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AVALIA ÇAO LINGUÍSTICA PARA CARGOS MULTILINGUÍSTICOS EM EMPRESAS MULTINACIONAIS

LANGUAGE ASSESSMENT FOR MULTILINGUAL POSITIONS IN MULTINATIONAL COMPANIES

Universidade de Aveiro
Ano civil da defesa

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Dissertação apresentada à Universidade de Aveiro para cumprimento dos requisitos necessários à obtenção do grau de Mestre em Línguas e Relações Empresariais, realizada sob a orientação científica do Professor Doutor Mark John Richard Wakefield leitor do Departamento de Línguas e Culturas da Universidade de Aveiro.

To my Mother.

o júri

presidente

Doutora Ana Maria Martins Pinhão Ramalheira
Professora Auxiliar da Universidade de Aveiro

Doutor Jaime José Becerra da Costa (arguente)
Professor Auxiliar da Universidade do Minho - Escola de Letras, Artes e Ciências Humanas

Doutor Mark John Richard Wakefield (orientador)
Leitor da Universidade de Aveiro

palavras-chave   Globalização, multinacionais, multilinguismo, comunicação, perspicácia
                            empresarial

resumo   A globalização estimulou diferentes quadros de atividades empresariais
                            multinacionais a operar em todo o mundo. Neste contexto foram identificadas
                            necessidades de organização específica. O multilinguismo, é um ativo
                            valorizado e causado pela globalização. Três em cada quatro empresas
                            multinacionais, gerem em média mais de 20 filiais fora do seu próprio país
                            (Feely e Harzing, 2003 p. 37). As empresas que operam em todo o mundo,
                            apontam como crucial a necessidade de falantes de línguas diferentes, para
                            prestar apoio nas suas unidades operacionais. Perante este desafio de diário
                            de encontrar falantes nativos da língua-alvo para exercer estas funções, os
                            recrutadores procuram diferentes opções na escolha final entre os perfis
                            disponíveis para as posições vagas.

keywords

Globalization, multinationals, multilingualism, communication, business acumen

abstract

Globalization has stimulated different frameworks of activities and the presence of multinational companies operating all over the world, gives rise to a need for a specific organization. Multilingualism is an asset both valued and caused by globalization. Three out of four multinational companies now manage at least twenty or more branches outside of their own country (Feely and Harzing, 2003 p. 37). The need for speakers of different languages in operational units of multinational companies in different countries or regions comes about due to the mere fact that multinational companies operate all over the world. Having to deal with the challenge of frequently being unable to find native speakers of the target language in the function, recruiters have different options in making the final choice among the available profiles for the vacant positions.

1. Introduction

In the social media age, globalized electronic marketplaces and macroeconomics, multinational companies are working overtime to gain any percentage of market share within their grasp in places beyond their reach and thus they build a direct or an indirect foothold, via subsidiaries, distributors or by other determined means and application of resources, to offer their products or services to the most remote markets around the world, and as an important piece of this expansion, they need members of the target linguistic community, of each newly penetrated market as part of their professional workforce.

This stems from the need for effective communication at all levels, from public authorities to suppliers of goods and services, distributors, clients, etc to this end multinational companies have to mitigate the challenges rising from communication gap caused by not speaking the language of the new markets that they enter. Each of the mentioned activities require a specific skillset including but not limited to business acumen, communication method, knowledge, experience, professional network, linguistic capabilities and so forth.

To tap into the full potential of the given market, multinational companies build specific roadmaps with their most essential operational building block being human capital that encompasses the needs to be addressed in the market. Building the right team requires a concise study of all the necessary characteristics to fulfil the required role to progress the roadmap and implementation of the global strategy as part of the selection and recruitment process. To create the correct profile for the team, the necessary individual job profiles need to be chosen for a coherent course of action and delivery of the envisaged results due to the fact that designed human resource deployments and activities targets to enable an organization to achieve its goals (Purcell & Right, 2007, p.274). In any organization, the required linguistic capabilities differ from one position to another. A receptionist needs to be able to exchange ideas in conversations applying speaking and listening proficiency. A clerk working in logistics department will require a broader linguistic capability including speaking, listening reading and writing with a limited professional vocabulary. An engineer in charge of evolution of ideas and solving design problems needs a more sophisticated language capability allowing them to apply the full range of rhetorical skills including

negotiation, persuasion, motivation and humour to be able to conduct a productive conversation and pass the right message to the interlocutors (Feely & Harzing, 2003, p.40).

In the present dissertation, we will have a multifaceted look at the importance of language literacy and business acumen among candidates for multilingual positions making use of review of primary data, obtained through two separate surveys, and secondary data. It was important for the trajectory of the work at hand to acquire information from both sides of the interview table to understand better their perspectives. The content and discourse analysis literature review was accomplished on the existing relevant body of data present in diverse sources. The sources include books, scientific articles and online texts to complement the study in order to find the answers to the research questions with the objective of understanding the importance of language literacy among all the possible skills of a candidate's profile as well as the importance of business acumen in current business climate. The two fields being intertwined with many aspects in common in the subject matter made us choose the literature among both business and linguistic sources for a bilateral view on the subject matter.

A short interview was performed with a professional recruiter to corroborate the acquired responses to one question on each survey that addressed by the two different perspectives on the same subject vis-à-vis the practical reality.

The perception acquired through the three different data acquisition methods helped us formulate our research questions and develop our hypothesis after studying the representations of the subject of the research (Gournelos , Hammonds, & Wilson, 2019, pp.49-53). The inductive hypothesis adopted in this research is that where there is lack of linguistic competence among the pool of candidates, employers tend to focus on their business acumen rather than their proficiency in the target language and compromise on the candidates' language competence (Toledo, Flikkema, & Toledo-Pereyra, 2011, p.193).

Subsequently our perception was that, interviewers tend to evaluate and prioritize certain other aspects of the candidate's profile such as business acumen, communication style, or any other requirement of the position apart from command of the target language.

Under these circumstances, the research questions that call for attention are as follows:

1. Are language placement/evaluation tests necessary for job interviews in the context of multinational companies?

2. Is there a standardized job interview format for the recruitment of potential multilingual employees to fill in multilingual positions in multinational companies?

3. Is business acumen or communicative competency in the target language of greater importance?

The first two questions are addressed in the Literature Review section. As a multidisciplinary conjunction the literature review englobes the respective factors by studying the generalities of Language and its Evaluation method through content and discourse analysis of the contours of contemporary best practice. We reviewed literature on Language for Specific Purposes (LSP) and its relevance to the research subject. We also studied available literature on business acumen, its importance for organisations and possible assessment methods during professional interview. The recruitment process was analysed and presented in general and different aspects of an interview was described along with its relevance to the subject matter.

To acquire empirical evidence, two separate surveys were prepared in order to respond to the third question, which is to compare the relative importance of interviewees' communicative competency in the target language or business acumen. The surveys also provide clarifications on the correlation between education of recruiters and their tendency to apply scientific method in the interview of multilingual professionals for multilingual positions in their companies. They also address the importance of learning new languages for job seekers.

The research method comprises the application of descriptive analysis of primary data acquired through two surveys published among professionals, performing a targeted interview and review of secondary data for obtaining deeper knowledge of the subject matter.

2. Language Assessment History and Methods

Realising the global concept of Language Assessment requires a brief definition on the main subject being Language itself. Understanding language, its description and acquisition serves in gaining a deeper perspective in this research and the effort in a multidimensional approach at the topic. Therefore, this would be our starting point to develop our understanding of the matter at hand.

2.1.1 Defining Language: Nature and Purpose

Language, one of the wonders of the natural world, is a structure composed of words, grammar and a system of putting words together in order to produce meaning (Pinker, 1994, p.15;Venezuela, 2020, p.3). In addition to being a system, language is a human instinct, meaning that unless there is a special brain impairment, all humans are capable of language acquisition (Venezuela, 2020, p.4). It is specifically personal, as it contributes to individual identity and to shaping interpersonal relationships, it acts as the initial means of reflection and guides human through his eternal journey of observation and exploration as it is the chariot of knowledge. We think with words, phrases, sentences composed of descriptive or comparative structures, create imagination and feel in words, which can be identified in silent speech that is unique to humans (Jarvis, 2019, p.58). We form our perception, understanding and judgement about our environment in words by recognizing our own sentiments through the predefined system of words. We feel something but we need words to understand, behave and manage our reactions through categorizing that feeling with words. We know that if we are felt with love or resentment vis-à-vis another person or a phenomenon, we need to identify the feelings in our head to be able to control or express them. We use language in all contexts in our solitude and in social situations; whether it is a small talk on the public transport or a complex professional meeting, like an interview, to explain, demonstrate or assert our position. We need words corresponding to any state, object, feeling or perception to be able to describe them internally or externally.

Humans acquire languages continuously throughout their lives since early childhood; data demonstrate that infants keep mapping important features of environment language in their first year of life before they can speak (Kuhl, 2000, p.11850).

Language acquisition is a developmental process that transitions from Phoneme Recognition (during the first eight months) up until Language Production (by thirty-six months). Each phase of the process is a consequent of a specific developmental stage in a child. As a developmental subject, language acquisition in children is related to socioeconomic status and race of the family (F. Morse & Cangelosi, 2017, p.37; Pungello et al, 2009, p.557). The expression of learnings and knowledge in specific contexts such as university applications, professional selection procedure and immigration is performed through the correct demonstration of knowledge through language be it written exams for university selection processes, verbal expression in job interviews as well as any other representation of written or verbal expression for any selection purpose.

Psycholinguistics, psychology of language, as the science that scrutinizes language is the analysis of the psychological and neurological enablers of human in acquisition, use, comprehension, and production of language (Jodai, 2011, p.3). Psycholinguistics of 1950s was defining language acquisition under heavy influence of behaviouristic psychology, structural linguistics, and information theory nonetheless the fresh approaches of Noam Chomsky challenged this by shedding light on language competence as independent from motivation or intelligence (Miller, 1979, p.1). This research evaluates the behaviouristic psychology and structuralist linguistics for more relevance to its topic and only a cursory reference shall be made to that body of knowledge given its tangential relevance to the primary objectives of this research. However, we will not undermine the importance of the information theory in linguistics while behaviouristic psychology and structural linguistics remains an important point of reference within this research. An overview of behaviouristic linguistics and structuralist linguistics will be presented along with authoritative critiques of them in order to be used in our analysis of linguistic aspects of job interviews. These two are reference for this research because a professional interview is composed of the psychological and linguistic capabilities of the interviewee and the perception of interviewer about the latter's demonstration of them.

2.1.2 Behaviouristic Linguistics

American psychologist, B.F Skinner, explains language acquisition and linguistics in his Book *Verbal Behaviour* with behaviouristic approach. He outlines mand, tact, audience relation, echoic, intraverbal and autoclitic as primary linguistic operants and explains the circumstances of their occurrence based on laboratory experiments on animals. Skinner defines each of the linguistic operants as below (Skinner, 1957, pp.70-353):

- Mand: functions as an expression of a need

- Tact is a reflex to exterior phenomena

- Audience relation is the listener's response to the request of another person in form of a reaction

- Echoic is the mere repetition of what is heard

- Intraverbal is when the speaker responds to another speaker in a conversation

- Autoclitic is activated when the speaker adds a new dimension to speech by using other operants within their communication

Skinner developed the investigation on operant behaviours as behaviours defined by their impact upon the surroundings rather than by their form. He studied simple non-human animals, such as pigeons, to see how systematic changes in consequences (i.e., reinforcers) and antecedents (i.e., state of deprivation, discriminative stimuli, etc.) can lead to systematic changes in behaviours and responses to stimuli. He took his understanding of how learning occurs and began to apply it to language within a graduate level course for his students at Harvard University. His notes for this class became the basis for the book, Verbal Behaviour published in 1957 (Frost & Bondy, 2006, p.3).

Skinner also identified four controlling antecedent variables of verbal behaviour: some state of deprivation or aversive stimulation, some aspect of the environment, other verbal behaviour, and one's own verbal behaviour. This means that according to Skinner there are five drivers for linguistic behaviour that happen individually or accompanied by any of the other four drivers. He believes that these drivers are the main reason speakers communicate. His analysis was based on these variables as they occur in isolation or in combination. In describing these operants, he developed

new terminology to describe these functional relations to minimize confusion with lay terminology or vocabulary from other professions (Frost & Bondy, 2006, p.4).

The combination of primary operants and impact of circumstances being environment and other people's behaviour in table one[1] explains simple and complex verbal operants and their controlling variables. Table one provides a diagrammatical representation of the situation referred to in respect of complex verbal operants and their driving factors.

2.1.3 Criticism of Behaviouristic Linguistics

Bearing in mind his Mentalist Learning Theory, Noam Chomsky, the most prominent linguistic alive, wrote *The Review of Verbal Behaviour. By F.B. Skinner* in 1959 covering all the major notions approached by Skinner. Based on scientific publications of the 1950s and 60s Chomsky refutes the basis of extrapolating animal experiments on human behaviour.

Whereas in the recent studies of Erich Jarvis, Head of the Laboratory of Neurogenetics of Linguistics of Rockefeller University, similarities have been found between non-human animals and humans in terms of language learning and syntax. A continuum hypothesis is suggested in which different species have varying degrees of vocal learning. This means that there is a large spectrum starting from vocal nonlearners to vocal learners with a large difference in between vocal nonlearners when we consider the large differences within the vocal learners range. There is the need to define another continuum as to why auditory learning (receptive language) is more advanced than vocal leaning (productive language) (Jarvis, 2019, pp.50-51).

In addition, Chomsky questions the limitations of Skinner's observations, methodology and angle towards the experiments as well as the positing of functional analysis as the only way to evaluate the success of his agenda. According to Chomsky, Skinner disregards the organism's knowledge, internal structure, and the way it processes information that are its undeniable inborn characteristics.

> *"Since Skinner's work is the most extensive attempt to accommodate human behaviour involving higher mental faculties within a strict*

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[1] Annex 1

behaviourist schema of the type that has attracted many linguists and philosophers, as well as psychologists, a detailed documentation is of independent interest. The magnitude of the failure of this attempt to account for verbal behaviour serves as a kind of measure of the importance of the factors omitted from consideration, and an indication of how little is really known about this remarkably complex phenomenon." (Chomsky, 1959, p.28)

Chomsky explains that with a literal reading, the book covers no aspect of linguistic behaviour and with a metaphoric reading the book is merely a traditional approach to the matter at hand and it is vague. The claims of the research and results, in literal or metaphoric form are rejected in terms of relevance to the linguistic behaviour based on their traditional approach to the subject matter.

In an effort to understand the basics of Skinner's behavioural linguistics in the context of a job interview we will see if such application will lead into a better linguistic understanding of the concept and whether or not it can be applied in the first place.

Considering a Skinnerian definition of stimulus and response, any response to a given circumstance is rooted in a physical stimulus. In the context of the linguistic aspects of a job interview there is limited trace of identifiable or direct physical stimulus. On the other hand, if according to Skinner's definition, by looking at an object, we produce a word under the influence of the object's characteristics, therefore, the organism is an empty device and since the stimulus is, part of the outside world the response can be predicted. There is limited trace of physical stimulus in an interview, which would limit the responses to questions and increase their predictability as a result. Furthermore, each interview has its own characteristics, there are a few interviews with a clear path and responses vary from different individuals with different backgrounds despite having the same interviewer or they are performed to hiring for the same operational position.

The state of deprivation, the state in which the speaker has a need that Skinner defines as one of the antecedent of linguistic operants, is pertinent in the context of an interview. As the interviewer is seeking answers to his questions and the need to hire a new person to fill in the open job post. This supports the view that the stimulus

of conducting a conversation within the context of a job interview is of physical nature and can be defined within the framework of Skinnerian behavioural conception of linguistics.

Nonetheless as we cannot identify the current stimuli until the speaker responds, we are not able to predict their verbal behaviour in terms of the stimuli in their environment and hence the inapplicability of verbal behaviour in the context of the professional interview.

Noam Chomsky challenges Skinner's Verbal Behaviour approach, with examples as to how humans respond to different objects simply considering the existence of emotions. Chomsky asserts a different view on Skinner's claim:

> *"It seems that Skinner's claim that all verbal behaviour is acquired and maintained in 'strength' through reinforcement is quite empty, because his notion of reinforcement has no clear content, functioning only as a cover term for any factor, detectable or not, related to acquisition or maintenance of verbal behaviour." (Chomsky, 1959, p.38)*

Chomsky studies the concept of drive for learning in laboratory experiments with rats and monkeys. He highlights the fact that animals that did not receive a food reward (reinforcement) found drive in merely accomplishment of the performed test, thus proving the process of latent learning being the drive of fulfilling rather complex tasks and he reject the necessity of reinforcement for learning. By proposing the possibility of innate evolutionary characteristics in human brain, the writer rejects the significance of environment "feedback" and the "independent contribution of the organism" in the process of language acquisition.

In Chomsky's viewpoint verbal operants as per Skinner's definitions do not conform to real-life language and are only limited to examples provided by the latter exemplified below where he explains why deprivation is not the only reason a speaker uses "mand". He posits further that:

> *"In the case of the mand "Pass the salt", the word 'deprivation' is not out of place, though it appears to be of little use for functional analysis. Suppose however that the speaker says, "Give me the book", "Take me for a ride", or "Let me fix it". What kinds of deprivation can be*

associated with these mands? How do we determine or measure the relevant deprivation? I think we must conclude in this case, as before, either that the notion 'deprivation' is relevant at most to a minute fragment of verbal behaviour, or else that the statement 'X is under Y-deprivation' is just an odd paraphrase for 'X wants Y', bearing a misleading and unjustifiable connotation of objectivity" (Chomsky, 1959, p.45).

Chomsky identifies the state of deprivation as not always the drive of applying verbal operant and questions whether or not it is correct to always expect a state of deprivation, when the speaker expresses a specific need or ask for something that is currently out of their reach.

In the context of a job interview, when the interviewer asks the interviewee to share their background, it is not necessarily, because the interviewer do not have the information, as most common practice is to choose the interviewees after receiving and reviewing their CVs. Having the interviewee's curriculum vitae at hand, it is common practice for the interviewer to ask the interviewee to provide a brief introduction on their education and career background with different intentions in mind. The interviewer arranges the questions either to make sure the provided information on the CV is real, or to check the way the interviewee presents their background or any other objective that can be pursued by individual interviewer.

While Chomsky's critique is of linguistic nature, a more psycholinguistic criticism is deemed essential to shed more light on the subject matter. Psychologists James Meindl, Niel Miller and Johnathan Ivy criticized *Verbal Behaviour* in the view of psycholinguistics rather than a pure linguistic approach. Acknowledging its positive influence and success of Skinner's work in practical utility and improving a great many lives, some have argued that the impact of Skinner's analysis on research and practice has been underwhelming. According to the aforementioned psychologists, Skinner attempted to offer a functional explanation of human language meanwhile it is argued that Skinner's analysis is in fact mainly founded on formal aspects (rather than functional) and that this has both created confusion and limited the utility of the analysis. Specifically, Skinner's formal account makes it difficult to distinguish verbal

from nonverbal behaviour and to distinguish the various types of verbal responses from one another (Meindl, Miller, & Ivy, 2018, pp.80-86).

Having reviewed the basic principles and critique of behavioural linguistics and identified its application in the context of an interview, we will now look at Structural Linguistics as another influential factor of psycholinguistics.
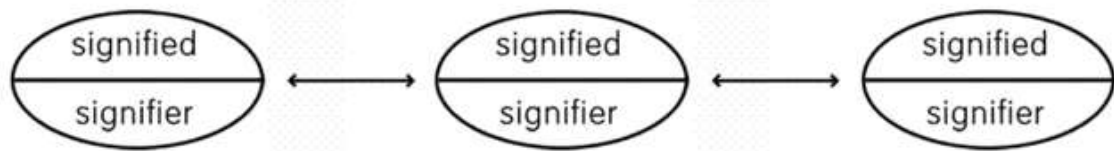

2.1.4 Structural Linguistics

The essential elements of structural linguistics in respect of Ferdinand de Saussure's work was also a significant influence on psycholinguistics in the 1950s. His posthumous book, *Course in General Linguistics,* is considered as the foundational primary text of structural linguistics. De Saussure did not refer to his body of work as structural linguistic and in his course; he called it semiology (semiotics). Danish linguist Louis Hjelmslev originally conceived the term structural linguistics. Structuralism however is a derivation of Emile Durkheim's work on structural functionalism and social fact in sociology (Dosse & Glassman, 1997, p.22).

In structural linguistics the "concept" is called the signified and the "image accoustique" is recognized as the signifier. A signifier is the word that represents or describes the concept in the form of sound. The relations between these two elements are arbitrary which means if in any case we agreed to call it with the sound image "apple" it would have been called "apple". Language used in a professional context is not exempt from this concept and the jargon and terminology follow the same principle; for example, the expression "circle-back" does not mean move in circles in retrograde manner, but rather that an important matter will be reviewed at an appropriate time.

While Skinner's behaviourism explains the drivers of language usage and tries to remain on functional level, De Saussure provides a clear description about language itself, which connects his work closely to Freud's in *Project for a Scientific Psychology* in 1895 (De Saussure, 2011, p.38). In the words of Pierre Bourdieu, De Saussure separates internal linguistics from external linguistics and detaches language from the backgrounds (locations, origins, and other characteristics) of its speakers (De Saussure, 2011, p.24). De Saussure discusses "Value" for signs as an interdependent part of language referring to the meaning of each sign. Value of a

sign depends on all the values of other signs and it is perceived through its contrast with other signs (De Saussure, 2011, pp.114-115). (Figure 1)

Through differentiation of aspects of Language, De Saussure defines the system scientifically.

2.1.5 Criticism of Structural Linguistics

Linguists including T.M. Pearson and Francis Utly criticize Structural Linguistics nonetheless many other still accept its basic tenets. Pearson describes limitations of Structural Linguistics in definition of a noun, in simplifying explanations of adjectives and danglers and in defining a program (Pearson, 1960, pp.229-233).

Utly however highlights exclusion of external factors in structural linguistics in analysis of historical text e.g. classical poetry:

> *Because linguistics deals intimately with the word and the structures into which the word is placed, it is as relevant to the work of art as de Tolnay's study of the nature of Michelangelo's pair of chisels or the struggles he had in obtaining marble for the Julius Tomb (Utly, 1960, p.319).*

As for Noam Chomsky Structural Linguistics is efficient in explaining phonology and morphology. However, for understanding the deeper layers of drive and capacities of human mind in acquisition of a new language it would hardly be useful.

This means that according to Chomsky applying the framework of structural linguistics would not serve as an analytical tool to the context of linguistics of a job interview because of the social layers of the context, however studying the structure of the language used during an interview might still fall into the Structural Linguistics. This is because the purpose of a job interview is to identify a suitable candidate to fulfil the required position. Albeit, the social setting of an interview implies a certain framework and language construct that is approachable via Structural Linguistics.

We can be almost positive that certain familiar expressions are avoided during a formal interview as well as certain tones of speech, and the applied terminology is relevant to the core activity of the job. The interviewee remains in a professional tone, and usually they stay on topic and focused to answer all the questions with utmost accuracy. This may be due to the fact that we adjust our tone and words to the context of our conversations and with whom we communicate as we gain more social experience.

2.2.1 Language Assessment History

Language tests are used to facilitate making informed decisions in respect of people's important life choices therefore the necessity of their accuracy is indisputable as in many different circumstances people are given the chance to participate in specific part of their education and career based on their language proficiency.

Three decades ago language testing was seen as made up of three successive periods, each an improvement over the previous but in recent years it is viewed as part of a long history of examinations, starting with essay translation (pre-scientific era), psychometric structuralisms' integrative approach and communicative as the most prominent approaches in the field. Psychometrics has been struggling to find ways of making tests reliable and valid ever since language testing has become an recognizable academic field (Alduais, 2012, p.203; Spolsky, 2020, p.375-378).

Many theories have been developed in the scientific approaches including the Unitary Competence Hypothesis in parallel with the Sociolinguistic Movement as a result of Oller's factor analytic research who stated that language proficiency is a single unitary ability that should not be broken down into the skills introduced by Lado and Carroll. In recent years, researchers have proposed an interactionalist perspective on language assessment (Bachman, 2007, p.11).

Language is not composed of separate components and skills but it should be regarded as a unit, which would entail language evaluation on the entire purpose of language instead of evaluating its building blocks (Bachman, 2007, p.27). Notwithstanding this, in the context if a job interview, the sole objective is to pass the

right and precise message to avoid any uncertainty in this business communication circumstance.

2.2.2 Language Assessment Methods

During 1960s and 1970s, researchers Lado, Carroll and Davies adopted "skills and element" model. It was the first time in history of language testing that the model deemed to apply the principles of current linguistics and those of language pedagogy (Bachman, 2007, p.19). According to Lado, pronunciation, grammatical structure, vocabulary, and cultural meanings are the variables of language that are to be tested but cannot be tested separately as they do not occur independently. In the same position as Lado, Carrol explained the construct described it as "aspects of language competence" such as phonology/graphology, morphology, syntax, and lexicon in addition to auditory comprehension, oral production, reading, writing that constitute linguistic skills (Bachman, 2007, p.7).

After the skills and elements era, Direct Testing was developed to measure the performance of the test taker in proximity of the examiner. To the proponents of Direct Testing

> "… *Performance on a direct test was essentially a predictor of the language performance that could be expected of the test taker in real-life settings"* *(Bachman, 2007, p.10).*

In parallel to Direct Testing Oller formed his Unitary Competence Theory to map out the test taker's proficiency through a "pragmatic test". He proposed that performance on a whole range of tests, which he termed pragmatic tests, depended on a common fundamental capacity in the learner being the ability to integrate grammatical, lexical, contextual, and pragmatic knowledge in test performance (McNamara, 2000, p.15). The research that was the basis for the theory was rejected by many researchers and Oller himself admitted that the theory was wrong (Bachman, 2007, pp:10-11).

Hymes's theory of communicative competence followed the previous theories, not chronologically but in terms of development, in the early 1970s. According to Hymes, knowing a language was more than knowing its grammar. In 1980s, Canale and Swain specified various aspects of linguistic knowledge, within the context of communicative competence. These aspects include grammatical or formal

competence, sociolinguistic competence, or knowledge of rules of language use in terms of what is appropriate to different types of interlocutors, in different settings, and on different topics; strategic competence, or the ability to compensate in performance for incomplete or imperfect linguistic resources in a second language; and discourse competence, or the ability to deal with extended use of language in context (McNamara, 2000, pp.16-18). They introduced the concept of strategic competence defined as "*verbal and non-verbal communication strategies that may be called into action to compensate for breakdowns in communication due to performance variables or to insufficient competence*" for when the speaker does not have the linguistic competence but pursues the communication (Dörnyei & Thurrel, 1991, p.17; Bachman, 2007, p.13).

Bachman defined the Interaction-Ability or Communicative Language Ability in the 1990s as the next approach in language evaluation that is an extension of Canale and Swain model factoring in the strategic competence into the assessment process. In the 1990s, Bachman and Palmer recognized the notion of authenticity, which was conceptualized in the late 1970s by Widdowson. Widdowson made a distinction between genuineness and authenticity of the task test. Genuineness is the attribute of the text that is written for proficient users of the language while authenticity is a social construct generated from interaction between the text and its reader. Bachman and Palmer used the term authenticity to refer to situational authenticity that is the level of correspondence between specifications of the test task and features of the target language use situation and renamed interactional authenticity to interactiveness (Grapin, 2017, p.2).

In the early 2000s, Task-Based Performance Assessment built upon previous approaches, specifically communicative language testing, communicative language ability and Interactional Approach to Language Assessment identifies the gaps the assessment design and the relationship between interaction and language ability (Bachman, 2007, pp.16-27).

3. Language for Specific Purposes: Multilingual Business Contexts

3.1 History and Definitions

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English was only learnt for practical purposes such as business and travel before the 1800s (Cavalheiro, 2018, p.72). Also today English is the official language in almost eighty-five percent of operators in corporate sector. In addition, reportedly ninety-one percent of employees consider English as extremely relevant in their work (Oksaharju, 2021, p.16).

Language for Specific Purposes (LSP) started after the Second World War as a branch of applied linguistics that discusses the use of language for some practical purpose. LSP testing followed the communicative language movement of the 1970s, to meet the requirements of assessing applicants' abilities to perform specific tasks in academic or professional setting (Grapin, 2017, p.1). It defines whether an individual has the language competences to apply them in relevant academic or occupational context. The LSP tests are of performance-based nature (O'Loughlin, 2008, p.2214). LSP was deemed to have improved communication and productivity for industrializing countries to overcome local barriers. However, it ended up being often at the expense of local languages (Starfield, 2013, p.2485).

It can be observed within the outlines of the above mentioned studies, that because of the effects of globalization and development of new markets' supply, and demand in newly independent countries the need for a specific approach had been identified therefore here we find the answer to the first research question. Our question being "Are language placement/evaluation tests necessary for job interviews in the context of multinational companies?" can be responded through extrapolative deduction revealing that in all language learning process, including from an LSP perspective, there are assessment tests independent of the interview as the learner has already taken the target language classes unless it is their mother tongue.

In addition, language assessment tests are important tools in the learning process for any purpose and in case of professional appointment as they play a significant role in aiding the employer in determining whether the potential employee can communicate in the target language. However, having analysed the existing body of literature and research studies in this area, it is possible to accurately claim that strategic

competence, learner's ability to use language in interaction with other speakers of the same language, also plays a significant part along with communicative and grammatical competences in a successful interview for both parties (Littlemore & Low, 2006, p.177).

LSP principles and related profiency tests are not only applied to English but also to German, Spanish and French. The Business Language Testing Service (BULATS) that evaluated the aforementioned languages, was in place until sixth of December 2019 and its now replaced by Linguaskill.[2] Linguaskill is a computer-based, multi-level test using artificial intelligence methods and is aligned with Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFRL). It offers two types of test namely Business and General, the Linguaskill Business assesses the language of business of the test-taker (Baharum, Ismail, Nordin, & Razali, 2021, pp.166-167). This means that there are scientific tests available to the multinational companies (MNCs) to assess their candidates language proficiency in the language that has been foreseen for the job vacancy that is to be filled. Multinational companies (MNCc) can resort to these different test types Linguaskill for example, to determine the level of language proficiency of the pontential candidates in the business context.

3.2 Language for Specific Purposes in Multilingual Business Contexts

The importance of language in the context of business can be traced in the activity of small and medium enterprises (SME) that comprise a notable ninety-nine percent of the total of the European businesses, creating eighty-five percent of the new jobs in the continent. A report from the European Commission in 2006 indicates that thirty-seven percent of the SMEs had lost a contract due to language ineficiencies; the losses worth between eight and thirteen and a half million euros. To thrive in a global economy companies must overcome the language barrier and therefore language can be considered a strategic resource. Language and business communication contribute to the success of companie (Hernández Linares, et al., 2018, p.118-121). Also in the context of business, language is defined a system of meaning, central to understanding of organizational, scoial and global realities. Assuming that the

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[2] Information retrieved from Cambridgeenglish.org

linguage and communication domain will affect the overall performance of the company and trying to consciously govern it, is the definition of strategic use of language by management. Development of language strategies is one way to establish this; for example many companies impelemnt a common corporate language English is chosen by the majority of them.(Sanden, 2016, pp.274-275). Evans refers to this phenomenon as a result of globalization since the 1990s (Evans, 2013, p.228).

> *The increasing use of English in internal communication in European corporations, either through deliberate policy or ad hoc practice, is an inevitable consequence of the tightening and thickening web of economic globalization since the early 1990s, and particularly of the prevalence of cross-border mergers, acquisitions, and strategic alliances, the ubiquity of mobile communication devices, and the application of work flow software (Evans, 2013, p.228).*

This is inferring to the choice of English as the official language of companies and its usage on a day-to-day basis to facilitate communication strategically therefore it dictates the usage of LSP in the majority of MNCs. In addition, as MNCs are composed of organizational units in different geographies they are multilingual organizations by definition and multilingual situations occur at all levels on a daily basis thus dealing with multiple languages in one's professional life requires a multidisciplinary approach as globalization affects the cultural settings and increases LSP communications (Sandrini, 2006, pp.119; Sanden, 2016; p275).

It is observed also that cultural differences are now accepted hurdles to doing business and language barrier has been referred to as "forgotten factor" and companies have to handle language issues thereof on a daily basis (Harzing, Köster, & Magner, 2010, p.279). Thererfore, it is necessary to find solutions in order to solve the problem rising from dealing with multiple languages and overcoming the language barriers. Harzing, Köster and Magner suggest these solutions and categorize them into three groups of "Informal day-to-day changes in communication patters", "Structural solutions" and usage of "Bridge Individuals".

Changes in day-to day communication patterns can be as simple as asking the interlocultor to repeat themselves, adjusting the communication method. Another way to change the communication pattern is code switching that is usage of the first langue among non native speakers which is generally seen as a negative phenomenon. Structural solutions are those to be applied within the organization to overcome the language barrier. The solutions include designation of a common corporate language, on which (CEFRL) does not fully agree and it promotes a "plurilingual and pluricultural competence" at the same time CEFRL focuses on the ability to code switch resorting to bilingual forms of speech or to developing linguistic and communication knowledge. Other structural solutions include using machine translation and using external translators or interpreters and providing language trainings within the organization. The vast adoption of English as common corporate language has been studied by research for long and even English as a Lingua Franca is a reletively new field of studies with its own journal called the Journal of English as a Lingua Franca (Guillan-Galve & Vásquez-Orta, 2018, p.6). This has been conspicuously relevant to European countries that considered English as a foreign language as opposed to postcolonial societies such as India and the Philipinnes that adopted English as a lingua franca as a result of English or American presence prior to World War II, (Evans, 2013, p.228; Guillén-Galve, 2018, p.344; Harzing, et. al, 2010, pp.283) .

The last category of solution is the usage of bridge individuals. Bridge individuals are not necessarily hired to bridge the language gap but they do help overcome the communication gap. They are categorized in four categories of expatriates, inpatriates, bilingual employees as linking-pins, locally hired non-native managers and parallel information networks (Harzing, et. al, 2010, pp.284-285).

On the other hand employees are expected to take part in meetings communicate verbally or in writing in a foreign language and consequently the success of communication and coordination efforts depending on emloyees' effort to adopt the foreign functional language. This is impacted by the employees' language identity (Bordia & Bordia, 2014, pp.415-416). Referring to the last solution suggested by Harzing et. Al, and combing the two different perspectives of the organization and employees willingness to adopt a common corporate language will give organizations

an edge in their implementation of their international business. Searching for employees inpatiates, expatriates or plurilingual candidates with a more flexible language identity could be a way to accomplish this objective.

4. Business Acumen: Definition and Evaluation

4.1 Business Acumen Definition

Before explaining business acumen, its definition and implications in the business world, we would like to review the concept of business language that would prepare the grounds for a better understanding of the concept of business acumen. Within the paradigms of business language, there is the constant use of specific expressions and jargon that describe the internal and external actions of the company. These specific expressions outline contexts, processes and or action (della Volpe et al, 2017, p.108).

Business acumen, a fundamental professional skill, is the ability to understand one's role and impact on the profitability of the business. It equips the individual with the competences to handle client relationship, run the related business processes, understand market competition and helps them to be efficient and productive in their area of activity (Makhele & Barnard, 2019, p.4). With these skills, individuals are capable of making sound decisions in their day-to-day activities as a part of execution of business strategy to obtain the anticipated result (McGregor, 2011, p.349). As a result, it contributes to the employee´s capacity to make relevant conscious decisions in the direction of the company strategy. It is valuable also in the respective strategic planning and its objectives. In other words, business acumen has an important impact in bearing significance in employees' parts and reliability of their actions.

Language being the bearer of thought and comprehension plays an essential role in this fundamental skill. Business acumen encompasses organizational skills and mastering of business language and corporate jargon. This means that a high level of business acumen leads to better understanding of business language and its translation into activities and delivering results. For that reason, an employee's level of business acumen has direct association with their understanding and thereafter

contribution to delivery of the objectives defined within departments and consequently the entire organization. Additionally, knowing the business language and possessing the right organizational skills coming from acquired business acumen, will also help employees present their activities, ideas and challenges and understand their impact on the company activities. This skill can help both the organization and the employee in achieving their goals. Companies achieve their business objectives and employees equipped with this skill with probably achieve their professional goals.

An individual with an acceptable business acumen is capable of understanding basic principles of business, is capable of analyzing the subjects at hand and can form their own perception according to their understanding and analysis and they are capable of designing approaches and solutions. Consequently, companies are interested in recruiting people with such skillset, as it will create a win-win situation for both the company and the individuals.

Business acumen is more and more recognized as an important competency because business acumen and business literacy are related. Someone with business literacy possesses "*at least intermediate level of proficiency in understanding, speaking and translating the language and concepts of business*" (Ragas & Culp, 2021, p.11)*.*

4.2 Business Acumen Evaluation

Evaluation of any sort begins with the job interview in the recruitment process. In this process, the job interview aims at selecting the right candidate for the vacancy through evaluating their skills and expertise related to the job positions. The interview contributes to assessment of the candidates' skills and career trajectory in relation to the job position. It is critical for the interviewer to ask the suitable questions to acquire the related information from the candidate to be able to make an informed decision (Qin, et al., 2019, p.2165)

Job interviews probe the possibility of recruiting a candidate through different types of questions addressing different categories of organization's needs and concerns. One essential way to structure an interview is the usage of standardized questions. There are four identified types of structured interview question: situational, past behavioral,

background, and job knowledge. Research demonstrates strong consistency and validity of both past behavioral and situational question types having studied them individually, directly or used all together (Hartwell, Johnson, & Posthuma, 2019, p.122).

> *While research on past behavioral and situational question types has provided an in-depth understanding of when and how those questions can be used, similar research on job knowledge and background questions is sparse. We gathered and examined 137 articles and book chapters on structured interviews. Of these, over half discussed or operationalized the structured interview by using past behavioral (50.3%) and/or situational (56.9%) questions. In contrast, only 13 of these sources (9.5%) mention background questions, and only seven (5.1%) mention job knowledge questions. Of those that do mention background or job knowledge questions, most are either non-empirical articles describing structured interviews or are empirical articles that analyze results at the interview level – not by question type. No articles empirically analyzed job knowledge questions, and only one article does so for background questions. In this article, McCarthy, Van Iddekinge, and Campion (2010) found that interviews using background questions, referred to as "experience-based interviews" (p. 340), demonstrated similar reliability and lack of demographic similarity effects, compared to interviews using situational and past-behavioral questions. (Hartwell, et al., 2019, pp.123-124).*

Hartwell, Johnson and Posthuma scrutinized one hundred and thirty seven articles and book sections about structured job interviews but were not able to identify the reason for the lack of research in the validity of job knowledge questions. Performing further research in this field would be recommendable for referencing and providing a framework for such questions and understanding their reliability. With the available research, it is demonstrated that job performance can be predicted through probing with past behavioral and situational question types this is in line with findings of Derous, Born and De Witte who created the Social Process Questionnaire on Selection that can measure applicant value and expectancies in various

characteristics including job knowledge (Dipboye, Macan, & Shahani-Denning, 2012, p.336).

As business acumen falls into the background and job knowledge question there is no relevant research to identify the evaluation methods but through extrapolative deduction it can be applied through assessment of candidate's educational background and general business knowledge questions e.g. what is the difference between EBIT and gross profit?

5. Recruitment: Process, the Job Interview

Given the importance of the job interview in the selection process, and its role in evaluation of the candidate in terms of language proficiency and business acumen we would like to discuss the dimensions of the job interview including the related process and subprocesses for a better understanding of the subject matter.

Job interview, the first encounter with the interviewee, is one of the sub processes of the recruitment process within Human Resource processes.

5.1 Recruitment Process

Recruitment is the process leading to hiring individuals for designated job positions. It is composed of four identified subprocesses. Starting by staff planning or headcount planning, HR marketing, Selection and the process ends in the hiring of staff; each of these process steps are composed of sub processes on their own illustrated in table two (Troger, 2021, pp.121-143).

Table 2. Demonstrates Troger's split of recruitment process into its subprocesses

Staff Planning	HR Marketing	Selection	Hiring
1. Quantitative and qualitative staffing needs	1. Informing, encouraging action and brand building	1. Choice of internal or external staffing	1. Formal contract
2. Identification of challenges	2. Target groups	2. Candidate screening	2. Psychological contract
	3. Employer branding	3. Selection interviews	3. Onboarding
		4. Recruitment tests	
		5. Decision	

For the objective of understanding what leads to the job interview and its prerequisites we will present each step of the recruitment process briefly. In this approach, the first step of the process is Staff Planning. During the staff planning phase the four dimensions of quantitative, qualitative, time and location dimensions are deliberated. The quantitative dimension is the calculation of the number of needed staff that is normally expressed in FTE (full-time equivalent). The qualitative dimension covers the prerequisite in skills, education that are generally referred to qualifications and the time and location are self-explanatory and indicate from when to when and the workplace or department in which the people are needed.

The main goal of this planning is to achieve the highest value by the smallest number of human resources; in other words to obtain the highest value at the lowest cost. In the planning phase of recruitment, market challenges for instance the challenges rising from economic stability, post pandemic situation and industry necessities have to be taken into account for practical purposes. To reiterate, the planning must comprise the limitations and realism of the planned number considering all elements of uncertainty for the long-term (Troger, 2021, pp.121-122). The concept of Strategic Workforce Planning is where human capital is organised to accomplish transformational objectives in line with strategies of the organization as opposed to the traditional approach to the subject matter (Jaillet, Loke, & Sim, 2021, p.1042). This methodology includes constraints and objectives in the calculations of the needed human capital for reaching the objectives of the company. The constraints include variables such us promotion, economic uncertainty, staff turnover and other specific factors of workforce planning.

The second step of the recruitment process, HR Marketing, is to assure that companies are attractive for candidates to apply. Informing as the first step of the process has as objective, making all necessary information about the company available for the prospective candidates. This information include the organization's mission, values, products, markets and job vacancies and are used to encourage people to apply for the open vacancies. Employer marketing is communicating the reputation and experience that constitutes an organisation as an employer (Kanchev, 2022, p.253). In employer marketing, the focus is on making the company appealing

for the possible applicants in accordance with their current potential needs (Troger, 2021, p.126).

Target groups as part of the HR marketing process directs targeted marketing activities to the two target groups composed of internal and external individuals based on the identified needs. External HR marketing activities are designed with the goals of creation of a positive image, increasing public awareness, drawing sufficient number of applicants, decrease of recruitment costs and ensuring smooth replacement for the organisation, an example is "best employer award" (Troger, 2021, p.126). HR management and marketing based on a common enterprise strategy that can apply the same communication strategies paired throughout the recruitment process as well as brand maintenance and employer marketing (Danyliuk, 2022, p.102).

Internal HR marketing uses knowledge of employees' needs and interest in the framework of increasing employee loyalty, reduction of staff turnover and establishing a pool of young talents in management in succession planning (Troger, 2021, p.128).

Employer branding, a process shared between line managers and HR management, uses internet, employer fairs and even employees (e.g. referral programs in which the employee acts as a recruiter) and headhunters to build and maintain the employer brand image. These tools have a high reach and can increase the size of the pool of potential applicants (Troger, 2021,p.132). It has been demonstrated in research that referred candidates had superior language skills and were more relevant to workplace (Breaugh, 2012, p.74).

Research validates that employer branding has a positive impact on employees and indicates the important role of managers o building effective and strategic employer branding to be able to retain the human resources (Nguyen, Luan, & Tam Huynh, 2021, p258).

The third step of the recruitment process is the Selection process which is the most important, the costliest and the most time consuming HR function. Employee selection, aims to find the optimal candidate for open vacancies. The starting point of this process is to determine if the screening will be among external or internal applicants. The next step is called job design that leads to having the job profile and with the job profile and specifications of the role, the screening process starts among

the chosen applicant group. The job profile is the base for developing the criteria for selection process. It is common to create a shortlist of the candidates (Piekkari, Welch, & Welch, 2014, p.72). This pre-selection step is usually taken among the received applicants to increase the validity of the choices; this is nowadays common practice among employers to ask for the necessary pre-selection criteria in online forms and applicants who do not meet the minimum expectation are excluded from the process (Troger, 2021, p.135). Specifying a foreign language prerequisite for a job profile can have an important effect, it can mean that the job position involves, immediately or along the way, globally oriented work or it might even lead to an international assignment (Piekkari, et al, 2014, p.70).

Screening for qualified candidates as the second step of the selection process, happens within a spectrum of activities depending on the location and policies of the organisation. During the screening process, the documentation presented by the applicant attached to their CV is also verified. Selection interviews follow the pre-selection, screening phase and verification of documentation. The interview aims to evaluate candidates' qualifications for the job vacancy. Interviews are the most significant source of information for selecting candidates. HR professionals as well as managers are usually responsible for performing them. We will take a more in depth look at interviews after finishing the explanations of the end-to-end recruitment process due to their relevance to the subject of this dissertation.

As the fourth phase of the selection process, the recruitment tests are usually performed after the first interview. There are various types of recruitment tests and the HR specialist is in charge of choosing and organizing the recruitment tests. The decision to choose the suitable candidate is made after the recruitment tests in favor of one candidate that is equivalent to the rejection of the other candidates.

Table 3. Split of responsibilities in recruitment process between line manager and HR specialist (Troger, 2021, p.138)

Line manager				HR Specialist
Job Description	Profile requirements	Definition of selection process	Pre-selection	Internal and external job posting
		Selection interviews		Social Media Screening
		Discussion		Recruitment tests
		Decision		Preparing employment contract
				Rejecting the candidate

The last part of the recruitment is the Hiring process. After the decision is made, it is time to communicate the decision with the candidates. The chosen candidate will receive a communication including offered contract. After signing the contract, the company plans and executes the employee integration and arranges their induction period largely referred to as onboarding process (Troger, 2021, p.135-142).

4.2 The Selection Interview

Having reviewed the different steps of the recruitment process, the aspects of the selection interview will be investigated, as it is where candidate evaluation based on the criteria defined in the required profile takes place. With this on mind, our main objective is to find the relevant specifications of the selection interview that assesses interviewee language proficiency and their business acumen.

Interviews, as the most popular instrument of the selection process, both among interviewers and interviewees, often fall into three categories of structured, semi-structured and unstructured but in reality there's a continuum in the structure of an interview. These categories were based on three dimensions introduced by Conway, Jako an Goodman in 1995; the three dimensions are standardization of questions, standardization of responses and the manner of combining ratings (Dipboye, et. al, 2012, pp.323-326). An unstructured interview is similar to an informal conversation and does not have goals or a specific agenda; the interviewer is flexible in this type of interview. A semi-structured interview has some goals and structure and gives so autonomy and flexibility to the interviewer. A structured interview is standardized and goal-oriented but does not give autonomy to the interviewer and it is strictly based on the job analysis and consequently the job profile (Chamorro-Premuzic & Furnham, 2010, p.36).

On the same note, Campion, Palmer and Campion identified fifteen elements of structure in their 1997 research as all narratives support the use of structured interviews (Campion, Palmer, & Campion, 1997, p.655). They define "structure" as

> "*any enhancement of the interview that is intended to increase psychometric properties by increasing standardization or otherwise assisting the interviewer in determining what questions to ask or how to evaluate responses*" (Campion, et. Al, p.656).

Based on meta-analyses, in is demonstrated that structured interviews are more reliable compared to unstructured interviews. However; this is questionable because researchers tend to disregard the latter despite its potential in bringing additional information to what can be obtained through structured interviews nevertheless it is not yet clear what dimension of structure are vital and how much structure is needed for interviewer to acquire valid judgment (Dipboye, et. al, 2012, pp.328-329). In another study, Kohn and Dipboye investigated the effects of the interview structure on recruiting outcome. It was concluded that holding highly structured interviews caused had negative consequences on the recruitment process. A large firm experienced twenty-seven percent drop in acceptance of the job offer after implementing structured interview procedure (Kohn & Dipboye, 1998, p.840).

One of the elements of structure in an interview is the question type that has been categorized into situational, past behavioral, background, and job knowledge (Hartwell, Johnson, & Posthuma, 2019, p.122). A structured interview is potentially capable of assessing candidate's energy and drive, work discipline, decision-making, intellectual effectiveness, relationships, flexibility and emotional stability as well as upbringing, education, work history, aspiration, circumstances and interests. These concepts can be examined in by the usage of different question types. For example the interviewer can formulate a background question type such as "What did you study at university?" and with the provided response they can evaluate the necessary background.

The interview is also, where the interviewer examines the representation of their expectations in the candidate. Interviewers seldom agree on a unidimensional view on only the knowledge, skills and abilities and they tend to combine those expectations with candidate's personal values, person-job and person-organization fit (Dipboye, et. al, 2012, p.328).

It can be assumed that the necessary skills and qualifications are considered and mapped prior to the actual interview including language proficiency, professional knowledge and business acumen of the candidate. There is evidence that in return that candidates who can demonstrate proficiency in usage of lexical items related to their personality, skills, capability experience and self-motivation are successful as this is an indication of their confidence in job interviews (Krishnan, Amutan Krishnan, Mohd Jan, & Binti Zainuddin, 2019, p.837). We can assume that LSP training and its demonstration has a positive effect on the success of an interview.

An interview is a reciprocated interaction that whether or not an applicant performs well in the interview is beyond looking or acting well and considering only the interviewers' perspective makes the perspective "*overly simplistic*" (Dipboye, et al, 2012, pp.341-343).

The steps taken prior to the interview to prepare the interviewer and the interviewee to set their strategies for the interview also can be relevant to our subject being the comparative importance of language proficiency and business acumen. All the necessities of the job is recorded in the initial step of the Recruitment process outlining the necessary skills and qualifications of the vacancy and the candidate

thereof. These outlines are available on the job description and profile requirements for the vacancy. So being equipped with the job profile and job description, the interviewer deliberately evaluates the linguistic proficiency and business acumen of the interviewee.

The other dimension of an interview beyond its structure and content, is the format interview format is referred to the way the interview is executed. The identified common formats are individual and panel interviews (Wiesner & Cronshaw, 1988, p.275). Interviews have an important also a psychological aspect to them, which is central to the Industrial/Organizational psychology. In their research about validity of interview type/format combination, Wiesner and Cronshaw drew the attention of I/O psychologist on their approach to the interview type (Wiesner & Cronshaw, 1988, p.289).

With the notions acquired through the Language and Business narrative of recruitment of multilingual in multinational companies, including Linguistic aspects of Language and LSP accompanied by the business dimensions being Business Acumen and the Recruitment process we will review the primary data acquired specifically for the purpose of this dissertation. The primary data acquired throughout the surveys indicate the relative importance of language proficiency and business acumen at the time of professional interview and the stance of interviewers about the subject matter.

6. Method

With the objective of understanding and obtaining interviewees and interviewers' perspective of the subject matter, we took advantage of online surveys as the chosen instrument for obtaining a broad picture of ideas. The online survey was share don Linkedin, world's largest professional network; otherwise, the alternative would have been to perform individual interviews, which would be difficult in terms of time management. The tool use for this survey was Google Forms[3] as a common tool

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[3] Appendice 2

used for such surveys that allows the collection of information via simple web forms (Kumar & Naik, 2016, p.188).

One survey targeted multilingual employees and the other targeted recruiters and recruiting managers in multinational companies (MNCs). This approach was adopted to conclude a bilateral perspective on the specific topic, understand the importance of linguistic skills vis-à-vis multinational recruiters and compare the importance of linguistic skills vs business acumen for both sides. In the analysis of both surveys, we applied descriptive statistics as the main method of statistical analysis to demonstrate the distribution of responses to be able to further analyse them.

In the first survey, we received twenty responses. Three out of the twenty respondents never worked for multinational companies. Interestingly two of them speak three or more languages. In the second survey, we received responses from seventeen recruiters / recruiting managers all of whom had experience working in multinational companies. Three of the respondents stated that for their companies, being bilingual/multilingual is not a prerequisite.

6.1 Overview of Responses

6.1.1 Survey 1. Job Interview for Multilingual Position – Interviewee[4]

Below we applied descriptive statistics to the responses provided to our survey questions to describe the survey results. After an overview of the questions and answers and we will find examine the possibility of finding response to our rising hypothesis about the interviewee's linguistic, professional profile and their language assessment during a multilingual interview. The reason why this hypothesis is of significance in this context is to understand the experience of different interviewees with different professional background. We also would like to realize if the number respondents that are comfortable with the language assessment setting is higher among those with more years of professional experience or among those who speak more languages or to understand if the two are related.

1. Respondents demographics

There were eight female and twelve male respondents.[5] There is only one responder above the age of fifty, eight people between twenty-one and thirty years old, six people between thirty one and forty, the remaining five are between forty one and fifty years of age.[6]

As visualised in the below chart there are ten respondents with master's degree or above, nine with bachelor's degree and only one with postgraduate certificate .

3. Your education:
20 responses

- Bachelor's degree
- Post graduate qualification
- Master's degree or above
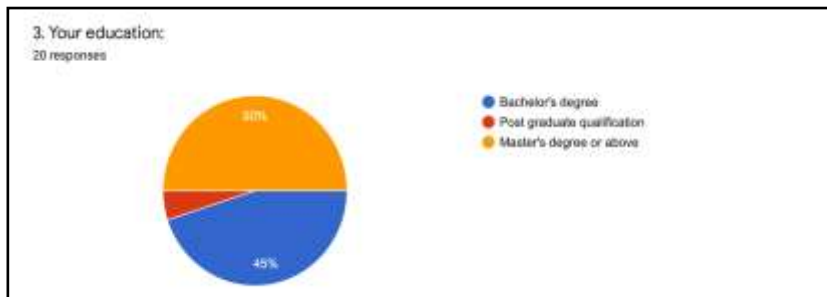
2. Respondents' linguistic profile

Among twenty respondents, there are sixteen respondents who speak three or more languages and nineteen of the twenty are willing to learn more languages to broaden their prospects. It is discernible in the below illustrated chart that the majority of the respondents speak three or more languages.

7. How many languages do you speak?
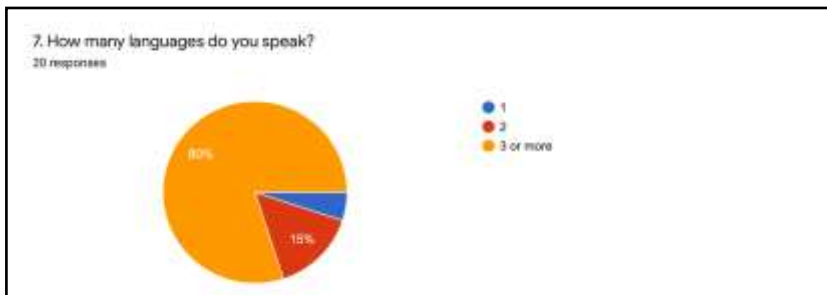20 responses

- 1
- 2
- 3 or more

Figure five illustrates respondents' willingness to learn more languages quite evidently and strikingly that only one out of the twenty respondents expressed unwillingness to learn another language. We hereby observe ninety-five percent of the respondents' enthusiasm to learn more languages.

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[4] Appendice 3
[5] Figure 1
[6] Figure 2

14. Are you willing to learn more languages to broaden your career prospect?
20 responses

● Yes
● No

95%
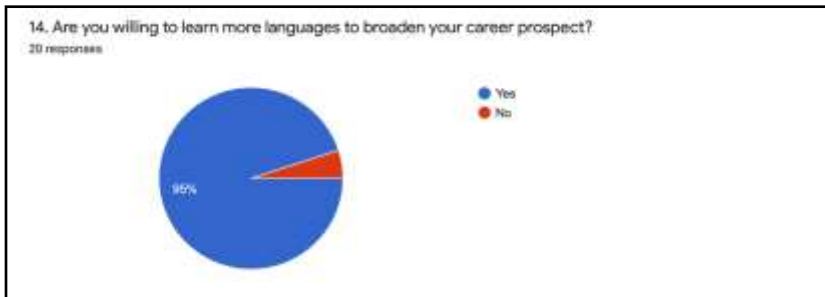
3. Respondents' professional profile

Ten respondents within the sample group had more than eleven years of working experience and there are only three people who do not have experience working in multinational companies. For thirteen of the twenty respondents (65%) it is a prerequisite to be bilingual in their workplace, such an elevated figure indicates the importance of multilingual skills in the modern workplace, meaning that employers are more likely to screen for potential multilingual employees for their open vacancies.[7]

4. Respondents' experience with job interviews for multilingual positions

This segment reviews specific questions about job placement for multilingual positions. We expect to assess the interviewees' feelings and how they were impacted under interview pressure. In addition, we would like to know whether companies ask for language proficiency tests to know about proficiency level of the candidate in the target language. Surprisingly only three interviewees were asked to present language proficiency tests. Nine out of twenty interviews were conducted entirely in the target language while nine others were performed in a combination of languages. Two of the occurrences had separate language evaluation and interviews. Illustrated below, three out of Twenty interviewees were asked for language proficiency tests.

8. Did any company ask for language proficiency tests such as IELTS, TEF, TCF,...?
20 responses

● Yes
● No

85%

15%

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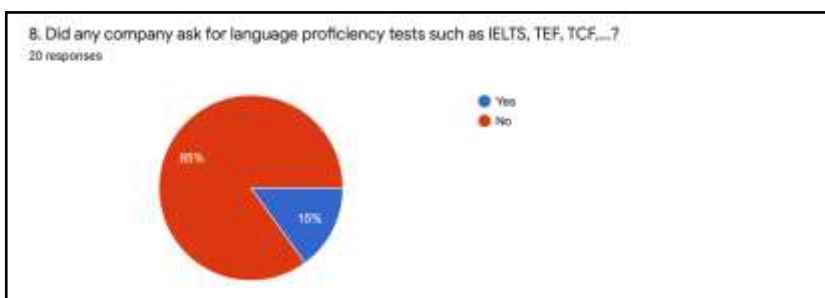
[7] Figures 6,7,8

Nine interviews out of twenty were held entirely in the target language, nine were split between native language and target language, and only two instances consisted of the company requiring a separate language assessment process.[8] It would seem logical to understand this finding to analyse the reason behind the low incidence of language proficiency tests being required by the organizations, the first guess being the price of the relevant tests imposed on a candidate. This might be a narrowing factor, reducing the number of potential candidate pool. Moreover, the employer/corporate entity seem to find it useful to conduct the interview entirely in the target language indicating how seriously some of them take the skill and determine its degree in each potential employee. Traces of subconsciously acknowledging the importance of the strategic and sociolinguistic competences is perceptible in this pattern.

Fifteen of the respondents felt comfortable during the evaluation of their language abilities, two of the respondents comfort level depended on the questions and the pressure of the interview and two of the respondents express discomfort during the process.[9] It could be inferred that those who were comfortable with the language setting of the interview, felt they possessed the desired skills or they were confident that with their de facto career experience and professional profile they were to communicate during the interview in any of their known languages.

In terms of preference in the interview language choice, twelve of the respondents preferred to have the entire duration of the interview conducted in a language other than their mother tongue. One person preferred to engage in language assessment exams, two of them preferred to have an independent language assessment process, five preferred to have the introduction in their mother tongue, and the rest could be performed in another language.[10] This could adjust the communication of the interview to a more familiar style when the two sides start communicating in their mother tongue. Knowing there is a mutual cultural understanding and becoming aware of an alternative means of communication in addition to the target language. Research performed by McCarthy and Goffin in 2008 and Young, Behnke and Mann in 2004 indicates many applicants experience stress during the interview process

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[8] Figure 10
[9] Figure 11
[10] Figure 12

(Dipboye, et.al, 2012, p.342), the hypothesis here is that maybe starting with mother tongue might help reduce to some extent this anxiety for some.

Eight of the respondents tended to demonstrate their professional knowledge, eleven preferred to foreground their personal character, particularly their communication skills, while only one person preferred to highlight their language proficiency.[11]

6.1.2 Analysis of Responses

Having reviewed the responses for a deeper analysis of the collected information, despite the limited number of completed surveys, there are observations that are amenable to generating a greater insight into the nature of the nature of the interviewees natural reaction to selection process for a multilingual professional position. The findings indicate an increased sense of self- confidence during multilingual during multilingual interviews with higher professional experience.

In table four, *Professional Experience column* shows the number of years of work experience of respondents. The column *Interviewee* shows the number of interviewees with the number of years mentioned in the column *Professional Experience.* Column *Comfortable* indicates the number of interviewees who described themselves as feeling comfortable during the interview process and the column *%* shows the percentage points of the number of people feeling comfortable among the group of respondents with the same level of work experience. The values in column *%* are the values from *Comfortable* column divided by values in column *Professional Experience.* The table is demonstrative of the fact that higher comfort level among respondents with higher work experience

Table 4. Comfort during multilingual interview vs years of experience

Professional Experience	Interviewees	Comfortable	%
1-5 years	9	5	56%
6-10 years	1	1	100%
11 years or more	**10**	**9**	**90%**

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[11] Figure 13

In the *Spoken Language* column in table five, we see the number of languages that the interviewees master. Column *Interviewee* shows how many of the respondents speak the number of languages marked in column *Spoken Languages. Comfortable* column shows the number of respondents who reported the sentiment of comfort during their multilingual interview experiences and the *%* column shows the percentage points of the number of people feeling comfortable among the group of respondents who spoke the same number of languages. The values returned in *%* column are the values from *Comfortable* column divided by values in column *Spoken Languages.*

Table 5. Comfort during multilingual interview number of language spoken

Spoken Languages	Interviewees	Comfortable	%
1	1	0	0%
2	2	2	100%
3 or more	**17**	**13**	**76%**

The objective of this exercise is to compare the importance and impact of each factor on the feeling of comfort among respondents. The factors being work experience and number of spoken languages certainly are observed separately in tables two and three.

The common denominator of the observed results is that in table two people with *more* experience and in table three, people with knowledge of *more* languages demonstrate a higher comfort level during the interview. This seemingly obvious interpretation sheds lights on the fact that more knowledge and experience added to the interviewees' confidence during the interview and they felt they were able to overcome the possible discomfort of the setting. A possible outcome for those respondents may be higher chance in being chosen in the recruitment process. As in a study carried out by Dimopoulos in a sample of two hundred and sixty recruiters, personnel managers and employers in Greece, certain features became evident such as many agree that an interviewee's confidence influences the decision of the recruiters and respectively the result of the interview (Dimopoulos, 2020, p.82).

Should we have larger sample size, we could benefit from a statistical analysis but comparing these two tables demonstrates that higher impact of professional experience on the comfort level of employees versus the number of languages they

speak. It can be seen that the group of interviewees who speak more than three languages (table two) has a lower comfort rate compared to the group with more than eleven years of work experience (table three) which is justifiable since with higher accumulated working knowledge the interviewee can express their knowledge in a more comprehensive way. Further study is recommended in the field of linking confidence vs fluency in speech to achieve a more comprehensive view on the subject matter.

6.2 Survey 2. Job Interview for Multilingual Position – Interviewer[12]

To better understand businesses' perspective for recruitment for multilingual positions observations from recruiters and recruiting managers were also integrated into this analysis. The objective of the surveys is to understand the main criteria for the choice of human capital for multilingual positions and to understand which language assessment method would be most appropriate for adoption in the interview stage of the selection process. In response to *"What's more important in your decision when you interview for a multilingual position?"* four of the respondents chose the *"Candidate's proficiency in target language"* response but the remaining thirteen respondents chose the *"Candidate's business acumen"* option.

1. Respondents demographics

There were nine male and eight female respondents, which is an indication of a balanced distribution of respondents' gender illustrated in the below chart.
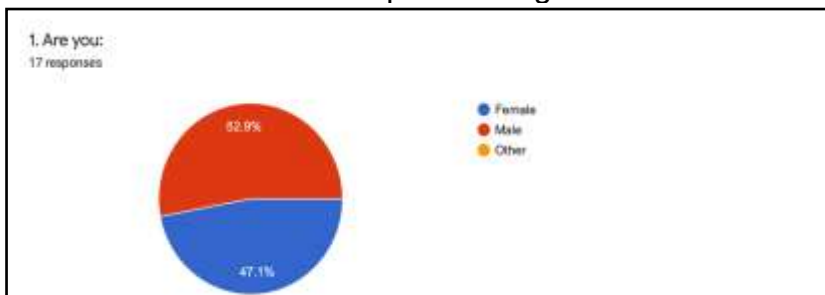
Each age group of twenty-one and thirty and above fifty had two representatives in the sample group.[13] Fourteen of the respondents have master's degree or above, two

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[12] Appendice 4
[13] Figure 15

hold bachelor's degree and only one with postgraduate qualification.[14] The distribution of social profiles of the respondents seems to be balanced in terms of age, gender and over eighty percent of the respondents are above postgraduate level. The significance of this finding is that it shows over eighty percent of the participants are aware of scientific methods.

2. Respondents professional profile

Seven respondents have between one to five years of experience in recruitment and seven of them have been active in the field for over eleven years; three respondents have between six to ten years of recruitment experience.[15] There are nine responses with one to five years of experience in multinational companies and the rest of the responses are evenly split between recruiters with six to ten and over eleven years of experience.[16]

The below chart is illustrative of the fact that there are seven respondents who post one to five multilingual job postings per year, seven who post more than ten per year and three who post between five to ten instances.
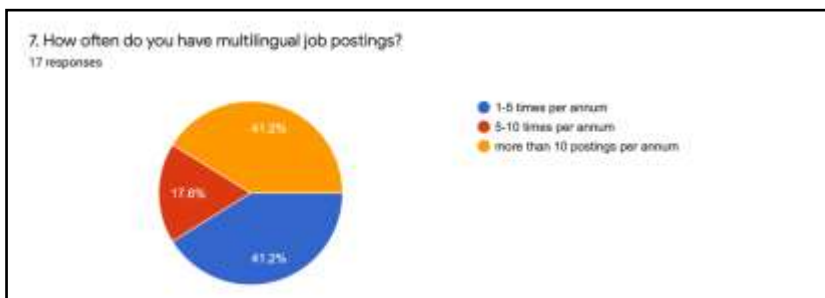
This information is of significance for this study as it will be a good indicator of the expertise of the interviewers that took the time to respond to this survey. In all of these fields, there are fifty percent of the respondents falling into medium or high experience in multinational recruitment. Their perspective and sharing of experience is of utmost value and adds credibility to this research.
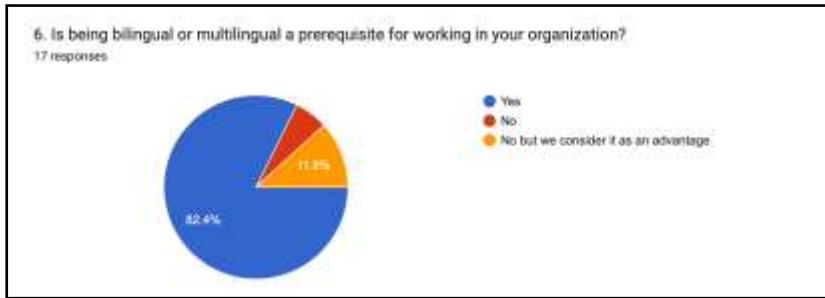
3. Language evaluation approaches

For eighty two point four percent of the respondents' organizations being bilingual or multilingual is a prerequisite, which is demonstrated in the chart below.

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[14] Figure 16
[15] Figure 17
[16] Figure 18

6. Is being bilingual or multilingual a prerequisite for working in your organization?
17 responses
Yes
No
No but we consider it as an advantage
82.4%
11.8%

Only three out of seventeen interviews are conducted completely in the target language.[17] This low return on this question made us evaluate the reason behind this choice among the recruiters, this might correlated with the fact also observed in the survey performed among interviewees. Eleven of the respondents require results of language proficiency tests for the recruitment process.[18] This represents over eighty percent of the respondents, for us this is indicative of the tendency to apply scientific method in selection process.

Eleven out of seventeen respondents' organizations, as indicated it the below pie chart in blue, offer language-training courses.

13. Does your organization offer language training courses ?
17 responses
Yes for all employees.
Yes only for multilingual positions.
No.
64.7%
23.5%
11.8%

Language competency is a vitally important skill for a large percentage of companies and the corresponding recruiters among our group, and that this must factor into their existing staff expertise in order for companies to use their in-house skill-sets to further the interests of the company. Our findings are in line with the findings of Feely and Harzing where they point out that training, as the direct and logical reaction to any skills-shortage in a business, is one of companies' options for Language Management (Feely & Harzing, 2003, p.44).

Ten out of seventeen respondents have predetermined questions to evaluate fluency in target language and the purpose for this is declared by eight of them to assess the

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[17] Figure 21
[18] Figure 22

candidate´s language proficiency.[19] This is an important observation and indicates that forty seven point three percent of the respondents have structured or at least semi-structured selection interviews to evaluate candidate's language proficiency.

Ten out of seventeen respondents give more weight to candidate's communication in target language, four find precision in context sufficient for recruitment and the remaining three focus on candidates' proficiency in target language. Based on this observations it is noteworthy that the candidate's strategic competence, one of the building blocks of the communicative language competences defined by Canale and Swaine, is of great value during interviews and this could be key as to find the suitable type of assessment type for selection process of multilinguals.[20] Ten out of seventeen respondents are aware of scientific studies about the subject matter.[21]

The split of responses to our question "Do you believe in the use of scientific evaluation of potential employees' proficiency in the target language? Demonstrated in the below pie chart indicates that four of the respondents do not believe in the use of scientific evaluation of candidates in target language, seven of them do believe in using such evaluation and six respondents believe in using language proficiency tests.
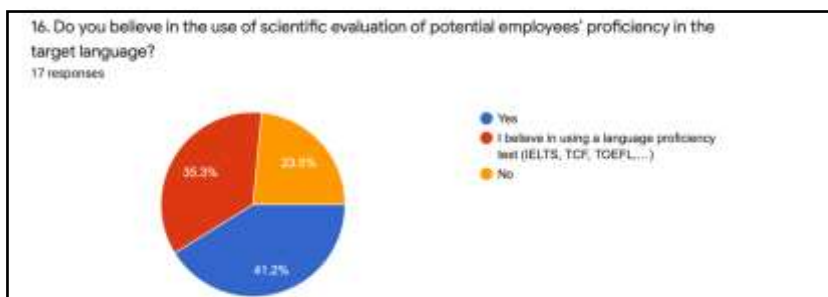
 Eleven of the respondents requested for language proficiency tests, ten of the respondents are aware of scientific studies supporting the approach but only six of them constituting a little above thirty percent, actually believe in using language proficiency tests. This could be the result of lack of knowledge in the field of linguistics and its science and not being able to qualify the language testing method being scientific.

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[19] Figure 24,25,26
[20] Figure 27
[21] Figure 28

6.2.1 Analysis of Responses

All respondents were experienced in recruitment in multinational companies and talent acquisition in multinational companies therefore followed similar processes and had an evenly distributed set of expectations in their language evaluation approach. It is evident that those who expected language proficiency tests (six out of seventeen) already use a scientific method as the mentioned tests are designed and executed with the latest developments in language assessment however in response to "*Do you believe in the use of scientific evaluation of potential employees' proficiency in the target language?*" only three of them picked the option "*I believe in using a language proficiency test (IELTS, TCF, TOEFL,…)*" and the remaining three responded affirmatively. This is an indication of awareness about how scientific methods are involved in the development on these tests and, therefore, the response to this question must be studied from a different angel. Only four of the respondents' answer to this question was "*No*". However, three of those organizations provide language courses for their employees that is also an indication of existence of a scientific method after all. On the other hand this could also be an indication of the businesses serious need for properly skilled employees hence the reinforcement of their efforts with scientifically backed methods, in this case, using language assessment tests. The major implication could be that they accept the centrality of linguistic skills and the need to check them in potential candidates and keep improving and developing those linguistic competencies in their existing employees.

As per the hypothesis, it can be observed that most of the respondents tend to focus more on the candidates' business acumen and less on the language proficiency. However obvious, but it is worth mentioning that the determining factor in this case is the core business of the company as well as the job description of the position and the rank of the position. For example, a company with the core activity of translation services would require a high proficiency among the candidates. In addition, a multinational company hiring for a high-ranking position with higher exposure to multinational teams and participation in multinational meetings, or hiring specifically for customer service for a target market speaking a language other than the candidates' mother tongue are other examples of the possible circumstances that require higher language proficiency.

In order to corroborate the survey responses we received for the question "*Do you ask for language proficiency test results from interviewees?*" to which we received eleven positive responses from interviewers representing sixty-four point seven percent of the entire responses being the equivalent of the question "*Did any company ask for language proficiency tests such as IELTS, TEF, TCF,...?*" that only three interviewees responded positive, we had a short interview with an experienced recruiter that currently works in a multinational company.

Our contact does not want his name and company revealed; therefore, we will would refer to them as "The Recruiter". The interview was held on the twentieth of October two thousand and twenty two at five o'clock in the afternoon in company premises.

The recruiter confirmed, "It is normal to have language proficiency tests when recruiting for multilingual positions in a multinational setting" confirming our findings and survey responses.

However about the interviewees' response The Recruiter mentioned" It is highly irregular unless you are providing a type of certificate. There the hiring company will skip requesting language proficiency test results. In my current company in any way we ask for an in-house built language proficiency test unless the candidate is a native speaker with a specific certificate which we would be hiring for a higher level of proficiency."

The recruiter reviewed the survey questions and answers individually prior to the interview and expressed that he was aligned on the acquired result except for the mentioned question rising from inconsistency between interviewee and interviewer responses. We suspect that there is a probability in misconception from the interviewee as to what constitutes a language assessment test. For instance, it is possible that at the time of applying for the job vacancy, the candidates fill a form and respond to language questions not recognise it as an official language assessment process. According to The Recruiter this applies to the company, they work in and every potential candidate is bound to take a language assessment test on their website before the initial screening and the HR interview.

7. Findings

Overall, taking the literature review in conjunction with the survey results into consideration it was possible to gain a deeper insight into the issues explored

through the chosen research objectives and to make analytical observations that help us better understand and explain the queries in question.

We can categorize our findings into Business and Language, knowing that in this specific area the two constructs are intertwined and overlap. The categorization was made to facilitate the perception. The findings cross examine both primary and secondary data.

Language findings consist of observations in the linguistics of the matter at hand mainly communication skill and the relevance of Language for Specific Purposes to the business environment.

Business findings include observations and data about business acumen and its measurement as well as different dimensions of the selection interview.

7.1 Language: Communication Skill or Strategic Competence

The most recent approaches in language assessment recognize communication as "Strategic Competence". Communicative Language Testing defines it as a linguistic skill that speaker applies when they do not have the linguistic skills to the structure in the target language but is willing to continue to communicate with their interlocutor (Dörnyei & Thurrel, 1991, p.17; Bachman, 2007, p.13). Interaction-Ability or Communicative Language Ability also implies the need to observe and include this competence into assessment process of test takers. This is demonstrated in many instances throughout the interviewers' survey as they highlight the importance of the candidates' communication style in target language. As literature infers, nonverbal and paralanguage, as inseparable parts of communication, may influence interview outcomes (Campion, et. al, 1997, p. 692).

In the survey results obtained from interviewers it has been discovered that most recruiters or recruiting managers (almost sixty percent) tend to highlight this aspect of linguistic skills during a multilingual interview while asked *"What is more important in your decision when you interview for a multilingual position: Communication Method, Proficiency in target language, Precision in context is sufficient or business acumen"*.

On the other hand, when asked *"Which of the below do you demonstrate more during an interview: My business acumen; My language proficiency or My character especially communication skills";* Fifty five percent of the interviewees tend to demonstrate more of their communication skills while only 10% picked the option *"My*

language proficiency". This implies a common tendency between the two groups of respondents sitting on opposite sides of one another with a strong underlying awareness.

Cross-checking the information from the literature review against the observations gleaned in the two surveys we can identify an affinity towards the significance of communication for an assumed successful interview well in line with the most recent movements in language assessment. Sixty percent of our recruiting respondents tend to allocate more importance to communication during interview time. This finding is in line with the findings of Philips and Bruch in 1988 that applicants perceive their own character to have impact on the result of the interview (Dipboye, et. al, 2012, p.337). This is also in line with the findings of Hollandsworth, Kazelkskis, Stevens and Dressel about the importance of verbal, articulative and nonverbal communication on and interviewee's success in obtaining a favorable decision in the job interview. It has been identified that characteristics such as communication skills, enthusiasm and ability to communicate are usually demonstrated during the selection interview. So any effort to increase the communication quality during the interview will be help facilitate creation of the right match between the candidate and the vacancy (Hollandsworth, Kazelskis, Stevens, & Dressel, 1979, p.359-365). It is observed that in this case, both sides of the interview agree on the communication style as the subject on which they emphasise.

Research in psycholinguistics indicate that people who speak more than one language, while speaking in their non-native language, to choose representations in the target language they either concentrate on the target language or inhibit the other languages (Spinelli, 2022, p.7). The number of languages spoken by a given participant and their dominant language also have an impact on their usage of their non-dominant language(s) (González, et al, 2016, p.503). This can interpolate as against the effort made by the speaker to communicate with interlocutor using their linguistic competencies. Consequently, a Communicative Language Testing approach tailored for English for Specific Purposes can serve the purpose of selection process for multilingual positions well. The choice of a language assessment method is diverse, from customised tests for the business, to the use of standardized test or traditional interview evaluation, most South Korean

conglomerates such as Samsung, SK, LG, and Doosan require the scores of the Test of English for International Communication (TOEIC) (Lee 2014), but there is not a harmonized approach in the selection process for multilingual positions.[22] This test is an example of a tailored ESL test used for this purpose which is also aligned with the content of our interview with our Recruiter.

7.2 Language: Language for Specific Purposes in Multilinational Business

The increasing encounter with multiple languages in the workplace that summons the use of Language for Special Purposes (LSP) has many aspects one has been, Evans outlines one of them in his research about use of English as Business Lingua Franca in Honk Kong. The concern about communication with native speakers or even highly proficient professionals is that this acts an advantage for them in meetings and negotiations and their proficiency is a source of power, as Ehrenreich (2010) notes, that it is likely that such speakers exploit their position (Evans, 2013, p.247).

Harzing et. al considered such issues and suggested solutions to address them. Invoking of Language Service Providers (LSP), choice of Business Processing Outsourcing (BPO) services that can cover the language need could also be considered as structural solutions to tackle the issue. Usage of Language Service Providers and BPOs is a less explored field in the attained litterature. However it is recommended for further research to look into the added value of each of the two possible structural solutions with an organizational perspective, having in mind that transferring processes to outside of a company might require extensive supervision and monitoring and preparing the transfer will be a time and effort consuming task requiring a lot of work inside and outside of the organization. Essentially the role of the Language Service Provider and the BPOs in this case would be to reduce language complexity inside the company by handling the processes on their sides. A common example is the outsourcing of call center activity. Large companies tend to reduce the number of their internal personnel and this way they will decrease the number of spoken languages throughout the company and consequently the

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[22] Information retrieved from a business magazine

language ocmplexity of the company. This is part of language strategies of a company and does not seem to have a direct link with the selection process of the multilingual candidate for a multilingual position in a multinational company however, the BPO or the Language Service Provider need essential basic information to be able to provide the required service correctly. At this stage Language for Specific Purposes and its evaluation serves both the company and the BPO service provier.

7.3 Business: Business Acumen

It is noteworthy that Business Acumen has been also associated with concepts such as business language and strategic communication, which fall partially into linguistics aspect of business. The two concepts of language proficiency and business acumen are related and can be examined with the same importance for organizations. In order to evaluate the candidate's business language knowledge, tests tasks in Language for Specific Purposes (LSP) are considered authentic (specifically in the work of Bachman) when they engage both Language and the specific knowledge on the background of the task (Grapin, 2017, p.4). this refers to the cadidate's knowledge of the businessa and their language proficiency in the field. On the other hand, when it comes to HR management practices, Piekkari et al, explain that eventhough language proficiency is capable of giving the potential candidate and edge over other candidates. But in general technical and professioal skills tend to be given more weight and in case it involves foreign locations, *"language skills are oftentime treated as "desirable" rather than essential"* (Piekkari, et al, 2014, p.73). In practical terms of HR management processes and activities, this needs to be reflected at the time of opening a job vacancy. There needs to be a balance between the language proficiency prerequisite and its relationship with technical skills, knowledge of the job and work experiences and other competences (Piekkari, et. al, 2014, 70).

Knowledge is growing with the help of language. According to the knowledge theory, we expect knowledge to improve the power to send and the power to receive information (Naseri, 2022, p,1). Language acts as the vehicle of knowledge, meaning it contributes to the development and transmission of knowledge. When asked, *"Are you willing to learn more languages to broaden your career prospect?"* Ninety five percent of the respondents answered *"Yes"*, which can be interpreted as

interviewees' perspective on language acquisition as obtainment of more knowledge and application of it leads to more or better opportunities for them. Knowledge and language have a bilateral effect on each other. Knowledge transfer in MNCs are also related to the language policies and the spoken languages of the company. Language-sensitive recruitment has to be balance so as to achieve a successful knowledge transfer in MNCs (Brannen, Piekkari, & Tietze, 2017, p.155).

It is vastly observed that in our globalized world, language has turned into an asset. Job seekers find addition of new languages to their language skillset profitable. Evidence of business preference practices found in online media attests to the fact that as a study by Wharton and LECG Europe suggests that acquisition of another language will lead to an average of two percent salary increase; learning German will lead to a four percent higher salary (Poppick, 2014)[23]. To this, we must add English as this is the language of international commerce and culture and the very medium in which this dissertation is written.

7.4 Business: The Dimensions of Selection Interview

Another important observation that was made in the literature review was the interview type and its contribution to the selection of the suitable candidate. As the structured interview is the type identified by research as reliable, it is recommended to use this type of interview to assess the characteristics required for the vacancy. This type of interview is deemed capable of assessing necessary requirements if planned questions include knowledge related questions, this knowledge could be of professional or any other type namely linguistic nature. This was illustrated in our survey result where forty-seven percent of the interviewers mentioned that they have pre-determined questions for evaluation of candidates' language proficiency. Research in Malaysia also confirms that employers are hiring employees who are qualified for the job vacancy and who are also proficient (Krishnan & Maniam, 2021 p.757).

In terms of content of the interview we reviewed the question types and their possible outcome. Strong consistency and validity of both past behavioral and situational question types is proven by research, nevertheless there is a need for research about

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[23] *"Want to Boost your Salary? Try Learning German",* Susie Poppick, June 04,204, retrieved from money.com

the knowledge question and background question types in structured interviews. This is to identify the efficiency and validity of those questions during an interview. We would also be keen on understanding whether or not they address the need for evaluation of the business acumen in candidates.

The importance of the Selection Interview to this dissertation is that it is has all the aspects studied in this research and brings together the linguistic, business and psychological dimensions of the selection process. We were able to identify through the Behavioural Linguistics of Skinner what is the verbal operant of the asked questions. We could also observe the business aspects of the job interview and the processes leading to the selection of the final candidate. With help from research of Piekkari et al, we were able to distinguish the skills and qualifications that are more vital at the time of recruitment decision and our surveys proved a point in line with research about the importance of communication style during the Selection Interview. There are points to be improved in the scientific research about the interview especially about the newest trends in interview formats and the question types that were not already covered in previous research. With the available information acquired through research, we don't know the reliability of the knowledge and background question types. These two question types are vital to this research because the business acumen and professional knowledge of the interviewee is assessed through these question types.

8. Conclusion

The present research studied the various relevant factors in the recruitment of multilingual candidates in multinational companies. This topic being of multidimensional nature required a deep dive in both Linguistics and Human Resource Management for the business dimension of the subject matter. There are many overlaps in the subjects which leads to overlapping in the analysis of the primary and secondary data. So to find a conclusive view a brief presentation of each part is made in order of appearance of the topics, we separated the findings and literature review in the mentioned categories. Here we quickly review the addressed areas to develop the reached conclusions and the answers to our primary research questions.

As the foundation and means of all knowledge and communication, to understand the different aspects of the matter at hand, we started with defining Language itself. Language is the chariot of thought and emotion; we delved deeper in the understanding of the phenomenon to have a better grasp on the scientific approaches. We then reviewed the two most prominent approaches in linguistics being Behaviouristic and Structural Linguistics.

For a behaviouristic approach, B. F Skinner's work in his book *Verbal Behaviour*, his definitions of linguistic operants and their function were studied. We also reviewed his methodology in accumulating the research result for the book. We then made a multidisciplinary deliberation on criticisms of Skinner's work in the field of psychology, neurolinguistics and linguistics with the noteworthy critique of Noam Chomsky on the book itself. Chomsky questions the limitations and perspective of Skinner´s experiment and his functional analysis, as well as his tendency to ignore the organism's knowledge. With this we were able to identify the relevance of behavioural linguistics in the context of a selection interview. There are motives involved in the interview both for the interview and the interviewee so the behavioural linguistics helped us better understand them.

Then the work of Ferdinand de Saussure in structural linguistic was briefly reviewed. De Saussure defines the concepts of signified and signifier and discusses value for signs. We also examined the criticisms on structural linguistics including that of Pearson, Utley and Chomsky. Pearson finds Structural Linguistics limited in definition of a nous, adjectives and danglers and defining a program. In addition, Utley identifies its limitations in including external factors in historical text. Chomsky acknowledges its limits in understanding the deeper layers of drive and human mind's potential in language acquisition. We then observed the relevance of structural linguistics in the selection process. The relevance is found in the choice of words, which makes this literature relevant to the topic of this dissertation.

In order to further understand different approaches in language evaluation in the next chapter we looked at the history of language assessment and methods that led to understanding of the most relevant type of assessment that can contribute to the subject of job interview and selection process in business. For this research the most relevant method is undoubtedly "Language for Specific Purposes" or LSP which we

reviewed the history and approach. LSPs relevance to a multilingual environment was studied with a special attention to possible solutions to the rising communication problems within organizations. The relevance of LSP to the subject of this dissertation is that recruitment of plurilingual individuals can serve as a bridge in the communication gap.

Furthermore, in our secondary data review we reviewed the definition of Business Acumen as a fundamental skill in the business environment. Business acumen incorporates knowledge of business language and organizational skills giving any individual an edge in understanding business strategy, making relevant decision and delivering actions in line with strategic planning of each organization. Such individuals are reliable in their actions and are capable of communicate and present their ideas, challenges and proposals and understand the impact of their daily activities in the overall performance of the organizations that they work in. This makes them a valuable asset and interesting for organizations to absorb in the selection process. There is a reverse phenomenon related to this issue and that is the role of language in the knowledge transfer within the organization. This means that being sensitive about language proficiency in the selection process can also contribute to the flow and contribution of business acumen within the organization.

In order to understand how the recruitment process serves in the selection of future employees we reviewed the process and outlined the different aspects of an interview. The recruitment process includes Staff Planning, HR Marketing, Selection and Hiring. Each process includes certain subprocesses that lead to a better understanding and its end-to-end execution in Human Resource Management practices. Recruitment is the costliest HR process and it is to be treated with the utmost care. The result of this process is important as staff are the drivers of company results therefore they have to be selected carefully.

We then looked at the Selection Interview. It is the most common tool in staff selection and it is an important part of the selection process. It falls into three categories of structured, semi-structured and unstructured categories. Researchers observed that structured interviews are more reliable and can lead to a better decision making on the side of the interviewer. Job interview is the setting in which the evaluation of Language Proficiency as Business Acumen is performed by the

interviewer. Structuring the interview in a way that the different representations of the job profile, including linguistic profile, business knowledge, etc receive enough attention, is vital in the selection of the suitable candidate. Other dimensions of the selection interview was also analysed in the findings in depth.

After the secondary data review, the results of the primary data review, composed of two parallel surveys performed on interviewees' and interviewers' was presented on the dissertation. After detailed analysis of each set of responses was performed, a more in-depth quantitative analysis was performed on each set of responses for a deeper delve into the collected survey responses. The findings were discussed after the analysis of responses. Our major finding is that we observed the importance of communication ability among both interviewers and interviewees. Interviewees tend to demonstrate their communication skills through the interview and with higher number of spoken languages they tend to be more comfortable during bilingual interview settings.

We also corroborated two sample responses with a recruiter in order to understand the reality of actions in the field of the industry in which they are active. Our interview confirms our findings about the answers from the interviewers mentioning the obtainment of a language proficiency test from possible candidates.

As for how this research helps us understand the answers to our questions, an account of how this process developed our insights and understanding follows.

Our first research question was *"Are language placement/evaluation tests necessary for job interviews in the context of multinational companies?"* Our objective was to understand if the usage or requirement of a language evaluation test is common among recruiters or whether it is of secondary or incidental importance. We identified that the decision makers, who answered our surveys, believe that in recruitment and talent acquisitions it is necessary to require a language assessment test for or prior to a job interview as the primary focus is on the communication skills and then on the business acumen of the interview.

Our second question was *"Is there a standardized job interview format for the recruitment of potential multilingual employees to fill in multilingual positions in multinational companies?"*

With this question, we intended to understand if scientific methodologies have been put in place for a more targeted interview. Our literature review did not provide us with any answer to this question. On the other hand, through the perspective of our survey respondents we discovered that eighty two point four percent of them start the interview with the mother tongue and then switch to target language for further questions. In addition, we found that when fifty-eight point eight percent of respondents declared that they do not have pre-set questions and forty-one point two of them do. It is to address the need to understand their language proficiency. This is based on the response to the follow up question that was proposed to understand the purpose of such pre-set questions of scenarios. The implication and practical effect of this was that such considerations should form part of future research activities that it would be re commendable in the field to ascertain or even establish scientific methods to provide a solution for this need in case deemed necessary.

For our third question *"Is business acumen or communicative competency in the target language of greater importance?"* that serves us to understand the relative importance of language proficiency compared to business skills is clearly answered in our survey with real results from interviewers and hiring decision makers that fifty eight point eight percent of respondents give greater importance to communication method of the interviewees. On the other hand, fifty-five percent of the responding interviewees tend to display their communication style, forty percent of them tend to demonstrate their business acumen during the time of the interview, and language proficiency is the last option for them. Our findings are in line with the findings of a YouGov survey performed in the United Kingdom of 2,500 executives, revealing that only 7 percent considered language skills the most important factor to consider if their company relocated overseas (Pollitt, 2007, p.32). This is in line with findings of various research that enumerate the important factors for both interviewers and interviewees. It was also pointed out in the findings that this a common perception between both sides and as the interview is an interaction of various natures the two sides have reciprocal impact on each other. Improvement of communication style by any of the sides of the table will have an important positive impact on finding the right match for the vacancy.

The limitations of this research are the number of respondents to our survey questionnaire. By improving this, we could have found more data points for analysis.

Further investigation is recommended on attitudes on the part of managers and recruiters and possibly looking at important factors that would either encourage or discourage further engagement in respect of adopting a more empirical reproach in verifying potential linguistic skills of candidates being considered as possible future employees. This is because intercultural and international communication for business purposes presents an opportunity and a challenge to people's professional development and growth (Ainsworth, 2013, p.46).

Another point that requires further investigation was not among our primary questions but demonstrated itself, as an aspect to be considered is the relevance of confidence and fluency in speech. This could help resolve the question whether or not the two are related and their impact on the interviewee's performance and its impact on the interviewer and consequently on the decision about the candidate.

Based on our findings we can recommend further research on creation of a scientific method in standardizing interviews specifically in structured interviews with background and knowledge questions for multilingual positions and further psychological analysis of bilateral impact of confidence and fluency in non-dominant language and its influence on interview result. Other issues that may arise because of these questions could also be given necessary attention.

Last issue to address is that we were able to find that our inductive hypothesis being "where there is lack of linguistic competence among the pool of candidates, employers tend to focus on their business acumen rather than their proficiency in the target language and compromise on the candidates' language competence" in line with reviewed literature. This hypothesis was indicated in the work of Piekkari, Welch and Welch in 2014. They present the idea that general technical and professioal skills tend to be given more weight compared to language prificiency during employee selection process and in case it involves foreign locations, *language skills are oftentime treated as "desirable" rather than essential"* (Piekkari, et al, 2014, p.73)

As a result, we were able to meet the objectives of the research and the answer to our research question, with the defined framework.

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9. Appendices

1. Table 1. Elementary Verbal Operants and Controlling Variables (Schönthaler, et al. 2012)

Precondition	Verbal Operant	Consequence	Example
Motivating Operation	Mand	Directly Effective	A child comes into the kitchen where their mother is and says: **"I want milk"**. The mother opens the refrigerator and gives the child milk.
Feature of the physical environment	Tact	Social	A child looks out of the window, turns to his mother, and says: **"It is hot today."** The mother says, "Right!"
Verbal behavior of another person	Intraverbal	Social	A mother asks her daughter: "What grade did you get in math?" The daughter replies, **"An A."** The mother says: "Very good!"
Verbal behavior of	Echoic	Social	A teacher says to a student: "Behavior in German is *Verhalten.*" The student

another person			repeats **"Behavior is *Verhalten*."** The teacher says "Correct."
A person's own verbal behavior	Autoclitic	Directly Effective	A child comes into his parents' bedroom at night and says, **"I think** I am sick." The mother takes the child and brings him to a hospital.

MO= Motivational Operation, Environment= Stimulating aspect of the environment, Verbal behaviour= verbal behaviour of someone else, Direct= Related to MO, Educational/social= social consequence provided by a listener

2. Google Forms links

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1WQVoXFjSmvynLKkeHmOFIT0MzX1DOgv7MVCrVT8H4wo/edit

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1vD5m97ra2-QG9yap_d_RLRblmQIUV1xqwZIhxj0jPQE/edit

3. Survey 1. Job Interview Language Evaluation (Interviewee)

* Required

1. Are you:*

Female

Male

Other

2. Your age:*

21-30

31-40

41-50

50 or more

3. Your education:*

Bachelor's degree

Post graduate qualification

Master's degree or above

4. Your work experience:*

1-5 years.

6-10 years.

11 years or more.

5. Do you have experience in multilingual work environment?*

Yes.

No.

6. Is being bilingual or multilingual a prerequisite for working in your organization?*

Yes.

No.

No but it's as an advantage.

7. How many languages do you speak?*

1

2

3 or more

Please share them:….

8. Did any company ask for language proficiency tests such as IELTS, TEF, TCF,...?*

Yes.

No.

9. When interviewed for a multinational company?*

The entire interview was conducted in the target language.

Interview started with my native language but switched to the second language during the interview.

There was a separate language evaluation process.

10. How did you find the experience of having your language abilities evaluated/assessed?

Yes, I was comfortable.

I was uncomfortable and I demonstrated less proficiency during interview due to stress.

It depends on the questions asked and the pressure of the interview.

11. Which one do you prefer:*

I prefer to have the entire interview in the language other than my native language.

I prefer at least the introduction to be made in my mother tongue so as to have less stress then to switch to the second language.

I prefer to have an independent language assessment process.

I prefer to provide language assessment exam results (IELTS, TEF,...).

12. Did any of the companies you work with provide language courses?*

Yes for all employees.

Yes only for some positions.

No.

13. Which of the below do you demonstrate more during the course of an interview:*

My character especially communication skills.

My language proficiency.

My business acumen.

14. Are you willing to learn more languages to broaden your career prospect?*

Yes.

No.

4. Survey 2. Job Interview Language Evaluation (Interviewer)

* Required

1. Are you:*

Female

Male

Other

2. Your age:*

21-30

31-40

41-50

50 or more

3. Your education:*

Bachelor's degree

Post graduate qualification

Master's degree or above

4. Your experience in recruitment and talent acquisition:*

1-5 years

6-10 years

11 years or more

5. Your experience in recruitment in multinational companies?*

1-5 years

6-10 years

11 years or more

6. Is being bilingual or multilingual a prerequisite for working in your organization?*

Yes

No

No but we consider it as an asset

8. How often do you have multilingual job postings?*

1-5 times per annum

5-10 times per annum

more than 10 postings per annum

9. How do you conduct interviews for multilingual positions?*

The entire interview is conducted in target language.

Start with the native language and switch to target language along the course of the interview.

We have a separate language evaluation process.

10. Do you have preset questions/scenarios for evaluation of fluency in the main language of the position?*

Yes

No

11. If you answer to previous question was Yes, what is the purpose of these predefined questions?

To assess the candidate's language proficiency in context.

To assess the candidate's knowledge of the construct.

To identify and cross check information provided to other questions.

All the above

11. Do you ask for language proficiency test results from interviewees?*

Yes

No

12. What's more important in your decision when you interview for a multilingual position:*

Candidate's proficiency in target language.

Candidate's business acumen.

13. Does your organization offer language training courses ?*

Yes for all employees.

Yes only for multilingual positions.

No.

14. Which aspect of candidate's linguistic proficiency is more important for your evaluation?*

Proficiency in target language.

Communication method.

Precision in context is sufficient.

15. Are you aware of scientific studies that examine the candidate's language proficiency?*

Yes

No

16. Would you like to use scientific methodology in evaluation of candidates' proficiency in target language?*

I believe a language proficiency test such as IELTS, TCF, TEF,... suffices.

Yes

No

17. Do you believe in the use of scientific evaluation of potential employees' proficiency in the target language?

Yes

I believe in using a language proficiency test (IELTS, TCF, TOEFL,…)

No

18. If you answered "Yes" to the previous question what would be the minimum required proficiency:

B1

B2

C1

C2

5. Illustrated charts

Figure 1. Gender

1. Are you:
20 responses

- Female
- Male
- Other

40%
60%

Figure 2. Age

2. Your age:
20 responses

- 21-30
- 31-40
- 41-50
- 50 or more

25%
30%
40%
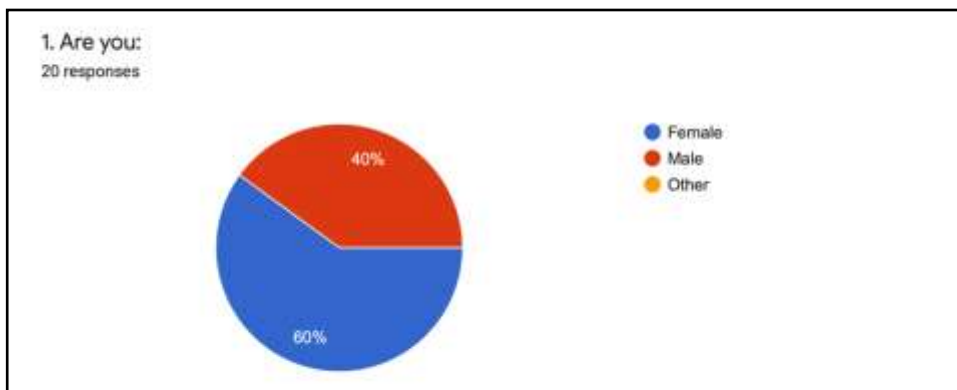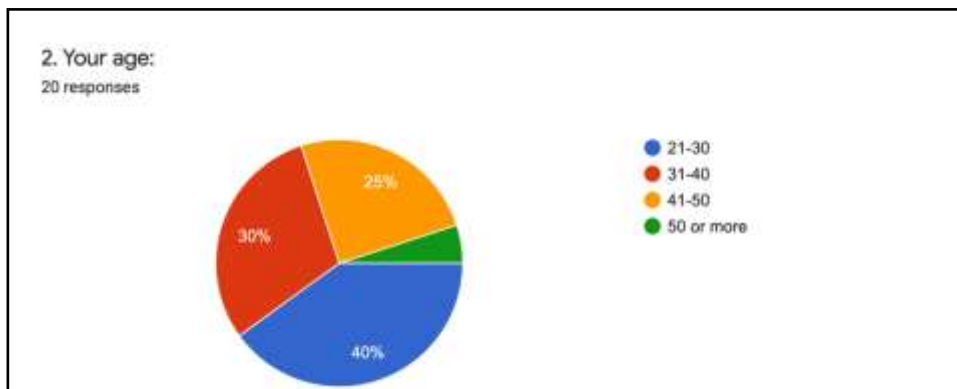
Figure 6. Respondents' professional experience

4. Your work experience:
20 responses

- 1-5 years
- 6-10 years
- 11 years or more

50%
45%
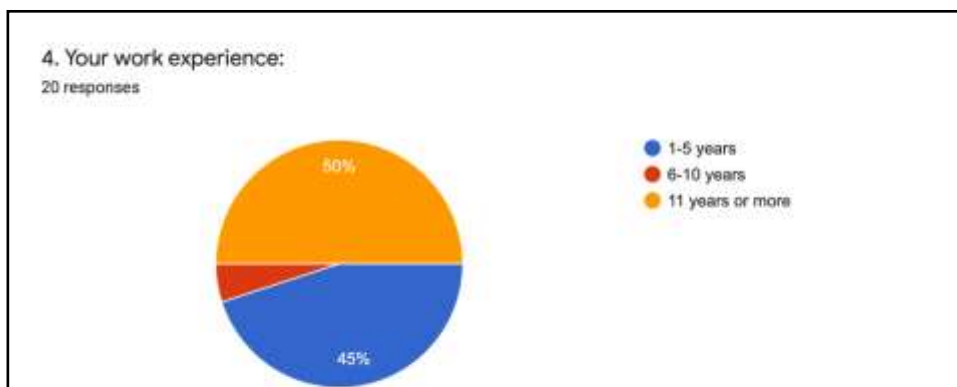
Figure 7. Experience in multinational companies

5. Do you have experience in multinational companies?
20 responses

- Yes
- No

15%

85%
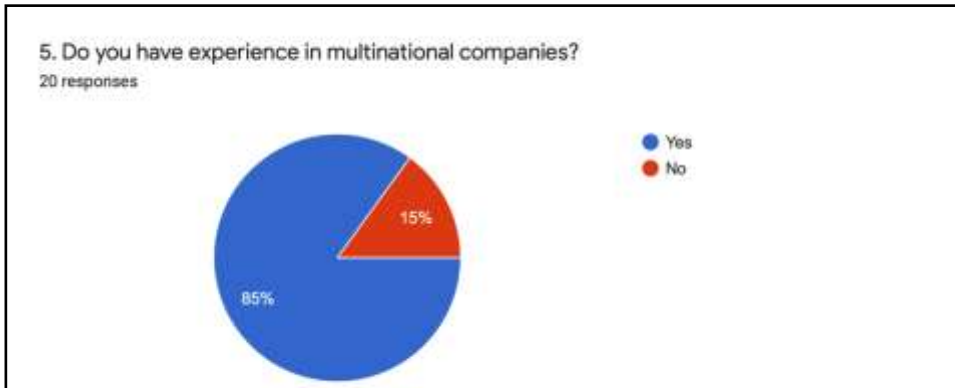
Figure 8. Language prerequisite for the current companies respondents work in

6. Is being bilingual or multilingual a prerequisite for working in your organization?
20 responses

- Yes
- No
- No but it's as an advantage

10%
25%
65%
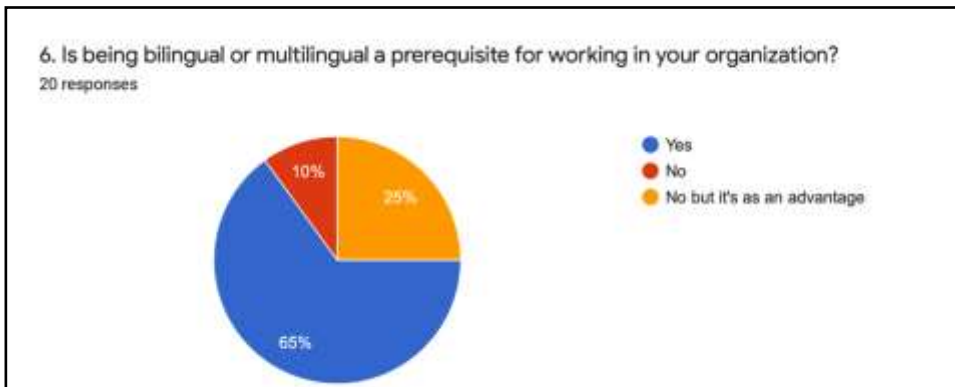
Figure 10. Time split of interview

9. When interviewed for a multinational company?
20 responses

- The entire interview was conducted in the target language.
- Interview started with my native language but switched to the second language during the interview.
- There was a separate language evaluation process

45%
10%
45%
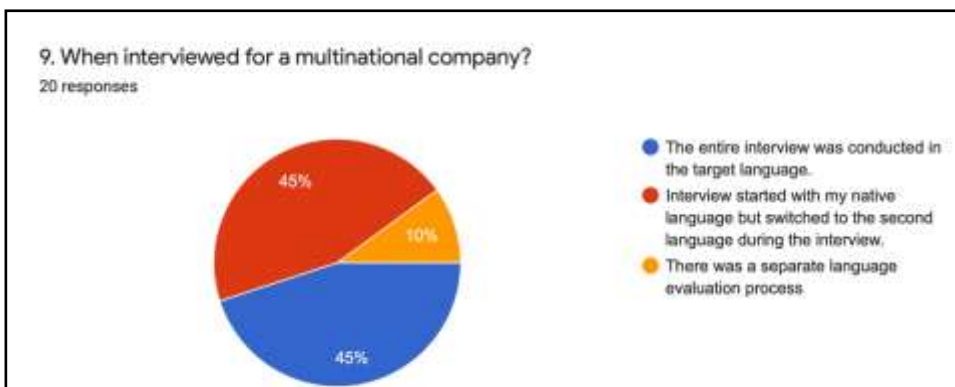
Figure 11. Respondents' feeling about language assessment

10. How did you find the experience of having your language abilities evaluated/assessed?
20 responses

- I was comfortable.
- I was uncomfortable and i demonstrated less proficiency during interview due to stress.
- It depends on the questions asked and the pressure of the interview.

75%
10%
15%
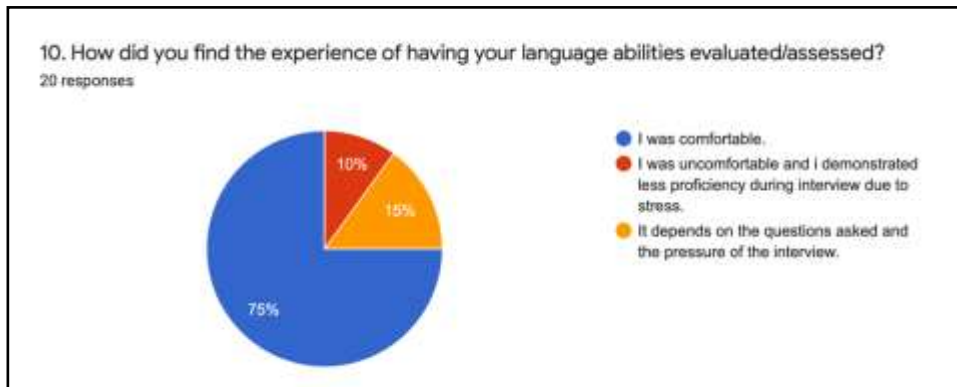
Figure 12. Respondents' language preference during an interview

11. Which one do you prefer:
20 responses

- I prefer to have the entire interview in the language other than my native language.
- I prefer at least the introduction to be made in my mother tongue so as to have less stress then to switch to the...
- I prefer to have an independent language assessment process.
- I prefer to engage in language assessment exams (IELTS, TEF,...)

60%
25%
10%
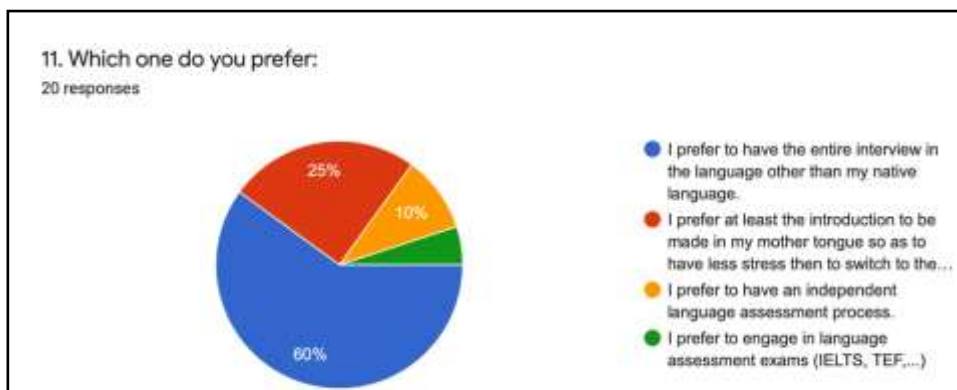
Figure 13. Respondents' tendency to demonstrate during an interview

13. Which of the below do you demonstrate more during an interview:
20 responses

- My character especially communication skills
- My language proficiency.
- My business acumen.

55%
40%
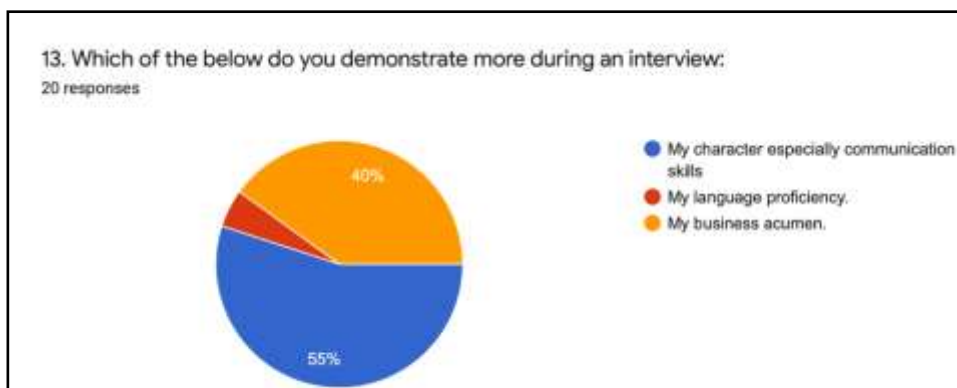
Figure 15. Age split of interviewers
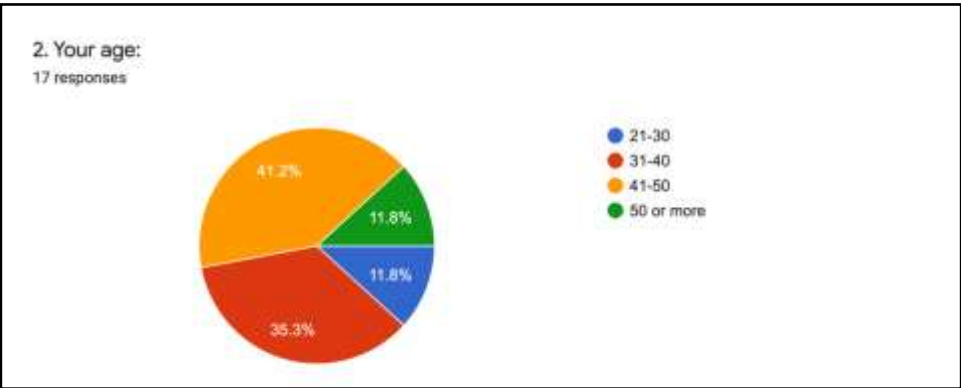
Figure 16. Education of respondents
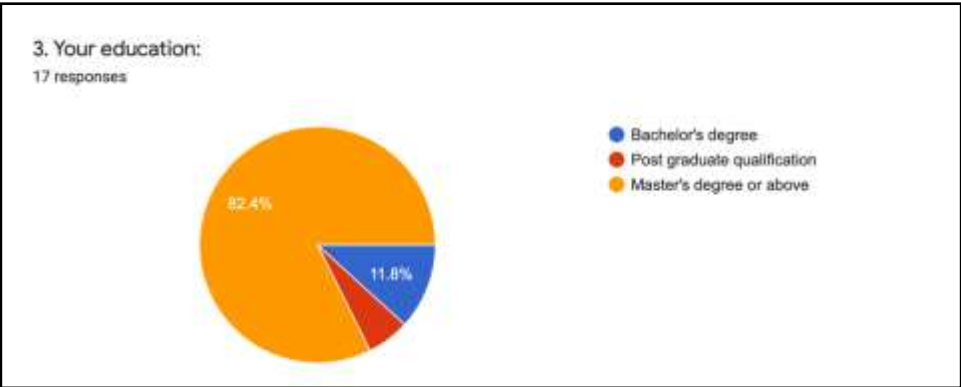
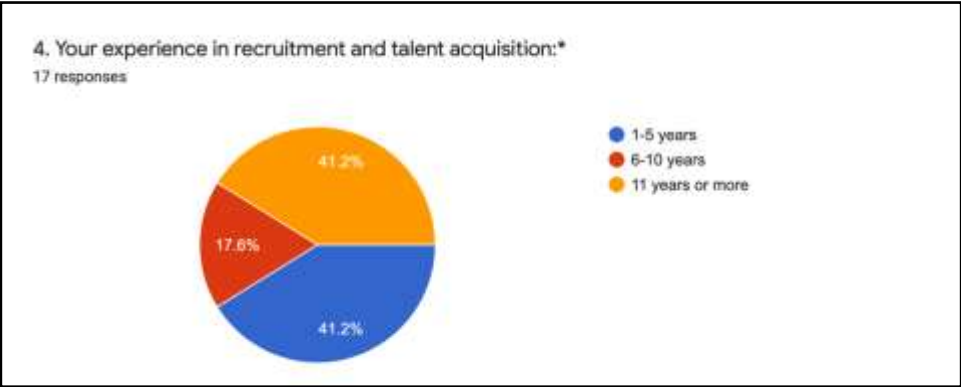Figure 17. Recruitment experience of respondents

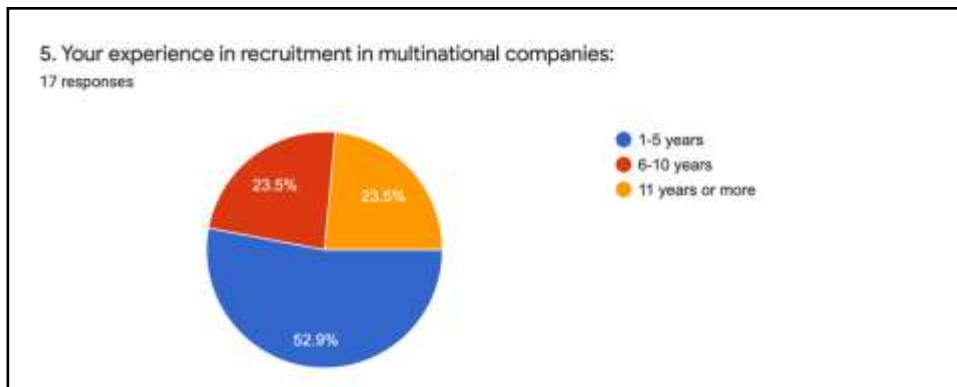Figure 18. Respondents' experience in multinational companies

Figure 21. Language setup in interviews for multilingual positions
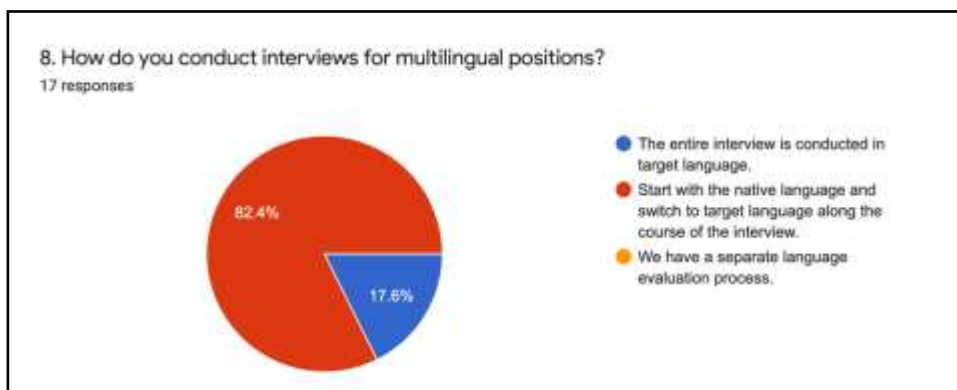

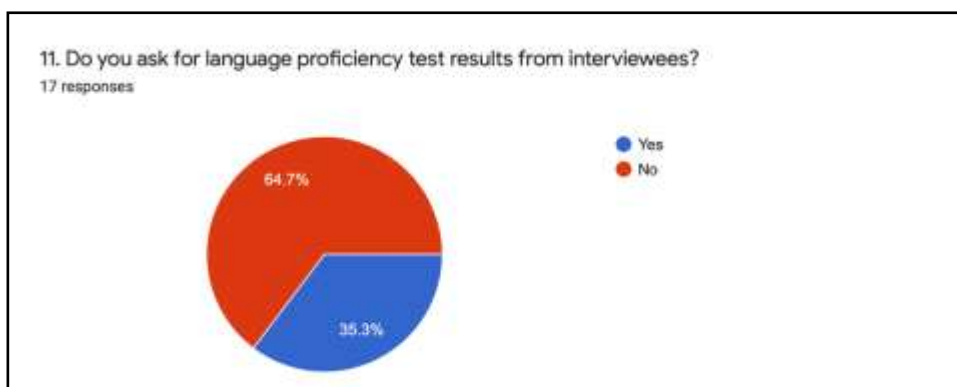Figure 22. Language proficiency tests requested by respondents
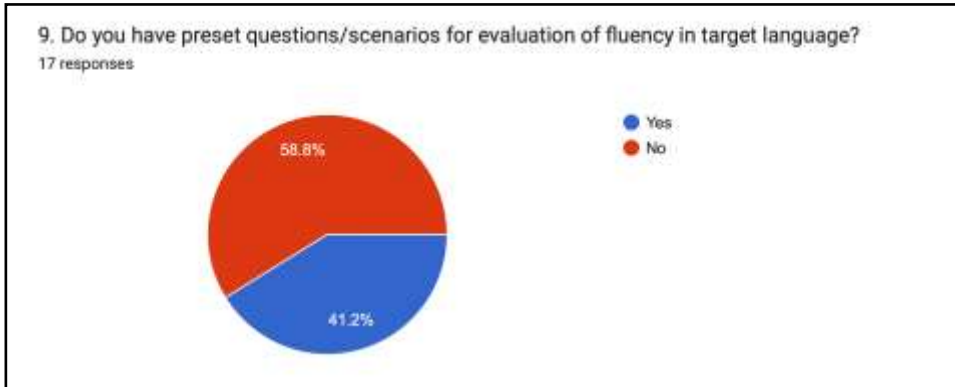
Figure 25. Pre-set questions

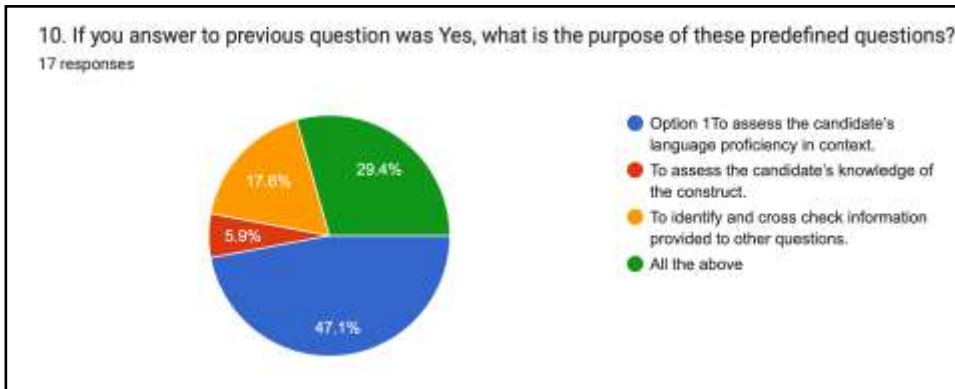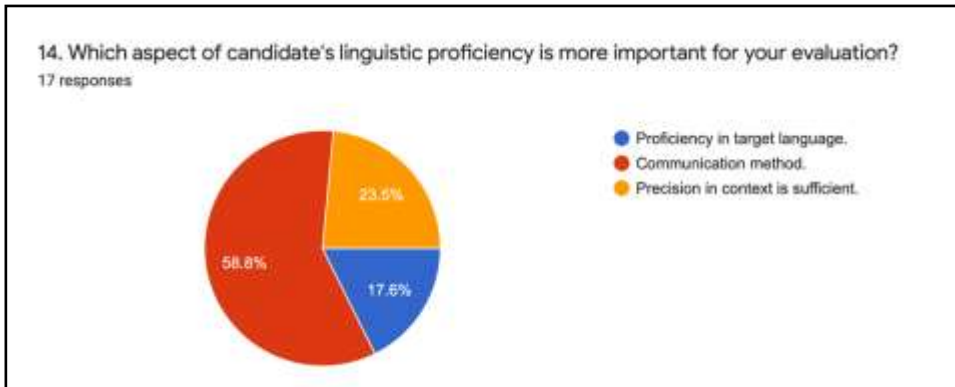Figure 26. Purpose of preset questions

Figure 27. Linguistic preference

Figure 28. Awareness about scientific studies about the subject matter

15. Are you aware of scientific studies that examine the candidate's language proficiency?*

17 responses

- Yes
- No

58.8%

41.2%