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Implementation of Language Management Strategies in Austrian and Slovakian
SMEs and their effect on employee motivation.

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Abstract English

Languages form the foundation of all human interactions and communications. They are powerful instruments that have a profound influence on business relationships, thereby contributing to the company's success or failure. As numerous languages are used in companies and individuals possess a variety of language skills, it has become a challenge for organisations to implement effective management strategies to overcome linguistic differences. This study aims to examine how SMEs in Austria and Slovakia address linguistic diversity caused by globalisation and the changing economic environment. Potential solutions to these new challenges are introduced, including mostly recommendations from the European Commission's PIMLICO Project conducted in 2011, which advises SMEs to implement LMS to overcome linguistic barriers in communication with stakeholders. The main objective of this study is to examine the extent and frequency of LMS implementation and their effect on employee motivation in the two target countries. Despite the importance of language-related problems and solutions in SMEs, only limited research exists. To fill the research gap, the thesis begins with an introduction to the theoretical knowledge and subsequently employs a quantitative research method. A questionnaire survey was distributed to employees of Austrian and Slovakian SMEs, with 130 employees of Slovakian SMEs and 70 employees of Austrian SMEs participating. The results provide a detailed overview of the language-related practices in companies, employee perspective on communication with stakeholders, motivation, and job satisfaction. Furthermore, the findings emphasize the importance of raising awareness about the role of languages and LMS in SMEs. Therefore, companies should assess their language needs and explore potential solutions such as LMS to gain a competitive advantage in the highly competitive market, instead of losing business opportunities.

Keywords: Languages. Language Management Strategies. Motivation. Language Policies. Austria and Slovakia. SMEs.

Abstrakt Deutsch

Sprachen bilden die Grundlage jeder menschlichen Interaktion und Kommunikation. Sie sind mächtige Instrumente, die einen tiefgreifenden Einfluss auf die Geschäftsbeziehungen haben und somit zum Erfolg oder Misserfolg eines Unternehmens beitragen. Da in Unternehmen zahlreiche Sprachen verwendet werden und die Menschen über eine Vielzahl von Sprachkenntnissen verfügen, ist es für die Organisationen eine Herausforderung, wirksame Managementstrategien zur Überwindung sprachlicher Unterschiede zu implementieren. Diese Studie untersucht, wie KMU in Österreich und der Slowakei mit der sprachlichen Vielfalt umgehen, die durch die Globalisierung und das sich verändernde wirtschaftliche Umfeld verursacht wird. Potenzielle Lösungen für diese neuen Herausforderungen werden vorgestellt, insbesondere Empfehlungen aus dem im Jahr 2011 durchgeführten PIMLICO-Projekt der Europäischen Kommission, das KMU die Einführung von LMS zur Überwindung sprachlicher Barrieren in der Kommunikation mit Stakeholdern empfiehlt. Das Hauptziel dieser Studie ist es, das Ausmaß und die Häufigkeit der Einführung von LMS und deren Auswirkungen auf die Mitarbeitermotivation in den beiden Zielländern zu untersuchen. Trotz der Relevanz sprachbezogener Probleme und Lösungen in KMU gibt es nur wenig Forschung, die sich mit diesem Thema beschäftigt. Um diese Forschungslücke zu schließen, beginnt die Arbeit mit einer Einführung in das theoretische Hintergrundwissen und dann eine quantitative Forschungsmethode verwendet. Es wurde eine Fragebogenerhebung unter Mitarbeitern österreichischer und slowakischer KMU durchgeführt, an der 130 Mitarbeiter slowakischer KMU und 70 Mitarbeiter österreichischer KMU teilnahmen. Die Ergebnisse geben einen detaillierten Überblick über die sprachbezogenen Praktiken in den Unternehmen, die Sicht der Mitarbeiter auf die Kommunikation mit den Stakeholdern, die Motivation und die Arbeitszufriedenheit. Darüber hinaus heben die Ergebnisse hervor, wie wichtig es ist, das Bewusstsein für die Rolle der Sprachen und LMS in KMU zu stärken. Die Unternehmen sind daher aufgefordert, ihre Sprachbedürfnisse zu bewerten und mögliche Lösungen als LMS zu erkunden, um sich einen Wettbewerbsvorteil auf einem wettbewerbsintensiven Markt zu schaffen, anstatt Geschäftsmöglichkeiten zu verpassen.

Schlüsselwörter: Sprachen. Strategien des Sprachmanagements. Motivation. Sprachrichtlinien. Österreich und Slowakei. KMU.

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List of Abbreviations

BELF	Business English as a Lingua Franca
CCL	Common company language
CV	Curriculum Vitae
CZ	Czech
DE	German
ELF	English as a Lingua Franca
ELAN	Effect on the European Economy of Shortages of Foreign Language Skills in Enterprise
EN	English
ESP	Spanish
EU	European Union
FRA	French
GEM	Global Entrepreneurship Monitor
HR	Human resources
HU	Hungarian
IM	Intrinsic motivation
ITA	Italian
KMU	Kleine und mittlere Unternehmen
LLR	Linear Logistic Regression
LP	Language Policy
LPP	Language Policy Planning
LMS	Language Management Strategies
MNE	Multinational enterprise / corporation

PIMLICO	Promoting, Implementing, Mapping Language and Intercultural Communication Strategies in Organisations and Companies
RUS	Russian
SK	Slovak
SME	small and medium sized enterprise
SMEs	small and medium sized enterprises
UKR	Ukrainian

1 Introduction

1.1 Establishment of Relevance

Over the past few decades, the European economy has been shaped by economic integration, worldwide globalisation of business, technological advances, increased mobility, the emergence of market economy in Eastern European countries, and several social, political, and economic changes and challenges. This has resulted in the global interdependence of states and the role of national, cultural, and economic boundaries has diminished (Kostić-Bobanović, et al., 2016, p. 31). These new trends have been impacting companies of all sizes and their language practices and policies, leading to a wider range of academic literature papers examining and discussing its impacts and solutions to linguistic issues and barriers (Linares, et al., 2018, p. 117). Globalisation brings a number of challenges for companies such as sustainability challenges, technological adaptation, protection of domestic markets, unemployment, poverty, inequality, economic instability, international terrorism, and religious conflicts. These challenges have created a more competitive and difficult environment for SMEs to survive and thrive. In order to overcome these challenges and survive on the market, SMEs have to implement appropriate survival strategies and strategic methods (Gamage, et al., 2020, pp. 1-6).

Furthermore, strategies in SMEs should include solutions for overcoming linguistic and cultural barriers in order to establish an effective communication network between an organisation and its stakeholders, including mostly partners, employees, customers, suppliers, and clients. The initial solutions to this problem were introduced at the beginning of the 1970s, focusing on the relationship and conflicts between economic, social, political, and linguistic issues. As a primary solution, language planning and policies were developed for governments to approach linguistic diversity (Jernudd & Neustupný, 1987, p. 71). During the following years, a number of effective solutions to language barriers arose, they developed further and were applied mostly in MNEs. Nowadays, these strategies have also been adopted by SMEs. They are identified in SMEs as Language Management Strategies (LMS) that can lead to successful international performance for both individuals and companies. Language Management Strategies are the planned adoption of various methods to facilitate effective communication with customers and suppliers. These measures can include recruitment of employees with various language skills, provision of language training, translation of promotional material, and

many other techniques depending on the business objectives and needs of the company as well as its presence on the international market (Kostić-Bobanović, et al., 2016, p. 31).

The problem is that there has been little research focusing on the implementation of these strategies (Bruen & Buckley, 2022, p. 29). Their implementation has been researched on an overall EU level, and more specifically in the following countries: Ireland (Bruen & Buckley, 2022, p. 29), Italy (Incelli, 2008, p. 99), Austria and Slovenia (Rižnar & Rybníček, 2017, p. 365). However, there remains a gap in the research in other European countries. As there is existing research in Austria, this can serve as a good starting point for potential comparison. The second country selected is Slovakia, a geographically and historically similar country to Austria. Despite the several geographical and historical parallels that Slovakia shares with Austria, there are also significant differences in terms of social and economic development, attitudes, language, and various other factors. The biggest differences arose after the Second World War until the fall of the Iron Curtain in 1989 and the dissolution of the communist regime in Slovakia. During this period, the political regimes and economies were significantly different (Haller, et al., 2023, p. 397ff.), with Slovakia operating under a centrally planned economy and Austria under a market economy.

Languages shape almost every economic activity and every interpersonal interaction which is why it was recognised in the 1990s that they should be part of the planning policies and management of each SME (Marschan, et al., 1997, p. 595; Theophanous & Karyolemou, 2022, p. 149). Unfortunately, linguistic diversity is a complex problem and there is nothing as a uniform „one-size-fits-all” solution to resolve the language challenges of a company in the globalised business environment (Sanden, 2016, p. 281). This thesis introduces various language policies for SMEs. These were derived from MNEs, which include attitudes towards national language, the company language, and multilingualism. In conjunction with this, it looks at the role, advantages, and disadvantages of English which seems to take over European business, and organisational communication and, in the meantime, setting other languages aside (Theophanous & Karyolemou, 2022, p. 149). Different language policies and practices that are applied in multilingual workplaces are discussed while introducing the concept of multilingualism. The research works with various academic papers as well as at an applied political level – studies by the European Union (van der Worp, 2017, p. 53).

The various challenges of linguistic diversity cause the need for LMS in SMEs. Related to this, companies have to consider which languages they are going to use and whether they are going to introduce a formal or informal language policy. Previous studies suggest that lack of

Language Management Strategies and language skills caused lost business opportunities whereas when companies applied them, they were able to gain a competitive advantage (Bruen & Buckley, 2022, p. 31). The company and its employees can both benefit from good language skills. Companies can cooperate and communicate more successfully with various stakeholders and employees have more possibilities, career development potential, trust, and possibilities to travel or develop themselves (Martinaj, 2023, p. 70).

1.2 Research Gap, Study Purpose, and Research Question

Even though employees are crucial and strategically meaningful resources (Sanden, 2016, p. 274) of each SME and languages are present in their everyday life, there is no detailed study looking at the connection between employee motivation and the implementation of Language Management Strategies. As previously mentioned, LMS are influenced by communication within a company which has an influence on employee motivation (Sopandi, et al., 2024, p. 1), by impacting team inclusion and team spirit (Davidson, 2013, p. 6), helping to set goals and get feedback (Mesch, et al., 1994, p. 311) as well as offer opportunities of personal growth and career development (Markaki, et al., 2013, p. 319). Employees together contribute to the creation of organisational culture and strongly affect overall productivity of the company (Sopandi, et al., 2024, p. 1). Additionally, employee motivation can influence new market entries, internationalisation process, and intercultural management practices of companies. Therefore, there is a possibility that employee motivation is also influenced by Language Management Strategies. The main aim of this thesis is to look whether this relationship exists.

One potential reason for this gap may be that the concept of Language Management Strategies, along with best-practice examples, was only recently discussed by the European Commission in the PIMLICO Project in 2011. Even though that many papers discussed the use of LMS in SMEs from a theoretical perspective (Martinaj, 2023, p. 70; Talukder & Barner-Rasmussen, 2024, p. 1; Kostić-Bobanović, et al., 2016, p. 31; Sanden, 2016, p. 281), there seems to be a lack of empirical evidence. The PIMLICO Project primarily summarises and describes practical solutions for SMEs based on examples of some real best-practice European SMEs (European Commission, 2011, p. 7). The practical application of LMS is still underresearched in most EU member states, which may explain why connections to other factors as employee motivation have not been examined yet. One reason for that might be that employees do not have sufficient knowledge about these practices. Another reason why there is no deeper look at the connection between employee motivation and implementation of LMS is that there is not enough research

discussing the LMS in SMEs, but potential solutions to the language barriers and problems are taken directly from data of MNEs (Talukder & Barner-Rasmussen, 2024, p. 1). The results of this study could help to understand the connection between the implementation of LMS and employee motivation, language policies, and language skills, and how they affect communication with diverse stakeholders and which consequences this has.

As previously mentioned, there is a lack of research on LMS practices in the target countries – Austria and Slovakia. Even though some studies were looking at the extent of LMS use in Ireland (Bruen & Buckley, 2022, p. 29) or Italy (Incelli, 2008, p. 99) and there is a similar study looking at the LMS practices in Austria and Slovenia, however, this study was limited by small sample (Rižnar & Rybníček, 2017, p. 365). However, these studies did not analyse the relationship between LMS and motivation. In Slovakia, there were just several small studies looking at a few SMEs and their language use or language skills and English competencies, but there exists no deeper analysis of LMS in Slovakia. Due to the nearness of both countries and their mutual history and territory, there is a potential to explore and compare the two countries in some detail. None of the studies explicitly researched the connection between LMS and employee motivation, even though others suggest that effective use of languages has a direct effect on employee performance and motivation and when languages are misused, this can lead to lack of job motivation, underperformance, and dissatisfaction of employees (Nwode & Anyadiegwu, 2023, p. 1). The thesis aims to explore the connection between employee motivation, language skills, language policies, and LMS in these countries.

It is important to explain the difference between language policy and LMS. On the one hand, language policy defines the norms and rules, principles of language use of a company. On the other hand, LMS are concrete measures which are implemented to overcome linguistic challenges and implement language policy. To sum up, language policy is a broader term including LMS (Sanden, 2016, pp. 280-281). This could lead to a deeper understanding of the importance of languages in SMEs. In the meantime, it could offer some solutions how to enhance communication efficiency and employee motivation.

The main research question is: To what extent are Language Management Strategies implemented in Austrian and Slovakian SMEs and how do they influence employee motivation?

Additional research question is: How do language policies influence communication with stakeholders in SMEs?

1.3 Outline of Chapters

The thesis consists of six chapters. The first chapter gives a brief introduction to the topic of research, the aim of the research, and defines the main research question.

The second chapter of the thesis introduces the theoretical background and recent knowledge about the topic and gives a detailed overview of languages and their role, language policies, the role of the European Union in language regulation and policymaking, and Language Management Strategies. Chapter 2.1 defines European SMEs and explains their relevance. The following chapter introduces the concept of language, its role in companies, and various approaches towards languages in SMEs. Furthermore, the term English as Lingua Franca is described too. Chapter 2.3 presents various language policies and introduces the concept of multilingualism. The chapter outlines the current knowledge on language policies and LMS as well as concepts and terms related to the issue. The next section gives an overview of the two target countries – Austria and Slovakia, and their demography, history, national and other languages. Chapter 2.5 describes the language policy of the European Union and the ELAN Study and PIMLICO Project by the European Commission. The following subchapter introduces the Language Management Strategies as well as the current state of research in the target countries. The last section of the second chapter deals with the employees and their motivation.

The third chapter introduces the empirical part of the study – the methodology. The collection of empirical evidence is done by a questionnaire survey distributed to employees of SMEs situated in Austria and Slovakia. The collected data gives an overview of the actual implementation of language policies and LMS as well as language skills, and its relation to employee motivation and communication with stakeholders. In the third chapter, there is a detailed description of the data collection, structure of the questionnaire, used scales, sample of respondents, method of questionnaire distribution, statistical evaluation of results, and summarizes the number of full and missing responses. Moreover, the chapter also includes a list of variables and introduces their operationalisation.

The fourth chapter presents the results and the statistical analysis of the collected data. The first subchapter deals with descriptive statistics of demographical data and the second one connects descriptive statistics with statistical inference, including the test of hypotheses and regression tables.

The fifth chapter discusses the empirical findings and presents the answer to the research question. This chapter also describes some practical implications and limitations of the study and suggestions for future research.

The sixth chapter concludes the findings and the whole research. After this chapter, there is a bibliography and an appendix.

2 Theoretical background

This chapter introduces the theoretical background to the topic. In the beginning, European SMEs are defined and their position in the globalised market is introduced. In 2.2 the use of various languages, the role of languages, English as a Lingua Franca, and multilingualism are introduced as some of the key elements of this thesis. In the following chapter 2.3 different language policies, their advantages, and disadvantages as well as implementation are discussed. Chapter 2.4 describes Austria and Slovakia from historical, demographical, and geographical perspectives, while looking at some shared traits and differences. This chapter also discusses the use of their national languages and other languages spoken in the studied countries. In 2.5 the role of the European Union along with two studies dealing with linguistic diversity in European SMEs by the European Commission (ELAN Study and PIMLICO Project) are introduced. In 2.6 Language Management Strategies are discussed. At the beginning of the chapter, LMS are defined, later their role and importance are shown and at the end of the chapter examples of these strategies are introduced. The following part discusses the current state of LMS in Austria and Slovakia. However, it is important to mention that there has not been enough research in these countries discussing LMS in SMEs yet. This subchapter also includes the best-practice examples of Austrian and Slovakian SMEs based on the PIMLICO Project. The last chapter of the theoretical background looks at the role of employees in SMEs and how languages influence them. In the meantime, the recent knowledge about the connection between employee motivation and Language Management Strategies is introduced. However, this also presents a gap in the research, because not many academic papers have discussed the connection between LMS and employee motivation.

2.1 Definition and importance of European SMEs

Since 2003, the European Union has a unified definition of small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs) which is regulated as a Recommendation 2003/361/CE by the European Commission. The European Union identifies three categories of SMEs:

Micro enterprises have less than 10 employees and annual turnover or annual balance sheet of less than 2 million euros. **Small enterprises** have at least 10 employees, but no more than 49. These enterprises have annual turnover or annual balance sheet of less than 10 million euros. **Medium enterprises** have employees ranging from 50 to 250. The annual turnover cannot

exceed 50 million euros, or the annual balance sheet cannot be more than 43 million euros (El Madani, 2018, pp. 108-109).

Table 1 EU criteria for defining SMEs

Type of SME	Number of employees	Annual turnover	Annual balance sheet
Micro	< 10	< € 2 mil.	< € 2 mil.
Small	< 50	< € 10 mil.	< € 10 mil.
Medium	< 250	< € 50 mil.	< € 43 mil.

Source: (El Madani, 2018, p. 109), own elaboration

SMEs are the backbone of the European economy, making up 98 % of all businesses in the EU. Concretely, in 2021, there were, 30.3 million micro and small enterprises, employing 78.8 million individuals and additional 240 000 medium-sized enterprises, employing 24 million individuals (European Commission, 2023). Together they create 85% of all new jobs in the EU and provide 67% of the total private sector employment. Because of their importance, SMEs play a crucial role in creating employment, social integration, economic recovery, and innovation. To remain competitive in the globalised market, the European Commission tries to support SMEs with various instruments to reinforce their activities across borders and help them find international business opportunities (Kostić-Bobanović, et al., 2016, p. 31).

Even internationally active SMEs have less access to human and financial resources than MNEs and they also cannot afford a high level of work specialisation (Talukder & Barner-Rasmussen, 2024, p. 1). Previous research in 162 Austrian family SMEs has shown that they can profit from entrepreneurial orientation, entrepreneurial strategies, innovation, and international performance (Strobl, et al., 2023, p. 152). These findings support the claim that during the past years, internationalisation has become relevant also for SMEs not just for large companies (Fink, et al., 2008, p. 429). The internationalisation of European SMEs report shows that many SMEs start their international activities by importing. In 2011, almost half of European SMEs were part of some international activity – exporting or importing (European Commission, 2011, p. 14). Previous research indicates that foreign language skills can significantly affect the company's export performance, annual turnover, and internationalisation success or failure (Kostić-Bobanović, et al., 2016, p. 32). SMEs due to their characteristics, such as for example, cooperative internationalisation or liabilities of smallness and newness, started to seek opportunities in international markets and broaden their portfolios. This has led to a need of multiple language skills (Fink, et al., 2008, p. 430). At a macroeconomic level, a lack of foreign language skills can be seen as a kind of tax on trade ranging from 15 to 22 % - representing the

proportion of lost business opportunities (Rižnar & Rybníček, 2017, p. 367) - which is why SMEs should pay attention to diverse language issues in their organisation.

2.2 Languages as powerful tools in SMEs

Language is a “unique way of perceiving and describing reality” (Baaij, 2012, p. 15). Languages are systems of meanings that help to understand global, social, and organisational realities (Sanden, 2016, p. 275). Today, languages are one of many markers of social and cultural identity. However, in the earlier stage of international business research, there was confusion of the meaning of language and culture, but later it was recognised that they are two separate constructs (Tenzer, et al., 2017, pp. 822-823). Language is understood as a key aspect of culture in other words “language is inherent in a specific culture and also embodiment of it” (Welch & Welch, 2008, p. 341). Simultaneously, languages are not just the “most direct expression of culture”, but also a potential “bridge” between different cultures (Baaij, 2012, p. 15).

Globalisation and migration have led to linguistic diversity and new language challenges in many interpersonal interactions including the business-related ones (Sanden & Kankaanranta, 2018, p. 544). For decades languages have been affecting international business (Tenzer, et al., 2017, pp. 822-823), contributing to a very competitive environment characterised by economic, cultural, political, legal, social differences which have a significant influence on the company’s financial performance (Virglerova, et al., 2020). What is more, language is one of the factors contributing to cultural distance (Dhir & Góké-Paríolá, 2002, p. 241). Language as part of a culture is a part of a common mindset that influences the way how people think, behave, communicate, and perceive things (Welch & Welch, 2008, p. 341). This means that language use is the manifestation of mutual values, practices, and beliefs which are basic components of each culture (Angouri, 2014, p. 2). In the business world, the connection between language and culture plays a major role in cross-cultural negotiation (Martinaj, 2023, p. 52). International business must cope with challenges caused by the relationship between language and culture (Tenzer, et al., 2017, p. 823). During the past decades, organisations have been dealing with the issues of multiculturalism and multilingualism (Sanden & Kankaanranta, 2018, p. 544) That is why scholars have introduced cultural accommodation as a psychological concept, which represents in a business context the link between language and culture (Tenzer, et al., 2017, p. 823).

During the past years, language diversity has affected the way how business is done, and management decisions made (Tenzer, et al., 2017, p. 817). Research shows that decision-

makers' linguistic knowledge is associated with their ability to recognise and exploit international opportunities. This can result in "knowledge corridor" that can either encourage or hinder the identification of international opportunities and future development of the company (Hurmerinta, et al., 2015). That is why languages are seen as a crucial management tool but also as an easily accessible instrument for all companies (Tenzer, et al., 2017, p. 817). However, it is important to mention that being proficient in a foreign language is a complex issue. It is not enough to know the syntax, vocabulary, and grammar, it is important to develop cultural understanding and sensitivity, global mindset, and international awareness. These qualities can also contribute to the individual's professional progress, growth, and employability (Kostić-Bobanović, et al., 2016, p. 32). What is more, languages influence knowledge creation and organisational communication which is why they have become the essence of international business, as they are a key factor of international cooperation and can create a competitive advantage (Sanden, 2016, pp. 275, 278) for SMEs. This leads to the finding that languages create an important know-how for the company which includes sufficient language skills, intercultural competences, and understanding of the work and traditions of partners and values of locations. This facilitates cooperation and creates a better understanding of the international business environment (Fink, et al., 2008, p. 437). It is important to note that languages can be conceptualised in many ways in the international workplace – while most common ones are "language as a barrier" and "language as a resource" (Zhao, et al., 2021, p. 56).

2.2.1 Communication and role of languages in SMEs

Communication is a continuous process of conveying message to other individuals. Effective communication is achieved when both the sender and the receiver are satisfied as they successfully exchanged thoughts, ideas, data, opinions, and knowledge. Successful communication is represented by mutual understanding of the parties, clarity, quality represented by purpose and responsiveness, and without misunderstandings, conflicts, or misinterpretations (Maamaa, 2023, pp. 379-383; Liu, et al., 2010, pp. 469-471). Moreover, language affects social interaction within teams (Welch & Welch, 2008, p. 341). Languages are much more than just communication tools that deliver a certain message. Languages are the expression of a national philosophy and character which can also represent a nation's strengths and weaknesses. That is why they can be considered as the verbalisation of culture itself. Language skills and competences are "an indispensable tool for communication and also a key to fundamental understanding of other people's way of thinking and expressing themselves"

(Kostić-Bobanović, et al., 2016, p. 32). These competencies are more than a linguistic ability to choose the right words, but also knowing how to use the language in various social situations (Tange & Luring, 2009, p. 220). That is why language skills are vital not just in everyday life but also in the world of business. They are not just a way how companies can access different markets, but they can acquire power within workplaces (Angouri, 2014, p. 3). Languages also affect all internal operations and processes (Sanden, 2016, p. 275) while being able to create trust and respect. Mutual trust and understanding between two business parties can be built by right implementation and understanding of language and culture (Kostić-Bobanović, et al., 2016, p. 32). Furthermore, trust can be defined as the way how an actor (an individual, not an organisation) responds to uncertainty, as in these relationships one person is not sure about what the other will do. Previous research indicates that norm-based trust is intrinsically motivated. Norm-based trust begins with how trustworthy we think the other person is. This can grow over time. The act of trust shows the other person's motives and helps the actor to form trust expectations and act reciprocally. The reciprocity helps to reinforce trust and justify further acts of trust (Fink & Kraus, 2007, p. 677). Trust, trustworthiness and cooperativeness can be a source of competitive advantage of a company as well as key to all stakeholders. That is important why stakeholders affect or are affected by organisation's fulfilment of objectives. Internal stakeholders are the owners, the management of the company and employees. External stakeholders are the customers, suppliers, government, creditors, shareholders and society (Pinheiro, 2015, pp. 43-45).

In the globalised world of many languages and dialects, language skills have become crucial for information exchange (Dvořák, et al., n.d., p. 3) because there is an increasing diversity of the workforce (Sanden, 2016, p. 276). Language is a connector between the organisation and its stakeholders not just in MNEs, but also in SMEs (Talukder & Barner-Rasmussen, 2024, p. 1). Messages between stakeholders who do not possess sufficient language skills, have to undergo multiple translations into various languages as they travel through channels within a sector, what can cause misunderstandings (Babcock & Du-Babcock, 2001, p. 374).

Even though language choices have a major influence on the success and survival of SMEs, currently there is not enough research about language strategies in SMEs, but the knowledge about language choices is often based on data from MNEs (Talukder & Barner-Rasmussen, 2024, p. 1). The right language policies can certainly protect use of various languages while wrong language policies can destroy it (Sherman & Nekvapil, 2018, p. 5).

Languages foster communication, and knowledge sharing and maintain social contracts, while representing a means of mobility and competitiveness for individuals and companies (Šukolová, n.d., p. 481). Thanks to languages people all around the world can communicate, cooperate, do business, trade, and create business relationships (Sanden, 2016, p. 278). To sum up, languages are present in personal relationships within organisations which transfer information through informal channels. Furthermore, they are also the basis of effective and feasible communication while being able to support knowledge creation and collaborative learning which have a positive effect on the team and create a competitive advantage for the company (Dhir & Góké-Paríolá, 2002, p. 242). Appropriate languages also support social interactions, help common understanding, facilitate the acquisition of resources, increase innovation, help firms to grow, improve image and can also increase the firm's revenue. More language skills open new doors on the market. In conjunction with this, research shows that immigrant-owned SMEs export more to international and global markets than to local ones (Talukder & Barner-Rasmussen, 2024, p. 2).

The use of foreign languages is vital in the following cases:

- meeting clients and ensuring customer care, creating trust with existing and potential clients, drawing up and tendering contracts with them,
- researching foreign markets and conducting market analysis,
- exhibiting at trade fairs, advertising abroad,
- meeting local legal requirements, customs documentation, and regulation,
- defending patents, attending court proceedings,
- engaging in queries, e-commerce, and after-sales service, chasing payment and recovering bad debt,
- identifying and managing a local agent, training or instructing local stakeholders, managing the local workforce, negotiating with stakeholders, in joint ventures, locally, in acquisitions and take-overs, and handling local union agreements (European Commission, 2011, p. 15).

2.2.2 English as a Lingua Franca

During the past decades, English has been a leading language dominating interpersonal interactions, mass entertainment, diplomacy, science (Martinaj, 2023, p. 54), international security, technology, and business (Melitz, 2018, p. 3). English language has become a

worldwide standard (Dvořák, et al., n.d., p. 3) which erases geographical, social, political, and religious differences (Martinaj, 2023, p. 54). English is the way how people communicate internationally as Arabic numbers are the standard way of counting (Janssens, et al., 2004, p. 414). There was no other language in the past spoken more widely than English is nowadays (Melitz, 2018, p. 1). It is also the most studied language worldwide with about two billion learners all over the world (Rižnar & Rybníček, 2017, p. 374). English as a global language has become English as a Lingua Franca (ELF) (Melitz, 2018, p. 1), which means „one language fits all” (Komori-Glatz, 2018, p. 4; Feely & Harzing, 2003, p. 11). It is a reaction to the interconnected global system and the need for worldwide communication (Šukolová, n.d., p. 480). The boom of English in Europe was mostly the reaction to EU enlargement and the collapse of USSR and the Eastern Block. At the beginning of the 21st century, when many countries joined the EU, Scandinavian countries together with the UK - countries where English was widely spoken, caused the expansion of ELF in Europe (Theophanous & Karyolemou, 2022, p. 149).

The reason why English is so popular is that in comparison to other languages, it has the big advantage of easier grammar than in the case of other world languages (French or German). English also has natural genders, differences between the tenses are very small, verbs have only indefinite genders, and many words are borrowed lexical units from different other languages. Its lexis is dominated by Romance languages and expressions. However, English as a Lingua Franca differs from classic English. It is an adapted version influenced by different cultures and communities created mainly by non-native speakers (Šukolová, n.d., p. 480) while creating a bridge between social, political, religious, and cultural gaps and differences (Martinaj, 2023, pp. 53-54). On the other hand, critics of just one Lingua Franca argue that it reduces access to critical resources – employees without sufficient language skills, lowers information and knowledge transfer and hinders communication in the company (Sanden, 2016, p. 280). However, many recruiters worldwide believe that hiring employees with advanced communicative skills in English can help to penetrate new markets all over the world (Theophanous & Karyolemou, 2022, p. 161).

Perceptions of the global role of English vary from author to author. On the one side, English is seen as a great facilitator that opens up new opportunities in the globalised business world as well as a necessary common language (van der Worp, 2017, p. 54) or a hegemonic force (Tenzer, et al., 2017, p. 816). On the other hand, the use of one global language can cause pressure on the linguistic load of a minority community. What is more, English is sometimes seen as a threat

to linguistic diversity (van der Worp, 2017, p. 54). During the past years, many companies believed that “English is enough” to trade with organisations with first language other than English (Bruen & Buckley, 2022, p. 44). Even though English has inevitably become a necessity, an essential and indispensable skill (Theophanous & Karyolemou, 2022, p. 149) in interpersonal and business communication, some researchers claim that English is not enough (Backus, et al., 2013, p. 183; Martinaj, 2023, p. 54; Melitz, 2018, p. 4) and it does not work without other languages (European Commission, 2011, p. 10). That is why research draws attention to the need for skills in a multiplicity of languages which also play a role in the world of business and other sectors. However, it is important to mention that high proficiency in English has become a prerequisite, while the lack of skills in other languages has led to loss of business (Bruen & Buckley, 2022, p. 30). This means that limited language skills and other language barriers can cause problems in international environment. These problems mostly include loss of rhetorical skills, misinterpretation, and misunderstandings (Sanden, 2020, p. 25).

2.3 Use of languages and language policies in SMEs

The communication of SMEs and MNEs is shaped by language policies and linguistic setups. Concrete consequences caused by linguistic challenges for the firm’s development are in SMEs unknown. However, it is clear, that languages influence a company’s competitiveness and survival. The choice of language can be the key decision of a company and the key factor of a policy because it affects all business activities and all stakeholder relations. (Talukder & Barner-Rasmussen, 2024, p. 2). Languages and their diversity can influence the organisation, both positively and negatively. SMEs can use three types of language policies: national (local) language policy, corporate (working / company) language policy – mostly English as a global business language and Lingua Franca, and multilingual policy (Tenzer, et al., 2017, p. 816). Language policies regulate the internal and external modes of communication of companies (Sanden, 2016, p. 274).

Correct development and implementation of language policies has a positive influence on language practices within the organisations (Holúbeková & Fördösová, 2017, p. 38). Language policies arise from language planning by the government regulating the use of languages within a region or country, which can be defined as “complex decision-making, the assignment of different functions to different languages or varieties of a language in a community, and the commitment of valuable resources” (Dhir & Góké-Pariolá, 2002, p. 242). A common corporate language or general guidelines in MNEs are often implemented by organisations to regulate

modes of communication. Corporate language policies are also affected by nation-driven policies and attitudes to various languages and their use. As the term corporate language is derived from MNEs (Talukder & Barner-Rasmussen, 2024, p. 2) in the further part of this research this is going to be used as company language to indicate the difference between MNEs and SMEs.

Most companies decide to apply formal language policies to manage language diversity. Many SMEs implement a “one language” working policy, despite the fact that they do it automatically and are sometimes not aware of its implementation. However, such a policy does not meet the language needs of the global and dynamic market (Angouri, 2014, p. 3). Nowadays almost every SME needs to implement English or other languages to access resources and stay compatible on the market. In many cases, English is not enough or is just taken as commonplace. This leads to a trade-off between “English-only” and “multilingual” approaches to language (Talukder & Barner-Rasmussen, 2024, p. 2). Another challenge for SMEs is the coexistence of various languages in companies. In response to this, experts observe a divergence between policy documents and real language practices (Angouri, 2014, p. 2). The reason for that is that languages are the keys to international markets and cooperation. This means that a multilingual approach can present a competitive advantage to a firm (Talukder & Barner-Rasmussen, 2024, p. 2).

Multilingualism in the globalised world

Changes caused by globalisation, advances in technology, and increasing demand for international mobility and communication have caused not just the spread of English, but also the multilingualism has been affecting the linguistic situation of SMEs and leading to new educational requirements (van der Worp, 2017, p. 55). Multilingualism plays a crucial role in the globalised world because many SMEs interact on a multinational level with individuals who do not share a common language (Angouri, 2014, p. 2) which is causing the need for multiple languages in the workplace (van der Worp, 2017, p. 55). Languages offer new opportunities and cooperation, but also career development and promotion in different business situations (Martinaj, 2023, p. 52).

It has been argued that a knowledge of different languages can make a difference between average and exceptional performance in international business (Bruen & Buckley, 2022, p. 30). Nevertheless, many SMEs do not need multilingualism due to their size, industry and other factors. That is why multilingualism is often considered as a waste of time, energy, and money,

and because of that, there has been a trend toward monolingualism. On the other hand, in the long-term, multilingualism can be beneficial as well as for employees and for the company by creating better access to markets, partners, stakeholders, and financial activities (Theophanous & Karyolemou, 2022, p. 150). One of the most important sources of multilingual preparation is provided by educational institutions. Many workplaces demand a certain level of language knowledge which is why higher educational systems often include languages in their curricula (van der Worp, 2017, p. 54).

In Europe, the main languages for international cooperation are English, German, French, Russian, and Spanish (Holúbeková & Fördösová, 2017, p. 38). As the PIMLICO Project by the European Commission shows English remains crucial mostly on the Internet, but also other languages as Spanish, Russian, Chinese, and Portuguese are becoming more relevant. In mid-2000s, over 50% of SMEs used English for exporting, whereas just 13 % used German, 9% French, 8% Russian, 4% Spanish, and the remaining 15% used other languages (European Commission, 2006, p. 19).

As already mentioned, to manage languages and organise language diversity (Janssens, et al., 2004, p. 415) SMEs use various company language policies which are implemented as means of regulation or standardisation of linguistic behaviour. These policies determine in which situation which languages are used (Talukder & Barner-Rasmussen, 2024, p. 2). Language policies are often described as a law, rule, regulation, plan, pronouncement, or statement about the use of language in a company which can have a formal or informal form. Sanden (2016) describes language policy as the “deliberate control of language matters”. Another definition states that language policies deal with the relationship between languages and issues specific to languages. If there is no language policy, its absence can cause serious problems for the employees and the company as well. The absence of language policy is often the representation of management’s passive attitude which causes day-to-day problems in communication (Sanden, 2016, p. 281). That is why languages in SMEs have been titled as the forgotten factor in multinational management, even though they are described as elements that “permeate virtually every aspect of their business activities” (Marschan, et al., 1997, p. 591).

Language policy can also include published guidelines for certain interactions or be written on some tables or signs in the company to remind employees to use concrete language during meetings or in concrete situations – interviews, research, and others. Company language policy does not have to be written (formal), it is enough when employees generally agree upon (informal) and use it in practice and so it becomes a part of organisational culture (Sherman &

Nekvapil, 2018, p. 6). The right working language policy should enable the best fulfilment of the organisation's mission (Dhir & Góké-Paríolá, 2002, p. 244).

To successfully implement language policies, companies have to get the right employees. That is why recruitment is an important part of the language policy in SMEs which are internationally active. Many of them use various websites, social media, and other digital platforms. Moreover, some companies tend to cooperate with universities and hire both externally and internally. However, HR managers face numerous challenges when selecting and nurturing pool of good employees. The majority of international companies conduct structured interviews with multiple rounds. The most important factor in the hiring process seems to be the CV, with IT and language skills being the crucial ones. Together with problem-solving skills these often have to be demonstrated in front of the recruiters (Delgadová, et al., 2017, pp. 218-220).

2.3.1 Monolingual policies: Common company language policy and national language policy

Common company language

Common company language (CCL) is a single language policy, using just one language in all communication processes of the company. CCL is mainly introduced in SMEs as an administrative managerial tool as it should make cooperation easier (Tenzer, et al., 2017, p. 816) or as an alternative language (Dhir & Góké-Paríolá, 2002, p. 242) to overcome language diversity and facilitate communication with internal and external stakeholders (Tenzer, et al., 2017, p. 816). Economic research has shown that common language can facilitate bilateral trade between different parties (Melitz, 2018, p. 11), improve general access to information (Sanden, 2016, p. 280), formal reporting, and provide easier access to literature, documents, and other resources. Furthermore, CCL can have a positive influence on informal communication and result in a sense of belonging to a group. What is more, the implementation of a common company language can remove linguistic barriers (Talukder & Barner-Rasmussen, 2024, p. 2). On the other hand, the implementation of a common language can lead to unforeseen problems if the management is introducing a strategy in a multinational or multilingual working environment. Problems such as loss in administrative and operational productivity, disruptive collaboration patterns, and process decrements can occur. In practice, it has been observed that more and more companies are creating a common company language policy, with English being the most widespread language this policy is based on (Sanden, 2016, p. 281).

English as “the language of globalisation” is often used as a CCL (Talukder & Barner-Rasmussen, 2024, p. 2). It is described as the “easy way out” (Sanden, 2016, p. 277) in SMEs to overcome linguistic differences by creating one shared language (Talukder & Barner-Rasmussen, 2024, p. 2). In the EU, English-only approach (Talukder & Barner-Rasmussen, 2024, p. 2) seems to solve the problems of European multilingualism and linguistic diversity (Backus, et al., 2013, p. 179). English is the most widely learned foreign language in Europe (Theophanous & Karyolemou, 2022, p. 149) that is why in many companies it is used as English as Lingua Franca, which is a standardised form of language spoken mostly by people with different mother tongues (Komori-Glatz, 2018, pp. 10-11). English also has become the language of many European institutions that employ people with multilingual backgrounds (Theophanous & Karyolemou, 2022, p. 149). Use of English can be justified by two factors: external pressure from suppliers, partners, customers, and competitors and the necessity to delegate tasks to a dispersed workforce (Talukder & Barner-Rasmussen, 2024, pp. 2-3). This introduces the concept of a more neutral form of ELF - a so-called Business English as a Lingua Franca (BELF) (Tenzer, et al., 2017, p. 816), spoken mostly by non-native speakers, (Tenzer, et al., 2017, p. 816) which is more about its efficiency and effectiveness than about its correctness. BELF is an easier form to communicate and understand each other, because there are no accents, the level of idiomaticity is lower and there are no culture-specific metaphors or jokes (Komori-Glatz, 2018, p. 9). That is why BELF works well as a shared language resource among people with different mother tongues (Sanden & Kankaanranta, 2018, p. 556). BELF as a monolingual language policy works well when an organisation has to deal with the global market as well as support the internal functioning of the company (Dhir & Góké-Paríolá, 2002, p. 242).

On the other hand, using English-only approach can underutilise the company’s language capabilities which could be used as an advantage in the market (Talukder & Barner-Rasmussen, 2024, p. 2). Another problem is that even though English should work as a neutral language, and is often misleadingly perceived as neutral and universal (Sherman & Nekvapil, 2018, p. 1), it does not guarantee equality between individuals mostly because of the different levels of language competencies (Sanden, 2016, p. 282) and varying language biographies. That is why in some cases English rather than acting neutral, reflects power relations. In cases when foreign SMEs deal with English native speakers the neutral role of English disappears. Because of this business interactions often require practical solutions in the form of language policies or strategies, which declare concrete languages for various predetermined situations, not just the

use of English as BELF (Sherman & Nekvapil, 2018, p. 2). English is often considered as the most practical solution for the younger generation of employees. However, in some countries such as Latin America or Russia where English is not the Lingua Franca, it is not recommended to use BELF (Theophanous & Karyolemou, 2022, p. 150). Another problem, mostly observable in Eastern Europe, that BELF is a new trend, and many employees don't have sufficient English skills, because they learned German or Russian as a foreign language (Sherman & Nekvapil, 2018, p. 2). However, for Eastern European countries it has become clear that English is the window to the Western Europe (Ene, 2013, p. 3138). The main problem of BELF remains that some Europeans don't have sufficient skills, while others don't want to speak English, what also causes a problem when English is used as a company language or the preferred language for internal communication of the company (Rižnar & Rybníček, 2017, p. 374). The reason why some do not want to speak English is that they perceive it as a threat to countries or professions that prefer other language (Ene, 2013, p. 3139).

Language policy might not be declared in some official document but is part of the company's organisational culture and creates an informal policy (Bruen & Buckley, 2022, p. 31). It is important because an SME tries to show commitment to a local market, gain a competitive edge, increase the flow of know-how in the market by getting feedback from local customers as well as creating international activities within an SME. This can be achieved through travelling and recognising the needs of various customers and can lead to positive rapport with major customers (European Commission, 2011, p. 16).

National language policy

National or local language policy is a more natural common company language policy. Without the knowledge of the local language, the company becomes vulnerable and defenceless (Martinaj, 2023, p. 69). Also, for this reason, in many European countries, national languages still have a strong position and should be used in all possible situations (Sherman & Nekvapil, 2018, p. 2).

The lack of language management approaches has been hindering language policymaking at national levels (Bruen & Buckley, 2022, p. 29). Moreover, national languages are spoken just by a limited number of people. Another problem is that national language regulations are part of high-degree politics which highly favour native speakers who gain higher status due to their language advantage (Sanden, 2016, p. 281). What is more, some employees who come from other cultural backgrounds and don't speak the local language, but work for the same

organisational mission, can be left out or discriminated against by this policy (Dhir & Góké-Pariolá, 2002, p. 244).

2.3.2 Multilingual policy: Multinational language policy

Whereas the previous chapter focused on one-language policies, this chapter considers the possibility of multiple languages in the workplace. While the idea of a common language is often oversold in the international business environment, many trends show that multilingual situations are part of international organisations and their everyday activities (Janssens, et al., 2004, p. 414). Even though there is no doubt about the role of English in SMEs, other foreign languages such as Chinese, Russian, Spanish, German, and Portuguese are commonly used (Martinaj, 2023, p. 54). Multinational policies are a reaction to the findings of research which shows that implementation of a shared working language in a multilingual workplace does not result in monolingualism as the employees continue using multiple languages. This implies that in SMEs where more languages are present one-language policy does not work (Angouri, 2014, p. 2). A multinational language policy or “multilingual franca” approach enables the mixing of different languages depending on the situation (Talukder & Barner-Rasmussen, 2024, p. 3). The first reason why companies apply multilingual approaches is that in today’s business world, where information technology and increased mobility are prevalent, managers have to communicate almost daily with stakeholders, who speak different languages. Nowadays international communication is the challenge of all managers and not only of an elite group as it was earlier (Janssens, et al., 2004, p. 414). However, managers tend to underestimate the role of language and its expressive side in multinational management (Sanden, 2016, p. 277). The second reason for supporting multilingualism is that new organisational forms and practices, such as network structures, have made language a crucial element at several hierarchical levels. While monolingualism may be sufficient for internal communication, external communication and international activities often require multilingualism. Thirdly, consumers and business partners in countries where the main language is not English expect information and support in their local language. The fourth reason is at the societal level. It is highly expected that thanks to the economic well-being of Western countries, new languages will be studied at school and English won’t be enough (Janssens, et al., 2004, pp. 414-415).

In many European companies, English is either used as an official language (BELF) or a working language. However, in most cases, English plus French or German is perceived as the most popular European combination (Melitz & Toubal, 2014, p. 4). Most SMEs that participate

in international business prefer a common language, which is usually English. However, SMEs with a broader international perspective implement Spanish, Chinese, and Arabic (Melitz, 2018, p. 2).

Successful integration of different language skills can positively influence the company as well as the achievement of its goals (Angouri, 2014, p. 2). Foreign languages are a necessity that influences the management and language diversity of SMEs (Martinaj, 2023, p. 54). The problem in SMEs is that multilingualism and foreign language skills are often seen just as economic factors and their social role is forgotten (Angouri, 2014, p. 3). Another problem with the multilingual approach is that it is not clear how many languages are essential, which effects they have and the sense of including them in the strategy and investing in their acquisition can cause more costs than benefits (Talukder & Barner-Rasmussen, 2024, p. 3).

H1: The presence of a multilingual formal or informal company language policy in SMEs, improves communication with stakeholders compared to monolingual policy.

H2: Internationalisation of Austrian and Slovakian SMEs lead to the requirement of local language and one additional language in the hiring process.

2.4 Differences and similarities between Austria and Slovakia

This chapter introduces the target countries of this research – Austria and Slovakia. The first subchapter looks at the shared history and territory, distribution of population, and cooperation between these two countries as well as some key similarities and differences. In the second part of this chapter, there is a description of languages which predominate as mother tongues in the target countries because of their ethnic composition and which foreign languages are most taught and used. In the final part of this chapter German and Slovak as the official languages of the studied countries are shortly described and characterised.

2.4.1 History and demographical data of Austria and Slovakia

History

Austria and Slovakia have a lot in common historically and geographically. For centuries Slovakia (Haller, et al., 2023, p. 397) was part of the Hungarian Kingdom which was part of the Habsburg monarchy since the Battle of Mohács in 1526 (Pezenhoffer, 1999, p. 161). In the western part of the monarchy, there were just small social-structural differences thanks to the developed educational system. In the eastern part the of monarchy, the situation was worse,

with significant social differences and no possibility of free education even at the elementary level. The historical deep-running ties between Austria and Slovakia were curtailed after the disintegration of the Habsburg Empire after the First World War. The postwar development of these two countries was totally different - the biggest differences between the two countries arose during the 20th century due to different political and cultural ideologies. Whereas Austria was part of the developed West, Slovakia was part of the communist East. While Slovakia became part of Czechoslovakia and later was coping with communism and was economically staying behind, in the meantime, Austria thanks to its economic-political system, steady economic growth, low level of industrial conflicts, and increasing productivity and income, was flourishing and slowly becoming one of the richest countries of the European Union. Since both countries joined the EU, both have experienced strong economic growth. Many believed that after the fall of the Iron Curtain in 1989 and the fall of the communist regime in Slovakia, the differences between Slovakia and Austria would diminish, but the reality was despite the European integration different. However, Slovakia developed thanks to investments from Western firms with Austria being the second biggest investor after Germany (Haller, et al., 2023, p. 397ff.), the gap between Western and Eastern European countries remains.

Demographical data and geography

Both countries are small Central European landlocked countries with important links to the whole of Europe, especially through the Danube and railways (Savić, 2022, p. 71). Most regions of Western Slovakia share borders with Hungary and Austria and their near regions. Slovakia maintains strong economic ties with Vienna and border-regions that affects the mobility of citizens and goods (Haller, et al., 2023, p. 404). Austria and Slovakia don't just share a history and can be both characterised by labour migration tendencies, but also borders of 106,7 km in the heart of Europe (Čiefová & Seresová, 2021, p. 61). Whereas Austria has about 9.2 million citizens (Statistik Austria, 2024), Slovakia has around 5.4 million (Statistical Office of the SR, 2024). This correlates with the size of its territory, Austria with 83 871 km² (Central Intelligence Agency, 2024) is two times bigger than Slovakia with 49 035 km² (Central Intelligence Agency, 2024). The common geographical area doesn't mean that both countries are the same in terms of values and culture (Čiefová & Seresová, 2021, p. 62). Austria and Slovakia have thanks to their shared history and shared geographical territory, have similar approaches and behaviour despite coming from different cultures – German-speaking Austria on the one hand and Slavic Slovakia on the other. Moreover, thanks to their proximity, the two

countries often cooperate (Fink, et al., 2008, p. 437) on economic, political, and scientific levels (Čiefová & Seresová, 2021, p. 61).

2.4.2 Languages spoken in Austria and Slovakia

Languages in Austria

The official language of Austria is German which is spoken by 88.6% of the Austrian population (World Atlas, 2024), which includes not just Austrian individuals, but also 225 000 Germans who live in Austria (Statistik Austria, 2023). The largest minority group in the country are Turks who speak Turkish - 2.3%. 2.2% of Austrian residents speak Serbian, and the other 2 % Croatian which is also an official language in some parts of Burgenland. It should be noted that more than 5% of the Austrian population is represented by individuals whose first language is Slovene (official language in parts of southern Carinthia) and Hungarian (official language in some parts of Burgenland) (World Atlas, 2024; Central Intelligence Agency, 2024). The three most important and widely taught foreign languages are English, French, and Italian.

Statistical evidence shows that 90 % of all firms in Austria are family firms, which are SMEs (Strobl, et al., 2023, p. 160). Based on a study by the Austrian Institut für Bildungsforschung der Wirtschaft - these companies will in the future need other languages than English too. These are mostly the languages of the countries with which Austria shares borders and trade. The mentioned languages are Italian, Czech, Slovak, and Hungarian (European Commission, 2011, p. 10).

Languages in Slovakia

The official language of Slovakia is Slovak which is the first language of almost 80 % of Slovakian citizens. The second largest ethnic group with about 10 % in Slovakia is the Hungarians whose first language is Hungarian. Other 2.3 % are represented by Roma, while the remaining 8% are created by other minority ethnic groups such as the Rusyns, Czechs, Ukrainians, and Poles (World Atlas, 2024; Central Intelligence Agency, 2024). In Slovakia most people speak at least one foreign language. Whereas the younger generation learns and speaks mainly English and German, the older one learned and speaks Russian (World Atlas, 2024). In the early 2010s, in Slovakia as in other Eastern European countries English was as much used as German and Russian in international trade (European Commission, 2011, p. 17).

The extent of use of official languages of the target countries

German is the official language of Germany, Austria, Switzerland, Liechtenstein, Belgium and Luxembourg (Hawkins, 2018, p. 87). It is spoken by around 230 million people (Straub, 2024) as it is widely spoken in other European countries such as Denmark (Melitz, 2018, p. 12) and Southern Tyrol (Hawkins, 2018, p. 87). There are around 100 million German native speakers and additional 25-30 million speak German as their second language. Moreover, approximately 100 million people can speak German as a foreign language (Straub, 2024). German is also widely spread in some parts of Eastern Europe (Melitz, 2018, p. 12). In 2010, 13% of European SMEs use German when exporting to 15 different European countries including Germany and Austria. This is the second most used foreign language after English in Europe. German can be used for trade not only in Germany and Austria, but also in Luxembourg, Belgium, and Hungary. In countries where German is used as a third language, it is essential to understand cultural and political connotations associated with the term market intelligence (European Commission, 2011, p. 18).

The Slovak language is a language that is spoken mostly by the citizens of the Slovak Republic (Central Intelligence Agency, 2024). This means that this language is spoken by approximately 5 million people which is significantly less than German. To illustrate how few people speak Slovak - fewer people speak Slovak than Catalan, which is spoken by 10 million people in Spain (Baaij, 2012, p. 18).

2.5 Role of European Union in language policies, ELAN Study and PIMLICO Project

The European Union is not just a geopolitical entity with an economic significance, but also a very diverse region of the world (Baaij, 2012, p. 14). It has more than 448 million citizens, representing 5.6 % of the world's population (European Union, 2025) working in more than 30 million organisations (European Commission, 2023), and speaking more than 80 languages (Baaij, 2012, p. 14). 24 official languages and more than 60 minority or regional languages are spoken (Backus, et al., 2013, p. 181) by at least 175 nationalities within the borders of the EU (European Parliament, 2022). Since the 1980s EU has been promoting the protection of local and minority languages and the need for multilingualism (Theophanous & Karyolemou, 2022, p. 149). EU language policy is represented by summarising the quote “mother tongue plus two”. This means that EU citizens should learn at least two foreign languages and be multilingual (Backus, et al., 2013, p. 182). While this had been agreed upon, during the summit meeting in

Barcelona in 2002, it still remains more a theoretical guideline than a practically implemented policy. The European Commission stated that schools are the most important resource of language learning (European Communities, 2008). This is important as learning foreign languages enriches life of the European citizens, supports exchange of ideas, cross-cultural communication, business growth, career enhancement, and benefit from Europe's cultural diversity (Martinaj, 2023, p. 70). In 2023, the European Labour Force Survey showed that 27.3 million people living in the EU are non-EU citizens. From these 11.2 million are employed in the EU labour market, representing 5.7 % of the total EU employment (European Commission, 2024).

The policy of the European Union is based on respecting linguistic diversity and creating intercultural dialogue between the member states. The policy promotes learning and teaching diverse foreign languages which are seen as basic skills of all EU citizens. Foreign languages should provide citizens with educational and employment opportunities (Holúbeková & Fördösová, 2017, p. 38). The reason why languages are promoted in the EU is that linguistic diversity is part of the European cultural identity, a core value as well as a “basic principle of the EU”. The EU also emphasizes that all European languages are equal (Baaij, 2012, p. 15). Even though the EU promotes its multilingual policy, there is neither a long-term concept of a unified language policy, nor concretely defined rules (Šukolová, n.d., pp. 480-481).

The Eurobarometer Survey in 2012 showed that Europeans appreciate language learning and have a positive attitude towards it. European citizens believe that language is crucial for the future of their children. The key advantage of languages is the ability to work in another country and use it in business interaction. However, the reality differs from these opinions. The Eurobarometer Survey shows that almost half of Europeans are not able to hold a conversation in another language than their mother tongue. However, half of Europeans can understand television, radio, or a conversation in at least one foreign language. Foreign languages are mostly learned at schools. The European language policy goal of mother tongue plus two other languages was achieved only in 8 EU member states, but this criterion is not fulfilled in either Austria or Slovakia (Backus, et al., 2013, p. 183).

H3: Employees of Austrian and Slovakian SMEs with higher education levels are fluent in more languages than those with lower education levels, aligning with the EU's “mother tongue plus two” philosophy.

Many studies by the EU show that SMEs have become more aware of the importance of languages – use of language skills and break down of language barriers (Angouri, 2014, p. 1). In the EU the most used and learnt languages are English in the first place and German and French in the second (Backus, et al., 2013, p. 183). Even though many companies and SMEs choose English as their company language, since Brexit English is the mother tongue of less than 1 % of the EU's population which means that almost all people use BELF (Theophanous & Karyolemou, 2022, p. 150). Other study even suggests that languages as English and French should become the main languages of the EU. The argument for their use is: if all legislative and other European texts were in English and French, it would make many things easier for EU citizens as taxpayers (Baaij, 2012, p. 20).

The two most important studies of the EU dealing with linguistic diversity in SMEs by introducing the concept of Language Management Strategies and their potential influences are the ELAN Study and the PIMLICO Project.

ELAN Study

ELAN Study stands for Effects on the European Economy of Shortages of Foreign Language Skills in Enterprise. It was a study by the European Commission conducted in 2006 (Bruen & Buckley, 2022, p. 31). The main objective of the ELAN study was to evaluate how language skills in SMEs influence their economic performance (Holúbeková & Fördösová, 2017, p. 38; Kostić-Bobanović, et al., 2016, p. 32) and the connection between exporting success and language skills (Rižnar & Rybníček, 2017, p. 365). It observed 1964 exporting SMEs in 29 European countries (Bruen & Buckley, 2022, p. 31). The results indicated that significant business opportunities are lost due to the lack of foreign language skills (Sanden, 2016, p. 278). The lack of language skills led to lost contracts (European Commission, 2011, p. 3; Rižnar & Rybníček, 2017, p. 369; Linares, et al., 2018, p. 121). Furthermore, increasing export performance was observed in cases when SMEs had language strategies recruiting native speakers, and employees with various language skills, and using translators (Kostić-Bobanović, et al., 2016, p. 33). Companies paying attention to language issues and challenges by developing effective strategies are more successful than companies without language strategies (Sherman & Nekvapil, 2018, p. 5). As a result of the ELAN study so-called Language Management Strategies (LMS) were developed to address different language needs of SMEs (Angouri, 2014, p. 1). Despite this EU study and different regional, local, and national recommendations developed by the Directorate General for Education and Culture of the European Commission, there seems to be minimal improvement in terms linguistic approaches of SMEs and their ability

to cope with language skills and cultural diversities mostly due to the lack of awareness about these practices (Rižnar & Rybníček, 2017, pp. 365-366).

ELAN study also identified four language-related characteristics of SMEs that enable them to work well internationally: the use of employees with different language skills, employment of native speakers from the target market, the use of professional translators, and the development of other Language Management Strategies and plans to cope with communication barriers (Bruen & Buckley, 2022, p. 32). It was also highly recommended to enable language training (Melitz, 2018, p. 15) for employees, create cooperation with universities, and publish websites in multiple languages (Rižnar & Rybníček, 2017, p. 367).

PIMLICO Project

Five years after the publication of the ELAN Study, the PIMLICO Project was conducted. PIMLICO stands for Promoting, Implementing, Mapping Language and Intercultural Communication Strategies in Organisations and Companies (European Commission, 2011, p. 3). The project examines the role of foreign languages in SMEs and Language Management Strategies (Martinaj, 2023, p. 53) and how companies employ them (Kostić-Bobanović, et al., 2016, p. 33). It was launched by the Directorate-General for Education and Culture in 2011. The main aims of the PIMLICO Project are:

- raising awareness of cultural and linguistic issues and barriers,
- promoting solutions to linguistic and cultural problems through examples of best practice SMEs using LMS,
- support communication strategies by EU governments and intermediary organisations through the Lifelong Learning Programme,
- improve cross-border trade on the global market,
- increase the use of LMS to improve European interactions (European Commission, 2011, p. 7).

The report of this project describes the best practices of 40 European SMEs based on their Language Management Strategies. Additionally, it identifies key contributors to success, such as business intermediaries as are the government, chambers of commerce, and educational institutions. The Austrian example of Paltentaler Minerals and Slovakian Slovmag are included as mini case studies in the Appendix. The main finding of the PIMLICO Project is that successful organisations use different Language Management Strategies to address communication issues and international activities.

The language management practices based on the PIMLICO Project are discussed more in detail in the following chapter.

2.6 Role of Language Management Strategies in SMEs

Globalisation caused the interconnectedness of the world. Increased physical mobility and technological innovations lead to the mutual encounter of different cultural and linguistic backgrounds (Backus, et al., 2013, p. 181). SMEs that operate internationally deal with different languages, cultures, traditions, habits, education levels, political systems, and different levels of industrial development (Dhir & Góké-Paríolá, 2002, p. 244). As a reaction to internationalisation and globalisation, organisations started to develop Language Management Strategies (Holúbeková & Fördösová, 2017, p. 38).

"The interplay of multiple languages is one of the most defining factors of globalisation today: only language can enable individuals, companies and countries to communicate" (Chambers, 1994, p. 15).

Under the term "language management" linguists understand the way how people use language and how they interact with it (Jernudd & Neustupný, 1987, p. 72). The LMS can be defined as "a company's package of measures and techniques used to prevent linguistic and cultural barriers from occurring in new and expanding foreign markets" (European Commission, 2011, p. 4). This means they can be understood as the planned adoption of a range of techniques to facilitate effective communication with clients and suppliers (Rižnar & Rybníček, 2017, p. 366) while overcoming linguistic barriers (Bruen & Buckley, 2022, p. 30). To summarise, these strategies address diverse linguistic and communication problems of various markets, which can often be transferred to other ones as well (Rižnar & Rybníček, 2017, p. 366).

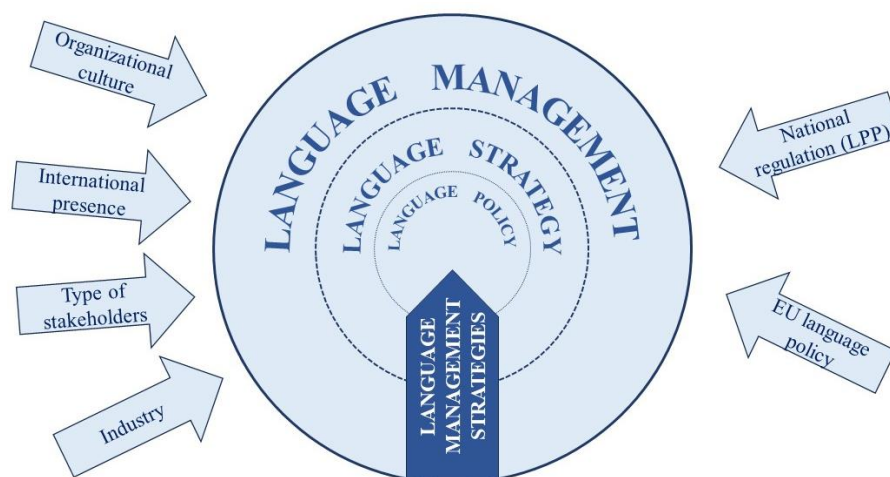
Language Management Strategies developed from language planning as problem-solving recommendations and practices. Language planning describes conscious efforts to change the linguistic behaviour of a societal group – defining communication on a macro level, mostly by governments. Language management was later developed as the extension of language planning focusing on the micro level - how individuals, organisations, and groups influence language use. Language management includes the choice of language, language policy, solving language-related problems, and setting norms (Jernudd & Neustupný, 1987, p. 74). It also includes formal planning of language teaching to employees, and hiring speakers, translators, and interpreters for different situations and languages (Sherman & Nekvapil, 2018, p. 6).

The main role of LMS is to support effective communication with stakeholders as clients and suppliers from abroad (Holúbeková & Fördösová, 2017, p. 38) because of the extent of multicultural and multilingual external stakeholders in companies (Martinaj, 2023, p. 55). LMS are chosen by international organisations to manage their international communication process (Janssens, et al., 2004, p. 415). Many organisations have decided to invest in LMS with the aim to expand into foreign markets and overcome potential linguistic differences and barriers (European Commission, 2006, p. 28). Company language management is all about a company planning, designing, and implementing a language strategy that meets the needs of the business. That is why companies develop language strategies or policies (Sanden, 2016, p. 274). Language strategies include several decisions among others the use of different languages, the function of translators in the creation of multilingual texts, and the methods used to validate the translation (Janssens, et al., 2004, p. 415). For organisations is important to measure the influence of foreign language skills and other LMS on their performance (Martinaj, 2023, p. 59).

Examples from best-practice SMEs from the PIMLICO Project, show five common characteristics of good LMS practices. Firstly, SMEs have functional capability across a range of languages in at least 3 languages including English. This means not just the ability to negotiate in those languages, but also to understand the multilingual and multicultural background (Bruen & Buckley, 2022, p. 31). One priority of companies should be based on the PIMLICO Project, to always have good language skills in English. The need for skills in a multiplicity of languages leads to the expectation that organisations should have people who not just speak but are also able to negotiate in 3 languages. LMS are crucial not just in negotiations, but also in all communication forms where information is transferred (Martinaj, 2023, p. 54). Secondly, the employees in the successful SMEs have a high-level competence in English. Thirdly, they can act and operate globally and adapt to different linguistic needs and demands. Different markets use different languages, which is why there is a need for third languages where the companies do not have linguistic capabilities for example German in Hungary. Fourthly, SMEs cooperate with local agents to address cultural and linguistic issues. Lastly, human resource strategy is important because of the use of staff's language skills which can be valuable in international interactions. For the human resource department, it is crucial to have a language management plan or strategy. This support can be short or long-term and can include foreign students on placement. For the human resources department, it is also crucial to

keep records of the language skills of employees and develop deeper intercultural understanding (Bruen & Buckley, 2022, p. 34; European Commission, 2011, pp. 19-21).

Figure 1 Language management



Source: own elaboration

Company languages and policies are important parts of language management. English-only and multilingual approaches introduced in 2.3 are the basics of LMS as a language standardisation strategy. The English-only approach is an example of when in a multilingual organisation a single standardised language is used. On the other hand, the multilingual approach uses several languages. Both these strategies deal with the linguistic diversity of a firm (Talukder & Barner-Rasmussen, 2024, pp. 2-3).

The right implementation can facilitate cooperation between organisations, and stakeholders and have other positive impacts (Martinaj, 2023, p. 55). However, in real life, companies seem to struggle with linguistic diversity. Efficient LMS has a positive influence on the administrative effectiveness of a company and in the meantime improve communication between stakeholders. Another advantage of the introduction of LMS in the company is that it can highly increase the company's turnover. About 40 % of the asked SMEs experienced a 25% or higher increase of turnover after introducing LMS. Another 35 % had observed an increase of 16-25%. The most significant increase in turnover was mainly caused by the introduction of new languages, multilingual website adaptation, and recruitment of local agents and native speakers to overcome language barriers and problems and enter new markets and cooperations (European Commission, 2011, p. 4). They are also an important part of the internationalisation process of each company because language skills are one of the most vital assets in the globalised market (Sanden, 2016, p. 278). For SMEs, it is crucial to use and improve language skills. These

strategies must be able to reduce linguistic and cultural barriers to stay competitive in the globalised international market (Martinaj, 2023, p. 55). LMS should be creative, dynamic, and adapted to the organisation's profile, goal, and possibilities (Rižnar & Rybnicek, 2017, p. 373). When languages are made an issue of the corporate agenda, they can reduce the potential drawbacks of a linguistically heterogeneous workforce (Sanden, 2016, p. 277).

2.6.1 Examples of LMS tools based on PIMLICO Project and the four stages of strategic language management

Language management tools are implemented to manage the company's language needs. They can be defined as different activities within a company, which an organisation deploys to overcome language-related challenges and satisfy its language needs (Sanden, 2016, p. 281).

Stages of strategic language management

Table 2 Four stages in strategic language management

	Language need analysis	Language policy / strategy	Language management tools	Revision and adjustment
Purpose	Obtain an overview of the language situation of the company as-is	Regulate or steer future language and communication practices	Facilitate and support implementation of language policy/ strategy	Continuous monitoring and supervision of language management initiatives
Outcome	Map of cross-language interactions	Language policy or language strategy document	Implementation of language management activities	Feedback from front-line employees
Benefits	Identify current and future language needs	A conscious decision of how to approach language and communication proactively	Satisfy emergent language needs or overcome language related challenges	Improved performance and strategic learning
Risks	Time-consuming, risk of manipulation	Language choice involves issues of power	Costly, use of bridge individuals may result in "gatekeeping"	Can be difficult to carry out in practice

Source: (Sanden, 2016, p. 279), own elaboration

A potential solution to language diversity is to conduct a language need analysis and linguistic audits. Linguistic audits aim to identify the language needs of management and different

employees. That is why Sanden (2016) created four stages in strategic language management based on the findings of previous studies and research.

As Table 2 illustrates, first stage assesses the company's current use of language and identifies the needs and gaps. This stage helps to identify possible future language requirements. Its main aim is to obtain an overview of the language situation of the company and potentially compare it with practices of other companies. This stage can implement LMS such as **keeping a record of the linguistic and cultural skills** of each employee that should be the basic knowledge of each employer or HR (European Commission, 2011, p. 19). This can be achieved through the use of **linguistic audits** (European Commission, 2011, p. 4). Moreover, **staff mobility programmes**, or European students' mobility as ERASMUS (Rižnar & Rybníček, 2017, p. 374), and taking on foreign students on placement (European Commission, 2011, p. 4) can offer new perspectives, attitudes, and cultural knowledge to the SMEs. Another LMS tool is **"buddying" with foreign colleagues** and cross-border secondment schemes (European Commission, 2011, p. 4) is also one way to develop intercultural understanding and know-how in cooperation. This is possible thanks to employee exchange programmes between international partner companies (Fink, et al., 2008, p. 437).

Secondly, good language strategy or policy including guidelines which meet the organisation's needs. The aim of this stage is to regulate or steer future language and communication practices. These are identified through language needs analysis, in the previous stage. These strategies and policies should also support the overall goals of a company. This stage can implement LMS such as: **employment of local agents** (Martinaj, 2023, p. 55) to solve language problems – companies have observed a relationship between the use of local agents and trade value. Local agents are people from the country, where the company has its branch office or where it cooperates, and thanks to their knowledge of language and culture they have better access to local people and stakeholders. PIMLICO shows a best-practice example of an Austrian company that employed local agents for languages such as Slovakian, Czech, Hungarian, Polish, German, Swedish, Dutch, Danish, Turkish, and Bulgarian.

"Linguistic and cultural skills are also very important to cooperation with agents. In each of our trading countries, there are cultural differences – you need to know them before you can have successful cooperation" (European Commission, 2011, p. 19).

Moreover, this stage also can implement **language training, cultural briefing schemes, and cultural training** (European Commission, 2011, p. 4). Companies can offer them in various forms: free language courses as job-related training (Avram & Kühne, 2008, p. 471), weekly English courses which are commonplace in many European companies (European Commission, 2011, p. 19), and in-house academy offering training and workshops for employees (Avram & Kühne, 2008, p. 471). Many organisations also apply online language learning during employee selection or as a recruitment policy. The policy can also be influenced by **adaptation of websites with special cultural and/or linguistic adaptations** (Rižnar & Rybníček, 2017, p. 366) - about 65% of European SMEs had a website. The number of websites depends on the sector: 74 % in personal services and manufacturing, 73 % of wholesale trade, 71 % business services, 59 % transport and communication, 55 % retail trade and 47 % construction. Its adaptation influences the market size and its attitude to English also plays a role. A multilingual marketing website strategy means that the main website is not translated into all languages but offers various languages based on the need of their clients. The Internet helps people overcome linguistic and cultural barriers caused by the internationalisation process (European Commission, 2011, p. 20). The stage can include **e-commerce** involving multilingual operations, as well as **forging links with local universities** – many SMEs decide to hire language graduates and place foreign students inside their organisations. They create an important link in communication and can open up new markets (European Commission, 2011, p. 20). The primary sources of language learning in countries are not companies, but educational institutions which provide language skills to children and aim to increase the number of people proficient in more than one foreign language. What is more, the role of language departments is crucial because it enables students not just to get new language skills, but to develop expertise in foreign languages and their fields (Rižnar & Rybníček, 2017, p. 374).

The following stage includes the creation and implementation of language management tools. The main purpose of this stage is to facilitate and support implementation of language policy or strategy with help of LMS. These include LMS such as employment of **native speaker recruitment** – employing native speakers can increase trade volume as well as impact trade performance, mostly on the local market. Whereas native speakers are language experts, who help ensure effective communication, local agents are more focused on business operations and cultural facilitation, leveraging their knowledge of the domestic market. Moreover, this stage also includes **employment of staff with different language skills** can help the company cope with multilingual settings (Martinaj, 2023, p. 55). Furthermore, another LMS which can be

implemented in this stage is the **use of professional external translators and interpreters** (Rižnar & Rybníček, 2017, p. 366). Translation and interpretation services are crucial for institutional multilingualism when effective communication is not possible due to language barriers (Baaij, 2012, p. 14). This is an ideal tool which helps to overcome comprehension problems (Lanstyák, 2018, p. 83). On the other hand, these services are costly. Nowadays technical tools or machine translation enables faster and cheaper translation processes, however, in many cases there is a need for human proofreading (Sanden, 2016, p. 281). Often it is important to also translate promotional, sales, and/or technical materials (European Commission, 2011, p. 20). Another supporting LMS at this stage is the **product or packaging adaptation** in line with local tastes and customs (European Commission, 2011, p. 4).

The last stage monitors, revises and adjusts the tools, strategies, and practices (Sanden, 2016, p. 282). An innovative combination of these different tools which have to be embedded in the company's language strategy can have a positive effect on the success of SME. Moreover, they are crucial supports of multilingualism and cultural and linguistic complexity (European Commission, 2011, p. 5). Other recommendations are that managers in higher positions should be able to communicate in more languages. The basic is English and other languages are perceived as beneficial (Dvořák, et al., n.d., p. 3). Managers are very important in the effective implementation of LMS (Martinaj, 2023, p. 69).

Earlier research indicated lost contracts due to the lack of language skills and language management because of an increasing worldwide demand for language skills in all professions. That is why investments in language skills and employment of formal LMS seem to be crucial to getting high returns (Martinaj, 2023, p. 55). The following LMS tools can be part of a strong internationalisation strategy of the human resource department, and any combination of the following measures based on the recommendation from the European Commission can create the company's LMS. The lack of language skills can lead to conflicts, misunderstandings, and losses (Martinaj, 2023, p. 69), dissuade companies from new market entries, and negatively impact mobility in the job market (Rižnar & Rybníček, 2017, p. 374). However, these can be overcome with help of modern advances in communication technologies (Babcock & Du-Babcock, 2001, p. 374), including LMS such as translation tools or other language apps. The reason why implementation of LMS in SMEs is challenging is that they are expensive (Martinaj, 2023, p. 72). Another problem is that economic evaluation, losses, and gains associated with linguistic diversity are hard to measure (Sanden, 2016, p. 278). Because of that, many companies are just satisfied with a good command of English.

2.6.2 Use of Language Management Strategies in Austria and Slovakia

Use of Language Management Strategies in Austria

A survey by Austrian Institut für Bildungsforschung der Wirtschaft showed that Austrian companies will need skills in the languages of countries with which they share borders as Italian, Czech, Slovak, and Hungarian in the future (European Commission, 2011, p. 10; Bruen & Buckley, 2022, p. 30; Rižnar & Rybníček, 2017, p. 375).

Austria is one of the countries together with Denmark, Spain, and the UK which stand out in terms of their infrastructural support and national policies regarding language measures for SMEs. Austrian company normally expects basic English skills from their production staff, whereas from administrative and other staff advanced level is expected. However, many organisations believe that in the case of some countries such as Italy, Russia, and France it is preferable to use their local language for organisational efficiency (European Commission, 2011, p. 17). This is confirmed by a study that shows that 43 % of Austrian SMEs don't think that English is enough to satisfy all language and communication needs. The same research shows that 77% of Austrian SMEs believe that there is a connection between languages and export performance, but don't possess an appropriate strategy (Rižnar & Rybníček, 2017, p. 375). Another observed problem is that non-German-speaking immigrants are part of the Austrian workforce in almost all Austrian SMEs. Companies try to solve this problem by offering courses to promote integration and development opportunities for these employees (Avram & Kühne, 2008, p. 471).

Use of Language Management Strategies in Slovakia

Research has shown that Slovak organisations mostly use English and German as tools to communicate with customers, suppliers, headquarters, and other stakeholders. The reason for that is that English has the role of Lingua Franca in the world and German is used because of the geographical position and economic relations with Germany and Austria. Managers in the same study pointed out that their employees need special language skills for telephone calls, business negotiations, and business letters. Some HR departments even conduct interviews and want CVs and motivation letters in a foreign language (Holúbeková & Fördösová, 2017, pp. 40-41).

Slovakia is one of the countries that is missing the national infrastructure to linguistic and cultural needs but has local or regional initiatives at the various Chambers of Commerce.

Bilateral Chambers offer linguistic and cultural support for companies from home countries and foreign countries and create a valuable trade link, e.g. German – Slovak Chamber of Commerce and Industry (in Slovakia) (European Commission, 2011, p. 6). Research has shown that in some Slovakian organisations provided LMS include mostly language courses for employees within and outside the premises are implemented. On the other hand, in Slovakia, SMEs neither cooperate with universities, and graduates from the business environment, nor offer internships abroad. Many SMEs are also poorly equipped with language skills (Holúbeková & Fördösová, 2017, p. 41).

H4: Austrian SMEs implement LMS more frequently than Slovakian SMEs.

H4.a: Austrian SMEs provide employee mobility programs (internship abroad, buddy programme) more frequently compared to Slovakian SMEs.

H4.b: Austrian SMEs provide language training (both free and paid), language certification and cultural training to their employees more frequently compared to Slovakian SMEs.

2.7 The impact of languages on employee motivation

Employees are a crucial part of each organisation. They bring language as a valuable commodity to each workplace (Angouri, 2014, p. 3). Employees are also part of internationally operating companies and their networks in their professional tasks have to deal with a number of various languages (van der Worp, 2017, p. 53). Language and communication affect every aspect of organisation: “organisation is communication” (Kim, et al., 2019, p. 74). However, previous studies have shown that many managers and language planners make the mistake that language is treated just as a commodity and means of communication, not as a powerful instrument (Sanden, 2016, p. 284). Through linguistic resources and individual decision-making, employees as well as SMEs can achieve their goals, agendas, and desired outcomes. That is why language should be seen as a vital human skill that provides the acquisition and transmission of various information (Sanden, 2016, p. 276; Dhir & Góké-Paríolá, 2002, p. 241). However, language is also perceived as a commodity through which employees negotiate their professional survival (Angouri, 2014, p. 3). Language is a meaning-making tool that plays a crucial role in motivating employees. It helps them to recognise their own contribution to the company. Furthermore, it helps employees understand how to align their work models and mindset with organisational norms, thereby ensuring compliance with unwritten organisational

and cultural rules. If employees do not align with the organisational culture, it leads to improper task performance and hinders career progression (Mayfield & Mayfield, 2016, p. 468).

Global workplaces often require employees to work in other languages than their native language. This leads to linguistic and communication challenges that affect team dynamics and individual motivation. Research on motivation shows that people who avoid goal orientation do not want to make mistakes or appear as incompetent, whereas people with learning goal orientation try to improve their skills, solve new situations, and gain more knowledge. Communication challenges among employees with diverse linguistic and cultural background are inevitable. If these obstacles are not recognised and addressed, they can lead to serious organisational issues including integration and collaboration problems between employees. To overcome these linguistic challenges, organisations can implement LMS such as language training to equalize varying levels of fluency within the company. Without such measures, lack of language fluency can lead to discrimination, bad team dynamics and fewer opportunities what leads to lower levels of employee motivation (Kim, et al., 2019, pp. 74-81).

2.7.1 The role of language, language policies and Language Management Strategies in the workplace

Employees must understand each other in their workplaces. Based on context there are different types of talk identified in the business context: negotiation, meeting, production-level collaborative, informal, and official talk (Sherman & Nekvapil, 2018, p. 5). Research shows that both the local language and working language (mostly English) are necessary for the career progression of employees and their integration into teams (Angouri, 2014, p. 3). Integration into teams often depends on internal communication and its practices which include formal and informal communication activities. This is a challenge for the company's management to create effective and efficient communication systems (Tkalac Verčič, et al., 2021, p. 591). The main problem in many SMEs is that many international employees do not speak the local language, and local employees lack access to other languages which can lead to exclusion and conflicts (Angouri, 2014, p. 3). If people cannot understand each other because they don't share a common language, it is difficult for them to cooperate and collaborate. If low-fluent or medium-fluent speakers encounter native speakers, they try to increase their credibility and defuse their status of loss by putting in higher efforts. Others decide to withdraw themselves or demonstrate avoidance behaviour to disappear from the group because they think their contribution would not be valuable in the group. That is why in some cases common language can have a

disintegrative effect (Sanden, 2016, p. 281). Everyone reacts differently, but it always causes problems when employees do not understand each other (Sherman & Nekvapil, 2018, p. 5).

The right implementation of various LMS tools can solve this problem by improving interpersonal interactions and stimulating other interpersonal factors as self-perception and self-esteem, which can result in higher levels of self-efficiency. These factors influence not just one's personal attitude, but also the company's economic performance. Efficient implementation of LMS influences different areas as the human resource strategy (Sanden, 2016, p. 278). It is important to note that in the case of implementation of LMS firstly the needs of the company are considered and employees with their individual experiences are just the resource to achieve the company's goals (Sherman & Nekvapil, 2018, p. 6).

In 2012 Global Entrepreneurship Monitor (GEM) (Martinaj, 2023, p. 54), the world's foremost study of entrepreneurship (Rižnar & Rybníček, 2017, p. 366), reported that employment opportunities are limited because of language and cultural barriers. The same study mentions a positive relationship between career choices, language skills, and successful entrepreneurship (Martinaj, 2023, p. 54). On the other hand, other linguistic obstacles or topics were never mentioned in their annual global reports (Rižnar & Rybníček, 2017, p. 366). Research in Slovakia has shown that employees think that the command of Languages for Specific Purposes is vital for them and their future for the sake of the fulfilment of tasks not just on a national level but also on an international one (Holúbeková & Fördösová, 2017, p. 41).

Multilingualism should be embraced because it opens new possibilities, new markets, and business opportunities as well as enables individuals to remain employable (Rižnar & Rybníček, 2017, p. 374). Bi- and multilingual employees are a valuable strategic resource for the company because they bridge cultures and remove linguistic barriers. However, employees can also misuse their language skills by filtering, distorting, and blocking communication. This is called "gatekeeping" and highlights the importance of language in the business world again (Sanden, 2016, p. 279). However, multilingualism has been perceived rather positively than as a problem because it brings multiple advantages for people. Many employees can profit from their good language skills and intercultural competences by getting actively involved in an organisation's expansion into new or emerging markets or having the possibility of an international career. That is why multilingualism is not just a tool to overcome the challenges of linguistic diversity of economic markets, but it also makes easier international cross-border mobility of employees (Theophanous & Karyolemou, 2022, p. 150). Even though language has been perceived since the 1960s as a symbol of "unity", "foreign relations", "development" and "democratisation",

language, and language policies are still valued differently in different social groups and relate to multiple interests of employees and companies (Jernudd & Neustupný, 1987, p. 73).

2.7.2 Motivation of employees in a linguistically diverse work environment

Organisational communication built by various languages is a key factor in the organisation's overall success and functioning. The way how communication is used in an organisation directly affects the morale of employees, their performance and motivation level (Rajhans, 2009, p. 145). The good relationship between employee and employer helps to increase productivity, organisational reputation, and external relations with other stakeholders (Tkalac Verčič, et al., 2021, p. 591).

The term motivation is derived from the Latin term *movere*, meaning to move (Ramlall, 2004, p. 53). Motivation is something that moves or pushes a person to work with commitment and diligence while feeling satisfied (Nwode & Anyadiegwu, 2023, p. 2). Based on this motivation can be defined as “those psychological processes that cause the arousal, direction and persistence of voluntary actions that are goal oriented” (Mitchell, 1982, p. 53). Other definition states “motivation is the willingness to exert high levels of effort toward organisational goals, conditioned by the effort's ability to satisfy some individual need” (Ramlall, 2004, p. 53). To sum up, motivation concerns “what drives a person to work in a particular way and with a given amount of effort” (Cong, et al., 2013, p. 161). Motivation can be summarised as a class of needs, drives, desires, wishes which force a person to achieve more on individual and collective level (Nwode & Anyadiegwu, 2023, p. 3). Communication and motivation are mirrored in the performance of employees because positive perception of company results in job satisfaction, increased trust, and commitment to the organisation. Satisfied and motivated employee is an asset to the company which increases the company's revenue and strengthens its position. On the other hand, basic communication errors lower productivity and lead to employee dissatisfaction, what decreases their motivation level. This means that job satisfaction, strongly impacts employee motivation (Rajhans, 2009, p. 147).

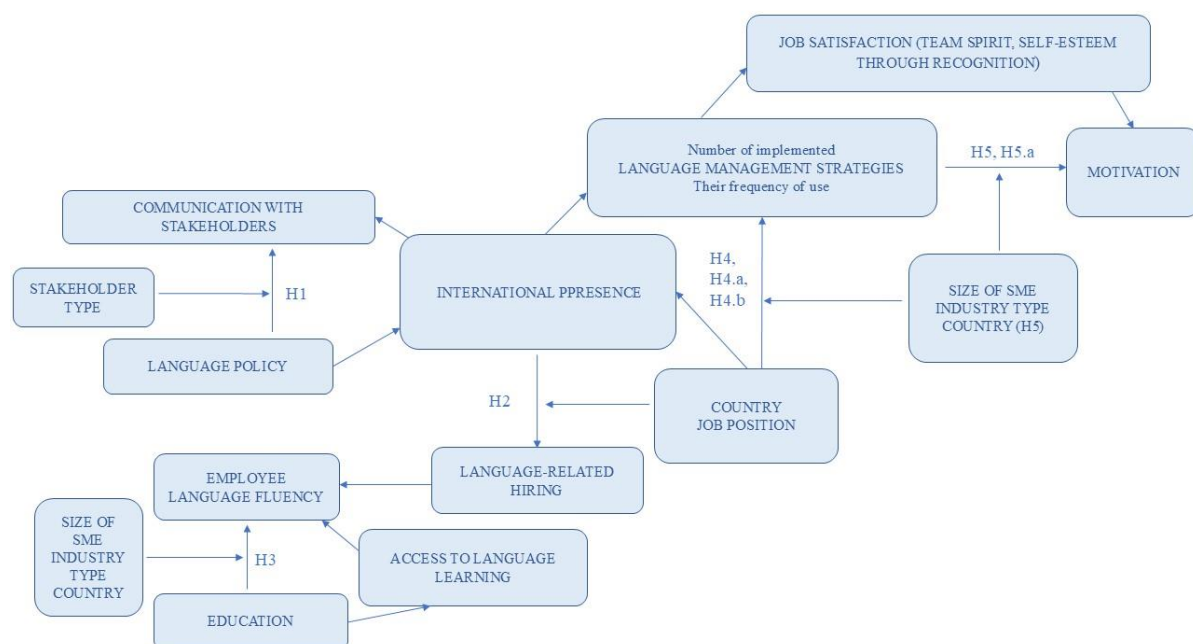
Employee motivation significantly influences both the employee and the company (Nwode & Anyadiegwu, 2023, p. 3). During the past decades there has been a huge number of motivation theories which cannot be discussed any further due to the limitations of this thesis (Ramlall, 2004, p. 53). Motivated employees can relieve tension and stress while exerting effort. Studies show that the most crucial factors which influence the motivation of an employee are the needs of employee, work environment, responsibilities, supervision, fairness and equity, effort, and

employee's development and career (Ramlall, 2004, pp. 58-59). These factors can be highly influenced by language skills, policies, and management strategies (Vaittinen, 2014, p. 1). As it was mentioned above, language and communication have an impact on individual motivation by influencing self-esteem, career progression (Kim, et al., 2019, p. 81). Previous research in the technology industry shows that employees are more motivated to develop foreign language skills when participation is voluntary and the skills are applied in practical situations (Vaittinen, 2014, p. 1). Effective communication practices seem to play an important role in employee performance and motivation (Rajhans, 2009, p. 148). Effective use of languages has a direct influence on employee performance and motivation. However, when languages are misused, there seems to be a lack of job motivation, underperformance, and dissatisfaction (Nwode & Anyadiiegwu, 2023, p. 1).

H5: In Austrian and Slovakian SMEs using greater number of LMS tools employees experience higher motivation, compared to employees in SMEs with no or lower numbers of LMS implementation.

H5.a: A greater number of LMS tools enhances job satisfaction, represented by higher self-esteem and better team spirit, which increases employee motivation.

Figure 2 Research model



source: (Bhandari, 2021), own elaboration

3 Methodology

This chapter gives an overview of the empirical research process in detail. It includes the description of research design, data collection method, sample size, and survey design, which aim to answer the research question. Moreover, variables and their operationalisation, as well as the statistical evaluation of the results and the number of full and missing responses, are described.

3.1 The empirical research process, sample size, and the survey design

This empirical research aims to answer the descriptive-explanatory research question (Rojon & Saunders, 2012, p. 58). The descriptive part of the thesis is represented by the literature review. It includes an overview of language policies, LMS, and implementation of these practices in a certain population – Austria and Slovakia - based on gathered data (Pawar, 2020, p. 52). The explanatory part aims to determine the precise effect of LMS on employee motivation, of country on the frequency of use of LMS and of the language policy on stakeholder communication (Rojon & Saunders, 2012, p. 58).

The research applies a quantitative research design that is based on data collected by a survey (Asenahabi, 2019, p. 79). Most of the answers are convertible into numerical data, which can be analysed, statistically evaluated, and tested. It also enables the comparison of two groups. It is evaluated how one and multiple language policies affect hiring process, communication level with stakeholders. Additionally, the research looks at the frequency as well as the use of LMS and employee motivation levels in SMEs in Austria and Slovakia. This method has been chosen, due to its effectiveness and other advantages as fast distribution and outreach to many respondents (Choy, 2014, pp. 101-102).

Theoretical background is derived from a range of primary and secondary literature resources, including mostly journal articles, online sources, documents, and statistical data, the empirical part uses a survey based on theoretical knowledge and previous recommendations. The survey is conducted in the form of a questionnaire as a questionnaire is the backbone of a survey, focusing on the practical application of LMS and relations between LMS and employee motivation. The anonymous questionnaire was created in Microsoft Forms (<https://forms.office.com/>) in German, Slovak and English to reach out to survey participants working in Austria and Slovakia, including respondents of various nationalities, both native and

non-native speakers of the target countries. The questionnaire enables the collection of quantitative primary data (Roopa & Rani, 2012, p. 273).

Survey design

The prerequisite for filling out the survey was that the respondents have to have a work experience in the target country. This means that not just people currently employed in the target country were able to fill out the survey, but also respondents with previous experiences (when they are students, unemployed, already retired, or currently working in other country). So, the research of this thesis included individuals who have a current and previous working experience in Austrian or Slovakian SMEs. For example, if someone now works in Germany but used to work in Austrian SME, it is included in the research. People who work in large companies or in other countries than Austria or Slovakia were asked not to fill out the survey.

The questionnaire which is included in the Appendix, is divided into four parts - having 24 questions, including 3 communication scales with 3 items, one motivation scale including 3 items, one job satisfaction scale (represented by team spirit and self-esteem) including 2x3 items, one scale evaluating the frequency of use of LMS and one for ranking them, 2 questions for categorising (country and type of SME), 7 demographic questions, one open question and some single- and multiple-choice questions. The first part of the questionnaire introduces the topic of the research, ensures anonymity and confidentiality of the collected data as well as restricts the sample with two questions enabling just to choose between the two target countries and 3 types of SMEs. The second part asks about language policies, Language Management Strategies, role of languages, and their relevance in the company's official communication, hiring process and in communication with stakeholders. The communication with stakeholders, is divided into three scales: clarity of communication, frequency of misunderstanding and overall communication quality, each measuring the communication with colleagues, customers, and other business partners (including all other stakeholders). These communication scales are assessed using a Likert Scale ranging from 1 to 6. What is important to mention that the frequency of misunderstandings represents a reversed scale. In this part, the questionnaire also looks at the availability and frequency of use of various LMS practices based on suggestions from PIMLICO Project. These questions were created based on the theoretical background.

The third part of the questionnaire measures the employee motivation level which is being evaluated on a Likert Scale from 1 to 6 (from strongly disagree to strongly agree). The scale consists of 3 items. These items measure intrinsic motivation and are taken from the 18-item

scale - The Work Extrinsic and Intrinsic Motivation Scale (WEIMS) (Tremblay, et al., 2009, p. 218) The third part also has a scale measuring job satisfaction. This scale with 6-items measures the strength of the job satisfaction as mediator as job satisfaction leads to higher motivation levels. It includes 3 items measuring team inclusion and 3 items measuring self-esteem represented by recognition. The following 6 items were chosen based on the previous findings described in 2.7 stating that team dynamics and self-esteem through recognition or potential career progression are connected to motivation and job satisfaction. These items are part of an 80-item scale of the Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire (Weiss, et al., 1967).

The fourth part collects general demographic data and other relevant personal information. The respondents are asked about their gender, age, nationality, education level, job position, number of SME experiences. The last question of this part asked in which language skills are the respondents fluent (at least B1/B2). Before submitting the survey, the respondents were asked to fill out an open question, asking whether they find their language policy useful, or if they are not using any, would they prefer to implement it. Here, it is also important to mention that there is a high probability that average employee is not aware of the language policy of the company, or some companies do not have any or are not explicitly aware of language regulation. That is why the language used in organisation's all formal communication with external stakeholders is going to be the strongest indicator of the language policy.

Sample size

The questionnaire was distributed from 2. November 2024 to 15. November 2024. Concrete employees from various SMEs were contacted with the help of social media, the Slovak-German Chamber of Commerce and Industry posted the survey on their Facebook, the Slovak-Austrian Chamber of Commerce and Industry also promised their help by addressing its members, also some student platforms were used (such as Studo and Poll Pool, a platform for reciprocal responses of surveys). Totally, 193 individuals were contacted directly per WhatsApp, SMS, and MS Teams, who were also asked to further distribute the questionnaire to their family and friends, what gave an access to wide network of various people, the so-called weak ties (Granovetter, 1973, p. 1363).

After closing the questionnaire, the data were downloaded to MS Excel. Even though this file which includes all originally collected data, before statistically testing the hypotheses, many responses to the questions had to be coded and transferred into numerical values.

The questionnaire received 200 responses. No response was excluded as all crucial questions were mandatory and people who work in a large company or other country as Austria and Slovakia, were not able to fill out the questionnaire. Just a few responses have missing data, in the questions asking about the age and gender, but they are still relevant to the research. 107 survey participants filled out the survey in Slovak, 48 in English and 45 in German. From the 200 responses, 107 responses were also received to the open question, which are discussed in Chapter 5.1.1. All 3 versions of the survey are attached in the Appendix.

3.2 Variables and their operationalisation

Variables are a crucial part of each research and research question. In this case, the independent or causal variables (Losh, 2017, p. 1) are:

- the language policy (H1),
- international presence (H2),
- education level (H3),
- country – Austria or Slovakia (H4, H4.a, H4.b),
- the implementation of LMS (H5, H5.a).

To operationalise these variables, they have to be measurable with the help of the survey. Firstly, the employees are asked whether their company has a language policy and if yes, whether a single or multiple language policy. It can happen that employees are not aware of the policy that is why the use of languages in official communication is considered as the main indicator of language policy. Secondly, the employees are asked whether the company is active on an international market or only on the home market. Thirdly, the various education levels of the employees are measured. Fourthly, the respondents are going to be divided in two categories based on the country where they work. The last hypothesis has the implementation of LMS as independent variable. In this case, the survey participants choose which from the 15 listed LMS tools are part of their strategy, and they decide whether they are implemented, or not and if yes, whether they are a common or exceptional practice in their SME. Later, based on the number of implemented tools are divided into four categories – no, low, moderate, and high implementation.

The dependent or effect variables (Losh, 2017, p. 1) are measured on a 6-item Likert scale or asking about the used or required languages as well as the fluency of employees. The dependent variables are:

- communication with stakeholders (H1),
- required languages in hiring process (H2),
- employee language fluency (H3),
- frequency of implementation of LMS (H4, H4.a, H4.b),
- employee motivation (H5, H5.a).

Furthermore, moderators and mediators are introduced. In this case, the moderators that affect the direction and strength of the relationship between the independent and dependent variables are:

- the size of the SME (number of employees, annual turnover, annual balance sheet),
- stakeholder type,
- number of implemented LMS,
- country,
- industry type,
- employee job position.

The mediators look at the way how independent variables impact the dependent ones:

- company's attitude towards languages,
- employee language proficiency,
- international presence,
- job satisfaction (H5).

It is important to look at the effects which moderators and mediators have on the relationship between the dependent and the independent variables (Bhandari, 2021).

3.3 Statistical evaluation of the results

The evaluation of the results is done in a free statistic software R. Descriptive statistic, presented in 4.1, enables visualisation of the demographic information with help of data, figures, and tables with calculated proportions and means. In most cases the respondents are divided into two groups based on the country (Austria or Slovakia) where they work(ed). Afterward, the

differences are further analysed. The inferential statistics chapter aims to establish a direct connection between the descriptive statistical data on language policy and LMS and the hypotheses. Even though this part gives a detailed overview of the testing procedure, the description of the results and applied tests and regressions are described in Chapter 4.2 in more detail.

For each multiple item scale, the Cronbach Alpha is calculated to evaluate if data are consistent and in the meantime measure unique factor. The internal consistency or reliability analysis of the items of the scales is shown by Cronbach Alpha. Reliability analysis evaluates if all the items of a scale, measure the same construct or concept – in this case communication with stakeholders, employee motivation and job satisfaction. Cronbach Alpha should not be less than 0.7 because a low number indicates a poor interrelatedness between the items of the scale. At the same time, it should not be much higher than 0.9 because a high value suggests that the items are measuring the same question or they are redundant (Tavakol & Dennick, 2011).

To compare the results of cases where there are two categories the normal distribution of data is tested by Shapiro-Wilk test at first and then the homogeneity of variances is evaluated by Levene's test. The variances are equal, and the homogeneity assumption is met when the p-value of the test is bigger than 0.05. If the variances are not equal, Levene's test has a p-value smaller than 0.05 (Deng, et al., 2014, p. 427). These tests are the basis of the further analysis to get reliable data as in Student's T-test the variances of both groups should be equal and the data have to be distributed normally (Gastwirth, et al., 2009, pp. 343, 352). What is more, it also controls the Type I and Type II errors (Cahoy, 2010, p. 2306). If the data are normally distributed and the variances are equal, Student's T-test is used, to look up whether there are significant differences between the groups (Sawyer, 2009, pp. E27-E32). If the criterion of normality is not fulfilled, the Mann-Whitney U test is used. On the other hand, if the criteria of homogeneity of variances is not fulfilled, the Welch's Test is used. In cases of multiple categories, the ANOVA test is applied. ANOVA evaluates the differences in means of more than 2 groups which are mutually independent. As in the case of Student's T-test the assumption of normality and homogeneity of variances has to be fulfilled (Kim, 2017, p. 22). If the normality is not fulfilled the non-parametric Kruskal-Wallis test is used and if the homogeneity of variances is not fulfilled the Welch's ANOVA is applied (Hecke, 2012, p. 242).

In case of association between groups for both the dependent and independent variable, the most appropriate test for testing the hypothesis is the Chi-Square test. This test aims to look if the differences across the two groups are significant (McHugh, 2013, pp. 143,146). The

relationship between the independent and dependent variable may differ depending on various factors – control variables such as country, company size and personal characteristics of the employee. In order to test hypotheses regression analyses are conducted. This is done after testing all the test of the hypotheses.

4 Results

This chapter presents the findings of the survey. The first subchapter employs descriptive statistics to provide an overview of the demographic data that was collected during the survey. The subsequent subchapter employs inferential statistics to test the hypotheses. This includes some descriptive statistics that introduces the statistical tests and regressions. The chapter includes a detailed analysis of language policies and LMS in SMEs. The results present an overview of the findings for Austria and Slovakia respectively, and for both target countries collectively.

4.1 Descriptive statistics of demographical data

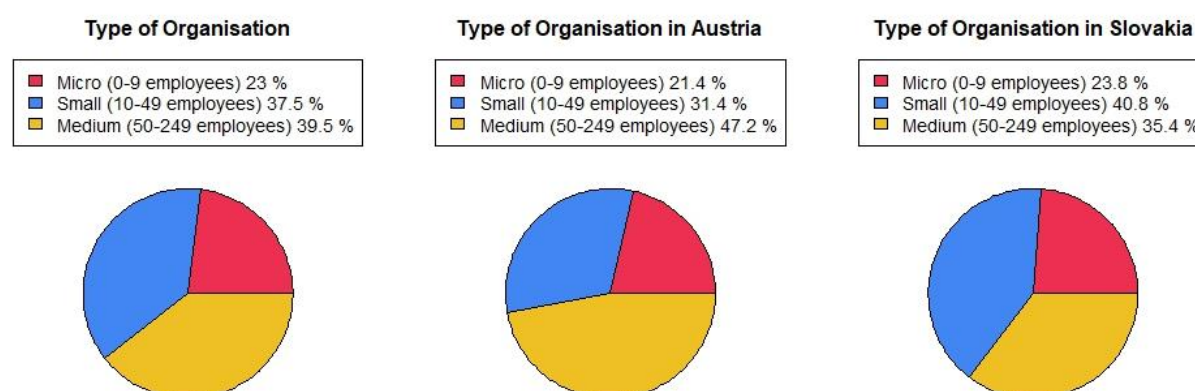
As it was previously mentioned, the condition for filling out the survey was a recent or previous working experience in Austrian or Slovakian SME.

Table 3 Distribution of respondents by the country of their current or former workplace

Country	Number of respondents	Share of respondents
Austria	70	35 %
Slovakia	130	65 %
Total	200	100 %

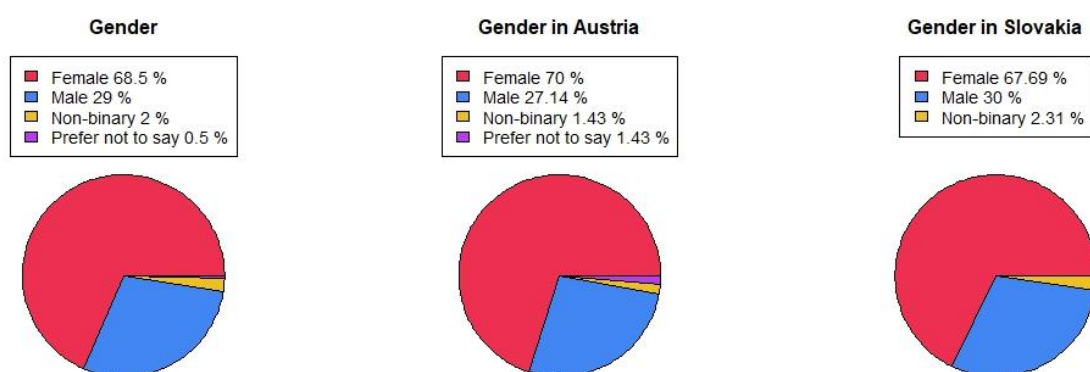
As previously stated above, in the research, the sample size consisted of 200 respondents. The respondents were asked to describe their most recent experience in a workplace in Austria or Slovakia. While one third of respondents work or used to work in Austria, almost two-thirds of the survey participants currently work or previously worked in Slovakia. This means that the group are not similar in size.

Figure 3 Distribution of SME Types: Overall, Austria, and Slovakia



The second criterion for inclusion in the survey was that the respondent has to be employed in an SME. 79 participants of the overall sample are employed in medium-sized enterprises, 75 respondents work for small-sized enterprises and 46 are employed in a micro-sized enterprises. In Austria, a significantly higher proportion of employees are employed in medium-sized enterprises, with 33 respondents. The number of respondents working in a small-sized enterprise in Austria is 22 and the remaining 15 employees are working for a micro-sized enterprise. In Slovakia, 46 respondents indicated that they are employed in a medium-sized enterprise. In comparison to the overall and Austrian distributions, the Slovak sample demonstrates a notable prevalence of respondents employed in small-sized enterprises, with 53 survey participants. The remaining 31 respondents indicated that they are employed in a micro-sized enterprise. Even though, Austria has a higher proportion of medium-sized enterprise, the proportions are balanced.

Figure 4 Gender distribution: Overall, Austria and Slovakia



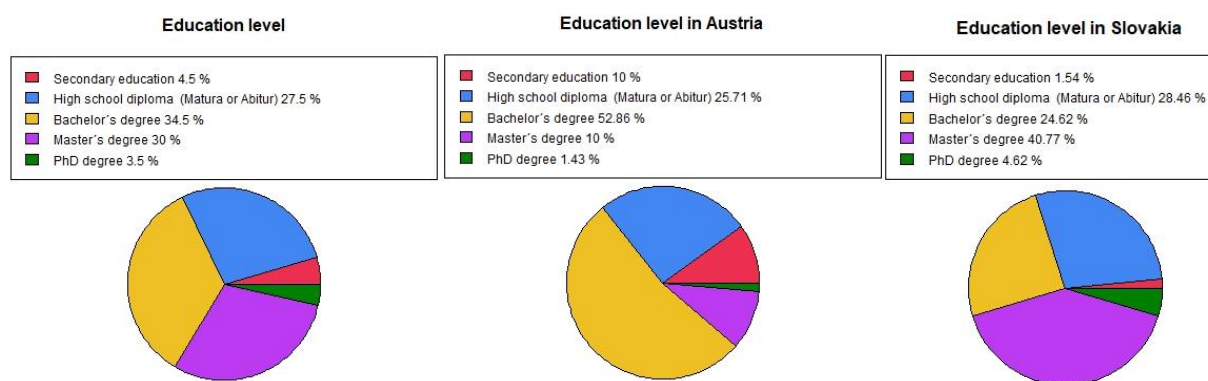
The gender distribution of the respondents across all three categories is comparable, with around 70 % female and around 30 % male. Only few respondents identified as non-binary or did not disclose their gender. This leads to the conclusion that the sample is not representative.

Figure 5 Age Distribution: Overall, Austria, Slovakia



The age distribution of the survey participants is illustrated in Figure 5. Five respondents did not fill out their age. The average age of the 195 respondents is 35 with a minimum age of 16 and a maximum age of 76. Five respondents did not disclose their age. Almost every number in terms of age is represented in this spread by at least one respondent. However, the majority of respondents of this survey are aged between 22 and 36. The average age of the Austrian sample is 31, with the youngest respondent aged 16 and the oldest aged 62. Whereas in Slovakia the average age of the respondents is 36, a minimum age of 18 and a maximum age of 76. As the Slovakian sample is represented almost by twice as many respondents as the Austrian one, the Slovakian has a much wider range and larger deviation.

Figure 6 Education level distribution: Overall, Austria and Slovakia



The majority of respondents, concretely 69 have a Bachelor's degree. 60 individuals from the overall sample have successfully completed a Master's degree. A total of 55 participants have obtained a high school diploma. A mere 9 participants have obtained some form of secondary education, while 7 possess a PhD degree. More than half of the respondents of the Austrian sample hold a Bachelor's degree, which might be attributed to the age of the participants. Approximately a quarter of respondents have passed the "Matura" or "Abitur" and have a high school diploma. 10 % of respondents in the Austrian sample have obtained a Master's degree, and an equivalent percentage have completed some form of secondary education. Just one person from this sample possesses a doctoral degree. The distribution of educational attainment in the Slovak sample differs from that observed in the Austrian sample. Slightly over 40 % of the survey participants obtained a Master's degree. A total of 37 respondents have a high school diploma, while 32 have obtained a Bachelor's degree. Six individuals from this sample have a PhD degree, while only 2 have pursued some form of secondary education.

Figure 7 Job position distribution: Overall, Austria and Slovakia

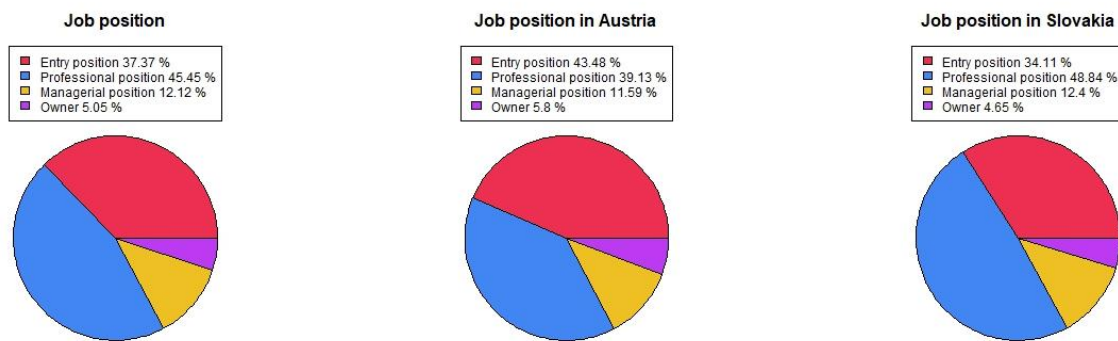


Figure 7 illustrates that the distribution of job positions across overall, Austrian and Slovakian sample is relatively similar. The overall sample comprises 74 respondents working in entry-level positions, 90 participants have a professional position, 24 respondents are managers, and the remaining 10 own an SME. In the Austrian sample 31 individuals, are working on an entry position. 27 respondents have attained a professional position, while 8 have a managerial one. Only four survey participants own the SME. In the Slovak sample, nearly half of the respondents are working in a professional position. 44 survey participants are employed in an entry position and 16 are managers. The remaining 6 respondents are owners of an SME.

Figure 8 Number of work experiences across SMEs: Overall, Austria and Slovakia

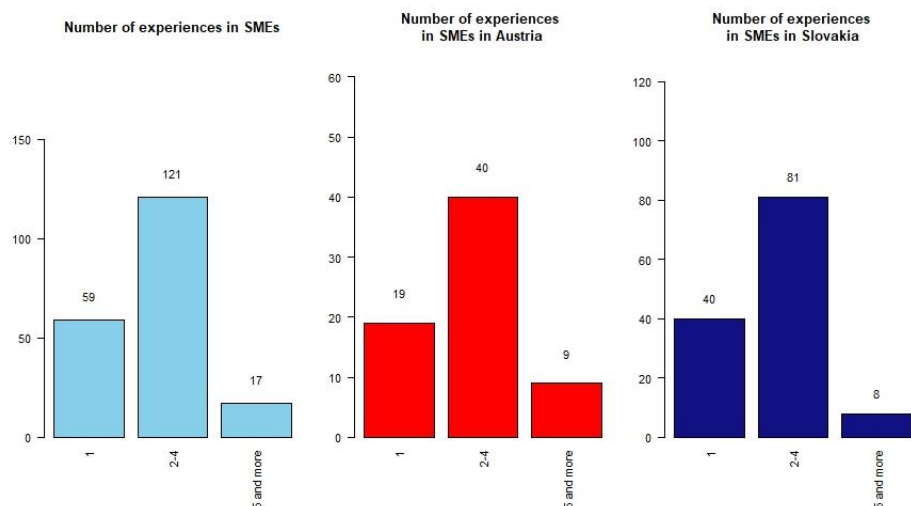
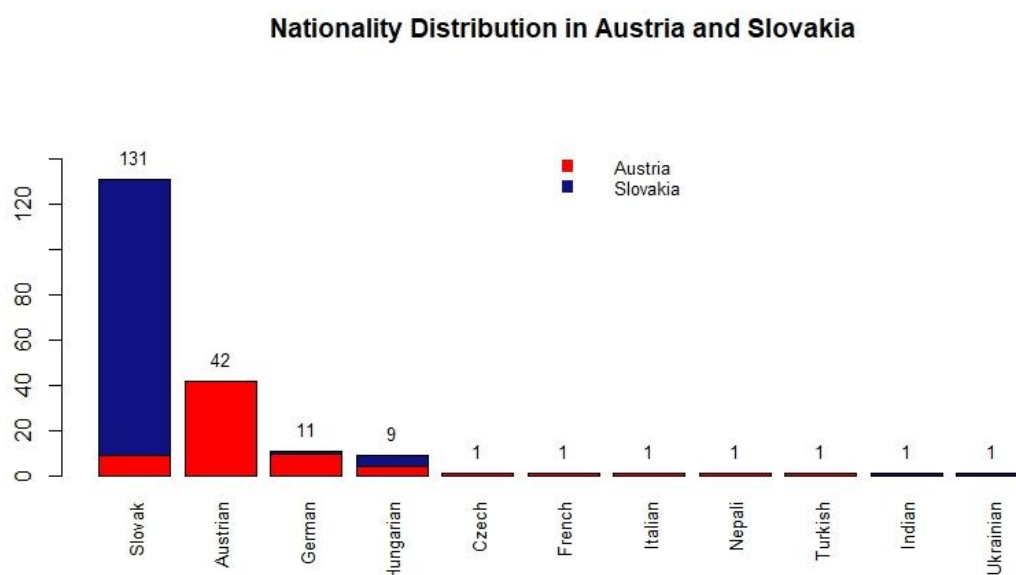


Figure 8 illustrates the number of work experiences across SMEs, including previous ones and the recent one. It is crucial to evaluate if the survey participants have experiences that they can compare to, as this influences their perception of the subject matter. The majority of the participants have an actual experience of 2, 3, or 4 SMEs, representing 60 % of the overall sample. As well as in the overall sample, this column represents the highest proportion in both

target countries. Around 30 % of respondents have only one SME experience, which they describe in the survey. Five or more experiences have only few people from the survey. In all three samples the ratio between the categories is similar.

Figure 9 Distribution of nationalities in Austria and Slovakia



Even though the research studies two target countries, it encompasses 11 nationalities within the overall sample. There is a more diverse sample in Austria than in Slovakia. All 42 Austrians work in Austria. In Austria also work 10 Germans, 9 Slovaks, 4 Hungarians, one Czech, one French, one Italian, one Nepali, and one Turkish respondent. In the Slovak sample, 122 survey participants are Slovak, and just 5 are Hungarian, who are part of the minority in Slovakia. In the Slovak sample, there is a very low level of diversity represented by one German, one Indian, and one Ukrainian person.

Table 4 Distribution of fluency in various languages: Austria, Slovakia and Overall

	Austrian sample	Slovakian sample	Overall sample
German	70	54	124
Slovak	12	123	135
English	62	110	172
French	10	8	18
Russian	0	13	13
Spanish	10	11	21

Italian	12	4	16
Hungarian	2	13	15
Czech	2	5	7
Croatian	2	2	4
Punjabi	1	0	1
Romanian	1	0	1
Swedish	0	1	1
Norwegian	0	1	1
Portuguese	0	1	1
Turkish	1	0	1
Bulgarian	0	1	1
Slovene	1	0	1
Ukrainian	0	1	1
Polish	0	1	1

Table 4 illustrates the number of individuals who have reached a fluent level of at least B1/B2 in the following languages. The majority of respondents are fluent in English. A total of 135 respondents indicated proficiency in Slovak, while 124 are fluent in German. The remaining languages are represented by a significantly smaller number of respondents. From the world languages, most participants speak Spanish, a bit less French, Italian, and Russian. From other languages, the highest number is achieved by the Hungarian language, with 15 respondents. In the Austrian sample, all respondents speak German. 62 respondents are fluent in English. In the Slovak sample, 123 respondents speak Slovak, which means that 7 people who work in Slovakia don't speak the national language. 110 survey participants speak English and 54 are fluent in German. The sample demonstrates that the majority of individuals speak 2 or more languages including the local language. A mere 19 people speak just their mother tongue. 70 respondents speak one extra language. A total of 81 individuals speak mother tongue and two other languages. 19 survey participants speak one plus three languages fluently. 7 respondents speak one plus four and 4 respondents speak one plus five languages fluently.

4.2 Statistical inference

Inferential statistics is used to evaluate and test the hypotheses stated above. The data obtained from the survey is analysed in detail. In many cases, the data has to be adjusted for better analysis. If necessary for a more complex understanding, descriptive statistics are used at the beginning of the subchapters.

4.2.1 Monolingual language policy vs. multilingual language policy affecting communication efficiency with stakeholders (H1)

Firstly, the perception of language policies and their official use are manifested with the help of some graphs. Secondly, the dependent variable, namely communication efficiency with stakeholders is prepared for analysis. In order to test the first hypothesis, the collected communication data are transferred from verbal expressions to a numerical Likert scale, ranging from 1 to 6. Three scales are used to assess overall communication: clarity of communication, frequency of misunderstanding, and overall quality of communication. These have been derived based on the former research which suggests that the key factors of communication are clarity, misunderstandings, and quality represented by purpose and responsiveness (Maamaa, 2023, pp. 379-383). These scales measure communication with three types of stakeholders: colleagues, customers, and other business partners. The misunderstandings scale originally has reverse items. The reverse values are calculated as 7 – obtained value.

Use of language policies in SMEs

Figure 10 Employee awareness of language policy in their SMEs: Overall, Austria and Slovakia



Languages are often employed as an automatic mechanism which is why the employee awareness of the use of language regulation in companies is important to start with. The data gathered during the research indicates that the majority of employees are either unaware of the

existence of a language policy in their company or know there is no policy at all. This means that languages are employed in an unregulated and automatic manner. A mere 11 % of all respondents indicated that they work in an SME where a formal written document exists that discusses the language policy. In the Austrian sample, there are 12 individuals out of 70 who work for a company having an official language policy. In Slovakia, this proportion is considerably lower, represented by 10 respondents out of 130. One fifth of the overall sample states that they have an informal language policy, defined as internal agreement, with no binding document. In both samples this category is represented by 20 survey participants. However, in the Austrian sample, this is a much higher proportion with 29 %, in comparison to the Slovak sample with 15 %. This means also that in Slovakian sample there is a significantly lower awareness and also stronger belief that there is no policy.

Figure 11 Language policy represented by languages used in official communication in SMEs: Overall, Austria and Slovakia

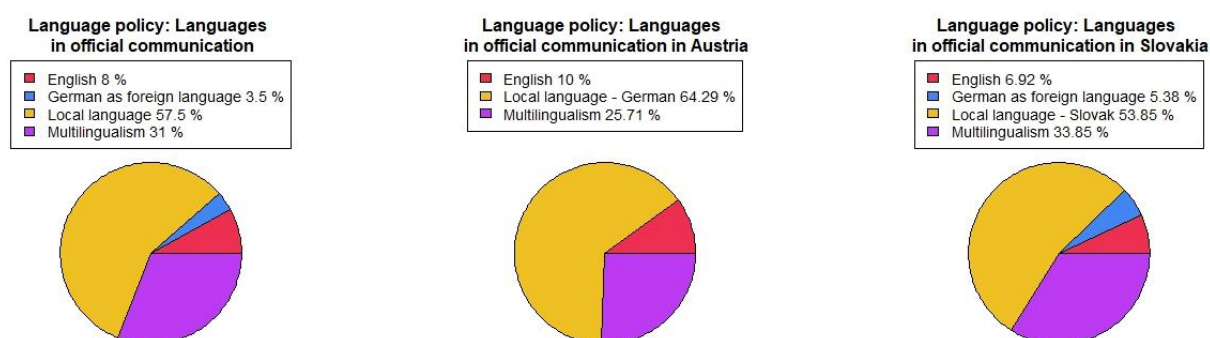


Figure 11 provides a visual representation of the explicit and inexplicit use of language policy within the companies. In order to facilitate comprehension for the respondents, this question pertains to their official language in the context of the SME. Notwithstanding the fact that the majority of respondents are either unaware of the existence of a language policy or believe that no such policy exists, for the purposes of this analysis, the use of languages in official communication is taken to be indicative of the language policy. 58 % of all survey participants work for a company, where they use just the local language. In the Austrian sample almost 65 % and in the Slovak sample, slightly less than 54 % utilise the local language as a tool for official formal communication with all types of stakeholders. Even though, some companies with explicit or implicit local language policy, use also other languages as hiring criterion or in communication with stakeholders as well.

In 8 % of companies, an English-only approach is employed, with 10 % in Austria and 7 % in Slovakia. Conversely to one language policies, almost one third of all companies use a

multilingual approach. This indicates that they use various languages depending on the situation. In Austria, 26 % of employees work for an SME with a multilingual policy, and in Slovakia 34%. Moreover, some employees in Slovakia have indicated that their company employs a German-only approach. This could be attributed to the fact that these companies are branches of German companies in Slovakia, as in Slovakia Germany is the biggest investor and over 600 German companies have their branches there (Forbes, 2019) and the second biggest investor is Austria (Haller, et al., 2023, p. 397ff.).

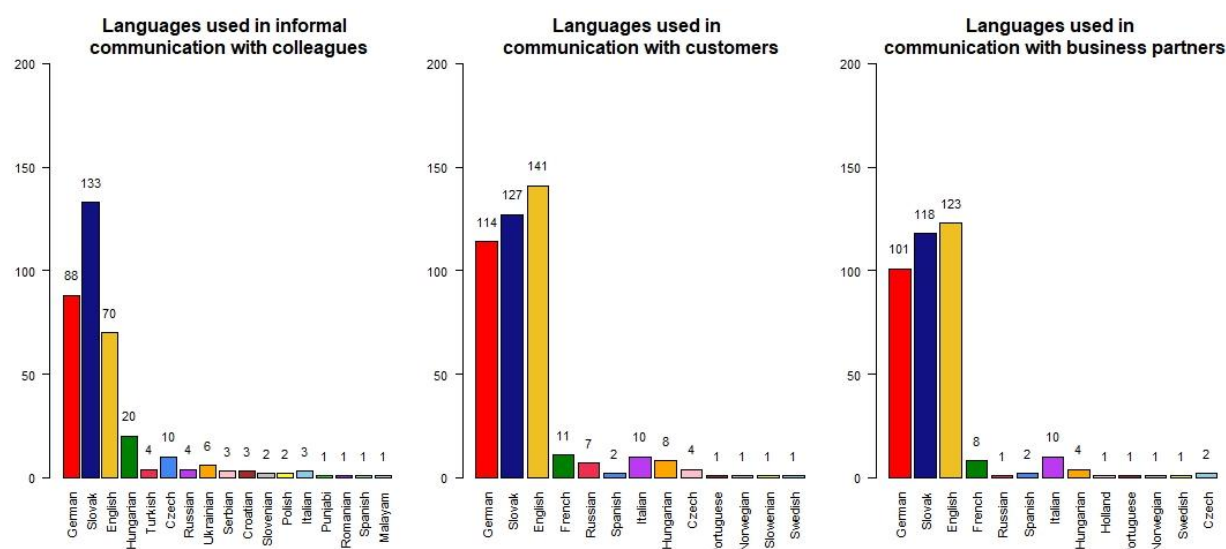
Table 5 Employee perception of language policy

	Local language	English	German	Multilingual	TOTAL
Formal policy	12	4	2	4	22
Informal policy	20	6	0	14	40
No awareness	47	5	5	21	78
No policy	36	1	0	23	60
TOTAL	115	16	7	62	<u>200</u>

To test the first hypothesis, the language policy approaches are categorised into 2 distinct groups. The first group - Group 0: incorporates all employees working for SMEs with one / single language policy (encompassing local language, English-only, and German-only approaches). The second group – Group 1: summarises all responses from employees working for companies that utilise more languages depending on the situation and circumstances and implement a multilingual approach.

Languages in stakeholder communication

Figure 12 Languages used in communication with stakeholders



As Figure 12 illustrates, the distribution of languages depends on the stakeholder group. In communication with colleagues, the most important languages are the national languages. When communicating with colleagues the languages of minority groups also play a role, with Hungarian being the most prevalent. In the case of external stakeholders, English is the most important utilised language, with 141 respondents employing it in their communication with customers and 123 in communication with other business partners. In this context, other world languages step in too, however, they are only used by less than 5 % of the survey participants.

Reliability analysis of the communication efficiency items

The basis of the communication scales are the three most crucial factors of communication – clarity, misunderstandings, and quality (purpose) (Maamaa, 2023, pp. 379-383). Before proceeding with further analysis, a reliability analysis is undertaken with the aim of ensuring that the items included in each scale are consistent and measure the same underlying construct, but do not measure the same factor.

Table 6 Reliability analysis of the communication scales

Cronbach Alpha	Overall	Austria	Slovakia
Total	0.89	0.88	0.89
Clarity	0.83	0.78	0.85
Misunderstandings	0.83	0.83	0.82
Quality	0.86	0.86	0.85

To assess whether items are internally consistent the Cronbach Alpha coefficient is calculated. As Table 6 illustrates all items within their category, as well as across the total evaluation, are reliable because all the values are bigger than 0.7. There is no scale which would be approaching 1, what indicates that the items are not repetitive and measure unique information of communication efficiency. The detailed distribution of each communication scale is shown in the Appendix – Reliability analysis of communication scales.

The clarity of communication, which was rated on a scale from very unclear to very clear, indicates an internal consistency of the items demonstrated by high Cronbach Alpha values with overall sample values of 0.83. The second communication scale is a measure of the frequency of occurrence of misunderstandings, with responses ranging from never to always. As already stated, this is a reversed scale. The reliability analysis manifests high consistency, as indicated by α of 0.83 for the overall sample. The final communication scale measures the overall quality of communication, representing if the purpose is fulfilled, with ratings ranging from very poor to excellent. In this instance, the overall sample have a Cronbach Alpha of 0.86.

The average values and the creation of overall communication score

After a comprehensive analysis of all 3 communication scales and evaluation of their consistency, an average value is determined for each respondent, thereby calculating a standardised measure of communication. The average values are calculated by summing up all individual values and dividing the total by 9, which presents the combination of three communication categories - clarity, misunderstandings, and quality - across three stakeholder types: colleagues, customers, and other business partners. Afterwards, these average values are categorised into Group 0 (one language policy) and Group 1 (multilingual policy), in order to facilitate an examination of the differences through the samples.

Figure 13 Average scores of communication efficiency with stakeholders: overall, one language policy (Group 0) and multilingual policy (Group 1)

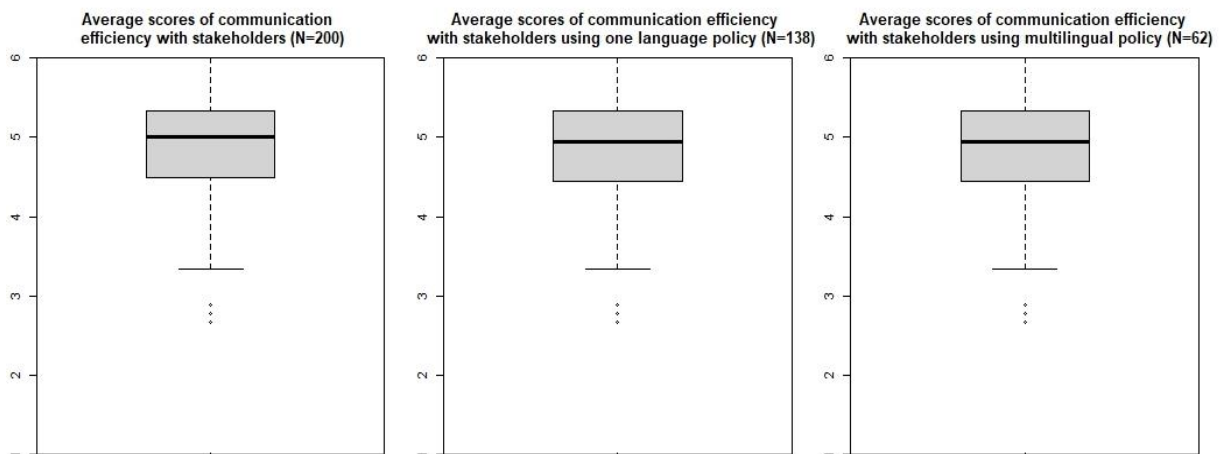
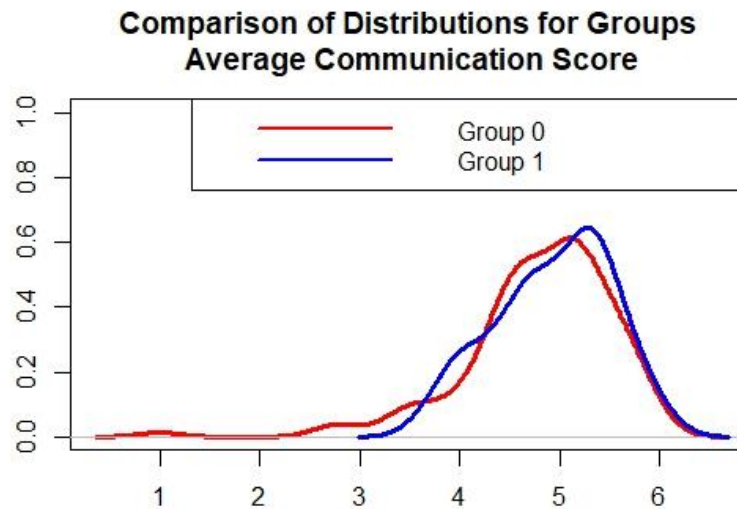


Figure 13 illustrates that visually there seem to be no significant differences between the two groups. On the left side, there is a boxplot incorporating all average scores for communication with stakeholders, with a mean of 4.85. The second boxplot represents Group 0, which presents SMEs implementing a single language policy. The average communication efficiency value of this group is 4.81 (N=138, SD=0.74). The right-hand boxplot stands for Group 1 with a multilingual language policy and a mean of 4.94 (N=62, SD=0.58).

Statistical testing of H1

To select an appropriate test for hypothesis testing, normality, and the variance equality of the two groups have to be tested. Firstly, to ascertain whether the sample is normally distributed, the Shapiro-Wilk test is employed for each group. If the p-value is higher than 0.05 than the data is normally distributed.

Figure 14 Normal distribution for Groups – one language policy (Group 0) and multilingual policy (Group1), average communication scores



In this case, the first group with one language policy (Group 0) is not normally distributed, because its p-value is $7.137e^{-8}$. The second group with multilingual policy (Group 1) is normally distributed with a p-value of 0.0711. Due to the non-normal distribution of Group 0, the assumption of normality is not fulfilled.

The second assumption is that of homogeneity of variances, which is evaluated with the assistance of Levene's test. This test aims to evaluate if the variances of the two groups are equal. The results indicate that the degree of freedom (Df) for the group factor is 1 and for the error, the term is 198 (total sample of 200 minus number of groups, which is 2). The F-value is 0.7152, and the p-value is 0.3988. As the p-value is greater than 0.05, the results of Levene's test indicate that there is no significant difference between the variances of the groups, and the assumption of homogeneity of variances is therefore met.

To sum up, although the homogeneity of variances is satisfied, the data set comprising Group 0 does not fulfil the criteria for normal distribution. Therefore, the Mann-Whitney U test is used instead of the T-test, which assumes normal distribution and homogeneity of variances. The Mann-Whitney U test, also known as the Wilcoxon rank-sum test, is a nonparametric test that does not require the data to be normally distributed or the sample sizes to be equal. In this case, although the variances are equal, the Mann-Whitney U test does not require this criterion to be fulfilled. The p-value of the Wilcoxon rank-sum test is 0.3428 ($W=3919$, $p\text{-value}=0.3428$), which is greater than the significance level of 0.05. This indicates that there is not enough evidence to conclude that the null hypothesis is not true and is being accepted. The original H1

– the alternative hypothesis is therefore rejected. This means that there is no evidence to suggest that a multilingual language policy leads to more effective communication with stakeholders in comparison to a single language policy.

Regression analysis

These findings are also supported by the regression model, which performs a regression analysis to evaluate the relationship between the independent variable (language policy) and the dependent variable (communication score), which is marginally significant (p-value=0.06519). In order to look if some control variables have an effect on the dependent variable a linear regression analysis is conducted.

Table 7 Factors influencing communication with stakeholders

Regression results H1.1					
	Dependent variable:				
	Average Communication				
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Multilingual LP	0.131 (0.106)	0.139 (0.107)	0.117 (0.106)	0.074 (0.107)	0.066 (0.110)
Micro Organisation		0.138 (0.130)	0.113 (0.129)	0.029 (0.134)	0.036 (0.136)
Small Organisation		0.136 (0.112)	0.106 (0.112)	0.075 (0.112)	0.076 (0.113)
Country: Slovakia			0.239** (0.103)	0.214** (0.105)	0.215** (0.106)
No language policy				0.181 (0.123)	0.182 (0.124)
Formal language policy				-0.237 (0.167)	-0.245 (0.169)
Informal language policy				0.102 (0.136)	0.094 (0.139)
International presence					0.033 (0.107)
Constant	4.808*** (0.059)	4.723*** (0.086)	4.592*** (0.103)	4.603*** (0.119)	4.585*** (0.113)
Observation	200	200	200	200	200
R2	0.008	0.017	0.043	0.073	0.073
Adjusted R2	0.003	0.002	0.023	0.039	0.034
Residual Std. Error	0.695 (df = 198)	0.695 (df = 196)	0.688 (df = 195)	0.682 (df = 192)	0.684 (df = 191)

F Statistic	1.512 (df = 1; 198)	1.115 (df = 3; 196)	2.195* (df = 4; 195)	2.145* (df = 7; 192)	1.880* (df = 8; 191)
Note:	*p<0.1	**p<0.05	***p<0.01		

The results indicate that Slovakia as a country is significant and a positive trend is observable (coefficient=0.215, p-value=0.0429). Other demographical variables have no significant influence, but the constants are highly significant. The overall model is marginally statistically significant, even though, the model explains only a small proportion of the variance (multiple R-squared=0.073, adjusted R-squared=0.034, F-Statistic=1.880). Personal demographic data are not included in this model, as they do not directly impact company communication. However, respondents' subjective evaluations of communication quality may still be influenced by their personal characteristics.

Table 8 Languages influencing communication with stakeholder

Regression Results H1.2		
	Dependent variable:	
	Communication with stakeholders	
Country Slovakia	-0.585	(0.387)
Micro Organisation	0.185	(0.164)
Small Organisation	0.012	(0.134)
No language policy	0.141	(0.137)
Formal language policy	-0.096	(0.191)
Informal language policy	0.156	(0.158)
Single language policy - German	-0.105	(0.424)
Local language policy	-0.151	(0.237)
Multilingual language policy	0.004	(0.244)
International presence	0.059	(0.135)
Multilingual hiring criterion	0.070	(0.123)
Communication with Colleagues (SK)	0.364	(0.291)
Communication with Customers (SK)	-0.580**	(0.281)
Communication with Business Partners (SK)	0.708**	(0.291)
Employee fluency (SK)	0.439**	(0.206)
Communication with Business Partners (Other)	0.219	(1.005)
Communication with Colleagues (Other)	0.007	(0.253)
Communication with Customers (Other)	0.796	(0.917)
Employee fluency (Other)	-0.419	(0.268)
Communication with Customers (FRA)	0.449	(0.359)
Communication with Business Partners (FRA)	-0.334	(0.427)
Employee fluency (FRA)	-0.491**	(0.219)
Communication with Colleagues (ITA)	0.546	(0.584)
Communication with Customers (ITA)	-0.131	(0.376)
Communication with Business Partners (ITA)	-0.072	(0.401)
Employee fluency (ITA)	-0.101	(0.227)

Communication with Colleagues (HU)	0.229	(0.231)
Communication with Customers (HU)	-0.008	(0.490)
Communication with Business Partners (HU)	-0.416	(0.583)
Employee fluency (HU)	-0.168	(0.321)
Communication with Colleagues (CZ)	0.025	(0.310)
Communication with Customers (CZ)	0.072	(0.533)
Communication with Business Partners (CZ)	-0.646	(0.637)
Employee fluency (CZ)	-0.778*	(0.435)
Communication with Colleagues (UKR)	-0.957	(0.639)
Employee fluency (UKR)	1.124	(1.163)
Communication with Colleagues (RUS)	0.645	(0.973)
Communication with Customers (RUS)	-0.022	(0.410)
Communication with Business Partners (RUS)	-0.094	(0.880)
Employee fluency (RUS)	0.092	(0.260)
Communication with Colleagues (ESP)	-3.33	(2.203)
Communication with Customers (ESP)	1.629**	(0.696)
Communication with Business Partners (ESP)	0.495	(0.953)
Employee fluency (ESP)	0.161	(0.177)
Communication with Colleagues (EN)	-0.204	(0.141)
Communication with Customers (EN)	0.123	(0.159)
Communication with Business Partners (EN)	-0.174	(0.146)
Employee fluency (EN)	0.229	(0.168)
Communication with Colleagues (DE)	-0.544**	(0.244)
Communication with Customers (DE)	8.303e-05	(0.172)
Communication with Business Partners (DE)	0.500**	(0.202)
Employee fluency (DE)	0.1396	(0.149)
Constant	4.392***	(0.378)
Observations	200	
R2	0.33	
Adjusted R2	0.093	
Residual td. Error	0.663 (df =147)	
F Statistic	1.392* (df=52; 147)	

Note: *p<0.1 **p<0.05 ***p<0.01

Secondly, the influence of employee language skills and languages used in communication with colleagues, customers and business partners is evaluated. The regression suggests that some of the languages influence the communication score. Some languages which occurred only a few times are grouped under the category “Other”. Significant predictors are Slovak in communication with customers (coefficient=-0.5802, p-value=0.0409) and business partners (coefficient=0.7083, p-value=0.0160), Spanish in communication with customers (coefficient=1.6290, p-value=0.0206) and German in communication with colleagues (coefficient=-0.5438, p-value=0.0274) and with business partners (coefficient=0.5000, p-value=0.0147). Other significant predictors are fluency in Slovak (coefficient=0.4389, p-

value=0.0347) and French (coefficient=-0.4914, p-value=0.0262). Even though, some languages are significant, others are not and the changes in communication score in many cases are random and not explainable by the control variables.

As the previous results indicated no significant difference, in the following sections the categories – clarity, misunderstandings and quality, are analysed separately, while comparing single and multilingual language policy.

Communication clarity with stakeholders and language policies

Communication clarity (N=200, mean=5.07, SD=0.8162) represents one of the three categories of communication with stakeholders. The Shapiro-Wilk normality test indicates that in case of the clarity scale, neither the single language policy (N=138, mean=5.0072, SD=0.9046, p-value= $6.986e^{-12}$), nor multiple language policy (N=62, mean=5.2097, SD=0.5540, p-value=0.0004) are normally distributed. The Levene's test suggests that the variances between the groups do not differ (F-value=3.0516, p-value=0.08221). As the normality criteria is not fulfilled the Wilcoxon rank sum test is used. The results indicate with a p-value of 0.2636 that there is no significant difference between the groups with monolingual and multilingual policies (W=3864, p-value=0.2636).

Communication misunderstandings with stakeholders and language policies

Misunderstandings negatively influence communication (N=200, mean=4.8667, SD=0.8069). The normality test indicates that in case of the misunderstandings scale, neither the single language policy (N=138, mean=4.8430, SD=0.8640, p-value= $1.758e^{-9}$), nor multiple language policy (N=62, mean=4.9193, SD=0.6658, p-value=0.0070) are normally distributed. The Levene's test shows that the homogeneity of variances is fulfilled (F=0.904, p-value=0.3429). The results of the Mann-Whitney U test indicate that there is no significant difference between Group 0 and Group 1 (W=4321, p-value=0.9085).

Communication quality with stakeholders and language policies

The last communication scale represents the quality of communication with stakeholders (N=200, mean=4.61, SD=0.8798). The Shapiro-Wilk test indicates that neither the single language policy (N=138, mean=4.5749, SD=0.8986), nor multiple language policy (N=62, mean=4.6882, SD=0.8382) are normally distributed. The results of the Levene's test indicate that the variances are equal (F-value=0.0957, p-value=0.7574). The results of the Wilcoxon-

rank test show that there is no significant difference between the companies using monolingual or multilingual policy ($W=3934.5$, $p\text{-value}=0.3575$).

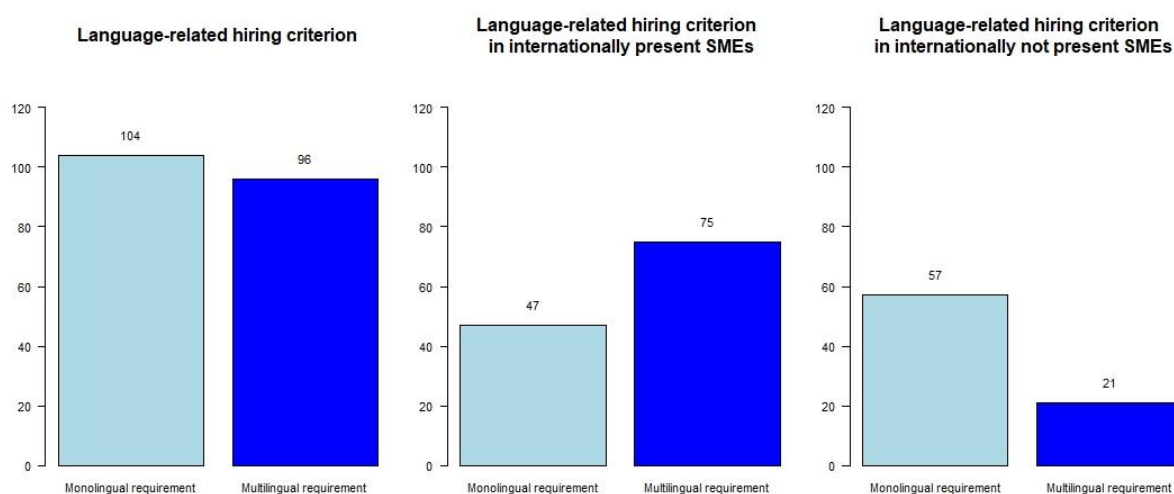
To sum up, none of the 3 categories separately as well as all three categories together do not observe significant differences between the single and multiple language policy groups.

4.2.2 The impact of an SME's international presence on language-related hiring criteria (H2)

The hypothesis states that the international presence of a company can have an influence on the language policy and the language-related hiring criterion. To test this hypothesis the data is divided into two groups: Group A comprises cases where no language-related hiring criterion or one language is required as a hiring criterion; Group B comprises cases where more languages are required as a hiring criterion.

International presence and language-related hiring

Figure 15 Language-related hiring criterion: overall, internationally present SMEs (Group A) and internationally not present SMEs (Group B)



As illustrated in Figure 15, from all 200 responses, 52 % of respondents work for an SME with single language-related hiring criterion and 48 % are employed in a company with multilingual hiring criterion. 61 % of respondents work for a company that has an international presence. The remaining 39 % of respondents, are employed by an SME with no international presence. The second bar chart gives an overview of the internationally present companies. Only 38 % of these companies have a single language (mostly local language or company language) as a hiring criterion. The remaining 62 % have a multilingual hiring criterion. The final bar chart demonstrates companies that are not internationally present. 73 % of respondents work for a

company that requires skills one language as a hiring criterion. The remaining 27 % of respondents, have a multilingual hiring criterion, even though, they are not internationally active.

Figure 16 Languages required in the hiring process

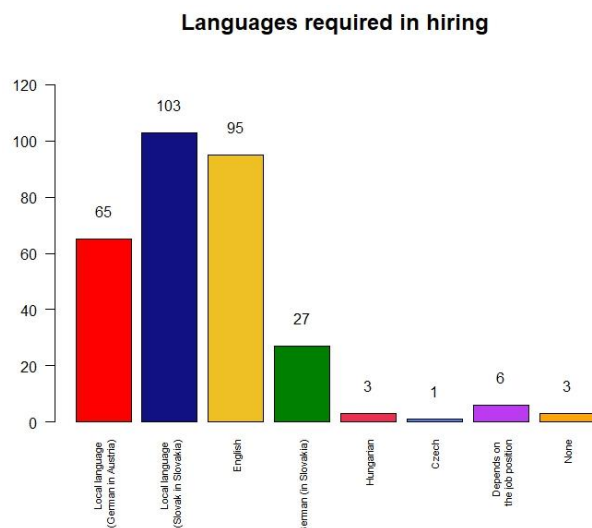


Figure 16 illustrates the languages that create a hiring criterion for any job in the SMEs of the respondents. The responses show which languages are required for any job in the company. A total of 65 out of 70 survey respondents in the Austrian sample claim that proficiency in German is a prerequisite for employment. On the other hand, in the Slovak sample, 103 of the 130 survey participants stated that Slovak is a hiring criterion. In almost half of the overall sample, proficiency in English is a prerequisite. Furthermore, 27 respondents from the Slovak sample, work for a company that requires fluency in German. 6 respondents indicated that the hiring criterion vary across job positions, meaning that in some entry-level positions, local language is sufficient, however, in higher-level positions, skills in multiple languages are required. Three companies have Hungarian as a hiring criterion. The identical number of respondents claim that they do not have any language-related hiring criteria. Additionally, one survey participant also works for a company that requires language skills in Czech language.

Statistical testing H2

Given that the dependent variable is categorised into two groups (Group A and Group B) and the independent variable is categorised into two groups (international presence: Yes and No), the chi-square test (a test of independence) is used to test the hypothesis. The contingency table contains the same numerical data as illustrated in Figure 15. The results of the chi-square test indicate that there is a statistically significant relationship between international presence and language-related hiring criteria $\chi^2 = (1, N = 200) = 21.395$, $p\text{-value} = 3.738e^{-6}$, as the $p\text{-value}$

is smaller than the significance level of 0.05. In order to ascertain how strongly these two categorical fields are associated, Cramer's V is calculated to measure the effect size. In this case, Cramer's V is 0.337, which signals a moderate association between the results. These results lead to the rejection of the null hypothesis, and the alternative hypothesis is accepted. This means that the results indicate that there is a connection between multilingual hiring requirements and the international market presence of SMEs. For companies operating internationally language proficiency is more important than for companies that operate only on the national level.

Regression analysis

Table 9 Factors influencing language-related hiring criterion

Regression results H2					
Dependent variable:					
Language-related hiring criterion					
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
International presence	1.466*** (0.316)	1.454*** (0.316)	1.352*** (0.322)	1.394*** (0.334)	1.363*** (0.354)
Country: Slovakia		-0.225 (0.315)	-0.209 (0.320)	-0.263 (0.332)	-0.246 (0.342)
Micro Organisation			-0.767* (0.416)	-0.998** (0.443)	-0.876 (0.453)
Small Organisation			-0.154 (0.342)	-0.229 (0.350)	-0.082 (0.375)
No language policy				0.586 (0.398)	0.329 (0.414)
Formal language policy				-0.290 (0.522)	-0.072 (0.551)
Informal language policy				0.300 (0.435)	0.184 (0.456)
Single language policy - German					-1.328 (1.255)
Local language policy					0.509 (0.587)
Multilingual language policy					1.366** (0.616)
Constant	-0.999*** (0.255)	-0.846** (0.332)	-0.567 (0.379)	-0.682 (0.418)	-1.351* (0.698)
Observations	200	200	200	200	200
Log Likelihood	-126.756	-126.503	-124.709	-123.001	-116.791
Akaike Inf. Crit.	257.513	259.005	259.417	262.003	255.582
Note:	*p<0.1	**p<0.05	***p<0.01		

In order to examine the relationship between the independent and dependent variable and clarify the outcome of the chi-square test a logistic regression is conducted. The results validate the strong relationship between international presence and language-related hiring criterion, as internationally active companies are significantly more likely to require multiple language as hiring criterion ($OR=e^{1.36317}=3.91$, $p\text{-value}=0.00012$). The regression also confirms the findings of the statistical test, as the international presence significantly influences the languages required in hiring (coefficient=1.3632, $p\text{-value}=0.00012$). Afterwards, the control variables are also included in the regression model. The hiring criterion is also influenced by the multilingual language policy of company, which means that different languages are used in various situations (coefficient=1.3660, $p\text{-value}=0.0265$). Moreover, micro-sized enterprises have a marginally significant negative influence (coefficient=-0.8759, $p\text{-value}=0.0533$). Secondly, a similar regression is done as in case H1 – Table 8. As only two factors are significant, a new regression table is not created. The first statistically significant factor is the employee fluency in English (coefficient=0.247, $p\text{-value}=0.0334$), which has a positive effect. The same effect on dependent variable is observable when looking at the English as language used in communication with business partners (coefficient=0.320, $p\text{-value}=0.00235$). Other languages used in stakeholder communication and employee fluency have no significance.

4.2.3 The relationship between education and language fluency (H3)

This hypothesis aims to examine the relationship between an individual's education level and individual's number of languages someone is fluent in. Given that educational institutions are widely regarded as the primary source of language learning (van der Worp, 2017, p. 54), this hypothesis seeks to evaluate if this is just a theoretical proposition or is also valid in practice. Moreover, it looks at fulfilment of the EU “mother tongue plus two” philosophy.

Figure 17 Fluent languages by education level

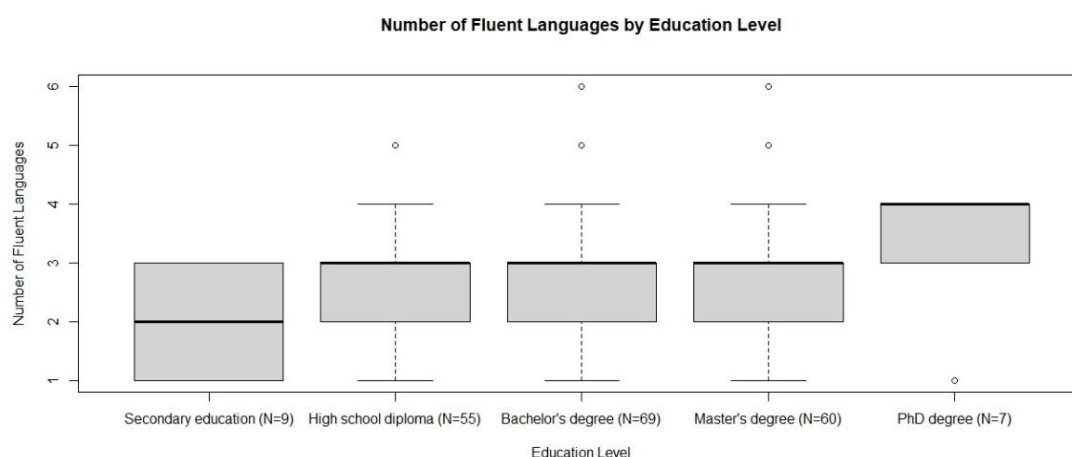


Figure 17 illustrates the distribution of the number of fluent languages based on the level of education attained. Graphically, the distribution shows that there does not seem to be a big difference between the groups – high school diploma, Bachelor’s degree, Master’s degree, but there is a difference between the two extreme groups – secondary education and PhD degree. On average the respondents speak 2.685 languages.

Statistical testing H3

To test the hypothesis, firstly, the normality criterion must be checked. The results of the Shapiro-Wilk normality test indicate that the normality criterion is not fulfilled as the p-value is lower than the significance level ($W=0.93123$, $p\text{-value}=4.234e^{-8}$). As in this case, the data have multiple categories, a chi-square test is used. In order to proceed with this test, a contingency table is created.

Table 10 Contingency table for Chi-Square test: Education and number of fluent languages

	1	2	3	4	5	6	Total
Secondary education	4	1	4	0	0	0	9
High school diploma (Matura or Abitur)	7	19	25	2	2	0	55
Bachelor’s degree	1	30	27	6	2	3	69
Master’s degree	6	20	23	7	3	1	60
PhD degree	1	0	2	4	0	0	7
Total	19	70	81	19	7	4	200

The results of the chi-square test show that there is a significant relationship between the independent variable and the dependent variable ($\chi^2=47.454$, $df=20$, $p\text{-value}=0.0005$). To check the results the Fisher’s Exact test with 10 000 Monte Carlo simulations is also conducted which indicates that there is a statistically significant association between employee education level and number of fluent languages ($p\text{-value}=0.0036$). Cramer’s V with a value of 0.244 indicates a small or moderate effect between education and employee language fluency (contingency coefficient=0.438, likelihood ratio: $\chi^2=41.273$, $p\text{-value}=0.0034$, Pearson: $\chi^2=47.454$, $p\text{-value}=0.0005$).

Regression analysis

The results of the linear regression analysis partially support the findings of the chi-square test. The education has an influence on number of fluent languages in some of the models. Lower education levels tend to have a negative effect, whereas higher education levels, have a near zero or positive effect. In this case, fluent languages are treated as metric variable.

Table 11 Factors influencing employee language fluency

Regression Results H3				
	Dependent variable			
	Employee language fluency			
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Education High school diploma	-0.303* (0.183)	-0.267 (0.195)	-0.252 (0.198)	-0.157 (0.197)
Education Master's degree	-0.078 (0.179)	0.005 (0.200)	-0.065 (0.213)	-0.067 (0.214)
Education PhD degree	0.474 (0.401)	0.495 (0.423)	0.462 (0.424)	0.650 (0.422)
Education Secondary	-0.812** (0.358)	-0.621 (0.384)	-0.620 (0.388)	-0.730* (0.387)
Gender (Male)		0.179 (0.169)	0.225 (0.168)	0.220 (0.167)
Managerial position		-0.036 (0.257)	-0.017 (0.255)	-0.065 (0.264)
Owner		-0.279 (0.364)	-0.188 (0.371)	-0.230 (0.369)
Professional position		-0.154 (0.176)	-0.131 (0.175)	-0.118 (0.176)
Country Slovakia			-0.038 (0.166)	-0.082 (0.170)
Micro Organisation			-0.079 (0.202)	0.145 (0.214)
Small Organisation			0.404** (0.171)	0.421** (0.175)
No language policy				-0.157 (0.199)
Formal language policy				-0.288 (0.256)
Informal language policy				0.071 (0.208)
Single language policy - German				-0.078 (0.492)
Local language policy				-0.285 (0.280)
Multilingual language policy				-0.004 (0.294)
Number of implemented LMS				0.047** (0.021)
Constant	2.812*** (0.122)	2.808*** (0.142)	2.694*** (0.177)	2.531*** (0.376)
Observations	200	198	198	198
R2	0.046	0.061	0.100	0.164

Adjusted R2	0.027	0.011	0.036	0.070
	1.011	1.019	1.006	0.989
Residual Std. Error	(df = 195)	(df = 187)	(df = 84)	(df = 177)
	2.370* (df = 4;	1.222 (df = 10;	1.574* (df = 13;	1.739** (df = 20;
F Statistic	195)	187)	184)	177)

Note: *p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

Other control variables significantly influencing the dependent variables are type of organisation and number of implemented LMS (coefficient=0.047, p-value=0.0296). The small companies have a positive effect (coefficient=0.4209, p-value=0.0171). The results of the regression are significant (multiple R-squared=0.164, adjusted R-squared=0.070, F-Statistic=1.739, p-value=0.0311).

4.2.4 Frequency of implementation of Language Management Strategies in Austrian and Slovakian SMEs (H4)

The questionnaire permitted the survey respondents to determine whether each listed LMS is a common practice, an exceptional practice, non-existent within their company, or not relevant. In accordance with the recommendations set by PIMLICO (European Commission, 2011), a total of 15 LMS are included in the list.

In Appendix there is a detailed overview and summary of each LMS, including the number of responses and the percentage distribution of each category. The green colour marks whether Austria or Slovakia has a higher score in the categories of common and exceptional practice.

The most common LMS is the recruitment of native speakers, followed by the recruitment of employees with the knowledge of several languages and adaptation of websites to other languages. However, only a limited number of SMEs implement LMS as cultural training, language training (paid by employees), or internships abroad.

In order to facilitate the evaluation of the results, the responses are converted into numerical values: common practice = 2, exceptional practice = 1, non-existent and not relevant = 0. While one could argue that non-existent and not relevant are distinct, both are scored as 0 in this context. This is because neither is implemented within the company, and the measurement reflects employees' subjective perceptions, which may be influenced by limited knowledge. This coding system enables the creation of an average score for each Language Management Strategy, separately for the overall sample, the Austrian sample, and the Slovak sample. These

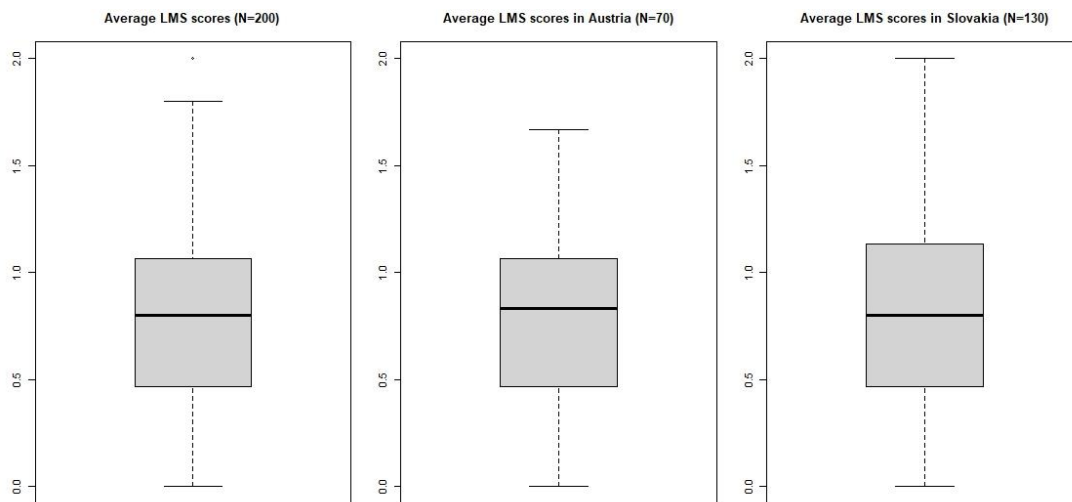
numbers are then multiplied by the proportions from already mentioned table, resulting in a score ranging from 0 to 2. This calculation allows the data to be prepared for the frequency of use of LMS. In further parts, these numbers are referred to as LMS scores.

Table 12 LMS score: ranking, Austrian, Slovak, and overall score

LMS tool	LMS number	Overall Rank	AT score	SK score	Overall score
Adaptation of packaging	LMS1	9	0.7143	0.5	0.575
Cultural trainings	LMS2	15	0.4	0.3769	0.385
Encouragement of mobility	LMS3	10	0.5286	0.5461	0.54
Internship abroad / Buddy programmes	LMS4	13	0.4714	0.4769	0.475
Language certification	LMS5	12	0.4429	0.5	0.48
Language trainings (paid by employees)	LMS6	14	0.3714	0.4615	0.43
Language trainings (paid by the company)	LMS7	11	0.3857	0.6077	0.53
Multilingual website	LMS8	3	1.3286	1.2538	1.28
Language skills update to employer	LMS9	8	0.6	0.6231	0.615
Recruitment – knowledge of several languages	LMS10	2	1.5571	1.3231	1.405
Recruitment – cultural knowledge	LMS11	6	1.0714	0.7	0.83
Recruitment – native speakers	LMS12	1	1.4286	1.5538	1.51
Translation of commercial materials	LMS13	5	1.0857	1.1846	1.15
Use of professional translators and interpreters	LMS14	7	0.5429	0.7462	0.675
Use of translation tools	LMS15	4	1.1714	1.2692	1.235

The highest possible value for the LMS score is 2, indicating that 100 % of respondents would assert that the specified strategy is employed as a common practice. In this case, these values are lower. The majority of the values are even lower than 1, meaning that in average they are not so frequently used or perceived as not relevant by the respondents.

Figure 18 Distribution of average LMS scores: Overall, in Austria and in Slovakia

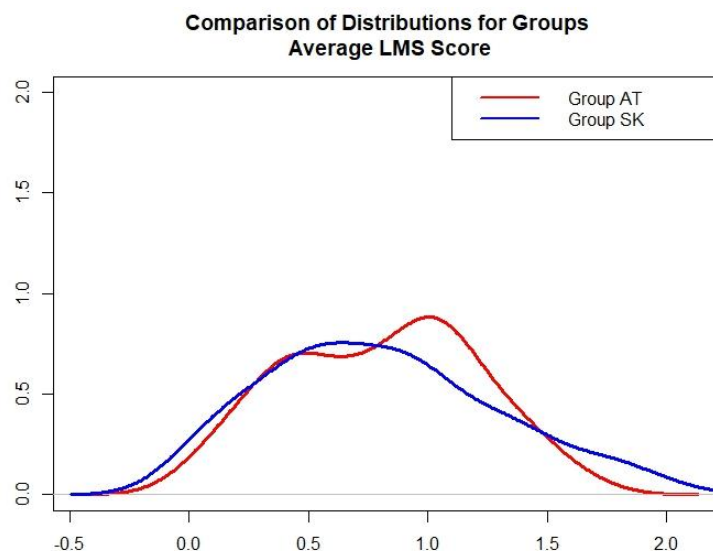


The mean value of the overall LMS score is 0.8077 (SD=0.4563), while the mean value of the Austrian LMS score is 0.8067 (SD=0.4013) and the mean value of the Slovak LMS score is 0.8082 (SD=0.4848).

Statistical testing H4

Following the calculation of LMS scores of each Language Management Strategy, the normal distribution of the Austrian and Slovak sample is evaluated. In this instance, the data are divided into two groups based on the independent variable which is the country in which the respondents are employed: Austria (Group AT) and Slovakia (Group SK).

Figure 19 Normal distribution of average LMS scores in Austria and Slovakia.



To evaluate whether the two groups are normally distributed the Shapiro-Wilk test is employed. The results, as well as Figure 19, demonstrate that the Slovak sample is not normally distributed,

as the p-value that is less than the significance level of 0.05. The Austrian sample has a p-value of 0.02652 (W=0.8628, p-value=0.02652) and the Slovak sample has a p-value of 0.0149 (W=0.8453, p-value=0.0149). Neither of the two samples is normally distributed.

Secondly, the homogeneity of variances is evaluated with the assistance of Levene's test. The p-value is 0.1487, which indicates that it is greater than the significance level and the variances are equal (df=1, N=198, F-value=2.1015, p-value=0.1487). As in the case of H1, the Mann-Whitney U test is used (W=4679.5, p-value=0.3704). The results indicate that there is no significant difference between the two groups and the null hypothesis is not rejected. Consequently, it can be concluded that there is no difference in the frequency of LMS implementation in the two target countries.

Regression analysis

Table 13 Factors influencing the frequency of LMS implementation

Regression Results H4					
	Dependent variable				
	Frequency of LMS implementation (based on Table 12)				
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Country					
Slovakia	0.002 (0.068)	0.011 (0.067)	0.060 (0.066)	0.022 (0.063)	0.038 (0.060)
Micro		-0.276***	-0.207**	-0.140*	-0.084
Organisat.		(0.083)	(0.083)	(0.080)	(0.077)
Small		-0.033	-0.011	-0.008	0.005
Organisat.		(0.072)	(0.070)	(0.069)	(0.065)
Internat.			0.380***	0.365***	0.300***
presence			(0.061)	(0.060)	(0.062)
No					
language				-0.125*	-0.146**
policy				(0.070)	(0.070)
Formal language policy				0.304***	0.314***
				(0.097)	(0.095)
Informal language policy				-0.087	-0.096
				(0.080)	(0.079)
Single					0.038
language					
policy -					
German					(0.184)
Local language policy					-0.116
					(0.108)
Multilingual					0.109
language					
policy					(0.111)

Constant	0.807*** (0.055)	0.876*** (0.063)	0.602*** (0.073)	0.589*** (0.076)	0.677*** (0.126)
Observations	200	200	200	200	200
R2	0	0.059	0.216	0.288	0.332
Adjusted R2	0.005	0.045	0.200	0.262	0.296
Residual	0.457	0.446	0.408	0.392	0.383
Std. Error	(df = 198)	(df = 196)	(df = 195)	(df = 192)	(df = 189)
	0.001 (df =	4.093*** (df =	13.406*** (df	11.102*** (df	9.379*** (df =
F Statistic	1; 198)	3; 186)	= 4; 195)	= 7; 192)	10; 189)
Note:	*p<0.1;	**p<0.05;	***p<0.01		

The results of the test are also validated also by the linear regression (multiple R-squared=0.332, adjusted R-squared=0.296, F-Statistic=9.739, p-value= $1.411e^{-12}$). Even though there is a small positive coefficient which suggests that Slovakian SMEs implement LMS more frequently compared to Austrian SMEs, but this is not statistically significant. Additionally, the dependent variable is affected by control variables, such as international presence (coefficient=0.300, p-value= $2.68e^{-6}$). Moreover, in the models with less control variables the micro organisations have a negative effect on the frequency of LMS implementation. Other significant indicator is the language policy. On the one hand, the written formal policy has a positive influence on the frequency of implementation of LMS (coefficient=0.3144, p-value=0.0011). On the other hand, in cases where employees reported no language policy there is a negative effect observable (coefficient=-0.1456, p-value=0.0386).

4.2.5 Employee mobility programmes in Austrian and Slovakian SMEs (H4.a)

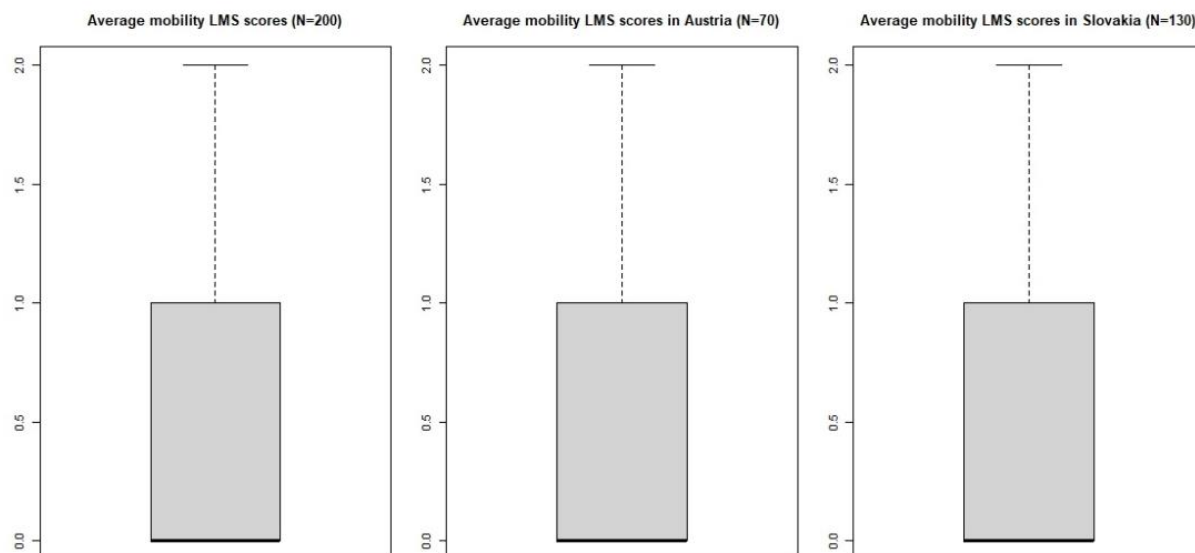
This sub-hypothesis examines the implementation of internships abroad and buddy programmes and whether SMEs encourage and offer their employees to go on mobility programme abroad. In comparison to some other LMS, these are relatively uncommon. Based on the LMS score the encouragement of mobility abroad (LMS 3) is the tenth most frequently utilised LMS. The provision of internships abroad and buddy programmes (LMS4) takes the thirteenth position out of the total of 15 LMS in the overall sample based on the LMS score.

Table 14 LMS scores of mobility programmes

LMS	AT score	SK score	Overall score
LMS3 (mobility)	0.5286	0.5461	0.5400
LMS4 (internship/buddy)	0.4714	0.4769	0.4750

Table 14 illustrates that the encouragement of mobility LMS score in Austria is 0.5286, while in Slovakia it is 0.5462. The scores of internships abroad and buddy programmes in Austria are 0.4714, and in Slovakia they are 0.4769.

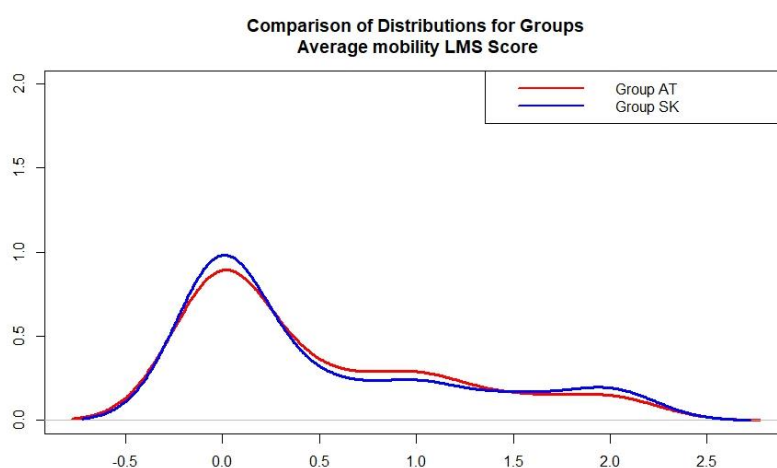
Figure 20 Average mobility LMS scores: Overall, Austria and Slovakia



The overall mean of the mobility programmes is 0.5075 (SD=0.6918), with an Austrian mean of 0.5 (SD=0.6703) and Slovakian mean 0.5113 (SD=0.7056).

Statistical testing H4.a

Figure 21 Normal distribution of average mobility LMS scores in Austria and Slovakia



At the beginning, the normal distribution of the groups is evaluated. The groups are not normally distributed (AT: $W=0.7427$, $p\text{-value}=9.435e^{-10}$; SK: $W=0.7222$, $p\text{-value}=2.242e^{-14}$). The results of the Levene's test indicate that the variances are equally distributed, with degrees of freedom (df) between groups 1 and residuals 198, $F\text{-value}=0.0126$, $p\text{-value}=0.9108$. After running the Wilcoxon rank-sum test in the next step, the results indicate

that there is no significant difference between the two groups as the p-value is greater than the significance level ($W=4576$, $p\text{-value}=0.4711$). To check if the Slovakian SMEs implement these LMS with greater frequency than the Austrian ones, what is the opposite of H4.a, one more Wilcoxon rank-sum test is calculated, which also indicates no significant differences ($W=4524$, $p\text{-value}=0.5301$). This means that the null hypothesis fails to be rejected and is accepted. In practical terms, this means that there are no discernible differences in the frequency of implementation of these two LMS in the target countries.

Regression analysis

Table 15 Factors influencing frequency of mobility-related LMS implementation

Regression Results H4.a					
	Dependent variable				
	Frequency of mobility-related LMS implementation				
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Country					
Slovakia	0.012 (0.103)	0.015 (0.104)	0.077 (0.103)	0.051 (0.101)	0.068 (0.099)
Micro		-0.165 (0.129)	-0.052 (0.130)	0.036 (0.129)	0.092 (0.127)
Organisation					
Small		0.004 (0.113)	0.042 (0.110)	0.086 (0.111)	0.099 (0.109)
Organisation					
No language					
policy			-0.217* (0.119)	-0.270** (0.119)	-0.273** (0.116)
Formal language policy			0.528*** (0.163)	0.525*** (0.161)	0.471*** (0.158)
Informal language policy			0.076 (0.133)	-0.148 (0.132)	-0.216 (0.131)
Single					
language					
policy -					
German				(0.312)	(0.306)
Local language policy				-0.282 (0.179)	-0.168 (0.179)
Multilingual				0.080	0.105
language					
policy				(0.188)	(0.184)
Internat.					0.308***
presence					(0.103)
Constant	0.500*** (0.083)	0.535*** (0.099)	0.476*** (0.113)	0.636*** (0.193)	0.367* (0.209)
Observations	200	200	200	200	200
R2	0.0001	0.010	0.100	0.158	0.196
Adjusted R2	0.005	-0.005	0.072	0.119	0.154

Residual Std. Error	0.694 (df = 198)	0.693 (df = 196)	0.667 (df = 193)	0.649 (df = 190)	0.636 (df = 189)
F Statistic	0.013 (df = 1; 198)	0.676 (df = 3; 186)	3.560*** (df = 6; 193)	3.976*** (df = 9; 190)	4.619*** (df = 10; 189)
Note:	*p<0.1	**p<0.05	***p<0.01		

The results of the linear regression support the results of the Wilcoxon rank-sum test. Its last 3 models show that the variables are significant predictors (multiple R-squared=0.295, adjusted R-squared=0.196, F-Statistic=4.619, p-value= $6.98e^{-6}$). When adding multiple control variables into the regression model, the results indicate that international presence of the company (coefficient=0.308, p-value=0.0032), and language policy have an effect on the dependent variable. If a company has a formal language policy, it positively influences the frequency of implementation of mobility programmes (coefficient=0.471, p-value=0.0033). On the other hand, no company policy negatively affects the LMS score of mobility programmes (coefficient=-0.273, p-value=0.0199). The same is observable by the informal language policy (coefficient=-0.216, p-value=0.102). The use of local language (coefficient=-0.1678) and German (coefficient=-0.3613) as foreign language as an official language also decreases the LMS score of mobility programmes, but these are not statistically significant predictors.

4.2.6 Language training, certifications, and cultural training programmes in Austrian and Slovakian SMEs (H4.b)

The second sub-hypothesis seeks to examine the implementation of language- and culture-related Language Management Strategies. Out of the 15 LMS listed in the survey, four are included in this category: cultural training (LMS2), language certification (LMS5), language training paid by employees (LMS6), and language training paid by the company (LMS7).

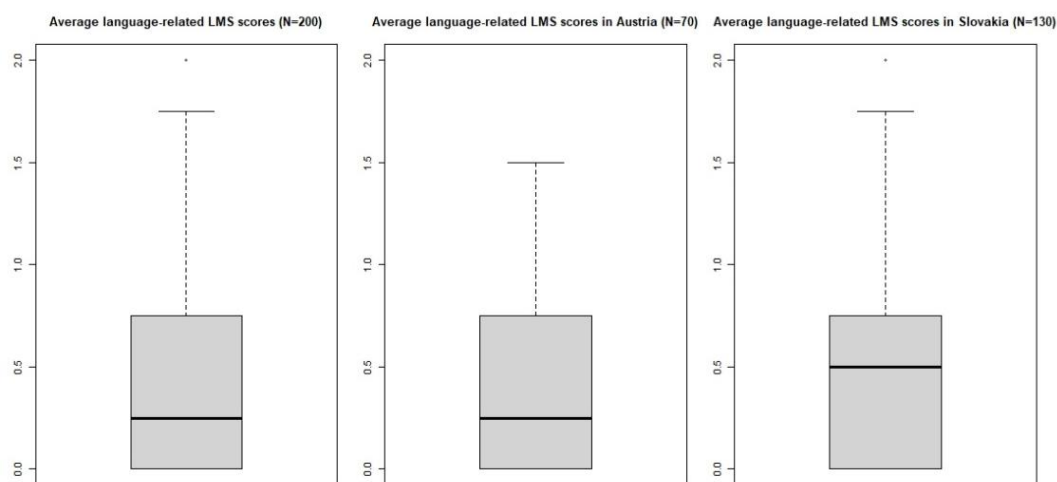
Table 16 LMS scores of language-related and culture-related LMS

LMS number	AT score	SK score	Overall score
LMS2 (cultural training)	0.4000	0.3769	0.3850
LMS5 (language certification)	0.4429	0.5000	0.4800
LMS6 (language training – paid by employees)	0.3714	0.4615	0.4300
LMS7 (language training – paid by company)	0.3857	0.6077	0.5300

Table 16 provides an overview of the LMS scores for these four LMS. The highest average score is achieved by language training programmes paid by the company, with a value of 0.53. However, the Austrian sample exhibits a markedly inferior score of 0.3857 in comparison to the Slovak sample, one with 0.6077. Secondly, language certification has an overall score of 0.48, with Austria having a score of 0.4429 and Slovakia having a score of 0.5. The third-ranked

category is language training, which is paid by the company with an overall score of 0.43 and Austrian LMS score of 0.3714 in comparison to the Slovak of 0.4615. The last LMS strategy is cultural training, which is also the least implemented of the 15 LMS, with an overall score of 0.385. This is the only score that is higher in Austria than in Slovakia – the Austrian score is 0.4, while the Slovak is 0.3769. It is also noteworthy that these strategies are some of the least utilised in the overall ranking.

Figure 22 Average language- and culture-related LMS scores: Overall, Austria and Slovakia

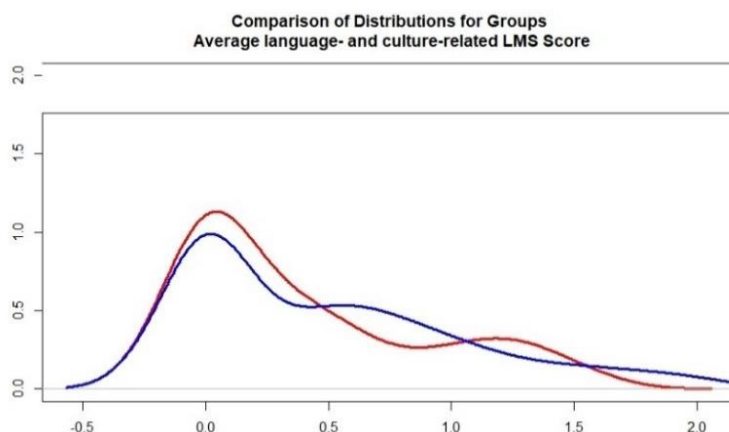


The overall mean of all four LMS is 0.4563 (SD=0.5325), while the Austrian mean is 0.4 (SD=0.486) and the Slovak mean is 0.4865 (SD=0.5538).

Statistical testing H4.b

As in the former hypothesis, the independent variable in this case is represented by the two target countries – Austria and Slovakia. To evaluate the difference between the frequency of language- and culture-related training which represents the dependent variable, the LMS scores are employed in the statistical tests.

Figure 23 Normal distribution of average language- and culture-related an LMS scores in Austria and Slovakia.



In order to test whether the data are normally distributed, the Shapiro-Wilk test is employed again. In both cases, the data are not normally distributed, as indicated by a p-value that exceeds the significance level. Concretely, in the Austrian sample, the p-value is $1.228e^{-8}$ ($W=0.7889$, $p\text{-value}=1.228e^{-8}$) and in the Slovak sample, it is $4.132e^{-11}$ ($W=0.8258$, $p\text{-value}=4.132e^{-11}$). The results of the Levene's test indicates that both groups have equal variances – the degrees of freedom are same as in H4 and H4.a, $F\text{-value}=2.2967$ and the p-values is 0.1312. As groups are not normally distributed and present two different groups, the non-parametric Wilcoxon rank-sum test is used in this case. The results of the Mann-Whitney U test indicate that there is no statistically significant difference between the Austrian and Slovak samples in terms of the frequency of implementation of the four language- and culture-related LMS. The reason for that is that the p-value is 0.7983, which leads to the rejection of the alternative hypothesis ($W=4240$, $p\text{-value}=0.7983$). To ascertain whether the hypothesis is not simply reversed and that Slovak companies implement these LMS more frequently than Austrian ones, a second p-value is calculated, which is also higher than 0.05 ($W=4860$, $p\text{-value}=0.2024$). This means that this is not true and there is no significant difference between the two groups.

Regression analysis

Table 17 Factors influencing frequency of language- and culture-related LMS implementation

Regression Results H4.b					
	Dependent variable				
	Frequency of language-related LMS implementation				
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Country					
Slovakia	0.087 (0.079)	0.097 (0.078)	0.170** (0.074)	0.135* (0.074)	0.150** (0.071)
Micro		-0.312***	-0.220**	-0.176*	-0.125
Organisation		(0.097)	(0.094)	(0.094)	(0.092)
Small		-0.027	0.001	-0.012	-0.0001
Organisation		(0.084)	(0.079)	(0.080)	(0.078)
No language policy			-0.140 (0.086)	-0.139 (0.086)	-0.142* (0.083)
Formal language policy			0.587*** (0.118)	0.559*** (0.117)	0.511*** (0.114)
Informal language policy			0.037 (0.096)	0.019 (0.096)	-0.041 (0.094)
Single language policy - German				0.168 (0.227)	0.160 (0.220)

Local language policy				-0.219*	-0.116
				(0.130)	(0.129)
Multilingual language policy				-0.013	0.009
				(0.136)	(0.132)
Internat. presence					0.276***
					(0.074)
Constant	0.400***	0.475***	0.365***	0.514***	0.273*
	(0.064)	(0.074)	(0.082)	(0.140)	(0.150)
Observations	200	200	200	200	200
R2	0.006	0.063	0.206	0.250	0.301
Adjusted R2	0.001	0.048	0.181	0.214	0.264
Residual	0.532	0.520	0.482	0.472	0.457
Std. Error	(df = 198)	(df = 196)	(df = 193)	(df = 190)	(df = 189)
	1.203 (df =	4.363*** (df =	8.338*** (df =	7.025*** (df =	8.140*** (df =
F Statistic	1; 198)	3; 186)	6; 193)	9; 190)	10; 189)
Note:	*p<0.1	**p<0.05	***p<0.01		

The primary logistic regression has significant variables (multiple R-squared=0.301, adjusted R-squared=0.264, F-Statistic=8.140, p-value= $6.693e^{-11}$). From the control variables, the significant ones are international presence (coefficient=0.276, p-value=0.0003), the independent variable – the country (Slovakia, coefficient=0.1496, p-value=0.0372), and the language policy. Regarding language policy there is on the one hand, the formal policy with a positive effect (coefficient=0.5105, p-value= $1.23e^{-5}$) and on the other hand, the companies with no language policy cause a negative effect (coefficient=-0.142, p-value=0.0907).

4.2.7 Language Management Strategies effect on employee motivation (H5)

Preparation of data and descriptive statistics

To test the final hypothesis, the data have to be transferred and prepared. Firstly, the independent variable – the utilisation of LMS is categorised. In contrast to H4 and its sub-hypotheses, in this case, it only matters if the strategy tool is used or not. Based on this, the data is adapted on a binary scale: 0 for not using the given strategy tool and 1 for implementing it. As there are 15 strategy tools, it can be reasonably assumed that the majority of companies will utilise at least one of them, even if not intentionally or purposefully. That is why, instead of a binary classification (use versus no use), four categories, creating an ordinal category are derived: NO implementation (0 LMS), LOW implementation (1-3 LMS), MODerate implementation (4-8 LMS) and HIGH implementation (9-15 LMS).

Table 18 Use of LMS in SMEs based on four categories

Category	Number of respondents working for SME in the given category
NO	6
LOW	30
MOD	94
HIGH	70

As Table 18 illustrates, only 6 respondents work for an SME with no LMS at all. Of these six individuals, 5 from them work in Slovakia and one in Austria. A total of 30 respondents indicated that they work for companies which implement one to three LMS. Here is important to mention, that in numerous cases where only one LMS is implemented, the recruitment of native speakers has been selected as the only implemented LMS by the SME. The third category encompasses 94 participants, indicated that they work for SMEs with a moderate number of LMS, ranging from 4 to 8. The highest number of implemented LMS, ranging from 9 to 15, is represented by 70 survey participants.

Figure 24 Distribution of respondents from SMEs by the number of implemented Language Management Strategies

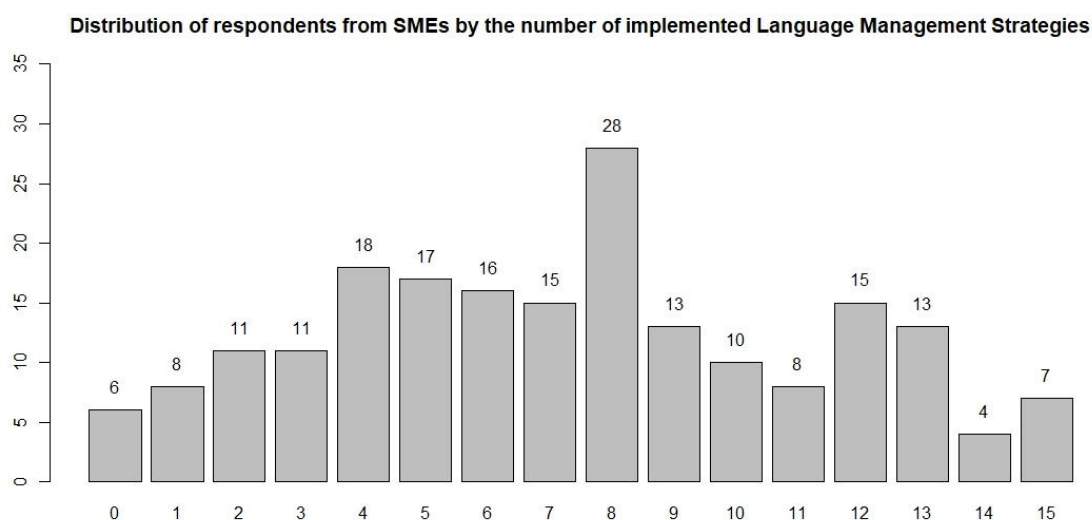


Figure 24 illustrates the detailed distribution of number of implemented LMS in each SME where the respondents work. The mean value is 7.3 LMS from the total of 15 ($SD=3.9124$). The highest adoption rate is observable in case of use of 8 LMS, with 28 out of 200 survey participants, whereas only a small proportion of SMEs use all or none of them. The mean of category NO is 0, the mean of category LOW is 2.1 ($SD=0.8030$), the mean of category MOD is 6.19 ($SD=1.5118$) and the mean of category HIGH is 11.6429 ($SD=1.8961$).

Reliability analysis of motivation scale and job satisfaction scale

In order to prepare the dependent variable, it is necessary to transfer the IM scale, taken from The Work Extrinsic and Intrinsic Motivation Scale (WEIMS) (Tremblay, et al., 2009, p. 218), from a scale Strongly disagree to Strongly agree to a numerical 6-point Likert scale. After transferring the data, the internal consistency of the scale is evaluated. The overall sample and the Slovak sample have a value of 0.89, while the Austrian sample is demonstrated by a value of 0.9. As in all three cases the Cronbach Alpha values are higher than 0.7, meaning that the scale is internally consistent. The results of this empirical research are even better than the internal consistency of the original scale, with a Cronbach Alpha of 0.80 (Tremblay, et al., 2009, p. 217).

The respondents also evaluated the statements about workplace harmony, including team spirit and self-esteem through recognition on a 6-point Likert scale, ranging from Strongly disagree to Strongly agree. The results of the reliability analysis indicate that the data are reliable, as all Cronbach Alphas are higher than 0.7. The overall reliability coefficient for the entire sample is 0.91, while the reliability coefficients for the team spirit and self-esteem items are 0.85 and 0.92. In the Austrian sample, the Cronbach Alpha of all items combined is 0.9, with team spirit at 0.78 and self-esteem at 0.91. The results of the reliability analysis in Slovakia demonstrate that the Cronbach Alpha of all items is 0.91, with team spirit items at 0.88 and self-esteem through recognition at 0.93. These results are similar with the original reliability coefficients, where the team spirit (co-workers) items have a median of 0.85 and the self-esteem (through recognition) items have a median of 0.93 (Weiss, et al., 1967, p. 14).

Motivation level based on the four categories

Once the data has been prepared, the motivation scale means are calculated. However, rather than being based on the country, they are based on the four categories of the use of the LMS. An average motivation value is calculated based on the three motivation items. These are then added together and divided by three.

Figure 25 Average motivation level based on implementation of LMS

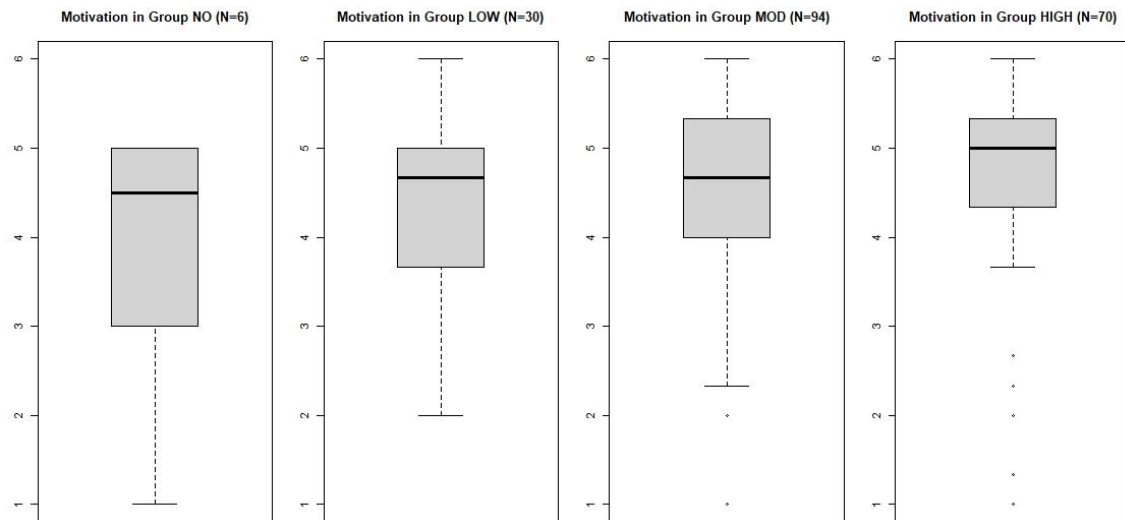
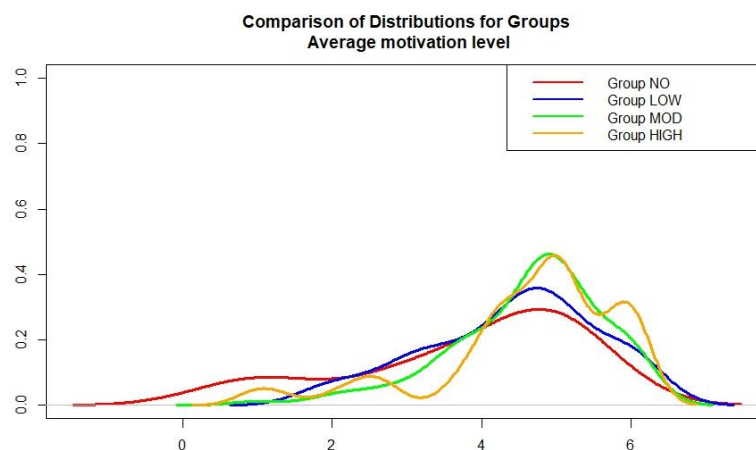


Figure 25 illustrates motivation based on the four categories of LMS implementation. The first category represents the level of employee motivation in companies with no LMS, ranges from 1 to 5, with a mean value of 3.8333 (SD=1.6021). The second category represents the motivation level of employees working for SMEs that implement 1, 2, or 3 LMS. The mean value for this category is 4.4111 (SD=1.1536), with an average motivation ranging from 2 to 6. The third category represents the motivation level of employees working for SMEs with a moderate implementation of LMS. The mean value for this category is 4.6277 (SD=1.0170). The final boxplot represents the motivation level of employees working for SMEs that implement 9 or more LMS. The average value of this category is 4.6333 (SD=1.2305). Even though visually there is a difference between the two extreme case of NO and HIGH, the Wilcoxon test shows that there is no statistically significant difference between the two group (W=142, p-value=0.1875).

Statistical testing H5

Figure 26 Comparison of Distributions for Groups: Average motivation level



To decide whether the appropriate statistical test is the ANOVA test, Welch's ANOVA or a Kruskal-Wallis test, firstly, the normality criteria and homogeneity of variances has to be evaluated. The results of the Shapiro-Wilk test for normality indicate that the categories NO and LOW are normally distributed, with p-values of 0.0703 and 0.0968. The remaining two categories are not normally distributed, as evidenced by the p-value of MOD: $3.403e^{-5}$ and the p-value of HIGH: $1.638e^{-6}$. The results of the Levene's test indicate that the variances are homogeneous, as the p-value is greater than the significance level of 0.05. The degrees of freedom (df) are 3, as there are four groups, resulting in a value of 196 for the within-group degrees of freedom. The F-value is 0.7239 and the p-value is 0.5388.

As the categories MOD and HIGH do not satisfy the normality criterion the non-parametric alternative to the ANOVA test, the Kruskal-Wallis test, is employed for further hypothesis testing. The results of this test indicate that there is no statistically significant difference between the medians of the motivation scores between the groups as evidenced by the p-value of 0.4007 (Kruskal-Wallis chi-squared=2.9415, df=3, p-value=0.4007). This indicates that the alternative hypothesis is rejected. It appears that there is no statistically significant difference between the four groups. To check if there is really no relationship between the number of used LMS and motivation level, the Kendall's rank correlation tau is calculated. The results of Kendall's Tau ($Z=1.6279$, p-value=0.1035, tau=0.0842) are consistent with those of the Kruskal-Wallis test. While tau indicates a weak positive relationship, there is no significant correlation between LMS implementation and motivation.

The impact of implementation of each LMS tool on employee motivation

With the help of the ANOVA test, the effect of specific LMS tools on employee motivation is evaluated. The test examines whether specific LMS have a statistically significant effect on motivation. The results indicate that adaptation of the packaging to different languages ($F=3.445$, p-value=0.0649), internship abroad / buddy programmes ($F=3.010$, p-value=0.0843), recruitment of employees with knowledge of multiple languages ($F=3.126$, p-value=0.0786) are marginally significant predictors. The provision of language skills update to employer is the only significant LMS ($F=5.192$, p-value=0.0238). All other LMS have a higher p-value than 0.1 which means that they are not statistically significant.

Regression analysis

The regression analysis looks how the dependent variable is affected by the independent variable and other control variables.

Table 19 Factors influencing employee motivation

Regression Results H5						
Dependent variable:						
Employee Motivation						
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Number of implemented LMS	0.028 (0.021)	0.022 (0.018)	0.023 (0.018)	0.008 (0.019)	0.006 (0.020)	0.008 (0.021)
Employee Job Satisfaction		0.580*** (0.068)	0.581*** (0.068)	0.577*** (0.071)	0.575*** (0.071)	0.577*** (0.072)
Country Slovakia			0.092 -0.144	0.107 -0.162	0.217 -0.165	0.219 -0.168
Age				0.007 (0.007)	0.005 (0.007)	0.005 (0.007)
Gender (Male)				0.094 (0.165)	0.044 (0.164)	0.047 (0.167)
Gender (Non-binary)				0.245 (0.510)	0.172 (0.509)	0.158 (0.518)
Gender (Prefer not to say)				1.058 (1.053)	1.035 (1.045)	1.047 (1.061)
Education High school diploma				-0.378* (0.196)	-0.379* (0.192)	-0.379* (0.194)
Education Master's degree				0.023 (0.207)	-0.006 (0.204)	-0.004 (0.211)
Education PhD degree				-0.723* (0.416)	-0.736* (0.410)	-0.729* (0.415)
Education Secondary				0.245 (0.385)	0.294 (0.380)	0.302 (0.384)
Managerial position				0.174 (0.275)	0.208 (0.275)	0.217 (0.279)
Owner				-0.374 (0.398)	-0.31 (0.394)	-0.313 (0.399)
Professional position				-0.025 (0.188)	0.069 (0.188)	0.073 (0.191)
2-4 SME experiences				0.131 (0.162)	0.075 (0.160)	0.078 (0.163)
5+ SME experiences				0.225 (0.285)	0.285 (0.282)	0.292 (0.292)
No language policy					0.084	0.086

					(0.186)	(0.192)
Formal language policy					0.27 (0.250)	0.273 (0.254)
Informal language policy					0.574*** (0.199)	0.586*** (0.203)
Single language policy - German						0.108 (0.467)
Local language policy						0.089 (0.269)
Multilingual language policy						0.057 (0.285)
Constant	4.367*** (0.170)	1.750*** (0.340)	1.681*** (0.357)	1.524*** (0.417)	1.374*** (0.414)	1.275** (0.515)
Observations	200	200	200	192	192	192
R2	0.01	0.277	0.278	0.353	0.386	0.386
Adjusted R2	0.005	0.269	0.267	0.294	0.318	0.307
Residual Std. Error	1.133 (df = 198)	0.971 (df = 197)	0.972 (df = 196)	0.956 (df = 175)	0.940 (df = 172)	0.947 (df = 169)
F Statistic	1.903 (df = 1; 198)	37.683*** (df = 2; 197)	25.181*** (df = 3; 196)	5.979*** (df = 16; 175)	5.689*** (df = 19; 172)	4.838*** (df = 22; 169)
Note:	*p<0.1	**p<0.05	***p<0.01			

The results of the regression contradict the findings of the test and its variables. The results of the regression are significant (multiple R-squared=0.3864, adjusted R-squared=0.3066, F-value=4.838, p-value= $1.03e^{-9}$). After adding the control variables, the results indicate that some of them have an influence on employee motivation level. These are job satisfaction (coefficient=0.5769, p-value= $1.77e^{-13}$), informal language policy (coefficient=0.5857, p-value=0.0045), education level – high school diploma (coefficient=-0.3793, p-value=0.0528), PhD degree (coefficient=-0.7290, p-value=0.0806). The independent variable – number of implemented LMS is not significant.

4.2.8 Job satisfaction mediating the relationship between employee motivation and LMS implementation (H5.a)

To evaluate if the implementation of LMS and motivation level of employees are affected by the indirect effect of the mediator – job satisfaction, a regression analysis is conducted.

Regression analysis – mediation analysis

Table 20 Job satisfaction as mediator of LMS and employee motivation

Regression and Causal Mediation Results (H5.a)			
	Dependent variable:		
	Job Satisfaction	Employee Motivation	
	Model A	Model B	Model C
	Job satisfaction ~ LMS	Motivation ~ Job satisfaction + LMS	Motivation ~ LMS
	(1)	(2)	(3)
Job Satisfaction		0.580*** (0.068)	
Number of implemented LMS	0.010 (0.018)	0.022 (0.018)	0.028 (0.021)
Constant	4.515*** (0.152)	1.750*** (0.340)	4.367*** (0.170)
Observations	200	200	200
R2	0.002	0.277	0.010
Adjusted R2	-0.003	0.269	0.005
Residual Std. Error	1.016 (df=198)	0.971 (df=197)	1.133 (df=198)
F Statistic	0.308 (df=1; 198)	37.683*** (df=2; 197)	1.903 (df=1; 198)
Note:	*p<0.1 **p<0.05 ***p<0.01		

As Table 20 shows above, there is a highly significant positive influence on employee motivation by their job satisfaction. In order to ascertain the concrete impact of mediation, the relationships between the independent variable, dependent variable and mediator are evaluated in pairs. This results in three paths (models). Firstly, the effect between the independent variable, and the mediator is investigated, concretely the use of LMS and job satisfaction (Model A). The results indicate that there is no significant relationship between the implementation of LMS and job satisfaction (Residual standard error=1.016 on 198 degrees of freedom, multiple R-squared=0.001552, adjusted R-squared= -0.00349, F-value=0.3078 on 1 and 198 df, p-value=0.5796). As the p-value is higher than the significance level and the R-squared is less than 1%, it can be concluded that the effect is very low and has no significant effect. Secondly, the effect of the mediator on the dependent variable – the impact of job satisfaction’s effect on motivation, is measured, while considering also the impact of the independent variable (Model B). The results (Residual standard error=0.9708 on 197 degrees of freedom, multiple R-squared=0.2767, adjusted R-squared=0.2694, F-value=37.68 on 2 and 197 df, p-value= $1.388e^{-14}$) indicate that there is a significant relationship between the mediator and the dependent variable. This means that the job satisfaction positively influences the motivation. Thirdly, the relationship between the independent and dependent variable – use of

LMS and motivation (Model C), is evaluated. The results (Residual standard error=1.133 on 198 degrees of freedom, multiple R-squared=0.009518, adjusted R-squared=0.004515, F-value=1.903 on 1 and 198 df, p-value=0.1693) indicate that there is no significant relationship due to the p-value, even though R-squared indicates that there is a weak positive trend, indicating that higher use of LMS leads to higher motivation, but this is not statistically significant.

After evaluating all three effects, the indirect and total effects are calculated based on the estimated values from the former calculations. The indirect effect demonstrates the manner in which the mediator influences the relationship between the independent and dependent variables. The total effect is the sum of the aforementioned indirect effect and the direct effect between the use of LMS and motivation. The results indicate low values, yet the role of job satisfaction as a mediator can be confirmed. The indirect effect has a value of 0.00592, which demonstrates the impact of job satisfaction on motivation. The total effect is stronger with a value of 0.03424. The findings show that the causal mediation analysis does not provide any evidence of significant mediation, what leads to the rejection of the alternative hypothesis.

Moreover, results indicate that job satisfaction positively influences motivation, what could indicate a moderation. However, after checking the moderation model statistically, the results indicate that the moderation is not statistically significant, meaning there is no evidence that job satisfaction moderates the relationship between LMS and motivation, even though job satisfaction plays a crucial role in motivation and the overall moderation model is statistically significant (multiple R-squared=0.2852, adjusted R-squared=0.2743, F-value=26.07, p-value= $3.112e^{-14}$). This leads to the conclusion that LMS does not directly influence motivation and job satisfaction neither mediates, nor moderates this relationship. Higher job satisfaction leads to increase employee motivation, what is also supported by the Pearson correlation coefficient of 0.52.

5 Discussion

This chapter connects the findings of the survey, the statistical results, and the theoretical background. It presents varying views on the topics of language policies and LMS as well as compares the differences of this thesis's findings and former research. At the end of this chapter, the limitations of the research are described and some suggestions for further research are introduced.

5.1 Interpretation of the results

The aim of this research is to evaluate the use of language policies, the awareness about them, and the role of languages in workplaces and in communication with stakeholders. It also aims to map the use and frequency of use of LMS and their impact on employee motivation in SMEs.

5.1.1 Role of language policies in SMEs

The results indicate that many employees don't have any awareness about the use of a language policy in their SMEs. Many employees are sure that there is no policy, while their companies think that these are not important for them, as they are just relevant for MNEs, even though previous research shows that languages also have a major impact on SMEs (Talukder & Barner-Rasmussen, 2024, p. 1). Only 11% of employees from the overall sample work for a company that has a formal written language policy (Angouri, 2014, p. 3). As the results of statistical regressions indicate, having a formal language policy has a significant effect on most hypotheses and their variables. 20 % of survey participants report about an unwritten language policy, which is generally agreed upon. Such policy is an important part of the organisational culture (Sherman & Nekvapil, 2018, p. 6). Even though that language policies are considered as a crucial part of language management theory as they formulate a complex that incorporates language management, language practices, language use, communication, and language beliefs within a company, they are rarely strategically implemented (Theophanous & Karyolemou, 2022, p. 152).

The statistical results of the empirical research indicate that a monolingual policy and a multilingual policy do not have different effects on communication with stakeholders. However, if the companies are internationally present, they seem to require multilingual skills more often to reach out to global actors and stakeholders. This is also statistically validated.

To deepen the understanding of employees and their views on language policy, as well as internal attitudes and practices of SMEs, an open question was asked in the survey about the perception and need of language policy. This shows different perspectives on use of language policies in SMEs. The term language policy is taken from MNEs, as there is a lack of research in SMEs on language policies (Talukder & Barner-Rasmussen, 2024, p. 1). This term seems to have a negative connotation. 43 respondents out of 107 who answered the open question, do not find language policies necessary or useful. Some introduce reasons for that such as all stakeholders speaking the local language and being active in the local market leading to the fact that there are no international activities. Other reasons are the lacking skills of management in a family enterprise, micro enterprise with a few employees, or manual occupations such as construction, manufacturing workers or employees of coffee shops and restaurants, which perceive languages as not relevant. On the other hand, many people just stated it is not necessary or they do not understand why this could bring something, without any reasoning which may also signal their lack of knowledge about the company's activities – mostly employees in entry positions, or employees who are afraid of innovation and changes, what also has been observed in previous research (Avenell, 2015, p. 38), or they cannot imagine how it could positively influence their company.

Another group of respondents introduced some reasons why they do not have any language policy and in which cases would they find it useful. Some argue that they can imagine that for bigger companies it makes more sense as it helps to cooperate with each other. Secondly, some mention language policy as crucial in communication with the public and the importance of English in this context is also mentioned. On the other hand, some respondents argue that they do not need any policy as nowadays everybody speaks English which represents the so-called “English is enough” view (Bruen & Buckley, 2022, p. 44). However, other research has shown that English is not enough (Backus, et al., 2013, p. 183; Martinaj, 2023, p. 54; Melitz, 2018, p. 4). One of the main reasons, why English is not a solution is that not everybody speaks English, and many people of the older generations have skills in other languages than English (Sherman & Nekvapil, 2018, p. 2). Moreover, other respondents claim that there is no need for language policy as nowadays, everything is international and works naturally. This view seems to highlight the lack of awareness of how important languages in the international market as management tools are (Tenzer, et al., 2017, p. 817). This also signals that people are not aware of the fact that it is not given that everyone speaks more than one language.

Other respondents are not sure about their company's language policies but claim there is some kind of agreement on an internal level, in the various departments, or as hiring criterion. Some respondents also indicated that even though they have an agreement, it is often violated by the employees and doesn't make much sense. On the other hand, some respondents mention that they are missing language trainings or other language-related supports from the company. These unknowingly mentioned LMS (European Commission, 2011) as the need for employee language trainings, mobility programmes, workations, team activities were seen as tools to enhance communication. 34 respondents out of 107 who answered this question have seen the implementation of language policy as beneficial, increasing team inclusion, facilitating teamwork and communication, lowering number of conflicts and misunderstandings, improving working environment (Martinaj, 2023, p. 69) and offering also opportunities for people with sufficient professional skills (Martinaj, 2023, p. 52) by positively influencing both the employee's career and company's development. Other respondents perceived language policies as positive, but highlighted the fact that it increases bureaucracy, is hard to bring into practice and is associated with higher costs. The expensive implementation of language regulations and LMS presents one of the biggest challenges for SMEs (Martinaj, 2023, p. 72). Another problem mentioned is that people often think that language policy makes sense only for MNEs or office jobs.

One interesting response stands out as it summarises some previously mentioned pros and cons of language policies. It states that language policy is not seen as essential, but a non-written one is more than beneficial and, in the meantime, the negative connotation of employees to the word policy is also highlighted:

"I do not consider the language policy in small and medium-sized enterprises to be very important. Nevertheless, I can imagine it being beneficial in places, especially when it comes to working communication in shared software. It would be about avoiding chaos and improving efficiency. The words policy, directive or regulation have a negative connotation from my point of view and could be viewed with disgust by employees, so I believe that in medium-sized and small enterprises, a common consensus among employees would be sufficient. Different language needs may arise within different departments of a company, so a single guideline might not be a happy solution. I see it as unfortunate to regulate unofficial communication in the workplace. The company I work for does not have a language directive, but the languages used are German, English, and Slovak. Their use naturally depends on

the communication situation. Often the language use depends on the language preferences of the clients, it is necessary to be flexible. It is this reason why we do not have a policy in our company” (Respondent nr. 150).

To sum up, while some people may not understand the importance of languages in the business environment, others recognise the benefits that language policies can bring to them and their company. As there are many factors affecting the perception of language policies in SMEs: market, company size, international activities, stakeholders, finances, and more – it is hard to say, if it has to be created in all SMEs, or it would not make sense for nobody. As in many other cases, here is also no “one-fits-all solution”. However, implementation of at least an informal language policy (Sherman & Nekvapil, 2018, p. 6) mostly brings benefits to both the company and employees. As the regression analyses showed an existing language policy can positively influence use and frequency of LMS implementation.

5.1.2 Role of Languages in Austrian and Slovakian SMEs

People use to say that languages open doors and thereby offer new business opportunities (Hurmerinta, et al., 2015; Talukder & Barner-Rasmussen, 2024, p. 2). This means that individuals with language skills bring advantages to the companies. Based on the findings of this thesis’ sample, there are only a few people speaking just one language, concretely 19 out of 200. However, the average number of languages a person is fluent in is 2.68. This shows that the goal of the European Union, introduced in the informal language policy is not fulfilled. Even though this average is near 3, not everybody speaks “mother tongue plus two” (Backus, et al., 2013, p. 182). In comparison to the EU, in the U.S. 79.7 % of residents speak only English (American Academy of Arts & Science, 2021, p. 4), and on average they speak only 0.7 foreign languages (Schultz, 2023). Similarly, as in the U.S., people living in the UK tend to speak only English. On the other hand, people in China speak two or more languages (World Population Review, 2024). In this thesis’ case, 111 respondents out of 200 speak at least 3 or more languages. Even though, 55.5 % fulfil the “mother tongue plus two”, other 44.5 % do not comply with this condition. As also previous research by the EU stated, this criterion was fulfilled neither by Austria, nor by Slovakia (Backus, et al., 2013, p. 183). Moreover, the findings of this thesis’ research, which were statistically validated, show that higher education increases the number of fluent languages a person speaks fluently.

Furthermore, the research shows that in this geographical area the most important languages are the local languages and English. This is supported also by previous findings which state that

in European countries, the national languages still remain the strongest (Sherman & Nekvapil, 2018, p. 2). As without the knowledge of local language, the company becomes vulnerable and defenceless (Martinaj, 2023, p. 69). Moreover, the majority of SMEs still depend largely on the local markets, even though other languages help the enlargement to the global market (Escudeiro & Vaz de Carvalho, 2013, p. 643). German is not only relevant in Austria as national language, but it is also important in Slovakia. The proof of this is that 59 respondents with Slovak nationality out of 131 can speak German fluently. This is consistent with the official statistical data that the two most important foreign languages in Slovakia are English and German (World Atlas, 2024). These two languages act as bridge languages within the EU, though they are considered to be a suboptimal solution to international business relations, which depend on mutual trust and confidence between the parties (Escudeiro & Vaz de Carvalho, 2013, p. 643). Even though English is widely used and spoken – 172 respondents are fluent in English, as a company language, it is used as official language only by companies of 16 individuals - 7 Austrian and 9 Slovakian SMEs. On the other hand, English is an important link for cooperation and access to resources (Janssens, et al., 2004, p. 414), that is why it is a prerequisite on the workplaces of 95 survey participants, as well as used in communication with customers by 141 respondents and by 123 with other business partners, proving the importance of English as Lingua Franca (Melitz, 2018, p. 1). This can be seen as the confirmation of former research, which states that recruiters believe that advanced English skills help them to penetrate new markets and deal with stakeholders (Theophanous & Karyolemou, 2022, p. 161). However, the role of other world languages in Austria and Slovakia appears to be minimal, what contradicts the findings of the European Commission, claiming that apart from English, Chinese, Russian, Spanish, and Portuguese are important in EU countries (European Commission, 2011, p. 19). In the studied sample only Russian and Spanish are used, and even these by a small number of respondents. This research also contradicts the findings of the Institute for Romance Studies at the University of Innsbruck, which suggests that Romance languages, including French, Spanish, Italian and Portuguese are widely used by Austrian SMEs in communication with their stakeholders and are commonly spoken and learnt in Austria. Nevertheless, the same study notes that around 10 % of Austrian citizens speak French and Italian, while only a small portion of the population speaks Spanish and Portuguese (Lavric & Bäck, 2009, pp. 46, 59-60), what can be confirmed by this thesis's research. Previous research in Slovakia also observed that less than 10 % of respondents are fluent in at least one of the world languages as Spanish, Italian, French and Russian (Holúbeková & Fördösová, 2017, p. 38).

Even though more languages are becoming important, the role of national languages seems to remain the strongest in the two target countries, at least on an internal level. Furthermore, in both countries Hungarian language seems to play an important role due to geographical and historical reasons. The main reasons are that almost 10 % of Slovak population has Hungarian nationality (World Atlas, 2024), the nearness of Austrian borders, tight cooperation among Central European countries, post-Monarchian bonds (Haller, et al., 2023, p. 404) and the fact that many Hungarian people work abroad due to the bad financial conditions in Hungary (Tiszóczy, 2024).

Based on theoretical findings around 50 % of SMEs are somehow active internationally (European Commission, 2011, p. 14). This thesis's sample offers an even higher number, represented by 61 % of SMEs from the overall sample. This indicates that the languages should be important in communication with stakeholders. However, number of used languages in company does not seem to have an effect. The languages which are used in communication with stakeholders show that some people have to communicate with stakeholders in languages in which they are not fluent, what can increase misunderstandings and decrease overall quality of communication. On the other hand, the sample includes many people with language skills in 3 and more languages, but they are not using them in the workplace, what leads to the assumption that managers or owners of the SMEs underestimate the importance of languages. Furthermore, managers also tend to underestimate the role of languages and their expressive side in multinational management of their company and in communication with stakeholders (Sanden, 2016, p. 277). This can be seen as lost business opportunities (Sung-Yul Park, 2016, p. 455), as they underutilise language capabilities which are present in the company and could be used as competitive advantages (Talukder & Barner-Rasmussen, 2024, p. 2). Even when they have this valuable resource present in the company, they cannot find the way how to use it, this means that they struggle with the linguistic diversity. Potential solution to that could be the investment into LMS (Sanden, 2016, p. 278).

5.1.3 Implementation of Language Management Strategies in Austrian and Slovakian SMEs and their influence on employee motivation

As the majority of respondents stated that there is no language policy or they are not aware of that, this can be representation of the management's passive attitude, which can lead to already mentioned communication problems (Sanden, 2016, p. 281), even though that in this research this is not verified. Furthermore, some managers see languages only as economic factors and

forget their social role (Angouri, 2014, p. 3), meaning that they are treated just as commodities and not as powerful strategical instruments (Sanden, 2016, p. 284). Some LMS tools can solve these communication issues.

The statistical tests of the fourth hypothesis and its sub-hypotheses show that there are no significant differences between the implementation and frequency of implementation of LMS in the target countries. However, this data gives an overview of LMS in Austria and Slovakia. This helps to discover what could be improved and compare this data with the findings of a comparable study dealing with LMS implementation in Austria and Slovenia (Rižnar & Rybníček, 2017). This study from 2016, was updated in 2021, but only for Slovenian enterprises, therefore the update is not relevant for this research.

The paper by Rižnar and Rybníček (2017) deals with approaches of SMEs and not employee perception, as this paper evaluates LMS in 79 Slovenian and 90 Austrian SMEs. This study helps to compare the findings of the Austrian sample. 49 % of the responses collected in the research by Rižnar and Rybníček (2017) hire native speakers, whereas in this thesis's Austrian sample almost 63 % of respondents claim to work for SME which uses this LMS as common practice and additional 17 % as exceptional. 50 % of responses from research conducted in 2016 indicate the recruitment of staff with various language skills. In comparison to that, around 62 % of respondents of this research reported this LMS as common practice and almost 33 % as exceptional practice. Another LMS, which can be compared is the use of translators and interpreters. This proportions are similar in both researches, whereas the research by Rižnar and Rybníček (2017) shows that 33 % of SMEs implement this LMS, in this thesis - Austrian sample 20% implement it as common practice and 14 % as exceptional practice. Based on the research from 2016, 38 % of Austrian SMEs use multilingual websites. To compare it with this research's empirical findings – 51 % of employees of SMEs reported creation of multilingual websites as common practice and additional 18 % as exceptional practice. Another LMS which is discussed in both cases, are language trainings, which were provided to participants of this survey not very often. Only 9 % of respondents are working for an Austrian SME where language trainings are paid by employees as common practice and 20 % as exceptional practice. 12.86 % SMEs offer language trainings paid by companies as common practice and exceptional practice. In comparison to the research conducted in 2016, this proportions are lower, as they report 50 % of the sample to offer language trainings (Rižnar & Rybníček, 2017, pp. 368-371). During the ELAN Study 49 % of companies reported that they offer a language training. The findings of this research do not coincide with the results of the ELAN Study which claim that Austrian and

Slovakian SMEs together with Czech, Spanish, Finn, German and Luxembourgish offer language trainings to their employees very often (Hagen, 2009, p. 29). To sum up, in the case of former research only 18 % of SMEs had formal implementation strategies and language regulations (Rižnar & Rybníček, 2017, p. 368). This number can correspond with this research and its formal implementation of language policies which is represented by 11 %.

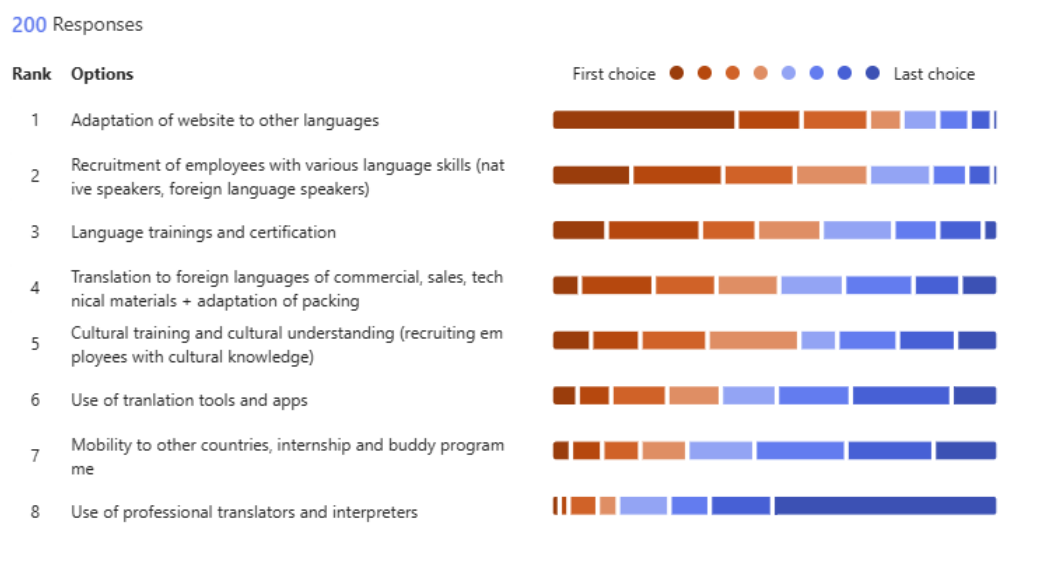
As this thesis's research works with employees, who may not have the sufficient knowledge about the following LMS – cooperation with universities, developing language plan, investments in company's language development, lost contracts due to lack of language skills, as well as statistical data about exporting and importing activities of SMEs are not part of the research in comparison to the research conducted by Rižnar and Rybníček (2017). On the other hand, this thesis's research deals with other LMS which are not included in the study of Slovenian and Austrian SMEs.

As there is no former research dealing with the Slovak implementation of LMS, the data cannot be compared as it is in the case of the Austrian sample. Only study dealing with LMS in Slovakia is including just 3 LMS and the languages used in communication with stakeholders, using a small sample of 14 respondents (Holúbeková & Fördösová, 2017). This paper looks at the language trainings within the premises and outside - 73 % respondents work for a company offering language training paid by the company and 27 % have to pay the language training themselves. In this survey 16 % of respondents working in Slovakia have the possibility to take a language training paid by the employees as common practice and additional 14 % as exceptional practice. The trainings paid by a company are common in 20 % of companies and in additional 21 % of SMEs they are an exceptional practice. The last LMS measured by Holúbeková and Fördösová (2017) are the internships abroad, but these are not implemented in any company where the 14 respondents work. In this thesis's survey 19 % of respondents working in Slovakia reported that they are encouraged to participate in mobility programmes as common practice and additional 16 % as exceptional practice. From the same sample 15 % say that internships abroad and buddy programmes are commonly offered by their SME and additional 17 % report it as exceptional practice.

When comparing LMS implementation of Austrian and Slovakian SMEs, it cannot be said automatically that one country implements more LMS as the other. As inferential statistics indicates there are no significant differences between the two countries. However, some LMS are more often implemented in one country than in the other. This can be also affected by other factors than the country – the sector, the size of the company, the international presence,

financial situation, and others. Even though the reasons may be different, some more visible changes between the groups are in the following cases. Firstly, Austrian SMEs implement adaptation of packaging of products to various languages much more often than Slovak ones. The same is observable in case of recruitment of employees with different language skills and cultural backgrounds. In case of all other LMS, the differences between the two countries are minimal. The findings of the research show that most companies hire native speakers and often require additional language skills in the hiring process. This supports the findings of earlier research, which states that there is an increasing demand for various language skills in all professions worldwide (Martinaj, 2023, p. 55) However, it is interesting that the least used LMS are the language training programmes, language certification, cultural trainings, and internships abroad, which could bring new perspectives, skills and experiences to the employees (European Commission, 2011, p. 19). As also the respondents mention in the open question, concretely these LMS are often missed by them and wish they would be added as they would bring benefits to them and the company (Martinaj, 2023, p. 70).

Figure 27 Subjective ranking of LMS based on employee evaluation of their importance



One question showed on Figure 27, asked the employees to subjectively evaluate the importance of LMS categories based on their previous experiences and wishes. Even though, this question is just a subjective one, it can bring some valuable insights, to what employees need, or to what they think can help their companies. Most employees think that the most important LMS is the adaptation of websites to other languages. Second place is taken by recruitment of employees with various skills (foreign language speakers and native speakers). Third most important LMS are the language trainings and certification programmes, followed

by translation of commercial and technical materials to foreign languages and adaptation of packages. The fifth LMS based on employee evaluation are cultural trainings for deeper understanding of cultures and developing cultural knowledge. This is followed by the use of translation tools and apps. The next place is taken by mobility to other countries, including internships and buddy programmes. The last, and from perspective of most employees the least important LMS is the use of professional translators and interpreters.

The statistical findings indicate that there is no significant effect between LMS implementation and employee motivation level, so the fifth hypothesis and its sub-hypothesis is rejected. After evaluating the individual effect of each LMS on motivation, statistically (marginally) significant ones are adaptation of the packaging to different languages, internship abroad / buddy programmes, recruitment of employees with knowledge of multiple languages, and the provision of language skills update to employer. As there is no research dealing with these issues, the data cannot be compared. However, most of the survey participants experienced high motivation level with an average value slightly under 5 from 6 possible points. Even though, as mentioned above some respondents think that if they would have more access to language- and culture-related trainings as well as international internships and buddy programmes, it would enhance their job satisfaction by lowering conflicts, creating better team atmosphere and working climate (Angouri, 2014, p. 3) and enabling new partnerships. As results of research signal a connection between job satisfaction and motivation - higher implementation of these LMS could also lead to increased motivation through increased job satisfaction.

5.2 Practical implications

There is still not enough research and awareness about the use of language policies and implementation of LMS (Martinaj, 2023, p. 69) in SMEs and among the employees (Bruen & Buckley, 2022, p. 29). However, LMS bring additional benefits to their companies and positively influence the employees. The main problem is that LMS originate from language policies, which are often negatively connotated, and people see it as something what is only useful and implemented in MNEs. That is why in SMEs, implementation of informal language policies is a good starting point. It could be helpful to introduce for SMEs another term instead of language policy, such as language guideline or language approach, as people perceive the term policy negatively and connect it with bureaucracy, strong rules, hierarchy, and power of MNEs.

As results indicate there are no statistically significant differences between one language policy and multilingual policy. Even though, critics of one language policy argue that it causes lack of critical resources and lowers transfer of knowledge and information, and in the meantime, hinders communication (Sanden, 2016, p. 280), this is not supported by the findings of this thesis.

SMEs in the future should implement more LMS such as language training, certifications, internships abroad and cultural trainings which are crucial source of competitive advantage on the international market. These can also increase the skills of employees. That is why it is important to understand for SMEs that even though that English as global player is more than important, it is often not enough and there is a need for multilingualism in both Central European target countries. This is also caused by the increasing diversity of nationalities and linguistic situation in SMEs, what has increased the need for multilingualism and new educational requirements (van der Worp, 2017, p. 55), as multilingualism can often turn into a competitive advantage of the firm (Talukder & Barner-Rasmussen, 2024, p. 2). Managers and HR workers should also focus more on the language skills of their employees. If they possess various languages, they should find a way how to use it for their benefit and use these valuable resources which they have in-house. On the other hand, if their employees don't have sufficient language skills, they should have the possibilities and obligations to get better and report about their progress. That is why linguistic audits, even though they are part of this research only as "provision of language skills updates to employer" are important and should not be underrated by HR and managers. Based on theoretical findings, this should bring internal benefits in reducing conflicts and misunderstandings between colleagues and on an external level broaden the scope of languages used in communication with stakeholders. These are only some of the benefits which can be seen as the returns to the investments into LMS. Moreover, even though that there is no significant effect between implementation of LMS and motivation, their implementation has a slightly positive influence on the job satisfaction of employees. Of course, not all LMS are relevant for each SME because of their field of activity and other factors that is why their relevance, and financial feasibility should be evaluated, as well as its benefits and costs. This is supported also by the statements from the open question, analysed in 5.1.1, which mentioned that more language courses and mobility programmes could be beneficial for their company, whereas others are not that important.

5.3 Limitations and suggestions for future research

There are some limitations to this research. Firstly, the sample size of 200 respondents - 130 from Slovakian SMEs and 70 from Austrian SMEs, represents only a small sample of the employees in SMEs, and there is a lack of detailed descriptions of the SMEs themselves. Due to the restricted sample (with the two conditions) a bigger sample was not possible. Secondly, most of the respondents are general employees, who don't possess the sufficient knowledge about language policies and LMS of the SMEs. This means that the responses can be too subjective and include personal perceptions and biases, instead of real practices of SMEs. Thirdly, as there are just few prior academic research papers looking at the use of LMS in SMEs in practice, there is little opportunity for data comparison, and the data of MNEs are not comparable. Fourthly, the unbalanced sample in terms of demographics can also be the cause of some biases. The same problem occurs in case of the relationship between motivation and LMS as this connection was not examined before. As the research addressed employees on various positions and not only managers and owners of SMEs, not all LMS from ELAN Study and PIMLICO Project were covered, but most of them, or at least their practices, are included either explicitly or implicitly. This leads to the fact, that this thesis can serve as a basis for further research of LMS in the target countries, as well as their impacts on motivation, but the data should not be generalised due to the formerly mentioned limitations and potential biases. Further research could contact the management or HR department of big number of SMEs and ask them about their LMS and language policies. In the next step, their general employees could be asked only about their motivation and job satisfaction. Such research would reduce the biases and would show real SME practices not just employee perception. Another limitation of research which was asking employees of various job positions, is that there is no possibility to evaluate costs, benefits, exporting or importing activities, lost business opportunities or competitive advantages of the SMEs. However, it was stated also in previous research that these with linguistic diversity associated economic evaluations, including possible losses or gains are not possible, or really hard to measure, even if professionals, managers or owners are asked (Sanden, 2016, p. 278).

For further research some more detailed studies on LMS, language policies, language fluency, communication with stakeholders, motivation and job satisfaction could be conducted. As it was mentioned before, there are many factors influencing the use of language policies in the company. In the future the impact of these factors such as company size, market presence, industry type or sector of activity could be evaluated in more detail. To get better insights how

do LMS and language policies work in the target countries, managers should be contacted, and the approaches of concrete SMEs mapped. Furthermore, to evaluate the relationship between motivation and LMS practices, some mini scenarios as vignette studies could be created for each LMS. This could help respondents to evaluate their motivation level based on the scenario. As well as measuring motivation level of employees of same companies with same LMS could help to understand if and how does implementation of LMS affect employee motivation and job satisfaction of individuals. Moreover, research should also deal with the meaning of language policies also in smaller institutions and organisations to improve communication efficiency with stakeholders, mostly when the employees of this company have various language skills and national or cultural background. Furthermore, the role of local languages, English, other languages, and multilingual approach should be analysed in more detail. It remains unclear, how many languages are essential. As well as it remains unclear where the turning point is when the inclusion of language strategy would cause more benefits than costs (Talukder & Barner-Rasmussen, 2024, p. 3). Looking at direct advantages and disadvantages of the use of different languages and approaches could also bring some more insights. All formerly mentioned topics, could be observed in various countries, in various industry types, over time, to compare data before and after potential changes. Moreover, the influences and effects of demographical and technological changes and developments could be included to understand tendencies and predict potential future developments of LMS, and language policies in SMEs.

6 Conclusion

The first part of the research analyses the impact of languages and language policies on stakeholder communication, including the comparison of single language policies, such as local language policy, English-only approach, or other common company language policy and multilingual approach. The research aims to fill the gap which is caused by limited knowledge about language-related practices in SMEs and the implementation of LMS derived from the European Commission's 2011 PIMLICO Project. The research aimed to examine the extent of implementation of Language Management Strategies in Austrian and Slovakian SMEs and their impact on employee motivation. At the same time, the practices of SMEs in the two target countries are compared. There is also no other research examining the influence of LMS on employee motivation and job satisfaction what represents one part of this research. The thesis aims to connect the theoretical knowledge and the practical application of LMS and language policies in the SMEs of the two target countries.

The findings indicate that SMEs in both target countries have various attitudes towards languages. Even though some companies have a language policy, the majority of them do not have an official language policy or the employees are not aware of that. Many companies implement at least a few LMS, however, there is a place for improvement. There is also a lack of awareness about these practices. Furthermore, many companies employ individuals with fluent language skills, but these are not used as a competitive advantage in the company. The reason for that is that managers of SMEs are often passive or not able to use the whole potential of the company – even though, employees have language skills, the company is not using them. On the other hand, some companies have employees who do not have sufficient language skills in languages that are used in communication with stakeholders, which can lead to misunderstandings.

The statistical evaluation of empirical evidence does not present any significant differences in employee motivation levels between companies with a high number of implemented LMS and with a lower number or no implementation of LMS. There were also no significant differences between Austrian and Slovakian SMEs and their frequency of implementation of LMS. Furthermore, the companies with single language policy and multilingual policy achieved equal scores in communication with stakeholders. The only statistically significant finding is that there exists a relationship between the international presence of the company and language-related hiring requirements. Despite the fact, that statistically the majority of null hypotheses

were accepted, this research contributes with its detailed overview of language-related practices in Austrian and Slovakian SMEs. Moreover, it presents the first attempt to measure if and how the implementation of LMS influences employee motivation. While this study, presents valuable insights, its findings are limited by sample size, and time, and do not consider all factors which may have an influence. Future research could broadly analyse the effect that LMS have.

As globalisation continues and other social, political, economic, and technological changes and challenges emerge, linguistic diversity is more and more common also in SMEs of small European states, such as Austria and Slovakia. These results in increasing demand for languages and regulations of their use and implementation. The main reason for their importance is that good language management can have a positive effect on the company by gaining a competitive advantage and its stakeholders. That is why languages are much more than just a tool or commodity, they are a necessary strategic asset, that can decide about the SME's success or failure.

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Appendix

Questionnaire in English distributed by MS Forms

Master's Thesis survey

If you have any questions, do not hesitate to contact me: a12023802@unet.univie.ac.at

For this research it is important that you work or used to work for Austrian or Slovakian SME

Dear respondent,

I am working on my Master's Thesis on Language Management Strategies and language policies. I would greatly appreciate your assistance in my research by answering a few questions based on your recent experience **in a small or medium-sized enterprise (SME) in Austria or Slovakia.**

Please note the following:

- If you have never worked in Austria or Slovakia, or if you are employed by a large company and never worked for an SME, kindly refrain from filling out this questionnaire.

All responses to this survey will be kept strictly confidential. **Individual answers will be anonymized and aggregated for analysis.** Your personal information will not be shared with any third parties and will only be used for the purpose of this research. By filling out the survey, you consent to these conditions.

The questionnaire will take approximately 10 minutes to complete. Thank you for your time and participation.

Country where you work (or have worked in the past)

- ☐ Austria
- ☐ Slovakia

Type of organisation

- ☐ Micro (0-9 employees)
- ☐ Small (10-49 employees)
- ☐ Medium (50-249 employees)

A **language policy** is a set of guidelines governing language use within a company to ensure clear communication and prevent misunderstandings - it includes hiring criteria, use of languages in your workplaces and other language regulations.

Is there a language policy in your company?

- ☐ Yes, there is a formal, written document
- ☐ Yes, there is an informal, unwritten policy (a general agreement on the use of languages that is known to all employees)
- ☐ I am not aware of that
- ☐ No, there is no language policy

Which language(s) is (are) used in your company as official/formal (part of the language policy)? In case of "Other" please specify.

- ☐ Local language (language of the country where you work)
- ☐ English
- ☐ More languages depending on the situation
- ☐ Other:

Does your company operate internationally?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

Which languages does your company require as a hiring criterion for employees? In case of "Other" please specify. Multiple answers are possible.

- ☐ National / local language (German in Austria)
- ☐ National / local language (Slovak in Slovakia)
- ☐ English
- ☐ German (in Slovakia)
- ☐ Other:

In which languages you communicate with your colleagues informally on your workplace? In case of "Other" please specify. Multiple answers are possible.

- ☐ German
- ☐ Slovak
- ☐ English
- ☐ Hungarian
- ☐ Turkish
- ☐ Czech
- ☐ Russian
- ☐ Ukrainian
- ☐ Serbian
- ☐ Croatian
- ☐ Slovenian
- ☐ Polish
- ☐ Other:

Which languages are expected to be used in communications with customers at your company? In case of "Other" please specify. Multiple answers are possible.

- ☐ German
- ☐ Slovak
- ☐ English
- ☐ French
- ☐ Russian
- ☐ Spanish
- ☐ Italian
- ☐ Other:

Which languages are expected to be used in communications with business partners (suppliers, partners, investors,...) at your company? In case of "Other" please specify. Multiple answers are possible.

- ☐ German
- ☐ Slovak
- ☐ English
- ☐ French
- ☐ Russian
- ☐ Spanish
- ☐ Italian
- ☐ Other:

How would you rate the clarity of your communications with:

	Very unclear	Unclear	Somewhat unclear	Somewhat clear	Clear	Very clear
Colleagues	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Customers	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Other business partners	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

How often do you experience misunderstandings due to linguistic barriers with your:

	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Usually	Always
Colleagues	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Customers	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Other business partners	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

How would you assess overall quality of communication with:

	Very poor	Poor	Neutral	Good	Very good	Excellent
Colleagues	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Customers	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Other business partners	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Please consider whether the following Language Management Strategies are used in your company, and if yes, how frequently?

	Common practice	Exceptional practice	Non-existent	Not relevant for company
Adaptation of the packaging of products to different languages	☐	☐	☐	☐
Cultural trainings	☐	☐	☐	☐
Encouragement of mobility to other countries	☐	☐	☐	☐
Internships abroad/ Buddy programmes	☐	☐	☐	☐
Language certification	☐	☐	☐	☐
Language training (paid by employees)	☐	☐	☐	☐
Language training (paid by the company)	☐	☐	☐	☐
Multilingual website/ Adaptation of website To other languages	☐	☐	☐	☐
Provision of language skills update to employer	☐	☐	☐	☐

Recruitment of

employees with the knowledge of several languages	☐	☐	☐	☐
Recruitment of employees with cultural knowledge (in case of international activities)	☐	☐	☐	☐
Recruitment of native speakers	☐	☐	☐	☐
Translation of commercial, sales or technical materials, e-commerce into foreign languages	☐	☐	☐	☐
Use of professional translators or interpreters	☐	☐	☐	☐
Use of translation tools and apps	☐	☐	☐	☐

Rank the categories of language management strategies listed in the question above from the most important to the least important from your perspective. Grasp each item and drag it up or down.

Adaptation of website to other languages
Cultural training and cultural understanding (recruiting employees with cultural knowledge)
Language trainings and certification
Mobility to other countries, internship, and buddy programme
Use of professional translators and interpreters
Recruitment of employees with various language skills (native speakers, foreign language speakers)
Use of translation tools and apps
Translation to foreign languages of commercial, sales, technical materials + adaptation of packing

Motivation and job satisfaction

Please indicate your level of satisfaction with the following job aspects:

	Strongly Dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Somewhat dissatisfied	Somewhat satisfied	Satisfied	Strongly satisfied
because I derive much pleasure from learning new things	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I do my work for the satisfaction I experience from taking on interesting challenges	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

I do my work for
the satisfaction
I experience when
I am successful at
Doing difficult tasks

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

Please indicate the extent to which you are in agreement with the following statements:

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree
The spirit of cooperation among my co-workers	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
The friendliness of my co-workers	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
The recognition I get for the work I do	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
The way I am noticed when I do a good job	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
The way my co-workers get along with each other	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
The way they usually tell me when I do my job well	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Which gender do you identify with?

- ☐ Male
- ☐ Female
- ☐ Non-binary
- ☐ Prefer not to say

What is your age?

What is your achieved education level?

- ☐ Secondary education
- ☐ High school diploma (Matura or Abitur)
- ☐ Bachelor's degree
- ☐ Master's degree
- ☐ PhD degree

Which languages do you speak fluently (at least B1/B2 level)? In case of "Other" please specify. Multiple answers are possible.

- ☐ German

- ☐ Slovak
- ☐ English
- ☐ French
- ☐ Russian
- ☐ Spanish
- ☐ Italian
- ☐ Other:

What is your nationality? In case of "Other" please specify.

- ☐ Austrian
- ☐ Slovak
- ☐ Other:

What is your current or latest job position in the target country?

- ☐ Entry position
- ☐ Professional position
- ☐ Managerial position
- ☐ Owner

In how many SMEs did you work during your professional life?

- ☐ 1
- ☐ 2-4
- ☐ 5 and more

I would be grateful if you could fill out this open-ended question too.

If your company has a language policy: Do you find it useful? Would you change anything?

If your company does not have a language policy: Why do you think your company does not have one? Do you think it would be useful to implement it?

Thank you for filling out the survey 😊
Have a nice day.

Questionnaire in German distributed by MS Forms

Masterarbeit Umfrage

Falls Sie Fragen haben sollten, können Sie mich gerne kontaktieren: a12023802@unet.univie.ac.at

Wichtig: eine Berufserfahrung in einem österreichischen oder slowakischen KMU

Sehr geehrte(r) Umfrageteilnehmer(in),

ich arbeite an meiner Masterarbeit über Sprachmanagementstrategien und Sprachrichtlinien für Unternehmen. Ich wäre Ihnen sehr dankbar, wenn Sie mir bei meiner Forschung helfen könnten, indem Sie mir einige Fragen beantworten, die auf Ihren tatsächlichen Erfahrungen **in einem kleinen oder mittleren Unternehmen (KMU) in Österreich oder in der Slowakei basieren**.

Bitte beachten Sie die folgenden Hinweise:

- Wenn Sie noch nie in Österreich oder der Slowakei gearbeitet haben, oder wenn Sie in einem großen Unternehmen beschäftigt sind und noch nie in einem KMU gearbeitet haben, füllen Sie diesen Fragebogen bitte nicht aus.

Alle in dieser Umfrage gegebenen Antworten sind streng vertraulich. Die einzelnen Antworten werden **anonymisiert und zu Analysezwecken zusammengefasst**. Ihre persönlichen Daten werden nicht an Dritte weitergegeben und werden nur für die Zwecke dieser Umfrage verwendet. Wenn Sie die Umfrage ausfüllen, erklären Sie sich mit diesen Bedingungen einverstanden.

Das Ausfüllen der Umfrage wird etwa 10 Minuten in Anspruch nehmen. Wir danken Ihnen für Ihre Zeit und Ihre Teilnahme.

Land, in dem Sie arbeiten (oder in der Vergangenheit gearbeitet haben)

- ☐ Österreich
- ☐ Slowakei

Typ des Unternehmens

- ☐ Kleinunternehmen (0-9 Mitarbeiter/innen)
- ☐ kleines Unternehmen (10-49 Mitarbeiter/innen)
- ☐ mittleres Unternehmen (50-249 Mitarbeiter/innen)

Die Sprachenrichtlinie ist eine Reihe von Leitlinien, die die Verwendung von Sprachen im Unternehmen regeln, um eine klare Kommunikation zu gewährleisten und Missverständnissen vorzubeugen - sie umfasst Einstellungskriterien, die Verwendung von Sprachen am Arbeitsplatz und andere Sprachregelungen.

Gibt es in Ihrem Unternehmen eine Sprachrichtlinie?

- ☐ Ja, es gibt ein formelles schriftliches Dokument
- ☐ Ja, es gibt eine informelle, nicht geschriebene Sprachrichtlinie (allgemeine Vereinbarung über die Verwendung von Sprachen, die den Mitarbeitern/innen bekannt sind)
- ☐ Mir ist es nicht bewusst
- ☐ Nein, es gibt keine Sprachrichtlinien

Welche Sprache(n) wird/werden in Ihrem Unternehmen als offizielle Sprache verwendet (Teil der Sprachenrichtlinie)? Falls „Andere“, bitte angeben.

- ☐ Lokale Sprache (die Sprache des Landes, in dem Sie arbeiten)
- ☐ Englisch
- ☐ Mehrere Sprachen je nach Situation
- ☐ Andere:

Ist Ihr Unternehmen international tätig?

- ☐ Ja
- ☐ Nein

Welche Sprachen sind für Ihr Unternehmen ein Einstellungskriterium? Wenn Sie „Andere“ antworten, geben Sie dies bitte an. Mehrfachnennungen sind möglich.

- ☐ Landessprache / lokale Sprache (Deutsch in Österreich)
- ☐ Landessprache / lokale Sprache (Slowakisch in der Slowakei)
- ☐ Englisch
- ☐ Deutsch (in der Slowakei)
- ☐ Andere:

Welche Sprachen verwenden Sie für die informelle Kommunikation mit Kollegen am Arbeitsplatz? Wenn Sie „Andere“ antworten, geben Sie dies bitte an. Mehrfachnennungen sind möglich.

- ☐ Deutsch
- ☐ Slowakisch
- ☐ Englisch
- ☐ Ungarisch
- ☐ Türkisch
- ☐ Tschechisch
- ☐ Russisch
- ☐ Ukrainisch
- ☐ Serbisch
- ☐ Kroatisch
- ☐ Slowenisch
- ☐ Polnisch
- ☐ Andere:

Welche Sprachen werden in Ihrem Unternehmen für die Kommunikation mit Kunden verwendet?
Falls „Andere“, bitte angeben. Mehrfachnennungen sind möglich.

- ☐ Deutsch
- ☐ Slowakisch
- ☐ Englisch
- ☐ Französisch
- ☐ Russisch
- ☐ Spanisch
- ☐ Italienisch
- ☐ Andere:

Which languages are expected to be used in communications with business partners (suppliers, partners, investors,...) at your company? In case of "Other" please specify. Multiple answers are possible.

- ☐ Deutsch
- ☐ Slowakisch
- ☐ Englisch
- ☐ Französisch
- ☐ Russisch
- ☐ Spanisch
- ☐ Italienisch
- ☐ Andere:

Wie beurteilen Sie die Klarheit der Kommunikation mit:

	Sehr unklar	Unklar	Ein bisschen unklar	Ein bisschen klar	Klar	Sehr klar
Mitarbeiter/innen	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Kunden/innen	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
andere Geschäfts- partnern/innen	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Wie oft kommt es zu Missverständnissen aufgrund von Sprachbarrieren mit Ihren:

	Nie	Selten	Manchmal	Gelegentlich	Gewöhnlich	Immer
Mitarbeiter/innen	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Kunden/innen	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
andere Geschäfts- partnern/innen	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Wie beurteilen Sie die allgemeine Qualität der Kommunikation mit:

	Sehr schlecht	Schlecht	Neutral	Gut	Sehr gut	Excellent
Mitarbeiter/innen	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Kunden/innen	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Andere Geschäfts- ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

partnern/innen

Überlegen Sie bitte, ob die folgenden Sprachmanagementstrategien in Ihrem Unternehmen eingesetzt werden und, wenn ja, wie?

	Gängige Praxis	Außergewöhnliche Praxis	Nicht existierend	Nicht relevant
Anpassung von Produktverpackungen in verschiedenen Sprachen	☐	☐	☐	☐
Schulung über andere Kulturen	☐	☐	☐	☐
Förderung der Mobilität in anderen Ländern	☐	☐	☐	☐
Auslandspraktika/ Buddy- Programme	☐	☐	☐	☐
Sprachzertifizierung	☐	☐	☐	☐
Sprachkurse (von Mitarbeitern/innen bezahlt)	☐	☐	☐	☐
Sprachkurse (vom Unternehmen bezahlt)	☐	☐	☐	☐
Mehrsprachige Webseite/ Anpassung der Webseite an andere Sprachen	☐	☐	☐	☐
Bereitstellung von aktualisierten Sprachkenntnissen für den Arbeitgeber	☐	☐	☐	☐
Einstellung von mehrsprachigen Mitarbeitern/innen	☐	☐	☐	☐
Einstellung von Mitarbeitern/innen mit Kenntnissen über andere Kulturen (für internationale Aktivitäten)	☐	☐	☐	☐
Einstellung von Mitarbeitern/innen, deren Muttersprache des Unternehmens ist	☐	☐	☐	☐
Übersetzung von Geschäfts-, Verkaufs- oder technischem	☐	☐	☐	☐

Material, E-Commerce
In Fremdsprachen

Einsatz von professionellen Übersetzern oder Dolmetschern

☐
☐
☐
☐

Verwendung von Übersetzungstools und -applikationen

☐
☐
☐
☐

Ordnen Sie die in der obigen Frage aufgelisteten Kategorien von Sprachmanagementstrategien von der aus Ihrer Sicht wichtigsten zur unwichtigsten. Greifen Sie jedes Element und ziehen Sie es nach oben oder unten.

Anpassung der Webseite an andere Sprachen
Kulturelle Bildung und kulturelles Verständnis (Einstellung von Personal mit kulturellen Kenntnissen)
Sprachkurse und Zertifizierung
Mobilität in anderen Ländern, Auslandspraktika und Buddy-Programm
Einsatz von professionellen Übersetzern und Dolmetschern
Einstellung von Personal mit unterschiedlichen Sprachkenntnissen (Muttersprachler/innen, Fremdsprachler/innen)
Verwendung von Übersetzungstools und -applikationen
Übersetzung von Geschäfts-, Verkaufs- und technischem Material in Fremdsprachen + Anpassung von Verpackungen

Motivation und Zufriedenheit am Arbeitsplatz

Bitte geben Sie an, inwieweit Sie den folgenden Aussagen zustimmen:

	Ich stimme überhaupt nicht zu	Ich stimme nicht zu	Ich stimme nicht ganz zu	Ich stimme einigermmaßen zu	Ich stimme zu	Ich stimme voll zu
Ich mache meinen Job, weil es mir Spaß macht, neue Dinge zu lernen	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Ich mache meine Arbeit wegen der Befriedigung, die sich aus der Bewältigung interessanter Herausforderungen ergibt	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Ich mache meine Arbeit wegen der Befriedigung, die ich erhalte, wenn ich bei anspruchsvollen Aufgaben erfolgreich bin	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Bitte geben Sie an, wie zufrieden Sie mit den folgenden Aspekten Ihrer Arbeit sind:

Sehr un- Unzufrieden Teilweise Teilweise Zufrieden Sehr

	zufrieden		unzufrieden	zufrieden		zufrieden	
Die Art der Zusammenarbeit Zwischen meinen Mitarbeitern/innen	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Die Freundlichkeit meiner Mitar- beiter/innen	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Die Anerkennung, die ich für meine Arbeit erhalte	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Die Art und Weise, wie ich auffalle, wenn ich gute Arbeit leiste	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Die Art und Weise, wie meine Mitar- beiter/innen miteinander zurechtkommen	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Die Art und Weise, wie sie mich wissen lassen, dass ich meine Arbeit gut mache	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Mit welchem Geschlecht identifizieren Sie sich?

- ☐ Männlich
- ☐ Weiblich
- ☐ Nicht-binär
- ☐ Ich möchte nicht erwähnen

Wie alt sind Sie??

Welchen Bildungsgrad haben Sie?

- ☐ Sekundarbildung
- ☐ Sekundarschulabschluss mit Abitur oder Matura
- ☐ Bachelorgrad
- ☐ Mastergrad
- ☐ Dokortitel

Welche Sprachen sprechen Sie fließend (mindestens auf B1/B2-Niveau)? Falls „Andere“, bitte angeben. Mehrfachnennungen sind möglich.

- ☐ Deutsch
- ☐ Slowakisch
- ☐ Englisch
- ☐ Französisch
- ☐ Russisch

- ☐ Spanisch
- ☐ Italienisch
- ☐ Andere:

Welche Nationalität haben Sie? Wenn Sie „Andere“ antworten, geben Sie dies bitte an.

- ☐ Österreichische
- ☐ Slowakische
- ☐ Andere:

Was ist Ihre derzeitige oder letzte Beschäftigung im Zielland?

- ☐ Einstiegsposition
- ☐ Professionelle Position
- ☐ Führungsposition
- ☐ Besitzer/in

In wie vielen KMU haben Sie in Ihrem Berufsleben gearbeitet?

- ☐ 1
- ☐ 2-4
- ☐ 5 und mehr

Ich wäre Ihnen dankbar, wenn Sie auch diese offene Frage beantworten würden.

Wenn Ihr Unternehmen eine Sprachrichtlinie hat: Finden Sie sie nützlich? Würden Sie etwas daran ändern?

Wenn Ihr Unternehmen keine Sprachenrichtlinie hat: Warum glauben Sie, dass es in Ihrem Unternehmen keine gibt? Wäre es Ihrer Meinung nach sinnvoll, eine solche einzuführen?

Danke, dass Sie meine Umfrage ausgefüllt haben 😊
Ich wünsche Ihnen einen schönen Tag.

Questionnaire in Slovak distributed by MS Forms

Prieskum magisterskej diplomovej práce

Ak máte akékoľvek otázky, neváhajte ma kontaktovať: a12023802@unet.univie.ac.at

Je dôležité, aby ste mali pracovné skúsenosti v slovenskom alebo rakúskom MSP

Vážený respondent / Vážená respondentka,
pracujem na svojej magisterskej práci na tému Stratégie jazykového manažmentu a jazykových smerníc podniku. Veľmi by som ocenila Vašu pomoc pri mojom výskume, zodpovedaním niekoľkých otázok, ktoré vychádzajú z Vašich aktuálnych skúseností **v malom alebo strednom podniku (MSP) na Slovensku alebo v Rakúsku.**

Prosím, zohľadnite nasledujúce podmienky:

- Ak ste nikdy nepracovali na Slovensku alebo v Rakúsku, alebo ak ste zamestnaní vo veľkom podniku a nikdy ste nepracovali pre MSP, prosím, aby ste tento dotazník nevyplňali.

Všetky odpovede tohto prieskumu sú prísne dôverné. **Jednotlivé odpovede budú anonymizované a agregované na účely analýzy.** Vaše osobné údaje nebudú poskytnuté žiadnej tretej strane a budú použité len na účely tohto prieskumu.

Vyplnenie dotazníka Vám zaberie približne 10 minút. Ďakujem Vám za Váš čas a účasť.

Krajina, v ktorej pracujete (alebo ste pracovali)

- ☐ Rakúsko
- ☐ Slovensko

Druh organizácie

- ☐ Mikro (0-9 zamestnancov)
- ☐ Malá (10-49 zamestnancov)
- ☐ Stredná (50-249 zamestnancov)

Jazyková smernica je súbor usmernení, ktorými sa riadi používanie jazykov v spoločnosti s cieľom zabezpečiť jasnú komunikáciu a predchádzať nedorozumeniam - zahŕňa kritériá prijímania zamestnancov, používanie jazykov na pracoviskách a ďalšie jazykové predpisy.

Existuje vo Vašej spoločnosti jazyková smernica?

- ☐ Áno, existuje formálny písomný dokument
- ☐ Áno, existuje neformálna, nepísaná smernica (všeobecná dohoda o používaní jazykov, ktorá je známa všetkým zamestnancom)
- ☐ Nie som si toho vedomý/á
- ☐ Nie, neexistuje žiadna jazyková smernica

Ktorý(é) jazyk(y) sa vo Vašej spoločnosti používa(jú) ako oficiálny(e)? V prípade odpovede „Iné“ uveďte.

- ☐ Miestny jazyk (jazyk krajiny, v ktorej pracujete)
- ☐ Angličtina
- ☐ Viacero jazykov v závislosti od situácie
- ☐ Iné:

Pôsobí Vaša spoločnosť medzinárodne?

- ☐ Áno
- ☐ Nie

Ktoré jazyky vyžaduje Vaša spoločnosť ako kritérium pre prijímanie zamestnancov? V prípade odpovede „Iné“ uveďte. Je možné uviesť viacero odpovedí.

- ☐ Národný / miestny jazyk (nemčina v Rakúsku)
- ☐ Národný / miestny jazyk (slovenčina na Slovensku)
- ☐ Angličtina
- ☐ Nemčina (na Slovensku)
- ☐ Iné:

V akých jazykoch komunikujete s kolegami na pracovisku neformálne? V prípade odpovede „Iné“ uveďte. Je možné uviesť viacero odpovedí.

- ☐ Nemčina
- ☐ Slovenčina
- ☐ Angličtina
- ☐ Maďarčina
- ☐ Turečtina
- ☐ Čeština
- ☐ Ruština
- ☐ Ukrajínčina

- ☐ Srbsčina
- ☐ Chorvátčina
- ☐ Slovinčina
- ☐ Poľština
- ☐ Iné:

Ktoré jazyky sa používajú pri komunikácii so zákazníkmi vo Vašej spoločnosti? V prípade „Iné“ uveďte. Je možné uviesť viacero odpovedí.

- ☐ Nemčina
- ☐ Slovenčina
- ☐ Angličtina
- ☐ Francúzština
- ☐ Ruština
- ☐ Španielčina
- ☐ Taliančina
- ☐ Iné:

Ktoré jazyky sa používajú pri komunikácii s obchodnými partnermi (dodávateľmi, partnermi, investormi,...) vo vašej spoločnosti? V prípade odpovede „Iné“ uveďte. Je možné uviesť viacero odpovedí.

- ☐ Nemčina
- ☐ Slovenčina
- ☐ Angličtina
- ☐ Francúzština
- ☐ Ruština
- ☐ Španielčina
- ☐ Taliančina
- ☐ Iné:

Ako hodnotíte zrozumiteľnosť komunikácie s:

	Veľmi nejasná	Nejasná	Trochu nejasná	Trochu jasná	Jasná	Veľmi jasná
Spolupracovníkmi	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Zákazníkmi	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Inými obchodnými partnermi	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Ako často sa stretávate s nedorozumeniami kvôli jazykovým bariéram s Vašími:

	Nikdy	Zriedkakedy	Niekedy	Občas	Zvyčajne	Vždy
Spolupracovníkmi	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Zákazníkmi	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Inými obchodnými partnermi	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Ako hodnotíte celkovú kvalitu komunikácie s:

	Veľmi zlá	Zlá	Neutrálna	Dobrá	Veľmi dobrá	Skvelá
Spolupracovníkmi	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Zákazníkmi	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Inými obchodnými partnermi	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Zvážte, prosím, či sa vo Vašej spoločnosti používajú nasledujúce stratégie jazykového manažmentu, a ak áno, akým spôsobom?

	Bežný postup	Výnimočný postup	Neexistujúce	Nie je relevantné pre firmu
Adaptácia obalov produktov do	☐	☐	☐	☐

rôznych jazykov

Školenia o iných kultúrach	☐	☐	☐	☐
Podpora mobility do iných krajín	☐	☐	☐	☐
Stáže v zahraničí/ Buddy programy	☐	☐	☐	☐
Jazyková certifikácia	☐	☐	☐	☐
Jazykové kurzy (hradené zamestnancami)	☐	☐	☐	☐
Jazykové kurzy (hradené spoločnosťou)	☐	☐	☐	☐
Viacjazyčná webová stránka/ Prispôsobenie webovej stránky iným jazykom	☐	☐	☐	☐
Poskytnutie aktualizácie jazykových zručností zamestnávateľovi	☐	☐	☐	☐
Prijímanie zamestancov so znalosťou viacerých jazykov	☐	☐	☐	☐
Prijímanie zamestnancov so znalosťami iných kultúr (v prípade medzinárodných aktivít)	☐	☐	☐	☐
Prijímanie ľudí, ktorých materinský jazyk je jazyk spoločnosti	☐	☐	☐	☐
Preklad obchodných, predajných alebo technických materiálov, E-commerce do cudzích jazykov	☐	☐	☐	☐
Využívanie profesionálnych prekladateľov alebo tlmočníkov	☐	☐	☐	☐
Používanie prekladateľských nástrojov a aplikácií	☐	☐	☐	☐

Zorad'te kategórie stratégií jazykového manažmentu uvedené v otázke vyššie od najdôležitejších po najmenej dôležité z Vášho pohľadu. Uchopte jednotlivé položky a potiahnite ich nahor alebo nadol.

Adaptácia webovej stránky do iných jazykov
Kultúrne vzdelávanie a kultúrne porozumenie (prijímanie zamestnancov so znalosťami o kultúre)
Jazykové kurzy a certifikácia
Mobilita do iných krajín, stáže a buddy program
Využívanie profesionálnych prekladateľov a tlmočníkov Prijímanie zamestnancov s rôznymi jazykovými znalosťami (rodení hovorcovia, cudzojazyční hovorcovia)
Používanie prekladateľských nástrojov a aplikácií
Preklad obchodných, predajných a technických materiálov do cudzích jazykov + adaptácia obalov

Motivácia a spokojnosť v práci

Uved'te, nakoľko súhlasíte alebo nesúhlasíte s nasledujúcimi tvrdeniami:

	Výrazne nesúhlasím	Nesúhlasím	Trochu nesúhlasím	Trochu súhlasím	Súhlasím	Výrazne súhlasím
Svoju prácu robím, pretože ma veľmi baví učiť sa nové veci	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Svoju prácu robím pre uspokojenie, ktoré mi prináša prijímanie zaujíma- vých výziev	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Svoju prácu robím pre uspokojenie, ktoré zažívam, keď sa mi darí plniť náročné úlohy	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Uved'te úroveň spokojnosti s nasledujúcimi aspektmi práce:

	Veľmi Nespokojný/á	Nespokojný/á	Trochu nespokojný/á	Trochu spokojný/á	Spokojný/á	Veľmi spokojný/á
Spôsob spolupráce medzi mojimi spolupracovníkmi	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Priateľskosť mojich spolupracovníkov	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Uznanie, ktoré sa mi dostáva za prácu, ktorú robím	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Spôsob, akým si ma						

všimnú, keď
odvediem dobrú
prácu

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

Spôsob, akým moji
spolupracovníci
medzi sebou
vychádzajú

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

Spôsob, ktorým mi
dávajú najavo, že
robím svoju prácu
dobre

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

S ktorým pohlavím sa stotožňujete?

- ☐ Muž
- ☐ Žena
- ☐ Nebinárne
- ☐ Radšej nechcem uviesť

Aký je Váš vek?

Aká je dosiahnutá úroveň Vášho vzdelania?

- ☐ Stredoškolské vzdelanie
- ☐ Stredoškolské vzdelanie s maturitou
- ☐ Bakalársky titul
- ☐ Magisterský titul
- ☐ Doktorandský titul

Ktorými jazykmi hovoríte plynule (aspoň na úrovni B1/B2)? V prípade odpovede „Iné“ uveďte. Je možné uviesť viacero odpovedí.

- ☐ Nemčina
- ☐ Slovenčina
- ☐ Angličtina
- ☐ Francúzština
- ☐ Ruština
- ☐ Španielčina
- ☐ Taliančina
- ☐ Iné:

Aká je Vaša národnosť? V prípade odpovede „Iné“ uveďte.

- ☐ Rakúska
- ☐ Slovenská
- ☐ Iné:

Aké je Vaše súčasné alebo najaktuálnejšie pracovné miesto v cieľovej krajine?

- ☐ Vstupná pozícia
- ☐ Profesionálna pozícia
- ☐ Manažérska pozícia
- ☐ Majiteľ/ka

V koľkých MSP ste pracovali počas svojho profesionálneho života?

- ☐ 1

- ☐ 2-4
- ☐ 5 a viac

Budem Vám vďačná, ak vyplníte aj túto otvorenú otázku.

Ak má Vaša spoločnosť jazykovú smernicu: Považujete ju za užitočnú? Zmenili by ste niečo?

Ak vaša spoločnosť nemá jazykovú smernicu: Prečo si myslíte, že ju Vaša spoločnosť nemá? Myslíte si, že by bolo užitočné ju zaviesť?

Ďakujem Vám za vyplnenie dotazníka 😊

Prajem vám pekný deň.

Best-practice of Austrian SME: Paltentaler Minerals

Best-practice example of Austrian SME based on PIMLICO Project: Paltentaler Minerals

Paltentaler Minerals is an SME with less than 20 employees. It is a family firm that operates in mining and quarries industry. Their main activities include processing plants and supplies and processes central raw material for branches as construction, agriculture, or decorative applications. Paltentaler Minerals achieves a yearly turnover of 3 to 5 million euros. 85 % of their sales come from exporting activity. This company has common company language – English as Lingua Franca. All employees have to speak and write this language. If employees need it, 2-3 hours English training per week are offered. Other commonly used languages are German, Croatian, and Serbian. Other languages in portfolio are French, however, skills have to be improved and Slovak due to business opportunities in Slovakia. Intercultural training is offered in Italian, Slovak, Hungarian, Polish, English, Chinese, Egyptian, Romanian, Spanish and Turkish. Other, LMS implemented is the recruitment of German and English native speakers. Other types of trainings focus on team building, personal coaching, specialist courses for staff, extensive marketing, and participation in research. Local agents are employed in languages as German, Dutch, Slovak, Hungarian, Danish, Swedish, Slovenian, Czech, Bulgarian, Polish, and Turkish, what increases the volume trade. Local agents are crucial in cooperation with South America and North Africa. Other implemented is the use of external translators mostly used in contracts proofreading and translation of promotional materials. Moreover, the company cooperates with institutions as TU-Graz and FH Joanneum. This model has brought success to the company and enabled its expansion (European Commission, 2011, pp. 120-121).

Best-practice of Slovakian SME: Slovmag

Best-practice example of Slovakian SME based on PIMLICO Project: Slovmag

Slovmag is a medium-sized enterprise operating in mining and quarrying. The company's production program is mining and processing of magnesite, production, and sale of basic refractory products. 95 % of their sales come from exporting activity. The company started to implement LMS due to the need to improve its foreign language skills and systematise the company's records of language skills. The language strategy was developed by sales departments and HR in cooperation with management. The organisational efficiency improved immediately. Everybody has to speak at least one foreign language. Staff can communicate in foreign languages, such as Russian, English, Czech and German, as the top markets for the company are Germany, Russia, Austria and the US. Improved language skills led to a lower need of external translators and improved internal communication. Translators are used for Swedish, French, and Turkish. However, in its foreign trade Slovmag has encountered many intercultural problems, including different interpretations of contracts and need to adjust to foreign banking customs. That is why the company contacts the chamber of commerce in the target country prior to actual trade. In this company also local agents and native speakers are crucial, mostly while operating in the Russian market. They are also used for English and German markets. Moreover, secondment schemes have been set up with Russia and student placements with Slovakia. The company also has a multilingual website with translations in English, German and Russian – which are the main target markets (European Commission, 2011, p. 124).

Reliability analysis of communication scales

Clarity of communication - Overall							
Replications ($\alpha = 0.83$)	Very unclear	Unclear	Somewhat unclear	Somewhat clear	Clear	Very clear	Total
with colleagues	4 2.00%	2 1.00%	10 5.00%	19 9.50%	72 36.00%	93 46.50%	200 100%
with customers	3 1.50%	2 1.00%	3 1.50%	24 12.00%	117 58.50%	51 25.50%	200 100%
with other business partners	2 1.00%	3 1.50%	4 2.00%	23 11.50%	113 56.50%	55 27.50%	200 100%
Clarity of communication - Austria							
Replications ($\alpha = 0.78$)	Very unclear	Unclear	Somewhat unclear	Somewhat clear	Clear	Very clear	Total
with colleagues	1 1.43%	1 1.43%	5 7.14%	11 15.71%	24 34.29%	28 40.00%	70 100%
with customers	0 0.00%	0 0.00%	1 1.43%	12 17.14%	37 52.86%	20 28.57%	70 100%
with other business partners	0 0.00%	2 2.86%	0 0.00%	12 17.14%	30 42.86%	26 37.14%	70 100%

Clarity of communication - Slovakia							
Replications ($\alpha = 0.85$)	Very unclear	Unclear	Somewhat unclear	Somewhat clear	Clear	Very clear	Total
with colleagues	3 2.31%	1 0.77%	5 3.85%	8 6.15%	48 36.92%	65 50.00%	130 100%
with customers	3 2.31%	2 1.54%	2 1.54%	12 9.23%	80 61.54%	31 23.85%	130 100%
with other business partners	2 1.54%	1 0.77%	4 3.08%	11 8.46%	83 63.85%	29 22.31%	130 100%

Frequency of misunderstandings - Overall							
Replications ($\alpha = 0.83$)	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Usually	Always	Total
with colleagues	63 31.50%	91 45.50%	24 12.00%	17 8.50%	4 2.00%	1 0.50%	200 100%
with customers	33 16.50%	98 49.00%	50 25.00%	17 8.50%	1 0.50%	1 0.50%	200 100%
with other business partners	49 24.50%	109 54.50%	27 13.50%	13 6.50%	1 0.50%	1 0.50%	200 100%
Frequency of misunderstandings - Austria							
Replications ($\alpha = 0.83$)	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Usually	Always	Total
with colleagues	9 12.86%	36 51.43%	12 17.14%	12 17.14%	1 1.43%	0 0.00%	70 100%
with customers	5 7.14%	33 47.14%	22 31.43%	10 14.29%	0 0.00%	0 0.00%	70 100%
with other business partners	11 15.71%	37 52.86%	14 20.00%	8 11.43%	0 0.00%	0 0.00%	70 100%
Frequency of misunderstandings - Slovakia							
Replications ($\alpha = 0.82$)	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Usually	Always	Total
with colleagues	54 41.54%	55 42.31%	12 9.23%	5 3.85%	3 2.31%	1 0.77%	130 100%
with customers	28 21.54%	65 50.00%	28 21.54%	7 5.38%	1 0.77%	1 0.77%	130 100%
with other business partners	38 29.23%	72 55.38%	13 10.00%	5 3.85%	1 0.77%	1 0.77%	130 100%

Overall quality of communication - Overall							
Replications ($\alpha = 0.86$)	Very poor	Poor	Neutral	Good	Very good	Excellent	Total
with colleagues	2 1.00%	3 1.50%	22 11.00%	45 22.50%	71 35.50%	57 28.50%	200 100%
with customers	1 0.50%	2 1.00%	25 12.50%	62 31.00%	85 42.50%	25 12.50%	200 100%
with other business partners	1 0.50%	3 1.50%	24 12.00%	55 27.50%	89 44.50%	28 14.00%	200 100%
Overall quality of communication - Austria							
Replications ($\alpha = 0.86$)	Very poor	Poor	Neutral	Good	Very good	Excellent	Total
with colleagues	0 0.00%	3 4.29%	12 17.14%	23 32.86%	20 28.57%	12 17.14%	70 100%
with customers	0 0.00%	1 1.43%	9 12.86%	31 44.29%	23 32.86%	6 8.57%	70 100%
with other business partners	0 0.00%	2 2.86%	9 12.86%	26 37.14%	23 32.86%	10 14.29%	70 100%
Overall quality of communication - Slovakia							
Replications ($\alpha = 0.85$)	Very poor	Poor	Neutral	Good	Very good	Excellent	Total
with colleagues	2 1.54%	0 0.00%	10 7.69%	22 16.92%	51 39.23%	45 34.62%	130 100%
with customers	1 0.77%	1 0.77%	16 12.31%	31 23.85%	62 47.69%	19 14.62%	130 100%
with other business partners	1 0.77%	1 0.77%	15 11.54%	29 22.31%	66 50.77%	18 13.85%	130 100%

Reliability analysis of motivation and job satisfaction scales

Intrinsic motivation - Overall							
Replications ($\alpha = 0.89$)	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree	Total
I do my work because I derive much pleasure from learning new things	4 2.00%	12 6.00%	12 6.00%	40 20.00%	85 42.50%	47 23.50%	200 100%
I do my work for the satisfaction I experience from taking on interesting challenges	6 3.00%	12 6.00%	19 9.50%	41 20.50%	83 41.50%	39 19.50%	200 100%

I do my work for the satisfaction I experience when I am successful at doing difficult tasks	8	13	11	41	80	47	200
	4.00%	6.50%	5.50%	20.50%	40.00%	23.50%	100%
Intrinsic motivation - Austria							
Replications ($\alpha = 0.90$)	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree	Total
I do my work because I derive much pleasure from learning new things	2	4	3	15	31	15	70
	2.86%	5.71%	4.29%	21.43%	44.29%	21.43%	100%
I do my work for the satisfaction I experience from taking on interesting challenges	4	1	8	16	30	11	70
	5.71%	1.43%	11.43%	22.86%	42.86%	15.71%	100%
I do my work for the satisfaction I experience when I am successful at doing difficult tasks	4	4	2	14	29	17	70
	5.71%	5.71%	2.86%	20.00%	41.43%	24.29%	100%
Intrinsic motivation - Slovakia							
Replications ($\alpha = 0.89$)	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree	Total
I do my work because I derive much pleasure from learning new things	2	8	9	25	54	32	130
	1.54%	6.15%	6.92%	19.23%	41.54%	24.62%	100%
I do my work for the satisfaction I experience from taking on interesting challenges	2	11	11	25	53	28	130
	1.54%	8.46%	8.46%	19.23%	40.77%	21.54%	100%

I do my work for the satisfaction I experience when I am successful at doing difficult tasks	4	9	9	27	51	30	130
	3.08%	6.92%	6.92%	20.77%	39.23%	23.08%	100%

Job satisfaction - Overall							
Replications ($\alpha = 0.91$)	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree	
Replications ($\alpha = 0.85$)	Workplace harmony and team spirit						Total
The spirit of cooperation among my co-workers	5 2.50%	8 4.00%	12 6.00%	34 17.00%	85 42.50%	56 28.00%	200 100%
The friendliness of my co-workers	3 1.50%	4 2.00%	13 6.50%	27 13.50%	83 41.50%	70 35.00%	200 100%
The way my co-workers get along with each other	4 2.00%	5 2.50%	20 10.00%	47 23.50%	81 40.50%	43 21.50%	200 100%
Replications ($\alpha = 0.92$)	Self-esteem through recognition						Total
The recognition I get for the work I do	8 4.00%	9 4.50%	29 14.50%	42 21.00%	70 35.00%	42 21.00%	200 100%
The way I am noticed when I do a good job	8 4.00%	16 8.00%	24 12.00%	41 20.50%	70 35.00%	41 20.50%	200 100%
The way they usually tell me when I do my job well	9 4.50%	10 5.00%	17 8.50%	53 26.50%	77 38.50%	34 17.00%	200 100%
Job satisfaction - Austria							
Replications ($\alpha = 0.90$)	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree	
Replications ($\alpha = 0.78$)	Workplace harmony and team spirit						Total
The spirit of cooperation among my co-workers	2 2.86%	3 4.29%	3 4.29%	19 27.14%	25 35.71%	18 25.71%	70 100%
The friendliness of my co-workers	1 1.43%	1 1.43%	6 8.57%	13 18.57%	28 40.00%	21 30.00%	70 100%
The way my co-workers get along with each other	1 1.43%	2 2.86%	8 11.43%	17 24.29%	28 40.00%	14 20.00%	70 100%
Replications ($\alpha = 0.91$)	Self-esteem through recognition						Total
The recognition I get for the work I do	1 1.43%	2 2.86%	8 11.43%	19 27.14%	24 34.29%	16 22.86%	70 100%

The way I am noticed when I do a good job	1 1.43%	4 5.71%	5 7.14%	15 21.43%	30 42.86%	15 21.43%	70 100%
The way they usually tell me when I do my job well	1 1.43%	5 7.14%	3 4.29%	20 28.57%	27 38.57%	14 20.00%	70 100%
Job satisfaction - Slovakia							
Replications ($\alpha = 0.91$)	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree	
Replications ($\alpha = 0.88$)	Workplace harmony and team spirit						Total
The spirit of cooperation among my co-workers	3 2.31%	5 3.85%	9 6.92%	15 11.54%	60 46.15%	38 29.23%	130 100%
The friendliness of my co-workers	2 1.54%	3 2.31%	7 5.38%	14 10.77%	55 42.31%	49 37.69%	130 100%
The way my co-workers get along with each other	3 2.31%	3 2.31%	12 9.23%	30 23.08%	53 40.77%	29 22.31%	130 100%
Replications ($\alpha = 0.93$)	Self-esteem through recognition						Total
The recognition I get for the work I do	7 5.38%	7 5.38%	21 16.15%	23 17.69%	46 35.38%	26 20.00%	130 100%
The way I am noticed when I do a good job	7 5.38%	12 9.23%	19 14.62%	26 20.00%	40 30.77%	26 20.00%	130 100%
The way they usually tell me when I do my job well	8 6.15%	5 3.85%	14 10.77%	33 25.38%	50 38.46%	20 15.38%	130 100%

Implementation of Language Management Strategies

	Adaptation of the packaging of product to different languages								
	LMS1								
	<i>common practice</i>		<i>exceptional practice</i>		<i>non-existent</i>		<i>not relevant for the company</i>		<i>Total</i>
Austria	20	28.57%	10	14.29%	11	15.71%	29	41.43%	70
Slovakia	25	19.23%	15	11.54%	11	8.46%	79	60.77%	130
Total	45	22.50%	25	12.50%	22	11.00%	108	54.00%	200
	Cultural trainings								
	LMS2								
	<i>common practice</i>		<i>exceptional practice</i>		<i>non-existent</i>		<i>not relevant for the company</i>		<i>Total</i>
Austria	8	11.43%	12	17.14%	33	47.14%	17	24.29%	70
Slovakia	14	10.77%	21	16.15%	32	24.62%	63	48.46%	130
Total	22	11.00%	33	16.50%	65	32.50%	80	40.00%	200

	Encouragement of mobility to other countries								
	LMS3								
	<i>common practice</i>		<i>exceptional practice</i>		<i>non-existent</i>		<i>not relevant for the company</i>		<i>Total</i>
Austria	13	18.57%	11	15.71%	26	37.14%	20	28.57%	70
Slovakia	25	19.23%	21	16.15%	22	16.92%	62	47.69%	130
Total	38	19.00%	32	16.00%	48	24.00%	82	41.00%	200
	Internships abroad / Buddy programmes								
	LMS4								
	<i>common practice</i>		<i>exceptional practice</i>		<i>non-existent</i>		<i>not relevant for the company</i>		<i>Total</i>
Austria	12	17.14%	9	12.86%	28	40.00%	21	30.00%	70
Slovakia	20	15.38%	22	16.92%	28	21.54%	60	46.15%	130
Total	32	16.00%	31	15.50%	56	28.00%	81	40.50%	200
	Language certification								
	LMS5								
	<i>common practice</i>		<i>exceptional practice</i>		<i>non-existent</i>		<i>not relevant for the company</i>		<i>Total</i>
Austria	9	12.86%	13	18.57%	32	45.71%	16	22.86%	70
Slovakia	23	17.69%	19	14.62%	40	30.77%	48	36.92%	130
Total	32	16.00%	32	16.00%	72	36.00%	64	32.00%	200
	Language trainings (paid by employees)								
	LMS6								
	<i>common practice</i>		<i>exceptional practice</i>		<i>non-existent</i>		<i>not relevant for the company</i>		<i>Total</i>
Austria	6	8.57%	14	20.00%	32	45.71%	18	25.71%	70
Slovakia	21	16.15%	18	13.85%	44	33.85%	47	36.15%	130
Total	27	13.50%	32	16.00%	76	38.00%	65	32.50%	200
	Language trainings (paid by the company)								
	LMS7								
	<i>common practice</i>		<i>exceptional practice</i>		<i>non-existent</i>		<i>not relevant for the company</i>		<i>Total</i>
Austria	9	12.86%	9	12.86%	36	51.43%	16	22.86%	70
Slovakia	26	20.00%	27	20.77%	37	28.46%	40	30.77%	130
Total	35	17.50%	36	18.00%	73	36.50%	56	28.00%	200
	Multilingual website / Adaptation of website to other languages								
	LMS8								
	<i>common practice</i>		<i>exceptional practice</i>		<i>non-existent</i>		<i>not relevant for the company</i>		<i>Total</i>
Austria	40	57.14%	13	18.57%	15	21.43%	2	2.86%	70
Slovakia	75	57.69%	13	10.00%	19	14.62%	23	17.69%	130
Total	115	57.50%	26	13.00%	34	17.00%	25	12.50%	200
	Provision of language skills update to employer								
	LMS9								
	<i>common practice</i>		<i>exceptional practice</i>		<i>non-existent</i>		<i>not relevant for the company</i>		<i>Total</i>
Austria	13	18.57%	16	22.86%	30	42.86%	11	15.71%	70
Slovakia	31	23.85%	19	14.62%	41	31.54%	39	30.00%	130
Total	44	22.00%	35	17.50%	71	35.50%	50	25.00%	200

	Recruitment of employees with the knowledge of several languages LMS10								
	<i>common practice</i>		<i>exceptional practice</i>		<i>non-existent</i>		<i>not relevant for the company</i>		<i>Total</i>
Austria	43	61.43%	23	32.86%	2	2.86%	2	2.86%	70
Slovakia	73	56.15%	26	20.00%	11	8.46%	20	15.38%	130
Total	116	58.00%	49	24.50%	13	6.50%	22	11.00%	200
	Recruitment of employees with cultural knowledge (in case of international activities) LMS11								
	<i>common practice</i>		<i>exceptional practice</i>		<i>non-existent</i>		<i>not relevant for the company</i>		<i>Total</i>
Austria	29	41.43%	17	24.29%	12	17.14%	12	17.14%	70
Slovakia	38	29.23%	15	11.54%	27	20.77%	50	38.46%	130
Total	67	33.50%	32	16.00%	39	19.50%	62	31.00%	200
	Recruitment of native speakers LMS12								
	<i>common practice</i>		<i>exceptional practice</i>		<i>non-existent</i>		<i>not relevant for the company</i>		<i>Total</i>
Austria	44	62.86%	12	17.14%	7	10.00%	7	10.00%	70
Slovakia	95	73.08%	12	9.23%	5	3.85%	18	13.85%	130
Total	139	69.50%	24	12.00%	12	6.00%	25	12.50%	200
	Translation of commercial, sales or technical materials, e-commerce into foreign languages LMS13								
	<i>common practice</i>		<i>exceptional practice</i>		<i>non-existent</i>		<i>not relevant for the company</i>		<i>Total</i>
Austria	31	44.29%	14	20.00%	12	17.14%	13	18.57%	70
Slovakia	65	50.00%	24	18.46%	13	10.00%	28	21.54%	130
Total	96	48.00%	38	19.00%	25	12.50%	41	20.50%	200
	Use of professional translators or interpreters LMS14								
	<i>common practice</i>		<i>exceptional practice</i>		<i>non-existent</i>		<i>not relevant for the company</i>		<i>Total</i>
Austria	14	20.00%	10	14.29%	28	40.00%	18	25.71%	70
Slovakia	36	27.69%	25	19.23%	32	24.62%	37	28.46%	130
Total	50	25.00%	35	17.50%	60	30.00%	55	27.50%	200
	Use of translation tools and apps LMS15								
	<i>common practice</i>		<i>exceptional practice</i>		<i>non-existent</i>		<i>not relevant for the company</i>		<i>Total</i>
Austria	35	50.00%	12	17.14%	15	21.43%	8	11.43%	70
Slovakia	70	53.85%	25	19.23%	8	6.15%	27	20.77%	130
Total	105	52.50%	37	18.50%	23	11.50%	35	17.50%	200