A Sheffield Hallam University thesis

MANAGEMENT OF LANGUAGE DIVERSITY IN INTERNATIONAL SUPPLY CHAIN RELATIONSHIPS OF UK SMEs

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Synopsis

Although language has claimed a place in the field of international business studies, the vast majority of research in this area has focused on language management practices in multinational organisations, and has therefore largely ignored the question of how small organisations cope with linguistic diversity in their international supply chain relationships.

This doctoral research uses a case study methodology in order to explore language management practices at four British SMEs, aimed at understanding the practices used; the interplay between language practices and power; how practices vary depending on whether they are implemented in upstream or downstream supply chain relationships; and the perspectives of language agents on these issues.

My findings highlight a number of issues which have implications for the international management literature. Firstly, I contribute to the literature on language management practices to show the methods used by smaller organisations, including language nodes, lingua francæ, body language, pictorial communication, translators, the extensive use of lean media, and Google Translate.

The findings also revealed the unplanned nature of many of the decisions relating to language management practice at SMEs. Rather than having a strategic approach, the organisations had often arrived at their current practices through a process of bricolage, where they redeployed linguistic resources which had originally been acquired for other purposes, highlighting the emergent nature of strategy-making in smaller organisations.

Additionally, the extensive use of the English language as a medium of communication in all the organisations studied was noted. However, in contrast to previous research on Business English as a Lingua Franca (BELF), I found that native speakers took ownership of the English language and positioned themselves as arbiters of correct usage, which had implications for how they related to linguistic Others in supply chain relationships of which the language users themselves were not necessarily aware.

There was a marked difference found between the practices used between upstream and downstream relationships. The organisations were much more likely to engage in a wider range of practices, and be more accommodating linguistically, for their customers than they were their suppliers. This demonstrates the primacy of the customer relationship in international supply chains, in contrast to recent research which highlights supplier relationships as a source of competitive advantage.

Finally, the study shows that small organisations largely focus their energies on language practices which address oral and informal communication with their partners, rather than on formal marketing tools such as websites and flyers. The study uses the lens of skopos theory in order to explore the efficacy of the translation practices which organisations use to translate written communication.

Candidate's Statement

I declare that this thesis "Management of Language Diversity in International Supply Chain Relationships of UK SMEs" is the direct result of my own work except where referenced to others and that all references and sources used have been appropriately acknowledged. Furthermore I declare that none of the material contained in the thesis has been used in any other submission for an academic award.

Natalie Victoria Wilmot. Sheffield, May 2017.

Acknowledgements

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Chapter 1: Introduction

This introductory chapter establishes the background and context for the doctoral project which I executed from September 2013 to May 2017. In addition to presenting the research aims, and an introduction to the academic literature in which this study is located, it then provides a brief biography of the author, as this has had a profound impact on the choice of topics for this research and the way in which it was conducted. The chapter ends by presenting the structure for the rest of the thesis.

1.0 Introduction

Over the past ten years, there has been a proliferation of academic interest in the topic of language in international management, so that it can no longer be considered as the "forgotten factor" (Marschan, Welch and Welch, 1997), the "lost continent" (Holden, 2002), or the "orphan" (Feely and Harzing, 2002) of the international management literature.

The aim of this doctoral study is to contribute to this field of management by investigating how smaller organisations in the UK manage linguistic diversity in their international supply chain relationships, and in doing so, is novel in a number of ways.

Firstly, despite the growth of empirical work in the field of language management, the extant literature deals almost exclusively with multinational enterprises, and as such has been concerned with dynamics in multilingual teams and leadership (Henderson, 2005; Hinds, Neeley and Durnell Cramton, 2014; Tenzer and Pudelko, 2016; Tenzer and Pudelko, 2017); international mergers and acquisitions (Joshi and Lahiri, 2014), knowledge transfer (Holden, 2002; Buckley, Carter, Clegg and Tan, 2005; Tan and Gartland, 2014) and relationships between headquarters and subsidiaries (Vaara, Tienari, Piekkari and Säntti, 2005; Harzing and Feely, 2008). As a result, there has been very little consideration given to inter-organisational relationships in which linguistic diversity exists (Cuypers, Ertug and Hennart, 2014), and despite some notable exceptions (e.g. Crick, 1999; Incelli, 2008; Knowles, Lloyd-Reson and Mughan, 2006), investigations of smaller organisations have been almost entirely absent from this body of literature. Furthermore, given the ubiquity of the English language in international management, empirical work which is located within the Anglosphere has been underrepresented in the field, perhaps on the assumption that because Anglo organisations are able to use English in order to communicate internationally,

their language practices are not as interesting as those in non-Anglophone countries. However, my own personal and professional background, which I describe in more detail in section 1.2, led me to believe that this may not be the case, thus stimulating my interest in this research topic.

Therefore, not only is the location of this study a novel one in the extant literature, but additionally, the perspective which I take on language is an atypical one, which combined with the location, enabled me to generate theoretical insights which form a contribution to knowledge in this area. By taking a political approach to language (Janssens, Lambert and Steyaert, 2004), I demonstrate how language practices are not neutral, but are manifestations of power dynamics which are present in organisational relationship. This enabled me to examine how language practices differ between upstream and downstream relationships of the focal organisations, and to theorise why they may do so, which is an area which has not previously been addressed in the literature. Therefore, it also draws upon the supply chain management literature, an area which has hitherto given little focus to relationships in the sense of contact between individual actors, as opposed to functional arrangements to facilitate trade (Gligor and Autry, 2012). This approach therefore helped me to establish the following research aims.

1.1 Research Aims

- To investigate what practices SMEs employ to manage linguistic diversity in their international supply chain relationships
- To understand the interplay between the language practices used and power dynamics in supply chain relationships
- To compare whether these practices differ between upstream and downstream relationships
- To examine perspectives of language agents regarding language use and its impact on relationships at different points in the supply chain.

1.2 Authorial Biography

Before continuing with the introduction to this study, it is appropriate at this point to introduce myself and my professional background, as this provides an important part

of the context to this research. Firstly, I am breaking with some traditional academic conventions (Watson, 1995) by using the first person in my presentation of this thesis. Whilst this is entirely consistent with my interpretivist approach, which is detailed in chapter three, on methodology, I also use it because the context of language management in smaller organisations is one which has previously been an important part of my professional life, and thus I make no claim to be an impartial, detached observer.

1.2.1 Origins

Having originally planned to study for a BA in Hispanic Studies for my undergraduate degree, a semester into the degree I realised that my interest in languages was one related to their practical use in daily life, rather than one which was driven by a particular interest in the literature of that language, which was the primary focus of the course, and therefore I decided to pursue an alternative route to professional and personal development.

I left the course, and instead enrolled on a part time BA in Business and Management, whilst at the same time securing full time employment in a contact centre of a retail bank, Abbey, which had recently been acquired by the Spanish bank Santander. It was at this organisation that I gained my first understanding of how language could act as a source of power in organisational life (Tenzer and Pudelko, 2017). When the CEO of Santander came to visit the contact centre, he spoke little English, and so I was invited to meet him and have lunch with a senior management team solely on the basis of my language skills in Spanish. Following this, I acquired additional responsibilities when Santander IT consultants came to shadow contact centre workers as part of the integration of our IT systems. Additionally, I gained a reputation in the contact centre for successfully resolving issues when our customers encountered banking problems when travelling to Hispanophone markets, which gave me an unearned status (Neeley and Dumas, 2016) that provided me with more responsibility than some of my direct superiors. After a period of time, I also worked in a Santander branch, where I continued to fulfil some of these linguistic responsibilities.

1.2.2 The Frequent Flyer

Following my time at Santander, my interest in linguistic diversity and the role that it can play in organisational life blossomed when I took a position as an Export Sales

Executive. I was recruited for the role specifically as a result of my language skills in Spanish and French and thus a language test was part of the formal interview process. In this role, I was a frequent flyer (Steers, Nardon and Sánchez-Runde, 2012), spending 50%-60% of my time travelling to markets in Southern Europe, North Africa and Latin America in order to develop the organisation's sales in these areas, and to engage in key account management of existing customers. During the remainder of the time which I spent in the office, I was using Spanish and French on a daily basis, although I did prefer to use email rather than telephone. Looking back, I clearly experienced Foreign Language Anxiety (Dewaele, 2007) when I was speaking on the telephone in Spanish or French, which was due in part to the office environment, which was open plan, meaning that many people would listen when I was on the telephone, as using other languages at the organisation was a novelty at that time.

During this time, I completed my undergraduate degree, with my dissertation exploring whether small UK exporters working with Hispanophone countries used Spanish in these client relationships.

1.2.3 Living in Barcelona

Following the completion of my undergraduate degree, I decided to leave the organisation to work in Barcelona. Although the company offered me the opportunity to continue working for them from a base in Spain, I preferred to be a Self-Initiated Expatriate (Suutari and Brewster, 2000) and seek alternative employment opportunities. During my time in Barcelona, I worked as an International Trader for a scrap metal organisation, working with clients in the UK, India and France, so at this time was still using all my language skills on a daily basis. This gave me the experience of fully immersing myself into a different language (Spanish), which gave me greater insights into the concept of linguistic identity (Bordia and Bordia, 2015) than I had previously. During this time, I also began my Masters degree in Leadership and Management via distance learning at a UK institution.

1.2.4 Return to the UK

Personal circumstances meant that I returned to the UK earlier than originally anticipated, and I began to work as a Supply Chain Coordinator for an American multinational organisation, coordinating the supply chain between our factories in the Czech Republic and Israel, and our customers in Spain and Portugal. As I don't speak

Portuguese, this involved me using lean media such as email to communicate with Portuguese customers using passive multilingualism (Piekkari, Oxelheim and Randøy, 2015), and Business English as a Lingua Franca (Kankaanranta and Planken, 2010) to communicate with colleagues in the Czech Republic and Israel. This was in addition to communicating with customers and colleagues in Spain in Spanish. It was here that for the first time I experienced language use becoming weaponised, and where fully proficient users (in this case native Spanish speakers) would use their command of the language to attack less proficient users, and dominate the conversation. Although the literature already points out that native speakers may dominate conversations (Méndez García and Pérez Cañado, 2005), this was the first time I had experienced it myself from this perspective, perhaps because of the ubiquity of English in international business, so I had not been in this position before. My academic interest in language continued during this time, and my Masters thesis was on the topic "corporate language policies in the MNE: facilitator or barrier to effective communication?" This was based on interviews carried out at the organisation where I was working at that time.

1.2.5 Entering Academic Life and Embarking on a Doctorate

Upon completion of my Masters, I was offered the position of Lecturer in International Business at Sheffield Hallam University, which also provided me with the opportunity to conduct this doctoral study. I had intended to study for a PhD for some time at this point, as I found that throughout my professional life, the academic knowledge which I gained as a result of my undergraduate and postgraduate studies had enabled me to make sense of events during my career which would otherwise have remained a mystery to me. As is evident, my research topic is very much influenced by my professional career trajectory, and for this reason, it was necessary for me to describe this at the beginning of the thesis, because, as I discuss in chapter three on methodology, this has influenced my philosophical position of interpretivism, and accordingly guided many of the methodological choices made throughout this study. My interest in the power dimension of linguistic diversity is a result of situations which I have encountered in my working life, in which I have never found language use to be neutral (Tietze, 2004). Instead, it has always appeared to me that specific choices are made which are context dependent, and are affected by the power dynamics of the

relations in which they occur, and this was an area that I wished to investigate empirically.

Additionally, I was particularly interested in the role of language diversity in international supply chains. Whilst there has been much written on multilingual teams (e.g. Henderson, 2005; Hinds et al, 2014; Tenzer, Pudelko and Harzing, 2014; Tenzer and Pudelko, 2017), this literature primarily reflects scenarios in which there was intensive contact among team members, who shared some form of organisational identity. This was not necessarily the case in the multilingual supply chains in which I had worked, in which contact between supply chain members was often both less frequent and less intense than that in a multilingual team, and this observation led to the location of the empirical work in this study.

Having therefore introduced the context, research aims and motivations for this project, I now go on to briefly explain the structure and content of this thesis, before I turn to a discussion of the literature which has influenced the study in the following chapter.

1.3 Structure of the Thesis

This thesis is organised into nine chapters as follows:

Chapter 1: Introduction – This chapter presents the context for the research, and identifies the aims which the empirical work addresses, in addition to providing biographical details of the author which have influenced the research.

Chapter 2: Literature Review – This chapter addresses three key bodies of literature, the language sensitive international management research literature, which is the field to which this study makes its largest contribution. It also addresses the literature on supply chain relationships and synthesises this with the organisation studies literature on power.

Chapter 3: Methodology – This chapter explains the interpretivist methodology used in this study. It addresses the use of a case study approach and the data collection methods used within this. It concludes by outlining the process of data analysis which was undertaken in the study.

Chapter 4: Strategy and Bricolage: Company A Findings – This chapter presents the key findings from the largest organisation in the study. As with the other findings chapters, it presents the findings for practices used in upstream operations separately to those used in downstream operations, in order to enable comparison. It shows how BELF is relied upon for upstream operations and many downstream ones, in addition to the use of language nodes.

Chapter 5: Language Nodes and Multilingualism: Company B Findings – This chapter presents the findings from Company B, who were the most intensive users of foreign languages of the four companies studied. They were additionally the only organisation who highlighted their intent to acquire language capital in their upstream relationships, rather than purely relying on BELF.

Chapter 6: Using Creative Solutions: Company C Findings – This chapter presents the findings of Company C, who are a micro-organisation employing three people. Key among their language practices was the need to employ a creative approach to acquiring language capital, as they had very limited resources with which to do so.

Chapter 7: Lean Media and English: Company D Findings – This chapter presents the findings of Company D, who used the smallest variety of practices to manage language diversity. They did not have any internal language capital, and relied significantly on using BELF to communicate in their supply chains, but like Company D, they also used creative practices in order to acquire language skills at a low cost.

Chapter 8: Contextualised Explanation and Analysis – This chapter draws together the key findings and highlights the different language practices which were used, and discusses how they are infused with power, and particularly considers the hegemonic position of the English language. It contrasts the practices and power dynamics in upstream and downstream relationships, and highlights how creativity and flexibility are important to small organisations managing language diversions. Additionally, it discusses how small organisations manage document translation, and explores this through the lens of skopos theory.

Chapter 9: Conclusion – This chapter presents the main contributions to knowledge of this doctoral study, and identifies opportunities for future research, and concludes with a personal reflection on the research journey.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

In this chapter the theoretical pre-understandings which have guided this research project are explained. It begins by discussing the evolution of the language sensitive literature in international management, which over the past twenty years, has established itself as a legitimate sub-field of international management. Practices for managing linguistic diversity which have been previously identified in the literature are presented, and their appropriateness for use in international supply chain relationships are considered. Among these practices, particular focus is given to the hegemonic position of the English language, given the UK-based location of all the case organisations. Different types of supply chain relationships are then presented, and consideration given to how this informed methodological choices. The chapter concludes with a discussion of organisational power, and how it can manifest through decisions related to language usage in inter-organisational relationships, both at episodic and systemic levels.

2.0 Introduction

This study is located within the field of international management, and despite the fact that it deals with language, it is not intended to form part of the linguistics literature. As such, the first part of this literature review will explore the development of language sensitive research in international business and consider its relevance to SMEs. Particular attention will therefore be given to the role of English in global business, in order to consider the impact of this on the context in which Anglophone organisations operate, and how this may affect their approach to managing foreign language diversity in their international supply chain relationships. A number of additional practices for managing language diversity will be identified and discussed in the context of their applicability to SMEs, and contributions from translation sensitive international management literature will be drawn upon as a lens to explore the adequacy of such strategies in different contexts. The following section addresses relationships in international supply chains, and thus draws on the supply chain management literature and the literature on marketing channels. The final section of the literature review synthesises the organisation studies literature on power with the language sensitive international business literature in order to explain how language

practices should be considered as power-infused, rather than neutral, and to explore the potential sources of this power in supply chain relationships.

Whilst located broadly within the domain of international management, this research has therefore drawn on a variety of different literatures in its theoretical underpinning, and these can be summarised in the below diagram.
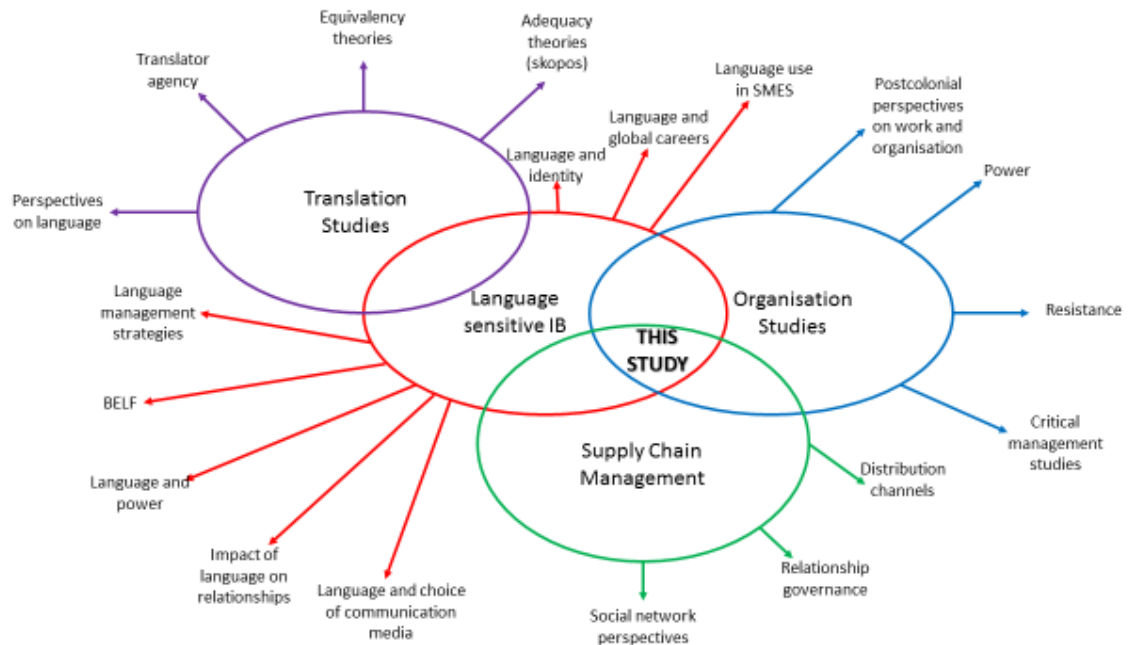
Figure 2.1: Contributing bodies of literature to this study

Whilst there has been little dialogue between the fields of international management and organisation studies (Piekkari, Welch and Welch, 2014) there have recently been attempts to link the domains, particularly with respect to taking a micropolitical approach to issues of power and control within the MNE (e.g. Geppert, Becker-Ritterspach and Mudambi, 2016). Although this project deals with SMEs, given that one of the research aims relates to power, and thus requires a synthesis between the existing literature on organisational power with the literature on language management strategies, this study is also located at this intersection. Furthermore, translation studies is beginning to impact on the language sensitive international management literature (e.g. Janssens et al, 2004; Blenkinsopp and Shademan Pajouh, 2010; Chidlow, Plakoyiannaki and Welch, 2014; Holden and Michailova, 2014) and the focus of the discipline on boundary crossing meant that it was a useful contribution to this study. However, given that it is a distinct discipline, unrelated to the fields of

business and management, here it is only addressed insofar as considering how it can contribute to translation in a business context, as opposed to addressing the substantial body of literature on literary translation, for example.

The final domain used to underpin the study is that of supply chain management. This is, as will be later addressed, a primarily functionalist, technicist literature which has been largely unaffected by the "linguistic turn" (Deetz, 2003) of organisation studies or even the "cultural turn" of international management. However, there is increasing interest within the discipline for a greater focus on social networks and relationships (Connelly, Ketchen and Hult, 2013; González-Loureiro, Dabic and Puig, 2014), and it is these areas which are addressed within this literature review.

2.1 What is Language?

Before addressing these areas however, it is necessary to do something still more fundamental to this research, and that is to define what is meant in this study by the term "language." There are multiple definitions – indeed in the Cambridge Encylopedia of Language, Crystal (2010) does not even attempt to provide a definition of what "language" is. I follow Tietze (2008) in considering language to have four dimensions; descriptive/categorizing, phatic, performance and hegemonial, and as such, through language, we may construct and understand particular social realities.

Descriptive/Categorizing Dimension
Language is a symbolic system of signs
It describes and categorises things in the world, explaining to us "what things are"
These categories, whilst socially constructed, also exist externally to human perception

Phatic Dimension
Oral communication is a social act
Speech performs a social function in which the content can be less important than the very fact that the communication occurred between social actors

Language

Performative Dimension
Not only are words symbolic, but they can also enact material changes in the world
For example, when a witness takes an oath in court they may say "I swear…" although the act is symbolic, after this their status in the court changes, and they may be cross-examined

Hegemonial Dimension
Language is not neutral – not everyone is able to claim and equal right to speak
English is often seen as the language of international business
Behind such assumptions may be the interests of dominant groups

Figure 2.2: The Four Dimensions of Language (adapted from Tietze, 2008)

Thus, although when this study discusses the question of "linguistic diversity," it refers to diversity of discrete language systems (English, Spanish, French, German, and so on), language can be any code of communication which we use in order to express ourselves to others. Janssens and Steyaert (2014) argue that that considering languages as discrete systems is too reductive in our complex global societies, and there is evidence that in sites of prolonged contact between different languages, new and hybrid forms can emerge which gain legitimacy and acceptance (e.g. Holden, Kuznetsova and Fink 2008; Blommaert, 2013; Billings, 2014). However, in terms of the linguistic diversity which occurs in international supply chain relationships of SMEs, my prior experience suggests that they do in fact conceive of languages as discrete systems – for example, they may train staff in "French" or they may have documents translated to "German," and thus this is the approach that I have taken at the outset of this study, although I remain open to the possibility that examples of hybridity may emerge from the research findings.

Furthermore, following Vaara et al (2005) I use the term "natural language," rather than "national language" which is often found in the language sensitive international management literature. I use natural language to simply mean "a language used in ordinary human communication, as opposed to a theoretical or artificial system" (Crystal, 1999, p. 228), although I accept that as all languages have been socially constructed, there is nothing "natural" about them. However, I use this instead of the term "national language," which is defined as "a language which is considered to be the chief language of a nation state" (Crystal, 1999, p.227) because this study is concerned with the interplay between language and power, and to elevate a language to the status of national language reinforces the idea of a hierarchy of languages, where some are less important than others. My views on this are undoubtedly shaped by living and working in Barcelona, where Catalan is recognised as an official language of the autonomous community of Catalonia, in addition to Castilian Spanish. However, there have been many years throughout history where Catalan has not been considered an official language of Spain, and was thus subordinated to Castilian. Catalonia has experienced frequent periods of extended diglossia, where two languages were present, but each had its own function (Ljosland, 2007), and thus Castilian was the language of public life, and Catalan was for use in the home (although

not during the period during which the language was banned entirely under the Franco dictatorship).

The situation is somewhat different in the contemporary era, as since the transition to democracy in 1975, Catalan has reclaimed a role in public and organisational life, however I feel that to use the term "national language" would be to ignore such history and to continue to view some languages as superior in some way to others. Therefore when I refer to "language" throughout this study, I am referring to discrete, natural languages, which may or may not be official national languages as well.

2.2 Overview of Language Sensitive Research in International Management

Despite the fundamental importance of language and communication to international management, it is a field which, until the last ten years, had received very little attention in the literature, leading Feely and Harzing (2002) to describe language as the "forgotten orphan of the management literature" and causing Maclean (2006, p.1377) to note that "companies deal with language differences every day. They cope, the world continues to turn. How they do so, however, remains largely absent from the literature."

Over the last decade however, this situation has begun to change, with language issues in organisations gaining increasing attention and the field gaining recognition as a legitimate and distinct area of study in its own right (Brannen, Piekkari and Tietze, 2014). This is in sharp contrast to the treatment which language issues received in management in the 1980s and 1990s, where language tended to be viewed as a subfield of culture, an area which has long received significant attention in the international management literature.

In recent years, language sensitive issues in international management have started to be investigated empirically, with topics such as the role of language in subsidiary-HQ relations (Feeling and Harzing, 2003), mergers and acquisitions (Vaara et al, 2005; Kroon, Cornelissen and Vaara, 2015), language effects in multinational teams (Henderson, 2005; Steyaert, Ostendorp and Gaibrois, 2011; Hinds et al, 2014; Tenzer et al, 2014), and most recently, the impact of language skills on individual career progression (Itani, Järlstrom and Piekkari, 2015; Yamao and Sekiguchi, 2015) all receiving empirical attention.

It is however, important to note that with a few notable exceptions (i.e. Enderwick and Akoorie, 1994; Crick, 1999; Knowles et al, 2006), language sensitive research has tended to focus on MNEs, and the impact of language diversity on intra, rather than inter-firm relationships (Cuypers et al, 2015). As a result, explorations of the impact of language diversity on SMEs still remain largely absent from the literature.

This is a curious omission, as although some of the relationship dynamics which are affected by language are similar for companies of all sizes, SMEs have much more limited resources than MNEs and thus the way in which they seek to manage questions of language diversity is likely to be different, and currently, there is little light shed on this in the literature.

Furthermore, the extant literature has largely researched language issues in non-Anglophone countries, for example Finland (Vaara et al, 2005; Marschan-Piekkari, Welch and Welch, 1999a) Denmark (Lønsmann, 2015), Saudi Arabia (Lauring, 2007), Japan (Peltokorpi, 2007), Brazil (Ribeiro, 2007), Switzerland (Steyaert et al, 2011), and Germany (Ehrenreich, 2010) but little attention has been given in the literature to organisations located in the Anglosphere, perhaps due to assumptions about the ubiquitous nature of English in international business. Although there have been some studies located in Anglophone countries (i.e. Enderwick and Akoorie, 1994; Crick, 1999; Clarke, 2000; Knowles et al, 2006), more recent research in this area, particularly that which addresses the UK context, has tended to consist of policy reports (e.g. European Commission, 2011; Foreman-Peck and Wang, 2014; Cambridge Public Policy SRI, 2015), and thus has taken a prescriptive approach, providing recommended solutions to the "problem" (as it is typically framed) of language diversity. In contrast, whilst this study does aim to understand the approaches which SMEs use in order to manage such diversity, it is also concerned with understanding the nexus of ties between such approaches and the power dynamics at play in inter-organisational relationships, in addition to examining how such interactions are viewed by language agents. Such issues have not yet been addressed in the academic or the policy literature, despite the dominance of English as a lingua franca in international business, meaning that Anglophone organisations face a very different context to non-Anglophone organisations with regards to language use. This raises an interesting question as to

whether they are impacted by language diversity in similar or distinct ways to organisations outside of the Anglosphere.

2.2.1 Perspectives on Language-Sensitive Research in International Management

The field of language-sensitive management research is a relatively new one within the field of international management, and despite the fact that one of the first works in the area appeared with San Antonio's (1987) study of language policies and use in an American company in Japan, and that the late nineties saw pioneering work in the field from Marschan-Piekkari, Welch and Welch (1997, 1999a; 1999b), the field initially struggled to generate wider interest within the field of international management.

Feely and Harzing (2003) suggest that part of the reason for this neglect is that the dominance of Hofstede (2001) and the interest that his work created in the effects of culture on international management blinded researchers to the effects of language, as the two were seen as one and the same. However, within the field of sociolinguistics, there was also little interest in business as a site of language contact (Harris and Bargiela-Chiappini, 2003), and therefore the "linguistic turn" (Deetz, 2003) which occurred in organisation studies did not extend to a consideration of foreign languages, and instead researchers considered discourse as if it occurred in a monolingual world (Steyaert and Janssens, 2013).

There is therefore a substantial body of literature in international management which deals with the impact of culture on communication, perhaps most famously the work of Hall (1976) on high and low context communication, but also work which addresses areas such as the link between culture, identity, and communication; culturally mediated communication protocols; influences of culture on non-verbal communication; and communication and intercultural conflict (e.g. Chaney and Martin, 2004; Guirdham, 2011; Steers et al, 2012; Jackson, 2014). Given the significant interest which culture has received in international management, it is not my intention to contribute to it further in this doctoral study. The research aims to specifically address the role of language in international supply chain relationships, and although I follow Agar (1994), and Janssens et al (2004) in considering language to be culturally bound, for conceptual clarity, I have limited this literature review, and the fieldwork itself to specifically exploring linguistic, rather than cultural diversity.

Despite these initial difficulties, language has gained legitimacy as a field of international business and is beginning to develop its own paradigms and conventions (Harzing and Pudelko, 2014), particularly with regards to methodology, as case studies have typically been the primary tool with which to investigate language in organisations, an approach which is shared with this study. Additionally, a number of studies (e.g. Janssens et al, 2004; Blenkinsopp and Shademan-Pajouh, 2010; Barner-Rasmussen and Aarnio, 2011) have used translation sensitive explanations in order to consider different approaches to the crossing of linguistic boundaries in organisational settings, and I will now outline these approaches and locate my own work within them.

2.2.1.1 The Mechanistic Perspective

The first perspective is mechanistic (Janssens et al, 2004). This approach assumes that equivalence exists between different natural languages and therefore translation can simply be reduced to an administrative task of finding the correct, equivalent word when moving between different languages. Following such an approach, organisations should be able to easily overcome language boundaries by deploying appropriate resources in order to manage the task of translation. There is no acknowledgement given to the role of culture in such an approach and therefore a good translation would be one that most accurately represents the source text using equivalent words in the target language.

Such an approach to language may be appealing in its simplicity, particularly to non-specialists in linguistics, which may help to explain why the mechanistic approach has been dominant in language sensitive research in international management (Peltokorpi and Vaara, 2014). However, this approach is no longer popular in translation studies due to this very simplicity (Venuti, 1993; Vermeer, 2012) and therefore drawing on this, the idea of translation equivalence is slowly beginning to be challenged in international business (Chidlow et al, 2014; Piekkari et al, 2014).

2.2.1.2 The Cultural Perspective

The second approach identified is the cultural approach (Janssens et al, 2004). This approach views the idea of equivalence between languages as too simplistic, and instead suggests that language is culturally bound and it is therefore inappropriate to separate meaning from the cultural context. The ability to communicate using a

grammatically correct sentence is not enough to ensure that meaning is transferred across two parties from the same culture, as "comprehension entails much more than the decoding of a linguistic signal" (Brannen, 2004, p. 599). When transferring between different languages and cultures, it is insufficient to simply translate linguistic meaning by searching for an equivalent word. Instead, the context also has to be translated, so that meaning can be recontextualised as appropriate in both the target culture and the target language. Given this, the translator has two primary choices when moving between languages. The source can be left as it is, and the translator needs to provide explanation in order to bring the reader towards the source to ensure understanding. Alternatively, they can try to provide a sense of meaning by rendering the source in a way which the reader can understand culturally as well as linguistically (Venuti, 1993).

Within international management, there are a small number of studies adopting the cultural approach, represented in the idea of "languaculture" (Agar, 1994) which views language and culture as two parts of an indivisible whole. Studies in this paradigm primarily deal with how untranslatable words can be dealt with (i.e. Wierzbicka, 2001; Blenkinsopp and Shademan Pajouh, 2010) or the role of translators in spanning linguistic and cultural boundaries, whether the role of translator is one which is held formally (i.e. Ribeiro, 2007) or informally (i.e. Barner-Rasmussen, Ehrnooth, Koveshnikov and Mäkelä, 2014). In addition, there is growing recognition that a shared social context, which can be created and communicated by language, is vital for successful international knowledge transfer (Buckley et al, 2005, Tan and Gartland, 2014).

The cultural approach resonates with my own experience of language use to a much greater extent than the mechanistic approach, however given the dominance of the impact of "culture" within international management, a distinction needs to be made between an emic approach, which embraces context, and an etic approach, in which essentialist views of culture are somehow linked to particular forms of expression (Zhu and Bargiela-Chiappini, 2013). Examples of such an etic approach can be found in Santacreu-Vasut, Shenkar and Shoham (2014), who suggest that countries where the dominant language is one which marks gender have lower female participation at senior levels of organisations, or Chen (2013) who suggests that people in countries

which have languages which do not strongly mark the future tense are more likely to engage in socially desirable future oriented behaviours, such as savings, and pension and retirement planning.

Such considerations of the link between language and culture have been a key part of the development of the language-sensitive international business literature (Brannen and Mughan, 2017). In this doctoral study, where I refer to a cultural approach to language, I refer simply to the embeddedness of meaning in a particular societal system, and thus to an emic approach to the relationship between culture and language, rather than an etic approach which makes claims about the structure of different natural languages and the impact of this on the "software of the mind" (Hofstede, 2001) of the people within that society.

Having clarified this point, I therefore move to the third perspective (Janssens et al, 2004) which can be taken on language – the political approach.

2.2.1.3 The Political Perspective

The political approach is one which can be viewed as an extension of the cultural approach. It rejects the idea of equivalence and agrees that meaning is contextually embedded but it particularly highlights how language use is bound with issues of power, rather than being a purely neutral vehicle for communication. The political approach seeks to explore "the weight of voices involved in translation activities" (Janssens et al, 2004, p. 423). Using the example of Venuti (1993) above, the political approach is therefore not merely concerned with whether it is the text or the reader which is "moved" to enable understanding, but instead views the movement as a political act, in which existing language hierarchies can be perpetuated and reified in the very decision of which should be moved.

The political approach invites us to consider forms of power linked to discourse (Wodak, 2012) in terms of who is able to claim the right to speak, who is able to determine the language of communication, and why they are able to do so.

In international management, the political approach to language has received the least attention (Peltokorpi and Vaara, 2014), despite the fact that sociolinguists (i.e. Pennycook, 1994; Blommaert, 2013) have long pointed out that power and language are inherently linked. This is nowhere so obvious as in the case of English and its

privileged position as the accepted lingua franca of international business (Fox, 1999), but as will be explored later in this literature review, this situation is not as unproblematic as it is often presented to be.

Whilst there have been studies within international management (e.g. Vaara et al, 2005; Boussebaa, Sinha and Gabriel, 2014) which address the question of language and power in a systematic way, much empirical work does acknowledge that there is a link between the two, but fails to sufficiently theorise the relationship. This may be due to the fact that the field of organisation studies, in which much of the work on power is located, has to date had little impact on language sensitive research in international management, leading to recent calls (i.e. Geppert et al, 2016) for a more integrated approach of organisation studies and international business, particularly when studying micropolitics within organisations, as is the case for this study.

The diagram below presents an illustration of some of the major areas of interest in the language sensitive international management research and the perspectives on translation which have been taken.

Sapir-Whorf hypothesis (Whorf, 1956)
Relationship between language and cultural practices (Chen, 2013; Santacreu-Vasut, Shenkar and Shoham, 2014)
Languaculture (Agar, 1994)
Language barriers do not occur independently of cultural systems (Bjerregard et al 2009)
Culturally untranslateable words (Blenkinsopp and Shademan Pajouh, 2010)

Language creating shadow organisational structures (Marschan-Piekkari et al, 1999a)
Language reproducing colonial relations (Vaara et al, 2005; Boussebaa et al, 2014)
Hegemony of English (Phillipson, 1992; Tietze, 2004)
English "colonising the colonisers" (Boussebaa and Brown, 2017)

Cultural

Mechanistic

Political

Location of this doctoral study

Strategies to overcome linguistic diversity (Feely and Harzing, 2003; Harzing, Köster and Magner, 2011)
Language as a part of MNC strategy (Luo and Shenkar, 2006)
Language and export performance (Enderwick and Akoorie, 1994; Crick, 1999, Clarke, 2000, Knowles, Lloyd Reson and Mughan, 2006)
Language and knowledge transfer (Buckley et al, 2005; Tan and Gartland, 2014)
Language and international teams (Henderson, 2005; Tenzer et al, 2014)
Language and emotions (Neeley, Hinds and Durnell-Cramton, 2012; Hinds et al, 2014)
Language and HQ-subsidiary relationships (Harzing and Feely, 2008; Harzing and Pudelko, 2014)

Figure 2.3: Perspectives on translation and areas of focus in the extant literature

2.2.1.4 Locating this Doctoral Study

This doctoral study is located in supply chains, which are characterised by imbalances in power between supply chain actors (Frazier, 1999), and furthermore, the case

companies are based in the UK, meaning that they have a privileged position given the hegemony of their native language (English) within international business. I therefore identify with the political approach to translation and linguistic boundary crossing for this piece of work, as this is best aligned with the research aims, which include the aim of understanding the interplay between language practices and power dynamics, and an examination of the perspectives of language agents on language use and its impact on supply chain relationships. This is not to deny the contribution of the other fields, particularly the mechanistic approach, under which most of the existing empirical work in the field has been conducted (Barner-Rasmussen and Aarnio, 2011; Peltokorpi and Vaara, 2014). Indeed, I continue this chapter by discussing many of the language management practices which have been previously identified using such an approach (e.g. Feely and Harzing, 2003; Harzing et al, 2011), but I will consider them in the context of their applications to SMEs specifically, rather than MNEs, and I will also discuss them in terms of the potential implications for power dynamics, by synthesising them with the organisation studies literature in the latter part of this chapter.

2.3 Practices for Managing Linguistic Diversity

The burgeoning literature on language management in organisations has identified a number of solutions which organisations may use in order to manage linguistic diversity, which are outlined in this section. Given that the language-sensitive management literature has tended to prioritise research on MNEs, some of these solutions are perhaps not appropriate for SMEs and where this is the case, this will be identified in the discussion.

Feely and Harzing (2003) suggest a variety of different ways in which organisations can seek to manage the language barrier, which the authors position in a negative way and consider to be a source of conflict in organisational relationships. They specifically consider the impact that it may have on buyer-seller relationships, which is of great relevance to SMEs. They suggest that sellers who work in their second language will lose some of their rhetorical powers of persuasion, and therefore will appear less credible to potential clients, which is in line with Tsialikis, Ortiz-Buonafina and LaTour (1992), whose Guatemala-based study found that salespeople with non-native Spanish accents were considered less trustworthy. This is also reflected in the fact that

Disneyland Tokyo portrayed evil characters with non-native Japanese accents, in order to highlight their role as outsiders (Brannen, 2004).

This negative perception is in line with a deficit model of language use (Li, 2007), and therefore the assumption that native-speaker competence is a requirement for successful buyer-seller relationships which occur across linguistic boundaries is an overly simplistic one, however I do agree that linguistic diversity can have a negative impact on organisational relationships, having experienced this personally. Therefore, it is appropriate that organisations would seek to use a range of practices to minimise any potential negative impacts that may arise as a result of this. However, this rational, strategic approach (Luo and Shenkar, 2006) is a mechanistic one, and I follow Barner-Rasmussen and Aarnio (2011) in being sceptical of the ability of management to design and implement strategies with which to manage linguistic diversity. Instead, in this study, I therefore think in terms of practices in which organisations and individual language agents may engage in order to cope with such diversity, and acknowledge that such practices are contextually contingent (Steyaert et al, 2011). Furthermore, what is lacking in the original paper by Feely and Harzing (2003) is a consideration of how such practices are infused with power, which will be discussed in this literature review. The table below presents an overview of practices which have been identified in the extant language management literature, although not all of them are discussed in this chapter, as many are not appropriate for inter-organisational relationships in supply chains, and thus are not relevant to the focus of this study.

Language practices	Description	Selected Associated Authors
Lingua franca	Use of a shared language which is jointly negotiated by participants	Feely and Harzing (2003); Nickerson (2005); Charles (2007); Ehrenreich (2010); (Kankaaranta and Planken, 2010)
Functional multilingualism	Using a mix of languages, whatever resources are available to communicate and get a message across	Feely and Harzing (2003); Steyaert et al (2011); Gaibrois (2016)

External language resources	Use of third parties such as professional translators and interpreters	Feely and Harzing (2003); Ribeiro (2007); Harzing et al (2011)
Training	Provision of language teaching by the organisation for its employees	Charles and Marschan-Piekkari (2002); Feely and Harzing (2003), Harzing et al (2011); Swift and Wallace (2011)
Corporate languages	Use of a language which is mandated by the organisation	Feely and Harzing (2003); Vaara et al (2005); Fredriksson, Barner-Rasmussen and Piekkari (2006); Tange and Lauring (2009); Harzing et al (2011)
Language nodes	Bilingual "bridge" individuals who engage in linguistic boundary spanning in addition to their usual organisational duties	Feely and Harzing (2003); Harzing et al (2011); Barner Rasmussen et al (2014)
Selective recruitment	Having language skills as a specific requirements when hiring new employees	Feely and Harzing (2003); Van den Born and Peltokorpi (2010); Swift and Wallace (2011); Peltokorpi and Vaara (2014)
Expatriate management	Bringing in linguistically skilled managers from overseas subsidiaries to act as bridge individuals	Feely and Harzing (2003); Lauring (2007); Harzing et al (2011); Harzing and Pudelko (2014); Zhang and Peltokorpi (2016)
Inpatriation	Sending managers from HQ to overseas	Feely and Harzing (2003); Harzing et al (2011)

	subsidiaries to act as linguistic bridges	
Machine translation	Use of computer software to translate, such as Google Translate	Feely and Harzing (2003); Ostler (2011); Harzing et al (2011)
Build in redundancy in the communicative exchange	Checking understanding, asking the partner to summarise, repeating information	Rogerson-Revell and Louhiala-Salminen (2010); Harzing et al (2011); Gaibrois (2016); Tenzer and Pudelko (2016)
Adjust the mode of communication	Using alternative methods of communication, such as email instead of telephone	Shachaf (2008); Harzing et al (2011), Klitmøller and Lauring (2013); Gaibrois (2016)
Parallel information networks	Shadow structures, where people with language skills are communicated with, not the people in charge	San Antonio (1987); Marschan-Piekkari et al (1999); Peltokorpi (2007); Harzing et al (2011)
Locally hired non-native managers	Hiring managers from overseas with language skills who already live in target country	Harzing et al (2011)
Code-switching	Second language speakers temporarily revert to speaking their native language amongst themselves	Brannen and Salk (2000); Harzing et al (2011); Hinds et al (2014)

Table 2.4: Language management practices identified in the international management literature

2.3.1 English as a Global Lingua Franca in International Business

Of the many strategies which organisations may use in order to manage issues of linguistic diversity, the one which is perhaps of the greatest relevance to British SMEs is the idea of using English as a lingua franca for their international communication. I therefore first address the status of English as a global language of international

business in order to explore the context in which the case organisations operate, in order to better understand the impact that their advantageous location in an English-speaking country may have on the ways in which they seek to manage language diversity in their supply chain relationships.

The status of English as the global language of international business is now so widely accepted as to be almost beyond dispute (Crystal, 2003; Ostler, 2011; Tsuda, 2013), and indeed I acknowledge the hegemonic position of English in global business communications, and the privileged position which it enjoys within the discourse of management itself (Fox, 1999; Tietze, 2004).

However, there are questions about the nature of this hegemony, particularly the idea that a simplified form of English, whether it appears under the guise of Business English as a Lingua Franca (Louhiala-Salminen and Kankaanranta, 2012), International English (Henderson, 2005), World English (Brutt-Griffler, 2002) or even Globish (Nerrière, 2003), can be viewed as a neutral code for communication, one which can be completely separated and divorced not only from its current context, but also from its colonial past (Pennycook, 1994).

In this section, I will argue that not only does reliance on the comforting myth that "everyone speaks English" (Bargiela-Chiappini, Bülow-Møller, Nickerson, Poncini and Zhu, 2003) create complacency within Anglophone organisations, and more specifically, British organisations, which in turn can lead to damaged relationships and missed opportunities, but that furthermore, the extensive use of English in international business is a reproduction of colonial power relations between core and periphery which are reinforced and reified by decisions made around language use in organisations (Boussebaa et al, 2014).

My perspective is that of a native speaker of English who has undoubtedly benefitted from the position that English holds, and of two other world languages, Spanish and French, which have also been languages of empire, as language has always been a handmaiden of empire (de Nebrija, 1493). However, even as I have benefitted from such linguistic hierarchies, in certain situations I have also been disadvantaged by them, and thus recognise and will demonstrate that the ideal of English as a global lingua franca is not the panacea that it is claimed to be. In doing so, I therefore

position my work not only within the political approach to language but in the established and growing field of critical perspectives on English as an international language (e.g. Phillipson, 1992; Pennycook, 1994; Tietze, 2004; Tsuda, 2013; Boussebaa et al, 2014; Boussebaa and Brown, 2017).

I begin by addressing the idea of a common corporate language within an MNE, as a theme which has received much attention within the language sensitive literature (Janssens and Steyaert, 2014) and which is frequently, but not always, English (Kankaanranta, 2006).

2.3.1.1 Corporate Language or Lingua Franca?

A common corporate language is often presented as a potential solution to managing linguistic diversity within organisations, and is suggested to create a shared identity throughout the organisation (Marschan-Piekkari et al, 1999), and to streamline processes by reducing the need for translation, and it has been frequently observed that in many (although not all) cases, this common corporate language is English (Kankaanranta, 2006). In practice however, common corporate languages often merely obscure the multilingual reality which continues to exist in many organisations (Fredriksson et al, 2006; Kroon et al, 2015), and therefore, management processes may be less effective, as the organisation behaves as though linguistic diversity does not exist, which is not the case.

It is clear that a common corporate language is not an appropriate solution for SMEs in managing their international relationships, as they are unlikely to be able to mandate procedures which take place beyond the boundaries of their own organisation. Therefore, this literature review does not address the body of work on common corporate languages from a procedural perspective, in terms of how organisations manage them. Instead I engage with it in order to consider how being obliged to speak a particular language affects individuals within the organisation, as this is a situation which may occur in the international supply chain relationships of SMEs for a variety of reasons, and in the fieldwork this study will examine the perspective of language agents on this issue. Essentially, where English is mandated as a common corporate language, employees in the organisation will communicate using Business English as a Lingua Franca.

For this reason, in this section I address the idea of English as a common corporate language and English as a lingua franca jointly. The two should be regarded as conceptually distinct, as a common corporate language is one which is officially mandated at an organisation and a lingua franca is merely a language used as a means of communication by non-native speakers (Poncini, 2003; Fredriksson et al, 2006). However, they both deal with circumstances in which individuals are obliged to use English, whether this is because an organisation has decreed that it must be so, as is the case at the Japanese organisation Rakuten (Mikitani, 2013), or because they have no other way in which it is possible to communicate and therefore English is a negotiated solution (Steyaert et al, 2011). Therefore in both circumstances, English, and the status that English has, exerts power over the interaction, as it is being used in a way that it would not otherwise have been.

Before going on to consider the role that English plays in international business today, it is important to briefly consider a historical perspective, in order to trace how English arrived at its current position.

2.3.1.2 English and Management Knowledge

English began its march around the globe as a result of colonial expansion and imperialist ambitions. The initial nature of this expansion is relevant, as contemporary language sensitive studies suggest that language choice in organisations can be seen as an attempt to re-establish colonial relationships in the present day by legitimising once again the use of the language of the oppressor (Vaara et al, 2005; Boussebaa et al, 2014).

Although in the 18th and 19th centuries English remained secondary to French and German as a language of science, diplomacy and trade (Ostler, 2010), it began to grow in importance in the aftermath of the Second World War as American cultural influence also grew, and most importantly for business, American theories about management began to spread around the world – in English (Tietze, 2004). An example of this influence can be observed in Brazil, where professors from the US began to teach in leading business schools in English, whilst Brazilian professors were relegated to the role of translators (Alcadipani and Caldas, 2012). These authors suggest this process to be akin to colonialism, despite the lack of colonial ties between the US and Brazil, and suggest that this attempt to force American management

theories onto Brazilian culture is a form of orientalism (Said, 2003), - which in this region could be better referred to as "tropicalism"(Alcadipani and Caldas, 2012) - where local cultures are essentialised, and a hierarchy of knowledge is naturalised, with local forms of knowledge and language subjugated to Western ideas and the English language. Indeed, Boussebaa and Brown (2017) argue that English has reached such hegemonic status, that it is now colonising the former colonial powers, such as France. They explore how French academics are required to work and publish in English, rather than French, in order to advance their careers, and note how, despite conflicting feelings about this, many academics have acquiesced, rather than resisting and potentially jeopardising their careers.

Therefore, SMEs who use English in their international supply chain partnerships need to be aware of the link between the English language and management knowledge (Tietze, 2004). English enjoys a privileged position in terms of the production and dissemination of management knowledge in academia (Tietze, 2004; Jack, 2004; Jack, Westwood, Srinivas and Sardar, 2011; Tietze and Dick, 2013), in addition to the hegemonic position that English occupies in the practice of international business. This has important implications for BELF, because BELF permits flexibility in its usage (Kankaanranta and Planken, 2010), as long as the message is made clear, and as such, could be argued to be a hybrid language (Janssens and Steyaert, 2014) which is influenced by the different mother tongues of BELF speakers (Méndez García and Pérez Cañado, 2005) therefore permitting a degree of creativity in its usage.

However, because management knowledge is produced in English and concepts are labelled in English, and therefore our epistemological understanding is shaped by the values of Western management knowledge as exemplified by English, these ideas are extremely difficult to translate to other cultural contexts which may have different values and beliefs about what management should be.

This can present difficulties for managers who are seeking to translate concepts across linguistic boundaries as may occur in a global supply chain. Even within the same language, organisations can find it difficult to agree on a shared understanding of different performance measures, and may therefore find it difficult to compare their performance across borders (Supply Chain Council, 2010).

This task is made still more challenging by the presence of linguistic diversity, as highlighted by Holden and Michailova (2014) and Tietze, Tansley and Helienek (2017). Holden and Michailova (2014) describe the translation of "The Handbook of Knowledge Management" from English to Russian, and highlight the difficulties of finding an appropriate semantic fit, given that Russian management styles developed under the Soviet era do not necessarily provide a vocabulary which permits the translation of meanings which are encoded in English words popularised under a capitalist system, and therefore refer to concepts which are culturally quite alien in Russia. Thus the assumption that BELF is a neutral code owned by an international business community is demonstrated here to be a false one, as English business terms are still imbued with the cultural values of the society in which they originated.

Tietze et al (2017) discuss a similar problem encountered in the attempt to make "talent management" relevant in Slovakian, in another society which was influenced by a Soviet, rather than Western style of management. Thus we can see that even in a purely European context, the English language discourse of management is not one that easily translates across cultural boundaries, and this situation is likely to be exacerbated when working at a global level. Thus the idea of language hybridity as a democratising tool within organisational relationships begins to crumble when we consider that within management, "correct" ways of understanding a particular concept are only accessible through the medium of English, and that it is therefore, the only way to access the management "gospel" (Tietze, 2004).

This dominance of English in management discourse can help us to explain the cursory treatment of linguistic issues in English language international business textbooks (Holden, 1987). Although interest in language related matters has grown enormously since this study was published thirty years ago, this interest has not yet been translated into serious consideration of linguistic issues in mainstream international business textbooks. The chauvinism which Holden (1987) identifies is lamentably still present (Fougère and Moulettes, 2011) and even texts which deal specifically with cross-cultural management (i.e. Steers et al, 2012; Browaeys and Price, 2011, Deresky, 2011; Aycan, Kanugo and Mendonça, 2014) deal with linguistic diversity in a brief, superficial manner, suggesting that Holden's (1987) call for linguistics to become incorporated into the mainstream management sciences has gone largely unanswered.

The implications of this scenario are that managers who have been educated in British or American institutions have thus been socialised into the idea that because of the dominance of English, linguistic issues are not a concern in international management. This may then impact the management processes that they implement at their organisations, and the way in which they then frame particular challenges they may encounter. In a meta-analysis of barriers which SMEs face when exporting, Leonidou (2004) noted that organisations seem to feel that linguistic differences have a low impact on their ability to export. However, factors which were identified as "very high impact" included "limited information to locate/analyse markets; inability to contact overseas customers," and "identifying foreign business opportunities," all of which are factors that are profoundly affected by the presence of linguistic diversity, yet it does not appear to be viewed that way by organisations. In this way, language can be seen to be a component of "psychic distance" (Johanson and Vahlne, 1977; O'Grady and Lane, 1996) defined as factors which prevent organisations from sharing information with suppliers or customers, and thus disrupt the process of learning about a market. Harzing and Feely (2008) consider that language forms an important component of psychic distance, and therefore the factors which Leonidou (2004) identifies as of high importance in terms of barriers to export, are affected by psychic distance and thus by language. The fact that it is not viewed as such by organisations may be a product of the way in which language is treated within the discourse of management itself, which is typically an English language discourse that despite claims of neutrality, espouses values associated with a Western, capitalist culture.

From an SME perspective, due to their limited size, there is evidence to suggest that owner/manager perceptions have a profound impact on whether the organisation will embrace linguistic diversity, or attempt to reduce it by relying on an English-only policy (Knowles et al, 2006) and therefore the implications of the managerial cadre being socialised into the discourse of English as the language of business through traditional business school education is a key issue that has implications for the practices that SMEs use in order to manage linguistic diversity. Thus the perspectives of language agents on their choice of practices (and the practices which may have been imposed upon them) forms an important part of this research.

Whilst the dominance of English in management has remained very much the status quo (Fox, 1999, Tietze, 2004; Tietze and Dick, 2013), there is a small but growing body of work which critiques the dominant research traditions in international business and management studies (e.g. Westwood, 2006; Jack and Westwood, 2006; Fougère and Moulettes, 2011) and the representation of cultural Others in English (Jack et al, 2011) and the importance of language and culture is highlighted, although even here, language was not initially given equal importance to culture (e.g Westwood, 2006).

I therefore position my own work within this epistemic critique of managerialism in English, and in the tradition of language sensitive research in international management. As is evident from this literature review, work in this tradition is not a unified body of literature, but rather an interrogative space, which includes contributions from critical management studies, postcolonial studies, and sociolinguistics, in which taken for granted assumptions about language use in organisations and the relationship that this use has with power are questioned and problematized. My specific interest in this study is therefore to explore the interplay between power and practices to manage linguistic diversity in supply chains. Rather than treating such practices as neutral tools, I will explore the perspectives of language agents on the use of such practices, and consider how the type of relationship may itself impact the approach taken.

2.3.1.3 Business English as a Lingua Franca (BELF)

Having therefore briefly outlined my epistemological position on English, I now consider in much greater detail the body of literature on English as a common corporate language, and Business English as a Lingua Franca (BELF). Whilst this phenomenon is sometimes referred to by other names, such as English as an International Language, BELF is the term which has gained the most currency in international management as it specifies the domain of use. In other fields such as sociolinguistics, English as a Lingua Franca (ELF) is the preferred term (Cogo and Jenkins, 2010), however I will use BELF throughout this work in order to refer to the idea of English being used as a vehicular language in an organisational context.

BELF is considered to be a variety of simplified English which is used between non-native speakers to enable communication via a shared language. As a result of this, it is often viewed as being owned by the international business community, rather than

being linked to any particular cultural context in the Anglophone world (Louhiala-Salminen and Kankaanranta, 2012). In this sense, English is viewed to be an ergolect, a work language which has been divorced from its cultural background (Fox, 1999; Bargiela-Chiappini et al, 2003).

As a result of the view that the only culture in which BELF is embedded is the culture of international business, there is an argument that English as a Lingua Franca can only occur between non-native speakers (Rogerson-Revell and Louhiala-Salminen, 2010), and that interactions which include native speakers should be categorised as English as an International Language. As many of my interviewees will also be native speakers of English, I align myself with Ehrenreich (2010) and Cogo and Jenkins (2012) who suggests that as native English speakers form part of the international business community, they should necessarily be included in any analysis of BELF, especially given that BELF should not be considered as merely a simplified form of native speaker English. Therefore in this doctoral study I consider BELF to be a variety of English which is used for business purposes in which at least one of the parties involved does not speak English as a native language.

Given this conceptual underpinning, the goal of BELF is simply successful communication between the parties involved, and it is therefore unconstrained by conventions of grammar or orthography which would usually be considered to be a part of "correct" English usage (Kankaanranta, 2006). In this sense, BELF is appealingly democratic, rejecting the idea that the rules of English should be determined by native speakers, and accepting that far from being a monolithic bloc, there are actually many varieties of English which have equal validity. Kachru (1992) conceptualises these varieties as "circles of English," in which countries where English is the primary, official language form an inner circle of users, followed by an outer circle, where English has a status as an official or administrative language, frequently found in countries which were colonies of the UK, for example India and Nigeria. Finally, there is an expanding circle of English users, who come from countries where English has no official status, and thus has been learnt as a foreign language.

Inner Circle
e.g. UK, USA

BELF

BELF

BELF

Outer Circle, e.g.
India, Nigeria

Expanding Circle, e.g.
Brazil, China, Russia
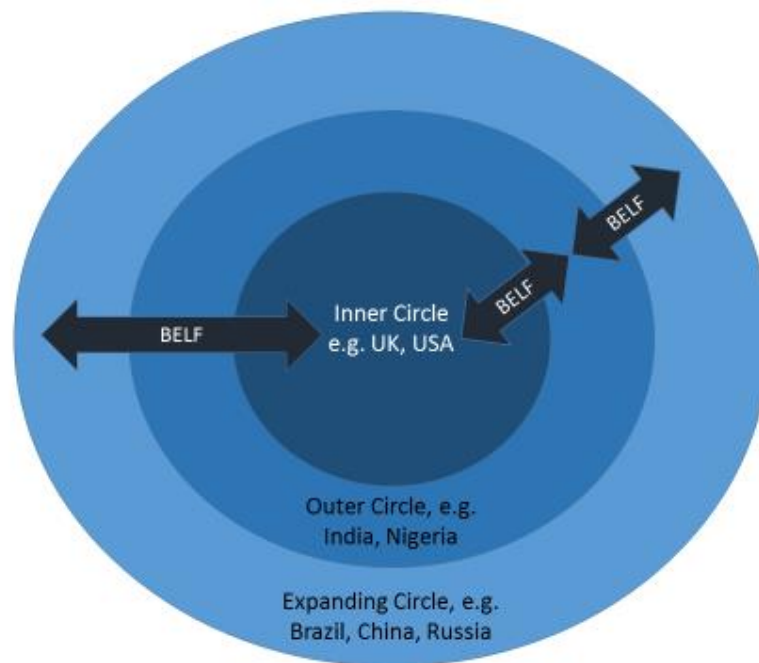
Figure 2.5 Circles of English (adapted from Kachru, 1992)

This fluidity in terms of its understanding of what constitutes English positions BELF in a "multilingual franca approach" (Janssens and Steyaert, 2014), in which language is viewed to be a social process, rather than a discrete code. Under this view, it is acceptable for individuals using BELF to use whatever linguistic means they have at their disposal in order to communicate. This may go beyond simple code-switching which is where individuals change between discrete languages during a single communicative event (Crystal, 2010), to become "languaging" (Jørgensen, 2008) or "translanguaging" (Janssens and Steyaert, 2014), which is a creative process in which hybrid forms of language are used in order to play with possibilities and to enable communication. This describes a process where "languages are so deeply intertwined and fused into each other that the level of fluidity renders it difficult to determine any boundaries that may indicate that there are different languages involved" (Makoni and Pennycook, 2012, p. 447).

When framed in this way, the use of BELF seems almost utopian – a neutral means of communication, unfettered by cultural or grammatical norms, in which interlocutors can use English and any other linguistic resources they possess in order to express themselves, and if communication is judged by both parties to have been successful, *voilà,* BELF has been used correctly (Kankaanranta, 2006; Kankaanranta and Planken, 2010). In such an ideal world, it is almost difficult to see why language diversity should

be a topic of interest to management scholars, rather than just linguists, as presumably the challenges posed to organisations by language diversity would be very few.

Unfortunately, this ideal world does not align with my own experience of using English as a lingua franca in organisational life, and furthermore, it does not align with empirical studies in the field which consider English as a common corporate language or lingua franca (e.g. Fredriksson et al, 2006; Ehrenreich, 2010) who note the challenges which occur when English is used in this way, thus suggesting that SMEs who do use English in their international supply chain relationships still need to be mindful in order to use it appropriately.

As a result, international management scholars are increasingly acknowledging that a lingua franca or common corporate language are not as unproblematic as they are sometimes portrayed to be, and that there are multiple explanations of why this approach is insufficient to create the shared social understanding for which it aims.

One potential reason for this can be found in the work of Lauring and Klitmøller (2015), who consider corporate language based communication avoidance. They find that employees are much more likely to seek to avoid communication in their second language rather than their mother tongue, which concurs with the findings of Piekkari, Welch, Welch, Peltonen and Vesa (2013), who suggest that some employees, particularly those who do not have high levels of competence in the target language, may simply ignore requests to do so. This is therefore an important consideration for UK SMEs, as were they to rely on the idea that "everyone speaks English" (Bargiela-Chiappini et al, 2003), they may find that attempts to contact overseas partners simply go ignored, particularly in initial contact attempts in order to establish a relationship, where no norms of language use have been determined. Furthermore, Lauring and Klitmøller (2015) found that employees tend to view the telephone as a more formal medium of communication which they are more likely to seek to avoid than a lean media such as email. This suggests that traditional wisdom regarding the importance of using rich media to initiate sales discussions, rather than lean media (Ambrose, Marshall, Fynes and Lynch, 2008) may in fact be inappropriate and ineffective in such scenarios, concurring with the findings of Klitmøller and Lauring (2013), Harzing and Pudelko (2014), and Tenzer and Pudelko (2016) that although rich media are better for gaining a shared understanding among monolingual teams, for multilingual teams, use

of lean media such as email can reduce the cognitive load associated with working in a foreign language (Volk, Köhler and Pudelko, 2014). For this doctoral study, it therefore raises an interesting question as to how the choice of communication media is linked to the different language practices which are used, if they are used in order to build redundancy into the communication, and whether actors perceive any links with power in such choices.

2.3.1.4 Anxieties of Using English

Linked to this, there is an extensive body of literature within sociolinguistics which looks at the phenomenon of "Foreign Language Anxiety" (FLA) (Dewaele, 2007) which can be viewed as a type of performance anxiety, similar to stage fright (Horwitz, 2010). It is primarily considered to be a classroom phenomenon (Horwitz, Horwitz and Cope, 1986) which occurs in a teaching context, and therefore has generated little explicit interest in the language sensitive international management literature. However, a wide range of studies in an organisational context (e.g. San Antonio, 1987; Park, Hwang and Harrison, 1996; Vaara et al, 2005; Neeley et al, 2012; Lauring and Klitmøller, 2015) have demonstrated that the requirement to communicate in a lingua franca or common corporate language can have a silencing effect on those who are not native speakers or do not consider themselves to be fully proficient in the language, suggesting that aspects of FLA may be at work in these situations. It is therefore interesting to explore whether SMEs expecting to communicate with international partners in English are aware of such issues, particularly if their employees primarily consist of monolingual English speakers, who may not be as sensitive to such a situation, having never experienced it themselves (Babcock and Du-Babcock, 2001; Holden, 2002; Cogo and Jenkins, 2012).

The other side of this avoidance behaviour would be where SMEs who are used to communicating in English are contacted in a language in which they have no knowledge. The Department for Trade and Industry (1996) cite an example of a British organisation which had gone bankrupt. When the offices were cleared, a fax was found which contained an order large enough to have saved the entire company. However, because it was written in German, rather than seeking to understand it, the employee who received it avoided the communication in an unfamiliar language, and simply placed it in a drawer and did nothing further with it. Therefore we can see that

avoidance behaviour from both parties can be a risk for British SMEs who work internationally, and the glib assumption that "everyone speaks English" does not reflect the reality of modern international business. However, the lack of empirical work located in SMEs mean what we still know very little about the practicalities of how their multilingual realities are managed (Maclean, 2006).

Another area in which the use of BELF can create as many challenges as it solves in organisations is in team dynamics. As with all areas of language sensitive international management, multilingual teams have been considered primarily from the perspective of teams within the MNE. However, teams which are formed across organisational boundaries, such as in a global supply chain may experience many of the same issues with regards to language, and will often share less of a social context which is important in sense-making (Buckley et al, 2005), than teams within an MNE do, as they are bound to a greater or lesser extent by the shared goals of the organisation. Such shared goals may not exist within a supply chain, and indeed, team members may find that their goals conflict, rather than converge.

Tenzer and Pudelko (2015), consider multilingual teams from an anxiety based perspective, and explore how individuals who perceive themselves to have low competence in the working language of the group may express frustration towards themselves, or show signs of resentment towards others, who do have higher linguistic competence. Particular focus is given in their study to the role of the team leader in mitigating these negative emotions, and the strategies that they can use to do this. This raises a compelling question regarding how SMEs manage such a challenge, given that although buyer-seller dyads contain a lead firm, in less formal supply chain relationships the role of the leader is not always made explicit, and thus they could frequently be characterised as self-managed teams (Proença, 2010), which provides potential for power struggles over who should assume the leadership role, particularly when dealing with an emotion-laden area such as language management (Neeley et al, 2012).

2.3.1.5 English as an Identity Threat

Given that language is a particularly salient market of identity (Tajfel and Turner, 1979) as it is a learned characteristic which is immediately visible (Buckley et al, 2005; Lauring and Klitmøller, 2015), it is often suggested to be a potential faultline (Hinds et

al, 2014) along which in-groups and out-groups may form within teams, and the risk of this is particularly high where low linguistic diversity is present and the team comprises of a small number of dominant languages, as is likely to be the case in a buyer-seller dyad of small companies in an international supply chain. Due to the small number of people who are involved in such a scenario, instead of fractures occurring between groups of people who share a language (e.g. Lauring, 2007; Hinds et al, 2004), they may occur between individuals, and thus such an investigation would shed light on to how individuals may be treated as Others on the basis of their linguistic identity (Bordia and Bordia, 2015). This is a component of social identity, and it is suggested that lower status groups (in this scenario, non-native speakers of English) are more likely to perceive identity threats. Therefore, it is possible that non-Anglophone supply chain partners may view a requirement to use English in order to communicate with British SMEs as a threat to their identity. Bordia and Bordia (2015) suggest that this threat is elevated where individuals are not accustomed to a global linguistic landscape (Blommaert, 2013), where individuals are not used to regular interaction with other languages, whether in the form of inter-personal communication, contact with signs and instructions in foreign languages, music and film in other languages, and so on. However, on this basis, given the importance of English around the globe, it appears that those at the greatest risk of a linguistic identity threat are monolingual speakers of English themselves. A provocative question therefore, is to investigate whether such identity threats are experienced by individual agents within international supply chains, and if so, how they are experienced depending on the language practices used in their exchanges.

This concept of linguistic identity could help to explain why code-switching – moving between two or more different languages in a conversation – is frequently seen as deviant behaviour within teams (Tenzer et al, 2014; Hinds et al, 2014) and as an attempt to exclude others from a conversation, even when it is done for highly pragmatic reasons. However, both the above studies note that bilinguals and multilinguals are more open to such behaviour than monolinguals, perhaps because they are already more accustomed to a global linguistic landscape, and therefore such activity is not a threat to their linguistic identity. This concurs with my own experience of a co-located multilingual team, where code-switching was viewed as a subversive

activity by monolingual team members, but was more generally accepted, although not universally so, by multilingual team members, and therefore raises the question of how code-switching is viewed by actors in SME relationships.

In addition to the risk of an identity threat, numerous studies (e.g. Vaara et al, 2005, Méndez García and Pérez Cañado 2005; Steyaert et al, 2011) have noted that where a lingua franca or common corporate language is used in a multicultural team, then native speakers, or those with high linguistic competence, will tend to dominate the meeting or communicative event, and silence other team members. Whilst this can take the form of them speaking more because it is easier to express themselves in their native language, or one in which they enjoy high competence (Volk et al, 2014), it may also take the form of shaming other team members because of their lack of language skills. Given that in a supply chain team which crosses organisational boundaries, team members are likely to be present because of the contribution that they are able to make, it is vital that they are permitted to make this contribution and that they are not seen as having lower competence in all aspects of their job because of their limited linguistic competence (Tenzer et al, 2014). These assumptions about professional competence can lead to reduced trust in the team (Tenzer et al, 2014), which is likely to be particularly damaging for virtual teams, which international teams that cross organisational boundaries will necessarily be. Trust can be more difficult to establish in global virtual teams (Jarvenpaa and Leidner, 1999) due to the lack of "small talk" and rapport building which can take place, as discussions tend to be of a more technical and business nature. Such "thin communication" (Bouchien de Groot, 2012) may make communication easier for individuals with lower linguistic competence, but again, can have a negative impact on rapport building within the team, and thus this research will investigate how SMEs manage such a dynamic.

2.3.1.6 Conclusions on the Use of English in International Business
In summary, whilst this is not to suggest that supply chain teams consisting of employees of British SMEs and members from other supply chain partners should necessarily seek to avoid BELF in order to communicate, the literature provides increasing evidence that this usage should be problematized, as it places English native speakers in a position of privilege over those who are not, and this privilege often goes unrecognised by native speakers (Méndez García and Pérez Cañado, 2005). Whilst

there are times that this may be necessary, and perhaps the only pragmatic solution, the issues which have been outlined above suggest that where English is used, it must be done so cautiously, and full opportunity must be given to all team members to participate, regardless of their linguistic ability. There are a number of strategies which can be used in order to achieve this. Neeley et al (2012) suggest that it may be useful for native English speakers to view "conversation as a challenge that everyone needs to participate in" (p. 240). In this way, they are encouraged to be cognisant of their own speech in terms of speed, accent, use of idioms etc., and thus become more able to empathise with the challenges that non-native speakers face. This can contribute to the development of a safe communicative environment for all team members, where they feel empowered to contribute. Tenzer and Pudelko (2015) also suggest that humour can be used to diffuse potentially damaging situations, but concur with Tietze (2008) that humour can be difficult to employ across language and cultural boundaries, as it may not be understood in the spirit that it was intended, and therefore risks causing greater offence.

The study will investigate whether British SMEs are aware of such accommodative practices and be prepared to use them, or other approaches if they are not already doing so, in order to manage BELF usage in international supply chain teams.

In this section I have explored the implications of English as a global lingua franca for international business, with a particular focus on how this may affect British SMEs. I have challenged the idea of BELF as a neutral code for communication, and suggested that far from being a democratising tool, it is impossible to separate English from its colonial past, and I have argued that the unreflexive use of English as an international medium of communication can reproduce colonial relationships between the core and the periphery. In addition to this, I have explored how the discourse of management, frequently expressed through the medium of the English language, is also not a value-free discourse, and in fact is influenced by capitalist, Western values, which are encoded into the language itself. For this reason, I suggest that it is inappropriate to view BELF as a hybrid language, where successful communication is the primary goal, as the management community does in fact have norms and values about correct usage as a result of socialisation into the international management community,

which, through business schools and academic publishing (Tietze, 2004; Tietze and Dick, 2013), most frequently occurs in English.

A reflection on this literature therefore leads me to posit that the result of these processes is to frequently render invisible issues of linguistic diversity to native speakers of English (Harzing and Feely 2008) and as such, organisations may not view some of the challenges which they face as issues which are affected by the presence of linguistic diversity, even where it would appear to be the case. As such, the use of BELF, rather than being a panacea, often serves to obscure the multilingual reality of international business today (Fredriksson et al, 2006). Therefore, the need to uncover lived experiences relating to linguistic diversity, rather than espoused values, led to the use of particular methodological approaches which I discuss in the next chapter.

Having said this however, it is not the aim of the study to criticise the use of English in all circumstances. Using English in an international business context may well be part of the linguascape (Steyaert et al, 2011) which has been jointly negotiated between two parties in a supply chain relationship. For any organisation, but particularly for SMEs who have limited resources, it is unrealistic to expect them to have sufficient linguistic capital to be able to conduct business in all the languages of the markets in which they work, and thus the use of any lingua franca may be a necessity. Thus the purpose of this section of the literature review was to sensitise me, as a privileged native speaker of English, to some of the challenges which can occur when it is used unreflexively in international business, in order to be able to investigate this area in the fieldwork.

There are arguments made for a severe curtailment of the use of English in international business, such as those of Tsuda (2013) who views the spread of English as wholly negative and calls for an English tax, which taxes "the English language used in international communication […] all English words and sentences will be taxed." (p265). Besides the financial implications not just for multinationals but for SMEs who happen to be located in Anglophone countries, and the impact on those organisations who use English as a negotiated, pragmatic solution, as previously discussed, such an approach is an example of linguicism which reproduces "an unequal division of power and sources (both material and immaterial) between groups which are defined on the basis of language" (Skutnabb-Kangas, 1988, p. 13), which Tsuda decries in the same

chapter. This argument therefore does not consider, for example, the unequal power relations which would be exacerbated in the case of a British SME who was penalised for using English, rather than Mandarin, in communications with a Chinese multinational, even if the use of English had previously been agreed by both parties. Thus I align myself with Phillipson (2015) in suggesting that the use of English in international business or anywhere else, is not, of itself, a wholly negative thing, but that problems arise when it is used unreflexively, particularly by native speakers, who do not consider the challenges that others may be facing in their use of English, and the advantage that being able to negotiate and conduct business in their native tongue may give them.

2.3.2 Bridge Individuals

Having dealt with the use of English in international business, I now turn to another potential approach which SMEs may adopt in their international relationships, the idea of bridge individuals (Feely and Harzing, 2003). These are essentially language nodes who are linguistically skilled in two or more languages, and thus act as boundary spanners (Barner-Rasmussen et al, 2014). Such individuals may be expatriates - although in the case of SMEs, they are much more likely to be Self-Initiated Expatriates or SIEs (Suutari and Brewster, 2000) who have been specifically recruited by the organisation as a result of their language skills. This may be a challenging process, as van den Born and Peltokorpi (2010) suggest that it can be difficult to recruit individuals who have both the requisite language skills and also the required technical knowledge that the position requires. However, the area of SIEs is one which has received little attention in the literature (López Duarte, Vidal Suárez and González Díaz, 2015) and little is known about their use as language nodes, thus raising an interesting question about the extent of their use in SMEs, and is one which will be examined in this study as a potential practice which the case organisations may engage in.

Once in the organisation, such language nodes become the focal point of contact between the organisation and organisational partners who speak the target language. As such, the language node may exercise their own agency in these communications, that is to say, that it is their role to communicate with partners and they are entitled to make appropriate decisions concerning the relationship. Alternatively however, they may become informal translators (Tietze, 2010) who are required to translate

messages from other parts of the organisation so that they can be understood by the partner organisation, and vice versa. Being in such a position can become a double edged sword for the language node. On the one hand, the gatekeeping role which they are required to play can be a source of considerable power and informal status within the organisation (e.g Marschan et al, 1997; Piekkari, Vaara, Tienari and Säntii, 2005) because they are able to control the flow of information across organisational boundaries and thus access to particular groups. However, it can also be a source of extreme stress for the language node if they are required to engage in translation activities in addition to their normal job (Feely and Harzing, 2003) and this is something which I personally experienced when I acted as a language node for an organisation. Furthermore, the power which the language node gains from their gatekeeping position may be seen as a threat by other members of the organisation, particularly by organisational superiors who are not linguistically skilled and may therefore see the language node as a threat to their own identity and authority (Fast and Chen, 2009).

The literature on language nodes refers primarily to their use in MNEs, and thus it is relevant to explore how such individuals feel in SMEs, particularly as in smaller organisations, language nodes can be a way of coping with linguistic diversity when only limited resources are available, and as such their use is likely to be pragmatic, and a coping mechanism where the use of English is not possible and the company needs to find a way of communicating with their supply chain partners.

2.3.3 Mechanical Translation

The use of mechanical translation has been suggested in the literature to currently be unfit for purpose (Feely and Harzing, 2003; Harzing et al, 2011), although the situation is changing (Ostler, 2011) and the ubiquity of tools such as Google Translate and the fact that they are free, means that they are an attractive proposition for smaller organisations with limited resources, and a tool which I have seen used in companies as part of my own professional life. Their usage necessarily relies on a mechanistic approach to translation (Janssens et al, 2004), as they are unable to cope with the cultural nuances associated with words and sense-making, as anyone who is multilingual and has used such a tool can attest. However, if we can argue that the goal of BELF is not native speaker like competence in English, but merely to "get jobs

done" (Charles, 2007:265), then perhaps the use of mechanical translation, with the requisite errors which will necessarily occur, could also be seen to simply get the required tasks done in scenarios where native speaker competence, in whichever language it may be, is not necessary. Clearly therefore, it would seem to be unwise for organisations to use such tools in order to produce materials which will be used to communicate themselves to the wider world, such as in marketing literature for example, but its potential in communications in existing relationships where the parties already know each other, and are aware that a linguistic barrier exists, has been underexplored. Perhaps in such scenarios involving smaller companies with limited resources, the use of mechanical translation is indeed fit for such purposes, and thus could be considered as a legitimate solution to managing linguistic diversity.

2.3.4 The Use of Translators and Interpreters

Using professional translators or interpreters is another solution which organisations can seek to use to manage linguistic diversity (Feeling and Harzing, 2003). One of the advantages of such a solution is that it does not cause individuals who feel they that have little to no competence in the target language to display this, and therefore they will not experience FLA or be seen to lose face (Park et al, 1996), which may be particularly important for senior figures in small organisations who may be involved in a sales negotiation in cultures where face is particularly important (Steers et al, 2012). In addition to this, translators can also act as cultural mediators between the two parties (Ribeiro, 2007; Blenkinsopp and Shademan Pajouh, 2010), which may be advantageous if the two partners are culturally distant. In such a way the translator uses their cultural and linguistic knowledge to act as a boundary spanner (Peltokorpi and Schneider, 2009; Barner-Rasmussen et al, 2014), which can then be used to engage in higher order boundary spanning activity such as facilitating and intervening in the relationship.

There are, however, problems with using professionals in order to manage linguistic diversity. Pragmatically, there is an issue of cost. Professional language services are expensive, and their prolonged use may be beyond the resources of many SMEs. Furthermore, the organisation may be reluctant to divulge private company information to someone who is an outsider (Feely and Harzing, 2003), and this may dissuade them from using translators. In addition to this, there is the issue of finding

an appropriate translator. As with language nodes, it can be a challenge to find translators who have both the language skills/cultural understanding and the technical understanding of the industry in order to be an effective translator. Although the role of the translator in business translation is often invisible (Venuti, 2008), any translator will exercise their own agency in their work, in deciding how best to render the information so that it will be understood by the target audience. This is an act of power, and not a mechanistic process (Janssens et al, 2004), and indeed, the translator may find that in translating a source for a linguistically and culturally distant audience, they are committing violence against the source text itself (Venuti, 1993). Given the lack of attention which British companies have given to linguistic issues in the past, the perspective of SMEs on this process is an intriguing research area.

2.3.4.1 Perspectives from Translation Studies

As previously mentioned, perspectives from translation studies have been used in order to classify my view on language as a political one (Janssens et al, 2004), in order to suggest that searching simply for equivalence in translation is ultimately a misguided task which needs to be further challenged in international business (Piekkari et al, 2014). Whilst the field of translation studies primarily concerns itself with the written word (Crystal, 2010), in this study I consider translation to be any act which seeks to move between different languages, be this movement oral or written, as I see translation as situated practice which is jointly negotiated by participants in the communicative act (Ciuk and James, 2015). Therefore, the translation theories which I will address in this section could be equally well applied to speech acts, as well as written, as managers working internationally may engage in both as a normal part of their work (Tietze, 2010).

Inspired by the pragmatism of BELF, even though a political view leads me to believe that it is not possible to remove the language from its context (Janssens et al, 2004), I have found the idea of skopos theory to be helpful, as a functionalist theory of translation (Munday, 2016), which focuses on outcomes, rather than aesthetic merit, and is thus suitable for translation in a business environment. Skopos theory suggests that we should not judge a translation by its perceived equivalence or fluency, which as Venuti (2008) suggests, frequently results in the domestication of a foreign text in order to render it more accessible to readers, particularly readers in the Anglosphere,

but that instead, we should consider the quality of a translation depending on its purpose (Vermeer, 2012).

Skopos theory assumes that texts are produced with specific purposes in mind, which involve interaction with other people (Reiss and Vermeer, 2014). Therefore when an act of translation occurs, in order to consider its efficacy, we should consider whether the translation continues to fulfil the same purpose (skopos) as the source text, rather than trying to consider "equivalence". This is a highly pragmatic approach to translation, and thus follows the same logic as BELF – if the translation fulfils the purpose required by the individual requesting the translation (the translation commissioner), then it is adequate for the needs of that translation. This echoes the view of Charles (2007) on BELF, where if both parties understand the communication, it has been used successfully, regardless of the aesthetics of the conversation.

This pragmatic approach is therefore suited to the needs of business, making skopos theory an appropriate lens through which to consider translation decisions – and indeed any decisions made in order to manage linguistic diversity – in organisations. For example, if a language node decided to translate the salient information that colleagues required in order to complete a task, rather than being expected to translate the entirety of a communicative event, under skopos theory, if the translation commissioner agreed that this is all that was required, this would be a perfectly adequate translation, which it of course would not be if an ideal of equivalency was being sought.

Skopos theory could also be used in order to consider the use of machine translation, as it may determine a translation appropriate, even where numerous lexical errors may exist (Behnam, Azimi and Hajarizadeh, 2014). Clearly, if translation is deemed to be a search for equivalence, which has been the dominant approach in international business, then lexical errors would be seen to be inappropriate, however the pragmatic approach of skopos theory would enable us to see such translations acceptable if they met the needs of the translation commissioner and this was a simple requirement to understand the gist of a text.

The problem here arises if the translation commissioner determines a skopos which is inappropriate for the needs of the organisation. For example, when commissioning a

translation of marketing material which would be used in order to promote the organisation to an external audience, a potentially difficult situation could arise if the commissioner felt that errors in the text were admissible, and that the most important thing was that the translation be done cheaply. Reiss and Vermeer (2014) specifically address the function that different text types play in communication, and the importance of ensuring that the skopos of a translation is appropriate for the text type. Therefore the use of Google Translate would meet the skopos of such a translation, but it would be unlikely to be viewed as adequate by external partners, and examples abound in international business of embarrassing mistranslations which had not been appropriately checked before use (e.g. Ricks, 2006). A provocative question therefore, is to ask how SMEs manage this trade-off, and to understand how they view the relationship between cost and quality when it comes to translation.

Another lens from translation studies which can be useful in order to examine translation in organisations is that of cultural politics. When applied to the use of English, this approach puts an emphasis on "the underlying political, cultural and ethical questions around English" (Pennycook, 1994, p. 5). It is therefore very much aligned with a political view of language (Janssens et al, 2004) and as Venuti (2008) points out, given that there are many more translations in literature of books written in English into other languages rather than vice versa, this means that a particular view of the Anglo culture is exported into other contexts through translation practices, thus positioning Anglo culture as normal and legitimate. This closely links to the diffusion of management practices from "the West to the rest" (Jack and Westwood, 2006) where particular the US and the UK are seen as producers of management knowledge – in English (Tietze, 2004), whereas other, peripheral regions are reduced to the status of consumers, and thus local forms of knowledge are subordinated. Cultural politics encourages us to consider the ethics of such practices, and as such is highly relevant when considering the language practices of British firms operating internationally, and how such practices are infused by power, particularly with regards to systemic forms of power which are concerned with societal level structures, as is the case with English language hegemony in international business, and this will be addressed in the latter part of this chapter, specifically in section 2.5.1 which explores the four faces of power

framework (Fleming and Spicer, 2007) and considers their applicability to language management practices in organisations.

2.3.5 Training

Another option which organisations engage in is to provide language training for their employees (Charles and Marschan-Piekkari, 2002; Feely and Harzing, 2003; van den Born and Peltokorpi, 2010). Whilst this is a solution, it is a long term one, and for smaller organisations particularly, in challenging economic times, often the first thing to be cut is the training budget, and in an area which may take years to achieve any kind of pay-off, this may not be viewed as an appropriate strategy by senior managers.

A further problem in this area which may be encountered particularly by Anglophone organisations is determining in which language staff should receive training. In my own career, I have worked at two organisations who offered free language classes to their staff, but they were located in Spain and the Czech Republic and the language which was offered was English. For organisations which already have competence in English because they are native speakers, the choice may be less obvious. The British Council (2013) suggested a list of ten languages which it sees as priorities – at the top of the list was Spanish, however it is likely that companies will make the decision based on which markets are the priorities for them, and which have the most need for a language speaker.

Aside from a lack of resources and the vexed question of which language to offer training in, there can be other challenges associated with this strategy. Swift and Wallace (2011) note that a lack of time can be a barrier for executives learning a foreign language, and even where this is not a problem, there may be difficulties in the learning process. Ellis and Sagarra (2010) identify the difficulties in learning a language as an adult, and note that typically a lower competence is reached than those who learn other languages as children. Furthermore, this may be a destabilising process if senior managers are required to learn a language which they find difficult and in which they lack proficiency (e.g. Mikitani, 2013) and thus may seek to withdraw from such a program in order to avoid perceived embarrassment. There have been numerous studies (e.g. Swift, 1993; Liu, Huang and John 2010) which suggest that language learning is most successful if the learners are intrinsically motivated to study a foreign language, and thus obliging employees to engage in it as a matter of company policy is

likely to meet with only limited success. Therefore for a smaller organisation, language learning may be of most use for employees who already have some linguistic competence (Charles and Marschan-Piekkari, 2002) or where all that is required is a short refresher course, which is what I was once offered by an organisation at which I was employed in order to use language skills, and thus whether companies do offer training and how employees perceive this is one of the potential practices which will be explored in this study.

2.3.6 Reflections on Language Sensitive International Management Literature

Given that this study primarily contributes to the language sensitive international management literature, this is the area to which I have given the greatest focus in the literature review, although I will go on to address the literature on power and on international supply chain relationships.

With few exceptions (e.g. Vaara et al, 2005; Boussebaa et al, 2014; Boussebaa and Brown, 2017), the extant literature has tended to take a functionalist approach to the management of linguistic diversity, seeing it as a problem which can be overcome by the deployment of particular practices (Vaara et al, 2005), whether these occur as part of a planned corporate strategy (Dhir and Gòkè-Paríolá, 2002; Luo and Shenkar, 2006) or through a more spontaneous process of individual decision making (Fredrikkson et al, 2006; Steyaert et al, 2011; Barner-Rasmussen and Aarnio, 2011). My research aims include identification of such practices which organisations use in order to manage linguistic diversity in international supply chain relationships, and comparing how such practices differ between upstream and downstream relationships. However, where I then diverge from this managerialist approach is in the aim of understanding the perspectives of language agents regarding the use of such practices, thus moving away from a consideration of what benefits the organisation to an understanding of how it impacts on the individual; and examining how such practices are infused with power, which I will go on to discuss in Section 2.5 of this literature review. The consideration of power enables a reflection on how organisational practices are not neutral, and how they may promote dominant interests, which perpetuate and reify societal level structures, and I ultimately suggest that such usage should therefore be questioned, irrespective of whether or not it benefits individual organisations.

Therefore, in this section, I have considered the dominance of the English language in international business and adopted a critical perspective on this, challenging the idea of the neutrality of BELF. Essentially, as I adopt a political approach (Janssens et al, 2004), I have argued that the use of English, or indeed of any language, is inextricably bound up with power which will affect both the organisational relationship and the way in which language is used within it.

I have reviewed some practices which smaller organisations could use in order to manage linguistic diversity in international supply chains, primarily drawing on the work of Feely and Harzing (2003), and in doing so, I have highlighted some of the benefits and also some of the challenges that smaller organisations may encounter when attempting to put such strategies into practice. I have suggested that we may use skopos theory (Reiss and Vermeer, 2014) as a lens in order to consider the appropriateness of translations and thus the practices which organisations use in order to manage them, whilst noting that cultural politics (Pennycook, 1994) provides a further reminder of how translation must always constitute an act of power, particularly where the English language is involved, due to its current global dominance. I will therefore address the topic of power in more detail after addressing relationships in international supply chains.

2.4 International Supply Chains

A supply chain can be defined as "all parties involved, directly or indirectly, in fulfilling a customer request […] these functions include, but are not limited to, new product development, marketing, operations, distribution, finance and customer service" (Chopra and Meindl, 2013, p. 13) and thus it is clear that effective communication is of great importance in coordinating these activities.

It is therefore perhaps surprising that the supply chain literature to date has tended towards techno-rational investigations (Connelly et al, 2013) and has given relatively little attention to the issue of relationship management in the supply chain. What does exist in this area tends to come from the marketing channels literature and thus has given focus to downstream inter-organisational relationships (Agostini and Nosella, 2017). Given that there is evidence to suggest (e.g. Turnbull and Cunningham, 1982; Wathne and Heide, 2004; Chen and Fung, 2013; Piekkari et al, 2014) that focal

organisations may adopt different strategies in terms of their relationship management of suppliers and customers, it would seem that the extant literature does not provide a holistic picture of relationships in supply chains, and thus it is appropriate to ask whether SMEs engage in different language management practices depending on whether they are working upstream or downstream.

This lack of information is exacerbated when we come to consider international supply chains which are the focus of this study, as the implications of cultural differences which have long been of interest to international management scholars have only recently become an area of serious consideration in international supply chains (e.g. Mehta, Anderson, Dubinsky, Polsa and Mazur, 2010; Mehta, Anderson, Dubinsky, Mazur and Polsa, 2011), and thus the impact of context on behaviour in relationships would benefit from a consideration of the international management and international HRM literature (González-Loureiro et al, 2014). There has to date, been no specific consideration of the role of language in international supply chain relationships, and thus from this perspective, there is a significant lacuna in the literature, to which this study aims to contribute.

Despite this however, in the past five years there has been increasing acceptance that relationships, and thus the communication which drives these relationships, are of fundamental importance in managing an international supply chain (e.g. Gligor and Autry, 2012; Kiessling, Howey and Akdeniz, 2014) even if such consideration implicitly assumes that the communication will take place in monolingual environments (Janssens and Steyaert, 2013).

Therefore in spite of these gaps in this particular literature, it is still of importance to this study, although given the key focus of the research, which is language, it is envisaged that the primary contribution to knowledge made will be to the field of international management, rather than to the specific supply chain literature. As such, in this section I draw on a number of different disciplines which address supply chain management, and therefore answer the call of Young and Merritt (2013) who argue that marketing channels and supply chain literature can be complementary as I synthesise the marketing channels literature with supply chain literature in order to better understand the types of inter-organisational relationships which may occur in such structures. Secondly, I draw on the field of organisation studies, an area which to

date has also had limited impact on language sensitive management research (Piekkari et al, 2014). The contribution of organisation studies to the supply chain literature is that it encourages a sensitivity to the idea that organisational actors have multiple social exchange relationships which form over time (Ballinger and Rockman, 2010) and thus enables the consideration of supply chain linkages from a more relational perspective than the other two fields provide. Given that this study seeks to understand the micro-level dynamics of such relationships, it is appropriate to consider multiple approaches to build up a holistic picture of such dynamics before viewing them through the lens of language.

Therefore, this section will be organised as follows. Firstly, I will consider different types of supply chain relationships which SMEs may have, both upstream and downstream. Consideration will then be given to the burgeoning literature on communication in international supply chains. A discussion of how supply chain relationships may be affected by power dynamics can be found in the following section, which deals specifically with power.

2.4.1 Supply Chain Relationships

The majority of the supply chain literature seeks to explain relationships from a rational, economic perspective which does not particularly align with the social network view (Connelly et al, 2013) which aligns better with the approach taken in this study, as well as my own experience of working in international supply chains.

Together with this understanding, the marketing channels literature can be used in order to depict a more nuanced picture of organisational relationships than would typically be used in the domain of international business. For example, the typology of Webster (1992) which is presented below, distinguishes between different types of relationships which in the discipline of international business could simply be considered as "export".

1. Transactions
2. Repeated transactions
3. Long term relationships
4. Buyer/seller partnerships (total mutual dependence)
5. Strategic alliances (including joint ventures)
6. Network organisations
7. Vertical integration
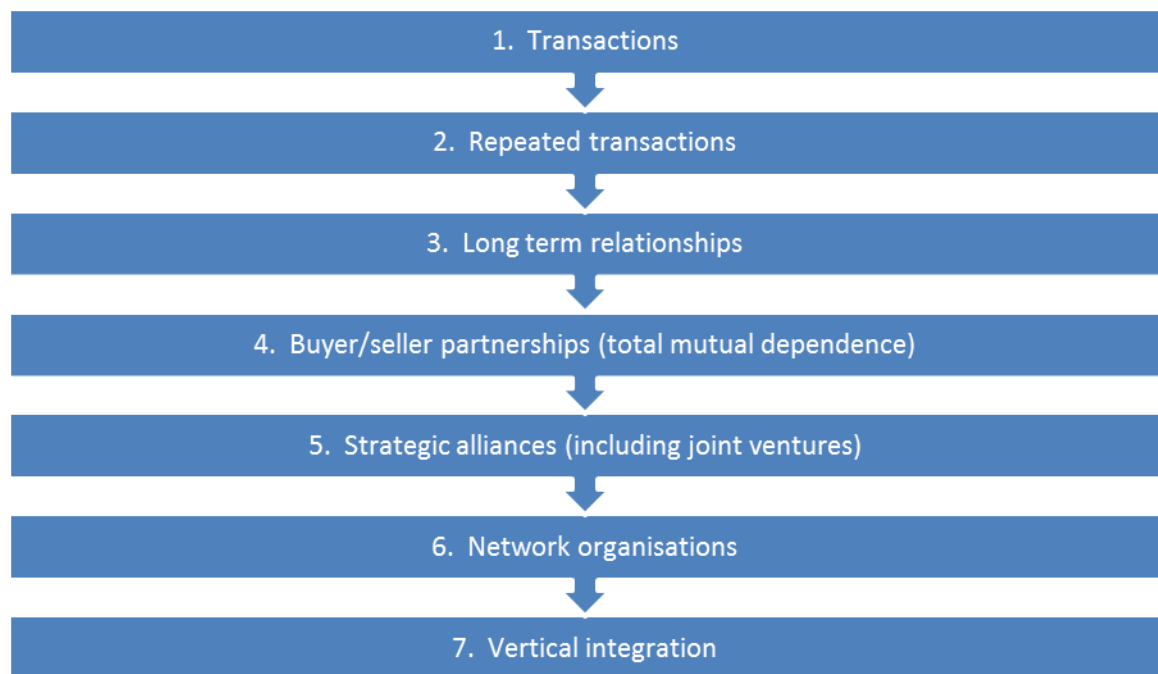
Figure 2.6: The range of marketing relationships (Webster, 1992)

This typology distinguishes between "repeated transactions" and "long term relationships" or "buyer/seller partnerships", which would be presumed to enjoy much greater relationship specific investments (Palmatier, Dant and Grewal, 2007) than would simply "repeat transactions". From the perspective of this study, such specific investments may take the form of recruitment of an individual who was fluent in the language of this supply chain partner, whereas a partner who merely engaged in sporadic transactions with the focal company may be expected to communicate with the British organisation in English. However, in the discourse of international business, each of these relationships could simply be classified as "export" and no further distinction made. Such an approach does not permit a sufficiently nuanced understanding of the type of relationship and thus the language practices which are used in order to manage them, and therefore, would not have been as useful a tool for case selection, as will be discussed in the following chapter.

Despite the fact that this typology was intended for use when thinking about downstream relationships, there is no reason why it is not equally applicable to supply chain relationships which are upstream of the focal organisation, and thus it is a helpful sensitising tool when considering all supply chain relationships of smaller organisations.

In the 1970s and 1980s, the marketing channels literature was dominated by a focus on conflict, and emphasis was given to adversarial relationships (Young and Merritt, 2013; Hopkinson and Blois, 2014). Conflict was deemed to be inherent in supply chains due to the imbalance of power which is always present between the two parties (Frazier, 1999).

However, more recently, the literature has tended to emphasize the importance of collaboration (Young and Merritt, 2013) which is why good communication has begun to be seen as an essential feature of successful supply chains (Ooesterhuis, Molleman and Van der Vaart, 2013).

Somewhat surprisingly, given this renewed attention, the literature provides little specific information on what actually constitutes good communication. Gligor and Autry (2012) suggest that inter-organisational relationships enjoy higher performance when personal relationships are present, and Dirks, Lewicki and Zaheer (2009) also suggest that researchers need to distinguish between interpersonal and interorganisational relationships, although a micro-level approach, such as that taken by this study, highlights the need to consider inter-organisational relationships as consisting of the interpersonal, consistent with an interest in the decisions and perspectives of the individual actors, as discussed in the following section.

2.4.2 An Interaction Approach to Supply Chain Relationships

A particular contribution of the marketing literature to the understanding of supply chain relationships can be found in the work of the Industrial Marketing and Purchasing (IMP) Group, which was founded in 1976 with the aim of studying marketing and purchasing activities across five European countries on a large-scale basis (Ford, 2004). Although the IMP group has always had a strong interest in international relationships (Ford, 2004), internationalisation is now considered as one of the sub-streams of IMP research, rather than the main focus of its work (Easton, Zolkiewski and Bettany (2003). Additionally, it is important to note that although the IMP literature and the supply chain literature are complementary in providing appropriate lenses through which to view supply chain relationships, they are distinct fields which operate using different research paradigms (Veludo, Macbeth and Purchase, 2004).

A key contribution to the understanding of supply chain relationships from the IMP group is the interaction approach (Håkansson, 1982). Whereas the supply chain literature tends to consider relationships in a specifically functional sense (Connelly et al, 2013), the interaction approach encourages a consideration of human communication and interaction in relationships (although this has not always been taken up in the literature), as it specifically addresses the role of the individual and the fundamental role of sales and purchasing professionals in B2B environments (Cunningham and Turnbull, 1982). This is in contrast with previous marketing research, such as Kotler (1976), in which agency was considered to rest with the selling organisation, rather than their individual customers, who were viewed as largely passive. The interaction model requires an understanding of the dyadic relationship between buyer and seller, and the context in which such relationships occur, and therefore has four elements:

1). The interaction process

2). The participants in the interaction process

3). The environment within which interaction takes place

4). The atmosphere affecting and affected by the interaction

(Håkansson, 1982 p. 15).

Unusually for work published at this time (Holden, 1987) the interaction model specifically notes that the nature of the environment in which the relationship occurs may require organisations operating within it to have special knowledge including foreign language skills, with this body of work giving particular focus to the role of language in international marketing interactions (Turnbull and Cunningham, 1981). It also highlights the importance of spatial or cultural distance and how this may affect the contact patterns which exist in relationships (Ford, 1984). This is of particular relevance to this research as it demonstrates how relationships consist of individual episodes which influence the long-term nature of the relationship (Ford, 1982), and therefore how particular communicative events and the practices which are used to manage them are of paramount importance in understanding the functioning of inter-organisational relationships as a whole. This is related to the typology of Webster (1992) as it demonstrates how episodes which occur at the early stages of the typology, such as a single transaction, can affect whether and how the relationship

progresses to more complex forms of interaction between the two parties as adaptations to the specific needs of the buyer and seller are made through relationship specific investments (Palmatier et al, 2007).

Under the interaction approach, relationships can be analysed through the different layers of activities, resources and actors (Håkansson and Snelhota, 1989), which enables us to consider the shared activity links which exist between organisations, resource ties which exist between organisational actors, and the bonds which form between individual actors, thus necessitating a focus on human communication which is relevant to this study. Although initially, the focus of the IMP group was on dyadic relationships, this was widened as it was understood from this perspective that such relationships were best understood as embedded in a context which includes other relationships which impact on the dyad (Ford, 2004).

Within this, the role of resource ties has become a key research theme, particularly in considering the importance of external networking for SMEs who may not have the capabilities to perform many of the tasks which their business requires in-house and thus must acquire resources outside of the organisation itself (Naudé, Zaefarian, Tavani, Neghabi and Zefarian, 2014) which may be applicable to language capabilities given the difficulties in recruiting individuals with appropriate linguistic and technical skills (van den Born and Peltokorpi, 2010).

Whereas the supply chain literature has a tendency to focus on rational economic relationships drawing on ideas of transaction cost economics (Williamson, 1975), network analyses drawing on the work of the IMP group also highlight the role of non-economic relations (Welch, Welch, Wilkinson and Young, 1996), including with competitor organisations and third parties such as government agencies (or in the case of this study, non-professional translators who can help organisations to cross language barriers on an ad-hoc basis (e.g. Piekkari et al, 2013)). Therefore although in this study the focus of the research is on the buyer-seller dyad, I am cognisant of the role which other relationships may plan in choice of practices to manage language diversity within these dyads.

Although the literature on industrial networks therefore is a useful perspective from which to consider interactions between buyers and sellers in international supply

chains, in which language was initially considered to be an important factor, as the literature has evolved language is no longer a key focus within this research stream (Welch, Welch and Piekkari, 2006). I therefore now address the literature on social capital, which shares an interest in social network theory and provides a complementary lens on language use in inter-organisational relationships.

2.4.3 Social Capital and Networks

Although the concepts of networks and inter-organisational relationships are ones which have therefore received attention across a variety of business disciplines, including international business, supply chain management and marketing, as detailed above, the role of language has received little attention in the majority of this literature, despite the fact that it underpins the three network attributes of activities, resources and actors (Piekkari et al, 2014).

For example, previous research (e.g. Barner-Rasmussen and Björkman, 2007) has demonstrated the importance of language fluency in establishing a shared vision amongst network parties - in this case in inter-unit relationships within Chinese and Finnish MNC subsidiaries - however it is equally difficult to imagine how a strong relationship is able to be maintained in the upstream and downstream relationships of SMEs where a shared language is not present.

This can be viewed through the lens of social capital, which is defined by Nahapiet and Ghoshal (1998) as "the sum of the actual and potential resources embedded within, available through, and derived from the network of relationships possessed by an individual or social unit (p. 243). Linked to this is the concept of human capital, which is defined by Piekkari et al (2014) as "an individual's set of knowledge, skills and abilities acquired through education and experience" (p105). Although Nahapiet and Ghoshal (1998) discuss how shared languages and codes form part of the cognitive dimension of social capital, they do not explicitly consider this in terms of foreign language capabilities, and therefore building on this work, Piekkari et al (2014) introduce the concept of "language capital", which is interwoven with both social capital and human capital and is used to denote "how language can be regarded as a unique resource that increases an individual's stock of human capital" (p. 106). Crucially, they note that as an individual possession, employees can choose whether or

not to deploy their language capital in organisational interactions. For example, an individual may have language capabilities which they do not usually use as part of their routine tasks at work, and if a situation arose where this linguistic competence would be useful, the employee could choose whether or not to use these skills or not, potentially depending on the benefits which they saw to them as an individual as a result of this action or non-action. Therefore language capital may change over time if employees use it to gain access to additional actors or resources in the network, or increase their stock of language capital by learning other languages which they plan to use in organisational relationships.

Linked to the idea of social capital development in networks is the idea of trust in international relationships, an area which I now address in the context of trust development in a multilingual environment.

2.4.3 Foreign Languages and Trust in Supply Chain Relationships

In an international supply chain, it is difficult to establish personal relationships without a higher level of fluency in a shared language. Bouchien de Groot (2010) warns of the dangers of "thin" communication which is solely task based, where a shared language is only present to a limited extent, so presumably such a situation would not typify "good" communication, raising the question of how SMEs can build deep relationships where language barriers exist.

Many studies have commented on the importance of trust in inter-organisational relationships (e.g. Das and Bing-Sheng, 1998; Ireland and Webb, 2007; Dirks et al, 2009) and suggest that this is a vital component of an effectively functioning relationship, built through communication which can help organisations to avoid conflict (Das and Bing-Sheng, 1998). As discussed in the previous section, the language sensitive international management literature warns us that trust can be diminished as a result of linguistic diversity in an interaction (Tenzer et al, 2014) as a result of individuals seeming less competent when struggling to express themselves in a particular language (Vaara et al, 2005) and perhaps subsequently seeming to suffer from Foreign Language Anxiety (Dewaele, 2007). The resulting lack of confidence with which the individual is able to present their ideas can lead to the intended audience not trusting them as much as they would someone who was able to express these ideas fluently (Tenzer et al, 2014). It has also been suggested (Lauring, 2007) that trust

may be diminished where linguistic diversity exists due to social identity theory – the idea that individuals will seek out and attempt to relate to others who they feel are like them in some way. Given that language is a highly visible marker of identity (San Antonio, 1987) this can mean that individuals do not initially trust those who may speak a different language to them. Linked to this idea, Eberly, Holley, Johnson and Mitchell (2011) suggest that where the sense of individual identity is particularly dominant, which language may be, as it is often highly salient in an intercultural encounter, this can lead to a sense of separation from the relational partner, and thus the relationship can become more distant than it would otherwise have been. Whilst such a barrier can be overcome in time, clearly the presence of linguistic diversity could be viewed to hinder effective communication which results in a trusting relationship in international supply chains, and therefore it is necessary to gain a deeper understanding than the extant literature currently provides of how SMEs manage this process.

The concept of trust in international supply chains is one which is closely linked to ideas of power and control (Ireland and Webb, 2007, Williams and Moore, 2007; Touboulic, Chicksand and Walker, 2014) and thus it is to the topic of power, and its manifestations and sources from both a linguistic and a supply chain perspective, to which I now turn.

2.5 Power in an Organisational Setting

In this study, I take a relational view of power, believing that it is not something which resides in individuals, but instead is constructed during social relations, and is therefore experienced subjectively by different individuals (Ezzamel, Willmott and Worthington 2011; Clegg, 2014; Geppert and Dörrenbächer, 2014). I therefore use the definition of Fleming and Spicer (2014, p. 239) who argue that power is "a resource to get things done through other people, to achieve certain goals that may be shared or contested." This is in contrast to the prevailing view of power in the international business literature which views it as predominantly negative (Geppert et al, 2016)

As power is therefore something which is socially constructed and performed, clearly language is one of the primary ways in which power can be exercised (Schachter,

1951). As observed by Martin and Nakayama (2008, p. 48) "power is always present when we communicate with each other although it is not always evident or obvious."

Given that power exists in social relations (Clegg, 1989), the use of power will provoke some kind of reaction from those who are involved in the relationship. This may be an act of simple compliance or acquiescence, but alternatively, power may be resisted by those who it is used against. Such resistance may result from a simple automatic resistance to change (Burnes, 2009; Thomas, Sargent and Hardy, 2011), or perhaps from a feeling of identity threat, whether this identity is professional, linguistic, or another identity which is salient in the context in which power is being applied (e.g Ezzamel et al, 2011; Bordia and Bordia, 2015).

Just as power is not purely negative in and of itself, neither is resistance, despite the fact, that like power, it is typically portrayed as such in the organisational literature, where it is frequently seen as an unjustified attempt to thwart management will (Thomas et al, 2011). In this study I use the concept of "struggle" (Fleming and Spicer, 2007), which links power and resistance in a symbiotic relationship, suggesting that one is unable to exist without the other, as struggle is "a multidimensional dynamic that animates the interface between power and resistance" (p. 58).

Under such an approach, struggle is a legitimate part of organisational life, and should be considered a creative, rather than a negative force, given that organisations are in a constant state of flux (Burnes, 2009; Tsoukas and Chia, 2002), and thus acts of power and resistance do not necessarily represent exploitation, in the case of power, or deviant behaviour, in the case of resistance, but that this would depend on the context and the way in which they are used. In this section, I will use the framework of the faces of power (Fleming and Spicer, 2007) in order to explore how different language practices which organisations may use can be seen as different types of power, and as such may be resisted or indeed accepted, in different ways by organisational members who are involved in these relationships (Wilmot, 2017). I use this as a sensitising framework in order to explore in the fieldwork how the different practices which organisations select could be seen as examples of particular acts of power or resistance.

2.5.1 Four Faces of Power Framework

Fleming and Spicer (2007) identify four faces of power which each have corresponding acts of resistance. These are Coercion/Refusal; Manipulation/Voice; Domination/Escape and Subjectification/Creation. Each of these will be discussed in detail with regards to how they may manifest when particular language strategies are used in order to manage linguistic diversity. It is important to note that these four faces of power can be broadly divided into two categories, episodic and system. Episodic relates to individual acts of power, so coercion and manipulation fall into this category. Domination and subjectification are systemic acts of power, which have become normalised and thus form part of the macro-level environment in which social interactions take place. However, there is a link between these two categories, because as Clegg (2014) points out, systemic acts of power consist of individual acts which have become routinized and legitimised to the extent that they then become the rules of the game.

2.5.1.1 Coercion and Refusal

The first face of power which Fleming and Spicer (2007) identify is that of coercion. This is an individual act of power which simply involves "getting another person to do something that he or she would have not otherwise done" (Fleming and Spicer, 2007, p. 14). As identified by Schachter (1951) and Martin and Nakayama (2008), this is frequently something which is done through linguistic means, for example a manager telling a subordinate what to do in a particular situation (e.g Thomas et al, 2011). However, it could also be argued that the use of a particular language strategy itself could form an act of coercion. For example, in the previous sections I have discussed the challenges that language nodes (Feely and Harzing, 2003) may face when they are required to take on translation activities in addition to their usual tasks. Obliging them to do this, even if it may appear to be an innocent request, such as asking someone to translate an email, is in fact an act of coercion – if they had not been obliged to do so, they would not have otherwise carried out this task.

The most obvious example of coercion in language strategies is the idea of a common corporate language (Wilmot, 2017) as this requires all employees to use a particular language even if they are not fully comfortable with it (e.g Mikitani, 2013). Although the idea of a common corporate language is not a strategy which is appropriate for

SMEs, the idea of obliging interlocutors to speak in a particular language certainly is, and for British organisations, this language is highly likely to be English. This too, is an act of coercion – it obliges the other party to speak in English even if they are not fully comfortable in doing so, in order to meet the needs of the British organisation, which privileges the native speaker (Méndez García and Pérez Cañado, 2005).

As previously identified, this doesn't necessary have to be viewed negatively. In some cases, forcing someone to speak in a language in which they are not fully competent may be, in certain situations, the only pragmatic solution. If a British employee is working with a Spanish partner, and the British employee has no competence at all in Spanish, and the Spanish person has a limited proficiency in English, clearly, the logical solution is for the Spanish partner to attempt to speak some English and to adapt to the language of the other interlocutor (Steyaert et al, 2011).

However, because power relations are subjectively experienced (Ezzamel et al, 2011), then this act of coercion may be construed negatively by the other partner. In such cases, Fleming and Spicer (2007) suggest that they may seek to resist this use of power through an act of refusal, where employees elect not to participate in whatever is being expected of them.

For example, the language node could simply refuse to translate an email, and argue that they have other tasks to focus on. The Spanish supply chain partner in the previous example may say that they cannot communicate in English sufficiently well, and therefore potentially end the relationship. Marschan et al (1997) suggest that this may well occur where employees do not feel that they have the language skills to cope with the request. However, it is much easier to refuse when such requests do not take place in person (Piekkari et al, 2013) as it is easier to ignore an email, which is a form of passive resistance, as opposed to refusing directly a person who is stood in front of you asking for help, as this entails a much more active form of resistance. Just as the act of coercion may not be experienced negatively, neither may the act of resistance. The person asking the language node for help may find their refusal reasonable, and understand that they have other work pressures, for example. The key here is that the act of struggle may be experienced either positively or negatively depending on the individual actors and their perspectives – two different people in the same situation may encounter it in a different way, which is why it is necessary to understand the

micro-processes of power relations, so that we can explore this subjectivity (Ezzamel et al, 2011), and the need to do this has influenced the research design, which is discussed in the following chapter.

2.5.1.2 Manipulation/Voice

The second type of episodic power which is identified by Fleming and Spicer (2007) is that of manipulation. This is where powerful actors do not seek to coerce others into doing something, but instead reduce the terms of the debate, so that choices about different ways of doing things are removed. This can take place through either action, or non-action on the part of the powerful, but either way, it seeks to establish "the way we do things round here" (Deal and Kennedy, 1982, p. 4). Such manipulation may occur through claims to rationality and pragmatism in individual circumstances, as can be found in the work of Vaara et al (2005). This study considers a merger between a Finnish and a Swedish bank. As Swedish is an official minority language of Finland, senior managers presented the choice of Swedish as the corporate language as the pragmatic choice, the one which would produce the least amount of organisational disruption. However, whilst this was experienced positively by the Swedish managers, the Finnish managers did not see it that way, as they felt less competent in Swedish, and thus unable to fully participate in the routines of organisational life which their status as managers would usually require of them (Vaara et al, 2005). Again, the scenario of a common corporate language is not applicable to SMEs, but based on this example, we can easily imagine how a British company, in international supply chain relationships with non-Anglophone counterparts, could present English as the pragmatic choice for the language of communication, on the assumption that the other party will have learnt some English at school. This assumption of English as a pragmatic choice could take the form of simply beginning the communication in English, making the assumption that the other party will respond in kind, unlike coercion, which requires a request (or demand) to use a particular language.

Fleming and Spicer (2007) suggest that manipulation may be most frequently resisted by "voice" which is where actors attempt to gain access to the decision making processes from which they were excluded. In the case of Vaara et al (2005), the Finnish managers did this by presenting English as the common corporate language – thereby putting all managers on an equal footing, and also demonstrating that

sometimes, English can be a neutral option, highlighting once more, the need to consider how power is experienced subjectively. In the case of a supply chain relationship, voice could be exercised by attempting to open up a discussion about the choice of language, through an attempt to suggest alternative solutions or practices in order to manage the linguistic diversity present in the relationship, although depending on the type of relationship, this may not be possible.

2.5.1.3 Domination/Escape

Domination is the first of the systemic faces of power which Fleming and Spicer (2007) identify. It is where systems of power are made to appear both legitimate and inevitable, and therefore become hegemonic (Gramsci, 1971). As a result of this, our values become shaped by these hegemonic forces, and individuals may therefore act in a way that goes against their own interests (Fleming and Spicer, 2007). Unlike coercion and manipulation, people are not obliged to do things in particular ways due to the behaviour of other actors, but instead act in a particular way based on their beliefs and their understanding of the society in which they operate as a whole, where particular actions are considered to be desirable.

There have been many suggestions in the literature that the English language has become hegemonic in international business (e.g. Venuti, 1993; Crystal, 2003; Phillipson, 2009; Tietze and Dick, 2013; Yamao and Sekiguchi, 2015). It enjoys a privileged position in international communications, and is often presented as a neutral or pragmatic solution in order to overcome linguistic diversity, as exemplified by the concept of BELF. Whilst the use of English can indeed have a democratising effect on international communication (Steyaert et al, 2011), the use of English is not wholly utopian, and therefore a critical approach to the use of English in international business can help to establish a more complete picture of the impact of this choice.

As I have previously discussed, particularly in the domain of management, English has become the primary vehicle for the production of management knowledge (Tietze, 2004; Jack, 2004). English is not a value-free option for communication, and the fact that it is so frequently seen as such is due to the legitimation processes in which English has been positioned as the rational option for international communication, and therefore its usage has become simply routinized, thus achieving hegemonic status. Whilst acknowledging that the use of English can be beneficial, in this study I

take a –phobe position (Holland, 2002) on its unreflexive use, because my political perspective (Janssens et al, 2004) indicates that it cannot be so easily uncoupled from its history, as a language which achieved its current status as a result of colonial, and then capitalist expansion, and the culture of the Anglosphere more broadly.

There are numerous examples in the international management literature which relate to the dominance of the English language in multinational organisations (e.g. Fredriksson et al, 2006; Mikitani, 2013; Boussebaa et al, 2014). Aside from this, there is strong evidence that Anglophone organisations do rely on the dominance of English in order to avoid having to invest in capabilities in other languages, particularly in smaller organisations (e.g. Enderwick and Akoorie, 1994; Rees and Rees, 1996; Crick 1999; Clarke, 2000), and indeed, the 2004 decision of the British government to make a foreign language no longer compulsory for GCSE students can be seen as a reflection of the generally low status which is accorded to foreign language abilities in the UK.

Fleming and Spicer (2007) suggest that the form of resistance which is most closely associated with domination is escape, where employees attempt to disengage mentally from the world of work (Cohen and Taylor, 2002), and as such may no longer identify with the organisation or its goals. Whilst there are examples of employees who are obliged to use English against their wishes doing this (e.g. Tietze and Dick, 2013), there are also examples of native English speakers at British organisations who engage in acts of escape if anything appears to challenge the status quo, and thus forces them to confront linguistic issues, which Harzing and Pudelko (2014) suggest that they are rarely obliged to do.

An example of this would be the previously discussed case of the British organisation who went bankrupt, when the company would have been saved by a fax in German, if only they had translated it, instead of ignoring it because they did not understand it (Department for Trade and Industry, 1996). Thus we can say that when the fax was received which challenged the British employees' expected norms of communication, they simply disengaged to the extent that they did not even attempt to understand it. Given that Foreman-Peck and Wang (2014) estimated the costs of the lack of language skills in the UK to be £48billion, or 3.5% of national GDP, we can see from these examples that systems of domination can be equally damaging to those whom they initially appear to privilege, and thus it is imperative that we gain a more detailed

understanding of the micro-relationships impact of the use of English in UK based international supply chains.

2.5.1.4 Subjectification/Creation

The final face of power identified by Fleming and Spicer (2007) is that of subjectification. It refers to a systemic type of power, which goes beyond domination in order to produce "the kind of people we feel that we naturally are" (Fleming and Spicer 2007, p. 23). It therefore does not only create hegemonic structures based on a particular ideology, but instead explores how those ideologies are subjectively experienced in order to shape an individual's own sense of self. Therefore while domination naturalises a particular social order, subjectification will shape the way in which individuals feel that they need to behave in order to be considered as legitimate actors within that social order.

Here, we can turn again to the hegemony of English in order to consider how individuals may relate to the use of English in their working lives. Boussebaa et al (2014) relate how call centre workers based in India believe that not only do they have to speak in English as part of their role, but they have to "neutralise" their accents in order to speak the variety of English which is most acceptable to their overseas clients. Therefore the Indian managers who control processes have internalised an idea of English which is not about simply getting the message across, as in BELF, but instead have constructed an idea of a "pure" variety of English which is superior to other, local versions. This was also the view of the native English speakers who interacted with the Indian agents, who then used their judgements on the quality of English spoken in order to make other assumptions about the agents' broader professional competence (Tenzer et al, 2014). This is despite the fact that in linguistics, the idea that there is a single, legitimate variety of English is one which has long been challenged (Kachru, 1992; Crystal, 2010).

Ehrenreich (2010) conducted a study in Germany which suggested that employees preferred to use English at work, as it made them feel more international, and more a part of the international business community, than using German or any other language did, as did the use of English by some French academics (Boussebaa and Brown, 2017). Here, we can see that the hegemony of English as an international language of business shapes the ways in which actors feel that they need to behave at

work, although again, it can be seen that in the case of Ehrenreich (2010), the employees involved did not necessarily experience subjectification negatively.

It is argued (Fleming and Spicer, 2007) that subjectification is thus most frequently resisted by creation, where individuals engage in micro-level acts which "use power to create something which was not intended by those in authority" (p. 43). In this sense, employees can engage in "translanguaging" (Janssens and Steyaert, 2014) in order to engage in creation, as this is where new language varieties emerge as different linguistic traditions are mixed in order to create hybrid forms of language use.

The existence of hybrid forms of language has been rarely noted in the international management literature (exceptions include Holden et al, 2008; Boussebaa et al, 2014; Logemann and Piekkari, 2015), however it is frequently observed in sociolinguistic studies of sites of prolonged language contact (e.g. Blommaert, 2013; Billings, 2014). There are a number of possible reasons why it is less frequently noted in business. Given that language has only recently become an established research stream of international business within its own right (Brannen et al, 2014), it is possible that its absence from the literature is simply related to the amount of empirical work which has been done on the topic in comparison to sociolinguistics. In addition, translanguaging is seen as more likely to occur where there is prolonged contact between linguistic groups, which may potentially occur in multinationals, but would not necessarily be the case in inter-organisational relationships. Alternatively however, it could be that corporate cultures have such a strong effect on individual's behaviour, and that English is so closely associated with management knowledge (Tietze, 2004) that the playfulness which characterises translanguaging (Janssens and Steyaert, 2014) is simply not present in relationships which occur in the business domain, and thus it is a form of resistance which is infrequently used in organisations. As a result, little is known about creation and hybridity in an organisational setting, and thus it is interesting to explore whether or not it is observed in this study.

In terms of the practical application of this framework to the study, although Fleming and Spicer (2007) suggest that these are the forms of resistance which are most closely associated with each of the faces of power, they do not argue that these are the only ways in which power may be resisted, and therefore it may be the case that subjectification is actually resisted through refusal, or escape, and that this would be

more commonly observed when it comes to questions of linguistic diversity in organisations, and I was sensitive to the possibility of such divergences during the fieldwork and analysis stages of this study, as is detailed in the following chapter.

2.5.2 Power in International Supply Chains

French and Raven (1959) suggest that in order to be able to exercise episodic acts of power within a supply chain relationship, actors must have a particular base of power. Whilst such an approach locates power within the individual, the relational view suggests that these bases are not possessed by the individual actor, but instead are drawn upon in order to perform power within the relationship. This understanding is only applicable to episodic acts, as systemic acts of power are embedded into the institutional environmental in which the relationship takes place, and thus in such cases, the environment itself provides legitimacy for systemic acts of power.

The supply chain literature tends to take a narrower view of power than does organisation studies, and as such, much of the literature (e.g. Benton and Maloni, 2005; Williams and Moore, 2007, Touboulic et al, 2014) views power as coercion, and considers the bases of power as being the five which were originally identified by French and Raven (1959): coercive; reward; legitimacy; expert; and referent (Hopkinson and Blois, 2014). Beyond these five however, Williams and Moore (2007) explain that power can also result from controlling scarce resources and demonstrate that therefore information can be considered as either a base of power in its own right, or as a factor which helps to generate other sources of power. Additionally, Ireland and Webb (2007) use the lens of transaction cost economics in order to identify economic power as a source of power in supply chain relationships. As with Williams and Moore (2007), they conceptualise power as stemming from the control of a scarce resource and therefore could originate from factors including: the number of suppliers from which a component can be purchased; a supplier's market share of a particular component; the number of major customers of a supplier's product; and the amount of revenue a supplier generates from a single purchaser (Krajewski, Wei and Tang, 2005; Ireland and Webb, 2007).

Such a basis of power is therefore one which is likely to be relevant to smaller organisations in their supply chain relationships, and the extent to which they or their supply chain partners wield such a base of power (which is likely to be episodic in

nature) may have a direct impact on the practices that the organisation uses in order to manage linguistic diversity in the relationship, given that communication is a basic requirement for the effective functioning of a global supply chain (Das and Bing-Sheng, 1998; Ooesterhuis et al, 2013). Thus for this doctoral study, it is interesting to examine what bases of power SMEs and their partners draw upon in order to be able to enact particular language practices through the use of a qualitative, case based methodology, which has been lacking in the power focused marketing channels literature (Hopkinson and Blois, 2014).

The nature and degree of power asymmetry which exists in an international supply chain is likely to influence the control and governance mechanisms which are used in the relationship (Gereffi, Humphrey and Sturgeon, 2005), as exemplified in the below diagram.
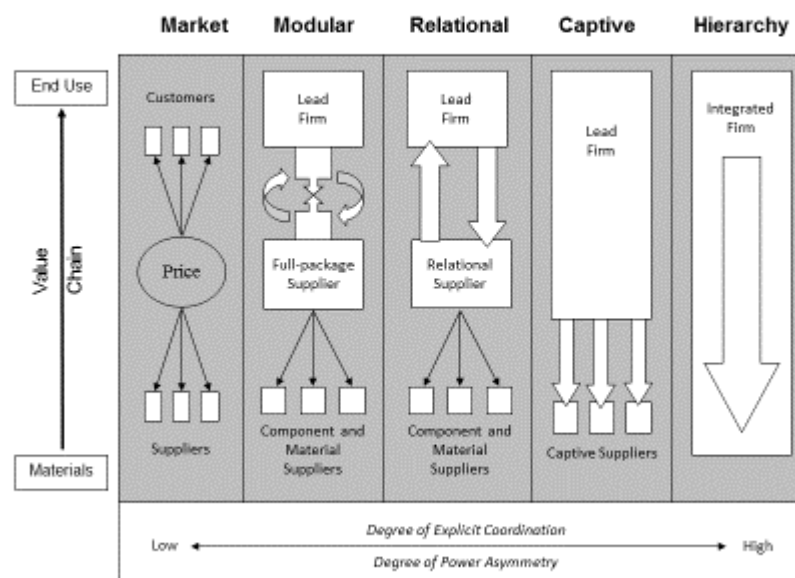
Figure 2.7: Five global value chain governance types (Gereffi et al, 2005)

Some of these governance types can be loosely mapped on to the typology of relationships identified by Webster (1992), where market based governance could be thought of as being closely related to transactions or possibly repeat transactions, long term relationships, buyer/seller partnerships and strategic alliances may be associated with relational governance, and network organisations and vertical integration could be associated with hierarchical governance.

Market based governance is extremely transactional and the relationship is governed by price, as there is little interaction between buyer and seller, so, because switching costs are low, if the seller cannot offer a product at the right quality and the right price, the buyer will simply go elsewhere. This may well be the case in some export relationships (Dirks et al, 2009), however when investment in the relationship occurs (perhaps by recruiting someone with language skills), then this can increase switching costs and make it more difficult for the buyer to simply go elsewhere if conflict occurs, as it necessarily will in supply chain relationships (Frazier, 1999; Dirks et al, 2009).

Relational governance is where frequent knowledge sharing is a part of the relationship, which does increase the risk of opportunistic behaviour by either party (Dant and Schul, 1992), however the relationship itself should act as a control mechanism to ensure that this does not happen (Khan, Shenkar and Lew, 2015). This will ensure that trust develops between the two parties, and frequently, such a type of governance can be found amongst organisations which share social and spatial proximity, or family and ethnic ties (Gereffi et al, 2005). Given that social identity theory (Tajfel and Turner, 1979) suggests that people will tend to interact with those who are similar to them in some way, and that language is an immediately visible marker of identity (San Antonio, 1987), it may well be the case that linguistic ties are also important where relational governance is used, and this is thus an intriguing area to consider.

Hierarchical governance, is where supply chains become vertically integrated, and competences and relationships are kept in-house. This may occur where competent and reliable suppliers cannot be found for particular components, or if the information required for their manufacture is so complex, that it is simply more effective to keep it within the organisation than to attempt to transmit such information to an external partner (Gereffi et al, 2005). This may of course, be a particularly complex thing to do when working across language boundaries, which may therefore be an additional reason why it is more effective to keep such processes in house.

2.5.3 Individualistic versus Systemic Power in International Supply Chains

The approach of both Webster (1992) and Gereffi et al (2005) considers the relationships from the perspective of a focal organisation, which is the approach that I take in this study, although unlike Gereffi et al (2005) I do not necessarily consider the

focal organisation to be the lead firm in the relationship. Given that I am looking at both upstream and downstream supply chain relationships, I will consider the firms that I select as cases – a process which will be discussed in detail in the methodology chapter – I will look at the upstream and downstream relationships of these focal firms, and it may well be that in some of these relationships, they are not the lead firm. For example, it may be that the focal organisational is located upstream of a powerful buyer who is able to exercise power in order to determine how they need to operate. However, as I am looking at the power dynamics of the relationships and how they influence language strategy, it is appropriate to consider a focal, rather than a lead firm for this study.

However, as described in the above section, the existing literature on power in supply chains tends to take a rather episodic, behaviourialist view of power, which is an insufficient conceptual tool to fully explore how supply chain relationships are infused by power (Mir, Banerjee and Mir, 2008). Rather than adopting the prevalent focus on management control in a rationalistic, economic way, I follow Geppert and Dörrenbacher (2014), in viewing supply chain relationships as contested terrains in which all stakeholders play a part, given the "social embeddness of economic organization" (Gereffi and Korzeniewicz, 1994, p. 2). Thus, the circuits of power framework developed by Clegg (1989) is helpful in demonstrating how episodic acts of power, which draw on individualistic bases, can become structural, and a feature of the institutional environment in which organisations operate, due to the fact that "power resources depends entirely on how they are positioned and fixed by the players, the rules and game." (Clegg, 1989, p. 209).

| Focus | Level of Circuit | Type of Power | Circuits of Power |
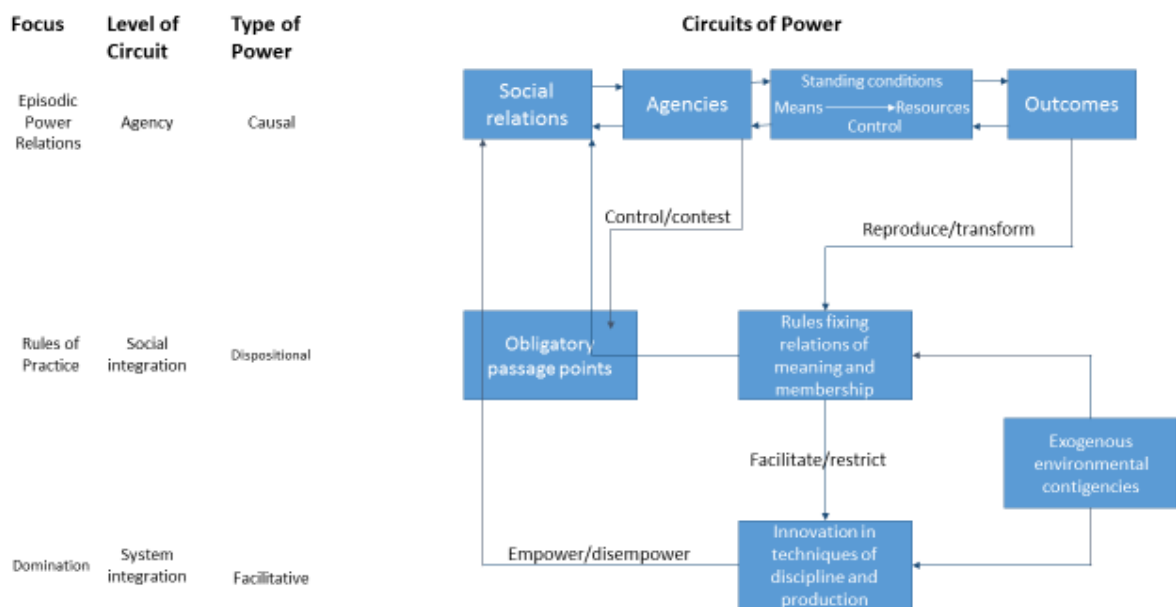
Figure 2.8 Representing the circuits of power (Clegg, 1989: 214)

Vaara et al (2005) use this framework of power to examine the linkages between language and power at each of the levels identified by Clegg (1989). At the episodic level, as discussed in the sections on coercion/refusal and manipulation/voice, language skills can be viewed as empowering or disempowering resources which form part of professional competence. However in addition to this, we can see how such language resources also facilitate the processes of identity construction, as language users position themselves as superior or subordinate to others based on their usage of language. Finally, as a result of the interplay between these first two circuits of power, as demonstrated in Figure 2.7, they give rise to the third circuit of power, system integration, or domination and subjectification in the terminology of Fleming and Spicer (2007). It is this circuit of power which can recreate postcolonial identities, and which Vaara et al (2005) argue produces the neo-colonial structuration of globalisation, thus rendering it equally as applicable to smaller organisations operating within this environment, as MNEs who have typically been the focus of explorations of power in the organisational literature (e.g. Vaara et al, 2005; Levy, 2008, Dörrenbacher and Geppert, 2011, Geppert and Dörrenbacher, 2014).

It is this final circuit of power which can explain the positioning of English as a hegemonic force in international business. Hegemony does not exist "ideationally, but through the communicative constitution of quotidian, taken-for-granted realities"

(Mumby, 1997, p. 344). Key to the Gramscian understanding of hegemony is the idea that "consent is given by the great masses of the population to the general direction imposed on social life by the dominant fundamental group; this consent is 'historically' caused by the prestige (and consequent confidence) which the dominant group enjoys because of its position and function in the world of production (Gramsci, 1971, p. 12). In such a reading, agency does not therefore reside in the structure of hegemony itself, but in the way in which it is continually reproduced and reinforced by the choices of social actors. Therefore in the case of the English language in international business, it is not some unique properties of the language which render it hegemonic, but rather, the way in which actors construct and position it, irrespective of whether this privileges or disadvantages them. Therefore, a compelling question for me throughout this research process was to examine how language agents viewed the use of the English language in their international supply chain relationships, not only at the level of how it could empower or disempower them in communicative events, but also in terms of how they constructed their identities as English language speakers, and how these subjectivities contribute to the maintenance of the hegemonic positioning of the language.

Therefore, in this study I draw upon the frameworks of Clegg (1989) and Fleming and Spicer (2007) in order to explain how power is enacted through the language practices which language agents in smaller organisations use in their international supply chain relationships, and therefore in line with Clegg (1989), I do not consider the faces of power identified by Fleming and Spicer (2007) to be discrete entities, but rather intertwining and reinforcing each other at a multiplicity of levels.

2.5.4 Reflections on Power in International Supply Chains
In this section I have therefore considered how the supply chain literature views power, typically by using the bases of power identified by French and Raven (1959), although additional sources, namely information and economic, are also identified in the literature (Ireland and Webb, 2007; Williams and Moore, 2007). In addition, the literature suggests that the level of power which exists in the relationships may influence the mechanisms which are used for relationship governance, and how some of these governance styles can be associated with the different types of relationships that have been identified by Webster (1992) and which I have suggested provide an

appropriately nuanced lens through which international supply chain relationships can be considered.

Furthermore, I have explained the intertwining nature of the different faces/circuits of power from the organisational literature and discussed how the supply chain literature tends to an individualistic view of power, which although useful, when taken alone, does not explain the institutional environment in which organisations are embedded, and which therefore has an impact on the deployment of bases of power to engage in episodic acts. I have therefore used systemic constructions of power (Clegg, 1989; Fleming and Spicer, 2007) and the concept of hegemony (Gramsci, 1971) in order to explore the nexus of ties between the individual and the structural acts of power as they are related in language use in international supply chains.

2.6 Conclusion

Given the subject matter of this study, which encompasses topics which are of interest to a wide variety of business-related disciplines (international management, organisation studies, supply chain management and marketing channels) and also addresses issues which are studied in areas outside of business, such as sociolinguistics and translation studies, it was necessary that this literature review acknowledged all the different influences which have shaped this study, although some of these fields have contributed more to its theoretical development than others.

Despite the fact that the topic of study is one which could be studied from a range of different perspectives, it is important to be clear that I locate it within the language sensitive international management literature, and it is in this field where I will make my primary contribution to knowledge. As such, this literature is the one to which I have given the deepest consideration in this literature review. I have outlined the state-of-the-art within the field, and traced its development over the past twenty years, from being "the forgotten factor" (Marschan et al, 1997) and the "orphan of the international management literature" (Feely and Harzing, 2002) to a legitimate and distinct field of inquiry in its own right (Brannen et al, 2014).

I have therefore positioned my own work within this literature, and established the contribution that it will make, by identifying the lacuna dealing with inter, rather than intra-organisational relationships, and particularly highlighting the lack of focus which

SMEs have received in the literature, in comparison with multinational organisations. I have also established that to date, there has been little work in this literature which considers language from a political perspective (Peltokorpi and Vaara, 2014) and therefore by explicitly considering how power dynamics of supply chain relationships influence language strategy at smaller organisations, the study will be able to make a contribution to knowledge in this field.

I have established my own position on the use of English as a global language, particularly within the domain of international business (Crystal, 2003). This position is a highly critical one towards the unthinking acceptance of English and claims to the neutrality of BELF (Louihiala-Salminen and Kankaanranta, 2012), which I cannot accept as I believe that the use of any language is a political act (Janssens et al, 2004), and particularly the English language, which is so bound up with management knowledge and privilege (Pennycook, 1994; Tietze, 2004; Phillipson, 2015) that I view neutrality as an impossibility.

Following this, I considered the various language practices which the literature suggests that organisations can use in order to manage linguistic diversity, and explored how they could be implemented in the inter-organisational relationships of smaller organisations, and I have identified how approaches from translation studies could be used in order to determine the appropriateness of particular strategies.

Following this extensive discussion of the language management literature, I then discussed the dynamics of supply chain relationships. Given that supply chain management is primarily a technicist literature (Connelley et al, 2013), but the focus of my research requires a social understanding, I also used some literature from marketing channels in order to explain these relationships, and suggested that we could also use this in order to explore upstream relationships as well. I highlighted the typology of Webster (1992) as being particularly useful in order to understand the complexity of different supply chain relationships that can exist both upstream and downstream of a focal organisation.

Finally, I outlined the approach that I take on power, viewing it as something which is performed, and something which is neutral (Hardy, 1996), and a legitimate and unexceptional part of organisational life. I used the framework of Fleming and Spicer

(2007) which identified four faces of power and resistance, and onto this framework I mapped some of the language management strategies which had been identified in the previous section, in order to enable a consideration of how these strategies could be subjectively experienced from a power perspective by the individual actors involved.

I concluded the literature review by considering how power is considered within the supply chain management literature, which I found to rely extensively on the work of French and Raven (1959), but which has more recently identified additional sources of power in information and economics. I then considered how the presence and type of power may influence the way in which supply chain relationships are governed, and briefly identified how language competences could be relevant to some of these governance mechanisms.

Therefore, having identified the theoretical basis for this doctoral study and highlighting the gaps in the literature to which I will contribute, I will now turn to methodology, in order to detail exactly how the study was conducted, and the rationale for conducting it in this manner.

Chapter 3: Methodology

This chapter presents the methodological decisions which were taken for this doctoral study. It begins with a consideration of the research philosophy which was used, critical theory, and then goes on to discuss how this philosophical orientation influenced the research design. A case study approach was used, which comprised of semi-structured interviews, observation and document analysis and the chapter discusses the justification for these methods, and the sampling technique used for selection of the cases. After explaining the process of data analysis, and how this informed the structure of the presentation of the findings, specific consideration is then given to some of the challenges encountered during the fieldwork, including issues of representation and translation, and the challenges of interviewing corporate elites, particularly in an atypical situation at an organisation where I was previously employed. The chapter concludes with a discussion of ethics and how this was managed throughout the study.

3.0 Introduction

Having previously discussed the literature which informs this doctoral study, here I will explain the methodology used. I will begin by addressing my philosophical position of critical theory, and explain how this influenced the case study methodology used for this research. I will then go on to explain the rationale for using semi-structured interviews, observation and data analysis as data collection methods. After this, I will then reflect on my experiences in the field, and I then explain the process of data analysis which was undertaken. The chapter concludes with a discussion of research ethics which were taken into consideration for the study.

3.1 Research Philosophy

Before explaining how the research was carried out, I will outline my philosophical position regarding the nature of knowledge, and how this influenced the design of this research project. I have not taken a positivist approach to this study, despite the fact that quantitative, positivist work forms the majority of published research outputs in the field of international business (Marschan-Piekkari and Welch, 2004, Cantwell and Brannen, 2011). This clearly raises the question of why I feel that the dominant paradigm of positivism, which assumes a "concreteness to the objects produced by thought, and in so doing, assumes that they stand outside the dialectic […] that the

subject can stand in an external relationship to the object" (Parker, 2003, p. 204), is not appropriate for this study, and there are a number of reasons for this.

Firstly, and perhaps most pragmatically, despite the fact that positivism has been the most common research philosophy used in international business, it is not the dominant approach which has been used in language sensitive international management research. Although there are a small and growing number of quantitative studies in the field (e.g. Barner-Rasmussen and Aarnio, 2011; Zander, Mockaitis and Harzing, 2011; Cuypers et al, 2015), the extant literature has more typically been conducted using a variety of qualitative methods. Although the field has now reached a certain degree of maturity, and there have been calls for a greater number of quantitative studies on language in international management (e.g. Barner-Rasmussen and Aarnio, 2011; Harzing and Pudelko, 2014), as I have demonstrated in the literature review, there still exist significant gaps related to both language use in smaller organisations, and in relation to understanding the interplay between the language practices which organisations use and the power dynamics of the relationships in which they are employed. Therefore, it is appropriate to adopt an interpretivist position when exploring such novel questions which require an in-depth and contextualised investigation of a particular phenomenon (Birkinshaw, Brannen and Tung, 2011), rather than simply using qualitative research as "a convenient escape route for researchers who do not wish to employ statistical analysis" (Remanyi, (2012, p. 51). Therefore, as an interpretivist, I am not using a hypothetico-deductive approach which seeks to test hypotheses which have been generated as a result of the literature review. Instead, I have used the extant literature as a sensitising tool, as it would be impossible to enter the field without some preconceptions and expectations as a result of the existing literature (Burrell and Morgan, 1979; Anderson and Kragh, 2011).

Secondly, and more importantly, I have used an interpretivist approach because this orientation is aligned with my own understanding of the social world. I have a realist ontology and a subjectivist epistemology – that is to say that my philosophical position is that a real world exists (Johnson and Duberley, 2000), however that the only way that we can access this real world is through human understanding, which is subjective (Welch, Rumyantseva and Hewerdine, 2016). In this respect, I would liken my position

to Plato's analogy of the cave – the real world is out there, but we cannot access it, and so shadows are all that we have. Whilst not trying to suggest that interpretivist research consists of trying to grasp shadows, instead I use this analogy in order to highlight the ephemeral nature of this type of management research.

Whilst there are a variety of different positions which can be taken under interpretivism, including postmodernism, postcolonialism, critical theory and social constructivism, what they share is that "all interpretive traditions emerge from a scholarly position that takes *human interpretation* as the starting point for developing knowledge about the social world" (Prasad, 2005, p. 13). There may therefore be divergence amongst international management academics writing from an interpretivist position in terms of whether their ontology is subjective or objective – whether or not there is a real world, or a truth, which is out there, but what they share is the subjective epistemology, (Duberley, Johnson and Cassell, 2012); the fact that we can only access this through our own, imperfect interpretations.

As the social world is constructed by social actors, and unlike in the natural sciences, I consider that it is impossible to separate the researcher from the researched when studying human behaviour, and suggest that the researcher's subjectivity has an important role to play in creating knowledge, and that it is impossible to separate oneself entirely from this process (Morgan and Smircich, 1980). Although academic writing has traditionally demanded objectivity (Watson, 1995) which has frequently been met through research orientations which suggest that reality can be expressed using value-free language, for this research, this would be an inappropriate approach as it ignores the position that "something cannot exist without our linguistic representations of it" (Brannen and Mughan, 2017, p. 13), which is the approach aligned with the epistemological and ontological stances used in this research. This study aims to gain a contextualised understanding of practices as they are used by different actors who are shaped by particular circumstances and relationships, and therefore requires a subjectivist epistemology.

In addition to the extant literature, my own professional experience, which I have discussed in the introduction, section 1.2, means that I have a pre-understanding of the field, which constitutes my own idiosyncratic background (Ketokivi and Mantere, 2010). This background and understanding therefore guided the development of the

study, both in terms of the questions which I asked (the interview protocol can be found in the Appendix), and in terms of the analysis, during which I used the existing literature in order to explore and explain the practices which organisations use to manage linguistic diversity, and how such practices are mediated by the type of relationships in which they occur, which enabled the generation of interpretive insights into how linguistic diversity is managed at smaller organisations.

Having positioned myself as having an interpretivist approach, my philosophy could be further categorised as using critical theory, and this will now be discussed in relation to how it aligns with my philosophical orientation and this particular research project in more detail.

3.1.1 Critical Theory

Given that I have positioned my approach as one which is outside of the mainstream in international business, it is perhaps unsurprising that I would consider myself to be a critical management researcher, one who "questions the authority of mainstream thinking and practice" (Alvesson, Bridgman and Willmott, 2011, p. 1). Key to this process is the idea of reflexivity (Fournier and Grey, 2000) which encourages the questioning of the claims of neutrality and value-free knowledge which have become taken for granted assumptions within positivism (Carr, 2006), and which I discuss in detail in Section 3.1.2.1. Therefore, I follow the call of Sullivan and Daniels (2008) for a multiple paradigm approach in international business, and agree that truth claims are no longer the sole preserve of hypothesis testing research under the positivist paradigm, although I concur with Welch, Piekkari, Plakoyiannaki and Paavilainen-Mäntymäki (2011) who suggest that such research is generally seen as having greater validity for theory development, although they argue that this should not necessarily be the case.

Critical theory can be defined as that which "generally aims to disrupt ongoing social reality for the sake of providing impulses to the liberation from or resistance to what dominates and leads to constrains in human decision making" (Alvesson and Deetz, 2000, p. 1).

It is concerned with the power relationships which exist between social actors, and how they exert control and influence over individuals and organisations (in critical

management research). It therefore has an emancipatory goal, with the aim of giving voice to those who have traditionally been silenced or marginalised in management research, and has the view that by shedding light on the (often invisible) power structures which exist in intra- and inter-organisational relationships, those who have been oppressed by them can be liberated.

Although Alvesson and Deetz (2000) note that critical theory began to emerge as an area of interest for management and organisation scholars in the late 1970s, it came to the field of international business much later than this, as evidenced by Andersen (1993) whose article "On the Internationalization Process of Firms: A Critical Analysis" which appeared in the Journal of International Business Studies, but whose use of the word "critical" contained none of the connotations that the word has come to have in the area of critical management studies, and had no focus at all on power structures and power struggles in the internationalisation process of firms. Instead the word was used in the sense of "involving or exercising careful judgement or observation" (Oxford English Dictionary, 2014). Therefore, almost twenty years after the arrival of critical theory as a field of management enquiry, it had made no impact on the terminology of international business, although today, it has made substantial inroads, as evidenced by the existence of the journal "critical perspectives on international business".

However, this situation has now begun to change, and there is a greater awareness that "given its roots, mainstream IB is not well placed to recognize alternatives to the dominant neoliberal perspective" (Roberts and Dörrenbächer, 2014, p. 4).

Given that my research explicitly considers the role of power and how it shapes language management practices that are used in inter-organisational relationships, critical theory would therefore seem an appropriate lens through which to frame the question. This position is further supported by the fact that I subscribe to a political perspective of language (Janssens et al, 2004) which, as discussed in the literature review, suggests that not only is language culturally bound, but that language use is also intimately linked with questions of power, and the claiming of the right to speak by different actors.

Critical theory is associated with the radical humanist paradigm (Burrell and Morgan, 1979; Hassard, 1991), as it considers that our understanding of reality is socially

constructed (Hassard, 1991), however it also draws attention to the "alienating modes of thought which characterize life in modern industrial societies" (Hassard, 1991, p. 278), which links to my understanding of how the English language is used in international business, as discussed in the Literature Review.

As previously discussed, this question of language is one which is often presented unproblematically in international business – there is frequently an unquestioned acceptance of the dominant position of English as the global language of business, and in an attempt to depoliticize this, in recent years we have seen increased interest in the concept of Business English as a Lingua Franca (BELF) (Louhiala-Salminen and Kankaanranta, 2012) which removes English, or BELF from the possession and control of native speakers, and instead positions it as a neutral code of communication, which is owned by the global community of international workers who use it to communicate, although there are numerous arguments that language cannot be neutral (Tietze, 2004; Pennycook, 2007; Phillipson, 2015).

Although it is not within the scope of this doctoral study to suggest solutions to this problem, what I aim to do is to shed light on some of these taken for granted assumptions regarding the nature of language use in organisations which are caused by existing power structures both within the organisations and in society more broadly, and thus I present this research as having an emancipatory goal, which is the hallmark of critical work (Klikauer, 2015).

However, there is disagreement within the management academy as to what constitutes critical work. Alvesson and Wilmott (1996) discuss the possibility of "microemancipation," which is to suggest that small acts of emancipation which still occur within the broader societal structures of managerialism and capitalism, should still be considered as work using critical theory. Klikauer (2015) argues that this is not the case, and that critical theory, as originally conceived by the Frankfurt School, is concerned with the destruction of these frameworks themselves.

This is a vexed question, and it is important to clarify my position on this. Firstly, I would recognise that I do consider myself to be a management researcher, and that my academic background is in business and management, and not sociology, which is the case for many critical management researchers within the UK (Rowlinson and

Hassard, 2011; De Vita and Case, 2016). This background, coupled with my prior experience in the private sector before joining academia has undoubtedly influenced my view on this. I consider myself to be a pragmatist rather than an ideological purist, and as such, I concur with Alvesson's view (2008) on what constitutes critical management research – that which is concerned with critically questioning ideologies, institutions, interests and identities through negations, de-constructions, re-voicing or de-familiarisations. It has the aim of some social reform or emancipatory goal, whilst at the same time recognises that we operate within constraints, and that the fact that we may not be able to overhaul an entire system does not suggest that we are unable to question and change some small parts of it, if that will give voices to the less privileged who are not in positions of power within the status quo.

Given the epistemological position that I have adopted, this is an entirely appropriate objective for this project, in line with the scrutiny I place on the dominant position of English within international business, I am necessarily concerned with powerful interests and how hegemonic positions are perpetuated and legitimised. However, I do not seek radical change, such as that suggested by Tsuda (2013) with regards to the status of the English language in business, as discussed in the literature review. I recognise the real world constraints within which businesses operate – they need to communicate with each other across linguistic boundaries, and sometimes, English is the most pragmatic way to achieve this. Instead, I would hope that my research can encourage a more reflexive use of English in business, and thus contribute to a space where this dominance can be questioned so that the choice isn't automatically English, and where other practices to manage linguistic diversity can gain increased awareness and visibility, which is the spirit in which such practices are considered in the light of power dynamics in Chapter 8, Contextualised Explanation and Analysis.

Given my aim of challenging the dominance of English within international business, I am also aware of the privileged position of English within the management academy, and the role that English plays within knowledge production. Therefore I also position myself within the tradition of critical theory in that I do not believe that knowledge is produced in a value-free way (Adler, Forbes and Willmott, 2007), and thus I am interested in considering the processes of knowledge production (Prasad, 2005), and the fact that most management knowledge is produced and disseminated in English

(Tietze, 2004) clearly has implications for the value systems encoded in such knowledge. Again, by acknowledging such matters and being reflexive of this throughout the research process, I hope to bring a greater criticality to my work. Clearly, I am not seeking to challenge this status quo in this research process – I am a native English speaker, studying at a British university, and therefore, I am producing this study in English, so in this sense, I am part of the very problem which I critique (Klikauer, 2015). However, by recognising that this knowledge production does not occur in a vacuum, and by being cognisant of this privileged position, I demonstrate my rejection of instrumental reason (Adorno and Horkheimer, 1972) which can lead to the production of knowledge which is "a) detached from everyday human existence and b) intended to *control* nature, people and social arrangements" (Prasad, 2005, p. 144).

Thus in this research, I have a commitment to praxis, defined as "the free and creative reconstruction of social arrangements on the basis of a reasoned analysis of both the limits and the potentials of present social forms" (Benson, 1977, p. 5). In the context of this study, this means that I am concerned not only with the production of knowledge which critiques the status quo, but crucially, "extends to taking action on what is discovered" (Foster and Weibe, 2010, p. 272). Therefore alongside the contribution to knowledge which is the requirement of any doctorate, I also make a contribution to practice, and thus aim to demonstrate to British organisations the implications of the unquestioning use of English in their international relationships, and to make them aware of other possibilities and resources which they could draw upon in order to make more informed decisions regarding language management practices.

3.1.2 Writing the Self
Given the epistemological position which I have adopted in this study, I now specifically explain how I addressed my own positionality within the study, by explaining the role which reflexivity played in guiding my actions, and which also further clarifies why I have chosen to write this thesis in the first person.

3.1.2.1 Reflexivity
Whilst there are many definitions and understandings of what constitutes reflexivity in social research (Holland, 1999), here I employ the definition of Haynes (2012, p. 73) who views reflexivity as "an awareness of the researcher's role in the practice of

research and the way this is influenced by the object of the research, enabling the researcher to acknowledge the way in which he or she affects both the research processes and outcomes."

As I discussed in the introduction, I have a personal interest in the topic of this research, given that prior to joining the university, I worked in both SMEs and MNEs which were part of global supply chains, and therefore dealt with questions of language diversity on a daily basis. Indeed, one of the primary reasons for my employment in these organisations was my ability to act as a "language node" (Feely and Harzing, 2003) between certain suppliers and customers, given that I speak English, Spanish and French. This therefore contributes to my pre-understanding of the situations which I may encounter when conducting the fieldwork, however it is important that this pre-understanding does not blind me to alternative interpretations and understandings of the micro-processes in the organisations. This was particularly relevant as I was able to conduct research in an organisation where I had previously worked, as I needed to be mindful of the fact that the norms and values which were at work in the organisation may have changed in the years between my leaving and re-entering the organisation as a researcher. Furthermore, re-entering an organisation where I had previously worked created challenges in terms of the emotions that it engendered within me, which impacted the way in which I approached the research in this particular organisation, which I discuss in section 3.8 relating to challenges of the research process.

As part of reflexivity, self-understanding is important before entering the field, therefore I used Jameson's (2007) framework for different components of individual identity, enabling me to view which identities have been the most salient at different times in my life. This awareness contributed to both my ontological and emotional reflexivity, and assisted me in building rapport during the fieldwork.

ONTOLOGY

objectivist   subjectivist

objectivist   Positivism   Incoherence

                     Neopositivism

EPISTEMOLOGY ——

                     Critical theory

                              Conventionalism

                     Critical realism   Postmodernism

subjectivist   Pragmatism
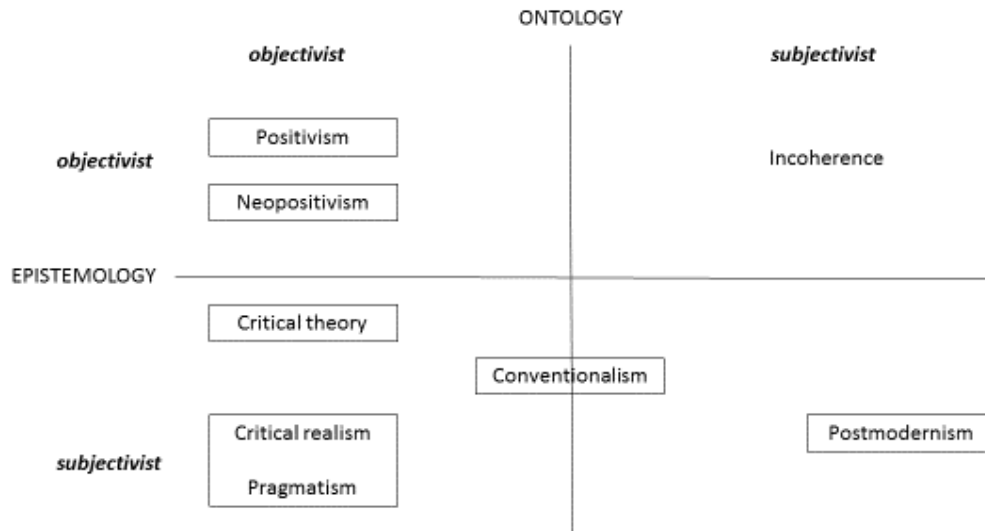
Figure 3.1 Reflexivity in management research (Johnson and Duberley, 2000:180)

Both Johnson and Duberley (2000) and Fournier and Grey (2000) view reflexivity as a key differentiator between Critical Management Studies, and mainstream, positivist approaches, however they acknowledge that reflexivity itself is not unproblematic, and that it can become uncritical, and a form of navel gazing (Weick, 2002). Johnson and Duberley (2000) suggest that such hyper-reflexivity is more typically associated with the postmodern tradition, whereas critical theorists more typically engage in epistemic reflexivity, which can be "emancipatory by both sanctioning and enabling the investigation and problematization of the taken-for-granted social constructions of reality which are located in the varying practices, interests and motives which constitute different communities' sense-making" (p. 185), which is my aim in this study.

Therefore, I have guarded against hyper-reflexivity by adopting an active form of reflexivity, so that part of the reflection itself is questioning why we engage in it. Where it is to criticise and problematise the research process and the role of the researcher with a view to gaining greater understanding, this is a helpful process. If it is to simply problematise without an attempt – or hope – of a solution, then this is navel gazing of the type that Weick (2002) and Cunliffe (2004) condemn, and is a

feature of the spiral of deconstruction which is a critique of postmodernism (Donaldson, 2003).

I therefore engaged in reflexivity from the early stages of the research process, and have continued to do so throughout the doctoral study, as, reflexivity is the most relevant tool available to enable me to critique my own methods, values, and interpretations, with a view to improving understanding. Therefore in order to support this process, I kept a field notebook, which not only included my observations at the case organisations, but also a reflection on myself and my emotions in the field. There are of course, other methods which could be used in order to enable this process but I elected not to use them in this study. For example, much published business research is multi-author (Woods, Youn and Johanson, 2010) and therefore rather than self-reflection, researchers are able to engage in discussion about the choice of methods and their interpretations, which is not possible for a doctoral study. Alternatively, some scholars (Marschan-Piekkari and Reis, 2004) advocate for the sharing of transcripts with participants as a form of data verification. I decided not to opt for this solution as sharing transcripts with participants can create difficulties (Marschan-Piekkari and Reis, 2004) such as the participants attempting to change what they have said and "reinterpret" their statements. Furthermore, from the conception of this doctoral study, I never intended to introduce a longitudinal element to the research, which would have been required if I went back to the participants to ask them to comment on the transcripts and thus include them further in the co-production of knowledge. I therefore avoided such an approach as I felt that the risk of this could reduce the authenticity (Tracy, 2010) of the accounts. Given the inapplicability of such alternative approaches to this doctoral study, reflexivity was the best way to enable self-critique, in the spirit of Czarniawska (2016).

3.1.2.2 Finding my Authorial Voice

This approach to reflexivity also affects the writing process, not only in terms of how I write and present the findings of the study, but in how I write myself as an integral part of this. Although using the first person is viewed negatively within many academic disciplines (Grey and Sinclair, 2006), given my philosophical orientation, it would be inappropriate not to situate myself within the research and to acknowledge

my own subjectivity. Whilst writing this thesis, finding my voice has been a question of merging the academic and the personal (Johnston and Strong, 2008), and therefore the decision to use the first person has been a deliberate one which is entirely compatible with my research methodology, and which enables the reader to understand to a much greater extent "where I'm coming from" (Grey and Sinclair, 2006).

In this respect, I would agree with Watson (1995, p. 807) in seeing "social science writing more as a kind of 'literary accomplishment' like plays and essays than as frill-free 'reports of scientific findings'." As Watson argues, whilst this may risk accusations of being "unscientific," in fact, it is a more honest portrayal of the research process, given that much published research tends to be opaque about the relationships between the researcher and the researched (Willmott, 1987). By avoiding claims of objectivity, and acknowledging myself in the writing, I am putting reflexivity into practice throughout the entire study, and not just doing so when in the field, or during a time period which could be defined as "analysis" – indeed, as discussed in section 3.7, I see the process of writing to be an integral part of analysis, rather than as a separate stage in the completion of this thesis.

I concur with Watson (1994) and Tracy (2010) that the aesthetic merit of the writing is an important feature of qualitative research, and thus as part of this, the writing would lack authenticity if I did not position myself within it. This becomes of particular significance when writing about the organisation where I was previously employed, because as I discuss in section 3.8.3, this was an emotion-laden experience which it would be inappropriate to attempt to present in a neutral, objective manner.

Having addressed the questions of the underlying philosophy which guides my research, I will now address how the research was carried out, and the reasons for the methodological decisions which were made.

3.2 Case Studies in International Business

Although approximately 90% of research published in the field of international business is quantitative (Marschan-Piekkari and Welch, 2004), there is a growing

interest in studies which employ alternative methodologies, following the recognition that quantitative methods alone are unable to address all the questions which international business should legitimately consider to be of interest (Buckley and Lessard, 2005). At the same time, interest is growing in the field of supply chain management as to how qualitative research (Borgström, 2012) can help to address the real-world challenges which practitioners face (Näslund, 2002). Given that my research necessitates an emic approach to the study of organisational relationships, which is defined as "the insiders' perspective on culture (from within a specific culture), which provides insight into cultural nuances and complexities" (Zhu and Bargiela-Chiappini, 2013, p.381), this brings me to consider the qualitative methods which could be employed for this study, and the qualitative method which is most frequently used in international business is that of the case study (Piekkari, Welch and Paavilainen, 2009).

This is not to suggest however, that the only information collection techniques which can be used in case studies are qualitative techniques. As Remenyi (2012) acknowledges, case study research can also be quantitative, and even where it is not, the type of case study research which reigns in international business tends to be located under the neo-positivist paradigm (Welch et al, 2011), following the approaches suggested by Eisenhardt (1989) and Yin (2009). As I am guided by the philosophy of critical theory, I elected not to use such an approach, as this risks subjecting qualitative research to the same requirements of validity, reliability and generalisability as quantitative work, leading to "qualitative positivism" (Prasad, 2005, p. 4), which would not permit the deep understanding and contextualised account which the research aims of this study necessitate.

Therefore, in this research, I follow the definition of Piekkari et al (2009, p. 569) of a case study as "a research strategy that examines, through the use of multiple data sources, a phenomenon in its naturalistic context, with the purpose of 'confronting' theory with the empirical world." This also corresponds with Fitzgerald and Dopson (2009) who see a case study as something which "involves the collection of empirical data from multiple sources to explore an identified unit of analysis" (p. 465).

Of particular importance is the use of multiple sources of information, and in light of this, in this study I elected to use three information collection methods, semi-structured interviews, observation and document analysis in order to explore the unit of analysis, which is the international supply chain relationships of the case organisations.

My position therefore, is that qualitative research is particularly useful in "opening the black box" of organisational processes (Doz, 2011) and in this section I will explain why the qualitative case study approach is the most appropriate for my own research.

3.2.1 Ensuring Rigor in Case Study Research

I seek to achieve credibility and sincerity (Tracy, 2010) by engaging in constant self-questioning throughout the process, and in line with the recommendations of Anderson and Skaates (2004), explicitly discussing the data handling procedures and data analysis and interpretation procedures used. Sincerity refers to authenticity and genuineness within the research and the presentation of the results, although Tracy (2010) is keen to stress that this does not mean that there is a single authenticity or "truth." Instead, as qualitative researchers, we should ensure that throughout the process and in the writing up, we are self-reflexive, honest and transparent, and thus we place ourselves in a vulnerable position. In this methodology chapter, I have been open about my motivations for conducting this research, and I have considered how these motivations and beliefs have impacted on the way in which I have conducted the research. I have been honest about the challenges which have been faced along the way, particularly with regards to the unexpected emotions that the research caused within me, and how this had an impact on the entire process, and in doing so I have been transparent about "the twists and turns along the way" (Tracy, 2010, p. 842).

Furthermore, by using multiple methods within the case study, I include aspects of triangulation, and follow Andersen and Skaates (2004) in viewing it as a valuable tool for qualitative inquiry, despite the criticisms from fields such as postmodernism. However under the paradigm of critical theory, triangulation can be acceptable (Alvesson and Deetz, 2000). Although triangulation is criticised by Blaikie (1991) as a tool which is best suited to positivist work, as it assumes one objective reality which

can be known by comparing the results of different data collection methods, in this study I take an approach concurrent with that of Silverman (2006), who claims that using different methods can deepen understanding of different aspects of an issue without needing to privilege any one account, and it is in this spirit that I have used triangulation within the study. As I discuss in Section 3.8.3, this was particularly important when I encountered my past self in the research, and therefore I was able to use triangulation in order to corroborate or challenge my own memories of particular experiences.

It is also important to note that I seek to generate contextualised explanations (Welch et al, 2011) regarding how smaller organisations deal with linguistic diversity in international supply chains, and not to suggest that the findings of my research are more widely generalisable across contexts, which is frequently an aim of positivist work. Instead, I am aiming for resonance (Tracy, 2010). This relates to the presentation of the research, and how it is written to engage the audience. Clearly, a written account cannot provide the same rich texture as a lived experience (Ketokivi and Mantere, 2010), but it still needs to enable readers to identify with it, and Tracy (2010) suggests that this can be achieved through the aesthetic merit of the writing, and the transferability of the research. It is suggested that personal narrative can be one way in which to demonstrate aesthetic merit, and indeed it is unlikely that this thesis would have achieved this aim in the same way had it followed the academic convention of writing in the third person. In terms of transferability, this is a particularly relevant point, because it does not mean generalisability in the positivist sense, but instead aims to provoke within readers a feeling of overlap between the story of the research and their own situation, and this can lead to improved practice. With the focus on praxis that critical research has, I therefore hope to elicit within readers the feeling that the research which I have presented here is therefore relevant to situations of linguistic diversity which they may have experienced, even though the context in which this experience occurred is likely to be completely different. Therefore, given the exploratory nature of this study, I wish to shed light on an underexplored area, and thus generate new insights on how linguistic diversity is managed by small organisations, which could be further investigated in future research, as suggested by Harzing and Pudelko (2014).

The fact that I approach the information as a critical theorist, with special interest in manifestations of power and resistance, leaves me potentially open to claims of bias. However, the very usage of the word "bias," is to use the language of the positivist, and qualitative, interpretivist research should not be judged on those terms. What could be perceived as bias when evaluating research according to positivist norms, could, under an interpretivist stance, simply be viewed as my own idiosyncratic background (Ketokivi and Mantere, 2010), to which I have previously referred. What is important therefore, is that the research is methodologically rigorous, and follows accepted principles of research under its own paradigm. Qualitative research frequently doesn't explicitly address issues of validity (Andersen and Skaates, 2004), given that the positivist, quantitative approach to validity requires certainty that the research measures what it was intended to and that the results are *truthful* (Golafshani, 2003, my italics). However, given my subjectivist epistemology, the idea of certainty of an absolute truth that we can access is not appropriate for this research. Therefore, I aim for credibility in this study, rather than validity. This refers to the trustworthiness and plausibility of the research findings. Tracy (2010) suggests that there are a number of ways in which this can be achieved in qualitative work, including thick description, crystallisation, triangulation and multivocality. As a case researcher, I have already expressed my aim of generating a rich description through the methods used to collect information in the case, and in the chapters on findings, I have shown some of this information, primarily in the form of quotes, to the reader, along with my own interpretations, so that they can judge for themselves if my interpretation is plausible. The usage of these multiple methods of information collection means that triangulation can occur (Denzin, 1978), I have not relied on one source of information in order to reach these interpretations, although I freely admit, that just because in my view, multiple sources of information point to a particular interpretation, this doesn't mean that this interpretation should be regarded as "correct," and this is why I strive for authenticity in the presentation of findings, rather than accuracy, which implies that this is only one correct interpretation of events (Golden-Biddle and Locke, 1993).

3.2.2 Information Collection Methods within a Case Study

One of the advantages of case studies for research of an exploratory nature is that it enables the use of multiple methods of information collection. Buchanan (2012) suggests that interviews are a frequently used method in qualitative research, and indeed, semi-structured interviews are an important part of the information collected in this study.

However, I did not rely on interviews as my sole method, instead I combined this with a variety of other methods, including observation and document analysis. There is however, some debate in the literature about what methods should be considered appropriate for case studies.

Brannen (2011) specifically excludes the possibility of incorporating ethnographic methods such as observation into case studies, and dismisses the use of the term "mini-ethnography" which can sometimes be used to characterise this hybrid approach. However, the basis of this argument appears to be that a case study should typically be used to gain understanding of "specific incidents, events or decisions" (p. 129) whereas an ethnography should be used to understand a culture, of which there is little prior knowledge, on a longitudinal basis, a view which is rooted in anthropology (as indeed, is the practice of ethnography itself).

Mir (2011), suggests that it can be appropriate to include techniques most frequently associated with ethnography, in order to help create a "thick description" (Geertz, 1973) within the case study, as this can help to unveil the microprocesses of organisational life, and Prasad (2005) discusses the fact that critical theory can blend with various methods from interpretive traditions in order to create synergies.

Therefore, although thick descriptions are more usually associated with ethnographies, rich description can also be achieved through case studies, and this is particularly useful in the context of my own research, as Ekanem (2007) suggests that a full ethnography of an SME may be difficult to achieve, and more complex than ethnography in MNEs (where such studies are typically located) by virtue of the fact that in a small organisation, the researcher is immediately visible and conspicuous and

as such, can elicit feelings of suspicion and annoyance from the other workers in the organisation. He suggests that for this reason it is frequently impractical to spend protracted time in the organisation as an ethnography would demand, and therefore argues for the use of "insider accounts," which he considers to be an "aspect of ethnography" (p. 107). I would therefore claim that this concurs with the viewpoint of Mir (2011), in that ethnographic techniques such as observation, informal conversations or unstructured interviews can be used in a case study, and that this approach is more appropriate for the research setting of this study (SMEs) than a full ethnography. Boxer, Perren and Berry (2013) also combine the usage of interviews and observation within a case study as an alternative to an ethnography in order to gain an understanding of decision-making in an SME setting. Furthermore, in using a variety of methods within the case study, rather than relying solely on interviews for information collection, I answer the call by Piekkari et al (2009) for greater plurality in case study research.

Therefore, at the outset of this research, my aim was to spend approximately one week on site at each of the organisations selected. This did not happen in all cases, and the reasons for this are discussed later in this chapter. The initial decision to spend a week was partly guided by pragmatic concerns relating to my own availability, but also depended on how long I felt that I would need in order to gather sufficient information, whilst not creating an undue burden on the SME with my presence (Ekanem, 2007). Whilst I was onsite, I used semi-structured interviews, observation and document analysis. I am therefore effectively "mixing methods" within the case studies, however I did this by combining "qual-qual" methods, rather than the more frequently used "quan-qual" approach (Pritchard, 2012). By doing this, I sought to ensure triangulation (Cox and Hassard, 2005) which is seen by Ghauri (2004) as essential for case study research. After discussing sampling, I will go on to discuss the methods that were employed in greater detail.

3.3 Sampling

I followed a multiple case study design for this doctoral research and as such, sampling decisions were of significant importance to the research process (Fletcher and

Plakoyiannaki, 2011), yet the literature suggests that they are frequently given insufficient attention (Buck, 2011). The unit of analysis in this research project is the international supply chain relationships – which is specific to the aims of the research – to discover the practices employed by smaller organisations to manage language diversity in international supply chain relationships, and to explore the linkages between these practices and the power dynamics of the relationships.

With this in mind, I undertook theoretical sampling, which should be viewed as a specific type of purposeful sampling. That is to say, I selected cases which fill particular categories (Fletcher and Plakoyiannaki, 2011), and therefore enables the cases to be contrasted, in order to better develop theory from cross-case analysis (Pauwels and Matthysens, 2004) – although in this thesis I follow the language of Welch et al (2011) and consider the theory building which resulted from this research as a "contextualised explanation". For this study, I sought organisations which had a variety of different types of international supply chain relationships, which did not just rely on communicating in English with international partners. It is therefore appropriate to briefly discuss some of the theory underpinning the theoretical sampling decision, drawing on the discussions in the literature review.

When thinking about the nature of language diversity in international business, it is frequently stated (Tietze and Dick, 2013; Ostler, 2010) that English has hegemonic status. As a result of this, particularly within the UK, many smaller organisations do not have significant foreign language capabilities within the organisation, and frequently rely on conducting business in English, regardless of the language of their counterpart (Hagen, Angouri, Dippold and Aponte-Moreno, 2012).

Despite this however, there are large numbers of smaller organisations in the UK who do not rely on using English within their international relationships. They recruit staff with foreign language skills, they use translators or interpreters, or they invest in language training programs for their existing employees (Hagen et al, 2012). Given that they exist in a world where English has hegemonic power, one of the central aims of my research is to explore why they do this. Their efforts in this area could be viewed as an application of episodic power by their supply chain partners – acts of

resistance against the dominance of English (Boussebaa et al, 2014) whereby due to the power that they hold in the supply chain (whether this be economic or relational), they are able to oblige such organisations to engage in the use of other languages.

It is these situations that I was therefore particularly interested in researching for this study. Whilst it may be interesting to investigate organisations who solely use English as a method of managing language diversity, I found a more engaging area to be the study of organisations who also use other methods, and to understand why they choose to do this. Therefore, I needed to select organisations who do not rely solely on communicating in English.

Furthermore, governance theories (Gereffi et al, 2005) would suggest that the type of relationship itself may influence the power dynamics within the relationships. Given this, I used Webster's (1992) typology of marketing relationships in order to consider the different relationships that SMEs may have. Having explained in more detail in the literature review why this typology is a helpful guide for this study, I present it again before further discussion of how it guided the sampling process.

1. Transactions

2. Repeated transactions

3. Long term relationships

4. Buyer/seller partnerships (total mutual dependence)

5. Strategical alliances (including joint ventures)

6. Network organisations

7. Vertical integration

Figure 3.2 The range of marketing relationships (Webster, 1992)

It would be expected that different governance types (Gereffi et al, 2005) would be in play at different levels of this typology, so where organisations are dealing with transactions, or even repeated transactions, it is likely that a market based governance system would be used, due to the low asset specificity of the transaction (Rehme,

Nordigården, Brefe and Chicksand, 2013). Due to the arm's length nature of the relationship, I would therefore expect that different language practices would be used to those that companies with relationships in the upper echelons of the typology would employ, as here, relational governance may be employed, (Dicken, 2010) which would require much deeper levels of integration and trust between supply chain partners (e.g. Chen and Fung, 2013). Therefore, I was interested in organisations that have international supply chain relationships at a mixture of stages in this typology, in order to understand whether this relationship structure influenced their use of a wider variety of language strategies rather than relying on English.

Having therefore identified the categories, based on the stipulations that organisations must use languages other than English in some way, and that the case organisations must have a variety of supply chain relationships meeting all the stages of Webster's (1992) typology across the four organisations, I then needed to identify the organisations. The challenges associated with this period in the research are discussed in a later section in this chapter, however the four companies which met these criteria and agreed to participate in the research are detailed in the table below. I have removed their names in order to provide anonymity, and have briefly outlined the type and size of the organisation and the industry within which they operate in order to provide some context.

Company A			
Description	Interviewees	Documents	Observation
This is a manufacturing company based in Sheffield which was established over 70 years ago and works in the automotive sector. It exports to over 80 countries and as such has a dedicated international sales team. It employs approximately 80 people in the UK, and it also has a JV in India and a wholly owned subsidiary in China. This is the largest organisation which I studied, as it was acquired in 2011 by a German multinational enterprise. However, given that the primary business of Company A is different to that of the MNE which acquired it, the company still operates very much in the manner of an SME when working with customers and suppliers, as it still negotiates with them on an individual basis, rather than as part of the larger group. I was previously employed at this organisation.	Customer Service Manager, German Speaking Export Sales Manager, Spanish Speaking Export Sales Manager, Finance Director, General Manager, IJV Manager (India), Marketing Manager, Purchasing Manager, Purchasing Manager 2, Sales Director, Subsidiary Manager China.	Company website. Promotional materials in English, French, Spanish, German, Russian, Mandarin, and Japanese.	One week spent on site – no occasions of foreign language use as language nodes were offsite.

Company B			
Description	Interviews	Documents	Observation
This is a manufacturing company in Sheffield which has been established for approximately 30 years and employs approximately 50 people. Whilst it sells products in the UK and Europe, via direct sales and distributors, its upstream supply chain is worldwide.	Executive Chairman, French Speaking Export Executive, French and Polish Speaking Export Executive, German Speaking Export Executive, Managing Director, New Product Development Manager.	Company website, brochures in French.	Two days spent on site – language nodes used lean media to communicate with supply chain partners, no evidence of telephone calls.
Company C			
Description	Interviews	Documents	Observation
This is a microenterprise in North Yorkshire employing three people working in the poultry industry. They are an on-line retailer distributing products made by other manufacturers.	Finance Director.	Company website, emails between company and international supplier.	One day on site – no evidence of foreign language use.
Company D			
Description	Interviews	Documents	Observation
This is a tool repair service based in Sheffield which employs 18 people. They work in 17 different markets and have won several export awards.	Managing Director.	Company website.	One day on site – no evidence of foreign language use.

Table 3.3 Details of companies and information sources

Thus in line with Pauwels and Matthysens (2004) I have selected contrasting cases in order to better generate theoretical insights, in so far as that all these organisations are of different sizes and have different types of supply chain relationships, which have been mapped below onto the typology of Webster (1992). Therefore, I will be able to examine how different language practices are used in different types of supply chain relationships, and to consider the differing power dynamics which exist in these different relationships.
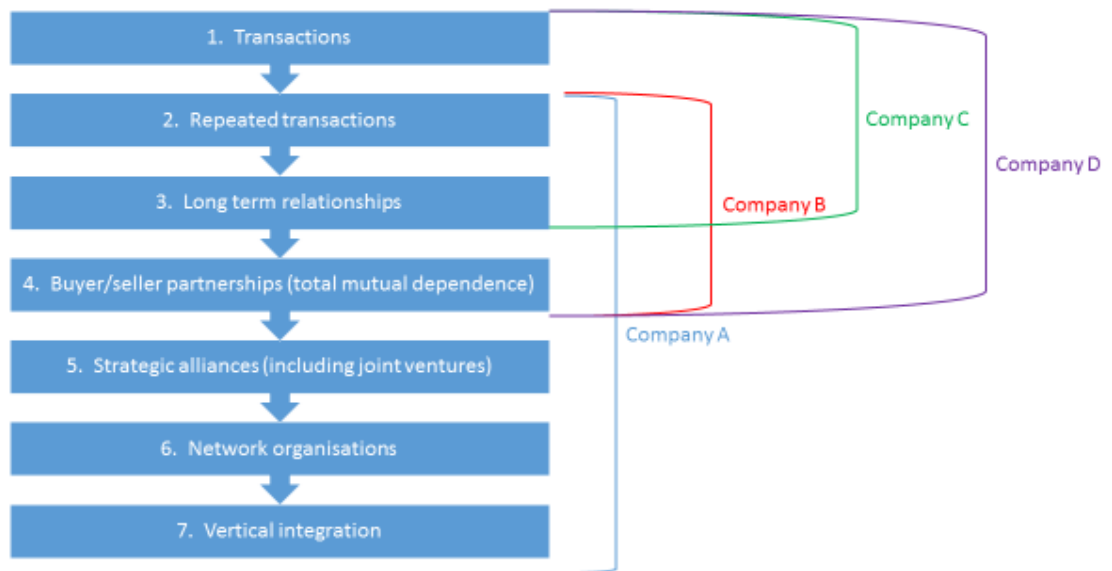
Figure 3.4 Supply chain relationships among the case organisations

It is important to note that each of these four organisations has a number of different relationships, and thus by having the relationships themselves as the unit of analysis, sufficient information will be collected during fieldwork in order to permit theory development (Andersen and Skaates, 2004; Flyvberg, 2006) or contextualised explanations (Welch et al, 2011).

I would note that only Company A appears to have relationships at the network organisation/vertical integration levels of the typology. This is not problematic as this is the largest organisation and although it operates in a manner similar to that of an SME, is part of a larger multinational group. Therefore it is interesting to compare how language practices may differ in these more closely integrated relationships compared with the looser relationships that the other SMEs employ. Given that SMEs, by virtue

of their size and financial resources, may find FDI to be too risky an approach to internationalisation, and that FDI frequently has an initial negative impact on performance in SMEs (Lu and Beamish, 2001) I decided that it was still appropriate to use this organisation as a contrast to the other cases.

Having explored the procedure which was followed in order to identify the case organisations, I will now discuss the different information collection methods which were used in each case, before explaining how access to obtain this information was negotiated.

3.4 Semi-Structured Interviews

As previously mentioned, semi-structured interviews have a long tradition within case study research, and are one of the most frequently used qualitative research methods. They are often used in inductive research (Cooper and Schindler, 2008) conducted in one of the interpretive traditions (Hughes and Sharrock, 1997).

The principal advantage of semi-structured interviews rather than unstructured interviews is that they allow for the provision of questions in order to guide the discussion to ensure that it is relevant, which unstructured interviews do not do, and they provide the flexibility to discuss in particular detail areas which are of specific interest or concern to the participant, and are therefore particularly suited to an exploratory study such as this one. The interview protocols can be found in the Appendix.

Furthermore, the semi-structured interview permits the orientation of "romanticism," in which "the interviewee is free to express him or herself authentically and will produce open, rich and trustworthy talk" (Alvesson, 2011, p. 14). In such interviews a close relationship is formed between researcher and participant, in order to better understand the microprocesses of organisational life related to language practices used within the organisation. It has been observed by other researchers (Neeley et al, 2012; Hinds et al, 2014) that language is frequently an emotive issue, and therefore this approach allowed both myself and the participants to explore why this could be so, whilst still ensuring that the conversation takes place in a loose framework ensuring that all respondents address similar questions and areas of interest. As such,

there are ethical considerations regarding this particular approach to interviewing, which are discussed further in the Ethics section of this chapter. The interview guide can be found in the appendix, although I did not address all points with all the participants, as some of the questions were not appropriate for particular job roles, and so I was careful to approach each interview as unique, based on reflection in the field (Wilkinson and Young, 2004), and thus I ensured that I asked questions which were relevant to the role of that particular respondent (Charmaz, 2002), instead of adopting a more rigid approach (Alvesson, 2011).

Another advantage to the semi-structured interviews is that it enables the researcher and the interviewees to clarify meaning (Winchatz, 2006), and also the rephrasing or reframing of questions if they do not appear to have been understood (Welch and Piekkari, 2006). This is particularly important given the topic of my research, as some of the research participants were not native speakers of English, as can be seen in Figure 3.3 which has the list of participants. For example, when engaging in a Skype interview with the Chinese Subsidiary Manager at Company A, he didn't understand one of my questions and told me *"sorry […] the sentence is too long,"* so I rephrased it and we reached an understanding. At the outset, I was also open to the possibility that I myself may conduct interviews in my second language of Spanish, although this did not occur during the fieldwork. Prior to entering the field, I had already determined that barring exceptional circumstances, I did not plan to conduct any interviews in my third language of French, as I did not feel that my own skills in that language were sufficient for the requirements of the research, although if any of the participants had particularly raised the issue, I would have given it much greater consideration. Given however that I was looking at UK based companies, I did not anticipate this to be a problem, and indeed, all the interviews were conducted in English without protest from the interviewees.

3.4.1 Selecting Interview Participants

This also raised the practical question of who I planned to interview within the case study organisations. I required individuals who operated at language and organisational interfaces – that is to say, those people whose work regularly required them to work with international partners, whether they were upstream or

downstream in the supply chain. Thus identifying the correct employees to approach was relatively straightforward, as only a small number of them were in frequent contact with international partners, and these tended to be individuals occupying roles such as Export Sales Manager, Purchasing Manager, Sales Director. The full list of interviewees can be found in figure 3.2. Given that I was based at the organisations in question, these interviews mainly took place face to face, although logistical constraints and the fact that I interviewed some organisational members based overseas meant that a small number of interviews took place over the telephone or using Skype, as detailed in Figure 3.4 below.

At the outset of the research, in order to build up a fuller picture of the relationship between the focal SMEs and their supply chain partners, I wanted to speak to a small number of these partners in order to gain their perspective on the relationship. Ooesterhuis et al (2013) suggest that it is important to gain perspectives from both parties in a supply chain dyad – i.e. both the buyer and the seller – in order to gain a deep understanding of the relationship, although they acknowledge that most empirical studies do only look at one half of the dyad. Unfortunately, when it came to the fieldwork, this was not possible, as the majority of companies were reluctant to give me access to their partners for research purposes. In the case where this was permitted at Company A, I spoke to partners at their international joint venture and their overseas subsidiary, and I was given permission to speak to one of their customers, but unfortunately the customer declined to participate. However, for this doctoral research, the focus is on the UK organisations, in order to understand the practices that they use in order to manage language diversity, and how these strategies are mediated by their own understanding of the power dynamics in the relationships, so it is therefore reasonable to conduct the research solely within the organisations themselves in order to gain information about their relationships as the unit of analysis. Therefore the overall research was not negatively impacted by this, although I do reflect on the more general challenges over access and discuss this in more detail later in this chapter.

Organisation	Interviewee Position	Interview Duration	Media	Sex
Company A	Customer Service Manager	29.19	Face to face	Male
	German Speaking Export Sales Manager	34.31	Telephone	Male
	Spanish Speaking Export Sales Manager	22.20	Telephone	Male
	Finance Director	18.43	Face to face	Female
	General Manager	38.19	Face to face	Male
	India IJV Manager	28.57	Skype	Male
	Marketing Manager	32.01	Face to face	Male
	Purchasing Manager	4.59	Face to face	Female
	Purchasing Manager 2	2.34	Face to face	Female
	Sales Director	46.14	Face to face	Male
	Subsidiary Manager China	27.53	Skype	Male
Company B	Executive Chairman	24.51	Face to face	Male
	French Speaking Export Executive	18.00	Face to face	Female
	French and Polish Speaking Export Executive	21.25	Face to face	Male
	Germany Speaking Export Executive	30.17	Face to face	Male
	Managing Director	9.58	Face to face	Male
	New Product Development Manager	57.39	Face to face	Male
Company C	Finance Director	80.44	Face to face	Male
Company D	Managing Director	52.52	Face to face	Female

Table 3.5 Interview participant details

3.4.2 Interview Orientation

The approach to interviewing that I planned to take was the romanticism approach (Alvesson, 2011), which relies on establishing rapport with participants so that they feel free to talk authentically and freely with the researcher. Given that I already had a

relationship with many of the participants, particularly at Company A, where I had previously worked, it seemed appropriate to me that I would need to create a situation of warmth in the interview. By creating an honest dialogue, I also wanted to try to mitigate the risk that the participants would simply tell me what I wanted to hear with regards to language, which Fontana and Frey (1994) suggest can be achieved through this approach. There are ethical considerations associated with the use of this orientation, as it can be viewed as a manipulation of the interviewee by the researcher, and I address this in section 3.9 on ethics.

For the most part, I feel that this was achieved, although as I discuss later in this chapter, I felt that my interview technique improved as the research progressed, and some situations were easier to manage than others.

3.4.3 Gendered Experience of the Interviews

I was acutely aware throughout the fieldwork that with five exceptions (and two of these were brief, as can be seen in Figure 3.4), all the participants in the interviews were men. It is acknowledged (e.g. Arendell, 1997; Alvesson, 2003; Wilkinson and Young, 2004: Broom, Hand and Tovey, 2009) that the biography of the researcher and the research participants can have a major impact on shaping a research project, particularly where qualitative methodologies are used, and here it was significant that such a large proportion of the research participants were male, as Schwalbe and Wolkomir (2003) suggest that male managers may find it difficult to fully open up in an interview as it may be important to them to present a certain image. Mikecz (2012) notes that it can be difficult for researchers to establish rapport with corporate elites because there is a power imbalance between the two parties, and there may be a sense that the interviewee is doing a favour to the researcher (Herod, 1999). Although the interviewees were not corporate elites in the sense of Mikecz (2012), here I use the term to reflect that they were senior figures within their organisations and in the business communities of which they were part. In this research I felt that there were times where this effect was amplified by my age and gender in relation to some of the research participants, and particularly at Company A, I felt there were some interviews in which I was working hard in order to present myself as a competent professional, (Gurney, 1985) particularly given that some of these elite interviewees had known me

ten years ago when I was starting out in my career. There was an occasion in which my gender was pointed out to me as a potential reason for why I had found working in a particular market difficult. At the time, I did not challenge this statement, although I do strongly disagree with it, because I did not want to damage the rapport which I felt I had established, and thus risk damaging the rest of the interview. This scenario, in which I disagreed strongly with comments that the interviewees made, occurred at other times during the research process, and at all times I remained silent, even where I knew that the statements made were factually incorrect, for example when a senior figure was incorrect about the volume of export versus domestic sales which the organisation had, something which I was able to verify through looking at the organisation's accounts, which are publicly available. I was conflicted about this, and still am to a certain extent, because I am unsure whether my desire to continue the interviews, and to not put them at risk, overrode my natural inclination to correct errors, particularly in a circumstance where male interviewees were committing them as they constructed themselves as superordinate to me, and thus I wrestled with the same challenges as Arendell (1997) although in a less overt setting. I therefore found myself unprepared for some of the strong emotional reactions that some of the interviews - particularly at Company A, where I had a greater knowledge of the context – evoked in me, and this led to additional challenges during the process of data analysis, which I will discuss later in this chapter.

An additional point of my biography (Alvesson, 2011) that was relevant to the interviews was the fact that I speak three languages. As a result, languages are extremely important to me and I feel that they have a fundamental role to play in international business, but I was aware that this may not be the case for some of the research participants, and I particularly did not wish to appear to position myself as superordinate to monolingual respondents. Broom et al (2009) discuss how perceived combinations of cultural capital and work status can be a limiting factor in interviews, which can have damaging implications for rapport within the interview where difference is perceived as an issue. Here I found myself trying to achieve a delicate balance between positioning myself as professionally competent – which given my professional background included linguistic competence – whilst also acknowledging that although language was the focus of my research, I viewed linguistic competence

as a skill like any other, and that I wasn't interested in making judgements on individuals who may or may not have had language skills themselves. This was particularly challenging when interviewing the elites of the organisation, as I did not want to do anything which could be perceived as a threat to their own self-image (Mikecz, 2012). Whilst there were situations in which I feel that I was patronized (Welch, Marschan-Piekkari, Penttinen and Tahvanainen, 2002), I feel that at times, this was because I allowed myself to be so, in an attempt to not criticise the interviewees and potentially cause a loss of face for them. I consciously made a decision to proceed cautiously in such scenarios as I valued the time which all the participants, regardless of their organisational position, gave in order to help me with my research, and as such, I would rather that I felt a little patronised by the conversations than my doing it to them, whether by design or accident.

All the interviews were recorded with the participants' permission, and they were transcribed ad verbatim by myself. Although it would have been possible to outsource the transcription process, I felt that it was necessary to engage in this personally, as this enabled me to get closer to the information at this early stage of the process of analysis, and it helped me to immerse myself in the information, instead of detaching myself from it by allowing someone else to transcribe it, as transcription is a form of representation (Oliver, Serovich and Mason, 2005). In line with my romanticism approach to interviews, I did not follow a highly structured convention to transcribing the interviews, as would localists (Alvesson, 2011). Instead I sought to reproduce a faithful account of the dialogue and to capture some of the atmosphere of the interview, such as when laughter occurred. Such an approach was sufficient for the narrative and thematic analysis which I undertook, however it would have been insufficient for a conversation analysis (Oliver et al, 2005).

3.5 Observation

Observation in most methodology textbooks seems primarily to refer to participant observation, of a kind associated with ethnographies. This method can be extraordinarily complicated to gain access (Chapman, Gajewska-DeMattos and Antoniou, 2004) and for this reason, studies including participant observation at a managerial level are quite rare.

For this research, I would hesitate to suggest that I was a participant observer, due primarily to the short period of time which I spent with each organisation, and therefore I would not elevate myself to the status of "participant" in the organisation. As part of the process of negotiating access, I did offer my skills related to language to the organisations, as this is often a way of gaining access to companies (Sharpe, 2004). However, this was not needed or used during the time that I spent with them, beyond the interest of all the organisations in the research findings, and their desire to have my analysis of their organisations once complete.

Therefore, although I was not a full participant observer in any of the case studies, I was still participating in the organisation's day-to-day activities and social interactions, (Brannan and Oultran, 2012) and make no claim to have been a detached, impartial observer. Therefore, following Gold's (1958) classifications of observation, I would position myself as "observer as participant," given the limited time that I spent in the field. I avoided some of the challenges associated with this role that Gold identified by virtue of the fact that I have worked in export/global supply chain management settings previously, and therefore brought my own prior understanding of the context. This, coupled with the interviews conducted, helped to avert some of the potential for misunderstanding which can result from observation during a brief period.

The advantage afforded by observation is that it enables the researcher to gain proximity to the organisational context and therefore the research participants (Brannan and Oultran, 2012). As such, it can assist in gaining the "insider account" of life within the SME called for by Ekanem (2007). Whilst I would not suggest that this enables a full understanding of "lived experience" (Jorgensen, 1989, p. 8) of the research participants, it did permit me to begin to understand how people manage language diversity in practice, rather than solely relying on their espoused beliefs about how it is managed, in an interview for example. In addition, by briefly sharing in the organisations' daily life, observation can enable understanding of the meanings attributed by participants to certain situations and practices, and therefore enables the researcher to enter their social world to a greater extent.

3.5.1 Challenges of Observation

My initial plan was to spend one week on site at each of the case organisations, however after my experiences at Company A and Company B, I realised that this would not be possible or desirable for the research. As Company A was the largest organisation, I did spend one week there, and had a desk in the office for me to use. However, what became clear to me very rapidly was that the foreign language speakers at the organisation did not tend to be based on site – all my interviews with them were conducted via telephone or Skype, because they worked from home when they were not travelling on business, which was the majority of the time. Combined with the fact that other participants who had regular contact with overseas partners stressed that they rarely spoke to them orally, but instead tended to rely on email, it became clear that there was very little to actually observe relating to language dynamics with international partners.

At Company B, a similar experience occurred. This was a smaller organisation so there were fewer interviewees, and I spent two days on site. Once again the organisation was accommodating and provided me with a desk while I conducted the research, but what emerged from the interviews and also from my own observations during this time was that again, there was very little to actually observe. This is not to suggest that the lack of observable interactions do not tell a story in their own right, and this is discussed further in the findings chapters, but it did become obvious that in this particular research context, it was not necessary to spend the amount of time on site that I had originally planned to do as part of the fieldwork. Saturation (Morse, 2004) in this area was reached very quickly, given that I wished to undertake observation in order to observe oral language use in practice, in order to compare it with the espoused values regarding language which I obtained from the interviews. Interviews from all the case organisations highlighted the extensive use of lean media in their communications with their international supply chain partners, and thus I was able to ascertain that this was indeed the case in relatively little time spent at the organisations. Given that all the organisations with the exception of Company B only had a maximum of one speaker of each language, there were no internal conversations in languages other than English for me to observe. In the case of Company B, where there were three French speakers, the interviews confirmed that they rarely used

French to each other in the office, and one of the interviewees suggested that they only did so if they were saying something they didn't wish other colleagues to understand. In such cases, my presence as an outsider is likely to have dissuaded these respondents from using French in this way, as they were aware that I spoke French and would be able to understand what would have been intended to be a private conversation.

The arrival at the saturation point was amplified further at Companies C and D, as they were both much smaller organisations (with three and eleven employees respectively). As a result of this, only one individual at both organisations worked extensively with overseas partners, and in both cases, this was one of the owners of the organisation, who had the roles of Finance Director and Managing Director respectively. Whilst these individuals had significant influence over the approach to language that was taken at the organisation, working internationally was only a small part of their role, and it would not therefore have been appropriate for me to effectively "shadow" them for a period of time. In order to counter this, these two interviews were the longest interviews which were conducted during the course of the fieldwork, and documents relating to the organisations' international activities were shared with me to contribute to my understanding of the case.

3.6 Document Analysis

Mills and Helms Mills (2011) point to the fact that archival research and critical theory are rarely used in conjunction in case study research, despite the fact that it enables a contextual understanding of certain phenomenon in providing a corpus of documentation which reflect the norms of the organisation in which they were produced.

With this in mind, I studied documentation created by the organisations which related to their interactions with their supply chain partners. Such documentation was primarily that which was publicly available, such as promotional literature or website information, although some organisations shared more confidential information with me, such as emails (which can be a rich source of information into language use,

particularly forms of language hybridity e.g. Kankaanranta, 2006). As with the observation, in this way, I was able to gain an understanding of how language diversity is actually managed in practice, rather than the explanation of how it is managed that was gained from the semi-structured interviews.

With this in mind, although there was an element of content analysis, understanding the language that the document is produced in, and what it says, I was also concerned with questions such as "what does this document do?" (Wright, 2011, p. 361), and therefore, what the purpose of the documents were, as this concept of the purpose of documents links directly to the concept of skopos theory (Vermeer, 2012) in which the adequacy of a translation depends on the purpose with which it was commissioned.

I did request access to emails between the case organisations and their supply chain partners. Unfortunately, due to confidentiality concerns, this was largely declined, with the exception of Company C, who provided access to some of their emails with a Korean supplier, in order to demonstrate how the English used by them as native speakers changed when working with a non-native speaker. Therefore the rest of the documentation which I used was publicly available marketing and promotional material for all the organisations. This comprised website pages and downloadable data from their websites, and physical brochures and flyers which I was given. Some of the documentation which I was provided with at Company A I had translated myself when I was employed at the organisation. This allowed me to have an in depth understanding of what the original purpose of the documents were, because that purpose had been determined by myself, and I was therefore able to compare their original intended usage with how they were currently being used at the organisation.

3.6.1 Document Translation

Recognising the need for transparency in translation in international management research (Xian, 2008; Chidlow et al, 2014; Piekkari et al, 2014) in this section I will discuss the approach which I took to the translation of the documents which I was given which were in languages other than English.

The documents which were in Spanish and French, I was able to understand, and with some context, I was also able to understand the Italian and Portuguese documents which I was given. However, I received documents in some languages that I was unable to understand (German, Russian, Mandarin and Japanese). I took the decision not to translate these documents but to leave them in their original language, as they were replicas of documents in languages that I was able to understand. I was interested to understand how they had been translated and what they had been used for, and therefore with this aim, it was not necessary to use a translation professional in order to be able to answer the question "what does this document do?" (Wright, 2011, p. 361) which was the main point of interest for this, rather than being more concerned with the question of "what does this document say?" Thus here I was interested in the performative aspect of language (Tietze, 2008), as discussed in the literature review.

If I had gained access to email correspondence in languages which I was not familiar with, this would have been entirely different. I would have needed to understand the communication in order to determine the purpose and scope of the document, and therefore I would have taken a different approach. However, I found it unnecessary to have documents translated when I already knew their content (because of their availability in other languages), when my primary concern was not what the document said, but what it did, the function that it served.

An argument can be made that having a professional translator look at the documents would have been able to identify errors in the translation – although under skopos theory (Vermeer, 2012) the existence of errors would depend on what the purpose of documents were in the first place. However, except where professional translators had been used, the research participants freely acknowledged that there may have been errors in the text anyway. Where they had been used, I was already familiar with the difficulties of technical translation (Munday, 2016), and the fact that even professional translators may make errors, particularly with vocabulary which is associated with particular domains of use.

Therefore, I chose to leave all documentation in languages other than English in its original language, as I could understand the majority of it in that language myself (Spanish, French, Portuguese and Italian). Any documents in other languages (German, Japanese, Mandarin, Russian, Polish) was a replication of other documents that I was able to understand, and given I was primarily interested in the purpose, rather than the content of marketing material, this decision was compatible with the goals of my research and the approach to language taken.

3.7 Data Analysis

In order to analyse the data that was generated from the fieldwork, I used a combination of narrative analysis and thematic analysis. Drawing on Boje (2001), I used grand narrative analysis within each individual case and for cross case analysis in order to tease out the dominant discourse around language use which was espoused at each organisation, which then made "local (antenarrative) stories become more noticeable (Boje, 2001, p. 35). Such an approach allows us to become alert to hegemony, and how it may be resisted, which is important as a critical theorist. Whilst such an approach draws on postmodernism (Lyotard, 1984), here I did not use it as a basis to deny all truth claims, but instead to critique a particular discourse, as per Best and Kellner (1991) who argue that critique of a particular grand narrative does not entail that all of them need to be equally scrutinised in a given piece of research. In this study, I particularly examine the grand narrative of the legitimacy of English as a language of international business, which is more in keeping with my own philosophy, and thus I follow De Fina and Georgakopoulou (2011) who suggest that in narrative analysis which addresses issues of power, local meaning making processes should be linked with wide social mechanisms of power, which is what I have done in the analysis by using the framework of power of Fleming and Spicer (2007).

In addition to the fine-grained examination of the data which narrative analysis can provide, I also engaged in a thematic analysis, which enabled me to explore the particular language practices that organisations engaged in to manage linguistic diversity, and the circumstances and relationships in which such practices occurred. Here I used an inductive thematic analysis which enabled a search for patterns in the

data (Spradley, 1980). Inductive thematic analysis can use a combination of emic and etic approaches to the information, for example, by using external themes which have been identified from the literature would be to use an etic approach, and an emic approach, in which themes emerge from the information itself is also used to complement this, which is in contrast to a deductive thematic analysis which only uses the etic approach (Boje, 2001). Given that there is an existing body of language sensitive international management literature, it is clear that there are a number of themes which have been identified in the literature which are relevant to this study. However, given the focus of the majority of this body of research – MNEs and their intra-organisational relationships – and the functionalist, mechanistic approach to language which is typically taken, it would be inappropriate to try to force my information into this pre-determined boxes. As this is an underexplored research context, the inductive approach, in which also themes emerge from the information in order to tell their story on their terms (Gummesson, 2000), is more appropriate, although the process was also informed by themes which were pre-existing in the literature – for example the work of Vaara et al (2005) on language practices and power dynamics.

In order to engage in this process, after transcription of the interviews I uploaded them into NVivo 10, and organised into categories identified from the literature, in addition to emergent categories which came out of the information itself. This process yielded a total of 127 different categories, key amongst which were "English as language of international business," "high email usage," "BELF difficult for native speakers," and "English skills not universal." These were then organised into three main themes of language practices, power and relationships. For the document analysis, the types of documentation available in different languages were categorised in order to create a picture of what types of information were available in other languages, how the documents had been translated, and which branding was used, as the company had documents which used a variety of brands from different points over the last ten years. This demonstrated the importance attached by the company to the production of documents in languages other than English.

However, whilst NVivo was used to organise my information into categories so that I could find quotes easily in order to support my analysis, the analytical process itself was a largely manual process where I thought about how the case information related to theory and to each other, following Pascale (2011) in that the idea of themes "emerging" from the information is problematic. It can make it appear that this is an almost organic process, in which the researcher takes a passive role, as themes spontaneously emerge from the information for anyone to see, when this is clearly not the case. When I discuss emergent themes therefore, I refer to those themes which have not previously been identified in the literature, but which I have seen repeated throughout my own data, and about which I have made the active decision that they merit the designation of a "theme" in their own right. In making such decisions, I have been influenced by my own biography, and also by the relevant literature in this field, and therefore, although I am broadly taking an inductive approach, a significant amount of pre-understanding went with me into the field.

Throughout this process, it was important for the analysis that I recognised my own active role within it, and that whilst the thematic analysis proved to be useful in understanding which practices are used and when they occur, this was complemented by the narrative analysis which enabled a deeper understanding of why certain practices were occurring. I agree with St Pierre (2013); Brinkmann (2014) and St Pierre and Jackson (2014) that coding can become a mechanistic process, in which "*words become quasi-numbers*" (St Pierre, 2013, p. 224) as they are stripped of context and isolated and manipulated into particular categories. To do this is not in line with my philosophy.   After arguing that a mechanistic approach to translation is overly simplistic (Janssens et al, 2004), and that language use is a political act embedded in a particular cultural context, it would not be appropriate for me to take an approach which opposes this in my analysis, and treats my interviews – speech acts – as if they can be broken down to constituent parts to put in boxes, which is essentially a positivist approach (Patton, 2008).

As a result of this, I have taken a more flexible approach to analysis in order to respond to the field (Childers, 2014), and to try to avoid the pitfalls highlighted by Alvesson (2011) that many researchers may commit to a critical methodology, but proceed with analysis in a neo-positivist manner, by addressing phenomena discussed in interviews

in an objectivist way. Whilst I have arranged my information into categories, I consider analysis to be "thinking with theory" (St Pierre and Jackson, 2014, p. 717) and that it is an inherently messy process. I therefore used whiteboards, of which I took photographs to preserve records, in order to move the categories about and think about how they related to each other. I printed the interview transcripts and made notes on them manually in order to identify particular discourses and how they linked to others. I noted down examples of power and manually categorised them into the faces of power and resistance identified by Fleming and Spicer (2007). In doing so, I found myself taking a much more active role in "thinking with theory" than the idea of a purely inductive approach in which themes "emerge" from the information, would suggest, and in this way, followed Murphy Augustine (2014) who acknowledges the messiness of analysis and suggests such an active role, and advocates writing as a form of analysis, in line with Elbow (1998, p. 15) who argued that "writing is a way to end up thinking something you couldn't have started out thinking."

3.7.1 Individual and Cross-Case Analysis

As discussed in the section on sampling, in this study I have chosen contrasting cases, in order to enable comparisons of difference, and therefore in line with Fitzgerald and Dopson (2009), the cases were selected specifically in order to address the research aims, particularly with regards to investigating the practices that SMEs employ to manage language diversity in their international supply chain relationships, and understanding the interplay between the practices employed and the power dynamics of these relationships.

Engaging in individual case analysis allows the identification of a wide range of practices and perspectives on language use in international supply chain relationships (Cerceau et al, 2014) and cross-case analysis allows the identification of common themes and critical differences in the language practices used across the four case organisations, particularly when sampling has been purposeful (Fitzgerald, Ferlie, Wood and Hawkins, 2002) as was the case in this study.
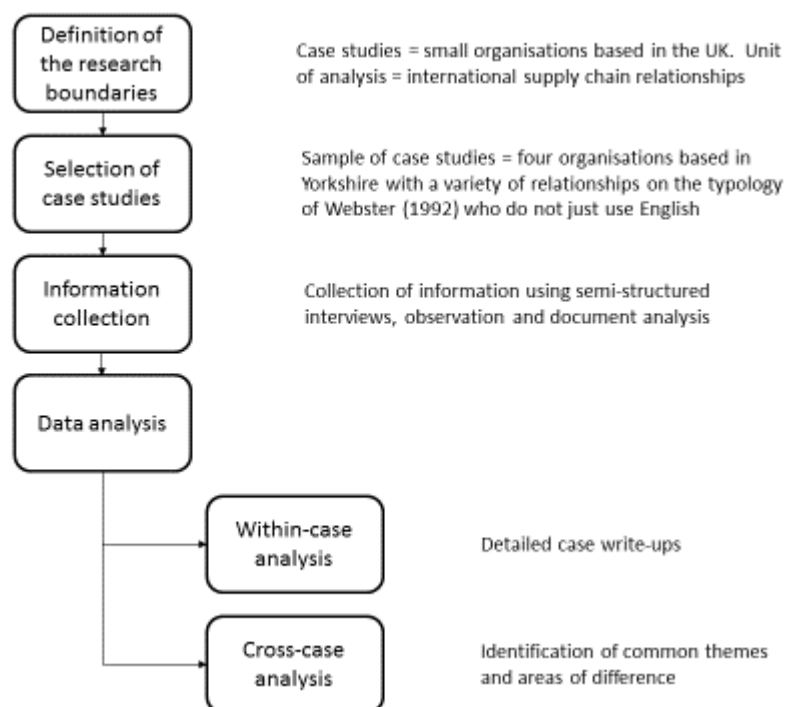
Figure 3.6: Methodological framework of the case study analysis (adapted from Cerceau et al, 2014)

Figure 3.4 summarises the methodological process which was followed for this study in order to identify and analyse the case organisations.

3.7.2 Within-case analysis

Case study research frequently involves the collection of a large amount of data (Cerceau et al, 2014) and one of the ways to begin to manage this is through writing up the individual cases. This has the additional benefit that in addition to the processes of thematic and narrative analysis which have been discussed, the process of writing can also be considered as a form of analysis in its own right (Elbow, 1998; Murphy Augustine, 2014).

The key points which were addressed in the write-up of each case can be found below. These points were informed by the literature review, and also from themes which resonated in the cases themselves, which had not previously been discussed within the literature.

- Size of organisations/number of employees

- Range of international supply chain relationships (type and amount)

- Different practices used in order to communicate in the relationships (as identified in the Literature Review) and other practices not previously identified

- Comparison of practices in upstream and downstream relationships

- Language practices using lean and rich media

- Perspectives of language users on the impact of these practices on their relationships

- Examples of language practices as faces of power and resistance (Fleming and Spicer, 2007)

- Perspectives of respondents on BELF

- Overview of documents available in other languages

- Notes from observation

The case narratives formed the basis of the following four chapters which present the findings for each of the case organisations. Chapter 8 is concerned with cross-case analysis in order to generate contextualised explanations, a process which I will now address.

3.7.3 Cross-case analysis

The within case analysis could be described as idiographic (Brannen, 2011), in that the chapters which address the four case organisations are primarily concerned with rich descriptions of the research sites. However, the analysis chapter which deals with the cross-case analysis emphasises nomothetic knowledge (Burrell and Morgan, 1979), as this is where I sought to look for similarities and differences across the four cases, and to use this in order to make inferences and search for explanations of the findings.

Therefore, during this process, I have engaged in two different types of theorising from case studies. Chapters 4 to 7 represent interpretive sense-making (Welch et al, 2011) in which I have focused on the particularities of each case in order to provide a rich description which enables an understanding of the actors' subjective experiences related to language use. However, in Chapter 8, I have created a "contextualised

explanation" (Welch et al, 2011) in which I have used the case studies in order to "generate causal explanations that preserve rather than eradicate contextual richness" (Welch et al, 2011, p. 750). Therefore, in this chapter, I am not seeking to present law-like explanations as would be expected from inductive theory building using case studies, as advocated by Eisenhardt (1989), but instead use an approach which is "partly deductive (theory inspired) and partly inductive (data inspired)" (Denis, Lamothe and Langley, 2001, p. 812), as this enabled me to use the existing literature to guide the analysis, but also to retain the possibility of being open to emergent themes from the case studies, as indeed was the case with regards to the importance of luck in the practices which all the case organisations used in order to manage linguistic diversity.

Therefore, whilst I discovered a number of practices which were unique to the individual contexts in which the four organisations operated, I found several themes which resonated across all four of the case organisations, even though they may have manifested themselves in different ways, as exemplified in the below table.

Manifestations	Theme	Presentation in Thesis
Export consultants	Practices to manage linguistic diversity	Section 8.1 – Practices used by Small Organisations to Manage Linguistic Diversity
Language nodes		
Lingua francæ		
Passive multilingualism		
Pictorial communication		
Specific recruitment		
Use of Google Translate		
Use of personal contacts		
Use of professional translators and interpreters		
University resources		
Changing communication media	Preference for lean media	
Email easier for NNS		
Email to overcome language boundaries		
Email used for transactional		

communication		
High usage of email		
Preference for written communication		
BELF difficult for NNS	Difficulties associated with practices used to manage linguistic diversity	Section 8.2 – Luck, Chance and Serendipity when Communicating in International Supply Chains
Code switching		
Cultural difficulties		
Cultural fit in recruitment		
Difficulties in using interpreters		
English skills mask incompetence in other areas		
Foreign language anxiety		
Over reliance on agents/distributors		
Problems of Google Translate		
Problems of language nodes		
Resource constraints		
Technical difficulties in communication		
BELF difficult for NS	Hegemony of English	Section 8.3 - Language and Power in Inter-Organisational Relationships
Customers can speak English		
Companies who cannot speak English unfit for international business		
English language of IB		
English poor at using other languages		
Suppliers can speak English		
World Englishes		
Avoidance of communication	Power/resistance associated with language use	
Language and organisational hierarchies		
Power in hands of NS		
Resistance to using English amongst NNS		
Different customer	Nature of supply chain	Section 8.4 – Impact of

expectations	relationships	Relationship Structure on Practices Used
English skills not universal		
Humour in relationships		
Importance of distributors		
Language providing access to particular partners		
Language skills not a requirement for certain markets		
Multidomestic approach		
Cost of professional translation	Issues specific to document translation	Section 8.5 – Document Translation in International Supply Chain Relationships
Differing customer requirements for documents		
Difficulties of Google Translate		
Difficulties of providing ongoing linguistic support for document translation		
Primarily English documentation		
Problems of language node translation		
Problems of technical translation		
Timescales associated with document translation		

Table 3.7 Key issues and themes in cross-case analysis

3.7.4 Issues of Representation and Translation

To engage in qualitative research is to engage in the politics of representation, as I will be interpreting the interviews, observations and documents in order to generate theory, and as such, I have an ethical responsibility to represent the research participants and their experiences in an appropriate and authentic fashion. However, as previously discussed, a written account can never be the same as a lived experience (Ketokivi and Mantere, 2010) and therefore I have had to make decisions about what to include in this written account and what not to, which is an ethical decision (Holt,

2012). Although this research is not positioned within the postmodern tradition, an understanding of this has sensitised me to the danger of seeking an overarching grand narrative (Berg, 1989), especially as this research project is context-dependent, and therefore I am wary of those who engage in truth claims without reflexivity about representation of the participants and the information collected, and therefore in this account I have used multivocality (Tracy, 2010) in providing multiple voices with diverse perspectives and opinions, rather than trying to provide a sanitised account in which all opinions neatly align.

Whilst representation is a challenge for all those working in the qualitative traditions, in this section, I will address some of the special challenges associated when some of the data collected is in language other than English. Although this is frequently the case in international business research, this issue is rarely given consideration in the methodology sections of these studies (Marschan-Piekkari and Reis, 2004), and frequently is reduced to an issue of back-translation (Holden and Michailova, 2014; Chidlow et al, 2014), or it is assumed that it is appropriate to conduct research in English in other cultures as this is the dominant language of international business (e.g. Khakhar and Rammal, 2013).

Whilst there are no established protocols for translation in international business research, I agree with Chidlow et al (2014) that the translator needs to be made visible in this process, and therefore in my analysis and write-up, I am explicit regarding if translations have occurred and who has undertaken them. As I have discussed in the Literature Review, translation theories have now moved beyond a simple mechanistic understanding of equivalency between languages, and offers alternative approaches including skopos theory with regards to translation, which regards the purpose of translation as the main criterion of success, but the idea of cultural politics (Venuti, 2008) in translation is also appealing, as this specifically acknowledges that representation of the Other is a political act, and therefore this approach fits well with my guiding philosophy.

This concern regarding representation of the Other led me to consider some of the contributions from postcolonial theory, as the challenges of representation are here a

key concern (Westwood, 2006), and a sensitivity towards language is encouraged (Jack et al, 2011). The awareness of the power of the writer (Krumer-Nevo and Sidi 2012) when engaged in an act of representation is helpful, however I feel that I must take an active approach to representation, as whilst it is positive that this issue is highlighted as a concern, some writers (e.g Spivak, 1988; 2005) can problematise it to such an extent that I as a white British, female doctoral researcher, could be caught in paralysis, leading to inaction, much as postmodernism is sometimes criticised for endless cycles of deconstruction (Donaldson, 2003).

Xian (2008) who suggests that translation therefore cannot be value-free, and that the translator is an active co-producer of knowledge. As the translator in this study was me, this is therefore compatible with my philosophy regarding the role of the researcher, and as I move through the process of collecting, translating and analysing information, I need to be mindful of this; and avoid mechanistic approaches and over-simplifications by being reflexive. Therefore, I will make explicit the translation process, and explain and justify key decisions taken, and present potential alternative meanings. Although I did not share transcripts with the participants, as this can create further problems (Marschan-Piekkari and Reis, 2004), there were occasions where I clarified doubtful areas with participants in a follow-up conversation or email.

3.7.5 Participant Debrief

As part of the process of gaining access to the field, I agreed that I would debrief the case organisations about the findings of the study once the analysis was complete. I advised the organisations from the very beginning about the lengthy timescales involved with the process of analysis, in order to manage their expectations, and so they did not think that I was simply ignoring them once I had obtained the information that I wanted.

I therefore produced a short document for all of the organisations, highlighting what I found to be the key aspects of the way in which each individual company managed linguistic diversity, and the implications of this, both positive and negative, for their relationship management. At the end of the document, I also highlighted areas of best practice which I have identified at other organisations in the study, in order to increase

awareness of other language practices which may be available to them and could be useful. A sample of these documents can be found in Appendix D, addressing the summary of findings and recommendations at Company A. For ease of use for the reader, I have included a table which cross-references these findings with the appropriate section of this thesis. As such, in addition to the contribution to knowledge of this research, which will be discussed in greater detail following the findings section, I have also provided a contribution to management practice, by identifying practical solutions for managing linguistic diversity which the organisations may not have been previously aware of. As I discuss in Section 3.9 of this chapter, on ethics, this therefore provided a benefit to the organisations who participated in the research.

3.8 Challenges of the Research Process

I begin this section by reflecting on the challenges encountered when attempting to gain access to organisations in order to conduct the research, and the time spent in the field. I then turn to one of the more unexpected challenges which I encountered, one which I have not found as a subject of discussion in the methodology literature. This was that I worked at Company A as an Export Sales Executive between 2007 and 2010, and one of the reasons why I had this role was because of my language skills. As a result of this, when conducting research at this organisation, I found myself interviewing former colleagues, which led to different dynamics in the interview process to those which I experienced at the other cases. Furthermore, some of the documentary evidence which I used for case analysis were documents that I myself had prepared when I worked at the organisations, and some of the practices which were used were ones which I had influenced during my time at the organisation. My past self essentially became one of my own research participants, and thus I reflect on the challenges presented by this as the concluding part of this section.

3.8.1 Gaining access

In order to approach organisations to participate in the research, I relied upon my professional networks, and organisations which I had had previous contact with. This was because I did attempt to contact some organisations which I had researched

online who appeared to meet my criteria, but without a personal introduction, my attempts at contact were ignored. After experiencing this, I only then contacted companies that I didn't previously know as long as I was able to secure an introduction from another member of my professional network, as I felt that this would increase the chances of my at least being able to explain the research to the organisation, and to explore the possibility of the conducting research there, without being ignored. Even so, I received multiple rejections throughout this process of gaining access. Despite the fact that access is widely acknowledged to be a key challenge for social researchers (Daniels and Cannice, 2004) I had not anticipated quite how challenging the process was likely to be. Firstly, although I have worked in export before joining the university, I had only worked at one smaller organisation in the UK, the others having been large multinational organisations and an SME in Spain. As a result of the roles I had in my professional career, most of the organisations with which I had worked were therefore based outside of the UK and so were not appropriate for this research. I therefore quickly came to realise that my professional network which was actually of use for the research was not as extensive as I had initially believed it to be.

I therefore asked for introductions from others in my network, such as former and current colleagues, and professional bodies of which I was a member, such as the Institute of Export, and Languages Sheffield, if they were aware of any organisations which they felt would be suitable for my research and that they would be prepared to introduce me to. Some contacts were very helpful in this regard, others less so, and even here, my requests were completely ignored in some circumstances. However, throughout this process, I built up a wider base of potential organisations which I was then able to approach. Unfortunately, two particularly interesting cases which I identified through this process declined participation when I approached them as they were going through periods of organisational change, and did not feel that the relevant staff would have time to participate in the research.

However, through this process, I eventually identified four case organisations who were willing to give me access. For two of the smaller organisations, I did not initially ask for the full access that I actually wanted at this early stage. This was on the basis that I didn't want to potentially ask for too much initially, which may have made them

reconsider, and that I was confident that I would be able to negotiate additional access if required during this research, as is a common approach (Sharpe, 2004). I therefore agreed mutually convenient dates for me to spend time with all of the organisations.

3.8.2 In the Field

My initial intention was to go first to Company A, as I was nervous about entering the field for the first time, which is not unusual (Murphy, 2006) and I felt that it would help me to gain greater confidence if I went to the organisation with which I was already the most familiar. Unfortunately, this was not possible due to the availability of the organisation, although this ultimately was not as unfortunate as it initially appeared. I therefore went first to Company B, an organisation with which I hadn't previously done any work, although I did know the Executive Chairman from a collaboration that we had done at the university.

Looking back on my first interviews, I do not feel that they were as well done as some of the later ones that occurred. Certainly they tended to be shorter, which suggests perhaps that I wasn't exploring the topic in as much detail as I would have hoped, although it may also have been that some of the individuals which I spoke to didn't see language issues as being so important as other participants did, and therefore in reality, it is likely to be elements of both of these factors which led to this.

The organisation provided me with a desk on which to make notes, observe, and look at documents. Unfortunately, the desk was located in a different open plan office to some of the interviewees due to space constraints, and therefore I wasn't able to observe as much as I had initially hoped. I therefore spent two days with this organisation, rather than the week as planned, because it became clear that there wasn't as much to observe from a language perspective as I had initially hoped. As was confirmed to me in the interviews, the dominant method of communication between the company and its supply chain partners was email, and so conversations in languages other than English were actually quite rare at the company. With hindsight, I still believe that this was the correct thing to do, and that I would not have gained any further insights by remaining longer, however I am also aware of the fact that part of the reason that I left after two days was because I felt awkward. This is frequently

experienced by researchers, particularly ethnographers (Van Maanen, 2011), and my confidence grew throughout the research process.

3.8.3 Encountering my Past Self

One of the major challenges which I experienced during this research process was at Company A, where I had previously been employed as an Export Sales Executive, with responsibility for the organisation's Southern European, South American, and African markets. I had originally been hired for the role as a result of my language skills, and at the time, the only foreign language speakers at the organisation were myself and my line manager, who spoke German and was interviewed as part of the fieldwork.

Given that I left the organisation five years before conducting this fieldwork – on the completion of my undergraduate degree and without any idea at that time that I would pursue a doctorate, I did not expect that when I returned to conduct this fieldwork that I would encounter traces of my past self. Certainly I knew that I would interview former colleagues, however there had been significant changes at the organisation since I had left – not least of which was that the company was acquired by a German multinational, and so, perhaps somewhat naively, I didn't expect to encounter traces of things that I had done in my former role, that were still in use at the organisation. The management literature is somewhat silent on such an occurrence. Whilst there is a tradition of action research (Coghlan and Brannick, 2014) where the researcher may go into their own organisation with a view to conducting research that will change things in some way, and there is a body of literature on the challenges of autoethnography, and the impact of researching your own organisation (Tietze, 2012) I have been unable to find anything specifically in the domain of management which deals with this phenomenon. Of course, the question could be asked why this is important, given that as an interpretivist generally, and a critical theorist specifically in this research, I have never claimed to be a detached observer from the research process, and have always acknowledged that I have a role to play in constructing knowledge. However, it is important because the other participants knew what I was doing, and were active participants in this process, in contrast to my former self, who is completely passive and cannot share with me now what the rationale for some of my actions and decisions were at the time. Furthermore, the key difference

between autoethnography and action research and what occurred here, is that usually, researchers know in advance that they were going to engage in autoethnographic research or action research. This was not the case for me, and it was the unexpected nature of this encounter with my past self that made this part of the study particularly challenging. As a result, what I have to work with for evidence of why some things were done in a particular way, are my memories of the situation at that time. In sociological research (e.g. kumar, 2015: Forber-Pratt, 2015; Franks, 2016: Holman-Jones, 2016), one's own memory can be an accepted form of information to use during the research process, however there is no tradition of this within the management sciences, still less so in international business with its dominant positivistic approach.

In order to manage this process, I was able to ensure that my memories were not the only thing that I had to rely on. I was able to use documentary evidence, and the testimony of the interviewees, in order to corroborate or challenge my memories of why particular things occurred. In this way, triangulation was used in order to produce a richer picture (Seale, 1999).

A further point which I had not expected when planning for the fieldwork was that I would experience a strong emotional response to interviewing former colleagues about the organisation's international supply chains, given that many of the client relationships and markets which they discussed were relationships which I had been responsible for establishing and maintaining. As a result, I found myself feeling very defensive when such relationships were discussed in a critical way – mostly without any malice on the part of the interviewees, although looking back through the transcripts, there were a small number of occasions where comments were made that I am unable to interpret in any way other than as a criticism of my work and my approach at that time. Additionally, there were remarks which I found frustrating, particularly where something that I had presented to the organisation during my time there, was now being repackaged and represented to me, the researcher, as something brand new. Again, I do not believe that this was deliberate – in fact, when listening to the recordings and reading the transcripts now, I am convinced that the interviewees genuinely believed that what they were telling me was new, and that it would be useful for my research. However at first, it made the process of analysis

extremely challenging in this case, as I would become frustrated and annoyed when engaging with some of these comments.

Whilst there is no requirement for me to remain neutral during analysis in the tradition that I am working in – indeed, as critical management researchers perhaps we should be emotionally invested when we are looking at unequal power relations and systems of domination, the result of this emotional turmoil was that initially, I myself was unhappy with the direction that the analysis was taking. There were certain interviewees whose comments I persisted in viewing in a negative light, even though I didn't really believe that is what they meant. Whilst I acknowledge that the findings which I will present in the next chapters are my own interpretation of events, I will justify why I have come to these conclusions. If I had continued to analyse the case in such an emotional state, it is likely that I would have arrived at a version of events that even I didn't truly believe in.

To manage this emotional time, I stopped. I stepped away from this particular case for three months, something which can be a useful way of gaining distance from an emotive research subject (emerald and Carpenter, 2015) and during this time I engaged in some reflection as to why I found some of the interviews so frustrating. One of the key reasons I ultimately acknowledged as being a problem is something that I have discussed previously in this chapter. Much of it was to do with the power dynamics involved with interviewing corporate elites, amplified by my age and gender. Whilst I was prepared to accept a certain amount of patronisation (Welch et al, 2002), in order to access the information that I wanted, what I hadn't expected was that some of my former colleagues would still view me in exactly the same way as they had eight years ago – as a subordinate, who potentially was not as appropriate to working in the engineering industry as a male sales executive would have been, and as a British person, who spoke Spanish and French as second and third languages, and therefore didn't have the same cultural knowledge as a native speaker.

When I stepped back and thought about all this, I realised that perhaps the comments which I found so frustrating were an attempt to present a strong, male, managerial persona. It was not my intention to suggest that monolingual English speakers were in

some way less suitable for international business than multilinguals, but I can understand how it could have been interpreted that way by some of the male managers, and their comments were less a criticism of me, and more an attempt to save face against a perceived threat (Tietze, 2012). With this understanding, I was able to step back into the data, and continue with less of an emotional response, as I realised that the reason why I felt so emotional about the topic was much less about me as an individual now, and was more to do with how I felt as an individual years ago, when I worked there, and thus in this respect, I agree with Jorgenson (1991, p. 211) that "the person to whom a research subject speaks is not the person an interviewer thinks herself to be."

Whilst engaging in reflexivity here, my intention is not to focus overly on myself (Alvesson, 2011) and to treat reflection as therapy, or to give "a cleansing account of […] positions, preconceptions and interests" (Lee and Hassard, 1999, p. 396), but instead to acknowledge that research is an emotional activity (emerald and Carpenter, 2015) and that to conduct research is to make oneself vulnerable, particularly when we open ourselves up in order to provide a reflexive account (Ellis, 2009). My aim is to ensure that this research is not a "view from nowhere" (Nagel, 1986) but that instead, such reflexivity enables me to outline my own position and beliefs so that they can shed light on my interpretations of the information, thus enabling a more holistic account of the research process (Zajonc, 2009).

This discussion demonstrates the pleasures and pitfalls of working in an organisation as a researcher where I had been previously known as something else. The change of identities required was more difficult than I had imagined before entering the field. On the one hand, having an in depth understanding of the context before the fieldwork was an advantage. On the other hand, we need to be careful when returning as an outsider to a situation we believe that we understand. In this I would liken it to reverse culture shock (Steers et al, 2012), where a situation that was familiar becomes less so after a period of absence. For this reason, I argue that awareness of the issue of returning researchers needs greater attention in management. Whilst this particular situation is perhaps somewhat unusual, with increasing attention on action research and longitudinal studies (Coghlan and Brannick, 2014) it is possible that

researchers may return to a field that they previously had an influence on in a way that they did not imagine at the time, and the methodological repercussions of this remain underexplored in the extant literature, and thus have the potential to be further developed in the future.

3.9 Ethics

Tracy (2010) states that all research should be ethical, and that as researchers, we should regard our participants as individuals in their own right, rather than as a utilitarian means to an end for our research, given that "information is not a mute possession, but the residue of others' lives" (Holt, 2012, p. 103). Like all researchers, I faced the dilemma of differentiating between "the goods that we want to pursue from the goods that it is good for us to pursue" (Holt, 2012, p. 101), and I acknowledge the impossibility of removing my own self-interest from this decision. Thus I would characterise the access which I was granted by the organisations as transactional, "in which access is granted based on an agreed return to the organization" (Cunliffe and Alcadipani, 2016, p. 541), as the access enabled me to collect the information which I required for my own study, whilst also providing an analysis which is of value to the organisations involved.

Therefore, in order to manage this tension, I followed procedural ethics (Sales and Folkman, 2000) which ensured that the research was conducted in accordance with university policy. The participant consent forms and participant information sheets which I used can be found in the appendix. In addition to this I also considered situational ethics – those which emerge from a consideration of the specific context in which the research takes place. A particular point of focus here was the need to behave ethically in interviews given that I was following an orientation of romanticism (Alvesson, 2011), as this approach can be viewed as exploitative on the part of the researcher, and risks being criticised as a performance by the research in order to elicit the desired information from the participants. Whilst I did not want to antagonise the participants, and risk the termination of an interview, as I discuss in section 3.4.3, the research was motivated by a genuine interest in gaining further understanding (Watson, 1994), and therefore my desire to develop a relationship with the

participants was not strictly utilitarian, although clearly, the collection of information does benefit researchers in the development of their academic careers, in addition to providing insights and understandings which may benefit a wider population.

3.9.2 Behaving ethically in access negotiations

I also wished to ensure that I did not only ensure non-malfeasance to the participants of the study, but that they benefitted from taking part in the research. When I approached organisations to participate I offered my language skills during the time I was carrying out the fieldwork, or to perform a language audit (Reeves and Wright, 1996) for them. None of the case organisations required these services, but they all expressed an interest in receiving the findings of the study, not just my analysis of their own organisation, but any best practices which other organisations engaged in, which I was happy to provide for them on completion of the analysis.

It could be argued that I perhaps negotiated access using overly functional terms (Hassard, 1991) and did not make clear to the organisations the critical nature of this study, particularly with regards to the use of the English language. However, where I was asked for further information on the study before access was granted, I was happy to share the full research proposal with the organisations, which explicitly discussed how I was interested in the mediating effect of power dynamics on language practices in the supply chain. Furthermore, as I approached these organisations on the basis of them using a variety of different language practices, the extensive use of English and the attitudes which were displayed towards it, as discussed in the findings chapters, were not anticipated before entering the field.

3.9.3 Data Storage

Data storage is an important part of ethical behaviour in conducting research (Ray, 2014). Here I again followed procedural ethics (Sales and Folkman, 2000) by complying with institutional policy on data handling. The raw data files and transcriptions were held on the University's secure Research Drive, accessible only to myself and my Director of Studies, and local copies were password protected. At no point did I link any company or individual names to these data files, in order to preserve anonymity.

3.9.4 Maintaining Anonymity

In my writing, I have endeavoured to maintain anonymity of all the case organisations and individuals involved, by using pseudonyms for the organisations and only providing general information about the industry in which they are involved, so that they cannot be identified. Whilst I have discussed that I was previously employed at Company A, I have not explicitly identified them, and in potential publications from this doctoral study, I have obscured the fact that I worked at this organisation in order to protect their identity further from a wider audience.

3.10 Presentation of Findings

In the following four chapters of this thesis, I present the findings from the case organisations, for which I have elected to dedicate a chapter per organisation, rather than organising the findings thematically. I adopted this approach because it facilitated the presentation of context at each organisation, enabling a holistic consideration of all the research aims as they were investigated at individual organisations.

As I discussed in section 3.7, writing was an important part of my analysis, and when I initially attempted to write the findings chapters in a thematic way, I realised that this did a disservice to the task of writing authentic representations of lived experience at each of the organisations (Ketokivi and Mantere, 2010; Tracy, 2010). By endeavouring to present the findings thematically, the accounts presented became somewhat disjointed, which in turn, made within case analysis feel disjointed, as the individual case narratives which I had written as part of the analysis did not fit neatly in the key themes that I had identified, as so much contextual information was required in order to explain why particular practices were used, and how they were viewed at the organisation.

Therefore, the four following chapters present the findings and some initial analysis from each of the four case organisations, and Chapter 8 focuses on discussion and analysis of the key themes which were applicable to all of the case organisations, but in different ways, as shown in figure 3.5. The contextualised explanation and analysis chapter therefore focuses on the themes of English language hegemony, approaches

to documentary translation, the influence of the structure of the relationship, and the role of chance, and the emergent nature of the practices which are used at the case organisations.

3.10.1 Presenting the Voices of the Interviewees

In the subsequent chapters, the discussion is supported by quotes from the interviewees. For ease of reading, I have tidied up these quotes to remove interjections from myself as part of the active listening process, and removed non/response tokens (e.g. um, er, yeah) which do not contribute to the meaning of the sentence.

For example:

A: I mean we did look at a Mandarin speaking guy… but he's… erm, he wants a massive salary, like… for what we'd want him to do…

Me: Yeah

A: It's just not feasible

This was represented in Chapter 5, on Company B, as *"I mean we did look at a Mandarin speaking guy, but […] he wants a massive salary, like… for what we'd want him to do […] It's just not feasible"* (Executive Chairman).

3.11 Conclusion

In this chapter I have discussed the methodology which underpins the fieldwork undertaken for this doctoral project. In it, I have explained my underlying philosophy of critical theory, why shedding light on the hegemony of English in international supply chain relationships should be considered as an emancipatory goal and discussed the importance of reflexivity in critical research (Johnson and Duberley, 2000). I have justified the selection of a case study methodology, and discussed the sampling methods and information collection methods that I used within each case. I have then presented the process of analysis of this information, and how multiple case studies can enable us to generate contextualised explanations (Welch et al, 2011).

Following this, I explain why I have used both grand narrative and thematic analysis (Boje 2001) in order to analyse the information that I collected during the fieldwork. Analysis can be challenging for the qualitative researcher, and I wished to avoid turning it into a purely mechanistic process (St Pierre, 2013) and losing the richness of the information by solely relying on coding. Whilst I used NVivo10 in order to organise the information, the majority of the analysis was done as a very manual process, which enabled me to immerse myself in the information and avoid a superficial analysis which did not align with my research philosophy.

I then acknowledged the challenges which were faced during the fieldwork and analysis stage of this research, and suggested that perhaps the most profound challenge which I faced was to return as a researcher to an organisation in which I was previously employed, and how this was a much more emotional experience than I had expected going into the research. I also considered the challenges of representation in qualitative research, and how we can guard against Othering in our writing. Whilst this is more usually thought of in critical international management research in relation to a cultural Other, in this study I refer more to the idea of linguistic Others, who may be members of the same cultural groups, but participate in different speech communities.

Following a discussion of ethics, I concluded the chapter by explaining how the findings of the study are presented in the next four chapters of the thesis, and therefore I will now turn to the findings from the first case organisation, Company A.

This chapter presents the findings from the fieldwork undertaken at Company A. It discusses the different practices which the organisation uses in order to communicate with international supply chain partners, and explains how these approaches differ depending on whether the relationships are upstream or downstream. The different viewpoints of organisational actors on these practices are explained, focusing particularly on the use of BELF as a communicative tool in international business. These findings demonstrate that the organisation focuses its resources on communication in downstream relationship rather than upstream ones, and show how actors construct linguistic hierarchies with preference given to native speaker varieties of English.

4.0 Introduction and Background

This chapter addresses the research aims outlined in the Introduction, section 1.1, in relation to Company A, which was the largest of the case organisations, and was selected on the basis of the wide variety of supply chain relationships which it has. This chapter therefore presents the practices which the organisation uses to manage linguistic diversity, firstly by considering the approach taken in downstream relationships, and then in their upstream relationships, and concludes by examining practices used in order to manage document translation. This final area has received considerably less attention in the language sensitive international management literature than practices for managing oral communication (Zhong and Chin, 2015), and therefore I present it separately in all of the findings chapters in order to ensure that specific focus is given to this area.

As this was the largest case organisation studied, one week was spent on site at this organisation in order to engage in observation, and a higher number of interviews were conducted at this company, with participants from the export sales team, senior management, customer service, accounts, purchasing and two overseas operations. Additionally, promotional literature from the organisation's website was considered.

Company A was founded over eighty years ago and operates in the manufacturing/engineering sector. It exports to over eighty-five countries, and has suppliers based in over twenty countries, and thus has a substantial number of supply chain relationships with both SMEs and MNCs who are distributors of the

organisation's products. In many countries, the organisation sells to a number of customers, and the current aim is to increase the number of downstream relationships, as detailed below. Over the duration of its life, it has been subject to a number of different buyouts, most recently being owned by a venture capital company and then bought out by a German multinational. However, it still operates very much like an SME in terms of its import/export practices, as it still has its own suppliers and customers distinct to those of the parent. Although they operate in broadly the same industry it has transpired that the distributors for the two companies are very different and thus there are not as many synergies between the two organisations as was originally thought.

In addition to this, the company has an International Joint Venture (IJV) in India and a Wholly Owned Subsidiary (WOS) in China, both of which were established before the takeover. The IJV predominantly operates downstream from the UK operation in order to sell the company's products in India, whereas the WOS is largely an upstream operation from the point of view of the UK. Although they do sell the organisation's products in China, it is a major manufacturing site for the organisation's products. The company employs approximately eighty-five people in the UK and has a turnover of £10m.

The company has recently undergone a restructuring in the export department and a significant strategy shift. Rather than having a small number of close relationships with larger distributors in overseas markets, which was the approach to export that the organisation had previously taken, now the company is replicating the sales model used in the UK in their international markets, meaning that the organisation is now seeking to have a larger number of relationships with smaller distributors, where enduring relationships, trust, and loyalty are no longer as important as they once were. This has had an impact on the staffing and operation of the export department, as explained below.

In the past, export sales managers were based in the office, with frequent short visits to their key distributors, whereas currently, staff are home-based. When they visit overseas markets, they hire a car and spend at least a week overseas at a time, in order to meet existing and potential customers, which is the approach taken in the UK and Ireland.

This has meant a greater need for linguistically skilled staff in order to facilitate this process in key Western European markets, as many of the smaller distributors who the organisation is looking to target do not speak English:

> *I think certainly in some markets […] we need to get to a lower level, of account, and down the tier chains and basically we felt that languages, native language is […] more important […] So therefore we've increasingly started to invest in more language speakers*
> (General Manager).

At the same time, managers from the UK side of the business, with no prior export experience have been moved to the export team in order to facilitate the implementation of this new strategy.

The Customer Service department who provide administrative support for the sales team do not have any linguistic skills. It is the view of the Sales Director that to acquire such skills would represent a doubling up on costs as he felt that Customer Service assistants with language skills would seek a much higher salary than their monolingual counterparts, and would not wish to solely spend their time in the office.

> *One, if you want to start recruiting language internally there's a cost associated with that, two, you generally find that people who have got language skills […] generally would like… I believe… […] a higher position within the company…*
> (Sales Director).

As a result, the company now has one French speaking sales manager, one Spanish and Italian speaking sales manager, and one German speaking manager, which the Sales Director believes to represent all the language skills that the organisation currently requires *"so, we've got all the language skills we need…"*

This belief arises from the fact that this is the most linguistic capital that the organisation has ever had. To the best knowledge of the interviewees (one of whom had spent thirty-one years at the organisation), the first foreign language speaker was the current German speaking sales manager, who was employed fifteen years ago. I was employed to use Spanish and French ten years ago, and when I left the organisation seven years ago, I was replaced by a Spanish and Portuguese speaker. He left a few months before the fieldwork took place, and at this point the company

decided to expand their linguistic capital and replaced him with two linguistically skilled employees who had French, Spanish and Italian competencies.

Figure 4.1 presents the location of the organisation's language capital and the practices which it uses to manage linguistic diversity which will be further explained throughout this chapter.
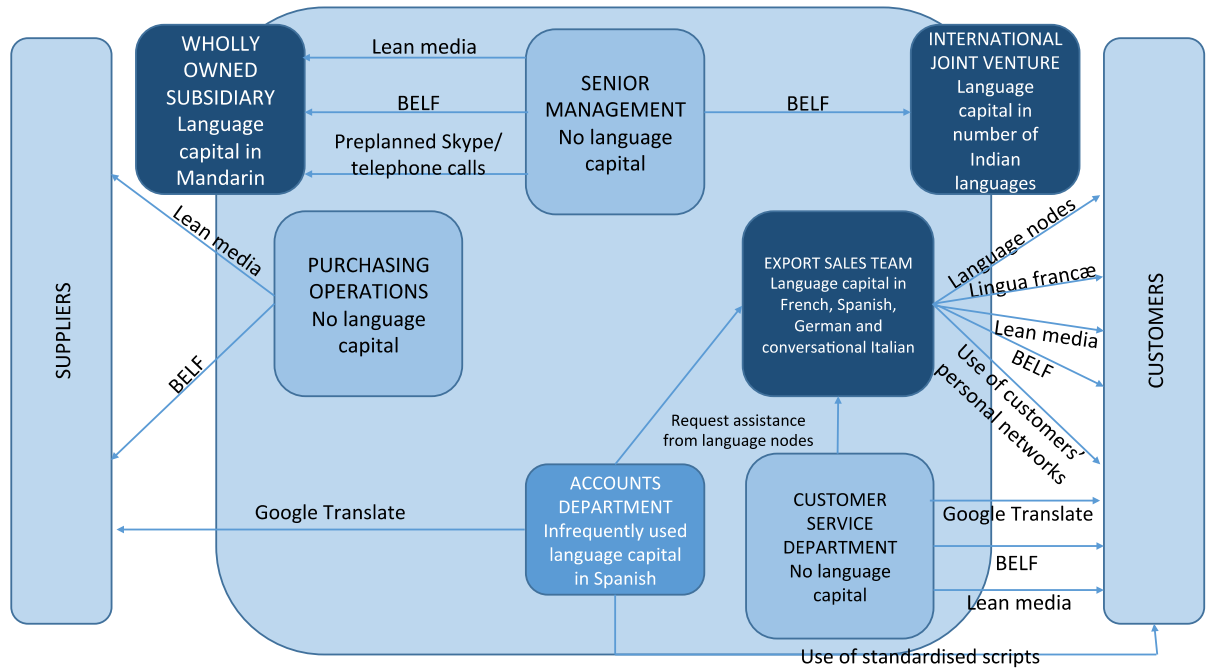
Figure 4.1 Sites of language capital and practices for managing linguistic diversity at Company A

4.1 Downstream Communication

4.1.1 Export Sales Department

Apart from the language skills of the sales managers, the company expected to communicate with their customers in English. It was acknowledged that this was easier in some markets than others; France was suggested by numerous interviewees to be a key market in which it had been difficult to conduct business without having a French speaker. Furthermore, the company stressed the value of having native speakers of a language, rather than people who had learnt it as a second language, as they felt that this provided cultural knowledge which was important. In a discussion about my own experiences in the French market, I was informed that "*Culturally, because, you know how difficult it was for you… I mean anybody who just speaks*

French and isn't, doesn't come from France is always going to struggle..." (Sales Director).

However, the organisation was not consistent in this approach across languages, and the relative importance of language and culture was emphasised at different times depending on what the competences of the organisation were. For example, for France, given that the organisation employed a French national who had moved to the UK prior to joining the organisation, both language and cultural knowledge were emphasised. However, for the Spanish and Italian markets, the issue of cultural understanding was given less focus, because the sales manager responsible for these areas was U.S. national of Hispanic heritage, and who did not therefore have the same emic understanding of Spanish and Italian culture as the French sales manager had of France, despite still speaking the language.

4.1.1.1 Language Nodes

The linguistically skilled individuals in the sales team acted as language nodes for the organisation, as they were the only individuals in the UK operations who possessed foreign language skills. This could at times be frustrating for the sales managers, as they found that they were required to deal with issues which, if language hadn't been a barrier to communication, would have been the remit of the Customer Services or Accounts departments. This was a particular challenge for the previous Spanish speaking sales manager, who had left the organisation a few months before the commencement of the fieldwork:

> *however that then becomes an issue for... [name] ... the issue where he felt that... he wanted the back up, the language back up...*
> (Sales Director).

> *So any issues, the slightest issue, they were coming back to him [...] So he couldn't pass hardly anything on to customer services, and that ends up taking a lot of his time*
> (German Speaking Export Sales Manager).

The difficulties of relying on language nodes were also noted when the company had a few months without a Spanish speaker, as the customers expected that they would be able to communicate in Spanish and they were unhappy when they were not able to, feeling that the company had broken their promises as "*they'd set up and that you'd*

promised all this and then all of sudden oh we can't because nobody […] speaks Spanish" (German Speaking Export Sales Manager).

This point raises an interesting question as to what it means for a smaller organisation to claim to be multilingual, particularly when relying on language nodes to communicate in supply chain relationships.   One interview highlighted that organisations need to be aware of the dangers of claiming linguistic competence when this responsibility falls on just one individual:

> *it's the catch up of investing in the organisation and you know, back up material, marketing material… catalogues… so it's not a disadvantage having the person, but companies have to be careful of thinking, oh well we've got someone speaking Spanish now, that's it…*
> (German Speaking Export Sales Manager).

Such a comment demonstrates the need for organisations, even smaller ones, to take a holistic approach to the management of linguistic diversity, rather than just adopting one practice (that of using a language node) and expecting this to be a panacea in resolving the organisation's communicative difficulties in that particular language, because as the General Manager noted: *"you get caught out occasionally… hopefully you've got enough time that you can put it back to the sales guys here…"* Again, this shows little consideration for the challenges that such an approach can present for a language node, who is required to deal with any issues that a customer may have, in addition to the usual responsibilities of their job.

As with document translation, which is discussed in Section 4.3, customer expectations were emphasised as a reason why the company felt it needed to use particular languages in certain circumstances. Interviewees noted that smaller countries, with globally unimportant languages, had no expectation that anyone would learn their languages in order to trade with them, and thus in such circumstances, the use of English did not pose a particular problem.

> *Eastern Europe […] they see the product, they understand it, they see some value and will go with it and never really asked for translations […] perhaps those kind of markets are used to having things in English, or another language that is not their own*
> (Marketing Manager).

4.1.1.2 Languages other than English as a Lingua Franca

In addition to using their language skills to manage relationships with the relevant markets, the sales team also occasionally used languages other than English as a lingua franca with their customers. For example, German was used as a lingua franca with some customers in a diverse range of markets *"there's a couple in Poland, one in Russia, one in Czech Republic and one in Namibia"* (German Speaking Export Sales Manager), as was Spanish:

> *So we figured it out in the end, had a mixture of both, Italian and Spanish, but yeah, that's what, I'll do, that's how I'll handle it… I'll try Italian… if they see that speaking Spanish maybe is easier then they'll speak Spanish to me, if they speak Spanish*
> (Spanish Speaking Export Sales Manager).

This choice of using languages other than English as a lingua franca indicates that English language skills are therefore not as universal as they are sometimes believed to be. Therefore the value of having linguistic capital within the organisation extends beyond merely facilitating communication with the associated markets, but can also provide access to other markets, where clients may have greater competence in second languages that are not English, as is the case with these examples.

4.1.1.3 BELF Usage in Export Sales

Although the export sales team was the only repository of language capital in the organisation, English was still used in order to communicate with a wide variety of markets. As the General Manager explained: *"we sell to eighty-five countries a year, obviously, clearly, we're not going to speak all those languages so… […] feasibility… English has certainly been the footprint of mostly what we use…"*

Whilst the challenge of having the requisite language skills for eighty-five different markets would be a challenge for an organisation of any size, it highlights that for smaller organisations, resource availability is a particular issue and thus it is necessary to choose particular markets as areas of focus in which to deploy scarce resources. For other markets, the organisation attempts to manage them as effectively as possible using the resources available, which in many circumstances, for smaller organisations based in the UK, means relying on English in order to communicate.

However, the importance of using the right sort of English was acknowledged. The German speaking sales manager was the only linguistically skilled interviewee who regularly used English in order to communicate with customers, as the parent company was Company A's only client in Germany, and he therefore became responsible for markets in Eastern Europe, the Middle East and Africa. He therefore identified the need to speak more slowly than usual, and as clearly as possible, avoiding idioms and a strong regional accent *"I try and speak clearly, and basically, proper Queen's English".*

In his opinion, it had been noticeable at exhibitions that sales staff who did not have export experience did not do this, and that customers visibly had difficulties in understanding them as a result:

> *Then… they're still using the language they would with their English customers […] and the speed of what they're saying… I can see…. You can see the customers, they're looking […] I don't know what they said but I daren't say anything!*

The challenges of using BELF for native speakers of English emerged as a key issue at this organisation, particularly in other departments which did not have any competence in languages other than English, and this will be discussed in further detail in Sections 4.1.2, 4.1.4, and 4.2.

Furthermore, it was noted that sometimes the customer could not speak English, or any of the other languages which the organisation had competence in, and in such circumstances, other practices were required to ensure that communication was able to occur. I was given the example of a Polish customer who did not speak any English, and therefore relied on the organisation sending him emails in English which he then passed to his girlfriend to translate for him: *"I've got this Polish customer who doesn't speak any English… if he didn't happen to have a girlfriend who spoke English… I don't know… I don't think we could do business"* (German Speaking Export Sales Manager).

This demonstrates how customers were prepared to draw upon their own networks in order to access linguistic resources which enable them to do business internationally, and highlights how language practices may not necessarily be formalised, but rely on creativity in order to find a solution, even if it may not be perfect – in this case, the

requirement for translations from the customer's personal network introduced a further delay into the communicative process.

However, it also links to another area which is important in how smaller organisations manage linguistic diversity, and that is the medium of communication which is used with their international supply chain partners.

4.1.1.4 Media Choice in Customer Relationships

It was noticeable that when there was the option of speaking to the customer in their own language, the sales team preferred to use richer communication media, such as the telephone, in order to communicate when they were not engaging in face-to-face meetings during market visits. The reason behind this was that the sales managers felt that it was easier to establish and maintain sales relationships using richer media:

> *I always have preferred face to face, but obviously in this role, I'm based here and my accounts are abroad, so my face to face is going to be limited…but […], if it's not face-to-face then I prefer, yeah, phone calls where possible […] if you are able to establish a good relationship with an individual, a company, and you work at developing that relationship, well at the end of the day hopefully they will trust you and they'll buy anything from you…*
> (Spanish Speaking Export Sales Manager).

At the same time, it was acknowledged by the sales team that email forms a key method of communication with customers, and particularly so when a language barrier is present. For example, the Spanish speaking Export Sales Manager speaks mainly conversational Italian, so when introducing himself to customers, he emailed initially and apologised for his "rusty" Italian. The German Speaking Sales Manager noted that his communication was *"I would say… ninety percent email"*, but it is key to note that he primarily uses BELF to communicate with his markets, and therefore he elects to use email because he feels that it is easier for non-native speakers to understand emails than oral communication, because not only do emails permit time to reflect on the content of the communication, but they also opens up the possibility of using tools such as Google Translate in order to understand the message.

> *They much prefer email so they have a bit of time to think about what they're writing and reading, and can use… we all know obviously Google Translate's not perfect, but it does give you generally a good gist of what's*

being said […] I know at least, about fifteen customers who, they've told me
they use Google Translate pretty much every time
(German Speaking Export Sales Manager).

This shows that where language competence is less than fluent, lean media such as email can be preferable for ensuring a shared understanding compared to rich media, as it affords language users more time to reflect on the contents of a message than would be possible in an oral encounter. Additionally, it demonstrates how lean media can be combined with other tools, so as online translation software. Although the use of this was not particularly prevalent amongst the export sales team, it was a practice which other departments in the organisation relied on heavily to communicate with overseas supply chain partners, which will be discussed in subsequent sections.

4.1.2 Customer Service Department
The Customer Services department did not have any language skills which had in the past caused problems for the export team who were acting as language nodes, because this meant that rather than dealing with administrative queries themselves, the Customer Services department passed the enquiry back to the relevant Export Sales Manager, as discussed in Section 4.1.1.1.

Due to the change in strategy which required a multidomestic approach in Europe, where the key European markets were treated the same way as the domestic market, the Customer Services Department found that the amount of communication with customers had increased, as they were now placing smaller orders more often than they had done under the old strategy. This communication tended to take place in English because this was the most convenient option for the organisation: *"most of our customers in Europe and possibly even the rest of the world, can actually… speak English […] Far better than we can speak their languages"* (Customer Service Manager).

As a result, although the Customer Service department had grown over the past two years, the organisation had not elected to specifically recruit anyone with language skills.

Sometimes the team did receive emails in languages other than English; in these circumstances they relied heavily on Google Translate in order to get a sense of what

the message was about. Although the team would tend to reply in English, having no other linguistic resources, the Customer Service Manager encouraged them to add a few basic words in the relevant language to their emails *"you know I'm happy for these guys to… to… sign off an email in the native tongue […] I think that makes a difference"* (Customer Service Manager).

4.1.2.1 Media Choice amongst the Customer Service Department

Although the Customer Service Manager stated that he found email to be the poorest form of communication: *"that is probably the worst method of conveying emotions and feelings just by written word… coz I can't see you",* he acknowledged that most of the team used it as their preferred method of communication when dealing with international customers because it was easier for the native English speakers to use email rather than dealing with the non-standard English accents of their international customers. He explained how the team would actively avoid speaking on the telephone to customers who had accents that they found difficult to understand: *"that African gentleman when he calls, we all go *gasps* it's that chap, you get it, no you get it, no you get it, because […] no one wants to struggle to communicate…"* (Customer Service Manager).

This demonstrates that the native speakers of English view BELF in terms of how difficult it makes it for them to communicate with speakers of English as a second language, rather than empathizing with the other party about the challenges that they face when expressing themselves in a language which is not their first. Therefore, in the Customer Service department, the preference for lean media was because it makes communication easier for native speakers, rather than non-native speakers.

4.1.2.2 Reliance on Language Nodes

As the Customer Service team did not have any language skills, it was acknowledged that this did lead them to rely on the export sales team at times, particularly if there were any problems within the relationship that required substantial discussion with the customer:

> *we had issues initially with product verification and then consequently stock availability, and it's very difficult to go beyond […] the straightforward…. I want that and I want it then… Okay well, we can do that but it's got to be then, and if they go, well why…. Well…. Capacity in our factory […] And then*

you start to move away from the commonly used words […] And the intention behind them… and then it gets difficult
(Customer Service Manager).

This demonstrates that although for simple, transactional communication, the use of lean media and a basic understanding of industry specific vocabulary and terms did not present a particular challenge, with regards to more complex discussions, the team found this approach to be insufficient and therefore they needed to rely on someone who had language skills: *"we're doing the more routine stuff, like just repeat orders […] But you've got that back up of, I've got a problem, I'll get [Export Sales Manager] to give you a call…"* (Customer Service Manager).

Thus here we can see that the organisation is attempting to leverage the use of a scarce resource (a linguistically skilled individual) by not involving them in routine tasks which can be performed by other members of the organisation who do not have language skills, whilst having the security that they can draw upon this resource if needed.

4.1.3 Communication with the International Joint Venture

The main contact points between the IJV and the UK operation were the IJV manager who I interviewed, the general manager at the UK organisation, and some of the purchasing team in the UK. English was the language used for all communicative exchanges with the IJV, although it was evident here that a shared language did not guarantee shared communication. The General Manager suggested that in some ways communication could be more difficult than with the Chinese subsidiary, as he found that in China, as the subsidiary knew that English was a foreign language, they made more of an effort to communicate, whereas the Indian partners had a tendency to assume understanding *"you've got to be very careful that yeah, that what you've said is actually what they've understood. Quite often it's not"* (General Manager). When discussing the relationship with the IJV the cultural aspects of language were strongly highlighted.

> *it's that cultural baggage that comes around language […] when you say something […] how you fit that into the understanding… it's not necessarily this word means this but it can mean lots of different things, and then if you say it in a different way or with a different emphasis, it can mean something*

[…] And then you understand it's not just the word itself, it's the context and [...] everything around it, and in India that's a particular problem
(General Manager).

language again is culture of communication (IJV Manager).

Related to cultural differences, it was explained that words were used in different ways in Indian and British English and I was given the example of "prepone", as explained by the Indian IJV manager:

I gave written message… I talked to him and then I gave a written message… please, so and so order, I don't want all material, at least, for this order, can you please prepone the delivery […] So, he send me confirmation, okay [interviewee name] I will give this… 20th May… I will give you 20th June
(IJV Manager).

Prepone is commonly used in Indian English to mean "bring forward," however was unfamiliar to the speakers of British English at the UK operation, who had assumed that it was a misspelling of postpone. Furthermore, the Indian manager explained how when he first visited the UK, he was unable to understand the accent of many individuals that he spoke to, because it was different to how he had been taught and had used the language in India. These are therefore illustrative examples of how BELF communication between speakers of different varieties of English can also be problematic, as the shared language of English is used in different ways, which the actors involved may not be attuned to without also having relevant cultural knowledge.

4.1.3.1 Communication Media

With regards to the use of lean media, the IJV manager expressed similar views to the Customer Service team in the UK, as illustrated by a recent experience with a Chinese supplier:

he started again talking to me, but his English was so poor that it was very difficult for me […] because this was a commercial matter […] Which we wanted to finalise the order, we wanted to finalise the payment terms. So then I requested, look gentleman, I put in the mail […] put me in a detailed mail with your English partner and give me the complete price, payment terms and whatever discount you can offer
(IJV Manager).

Here we can see an exchange with an asymmetry between the levels of English used by two non-native English speakers, which became problematic. In order to manage the situation, the interlocutors opted to change the communication to a lean media in order to ensure appropriate understanding for a business transaction, which was the same practice used by native speakers in the UK.

There also seemed to be a cultural preference for the IJV to engage in written communication even after communication via rich media had taken place. For example *"but telephone call, or Skype… all have to be followed by a written email, that is a must"* (IJV Manager). Here, this practice appears to serve a dual function. Firstly, it is used in order to mitigate any misunderstandings which may be caused by different usage of language in the UK and India. However, it is also used as a business practice in order to create a paper trail of what has been agreed in case of queries in the future.

The IJV were comfortable using English for all documentation, including for their domestic operations, as they saw this as quite usual in India, but their sales team would use local languages when they were contacting customers. However, they were all able to understand without difficulties any documentary communication which came from the UK office.

Given the nature of the industry (engineering), it was also suggested that pictorial and graphical communication could be of use, for example, when trying to communicate system processes, screencasts had been used *"all the screens they take the snapshots, and combined… complete screen they are putting into the mail to us… step 1, step 2, step 3"* (IJV Manager). This is an innovative practice which has only recently become an option for organisations due to technological advancements, and thus does not fall easily into the rich/lean media dichotomy.

4.1.3.2 Views on BELF in International Business
The Indian manager was the most passionate person that I spoke to regarding the use of English in international business. Not only did he accept that it was the dominant language of international business, but he fully believed that it should be, and did not understand why any organisation would not embrace it. When I asked if the IJV had

ever encountered any difficulties where partners did not want to communicate in English, I received the following response:

> *Oh, but those companies cannot do… they are not suitable […] for international business, then […] If they ask, they are not suitable for doing the business internationally […] They will have limitations…*
> (IJV Manager).

This was a marked difference from the perspective in the UK operation, where although there was an expectation that many of their partners would speak English, they had also made provisions for customers in key markets who were not able to, through the employment of language nodes. Different perceptions of English as a language of international business were encountered at all of the case organisations, and this area is explored in more detail in Chapter 8, which provides a contextualised explanation for the viewpoints offered. However, it is noteworthy that those with more extensive international experience, having spent significant periods of time overseas, viewed BELF more positively than those who were monolingual and UK based, as evidenced by the viewpoint of the General Manager on BELF, *"it's an international language owned by everybody to be interpreted by themselves and there's no right or wrong"* (General Manager), which is in sharp contrast to the views of the Customer Service Team who attempted to avoid speaking on the telephone to people who had strong non-British accents.

In this context, it is important to note that the IJV's international supply chain relationships were upstream. In their downstream operations, they solely worked in India, using a variety of Indian languages, in addition to business documentation in English. The situation is therefore different to the UK office, who had international downstream relationships that they managed in other languages. For the organisation's suppliers however, English was used exclusively, and it is possible that this demonstrates a difference in attitudes and expectations between downstream, where the organisation were prepared to adapt to customer preferences to a greater extent, and upstream, where the organisation expected its suppliers to adapt to its own communicative practices – in this case, by using English.

4.3.1 Accounts Department

Although the accounts department work both upstream and downstream, for their suppliers, they simply expected to communicate in English, and thus the majority of the practices which were discussed related to downstream relationships. Although there was a Spanish speaking Accounts Administrator, who rarely used her language skills with customers, and was not recruited specifically for this purpose, the accounts department relied on English to communicate with all their international partners. They didn't find this to be a particular problem because of the status of English in international business:

> *We've got the wonderful position of us being in an English speaking nation anyway […] So, as you know, we've got a dominant language and most countries… have to speak English […] to some degree, and that really is what we rely on I think […] it puts us in that lovely, arrogant position of not having to make an effort really…*
> (Finance Director).

Therefore in contrast with the export sales department, who highlighted the importance of language use in establishing rapport with customers, the accounts department, who fulfil a more transactional role in supply chain relationships, did not see the need to make particular efforts to communicate with their international partners.

4.3.1.1 Google Translate

They did however, acknowledge that they relied very heavily on Google Translate when they received emails in languages other than English, although the team had now generally learned key terms such as credit note and invoice in other languages so were able to pick these out and thus have a general understanding of what the email was about before using Google Translate, which they found useful.

Furthermore, it was explained that the Finance Director encouraged the use of Google Translate as a form of back translation to improve the quality of the communication:

> *paste it into Google Translate and get the English version, and then paste that back into Google Translate to translate it back […] To see if it's an accurate representation […] I don't know whether there's any mileage in that or not, but it's just something we do to try and improve our accuracy*
> (Finance Director).

4.3.1.2 Use of standardised scripts

The accounts team had emails in varying degrees of severity in Spanish and French *"so the standard blurbs are – cough up or else"* (Finance Director) - which were apparently prepared by me, during my time at the organisation, although I had no recollection of this - which were used if customers did not pay within the expected timeframe. It was noted that when chasing accounts, using emails may increase the risk of customers simply ignoring requests for payment "*Yeah, we would react to people more if they called us, you have nowhere to hide with a phone call do you?"* (Finance Director), although generally, it was noted that problems with late payments tended to have less to do with language and more to do with the payment culture of the country that they were dealing with, for example, the Finance Director highlighted the USA as being a particular problem for late payments, which could not be ascribed to a language barrier.

4.3.1.3 Differences between upstream and downstream communication

The accounts team noted that they would encourage different communicative practices depending on whether or not they were dealing with customers or suppliers *"All email with suppliers – with customers we would always encourage a more personal relationship"* (Finance Director), indicating that the company has differing views on its relationships, depending on whether they were upstream or downstream. In practice however, it was not always possible to adopt a more personal approach with customers, because *"in reality, we make one call to an overseas customer, and struggle to perhaps get past the receptionist…"* (Finance Director). Therefore although the organisation espoused the value of having more personal relationships with customers, it was at times impractical to achieve this across all organisational interfaces because of a language barrier. As a result, lean media formed the vast majority of communication for the accounts department, even though there were occasions where it would be preferable to speak to someone via a richer media.

4.2 Upstream Communication

The practices which the other departments used in order to communicate with upstream international supply chain partners were different to those which have been identified above, and will be the focus of this section.

4.2.1 Purchasing Department

Although for all departments in the UK operation, English was the main language of external communication, this was nowhere more apparent than in the purchasing department. The two interviews with the purchasing managers were brief and it was clear that they did not regard language as an issue at all. Although the company had over twenty international suppliers, the organisation communicated with them exclusively in English, using lean media:

> *I don't speak to them at all […] To be honest, no, it's more communicated by emails…*
> (Purchasing Manager).
>
> *emails are quite frequent obviously…*
> (Purchasing Manager 2).

Furthermore, the transactional nature of the communication was highlighted, with both purchasing managers explaining that the emails tended to confirm details such as the order quantities, pricing, and shipping and delivery dates. It was explained that emails were preferred, partly because this made communication easier when the accents of non-native English speakers made comprehension difficult *"I also find that sometimes when you speak to people over the phone, it just… for me it's harder to understand them"* (Purchasing Manager 2). Additionally, the fact that many suppliers were located in East Asia meant that email was preferable in order to accommodate the time difference.

As such, the two interviewees in the purchasing department suggested that there was very little difference between working with UK suppliers and with international suppliers, as they did not experience any difficulties in the task-based communication using lean media that they engaged in *"to be fair there's no difference from dealing with somebody in China than there is someone in the UK"* (Purchasing Manager 2).

4.2.2 Communication with the Wholly Owned Subsidiary

The situation in the Chinese subsidiary is very different to the Indian IJV. The main points of contact were between the General Manager, Customer Service Manager, Finance Director and the Chinese Subsidiary Manager, and all these interviewees highlighted the difficulty of oral communication and how much additional time it took to ensure a shared understanding.

I was in China with our China office, two weeks ago and a very simple question […] which is I'd have asked anybody else, they would have… it would have been a one sentence question with a one sentence answer, it would have been that quick […] But, explaining what I meant, and then, understanding the answer that came back in English […] Probably took the best part of two hours
(Finance Director).

Similarly, the difficulties encountered in a conference call were explained to me:

we had a conference call for the best part of two and a half hours, where they'd got a load of questions about things and we were trying to convey how we deal with these issues that they're facing with the ERP, and it's just not black and white. Now […] you might not know anything about the ERP, but I'd have a much easier job explaining to you what I'm trying to get across […] because you understand the way I'm talking…
(Customer Service Manager).

Furthermore, the unthinking use of idioms in communication, even if it took place face to face, had caused great difficulties, for example this case:

And… I stood up and I was talking to them, I think just the opening gambit about, you know, we need to get things right first time, we've got to have a structured approach, and I did say, you know, you' don't want to get your knickers in a twist over things that aren't important […] and I got all these blank looks, and I got a look from [Finance Director] saying… I don't think they quite understood the analogy there… And then I thought ooh yeah, why would they… obviously. And then I went into mime, and I was trying to say, if you get dressed…. In the dark… (<u>gesticulating</u>) and you…. Pull up your knickers…. (<u>still gesticulating</u>) and you go…. Oh… they're all twisted… I've got to take them… I've got to do it again […] and the mime I think made it even worse…
(Customer Service Manager)

Humorous though this anecdote may be, it raises an important issue that even when face-to-face communication occurs, if native English speakers use idioms in a situation where they are supposed to be communicating in BELF, it will often lead to difficulties and a potential breakdown of communication. Additionally, it highlights how, when encountering communicative difficulties, many actors, when engaged in face-to-face communication, will use body language in order to communicate, and this can play an important role in mitigating difficulties:

but… some language is the same, body language […] So you can show you're friendly… how friendly […] Is a thing… just smiling… or yes… show some friendly ways
(Chinese Subsidiary Manager).

Yeah, but then I find as well, that I overcompensate in areas as well, to kind of… help the expression come through (laughs) […] So I might go really high pitched! Or I might pull a really silly face […] to demonstrate *stupid* or something like that. (laughs) But yeah… so it all gets very, very embarrassing
(Finance Director).

It is interesting here to note that while the Chinese manager describes using a small form of body language to show intent, such as smiling, the two anecdotes from the UK employees involve using body language almost at a level of pantomime, and have an underlying sense of awkwardness. This indicates that English native speakers feel more threatened by an inability to communicate than the Chinese counterpart – perhaps because it is more jarring for them that they are unable to make themselves understand when using their native language, whereas the Chinese manager accepts that communication in a second language is difficult, and thus is more comfortable using all the resources at his disposal, including body language.

4.2.2.1 Communication Media

There was a strong preference demonstrated by the Chinese manager for lean media *"Email system, as it is more efficient way […] to communicate with each other"* (Chinese Subsidiary Manager). Although there was a periodic telephone or Skype meeting between the UK and China which took place weekly or monthly depending on business needs, the Chinese manager preferred to be sent an email with the key points in advance so that he was able to prepare, even if it was for an urgent matter. Therefore, although the sending of agendas before a meeting is a common practice, here it is also linked to the idea that written communication is easier for non-native speakers to understand:

Even for some urgent things, since we can put to identify, I have more time, then we email to each other […] So, for the receiver, can have time to see about it […] More carefully, and if put down the actions… detailed actions[…] So… even we have to, next time, to Skype to each other, we have already more learned about our topics
(Chinese Subsidiary Manager).

Additionally, there were clear examples of non-native speakers feeling uncomfortable when being required to use English, as demonstrated when the UK office telephoned the Chinese subsidiary without having warned them in advance: *"So these employees scared […] Will not speak! (laughs) […] Just maybe will put a very simple… English, for example 'wait a minute'"* (Chinese Subsidiary Manager).

This was linked by the manager to Chinese cultural norms, as he suggested that to commit errors in speaking a foreign language could cause a loss of face in China, so employees would simply seek to avoid being in such a situation. As with the Indian IJV, the theme of the interplay between language and culture came through strongly in the interview with the Chinese Subsidiary Manager, and particularly his work as a language node which involved translation.

4.2.2.2 Translation practices in a Boundary Spanning Role

As many of the employees at the Chinese subsidiary did not speak any English, the managers that did were required to act as language nodes in order to translate key messages from the UK for dissemination amongst the workforce. The General Manager, from whom the majority of such messages emanated, acknowledged the importance of trust between the language node, in order to be confident that such translations were done accurately and were not too distorted:

> *that partnership or that chemistry between me and that general manager is quite important […] And I then have to trust that what I've said, in a particular… I mean you talk about Chinese whispers […] Then… that what I say… what we're trying to do, is then interpreted as you go down the line so that by the time you've got to the bottom of the chain… then yeah… they… it's the same thing… and clearly there's going to be some nuances but hopefully the basis of it…*
> (General Manager).

The Chinese manager acknowledged that as far as possible, he tried to remain faithful to the message in the English original, but found that due to the linguistic distance between English and Mandarin, it was impossible to stick too closely to the source, and thus regarded it as more important to translate the message itself, rather the way in which it was said:

As you know, if we translated English, there are actually irregular way to translate into Chinese. The sentences […] Yeah, we can understand… but express way is quite strange […] So I would say… yeah. So sometimes, some details is not very important […] so I will also sometimes omit it…
(Chinese Subsidiary Manager).

With any translation, there needs to be trust in the translator, and this is applicable whether it is a language node who is internal to the organisation, or an external professional translator, and these examples highlight the importance of such a working relationship.

Alternatively, Google Translate was also relied upon to bridge this language gap, although it was acknowledged to be imperfect:

Google Translate […] it helps, you never know quite whether it's saying quite what you want but, generally when I'm translating into Chinese […] Yeah, most of them say… you know I know that sometimes if it's important I'll get [Chinese manager] to check it or something or, especially if I'm sending something out to the sales force […] centrally from me, you know it check it […] I normally get, yeah, it's okay
(General Manager).

Thus, this is an alternative practice to try to reduce pressure on language nodes, to try and use other tools in order to translate the message, and then to use the language node in order to approve it, rather than doing the entire translation themselves. This again shows creativity in how smaller organisations seek to use limited (linguistic) resources in the most efficient way.

4.3 Document translation

Over the past ten years the company has undergone numerous rebrandings, and only the English version of promotional literature is available in the latest branding. In order to support the new export strategy, the company was looking into having their product catalogue translated into French and potentially Spanish, but they acknowledge that the cost (approximately £3000 per language) was a barrier. The marketing manager said most of their translation budget was consumed by compliance issues, for example, user guides for the products which were legally required to be available in the language of the target market: *"So, it's quite ironic that it's the*

aftersales […] That gets the lion's share of the translation budget…" (Marketing Manager).

As such, the company continued to make available on their website old datasheets for certain products which were available in Spanish, French, German, Russian, Mandarin and Japanese.   These datasheets had been translated professionally, with the exceptions of Spanish and French, which I had translated during my time at the organisation.

I was surprised to find these translations still in use, as I am not a professional translator and was always aware that there were errors in the text. My intention when translating them initially was to use them as a sales aid in my discussions with customers, in order to demonstrate my own commitment to the market. I therefore used these documents in quite a personal sense, frequently with the caveat that I had done them and I knew they weren't perfect, but I wanted to try to make the product information available to customers in their own language. I was therefore a bit perturbed that they were being used publicly, without me there to apologise for the errors.

What seemed to be key in the decisions that the organisation made regarding the use of document translation is that the company believed that different customers had different levels of expectations regarding what would be available in different languages, seemingly pointing towards a linguistic hierarchy of languages.   For example, the Marketing Manager noted that Eastern European markets did not expect to have product information available in their own languages, which was not the case for Western European markets and languages which have been historically more important at a global level "*Whereas, perhaps more developed, dare I say, European markets are actually, well no, it's got to be in German, it's got to be in Spanish"* and had a different set of expectations regarding document availability which the company had to comply with if it wanted to operate successfully in those markets.

4.4 Conclusion

Although the company espoused a commitment to using foreign languages, this approach was not evidenced consistently throughout the organisation. Instead, there were pockets of particular practices, some of which was the result of a lack of

resources, but there were some examples of good practice, particularly around BELF awareness which could have been better diffused throughout the whole organisation at little to no cost. Similarly, the company talks of a multidomestic approach, but at this stage, this only applies to the sales team, not the full package of customer service and after sales support.

As such, rather than a language strategy, it seems that the company is following a process of bricolage and emergent practices to communicate based on the preferences and skills of individual employees. The organisation actually only uses foreign languages when it feels that it really has to – for example when trying to operate in markets with large numbers of small distributors who are not able to speak English – and thus it is the economic power of a collective group, which causes them to engage in alternative practices, rather than simply relying on the hegemony of English.

Although a great variety of practices were used, it appeared that relatively little thought had been given to linguistic issues, beyond hiring language nodes. Linguistic capital was owned by individuals rather than being viewed as a strategic asset at the organisational level, and for this reason, this chapter is titled "Strategy and Bricolage," as although the organisation believed itself to have a planned approach to the management of language, in practice, it was demonstrated to be more emergent than was acknowledged.

Although senior management at the organisation were keen to stress their commitment to language diversity, they were also wary of according too much importance to linguistic matters. For example, culture was repeatedly cited as an issue of equal or greater importance to language. However there were contradictions in this. For example, where there was a shared culture, this was emphasised over language. Similarly, monolingual respondents highlighted cultural differences – perhaps because this was an area that they could claim competence in and demonstrate professional knowledge, especially given the focus on culture in international management over the past thirty years. However, if respondents had a shared language but not a shared culture, i.e. it was spoken as a non-native speaker, they were quick to assert the primacy of language. Therefore it seems that while many respondents saw language and culture as important, they either consciously or unconsciously gave primacy to whichever one made them appear the most

professionally competent, thus highlighting the importance of acknowledging the different perspectives and backgrounds of the respondents in understanding their views on this topic.

Chapter 5: Language Nodes and Multilingualism - Findings Company B

This chapter presents the findings from the fieldwork at Company B. It addresses the practices used for managing linguistic diversity in downstream relationships, particularly focusing on the role of language nodes at the organisation, and considers the challenges which the organisation faces in managing upstream international supply chain relationships while relying solely on English in order to manage this process. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the approach taken to document translation at the organisation, and the views of organisational actors on the efficacy of their approach.

5.0 Introduction and Background

Company B has been established for thirty years and operates in the magnetics industry. Its manufacturing operations are located in South Yorkshire and it employs approximately forty-five people, with fourteen of these based in offices and the rest on the shop floor. The organisation has a number of international suppliers, located predominantly in East Asia, and focuses on export markets in Europe, although it also exports a small amount to other locations including the Middle East. These downstream relationships are predominantly repeat transactions with organisations who are the end users of Company B's products, although work is also done with a small number of distributors in particular markets such as Italy and Nordic markets in which the organisation does not have language competencies.

Interviews were undertaken with members of the export team, the new product development management and members of the senior management team, as these were the individuals who were primarily engaged in managing the organisation's international supply chain relationships. Two days were spent on site at the organisation in order to engage in observation, and relevant hard copies of promotional literature, in addition to that available on the organisation's website, were considered.

The organisation started to export quite early in its life, and first targeted the Nordic markets and then France, before expanding to other European markets. The company has almost always had at least one French speaker throughout its life span. This was originally an English native speaker who had learnt French and who led the export side of the business when this was in its infancy. France has always been, and still is, the

largest export market for the organisation, contributing approximately half of total export turnover, out of a total turnover of £6m, of which export as a whole contributes £2m.

Reflecting this emphasis on the French market, the company now has three French speakers in the export team, one of whom also speaks Polish, and one German speaker. All the export sales team are now primarily office-based, occasionally doing market visits in order to visit particular customers or attend trade fairs. Additionally, there is also one Bulgarian speaker in accounts, and a Lithuanian speaker on the shop floor, in addition to two more Polish speakers, although there is no requirement to use Bulgarian or Lithuanian professionally as Company B does not operate in these countries. The fact that I was told about these language capabilities therefore indicates that respondents were keen to portray an image of the organisation as a cosmopolitan one, with a serious commitment to having competence in a variety of different languages in order to serve their export markets. In addition to this existing language capital, both the Executive Chairman and the Managing Director spoke of their plans to further increase this capital in the future, not only in order to supply new export markets, particularly Spain, but also in order to enable them to work more effectively with their partners in China as they had previously had some problems in communicating with their international suppliers.

However, as a small organisation they were conscious of resource constraints and thus when they had received an application from an appropriately qualified Mandarin speaker, they had to decline the opportunity at that time as the salary demands were too high: *"I mean we did look at a Mandarin speaking guy, but […] he wants a massive salary, like… for what we'd want him to do […] It's just not feasible"* (Executive Chairman).

Initially, the organisation's export expansion was led by the New Product Development (NPD) manager, who had learnt French at night school and had an enthusiasm for travel. At the beginning of the organisation's export journey, although his primary role was in UK sales, he began to look to Europe as a potential way of developing sales, and explored France, Sweden and Denmark particularly, as he was interested in countries where the competition wasn't particularly dominant and that had a good payment record. Language was a factor in this decision making process but was not the only

thing that was considered, although the fact that the company chose to focus on France and Scandinavia signals that language did play a perhaps larger role in the process than the interviewees acknowledged: *"We were cherry picking people who… were… had a certain profile, from a certain country with a certain payment culture, and the language… may have been a big factor […] Or may not"* (NPD Manger).

Germany would have also been an interesting market for the organisation, but at that time it had a German shareholder which prohibited them from working there, which is no longer a barrier. In order to find contacts in these early days of international expansion, the NPD manager would follow the same approach in France as he did in the UK; travelling the country in order to meet potential distributors. In Scandinavia, a more targeted approach was taken, and the company paid to use the services of the Chamber of Commerce, who would identify potential distributors who the company could then contact. More recently, they have also found European exhibitions to be useful in establishing a wider range of contacts across Europe.

The company mainly tends to work with end users who use the company's products in their own manufacturing processes, and thus are long term repeat customers, although it does have some distributors in certain markets – in Italy, where language has been a barrier to working with end users, in Scandinavia, and most recently they have a long term business opportunity with a German distributor.

Figure 5.1 provides an overview of the sites and types of internal language capital that the organisation possesses, and indicates the practices which are used in order to communicate with international supply chain partners. These practices will be further explained throughout this chapter.
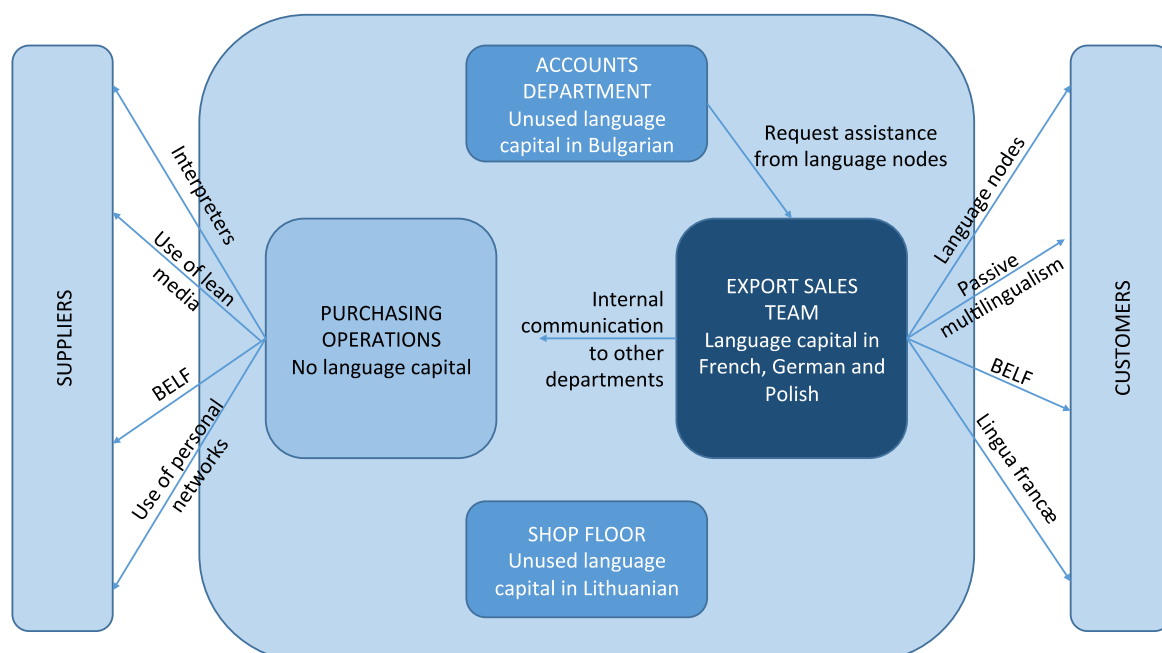
Figure 5.1 Sites of language capital and practices for managing linguistic diversity at Company B

5.1 Downstream Communication

5.1.1 Export Sales Department

As with Company A, the language capital of the organisation is concentrated in the sales department, and this is something which the organisation has significantly increased over the last six to seven years, rising from two language speakers (both French), to four, adding both German and Polish to their abilities.

There was a strong perception within the export department that their language skills had been absolutely fundamental to their performance in overseas markets, particularly in France where they were emphatic that it would not be possible to do business without the appropriate language skills. Whilst this could be perceived as self-interest, when discussing markets other than France, the department were generally more circumspect about the role that language plays, indicating that France really was seen as a special case.

Given the emphasis which the organisation placed on language, the employees in the export department were responsible for all aspects of the customer relationship; their role thus extending beyond that which would usually be considered as the remit of a sales manager. They were therefore in the position of language nodes.

5.1.1.1 Language Nodes

Many of the interviewees, including those at a senior level, took the view that language skills were a requirement to work in particular markets, which is why the organisation had decided to invest in linguistically skilled individuals. As was the case at Company A, France was highlighted as a particularly difficult market in which to conduct business without having a French speaker:

> *particularly in France we find if you don't speak their language […] They're less likely to deal with you*
> (Managing Director).

> *We found that if nobody was here who could speak French when they rang up they'd rather put the phone down*
> (Executive Chairman).

Thus it was the expectations of customers in this particular market which drove the decision to engage in specific recruitment of linguistically skilled individuals.

Unlike Company A however, the company did not emphasise cultural knowledge as much as the language skills. None of the current French speakers at the organisation were native speakers, two were British who had learnt it as a second language, and one was Polish who had lived in France as a child.

The German and Polish speakers did speak the language as a mother tongue (although the German speaker had moved to the UK with his parents at a young age, and therefore identified as British, rather than German), but neither of these had been recruited specifically for their skills in these languages, as the decision to target these markets was only made after the organisation realised that they provided additional skills which they could exploit. The German speaker joined the organisation as a UK sales manager, and the Polish speaker was recruited in order to manage accounts in France *"Poland was just addition, I think I was just told to… try to start"* (French and Polish Speaking Export Executive).

As with Company A, the linguistically skilled employees in the export sales department did not have any linguistic support in the Customer Service and Accounts teams, and therefore they were required to take on a significant amount of administrative tasks related to their customers, in addition to managing the sales relationships. This did cause frustrations and concerns about workload at times:

*Sometimes it is a bit of a pain sometimes, having to chase customers for…
unpaid invoices and that… and especially when you know they've got goods
to go*
(French Speaking Export Executive).

*if you try to spin too many plates… then… ultimately one plate may drop,
and that's always the fear*
(German Speaking Export Executive).

The German and Polish speakers faced additional pressures because they were the
only individuals in the team who were able to speak these languages, and so this could
present problems if they were out of the office. For French this was not a particular
problem, because there were three French speakers employed by the organisation, so
there would usually be one available to deal with any queries that came through even
if it was not necessarily their own account, but this was not an option for German and
Polish.

The German Speaking Export Executive had recently been out of the office attending a
trade fair, and he noted that this had caused difficulties in his absence: *"My out of
office goes on then, and whilst I can deal with some things while I'm there […] You're
almost having to rely on someone else to communicate in that same language."*

Although the French Speaking Export Executive did have a level of basic German, it was
insufficient to rely on this:

*I've had five or six emails last week that… from clients… two that can't
speak any English so… they came through in German, and… and some of
them, they're using German that I know [French Speaking Export Executive]
perhaps wouldn't understand […] So that can make it difficult*
(German Speaking Export Executive).

Additionally, the lack of language cover was linked to customer expectations, as the
German market was seen as problematic because customers there expected a quick
response to their queries, with written confirmation of their orders, something which
was not expected from all markets. This therefore put additional pressure on
members of staff who were trying to provide linguistic cover through their own basic
skills in the language: *"If [French Speaking Export Executive]'s then having to spend
15/20 minutes, digesting a German email […] that makes her life more difficult"*
(German Speaking Export Executive).

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The French Speaking Export Executive spent more time in the office than the other two sales executives and was therefore the one who provided the most amount of linguistic cover. Although she acknowledged that she could read the majority of emails which arrived in German (although her use of the word *"decipher"* when explaining the process attests that it was not without some effort), when emails arrived in Polish which she needed to deal with, she used software in order to translate the general meaning of the message:

> *A: Google Translate is quite useful, it doesn't translate it… but you can make out…*
>
> *Me: The general sense?*
>
> *A: Yeah, so, you can translate it that way*
> (French Speaking Export Executive).

It is interesting to note that in such scenarios, the favoured practice is to use Google Translate in order to simply get a sense of the message, rather than asking one of the other Polish speakers who was employed on the shop floor. Although the organisation has been effective in leveraging the language resources which it had acquired through chance amongst office staff, it did not use linguistic resources from the shop floor when they may have been helpful. It does not fall within the scope of this research to consider the "us and them" divisions which may occur between shop floor and office employees. However, the fact that here the organisation does not leverage particular resources because of where in the organisation they are based indicates that there may be internal divisions at Company B which prevent the organisation from using all their linguistic resources as creatively and efficiently as they perhaps could.

Given the limited amount of linguistic cover which was available for languages other than French, the responsibility for which typically fell on the shoulders of the French Speaking Export Executive, the other sales executives stressed the need to manage customer expectations:

> *through the nature of making an introduction to the company they realise that the business isn't massive, you know […] We haven't got 200 people and 15 speak German […] So they know that*
> (German Speaking Export Executive).

However, one interviewee also suggested that being in the position of language node could be of benefit, not because of the gatekeeping powers that language nodes in organisations may enjoy, but because they found that it could be helpful to have an understanding of all aspects of the client relationship:

> *you can keep an eye on the whole account I suppose […] So you're involved in the whole account, rather than just the sales side […] Yeah and you get a feel for if a customer hasn't paid, or why they haven't paid, or […] So… yeah, then you can say to the accounts department, oh, they've not paid because…*
> (French Speaking Export Executive)

Additionally, the export sales team also discussed as a problem the expectation that because they were fluent in multiple languages they would be able to translate between them, which they felt to be a very different skill, and outside of their remit, in a way that acting as a language node in order to manage all aspects of a customer account was not:

> *it's the translation side I'm not overly keen on I have to say - it's not my particular strong point*
> (French Speaking Export Executive).

> *I do think that is not the job of a sales person to translate that. It's one thing conversing with a client, it's another thing writing a brochure*
> (German Speaking Export Executive).

The area of document translation at this organisation is explored in more detail in Section 5.3, however I now turn to another practice which the organisation used in order to manage linguistic diversity – the concept of passive multilingualism.

5.1.1.2 Passive Multilingualism

Currently, the use of German and French at the organisation only occurs with customers from teutophone and francophone markets. This is not the case for Polish, as it is linguistically close enough to other Slavic languages that it can be used in order to engage in passive multilingualism, where different languages are used simultaneously in a conversation.

As the French and Polish Speaking Export Executive explained:

Eastern European [...] languages are quite similar, so if I don't speak Czech or Slovakian, or even Russian... I'm still able to communicate easier [...] Than an English person, for example [...] I'm able to speak in Polish and the other side is speaking Czech or Slovakian and we're still able to understand each other.

Interestingly, where language fluency was not present, here the importance of culture was also emphasized *"We have a similar culture, history, etc, which is again helping [...] breaking [...] the first barrier"* (French and Polish Speaking Export Executive).

This is particularly intriguing, as it mirrors the findings of Company A in so far as that the role of culture was emphasized or de-emphasized depending on the level of language competence in those particular markets. Where language skills were not completely fluent, having an understanding of the relevant culture was emphasized to a greater extent, again suggesting that interviewees were (unsurprisingly) keen to portray themselves as competent professionals, who had an appropriate repertoire of skills on which they could draw in order to effectively manage communication where linguistic diversity was present.

Additionally, the importance of language and culture as a marker of social identity was also discussed by this interviewee. He discussed how, in markets other than Poland, he had been able to circumvent gatekeepers in other organisations with whom the organisation had previously unsuccessfully attempted to establish a successful working relationship:

completely accidentally, we found that there was one or two Polish people working in certain companies [...] [Company B] as a company never actually... successfully managed to work with these companies and, just because I was Polish and the people on the other hand were Polish, it's just opened the doors... within ten or fifteen minutes
(French and Polish Speaking Export Executive).

This demonstrates how a shared linguistic and cultural identity can help in the establishment of business relationships. The effect here is perhaps amplified by the fact that these gatekeepers were living and working outside of Poland, so their linguistic and cultural identities were particularly salient when they encountered someone else from the same national group in an unexpected setting.

5.1.1.3 BELF Usage in Export Sales

Given the linguistic capital which the organisation possessed, BELF usage for export sales was significantly lower than for any of the other case organisations which form part of this study, as for key markets, the organisation had the internal language capabilities to manage these relationships in languages other than English. However, the organisation did do a certain amount of business in markets for which they did not have language capabilities, including Scandinavia, Spain, Italy and the United Arab Emirates.

The use of BELF did not appear to cause particular issues at Company B, and the interviewees generally appeared quite sensitive to issues of BELF, most likely because the whole export sales team had themselves experienced the challenge of expressing themselves in a foreign language, and were therefore cognisant of the difficulties which may be encountered in a way that monolinguals (particularly English-speaking monolinguals), may not be, as they have not experienced the struggle to communicate in a foreign language themselves. Even so, it was noted that:

> *Most of them have learned English the same way I've learned it so maybe,*
> *it's even easier for them to talk with me, instead of someone with a*
> *different English accent, which sometimes is quite difficult to understand*
> (French and Polish Speaking Export Sales Executive).

An illustration of how the unthinking use of BELF can cause problems for non-native speakers, even those who are fluent in English, was provided by the French and Polish Speaking Export Executive, who explained how an idiom used by a member of Company B's accounts team had caused a misunderstanding:

> *I had a situation here, when I've misunderstood a… I think it was a saying. I*
> *was asking my accountant if the company has paid […] So that the goods*
> *can go […] And, she couldn't remember the company name, and finally she*
> *said "oh yes, the penny has dropped" so for me, that means that the*
> *penny… the money […] so the material can go.*

Although intra-organisational communication is beyond the scope of this study, this anecdote further supports some of the findings from Company A regarding the difficulties of BELF, particularly with regards to the use of idioms, thus highlighting that

it is a particular issue which native speakers of English need to be conscious of when communicating with non-native speakers.

The use of English to communicate with certain markets (such as Scandinavia) had not been resisted in anyway by customers in these markets "*They didn't complain… which means, I think it's acceptable for them*" (French and Polish Speaking Export Executive). Furthermore, given that Company B did not do highly significant amounts of business with these markets, in comparison with the ones for which they did have the relevant linguistic competence, their customers do not have the expectation that organisations would invest in acquiring language competence in order to manage a small amount of business, and therefore were happy to use English for this. However, it would be interesting to research whether there was a point at which this changes, and at what point customers would feel that they had become economically significant enough that they would expect Company B to make provisions for them to communicate in the language of their preference.

5.1.1.4 Media Choice in Customer Relationships

Given the generally high levels of linguistic competence which the organisations had for their key markets, it is unsurprising that the interviewees stated that they made extensive use of the telephone in order to manage the sales relationship with their customers.

> *From a selling point of view I almost prefer to speak, because you can gauge somebody's attitude and reactions far better than an email*
> (German Speaking Export Executive).

> *Contact with customers is quite important to me, I love… speaking, talking on the phone*
> (French and Polish Speaking Export Sales Executive).

> *Some things are too hard to explain over email… so it's easier to pick up the phone and say whatever*
> (French Speaking Export Executive).

There was a strong sense that using the telephone helped to establish better relationships, although this is not to suggest that the organisation did not also make extensive use of email in communication with customers, particularly when dealing with routine, transactional matters:

sometimes… a quick email's fine
(French Speaking Export Executive).

If it's just a very quick, I need a question answering or, can you confirm this, then I would always do it by email
(German Speaking Export Executive).

Thus at Company B, the driver of decisions regarding media choice was the nature of the communication itself, and whether it would be easier to explain via email or telephone, rather than any linguistic concerns, although these were also noted as a potential factor:

So email then provides for the non-fluent speaker […] Maybe for the partially fluent […] an acceptable way of getting the whole story delivered. Phone call… with a non-fluent speaker… would get interrupted and bypassed because you didn't necessarily get every response
(NPD Manager).

Furthermore, the importance of customer expectations was also highlighted when discussing media choice. For example, it was explained that German customers would expect confirmation of an order placed via the telephone in writing, and thus the use of a lean media here appeared to be the provision of a paper trail in case of any future queries: *"they'll want a confirmation by email to say we've just had this conversation… this is what I've ordered, and just to make sure that everything's correct"* (German Speaking Export Executive).

However, it was interesting to compare these interviews with the field notes taken during the time spent at this organisation, as I noted that it was clear that email was used extensively for customer communication, as I was not aware of conversations taking place in languages other than English during the time that I spent at the organisation. I do not claim that the time that I spent on-site to necessarily be representative of a typical day at the organisation, however the dissonance between how much the interviewees claimed to use the telephone to speak in other languages and what I actually observed is interesting, and suggests that the interviewees – perhaps unconsciously – overestimate the time they actually spend speaking in other languages, and that email is more important for communication than they acknowledge, because their decision to use it is not driven by language concerns, as the choice of email typically was at the other case organisations.

Given that the export sales team are based in the office and manage all aspects of the customer relationship, at this organisation I did not interview any members of the accounts or customer service teams, as they had much less interaction with international customers than at Company A. I therefore now turn to the practices used in order to manage upstream communication with the organisation's supply chain partners.

5.2 Upstream Communication

5.2.1 Purchasing

The purchasing side operated in a very different way to the organisation's downstream operations, and currently does not have any language capital. Most of the company's suppliers are located in East Asia, particularly China, and the relationships were managed by the Executive Chairman.

The fact that the Executive Chairman relies on English in order to communicate with these partners has been at times problematic: *"it's really really difficult to get things through… and also… their interpretation of things can be a bit strange…"* (Executive Chairman).

As a result of this, the company is considering recruiting a Mandarin speaker in order to work on purchasing. In the meantime, the organisation is managing this linguistic diversity through a variety of different practices.

5.2.1.2 BELF Usage with International Suppliers

The organisation expects to be able to communicate in English with their international suppliers, and as such, the communication which they use takes place in BELF. However, the Chairman acknowledged that his usual style of communication could cause difficulties for international partners: *"I am conscious that my accent, and the way I speak, is quite problematic for people*." Despite being aware of this, he said that he found it difficult to modify his speech in order to make it easier for non-native speakers to understand. He explained that some people would use an exaggerated slowness, which he did not like to do, and that the speed of his speech and accent had caused difficulties not just in BELF usage with speakers of languages with a high linguistic distance from English, such as Mandarin, but also with speakers of proximate languages such as French. However, in order to try to make himself more easily

understood, he found that many of his supply chain partners had learnt American, rather than British, English, so he would try to use Americanisms in his speech "*I go on vacations and… not holidays […] And quite often I'll say… oh I'll give you my cellphone number.*" He was able to do this without a particularly conscious effort as he had previously spent a number of years working at an American organisation, and thus had already been socialised into the use of this variety of English. The difficulties encountered in oral communication therefore were a key driver of the choice of communication media used with the organisation's upstream partners.

5.2.1.3 Choice of communication media

In order to conduct the majority of business with China, the Executive Chairman relies on email to communicate. The primary reason for this is that he finds that many of the organisation's supply chain partners in China are much more proficient in written English than they are spoken: *"a lot of Chinese are really good at writing […] But they can't speak it to save their life"* (Executive Chairman). This further supports the findings that lean media is easier to use for non-native speakers who are not fully proficient in a language. However, even the use of email requires some adaptation compared to how it would be used amongst a group of native speakers, in order to reach a shared understanding:

> *I'm fully aware that where I might be able to send you an email and you send me an answer […] It might take four exchanges […] To get it to be clear […] And quite often, they will… what I find is, if you put too many points in an email to a Chinese person, they don't answer them all […] So you have to send things separately in small bite sized chunks*
> (Executive Chairman).

Linked to this, the Chairman explained that where understanding was a problem, he would frequently change the communication media. For example, if a supplier were to telephone him, and he found it difficult to understand because of their accent, he would attempt to move the exchange to email, which he found easier. As with Company A, this is an example of BELF usage being considered from the point of view of the native speaker of English, who found it difficult to use, and thus lean media was selected primarily because it was easier for the native, rather than non-native speaker, to communicate using this method.

5.2.1.4 Use of Intermediaries

In order to counter some of the challenges caused by email communication and BELF usage, the organisation found it helpful to visit China once a year in order to meet with their suppliers, and in such scenarios would use the services of an interpreter. Not only was this important in facilitating communication in business meetings, but it also had additional benefits: *"we know that when we go to a meeting… they'll like whisper in their language and you don't know what they're saying […] with some meetings we'll take a translator"* (Executive Chairman).

The use of code switching here was perceived as a deviant act, with an implicit assumption that an organisation would only engage in code-switching in order to try to hide information, rather than considering that it may just be a pragmatic act in order to clarify a point.

In addition to the usage of specific language intermediaries such as interpreters, the organisation also used intermediaries in a more general way in order to support their business activities in East Asia. Through the business network of the Executive Chairman, the organisation has established links with agencies who specialise in supporting British businesses who operate in China, and the organisation has used their market and linguistic knowledge in order to research suppliers:

> *so… she [name] got somebody from Shanghai to call them, and spoke to them in Chinese and everything, and got so much information that they were willing to give, she then phoned our supplier… who we thought they were dealing with… and… rather miraculously, as she was on the phone, she heard somebody talking to… somebody from the company she'd just rung […] Because they'd rung up to say… something's going on, somebody's checking us out […] And she could overhear the conversation […] So… I mean, we just couldn't do that*
> (Executive Chairman).

In addition to this, the organisation also has contacts in Hong Kong and Shenzhen who originally met the chairman through business networks but have since developed a more personal relationship, and who are willing to provide occasional support if Company B is having difficulties with suppliers in order to avoid the need for the Chairman to visit the market more frequently: *"I say to him can you have a look at such and such, he'll explore it for me, rather than me having to jump on a plane."*

Therefore although the majority of the communication with suppliers is done internally by Company B, there are circumstances in which the use of intermediaries has been essential in order to work effectively in the market, and the organisation has used both formal and more informal channels in order to establish relationships with intermediaries.

5.2.1.5 Use of Google Translate

A final practice which the organisation occasionally used in order to manage upstream communication is Google Translate. This was not typically used in order to facilitate direct communication with suppliers, but rather to acquire product and market information. For example, when Company B was trying to research potential new suppliers, given the type of industry in which they operate, organisations in China would typically only have their website in Mandarin: *"they've not made their… website Western friendly […] And you haven't got a clue what you're looking for […] You're cutting and pasting into Google Translate"* (Executive Chairman).

While this was effective in order to gather some basic information, such an approach was not without difficulties:

> *I was trying to translate a Chinese email last week… and it didn't work […] it was a datasheet from a supplier and I wanted to find out what was in that datasheet and it didn't go to plan*
> (German Speaking Export Executive).

In this scenario, the use of Google Translate was completely ineffective, and the organisation ultimately resorted to asking one of the aforementioned intermediaries to assist.

This leads to the final area of language practices which the organisation uses, an exploration of how documents in languages other than English are managed.

5.3 Document Translation

In terms of document translation, the company had opted to have their website available solely in English. There was a page which had a short message in Polish, French and German, which simply invited customers to contact them for further information, and assured them that these languages were spoken at the organisation.

These messages had been translated by the export sales team, but they were all keen to stress that they did not consider themselves to be translators:

> *I think I was involved in some… very basic translation, on our website, but this is just a greeting, contact information, and stuff like this, nothing… heavy […] I think we prefer to use a professional company to do the translating because a) it's time consuming and b) they know how to do it […] They've got experience to deal with it faster and better probably as well*
> (French and Polish Speaking Export Executive).

> *very often marketing literature's got its own style anyway […] that's a whole other different skillset as far as I'm concerned*
> (German Speaking Export Executive).

The organisation did seem to be aware of the dangers of asking language nodes to translate, and as such, it was done very infrequently. The German Speaking Export Executive had translated a brochure into German, with the help of his father: *"I translated it all into German… and… with the help of my father actually, who… his written German is better than mine… so we sat down, and it took us quite some time to do that"*

However, this was an exception rather than common practice, although it is an interesting example of language nodes drawing on their own personal networks in order to achieve organisational goals related to language.

There was a sense that translating documents to languages other than English was not particularly useful:

> *Did it benefit us? Probably not […] Because I don't think… German companies are expecting that level of […] you know if I handed somebody an English brochure over in Germany, they would be happy to receive that, as much as they would do a German one I guess*
> (German Speaking Export Executive).

This opinion was shared by the French and Polish Speaking Export Executive *"I don't think the… the Polish market, it still isn't that important so we just have to generate some brochures just in English."*

The market which diverged from this practice, as with other areas of language use, was France. Here the organisation did have brochures available in French which had been professionally translated, but these had been done some time ago and were not up to

date as they used the old branding for the organisation. Thus, as at Company A, much less attention was given to marketing communication in languages other than English than was given to ensuring that the sales relationship itself could take place in the customer's preferred language.

Although the company did indicate that they were considering having further technical documents made available in other languages, it was confirmed that they would use professional translators to do this because they were aware that the export sales team were not comfortable translating such content:

> *he's not comfortable doing a technical document […] Because… they're not words or phrases that he uses commonly, and knowing how… how seriously the Germans take those kind of documents… it's not worth getting it wrong* (Managing Director).

Thus in scenarios where the translation needs to be completely accurate, the company prefers to use professionals.

Although Company B did not explicitly discuss the cost of professional translation services, the fact that they appear to require some documents to be available in other languages and have not yet had this done, despite the fact that they have been working in these export markets for a number of years, does signal that there is still some kind of barrier to using translation services, which may well be the costs involved, as was the case with Company A. Alternatively, it may be that it is not just a priority for the organisation at this moment in time, given the expectations of their customers, and thus as a small organisation, the organisation is simply using its resources where they will add the most value.

5.4 Conclusion

All of the export department highlighted how important language is in developing relationships because it meant that they did not need to just focus on task-related information. As with Company A, an understanding of culture was also considered to be important, but much greater emphasis was given to language, with the export team being unsure how companies could be particularly successful in markets where they did not have appropriate language skills.

There was a general perception that just because their customers were able to speak English, that did not necessarily mean that they were always comfortable when doing so, or that they wished to do it all the time. Even despite this, email still formed the main basis of business communication, although customers did ring up, primarily to discuss issues rather than for more transactional communication, and thus knowing that they were able to speak in their own languages gave customers the confidence to engage in more complex conversation.

Although BELF is used at the organisation, this is primarily in upstream communications, and thus it demonstrates that the organisation is currently more concerned about linguistically accommodating their customers, than they are their suppliers.

However, there was a genuine commitment to language related issues even at senior management level in the organisation, and the export success which was ascribed, at least in part, to linguistic competence led to an appetite for further increasing the organisation's language capital in order to support both upstream and downstream relationships. This approach to managing language diversity, of embracing multilingualism in supply chain relationships, and the predominant strategy of using language nodes in order to do so, led to the title of this chapter - "Language Nodes and Multilingualism".

Chapter 6: Using Creative Solutions - Findings Company C

This chapter explores the practices used at a micro-enterprise of three people in order to manage linguistic diversity amongst their suppliers and customers. Given the lack of resources, both financial and human, which the organisation has, this chapter discusses how the company relied on creative solutions in order to acquire language capital at a low cost. Furthermore, the chapter demonstrates the importance of the influence of a key individual in a small organisation in driving international expansion. The chapter gives particular focus to the area of document translation, as this company is an online retailer, and thus the translation of its website was of primary importance in establishing international sales relationships.

6.0 Introduction and Background

Company C is the only one of the case organisations which is not currently involved in manufacturing. Instead, it is an online retailer which sells products in the poultry industry, and has suppliers based in a number of different countries, including the UK, Netherlands, Italy, and most recently, South Korea. The company has been established for nine years and is a micro-enterprise, employing three people, two of whom are father and son. The son joined the organisation upon graduation from university, and worked at the company during the placement year of his sandwich degree, during which time he focused on investigating the European market for the company, because at that time, it was not an active exporter. Having established that there were potential markets in Europe for the organisation's products, he proceeded to develop this when he joined the company following graduation. He is now the Finance Director for the organisation and was the interviewee for this case study, as he deals with the vast majority of the organisation's international relationships. Due to the small size of this organisation and the fact that it has no internal language capital, there was little to observe, with limited time being spent on site. Therefore documents were a key data source for this organisation, with access being given to a small number of emails between the organisation and a Korean supplier, and the organisation's website, which was the key route to market, was analysed.

The organisation does not have any internal language capital, and thus has relied on a range of different practices in order to acquire the linguistic capabilities which it needs in order to operate in its core export markets of France, Germany, Italy and Spain. For upstream communications, the organisation relies on being able to communicate with

their suppliers in English. This is not possible in their downstream operations, because unlike any of the other case organisations, Company C deals exclusively with end users who are frequently members of the general public, and thus the organisation operates in a different environment to the other organisations who predominantly operate in B2B environments, regardless of the type of relationships that they have. As such, the practices which are used in order to manage downstream communication are substantially different to those which are used at Company A and Company B, as demonstrated in Figure 6.1. Therefore the organisation's downstream relationships are predominantly one-off transactions, or repeat transactions where end users purchase additional products from the company. Upstream, the company has long-term relationships, as they are a distributor for key suppliers located in the UK, Italy, Netherlands, and is in the process of establishing a relationship with a supplier in South Korea. As a result of the small size of this organisation, it was particularly relevant for addressing the research aim of understanding practices used to manage linguistic diversity, as some of its approaches have not previously been identified in the literature, as will be discussed later in the chapter.
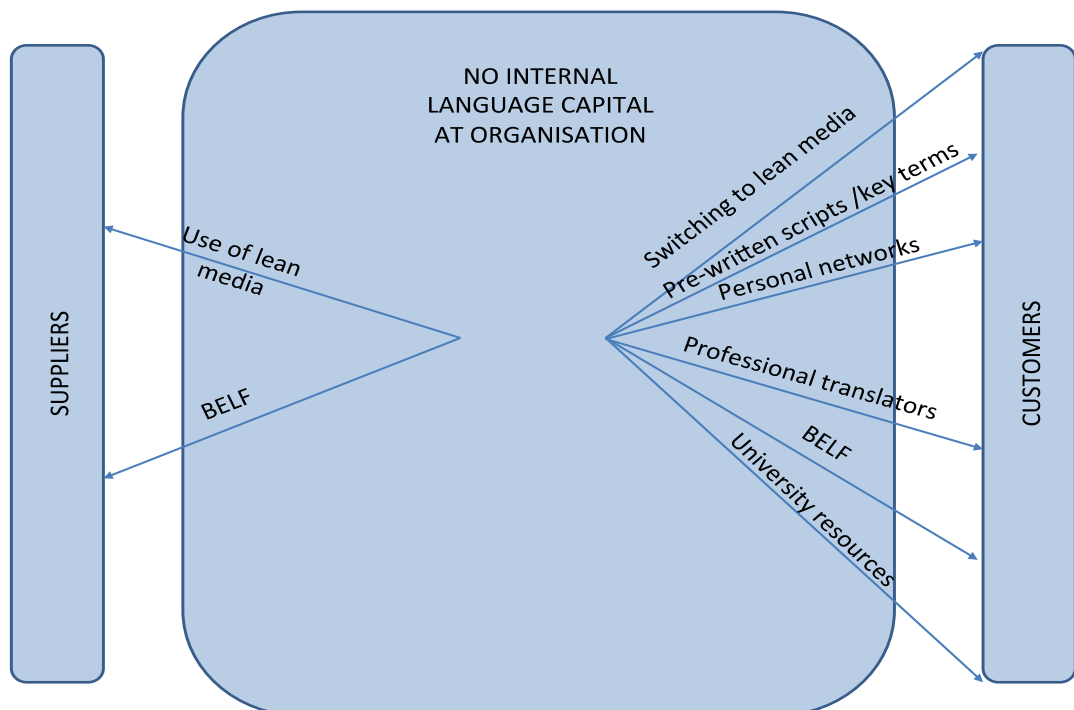

Figure 6.1 Sites of language capital and practices for managing linguistic diversity at Company C

6.1 Downstream Communication

The primary route to market of this organisation is through its website, which is used in order to sell to both domestic and international consumers. Therefore, when the organisation made the decision to attempt market entry into Europe, a key task for the company was to internationalise this website:

> *my first port of call was to go right, how am I going to get this translated, and we had this mentality where we don't just want to be in with the rest, we want to be… the best… you know… that's…. it stands for everything you do, we want to be better than everybody else, and that was no different for Europe*
> (Finance Director).

The translation of the organisation's website is discussed in Section 6.3, in order to maintain consistency with the other findings chapters; however, in order to provide context to this section which discusses communication with customers, it is necessary to understand that the organisation used two primary methods in order to translate the website, university resources, and professional translators.

6.1.1 BELF Usage in Export Sales

Due to this organisation's limited size and lack of internal language resources, the company used English in conversations with international customers wherever possible.

However, before establishing contact with customers, the organisation found that initial desk-based market research without having the necessary language skills did pose problems. Given the nature of the B2C environment in which the company operated, the organisation didn't consider the fact that their language skills restricted them to desk research had posed them a particular problem, as they had always anticipated that they needed to rely on desk research, due to the difficulties in targeting and gaining feedback from individual consumers before entering the market.

This meant that the organisation was not always able to understand local information, such as industry specific forums which would have been helpful for their research. As a result, for much of their desk research they were restricted to English websites, which in this particular industry, were predominantly US-based, meaning that *"I*

always needed to take that with a pinch of salt so… they're coming from a different perspective" (Finance Director).

Therefore, the reliance on using BELF in downstream relationships caused the organisation challenges in two different areas. Firstly, it complicated the market research process, making it difficult to establish which markets to target. Secondly, at times it was also met with resistance from customers, who were unable or unwilling to use English in their communications with the organisation, thus representing a loss of sales to the organisation because of a lack of linguistic ability *"obviously we had a few people drop out"* (Finance Director).

As a result, in order to operate effectively in international markets, the organisation realised that it needed to establish practices which would enable it to deal with the linguistic diversity encountered when trying to sell their products into international markets.

6.1.2 Foreign Language Use in Export Sales

Given that the organisation had only three employees, none of whom were fluent in any languages other than English, and as a micro-organisation, the organisation did not have sufficient resources to engage in specific recruitment to acquire language skills internally, the company realised that it had to devise alternative methods of gaining language capabilities with the twin purposes of gaining better market information, and providing an improved communicative service to their customers.

6.1.2.1 Using University Resources

As a recent graduate, the Finance Director still had contacts at his university, which prompted him to explore whether there were any resources which the university could provide in order to help to resolve the issues caused by a lack of language resources. As a result, Company C established a low cost way of gaining market information – using university students to carry out the research. For example, the organisation had used students of International Business, and Languages in order to conduct research and suggest strategies to be more effective in each market:

> *they came up with some general strategies, but then they also came with little tactics for each country […] so the Italian student said that Italians are very conscious of it being… Italian built… they're very patriotic […] So… he*

said… would it be an idea if you have got a lot of Italian built machines and
products to put an Italian flag on it
(Finance Director).

As the primary purpose of these research projects from a university perspective was to gain practical experience for the students, this was a free resource which the organisation was able to access. This had the dual advantage of providing market information which the organisation may not have been otherwise able to gain access to because of the language in which it was available, but it also saved the organisation time because they were able to outsource the process of researching a market and devising selling tactics, which afforded them more time to focus on other aspects of the business which they were also developing.

6.1.2.2 Basic Communication in Foreign Languages

However, the key problem that the organisation faced when they had successfully internationalised their website (as discussed in Section 6.3) was that they gained a lot of interest from international customers who would telephone them to discuss the products, many of whom were unable to communicate in English:

> *we had a bit of a problem with the fact that we had […] customers ringing*
> *us up […] saying bonjour […] and we're thinking oh god… I don't know what*
> *to say in French […] we really struggled*
> (Finance Director).

The organisation swiftly realised that it needed to find some way of communicating with these potential customers, but again, lacked the resources to acquire a multilingual employee who was able to speak to such customers. Therefore, the Finance Director approached the translation company who they had worked with on the website, and asked them to provide lists of basic phrases and vocabulary that they could use in order to communicate with customers: *"I printed off some sheets with just very basic translation sheets that we stuck around the office"* (Finance Director).

This solution did still present some problems, as none of the employees were proficient in French, Italian, German or Spanish, which were the languages which these sheets were available in, and thus the Finance Director tended to take a lead in attempting to communicate with the customers in this manner, without the requisite

language skills which the language nodes in Company A and Company B had in order to perform this function.

The ultimate aim of these sheets, was not just to enable basic telephone communication between Company C and their multilingual customers, but to enable them to change the media of communication:

> *we were saying stuff like […] I'm very sorry I can't speak French, please could you send me an email […] And we'll get back to you very quickly, our email address is […], which is difficult because there's no translation for @… well there is, but you know what I mean […] So you know, stuff like that we struggled with, but yeah in the end we… we… sort of got that ritual down to a T, and when they emailed us, you know, we did use Google Translate then*
> (Finance Director).

6.1.3 Media Choice in Customer Relationships

The organisation felt that telephone calls were the most challenging form of communication when they took place across language boundaries without sufficient competence of either interlocutor to enable a fluent conversation. Therefore, the Finance Director sought to move to a leaner communication medium in which he found it easier to manage communication in languages other than English: *"I could definitely write and read better than I can speak the languages."*

The use of email permitted the organisation to use free resources such as Google Translate and language dictionaries in order to manage the communication process, although this was quite time consuming:

> *I was the most fluent… which isn't very fluent at all… so what I would do, is I would write… I would write in the language that I was wanting to write in… and I'd use Google Translate as a sort of checker to make sure that… the message wasn't getting lost, but I was using the sentence structures, using the dictionaries at the back, whatever […] And it was quite hard work, but I got quite into it*
> (Finance Director).

Another practice which was used in order to facilitate this process was to mirror the language which the customer used, in order to reduce the amount of original content in a foreign language which needed to be produced: *"I'd copy their sentence structure […] They would write something like I have a problem with… so I would come back and say I'm sorry you have a problem with…"* (Finance Director).

Although the organisation acknowledged that they did lose some potential customers at the stage where they tried to change the communication media, generally, the Finance Director felt that this approach worked quite well, and they didn't have complaints from customers that the emails which the organisation constructed were unintelligible for them.

However, they did find that sometimes the emails which customers sent contained spelling errors or slang which Google Translate and dictionaries were unable to cope with, which caused a blockage in the communication:

> *especially Spanish…. They tend to not spell correctly […] I don't know how more politely to put it! They don't use correct grammar, they don't use, they don't spell it correctly… and you know as an English person reading it… you've got no hope, because Google doesn't know what it is*
> (Finance Director).

In such circumstances, the Finance Director drew on his own personal network of multilinguals who were able to provide guidance and assistance, although over time, he became accustomed to common mistakes, such as the letters "b" and "v" being used interchangeably in Spanish (phonetically, they are the same, but lexically, they are not). The area in which continued assistance was required from foreign language speakers was when slang was used *"it was slang when I needed help, nothing else really […] Google's very intelligent"* (Finance Director).

6.2 Upstream Communication

6.2.1 BELF Usage with International Suppliers

English was used exclusively for communication with international suppliers (although the organisation did also note that they worked extensively with a British supplier). Thus BELF was frequently used in upstream communications with three key suppliers with whom the organisation has regular contact, one in Italy, one in the Netherlands, and one in South Korea.

The relationship with the Italian supplier is the longest established, and the Finance Director highlighted that one of the key people at the supplier organisation spoke excellent English, and this had facilitated the development of their relationship: *"he's been over here a couple of times, and his English is perfect, and he'll come over, and we'll go to the pub, and we'll have a chat."*

The Finance Director was sensitive to the fact that BELF requires a different type of English language use to that which he would usually use as a native speaker *"I don't write the Koreans as I would write to an English speaker, I sort of have a different accent, on an email"* (Finance Director). I noted this to be the case when a sample of these emails were shared with me – it was clear that the Finance Director had not only taken into consideration different cultural expectations regarding cultural politeness norms and formality in Korea, but also that an attempt had been made to simplify the sentence structures and vocabulary used in English so that they were more appropriate for an international audience.

Furthermore, it was explained that as this is such a small organisation, the members engaged in cross-checking with each other when they were sending emails which they felt were strategically important for the company, to make sure that the emails made sense and portrayed the organisation in the way that they wanted: *"With the Europeans, we have a different way of writing, and, especially the Koreans as well. We want to… we never want to come across as like, blunt"* (Finance Director).

6.2.2 Choice of Communication Media

Despite the fact that the organisation did not believe that their reliance on the use of English had caused them any particular problems in their upstream relationships, it had impacted on the choice of media used for such communications.

With the Korean supplier for example, communication had only ever taken place via email, and the reason for this was that *"I don't know how good their English is"* (Finance Director). Therefore, despite the fact that the company was seeking to deepen the relationship further, and to gain geographic exclusivity from the Korean manufacturer, the company had actively avoided communicating with them using a richer media due to concerns about a lack of linguistic competence. Indeed, it was suggested that both parties had a "nervousness" about working with each other, and although other potential factors were identified, the choice of media would have impacted on this.

Although this is a supplier relationship, its dynamics almost function as a sales relationship, as they are trying to encourage the supplier to choose them as their exclusive distributor in the UK and thus are keen to try to impress them and explain

the high quality of service that Company C offers. This may explain why such effort has been put into ensuring successful communication with this supplier, in contrast to the findings from the other cases, which suggest that smaller organisations will typically put their resources into communicating with customers, and tend to expect that their suppliers will take responsibility for managing any linguistic diversity. Here, although the supplier is still expected to use English, rather than Korean, there is still a significant effort made in order to share the burden of communication.

In contrast, the relationship with the Italian supplier was characterised as very warm, and although the majority of the communications were transactional, and used email, not least because this *"keeps a paper trail"* (Finance Director), the supplier contacted Company C by telephone every quarter in order to discuss the business and develop the relationship, and also engaged in infrequent visits to the organisation.

Therefore, despite the fact that Company C exclusively relied on the use of English when dealing with their suppliers, they had given significant consideration to how they could best do this, and made adjustments to the way in which they used English in order to accommodate the capabilities of the other interlocutor and thus used BELF with their suppliers in a more sensitive way than the other companies in the study. However, as a result of their preference for lean media, they did not take full advantage of relationship development opportunities as they were avoiding non-task based conversations due to uncertainties about the other party's English language ability.

6.2.3 Communicating with Language Nodes

Given the use of BELF in upstream relationships, the organisation noted that they tended to deal with one individual at their suppliers, who was able to communicate with them in English. This provided an interesting insight into the use of language nodes from a perspective which has rarely been considered in the extant literature – that of the organisation which is being communicated with by a language node, rather than those who are using a language node themselves in order to communicate.

It was established that because of the senior position which the language nodes held in their organisations, working exclusively with these individuals did not present any problems for Company C, however: *"you don't just want… to have one contact who's*

maybe… lower down in the business and can't have the authority to ask the questions that we need" (Finance Director).

Therefore, in order to work effectively with their suppliers, it was found to be important that the company was able to establish relationships with the right individuals in their supplier organisations, and were not merely assigned a contact purely because of their English language abilities: *"Generally, all of our suppliers… we've got contacts in the right places in the business, so having one contact isn't a problem" (Finance Director).*

6.3 Document Translation

The area of document translation is the one in which Company C had concentrated the majority of their efforts to acquire linguistic resources, in accordance with their strategy as an online retailer. Thus they had given significant attention to the translation of their website, including at the design and planning stage, taking into consideration such details as:

> *German for example, the sentences are on average 30% longer […] So I needed to make sure that we weren't just designing with the UK in mind, we had to think okay, this button needs to be this long, because in German, the word's longer* (Finance Director).

6.3.1 Using Personal Networks

As the business model of Company C was that of an online retailer, they did not only want to translate their website linguistically, but they also wanted to ensure that it would be considered culturally appropriate for their clients in overseas markets. Therefore, when deciding to make the initial expansion into Europe, the organisation did not only engage in market research which was specific to their industry, but were also interested in understanding how consumers in these overseas markets engaged in online shopping.

Given that the company did not have any linguistic resources that they could use in order to approach international customers in order to get their opinions, and that even if they had, identifying a target pool of customers would have been extremely difficult, the Finance Director used his own personal network in order to gain understanding about online shopping preferences amongst European customers. As part of his university course, he spent a semester abroad in Australia, where he met students

from all over Europe with whom he remained in contact after returning home, and thus it was from these individuals that he sought help when trying to understand market preferences:

> *I sent out this questionnaire on Facebook to all my European friends, just asking really basic stuff, like what's your favourite search engine… what's your favourite website […] What's your favourite ecommerce website… do you watch videos online before you buy a product… how important are images to you… that kind of thing*
> (Finance Director).

Although the responses confirmed that there was very little difference between key European markets and the UK with regards to website preferences, the company found it valuable to use personal networks in this way.

In addition to this cultural knowledge, this personal network was also drawn on in order to offer linguistic support for the second practice which the organisation used in order to translate documents – that of using university students.

6.3.2 Using University Resources

In the market research stage, the organisation had identified France, Italy, Germany and Spain as key markets, and therefore the company wanted to translate its website into these four languages, but at a low cost. They approached the Finance Director's former university, and found Languages students who were prepared to help with the translation for a substantially lower cost than using a professional translator.

However, being aware that translation is a different skill to being able to speak a language, and that these students were translating into their second language rather than their mother tongue, he asked native speakers, who he had met during his time on a semester abroad, to check the translations. Thus in acquiring language capital for the organisation, the role of personal networks was initially fundamental, given the absence of financial capital which larger organisations would have.

This process of checking the work of the students, who were acting as informal translators, revealed few errors, and thus the native speakers who were proof reading the texts had comparatively little work to do *"the majority was fine, I'd say it's probably 90/10 ratio"* (Finance Director).

Although this approach initially seemed to work well for the website translation, the organisation found that it caused two main problems. The first was that the organisation was paying two people (the student and the native speaker) to do this work, even though this was much cheaper than using a professional translator. The second, and more pressing issue was that using non-specialists, who had a number of other commitments in addition to this translation, made this quite a slow process:

> we got the home pages done and the bit of the about us, and the main pages, but when it came to the products… there was just too many of them for the students to do […] it was just taking weeks and weeks and weeks, so… I mentioned it to our website designer… he was conscious, coz all the time it's dragging on, the site's not live, and they want the project finished as well
> (Finance Director).

As a result, the organisation decided that in order to supplement the work that the students had already done, it was necessary to use a professional translation service in order to complete the work in a timely manner.

6.3.3 Using Professional Translators

This practice represented a significant expense to the company but it was deemed to be worth it to support their expansion plans due to the speed of the service which the professional translators were able to provide. The translation company which Company C used was recommended by the website design agency:

> you submit it and they charge you per word and they translate. But it was brilliant […] It cost a bit more money […] But it was so worth it because… the speed at which they come back to you… with translations is phenomenal
> (Finance Director).

As a small organisation with limited resources, it was key for Company C to use their resources in the most efficient way possible depending on the nature of the communication in which they were engaging. Due to the fact that their website was the entire distribution system for their products, although using professional translation was an expensive service, it was necessary in order to meet the business requirements for the translation, as the lower cost methods which the company had previously tried to use unfortunately did not provide the required level of service. Thus the organisation was concerned with the purpose of the translation and this

helped to drive decisions about which practices to use in order to best manage the translation process. A fuller discussion of the potential implications of a purpose-based (skopos) approach to translation for all the case organisations can be found in Chapter 8, as the analysis demonstrates that considering the purpose of a translation is a useful tool when determining the adequacy of different translation methods.

6.3.4 Maintaining Documents in English

There was only one aspect of their online presence that this organisation did not make available in any languages other than English, and this was their app which was available for download on Apple and Android systems. As a result, the download of this app tended to be restricted to a small number of markets: *"Denmark, Norway, Sweden… huge… downloads for their population, obviously the US was the biggest market, UK was second biggest"* (Finance Director).

Interestingly however, there was also a significant number of downloads from South America, a region in which the organisation was not present. The organisation guessed that perhaps the app would be seen as innovative in this region, and had looked into the possibility of translating it into Spanish, in order to further drive interest, however:

> *with an app it's more complicated because you need to… somehow in the coding it needs to know what country they're in… so it needs to detect your location settings on your phone […] Combined with your language settings on your phone and all that […] To decide what currency to charge and what to do… But that's apparently quite complex code… so there's a bit of a barrier there […] so there is a cost*
> (Finance Director).

Thus in this case, it is the type of document itself and the complexity associated with its translation which is driving the decision, and so as South America is a region which the organisation is not currently targeting, the decision has been made to leave the app solely in English.

6.4 Conclusion

The language practices at this company have been driven by one individual and his interest in expanding the business internationally. As Company C is a micro-enterprise and does not have significant resources on which it can draw, the organisation has

engaged in creative practices to acquire language capital in a low cost manner. These included the personal networks of the Finance Director, using free resources provided by Higher Education Institutions, and crucially, making an effort to communicate in foreign languages possessing only very limited language competencies, and thus it is the creativity which is inherent in all the practices used at this organisation which led to the title of this chapter "Using Creative Solutions".

Although over the past two years, the export market has declined significantly for the organisation, it would be inappropriate to attribute this purely to linguistic issues, given the efforts they have made and the other factors which were identified as contributory factors, including competitor reactions as Company C began to gain market share in Europe, logistics costs, and suppliers establishing their own distribution networks in Europe and thus requesting that Company C only distribute their products in the UK.

Therefore, as a result of the drive of an individual, this microenterprise has a much more proactive approach to language than many larger companies, although the fact that they are a distributor, rather than a manufacturer, and thus work with end users also has an impact as end users are less likely to speak English than businesses, and have perhaps a greater expectation that the seller will orient themselves to the customer, an expectation which seems to have been predominant at all of the case organisations included in this study.

This chapter presents the practices used at the fourth case organisation in order to manage linguistic diversity in their international supply chain relationships, which in this particular case, are all downstream. It explains how although relying on the ability of distributors to speak English is the main practice which the organisation employs, this approach is not without its difficulties. It therefore presents some of the other practices which the organisation uses, particularly with regards to using external sources of language knowledge, including professional translators and university resources.

7.0 Introduction and Background

This organisation has been operating since 1969 in the engineering industry and employs eleven people. The current Managing Director has owned the company since 2000, during which time exports as a share of total turnover have doubled, from approximately 20% to approximately 40%. The MD was the interviewee, as she manages the vast majority of communication with international partners and is also the person responsible for going on international visits. As with Company C, this organisation does not have internal language capital and thus there was no instances of foreign language use to observe, therefore document analysis of the organisation's website which had recently been redesigned provided additional evidence as different approach to foreign language use had been taken following the redesign. The company currently does not have any international suppliers, and thus its upstream operations are not of particular relevance for this study, and therefore in contrast to the three preceding chapters, this chapter does not have a section on upstream communication.

With regards to its customer base, the company supplies a variety of overseas markets, primarily in Europe, including Finland, France, Italy, Netherlands, Scandinavia, and Spain, but also Malaysia, Singapore, and most recently has begun operating in Turkey. It does not typically work with end users, but instead works with distributors and agents with whom it has long-term relationships.

Figure 7.1 maps out the key communicative practices which the organisation uses in its international supply chain relationships which are examined in this chapter.

Figure 7.1 Sites of language capital and practices for managing linguistic diversity at Company D

7.1 Downstream Communication

The organisation does not have any internal language capital and therefore uses external resources and intermediaries when trying to communicate if English is not sufficient for the market's needs.

7.1.1 BELF Usage in Export Sales

Typically, in established relationships, the use of English has not posed a problem for the organisation, as a network of distributors is used in order to operate in overseas markets, and at these distributors, at least one individual is usually able to speak English in order to ensure communication: *"we've met some very good people and somewhere along the line, fortunately for us, most of them have got somebody English speaking, in the companies, because English is a second language in most European countries"* (Managing Director).

The Managing Director felt that this network of distributors was the best strategy for the organisation as it meant that they did not have to deal directly with end users in overseas markets, which may potentially exacerbate the language barrier, and she felt that their distributors were much better positioned to service end user needs than Company D itself:

I suppose that's really basically what we do with our distributors… we use distributors in the country of choice, so the customers are actually dealing with their own countrymen […] People that understand their culture, they understand the business, they understand the business culture
(Managing Director).

However, this meant that Company D was particularly reliant on the distributors in order to work effectively, and this is something that had caused them problems in the past, when it was discovered that one of their agents had been operating in a fraudulent manner, which demonstrates the potential restrictions of having to only use distributors who are able to speak English. Thus although the company found that it was perfectly possible to use BELF in order to operate in Europe, in doing so, it was distancing itself from the local markets, which produced an environment in which unscrupulous individuals felt that they could exploit this lack of market proximity. As a result of these events, the organisation changed its distribution model to a network primarily composed of distributors, instead of agents, who received a commission on sales, which was the model that Company D had used in the past.

The Managing Director did demonstrate awareness of the need to modify the kind of English which she used when communicating in BELF, saying that:

Yes, I think you do… I think you do tend to… hopefully I don't slow down and shout… you know, which… you slow down… and I don't, I don't think I have got a particularly strong [regional] accent.

However, I am from a different part of the UK, and the regional accent which the Managing Director had seemed to me to be to be quite strong, although it is possible that given this was a conversation between two native speakers of English, no attempts were made to minimise accent in the way that they would have been if a non-native speaker had been involved.

Furthermore, she was also aware that where some of her distributors may come across as abrupt, verging on rude at times, but that much of this is due to a language barrier when they were communicating in English*: "my Slovenian rep is that… she speaks perfect English… she can be very brash with it […] But I'd take that again, it's the literal translation of what she wants to say"* (Managing Director).

Therefore, it was emphasised that communication in BELF from both parties tended to be task based conversation:

sometimes you do just have to do it that little bit more slowly, or, use more direct words and leave out a lot of the conversational stuff that… you know, if you and I were talking, it'd be… there'd be more in there… you tend to leave out some of the […] enhancements that you'd have put in
(Managing Director).

Potentially as a result of this focus on the task in communicative events, it was stressed that the type of relationships which the company tended to have with customers was an arms-length relationship:

I know they say it is built on relationships, but I think, initially, yes it is, but once people know you, and they've met you, then that is easier to manage going forward, because they trust, and I think that's the big thing […] I'd not met the distributors… we'd converse with them on email and et cetera, but at the end of the day, as long as we give them good service, a good quality product, we turn up on time, and they pay us et cetera, then that is a sound business relationship
(Managing Director).

This is an indication that language is a factor in the type of business relationships which the organisation tends to have, but other factors were also acknowledged by the organisation as playing an important role, as it was stressed that under the previous owner, the organisation had been too close to some of its customers, which had ultimately caused financial problems, and the current Managing Director was keen to avoid such a scenario.

Furthermore, the Managing Director suggested that using BELF could create challenges during the process of establishing new relationships. For example, it was noted how difficult it was to contact new companies in Turkey via telephone, as frequently the person who would answer would be unable to speak English, which would then make it very difficult to be able to speak to the correct person: *"Trying to make telephone appointments in Turkey was incredibly difficult […] Without some help, yeah… because they, just answer the phone and you go… right… and as soon as they don't speak English, that's it"* (Managing Director).

Thus in order to manage this process of market expansion, the organisation was obliged to use other practices which are discussed in the following sections, in order to be able to communicate effectively with international partners.

Additionally, the company also provided the only account in the study of BELF being resisted by a foreign partner to the extent that language became weaponised. The company used to have a distributor in France who they no longer work with who did not speak very good English, and would frequently rant in French when speaking to the MD on the phone. When a French speaker was hired at the company and was put on the phone to the client without any warning, the client seemed shocked and stopped his tirades, suggesting to the MD that he had been offensive, but did not feel comfortable to keep doing so when people were able to understand him:

> *he used to try and shout at us in French […] I put this lady on the phone and she just started talking fluent French… completely threw him […] Because he knew that probably he couldn't get away with saying some of the things that he would have said if he was just talking to me*
> (Managing Director).

This individual also had a tendency to hide behind the language barrier when trying to get his own way, for example if the company was trying to introduce a price increase he would claim to not understand and continue doing what he wanted:

> *I found a lot more out afterwards, where he was using the language barrier distinctly to his advantage, shall we say […] I don't understand! And then you know, you find a few things out, he understood perfectly, coz the ones I wanted to charge him extra for, he was actually charging the customer extra for*
> (Managing Director).

Although this was the behaviour of one individual, and therefore individual personality has a role to play in such behaviour, it does demonstrate that when an organisation relies on their supply chain partners bearing the linguistic burden of communicating in English, this can place organisations in a vulnerable position where supply chain partners can turn the language barrier to their own advantage and use it to both conceal information and also behave in a manner which may be considered unacceptable in business if the full intent of such behaviour were fully understood by both parties.

7.1.2 Using Language Intermediaries

Given the lack of internal language capital at the organisation, the Managing Director found it useful at times to engage the services of language intermediaries in order to facilitate communication with downstream supply chain partners.

7.1.2.1 Professional Interpreters

Despite the majority of the organisation's customers having a language node who enabled communication to take place in English, there was an occasion where a customer from Italy visited the premises of Company D who did not speak sufficient English to enable communication to take place, and Company D was unable to communicate in Italian.

The organisation therefore hired the services of an interpreter, who the Managing Director had previously met at a business networking event. In addition to the linguistic skills of the interpreter, the Managing Director appeared to attach a good deal of importance to the role of culture in international business, and it was therefore considered to be helpful that:

> *although she was Italian […] She was local to [city][…] So it was easier because we had an understanding in English sort of locally, and she then had got an understanding with the Italians… and they didn't actually know each other but they were very close… where their families came from*
> (Managing Director).

It was noted that the use of an interpreter was effective in the meeting, but that it was also very tiring for the Managing Director as an interlocutor *"I found it… not hard work, but I found it tiring […] Because you're going through everything twice."* As a result of this, the MD felt that using an interpreter to facilitate a business meeting was a skill in itself, and which got easier with practice as the day went along. This raises an interesting point about the additional effort which interlocutors have to put into a conversation which is taking place through an interpreter and whether they are always aware of this before entering the conversation, particularly if it is with individuals which don't have a prior relationship: *"Tiring… especially when you're with people that you don't know, you've not met before"* (Managing Director).

The role of body language was also highlighted as being important in conversations which were facilitated by an interpreter, as this enabled both parties to get an

indication of the other interlocutor's response to a particular point, before the interpreter had actually translated a message in detail: *"you tend to get a feeling for what's being said, even if you don't know what's being said [...] It's all... ultimately I think that is down to body language"* (Managing Director).

Interestingly, and in contrast to other comments regarding virtual communication made by the MD, here it was felt that it was easier to communicate with the Italians at lunch, when non-business matters were being discussed:

> *when you're talking about family... and things like that you can... you can get round it in English, which we did at lunch, you know, I mean the interpreter still came with us to lunch [...] But we could actually get round it, you know, talking about granddaughters with pictures... and their children, liked skiing, and this that and the other. You couldn't get round... the actual business conversation... would have been much more difficult without the interpreter*
> (Managing Director).

7.1.2.2 Language Nodes as Interpreters

In addition to using professional interpreters, the organisation had also encountered situations in which partner organisations had brought language nodes to meetings in order to take on the responsibility of interpreting the discussion: *"this guy didn't speak one word of English, and I didn't speak one word of Turkish, but the guy that he brought with him, translated very well, and we had a really really good meeting"* (Managing Director).

This demonstrates the creativity which organisations employ in order to deploy limited linguistic resources without expending money on professional language services where they do not feel it is necessary. However, although the MD stated that this particular meeting had been really useful, when discussing the role of interpreters, she also noted that: *"at the end of the day, I hadn't got a clue, whether that interpreter's actually telling them the right thing, but you know that they are [...] And a professional interpreter will do that."*

The particular emphasis which was given to the trustworthiness of a professional interpreter implied that when using language nodes, or more informal interpreters, there was a greater risk of being misrepresented than when paying for the services of a professional.

7.1.3 Using External Resources (Universities, Chamber of Commerce, Language Organisations)

Given that market research and establishing initial contact with potential overseas partners was one of the areas which the organisation found particularly challenging, in order to do this, they used the services of external organisations who were able to provide information for free or at a low cost. For example, given that Turkey had been identified by the organisation as a potentially interesting market, but one which was difficult to fully research and establish links in without some form of Turkish language competence, the organisation pursued two different routes in order to gain information and establish contacts in the market.

7.1.3.1 Using University Resources

Firstly, the organisation contacted local universities, and became involved in projects where university students would research overseas markets as an in-module project in order to gain experience. Whilst such projects were useful in order to provide a general market overview, which saved the organisation time as they did not have to conduct their own desk research, the company found that such projects were particularly valuable if the students involved were able to speak the language of the country that they were researching, as the MD explained when discussing projects which had been done on Turkey and Romania: *"They both presented really well, but the Turkish one… because they'd got a Turkish national in the team[…] You got… more, in depth, than the other team that were looking at Romania."*

During such projects, some international students were even able to visit potential partners when they returned home for the holidays, and to then feed this information back to the company: *"she'd even been to see customers when she went over on holiday for me!"* (Managing Director).

Thus such reports provided a valuable and free resource when the organisation was at the market research stage and was looking for market information. Indeed, it was suggested that this is an area in which universities can make further links with local business communities, and it was the opinion of the MD that universities need to publicise such opportunities to a greater extent, as she felt that more businesses would use them if they knew about them: *"the university needs to sort of […] promote*

it, coz there are a lot of people that would use it, if they knew it was there, definitely"
(Managing Director).

7.1.3.2 Using Chamber of Commerce Services

At the stage of needing to contact target organisations in order to discuss the potential for a relationship, the organisation found it useful to use services from the Chamber of Commerce to establish contact where there was a language barrier present *"was incredibly difficult [...] I trotted myself off to the British Chamber of Commerce and got them to do it!"* (Managing Director). Although such services are not free, they do provide an initial contact with a market for a cost which appears to be within the reach of many SMEs (UKTI, 2012), and thus were used in order to avoid situations where the company had identified potential partners, but was unable to speak to appropriate decision makers because they could not get past gatekeepers at the organisation who were unable to speak English.

7.1.3.3 Using Local Language Organisations

Finally, in addition to the resources provided by institutions such as universities or chambers of commerce, Company D has also made use of local language organisations who offer free or low cost services which can support businesses in overcoming the language barriers in their relationships. The MD explained how they had tapped into resources such as Languages Sheffield, which promotes "all forms of language use and learning" (languages-sheffield.org.uk, n.d.) in order to access linguistic resources and gain useful contacts.

This section demonstrates how smaller organisations increasingly have a wide range of less formal resources which they are able to access in order to gain linguistic support, however, a lack of awareness of such support networks can be a barrier to their use.

7.1.4 Using Google Translate

The organisation did use Google Translate in order to communicate with customers, and noted that it tended to work reasonably well:

> *last week when we were talking to this French company, using the Microsoft French and Microsoft English, backwards and forwards, it actually worked incredibly well, the salutations were there [...] and everything was very cordial*
> (Managing Director).

However it was acknowledged, that in such a situation, it was not necessary to understand everything, but that *"as long we get the gist across and the business is right"* it was an adequate way to communicate for the needs of this business.

Where the use of tools such as Google Translate created particular problems for the company was in relation to industry specific vocabulary which Google did not understand. For example, it was explained that when the company was trying to understand a price list of products that a French organisation had sent them using Google, which could have been viewed as a very literal act of translation, online software was unable to cope and led to the following situation:

> *some of the tooling descriptions where we've tried to translate the French distributors price lists that we brought in, one of my favourites, is* fraise herisson*, which is a strawberry hedgehog [...] But to us, it's a porcupine cutter*
> (Managing Director).

Thus while such tools do have a role, and can support communication across language boundaries, the company is aware that they are not perfect, and can cause problems, particularly for technical vocabulary.

7.1.5 Media Choice in Customer Relationships

Given the reliance on being able to communicate in English, the organisation tends to use lean media such as email for the majority of their communications, as they believe that this makes it easier for the other partner: *"It tends to be the majority email [...] I think they find that easier... and so do we because it gives them an option to... you know, sort of translate or whatever"* (Managing Director).

The exception to this was the agent based in Finland who would usually telephone the organisation, however, although his English was fluent, these telephone calls also tended to be about transactional matters *"he's always ringing up with reports and to ask where his money and one thing and another, and whether there's a shipment going, so he's quite easy to deal with."*

Given the nature of the relationships which the organisation had with its distributors, most communication was quite infrequent *"the others don't need... tend to need a lot of handling [...] Particularly those that have been with us a long time..."* (Managing

200

Director), and thus it is likely that this infrequent communication was one of the factors which made it easier for the organisation to rely on communicating in English.

Furthermore, the use of email permitted the organisation and its customers to send each other images, thus incorporating a richer media into a lean media. This was particularly helpful in the engineering industry: *"with the benefit of… instant digital availability, if we don't know what they're talking about… is it possible to send us a picture […] And now the majority of them, if they want to ask us something, will send us a picture anyway"* (Managing Director).

Thus in a technical industry, it is much easier to remove linguistic communication from the exchange and to rely on a picture in order to communicate the part or tool concerned, again further reducing the pressure on both parties to communicate a potentially complex message verbally.

7.2 Document Translation

At the time of the fieldwork, the organisation had recently undergone a rebranding which involved a re-design of their website. Prior to this, they had undertaken an Export Communications Review provided by UK Trade and Investment, who advised the organisation on how to make the website more international. As a result of this, they undertook several actions:

> *we internationalised it to a certain extent, by internationalising the telephone numbers, and things like that, and we put the language buttons on… to show the intent […] but never actually got round to… putting the pages on*
> (Managing Director).

Although at this point, the organisation did have some materials available in other languages because the previous owner had used a translation agency in order to translate some product information into other languages *"we had leaflets in Dutch, we had leaflets in French"* (Managing Director), there did not seem to be a requirement amongst their customers to provide such information, and as the product information was by this point, somewhat out of date, the organisation decided not to include this information on the website.

Following the website redesign, the organisation continued with the decision not to make materials available in other languages, but instead:

> *we were advised to put more pictures on… and less words, because pictures tell a story, and that's sort of the route that we went down with the new web developer to get it more, modern looking*
> (Managing Director).

The organisation was contacted by a translation agency who offered to create them micro-sites in the languages of key markets for the company, however the company did not pursue this option because of *"stupid prices. Absolutely stupid. Restrictive prices"* (Managing Director).

Company D may have been more disposed to consider this service had there been a demand from customers for materials and the website to be available in other languages, but as this did not appear to be an expectation of their customers, the MD decided that *"I can't see, necessarily see, the benefit, I'd rather spend the money on… a good quality website, and then see where we go."*

Thus as at the other case organisations, where smaller organisations have limited resources, it was frequently customer expectations which contributed to the decision making process about whether resources needed to be allocated to providing linguistic support, or whether the resources would be best utilised in other areas, as was the case here.

7.3 Conclusion

This chapter has presented a variety of practices which Company D uses purely in downstream supply chain relationships in order to manage linguistic diversity. It has highlighted that in situations where British organisations rely on the ability of their supply chain partners to communicate with them in English, it can leave them vulnerable to exploitation because they are unaware of what may actually be happening in the market. It also highlights the predominance of task-based communication where fluency in a shared language is not present, particularly when a lean media is used for the majority of communication. As a result of the primacy of these two practices, this chapter is entitled "Lean Media and English" in order to reflect that, although other practices were used, the organisation primarily relied on

being able to communicate in English with their partners, and to use lean media to communicate where this was not possible.

Additionally, as with Company C, the case demonstrated how smaller organisations can try to use free resources in order to acquire language skills and market information, which can then be supplemented by paid for resources in particular circumstances, such as the use of professional interpreters and the Chamber of Commerce. Furthermore, it shows how crucial it is that smaller organisations allocate their limited resources in a way which is going to add value for the organisation, and thus choose from a variety of different practices to deploy resources which are most appropriate for them in particular circumstances, rather than adhering to a pre-defined strategy which may not be flexible enough for the organisation's needs.

Chapter 8 – Contextualised Explanation and Analysis

In this chapter, evidence is used from the four findings chapters in order to provide contextualised explanations for the choices which the case organisations have made in order to manage linguistic diversity in their international supply chains. Five key themes are presented: the practices which the organisations use; the emergent nature of such decisions; the importance of relationship structure; the role of power in shaping decisions; and practices which are used specifically to manage document translation. By drawing on theory presented in the Literature Review, including that which addresses language management practices, BELF, supply chain relationships, and power, explanations are provided for why organisations use identified practices in particular ways and the role of linguistic Others is further explored.

8.0 Introduction

Based on contextualised explanations (Welch et al, 2011) relating to the key themes which emerged from the research, as discussed in section 3.7.3 of the methodology, this chapter presents the analysis of the findings of the research..

I begin by addressing the research aim of identifying the language practices which smaller organisations use in order to manage linguistic diversity in their international supply chain relationships.

8.1 Practices Used by Smaller Organisations in Order to Manage Linguistic Diversity

The extant literature has identified a wide range of practices which organisations can use in order to manage linguistic diversity in international business, as exemplified in Figure 2.4 in the Literature Review, although as discussed, previous empirical work has tended to focus on multinational enterprises, whilst the practices of smaller organisations have remained underexplored. As a result, the practice for managing linguistic diversity which has received the most attention in the literature, the idea of a common corporate language (Janssens and Steyaert, 2014), is not applicable to the context in which the four case organisations in this study operate for two primary reasons. Firstly, given that the focus of this study is on inter-organisational relationships, the focal organisations are not able to formally mandate the language practices of their supply chain partners, which would be required for a common corporate language. Secondly, all the case organisations are based in the UK, meaning that the choice of English as a common corporate language, which is frequently the

case (Neeley, 2012), would be relatively uncontroversial in such a scenario. Therefore, in keeping with the research aims of understanding the practices which smaller organisations use to manage linguistic diversity and how these are linked with power dynamics, this chapter presents practices which have received less attention than common corporate languages in the extant literature.

8.1.1 Lingua Francæ in International Supply Chains

Despite the lack of a common corporate language in any of the case organisations, a lingua franca, defined as a vehicular language of communication between non-native speakers (Poncini, 2003; Fredriksson et al, 2006), was indeed observed at all the organisations studied. In the majority of scenarios, this lingua franca is English, and thus I will address this in more detail in section 8.3 of this chapter, as I consider that this lingua franca is not used in a neutral way as suggested by the concept of BELF (Louhiala-Salminen and Kankaanranta, 2011), but instead is infused with power dynamics, and therefore I discuss this in the context of the research aim of understanding the interplay between the language practices employed and power dynamics in supply chain relationships.

In addition to the use of English as a lingua franca however, at Companies A and B, which were the only two organisations with internal language capital, languages other than English were also used as lingua francæ, although to a lesser extent than English. At Company A there were examples of German and Spanish used in order to communicate with customers outside of teutophone and hispanophone markets. Additionally, in Company B, Polish was used as either a lingua franca with customers in Eastern Europe, or as a form of passive multilingualism (Piekkari et al, 2015) in communicative events involving other Slavic languages which were mutually intelligible. The use of such languages in this way is advantageous for smaller organisations who lack the resources to invest in acquiring additional language capital, and from an organisational perspective, also provides a more efficient use of existing linguistic resources. However, the use of this particular practice requires the organisation to have internal language capital, which was notably only present at the two largest organisations (which had more than forty employees), and who had acquired such capital through the recruitment of language nodes.

8.1.2 The Role of Language Nodes in Smaller Organisations

Both Company A and Company B had engaged in the recruitment of language nodes (Feely and Harzing, 2003) in order to better communicate with their supply chain partners, and both have found this to be an advantageous solution, and as a result, they had both increased the amount of internal language capital which they had available over time.

From the perspective of individual language agents however, this solution was one which brought both advantages and disadvantages to their working lives, as exemplified by the below quotes:

> *it's just the opportunity to… to really engage with the language again*
> (Spanish Speaking Export Sales Manager, Company A).

> *I hate not using it [the language] on a daily basis*
> (German Speaking Export Sales Manager, Company B).

> *I mean contact with customers is quite important to me, I love… speaking, talking on the phone and… the whole visits, exhibitions and stuff like this, is very very interesting for me so, really pleased that I can use my linguistic skills*
> (French and Polish Speaking Export Executive, Company B).

> *every single French communication that came along could only be answered by me […] I was […] twenty nine then, thirty years old then […] I had the chance to go where I wanted to, for free*
> (New Product Development Manager, Company B).

> *the problem we've got is that, because you've only got one person… with the language… with the individual language skills, when they're not around or they're on holiday, and you have an issue…*
> (Sales Director, Company A).

> *Sometimes it is a bit of a pain*
> (French Speaking Export Executive, Company B).

Whilst language nodes typically emphasised the intrinsic pleasure which they derived from being able to use their language skills at work, indicating that their linguistic competence formed an important part of their professional identities (Itani et al, 2015), it was also noted that the role of language node brought with it a significant amount of stress, as such employees found that their linguistic skills obliged them to

become involved in aspects of the supply chain relationship which would not usually be associated with their role.

Additionally, Company A and Company B demonstrated different orientations to the recruitment of language nodes. Whilst both organisations used self-initiated expatriates (Suutari and Brewster, 2000), there was a much greater preference at Company A to employ native speakers of a language, who had both language and cultural skills (Peltokorpi and Schneider, 2009), which the organisation saw as important in effectively managing relationships, rather than linguistic skills alone. Company B was significantly less concerned with the use of native speakers, and all of the language nodes at this organisation operated in at least one language which was not their mother tongue, demonstrating a different orientation to the deployment of language nodes, and a greater emphasis on linguistic, rather than cultural, knowledge.

The language nodes were keen to stress their preference for oral communication:

> *what I tell all my customers, if something's urgent, don't send an email […]*
> *Coz, you know, you might not read it til the morning, if it's urgent, give me a*
> *call* (German Speaking Export Manager, Company A).

> *it's easier to pick up the phone and say whatever*
> (French Speaking Export Executive, Company B).

> *From a selling point of view… I … almost prefer to speak, because you can*
> *gauge somebody's attitude and reactions far better than an email*
> (German Speaking Export Executive, Company B).

> *phone would be always the preferred solution if possible here in the office*
> (French and Polish Speaking Export Executive, Company B).

In practice however, and from observational data, the use of email as a tool of communication was widespread, which was also the case at Companies C and D where internal language capital was not present.

8.1.3 The Use of Different Media Types to Communicate in International Supply Chains
A pattern emerged in the case organisations that in addition to the linguistic content of a message, the form in which it was encoded also had a significant role to play in crossing linguistic boundaries, as I will now explain.

8.1.3.1 Lean Media

Although traditional communication theory (e.g. Dennis, Fuller and Valacich, 2008) suggests that rich media is preferable for conveying complex messages such as may occur in an international supply chain, this study confirms the findings of Tenzer and Pudelko (2016), that where linguistic boundaries are present, lean media, typified by email in all the case organisations, was preferred by participants as they considered it easier to communicate via this method when non-native speakers were involved in the exchange. This concurs with the concept that for second language speakers, reading and writing are easier skills to perform than speaking and listening (Tenzer and Pudelko, 2016), because an asynchronous, written exchange provides time for respondents to understand and reflect on the content of a message before composing a response. Additionally, such an environment is one in which foreign language anxiety (FLA) (Dewaele, 2007) is less likely to occur, as it is a less pressurised environment which creates a reduced cognitive load for second language speakers (Volk et al, 2014).

It was additionally identified across all four organisations that the use of lean media also enabled the use of programmes such as Google Translate in order to assist in the crossing of linguistic boundaries in international supply chains. As this relates to document translation, this area of language practice is explored in more detail in section 8.5.

Interestingly, although language nodes suggested that they were more likely to use lean media for transactional communication *"if it's just a very quick, I need a question answering or, can you confirm this, then I would always do it by email"* (German Speaking Export Executive, Company B), this was a practice which occurred across all different types of communications, regardless of whether the organisations had internal language capabilities or not. Whilst at some of the organisations the use of lean media was framed as a pragmatic solution to overcoming language boundaries, Company C explicitly identified the fact that changing the communication media (Shachaf, 2008; Harzing et al, 2011; Klitmøller and Lauring, 2013; Gaibrois, 2016) was a key part of their practice in managing linguistic diversity without having the resources to acquire internal language capabilities at the organisation.

The findings therefore highlight the use of lean media as a key practice which smaller organisations use in communicating with their international supply chain partners as it is not dependent on any additional resources.

8.1.3.2 Pictorial Communication

The organisations also drew attention to the fact that the development of communication technology had meant that they were now able to communicate pictorially to a greater extent than had been possible in the past *"So now we've obviously… with the benefit of… instant digital availability, if we don't know what they're talking about… is it possible to send us a picture"* (Managing Director, Company D). Given that all the organisations operated in technical industries, this was something which they found to be invaluable as they were able to see images of products and parts and understand what they related to without the need for lengthy verbal explanations. Again, this was a practice which was employed at organisations both with and without internal language capital, although it was relied upon to a greater extent where language capital was not present, demonstrating once again the vital role which the mode of communication can play in scenarios where linguistic capabilities are not present. Whilst this practice may not be appropriate for smaller organisations in all industries, particularly service organisations, the findings show that it is a useful tool to manage linguistic diversity in manufacturing supply chains.

8.1.3.3 Body Language

Some respondents particularly highlighted that although not always practical, face to face communication was preferred:

> *I always have preferred face to face, but obviously in this role, I'm based here and my accounts are abroad, so my face to face is going to be limited*
> (Spanish Speaking Export Sales Manager, Company A).

> *That conversation, had it taken place over email or phone, it would have been nigh on impossible*
> (Finance Director, Company A).

> *actually I think French people like to see you as well…*
> (General Manager, Company A).

Part of the reason for this was because it enables communication through body language, as this enables interlocutors to get a sense of what the conversation is about

even when the verbal content is not clearly understood. Of all the case organisations, only the largest, Company A, engaged in frequent visits to international supply chain partners, with Companies B and D visiting less frequently and Company C not at all, due to a lack of resources. However, the findings indicate that the importance of face to face meetings in establishing working relationships across linguistic boundaries should not be underestimated. Whilst an investment in face to face meetings would not be desirable or even possible for all relationship types (Webster, 1992), for strategic relationships at the higher end of this typology, such a relationship specific investment (Palmatier et al, 2007) can play an important role in the development and maintenance of strong links across linguistic boundaries.

8.1.3 The Use of External Language Resources

Given that none of the organisations had sufficient internal linguistic capabilities in order to communicate in all of the languages in which their supply chain partners operate, all of the organisations elected to use external language resources in some way. In this section, I specifically exclude professional translators as external resources as this will be addressed in section 8.5 on document translation.

Whilst professional resources, such as translators were used by all the case organisations, and interpreters were also used by Companies B and D, the findings show that all the organisations were concerned about the financial cost associated with such practices, as discussed in greater detail in section 8.2, which explores how smaller organisations are required to use creative solutions in order to meet their linguistic needs. Therefore, particularly at the smallest organisations, Companies C and D, they preferred to use less formal external resources in order to acquire linguistic capital.

For example, university resources were especially important for Companies C and D, as this provided a free or low cost way in order to use linguistic and research skills of students in order to acquire market knowledge. Additionally, using student-led research projects was also seen as a time-saving activity for companies who were then able to free up management time to work on other tasks which were critical to the business. However, the organisations did find that the results of such projects could be variable depending on the skills and motivations of the students concerned, and

therefore although such a practice could provide market insights, it was not a long-term solution to ongoing communications with particular partners.

This was also the case with services provided by Chambers of Commerce, which were used by the case organisations in order to overcome initial linguistic hurdles in establishing relationships, and in identifying potential partners as part of a market research process. Whilst such services are not free, the organisations clearly saw this as a worthwhile investment in order to overcome specific challenges posed by the lack of linguistic capital when seeking to acquire market information, but again, was not a solution to ongoing communicative challenges.

8.1.4 Summary of Practices

Although some of the practices used by the case organisations have been identified in the extant literature, for example language nodes and the use of external resources, a contribution of this study is to demonstrate how smaller organisations use such practices in different ways to their larger counterparts which have typically been the focus of the literature. For example, the attention which was given by all organisations to media choice in their international relationships is an area which is only recently beginning to gain attention in the language-sensitive international business literature (e.g. Klitmøller and Lauring, 2013; Harzing and Pudelko, 2014; Tenzer and Pudelko, 2016) and has not previously been researched in the context of smaller organisations.

It is pertinent to note that the constellation of practices for managing linguistic diversity in international supply chain relationships which have been identified throughout this study have predominantly been used for reasons of resource availability and cost. However, as the organisations tend to rely on the extensive use of English in order to operate across linguistic boundaries at low cost, here the location of the study becomes extremely relevant, as this is a solution which would not be available if English did not have such a privileged status in international business, and therefore the ability to rely on supply chain partners speaking your native language is not one which is necessarily available to smaller organisations in non-Anglophone markets. This highlights that although the choice of practices used by organisations is highly pragmatic, systemic power is at work in order to enable these decisions, and this area is discussed in more detail in Section 8.3.

Additionally, these findings point to the creativity which smaller organisations employ in their language practices, and the role that chance plays in their international operations, a topic to which I now turn in more detail.

8.2 Luck and Chance When Communicating in International Supply Chains

Although all of the case organisations had a repertoire of practices which they used in order to manage linguistic diversity, this does not mean that such repertoires formed part of a language strategy (Luo and Shenkar, 2006). This study confirms the findings of Barner-Rasmussen and Aarnio (2011) who suggest that it is often impossible for organisations to deploy a formal strategy related to issues of language management, and therefore, particularly for smaller organisations, the approach taken tends to be emergent, and is contingent on context and the resources which are available to the organisation at a particular temporal moment. This supports the findings of Hurmerinta, Nummela and Paavilainen-Mäntymäki (2015) who stress the creativity of small firms in addressing linguistic diversity, and therefore although the debate continues regarding the level of formality of organisational language strategies (Piekkari et al, 2014), the findings demonstrate that for smaller organisations, an ad hoc response to managing linguistic diversity is typically used.

Consequently, this doctoral study shows how smaller organisations engage in a process of bricolage (Lévi-Strauss, 1974), and "make do" with the resources which they have available which drives the choice of particular export strategies, rather than first having a strategy in place and then acquiring resources to support this. However, it is important to stress that this "emergent strategy means, not chaos, but in essence, *unintended order*" (Mintzberg and Waters, 1985, p. 271, original emphasis). Therefore, although the findings show the difficulty of planning and executing a pre-determined strategy, instead they demonstrate how smaller organisations function quite successfully in learning what works, by taking actions seemingly at random, but which can ultimately demonstrate a pattern (Mintzberg and Waters, 1985) that enables them to respond to language demands over time (Piekkari et al, 2014).

This was even the case at Company A, which as the largest organisation, had the most clearly defined international strategy, and had recently acquired language capital – on the basis of prior experience -in order to support a multidomestic approach (Bartlett

and Ghoshal, 1989) in European markets. However, until very recently this had not been the case. For example, the previous Spanish speaking export sales manager also spoke Portuguese, which led the organisation to explore the Brazilian market because they could, and not because it had been determined as a priority for the organisation. Similarly, when I was employed at the organisation, in addition to Spain and France, I also began to explore markets in francophone North Africa, and hispanophone Latin America, simply because my language skills enabled me to do so, and thus it was the available resources which to a certain extent, drove the choice of markets, rather than a clearly formulated strategy which required the acquisition of particular linguistic resources.

Furthermore, at Company B, it was found that capital in two languages, Polish and German, was acquired accidentally. The two language nodes who speak these languages were not recruited for their skills in Polish and German, but for other aspects of the business, and after spending time at the organisation, it was realised that these languages could potentially create access to new markets.

Additionally, all the organisations relied on contacts which they had made either personally or through networking events which had provided opportunities, demonstrating the unplanned nature of such occurrences.

These findings highlight both the importance that luck, chance and serendipity have played in the language practices which smaller organisations use to manage their international supply chain relationships, and also the agility which the firms demonstrate in exploiting the resources which they do have available. They indicate that although they may be acquired in an unplanned way, language skills form part of the intangible resources of the organisation which are used to create competitive advantage. This is particularly important in the UK because linguistically skilled individuals who also have appropriate technical competences are rare, and although language skills are an easily imitated resource, the relationships between supply chain partners which they facilitate are not, and thus are a value-adding resource for the organisation (Peng, 2009).

The evidence presented in the previous chapters also demonstrate that these practices are not used in a neutral way, but are instead infused with power dynamics which are

constructed both in the individual supply chain relationships themselves, and also in the wider macro-environment in which the organisations operate, and it is to the theme of power to which I now turn.

8.3 Language and Power in Inter-Organisational Supply Chain Relationships

In this section I address the research aim of how language practices are influenced by supply chain relationship dynamics.   As discussed in Section 2.5 of the Literature Review, I take the view that power is relationally constructed, and is therefore present in all human interactions.   Following Hardy (1996) in avoiding a purely negative conceptualisation of power, and having used the framework of Fleming and Spicer (2007) in order to categorise language practices as particular manifestations of power and resistance, as can be seen in Figures 8.1 and 8.2, I begin with a discussion of systemic power and its impact on language practices, as this was much more prevalent throughout the study than episodic forms of power.

8.3.1 Systemic Power, Resistance and their Impact on Language Management Practices in International Supply Chains

Fleming and Spicer (2007) suggest that both domination and subjectification are forms of systemic power which are embedded into societal structures, rather than being constructed in individual encounters between social actors. The most immediate and visible manifestation of such forms of power in the international supply chain relationships studied was the unquestioned usage of English as a lingua franca, and in this power-sensitive explanation, I here specifically refer to "English" rather than "Business English" because the way in which the language was used was placed very firmly under the ownership of native speakers who are "inner circle" (Kachru, 1992) members, and therefore it could not be considered as a neutral practice.

Despite all the case organisations being selected because they did not solely rely on the use of English in their international communications, the findings demonstrate that in practice, English was the main form of communication between all the organisations and their supply chain partners.

Such a decision was presented as both legitimate and inevitable by the interviewees, thus reinforcing the hegemonic position (Gramsci, 1971) of the English language in

international business. For example, a reason which was commonly given for the use of English was the poor level of attainment of British employees in foreign languages:

> *my experience is that most people… know English better than we know anything else*
> (Customer Service Manager, Company A).

> *it seems like there is… at least here in the north… there's not that many people with foreign language attributes…*
> (Spanish Speaking Export Sales Manager, Company A).

> *it puts us in that lovely… arrogant position of not having to make an effort really* (Finance Director, Company A).

> *I mean it's only our country that's lazy isn't it and don't learn other languages*
> (Purchasing Manager, Company A).

> *English is a second language in most European countries, so… It makes us incredibly lazy*!
> (Managing Director, Company D).

Although such comments may initially appear to come from a position of humility, in fact, what they do is to place the burden of communication onto a linguistic Other, which is able to occur because of expectations about the use of English in international business. Therefore, far from being a neutral, pragmatic solution, as BELF is frequently advocated to be (Louhiala-Salminen and Kankaanranta, 2011), in this study, it was used as an instrument of domination, where native English speakers felt they had the right to speak in their own language, and others did not, and this was reflected in the language practices which the organisations used, as identified in Section 8.1. Furthermore, a hierarchy of Englishes was demonstrated, so that rather than a constellation of World Englishes where expanding circle users enjoyed equal legitimacy with inner circle users (Kachru, 1992), instead, English language users were positioned as members of in groups or out groups (Lauring, 2007) depending on the variety of English which they used:

> *we have an African gentleman ring… and he's very broad in his… and I've taken the call in the past and thought, do you know, I keep saying I'm sorry, email me, write it me down, because I just can't […] when he calls, we all go,*

it's that chap, you get it, no you get it, no you get it, because no one wants
to struggle to communicate
(Customer Service Manager, Company A).

Therefore, although in the field of international management, postcolonial scholars have written about the concept of cultural Others, and how they are marginalised (e.g. Westwood, 2006; Jack and Westwood, 2006; Jack et al, 2011), here I argue that the dominance of English has led to linguistic Othering in Anglophone organisations, where speakers of other languages are marginalised and viewed as disruptive because they do not conform to expectations about who should legitimately be involved in international business, and challenge Anglocentric norms of communication.

Furthermore, some of the interviewees demonstrated by their words that they did not simply accept the domination of English as quite legitimate, but that they had been subjectified by it (Fleming and Spicer), and that it had shaped their values in terms of understanding which people and organisations were able to participate in international business, as evidenced by the comments of the IJV Manager at Company A, when I asked if he had experience of international organisations who wanted to communicate in languages other than English *"If they ask… they are not suitable for doing the business internationally […] They will have limitations."*

Such findings show that despite the discourse of BELF, which presents its use as a practical solution, which is also neutral and democratic (Kankaanranta, 2006), this is profoundly distorted when native speakers of English are present in the communicative exchange, as they are able to dominate interactions without necessarily being aware of it (Méndez García and Pérez Cañado, 2005). It is this lack of awareness which is particularly relevant, as the interviews do not suggest that native speakers set out to exercise their linguistic power in order to oppress others, but that the environment of international business and beliefs about the hegemonic position of English enables them to do so without being aware of their privileged position. Indeed, so entrenched were these values in some circumstances that if they were challenged in anyway, this was met by anger and confusion on the part of native speakers, who themselves resisted attempts to challenge this hegemony, demonstrating the dynamic interplay between power and resistance conceptualised as "struggle" (Fleming and Spicer, 2007).

I then decided that we should then have a French answerphone […] So I got this French lady to rehearse the script so that… at weekends, or in the morning earlier, late in the evening if somebody rings and they don't get through, they get this English and French version […] the French version was absolutely spot on for the French, but some of the […] when English people heard it, they really didn't like it […] So some of our UK clients, really questioned it
(New Product Development Manager, Company B).

Such manifestations of English language dominance were met with resistance in some quarters, although not in the way in which Fleming and Spicer (2007) suggest. Rather than resistance through escape or creativity, which are suggested to be the most common forms of resistance to systemic acts of power, instead the most common form was found to be simply refusal – where supply chain partners would simply cease interactions with the case organisations if they were obliged to work in English:

they said oh well if you've not got any French literature then we can't deal with you
(German Speaking Export Sales Manager, Company A).

if nobody was here who could speak French when they rang up… they'd rather put the phone down
(Executive Director, Company B).

obviously we had a few people drop out at the… can you give us an email stage […] Where they would probably think… you know this is going to be hard work… I'll just call up a French company
(Finance Director, Company C).

Such a solution perhaps reflects the relationship stage at which such encounters of struggle took place. Given that language is an immediate and visible marker of identity (Lauring and Klitmøller, 2015) and it was obvious from early stages of an interaction whether English or another language would be used, at such points, the relationships could be classified as "transactions," or potentially "repeated transactions" (Webster, 1992). Thus at this stage, neither party is heavily invested in the relationship, which is therefore governed by a market-based mechanism (Gereffi et al, 2005), meaning that it is easy for either party to simply walk away and find another supply chain partner, without incurring any further costs or inconvenience. Therefore to employ refusal as a means of resistance in such circumstances enables supply chain partners to reject the

dominance of English through a non-engagement in the interaction, and does not require further effort on their part.

It is therefore interesting to consider what happens when investments have been made into the relationship by both parties, and then the terms of the relationship, or more specifically for this study, the accepted communication norms, change. This happened at Company A, during a time period where they did not have Spanish or French speakers despite having established relationships with customers using these languages. In such circumstances, customers complained: *"we've had two upset customers since [former Spanish speaking sales manager] left… and… [current Spanish speaking sales manager] joined so we had a gap of a few months when we had no fluent Spanish speaker"* (German Speaking Export Sales Manager, Company A).

However, these customers continued with the relationship in a weary acquiescence, because at this point, they had moved up the typology of relationships (Webster, 1992) and therefore although they did not wish to use English, at this stage there were switching costs associated with changing supply chain partners (Gereffi et al, 2005).

8.3.2 Sites of Resistance against English Language Hegemony

It is interesting to consider the quarters from which resistance against the hegemony of English were most commonly encountered. All of the case organisations particularly highlighted France as a market in which the expectation of being able to use English in order to conduct international business was frequently challenged, as demonstrated by the above quotes, and there are a number of potential reasons for this.

Firstly, the geographic proximity of France and the UK mean that France is an obvious choice for British exporters who are following an incremental model of expansion (Johanson and Vahlne, 1977), and European Union membership has also reduced administrative barriers to trade between the two countries. Therefore, France is a market in which all of the case organisations had experience, which was not the case for Japan, which was also highlighted by Company A as a challenging market to do business in without Japanese language skills: *"a lot of Japanese won't speak English so… yeah the people that I deal with at [Japanese company]… yeah, they speak English, but further down the chain they won't… and their customers won't speak English"* (General Manager, Company A).

Furthermore, the UK and France have had a long and at times fractious shared political history over the last millennium (Vaara et al, 2005), and this shared history and knowledge is also likely to have influenced perceptions and stereotypes amongst both parties, which continues to shape how both sides view each other in trading relationships today. There is a small body of literature in international business which considers historical perspectives and how they influence intercultural encounters – for example, Holden (2002) notes the importance of historical relations in business between Russia and the West. Tietze et al (2017) demonstrate how the historical context is important when considering the translation of management knowledge from English to Slovak, and Śliwa (2008) takes a postcolonial perspective on Poland in order to demonstrate how linguistic imperialism – currently in the form of English, although over the past two-hundred years also German and Russian – can bring advantages for some whilst disadvantaging others. Similarly, Koveshnikov (2015, p. 411) observes in relation to Russia and Finland that "due to a long joint history and geographic proximity, people in both countries have had many opportunities to be subjected to various public and media opinions and ideas about one another," which is also true of Franco-British relations. Therefore, although such historical perspectives on language have tended to focus on transition economies, which is not the case in the Franco-Britannic relationship, such studies help to emphasize the role of history in constructing modern language management practices, and show how they "cannot be isolated from broader societal issues" (Hollinshead, 2010, p. 174).

Finally, and most importantly from a power perspective, both English and French are languages of global importance. They are both languages of colonial powers, which enabled them to export their usage around the world (Ostler, 2011), and have both been, at different points in their history, important languages for politics, diplomacy, trade and commerce. The rise in the use and importance of English, led by the USA since the Second World War, has contributed to the decline in French on a global stage, and thus it is unsurprising that many French speakers view the dominance of English in a negative light, and are unwilling to use it at the expense of their own language (Saulière, 2014). The institutional environment in France is one in which, in 1994, the French government passed the "Loi Toubon", mandating the use of French by French organisations, and "although English is mentioned nowhere in the text, the

law has been considered, ever since its adoption, as a reaction against the Anglicization of the French society and language" (Saulière, 2014, p. 224).

This is in contrast to perceptions of English in countries which had languages with a small number of speakers outside those markets, such as the Nordic countries. The case organisations highlighted how in many countries, there was not an expectation that they would need to communicate in the local language, particularly for written documentation, and that supply chain partners were happy to use English:

> *I would say 97% of our customers all speak English* (Sales Director, Company A).

> *I must have been to Sweden and Denmark fifty times, I have never learnt a single word in Swedish or Danish. And never needed to […] And I didn't think I was being expected to* (NPD Manager, Company B).

> *some of them are better at English than others, but predominantly… they'll all speak English*
> (Finance Director, Company C).

> *I have been in meetings with Chinese owners of the businesses that… even they can speak English. I think anybody under the age of fifty, fifty-five… in… particularly in Singapore speaks English*
> (Managing Director, Company D).

This highlights the importance of expectations on influencing the choice of particular language practices, and again reaffirms the view of power as neutral, but can be perceived by organisational actors as having both positive and negative effects. For example, for many organisations which come from countries with languages of a low number of native speakers, the use of English as a lingua franca enables them to participate in international business in a way which otherwise may not be possible. Certainly the extant literature points to multiple examples of the use of English as having a democratising effect (e.g. Vaara et al, 2005; Steyaert et al, 2011; Tenzer and Pudelko, 2017). Therefore, in the light of these studies and the evidence of this doctoral project, Tsuda's (2013) proposal of penalising English use in international business is not an appropriate solution to the legitimate challenges which BELF usage can create, as it ignores the productive aspect which a widely shared lingua franca can bring to both organisations and individuals.

Instead, the results of the study demonstrate that it is the unreflexive use of English as a lingua franca which is particularly problematic – not just for those who are excluded from the conversation by virtue of the choice of language, but that also, relying too much on being able to use English can be damaging for those whom it initially appears to privilege – including British organisations, as discussed in Section 8.3.4.

Coercion
No examples of coercion in the relationships studied

Manipulation
Removal of linguistic capital previously in place, forcing use of English (Company A)
Only having English speakers in certain functional areas of the business (Company A and B)
Only having internal language capital in English (Company C and D)

Four faces of power

Domination
English perceived as language of international business (all companies)
Smaller linguistic communities don't expect to be able to use their own languages (all companies)
Provision of information in English only (Company D)

Subjectification
Perception that companies who aren't prepared to use English aren't appropriate for IB (Company A)
Judgement regarding legitimate varieties of English (Company A)
Complaints from English customers on inclusion of French on company answerphone (Company B)

Figure 8.1: Manifestations of power in international supply chains (adapted from Fleming and Spicer, 2007)

Refusal
Employees seeking to avoid answering the phone to non-standard English accents (Company A)
Chinese employees trying to avoid answering phone to English HQ (Company A)
French customers hanging up if unable to speak immediately in French (Company B)
Customers not pursuing business if unable to speak in their preferred language (Company C)

Voice
Customer complaints about not having access to support in their own language (Company A)

Four faces of resistance
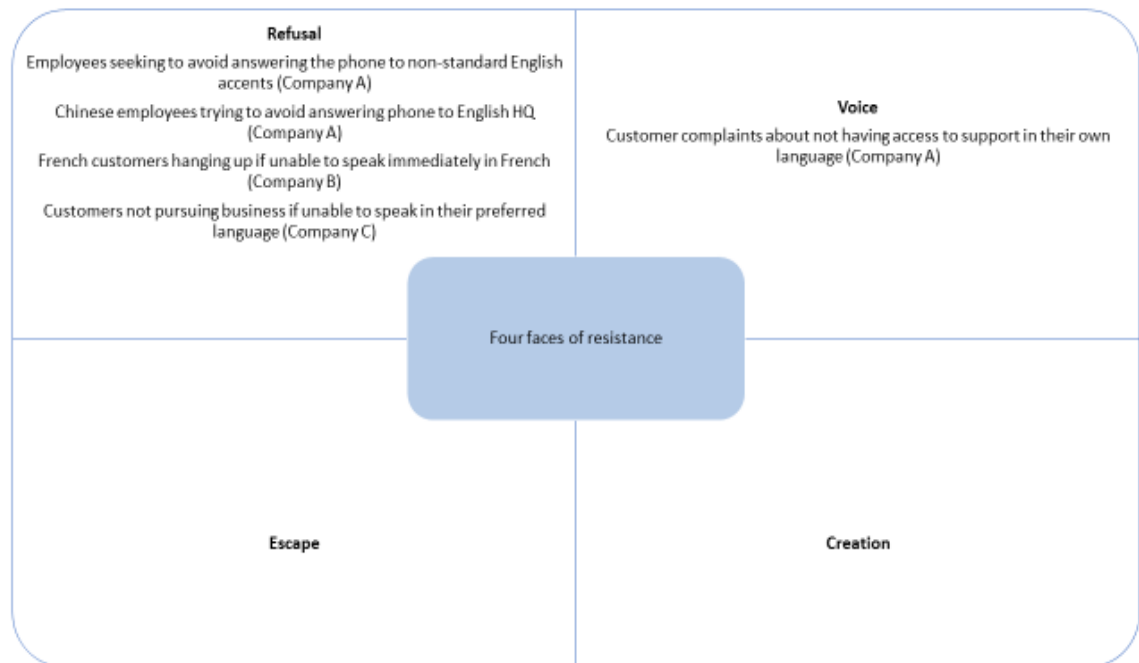
Escape

Creation

Figure 8.2: Manifestations of resistance in international supply chains (adapted from Fleming and Spicer, 2007)

8.3.3 Reflections on Manifestations of Power and Resistance

It is interesting to compare these empirical findings with the theoretical manifestations of power and resistance which are discussed in the literature review and by Wilmot (2017). The most obvious manifestation of coercion was identified as a common corporate language (Wilmot, 2017) and therefore it is unsurprising that coercion was not identified in this study. Whilst numerous examples of manipulation were identified, as evidenced by Figure 8.1, it is clear that in the context of smaller organisations, structural manifestations of power, relating to the status of the English language, were much more prevalent. However, what is particularly surprising about these findings is that they demonstrate that structural power was challenged by acts of resistance more usually (although not exclusively) associated with episodic power (Fleming and Spicer, 2007).

Escape, where employees mentally disengage from the world of work, and creation, where individuals use power creatively to create something which was unintended by those wielding it (Fleming and Spicer, 2007) were not identified at all during this study. This may point to methodological challenges in accessing such manifestations, for example, it is unlikely employees would admit they were disengaged from their role in an interview, although it may have become apparent in observation. However, in the

context of these findings, this lack of escape demonstrates that power was resisted actively, even where this was through refusal which constituted non-action, a conscious decision was made to do this, rather than a mindless compliance with organisational expectations. Given that Ezzamel et al (2001) argue that the disengagement exemplified by escape could also be viewed as a weary yet cynical acquiescence, these findings indicate that the emotional responses which language practices can evoke (Hinds et al, 2014) cause an active, rather than passive resistance.

With regards to creation, which is characterised by playfulness (Janssens and Steyaert, 2014), these findings support Tietze (2004) and Tietze et al (2017), in highlighting the close relationship between English and management knowledge and the discursive void which exists when moving between such knowledge and other languages. Furthermore, given that this study deals with inter-organisational relationships in which actors are geographically dispersed, the lack of creation can also be explained by the fact that interaction between actors and languages is insufficient to lead to translanguaging, which by its nature, necessitates frequent and prolonged contact to produce new and hybrid forms of language (Janssens and Steyaert, 2014). Therefore these empirical findings present an intriguing counterpoint to previous theoretical work in this area, and thus offer a thought-provoking direction for future research.

8.3.4 How Power Can Harm the Privileged

In addition to demonstrating struggle, and tension between the wielders of power and the oppressed, the findings also show that by legitimising hegemonic practices, such as the unquestioned acceptance of English as a lingua franca, they can also be damaging to those who they initially appear to privilege.

For example, both Company A and Company D highlighted how many of their distributors and agents were selected at least in part because of their English language skills, although this led to a risk that such skills masked incompetence about local market knowledge: *"you can get fantastic speaking… English speaking, from wherever that haven't got a clue […] No idea about the local market… they just rely on the fact that… well I can speak English"* (Marketing Manager, Company A)

Therefore a reliance on partners being able to communicate in English, at the expense of other language practices which may enable the focal organisations to be more equal

participants in a relationship can have negative repercussions for organisational performance. The perpetuation of hegemony is a harmful state of affairs for all involved in the situation, as it leads to the oppression of all actors, although to different degrees (Mumby, 1997),

This leads into a consideration of how the structure of the relationship affects the practices which are used, and who is able to determine what the communicational norms are, something which is of key importance in international supply chain relationships.

8.4 Importance of Relationship Structure on Practices Used

It was clear that across all of the four case organisations, there was a significant difference between the practices which were used in order to manage upstream supply chain relationships, and those which were used in order to manage downstream relationships.

8.4.1 Upstream Relationships

There was very little pro-active effort made in upstream relationships, and there was a clear expectation that suppliers should be prepared to communicate with the focal organisation in English. Only one of the organisations - Company B - discussed any plans to acquire language capital which would enable them to better communicate with their suppliers, rather than their customers.

The cases demonstrate that, despite increasing calls within the supply chain management literature (e.g. Trent and Monczka, 2003), procurement and sourcing are not necessarily viewed as strategic activities in the same way as downstream, customer-focused operations are. Although there were some exceptions, for example *"we have a really really good relationship, especially with, one of our Italian suppliers"* (Finance Director, Company C), overall it seemed that the organisations had quite transactional relationships with their suppliers, and as such, were content to communicate with them infrequently and in lean media.

The lack of linguistic attention given to supplier relationships is even notable at the Chinese WOS of Company A, which Webster (1992) positions as the most integrated organisational relationship in his typology. This is despite it being widely

acknowledged by the interviewees at the organisation that linguistic diversity in the relationship presents a communication barrier:

> *it doesn't cause problems, what it does do is frustrates and slows down a process*
> (Finance Director, Company A).

> *very difficult with someone who's not a native in that language, and I think you lose a lot so people go… and you think… they don't know what I'm talking about […] but they're nodding….*
> (Customer Service Manager, Company A).

Even though Company A found the language barrier to cause frustrations at their UK HQ, the burden of communication was still placed on the WOS, the linguistic Other, to ensure that they have sufficient levels of English to ensure communication to take place.

Such an approach points to power in such relationships resulting from economic power (Ireland and Webb, 2007) which was controlled by customers. In this situation it was the case organisations, who in their role as customers, effectively dictated the method of communication, which in all instances, was to use English. However, this belief about the primacy of the customer did not necessarily extend to communications with their own customers, as evidenced in the findings chapters.

8.4.2 Downstream Relationships

In downstream relationships, the choice of language practices was influenced to a much greater extent by customer expectations. Although all the organisations used English when communicating with at least some of their customers, they were much more disposed to engaging in alternative practices, such as the use of language nodes, or alternative resources in order to acquire language capital, and this was particularly prevalent in markets where customers expected to be able to communicate in languages other than English:

> *European markets are actually, well no, it's got to be in German, it's got to be in Spanish*
> (Marketing Manager, Company A).

if you can't speak French, you're in trouble… straight away, before you've even got over the first hurdle
(German Speaking Export Executive, Company B).

So we had our website redesigned… with foreign languages in mind, and I did a lot of research
(Finance Director, Company C).

We did have leaflets… we did have leaflets originally, we had leaflets in Dutch, we had leaflets in French
(Managing Director, Company D).

With the exception of Company D, who relied on distributors and agents in part because of the difficulty of communicating in languages other than English, all of the organisations worked with a number of customers in individual overseas markets. Therefore, although individually, their customers were potentially quite small, as a collective, they were economically very significant for the case organisations, and thus the desire to meet their communicative needs can be seen to be an exertion of economic power within the supply chain (Williams and Moore, 2007; Ireland and Webb, 2007). Additionally, this desire to meet the customers' needs highlights the case organisations' desire to have deeper, more trusting relationships with their customers than they had with their suppliers.

The findings therefore make it clear that smaller organisations, who have limited resources, are much more likely to focus their resources on managing downstream, rather than upstream relationships. This is in contrary to advice in the supply chain literature, which suggests that global sourcing should be viewed as a strategic-value adding activity, rather than simply viewed at a transactional level (Trent and Monckza, 2003).

They also demonstrate that the organisations consider themselves to have very different types of relationships with their suppliers as opposed to their customers. Whereas the majority of upstream relationships could simply be classified as "repeat transactions" (Webster, 1992), downstream relationships are much more likely to be at the level of "buyer/seller partnership" (Webster, 1992).

It is therefore clear that the case organisations relationally construct power so that it resides with the customer, rather than the buyer, in their supply chain relationships.

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This is evidenced by the expectation that their suppliers will manage the relationship in the language of their choice as customer (English), but were prepared to engage in alternative practices to accommodate the needs of their customers when communication in languages other than English was required.

This focus on the linguistic needs of the customer, rather than the supplier, is something which also extends beyond oral communication to written documents, which will now be discussed in further detail.

8.5 Document Translation in International Supply Chain Relationships

The extant language sensitive international management literature has typically focused to a much greater extent on oral communication practices, rather than written documentation. Although there is growing interest in this area (e.g. Kankaanranta, 2006; Kuznetsov and Kuznetsova, 2014; Holden and Michailova, 2014; Piekkari et al, 2014; Logemann and Piekkari, 2015), Zhong and Chin (2015) suggest that it is translation, rather than language, which is now the "forgotten factor" in international management.

Therefore, in order to explain the findings which specifically relate to document translation in this study, I have drawn on the field of translation studies, specifically skopos theory (Vermeer and Reiss, 2014), in order to provide an analytical framework.

Across the four case organisations, generally much less attention was given to document translation than to oral communication, with the general perception being that the majority of customers were quite happy to receive such documentation in English "*they see the product, they understand it… they see some value and will go with it, and never really asked for translations […] Or having it in local languages*" (Marketing Manager, Company A).

The significant exception here was Company C, who, as an online retailer dealing with end users rather than business customers, placed significant importance on the translation of their website, as this was their only distribution channel into European markets.

Whilst all of the organisations had used professional translators at some point, across the four organisations there was a general reluctance to do so because of the

significant costs involved. Therefore, this section will specifically address the issue of the different practices that the companies use to manage written communication, and uses skopos theory as a theoretical lens in order to explain these decisions.

8.5.1 Email communication

It has already been established (see section 8.1.3.1) that lean media, predominantly email, formed the basis of much of the supply chain communication in which the four case organisations engaged. Whilst this afforded a number of advantages for reasons which have already been discussed, one of the key reasons for this was that it enabled the companies to use free translation programmes, such as Google Translate, in order to decode messages which arrived in languages other than English and to reply to supply chain partners in the same way.

It was interesting to note that there was a sharp distinction between monoglots and polyglots with regards to their perceptions of Google Translate. Whilst monoglots (who in this study are all English native-speakers) generally viewed the use of Google as quite unproblematic *"this last week when we were talking to this French company, using the Microsoft French and Microsoft English, backwards and forwards, it actually worked incredibly well"* (Managing Director, Company D), the polyglots tended to express more reservations and explain it was a valuable tool in some circumstances, but not others *"When I translated Polish for example, it's like *sighs* and you read things and think well that doesn't make sense, but I can't relate anything to it"* (German Speaking Export Sales Manager, Company A). This raises an intriguing question as to whether there are circumstances in international business in which the use of Google Translate is more appropriate than others, and this can be answered through the application of skopos theory, which is a particularly advantageous lens to employ for this study, as unlike the majority of translation theories, it deals specifically with functional, rather than literary texts (Munday, 2014).

As discussed in Section 2.3.4.1 of the literature review, skopos theory is not concerned with translation equivalence, but adequacy, and therefore argues that it is the purpose of a translation which should be the main criterion which enables us to judge whether or not a translation is adequate. Therefore, if it is used in order to gain the general sense of a message *"we all know obviously Google Translate's not perfect, but it does give you generally a good gist of what's being said"* (German Speaking Export Sales

Manager, Company A), then it is frequently a perfectly adequate tool to use as it provides a translation which meets the needs of the translation commissioner. Similarly, if it is being used in order to compose an email to a supply chain partner, and crucially, the partner is comfortable receiving communication in less than idiomatic language, as long as the message is clear, then again, the translation meets it skopos, so it is appropriate to use Google Translate. Given that email communication is typically quite informal (Lauring and Klitmøller, 2015), skopos theory would tend to suggest that it is an appropriate translation method in these circumstances, and is particularly advantageous to smaller organisations with limited resources as it is a free tool. The question of adequacy then, depends to a large extent on the function of the text (Reiss and Vermeer, 2014), for example, the question of adequacy becomes much more important when the communication is not one-to-one, but one-to-many, and the function of the text is order to support marketing activity.

8.5.2 Website and marketing communication

In a one to many situation it is not always immediately clear who the audience is (Napoli, 2010) and thus it can be difficult for the translator to establish exactly what the skopos of a translation may be. Additionally, the use of a translation may change over time, meaning that what was once adequate may no longer be so, and I will begin by providing an example of translations which I did at Company A to illustrate this point.

Whilst I was in employment at the organisation, I translated some promotional data-sheets into Spanish and French. This was a challenging exercise, as it was a technical translation, however I did it in order to demonstrate my own commitment to the hispanophone and francophone markets in which I was working, so when I used the datasheets with customers, I distributed them with this caveat. Therefore, although under an equivalency theory of translation (Munday, 2016), there were errors, under the functionalist approach, the translations met the skopos which I, as translation commissioner had determined. However, when I left the organisation, and returned to conduct the fieldwork for this study, I discovered that these translations were publicly available on the company website as a stand-alone piece of marketing material, and as such, were not meeting their skopos. This was not the purpose for which I had done

these translations, and thus I felt that the changed skopos meant that the translations were no longer adequate.

However, this raises an interesting question as to the role which I played in these translations. Did I serve a dual role as both translator and translation commissioner, which would enable me to perform the translation according to my own skopos? This is certainly how I saw myself. Alternatively however, I may have simply been the translator, with the organisation – which is who, ultimately I did the translation for, in the context of my job role – as commissioner? In which case, the fact that the translations were used in a different way after I left the organisation indicates that there was an entirely different skopos for these texts to the one that I had understood which highlights the importance of clarifying roles and ensuring a shared meaning exists regarding the skopos between commissioner and translator. Flynn (2004) suggests that disagreement may frequently occur between translators and commissioners and this can be resolved by understanding what readers do with the text. Whilst this was beyond the scope of this doctoral study, this potentially represents a fertile area of exploration for future research considering translation in international business.

Despite this potential for conflict over the skopos of a translation, the findings show how organisations can use skopos theory in order to determine the practices which they need to use in order to manage document translation. When Company C began the translation of its website by using university students, part of the skopos was to achieve translation at a low cost. However, it transpired that this came at the expense of the ability to complete the work in a timely fashion, meaning the skopos of the translation was not met, and therefore a professional translation service was needed in order to use this.

The findings therefore demonstrate that given the limited resources of smaller organisations, they can use the idea of skopos theory and the purpose of a translation in order to consider which practices are the most appropriate to use in particular circumstances, and thus enable organisations to efficiently allocate scarce resources. This functionalist, rather than literary approach to translation needs, is particularly useful for the examination of translation practices in business contexts and thus is a

useful lens for language-sensitive international management scholars to explore translation practices in future research.

Additionally, this functionalist approach to translation may be a way in which hegemonic assumptions about the use of language in international business can be broken. Firstly, by accepting that equivalence in translation is not always necessary, it opens the door to a more pragmatic view of translation, akin to that espoused by BELF, where grammatical correctness is not always necessary, as long as the message is able to be understood (Kankaanranta, 2006). Such an understanding of language as a communicative tool to be used in any way deemed appropriate by language users could help to challenge linguistic hierarchies where certain varieties of language use are deemed as more legitimate than others (Kachru, 1992). This is particularly pertinent when considering the use of English, as this study has demonstrated how some Englishes are deemed to be more legitimate than others, at times causing frustrations and break downs in communication, and thus approaches which challenge this are to be welcomed.

Furthermore, the flexibility provided by the ability to use foreign languages in a non-standard way, facilitated by free software such as a Google Translate, questions the dominant assumptions regarding the legitimacy of English in international business (Tietze, 2004). If equivalency in certain translation acts is not required, and the requirement is the much lower requirement of intelligibility, then the use of free tools means that there are other ways to communicate in international business without relying on a majority of actors speaking in English. For written, one-to-one communication, skopos theory permits all actors to use their own languages, which can then be translated using Google, removing the requirement of a vehicular language, which tends to be English. Such translations could even be considered as a variety of translanguaging (Janssens and Steyaert, 2014), where hybrid forms of language use are not created by individual actors, but by translation software. If such usage still meets the purpose of the translation, then such an approach has the potential to become democratizing, permitting all actors to participate in (written) communication, regardless of their levels of individual language capital.

8.6 Conclusion

In this chapter, the key themes which emerged from this doctoral study have been identified and discussed. I have provided contextualised explanations (Welch et al, 2011) for these findings, and as such, have provided explanations for the following research aims:

1) To investigate what practices SMEs employ to management language diversity in their international supply chain relationships

2) To compare whether these practices differ between upstream and downstream relationships

3) To understand the interplay between the language practices employed and power dynamics in international supply chain relationships

4) To examine perspective of language agents regarding language use and its impact on relationships at different points in the supply chain

Although some of these findings have confirmed the findings of previous studies, there were a number of novel insights which were generated as a result of this doctoral study.

The choice of communication media as a practice for managing linguistic diversity proved to be a very common practice amongst the smaller organisations studied. Whilst previous research has suggested that rich media is preferable for communicating complex messages, this study concurs with Tenzer and Pudelko (2016) in finding that lean media can actually help to avoid misunderstandings when linguistic diversity is present. Additionally however, the use of lean media was identified as a key practice to manage diversity when there was no shared language present, as it could be used in conjunction with other practices, such as automatic translation software, and therefore lean media was key for organisations who did not have the resources to acquire internal language capabilities, a finding which does not appear in the extant literature.

Linked to the issue of resource availability, the emergent nature of the language practices used amongst smaller organisations challenges the idea that organisations can have a "language strategy" (Luo and Shenkar, 2006). The organisations did treat linguistic resources as a potential source of competitive advantage (Peng, 2009) due to

the way in which they were deployed in supply chain relationships, although they were frequently acquired in an unplanned and emergent way (Barner-Rasmussen and Aarnio, 2011). However, by drawing on the supply chain literature, the findings also demonstrate the importance of relationship structure on the language practices which were used and where they were viewed by the organisations to add value. Whereas the vast majority of language sensitive international management research has focused on intra-organisational relationships, and to a less extent, downstream supply chain relationships (i.e. Enderwick, and Akoorie, 1994; Crick, 1999; Clarke, 2000), this study demonstrates that smaller organisations use very different practices for managing linguistic diversity with their suppliers than they do with their customers. For supplier relationships, there was the expectation that suppliers should accommodate their own linguistic preferences and communicate in English, even though it was acknowledged that this approach caused challenges. This indicates that upstream relationships are not valued, and viewed as strategic in the same way that downstream ones are, despite calls in the supply chain literature for a move away from viewing upstream relationships as purely transactional (Trent and Monckza, 2003). This consideration of upstream relationships thus represents a previously unexplored area in the language sensitive international management literature.

The importance of expectations in supply chain relationships is related to the other key theme to which this study offers insights – the link between language practices and power. The study demonstrates how power dynamics in supply chain relationships do not only influence the choice of practices which smaller organisations use, but additionally, provides a rare insight into how BELF is conceptualised and used by native Anglophones.

Whereas previous literature (e.g. Kankaanranta and Planken, 2010; Steyaert et al, 2011) has focussed on BELF as a democratising tool, with English used as a vehicular language of communication in a multilingual environment, this study demonstrates how this picture is complicated by the presence of native English speakers, who, far from viewing BELF as a neutral code of communication, position speakers of other languages as linguistic Others, whose use of English can be delegitimised by native speakers. The study demonstrates how, in a British context, language use is particularly linked to systemic forms of power, and indicates how the role of history

still has an important part to play in contemporary international business management. Furthermore, it suggests that the lens of skopos theory can have a democratising effect by breaking open some hegemonic assumptions about the use of English in international business.

In the next, and concluding chapter, of this doctoral thesis, I will therefore demonstrate how these key insights form a contribution to existing theory on language management, and how this contributes to management practice. Avenues for future research will also be discussed in the light of these findings.

Chapter 9: Conclusion

This chapter concludes the thesis and presents the main contributions to knowledge of this study, which are in the areas of language and power, language and relationship structure, thereby additionally contributing to the supply chain literature, and highlights the importance of luck and coincidence in language management, an area which has been ignored in the extant literature. In addition to articulating the contribution of this study to management practices, directions for future research are identified. The chapter concludes with a personal reflection which considers the journey undertaken through this study and the theme of emancipation through research.

9.0 Introduction

This research is a riposte to the idea that it is less interesting for international business researchers focusing on language to study Anglophone organisations (Hurmerinta et al, 2015), and sheds light on areas which have previously been neglected in the language sensitive international management literature, by focusing on smaller organisations rather than multinationals, inter- rather than intra-organisational relationships and by the UK location of the study.

By adopting a political perspective on language (Steyaert et al, 2011), I have rejected the mechanistic approach which has dominated the extant literature on language in management (Peltokorpi and Vaara, 2014), and these factors have enabled this study to make contributions to both knowledge and management practice, which I will now further articulate.

9.1 Contributions to Knowledge and Practice

Although this work is located within the broad field of international business, it has drawn on a range of literature from international business, organisation studies, supply chain management and translation studies, and therefore the synthesis of these fields, and the empirical evidence from the case studies, enables the development of a more nuanced understanding of the impact of linguistic diversity, and how it is managed, in the international supply chains of smaller organisations.

9.1.1 Language and Power

As this is a critical research project, an exploration of how language practices are influenced by power was one of the central research aims. Whilst much of the literature on practices for language management takes a neutral view of their implementation, the political perspective suggests that this is not necessarily the case, and that language management practices can be manifestations of power (Wilmot, 2017). This is particularly relevant in this study given the (unsurprising) and extensive use of English to communicate with international partners at all of the case organisations. Whilst the use of English in international business has been variously positioned as a democratising tool (Kankaanranta, 2006; Steyaert et al, 2011; Gaibrois, 2014) and a hegemonic force (Phillipson, 1992; Tietze, 2004), this study confirms the powerful status of English, but adds to our understanding of it in several ways.

Firstly, the perspective of the organisational actors on BELF adds the voice of monolingual English speakers to the debate on the role of BELF in international business. By using Kachru's (1992) model of circles of English, I have demonstrated the tendency for expanding and outer circle varieties to be delegitimised by native speakers, in contrast to the inclusive discourse promoted by the BELF literature. Where monolingual English speakers are exposed to these different varieties of English, the findings indicate that a linguistic identity threat (Bordia and Bordia, 2015) was perceived, and in response, non-native speakers were positioned as linguistic Others, who were obliged to bear the burden of communication and make greater efforts than native English speakers in ensuring that communication was able to occur. This was noted in both upstream and downstream supply chain relationships studied, suggesting that assumptions relating to the legitimacy of English in international business have primacy over other adjustments organisations would usually make in order to maintain relationships, as discussed in section 9.1.2, although it was found that such assumptions are more prevalent in upstream relationships. These insights enhance our understanding of BELF, and suggest that whilst there are circumstances in which it can be an emancipatory tool of communication, there are occasions in which BELF is a clear manifestation of the hegemonic power of English, and by unquestioningly accepting BELF, we as academics risk becoming subjectified (Fleming and Spicer, 2007) by this discourse.

Additionally, the study points to the existence of language-based hierarchies, particularly in relation to the use of English in international business. Whereas Kachru (1992) established the concept of "circles of English", as represented in Figure 2.5, on the evidence of this study, I suggest the concept of a "pyramid of English" to be more appropriate.
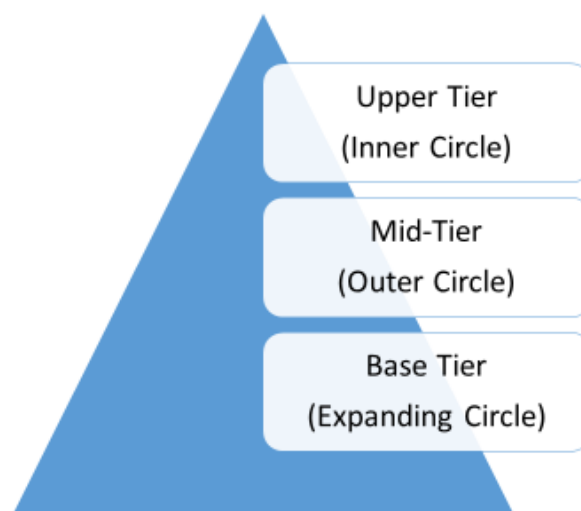

Figure 9.1: Pyramid of English adapted from Kachru (1992)

Drawing on Graddol's (1997) identification of world language hierarchies, and unlike the Circles of English model (Kachru, 1992), which confers legitimacy to all the varieties of English, the pyramid model demonstrates that although there are different varieties of English, they are not all perceived equally by native speakers (Nejjari, Gerritsen, Van der Haagen and Korzilius, 2012). Thus at the pinnacle, native speaker varieties of English are typically perceived as an aspirational goal for non-native speakers by the English native speakers, although not necessarily by the English language learners themselves (Rindal and Piercy, 2013). In the study, outer circle users were accepted as legitimate, except for when their versions of English came into conflict with inner circle varieties, which were constructed as superordinate. At the base of the pyramid is the expanding circle, which, despite experiencing rapid growth in number of users of English, are not seen as legitimate users with agency to use the language as they see fit, but instead, should seek to model themselves on inner circle varieties. This concept therefore demonstrates the hierarchical view of the English language use that

supply chain actors (specifically English native speakers) have, and therefore challenges the democratic understanding of BELF which is presented in the literature (Louhiala-Salminen and Kankaanranta, 2011).

9.1.2 Language and Supply Chain Relationship Structure

The study also examined how the type of supply chain relationship affected the language practices used. The extant literature has given scant consideration to inter-organisational relationships and the language practices used in order to manage them, and this project therefore makes a contribution to both the supply chain literature and the language sensitive international management literature, as it does not only examine inter-organisational relationships, but it also differentiates between upstream and downstream relationships and the degree of proximity of the relationships, and thus provides insights into the nexus of ties between relationship structure and language practices.

It is particularly noteworthy that upstream relationships were given much less focus than downstream relationships. Although the supply chain literature now argues for a strategic approach to global sourcing (e.g. Golini and Kalchschmidt, 2015; Hanna and Jackson, 2015), and argues that it should be considered as a value-adding activity for organisations, it is acknowledged that many organisations still view sourcing and procurement activity at a very transactional level (Trent and Monckza, 2003). The study shows that organisations are unwilling to make relationship specific investments for their upstream supply chain partners, which was not the case for downstream partners. This demonstrates that supplier relationships are not afforded the same importance in organisational strategies as customer relationships, and is therefore a key area which smaller organisation should seek to develop for better supply chain management.

In contrast, much has been written in the distribution channels literature (Oosterhuis et al, 2013), about the importance of effective communication with customers. However, there has been little consideration as to what constitutes effective communication. In this study I posit that the organisations use a variety of practices to manage linguistic diversity in supply chains, which is one facet of effective communication, whilst acknowledging that although a shared language in itself is no

guarantee of good communication, mutual intelligibility between interlocutors is required for it to occur.

The ways in which this mutual intelligibility is achieved varies depending on the degree of proximity of the downstream relationship. Where relationships are towards the lower end of Webster's typology (1992), organisations may typically use practices such as Google Translate, lean media, and BELF in order to communicate, which do not require relationship specific investments. However, relationships of greater strategic importance to organisations use alternative practices for two primary reasons. Firstly, they are more likely to engage in specific recruitment, and the use of language nodes, in order to manage these relationships, which requires specific investment in resource acquisition. Secondly, having language skills – even if acquired "accidentally," as discussed in the following section, makes it easier for the organisations to build closer relationships with their customers, and enables the development of relationships which, without such skills, may not have been possible.

Additionally, this study answers the call of González-Loureiro et al (2014), who suggest that an understanding of international management and international HRM is gaining increasing importance in global supply chains. By considering practices for managing linguistic diversity, it contributes to this literature by presenting practices which are able to deepen relationships so that communication is not merely transactional and task-based (Bouchien de Groot, 2012).

9.1.3 Language and Strategy

There is debate in the academic literature as to whether organisations are able to adopt planned language strategies (Dhir and Gòkè-Paríolá, 2002; Luo and Shenkar, 2006) or whether such practices are more emergent and based on organisational resources at particular temporal moments (Barner-Rasmussen and Aarnio, 2011; Piekkari et al, 2014). This study contributes to this debate by integrating the perspective of smaller organisations, who have typically been excluded from the literature in favour of multinational enterprises. It indicates that smaller organisations typically engage in a process of bricolage, and exploit the linguistic resources that they have acquired in unplanned ways in order to operate in linguistically diverse markets, and highlights the important role that luck plays in the strategy-making process. This is an area which has not received a meaningful discussion in the language sensitive

international management literature, perhaps due to the functionalist assumptions implicit within mainstream international business, which assume that managers, as rational agents, are able to articulate and implement strategy. This study indicates however, that for smaller organisations, luck and chance are equally as important as strategic vision in acquiring language capital, and that the task of management may therefore be to identify the resources that the organisation has available and how they may best be used. However, consistent with the findings of Gaibrois (2014), there is some evidence to show that unplanned language capital which resides in white-collar workers is more likely to be exploited by the organisation in comparison with that possessed by blue-collar workers, highlighting once again, albeit in an indirect way, the linkage between language and power.

In Chapter 8, I have used skopos theory (Reiss and Vermeer, 2014) as a lens through which the appropriateness of translations for business purposes can be judged. However, with its focus on pragmatism which aligns with the reason behind much of the decisions regarding language management practices that smaller organisations use, here I present the idea that this is a conceptual tool which can be expanded beyond translation in order to consider language management decisions in a more general way. Given that concerns about cost and resources drive the majority of the planned decisions which the case organisations have made regarding language management practices in this study, I argue that organisations should consider the purpose of communication in order to evaluate the practices used to manage it. Skopos theory therefore provides a tool with which organisations are able to do this, and thus the synthesis of theories from translation studies with those of international management forms a contribution to knowledge and enhances our understanding of why organisations engage in particular practices at given temporal moments.

9.1.4 Overall Contribution to Knowledge

The overall contribution to knowledge of this thesis can therefore be summed up as follows. Firstly, I have explicitly incorporated the perspectives of native speakers of English into discussions of BELF and the use of English in international business. Although I acknowledge the productive aspects of English as a lingua franca which have previously been identified in the extant literature, I have demonstrated how the use of the language is still infused with power, and show how native speakers claim

epistemic authority to determine norms of usage even when used in an international business context.

Additionally I have demonstrated how language practices used vary depending on the type and proximity of the relationship in which they occur, by exploring inter-organisational relationships which have received less focus in the language-sensitive international management literature.

Finally, I have drawn attention to the importance of luck and chance in the language management practices of smaller organisations. Although there has been previous debate regarding the possibility of implementing strategies in order to manage linguistic diversity in organisations, in this thesis I have highlighted the role of bricolage, where smaller organisations creatively exploit their limited linguistic resources in order to enter and work in new export markets in a frequently unplanned process. This is a point which has not been explored in the extant literature on language management, which largely relates to the effects and implementation of language strategies in the MNC. By emphasising the role of creativity and bricolage, I add to our understanding in the international business literature of how language diversity is managed pragmatically by organisations who have few linguistic resources at their disposal.

9.1.5 Implications for Practice

Whilst the primary aim of this doctoral study is to contribute to academic theory, as detailed in the preceding sections, it also has direct implications for management practice. Currently, many organisations in the UK do not have any internal linguistic capabilities, a trend which is especially prevalent for smaller organisations. Interviewees from the case organisations felt that there was a lack of knowledge in their sectors about the challenges of exporting generally, and how to acquire and leverage language skills particularly. They felt that there was particularly poor awareness around some of the free and low cost practices which can be used, especially the role of university resources in developing international relationships.

By presenting a range of practices which can be used to manage linguistic diversity specifically in the context of smaller organisations, some of which have not received empirical attention in the international management literature, such as the use of

university resources and local language organisations, I hope to draw attention to the multiple ways in which linguistic diversity in international relationships can be overcome, using practices which are appropriate for organisations of any size, and with potentially limited resources.

I would particularly highlight the importance of organisations using linguistic resources that they have available even if they were not acquired as part of a strategic export plan. The study emphasizes the value of language skills which were acquired unintentionally, but were then leveraged in order to open up specific markets, and thus demonstrates the value of a bricolage approach for small organisations.

Additionally, it has become clear from the study that there are particular challenges for BELF usage for monolingual native Anglophones, and that by drawing attention to these issues, organisations can use English in international relationships in a more sensitive way, and be mindful of the difficulties that second language English speakers may encounter, rather than simply positioning their communication as deficient because it does not conform to native speaker norms of usage. Although these actions alone are insufficient to challenge the privilege of English in international business, such an approach would have a micro-emancipatory impact on non-native English speakers, who are viewed by many Anglophones in this study as disruptive and problematic, and thus this contribution is aligned with the critical philosophy of this study (Alvesson and Willmott, 1996).

9.2 Directions for Future Research

As an exploratory research project, the multiple case study design was adopted in order to shed light on language practices used by smaller organisations, which had not been previously identified in the literature. As a result, the case organisations, whilst based on a theoretical sample (Fletcher and Plakoyiannaki, 2011), were located across a number of industry sectors in one particular region of the UK. It would therefore be interesting to explore how wide-spread the use of such practices are in a larger scale study, which adopts a systematic approach to industry selection. All the case organisations sell physical products, and thus the communicative requirements for purely service organisations may be very different, and is an area worthy of further investigation.

Additionally, in accordance with most research located in supply chains, this study has primarily considered the focal organisations, and not buyer-seller dyads (Oosterhuis et al, 2013) – with the exception being the Wholly Owned Subsidiary and International Joint Venture of Company A. An exploration of the views of supply chain partners on the practices used to manage linguistic diversity would provide further insights into the phenomenon, and may yield alterative perspectives to those of the focal organisations.

Furthermore, the research highlights the need for further research on BELF which considers the viewpoints of native English speakers, which is currently lacking in much empirical work, beyond the inclusion of native English speakers in multilingual teams (e.g. Henderson, 2005; Tenzer and Pudelko, 2017). This study indicates that English speakers who interact with speakers of other languages in arms-length, transactional relationships, may hold negative viewpoints of BELF as a communicative tool, but in doing so, still place the burden of communication on linguistic Others. This is a perspective which has received little attention in the context of international management and thus merits further attention.

Finally, this study has focused specifically on diversity between discrete natural languages in international supply chains. There is of course, additional variation within languages in terms of the perspectives of language users towards their use. For example, studies (e.g. Hiraga, 2005) have demonstrated how certain varieties of American and British English are viewed as superior to others. Whilst such a consideration is beyond the scope of this doctoral study, increasing interest in hybrid and contextually bound language use in international business (Janssens and Steyaert, 2014) means that a specific consideration of intra-lingual, in additional to inter-lingual diversity, is an underexplored area in international business and would provide an interesting avenue for further investigation.

9.3 Closing Reflection

Having presented the contributions to knowledge of this doctoral study, and suggested future research directions which have arisen as a result of it, I now conclude this thesis with a personal note on the journey undertaken.

The idea for this doctoral study was born out of my own personal experiences of using languages in international business. In 2009, when I wrote my undergraduate

dissertation on the use of Spanish amongst British exporters, language was still "the forgotten factor" (Marschan et al, 1997). Eight years later, this is no longer the case, and this doctoral study makes a contribution to the vibrant and fast-growing field of language-sensitive international business.

As a result of this personal and professional interest in the topic, this research journey has been something of a cathartic experience for me, as I have seen some of my own perspectives and anxieties reflected in the findings, in addition to discovering views which I had not previously considered. Therefore, in addition to the micro-emancipatory goals which I had for the participants of the research, I also unexpectedly found that throughout the process I too was freed from some of the assumptions which I previously held regarding the nature of academic research and the role of the researcher. Whilst my interpretivist approach meant that I was always wary of grand truth claims and that I acknowledged my own subjectivity as an important process of the research, I was not expecting the fieldwork and analysis to be such an emotion-laden process, and for my own biography to have such a significant impact on the way in which the fieldwork was conducted. The fact that I speak three languages undoubtedly influenced the way in which I framed particular questions during the interviews, and although in Section 3.4.3 I reflect on how, before the fieldwork, I wasn't interested in making judgements on whether or not the research participants themselves had language skills, as I went through the process of data analysis, it became clear that actually, I did react emotionally to some of the data, and found myself wanting to make prescriptive, value-laden judgements about some of the practices used and attitudes discussed in the research. Therefore, although as a critical researcher it is perhaps to be expected that I have strong views on particular actions, this process forced me to confront some of my own assumptions related to systemic power structures expressed through language use, and I would therefore suggest that this process has had an emancipatory impact on me, as it has enabled me to reflect on how my own resistance to hegemonic power structures influenced my views as to how others should similarly challenge them (Johnson and Duberley, 2000).

I have contributed to my emancipatory goal of contributing to a critical space where the use of English in international business is interrogated, rather than being taken for granted, and in doing so, the weight of history has been very apparent in

understanding contemporary management practice (Ocasio, Mauskapt and Steele, 2016). In the summary of findings which I sent to the organisations on completion of data analysis, (for a sample, please see Appendix D), I identified that sometimes native English speakers would tend to take ownership of their own variety, and to view other forms as secondary. Therefore as part of my recommendations and suggestions, I indicated that they needed to be made more aware of this privilege and how it can impact on those communicating in English as a foreign language. Therefore, as a result of these findings, I hope to have challenged some organisational assumptions around the legitimacy of particular acts of language use. However, there are limits to the ability of academic research to effect sustained organisational change. One of the main issues that I found in terms of disseminating this research to a wider managerial, as opposed to a purely academic, audience was the balancing act between "the intellectual capital of the academy and the pragmatism of management decision-making in the real world" (Parker, 2003, p. 200). Therefore in the summaries of findings which I sent to the organisations, the language which I used in order to frame particular issues was not as direct as that which I have used in this thesis, as there is a significant risk that too strong an epistemic critique of English generally and BELF in particular would position me too far away from "the lifeworld of business" (Parker, 2003, p. 201), and thus be further away from my goal of encouraging organisations to question taken-for-granted assumptions. Additionally, given my rejection of positivism and generalizable truth claims for this piece of research, I am reluctant to position myself as having a unique understanding of what should be and privileging my own account (Parker, 2003).

Therefore I end this thesis with a call for tolerance, and the need for flexibility and hybridity (Bhabha, 1994) in terms of language management practice. Despite the unique position of English, which enables it to be a tool in overcoming Babel, too often I have observed it used as a tool to strengthen divisions. Therefore I call for linguistic hospitality in an environment characterised by linguistic diversity *"where the pleasure of dwelling in the other's language is balanced by the pleasure of receiving the foreign word at home, in one's own welcoming house"* (Ricoeur, 2006, p. 10).

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Appendix A – Participant Information Sheet

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET

Foreign Language Diversity in the International Supply Chain Relationships of UK companies

PhD Research by Natalie Wilmot, Sheffield Business School, Sheffield Hallam University.

The purpose of this information sheet is to provide you with the necessary information for you to be able to make an informed decision about whether or not you would like to participate in this doctoral study. You have been asked to take part because of your role at [Company Name], as the senior management team have given permission for me to approach you. For the study, I am interested in looking at UK organisations who work internationally, and who use certain strategies in order to manage language diversity in order to cooperate with international suppliers and clients.

What will I be required to do?

I would like to interview you in order to talk about your experiences, and also to observe some phone calls that you may have where you speak to international clients/suppliers where you use languages other than English.

Where will this take place?

This will take place at the [location] premises of [Company].

How often will I have to take part, and for how long?

It is not anticipated that the interview will last for more than one hour, I will be onsite at your organisation for one week in order to conduct interviews, observe some interactions, and analyse documentation of the organisation, including promotional materials and the website.

When will I have the opportunity to discuss my participation?

At the end of the week, there will be the opportunity to debrief with myself, the researcher.

Who will be responsible for all of the information with this study is over?

The researcher, Natalie Wilmot. The raw data will be held in an anonymised form for up to three years in a password protected file after the submission of my doctoral thesis. The anonymised data may be shared with my PhD supervisors, Dr. Diana Sharpe and Prof. Susanne Tietze during this time, but will not be released to anyone else.

How will you use what you find out?

The information collected will be used as the basis for my doctoral thesis, and as such may also be used in conference proceedings, journal articles and other research outputs.

Will anyone be able to connect me with what is recorded and reported?

No, the raw data will be held anonymously, so that it is not linked to your name, and in any research outputs the identity of you as an individual and also the organisation which you work for will be protected.

How long is the whole study likely to last?

Anticipated submission date of the doctoral thesis is September 2017

How can I find out about the results of the study?

I will advise your organisation of the findings of the study once the data has been analysed and written up.

What if I do not wish to take part?

Participation is totally voluntary, and you are under no obligation to participate.

What if I change my mind during the study?

You are free to withdraw up to six months after the time when the research is carried out. After this time, withdrawal may not be possible as some of the key findings of the research may have been disseminated, although, as previously stated, this will be anonymous.

Contact Details

If you have any questions or concerns about this research which you wish to address before, during, or after the data collection, in the first instant please contact myself:

Natalie Wilmot n.wilmot@shu.ac.uk 0114 225 5152

or my Director of Studies, Dr Diana Sharpe, Senior Lecturer in International Business d.sharpe@shu.ac.uk 0114 225 5249

PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM

FOREIGN LANGUAGE DIVERSITY IN THE INTERNATIONAL SUPPLY CHAIN RELATIONSHIPS OF UK COMPANIES

Please answer the following questions by ticking the response that applies:

	YES	NO
1. I have read the Information Sheet for this study and have had details of the study explained to me	☐	☐
2. My questions about the study have been answered to my satisfaction and I understand that I may ask further questions at any point	☐	☐
3. I understand that I am free to withdraw from the study within the time limits outlined in the Information Sheet, without giving a reason for my withdrawal or to decline to answer any particular questions in the study without any consequences to my future treatment by the researcher.	☐	☐
4. I agree to provide information to the researchers under the conditions of confidentiality set out in the Information Sheet.	☐	☐
5. I wish to participate in the study under the conditions set out in the Information Sheet	☐	☐
6. I consent to the information collected for the purposes of this research study, once anonymised (so that I cannot be identified), to be used for any other research purposes	☐	☐

Participant's Signature _____

Date _____

Participant's Name (printed) _____

Contact details_____

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Research Protocols

Semi structured Interviews	RQ	Supporting Theory	Research Questions
What strategies are used to manage foreign diversity in supply chain relationships? (ie do you use translators, hire people with foreign language skills, look for partners who speak English etc…)	2	Enderwick and Akoorie, 1994; Crick, 1999 Feely and Harzing, 2003; Harzing, 2011, Steyaert et al, 2011	1. To understand what strategies SMEs employ to manage the issue of language diversity in these relationships
Are they adopted for all customers/suppliers? Why/why not?	3, 5	Webster, 1992; Knowles et al, 2006	2. To compare whether these strategies differ between upstream and downstream relationships
Are these strategies successful? Or do you still encounter problems/difficulties in communication?	4	Boussebaa et al, 2014, Vaara et al, 2005, Janssens et al 2004	3. To understand whether language influences the structure of the relationship, and how it may influence the power relations between supply chain members
(If relevant) What sort of problems do you encounter?	4	Brannen and Salk, 2000; Boussebaa et al, 2014, Vaara et al, 2005, Janssens et al 2004, Chen et al 2006; Dirks et al 2009	
How important is English in your international supply chain relationships?	1,2, 3,4	Tietze, 2004, 2010; Louhiala-Salminen and Kankaanranta, 2012, Fredrikson, 2006; Yamao and Sekiguchi, 2015	4. To examine perspectives of language agents regarding language use and its impact on relationships at different points in the supply chain
Why don't you always use English in international business relationships?	2, 3, 4	Phillipson, 2009; Ehrenreich, 2010, Steyaert and Janssens, 2014, Fleming and Spicer, 2014	
Where just English is used, has it ever caused any challenges in communication?	1, 2, 4	Boussebaa et al, 2014; Pennycook, 1994	
How comfortable are you (individual) and you (organisation) in using other languages?	1, 3, 4	Dewaele et al, 2008; Vaara et al, 2005, Hinds et al, 2013; Neeley, 2013	
If using other languages is challenging - why do it?	1, 3, 4	Gereffi, 2009; Fleming and Spicer, 2014	
What advantages, or disadvantages does it bring for your organisation?	1, 2, 3, 4	Feely and Harzing, 2003; Gereffi, 2009; Fleming and Spicer, 2014	
What methods of communication	1, 2, 3,	Méndez-García and Pérez Cañado,	

do you prefer when speaking your first/second languages at work?	4	2005; Hinds et al, 2014; Fleming and Spicer, 2014
How would you characterise your global supply chain relationships? Are they arms-length and distant, or collaborative and close?	2, 3	Webster, 1992; Fleming and Spicer Das et al, 1998, Frazier, 1999
Do you think that the relationship influences the way that you deal with language diversity within it?	2, 3, 4	Gardner and Avolio, 1998; Das et al, 1998; Ballinger and Rockman, 2010; Gajewska-Demattos et al, 2004
Document Analysis		
Which languages? *Is the text available in just one language? Several languages? Or is it a hybrid text, using more than one language within it?*	1, 2	Kankaanranta, 2006; Louhiala-Salminen et al, 2005
What type of documents? *Are they meant for public use, or are they private within the organisation/supply chain relationship?*	1, 2, 3	
Who produced the documents? *Both in terms of the individual who produced the source, and then also if a translator used?*	1, 2, 3	
Who is the target audience? *Is it an internal communiqué, a mass communication for the public ie website, personalised communication with a supply chain partner*	1,2,3	Kankaanranta, 2006; Louhiala-Salminen et al, 2005
What are the documents about? *Product specs, email discussing aspects of the commercial relationship, accounts information, promotional literature/catalogue etc*	1,2,3	
How are they disseminated? *On internet/intranet, email, catalogue, post, fax. Is it intended for supply chain partner or wider audience – ie a sales catalogue may go through a distributor before reaching intended audience*	1, 2, 3	
Observation		
Who uses languages other than	1, 2	Sullivan, 1988,

English and what organisational roles are they in?		Webster, 1992; Yoshino and Rangan, 1995; Das et al 1998, Gereffi et al, 2005	
When? And Why? Who are they communicating with, and in what situations?	1, 2, 3, 4	Sullivan, 1988, Webster, 1992; Yoshino and Rangan, 1995; Gardner and Avolio, 1998, Gereffi et al, 2005; Millington et al, 2006, Fleming and Spicer, 2014	
Do they react emotionally when other languages are used?	1, 3, 4	Gardner and Avolio, 1998; Neeley, 2013; Hinds et al, 2014, Foreign Language Anxiety	
Do other people in the office seem to mind when other languages that they may not understand/be fluent in are used?	4	Méndez-García and Pérez Cañado, 2005; Tenzer et al 2014	
Do they act differently when using L1/L2 in terms of their posture, mannerisms, tone of voice	1, 4	Dewaele et al, 2008; Whorf (1956), Foreign Language Anxiety, Méndez-García, 2005, Vaara et al 2005	

Individual vs Organisational Perspectives

Individual	Organisational
What are your feelings on the usefulness of using foreign languages at work?	What strategies are used?
Which media of communication do you prefer to use to communicate with supply chain partners?	What difficulties are there in managing these strategies?
How comfortable are you in using other languages at work?	Are they adopted for all customers/suppliers? Why/why not?
What advantages/disadvantages do the language strategies used cause for you as an individual?	Are the strategies successful?
Do you undertake "formal" translation activities for the organisation?	What sort of problems are encountered?
What are your feelings on translating/interpreting?	How have these strategies changed over time – why has development taken place?
Are you able to code-switch when you re speaking to supply chain partners?	How important is English in your international supply chain relationships?
Do you deliberately seek out roles in which you are able to use your language skills?	Why not just always use English?
Do you think that there are alternative strategies to managing linguistic diversity which aren't currently being used?	Has just using English ever caused any challenges in communication?
	What advantages/disadvantages do your strategies bring for the organisation?
	What are your supply chain relationships like? Are they close or arms-length?
	Do you think that the types of relationship influence the way that you manage language diversity within them?
	Do you have one point of contact for supply chain partners or can whole support team be involved?
	Is there an institutional view about the media of communication which should be used?

Supply Chain Partners
- How do you prefer to communication with the UK?
- What media of communication do you use?
- Is there a policy about required language skills when it comes to recruitment?
- Are you happy with how linguistic diversity is currently managed or do you think that it would be better to manage things different in some way? If so, how?
- If there isn't currently anyone at head office who is able to speak your language, would it be useful to you if there was?
- Have any problems in communication been caused by language differences?
- How, in your view, can we avoid such problems?

<u>**Appendix D – Sample Summary of Findings for Company A**</u>

<u>**Foreign Language Diversity in the International Supply Chain Relationships of British Organisations: Summary of Findings**</u>

Introduction

This report is based on the fieldwork carried out by Natalie Wilmot as part of her doctoral research project, which was conducted in summer 2015, which explores the language management practices used in smaller organisations in the UK.

Over the past twenty years, there has been increasing interest in how organisations operating internationally manage language diversity in their relationships. However, the vast majority of empirical studies in the area have been located in very large organisations with a wealth of resources at their disposal. There has been little consideration as to how smaller organisations manage such processes, and it is an understanding of these practices which this study aimed to generate. For the research, four case organisations were selected and interviews, document analysis and observation was carried out (where appropriate). These findings have now been analysed, and this report presents the key results of the findings which can be used in a business context.

It begins by identifying the language practices which were used at [Company A], and then presents the key findings related to best practices which were identified across the all organisations. Recommendations are then made as to how [Company A] could best implement these practices in order to support their international activities.

Language Management at [Company A]

As an organisation which exports to eighty-five markets, has a German parent organisation, a Wholly-Owned Subsidiary in China, and an international joint venture in India, in addition to having suppliers located in approximately twenty different countries, language diversity is an issue which [Company A] deals with on a daily basis, using a variety of different practices.

Clearly, it would be impossible to have the language capabilities to manage all these markets, and therefore it is unsurprising that the company relies extensively on being able to use English in order to communicate with its partners. This is particularly true in areas outside export sales, as at the time of the fieldwork, with the exception of an individual in the accounts department, the key competencies in foreign languages were located in the export sales team.

Therefore, in terms of purchasing, English was used as the only method of communication with suppliers, as it was at all of the case organisations in this study. It was found that lean media such as email, were preferred, as this eliminated problems such as time differences, and also problems of accent, and it was generally felt that non-native speakers would find it easier to communicate using emails rather than verbally. However, it should be stressed that the communications which were referred to with suppliers were of a transactional nature, dealing with the placing and delivery

of orders, and therefore it was not mentioned if this use of lean media also extended to the negotiation stage of the relationship.

In other departments without language skills, in addition to the use of email, it was also noted that Google Translate could be used in order to understand messages which may arrive in languages other than English, and this could also be used to compose messages. Additionally, standardised scripts in other languages were used in email messages to convey a message, and where necessary, people could request help from the language skills which resided in the export sales team.

When discussing the extensive use of English, it was particularly noted that the British have a reputation for not being able to speak other languages, and it was felt that other nationalities tended to have much greater competency in this area. Additionally, there seemed to be frustrations when speaking English with non-native speakers who had difficulties in making themselves understood because of their grasp of their language, or their accent. Therefore, despite the fact that there is increasing interest in the academic literature in the idea of Business English as a Lingua Franca, which is considered to be a neutral language used by the international business community, in some parts of the organisation there appeared to be a clear sense of ownership of the English language by native speakers, which caused frustration when they felt that it was not used "correctly".

At the time of the fieldwork, the organisation had individuals who were able to speak French, German, Spanish and some Italian, which was the most language skills the organisation had ever had. In addition to enabling [Company A] to replicate the sales model in the UK and Ireland, where a lower tier of customer was typically approached, who, in overseas markets, were frequently unable to communicate in English, these language skills were also able to act as a lingua franca with customers in other markets who did not speak English, as examples were given of German being used with clients in Poland and Russia, and Spanish being used in Italy when needed.

However, it was at times problematic for the sales team that there were no language skills in the Customer Service team, as this sometimes led to an increase in their workload, where they were forced to deal with issues which would not usually be within the remit of a sales manager, because the Customer Service team were unable to communicate directly with the customer.

Communication with the Chinese subsidiary was identified as being potentially problematic, and here it was stressed that the subsidiary appreciated advance notice of communication, as unexpected telephone calls could cause anxiety for some team members who were not confident in their English language skills. Before planned meetings, whether via telephone or Skype, the circulation of agendas was found to be particularly helpful as it enabled some planning and preparation to occur from a linguistic perspective, in addition to from a topic perspective.

With regards to promotional documents, much greater attention was given to oral communication in other languages than was given to written marketing communication. The cost of translation was noted as a particular barrier to this, and

although at the time of the fieldwork there were plans to translate the product catalogues into Spanish and French, there was concerns about the cost of this. The bulk of the translation budget went to ensure legal compliance, for example where product manuals were required to be translated.

As a result of this, on the company website, there were data sheets available for certain products in other languages, including Spanish, French, German, Mandarin, Japanese and Russian, but these did not have consistent branding, and only the English version of the datasheets was available in the most recent branding of the organisation. These data sheets had been produced using a mix of professional translators and linguistically skilled staff at the organisation.

The organisation had therefore responded to the challenge of managing linguistic diversity in a variety of different ways. In the next section, the practices identified across all the case organisations, not just at [Company A], are presented, and the final section of this report considers how these practices, and others identified in the existing literature, could be implemented by [Company A] in the future.

Practices Identified across the Case Organisations

- ❖ The use of linguistically skilled individuals, or language nodes was a key practice used at the case organisations in order to work with international partners. It was key to note that they were only used to work with customers, and no examples of language nodes working with suppliers were found during the study. The advantage of using language nodes is obviously that it means that someone is able to communicate with customers in their own language. However, it was found that being in this position could at times put stress on the employee, as it meant that they were sometimes to be required to be involved in all aspects of the client relationship, which they wouldn't necessarily be otherwise, and this could be very time consuming – although it was pointed out that this could be advantageous as it ensured a deep understanding of the account.
- ❖ These linguistically skilled individuals were also able to operate in markets where they didn't speak the national language, but where having languages other than English was beneficial, and therefore there were examples of Spanish, French and German used as a lingua franca with customers, instead of English.
- ❖ Additionally, where some languages were linguistically proximate, language nodes could engage in "passive multilingualism" – where a mixture of mutually intelligible languages were used – for example, Spanish speakers and Portuguese speakers were able to use their own languages yet still understand each other.
- ❖ Organisational members also drew on their own personal networks to assist when the language barrier was posing a problem – for example by asking a friend or family member to translate the meaning of a message or check a translation.

❖ It was noted across the cases that oral communication across language boundaries was the most difficult type of communication to engage in. Therefore there was extensive use of emails, which allow second language speakers more time to think about the message and plan their response.

❖ This additionally enables stock responses to be sent in different languages, for example to ask for delivery dates or confirmation of payment.

❖ In technical environments, the use of images in email communication was particularly helpful.

❖ Where telephone calls or face to face meetings were required, it could be useful to send a clear agenda for the meeting in advance, which allows second language speakers time to prepare for the discussion.

❖ The difficulties of oral communication could sometimes be mitigated by body language in face to face encounters.

❖ Professional translators and interpreters are potential solutions to language barriers, but the cost of such services mean that they are impractical for frequent use for smaller organisations.

❖ University resources can help in translation and market research activities, as students are often required to engage in business projects, so organisations can ask them to work on website localisation projects, or desk based market research.

❖ Additionally there are local organisations which can be useful sources of information – in addition to the Chamber of Commerce, specific groups such as Languages Sheffield can provide information and guidance.

❖ Having lists of common words and phrases in other languages visible in the office can help to overcome difficulties if a customer telephones and are not able to speak English. Using set phrases, the conversation can often be moved to email, which is much easier for both parties.

❖ Google Translate was mentioned frequently as a solution to managing the language barrier. However, it is important to be judicious about its use, as its translations are frequently inaccurate. Therefore although it is particularly useful for understanding the gist of a message which is not in English, extreme care needs to be taken when using it to translate a message from English to another language, as the translation may be inappropriate for its purpose.

❖ Distributors were a key way of managing sales to markets where English was not widely spoken, although care needs to be taken over the choice of distributor, as they need to have the appropriate technical competences, in addition to being able to communicate with their supplier in English.

❖ English can be widely used across a variety of markets. However, it isn't appropriate in all circumstances, and particular attention needs to be given to the variety of English which is used. Native speakers have a tendency to have accented speech and to use idioms which are often unfamiliar to second language speakers, which makes it quite difficult to be understood. It's important to slow down the speed of speech, and simplify the terms which are used, paying particular attention to colloquialisms.

- ❖ Additionally, even when communicating primarily in English, small gestures can be made in other languages, for example by using greetings and sign offs in other languages, and paying attention to culturally based communication protocols, for example the degree of formality used in emails.
- ❖ Finally, for smaller organisations, although a certain amount of planning can be done with regards to language issues, it can be difficult to recruit people with appropriate language and technical skills within the salary expectations of the organisation. Therefore, it's important to be able to react quickly to use linguistic resources that the organisation may already have, but which were acquired for different purposes. Throughout the research, a number of examples were found of individuals acting as language nodes although they were not originally recruited for these purposes. A certain amount of flexibility is therefore key.

Recommendations

While it is clear that [Company A] do have a strategy in place in order to manage foreign language diversity, there are some areas which could still be improved on.

- ❖ Given the variety of overseas markets which the company works with, English is the main language of communication for many relationships, so it could help for there to be an awareness amongst all employees about the type of English which they use. Encouraging sensitivity to some of the challenges which non-native speakers face, particularly with regards to accent and colloquialisms would be helpful, and may improve communication. Linked to this, it should be ensured that when telephone calls are made to partners who are known to have lesser competence in English, an agenda is sent in advance so that the other party is able to prepare and are not caught off guard.
- ❖ At the time of the fieldwork, there was a great diversity of branding in terms of the marketing materials which were available online in different languages. This should be standardised so that other languages are not presented as "lesser" by being in old branding – although I believe that this has now been rectified.
- ❖ Be open to the possibility of using foreign language speakers for purposes other than those for which they were originally recruited, or consider the potential for sales managers to work in regions where their language skills may be a more appropriate lingua franca than English.
- ❖ At the time of the fieldwork, Customer Services were an area which did not have any foreign language skills. It could therefore be helpful for them to have stock phrases available which they could use in emails to clients or to use on the telephone occasionally.
- ❖ Additionally, if consideration was given to acquiring additional language nodes in the future, it may be appropriate to consider locating them in the customer services team rather than in export sales, although this would depend on salary expectations of both the individual and [Company A].

Table D.1 Cross-referencing of practices identified across the case organisations

Practice	Example of Use	Supporting Quote	Page No.
Language nodes	Company A	*so, we've got all the language skills we need… (Sales Director)*	135
Lingua francæ other than English	Company A	*had a mixture of both, Italian and Spanish, but yeah, that's what, I'll do, that's how I'll handle it (Spanish Speaking Export Sales Manager)*	139
Passive multilingualism	Company B	*Eastern European […] languages are quite similar, so if I don't speak Czech or Slovakian, or even Russian… I'm still able to communicate easier (French and Polish Speaking Export Executive)*	166
Personal networks	Company B	*I translated it all into German… and… with the help of my father actually (German Speaking Export Executive)*	174
Extensive use of emails	Company A	*All email with suppliers – with customers we would always encourage a more personal relationship (Finance Director)*	149
Use of stock responses	Company A	*so the standard blurbs are – cough up or else (Finance Director)*	149
Images in emails	Company D	*with the benefit of… instant digital availability, if we don't know what they're talking about… is it possible to send us a picture (Managing Director)*	201
Agendas to enable meeting preparation	Company A	*even we have to, next time, to Skype to each other, we have already more learned about our topics (Chinese Subsidiary Manager)*	153
Body language	Company D	*you tend to get a feeling for what's being said, even if you don't know what's being said […] It's all… ultimately I think that is down to body language" (Managing Director)*	197
Language professionals such as translators	Company C	*It cost a bit more money […] But it was so worth it because… the speed at which they come back to you… with translations is phenomenal (Finance Director)*	188
University resources	Company C	*but when it came to the products… there was just too many of them for the students to do (Finance Director)*	188
Business associations	Company D	*I trotted myself off to the British Chamber of Commerce and got them to do it! (Managing Director)*	199

Lists of vocabulary	Company C	*I printed off some sheets with just very basic translation sheets that we stuck around the office (Finance Director)*	181
Google Translate	Company A	*Google Translate […] it helps, you never know quite whether it's saying quite what you want but, generally when I'm translating into Chinese (General Manager)*	154
Use of distributors	Company D	*I suppose that's really basically what we do with our distributors… we use distributors in the country of choice, so the customers are actually dealing with their own countrymen (Managing Director)*	193
BELF	Company C	*he's been over here a couple of times, and his English is perfect, and he'll come over, and we'll go to the pub, and we'll have a chat (Finance Director)*	183
Using greetings in other languages	Company A	*you know I'm happy for these guys to… to… sign off an email in the native tongue […] I think that makes a difference (Customer Service Manager)*	143
Using all available linguistic resources even if not intended for a specific purpose	Company B	*Poland was just addition, I think I was just told to… try to start (French and Polish Speaking Export Executive)*	162