 4% of the respondents (3 participants), who face issues, related their problems mostly to finding the 'right words'. Other issues mentioned are related to using appropriate grammatical structures, being spontaneous and understanding different pronunciations as it can be seen in figure 20. Additionally, two key features of communication for business purposes are designated as to be causing difficulties. More precisely, business related terminology that often and sometimes seems to be the source of difficulties. Similarly, communicating difficult messages politely is the cause of difficulties for some of the participants. Communicating difficult messages politely and finding the right words are the issues mentioned in Rogerson-Revell's (2007: 116) study on business meetings that NNS of English face. The participants have not provided a more detailed account of the difficulties they experience in making themselves understood. The insights gained can serve to help understand the kind of difficulties that can be present, but remain limited to these individual cases because of their statistical insignificance.

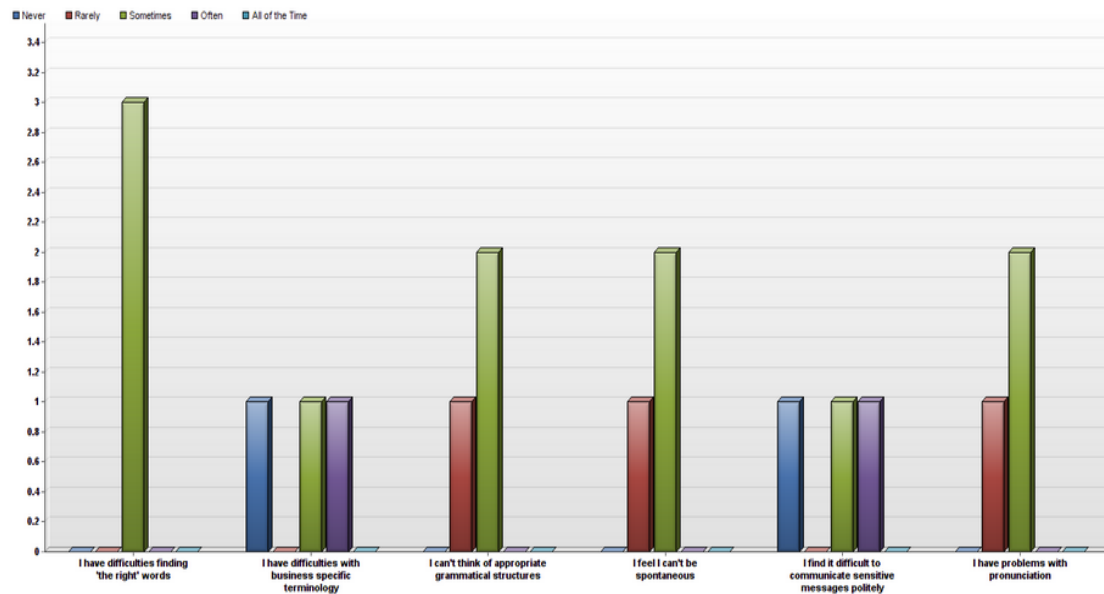


Figure 20 I have problems making myself understood because

Based on the data collected it can only be concluded that Bank Austria CEE Controlling unit employees do not experience difficulties in their communication in English at work on the whole. Very few participants experience difficulties when communicating in English, hence no generally applicable conclusions can be drawn as to the cause of issues that are impeding the communicative processes. The problem of communicative difficulties cannot be said to be an overarching one, but tied to the individual cases.

5.2.3. Difficulties across different communication channels

5.2.3.1. Email communication

Today, the majority of the means of communication we rely on are technology bound. Email communication brought about a revolution in the speed and effectiveness in getting the message across. It proved to be more efficient than writing letters, but also less time-consuming than communication over the phone. Clearly, in business, saving time and effectiveness are of the essence. Therefore, in a corporate setting email communication is one the key communication channels. Receiving and sending emails is a big part of each corporate professional's everyday work life. The importance of email communication was emphasized in a study by Louhiala-Salminen (2002) that focused on the discourse activities in the daily routine of a business manager. The study confirms "the decisive role of e-mail as a communication

medium” (Louhiala-Salminen 2002:211) in a business professional’s life. Hence, being able to understand the content of such messages and being able to easily draft emails is important for successfully completing work tasks.

The use of ELF in email communication in the setting of multinational corporations has been the topic of a study by Louhiala-Salminen et al. (2005). The study focuses on the email communication and discursal similarities and differences, but also problems that exist in such encounters between Swedish and Finish employees in two merged organizations, Paper Giant and PankkiBanken. Additionally, the study by Evans (2013) on business communication in ELF in Chinese business encounters focused on email communication as one of the key communication channels.

Firstly, it is crucial to understand how much of the email communication between employees in the Controlling department takes place in English. Figure 21 shows that Bank Austria employees write the majority of emails at work in English. To be more precise, 57% of the respondents claim that a lot of the emails they write at work are in English, and additional 12% of the respondents write quite a bit of their emails in English. 17% state that all emails they write are in English. 14% of the respondents maintain that some of their email correspondence is done in English. However, none of the respondents suggested never writing emails in English. Therefore, the findings suggest that writing emails in English is a part of work reality in Bank Austria CEE Controlling unit. The results go to confirm the central position of the email communication in the multinational corporation and the frequent use of ELF in email writing.

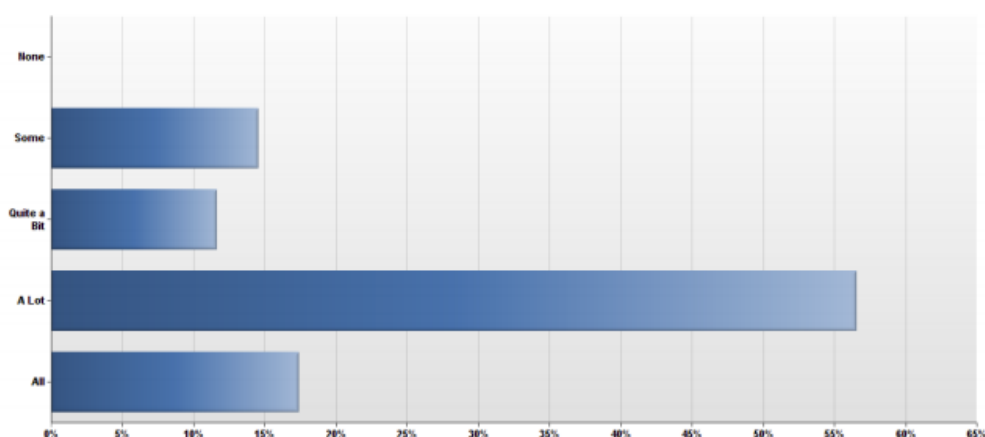


Figure 21 How many of the emails you write at work are in English?

With regard to difficulties the respondents in the survey experience in email communication, the majority of the respondents claim they do not experience any difficulties when writing emails. More precisely, 93% of the respondents' email communication is unproblematic. 7% of the participants claim they do experience some difficulties. The respondents were asked to specify the issues they have in the email communication. The issues mentioned involve the spelling problems and the choice of appropriate vocabulary.

Previously, it was explained that retaining professional relationships and personal respectability are essential qualities to hold in the business encounters. Essentially, ELF and BELF are designated as cultureless, neutral codes. However, everyone who communicates in English in the international context brings their native culture to ELF interactions (Louhiala-Salminen et al. 2005). This is particularly obvious when having to communicate sensitive messages. Often, communicators find it difficult to balance staying polite, but specific. One of the respondents in this survey who reported to have difficulties in email based communication pointed to this issue. The respondent stated that his difficulties are "more or less very similar as in spoken language, plus [he sees] as much more tricky the issue of being polite enough when commenting sensitive things". This only goes to show that in the communication for work purposes the challenges with using a foreign language move far beyond the linguistic problems, such as grammar and vocabulary, but extend into more complex sphere of cultural appropriacy. More precisely, being culturally sensitive and respectful in

communication with people one does not share a native language, or a culture. This becomes even more evident in the work context as there is more pressure to stay appropriate and professional.

In conclusion, the findings show that for the majority of Bank Austria CEE unit employees email communication does not involve difficulties. A statistically insignificant number of the respondents face communicative issues in email communication.

5.2.3.2. Reading and writing official work documents

In corporate environment writing official documents such as reports, proposals, contracts, summaries, presentations and alike is a crucial part of the job. ELF in written business communication and its prominent role has been a topic explored in a study by Evans (2013). Evans (2013) studied the extent and the importance of written communication in ELF among the business professionals in Hong Kong and discovered its notable position.

Figure 22 shows that 36% of the respondents claim they write a lot of documentation in English for work. Additional 26% of the participants in the survey state they write all documentation in English, followed by 19% of the respondents who write quite a bit of documentation in English. Some of the documentation is written in English by 19% of the respondents. None of the respondents stated they do not write work related documents in English. The findings confirm that in the Bank Austria CEE Controlling unit English plays a central role in writing the official documentation.

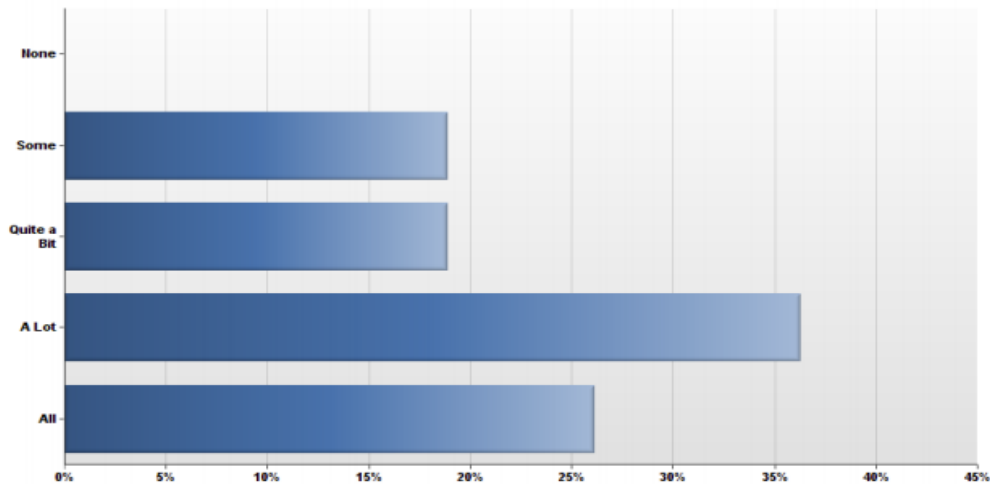


Figure 22 How much of the work documentation you write is in English?

Similarly, as figure 23 shows, 49% of the respondents read a lot of documents in English, additional, 23% claim all the documentation they read is in English. Furthermore, 13% of the respondents state that quite a bit of the documentation they read is in English. Some of the documentation in English is read by 14% of the respondents. Finally, none of the respondents state they never read work documents in English.

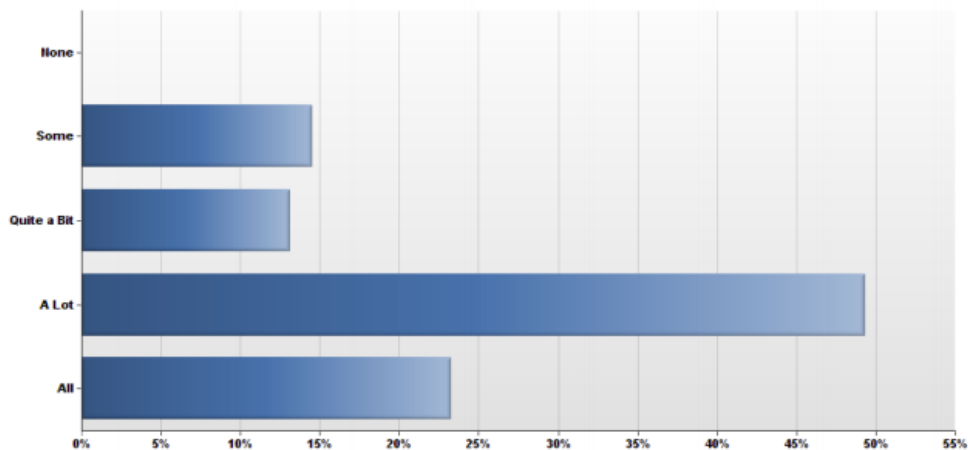


Figure 23 How much of the work documentation you read is in English?

When it comes to difficulties in reading the official documentation, 91% of the respondents do not experience any difficulties when having to read work documents. 9% of the participants in the survey claim they experience difficulties. The issues that were mentioned can be organized into two groups, namely, vocabulary related

problems, that is, not being knowledgeable in legal and business specific terminology, and maintaining concentration. With regard to difficulties when writing official papers in English, the majority of the respondents, more precisely 94%, point out they do not experience any difficulties. Only 6% of the participants claim to have difficulties when having to write. Difficulties listed mostly regard spelling and vocabulary.

One respondent's response related to difficulties in writing work related documents points to an important issue. The participant pointed out that "for official documents [he] prefer[s] a native speaker to check the wording just to be sure we do not deliver externally or outside the bank something which is not perfect". This goes to show the impact of NS Standard English. NNSs of English find themselves under pressure to produce correct, proper English, as based on, and governed by NS Standard. It is precisely this rigidity that ELF stands in opposition to, and offers freedom from. ELF speakers are creators; they make their contribution to the English language. Striving towards perfection, or the norm, in this particular case, poses constraints, and today, when there are more NNSs of English than NSs (Crystal 2003), is irrelevant. Although, this response provides an important insight into the nature of the English language and challenges its users are facing, it still has to be taken at a face value as its statistical significance is minor and as such it has to be limited to this particular case.

The findings with regard to difficulties when reading and writing work documentation in English imply that Bank Austria CEE Controlling unit employees do not face difficulties. The difficulties mentioned by some of the participants do not have statistical significance to make an impact on the findings.

5.2.3.3. Phone calls and conference calls

The nature of phone and conference call communication, unlike written or email communication, allows for the negotiation of the meaning between the parties involved in the communicative act. All possible misunderstandings can be more easily and promptly solved. The topic of conference calls in the setting of multinational corporations, namely, in Siemens' subsidiary the PLANT has been explored in a study by Nekvapil and Nekula (2006). This chapter aims to understand how much of the communication in Bank Austria occurs through these channels, namely phone

and conference calls. Additionally, the issues following such interactions will be explored.

According to 36% of the respondents a lot of the phone communication for work purposes is done in English. Additional 13% of the participants declared that all their phone calls are in English, whereas, 16% state that quite a bit of their phone communication at work takes place in English. 33% have some of the phone calls taking place in English. Finally, only 1% of the participants state none of their phone communication is in English as shown in figure 24.

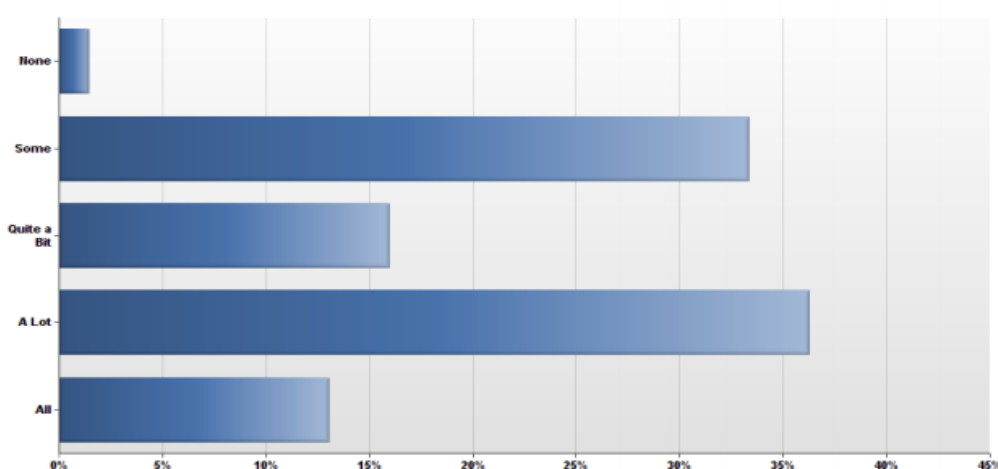


Figure 24 How much of your phone communication is in English (conference calls excluded)?

Furthermore, 94% of the respondents claim they do not have any difficulties when communication in English over the phone, only 6% of the participants experience difficulties in such interactions. The problems mentioned are related to vocabulary, and thinking directly in English. One of the respondents pointed out a positive side of phone communication, more precisely, negotiation of meaning, that is, accommodation, the basic governing principle of ELF (Seidlhofer 2009b). The respondent stated the following:

my troubles are more or less the same when using whatever form of communication, maybe over the phone is slightly better due to the fact that this kind of conversation allows me to say more words and it does not seem to me so serious

Clearly, phone communication in English for the majority of the participants is a part of the job they do. Similarly to the other channels of communication difficulties do not

seem to be trending, but are present only in a few of the individual cases. A general conclusion related to the kind of difficulties cannot be drawn. One respondent's response points directly to the positive side of phone communication, namely its flexibility that allows negotiation of the message.

With regard to conference call communication in English, as shown in figure 25, 30% of the respondents state all their conference calls are in English. Furthermore, 26% claim a lot of their conference calls take place in English. In contrast, 29% of the participants state some of their conference calls are in English and 13% claim quite a bit of their conference call communication is in English. Once again, only 1% of the participants state they do not communicate in English when having a conference call. When it comes to difficulties, the majority of the respondents do not experience any difficulties, that is 93%, only 7% of the respondents have some difficulties in conference call communication in English. Difficulties listed involve understanding different accents, making oneself understood and following conversations involving multiple speakers

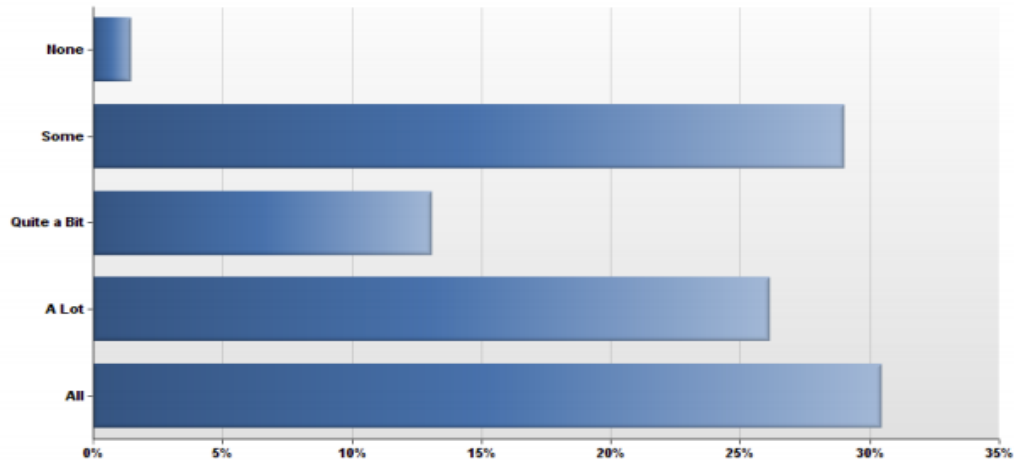


Figure 25 How much of your communication when having a conference call at work takes place in English?

The findings show that conference calls in English comprise a considerable part of work communication in Bank Austria. Although conference call communication can be more complex than the phone communication, as it involves multiple speakers, still the difficulties expressed by the participants in this survey remain very limited. The

findings regarding the nature of difficulties cannot be used to make more universal conclusions.

5.2.3.4. Meetings

Meetings are an important part of the corporate life. The use of ELF in the context of meetings in multinational corporations has been the topic of many studies in the past. Louihiala-Salminen et al. (2005) studied cultural and discoursal differences and similarities, but also challenges in communication in meetings in ELF between a Finnish and Swedish subsidiary. Poncini (2012) conducted a study on the use of English in meetings with multicultural participation in an Italian company. Additionally, studies by Rogerson-Ravell (2007; 2008) on international business meetings held in English deal with the difficulties in such situations and strategies for overcoming them. Therefore, investigating to what extent the participants in this study use English in the communication in meetings in Bank Austria CEE Controlling unit is important. Additionally, it is crucial to understand difficulties related to communication in this context.

Figure 26 shows that 28% of the participants state a lot of the meetings they are part of take place in English. Additional 22% state all their meetings are held in English. 16% of the participants' meetings take place in English. Furthermore, 33% state some of the meetings in which they participate are held in English. Only 1% of the respondents claim none of the meetings they attend are conducted in English. Based on the data collected it can be concluded that the meetings conducted in English have an important position in Bank Austria and its subsidiaries. When it comes to communicative issues in the context of business meetings 6% of the participants state they experience some difficulties in meetings that are in English. The majority, that is, 94% claim they do not face any difficulties in such interactions.

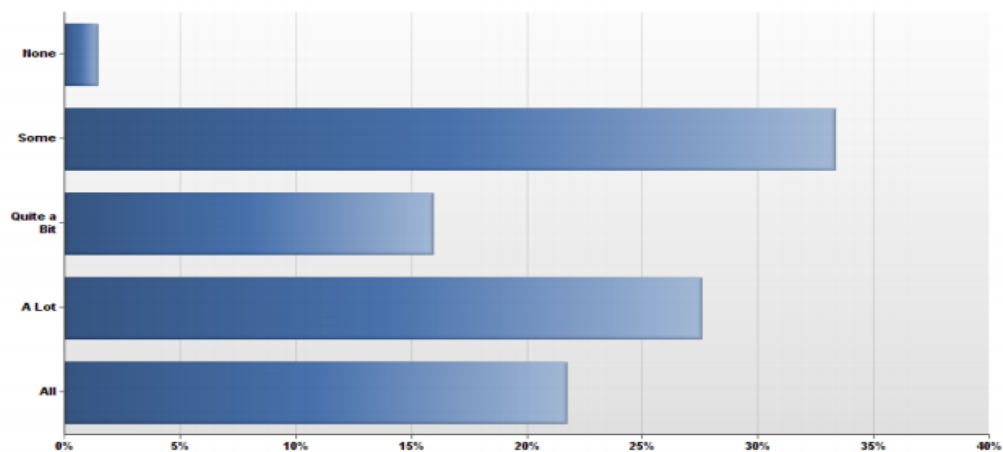


Figure 26 How much of your communication in meetings takes place in English?

The difficulties listed involved mostly issues with business specific vocabulary. However, one of the participants points to an important problem that can emerge. The respondent states the following:

when taking part in the meetings where english is a must usually I am not the person who is supposed to lead the conversation, present or being active, if this would be the case I would have probably a lot of troubles. except of this I can say that again I have troubles with express myself due to the lack of technical vocabulary knowledge

Clearly, the respondent here relies on an avoidance strategy, based on his own admission, he would indeed have difficulties in using English in meetings. He points out that most of his issues are related to the limited knowledge of the technical vocabulary. He feels more comfortable taking a passive position, however, if he were to find himself in a leading, more active position in a meeting this might be a source of problems. This is still an individual case and its value is in that it points to a specific issue that can occur in communication in English in the context of business meetings.

It can be concluded that the majority of Bank Austria CEE Controlling unit employees do not experience difficulties when communicating in English in the context of meetings. A statistically insignificant number of participants face difficulties. These individual cases do not impact the overall situation.

5.3. Use of English for work purposes

5.3.1. Attitudes towards using English

The problem with a choice of a common corporate language often moves far beyond the level of linguistic. Namely, studies on language policies in the past have shown that language choice creates power structures. Language can put employees in disempowering and well as empowering positions. The study on Finnish Merita and the Swedish Nordbanken by Vaara et al. (2005) showed how a choice of a common corporate language, Finnish, is not at all a neutral matter. Language can influence the structure of the organization and the power distribution in the company. It can create the structures of domination and have identity implications. Ultimately all of these issues will have impact on the performance and career of the employees.

Additionally, a study by Marschan-Piekkari et al. (1999b) has shown that the choice of English as company's official language did not remove communicative barriers, but created power structures by putting employees with language knowledge in positions of power, which ultimately influenced the structure of the organization. This study helps to confirm that, even though, language policies and common corporate languages exist to facilitate communication within multinational organizations language choice is never naive. ELF, although often seen as neutral, in situations when employees lack fluency can have serious consequence. Therefore, for this research it is essential to consider the attitudes of the employees towards the use of English in their day-to-day work life. Questions from 45-57 of the questionnaire dealt with this topic and can be found in the Appendix A.

Figure 27 shows that 28% of the respondents in the survey state they feel confident when speaking English at work, Additional 25% feel very confident. 16% of the respondents feel indifferent towards using English for work purposes. Finally, none of the respondents feel insecure or very insecure when using English for work.

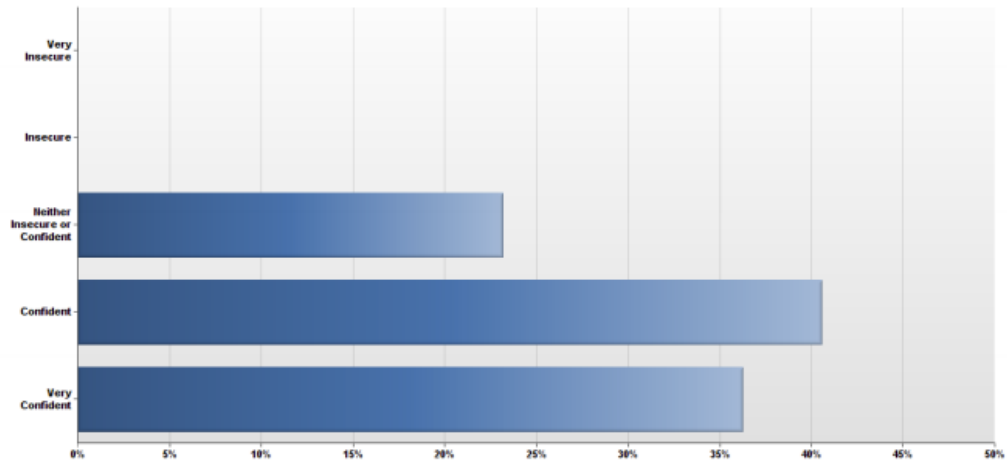


Figure 27 How do you feel when having to speak English at work?

When it comes to writing in English for work purposes as it can be seen in figure 28, 33% of the participants feel very confident. Additionally, 23% of the respondents state they feel confident when writing in English for work. Finally, 16% of the respondents feel insecure or very insecure when having to write for work in English. None of the respondents feel uncomfortable writing in English. It can be concluded that some of the participants feel slightly more comfortable when writing in English for work, however it is not statistically significant.

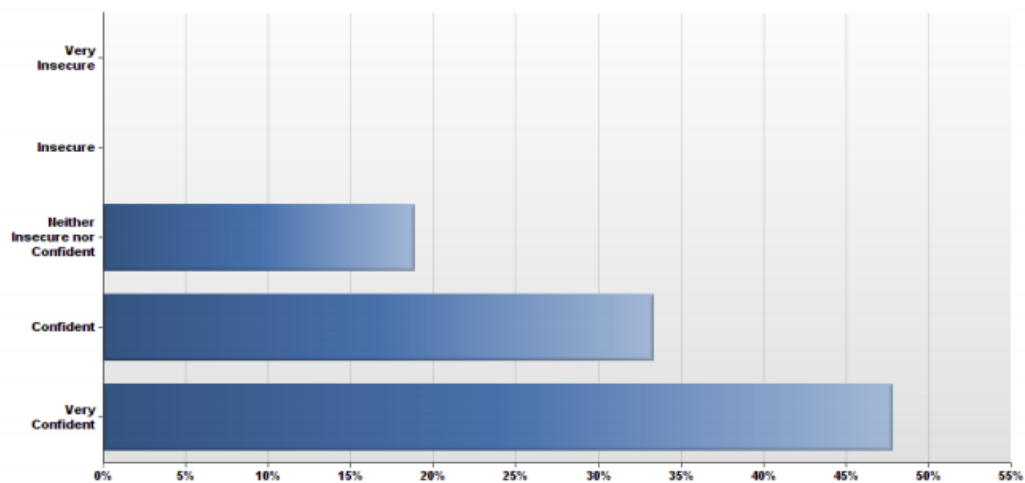


Figure 28 How do you feel when having to write English for work?

The findings show the majority of the respondents do not seem to have issues with using English for work. This was confirmed with the following scale question that indicated that the majority of the respondents feel comfortable when having to use

English for work purposes. More precisely, on scale 0-10, 35% of the respondents feel extremely comfortable using English for work, or very comfortable, 29%. Only, 6% of the respondents seem indifferent to using English for work. None of the respondents marked they feel uncomfortable when using English for work as shown in figure 29.

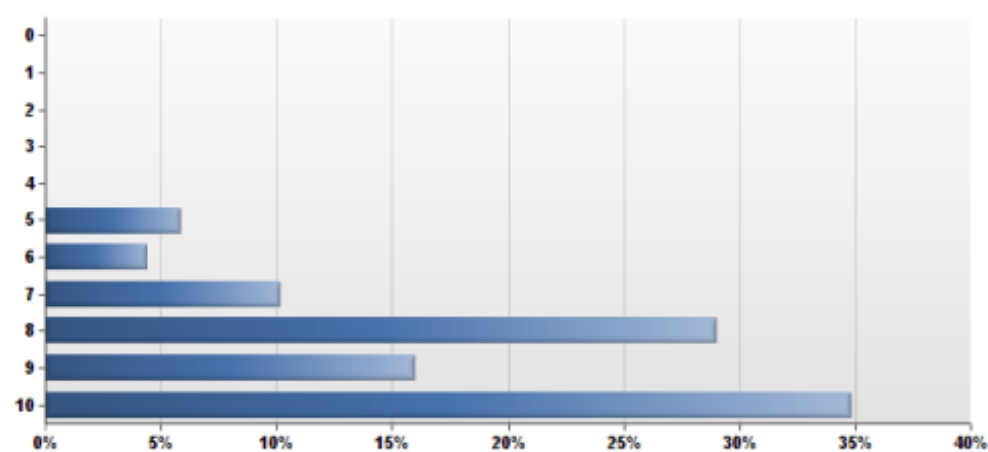


Figure 29 On scale 0-10, how comfortable do you feel using English at work?

Similarly, figure 30 shows that the majority of the participants feel indifferent towards using English for work (59%). Additional 16% of the respondents feel very happy using English for work, and 25% feel happy using English for work purposes.

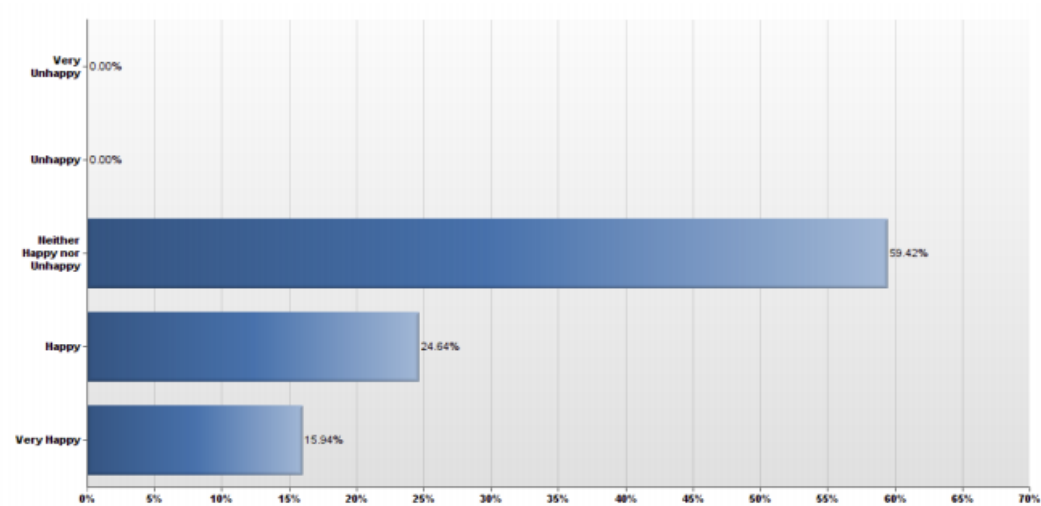


Figure 30 How does communication in English at work make you feel?

A conclusion can be drawn that attitudes towards using English for work in Bank Austria CEE Controlling unit seem to be overall positive. The majority of the employees do not have any negative attitudes towards the use of English. It can only be assumed that the majority of the employees accept the use of ELF as the part of their every day work life without feeling negatively towards it.

5.3.2. Career and the performance impact

Marschan-Piekkari et al. (1999b) identified that a common corporate language can act as a source of power, as a facilitator and as barrier. This issue clearly becomes even more evident in multicultural companies, which has been the case in Finnish Kone Elevators. It has been reported that some of the staff could not attend certain training programs due to their limited English language skills (Marschan-Piekkari et al. 1999b:427). Clearly, missing out on such opportunities affects one's professional development, networking chances and ultimately can have devastating impact on one's career. Therefore, understanding the impact of the official language, English, in the case of Bank Austria, is relevant. More precisely, it is important to understand the impact the use of English has on the career direction and the work performance of the participants in the study.

Figure 31 shows that the majority of Bank Austria CEE Controlling unit employees feel that the use of English for work purposes has influenced their work performance positively, more precisely 38% of the respondents. Additional 20% of the respondents believe that the use of English language has made a positive influence on their performance at work. In contrast, 39% of the participants are neutral with regard to this matter. More precisely they believe the use of English at work has not influenced their performance. Finally, only 3% of the respondents believe that the use of English at work has made a negative impact on their work performance. None of the participants state that English has made a very negative impact on their performance.

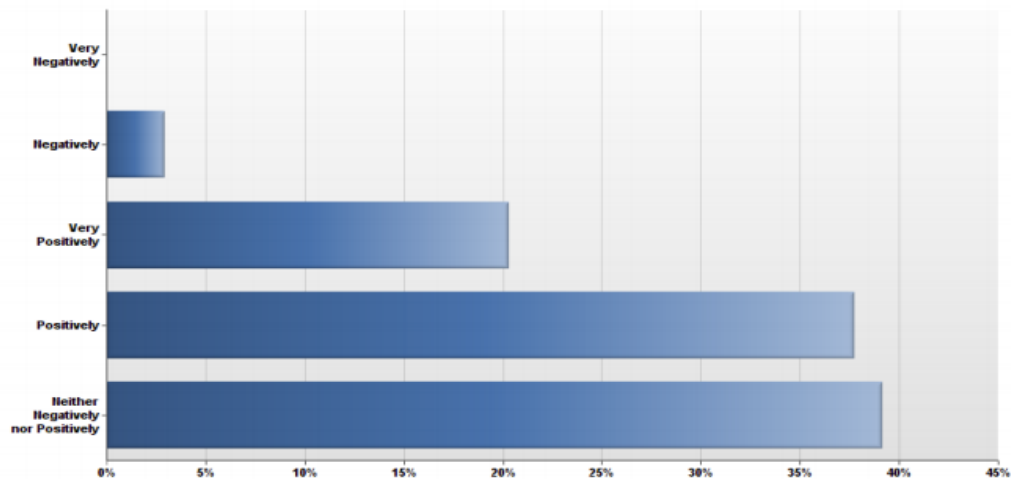


Figure 31 In your opinion, how has the use of English at work influenced your performance?

Similarly, as it can be noted from figure 32, 41% of the respondents believe that using English at work has had a positive influence on their careers. Additional, 36% believe using English at work has had a very positive influence on their career. On the other hand, 23% on the respondents state that use of English has not had an impact on the direction their careers have taken. None of the respondents feel the use of English influenced their careers very negatively.

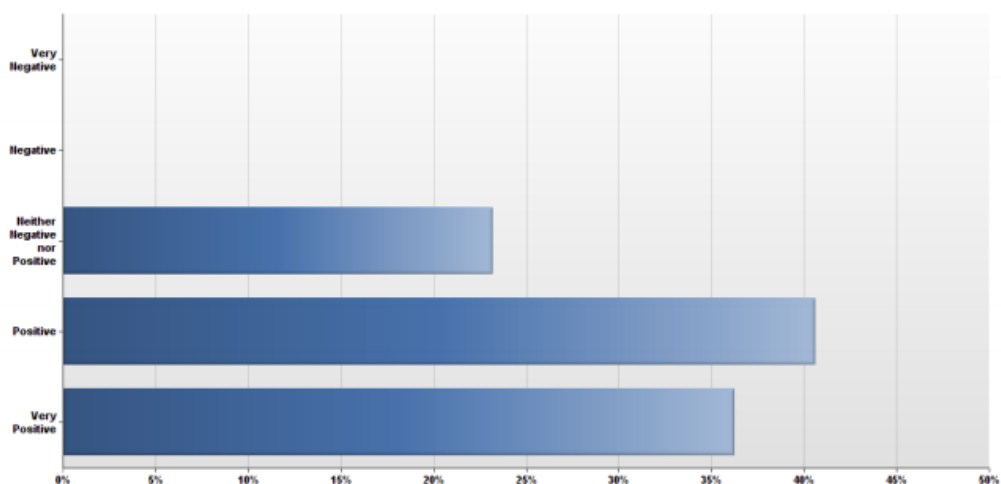


Figure 32 What effect, in your opinion, has using English at work had on your career?

The findings indicate that the majority of the participants do not feel negative impact of English either on their performance, or on the direction of their careers. The 3%, that is 2 participants, who identified English for work purposes as having negative impact on their performance, can be considered particular cases. The value of these

responses does not have statistical significance and therefore these responses cannot influence what is, overall, positive impact of using English on the career and performance of the participants.

5.3.3. Attitudes towards English as the official company language

Studies by Vaara et al. (2005) and Marschan-Piekkari et al. (1999b) have found how complex exactly the influence of language policy and a common corporate language can be. In this case study so far, the use of English as an official company language in Bank Austria has proven to be fairly uncontroversial. Over the course of this study the majority of Bank Austria employees have indicated they do not have difficulties when communicating in English. Additionally, the majority of the respondents, as this study finds, do not believe English has made a negative impact on their careers or their performance. Even though, the majority of the respondents in the study do not have issues with using English for work, it does not prove that English would be their first choice for a common corporate language. Therefore, understanding personal attitudes with regard to language choice in Bank Austria as seen by CEE Controlling unit is deemed relevant.

The majority, that is 62% of the respondents who took part in the survey state that they would not prefer to use their native language in the professional context. On the other hand, 38% of the participants claim they would prefer using their native language in the communication at work. Figure 33 shows that 77% of the respondents would prefer using English in their daily work which stands in contrast to 62% of the respondents who prefer using English for work. The discrepancy between the two can be noted. 19% of the respondents would limit the use of English on a weekly basis. 1% of the respondents would like to use English once a month and 3% would prefer never using English at the workplace.

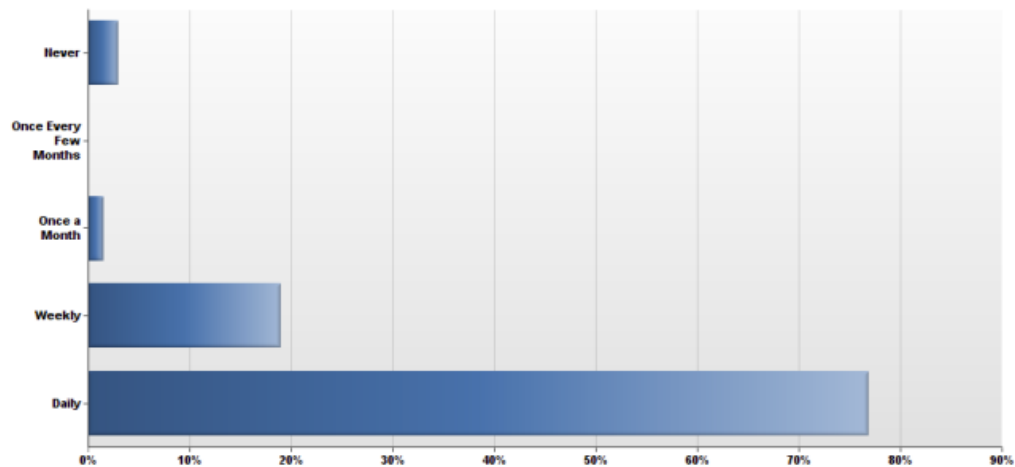


Figure 33 How often would you prefer to use English at work?

The participants were asked to specify in what situation they would prefer using their native language. The majority of the respondents stated they would prefer to use their native language in day-to-day work operations. Furthermore, social situations at work, such as work breaks and social interactions, were listed as the ones where the use of one's native language is desired. Finally, meetings, discussions and situations when it is necessary to be specific and communicate complex messages are assigned as the situations when the use of the native language is preferred over the use of ELF. Two of the participants explain their view on this matter:

Participant 1:

When establishing details of the tasks it is easier to understand in the mother tongue, especially in the situations when most of the people involved in the communication are romanians.

Participant 2:

Not necessarily the mother tongue, but I prefer that in situations where there is a requirement - it has to be explicit and all people understand the same (but more should be encounter this situation when the request comes in the mother tongue)

The findings demonstrate that using English for work is not seen as negative by Bank Austria CEE Controlling unit employees. However, the native languages are preferred in situations when it is not relevant to use English, for instance when the majority of the participants involved in the communicative act share a native language or when it is essential to understand the content or a request clearly. Bank Austria CEE

Controlling unit employees do not have particular issues with the use of English at work, but it can be concluded that they prefer using their native languages when the situation allows it and when it is necessary to understand the content fully. A polylingual language policy is preferred in these situations.

5.4. Comparison: gender, age, subsidiaries

In order to have a better understanding of how English is used by Bank Austria CEE Controlling unit employees and of their attitudes, a more in-depth statistical analysis was conducted. Firstly, the statistical analysis was conducted to compare means between male and female employees in their responses with the purpose of finding significant distinctions. Furthermore, over the course of the research three distinctive age groups of the participants in the survey emerged. A statistical analysis of the responses between the three age groups was done to gain more insights of whether age made a significant impact on the responses provided. Finally, a comparison was undertaken between the participants working in Bank Austria headquarters in Vienna and Bank Austria employees in the subsidiaries.

The statistical analysis was conducted using statistics program SPSS. Depending on the kind of cross tabulation performed different kinds of tests were employed, namely, a T-test for independent samples. An ANOVA test was used for comparison of the three groups, a Mann-Whitney U test and a Kruskal Wallis H test were used for comparing two samples. A detailed overview of the statistical tests can be found in the Appendices B-F. In what follows findings gained through statistical analysis will be presented.

5.4.1. Comparison between female and male responses

In sociolinguistics many studies have emphasized the differences between men and women with regard to language use and language learning. Labov (1991:243) found that “women use fewer stigmatized forms than men (Labov, 1966:288) and are more sensitive than men to the prestige pattern”. Burstall (1970), in her study on young students learning French in primary school, compared the achievement and attitudes of male and female students. She discovered that girls had more positive attitudes towards learning French. Maltz and Borker (1982) studied distinctions between male and female conversational style and discovered systematic differences between male

and female talk. Hence, understanding differences in responses between male and female respondents is needed as important distinctions can be discerned. For the analysis of the dichotomous variables, namely gender, a non-parametric test with two independent samples was used.

The Mann-Whitney U test with regard to the forms and situations in which English is used did not reveal any notable differences between male and female responses. Furthermore, having in mind that there are a few reported difficulties related to the use of English at work, the only significant distinction between male and female responses is with regard to having difficulties understanding other speakers when they speak English. Table 1 shows statistical significance between male (N=32) and female (N=37) responses with regard to having difficulties understanding other speakers when they speak English. More precisely, male participants have higher mean (M=37.31) than female (M=33.00). From the data in table 2 it can be concluded that male participant group (U=518.000, p=.028) was statistically more significant than female participant group. This is to say that more male participants than female confirmed to have difficulties understanding other speakers when they speak English.

Question	Gender	N	Mean Rank	Sum of ranks
Do you have problems understanding other speakers when they speak English?	Male	32	37.31	1194.00
	Female	37	33.00	1221.00
	Total	69		

Table 1 Mann-Whitney U test (gender) ranks

	Do you have problems understanding other speakers when they speak English?
Mann-Whitney U	518.000
Wilcoxon W	1221.000
Z	-2.200
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.028

Table 2 Mann-Whitney U test (gender) test statistics

With regard to attitudes towards using English for work purposes, the Mann-Whitney U test shows minor statistical significance between male (N=32) and female (N=37) participants. Table 3 shows that in question “Would you prefer using your mother

tongue at work” male participants have slightly higher mean ($M=39.25$) than female ($M=31.32$). Table 4 demonstrates significance of male group of participants ($U=456.000$, $p=.051$) as compared to female. More precisely, more male respondents would prefer using their native language at work. However, this value is on the border of the statistical significance and therefore it needs to be approached with caution. No other significant differences as to gender were shown by the analysis. It can be tentatively concluded that female participants reported to have fewer issues understanding other speakers when they speak English, and the female participants have slightly more positive attitudes towards using English at the workplace. For the complete Mann-Whitney U test refer to Appendix D.

Question	Gender	N	Mean Rank	Sum of ranks
Would you prefer using your mother tongue at work?	Male	32	39.25	1256.00
	Female	37	31.32	1159.00
	Total	69		

Table 3 Mann-Whitney test (gender) ranks

	Would you prefer using your mother tongue at work?
Mann-Whitney U	456.000
Wilcoxon W	1159.000
Z	-1.950
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.051

Table 4 Mann-Whitney test (gender) test statistics

5.4.2. Comparison between three age groups

Age was another factor that was regarded as relevant. Three distinctive age groups could be discerned once the data was analyzed. More precisely, group 1 included participants aged 20-30, the group 2 participants are aged 31-40, the group 3 participants are aged 41-51. For the analysis of the three age groups one-way ANOVA test was used. The complete one-way ANOVA test analysis can be found in the Appendix C.

In the questions regarding forms and situations in which English is used there were no significant differences observed. Similarly, there was no significance with regard to difficulties when communicating in English at work. Significance was noted between

group 1 (N=20), group 2 (N=37) and group 3 (N=11) with regard to how participants rate their knowledge of English. There was a statistically significant difference between groups as determined by one-way ANOVA test ($F(3.150)=3.996$, $p=.049$) as shown in table 5. The test revealed that the group 1, that is, the participants aged 20-30, had a higher mean ($M=4.20$) than group 2 ($M=3.73$) and group 3 ($M=3.55$) as shown in table 6. Group 1 was more statistically significant, namely it had higher mean, when it comes to rating their knowledge of English, as it can be seen in table 6. That is to say the participants aged 21-30 had more confidence in their English language skills.

Question		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
How would you rate your knowledge of English?	Between groups Within groups Total	3.996 41.225 45.221	2 65 67	1.998 .634	3.150	.049

Table 5 One-way ANOVA test (age groups)

Age group		N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
1.00	How would you rate your knowledge of English? Valid N (listwise)	20 20	3	5	4.20	.768
2.00	How would you rate your knowledge of English? Valid N (listwise)	37 37	2	5	3.73	.732
3.00	How would you rate your knowledge of English? Valid N (listwise)	11 11	1	5	3.55	1.036

Table 6 One-way ANOVA test (age groups) descriptive statistics

In contrast, the Kruskal-Wallis H test in the analysis of the three groups revealed significance between the 3 age groups, group 1 (N=20), group 2 (N=37) and group 3 (11). As shown in tables 7 and 8 the Kruskal-Wallis H test showed that there was a statistically significant difference in preference of native language between the 3 groups, $\chi^2(2) = 7.853$, $p = 0.020$, with a mean rank of $M=26.60$ for group 1, $M=36.20$ for group 2, and $M=43.14$ for group 3. More precisely, the group 3, participants aged 40-51, expressed preference of using their native language at work. For the complete Kruskal-Wallis H test refer to Appendix D of this thesis.

	Age groups	N	Mean rank
Would you refer using your mother tongue at work?	1.00	20	26.60
	2.00	37	36.20
	3.00	11	43.14

Table 7 Kruskal-Wallis H test (age groups) ranks

	Would you refer using your mother tongue at work?
Chi-Square	7.853
df	2
Asymp. Sig.	.020

Table 8 Kruskal-Wallis H test (age groups) test statistics

From the statistical analysis conducted it can be concluded that younger generations express more confidence in their English language skills. This is not surprising as the generation of the participants in their twenties started using English at an early age. It is worth mentioning that in Europe, in the majority of countries, in the last 15 years English has become an obligatory school subject from the age of 7. Additionally, English being used as the language of the Internet further helped younger generations dive in the world of the English language. On the contrary, the generation of the participants in their forties possibly started using English later in their lives and therefore they still feel more comfortable using their native language for work purposes and they show less confidence in their English language skills.

5.4.3. Comparison between the subsidiaries

A comparison for difference in responses was done as to the countries participants are working in. A distinction was made between two groups of employees, namely, employees working in Bank Austria headquarters and employees working in Bank Austria subsidiary companies. Having in mind that Vienna is generally a very

international city, and especially in the context of Bank Austria, as many expatriate employees are employed in the Bank Austria headquarters, a distinction between the two groups of participants was seen as relevant. There is a high probability that the employees working in Bank Austria headquarters in Vienna will have more positive attitudes towards using English.

A comparison of the responses between the subsidiaries was not conducted because the subsidiaries have significantly fewer employees than headquarters of Bank Austria and the statistical analysis would not be possible.¹⁴

For the analysis of the two groups a non-parametric test with two independent samples was used, namely, the Mann-Whitney U test that is available in the Appendix E. With regard to situations in which English is used, the test revealed significant differences between the two groups, namely the employees working in Bank Austria headquarters (N=26) and the employees working in Bank Austria subsidiaries (N=43).

In the tables 9 and 10 it can be seen that the employees working in Bank Austria headquarters have higher mean in several questions. Firstly, when it comes to using English in their private lives, the employees working in the headquarters have higher mean (M=43.88) than employees in the subsidiaries (M=29.63). More precisely, the group of employees working in the headquarters shows statistical significance with regard to using English privately (U=328, p=,001). That is to say, the headquarters employees use English more in their private lives in communication with their family and/or friends.

Similarly, the headquarters group of employees has higher mean (M=44.17) than the subsidiaries employees (M=29.54) when it comes to using English in communication with the immediate colleagues. There is statistical significance of the headquarters group of employees (U=320, p=.000) when using English in communication with the immediate colleagues as shown in tables 9 and 10. More precisely, headquarters employees answered more often affirmatively to using English in communication with the immediate colleagues.

¹⁴ For the precise number of participants who took the survey as per subsidiary refer to chapter 4.5. Sampling

The statistical significance was also noted in question regarding using English in the communication in social situations with colleagues. Namely, as it can be seen in tables 9 and 10, employees working in the headquarters have higher mean ($M=44.67$) when it comes to using English in the social interactions with the colleagues than subsidiary employees ($M=29.15$). There is statistical significance ($U=307$, $p=.000$) of the headquarters employee group, meaning that headquarters employees answered more often to use English in social situations with the colleagues.

Finally, as shown in tables 9 and 10, headquarters employees show higher mean ($M=44.67$) than subsidiary employees with regard to using English in communication with colleagues in other UniCredit branches. The group of headquarters employees is more statistically significant ($U=437$, $p=.022$) than the subsidiary group. More precisely, with regard to using English in communication with colleagues in other UniCredit branches headquarters employees answered more often affirmatively.

	Country	N	Mean rank	Sum of ranks
Do you use English in your private life to communicate with friends, family members etc.?	Austria	26	43.88	1141.00
	Others	43	29.63	1274.00
	Total	69		
Do you communicate in English with your immediate colleagues?	Austria	26	44.17	1148.50
	Others	43	29.45	1266.50
	Total	69		
Do you communicate in English in social interactions with your colleagues?	Austria	26	44.67	1161.50
	Others	43	29.15	1253.50
	Total	69		
Do you communicate in English with your colleagues in other UniCredit branches?	Austria	26	39.67	1031.50
	Others	43	32.17	1383.50
	Total	69		

Table 9 Mann-Whitney U test (countries) ranks

	Do you use English in your private life to communicate with friends, family members etc.?	Do you communicate in English with your immediate colleagues?	Do you communicate in English in social interactions with your colleagues?	Do you communicate in English with your colleagues in other UniCredit branches?
Mann-Whitney U	328.000	320.500	307.500	437.500
Wilcoxon W	1274.000	1266.500	1253.500	1383.500
Z	-3.331	-3.705	-3.858	-2.291
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.001	.000	.000	.022

Table 10 Mann-Whitney U test (counties) test statistics

The T-test was used for the independent samples. The test results are available in the Appendix F. As tables 11 and 12 show, the T-test revealed that employees working in Bank Austria headquarters (N=26) had higher mean (M=4.73) when it comes to using English more often for work than subsidiaries' employees (N=43; M=4.09). Namely, headquarters' employees answered to use English more often for work purposes ($t(67) = 3.672$; $p = .000$). Additionally, the T-test shows that the headquarters employees (M=9.38) felt more comfortable using English for work than the subsidiary employees (M=7.95). The headquarters employees rated being comfortable using English higher than the subsidiary employees $t(67) = 4.454$, $p = .000$.

With regard to the attitudes the T-test shows that the headquarters employees find knowledge of English more important than employees in the subsidiaries. The headquarters employees have higher mean (M=4.88) than subsidiary employees (M=4.44) in this question. The findings imply that the headquarters employees value the knowledge of English more $t(61) = 3.512$, $p = .001$. Furthermore, the headquarters employees have higher mean (M=5.00) than the subsidiary employees (M=4.63) when it comes to their attitudes towards using English for work. More precisely, the headquarters employees find knowledge of English for work purposes more important $t(67) = 3.532$, $p = .001$.

Question	Country	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std.
How often do you use English for work?	Austria	26	4.73	.562	.110
	Others	43	4.09	.799	.122
On scale 0-1- how comfortable do you feel using English at work	Austria	26	9.38	.852	.167
	Others	43	7.95	1.495	.228
How important is the knowledge of English to you personally?	Austria	26	4.88	.326	.064
	Others	43	4.44	.590	.090
In your opinion, how important is the knowledge of the English language at work?	Austria	26	5.00	.000	.000
	Others	43	4.63	.536	.082

Table 11 T-test (countries) group statistics

Question		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df.	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean dif	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Low	Up
How often do you use English for work?	Equal variances assumed	1.274	.263	3.672	67	.000	.638	.174	.291	.984
	Equal variances not assumed			4.022	65.905	.000	.638	.159	.321	.954
On scale 0-1- how comfortable do you feel using English at work	Equal variances assumed	3.637	.061	4.454	67	.000	1.431	.321	.790	2.072
	Equal variances not assumed			5.062	66.839	.000	1.431	.283	.867	1.995
How important is the knowledge of English to you personally?	Equal variances assumed	37.182	.000	3.512	67	.001	.443	.126	.191	.694
	Equal variances not assumed			4.014	66.597	.000	.443	.110	.223	.663
In your opinion, how important is the knowledge of the English language at work?	Equal variances assumed	130.791	.000	3.532	67	.001	.372	.105	.162	.582
	Equal variances not assumed			4.556	4 2.000	.000	.372	.082	.207	.537

Table 12 T-test (country) independent samples test

A conclusion can be drawn that CEE Controlling unit employees working in Bank Austria headquarters in Vienna feel more comfortable using English for work purposes, they also feel more confident in their English language skills. Additionally, they find knowledge of English important for them personally, but also in the work context. They had higher mean with regard to using English in communication privately, for work purposes and in social interactions with their colleagues. In contrast, the subsidiary employees had lower mean in all these questions, and additionally prefer using their native language for work.

5.5. Discussion of the findings

The present study was designed to determine communicative difficulties Bank Austria employees have in their work communication in ELF. The study found that Bank Austria CEE Controlling unit employees on the whole do not face difficulties understanding or making themselves understood. Albeit, statistically insignificant, the responses of the participants who face challenges in ELF work communication point to an important issue. More precisely, the source of communication issues is not necessarily only related to linguistic problems, namely knowledge of grammar, vocabulary and alike, but also cultural problems. Both ELF and BELF communication involve multiple cultures and hence many native languages, therefore assuming the neutrality of ELF and BELF communication can be only applied to the ownership of the code and not to the nature of the communication (Louhiala-Salminen et al. 2005:403-404). The respondents in the research pointed out issues in communicating sensitive content in a polite manner, such act then includes not only the linguistic knowledge, but also the knowledge of the culture and the cultural sensitivity. ELF and BELF speakers employ discourse or culture strategies in their interactions (Gerritsen & Nickerson 2009:182). It is ELF interactions where meanings, ideas and cultural norms get negotiated.

This study set out to explore possible difficulties as distributed across different communication channels. The results of the email communication are in line with the previous studies by Evans (2013) and Louhiala- Salminen et al. (2005) that emphasize the central position of the email communication in the business world. The findings with regard to difficulties as distributed across this communicative medium show that the participants in the survey overall do not face issues in the email communication.

Similarly, when it comes to reading and writing official work documentation the participants on the whole do not face challenges. In spite of being statistically of minor importance, one response that expresses concern with the correctness of the language used in this context shows the power of the NS Standard English. Even though, NNS of English outnumber the NS (Crystal 2003) and they use ELF creatively (Seidlhofer 2011) still the impact of NS ownership of the English language (Quirk 2003) and the linguistic imperialism (Phillipson 1992) can be sensed.

The study findings show that phone and conference call communication was not problematic for the majority of the participants. It is worth noting that phone communication was regarded as more flexible as it allows meaning to be negotiated. The negotiation of the message and accommodation (Seidlhofer 2011) are central in ELF interactions. Furthermore, communication in ELF in the context of meetings, as study finds, was also seen as unproblematic.

In the previous research the use of the avoidance strategies (Nekvapil & Sherman 2009; Marschan et al. 1997) has been emphasized as a coping mechanism when dealing with a linguistic problem. The findings of this study do not indicate that the written communication is used as an avoidance strategy over spoken communication.

The most obvious finding to emerge from the analysis is that the majority of the Bank Austria CEE Controlling unit employees do not experience communicative difficulties. In line with this finding, it is not surprising that the majority of the participants express confidence in their English language skills. They feel comfortable when using ELF for work purposes. The use of English was assessed as having overall positive impact on the performance and the careers of the participants. The findings coordinate with the findings of Kankaanranta and Louhiala-Salminen (2010) and Rogerson-Revell (2008) which show that the use of ELF for the purposes of the international business are seen as “just work” and “functional realism”. In this line of thought, the participants in the study, as the findings imply, see no issue in using English for work.

The comparison of the responses of male and female respondents revealed differences. More precisely, the findings indicate that more male participants stated to have communicative difficulties in using ELF at work than the female participants. Additionally, more male participants expressed the preference of using the native language in the work communication over ELF. However, these results need to be interpreted with caution as borderline significance was noted. It is possible therefore, that female employees cope better and that they have more positive attitudes towards using ELF for work.

The results of the statistical analysis indicate significant distinctions between the three age groups. Unsurprisingly, the youngest group of the participants expressed more confidence in their English language skills. In contrast the oldest group of the

participants preferred using the native language in work communication to ELF. The findings clearly show that the younger generations are more adapted to using English and more accepting, whereas older generations possibly started using English at a later stage in life and they do not feel comfortable in ELF interactions.

Finally, the study finds notable differences in responses between the headquarters employees and the subsidiary employees. The results imply that the headquarters employees used English more often in their private and professional lives. It is therefore not surprising that the headquarters employees expressed to have more positive attitudes towards using English for work and they recognize the importance of the English language knowledge for the professional development. The possible explanation for these results may be the international character of the city of Vienna where Bank Austria headquarters are located. More precisely, historically countries of Central and Eastern Europe that were under the reign of the Hapsburg monarchy and since Hapsburg times maintained strong political and economic relationship. This relationship furthered the migrations of people from these countries into Austria in general, but particularly Vienna. Additionally, the establishment of the EU and Single European Labor Market law increased the internationality of the city of Vienna. These events influenced the internationality in Austria's capital and its impact is visible in the work place. Finally, the fact that Bank Austria is an Italian owned company further promotes the international character of the company. Therefore, a comparison was conducted between the responses of the employees from the subsidiaries on the one hand, and on the other hand employees from the headquarters. Ultimately, in the international environment the use of English is seen as a necessity. Additionally, Bank Austria employs expatriate employees across its network as identified in this study. The presence of the expatriate employees possibly further promotes the use of ELF in Bank Austria headquarters, as employees probably do not have another code in common.

6. Final remarks

6.1. Suggestions

Bank Austria Annual Report (2007:98) indicates that the official language of Bank Austria and UniCredit Group is English. However, Bank Austria language policy is *implicit* and hence does not provide details. Over the course of this research it was

not possible get hold of a more detailed language policy. Given that Bank Austria does not have an explicit language policy one of the possible improvements would be implementing an explicit company language policy.

The purpose of language policies is to regulate communication. Especially in multinational corporations where the context is by nature multilingual. Language policies should regulate the flow of communication, cater the report between the units in the company, address communication issues, care that the linguistic resources are fully exploited and not disabling, and overall help the communicative process in the company. Indeed, the very existence of a language policy does not guaranty successful communication as language policies can have implicit dimensions. However, when formulated well, language policies can have an enormous impact and take advantage of the linguistic resource in the company and improve the communication. A good language policy will not allow for a language to act as a barrier and impose structures and hierarchies. Having this in mind, it is essential for Bank Austria to formulate a language policy. Albeit, the conclusion on the use of ELF as a common corporate language in Bank Austria is positive, linguistic resources could be employed in a more advantageous manner.

In the context of language policies for a company to understand and have a full awareness of the linguistic situation it is crucial to conduct a linguistic audit. The top management of a corporation after having proclaimed a common corporate language often considers the issue of language addressed, however, the previous studies on the common corporate language choices have shown how the linguistic problems can be present despite the existence of a language policy. Therefore, conducting a linguistic audit to address and assess the linguistic situation within a company is of the utmost importance. The value of the linguistic audit was pointed out in Thomas (2008), Reeves and Wright (1996) and Charles and Marschan-Piekkari (2002). Reeves and Wright assert (1996:5) “the objective of a language or a ‘linguistic’ audit is to help the management of a firm identify the strengths and the weaknesses of their organization in terms of communication in a foreign language”. Similarly, Charles and Marschan-Piekkari (2002:23) consider that “[t]he purpose of a linguistic audit is to make a company aware of potential problem spots in communication and language use”. Linguistic audit will enable a corporation gain a better understanding of how languages are used in the company and discover the communication issues.

Reeves and Wright (1996:7) propose six stages of the linguistic audit. In the *preliminary stage* the audit is initiated and the terms of confidentiality are agreed upon with the company. Furthermore, in the first stage the audit is integrated into the planning process, namely the linguistic problems are identified and the future language related challenges. The second stage of the audit involves getting a better understanding of the organization in terms of the language, more precisely the “current and potential language roles” (Reeves and Wright 1996:7). A company’s culture is also explored at this stage. The third stage is focused on the language use in the company, that is, its actual and the potential use. The fourth stage involves the assessment process where language proficiency is evaluated and the postholder’s profile is being created. In the fifth and the final stage of the linguistic audit a report is formulated that includes the action plan, training needs and recommendations. Reeves and Wright (1996:70) go to propose the following action plan as a result of the auditing process:

- A Language Training Plan
- Recruitment Plan
- Use of professional interpreters and translators
- ‘Fire Fighting’ involves the immediate recruitment of the qualified staff
- Identification of underused skills
- Recognition of the corporate mission and strategic objectives in terms of potential weaknesses

In the context of Bank Austria, which does not have a detailed language policy, conducting a linguistic audit would offer insights into how language is used. Possibly, the expressed preference of using native languages by some of the participants, in situations that require communicating sensitive messages politely, understanding contents fully and in situations when it is essential to be clear, could be addressed by the linguistic audit. The linguistic audit could point to the communication issues and specify language training focus to resolve those issues.

The importance of language training has been emphasized as one of the strategies for a corporation management to deal with language barriers. The value of language training programs in multinational corporations has been emphasized in Charles and Marschan-Piekkari (2002), Piekkari et al. (2005), Feely and Harzing (2003) and Reeves and Wright (1996). Reeves and Wright (1996:71) propose language training as the integral part of the language audit recommendations. They propose that

(1996:70) language training should be needs and time specific and targeted based on the issues that were identified by the audit. Furthermore, the training should both take place in the company and outside of the company with the possibility of getting “accreditation of by the external bodies” (Reeves and Wright 1996:70). According to Reeves and Wright (1996:70) language training should involve “the development of skills in International English”. Once again, the knowledge of English is regarded as integral in the context of business. Another important aspect noted is that the training should be fully costed (Reeves and Wright 1996:70). This is crucial to keep in mind as “[t]raining in most companies is geared to the economic cycle. When times are good money is invested in training. When belts get tightened training is one of the first “luxuries” to be pared down” (Feely and Harzing 2003:44). The cost account of the language training programs is an obvious downside. Additionally, as Reeves and Wright (1996:71) assert “it will almost certainly be advisable to ensure that the company understands that the language training objectives cannot be met within the same time limits as some other training needs”. Namely developing a computer skill might require several days or weeks to master, however language learning is normally a long-term costly process.

In the context of Bank Austria the analysis of the questionnaire data showed that Bank Austria CEE Controlling unit employees do not have communicative difficulties, however, it should not be overlooked that certain participants emphasized the issue of using ELF in situations when it is important to be clear, communicate in polite manner and have a full understanding of a topic. Furthermore, several participants on few occasions reported having difficulties with technical vocabulary, which can be easily addressed in the language courses. Moreover, one of the respondents pointed out that he does not have difficulties in communication in meetings, only because he is not in the meeting leading position. He also added that if this were the case, he would expect to face problems. Therefore, language training can be aimed at not only language skills, but also skills that are of major importance in the business context such as presentation skills. The linguistic audit could offer more insights into the kind of training to be provided to the employees of Bank Austria. Finally, a group of the oldest participants in the survey reported to prefer using their native languages at work, an issue that can also be addressed in language training by making those employees feel more comfortable and meeting their needs in such courses.

Although the majority of Bank Austria CEE Controlling unit employees do not experience difficulties in communication in ELF, still there were cases where employees did express their concerns. Additionally, given that the questionnaire used for the research was voluntary and in English, some employees having problems in communication in English might not have taken the survey in the first place. A linguistic audit would resolve this problem as it would be done officially and would place more responsibility on all the employees to take part in it. Insights collected through a linguistic audit could be used to design an explicit language policy and address linguistic problems through language training. Targeted language training would be more effective than language training approached more generally.

6.2. Implications for further research

The case study on Bank Austria CEE Controlling unit did provide some understanding on how and in which situations ELF is used in this company as a common corporate language. It provided more understanding of the kind of issues employees working in ELF face. Finally, attitudes of employees towards using English in the professional context and the performance and career impact were both accounted for. Although insights on these matters were gained still there is space for improvement and for a more in-depth research.

It was explained earlier that the case study on Bank Austria involved CEE Controlling unit employees in Austrian headquarters and the subsidiaries in Bulgaria, Czech Republic and Slovakia, Hungary, Romania, Serbia and Slovenia. Therefore, the findings gained can be limited to the situation in these particular subsidiaries. It is very difficult to speak of universally applicable conclusions that could stand as a fact for the entire UniCredit Group or other similar companies.

It has to be noted that Bank Austria has subsidiaries also in Ukraine, Croatia, Russia, Turkey, Azerbaijan, Hungary and Bosnia and Herzegovina. In order to get a full account on the position of ELF in Bank Austria it would be of value to conduct a more comprehensive study to include all the subsidiaries. Additionally, given that UniCredit Group is the holding company of Bank Austria and HypoVereinsbank in Germany and Bank Pekao in Poland, a large-scale study on the entire UniCredit Group could be conducted. The study could provide valuable insights on challenges employees are

facing in using ELF for work purposes. The study would provide insightful data for the language policy formulation and language training.

On a smaller scale a study could be conducted within Bank Austria and the subsidiaries to include other relevant departments that use English in their daily work life. This case study involved CEE Controlling unit as it is a mediating unit between Bank Austria headquarters and the subsidiaries. However, it has to be borne in mind that there are other departments that use English daily, namely Asset and Liability Management, Capital Management, CEE Financing and alike. It would be relevant to gain understating on the position of ELF as used by the employees in these departments. This would of course provide more detail and possibly point to issues that have not surfaced in the study on CEE Controlling unit.

One of the primary foci of this thesis was to give a full overview of the difficulties the employees experience in the professional setting when using the English language, however the findings have mostly shown that communication in ELF in Bank Austria is not followed with a variety of difficulties. Nevertheless, this still does not mean that the issues are not present. Earlier, it was emphasized that the method used for gathering data was a questionnaire written in the English language. This could possibly be a reason for employees who do experience difficulties not to take the survey. The dropout rate in the study was 16% which is quite high, as the survey was distributed by the heads of each department and the participation was encouraged internally. Another possible reason is that it was limited to the CEE Controlling unit and to certain subsidiaries. Including other subsidiaries and other English using departments could be of value.

The case study did provide interesting data, however, given that the main instrument for data collection was questionnaire, data collected was not very detailed. The majority of open-ended questions were left unanswered, either because respondents had nothing more to add, or because the requirement itself was rather time-consuming. In order to gain more detail, interviews could be conducted to supplement data from the questionnaire. Data collected through interviews would offer more detail and could possibly point to the issues that were not previously thought of and deemed relevant. Interviews in a native language of the participants could be particularly relevant in the case of the participants who struggle in their

communication in ELF and who could have been put of by the questionnaire in the English language in the first place.

6.3. Summary

Through processes of mergers and acquisitions Bank Austria has moved beyond the national boundaries of Austria and gained presence across Europe. Today, Bank Austria has its operations in 14 different countries across the European continent, which makes it a uniquely nationally rich corporation. Multinational corporations are not only diverse in terms of the nationalities of its employees, but national variety involves the cultural and linguistic variety that was of particular interest for this paper. In order to deal with the abundance of languages in the company Bank Austria and its holding company, UniCredit Group proclaimed English their common corporate language.

Using English as a corporate language is supposed to be seen as neutral as English today occupies the role of the globally acknowledged lingua franca. It is a code with no 'owners'. However, the overview of the research on the use of English as a corporate language revealed how monolingual and English only language policies can have negative consequences on a corporation. Additionally, albeit ELF is seen as neutral, still its users allow the influence of their native cultures and linguistic influences. Even though, ELF is recognized as *neutral*, still its neutrality does not always counterbalance the issues. Proclaiming English an official company language purely based on its neutrality does not remove the problems that can be present. Particularly for this reason, it was important to understand the impact of using ELF in Bank Austria and its subsidiaries.

The analysis of the data collected on Bank Austria CEE Controlling unit employees has clearly shown that its employees are active users of English, both in their private and professional lives. Although communicative difficulties are bound to come up in non-native language communication and directly inhibit the communicative process and compromise the *professional face* very few difficulties were reported. The majority of Bank Austria CEE Controlling unit employees do not experience communicative difficulties in ELF. Additionally, a detailed account of different communication channels and difficulties distributed across them has shown that the

majority of the employees do not experience any particular problems across these mediums.

The research into language policies in multinational corporations has shown that management of multinational corporations often implements a language policy without assessing its impact. Welch et al. (2001: 202) assert that top management, after drafting a language policy, tends to see the issue of language as having been addressed and dealt with, even though the impact of language policy might not have been properly estimated. Other studies (Vaara et al. 2005; Marschan-Piekkari et al. 1999b) have shown that continuing to use a common corporate language can have severe consequences and impact performance, career direction and influence overall attitudes of employees. With regard to this, the majority of Bank Austria CEE Controlling unit employees believe that the use of ELF at work has had an overall positive influence on their careers and their work performance. It is worth noting that none of the employees believe the use of ELF at the workplace impacted their performance or careers negatively. Additionally, the majority of the employees who took part in the survey prefer to continue using English for work. However, using their native language is not looked down upon especially when using English is not seen as essential. For instance, in social situations, situations when it is important to understand the content clearly and fully, also situations when it is important to be clear and communicate sensitive messages politely are listed as the ones when the native language is preferred over ELF.

The statistical analysis of male and female responses has shown that male participants reported to have more difficulties in understanding other speakers when speaking English. Borderline statistical significance was noted with regard to using the native language at work. More precisely, more male participants expressed preference of using their native language for work purposes than female. The correlations made with regard to gender did not offer other insights. It can be tentatively concluded that the female participants have possibly slightly more positive attitudes and outlook on using English for work purposes than male participants.

The comparison of three age groups that emerged over the course of the statistical analysis had an expected outcome. Namely, the group of employees 20-31 years of age expressed more confidence in their English language skills. Additionally, the

group of employees aged 41-51 more often stated to prefer using their native language for work purposes. As mentioned earlier, the outcome offered by this analysis is not surprising as younger generations encountered the English language at an early age, most probably from the first grade of the primary school. Additionally, technological advances, particularly the Internet further made the English language approachable for the younger generations. Moreover, the majority of universities today offer courses in English, which helped younger generations feel more comfortable with using English.

The statistical analysis also dealt with difference between the responses of the headquarters employees working in Vienna and the subsidiary employees working in in Bulgaria, Czech Republic and Slovakia, Hungary, Romania, Serbia and Slovenia. The distinction between the headquarters and the subsidiaries was seen as relevant because of the historical and political relationship these countries share and high internationality of the city of Vienna where Bank Austria headquarters are located. The statistical analysis revealed that employees in the headquarters used English more in their private lives and in communication with their colleagues both in immediate surrounding and in other UniCredit Group branches. Additionally, employees working in Bank Austria headquarters used ELF more, both in general and for work purposes. Finally, employees working in headquarters in Austria reported feeling more confident in using English in their professional lives. In contrast, subsidiary employees expressed preference for using their native languages for work purposes.

The insights gained through statistical analysis of the responses of Bank Austria CEE Controlling unit employees working in the subsidiaries and the headquarters revealed that overall employees working in headquarters used English more often and expressed more confidence in their English language skills. Having in mind that Vienna, especially in the last 10 years, has become a highly international city, then that employees working in the headquarters feel more comfortable and use ELF more often is not surprising.

It can be concluded that Bank Austria CEE Controlling unit employees are active users of English both in their private and professional lives. Bank Austria CEE Controlling unit employees both in the headquarters and the subsidiaries use of

English is not compromised by the communicative difficulties. The majority of employees have positive attitudes towards using ELF for professional purposes and ELF is not seen as having influenced their performance and careers negatively. Additionally, the majority of employees do not have issues with continuing to use English for work purposes. It is worth mentioning that the younger participants in the survey have more confidence in their language skills, whereas the oldest participants expressed preference of using their native languages for work purposes. Similarly, employees in Bank Austria headquarters in Vienna used English more often both privately and in their professional lives. They also expressed more positive attitude towards using English for work purposes. Finally, headquarters' employees valued the knowledge of English more than employees in the subsidiaries who expressed the preference of using native languages in the professional life.

In Bank Austria the use of ELF at the work place is seen as a part of the job requirement and trends in the world. This conclusion aligns with findings of Kankaanranta and Louhiala-Salminen (2010) study on perceptions of using English for work purposes and Rogerson-Ravell's (2008) study findings where the use of English in the international business is seen as "functional realism". The use of English in the professional lives of Bank Austria employees is seen as not driven by communicative difficulties and negative attitudes, but rather accepted as a fact of working life and approached positively. It is important to note that, even though, the use of ELF is seen as positive, certain groups expressed preference of native languages in the work context, namely, employees in the subsidiaries and the oldest group of the employees. Although, this can be seen as a minor issue it should not be overlooked as the impact of feeling uncomfortable when communicating in ELF at the work place can ultimately have an impact on the *professional face*, performance and career.

7. Conclusion

The role and the position of the English language has changed. English today is a globally used medium of communication employed in a variety of contexts like no language before. It has exceeded its national borders and spread across the globe to gain tremendous number on NNSs, which is higher than the number of its NSs. As the position of English changed, new scientific paradigms have surfaced that attempt

to conceptualize this new global role. ELF paradigm captures the essence of this new global trend where English language users across the world appropriate the language for their own needs and through process of accommodation achieve communicative success while shifting from the Standard English norms.

ELF is used in a variety of contexts, business communication being one of them. Concepts such as BELF emerged to capture the role of ELF in the context of international business. This thesis clarified the notion of BELF and contrasting paradigms such as EIB. Additionally, the position of English in the international business world was explored and the position of English in nationally, culturally and linguistically diverse multinational corporations.

Multinational corporations manage not only their business interests, but they manage their linguistic assets equally, and such management occurs through language policies. Language policies in the framework of sociological research and more specifically in the context of multinational corporations have been addressed in this paper. The principal aim of any language policy is to control communication flow and address a linguistic problem, however it was demonstrated how language policies do not guarantee successful barrier free communication, but often language policy choices result in communication and staff issues. It was shown that language in a multinational organization can act as a resource, source of power and barrier. Language acting as a barrier is a particularly notable problem that requires strategies both on the part of multinational corporation management and an individual working in the organization.

The theoretical portion of this paper helped outline the issues related to language in multinational corporations and provided the foundation for the case study, which was the primary focus of this thesis. The empirical case study investigated the position of the English language in multinational corporation Bank Austria and its subsidiary companies in Bulgaria, Czech Republic and Slovakia, Hungary, Romania, Serbia and Slovenia. The study explored the historical events that were crucial for the creation of this multinational corporation. Additionally, the structural organization and the communication flow were explored as well. Given that language policy and its impact was of particular interest for this paper it was revealed that this multinational proclaimed English its common corporate language. However, the investigation has

also shown the company does not possess an explicit language policy that would offer detail on how English is used in this organization. This study looked into the purposes and situations in which the English language is used, communication difficulties following choice of ELF as a common corporate language as distributed across different communication channels and attitudes towards using ELF for work.

It was found that Bank Austria employees are active users of English both privately and professionally. English is used both in written and spoken forms at the workplace which does not point to the employment of the avoidance strategies. Additionally, it was shown that Bank Austria employees do not experience the communication difficulties when using English at the workplace. The majority of the employees do not have issues in their English language communication across different communication channels. Finally, Bank Austria employees have positive attitudes towards using English for work and believe that using English has had overall positive impact on their performance and careers. The majority of the employees do not foresee issues with using English for work in the future.

Albeit, Bank Austria employees have difficulty free communication and overall positive attitude towards using English in the professional contexts there is space for improvement. Bank Austria management would benefit from having a more detailed language policy that would enable it to use all of its linguistic resources to the fullest. Conducting a linguistic audit in order to assess the language situation in the company would offer more detail and a starting point for the company to draft its language policy. Albeit, communicative difficulties were not prominent, offering more targeted language training courses would be beneficial. The specifics of the language training would be revealed as the result of the linguistic auditing.

When it comes to implications for further research it was pointed out in this thesis that only one unit of Bank Austria took part in this study. Therefore, the findings of this study are limited to the unit which took the survey. Additionally, the survey was distributed only to certain subsidiaries of Bank Austria. In order to get a full overview it would be relevant to include all 14 subsidiaries in the study. Attention was also drawn to the fact that the survey was conducted in English, which might have caused a relatively high dropout rate. Having survey written in the national languages of the participants could offer more valuable information on the side of the respondents.

Conducting interviews would possibly give more detail and would reveal issues that were not anticipated. Therefore, a study that would include other subsidiaries of Bank Austria and other units of the company would offer more insights.

In conclusion, the findings of the thesis align with the findings of Kankaanranta and Louhiala-Salminen's (2010) study on perceptions of using English for work purposes and Rogerson-Ravell's (2008) findings where the use of English in the international business is seen as "just work" and as "functional realism". The use of ELF in Bank Austria and its subsidiaries is approached similarly. ELF communication is not followed by communicative difficulties and overall employees have positive attitudes towards using ELF at the workplace. The employees do not note any negative impact of using ELF as a common corporate language, but accept its use as workplace reality and the international business requirement.

7. Bibliography

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8. Appendices

APPENDIX A QUESTIONNAIRE

1. How old are you?

2. Please specify your gender

☐ Male

☐ Female

3. How long have you been working for the UniCredit Group?

☐ less than 1 year

☐ 1 - 3 years

☐ 3 - 5 years

☐ More than 5 years

☐ I don't work for the UniCredit Group

If I don't work for the UniCre... Is Selected, Then Skip To End of Survey

4. In which country are you working?

5. What country are you from?

6. What is your first language?

7. Do you speak any other languages except your first language and English?

☐ No

☐ Yes

Answer If Do you speak any other languages except your mother tongue and English? Yes Is Selected

8. What other languages do you speak?

9. How long have you been regularly using English?

☐ less than 1 year

☐ 1 - 3 years

☐ 3 - 5 years

☐ More than 5 years

☐ I don't use English at all

If I don't use English at all Is Selected, Then Skip To End of Survey

10. Have you ever studied in English (a semester abroad, BA, MA, PhD)?

☐ No

☐ Yes

Answer If Have you ever studied in English (a semester abroad, BA, MA, PhD)? Yes
Is Selected

11. How long have you studied in English?

- ☐ less than 1 year
- ☐ 1 - 3 years
- ☐ 3 years
- ☐ 3 - 5 years
- ☐ More than 5 years

12. How would you rate your knowledge of English?

- ☐ Poor
- ☐ Fair
- ☐ Good
- ☐ Very Good
- ☐ Excellent

13. How often do you use English?

- ☐ Never
- ☐ Rarely
- ☐ Sometimes
- ☐ Often
- ☐ Most of the Time

If Never Is Selected, Then Skip To End of Survey

14. Do you use English in your private life to communicate with friends, family members etc.?

- ☐ No
- ☐ Yes

15. Do you use English for work?

- ☐ No
- ☐ Yes

If No Is Selected, Then Skip To End of Survey

16. How often do you use English for work?

- ☐ Never
- ☐ Rarely
- ☐ Sometimes
- ☐ Often
- ☐ Most of the Time

If Never Is Selected, Then Skip To End of Survey

17. Do you communicate in English with your immediate colleagues?

- ☐ No
- ☐ Yes

18. Do you communicate in English with your colleagues in other UniCredit branches?

- ☐ No
- ☐ Yes

19. Do you communicate in English in social interactions with your colleagues?

- ☐ No
- ☐ Yes

20. In what forms do you use English normally?

- ☐ Spoken communication
- ☐ Written communication
- ☐ Both

21. Do you have problems understanding other speakers when they speak English?

- ☐ No
- ☐ Yes

If No Is Selected, Then Skip To Do you have problems making yourself ...

Answer If Do you have problems understanding other speakers when they speak English? Yes Is Selected

23. I have problems understanding:

	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	All of the Time
Different accents	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Fast pace of speech	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Complex grammatical constructions	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Specific vocabulary	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
When context is unfamiliar to me	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

22. Do you have any other problems understanding that were not mentioned?

24. Do you have problems making yourself understood when you speak English?

- ☐ No
- ☐ Yes

If No Is Selected, Then Skip To How many of the emails you write at w...

Answer If Do you have problems making yourself understood when you speak English? Yes Is Selected

25. I have problems making myself understood because:

	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	All of the Time
I have difficulties finding 'the right' words	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I have difficulties with business specific terminology	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I can't think of appropriate grammatical structures	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I feel I can't be spontaneous	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I find it difficult to communicate sensitive messages politely	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I have problems with pronunciation	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

26. Do you have any other problems making yourself understood that were not mentioned?

27. How many of the emails you write at work are in English?

- ☐ None
- ☐ Some
- ☐ Quite a Bit
- ☐ A Lot
- ☐ All

If Never Is Selected, Then Skip To How often do you read work documents ...

28. Do you experience any difficulties when writing emails in English?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

Answer If Do you experience any difficulties when writing emails in English? Yes Is Selected

29. Could you please specify what difficulties you have when writing emails in English

30. How much of the work documentation you read is in English?

- ☐ None
- ☐ Some
- ☐ Quite a Bit
- ☐ A Lot
- ☐ All

If Never Is Selected, Then Skip To How often do you write official work ...

31. Do you experience any difficulties when reading work documents in English?

- ☐ No
- ☐ Yes

Answer If Do you experience any difficulties when reading work documents in English? Yes Is Selected

32. Could you please specify what difficulties you have when reading work documentation in English

33. How much of the work documentation you write is in English?

- ☐ None
- ☐ Some
- ☐ Quite a Bit
- ☐ A Lot
- ☐ All

If Never Is Selected, Then Skip To How often do you talk on the phone in...

34. Do you have any difficulties writing official documentation in English for work?

- ☐ No
- ☐ Yes

Answer If Do you have any difficulties writing official documents in English for work? Yes Is Selected

35. Could you please specify what difficulties you have when writing official work documentation in English?

36. How much of your phone communication is in English (conference calls excluded)?

- ☐ None
- ☐ Some
- ☐ Quite a Bit
- ☐ A Lot
- ☐ All

If Never Is Selected, Then Skip To How often do you communicate in Engli...

37. Do you experience any difficulties when talking on the phone in English (conference calls excluded)?

- ☐ No
- ☐ Yes

Answer If Do you experience any difficulties when talking on the phone in English (conference calls excluded)? Yes Is Selected

38. Could you please specify what difficulties you have when speaking English over the phone

39. How much of your communication in meetings at work takes place in English?

- ☐ None
- ☐ Some
- ☐ Quite a Bit
- ☐ A Lot
- ☐ All

If Never Is Selected, Then Skip To How often do you communicate in Engli...

40. Do you have any difficulties communicating in English in meetings?

- ☐ No
- ☐ Yes

Answer If Do you have any difficulties communicating in English in meetings? Yes Is Selected

41. Could you please specify what difficulties you have communicating in English in meetings

42. How much of your communication when having a conference call at work takes place in English?

- ☐ None
- ☐ Some
- ☐ Quite a Bit
- ☐ A Lot
- ☐ All

If None Is Selected, Then Skip To End of Block

43. Do you have any difficulties communicating in English when having conference calls?

- ☐ No
- ☐ Yes

Answer If Do you have any difficulties communicating in English when having conference calls? Yes Is Selected

44. Could you please specify what difficulties you have communicating in English when having conference calls

45. On scale 0 - 10, how comfortable do you feel using English at work (0 being 'not comfortable at all', 10 being 'extremely comfortable'):

- ☐ 0
- ☐ 1
- ☐ 2
- ☐ 3
- ☐ 4
- ☐ 5
- ☐ 6
- ☐ 7
- ☐ 8
- ☐ 9
- ☐ 10

46. How do you feel when having to speak English at work?

- ☐ Very Insecure
- ☐ Insecure
- ☐ Neither Insecure or Confident
- ☐ Confident
- ☐ Very Confident

47. How do you feel when having to write in English for work?

- ☐ Very Insecure
- ☐ Insecure
- ☐ Neither Insecure nor Confident
- ☐ Confident
- ☐ Very Confident

48. How does communication in English at work make you feel?

- ☐ Very Unhappy
- ☐ Unhappy
- ☐ Neither Happy nor Unhappy
- ☐ Happy
- ☐ Very Happy

49. In your opinion, how has the use of English at work influenced your performance?

- ☐ Very Negatively
- ☐ Negatively
- ☐ Neither Negatively nor Positively
- ☐ Positively
- ☐ Very Positively

50. Would you prefer using your mother tongue at work?

- ☐ No
- ☐ Yes

If No Is Selected, Then Skip To How often would you prefer using Engl...

Answer If Would you prefer using your mother tongue at work? Yes Is Selected

51. In what situations would you prefer using your mother tongue at work?

52. How often would you prefer using English for work?

- ☐ Never
- ☐ Once Every Few Months
- ☐ Once a Month
- ☐ Weekly
- ☐ Daily

53. What effect, in your opinion, has using English at work had on your career?

- ☐ Very Negative
- ☐ Negative
- ☐ Neither Negative nor Positive
- ☐ Positive
- ☐ Very Positive

54. In your opinion, how important is the knowledge of the English language at work?

- ☐ Really Unimportant
- ☐ Unimportant
- ☐ Neither Unimportant nor Important
- ☐ Important
- ☐ Really Important

55. How important is the knowledge of the English language to you personally?

- ☐ Really Unimportant
- ☐ Unimportant
- ☐ Neither Unimportant nor Important
- ☐ Important
- ☐ Really Important

APPENDIX B MANN-WHITNEY TEST GENDER

Ranks				
	Please specify your gender	N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks
Do you speak any other languages except your first language and / English?	Male	32	35.03	1121.00
	Female	37	34.97	1294.00
		69		
	Total			
Do you use English in your private life to communicate with / friends, family members etc.?	Male	32	32.94	1054.00
	Female	37	36.78	1361.00
		69		
	Total			
Do you use English for work?	Male	32	35.00	1120.00
	Female	37	35.00	1295.00
		69		
	Total			
Do you communicate in English with your immediate colleagues?	Male	32	34.72	1111.00
	Female	37	35.24	1304.00
		69		
	Total			
Do you communicate in English with your colleagues in other / UniCredit branches?	Male	32	36.69	1174.00
	Female	37	33.54	1241.00
		69		
	Total			
Do you communicate in English in social interactions with your / colleagues?	Male	32	36.30	1161.50
	Female	37	33.88	1253.50
		69		
	Total			
Do you have problems understanding other speakers when they speak / English?	Male	32	37.31	1194.00
	Female	37	33.00	1221.00
		69		
	Total			
Do you have problems making yourself understood when you speak / English?	Male	32	33.50	1072.00
	Female	37	36.30	1343.00
		69		
	Total			
Do you experience any difficulties when writing emails in English?	Male	32	35.34	1131.00
	Female	37	34.70	1284.00
		69		
	Total			

Do you experience any difficulties when reading work documents in / English?	Male	32	35.23	1127.50
	Female	37	34.80	1287.50
	Total	69		
Do you have any difficulties writing official documentation in / English for work?	Male	32	34.08	1090.50
	Female	37	35.80	1324.50
	Total	69		
Do you experience any difficulties when talking on the phone in / English (conference calls excluded)?	Male	31	33.60	1041.50
	Female	37	35.26	1304.50
	Total	68		
Do you have any difficulties communicating in English in meetings?	Male	32	32.50	1040.00
	Female	36	36.28	1306.00
	Total	68		
Do you have any difficulties communicating in English when having / conference calls?	Male	32	35.19	1126.00
	Female	36	33.89	1220.00
	Total	68		
Would you prefer using your mother tongue at work?	Male	32	39.25	1256.00
	Female	37	31.32	1159.00
	Total	69		
Do you actively work on improving your English language skills?	Male	32	32.52	1040.50
	Female	37	37.15	1374.50
	Total	69		

Test Statistics^a

	Do you speak any other languages except your first language and / English?	Do you use English in your private life to communicate with / friends, family members etc.?	Do you use English for work?	Do you communicate in English with your immediate colleagues?	Do you communicate in English with your colleagues in other / UniCredit branches?	Do you communicate in English in social interactions with your / colleagues?
Mann-Whitney U	591.000	526.000	592.000	583.000	538.000	550.500
Wilcoxon W	1294.000	1054.000	1295.000	1111.000	1241.000	1253.500
Z	-.018	-.925	.000	-.136	-.990	-.619
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.986	.355	1.000	.892	.322	.536

Test Statistics^a

	Do you have problems understanding other speakers when they speak / English?	Do you have problems making yourself understood when you speak / English?	Do you experience any difficulties when writing emails in English?	Do you experience any difficulties when reading work documents in / English?	Do you have any difficulties writing official documentation in / English for work?	Do you experience any difficulties when talking on the phone in / English (conference calls excluded) ?
Mann-Whitney U	518.000	544.000	581.000	584.500	562.500	545.500
Wilcoxon W	1221.000	1072.000	1284.000	1287.500	1090.500	1041.500
Z	-2.200	-1.635	-.295	-.185	-.877	-.846
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.028	.102	.768	.853	.381	.398

Test Statistics^a

	Do you have any difficulties communicating in English in meetings?	Do you have any difficulties communicating in English when having / conference calls?	Would you prefer using your mother tongue at work?	Do you actively work on improving your English language skills?
Mann-Whitney U	512.000	554.000	456.000	512.500
Wilcoxon W	1040.000	1220.000	1159.000	1040.500
Z	-1.929	-.598	-1.950	-1.106
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.054	.550	.051	.269

APPENDIX C ONE-WAY ANOVA TEST AGE GROUPS

		ANOVA				
		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
How long have you been regularly using English?	Between Groups	2.379	2	1.189	7.130	.002
	Within Groups	10.842	65	.167		
	Total	13.221	67			
How long have you studied in English?	Between Groups	3.161	2	1.581	.677	.518
	Within Groups	56.024	24	2.334		
	Total	59.185	26			
How would you rate your knowledge of English?	Between Groups	3.996	2	1.998	3.150	.049
	Within Groups	41.225	65	.634		
	Total	45.221	67			
How often do you use English?	Between Groups	.631	2	.316	.572	.567
	Within Groups	35.884	65	.552		
	Total	36.515	67			
How often do you use English for work?	Between Groups	.428	2	.214	.358	.700
	Within Groups	38.793	65	.597		
	Total	39.221	67			
How many of the emails you write at work are in English?	Between Groups	1.778	2	.889	1.061	.352
	Within Groups	54.457	65	.838		
	Total	56.235	67			
How much of the work documentation you read is in English?	Between Groups	4.608	2	2.304	2.586	.083
	Within Groups	57.906	65	.891		
	Total	62.515	67			
How much of the work documentation you write is in English?	Between Groups	3.648	2	1.824	1.627	.204
	Within Groups	72.866	65	1.121		
	Total	76.515	67			
How much of your phone communication is in English (conference / calls excluded)?	Between Groups	1.655	2	.828	.663	.519
	Within Groups	81.095	65	1.248		
	Total	82.750	67			

How much of your communication in meetings at work takes place in / English?	Between Groups	.864	2	.432	.292	.748
	Within Groups	96.356	65	1.482		
	Total	97.221	67			
How much of your communication when having a conference call at / work takes place in English?	Between Groups	10.283	2	5.141	3.533	.035
	Within Groups	94.585	65	1.455		
	Total	104.868	67			
On scale 0 - 10, how comfortable do you feel using English at work / (0 being 'not comfortable at a...	Between Groups	6.124	2	3.062	1.433	.246
	Within Groups	138.862	65	2.136		
	Total	144.985	67			
How do you feel when having to speak English at work?	Between Groups	2.036	2	1.018	1.752	.182
	Within Groups	37.773	65	.581		
	Total	39.809	67			
How do you feel when having to write in English for work?	Between Groups	2.733	2	1.366	2.376	.101

Descriptive Statistics

age_group	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
How would you rate your knowledge of English?	1	3	3	3.00	.
Valid N (listwise)	1				
1.00 How would you rate your knowledge of English?	20	3	5	4.20	.768
Valid N (listwise)	20				
2.00 How would you rate your knowledge of English?	37	2	5	3.73	.732
Valid N (listwise)	37				
3.00 How would you rate your knowledge of English?	11	1	5	3.55	1.036
Valid N (listwise)	11				

Descriptive Statistics

age_group		N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
1.00	How much of your communication when having a conference call at / work takes place in English?	1	4	4	4.00	.
	Valid N (listwise)	1				
	How much of your communication when having a conference call at / work takes place in English?	20	2	5	4.00	1.170
	Valid N (listwise)	20				
2.00	How much of your communication when having a conference call at / work takes place in English?	37	1	5	3.19	1.198
	Valid N (listwise)	37				
	How much of your communication when having a conference call at / work takes place in English?	11	2	5	3.91	1.300
	Valid N (listwise)	11				

APPENDIX D KRUSKAL-WALLIS TEST AGE GROUPS

Ranks			
	age_group	N	Mean Rank
Do you speak any other languages except your first language and / English?	1.00	20	35.90
	2.00	37	33.65
	3.00	11	34.82
	Total	68	
Do you use English in your private life to communicate with / friends, family members etc.?	1.00	20	42.10
	2.00	37	31.03
	3.00	11	32.36
	Total	68	
Do you use English for work?	1.00	20	34.50
	2.00	37	34.50
	3.00	11	34.50
	Total	68	
Do you communicate in English with your immediate colleagues?	1.00	20	34.80
	2.00	37	33.97
	3.00	11	35.73
	Total	68	
Do you communicate in English with your colleagues in other / UniCredit branches?	1.00	20	33.20
	2.00	37	37.24
	3.00	11	27.64
	Total	68	
Do you communicate in English in social interactions with your / colleagues?	1.00	20	35.30
	2.00	37	34.47
	3.00	11	33.14
	Total	68	
Do you have problems understanding other speakers when they speak / English?	1.00	20	32.50
	2.00	37	34.34
	3.00	11	38.68
	Total	68	
Do you have problems making yourself understood when you speak / English?	1.00	20	36.40
	2.00	37	33.92
	3.00	11	33.00
	Total	68	
Do you experience any difficulties when writing emails in English?	1.00	20	35.30
	2.00	37	35.16
	3.00	11	30.82
	Total	68	
Do you experience any difficulties when reading	1.00	20	34.90
	2.00	37	33.34

work documents in /	3.00	11	37.68
English?	Total	68	
Do you have any	1.00	20	34.20
difficulties writing official	2.00	37	34.34
documentation in / English	3.00	11	35.59
for work?	Total	68	
Do you experience any	1.00	20	33.68
difficulties when talking on	2.00	36	33.86
the phone in / English	3.00	11	35.05
(conference calls		67	
excluded)?	Total		
	1.00	19	33.76
Do you have any	2.00	37	34.72
difficulties communicating	3.00	11	32.00
in English in meetings?	Total	67	
	1.00	20	26.60
Would you prefer using	2.00	37	36.20
your mother tongue at	3.00	11	43.14
work?	Total	68	
	1.00	20	36.70
Do you actively work on	2.00	37	32.70
improving your English	3.00	11	36.55
language skills?	Total	68	

Test Statistics^{a,b}

	Do you speak any other languages except your first language and / English?	Do you use English in your private life to communicate with / friends, family members etc.?	Do you use English for work?	Do you communicate in English with your immediate colleagues?	Do you communicate in English with your colleagues in other / UniCredit branches?	Do you communicate in English in social interactions with your / colleagues?
Chi-Square	.370	5.756	.000	.114	5.220	.130
df	2	2	2	2	2	2
Asymp. Sig.	.831	.056	1.000	.944	.074	.937

Test Statistics^{a,b}

	Do you have problems understanding other speakers when they speak / English?	Do you have problems making yourself understood when you speak / English?	Do you experience any difficulties when writing emails in English?	Do you experience any difficulties when reading work documents in / English?	Do you have any difficulties writing official documentation in / English for work?	Do you experience any difficulties when talking on the phone in / English (conference calls excluded)?
Chi-Square	4.208	2.212	2.229	1.743	.244	.232
df	2	2	2	2	2	2
Asymp. Sig.	.122	.331	.328	.418	.885	.891

Test Statistics^{a,b}

	Do you have any difficulties communicating in English in meetings?	Would you prefer using your mother tongue at work?	Do you actively work on improving your English language skills?
Chi-Square	1.001	7.853	.895
df	2	2	2
Asymp. Sig.	.606	.020	.639

APPENDIX E MANN-WHITNEY TEST COUNTRY

		Ranks		
In which country are you working?		N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks
Do you speak any other languages except your first language and / English?	Austria	26	40.17	1044.50
	others	43	31.87	1370.50
		69		
	Total			
	Austria	26	43.88	1141.00
	others	43	29.63	1274.00
	Total	69		
Do you use English for work?	Austria	26	35.00	910.00
	others	43	35.00	1505.00
	Total	69		
Do you communicate in English with your immediate colleagues?	Austria	26	44.17	1148.50
	others	43	29.45	1266.50
	Total	69		
Do you communicate in English with your colleagues in other / UniCredit branches?	Austria	26	39.67	1031.50
	others	43	32.17	1383.50
	Total	69		
Do you communicate in English in social interactions with your / colleagues?	Austria	26	44.67	1161.50
	others	43	29.15	1253.50
	Total	69		
Do you have problems	Austria	26	35.65	927.00
	others	43	34.60	1488.00

understandin		69		
g other				
speakers				
when they	Total			
speak /				
English?				
Do you have	Austria	26	33.50	871.00
problems	others	43	35.91	1544.00
making		69		
yourself				
understood				
when you	Total			
speak /				
English?				
Do you	Austria	26	37.50	975.00
experience	others	43	33.49	1440.00
any		69		
difficulties				
when writing	Total			
emails in				
English?				
Do you	Austria	26	34.65	901.00
experience	others	43	35.21	1514.00
any		69		
difficulties				
when				
reading work	Total			
documents				
in / English?				
Do you have	Austria	26	34.33	892.50
any	others	43	35.41	1522.50
difficulties		69		
writing				
official				
documentati	Total			
on in /				
English for				
work?				
Do you	Austria	26	32.50	845.00
experience	others	42	35.74	1501.00

any difficulties when talking on the phone in / English (conference calls excluded)?	Total	68		
Do you have any difficulties communicating in English in meetings?	Austria	25	32.50	812.50
	others	43	35.66	1533.50

Test Statistics^a

	Do you speak any other languages except your first language and / English?	Do you use English in your private life to communicate with / friends, family members etc.?	Do you use English for work?	Do you communicate in English with your immediate colleagues ?	Do you communicate in English with your colleagues in other / UniCredit branches?	Do you communicate in English in social interactions with your / colleagues?
Mann-Whitney U	424.500	328.000	559.000	320.500	437.500	307.500
Wilcoxon W	1370.500	1274.000	1505.000	1266.500	1383.500	1253.500
Z	-2.459	-3.331	.000	-3.705	-2.291	-3.858
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.014	.001	1.000	.000	.022	.000

Test Statistics^a

	Do you have problems understanding other speakers when they speak / English?	Do you have problems making yourself understood when you speak / English?	Do you experience any difficulties when writing emails in English?	Do you experience any difficulties when reading work documents in / English?	Do you have any difficulties writing official documentation in / English for work?	Do you experience any difficulties when talking on the phone in / English (conference calls excluded)?
Mann-Whitney U	542.000	520.000	494.000	550.000	541.500	494.000
Wilcoxon W	1488.000	871.000	1440.000	901.000	892.500	845.000
Z	-.520	-1.367	-1.792	-.228	-.535	-1.610
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.603	.172	.073	.819	.592	.107

Test Statistics^a

	Do you have any difficulties communicating in English in meetings?	Do you have any difficulties communicating in English when having / conference calls?	Would you prefer using your mother tongue at work?	Do you actively work on improving your English language skills?
Mann-Whitney U	487.500	515.000	393.500	475.000
Wilcoxon W	812.500	866.000	744.500	826.000
Z	-1.560	-.865	-2.441	-1.202
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.119	.387	.015	.229

APPENDIX F T-TEST COUNTRY

Group Statistics					
	In which country are you working?	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
How would you rate your knowledge of English?	Austria	26	4.19	.694	.136
	others	43	3.60	.821	.125
How often do you use English for work?	Austria	26	4.73	.533	.105
	others	43	4.09	.781	.119
How do you feel when having to speak English at work?	Austria	26	4.65	.485	.095
	others	43	3.81	.732	.112
On scale 0 - 10, how comfortable do you feel using English at work / (0 being 'not comfortable at a...	Austria	26	9.38	.852	.167
	others	43	7.95	1.495	.228
How do you feel when having to write in English for work?	Austria	26	4.65	.562	.110
	others	43	4.07	.799	.122
How does communication in English at work make you feel?	Austria	26	3.85	.834	.164
	others	43	3.40	.660	.101
In your opinion, how has the use of English at work influenced your / performance?	Austria	26	3.96	.824	.162
	others	43	3.63	.787	.120
How often would you prefer using English at work?	Austria	26	4.77	.815	.160
	others	43	4.60	.760	.116
What effect, in your opinion, has using English at work had on your / career?	Austria	26	4.27	.827	.162
	others	43	4.05	.722	.110
In your opinion,	Austria	26	5.00	.000	.000

how important is the knowledge of the English / language at work?	others	43	4.63	.536	.082
How important is the knowledge of the English language to you / personally?	Austria	26	4.88	.326	.064
	others	43	4.44	.590	.090
How often do you use English?	Austria	26	4.73	.452	.089
	others	43	4.07	.768	.117
How many of the emails you write at work are in English?	Austria	26	4.35	.689	.135
	others	43	3.42	.852	.130
How much of the work documentation you read is in English?	Austria	26	4.38	.898	.176
	others	43	3.47	.827	.126
How much of the work documentation you write is in English?	Austria	26	4.42	.902	.177
	others	43	3.26	.902	.138
How much of your phone communication is in English (conference / calls excluded)?	Austria	26	4.23	.710	.139
	others	43	2.67	.865	.132
How much of your communication in meetings at work takes place in / English?	Austria	26	4.31	.970	.190
	others	43	2.77	.922	.141
How much of your communication when having a conference call at / work takes place in English?	Austria	26	4.46	.859	.169
	others	43	3.00	1.113	.170

Independent Samples Test

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means		
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
How would you rate your knowledge of English?	Equal variances assumed	1.128	.292	3.049	67	.003
	Equal variances not assumed			3.179	59.729	.002
How often do you use English for work?	Equal variances assumed	1.274	.263	3.672	67	.000
	Equal variances not assumed			4.022	65.905	.000
How do you feel when having to speak English at work?	Equal variances assumed	3.488	.066	5.193	67	.000
	Equal variances not assumed			5.726	66.357	.000
On scale 0 - 10, how comfortable do you feel using English at work / (0 being 'not comfortable at a...	Equal variances assumed	3.637	.061	4.454	67	.000
	Equal variances not assumed			5.062	66.839	.000
How do you feel when having to write in English for work?	Equal variances assumed	2.952	.090	3.268	67	.002
	Equal variances not assumed			3.557	65.355	.001
How does communication in English at work make you feel?	Equal variances assumed	3.169	.080	2.487	67	.015
	Equal variances not assumed			2.348	43.771	.023
In your opinion, how has the use of English at work influenced your / performance?	Equal variances assumed	.012	.913	1.676	67	.098
	Equal variances not assumed			1.657	50.998	.104
How often would you prefer using	Equal variances assumed	.951	.333	.848	67	.399

English at work?	Equal variances not assumed			.833	49.982	.409
What effect, in your opinion, has using English at work had on your / career?	Equal variances assumed	3.304	.074	1.175	67	.244
				1.136	47.357	.262
In your opinion, how important is the knowledge of the English / language at work?	Equal variances assumed	130.791	.000	3.532	67	.001
	Equal variances not assumed			4.556	42.000	.000
How important is the knowledge of the English language to you / personally?	Equal variances assumed	37.182	.000	3.512	67	.001
	Equal variances not assumed			4.014	66.597	.000

Independent Samples Test

		t-test for Equality of Means			
		Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
				Lower	Upper
How would you rate your knowledge of English?	Equal variances assumed	.588	.193	.203	.972
	Equal variances not assumed	.588	.185	.218	.957
How often do you use English for work?	Equal variances assumed	.638	.174	.291	.984
	Equal variances not assumed	.638	.159	.321	.954
How do you feel when having to speak English at work?	Equal variances assumed	.840	.162	.517	1.163
	Equal variances not assumed	.840	.147	.547	1.133
On scale 0 - 10, how comfortable	Equal variances assumed	1.431	.321	.790	2.072

do you feel using English at work / (0 being 'not comfortable at a...	Equal variances not assumed	1.431	.283	.867	1.995
How do you feel when having to write in English for work?	Equal variances assumed	.584	.179	.227	.941
	Equal variances not assumed	.584	.164	.256	.912
How does communication in English at work make you feel?	Equal variances assumed	.451	.181	.089	.813
	Equal variances not assumed	.451	.192	.064	.838
In your opinion, how has the use of English at work influenced your / performance?	Equal variances assumed	.334	.199	-.064	.731
	Equal variances not assumed	.334	.201	-.070	.738
How often would you prefer using English at work?	Equal variances assumed	.165	.194	-.223	.552
	Equal variances not assumed	.165	.197	-.232	.561
What effect, in your opinion, has using English at work had on your / career?	Equal variances assumed	.223	.190	-.156	.601
	Equal variances not assumed	.223	.196	-.172	.617
In your opinion, how important is the knowledge of the English / language at work?	Equal variances assumed	.372	.105	.162	.582
	Equal variances not assumed	.372	.082	.207	.537
How important is the knowledge of the English language to you / personally?	Equal variances assumed	.443	.126	.191	.694
	Equal variances not assumed	.443	.110	.223	.663

Independent Samples Test

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means		
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
How often do you use English?	Equal variances assumed	1.201	.277	3.983	67	.000
	Equal variances not assumed			4.498	66.978	.000
How many of the emails you write at work are in English?	Equal variances assumed	4.091	.047	4.696	67	.000
	Equal variances not assumed			4.947	61.334	.000
How much of the work documentation you read is in English?	Equal variances assumed	.005	.942	4.335	67	.000
	Equal variances not assumed			4.246	49.458	.000
How much of the work documentation you write is in English?	Equal variances assumed	.412	.523	5.208	67	.000
	Equal variances not assumed			5.208	52.870	.000
How much of your phone communication is in English (conference / calls excluded)?	Equal variances assumed	5.315	.024	7.726	67	.000
	Equal variances not assumed			8.111	60.832	.000
How much of your communication in meetings at work takes place in / English?	Equal variances assumed	.464	.498	6.595	67	.000
	Equal variances not assumed			6.511	50.728	.000
How much of your	Equal variances assumed	3.558	.064	5.737	67	.000

communication when having a conference call at / work takes place in English?	Equal variances not assumed		6.111	62.902	.000
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Independent Samples Test

		t-test for Equality of Means			
		Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
				Lower	Upper
How often do you use English?	Equal variances assumed	.661	.166	.330	.992
	Equal variances not assumed	.661	.147	.368	.954
How many of the emails you write at work are in English?	Equal variances assumed	.928	.198	.533	1.322
	Equal variances not assumed	.928	.187	.553	1.302
How much of the work documentation you read is in English?	Equal variances assumed	.919	.212	.496	1.343
	Equal variances not assumed	.919	.217	.484	1.355
How much of the work documentation you write is in English?	Equal variances assumed	1.167	.224	.720	1.615
	Equal variances not assumed	1.167	.224	.718	1.617
How much of your phone communication is in English (conference / calls excluded)?	Equal variances assumed	1.556	.201	1.154	1.958
	Equal variances not assumed	1.556	.192	1.173	1.940
How much of your	Equal variances assumed	1.540	.234	1.074	2.006

communication in meetings at work takes place in / English?	Equal variances not assumed	1.540	.237	1.065	2.015
How much of your communication when having a conference call at / work takes place in English?	Equal variances assumed	1.462	.255	.953	1.970
	Equal variances not assumed	1.462	.239	.984	1.939

APPENDIX G ABSTRACT IN GERMAN

Englisch als Lingua franca (EFL) ist die wichtigste Rolle, die die englische Sprache heutzutage spielt. Diese wird in unterschiedlichsten Kontexten benutzt wie sonst keine andere Sprache. Ein besonderer Kontext in dem EFL benutzt wird ist die internationale Wirtschaft. Die multinationalen Korporationen, die international arbeiten, bestimmen in ihren Sprachrichtlinien ELF als ihre übliche korporative Sprache. Diese Masterarbeit ist eine empirische Fallstudie in einer multinationalen Korporation, Bank Austria, und in ihren Filialen in Bulgarien, Tschechien, Slowakei, Ungarn, Rumänien, Serbien und Slowenien. Die Studie setzt ihren Schwerpunkt auf die Formen und Situationen in welchen ELF benutzt wird, sowie auf die Schwierigkeiten der Angestellten zu verstehen und verstanden zu werden. Die kommunikativen Schwierigkeiten über die kommunikativen Kanäle hinweg werden auch untersucht (Email, Telefonate, Telekonferenzen, offizielle Dokumente und Sitzungen). Des Weiteren werden die Einstellungen gegenüber Benutzung der ELF in der Arbeit der Angestellten der Bank Austria untersucht. Insbesondere, berichteten die Teilnehmer der Studie über den Einfluss der Nutzung der ELF auf ihre Leistung und Karriere. Die Ergebnisse deuten darauf hin, dass die Angestellten in Bank Austria aktive, fortgeschrittene Kommunikatoren sind, deren kommunikative Interaktionen mittels ELF in der Arbeit problemfrei sind. Zusätzlich, die Angestellten berichten allgemein positive Einstellungen über die Nutzung der ELF in ihrem Arbeitsleben, ohne dass ELF ihre Leistung und Karriere negativ beeinflussen würde. Sie nehmen ELF eher als eine Voraussetzung wahr.