

**THEMATIC NETWORK PROJECT IN THE AREA OF LANGUAGES III
(TNP3)
SOCRATES-ERASMUS PROGRAMME
(2003-2006)**

Sub-project Two

Languages for enhanced opportunities on the European labour market

**National Report: Germany
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Authors: Robert Hagen & Guido Mensching, Freie Universität Berlin

1. Introduction

1.1 A brief overview of the national labour market

1.1.1 The principal sectors of the labour market

To characterize the structure of the national economy, we first present the respective share of the principal sectors with respect to the national product and the numbers of employees in these sectors. If we look at the figures of the years 1999 and 2003 (see tables 1 and 2 below), we can read off the direction of development into which the economy is moving. The primary sector (agriculture), already contributing relatively little to the overall national product, is further losing ground. The traditionally strong secondary sector of industrial manufacturing is still important, but constantly diminishing compared to the tertiary sector of services. Thus, the statistical facts confirm the trend of "tertiarisation", in other words, the transition towards a "service society". A further transformation into a knowledge society, as claimed by sociologists and economists, may well take place, but the macroscopic sectoral statistics are too coarse to confirm such trends.

Table 1 shows the gross value added of the principal economical sectors in billions of Euros, calculated at current prices, i.e. without adjustment to inflation.¹

¹ The data are taken from the Federal Statistical Office of Germany (Statistisches Bundesamt), <http://www.destatis.de>.

table 1

	agriculture, forestry and fishing	manufacturing	construction	wholesale and retail trade, hotels and restaurants, and transport	financial intermediation, renting and business activities	community, social and personal service activities
1999	22.12	452.99	100.93	322.09	548.3	396.75
	(1%)	(25%)	(5%)	(17%)	(30%)	(22%)
2003	21.81	481.79	82.64	355.34	602.89	429.12
	(1%)	(24%)	(4%)	(18%)	(31%)	(22%)

Table 2 lists the number of employees in the respective sectors.

table 2

	agriculture, forestry and fishing	manufacturing	construction	wholesale and retail trade, hotels and restaurants, and transport	financial intermediation, renting and business activities	community, social and personal service activities
1999	1.004.000	8.498.000	2.904.000	9.684.000	5.426.000	10.811.000
	(3%)	(22%)	(8%)	(25%)	(14%)	(28%)
2003	953.000	8.103.000	2.331.000	9.717.000	6.029.000	11.143.000
	(2%)	(21%)	(6%)	(25%)	(16%)	(29%)

1.1.2 Types of companies in operation: international, SMEs etc.; catering for local / regional / national or European / international markets

According to the *Institut für Mittelstandsforschung Bonn*², the official statistics available contain no specifications on the enterprises' size (in terms of the number of employees). However, a partial statistics is compiled by the *gewerbliche Berufsgenossenschaften*, professional associations, where everyone entertaining any sort of business is obliged to register. The data are not complete, however, insofar as some branches are not concerned by this obligation to registration. So the statistics do not contain agricultural establishments, the railways and post, and is neither complete on employees of the public sector. Furthermore, the data are not gathered with reference to the actual number of employees, but only with reference to hours of work, such that two half time workers count as one full time employee. The figures in tables 3 and 4 refer to the year 2000.³

table 3

enterprises with ... full time employees								
1 - 9	10 - 19	20 - 49	50 - 99	100 - 199	200 - 499	500 - 999	> 1,000	total
2,654,358	201,319	118,493	38,981	19,404	10,752	3,236	1,989	3,048,532

table 4

full time employees in enterprises with ... full time employees								
1 - 9	10 - 19	20 - 49	50 - 99	100 - 199	200 - 499	500 - 999	> 1,000	total
5,845,626	2,684,740	3,553,999	2,719,123	2,767,478	3,438,677	2,303,076	5,776,781	29,089,502

² <http://www.ifm-bonn.org>

³ Institut für Mittelstandsforschung Bonn (2002): *Unternehmensgrößenstatistik 2001/2002 - Daten und Fakten*, Bonn: p. 160, available online at: <http://www.ifm-bonn.org/dienste/dafa.htm>. (The figures quoted are taken from chapter 5.)

1.2 Economic internationalisation and integration

We can gain a general impression of the degree of internationalisation of the German economy from the fact that about three quarters of the German enterprises maintain international contacts and realise more than a third of their business volume abroad. This is what reveals a survey by the *Institut der deutschen Wirtschaft Köln* (Cologne) (IW)⁴.

In what follows we present further figures that are commonly regarded as indicators of the degree of economic globalisation. Among these are, first, the volumes of export and import of the national economy, that is, the foreign trade balance. Second, the amount of foreign direct investments, both foreign capital invested in companies in Germany and German capital invested in enterprises in foreign countries.

Foreign Trade Balance

Table 5 illustrates the enormous growth of exports and imports, with the export rate exceeding the imports. The numbers refer to millions of Euros.⁵

table 5

	imports	exports
1950	5,815	4,275
1960	21,844	24,514
1970	56,041	64,053
1980	174,545	179,120
1990	293,215	348,117
2000	538,311	597,440
2002	518,532	651,320

According to an inquiry by the German chamber of commerce (Deutscher Industrie- und Handelskammertag, DIHK)⁶, 74% of the German imports and exports in the year 2002 are with countries within Europe together with Turkey and CIS, the states supplanting the former Soviet Union. 43% of the foreign trade takes place with countries of the Euro zone. The share of the 10 countries acceding to the EU is about 10%. From the point of view of trade relations, the most important regions, besides the European region, are North America and Asia. 12% of the German exports go into the NAFTA (U.S.A., Canada, and Mexico), the greatest part (10.6%) into the U.S.A. With respect to German imports, the U.S.A. are also the most important trading partner next to the European countries. However, China is gaining in importance, delivering more than 4.9% of the imported commodities. The remaining regions (Africa, South America, and Middle East) contribute only about 6% to the German foreign trade volume.

Estimates for the future development of trade relations purport that the relative importance of China will augment, and that the Chinese import and export volumes will surmount those of

⁴ Werner Lenske & Dirk Werner (2000): *Globalisierung und internationale Berufskompetenz - Die IW-Umfrage zu Ausbildung und Beschäftigung 2000*, Köln. We will return to further results of this survey under point 2.2.

⁵ Data according to the Federal Statistical Office Germany (see note above).

⁶ Deutscher Industrie- und Handelskammertag (DIHK) (2003): *Export und Import 2003 / 2004. DIHK-Umfrage bei den deutschen Auslandshandelskammern - Herbst 2003*.
(http://www.dihk.de/inhalt/download/AHK_Umfrage_2003.pdf)

Japan. A significant growth of German exports is expected for the Middle East, especially Iran.

As regards categories of products, vehicles, machines and chemical products represent around 50% of the total of the German exports. 4.8% of the exported products pertain to the sector of information technology, radio and TV receivers and electric components.⁷ Among the further product categories where exports exceed imports, there are products of publishing houses and print products (0.7% of all exports), medical technology/regulation and measuring technology/optical products (4%).⁸

The most important product categories of imports are agricultural products (3% of all imports), coal (0.2%), mineral oil and gas (7%), ores (0.4%), clothes (3%), leather and leather products (1%), and information technological products (5%).

Foreign direct investments

According to the OECD⁹, foreign direct investments reached a high level during the period of economic boom in the late 1990s. Afterwards, from 2000 onwards, international investments were dampened. This was due to a general macroeconomic weakness, and, since 2003, to political instability. This development touched in particular the investment flows into the U.S.A. and the U.K.

Taking a longer perspective, over the last decade (1993 to 2002), Germany is among the main net exporters of foreign direct investments – together with the U.K., France, Japan and Switzerland. Also with respect to inflows, Germany is among the first four OECD countries. Looking at the years 1999 to 2002, the situation in Germany has changed, in the years 2000 and 2002 investment inflows exceed investment outflows. Table 6 shows the foreign direct investments flows to and from Germany (billions of US\$).

table 6

	outflows	inflows
1999	109.6	55.8
2000	56.9	203.1
2001	42.1	33.9
2002	24.6	38.1

To compare, the German gross national product of the year 2002 was 2572.77 billions of US\$¹⁰.

Cross-border “mergers and acquisitions are the largest single component of FDI [i.e.: foreign direct investments] in most OECD member countries” (OECD 2003: 7). “The other components are [...] investments in new plants, reinvested earnings and capital transfers between related enterprises.” (OECD 2003: 20, note 2) The financial volume of mergers and acquisitions in OECD countries (inflow and outflow) constantly increased between 1995 and 2000 and declined afterwards. The estimated figures for the year 2003 are only about one fifth of the peak level in 2000.

As regards the sectors involved, “some of the largest cross-border mergers and acquisitions into OECD countries” in the years 2002 and 2003 “took place in the telecommunications sector” (OECD 2003: 9). “Another sector that saw much cross-border investment activity” during this period “was energy production and distribution” (ibid.). The largest individual pur-

⁷ According to DIHK, see note above.

⁸ Data referring to the year 2003, according to the Federal Statistical Office Germany (see note above).

⁹ OECD (2003): *Trends and Recent Developments in Foreign Direct Investments*, available at <http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/52/11/2958722.pdf>.

¹⁰ According to the Federal Statistical Office Germany, and assuming that 1 EUR costs 1,22 US\$.

chase was recorded in the financial sector. “Among the more traditional industries, the food and beverages sector saw several large cross-border transactions” (OECD 2003: 10).

1.3 Recent changes in the labour market as a result of increasing European integration and globalisation

A general trend with respect to changes in the labour market concerns, as already noted, the growth of the service sector, and, accordingly, a reduction of the number of employees in the sectors of agriculture and industry. The share of employees in the service sector rose continuously from 61% in the year 1992 to 70% in 2002. An exception to this (apparently) continuous growth of the service sector is the telecommunication and internet branch, which vigorously expanded during the boom of the nineties and cooled down afterwards (cf. also 4.1, question 1).

One aspect of the phenomenon of globalisation can be seen in the fact that nearly all of the larger enterprises have their business sites distributed all over the globe, with production chains crossing national borders and costumers in different regional markets (see 1.2 above). Consequences of the economic internationalisation in terms of demands in the field of language skills are to be felt especially in the higher and intermediate levels of business administration and in the departments concerned with marketing, sales and purchasing, as well as finance and controlling.

1.4 Summary of section 1

Looking for general trends and central features of changes and developments going on in the national economy of Germany, the following main aspects have been highlighted.

(1) Keeping to the traditional partitioning of the national economy into agriculture, manufacturing and services, statistical data reveal an increasing importance of the service sector. As regards changes in the world of work, this goes along with an increase of broadly communicative tasks and functions.

(2) Another trend pointed at by sociologist goes under the flag of “knowledge society”. This term tries to capture among other things the emergence of communication and information technology, as well as in general a rising demand for highly skilled specialists in various domains, due to technological innovation.

(3) The nowadays ubiquitous talk of (economic) “globalisation” is shown to be justified by several macroeconomic indicators. The constant growth of international trade volumes can be traced back even to the 1970s. Another important sign of international business relations concerns foreign direct investments. These have seen a peak level in the late nineties, and slightly declined in more recent years, while still remaining at significant levels.

(4) As regards the countries with which Germany entertains trade and business relations, the most important partner economies pertain to the European area. This fact confirms the progress of European integration.

(5) On the face of it, both phenomena (3) and (4) provide evidence for an increasing demand for multilingual communication capacities. With the aspects (1) and (2), on the other hand, we have at hand first hints where such multilingual tasks might emerge mostly, and what types of function we can presume to be prevalently concerned.

Taking this broad picture as general background, we now go on to seek for more detailed answers – be it confirming or (partly) disconfirming information – to the question on implications for highly skilled labour force (issuing from higher education institutions). How ought these to be equipped to be able to cope with the situation they are about to encounter on the labour market?

2. New linguistic demands in the private and public sectors resulting from European integration and globalisation: languages and skills / competences

2.1 Communications from international organisations

No data available.

2.2 Communications from employers, employers' organisations and other organisations

DIW report

In what follows, we summarize a report on the use of foreign languages at the work place by the German Institute for Economic Research (DIW Berlin)¹¹: The report presents the results of a study that tries to find out to what extent foreign language are part of the competences applied at the work place. In other words, the question is, does globalisation and European integration make themselves felt in the context of work. The study proceeds by analysing the data that are collected on a regular basis by the European Community Household Panel (ECHP) and the German Socio-Economic Panel (SOEP).

According to these data, on average, every fifth employee in Europe uses a foreign language on his/her working place. ("Foreign language" here means a language other than the official national one, regardless of whether it is his or her native language.) Among immigrant employees, the percentage of those who use their mother tongue or another foreign language on the work place amounts even to two thirds. For this group, the quota of foreign language users is high even for people working in positions with low qualifications. It needs to be mentioned however that the authors here also counted the use of languages for conversation between immigrant colleagues in their respective native language.

Whereas it has been known for a long time that foreign language skills are demanded in the professions of managers, engineers, and scientists, more recently such skills are also increasingly required in commercial occupations. Moreover, the demand for people qualified in languages is especially rising in the sector of services, and here in particular in the hotel and catering industry. As for the latter branch, foreign language skills are also relevant for low qualified personnel.

Relating to Germany, the following results are presented: Similar to the European average, 21% of the employees in Germany report to use a foreign language at work. This quota varies from branch to branch:

- agriculture and fishing: 8%
- industries: 23%
- hotel and catering: 39%
- other services: 26%

¹¹ Ingrid Tucci & Gert G. Wagner (2003): „Fremdsprachenkenntnisse als wichtige Zusatzqualifikation im Dienstleistungssektor“, in: *DIW-Wochenbericht* 41/03. (Available at <http://www.diw.de/deutsch/produkte/publikationen/wochenberichte/docs/03-41-1.html>) This report is also summarized and made public by the employers' organization *Deutscher Industrie- und Handelskammertag* (DIHK).

The portion of those who use a foreign language at work decreases with the age of the persons interviewed: among those between 26 and 35 years of age 26% purport to use a foreign language, among those between 46 and 55 years the number reduces to 18%. Moreover, the extent of language use is shown to depend on the level of education. In the group of people with a higher educational level, 40% claim to use a foreign language at work, while the corresponding rate is 17% in the group with an intermediate education and 13% within the group of a lower level of education. As regards the question of which foreign language the employees use (in the first place), if they respond to use any, it is English for a majority of 78% of the subjects, followed by 9% speaking or writing French at work, 7% apply another EU language and the remaining 5% other languages.

The European average numbers indicate furthermore that the prevalence of English is stronger for managers (80%), scientists (81%), and engineers (84%), while the relative number of those who use languages other than English is higher with jobs requiring lower qualifications. Another interesting figure is also only given for Europe as a whole: the variation of foreign language use depending on the status of the profession. A high status of profession goes along with a quota of 45%, while an intermediate status of profession correlates with a percentage of 34% and a low status with 20%.

The report concludes that the results reflect the growing importance of foreign language skills for being able to compete in a globalised economy and as a consequence of increasing worldwide business cooperations. At the same time, foreign language skills promote mobility for workers in the context of the European Union.

Public communication by BDA

In a public communication, the employers' organization BDA (*Bundesvereinigung der Deutschen Arbeitgeberverbände*) calls for a stronger international orientation in the vocational training because of the increasing internationalisation and Europeanisation of the economy¹². In this appeal, the focus lies on the vocational training below higher education, that is on the system of combined in-firm training and education at vocational schools. However, analogous considerations apply to higher education as well. The organisation bases its recommendations on the results of a survey by the *Institut der deutschen Wirtschaft Köln* (IW)¹³. The survey reveals that about three quarters of the German enterprises maintain international contacts and realise more than a third of their business volume abroad. Moreover, in 37% of the enterprises, a certain part of the employees regularly applies international qualifications such as foreign language skills, knowledge about foreign markets or business practices and intercultural skills. Foreign language skills are most important among the international qualifications. About a third of the employees of these enterprises uses languages on a regular basis. As a consequence, the BDA appeals to extend the learning of languages at the vocational schools and to offer opportunities for additional qualifications and optional offers. Foreign languages should be obligatory in those vocations in which these skills are indispensable for the profession, as in the case of personnel for travel agencies.

Personal communication by DIHK (Deutscher Industrie- und Handelskammertag)

TNP: It is generally acknowledged that businesses tend to operate on a global market and that, from a German perspective, economic integration of Europe bears on the corporations' policy.

¹² BDA: „Internationalisierung der Beruflichen Bildung“, <http://www.bda-online.de/www/bdaonline.nsf/id/2D13A73DE7C70291C1256DE70069F436>.

¹³ Werner Lenske & Dirk Werner (2000): *Globalisierung und internationale Berufskompetenz - Die IW-Umfrage zu Ausbildung und Beschäftigung 2000*, Köln.

This should make itself felt in terms of foreign language needs, especially for highly qualified labour force. Does your experience confirm a similar development?

DIHK: As regards economic internationalisation, activities transcending national borders are now not only common to large corporations, but become also more and more part of the business strategies of small and medium sized enterprises. We perceive indeed growing demands on multilingual communication as a consequence of the economic transformation process. This is especially true for executives and marketing departments, including functions of customer relations. The greatest part of trade and business activities of German enterprises takes place inside the European Union. However, Eastern Europe and Asian countries are clearly gaining ground. A good command of English as a universal language is indispensable for almost all sorts of staff. But also other languages are often very important, for example for preparing and entertaining negotiations and for getting an idea on foreign customs and mentalities.

TNP: Does it happen that poor performance in some language hinders prospects in a targeted market or thwart intended acquisitions or commercial partnerships?

DIHK: A lack of foreign language competence may cause serious problems especially in the field of marketing. As regards the area of production, in general no such linguistic capacities are called for, as communication is accomplished in the local language. Knowledge of English may be demanded also in the area of production, however.

TNP: Do you know – e.g. through inquiries – whether graduates' qualifications match employers demands?

DIHK: We have recently started a survey on companies' opinions concerning curricular contents, especially those of bachelor programmes in course of being introduced. The analysis of the data has still to be completed. I can only tell you that among the respondents, surprisingly a significant portion held that a stay abroad should not be mandatory for the first degree level.

TNP: There exists an elaborate method for analysing a given company's foreign language needs that is called linguistic audit. Do you know of German companies recurring to such services?

DIHK: I do not know of any companies doing so.

TNP: What about cross-border business relations between German and Poland?

DIHK: In the area of higher education – besides, education is the resort I'm actually working in – there is a rich cooperation especially in the regions near the border, e.g. at Viadrina University (Frankfurt/Oder) and the University of Applied Sciences Zittau/Görlitz. On the political level, we have seen a period of diplomatic dissonances. But the economic base has continued to function without harm. German enterprises are strongly interested in entering the Polish market. Saving wages is not the primary reason for building up new plants.

TNP: I suppose that if one intends to establish a branch abroad one needs staff with particular qualifications, comprising basic knowledge of economy, linguistic competences, familiarity with European and national law and other knowledge regarding the target country ...

DIHK: Your intuitions are right. Generally speaking, we have witnessed that interdisciplinary qualifications are sought for very much, this holds e.g. for economy plus engineering. A similar situation could be true for a combination of subjects in the way you have just indicated.

TNP: Do you know of the situation of language graduates that try to enter the private job market? In a number of articles one can read that these are recruited by insurances ...

DIHK: Contrary to what one might expect, language graduates and more generally graduates from the humanities do find their way into positions in the private sector. What sorts of branches be most inclined to employ this type of graduates is difficult to say. Marketing, public relations, human resources and management are among the typical fields of activity – that is, broadly speaking, tasks that demand multiple skills.

2.3 Results of language audits

Several informants told us that they do not know of any companies that applied a linguistic audit.

2.4 Results of local / regional / national surveys

The organisation of German chambers of industry and commerce (DIHK)¹⁴ has conducted a survey¹⁵ among its members, which asks to state their opinions on the newly introduced bachelor and master degrees.¹⁶ The study dates from 2002. The survey is based on the answers of 832 enterprises from all sectors and of different size. One of the main results was that employers feel as yet not sufficiently informed about the qualification profiles of the graduates.

Among the questions, one concerned the importance of foreign language skills. Employers were requested to indicate how important they deemed the mastery of two foreign languages. Table 7 shows the importance of the mastery of two foreign languages according to employers.

table 7

the mastery of two foreign languages is ...	
... very important	20.2%
... important	56.7%
... unimportant for their purposes	23.1%
[no answer]	10.3%

The group of enterprises according little value to foreign languages comprises mostly small enterprises and companies oriented on local or regional markets. Among these there are companies of retail trade, banking houses operating on regional markets, insurances, publishing houses and print industries, administration, enterprises producing basic materials and small, highly specialised industries. Among the enterprises demanding skills in at least two foreign languages (together with otherwise adequate qualifications) we find large industries and services catering international markets.

¹⁴ <http://www.dihk.de>

¹⁵ The report is published online: <http://www.dihk.de/inhalt/download/bachelorumfrage.doc>.

¹⁶ In this context, one has to keep in mind that the introduction of new degree programmes along the lines of a two-tier structure is done only step by step. Thus, in 2002 only a small portion of the degree programmes offered conform to the B.A./M.A. model, while the majority still persists in the form of one-tier degrees. Consequently, the impression of not been sufficiently informed – reported on in what follows – might be in part due to this situation.

Another question is about the importance of a stay abroad as part of study programmes. Table 8 shows the employers' attitudes concerning the importance of international experience for job candidates.

table 8

international experience is ...	
... very important	6.8%
... important	53.6%
... unimportant	39.8%
[no answer]	13.4%

2.5 Outcomes of academic studies and research

*Survey by IW*¹⁷

The *IW Köln* has done a survey on the foreign language needs of German small and medium sized enterprises. Although it dates back to the year 1996, its results still prove valuable, particularly as no more recent comparable study is available to our knowledge. The survey is based on questionnaires filled in by 663 companies of all sizes, but in the majority by small and medium-sized enterprises. In the sample, the share of companies located in near border regions (56%) is slightly higher than the actual proportion. This may have led to a certain distortion.

International orientation:

The companies have been asked on the degree of international orientation of their business activities. As an indicator of this orientation they used the import and export quotas as well as the share of international business relative to the overall business volume.¹⁸ The answers to this item revealed differences according to the sector the enterprise belonged to. The international orientation along the given definition is **higher** than average in the following branches:

- manufacture of machinery and equipment
- manufacture of transport equipment
- manufacture of basic metals and fabricated metal products
- manufacture of optical equipment and of precision instruments
- manufacture of electrical equipment
- manufacture of chemicals, chemical products and man-made fibres
- manufacture of food products, beverages and tobacco
- tourism
- transport
- wholesale trade and import/export
- hotels and restaurants
- financial intermediation

¹⁷ Sigrid Schöpfer-Grabe & Reinhold Weiß (1996): *Fremdsprachen in der beruflichen Bildung - Bestandsaufnahme in Klein- und Mittelbetrieben*, Institut der deutschen Wirtschaft Köln.

¹⁸ This has been done in order to be able to apply the criterion of internationality also to the banking sector where there is no genuine import and export.

The following branches turned out to be **less** internationally oriented:

- handcraft [difficult to locate in NACE]
- construction
- manufacture of pulp, paper and paper products; publishing and printing
- retail trade
- insurance and pension funding, except compulsory social security

In total, two thirds of the companies are active with international businesses.

Foreign language needs:

Overall, two thirds of the companies state to need foreign languages¹⁹ whereas about one third don't need any. These data are further detailed by indicating the frequency of foreign language use:

- 29.3% of the companies state to use foreign languages permanently,
- 29.6% often,
- 10.2% rarely, and
- 30.9% never.

Dependency of foreign language needs on various factors:

Dependency on the company's size:

Table 9 shows the share of companies stating to need foreign languages relative to the company's size (number of employees):

table 9

size / number of employees	foreign language needs
1 - 49	56.7%
50 - 99	64.6%
100 - 499	74.2%
500 - 999	85.0%
> 1000	92.9%

Dependency on the company's international orientation:

The amount/intensity of foreign language needs has shown to depend on the share of foreign businesses relative to the total business volume. Furthermore, foreign language needs are higher if the company has establishments abroad or if it is itself part of a foreign corporation.

Differences between Eastern and Western Germany:

Differences between the federal states of the Federal Republic before 1990 and the "new" federal states are small. This represents a change compared to previous studies of a similar nature, which had signalled lesser needs for foreign languages in the Eastern part of the country. From this fact one can infer an increasing export activity in companies residing there. Referring to the period in question (1994), there remains however, a difference between East

¹⁹ This number is indeed more elevated than the figure reported above referring to another survey by IW Köln (see footnote 13). Standing to those data, only in 37% of the companies part of the employees regularly uses foreign languages.

and West with regard to the companies entertaining establishments abroad or being part of a foreign corporation.

Differences between branches:

The variation of the amount of foreign language needs depending on which economic branch a company belongs to follows roughly the same pattern as the degree of international orientation (see above). Still, it is surprising how many of those companies with little international orientation state to need foreign languages. In the branches of retail trade and insurances, more than half of the companies respond affirmatively to this question, with handcraft companies the ratio is one to three, and in the construction sector one to five.

Frequency of foreign language needs in individual languages:

Table 10 shows the frequency of use of individual languages.

table 10

	permanently	frequently	rarely
English	35.8% ²⁰	44.8%	16.8%
French	8.7%	24.9%	47.8%
Spanish	2.6%	10.7%	33.8%
Italian	2.6%	5.7%	38.0%

The following further languages figure in the answers, with a frequency lower than that of the languages mentioned above. The order in this list represents the frequency of being mentioned in the answers.

Languages used with some frequency

Russian	Danish
Dutch	Japanese
Czech	Chinese
Portuguese	Polish

In addition, the following languages occur in individual cases:

Languages used sporadically

Swedish	Korean	Hindi-Urdu
Turkish	Serbo-Croatian	Luxembourgian
Hungarian	Latvian	Slovenian
Bulgarian	Norwegian	Finnish
Greek	Arabian	Indonesian
		Romanian

Compared to previous surveys, the following languages slightly gain importance: Italian, Russian, Dutch, Czech, Portuguese, Danish, Japanese, Chinese, and Polish. It is difficult to assess, however, whether there are effects of the sample comprising more companies from near-border region than average.

²⁰ The percentages refer to the share of companies with linguistic needs with respect to the language in question among those enterprises with linguistic needs generally. (That is, companies not needing languages are not included.)

Number of languages used:

Table 11 shows the percentages of companies with respect to the number of languages used.

table 11

1	2	3	4	5	> 5
12.1%	21.7%	18.1%	17.2%	12.3%	18.6%

The percentage of companies using five and more languages is higher with larger enterprises. With companies employing more than thousand persons, the share is higher than 50%. Among companies employing less than 50 persons, the share still amounts to 19.9%.

Linguistic needs differentiated along functions:

Linguistic needs vary from function to function. Table 12 indicates the share of companies that need linguistic competences in the respective department, along with the share of employees inside that department needing linguistic competences.

table 12

function	share of companies with linguistic needs in this area	share of employees with linguistic needs in this area (average)
sales	69.7%	44.3%
marketing	40.4%	43.3%
data processing	40.0%	42.4%
services/customer care	60.9%	40.0%
research	28.6%	39.8%
purchase	51.5%	37.8%
finance/controlling	36.9%	29.5%
human resources	25.6%	24.8%
manufacture	28.4%	19.9%

Normally, smaller enterprises are not divided up into departments with separate tasks. As a consequence, these can only be asked on linguistic needs rising in the company in general. If these cases are included, the resulting share of enterprises generally needing languages amounts to 84.5%, while the average of the share of staff concerned is 29.4%.

2.6 Summary of section 2

To sum up, we rehearse the main points of section 2.

As regards the pervasiveness of the use of foreign languages in a vocational context generally – i.e. not restricting attention to academic staff alone – empirical data confirm the hypothesis of a remarkable frequency of the use of foreign languages at work. On average, 21% of the employees in Germany make use of foreign languages in a professional context. This rate changes, as could be demonstrated, depending on the economic sector, status of the profession and other factors. The higher the position of the employee, the more English dominates among the languages used.

These findings are further deepened and supplemented by an investigation looking at the amount of international orientation undertaken by *IW Cologne*. It again shows differences between sectors and enterprises of different size. Among other things, the report shows that

also less common languages like Arabic or Finnish are in fact used by companies in individual cases, though by the lights of pure statistics it is tempting to overlook these cases.

A similar study reveals that about three quarters of the German enterprises maintain international contacts, and in 37% of them part of the employees regularly applies foreign language skills and knowledge related to foreign markets. For the employers' organisation BDA this underpins its plea for adequate measures in the system of vocational training.

A spokesperson from the chamber of commerce and industries pointed out to us an increasing demand for multilingual communications between companies and with customers. Furthermore she notices an increasing number of positions where multiple qualifications are required. This is manifested through the success of graduates with double qualifications and through the rising number of graduates from the humanities working in the private sector.²¹

Two years ago, German enterprises were asked whether they deemed it important or very important that university graduates should master at least two languages. 77% answered affirmatively.

3. In regard to non-language graduates, what formal or informal linguistic and intercultural qualifications – languages / skills and competences – are sought after on the national labour market?

3.1 Communications from heads of personnel departments

We have interviewed a number of the companies that are listed in the DAX, that is that are among the top 30 of German corporations in terms of turnover and profit. Unfortunately, some of the companies we contacted were not willing to respond. We have received answers from five corporations (Allianz, Deutsche Telekom, Schering, Siemens, and Volkswagen), from two of which we have been able to talk with more than one department. Part of the communications has been in written form only, whereas some data are based on interviews. In what follows we summarize the answers received.

Question 1: In which departments and for which individual positions and tasks foreign language skills are required?

In view of the fact that all of the companies investigated run their businesses on a global scale, foreign language skills are, in principle, vital for all sorts of staff. Looking at the individual companies and departments, a more differentiated picture emerges. First of all, some enterprises dispose of specialized language services units, which do all sorts of necessary translations in several languages. For example, Deutsche Telekom and Volkswagen dispose of such specialized units.

Deutsche Telekom reports that foreign languages are especially important in those business fields that operate internationally, e.g. T-mobile international. Another example is the department responsible for international controlling. Further linguistic needs obtain at the points of contact between central units in Germany and the foreign affiliates, e.g. in the U.S.A. and in Slovakia. This includes communication between local executives, personnel managers and

²¹ For another line of argument to explain the rising number of graduates from the humanities that venture into the private sector see section 7.1, conclusions.

employees. In general, a good command of English is required for most positions. Linguistic skills are especially vital those who work in purchasing units.

Allianz's life insurance department tells us that among the company's units in which foreign language skills play a prominent role, there are departments with international relations in the domain of business customers, finance departments and accountancy departments. Foreign language skills are important for the profession group of business administrators and economists. The central office of the Allianz Group – that is, the overall corporation comprising besides insurances also banking houses – reports of languages playing a vital role in all of those central units – called Group Centers – that operate in an international context. This concerns all types of profession, but most of all business administrators/economists.

Schering (pharmaceutical industries) reports that in all departments foreign language skills are demanded. This holds for different sorts of professions, as for example chemists, pharmacologists, biologists, psychologists, physicians, information technologists, lawyers and engineers.

The **Siemens** corporation consists of several bodies that operate as rather autonomous enterprises. One of them is the consulting agency Siemens Management Consulting (SMC). As a consequence of the company's worldwide business activities and the general standards of the consultancy branch, a very good proficiency in English is expected from potential employees. A minimum condition is a prior stay abroad in an English speaking country, be it studies abroad or an internship.

Siemens Information and Communication Networks told us that knowledge of English is required for all types of employment in this business unit. Foreign language skills are needed in particular for activities in the area of sales and distribution on the international market. Furthermore, there are a few multinational teams at development departments where the working language is English.

At **Volkswagen**, foreign language skills (at least one language) are required for all employees (with an academic education).

Question 2: Which languages are demanded?

There is a clear prevalence of English, as regards the demands of foreign language skills for academic applicants and employees. Depending on the trade relations and the different sites abroad and international affiliates of the corporations, other languages are of relevance as well. This is by no means valid only for specialized linguistic services and in-house translation offices, but also for units responsible for international sales and purchases, financial controlling of the business sites, and executive staff. A detailed estimation of the demands for languages other than English seems difficult, because of the different structures and areas of activity of the individual enterprises. The linguistic demands beyond English clearly depend on where the corporation's foreign establishments are and with which countries they entertain trade relations. Generalizing, of greatest interest seem to be (not necessarily in this order):

- Spanish and Portuguese
- Eastern European languages
- Chinese and Japanese.

Demands for French have shown up only on a reduced scale as yet. It seems unclear whether English can in principle always function as lingua franca in whatever business context, or whether the mastery of other languages spoken by trade partners and employees at foreign locations may significantly improve internal cooperation and external communication.

Deutsche Telekom reports the following examples for the use of languages other than English. Within the central unit responsible for the international controlling, there are working some (German speaking) Russians who stay in constant contact with the office in Moscow. At Telekom Slovakia, which belongs to Deutsche Telekom, the employees talk Slovakian among each other, but communicate in English to the personnel managers delegated from Germany. Some of the executive staff – Germans in the main – have also learned Slovakian. Since Deutsche Telekom has taken over a Spanish telecommunication provider, there is a new demand for technical and other specialist personnel able to speak Spanish. Some employees communicate in French, but these cases are episodic.

In general, a good command of English is a prerequisite for most positions. A particular good mastering of the English language is required for those who work in purchasing units, as Deutsche Telekom often buys from English and U.S. companies. In recent times, however, Telekom is mainly purchasing from national companies.

Allianz's central corporation unit tells us that mainly English is demanded, although the demand for Eastern European and Asian languages is slightly increasing. The department for life insurances requires English only.

Schering reports that besides English the linguistic demands depend on the languages spoken at the sites of the subsidiary companies abroad.

While **Siemens** Management Consulting staff needs good English language proficiency, skills in additional languages are very much welcome, especially if these happen to be languages spoken at the business sites abroad. A special demand is noted for Chinese and Japanese, otherwise appropriately qualified graduates (in engineering sciences, economics and the like) competent in one of these languages have good chances for being recruited by the Asian affiliates.

At Siemens Information and Communication Networks knowledge of English is required for all types of employment in this business unit. A particularly good command of the language is demanded for activities in the area of sales and distribution in Anglophone countries. The same is true for Spanish and Portuguese with regard to the South American markets. Other countries and languages are concerned as well, but not known in detail to our contact person.

At **Volkswagen**, knowledge of English is required for all employees (with an academic education). A second language is desirable, in the first place Spanish.

Question 3: How important are intercultural skills?

Most companies attribute importance to intercultural skills and competences. Most importance is accorded to these as regards executive staff, as they often work in multinational teams and have to deal with international contacts. An exception is Allianz life insurances, which operates primarily in the national market.

It is striking, however, that although personnel managers purport to attribute importance to intercultural competences, they have little to say about this in more concrete terms. On the other hand, this contrasts with the fact that the demand for intercultural training for executive and other staff on the private market is – to our knowledge – perspicuous.

Question 4: Are you able to cover the needs as regards staff qualified in languages?

No difficulties are reported here.

Question 5: Do you observe an increase in the need for staff qualified in languages?

This question is answered with a clear yes in those cases where the company or the inquired business unit has expanded its global activities, e.g. by acquiring foreign companies. Siemens Management Consulting does not exist long enough as to answer this question. Allianz life insurances observes only a slight increase, probably due to its focus on the national market.

Language requirements in job advertisements - examples

- Siemens requires very good knowledge of English for nearly every position– writing as well as speaking skills. In some cases additional foreign language skills are “welcome”. However, technical specializations clearly are the most important qualifications required.
- Deutsche Telekom expects from business administration/economics applicants English plus a further foreign language, preferably French or Spanish.
- In about 80% of the job offers Daimler Chrysler Germany demands good or very good knowledge of English.
- Bankgesellschaft Berlin requires good knowledge of English from all applicants with a business or economics degree.
- Volkswagen AG searches qualified personnel and trainees of different professions for its establishments in China, in some advertisements it is said that applicants with knowledge of Chinese will be preferred.

3.2 Communications from public and private labour offices

No relevant information available.

3.3 Outcomes of academic studies and research

Some indirect evidence as regards linguistic needs for university graduates in the fields of business administration/economics and law can be obtained from a study by the “Institut für Arbeitsmarkt- und Berufsforschung” (IAB)²² that seeks an answer to the question as to why in the branch of business related services the percentage of personnel with specialized professional qualifications below academic degrees (that is staff trained in the system of apprenticeship plus vocational school) is relatively low. The study concludes that according to communications by employers an important reason is to be seen in deficits in computer skills and a lack of foreign language skills. The branches inside business related services in which foreign language skills turned out to be important are renting of mobile objects, accounting and tax consultancy, management consultancy and public relations, and trade fair management. This lack in linguistic competences concerns commercial vocations, assistants for tax consultancy

²² Thomas Zwick (2001): „Beschäftigungsmöglichkeiten von Fachkräften mit Dualer Ausbildung in informationsintensiven Dienstleistungsunternehmen“, in: *Mitteilungen aus der Arbeitsmarkt- und Berufsforschung* 1/2001, available at: http://doku.iab.de/mittab/2001/2001_1_mittab_zwick.pdf.

and assistants for lawyers. From these observations we may derive that foreign language skills are equally or even more important for university graduates applying for jobs in this branch.

3.4 Employment of “foreign” workers for linguistic reasons

An empirical inquiry by the Institute for the Study of Labour (IZA)²³ dating from 2001 investigates on the nature of and motivations for mobility of highly qualified labour force.²⁴ The study compares the situation in four European countries. It is based on the data of 850 enterprises – small as well as large ones. In what follows we summarize the main results.

In Germany, 39% of all enterprises employ academic staff from abroad. This is a relatively high proportion as compared to other European countries. Only in Great Britain this rate is higher. (FR: 34%, NL: 32%, UK: 50%) In the German enterprises concerned, the average proportion of foreign highly qualified staff is 9%. (FR: 11%, NL: 17%, UK: 11%) As regards the type of enterprises where recruitment of highly qualified foreigners tends to be common practise, these are in particular internationally operating enterprises, companies active in research and development and companies in the information technology sector. In Germany, for enterprises strongly engaged in research and development 7 out of 10 employ foreigners, in the IT sector almost 6 out of 10. In the first group of companies, 12% of the recruited graduates are of non-German nationality, in the latter group it is 10%. In the manufacturing sector and the banking sector, a third of the companies employ foreign academics. The quotas are 7% and 5%, respectively.

The companies have been asked on the reasons for which they employed foreign staff. They responded that they do so mainly because

- they are competent in foreign languages (47% of the answers) (for further 25% this is at least a side motive)
- they know foreign markets (35% of the answers) (for further 29% this is a side motive)
- they speak English very well (33% of the answers)
- their capabilities are better matching the exigencies (15% of the answers)
- there aren't enough German applicants sufficiently qualified (11% of the answers)
- they are the best of all applicants (9% of the answers)
- the abilities needed in the job are not covered by the German education system (5% of the answers)

As can be seen, foreign language skills are among the most important reasons to employ foreign staff. As regards the types of qualifications, the highest demand is on graduates of engineering sciences. Further qualifications sought after are in the fields of computer sciences, mathematics, natural sciences and economics.

As regards functions, in half of the enterprises the foreign employees are occupied with research and development, a third of the companies employ them in marketing and sales and a fourth engages them with computer and network technology.

Most of the international staff is recruited from EU countries, most of all France and UK. 40% of the enterprises employ French staff, 40% employ staff from the UK, and 41% of the companies employ staff from Eastern European countries.

²³ www.iza.org.

²⁴ R. Winkelmann et al. (2001): *Die Nachfrage nach internationalen hochqualifizierten Beschäftigten*, I Z A Research Report No. 4. The report is available online:

http://www.iza.org/ProductFunctions/publication/reports/mp_entries/993741099.789/dokumentFile/IZA_4.pdf.

A summary is published by iwd (Informationsdienst der deutschen Wirtschaft Köln):

<http://www.iwkoeln.de/default.aspx?p=contenthighkey&i=2098>.

We also addressed this topic asking the above-mentioned DAX enterprises. Most companies have answered this question negatively or told us that this is only rarely the case. Another company, which is not being member of the DAX and which interviewed later on, ThinPrint (digital printing technology), told us that they prevalently recruit foreign staff to comply with the requirements they face. The countries in question are Japan and Eastern European countries.

3.5 Summary

According to the spokesmen consulted, good or very good English proficiency is required for nearly everyone working or applying for a qualified function in these corporations. When it comes to other languages, the situation varies from enterprise to enterprise and from department to department. Some of the companies apply a rather broad array of different languages serving central communicative functions. This is often due to foreign sites and international costumers, so multilingual communication takes place at various points of contact internal to the enterprise, between enterprise and costumers and with other companies. Some companies entertain specialised in-house linguistic services charged with all sorts of translations. The main tasks involving foreign languages are sales and purchase, controlling and executive functions.

The most frequent languages are:

- English
- Spanish
- Portuguese
- Eastern European languages
- Chinese
- Japanese

This confirms other inquiries, thus, except that French does not figure among the frequently used languages.

As regards assessment routines for language skills, individual interviews are the preferred method.

Among the companies interviewed, recruitment of foreign personnel for linguistic reasons is not common practice. This first impression is disconfirmed, however, by an inquiry on this topic. Standing to that report, which refers to highly qualified personnel alone, 39% of the enterprises in Germany employ foreign staff, half of which do so for linguistic reasons, and for further 25% this constitutes a side-motive. Another important motive lies in the knowledge of foreign markets. On average 9 out of 100 employees are foreign staff.

Upon the question, whether the enterprise incurs difficulties to come up with the demands for multilingual communication, no such difficulties are reported. However, this may also be due to a lack of awareness for such needs or an inclination to pass such problems over to lower management levels.

4. In regard to language graduates (bachelor and master) outside language-related industries and professions, what formal or informal linguistic and intercultural qualifications – languages / skills and competences - are known to enhance career prospects?

4.1 Communications from heads of personnel departments

As we requested some DAX corporations to provide some information on their recruitment practice, two questions turned upon the prospects for language specialists outside traditional occupations (such as translation and language teaching).

Question 1: Do you sometimes engage academic personal trained as language specialists?

The majority denied this question, claiming an absolute priority to other relevant qualifications (engineering, economics, etc.). A partial exception is Deutsche Telekom. While at present the enterprise does not recruit any applicants with a degree in languages, about five years ago the situation was different. During the boom of the information and communication branch (often referred to as “new economy”), a considerable number of graduates from the humanities and social sciences, e.g. applicants trained as teachers of history, were recruited. However, at present only few positions are vacant, and applicants have to possess specific qualifications (other than, e.g., languages). Another exception is Allianz (insurances, finance and banking), the enterprise sometimes recruits personnel from disciplines such as languages. As an anecdotic fact, we may add here, that our contact person employed at the human resources department of Siemens Management Consulting has an educational background as a graduate in languages, with specialisation in English and Italian linguistics. She has found access to this non-traditional employment via internships and additional courses in business basics and personnel management.

Another information to this point is, that, according to their website, Lufthansa generally engages (among others) graduates from humanities and social sciences, who first are trained for a period within a trainee programme (during which they already receive an income). However, at the same time, the website announces that at present the corporation does not engage any new applicants.

Question 2: What additional requirements language graduates are expected to fulfil (e.g. internships, job experience ...)? What kinds of tasks will they eventually undertake?

Deutsche Telekom informs us that internships and qualified job experience typically are pre-conditions. The concrete responsibilities applicants then assume depend in large measure on the type of their prior work experience. Applicants may enter for example positions in a controlling department.

The Allianz central unit tells us that an important fact is the personality of the applicant, which should be marked by social competence. Positive features are engagement in projects outside university and activities that show some degree of entrepreneurship (“unternehmerisches Denken”). A further advantage are internships with interesting kinds of activity.

Job offers for language graduates

Results of the search engine for job offers of the official labour agency²⁵

Search for jobs as graduate of Romance studies / philology:

Besides job offers for teachers and one offer for a translator/interpreter only one vacant position outside traditional occupations was announced: by a management consultancy. The functions to be performed aren't further specified. A differentiation as to what language one has studied is not possible.

Search for jobs as a graduate of Sinology:

None of the proposed job offers required any knowledge of Chinese. Another trial by filling in "economic sinologist" as qualification delivered zero results.

Search for jobs as a graduate of Japanology:

Teacher of German in China; project management (without details); tourist guide (various offers), translator/interpreter (various offers, but without reference to Japanese!).

Search for jobs as a graduate of economic Arabistics:

No results.

Search for jobs as a graduate of Slavonic languages:

The results are nearly identical to those of the graduate of Japanology, that is they do not refer to any Slavonic language.

It is not clear, however, what conclusions one may draw from these tests, as the ultimate reason for poor results may be that only a part of the actual job offers finds its way into the data base, furthermore the system seems not to be optimally programmed.

4.2 Communications from public and private labour offices

No information available.

4.3 Summary

Standing at the responses by the spokespersons of the DAX corporations, prospects for language graduates in the private sector seem not very promising. Furthermore, no great difference is made between language graduates and graduates from other disciplines out of the spectrum of humanities and social sciences. For some companies, the situation was quite different some years ago, when they needed new staff. Then, also applicants with "untypical" qualifications were engaged and trained within the company. Applicants from humanities and social sciences are preferably charged with tasks related to services, as they are expected to possess social competences. The situation improves, if the applicants dispose of prior professional experience, i.e. internships and possibly a previous engagement at some company. Further findings on this issue are presented in section 7.

5. Validation of learning, assessment, certification – what does the labour market recognise and value?

Regarding the issue of assessment of linguistic competences, we decided again to ask individual companies.

The spokesman of the human resources department of **Deutsche Telekom** told us that they accept any kind of university certificate and documentation of language learning achieve-

²⁵ <http://www.arbeitsagentur.de/>

ments in higher education as well as international certificates. Stays abroad are of equal interest. If necessary, that is if linguistic competences are essential to perform the tasks, applicants are assessed by interviews in the foreign language.

Due to its international orientation, **Siemens** Management Consulting absolutely demands a very good command of English. To warrant this, applicants have to have spent at least six months in an Anglophone country.

The following companies we asked to supply information on their preferred methods of assessment of linguistic skills have been selected randomly among those that searched qualified staff with among others linguistic competences via advertisements in a Berlin newspaper (August 2004).

Lufthansa Global Tele Sales

(a company owned by Lufthansa AG, which is mainly concerned with booking services via telephone, www.lufthansagts.de)

The applicants are subject to an assessment procedure that extends over a whole day. This is true for those applying to simple call centre positions as well as for those applying for executive functions. For executives, English language skills are indispensable, other languages are only of secondary importance. The linguistic skills are tested inside the general assessment procedure. Here the focus lies on oral as well as on written expressive powers. In order to adjudicate the linguistic abilities, certificates of whatever sort are not demanded.

BVV

(pension insurance schemes)

Although the advertisement mentioned among the requirements for applying for a post in the secretariat of the executive board good English skills as regards the area of capital investments, we were told that generally speaking knowledge of English is valuable, but, however, when one decides on which person to engage, the question of linguistic skills does not range among the most important criteria. For this reason, one does not adopt any assessment routines on foreign languages, nor are particular certificates demanded for.

ThinPrint

(digital printing technologies)

In order to get an idea of the linguistic capabilities of an applicant, in principle one recurs to all types of documentation offered. Indications regarding stays abroad, though, are accorded more value than all types of certificates. Due to the exigencies ensuing from international business activities, the general corporate policy adopted seeks to accommodate these demands, however, by recruiting foreign staff. This concerns especially countries of Eastern Europe and Japan.

ENERTRAG

(production and distribution of wind power)

As a rule, qualified personnel is expected to dispose of good English language skills. Other languages are not explicitly demanded for. The concrete form of testing these skills varies from case to case, depending on the tasks that are to be performed. The most usual form opted for is interviews in the target language done by native speakers. Documentation of stays

abroad and various types of certificates play only some role in the course of choosing among the applications sent in those to be ultimately invited for presentation. What individual forms these documentations may take is rather irrelevant, however.

Summary

In the picture emerging from this – admittedly small – sample of responses from personal managers, individual interviews performed in the target language is the instrument of assessment most commonly adopted. This is what appears to hold at least in those cases in which languages are an inherent part of the required qualifications and not only an additional requirement. Seemingly, employers are not willing to rely solely upon standard forms of certificates and tests. There is slightly more willingness to believe in the profits candidates may have taken from stays abroad. Eventually, foreign language certificates are among the items drawn upon for sorting out candidates among the incoming applications.

6. Communication and co-operation between higher education institutions / public authorities and the world of work (private and public employers, the social partners, professional associations etc) – aims and structures

6.1 Consultation about current and future needs and qualifications

6.1.1 at local / regional level / 6.1.2 at Member State level

Bund-Länder-Kommission

The federal ministries responsible for education and research dispose of a special commission dedicated to work out recommendations in issues of education and research subsidies based on prior internal consultations. This institutionalised consultancy panel is called *Bund-Länder-Kommission* (BLK).²⁶ Its members are delegated from the federal ministry and those of the federal states. Furthermore, the commission entertains links with other bodies, which take on an advisory role. Among these bodies are the science council (*Wissenschaftsrat*) and the Federal Institute of Vocational Training (BIBB)²⁷. The latter body in turn cooperates with employers' organisations and trade unions.

The group of experts defines its objectives as those of adaptation and progressive development of the education systems and educational contents against the background of societal, political and technological evolutions. According to their self-characterisation, the educational systems have to adapt, among other things, to the European integration process and the increasing globalisation of economy as well as science.

One of its main activities is to initiate and promote pilot study programmes.²⁸ Another project of the BLK accords an outstanding role to partners from the world of work. It aims at expanding and improving the offer of so-called “dual” study programmes. They are called “dual” by analogy to the system of professional training outside universities, which comprises parts of practical training inside companies responsible for their trainees and portions of more theoretical training at vocational schools. In a similar vein, dual study programmes are strongly vocationally oriented and comprise large portions of in-company training. BLK pleads for being aware of new perspectives that show up with the introduction of the two-tier structure

²⁶ <http://www.blk-bonn.de>.

²⁷ Bundesinstitut für Berufsbildung (BIBB): <http://www.bibb.de/en/welcome.htm>.

²⁸ For a list of these programmes including short descriptions (in German language) see http://www.blk-bonn.de/modellversuche/programm_neue_studiengaenge.htm.

of university degrees. Up to now, programmes of this type have been limited to universities of applied sciences (*Fachhochschulen*). Thus, this initiative appeals to universities in the first place.

However, despite the introductory remarks on globalization and European integration, BLK's homepage does not betray any particular awareness of the role of languages and corresponding efforts to raise the status and amount of linguistic training in innovative study programmes and novel contents.

Federal Ministry for Education and Research²⁹

Indirect influence of companies of the private sector on contents of study programmes and the scope of innovative programmes results from local cooperation between enterprises active in research and new technologies and research institutes inside and outside universities. In many cases, such cooperative initiatives are financially aided by public funds of the Ministry of Education and Research. The public funding aims at strengthening technological advance and consequently the competitiveness of the national economy. Projects that receive such support are primarily concerned with technological fields as e.g. nanotechnology, aerospace industry, and life sciences. One programme called "InnoRegio"³⁰ promotes innovative public-private partnerships residing in Eastern Germany.

All products emerging from such research are oriented on international markets. What implications arise consequently in terms of foreign languages is difficult to say without knowing the details. To be sure, English will prove important as universal language of the scientific community, thus will also be vital for issues of applying for patents, users' manuals and more. On the other hand, a specific demand of foreign languages may arise, if international customer relations and global marketing strategies are on the agenda.

Accreditation Council³¹

The process of introducing new study programmes with bachelor and master degrees includes measures for warranting quality assurance. A crucial instrument for attaining quality assurance consists in the procedure of accrediting study programmes. The universities submit the concepts for new study programmes to have them examined and evaluated according to determined criteria. In case of complying with these criteria, the programme obtains the official accreditation. The accreditation council avails itself of specialised agencies, which evaluate the submitted concepts. Through the criteria adopted in this procedure, the institution influences the shape new curricula take, the definition of learning outcomes, and the nature of the contents to be delivered. In the present context, the following details are of interest:

The institution of the accreditation council is made up of representatives of the federal states, higher education institutions, students and professional practice.

Among the criteria for evaluating study programmes are that the programme has to present a concept for fields of professional activity graduates qualify for, and that predictable developments in professional fields are to be taken into account.

Other developments

Along with the establishment of renewed study programmes that conform to the two-tier structure, often new elements of vocational training are introduced – especially in regard to subjects that are not vocationally oriented as such (humanities and the like). These process –

²⁹ Bundesministerium für Bildung und Forschung (BMBF): <http://www.bmbf.de>.

³⁰ <http://www.innoregio.de>.

³¹ <http://www.akkreditierungsrat.de>

undertaken by the individual universities – may well have included local consultations with employers or interested bodies. We are not in a position, however, to know about this. The mentioned new programmes often contain an obligation for the students to attend internships. This fact alone may prompt contacts with the world of work, be it in an unsystematic fashion.

6.1.3 at European level

No information available.

6.2 Consultation and co-operation regarding higher education provision of continuing education

No information available.

6.3 Consultation about division of labour

No information available.

6.4 Summary

Putting aside rather indirect ways of political participation of employers and their organisations in the process of decision making in educational matters, contacts between the world of work and institutions of higher education are rare. They are most often to be found in technological research projects. This may also be due to an emphasis on the autonomy of education and research. Closer contacts may arise, however, through efforts aiming at raising the graduates' employability by including practical elements in programmes thoroughly theoretically oriented so far – such as disciplines in the field of humanities, and to some degree, language programmes, too. Cooperation and consultation specifically related to languages and linguistic skills could not be found.

7. Institutional, regional and national career services

7.1 Types of surveys conducted among higher education graduates

Some studies on the careers of graduates are limited to specific disciplines or group of disciplines, while others have a broader scope and include nearly all sorts of subjects. Similarly, studies vary as to how many universities are included, some initiatives monitor the career paths of one institution alone.

Typically, the surveys look at the time span lapsing between the end of studies and the start of work – as an indicator of the difficulty to enter the job market – the income achieved, the position in the hierarchy of a company, the degree of satisfaction and the relation of academic qualification and sorts of competences actually applied at work. These complexes of questions may contain more detailed questions in order to obtain more fine-grained information, e.g. what kind of training graduates are missing at hindsight that would have enhanced career prospects. Also, graduates may be requested to formulate recommendations from their point of view.³²

³² On the page http://www.uni-kassel.de/wz1/f_allepro/f_abs002.htm (lower part) a selected list of graduate surveys conducted in Germany is presented.

7.2 Survey responses relevant to TNP3

National report covering all disciplines

In 2000 a large survey with 5,000 graduates from German universities was undertaken.³³ Unfortunately, only few data relevant to TNP3 have been compiled. The figures are not assigned to individual subjects but only five groups of disciplines, so observations about e.g. graduates of Romance languages and literature are not possible.³⁴ As regards foreign language skills, one question tackles this issue. The graduates have been asked to compare single competences achieved during their studies with the demands they are confronted with at their work place. In contrast to many other sorts of competences, with respect to foreign language the survey reveals an apparently perfect match between the degree of competence acquired and that actually needed. The inquiry presented in the next paragraph contradicts these findings, however. Another topic of the survey regards stays abroad during the studying period. In the average, 25% respond to have included a stay abroad in their study programme. Furthermore, the survey provides the percentage of graduates that worked abroad after completing their degree programmes – or intend to do so. We reproduce here (part of) the corresponding data (table 13):

table 13

	medicine	law	economics	social science & humanities	natural sciences	total
takes into consideration to work abroad	68%	42%	55%	52%	58%	55%
has tried to find employment abroad	22%	13%	18%	15%	18%	17%
has received an offer for a job abroad	15%	10%	17%	9%	18%	14%
has had regular employment abroad	7%	11%	7%	6%	6%	6%
has worked a period of time abroad on behalf of his/her employer	3%	8%	12%	4%	11%	8%

HIS study

The research institute HIS (Hochschul-Informationssystem)³⁵ asked graduates of the year 2001 on the conditions of entering the labour market and the work situation one year after

³³ A report published at http://www.fu-berlin.de/career/forschung/material/Kassel_Langfassung.pdf presents the results concerning the Freie Universität Berlin, comparing them with the German average data. The study has been conducted by Wissenschaftliches Zentrum für Berufs- und Hochschulforschung at the University of Kassel: http://www.uni-kassel.de/wz1/f_allepro/f_abs002.htm. The project is called CHEERS (Careers after Higher Education: a European Research Study): <http://www.uni-kassel.de/wz1/tseregs.htm>. The data presented above refer to the national average.

³⁴ At least the report available online does not provide such information.

³⁵ <http://www.his.de/>

completing the degree programme.³⁶ This project is performed on a broad empirical basis and contains a high number of detailed questions. One section of questions presents the graduates with a list of different sorts of competences and asks them to indicate the relative importance these competences play in their actual professional life. In another section the graduates report their self-estimation as to what degree they possess these competences – as a result of their academic education. The answers are sorted according to the type of qualification obtained. Among the different competences the graduates are asked to weigh according to relative importance, alongside domain specific knowledge, scientific methods, social competences and others, the role of foreign language skills is of interest, too.

Relative importance of foreign languages at the work place:

The graduates were asked to attribute the relative importance of the different skills according to a scale of five degrees, the highest “very important” (value 1) and the lowest “unimportant” (value 5). The answers strongly vary, depending on the type of discipline studied. The following groups of graduates have accorded the **highest degree** of importance to foreign language skills as compared to other groups; the numbers indicate the percentage of answers with value 1 (“very important”) or 2 (“important”):

- chemistry:.....89%
- biology:.....86%
- physics:.....81%
- industrial engineering (university):.....76%
- electric engineering (university):.....68%
- industrial engineering (university of applied sciences):.....67%
- electric engineering (university of applied sciences):.....66%
- informatics (university):.....66%
- engineering (Maschinenbau) (university):.....65%
- informatics (university of applied sciences):.....64%
- mathematics:.....61%
- economics (university):.....59%
- economics (university of applied sciences):.....58%
- law:.....57%
- engineering (Maschinenbau) (university of applied sciences):57%
- languages and cultural sciences:.....52%

The **lowest degree** of importance has been accorded to foreign language skills by graduates of the following disciplines:

- social pedagogy (university of applied sciences):.....14%
- architecture (university):.....15%
- social pedagogy (university):.....18%
- teachers (primary school):.....21%
- agriculture and nutrition (university of applied sciences):.....23%
- architecture (university of applied sciences):.....24%
- civil engineering (university of applied sciences):.....24%
- human medicine:.....29%
- pharmacology:.....29%

³⁶ Kolja Briedis & Karl-Heinz Minks (2003): *HIS Projektbericht. Studienverlauf und Berufsübergang von Hochschulabsolventinnen und Hochschulabsolventen des Prüfungsjahrgangs 2001*, available at: http://www.bmbf.de/pub/his_projektbericht_12_03.pdf.

Self-estimations with regard to different competences:

The graduates were asked to evaluate their foreign language skills on a scale taking the values between 1 (high competence) and 5 (low competence). Only 38% of the graduates of universities and 28% of those of universities of applied sciences judged to possess rather good foreign language skills (values 1 and 2). According to these self-estimations, linguistic skills seem to be better in the group of natural sciences and technically oriented studies (besides graduates from language programmes).

With regard to all disciplines, the number of those who deem foreign language skills important for professional purposes clearly exceeds the number of those who claim to actually dispose of such competences to a sufficient degree. For example, 40% of the biologists judge themselves able in at least one foreign language, while 86% think this competence is important for their daily work. For law graduates, the rate is 29% to 57%.

Nation-wide survey among graduates from humanities and social sciences³⁷

From a nation-wide survey among graduates from *Magister* degree programmes³⁸ – comprising mainly disciplines of social sciences and humanities – dating back to 1995, we here cite two notes relevant to the present issue.

“A relatively elevated proportion of graduates from the *Magister* programmes – and this holds in particular for those with languages as their main subject – start their professional careers covering positions and functions failing to be adequate with respect to the specific qualifications acquired at university as well as with respect to the general level of skills required by the job. Four or five years after graduation this number still amounts to 16%. During this time span, about two thirds of the *Magister* graduate succeed to take up an occupation adequate in both senses. Eight percent fail to find employment after graduation.” (p. I)³⁹

“*Magister* graduates with a language as their main subject – who by the way are slightly more quickly in entering a regular employment compared to those issuing from other disciplines [within the spectrum of social sciences and humanities] – show a lower rate of graduates that take up further studies or doctoral studies.” (p. 15)

That is, comparing graduates specialising in languages with those from other disciplines located in the domain of humanities and social sciences, two facts are striking, and somewhat paradoxical if combined: First, language graduates enter the job market more easily than those of the comparison group. Second, they relatively often cover occupations beneath their global and specific skills level and continue to do so for quite a long time.

³⁷ Bundesministerium für Bildung, Wissenschaft, Forschung und Technologie (1995): *Absolventenreport Magisterstudiengänge. Ergebnisse einer Längsschnittuntersuchung zum Berufsübergang von Absolventinnen und Absolventen der Magisterstudiengänge*, Bonn. The original language is German, quotations are translated by us. Page numbers in brackets refer to this source.

³⁸ Programmes conferring the degree ‚Magister‘ extend over five years and correspond roughly to Master degrees. Two major subjects or one major and two minors are combined. The subjects are most typically from the domain of humanities and social sciences. But often also more “uncommon” combinations e.g. with biology are possible.

³⁹ For comparison: the national unemployment quota in 1994 was 10.6%. (Source: Bundesministerium für Gesundheit und Soziale Sicherung: *Lebenslagen in Deutschland. Daten und Fakten*: S. 40, http://www.bmgs.bund.de/downloads/arm_reich_daten_fakten.pdf)

*The Hamburg survey*⁴⁰

More detailed insights into the job situation of language graduates are provided by a survey that restricts itself to graduates of the University of Hamburg. Out of a total of 583 graduates that had studied either German language and literature, history, or modern languages and completed their courses between 1987 and 1989, 445 had been interviewed via phone in 1993.

Employment quota:

81% of the graduates are employed. 1% attends vocational training. 7% pursue doctoral or other studies. 6% claim to stay as housewife and care for children, 2.7% are unemployed and looking for occupation. Another 1% is equally unemployed while renouncing any job aspirations for one reason or another.

Fields of occupational activity:

table 14

type of occupation	all graduates / subjects	graduates from modern languages
education	3%	3%
science	6%	6%
publishing houses, bookstores and libraries	9%	7%
archives/documentation	6%	5%
journalism	27%	17%
PR/advertisement/marketing	12%	17%
culture, TV and cinema	5%	7%
translation	2,5%	6%
health care	2,5%	2%
referee or other function in the non-profit sector	3%	2%
public administration	2%	2%
private sector	20%	27%
other ⁴¹	2%	1%

Comparing the distribution across different fields of vocational activities of the graduates of all disciplines and that of those specialising in modern languages, the following divergences can be established:

- The proportion of those working as translators is higher within the group of modern language graduates.
- The share of those that works at companies in the industrial and services sector (i.e. in the “private sector” except the areas singled out separately such as journalism etc.) is clearly higher within the group of modern languages graduates, 27% compared to 20% among graduates of the other disciplines.
- Among language graduates the relative number of those that go on to work as journalists is lower than with the remaining graduates.

⁴⁰ Martha Meyer-Althoff (1994): „Studium mit Magister-Abschluß. Ergebnisse der vierten Hamburger Magisterbefragung (Examensjahrgänge 1987-1989)“, in: *ibv* Nr. 33. The original language is German, quotations are translated by us. Page numbers in brackets refer to this source.

⁴¹ This item comprises all sorts of occupations in no way related to the prior studies. The graduates concerned work as taxi driver, farmer, postman or in the retail trade.

- Regarding the share of those that come to work in the field of PR /advertising / marketing is slightly higher among the modern languages graduates than among the remaining graduates.
- The share of those working in the field of culture, TV and cinema is slightly higher among language graduates.

Within the other categories, now significant differences show up.

A more detailed characterisation of the occupations is given only with respect to all graduates, not further differentiating between modern languages and other subjects. Accordingly, no further conclusions can be drawn as to eventual differences regarding the types of position and degree of responsibility. The same is true for what follows. So the remaining facts may be of interest in the current context only insofar as one assumes that what is reported for the graduates with subjects in the domain of humanities holds roughly true also for graduates issuing from courses of modern languages / philologies.

Satisfaction with the individual job situation:

“Only 12% of the graduate would rather like to do another job”. (p. 2780)

How long it takes to find employment:

“The time span between graduation and the first employment often is quite remarkable, although the results from the previous three surveys of this series don’t reveal any signs pointing to a deterioration. While more than half of the graduates (56%) took less than half a year to find employment [...], for the remaining 44% it took longer, for 28% even more than a year. Furthermore, often the first occupation taken on does not meet the expectations and aims of the graduates, so that they regard it more as a kind of temporary solution. This is how to interpret the fact that more than a quarter (29%) had already changed the job at least one time.” (p. 2782)

Development across time:

The report reviewed here is the fourth of a series. The series as a whole covers Hamburg graduates that completed their studies between 1965 and 1989. Regarding development over the time, the following effects can be discerned:

- The share of those going on to work in the private sector has grown continuously. The same holds for journalism.
- The domains of science and education have more and more lost ground as regards the relative number of graduates working in these fields.
- The professional field of culture and film production demands ever less graduates since 1983. The area of publishing houses, bookstores and libraries has seen a perspicuous decline around the year 1980. Later on, this market segment began to gain ground, but without reaching again the former level.

These observations regard relative volumes, however. They have to be understood against the background of a growing total number of graduates. Consequently, the absolute number of graduates finding occupation in the respective field does not necessarily decline in the same way.

*Changes resulting from the follow-up survey:*⁴²

Among the graduates completing their courses between 1990 and 1992, 8.8% (60 out of 680) were unemployed at the time of the interviews. This represents a serious increase of the quota, the preceding survey conducted in 1993 had counted 3.7% unemployed graduates. (p. 23) The share of those working on a freelance basis has equally grown. Whereas in the earlier period less than a fifth did so, more recently 27.2% fall under this category. (p. 25) We should to add that an implicit assumption here is that in the majority of cases this solution is rather due to a lack of opportunities to find a more “secure” employment. The number of those that succeeded to find employment during the first 6 months after graduation has slightly risen, from 56 to 63%.

Among the types of occupational activity, a new rubric has been added, that of multimedia. At the time of the survey, as yet only 1.5% of the total of employed graduates works in this area. This rubric comprises webmasters, multimedia developers, network specialists, online editors and multimedia project managers. Among language graduates, the share of those finding their way into this branch is still smaller. However, due to the size of the sample, caution is in place as to whether this fact is liable to generalisations. Further deviations: The share of those being engaged in the education sector has doubled, from 3 to 6.5%. The field of publishing houses, bookstores and libraries has seen a decline from 9 to 5.8%. The potential of the private economy as employer of the graduates in question has weakened, 15.4% enter this sphere, as opposed to 20% formerly. The other percentages remained by and large stable.

Another novelty in this Hamburg survey is a comparison with the results from surveys undertaken among graduates from Sinology and oriental studies. The share of those finding employment the industrial and services sector is twice as high with the graduates from Sinology (cf. also below). The corresponding number among the graduates from oriental studies mirrors that of the other disciplines surveyed, however. By contrast, specialists in oriental culture go on to work in the domain of science far more often than the average, 26.6 compared to 7.2% average.

*The Gießen report*⁴³

In the year 1978, the University of Gießen had introduced “alternative” programmes combining languages with other disciplines. These programmes had been implemented at the same time as the Kassel programmes described below and followed a similar conception. Differing from the Kassel model, the combination of two main subjects is excluded, allowing only a combination of one major with two minor subjects. English and French studies are eligible as major. One of the minor subjects is constituted by a further philology – besides a Romance one this may be also Russian or Arabic – for the second minor, students select an economic subject with different options of specialisation (micro-economics, macro-economics, agro-economics and others), transportation sciences, geography, or geology. One semester is obligatorily spent abroad.

⁴² Martha Meyer Althoff (1999): „Stabiler Trend oder dramatischer Einbruch? Hamburger Magisterabsolventen 1990-1992 auf dem Arbeitsmarkt“, in: Dieter Grünh (Hg.): *Mit Praxisprogrammen das Berufsziel erreichen*, Berlin. The original language is German, quotations are translated by us. Page numbers in brackets refer to this source.

⁴³ Wolfgang Lührmann (1991): „Diplom-AnglistInnen, Diplom-RomanistInnen und Diplom-SprachlehrerInnen im Beruf. Ergebnisse einer Absolventenbefragung“, in: *ibv* Nr. 24: S. 1055-1061. The results concerning the graduates that specialised in language teaching („Diplom-Sprachlehrer“) are not included in the text above. The original language is German, quotations are translated by us. Page numbers in brackets refer to this source.

The graduates of these programmes had been sent questionnaires they were asked to fill in after they had found their first occupation. They had then been asked periodically to supply information on their current occupational situation. The authors of the inquiry received answers from about 50% of the graduate, that is, in absolute numbers, 175. About a third of the graduates supplied also information upon the follow-up queries.

“The majority of the graduates (51%) had attended at least one internship before completing the programme. 37% had at least one internship abroad.” (p. 1056)

The distribution of the graduates onto different types of activity and economic sectors is roughly similar to the Kassel sample. The unemployment rate is lower in the Gießen case (2%) as compared to the Kassel case (5%). The Gießen inquiry is in one respect more informative than the Kassel data, as the first not only indicates the type of work and economic sector, but also provides useful hints on the position with regard to the hierarchy of the company, shown in the first five rows of table 15 below.

table 15

management or trainee in programmes preparing for management functions	8%
key positions in private companies	12%
assistant (private sector)	20%
officer [Sachbearbeiter] (mainly private sector)	25%
secretary (private sector)	10%
translation	6%
science	3%
journalism	3%
language teaching⁴⁴	6%

“The graduates employed in management positions by large enterprises work in departments dedicated to exports and foreign affairs. Among those attending pre-management trainee programmes we find trainees specialising in banking, marketing, distribution and foreign transactions.” (p. 1056)

Under the headline of key positions in the table above, the following functions have been subsumed: officer responsible for international purchase, budget organiser, distribution representative, commercial project manager, calculations specialist, scientific assistant for market research, assistant with controlling functions (trade), information specialist (business consulting), organiser of trade fairs, sales manager, economic referee, executive director. (cf. *ibid.*)

“As regards the field of journalism, [the author] grant[s] that this type of activity is not peculiar to graduates from languages anymore than for other graduates. Looking at the graduates at hand it strikes, however, that most of those that became journalists actually work at international reviews and foreign press agencies.” (*ibid.*)

“A significant portion of the officers is charged with tasks of export and distribution [...]” (*ibid.*)

“The occupations of the graduates pertain to rather heterogeneous sectors. In the following fields a certain concentration can be noticed: electric and electronic industries (including computer manufacturing and software distribution), metal industry, machinery and industrial plants, banking, tourism.” (*ibid.*)

⁴⁴ This item concerns the graduates of another programme, which is included in the survey but omitted by us.

Duration of search for an occupation:

1-3 months:	35%
4-6 months:	30%
7-9 months:	16%
10-12 months:	6%
more than a year:	8%

If we juxtapose the corresponding figures of the Hamburg survey (see above), the Gießen graduates fare better than their former fellows from “conventional” programmes.⁴⁵ Whereas 65% of the Gießen graduates needed less than 6 month to find employment, only 56% of their Hamburg fellows did so. And while in the first group only 8% were still unemployed one year after graduation, in the second 28% shared this fate.

Number of unsuccessful applications according to economic sectors:

“Chances that an application be followed by an actual employment differ sharply, as it turned out, from sector to sector. The metal and chemical industry as well as the electric and electronic industry proved to be favourable areas, whereas the automobile branch, tourism, banking houses and publishing houses were far less inclined to engage graduates.” (p. 1057)

Graduates with an economic minor:

“There are no visible differences regarding the occupational situation depending on which type of specialisation inside the economic domain had been chosen, whether it had been business administration, macro-economics and so on. Solely graduates that had opted for social economics of developing countries encountered slightly more difficulties.” (p. 1058)

This is astonishing insofar as, by contrast, it is known that among graduates of the corresponding programmes majoring in these different subdisciplines there are significant differences regarding careers prospects. (ibid.)

“Looking at those who reached management positions (including the respective traineeships) as well as at those who came to hold key positions, it is exclusively those graduates who opted for an economic minor that are to be found in this division.” (ibid.)

Graduates with geography as a minor:

“The graduates with geography as a minor work most frequently in the field of translation, as officers and as secretaries. They do not cover any management or key positions, and they are to be found less probably in assistant positions. [...] The officers among these graduates remarkably often work in the tourism sector (travel agencies, tour operators and airlines). All of the graduates emphasise that they almost never could make any use of their acquired knowledge of the subject matter [i.e. geography]. [...] Interestingly, the graduates of this group happen to be employed more often by foreign enterprises than their fellows with a different minor. This may due to a higher degree of open-mindedness on the side of these enterprises in front of such more “unusual” qualifications.” (p. 1058)

⁴⁵ Furthermore, not too much time (3 years) lies between the two surveys, to preclude extraneous factors.

Graduates with agro-economics as a minor:

The results regarding those with agro-economics as a minor resemble those of the former group of graduates.

“The chance to come to be employed as a secretary is the highest among all of the graduates (30%); they work perspicuously less frequently as officers [...]; the share of those holding assistant positions, by contrast, is relatively high.” (ibid.)

Applicability of competences and knowledge acquired during studying:

“According to the graduates, among the contents of the education enjoyed it is only foreign language competence and the secondary subject matter (above all economics) that account in effect for their employability – in the sense of rather directly favouring to be in fact recruited by some employer. The remaining contents – linguistics and literature – don’t find any application in a professional context, unless very rarely and/or in a quite indirect way.” (p. 1060)

“As regards the judgements by the employers concerning the relative importance of the competences, further differences emerge. In 26% of the cases the graduates told that their employer attaches more importance to the knowledge and competences acquired in the additional subject [e.g. economics] than they attach to foreign languages. For the employers of another 30% it was the other way around. For 21% both fields were of equal relevance. And another 21% of the graduates left this item unanswered.

Graduates working as managers or in key positions or else running traineeships for management functions report – as one almost might expect – that the non-philological subject was clearly more important than foreign language proficiency. In this place, at times one encounters comments like ‘Languages are welcome as a kind of accessory – but they are, in a way, taken for granted’. [...] For employers of translators and secretaries, foreign languages evidently possess a higher priority.” (ibid.)

For the intermediate categories of occupations in the private sector (see table above), the employers’ opinions are variegated and lie between the two opposite positions just pointed at.

The next two paragraphs are to be read as side notes. Though interesting in principle, they don’t lie at the centre of the topic discussed.

Career paths:

Lührmann notes that, as the results of the periodic queries show, there seems to exist a strict correlation between the position at which graduate enter their careers and the position they ever reach later on. A low entrance position significantly reduces the probability to attain key positions or management functions in the future professional life.

Differences between male and female graduates:

The male graduates manage more easily to attain rather quickly favourable entering positions and in general they achieve a higher income than their former female fellows. This observation has to be taken with the proviso, however, that the sample contains only less than 10% male graduates, thus the absolute number is small, too.

“The male graduates testify good or very good opportunities for vocational training and career opportunities. They only rarely work in the secretariat – as they don’t – by the way – figure among those occupied with translation.” (p. 1060)

Summary:

Summarising Lührmann concludes that

“the success of the graduates of the programmes in question to enter the job market can be judged optimistically. Comparing the results with those of other programmes in the field of humanities, these ‘alternative’ programmes no doubt open up better career prospects – at least judging from the data available up to now.” (p. 1061)

Survey among Kassel graduates from “alternative” language programmes⁴⁶

The programmes whose graduates we are going to report on consist in a combination of either two main subjects – English or French philology together with economics – or a combination of one of these philologies and two minors, one of which is economics and the other another Romance philology. At least one semester has to be studied abroad. Almost half of the graduates spent two or more semesters abroad. The survey is based on the answers of the 56 graduates that completed their degree programmes between 1986 and 1990. They had been interviewed by phone in the first half of 1990.

Employment quota:

employed:.....	40	(71.4%)
not employed.....	16	(28.6%)
total:.....	56	(100%)

Those not employed gave the following answers as to the reason or what they are doing instead:

only recently completed the course:.....	1	(6%)
not working due to personal reasons:.....	3	(19%)
taken up further studies without working before:.....	3	(19%)
internship:.....	1	(6%)
participation in a programme by the labour office:.....	11	(6%)
unemployed since completion of the course:.....	7	(44%)
total:.....	16	(100%)

Among the 7 graduates looking for occupation, 4 do so for less than 6 months and 3 for more than 6 months (between 11 and 17 months). Retaining 6 months as an acceptable period for search, 3 graduates (5.4%) remain with manifest difficulties to find occupation. This compares to a general unemployment quota of 7.2% in Germany.⁴⁷ However, if one includes those 4 graduates searching for less than 6 months, one obtains a rate of 12.5%, which lies clearly above average.

⁴⁶ Albert Over (1992): *Studium und Berufskarrieren von Absolventen des Studienganges berufsbezogene Fremdsprachenausbildung an der Gesamthochschule Kassel*, Kassel. The original language is German, quotations are translated by us. Page numbers in brackets refer to this source.

⁴⁷ The quota refers to the Western part of Germany alone. It is taken from Bundesministerium für Gesundheit und Soziale Sicherung: *Lebenslagen in Deutschland. Daten und Fakten*: S. 40 (http://www.bmgs.bund.de/downloads/arm_reich_daten_fakten.pdf).

The graduates had been requested to indicate which criteria had been most important for their employment and to weigh these criteria along a scale taking values from 1 (= very important) to 5 (= unimportant) (cf. p. 91). Table 16 below shows the results:

table 16

	total sample		English studies group		French studies group	
	importance value (average)	n ⁴⁸	importance value (average)	n ⁴⁸	importance value (average)	n ⁴⁸
personality	1.0	17	1.0	11	1.0	6
language competence	1.9	30	2.3	20	1.1	10
accidental need for personnel	2.0	1	-	-	2.0	1
prior job experience	2.3	7	2.5	6	1.0	1
personal relations	2.3	3	2.3	3	-	-
stay abroad	2.4	25	2.9	17	1.4	8
economics	3.8	18	3.6	14	4.8	4
specific subject combination	4.3	24	4.1	17	4.9	7
particular subject matters	4.3	18	4.7	12	3.7	6
area studies	4.6	11	5.0	7	4.0	4
topic of the thesis	4.6	16	4.9	11	3.8	5

According to the author, the claim that one of the most important criteria for being recruited is to be seen in the overall “personality” - that is conduct, appearance, way of talking and so on – matches perfectly with the results of other surveys.

As regards the relatively little weight that has been accorded to knowledge in economic matters, this may be in part due to the fact that this qualification cannot be immediately read off the degree’s title (“Diplom-Romanist” and “Diplom-Anglist”). So some applications may fail to attract attention.

Looking at the differences between the values accorded by the French and the English group, the divergences of importance attributed to language competence and the stay abroad strike most. These factors turn out to be of higher relevance if the language in question is French – in contrast to English and experience with Anglophone countries. Presumably this is due to French being less frequent as a foreign language – assuming a corresponding demand for these skills at the same time.

Types of occupation:

The majority of the fraction of the employed graduates is to be found in the following fields and types of profession:

- executive functions
- distribution and marketing
- export and import

⁴⁸ Absolute number of the graduates that mention the respective criterion. Multiple answers were allowed.

Some work in the domain of media (press agencies) and some in education institutions. As far as the economic sector is of concern, manufacturing industries and trade are dominating. Companies from the services sector (except trade) figure less than could have been expected based on the relative volume of people working in this sector generally. This holds especially for banking houses and insurances. In this context, two remarks are in place. First, the expansion of the telecommunication sector has entered the scene only later than the date of that survey – so the distribution along sector probably would have been different at later times. Second, according to experts, typically the majority of the employees of banking houses and insurances are occupied with local customer relations, while foreign affairs are handled by centralised departments endowed with relatively few staff. Against this background, prior expectations for the prospects of the graduates in question – entertained by those that had conceived the programmes depicted – have to be revised in this last point.

40% of the employed graduates claim to cover tasks not adequate to their qualification. 60% tell to be engaged in accordance to their qualification. Most of those employed below qualification pertain to the profession groups ‘secretary’ and ‘distribution’. Here, also too low wages are complained. Asked whether they are able to apply the knowledge and competences acquire inside the philological line of the programmes, this group in the majority answers positively. In particular those working as secretaries testify a high rate of applicability. However, these answers don’t allow any specific conclusions to be drawn, as maybe it’s only foreign language skills alone that find really application in the professional environment, nonetheless giving rise to the positive answers.

The graduates are also asked what sorts of knowledge and competences they had to acquire “on the job”. The responses mainly referred to general knowledge specific to the branch, computer skills and knowledge related to marketing.

Applicability of qualifications acquired:

The graduates have been asked to indicate the degree of applicability of individual competences and knowledge acquired at university along a scale from 1 (= applicable very well) to 5 (= by no way applicable). Table 17 below represents the results. (cf. p. 112)

table 17

	average value	absolute number
linguistics	4.0	19
literature	5.0	4
foreign language skills	2.1	39
area studies	4.5	20
economics	3.8	31
experience by stay abroad	2.2	23
independent working, flexibility, problem solving, scientific methodology	1.0	4

*Survey among Hamburg Sinology graduates*⁴⁹

All graduates that completed their programmes between 1980 and 1995 were sent questionnaires. Out of a total of 179 graduates, 109 (61%) satisfied the request to provide the relevant information.

⁴⁹ Ruth Cremerius & Hans Stumpfheldt (1997): „Sinologie und Beruf. Ergebnisse der ersten Absolventenbefragung des Seminars für Sprache und Kultur Chinas der Universität Hamburg“, in: ASIEN 62. The original language is German, quotations are translated by us. Page numbers in brackets refer to this source.

Employment quota:

employed:.....	89	(81.7%)
unemployed:.....	5	(4.6%)
housewife, child care, further training or studies:.....	15	(13.8%)

Among the 89 employed graduates, 28% are self-employed or working on a freelance basis. (p. 161) The share of those that are self-employed thus results higher among the graduates of Sinology than that reported for graduates with comparable subjects such as Romance studies (around 20%).

Fields of occupation:

table 18

	absolute	relative
private sector	40	45%
science	8	9%
journalism	7	8%
education	6	7%
translation/interpreting	6	7%
PR/advertisement/marketing	5	6%
publishing houses	4	4%
no-profit organisation	3	3%
archive/documentation	2	2%
health care	2	2%
culture and film production	2	2%
public administration	1	1%
other	3	3%

The share of those working in the private sector, that is various industries and services, is particularly high. For example, the fourth Hamburg graduate survey reports of only 20% employed in this area. A (small) portion of the Sinologists reached elevated positions in enterprises, such as ‘sales manager’ or ‘key account manager’.

Upon the question whether their actual occupation is in some way related to China, 57% answers affirmatively and 42% negatively. Looking at those employed in the private sector alone, the picture doesn’t change much. Among those that previously answered that their work includes some connections to China, 84% go on to say that they can take profit from their Chinese language competence at work. (p. 163) 78% of the employed graduates say to be by and large satisfied with their professional situation. (ibid.)

Contrary to what one would expect in view of the by and large positive results, the following numbers reveal more sceptic attitudes. Asked whether they would study Chinese again if they had to decide now, 70% answer with ‘yes’ and 29% with ‘no’. The rates are almost identical if one looks at those employed alone. Thus, despite being content with their occupation (78%), some (8%) are not convinced retrospectively to have settled on the right track. (p. 164) Still less graduates would advice young people to take up Chinese studies, only 54% do so. And if they do so, many go on to qualify their advice adding comments like: ‘only combined with a more vocationally oriented subject such as economics or law’, ‘only if they keep to specific goals and learn to move ahead proactively’.

The latter data and comments seem to indicate that the graduates found it rather hard to find they way, thus feeling obliged to advice their successors to come up with clear ideas and additional practical knowledge.

*Survey among graduates from the faculty of economy, Dortmund*⁵⁰

A survey undertaken by the University of Applied Sciences Dortmund traces the careers of the graduates of the faculty of economics. The graduate had attended a programme with a special profile, centring on international business relations and entertaining cooperation in Western and Eastern Europe, allowing numerous opportunities for studies abroad. Furthermore, the university provides a rich offer of language courses. (cf. p. 78)

At a few points, also questions concerning languages are addressed. Table 19 reproduces the answers on the question “How often do you need foreign languages at work?” (p. 80; number of answering graduates: 427)

table 19

English							
often		sometimes		seldom		never	
written	spoken	written	spoken	written	spoken	written	spoken
19.7%	19.2%	22.7%	23.5%	30.0%	26.9%	27.6%	30.4%
French							
often		sometimes		seldom		never	
written	spoken	written	spoken	written	spoken	written	spoken
2.3%	2.3%	6.6%	8.7%	15.9%	12.9%	75.2%	76.1%
Spanish							
often		sometimes		seldom		never	
written	spoken	written	spoken	written	spoken	written	spoken
0.9%	0.9%	1.9%	2.3%	6.8%	4.5%	90.4%	92.3%

Next, the graduates are asked on the criteria for succeeding to find employment. Part of the results is reproduced below. The features to be judged as important or not have been given by the questioners in advance. (p. 41)

Most important features:

	important	unimportant
eloquence:.....	81%	6%
behaviour and psychological understanding:.....	80%	5%
vocational experience and training:.....	80%	7%

Ranging in the middle field:

	important	unimportant
foreign language skills:.....	49%	15%

„Short duration of studies“ and “ability to work in teams” are deemed more important than “foreign languages”. The grades of the final exams, on the other hand, they hold to be less important.

Summary

(1) As a general trend, the absolute and relative number graduates from **humanities and social sciences** that entered the private sector rose continuously, but came to decrease somewhat in recent years.

⁵⁰ Wolfgang Laufner (1993): *Ergebnisse einer Absolventenbefragung am Fachbereich Wirtschaft der Fachhochschule Dortmund*, Dortmund. Page references are to this source.

(2) If compared to other graduates in the domain of humanities, graduates with **modern languages degrees** enter the job market more easily. Graduates in the domain of modern languages work in the private sector to a larger extent than graduates in the domain of humanities in general. At the same time, they tend to run the risk to be employed beneath their qualification. Many graduates become employed as secretaries and in departments dedicated to distribution. These occupations are characterised by little responsibility and autonomy as well as by low wages.

(3) Graduates combining **languages and economics** fare better than other graduates with modern languages degrees. A larger share goes on to work in the private economy, and the number of those that succeed in taking on executive functions is significantly higher. At the same time, fewer graduates with this profile decide to work as journalists.

(4) Graduates in **Sinology** also enter the private sector to a large extent. At the same time, many of these work on a freelance basis or are self-employed.

(5) As regards **unemployment rates**, specific data for language graduates are not available. As for graduates in the domain of humanities generally, up to 1995, the unemployment rates lied between 2 and 5 percent – i.e. clearly beneath the national average value (1995: 10,4%). In 1998, the unemployment rate rose to 8.8%, still beneath the national average value of 12.3%.

(6) As regards the influence of **additional foreign languages skills** – be it English or other languages – for other graduates specialised e.g. in chemistry, economy or engineering, only very few relevant data could be found.

Conclusions

(1) To interpret the growing number of graduates from the humanities and social sciences going to be employed with various economic functions, our hypothesis is that there are two aspects to it, which both contribute to the effects observed. First, the demand for personal fulfilling multiple tasks and possessing “key skills” grows. And the graduates in question are (often/sometimes) supposed to cope with these. Second, as regard occupational fields typically aspired at by “humanistic” graduates, a number of these offers only a reduced amount of jobs, thus constraining the graduates to venture into more “untypical” domains as well as into “untypical” forms of work such as self-employment. Among the sectors concerned, we think of the education system with oscillating numbers of newly assumed teachers – a fact susceptible to forecast, but in fact not planned. The research and higher education area is subject to budgetary cuts, thus creating fewer opportunities for graduates. Print media and also radio and TV is undergoing a concentration process and is suffering economic problems, thus worsening prospects and labour conditions for journalists and related professions. Public museums and other cultural institutions are subject to budgetary cuts, too. And the market for publishing houses is not an easy arena since quite a while.

(2) Combinations of philological subjects and subjects from domains other than humanities seem to be attractive qualifications as regards the labour market. This has been shown for economics as the second subject. And also in the case of geography with languages, the graduates fair rather well.

(3) Besides knowledge in the field of economics, the following elements have proved useful: foreign language skills, stays abroad, and internships abroad or at home.

Further notes by way of speculation

As long as no more recent studies are available, it's left up to speculation what further changes may be under way. We may formulate in this place a few considerations based on recent general developments.

Beginning in the second half of the 1990s, the market of information and communication technologies saw tremendous growth rates that even made revive hopes for an never ending economic prosperity – that's one aspect meant by the label 'new economy'. Some years ago, this boom cooled down again, however, and has come to a consolidation on a more modest level. During the phase of rapid expansion, this market segment also offered opportunities for "humanistic" graduates – although we are not in a position to offer concrete numbers. (But cf. Deutsche Telekom interview above for this matter, section 3.1.) Although, as indicated, the period of prosperity has passed, this branch has by no means turned to be irrelevant. The chances in this field – and the further development of job opportunities that first figured in the fifth survey as the item of multimedia – merits further attention.

The situation in the field of journalism – and to some degree also that concerning radio and television – has worsened in the last 5 years or so, up to a point to hear speaking about a serious crises in this area. Earlier on, the situation for prospective and active journalists had already become more difficult, as contracts on a freelance basis had become more and more common. The more recent pessimistic signs result from an ongoing concentration process (mergers) and a declining advertisement activity. As a consequence, the supply of journalists exceeds the demand.

Another area that has seen a continuing expansion – admittedly hit temporarily after September 11– is the tourism sector, and the activity of airlines in particular. This field also should be looked at carefully to evaluate the potential for language experts.

In view of the expansion and intensification of international trade and business relations especially between Germany and Eastern European countries and China and Japan, experts combining profound knowledge of a particular region and language with robust economic knowledge and maybe also basic knowledge in some area of technology seems to be a kind of prototype of "high potential". This hypothesis is, however, difficult to be corroborated by empirical data. A high degree of English language proficiency, on the other hand, today is almost an absolute "must" for qualified personnel of in many branches – as a glance into job advertisements suffices to give evidence for.

7.3 Career advice relevant to TNP3

As an example, we describe the activities of the Career Service of the Freie Universität Berlin.⁵¹ The services provided comprise:

- announcement of internship and job offers via website and notice-board, in particular internships abroad
- information about professions and advice concerning internships
- provision of specific information concerning internships according to branches and countries
- training packages for raising employability, including e.g. courses on how to apply for a job, presentation techniques, basic of economics, ...
- allocation of *Leonardo* grants⁵²

⁵¹ We are grateful for helpful information on the institution to Christiane Dorenburg.

⁵² The *Leonardo da Vinci* programme by the European commission fosters mobility in vocational contexts. For detailed information see http://europa.eu.int/comm/education/programmes/leonardo/leonardo_en.html.

Most of the students and graduates reverting to this service are studying or have studied humanities and social sciences. Part of those seek internships because these are prescribed by their programmes, but among those that aren't obliged to do internships, the demand for internships is continuously rising. This holds also for internships abroad.

For the Career Service, languages don't play any direct role. They only come into play when internships abroad are concerned, insofar as the target country envisages of course depends on language competences.

The most frequent target countries are the U.K., France Spain and the U.S.A.

As regards contacts with potential employers, the institution does not entertain any permanent contacts. It entertains, however, contacts with the regional employers' organisation.

8. Process recommendations: measures to be taken to bring about improved consultation and co-operation between higher education and the world of work

- There is a need of systematic consultations and cooperation between stakeholders and employers, as well as graduates and trade unions. The objectives of the consultations lie in the fields of curriculum design, "marketing" of graduates and their qualifications, establishment of contacts between students and potential employers already before accomplishing the degrees. This is put forth especially in view of the fact that such consultation are by no way common practice in Germany. (See section 6.)⁵³

9. Process recommendations: measures to be taken to survey higher education graduates and to provide careers advice in regard to linguistic and intercultural requirements

9.1 Graduate surveys

- In addition to cumulative graduate surveys and complementing them it would be helpful to dispose also of individual career "biographies". These could guide students and graduates as well as enter into considerations on curriculum design. Such individual stories often reveal details that tend to be concealed by cumulative surveys by means of questionnaires.

9.2 Career advice

9.2.1 At institutional level

- As regards students enrolled in subjects of the humanities – among them language students – these have to come up with clearer ideas and strategies to pursue their plans as early as possible – thus changing the often found attitude to wait until the end of studies and only then actually consider questions of job prospects.
- As regards internships, we recommend to ask the students to compile short but informative reports on their experience. This allows to evaluate the experience and make the results – as well as the reports themselves – accessible to other students, who can take

⁵³ We may add a note of caution in this place. Such consultation processes mustn't be performed in a too simple-minded fashion. We would like to comment on a recent case of wrong understood "consultation", which took place at Hamburg. The senate now wishes to reduce the faculties of humanities by 50%, based on an expertise which claims that in the future labour market there is (almost) no demand for graduates of this type. Whilst we don't know the details of this expertise, we doubt its methodology, as the demand for graduates of similar subjects is difficult to measure. Further discussion is not possible in this place.

advantage from these in avoiding inconveniences, imitating promising strategies, or learning about formerly unknown vocational activities.

9.2.2 At Member State level

- Furthermore, students have to be informed about those potential fields of vocational activity that are at risk, that is, where the supply of qualified labour force massively exceeds demand – such as currently is the case for journalism, science, and teachers with particular subjects such as German and history. For these groups, strategies have to be developed to be prepared with a second option, thus preventing to get low qualified jobs or become unemployed.

9.2.3 At European level

- At the European scale, career advice is a difficult thing. Before going on to foster mobility directly – via language training and other measures – one needs to think about the complexities of this issue and come up with a coherent policy. Problems arise mainly from two sides. First, the Eastern European countries – among others – face the problem of “brain drain”, that is, highly qualified personnel is leaving the country to find employment elsewhere, where wages are higher. If this trend is consistent, the national economy concerned may be damaged economically. On the other hand, the employees in the wealthier countries experience wage dumping effects, as companies announce their intention to transfer their production (or development) sites into less costly countries – or else to outsource individual functions or departments. Against this background, career advice with regard to language and mobility issues faces particular challenges, that can’t be addressed adequately in this place.

10. Initial overarching recommendations regarding learning outcomes and academic profiles

10.1 of non-language graduates

- After investigating further on the issue of demand and potential of foreign language skills (besides or in addition to English) in various domains, curricula and profiles such as engineering plus Japanese; economy – specialty foreign trade affair + Arabic; economy – specialty marketing and international business relations + two Eastern European languages; ...

10.2 of language graduates (at bachelor level and at master level)

- Where not already the case, inclusion of internships into curricula in a profitable manner.
- In order to realise hidden potentials of language experts, a promising perspective lies in the combination of linguistic subjects and more vocationally oriented subjects. At first, economic subjects come to mind, but also other subjects open up interesting fields of professional activity, such as information technology, engineering science, tourism. An example that proceeds in this direction is offered by the university of Dortmund, which

combines languages and other subjects deliberately with a view to fields of vocational application.⁵⁴

- As has been shown by several surveys, language graduates are running the risk to end up in low qualified and low paid positions as in secretariats. There is a need to face this problem.

11. Initial recommendations regarding validation of learning, assessment and certification of linguistic and intercultural skills and competences

- Starting from the results presented in this place, it is difficult to come up with recommendations. If further studies confirm the result that foreign language certificates fail to be regarded useful instruments, the next step should be finding out why this is so.

12. Needs for future projects, studies and research

- More efforts have to be done to elucidate the hidden potential of specialists with good language skills and knowledge related to some region – eventually to be complemented by economic basic knowledge and perhaps acquaintance with European, international or foreign law. When companies intend to build up foreign establishments, to take over companies abroad, want to take up international business contacts and need to care for foreign partners and customers, the question of interest is: Where precisely lie the language and “culture” sensitive interfaces of enterprises internationally operating, what sort of tasks and functions are concerned, and what sort of skills are needed there?
- When it comes to linguistic capabilities in a broader sense, these are normally considered under the headline of “key qualifications” or “soft skills”. We have in mind here such things as expressive power, conflict management, ability to criticise and accept critique, ability to search, analyse and evaluate information and so on. One question to be pursued is, what sort of vocational activities are concerned here. Another question is, how can graduates persuade employers of their skills. How can university raise the status of their graduates mediate these skills? And, is it true that such skills are fostered by multilingualism?
- In order to achieve a clearer understanding of the needs and fashions of multilingual communication in different types of companies, we recommend performing research along the methodology of linguistic auditing.
- Networks of “young professionals” have to be fostered and initiatives for establishing new ones are to be welcome. A successful example is the network “junge Osteuropa-ExpertInnen”, <http://www.joe-fixe.de>.

⁵⁴ For details see the TNP2 German national report, p. 21, and references there: <http://www.lang.ltsn.ac.uk/tnp.aspx>.