

ANGLIA RUSKIN UNIVERSITY

**SMEs AND BUSINESS INTERNATIONALISATION: THE
CONTRIBUTION OF COMMUNICATION SKILLS**

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**A Thesis in partial fulfilment of the requirements of
Anglia Ruskin University for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy on the basis of Published Work**

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I wish to thank my co-authors for their support and contributions to the published items. There are numerous colleagues in my past and current jobs who have similarly shared my approach to interdisciplinary work and have made it possible to generate data and outputs for many years whilst working as a university lecturer with a full teaching timetable. Other friends such as Ed Tuijl, Alison Lys and Anne Davidson-Lund have come and knocked on my door inviting collaboration and that too has given me great motivation and reward to know that those outside higher education value my work too.

ANGLIA RUSKIN UNIVERSITY

ABSTRACT

ASHCROFT INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS SCHOOL

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

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COMMUNICATION SKILLS**

By TERRY MUGHAN

October 2010

Recent decades have seen rapid and significant changes in the field of international business and management. Whilst the globalisation of economies and markets has led to greater frequency of communication and interaction between companies and people of different cultures and native tongues, academic research has struggled to keep pace with the nature and consequences of better communication technologies and greater human mobility. Much literature remains rooted in dated business and economic paradigms of relevance to few companies and takes little account of new forms of behaviour.

This thesis examines the contribution of communication skills, in the form of cultural and linguistic competence, to the development and performance of companies and managers, primarily SMEs, in their international markets. Drawing on original data from regional and international studies conducted over the last ten years, it illuminates the shift from the exporting to the internationalising model, from the language training to the intercultural model and from the training to the developmental/consulting model, as these changes have manifested themselves as responses to the new global business environment. This shift has been very visible in business reality and the policy sphere. Academic literature has struggled to present these phenomena coherently and the author's contribution to the generation of new data and the development of new theories and perspectives is argued and evidenced.

Over-simplification of the actual market operations of international SMEs, the role of foreign language competence in business performance and the presentation of culture as a key phenomenon are presented as original contributions by the author based on primary research data. The place of this contribution in the literature is discussed and areas and issues requiring further investigation are highlighted, particularly the need for more firm and individual-based research, preferably of a longitudinal nature.

Key words: SMEs, internationalisation, languages, intercultural skills

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1. The selected published items

My prima facie case was approved on 21 July 2010 and was based on the following selected published items:

ITEM 1. 1992 - Is 'Languages for Export' Enough?, in *European Business Review*, Vol. 90, Issue 3. 1990 (Mughan, 1990)

ITEM 2. Culture as an Asset in International Business, in *International Business - Text and Cases*, ed., Preston J., Pitman. 1993 (Mughan, 1993)

ITEM 3. 'The Integration of Foreign Culture Awareness into Business Language Teaching Materials and Methods', *The Language Learning Journal*, Issue 17, Autumn, 1998 (Mughan, 1998)

ITEM 4. 'Strategies for Internationalisation within SMEs: the Key Role of the Owner-Manager', with Lloyd-Reason L. *Journal of Small Business and Enterprise Development*, Volume 9 Issue 2, MCB Press, Bradford. 2002 (Lloyd-Reason and Mughan, 2002)

ITEM 5. 'Management Consulting and International Business Support for SMEs: Needs and Obstacles,' *Journal of Education and Training*, Volume 46 Issue 8/9. (Mughan, T., Zimmermann, C. and Lloyd-Reason, L., 2004,)

ITEM 6. 'Foreign Language Use among Decision-Makers of Successfully Internationalised SMEs: Questioning the Language-Training Paradigm', with Knowles, D. and Lloyd-Reason, L., in *Journal of Small Business and Enterprise Development*, Vol. 13, No. 4, 2006 (Knowles and Mughan, 2006.)

ITEM 7. 'Skills and Knowledge needs of the Global SME', in *Trading Places – SMEs in the Global Economy*, eds. Lloyd-Reason, L. and Sear, L., Cheltenham: Edward Elgar. 2007 (Mughan and Lloyd-Reason, 2007)

ITEM 8. 'Intercultural Interaction: A Sense-making approach', in *The Intercultural Dynamics of Multicultural Working*, eds. Guilherme, M, Glaser E., Mendez Garcia M-C., Multilingual Matters (Mughan T. and O'Shea G., 2010.

ITEM 9. Exporting, the Multiple Market Experience and the SME Intercultural Paradigm in *Becoming Interculturally Competent through Education and Training*, eds Feng A., Byram M., and Fleming M., Multilingual Matters, 2009

ITEM 10. Business and Management Theories and Models of Intercultural Competence: Implications for Language Learning, in *Interkulturelle Kompetenz und*

Fremdsprachliches Lernen. Modelle, Empirie und Evaluation, eds Byram M. And Hu A., Tuebingen, Guenther Narr, 2009

This thesis will further include reference to and brief consideration of the following research reports. They relate to three pieces of commissioned research which are publicly available and demonstrate the impact my work has had inside and beyond the academic community:

ITEM 11. *Competing Effectively in International Markets*, with Lloyd-Reason, L., commissioned by the East of England Development Agency and published by Anglia Polytechnic University, 2003

ITEM 12. *Intercultural Competence for Professional Mobility*, with Glaser E., Guilherme M. & del Carmen Mendez Garcia M., European Centre for Modern Languages, 2008

ITEM 13. *Removing Barriers to SME Access to International Markets: OECD-APEC Global Study*, with Lloyd-Reason, L., commissioned and published by the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), Paris. 2007

2. Introduction

Objectives and structure

The purpose of this proposal is to demonstrate that a series of research activities and publications produced over a period spanning eighteen years constitutes a body of work comparable in ‘originality, depth of scholarship achieved and the significance of their contribution to knowledge of the subject’¹ with that required in a PhD thesis. In order to do this I will provide evidence in the form of journal articles and book chapters of a substantial contribution to knowledge which will be supported by a critical review of related academic work and references to my own further development as a researcher and consultant to organisations involved in my selected fields. I will describe the context and aims of my research and give a critical review of the current state of knowledge and research in the field of SME internationalisation and indicate how my work has contributed to it. In addition to the academic outputs which bear testimony to this contribution, I will also argue that my research and publishing have been conducted amongst a broader community and that it has had an impact in policy and society which is considerable and adds value to the normal academic metrics in the context of a contemporary PhD in this subject area.

In this introductory chapter I will outline the context within which I developed this body of research, my motivations, the key questions and areas my work addressed and an overview of its contribution to the study of management and communication across cultures and languages.

I will also describe how, over the period of the publications cited, I developed a body of work as, progressively, a lone researcher, an academic leader and, eventually, a research team leader and project manager, thereby demonstrating my ability to identify research needs, initiate projects, ‘pursue further research’ and make a ‘substantial contribution to knowledge’ *ibid.* Salmon (Salmon, 1992) furthermore argues that doctoral-level research is a ‘creative endeavour’ demanding qualities of ‘intellectual boldness and imagination’. Such qualities must be underpinned by intellectual rigour and the selection of appropriate methods for the subject matter. I will argue that these qualities are present in my work.

In this section I will also identify key hypotheses which informed and motivated me in my work and the gaps in literature which my research and publications have addressed.

¹ Research Degrees Regulations, Tenth Edition, Anglia Ruskin University, September 2009, p.3

The next section will consist of a review of the selected published items followed by the final section where I will discuss my contribution to the field.

Acquiring and developing a research base

This proposal reflects a personal scholarly experience over twenty years or so, an experience which is still being lived by the author and also by an interested academic and business community which is much larger now than it was in 1990, the date of the first of my eligible publications for a PhD by published works. This experience has been lived out in the company of other scholars, students, business managers, policy-makers and colleagues. It has become manifest in the form of scholarly publications, research projects, new courses, policy reports, international conferences and funding bids. Whilst this proposal will concentrate on the academic publications which have been produced during this period, I would not like to lose sight of the educational, business and policy outputs which have enabled me to manifest my theoretical and conceptual musings throughout this period in artefacts which have benefited others with an interest in this field. These include the design and delivery of the first modules and courses in intercultural communication and management and the creation of the first professional society for intercultural research in the UK. There are also numerous research studies and policy reports and initiatives which have absorbed as much energy as academic publishing but cannot be cited here. The invitations from so many bodies (OECD, UKTI, EEDA, CILT, DG Enterprise, DG Education and Culture, Universities of Cambridge, Durham, Jyväskylä, Linz) to act as researcher, author, consultant and Visiting Professor might be seen as one measure of its contribution and reception within relevant fields.

The present objective is to encapsulate the contribution made by my work to our understanding of the internationalisation process of small and medium-sized enterprises. Falling primarily within the theoretical framework of the resource-based view of the enterprise, my studies and publications have drawn on first-hand experience of the challenges faced by these companies in the form of qualitative and quantitative research and training and consulting interventions. The process by which individuals communicate across languages, cultures and organisations for the purpose of business development across borders is immensely complex and can be examined from many different perspectives; linguistic, social anthropological, pedagogical, psychological, technological and even political (Gibson, 2002). The skills required for effective communication are the object of study for academics across all these communities and more, each employing its own method and outlets. For example, within the business and management academic community language and intercultural competence is of interests to scholars, researchers and students in the areas of marketing (Usunier, 2005), exporting (Manolova, 2004, Morgan, 1997), human resources (Harzing & Ruysseveldt, 1995), organisational

development (Schein, 2004), knowledge management (Holden, 1989, Holden, 2002) and management development (Deresky, 2003). Making my work matter in this diverse community has been a stern challenge, particularly in the early years when the boundary lines between academic disciplines were so much more rigid. My personal motivation to research the field was sparked in the 1970's by my experience as a young teacher of foreign languages of delivering training courses in small and medium-sized enterprises, first in Germany, then France, then the UK. In acting firstly as tutor then as account coordinator, I came to question the purpose and value of language training and to explore the learning needs of the organisation and the managers, engineers and administrators commissioning and undergoing the training (Mughan, 1989). Language courses focussing completely on the acquisition requirements of the individual learner were clearly not addressing strategic knowledge and performance needs of the organisation, even if the individual learners were making satisfactory progress in their foreign language skills acquisition.

This conviction remains largely intact today and led me to formulate some early **hypotheses** about the nature and place of communication skills in international business:

- Language skills are useful for business internationalisation but need to be accompanied by cultural and business knowledge of the target market
- The nature of the relationships which emerge through successful communication may be leveraged through management learning and consulting to generate other benefits to the firm in international markets

My subsequent career has revolved around the exploration of the managerial, intercultural and linguistic dimensions of these hypotheses. I developed my skills as a researcher in a hands-on, collaborative environment starting with personal projects at Wolverhampton Polytechnic in the late 1980's, through to small projects funded by business support agencies in Cambridgeshire to two large £180,000 projects funded by the East of England Development Agency and HEIF and a global study of SME internationalisation for the OECD in 2006, with several LEONARDO and similar projects in-between. These studies employed a variety of methodologies; qualitative and quantitative, interviews, observation and large-scale empirical studies. I have had the opportunity to gather hard data about organisations, management skills (and needs) and business and policy challenges and to review many studies on similar and associated subjects carried out by academic, business and governmental bodies.

The Research Context

My research activity has evolved as a function both of my interests and the changes in the international business environment. My interest in language as a business phenomenon in the 1980's was prompted by my experience as a trainer and enhanced by the opening up of European markets in 1992 (Liston and Reeves, 1985, Randlesome, 1990). As the years have passed the academic interest in this and associated fields has grown as the opening-up of culturally diverse markets, the resource-based theory of the firm (Penrose, 1959, Barney, 1991) and the importance of SMEs to the global economy and the academic community have become established characteristics of international business and management research (Mughan and Lloyd-Reason, 2007, Lloyd-Reason and Sear, 2007). The data and literature dealing with business internationalisation, international management learning and the role of culture has increased year on year in quantity and quality (Browaeyns and Price, 2008). The field of intercultural management, to which I contributed in the UK and Europe by founding SIETAR UK and designing innovative higher education courses, has become a part of mainstream management research and education as organisations and individuals have become more mobile and relationship-oriented.

The next phase of my development involved funded research into business internationalisation for government/inter-governmental agencies such as the East of England Development Agency (Lloyd-Reason and Mughan, 2003), UK Trade and Investment (Mughan, 2006), the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD, 2008) into which I sought to incorporate language and intercultural questions and method. These generated strategically contextualised empirical data which feature in several of the selected publications (Mughan and Lloyd-Reason, 2007, Knowles and Mughan, 2006). This work demonstrates the quality of creativity and imagination which is a feature of PhD level work and does so in a non-linear fashion which furthermore evidences qualities of relevance, resilience and purpose which have made my work beneficial to my university, the broader academic and educational communities, policy bodies and businesses themselves.

Yet even given the growth in this field, I believe we are barely scraping at the surface of understanding what is actually happening in international trade, transactions and management processes. This is particularly important in the light of two **gaps** in the literature and to which my work makes an important contribution:

- Most of what we know about international management competences is based on work which undervalues and even disregards the interplay of different native languages and lingua franca in organisations and business

- Most of what we know about intercultural skills and knowledge is based on large multinational corporations and their managers. SMEs, in spite of their importance to employment and international trade, are largely under-studied.

International Management and Languages

There is ample evidence (Ricks, 1993) that international organizations and managers have been encountering language problems for many years and probably ever since international trade began. Misunderstandings due to the inability to understand foreign tongues litter the fields of exporting, marketing, human resources, negotiating, and more recently international acquisitions and mergers (Cartwright and Cooper, 1996, CILT, 2006a).

Whilst there is ample literature dealing with these matters on the side of language scholars and policy-makers, it is remarkably under-valued as a systemic issue in the field of management science and strategy (Tietze, 2008).

Nigel Holden published the findings of a survey of 463 English-language management books in a university library (Holden, 1987). He found that the majority of the books did not deal at all with the concept of language as a management issue or problem. Precious little has changed today, though there are signs that researchers efforts in this area are increasing. In the light of repeated testimonies from business practitioners such as Percy Barnevik, former Chairman of Asea Brown Boveri, it is surprising that management theorists continue to ignore the importance of the language barrier in organizations which have become more and more complex and interdependent throughout this period. Some investigators (Feely and Harzing, 2003) suggest that this may be because of the dominance of English as a lingua franca or even the pervasive use of Hofstede's findings, particularly for American researchers. SMEs (Small and medium-sized enterprises), on the other hand, are exhorted by governments world-wide to master the language of their export markets. Subsidised services, including language training, are widely offered to help exporters increase sales in foreign markets and thereby protect and create jobs and improve the balance of trade (Girma et al., 2001).

Hagen (1988) advocated the development of language strategies that enable companies to respond effectively to language problems before and as they encounter them, rather than using guess-work or relying on translation and interpreting services. Government funding to support language learning is predicated on the assumption that these skills are necessary to perform effectively in international markets and measures have been developed to demonstrate the benefit to companies which master foreign languages (CILT, 2006b). Increasing the stock of SMEs which export equates to economic benefit in the form of sales revenue for the company, better trade figures and reduction in

unemployment on a national level (Girma et al., 2001). A whole body of academic literature (Sousa, 2004) is dedicated to measuring the contribution of such support measures to the competitiveness of the firm and the nation-state. Cheng (2007) characterises this body of literature as ‘theory-motivated and phenomenon-based’ and effectively criticises scholars who conduct research as *‘a tool to test and extend existing theory from the established disciplines rather than to deepen the understanding of the phenomena under study’*.

The empirical work on which this application is based belongs to the ‘phenomenon-motivated and theory-based school’ in that it has focussed aspects of SMEs and internationalisation we know little about. It has sought not just to evaluate the effectiveness of language skills as a support to exporting but on the ways in which these skills interact with organisational decision-making. For example, a study in the East of England (Knowles and Mughan, 2006) revealed that SMEs which have staff able to speak a given foreign language (usually as a result of subsidized government support) often cease to actually use that foreign language as they expand their operations to multiple international markets. That this happens is probably due to the manner in which businesses internationalise which, contrary to rationalist thinking, is often random and messy (Bell et al., 2004). A company which has invested considerable effort into the development of a specific international market for its first exporting venture may subsequently find itself attracted into other markets by fortuitous meetings at international trade fairs or even an unexpected order dropping into the inbox or onto the door mat. If that order offers attractive revenues it will be pursued and this new market may prove more profitable than the first which had been contemplated. In this way small firms often find themselves in a number of national markets without the resources to communicate effectively in them (Williams and Chaston, 2004). The management learning implications of these findings are significant in the questions these findings raise about information processing and knowledge management in markets where they can communicate effectively vis-à-vis markets where they cannot (Wright & Wright, 1994).

For large firms the picture is very different. They do have the resources to equip themselves with the required language skills and many do so using recruitment and training (Harzing & Ruysseveldt, 2004). The breadth and scale of the challenge is however daunting and no comprehensive theory or strategy exists to help us understand and manage the range of challenges companies face. In practice larger companies use a variety of tactics to paper over deficiencies in communications and relationships across borders and cultures ranging from recruitment to over-reliance on English as a lingua franca, use of interpreters and translators, technological solutions such as machine-assisted translation and individual coping strategies which may or may not yield results (Tanaka, 2008). The variety and fluidity of language use in international organizations is an important concept which has recently received attention from a number of scholars.

Studies of organizations which span national boundaries have looked at the relationship between lingua franca use (usually English) and other languages in multicultural teams (Welch et al., 2005). Nonetheless, the stock of empirical data in this field is still small and needs to be enhanced. Fink and Holden (2007) call for a better understanding of the human dimensions of international business and a phenomenon-driven research agenda. The empirical work I have done for EEDA, UKTI and LEONARDO in particular addresses this imperative and makes some contribution to our understanding of language use and contact in international business.

What emerges from all studies of interpersonal communication in organisations is a highly complex picture of language use and the concepts of identity, culture and power which accompany it. In multinational organizations, even those which adopt a lingua franca policy, there is a great richness of language use wherein English intermeshes with other languages on the formal, informal, written, and spoken levels (Tietze, 2008). These findings are borne out and amplified by the findings of a four-country study (ITEM 7) which the proposer co-conducted and co-authored. Co-existence and interdependence of foreign languages (including the lingua franca) in the workplace and sophisticated processes of peer-group decision-making and selectivity regarding language use applied in a wide range of organisation types. Over-reliance on a lingua franca would appear to be hazardous for managers and simply wrong for academics.

Intercultural Management

Intercultural skills are well established as an important dimension of international business (Glaser et al., 2007). The expatriate model was largely responsible for the emergence and growth of the intercultural training industry, even though it was based on a simple model of international business and a limited marketplace. This school was characterized by an emphasis on cultural difference (Harris, 1980) and the study of the processes of adaptation to different cultural environments (Brislin, 1986).

The shift to more complex global forms of trading and the ensuing high level strategic challenges which faced businesses in the 1990's resulted in the emergence of a more comprehensive concept of intercultural management (Browaeys and Price, 2008, Usunier, 2005, Usunier, 1998). Its prime purpose is to study and service the international business organisation as it developed in the 1990's in its structure, culture and activities. The individual, in the form of the manager, is an important part of this complex but just one among a set of resources and competences of the organization which make up its strategic capability (Johnson and Scholes, 2002). Efficiencies and efficacy stem primarily from the level of the organisation and its systems, which, it is now recognised, are susceptible to cultural difference across borders (Adler, 1991).

Intercultural issues are therefore institutional and material as well as human (Trompenaars, 2007). Organisations, products and services have to be localised to obtain competitive advantage and whilst all of this cannot be achieved without competent global managers these individuals and their individual competences should be seen effectively a sub-set of the organisation in the process and field of international management based on strategic planning and execution (Schein, 2004).

It follows from this analysis that the most influential work in the history of intercultural research had as its prime locum and purpose a study of an international business organisation, IBM, even if it subsequently became mainly characterised by some as an intriguing but rather crude classification of national cultures. Geert Hofstede's (1980) 'Culture's Consequences', an anthropological study of the subsidiaries of the computer giant across the free markets of the world at the time (the late 1970's) continues to be the basis of the description of culture in international business textbooks because it contributes to the rational linearity of management science and to our understanding of organisational cultures in the rather complex and messy global age. The often criticised static nature of the data about national cultures arouses much passion among interculturalists, (Jack et al, 2008, Holden, 2002). In my view the passionate debate about Hofstede's work on national cultures overshadows a real contribution it makes to the literature on organisational types and behaviour and this empirically-grounded framework is crucial to management strategists (Johnson and Scholes, 2002). Subsequent studies have deepened and expanded our understanding of the field. Trompenaars and Hampden Turner (1997) extended Hofstede's range of dimensions and conducted more sustained inquiry into managers' attitudes using dilemma theory. From France, D'Iribarne (1993) contributed a rich picture of a French industrial organisation and the social and cultural values found there. Holden (2002) looks at the relationship between intercultural theory and knowledge management, the emerging theme which has attracted great interest among organizational behaviourists, systems specialists and executives keen to capture competitive advantage. He posits that cross-cultural management has entered a new scenario. Rather than focus on cultural differences, it should be regarded as a key element in the transfer of knowledge across business units and national boundaries.

Earley (2000) argues that the field of cross-cultural management has been dominated by research on cultural values and that anthropologists have been most influential in this research. The flaw in this approach, he posits, is that it assumes that a given cultural value applies to all individuals within a given culture. He goes on to advocate an approach based on the individual level of analysis and a search for the psychological fingerprint of each person and a measure of cultural intelligence (CQ). This intelligence is a paradigm based on individual preferences and needs and is a more complex view of the challenge than the classical one based on cultural values (Earley, 2006). Intercultural management is therefore much more than the IBM data and Hofstede's dimensions and draws on

theoretical and methodological contributions from a range of fields; linguistics, social anthropology and psychology (Victor, 1992).

We have witnessed a process by which interculturality has been incorporated into the international management mainstream to add value to core concepts such as organizational transformation (Schein, 2004), negotiating (Ghauri and Usunier, 2003), conflict management (Kumar) and teamwork (Gluesing, 2004, Chevrier and Prince, 1990) which are established as classical problem areas in international business. My empirical work with SMEs encountered many of these concepts in the course of firm-based inquiry and identified knowledge and skills needs in the internationalisation process (Glaser et al., 2007, Knowles and Mughan, 2006, Mughan, 2006, Mughan and Lloyd-Reason, 2007) using research instruments which were sensitive to cultural knowledge and languages use. To my knowledge, this work is unique in combining both these dimensions alongside classical variables of resources, capabilities and motivation.

Research Aims

It would be misleading for me to suggest that I conceived of a single research aim twenty years ago and have pursued it to the exclusion of all other things since. There have however been constant themes and gaps in the literature about the ways in which managers communicate and learn about their internal and external environment that I have tried to address. I have sought in particular to:

- Identify the place and contribution of language and intercultural skills in international business (ITEMS 1, 3, 6, 7, 9 & 10, 11, 12)
- Assess the place of these skills in the process of SME internationalisation (ITEMS 2, 4, 6, 8 and 9, 11, 12)
- Assess the learning needs of SMEs in their exporting and associated international activities (ITEMS 1, 4, 5, 7 and 8, 11, 12, 13)

3. Review of the published works on which this thesis is based.

ITEM 1. ‘1992 - is languages for export enough?’ in *European Business Review*, Vol. 2, No.3, 1990.

This article was my second published piece on the subject of language learning in companies. The first was published in The Times newspaper in 1988 and outlined a number of business benefits associated with foreign language use. This article was published at an important time in the history of the European Community. The aim of the 1992 Single Market treaty was to achieve a unified European territory that would overcome the economic stagnation and unemployment of the early 1980s and improve the position of EC members in the global economy. In 1985, the European Commission proposed almost 300 specific reforms that would reduce trade barriers between EC countries by 1992. The internal competition generated by these changes led the UK government to introduce a programme to promote exporting as a means of maintain and improving the UK trade balance. Language training for small businesses was a key element of this drive (Hagen, 1998) and the dominant theme of ‘Languages for Export’ infused government trade support services, the training community and, importantly large parts of the higher education community including languages departments in polytechnics and universities (Liston & Reeves, 1985). This policy had created a dependency bond between higher education and government policy which in my opinion had not led to a broad and inclusive view of language use in international business. The emphasis on exporting may have been financially beneficial to higher education in the short term but seemed to stultify academic curiosity and debate.

The main aim of the article was to draw attention to the full range of language learning needs and use within the broader business community and the case-study within the article described a UK subsidiary of a Canadian firm with a large, powerful sister company in German. That this company was not exceptional in being a locale for languages use in a non-exporting sense within the international and UK contexts was illustrated by some data on international mergers and acquisitions from the Financial Times.

At an early date in the new process of globalisation, this article proposes a more comprehensive appreciation of language use in international organisations by language trainers and teachers, government support services and policy bodies. It questioned the simplistic advocacy of languages as a tool to sell better by describing in the case study the role of languages in internal communications of a multinational firm. It furthermore identifies some issues in the relationship between foreign language and lingua franca use in international companies such as the loss of influence and intelligence that may be experienced by English native-speakers. (Welch, Welch & Piekkari, 2005)

This article appeared in *European Business Review*, a journal which now has a high rating and reputation. In hindsight, my evaluation of it is mixed. It was innovative in identifying the above strategic shortcomings in both business and government behaviour and provocative in challenging the practices of the language teaching profession which was responding rather limply to policy rather than assessing real needs and patterns of language need and use in firms and transactions.

Methodologically, the article used a case-study as its main form of evidence and in this respect was maybe a little ahead of its time in favouring such a phenomenological approach. The rather sparse quantitative data reflects the early stage of my development as a researcher. Chronologically, this article was successful in identifying issues and research needs (Welch, Welch & Piekkari, 2005, Tietze, 2008) which remain unresolved and are increasingly important today. It situated my work on the cusp of business strategy (internationalisation), on the one hand, and business communication (language skills) research on the other.

ITEM 2. Culture as an asset in international business, in *International Business - Text and Cases*, ed. Preston, J., Pitman, 1993.

This item was my first piece of authoring focussing on business and culture. It was part of a textbook aimed at undergraduate students and focussed on the place and role of culture in international business and is one of a small number of pieces not resting on an empirical base of real business behaviour. The editor was keen to give the book and European focus to counter the dominant US-based readings available in the field. This can be seen in the choice of case-studies and, in places, in a rather over-stated proselytising discourse in this chapter.

The purpose of this chapter was to stimulate thinking about the broad role of culture as a positive element in international business while later chapters would focus a little more on its functional role in areas such as marketing and human resources. The discussion of this subject was still rather light in the UK-based literature at this point in time (Mead 1994) and the attempt by this chapter to develop a strategic and functional framework for the understanding of culture in business was quite innovative. For example, the linking of culture to the concepts of team-work and innovation, in the case of the Swedish pharmaceutical firm, alongside the more conventional linkage with markets and product modification, in the case of German electrical appliances, reflects the broad strategic focus on the subject I was keen to cultivate.

On a skills level, the key perspective presented here, which was drawn from intercultural communication theory (Gudykunst & Ting-Toomey, 1988) was the focus on the Self as the first line of cultural responsibility in interactions with foreigners. The ability and readiness to assess one's own contribution to an intercultural encounter is of particular importance in business yet is still rather neglected in a management literature preoccupied with knowledge (intrinsically of 'the Other' in the form of the environment, markets and competitors).

The call for a positive and integrated approach to culture in business was addressed to students of international business. It cited range of sources from fields of social anthropology, marketing and human resources. In hindsight, I feel that editorial directives which discouraged extensive referencing are to be regretted. The range of perspectives across the business functions and on national, organisational and individual levels would have benefited from fuller referencing, particularly from the field of intercultural communication. More space for this would be found in ITEM 3.

In a very competitive market, the book was a successful seller and is frequently cited in literature reviews and curriculum materials.

ITEM 3. ‘The integration of foreign culture awareness into business language teaching materials and methods’, *The Language Learning Journal*, Issue 17, Autumn, 1998.

By 1998 the drop in recruitment to foreign languages courses in the United Kingdom was beginning to make itself felt, after something of a boom in the middle of the decade. At the same time, the importance of culture across all areas of business and the social sciences was increasing year on year.

This item returns to the dimension of language learning as the problem area and sought to assess the challenge of making language learning materials address strategic and intercultural issues more systematically and effectively (Mughan, 1989). In doing so, it discusses theoretical and methodological problems and reviews seminal intercultural works which offer structures or models that may inform language learning. Areas where the respective fields diverge and converge are discussed and key elements of mismatch in cognitive development are identified. The quality of the discussion and the scholarly basis for it is stronger here than in the earlier publications. The references are both more extensive and more cross-disciplinary and a number of emerging and critical themes such as ‘deeper knowledge of culture’ (Shaules, 2007) are broached and discussed. Similarly, the exhortation to language professionals to adopt more of a social-anthropological approach has been echoed and developed by Phipps (2004).

The methodology for this article is primarily a review of literature and training methodologies. The selection of Brislin, Hofstede and Trompenaars as models of cultural theory which might be applied to language learning represented something of a bold act which has since been reflected in thinking and policy (CILT, 2009). The fusion of language and intercultural learning on the professional and theoretical levels has continued to gain ground and was manifested in the formation of SIETAR UK and IALIC in 1999. Shortcomings in this article include insufficient consideration of competence theory and assessment issues. Nonetheless it was a creative and innovative piece of work which again explored the relationship between theory and action in a changing business and education landscape.

The Language Learning Journal is a leading journal in its field and published another of my articles.

ITEM 4. ‘Strategies for internationalisation within SMEs: the key role of the owner-manager’, with Lloyd-Reason L. *Journal of Small Business and Enterprise Development*, MCB Press, Bradford, 2002.

This article was written in collaboration with a colleague, Lester Lloyd-Reason, whose specialism is strategic management. It emerged from our joint participation in a LEONARDO-funded project and represents our attempt to reconcile prevalent theory on SME internationalisation with our observations of the four companies participating in the project (it is worth bearing in mind here that the seminal Uppsala model of Johanson and Vahlne (1977) was also based on the study of four companies). The literature review at the beginning of the article also discusses the differences between the internationalisation process of large companies and SMEs and discusses theories of the ways in which managers learn about international business.

The project and the preparation of this article gave me the opportunity to locate the concept of language and intercultural skills within SMEs within a broader set of literature dealing with their internationalisation. It focussed on representing the issues, challenges and needs facing SMEs and did so through the ‘Internationalisation Web’ which describes the ‘cultural orientation’ or attitudinal and behavioural features of the international owner-managers of the participating companies. These range from the possession of relevant education and skills, language and intercultural, to a set of positive social attitudes towards foreigners and the use of formal information and knowledge sources to promote and capture business opportunities. (A more extensive review and discussion of SME internationalisation literature would follow in ITEM 6.)

This article represented a significant addition to the literature in two ways. Firstly, as an empirical study of transnational business and educational cooperation it added significantly to the Uppsala model by identifying SME-based phenomena which were common across national borders and others which were unique to national settings. Secondly, it did so within the framework of a recognised strategic concept, international orientation, and produced an integrated model for improving international business performance (not just the individual communication skills of employees). These perspectives reflected the respective strengths of the two authors and represent a move towards a holistic consideration of international business communication rather than the traditional one whereby language skills were considered a useful addition to the resources of the organisation which were developed separately from core management strategy and skills.

This was the first article I wrote in collaboration with another academic and was important in that it helped me validate my research interests within an established, related academic school of literature. This would provide a framework for further empirical and

theoretical studies and development of models of management learning about international business. (A more extensive review and discussion of SME internationalisation literature will follow in ITEM 5.) It would also provide a stronger platform for further joint publishing and the informing of policy bodies. It helped promote a resource-based and social constructivist approach to understanding small firm behaviour, as an alternative to macro-economic quantitative analyses, which were much more prevalent at that time. Finally, it gave me a grounding in new ontological approaches which would help incorporate an interpretivist approach into larger scale studies in the coming years.

ITEM 5 ‘Management consulting and international business support for SMEs: needs and obstacles,’ with Zimmermann C. and Lloyd-Reason L., Journal of Education and Training, Volume 46, Issue 8/9, 2004.

This article picked up again on the problem of government support for small business internationalisation. This time the focus is not on skills but on the learning or developmental model and the merging demand for consulting, as well as training and information provision, as a response to greater complexity in international markets and ensuing challenges to management resources and competence. The article reviews key changes in policy and support structures in the UK, including regionalisation, and outlines the key features of current provision.

Data from recent empirical studies, including ITEM 11, is presented to identify management learning needs. A new range of management competences required for dealing with scale and complexity in international markets is presented and discussed. The role of consulting as a new paradigm for inculcating these competences is discussed with a consideration of both the advantages of this approach and the factors which inhibit its introduction. The latter include a consideration of the skills levels of existing support structures and personnel and SME scepticism vis-à-vis consultants.

Again, this article demonstrates my ability to work with other authors to explore ‘cross-over’ phenomena in international business. Carsten Zimmermann was just completing his PhD at the Judge Business School at this point in time and brought to this publishing project knowledge of consulting literature which we together applied to the data acquired in the CEIM study (ITEM 11) and broader literature, both academic and policy-based, dealing with emerging phenomena in the field of small business internationalisation. This inductive approach has a tendency to yield findings which are of great value to practitioners (in this case in the fields of business support and consulting) but which seem to lack roots and theoretical grounding to some academics.

The HIGHER Project (Mughan, 2006) explored these issues in greater depth both in terms of literature and inquiry. UK Trade and Investment now has a new programme for established international companies focussed mainly on consulting support but struggles to raise the competences of its own advisors to the required level. This experience is very much in line with the hypothesis of this article.

Lester Lloyd-Reason was named as a co-author of this article because of his contribution to the CEIM project.

ITEM 6. ‘Foreign language use among decision-makers of successfully internationalised SMEs: questioning the language-training paradigm’, with Knowles, D. and Lloyd-Reason, L., in *Journal of Small Business and Enterprise Development*, Vol. 13, No. 4, 2006.

This article appeared in a special edition of Small Business and Enterprise Development and was expressly commissioned by the editor of the journal on the basis of earlier work of ours he had published. Data from our large empirical study of 1200 companies in the East of England (ITEM 11) was revisited under my supervision by a researcher, Deborah Knowles, who obtained a full-time post at Westminster Business School while the article was under consideration. We also up-dated the literature review and the article represents more progress in bringing together the business and languages-based schools of SME needs and behaviour. All of this was placed within the framework of the general findings of the CEIM study detailing the learning needs of managers across the range, represented by the epithet of ‘*Planning, Manning and Scanning.*’ (See ITEMS 7&11)

The empirical study incorporated a detailed study (following on from ITEM 3) of the cultural orientation of managers of 80 companies using face-to-face interviews and associated data analysis. These broadly corroborated findings from our earlier studies and added a level of detail that enabled us to identify some valuable new perspectives, particularly with regard to the language training paradigm. We posited that language skills make an indirect contribution to overall international business success which is more valuable than their direct contribution to improved communication with specific foreign clients and markets. Languages are seen conceptually as part of a network or framework of ‘international orientation’ which drives business success in multiple markets, adding value to decision-making theory and practice and to the deliberations of policy-makers and trainers. The decision to critique existing paradigms of language learning was based on my earlier work (Mughan 1993; Mughan 1998). The analysis and discussion of the qualitative data was led by Deborah Knowles and I took the lead with the implications and conclusions.

This article describes and discusses the established yet problematic role of languages in international business on the level of the SME. It proposes a more complex understanding of the subject than that which predominates in the literature whereby specific language skills levels equal success in specific markets (Liston and Reeves, 1985, Hagen, 2005). On the basis of empirical data it proposes a more integrated understanding and place for language and intercultural skills in the development of government support and SME resources. It both reprised and enhanced earlier publications and hypotheses and the attention it gives to the internal resource of the SME was acknowledged by both UKTI and the National Centre for Languages who invited me to act as consultant on associated projects. I was also invited by Professor Michael Byram of the University of Durham to

join a research symposium and to examine a Ph.D thesis on an associated subject on the basis of this article.

Lester Lloyd-Reason was named as a co-author of this article because of his contribution to the CEIM project.

ITEM 7. ‘Skills and knowledge needs of the global SME’ with Lloyd-Reason L., in *Trading Places – SMEs in the Global Economy*, eds Lloyd-Reason, L. and Sear, L., Edward Elgar. 2007.

This book was commissioned by Edward Elgar after a successful title in 2000. It gathered original and critical thinking on all aspects of SME internationalisation. I took the lead on a chapter looking at learning needs of SMEs based on my joint research with Lester Lloyd-Reason (ITEM 11).

This chapter describes the broad literature base of SME internationalisation and the empirical study carried out in the East of England. The key theories of international business and the resource-based view are presented as the basis for our understanding of the framework of management learning in this area. The strengths and shortcomings of the U-Model and the I-Model (Johanson & Vahlne, 1977) are discussed and the data from the empirical study forms the foundation of a contribution to emerging efforts to incorporate the resource-based view into SME internationalisation literature.

The findings from both the quantitative 1200 company study and the qualitative 80 company study are described. The management learning (here called skills and knowledge) needs are described and the ‘*planning, manning, scanning model*’ is described at greater length. Companies were banded in to five groups in terms of their international maturity and success and the learning needs of each band are set out. Accompanying literature is cited to develop the thesis that more strategic and deeper forms of internationalisation will generate new learning needs which go beyond the provision of information and training and lead to deeper forms of engagement including consulting and network promotion. The consequences of this for support providers are discussed.

This chapter describes the theoretical and empirical context within and alongside which the earlier-mentioned hypotheses and findings about language use and intercultural knowledge have been obtained and elaborated. It explains the forces which are bringing about change in the SME literature and their effect on learning processes in general and the place of communication skills in particular. This chapter, presented in paper form at the ISBE Conference in 2005 was instrumental in my being invited, along with Lester Lloyd-Reason, to act as consultant to the OECD on the ‘Removing Barriers to Access to International Markets; project. I was the lead author for this chapter which drew considerably on the project report while Lester Lloyd-Reason led on the empirical study description (See ITEM 11). The book was very well received and is frequently cited in SME literature.

ITEM 8. ‘Intercultural Interaction: A Sense-making approach’, with O’Shea G. in *The Intercultural Dynamics of Multicultural Working*, eds. Guilherme, M, Glaser E., Mendez Garcia M-C., *Multilingual Matters*, 2010.

This article was written as a contribution to a book stemming from the ICOPROMO project (ITEM 12). The project had generated a lot of data about workplace behaviour and communication as well as a library of training activities to assist in the development of intercultural competence.

My contribution to this chapter was to posit that organisational behaviour theory could employed to assist our understanding of intercultural interaction. The latter is classically seen as a teleological phenomenon comprising a range of concepts and elements such as value-based behaviour and verbal and non-verbal communication. For the large part, the interaction is between individuals and groups acting as independent agents endeavouring to communicate for personal and social purposes. The ICOPROMO project sought to shed light on the processes and competences required by individuals at work. This chapter framed this more specifically by examining work in the context of multinational organisations (BMW and Rover).

Sensemaking (Weick, 2000) is an issue of language, talk and communication yet Weick does not deal directly with issues of multiple language use or communication across cultures. The BMW-Rover case illustrates how complex the web of communication is in contemporary organisations and how processes of strategy, structure and decision-making are enacted across languages and cultures. There is clearly a lot in common between sensemaking and intercultural theory and this chapter, plus the training activity contained within it, constitute the first attempt I know of to explore this relationship. It specifically broaches the notion that an exclusive focus on cultural difference does not suffice to explain complex phenomena and behaviour in contemporary organisations and goes on to call for more research into the interface between intercultural and other forms of management and organisational theory.

This chapter was the result of truly open collaboration between Greg O’Shea and myself. It is difficult to say who did what as there were so many stages both in the project and in the writing where we reviewed and amended each other’s work. It is our contention that it uses solid empirical data from the project and the BMW/Rover case to broaden the theoretical base of intercultural management theory.

ITEM 9. ‘Exporting, the multiple-market experience and the SME intercultural paradigm’, in *Becoming Interculturally Competent through Education and Training*, eds Feng A., Byram M. and Fleming M., *Multilingual Matters*, 2009.

Intercultural competence interests many academic and professional communities; management, languages, psychology to name but a few. This publication examines how education and training contribute to the development of intercultural competence in different locations and through different methodologies. I was invited to contribute on the subject of SMEs and chose to adapt the CEIM interview data to this subject.

As already affirmed, SME literature is strong in the field of language competence and weak in the intercultural one (whereas large company literature is the opposite). I used the CEIM research to illustrate how SMEs involvement in foreign markets may grow (*the multiple market experience*) and how the personal characteristics of successful SME owner-managers predispose them favourably to this pattern. Personal openness to new cultures, social habits, educational background and business decision-making form a mesh of subjective and objective characteristics. The resultant management competences enable the company to surmount the multiple entailed market challenges and the language shifts that are entailed. The nature of that language shift and the threats it poses are discussed. The SME intercultural paradigm and management learning, in its formal and semi-formal forms, result from the interplay of business experience, language learning and cultural openness which made our ‘successful’ companies distinctive. The lessons for support agencies from this hybrid model are complex but provide clues as to the attributes to look for in companies aspiring to high levels of international growth.

The CEIM data, based as it was on interviews and self-testimonies, might be enhanced by a further study using observational techniques over time and a sequence of international business transactions to test and elaborate on these findings. Notwithstanding this reservation, these findings are notable in that they have been reviewed and validated by a number of the owner-managers themselves. I have been commissioned to advise on service development for UKTI as they seek to extend their service to experienced exporters. Fellow professionals in the field concur with the profiling of companies, the modelling of needs and the recommended methodologies outlined in these articles.

This article resulted in an invitation to join a research and publishing consortium run by the Universities of Hamburg and Durham (See ITEM 10).

ITEM 10. Business and management theories and models of intercultural competence: Implications for language learning, in *Interkulturelle Kompetenz and Fremdsprachliches Lernen. Modelle, Empirie und Evaluation*, eds Byram M. And Hu A., Guenther Narr, 2009.

The interplay between the respective schools of management, languages and intercultural competence provides opportunities and perspectives which can appear both infinite and confusing. The fact that my work does not sit within a single, clearly-defined community of practice means that my work may be at a disadvantage when it comes to measuring impact on specific communities but at an advantage in other ways.

This article was commissioned by Michael Byram, a leading interculturalist in the field of education, and is located in the introductory part of the book which focuses on theories and models of intercultural competence. Despite this, the editors and publishers were keen to have a book with a strong empirical bent, so I decided to include some data from a LEONARDO project we completed in 2006 which illustrated and, in most cases, reinforced the key findings from the literature review which forms the core of the chapter. As already indicated, my earlier writings (ITEMS 2, 4, 5, 6), in a rather barren research landscape in the 1990's, touched on the complex nature of language use in the emerging global economy and the shortcomings of educational policy and management literature. Tietze's recent work (Tietze 2008), represents a major step forward in articulating a more comprehensive and structured approach to research and knowledge in this area and I endeavoured to elaborate on some of the issues she broached by discussing the relationship between these three fields of study and learning and the questions that emerge. Re-casting the basis on which language learning is constructed to reflect organisational change, multicultural teamwork and the role of the linguist are among the conclusions of this chapter.

The key themes and conclusions of this chapter have broad relevance for managers and educationalists. The inconsistencies in research and policy practice vis-à-vis languages and culture it identifies have been a theme in most of my work for almost twenty years and this message is an important one for researchers. This analysis exposes some ill-founded assumptions in the method and theory of organisational and learning research and is deserving of serious attention and investment.

As this chapter was commissioned for a book, the range of discussion of these important issues is focussed and limited. Great potential exists to develop these concepts and themes either by re-visiting some of my earlier empirical work or developing a study

proposal to test selected issues of foreign language/lingua franca interaction, role and team behaviour and knowledge transfer across language and value systems.

ITEM 11. *Competing Effectively in International Markets*, with Lloyd-Reason, L., commissioned by the East of England Development Agency and published by Anglia Polytechnic University, 2003.

This large-scale study was commissioned by EEDA in order to inform its strategic aim of enabling the East of England to become one of the world's 20 top regions for innovation. The study was innovative in its aims and methodology. Our objectives included the gaining of insights into both the strategic and orientation characteristics of the companies and a large volume of data in many forms enabled us to produce recommendations rooted in the nature of the firm itself, as opposed to the much more conventional macro-economic studies which informed government exporting policy. A 1200 company quantitative study was followed by an 80 company qualitative one and the findings provided a profile of the regions international companies. Companies were banded according to their stage of internationalisation and the skills and knowledge levels associated with each band were set out, along with their developmental needs.

. The findings from the qualitative interviews in particular enabled us to propose an integrated perspective on how language and intercultural skills relate to broader management skills in the life of the firm.

Data from this project was used in ITEMS 5, 6 & 7 & 9.

ITEM 12. *Intercultural Competence for Professional Mobility*, with Glaser E., Guilherme M. & del Carmen Mendez Garcia M., European Centre for Modern Languages, 2008.

This study covered four European countries and lasted three years. It started with a thorough literature search followed by both quantitative and qualitative studies of multicultural teams and concluded in the development of the ICOPROMO model and a set of training activities. This report was commissioned by the ECML to inform the development of educational policy and pedagogy in this field.

My role in this report was mainly in Section 1 the '*Introduction*' and Section 2, '*The New World Order and the Individual*' and in the analysis of the data gathered for the quantitative study which is found on the CD ROM.

Data from this project was used in ITEMS 8 & 10.

ITEM 13. *Removing Barriers to SME Access to International Markets: OECD-APEC Global Study*, with Lloyd-Reason, L., commissioned and published by the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), Paris, 2007.

The work on the previous two items exposed our team to national and international audiences we were invited to advise in various fora, as well as give academic papers. This led to an invitation to advise the OECD on a global study of SME exporting and national government policies in that field.

This item comprises both a literature review and an empirical study, culminating in the identification the main barriers, company needs and best practice in government support. My work in this was firstly in the literature review and included a review of regional studies carried out on this subject in the previous decade. I also led on the analysis of the findings and the general conclusions. The study found that the main barriers to internationalisation come not from barriers external to the firm but from their own (lack of) internal capabilities. The concept of barrier shift in the life of the international firm and the under-provision of support in the area of national business environment were other important contributions of the study to both policy development and academic research. The report was presented at a high-level conference in Athens in 2006.

The report and the action plan issuing from the conference were circulated to all OECD and APEC national governments.

Data from this project was used in ITEMS 7 & 9.

4. Contribution to the Field

In addressing the aims of this proposal, I would claim that I have made a substantial and significant contribution to the international management field by unearthing new phenomena, critiquing established theories, making syntheses which have not been made before, bringing new evidence to bear on old issues and being cross-disciplinary and using mixed methodologies (Philips and Pugh, 2005). I have furthermore identified and opened up areas of inquiry, and critiqued and proposed new models of theory and practice grounded in empirical data of particular value because of its scientific integrity, varied methodology (Cheng 2007) and relevance to policy bodies.

My work, in particular ITEMS 1, 3, 5, 8 and 9, identifies and critiques the shortcomings in theory and practice in academic work and policy practice in the field of language and intercultural learning for managers. The focus on exporting to the exclusion of other business processes, the absence of structured intercultural theoretical frameworks, the transferability of language skills and the relationship between lingua franca and foreign language process are all areas where I have initiated questions and further research on the basis of literature reviews and empirical evidence. The article on languages for export (ITEM 1) appeared at a particularly early date and the questions posed in this piece are now beginning to feature much more prominently in management theory and practice research (Tietze, 2008). The exploration of intercultural theory and learning (ITEM 3) similarly appeared before other scholars began to focus on this matter. The relationship between intercultural and language learning (ITEM 9) is discussed from the perspectives of both communities and the importance of this in contemporary Europe is now unquestioned (Mughan, 2009, Byram & Hu, 2009). The entire field is characterised by complexity and lack of focus and my work has been innovative and original in identifying key gaps and blockages in existing theory based on empirical data (ITEMS 11, 12 & 13)

Gaps in our understanding of the way in which SMEs build relationships with markets in an era of complexity and competition were discussed in ITEM 4 and ‘The Internationalisation Web’ model explained how Owner-managers build knowledge and sensitivity in this environment. On a more formal level, and on the basis of a large-scale empirical study, the long-standing problem of how to instil international market know-how in small companies was addressed by the ‘Planning, Manning, Scanning’ model (ITEM 7) which has been used by trainers and consultants to great effect. The manner in which language training for the smaller company facilitates broader and adaptable learning about numerous foreign markets was empirically explained by the ‘Multiple-market intercultural paradigm’ (ITEM 9)

Identify the place and contribution of language and intercultural skills in international business management

On the basis of critical reviews of management theory in the area of business internationalisation, significant gaps in and between associated schools of literature have been identified and discussed (ITEMS 1&2). The International Orientation school (Manolova et al., 2002), which essentially overlooks foreign language competence has been enhanced by analysis of skills transferability and intercultural frameworks (ITEM 4). To counterbalance this, over-investment in single-market based language skills in a fluid international language environment has been critiqued (ITEM 5). All such considerations have been weighed in the context of the assertion of the primacy of strategic management of organisations and competences (ITEMS 6 and 9) and long-term needs for skills (ITEM 10).

Assess the place of these skills in the broader management learning challenge

The epistemology of international management learning is so wide that it has possibly resulted in a form of paralysis on the part of management researchers and theorists. Most languages-based empirical work (Hagen, 2005, CILT, 2009, Hagen, 1988) has had as its prime focus the argument for language-learning as a policy issue on a national educational level (ITEMS 5 & 6). As such business, management and international trade are arenas where language use could be demonstrated to be useful and beneficial to companies and the economy. My work has approached the issue more from the point of view of business and organisational benefit, locating language and intercultural competence within broader strategic and learning frameworks (ITEM 4). Studies of competitiveness and growth (ITEMS 11 & 12) have included consideration of the communication challenges and situated them vis-à-vis to other areas of management challenge and competence (ITEM 6). This work has broken new ground and validated the place of language and intercultural skills as part of a range of concepts within the field of business internationalisation (ITEM 9). As such it advocates a more inclusive and integrated landscape for international management learning and some key perspectives and inquiries designed to help us understand the process better (ITEM 7).

Assess the learning needs of SMEs in their exporting and associated international activities

In examining the needs of SMEs in international markets, thought immediately turns to the word 'exporting' (ITEM 1). As part of a firm-based view of management learning, I have sought to present learning needs as a reflection of current reality and not allow institutional reflexes constrain my inquiry and reflection. Evidence of both the trading realities (ITEM 7) for SMEs which involves importing, licensing, partnering and direct investment (Salomon, 2006) and the multi-market nature of trading (ITEM 9) have been

gathered and analysed to propose new paradigms to drive organisational management development and influence policy-makers in the UK and world-wide (ITEMS 6 & 9).

Overall, the quality of my research and contribution is in my identification of emerging trends at an early stage, the obtaining of empirical data to test emerging hypotheses in collaboration with fellow researchers from my own and other disciplines and the formulation of lessons and recommendations which are actionable by both the academic and policy communities. Future research in this field might further examine the role of language and intercultural competence in business internationalisation, particularly in the medium-sized company, equity-based market entry band. More data on language contact in multicultural teams is also needed, preferably of a longitudinal nature. As well as improving the theoretical framework of international business and management, this research would help inform management training, development and consulting and, in turn individual and organisational performance.

5. Conclusion

I believe I have made a substantial and significant contribution to the field of business internationalisation by identifying and opening up areas of inquiry, critiquing current theory and introducing new empirical data of particular value because of its originality, robust and varied methodology and problem and firm-based nature. The shift from the exporting to the internationalising model, from the language training to the intercultural model, and from the training to the developmental/consulting model are all areas where my work has added conceptual value on the basis of empirical data. In a context of rapid economic change which makes businesses more susceptible to shifts in trends and environmental forces, my work has contributed to the development of social constructivist method in this field and perspective to help bring about management and business self-dependence through the development of strategies and frameworks for development, particularly in small and medium-sized firms. The interdisciplinary nature of the research themes is reflected by the collaborations and publications I have generated and whilst it might be felt by some (myself included) that the impact of my work was lessened by this range of output locations, I would contend that the integrity and scale of the data (ITEMS 11, 12 & 13) and clarity of analysis, critique and argument in the cited works is at the very least the equivalent of a successful PhD thesis.

The fact that the work was produced over a period of time which far exceeds that of a normal PhD programme means that achieving coherence is a particular challenge. In addition, the selection of items reflects work carried out over a number of projects for different funders and this aggravates the problem. Throughout this period I have

produced more than 80 articles, papers, chapters and reports and those selected for this proposal clearly represent the work which I think is most central and focussed on my hypotheses. It is worth pointing out, however, that there are among those items not selected at least a dozen conference papers and a dozen publications which were peer-reviewed and accepted for publication at events such as the Academy of Management annual conference, the ISBE annual conference and by Emerald, Palgrave Macmillan, The Language Learning Journal and Edward Elgar. In addition there are other policy reports including recommendations which have been welcomed and acted upon by the OECD, EEDA, UK Trade and Investment and the French Ministry of Economy and Finance. My development as a researcher and author has clearly not been that of a classical PhD student. It has been partly heuristic and partly programmed. At times I have felt more like an entrepreneur than a researcher, more like a consultant than academic, more like a psychologist than a linguist and overall I have experienced a sense of personal growth, of criticality and contribution to a number of professional communities. The downside to this form of scholarly progression is the lack of a single driving 'school' from which I might have inherited both method and companionship from an early age. On the other hand, I benefitted from freedom to choose my own path. Gradually realising this freedom and the space I had to create and contribute using academic method gave me a great sense of accomplishment, as has writing this document.

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