The relationship Between Language and Careers in Multinational Corporations: A case study of UPM-Kymmene Oyj

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Objectives of the study

This study aims to investigate the role of language in career management both from organizational as well as individual perspective. The research objective of the study is to examine how the organization's language strategy/practices can act as a facilitator or barrier for career mobility. Also, to find out how the individual's own language competences affect career mobility and if their language skills affect their own perception of their own career success.

Summary

The Thesis explores the relationship between language and careers in MNC environment through the case company UPM. The research aims to define the effect of common corporate language on career mobility. Also, language effects on individual career mobility and success are examined through six interviews with Global Functions personnel, six interviews with Human Resource personnel, and other observations of UPM processes and practices.

Findings and conclusions

The choice of English as common corporate language was generally seen as a facilitator for career mobility. Moreover, if the individual possessed English language skills it had a positive effect on the individual's career mobility within the Global Functions and that in turn had a positive influence on the individual's perception of his/her own career success.

Keywords: Language, Careers, MNC, Career mobility, Career Success

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1   Introduction

This study aims to investigate the role of language in career management both from organizational as well as individual perspective. In academic career research the role of language or individual language skills has received little attention until recent years. Moreover, the role of language in organizations has often been overlooked and seen as a merely technical or operational issue (Maclean, 2006).

In the global business world, most multinational companies (MNC's) make choices concerning their language strategies and practices that guide communication and information exchange. Many companies simply choose English as the common corporate language and use translation services and language training when needed.

However, the changing circumstances in the business world and the uncertainty of career outlooks has made it meaningful not to look at career solely as the property of individuals (Baruch, 2006; Dany et al., 2003). In addition, the concept of career and how career success is viewed or measured is changing. Moreover, the protean career view maintains that the individual is responsible for their own career management in terms of being self-directed and active (Hall 2002, King 2004).

This research explores how career management can be seen as a shared responsibility between individuals and organizations (cf. Baruch, 2006), indicating more a complementary rather than supplementary perspective (Järlström and Valkealahti 2010; Dries and Pepermans, 2008) in the case company UPM-Kymmene Oyj (UPM). The *role of language* in the organization, as facilitator or barrier, for career mobility and career success is also discussed both in the organizational context as well as in the individual context.

1.1 Background of the study

The changing nature of careers in today's business world inspired me to think about factors affecting career success and career mobility. Having started my career a few years ago in the case company, one of the few big multinational corporations based in Finland, I believed that I could find out interesting results from the case company on the relationship between language and careers.

Being bilingual myself, I had personally experienced in school as well as in business that knowing multiple languages can have its advantages in surprising situations. Therefore, I was eager to see if the study would show similar results compared to my personal experience as well as if my perception of language management in the case company would be shared by the interviewees.

Organizations cannot offer lifelong careers anymore and career paths have altered from traditional linear career progression towards more horizontal movements (Littleton et al. 2000). Individuals need to adapt to the changes in their working environment, regardless of their willingness to do so.

Also, the attitudes of individuals towards the employer and their views about their careers and employment have changed, and are changing, dramatically, thus challenging the traditional assumption commitment and motivation (Jones, 2005).

Globalization has had its effects on how, when and where people do business. MNC's operate in various cultures and language areas on a daily basis, yet the role of language in academic research is often overlooked (Maclean, 2006). Foreign languages are used at the workplace as means for communication on a daily basis; however very few MNC's based in Finland have established language strategies to guide and help their employees in communication (Ylinen, 2010).

1.2 Research problem and research gap

This study aims to take a critical look at the effect of language practices on careers in MNC environment through the case company. In addition, the research will be looking at language effects on individual career mobility and success by individual interviews in the case company.

The effect of individual language competences on career mobility has received little attention. Furthermore, career studies have been mostly concentrating on successful careers (Sullivan & Barush, 2009), not the effects of individual language skills on different career moves.

Muukari (2008) and Borenius (2009) in their Master's Theses studied the effect of individual language skills as factor of career progression and networking. In Ylinen's (2010) Master's Thesis, she found that in Finnish multinational organizations an official language strategy for a company is still a rare sight. Yet employees operate in a multicultural and multilingual environment on a daily basis — using their own abilities to their advantage the best way they can.

Based on my own experience from working with UPM I came up with two insights to guide my research. First, I believed that on organizational level, despite the common corporate language being English, Finnish is almost equally important. Second, I believed that on individual level, persons working at UPM feel that language skills are a facilitator for their career development, especially if they have Finnish, German or French language skills which are large non-English speaking operational countries.

1.3 Research objectives and questions

The research objective of the study is to investigate how the organization's language strategy or practices can act as a facilitator or barrier for career mobility. Furthermore, to find out how the individual's own language competences affect career mobility and if their language skills affect their own perception of their own career success.

The empirical data for the study will focus on the language practices and their effects on careers in the case company UPM. As the company does not have an official language strategy (Ylinen, 2010), apart from the common corporate language being English, the language practices are deducted from interviews with Human Resources (HR) professionals in the company as well as corporate strategy and various processes and practices used in recruitment, staffing, training and internal processes.

Moreover, the individual interviews will focus on the interviewee's perception of the effects of language skills on his or her career. Focal points and underlying trends can be deducted from the interviews yet they are still viewed as subjective perceptions on the individual's view of his or her experience.

Thus the research questions are outlined as follows:

1. How does the common corporate language act as a facilitator or a barrier for career mobility?
2. How does the individual's own language competences affect
   i)   career mobility
   ii)   their perception of their own career success

1.4   Definitions

The next section will provide definitions of the most important terms used in the research.

Multinational Corporation (MNC)

A general view of a definition for a Multinational Corporation (MNC) is presented for instance by Czinkota et al. (1999) who define a multinational corporation as a firm,

which operates in at least two countries, generates at least one third of its overall revenues from foreign operations and controls and manages subsidiaries abroad.

On the other hand, Ghoshal and Bartlett (1990) define the MNC as dispersed goal-disparate group of organizations with headquarters and different national subsidiaries. Furthermore, Ghoshal and Bartlett's view is that an MNC is an inter-organizational network that is embedded in other networks consisting of for example its' clients, suppliers, distributors. That specific view is a shift from traditional MNC theory that has mainly been looking at the headquarter-subsidiary relationship.

For this study I will choose the more traditional view of the MNC which allows me to concentrate on language effects within the chosen case company; and compare the effects of language in the headquarters as well as the subsidiaries of UPM.

Common Corporate Language

It can be said that to ease communication and knowledge sharing, an MNC may choose a common corporate language to be used in general communication. Choosing a common corporate language is probably the first step preventing multiple languages within an organization from becoming a barrier for communication.

For example, Fredriksson et al., (2006) state that a common corporate language is an "administrative managerial tool" which is decided by the board of directors and top management of an MNC to assist in daily operations.

In the case of UPM it means that most people in the company operate with a foreign language on a daily basis, and that is for instance true for the Finnish based headquarters in Helsinki. Moreover, choosing a common corporate language may not be enough in solving language issues in communication. Not many organizations dare to operate with multiple corporate languages officially (Maclean, 2006).

Language Strategy/ Practice

In this study I will use the terms 'language strategy' and 'language practice' interchangeably referring to any formal guideline the case company may have to determine the use of language in any given situation.

Janssens, Lanbert and Steyaert (2004) define the language strategy as something that can refer to several components like a decision of which language(s) can be used, the role of translators in creating multilingual texts, the method used to validate the translation process or the types of texts that are expected to be produced. Moreover, I will also look at HR processes and the role of language in recruitment, training and development activities in the case company.

The language practices of the case company will be described and derived from corporate strategy, processes and practices used in recruitment, staffing and training as well as interviews with HR professionals within the company.

Career

Oxford English Online Dictionary provides many meanings for the word *career*; among them :

"In modern language (after French carrière) freq. used for: A course of professional life or employment, which affords opportunity for progress or advancement in the world".

An older and more classic definition of the career as a term can be found for example by Arthur at al. (1989), it defines career as evolving sequences of a person's work experiences over time. This definition implies that career is a structured steady line going one direction from bottom to the top and does not reflect the modern changing nature of careers.

For the purpose of this research I will use the following definition proposed by Sullivan and Baruch (2009, p.1543):

"Career as an individual's work-related, and other relevant experiences, both inside and outside of organizations, that form a unique pattern over the individual's life span".

The reason for this choice is that in this research I want to view a career as a complete part of an individual's life, not restricting myself to viewing the career as only linear progression upwards in an organization. This gives me an opportunity to study the different aspects that make up career success and career mobility and moreover, to find out whether language is one of the factors.

Career strategy

Career strategy refers to a plan a person himself/herself makes about achievements he/she wants to accomplish during his/her career. A career strategy can be formal or informal, so it can be an actual written strategy or it can be a set of goals that the person wants to achieve. A career strategy can also entail matters such as which countries the person wants to work and live, what skills he/ she wants to attain to further his/ her career.

The purpose of defining what a career strategy is links to the empirical research and determination of how structured or planned the interviewees' careers have been and how that affects career success.

Career path

For this research the career path of a person is outlined in order to provide a clearer picture of the career aspirations and career mobility of the person in question. A career path refers to events a person encounters and decisions that he/she makes that affect his/ her career formation and brings him/her to the position that he/she is today. The career

path of a person describes how often he/ she has changed employer, position, department or responsibility area or even country of employment.

Career Success

Arnold (1997) argues that careers can be viewed from subjective or objective perspectives. *Objective career success* can be measured in terms of pay, promotion and status. *Subjective career success* is harder to define as the terms of definition are subjective to each individual.

Common factors in measuring subjective career success are the job itself, career and general life satisfaction. Also Gunz & Peiperl (2007) write about extrinsic and intrinsic career success the former meaning measures of salary, number of promotions and occupational status, and the latter the subjective ranking of one's satisfaction with one's career.

For this research I will use the terminology of Arnold because it is a more self-explanatory term about the different measures.

Career mobility

Sicherman and Galor (1990: 170) argue that:

"Studies of occupational mobility have been conducted within a job-matching framework in which occupational mobility is assumed to be the outcome of changes in the information set, market conditions, or workers' characteristics (e.g., Miller 1984)".

People rarely spend their entire working life in the same occupation nowadays.

Furthermore, *intrafirm* career mobility is subject to the employer's decision. On the other hand*, interfirm* mobility and its optimal timing are determined by the individual

(Sicherman & Galor, 1990). The theory of Sicherman and Galor (1990) has its roots in looking at the transferability of skills.

Additonally, Vardi (1980) proposed a hybrid approach of looking at organizational career mobility from micro and macro perspectives which views career mobility from actual, intra-organizational job mobility experienced by employees and as the perceptions, attitudes, and behaviors related to these experiences. In his work, he argues that important factors, such as individual differences of employees and for instance lateral moves have been overlooked by researchers in the area. For the purpose of this study language can be looked at as one skill that transfers with the individual throughout his or her career with which he or she can optimize his or her career capital.

Boundaryless career

During the last few decades the context of viewing a career has dramatically changed. Organizations do not, or cannot, offer lifelong careers anymore and career paths have changed from traditional linear career progression to include also lateral career moves (Littleton et al. 2000). From this perspective careers have become *boundaryless* (Briscoe et al. 2006) indicating more non-hierarchical moves within and between organizations.

Literally the boundaryless career means unlimited career paths (Inkson, 2006). The increased mobility, and decreased predictability, in working life has caused that almost all careers cross multiple employer boundaries (Arthur et al. 1999). In addition, there are several internal boundaries in organizations such as departmental, divisional, hierarchical, and geographical. Further, it has been suggested that there are for example occupational or cultural boundaries.

Gatekeeper

The term gatekeeper is used to describe a person that receives an unofficial position as someone who can influence communication and knowledge sharing in the company.

Due to his or her skills in a specific language the gatekeeper can choose to share the information he or she receives or keep it to himself/ herself (Macdonald and Williams, 1992).

1.5 Structure of the study

First, existing literature on language strategies and careers research will be presented to form a base for the empirical research of the Thesis. This is done in order to provide a better picture of possible effects that language can have on careers in MNC's. Second, the theoretical framework of the study will be presented based on previous research. Third, the Methodology used in the empirical research and data collection method will be explained in detail. Fourth, the findings of the research will be laid out. Fifth, the findings will be discussed and recommendations to the case company UPM will be made. Finally, the main findings of the study and limitations of the research will be presented together with suggestions for further research.

It is important to present possible language strategies in MNC's and language effects on careers from literature, so that a good enough picture of different points of views in the previous research can be formed. By knowing them, it is easier to understand and analyze the data and understand implications from the empirical research

To go deeper in the topic it is important to know what the role of language is in international communication and the effects of language skills on careers, both from an organizational point of view as well as from an individual's point of view. This is crucial in order to understand the language effects on careers in MNC's.

Communication is the key when it comes to succeeding and advancing in the business world and in order to communicate we use mostly different languages. Hence, the amount of languages that we are able to communicate with can add to our career capital and affect our career mobility and career success.

Finally, *Figure 1* presents a summary of the structure of the Thesis with descriptions of each stage.

Figure 1: Structure of the Thesis

Introduction and Literature review	Empirical Research	Findings	Discussion and Recommendations	Conclusion
Language strategies and practices in MNC's Language effects on careers on organizational & individual level	Explanation of the methodology used in the empirical research Single-case study on language effects on careers	Findings on the relationship between language and careers in MNC's	Discussion of the findings and recommendations to the case company UPM	Summary of main findings, limitations and suggestions for further research

2   **Literature review**

This chapter will review previous literature and studies of language strategies in Multinational Corporations (MNC's), language effects on careers in MNC's and the role of language in individual career development. The ultimate purpose of this chapter is to present the theoretical background for the study.

2.1   Language strategies and practices in Multinational Corporations

The term language strategy can be used in many different areas of science such as economics, education, politics and culture. The term is defined in various different ways. The purpose of this section is to provide alternative definitions of the term language strategy/ practice from existing research and through those definitions mirror the language practices found in the case company.

2.1.1   Common corporate language

It is common nowadays that an MNC makes a choice of an official corporate language in order to ease communication within and outside the company. A main reason for a common corporate language is to make information flow efficient within the company in for example formal reporting, information systems and cross-national interaction (Feely & Harzing, 2003). Employees thus know that in common communication one official language can be used as a rule.

A few authors have studied language strategies and their importance to intercultural communication (see Dhir & Gòkè-Paríolá, 2002; Feely & Harzing, 2003; Simonsen, 2009; van der Born & Peltokorpi, 2010). English is still considered the international language of business and the western industrialized countries generally favor English (Maurais & Moris, 2003). *However, the widely held view in the native English speaking business world about the unimportance of foreign languages has come under considerable criticism (Enderwick & Akoorie 1994).*

Also, Bloch (1995) argues that the misconception of that mastering the English language and speaking only English in the business world should be laid to rest once and for all. Yet, contradicting findings of the position of the English language as lingua franca of the business world are presented and discussed in the next section.

Marschan-Piekkari et al. (1999a) state that communication coordination in international, or multinational companies, is essential in order to be prepared and react for unexpected circumstances. Effective internal communication and information sharing requires a very co-operative and trusting environment with no risks of internal competition which can lead to key information holders acting as gatekeepers (Macdonald & Williams, 1992). Information and knowledge sharing are two aspects speaking in favor of common corporate language; it levels the playing field in terms of others than native English speakers, so that everyone is speaking another language than their mother tongue.

The trend of Finnish MNC's choosing English as their official language is also identified by Rossander et al. (2005) in their research about mergers and acquisitions between Finnish and Swedish companies. Yet, the interviewees, Finnish and Swedish Chief Executive Officers, pronounce difficulties in communicating with "business English" or "international English" as some call it, as opposed to the mother tongue or second language of the person (Ibid.). The term "business English" relates to the quality of the language spoken, where the message and nuances of the topic can be altered either due to the language skills of the speaker or the listener. For instance this finding speaks of the risks of the common corporate language being a barrier for communication rather than an enabler.

2.1.2 Lingua Franca

Lingua Franca by definitions means a language adopted for communication between individuals whose native languages differ (Oxford English Dictionary). During the course of recent years, the English language has secured a position as the lingua franca

of the business world (Koho, 2007). The English language has in fact such a strong position in multinational companies that it can be adopted as common language in a company where no one actually speaks English as his or her mother tongue, or without the official policy that English would be the official language (Vaara et al. 2005).

Luo and Shekar (2006) argue that the position of English as lingua franca becomes common due to MNC's work across different countries that might not share the language of, for instance, the country of the company's headquarters. That is certainly true for Finland and Finnish based multinationals where over 50 per cent of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) is accounted for by export of goods and services and with the populations of little over 5.3 million people speaking Finnish as native or second language (Statistics Finland 2010).

2.1.3 Multilingualism

It can be vital for the company to also take into account local languages as that can have a major impact on relations with local stakeholders and customers (Van der Born and Peltokorpi, 2010). Furthermore, in the recruitment of competent local personnel, limiting oneself to just one language might have an effect on the quality of recruits (Ibid.). Feely and Harzing (2003) state that functional multilingualism is relying on a mix of language and whatever means one can think of to get the message across to the other party.

Despite the importance of English in business communication, foreign language competence facilitates especially relationship and network building when conducting international business. Foreign language competence influences the international buyer and seller relationships, establishes trust, signals commitment and respect for the customer, and has a major effect on the atmosphere that characterizes the relationship (Turnbull & Welham 1985). Also, Swift (1991) argues that cultural aspects are important in communication and local language knowledge helps understand local business practices.

Moreover, needs for effective communication is not restricted to external communication with clients or suppliers. A company must have effective means to communicate internally, thus language is a key issue also in internal communication (Marchan-Piekkari, Welch & Welch, 1999b).

In conclusion, *Figure 2* illustrates the pros and cons of the language strategies from the viewpoint of career mobility in order to lead us into the subject of careers in the next section.

Figure 2: Pros and Cons of the common language strategies from the viewpoint of career mobility

COMMON CORPORATE LANGUAGE	LINGUA FRANCA	MULTILINGUALISM
+ Clear for everyone which language is used for communication + Only one language requirement + Neutral	+ Using the common language for all parties + Open for different options	+ Local cultures are taken into account + Provides everyone important information in their mother tongue
- Does not take into account local languages used at local offices and in social situations outside work - Overlooks importance of getting to know local culture through local languages	- Risks for misunderstanding & language barriers - Unofficial - Does not put everyone on a level playing field	- May cause the gatekeeper effect - Translation activities take a lot of resources - May be unclear and confusing

In the next sections I will examine what previous researchers have found about language effects on careers, and further take a look at how the nature of careers have changed during recent years of globalization.

2.2   Careers

In this section, the previous research on careers will be reviewed. First, the changing nature of careers will be presented after which the language effects on careers from existing literature will be discussed.

Gunz & Peiperl (2007) in the *Handbook of Career Studies* write that the field of career studies is and has been very fragmented and researchers seldom agree on which topics influence careers the most.

2.3   The changing nature of careers

Before the times of industrialization careers where formed on the basis of occupational inheritance rather than choice of occupation, meaning that the father passed on his profession to his son, whereas women were mostly bound by domestic duties (Gunz & Peiperl, 2007). Since then, researchers have had different opinions; whether careers are shaped from the viewpoint of individual agency or social determinism theories (ibid.).

However, it is certain that the nature of careers is changing and globalization provides unlimited possibilities for career mobility and success. Careers have become more boundaryless in terms of career mobility on a lateral scale within or between organizations (Briscoe et al. 2006). Yet, there is also more uncertainty; MNC's that strive for maximum efficiency and profits mostly cannot, and do not, offer life long careers with a traditional linear career progression (Littleton et al. 2000).

What then makes a career successful? Gunz and Peiperl (2007) raise the question of whom the career should be fit for, diving also into factors of extrinsic and intrinsic career success measures. The most commonly investigated influences were demographical matters such as the age or gender of the person, or the human capital factors such as work experience or education (Gunz & Peiperl, 2007). The aim of this empirical research is to take a closer look on how language skills, or the lack of them, can be seen as a factor influencing career mobility and career success.

2.3.1 Language effects on careers in MNC's on organizational level

There is no doubt that globalization has had its effects on how MNC's view language, or at least the question of language cannot be overlooked. Language is one of the main means of communication on knowledge sharing, and multicultural organizations are often said to have the potential knowledge resources to increase performance (Lauring & Selmer, 2011).

The requirements for employees' foreign language skills in multinational corporations have been on the rise in the 21st century. Piekkari (2008) argues that international mergers and acquisitions that constantly shape the business has shifted focus from solely professional skills towards requirements on language capabilities.

However, the view of language skills' effects on career progression is still seen as quite narrow, even though it could open doors to opportunities that might otherwise be unattainable. The narrow appreciation of language skills can partly have its roots in the strong position of English as the lingua franca of the business world. In order to ease communication, many companies choose English as the common corporate language but the effect might be that employees' only required language skill is English.

From the point of view of knowledge sharing and communication language dissimilarities can cause uneven patterns of interaction and knowledge sharing. In contrast to the belief that diversity in groups is seen as beneficial, language differences can have a negative impact on interaction and knowledge sharing when the group members have inadequate language skills (Mäkelä et al., 2007).

In some cases the common corporate language has such a strong impact on the company image that it influences the applicants decision to apply for the job in the first place as found in the Master's Thesis study by Muukari (2008). In her research she found that 37 per cent of Finns working in the Finnish affiliate of the Swedish company Handelsbanken rated their Swedish language skills as good. Muukari's (2008) study

suggests that applying to Handelsbanken in Finland was partly influenced by Swedish language skills of the applicant because the employees wanted to use and be appreciated for their Swedish skills. Hence, the linguistic image of the company is so strong, that the applicants' language skills can be considered a facilitator for Swedish speaking applicants and a barrier for non-Swedish speakers already in the recruitment phase. This implication was backed up by the HR Manager interviewed for the research (Ibid.).

2.3.2 Language effects on careers in MNC's on individual level

Language effects on careers from the individual person's perspective have had little attention in academic research.

Language skills may provide the individual the ability to establish networks that provide career opportunities or a specific language skill can give the individual a cutting edge over another candidate for a coveted position in the company. For example, Borenius (2009) found in her research that bilingual individuals in Finland who speak Swedish as their mother tongue can become gatekeepers that get opportunities as well as responsibilities in the company that go beyond the scope of their actual position, due to their language capabilities. For instance, those who had a native level knowledge of Swedish in the company got translating tasks that were beyond their normal duties.

On the other hand, lack of language skills can present itself as a barrier to certain positions as found in Muukari's (2008) research where certain positions higher up in the hierarchy were unattainable for the Finns who did not have adequate level of Swedish skills.

The above mentioned findings in previous research speak for language's role as an enabler or barrier for career mobility. The *Figure 3* below this paragraph illustrates how the common corporate language can become a glass ceiling for further career progression if the person's language skills are not adequate. Furthermore, the individual may decide to seek employment elsewhere due to the language barrier and leave the company. Some candidates may decide already in the application phase that they do not

wish to work for a Swedish speaking company, for example, and not even apply for the job as suggested in a study by Piekkari et al. (2005). This study is investigating the effects of the choice of common corporate language in the merger of the Swedish Nordbanken and Finnish Merita Bank. In contrast, an individual with good language skills might be able to use his/ her language skills as facilitator in networking and finding new opportunities. His or her language skills may facilitate career mobility within the company both horizontally and vertically.

Figure 3: Illustration of language as glass ceiling for career mobility
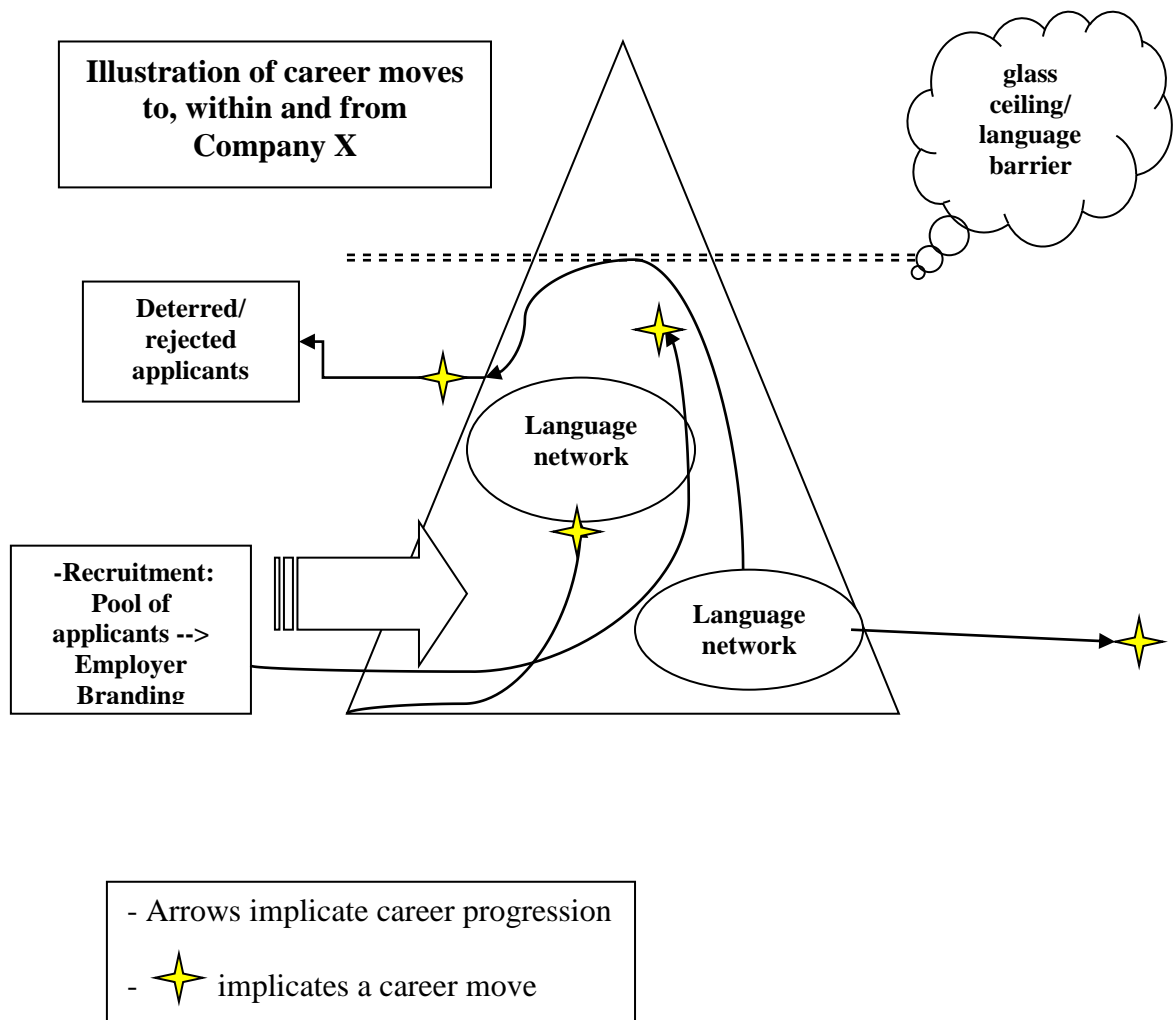
Source: Adapted from R. Piekkari's Thesis Seminar in autumn 2010 and the article by Piekkari et al. (2005).

2.4 Theoretical framework

The theoretical framework of the study, illustrated in *Figure 4* below, is constructed on the basis of the knowledge and arguments from previous research presented in the literature review.

Figure 4: The theoretical framework of the Thesis
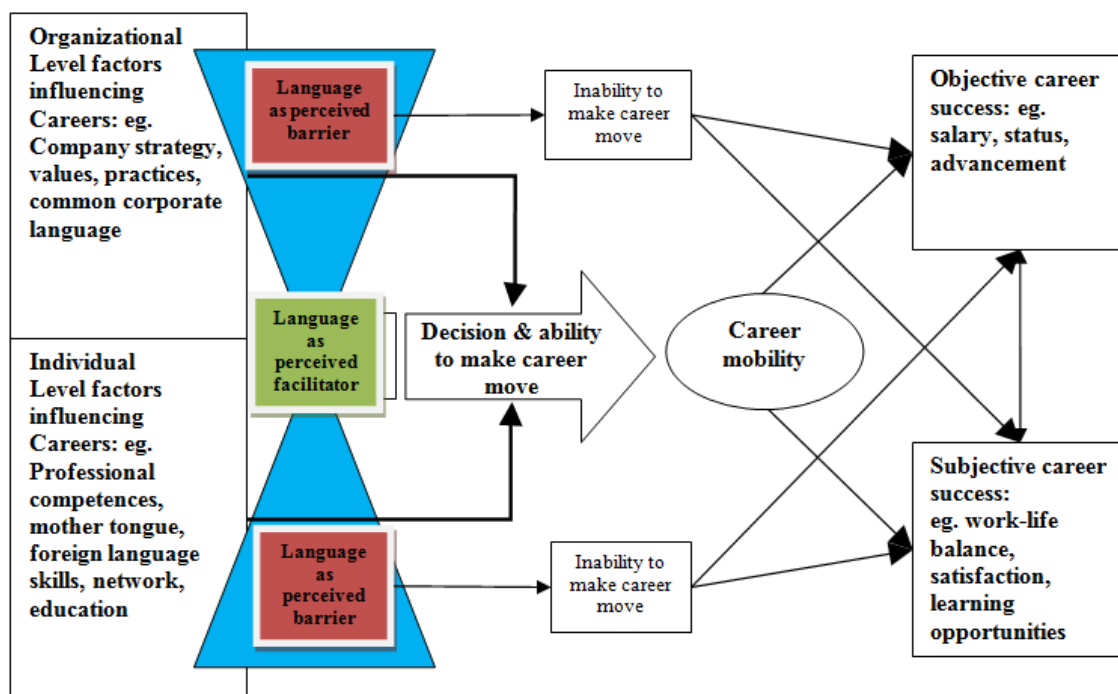
Source: Adapted from Järlström M., Jokinen T., Piekkari R., Velikodnaya N. & Leppänen A. (2010).

The theoretical framework in Figure 4 illustrates how the organizational level factors in the company and individual level factors of the person interact thus influencing the person's career decisions. The focus of this research is to find out if an organizations common corporate language or individual language competences can be perceived as a facilitator or a barrier for career mobility and how they affect the perception of career success.

Hence, the research questions of this study were outlined in the beginning as follows and the answers to the research questions based on previous literature in relation to the theoretical framework will be presented next.

1. How does the common corporate language act as a facilitator or a barrier for career mobility?
2. How does the individual's own language competences affect
   i)   career mobility
   ii)   their perception of their own career success

Based on previous research the company language strategy or practices affect for example networking, communication and knowledge sharing (see for example Feely & Hazing, 2003; Marschan-Piekkari et al., 1999a; Macdonald & Williams, 1992). All of the presented language strategies and practices: common corporate language, lingua franca and multilingualism, include elements that can be perceived as a barrier or a facilitator for individual career development.

First, common corporate language strategy gives the clear signal from the company side which language skill is required from the employees and which language is used for communication so it can be perceived as a facilitator if the individual possesses that language skill. Also, individuals who do not possess the common corporate language skill, and it is a barrier for their career mobility can take the initiative to learn it. When the common corporate language is a barrier for career mobility the official one language policy gives the option to the employees to learn the language. Possible supportive measures from the company side can be language trainings for example.

On the other hand, the common corporate language does not take into account the importance of communication, knowledge sharing and creating networks in local languages of different units in the company. This can lead to a situation where additional language skills are unofficially required from the employee. The unofficial requirements can present a more serious language barrier for career mobility than the

common corporate language strategy itself. Moreover, Muukari (2008) suggested in her research of the Swedish Handelsbanken in Finland that the common corporate language, which in this case was Swedish, can sometimes act as a push factor for professionally capable employees to leave the company due to their lack of language skills.

Second, Lingua Franca language practice is more flexible in the sense that the common shared language of each party can be used on a case by case basis; making knowledge sharing and communication more flexible thus acting as a facilitator for career mobility. Lingua Franca can also become a barrier for career mobility and effective communications and favor those with extensive language and communication skills. The risk is that language skills may deter attention from other factors affecting career mobility such as professional competence. Even though the outcome of Lingua Franca can often be using English, which is the most popular choice also for common corporate language in MNC's, the practice still differs as Lingua Franca does not have to be English. The open choice of language on a case by case basis may enable multilingual employees, or employees with key language skills, becoming gatekeepers of information.

Third, the multilingual language strategy creates clarity, in the same sense that the common corporate language strategy; taking into account the importance of different local languages. It requires also the commitment from the company side in providing different kinds of documents in different languages and language training for employees. From the individual side multilingual employees might perceive this language strategy as a facilitator for career development and employees lacking languages skills might perceive this language strategy as a barrier, or even confusing. As Lingua Franca, the multilingual language strategy may easily cause the gatekeeper effect favoring those with good language skills and cause disturbances in communication. Multilingualism can also be the outcome of non-management caused by the lack of clear guidance and language practices in the MNC.

The effect on an individual's own language competences on career mobility or the individual's perception of career success, have received little attention in academic research in the past. Where researchers have found that the requirements for employees' language skills in multinational corporations have risen, the reason why and how language skills affect the employees' career is still lacking (Piekkari, 2008).

Language skills have been found to provide enhanced opportunities for networking which can have a positive effect on career mobility in terms of options to choose from. For example, in Rossander et al. (2005) the Swedish speaking Finns were found to keep close contact also socially and not only in business, suggesting that a career opportunity is not always about what you know; but the correct persons knowing what you can do. Thus, language networks can present an opportunity to make yourself known.

Also, Muukari (2008) and Borenius (2009) found that language skills can provide opportunities at work beyond the employee's normal scope of duties which can affect the individual's perception of his/ her career success and provide further opportunities of advancement and acknowledgment. On the other hand, lack of language skills can leave certain positions inside the company outside the reach of the employee's capabilities, or without the cutting edge in comparison to another candidate for the position.

3   Methodology

This chapter explains the methods which were used in the empirical research for this study. First, the single case study design is presented and justified. Second, the data collection method is explained and reasoned including how the interviews were conducted, how observations were made and what other sources of data were used. Also, the validity and reliability of the data is examined.

3.1   Research method

The single-case study method for the empirical research was chosen because the theory building in the literature review serves as a basis to test in practice, in the context of the case company UPM, how the common corporate language can act as a facilitator or a barrier for career mobility. As well as, how individual language competence affects career mobility and how that influences the individual's perception of his/ her own career success.

According to Yin (2009) the single-case study can be used to confirm, challenge or extend a well-formulated theory. The single case study was chosen in order to receive a deep insight into the chosen case company and in order to collect in-depth data from the interviewees. Also, I felt that my experience from working at UPM for over four years observing the daily business there gave me the possibility to benefit from my prior experiences during the study. That could not have been achieved if I would have chosen another case company, or a second case company, to compare the results with and used the multiple-case study design.

More specifically, Yin (2009) states that the case study method allows the researcher to explore matters that are not easily covered by other research methods. Furthermore, Yin (2009) continues that case study research is applicable when there is no requirement for control of behavioral events but the subject matter concerns contemporary events. In my research the findings reflect the current linguistic

environment at UPM and naturally those may change over time. That is why the single-case study method was chosen for the empirical part of this study.

I chose a qualitative research method for the empirical part of the study as the main aim of this research was to find out how language and language skills affect a person's career in terms of mobility and success. Interviews with personnel from the case company, UPM-Kymmene Oyj, provide the opportunity to observe the views and experiences of the interviewees and to find out how they fit in to the prior research done on this subject. As Bogdan & Taylor (1975) have stated that qualitative methodologies produce descriptive data in people's own written or spoken words.

According to Moisander and Valtonen (2006) several empirical materials and methodological tools can be used in qualitative research. One positive aspect about qualitative research is that it gives the researcher quite a lot of freedom. In the data collections process I used the semi-structured interviews, observation and other internal sources of data like recruitment practices, training practices, internal data sources and HR practices; and other public sources of data to build up the chain of evidence.

3.2 Selection of the Case Company

The main reason for selecting UPM as the case company is that I have been working in the Global Human Resource department there for over four years. My work has given me the opportunity to be a part of a variety of HR related matters in the company, thus providing me with an insider insight to how language related matters are dealt with in the organisation.

The insider insight can serve as a limitation for the study if I would not be able to act as an objective researcher, but pursue a hidden agenda or steer and influence the results of the study in some way. This concern will be addressed in the reliability and validity section after the detailed description of the data collection process.

On the other hand, being an insider provides me with a pre-understanding of the subject I have chosen to study which can be seen as an advantage in creating an understanding of the results of the study (Gummeson, 2000).

Another reason to choose to study UPM was that in my experience it would provide an interesting ground to study language and career. The language matters on the organizational level can be highlighted for instance with that although the official company language is English, UPM operates in many different countries where the local languages are a prerequisite especially in HR related matters.

3.3   Data collection

The following sections describe the methods of collecting data for the empirical research. First, the process of how the interviewees were chosen, contacted and how the interviews were conducted will be described. Second, other observations about company language practices and other sources of data included in the empirical research will be presented.

3.3.1   Interviews

The interviews included in this research were conducted during February 2011 and March 2011. All together 12 interviews were conducted. The goal of the research was to find answers to two levels in language and career research. First, how the case company's common corporate language can act as a facilitator, or a barrier, for career mobility. Second, how the individual's language competences affect the career mobility, and the individual's perception of his or her own career success.

In order to receive interesting and valuable data the interviewees were divided into two categories. The first category was the individual interviewees who were interviewed for the purpose of finding out how language had influenced their personal career. The second category was the Human Resources representatives who were interviewed for the purpose of finding out how language practices in the case company affect careers in

the company in general. Due to the absence of an official language strategy in the case company the HR interviewees were also asked questions about language practices in recruitment, training and career management in the case company.

The interviews were semi-structured and the interviewees were encouraged to describe their experiences openly and freely. However, in order to ensure the preciseness of the results questions by the interviewer were also made when needed. The interview questions can be found in the Appendix.

A summarizing table of the interviewees can be found in Table 1 and Table 2. Six representatives were interviewed for each category. The information in the tables was gathered from a background form sent to the interviewees to fill in prior to the interview. The blank version of the background form can be found in Appendix I.

Kvale (1996) points out that interview as research method can be deceptively simple, it is easy to grab a tape recorder and start interviewing people. That is why careful preparations were made before the interviews were started beginning from the selection of interviewees followed by the structure of the interviews which will be described in the next sections.

Table 1: Summary of background form of individual interviewees

Name	Title	Location	Mother tongue	Other language skills	No of years in work force (not only UPM)	No of positions defined as most important during the career	Variation of service years in most important positions	No of years in current position
Piia Teppinen	PMO Senior Expert	Helsinki, Finland	Finnish	Swedish, English, German, French	7,5 full time (+ 5 years prior to completing studies)	4	1 – 2y 5m	2 months
Rikki Law	Head of Asia Pacific IT Service Centre (China)	Shanghai, China	English	Finnish	26	6	1 – 6	9 months
Jonathan Mitchell	IT Director, APAC	Shanghai, China	English	-	34	4	2 – 6	3 months
Aila Ahvenainen	Specialist, Invoicing	Kotka, Finland	Finnish	English, German	4 full time (+ 9,5 prior to completing studies)	2	3,5 – 6	4
Nina Law	Manager, Business Relations & Change Management	Shanghai, China	Finnish	English, Swedish, French, Italian, Polish	25	4	0,5 – 3	0,5
Sergio Bolivar	Specialist, Change Management	Helsinki, Finland	Spanish	English, Finnish	4	2	1 – 1,5	0,5

Table 2: Summary of background form of HR interviewees

Name	Title	Location	Mother tongue	Other language skills	No of years in work force (not only UPM)	No of positions defined as most important during the career	Variation of service years in most important positions	No of years in current position
Timo Lahtinen	Manager, Resourcing	Tampere, Finland	Finnish	English, Swedish	25	4	3 – 9	4
Anja Veenker	Specialist, Business HR	Augsburg, Germany	German	English, French	26,5	2	1,5 – 8	1
Tomasz Stoma	Manager, HR, Krakow Site	Krakow, Poland	Polish	English, French, Italian, Russian	6	4	1 – 2	1
Katri Länsiluoto	Manager, HR, Forest Finland	Valkeakoski, Finland	Finnish	Swedish, English, German	13	3	3 – 6	13
Minna Palho	Manager, HR, Global Functions	Helsinki, Finland	Finnish	English	10	2	1,5 – 2	1,5
Jaana Piikkilä	Manager, HRD, North Europe	Tampere, Finland	Finnish	English, German, Swedish	25	4	1,5 – 7	1,5

Interviewee selection

During autumn 2010, when I was writing the literature review for this research and studying other relevant background material, I also began processing which of my colleagues at UPM I could or should interview for this research. I also discussed the research approach and possible interviewees with then current manager Tuija Rinne, HR Vice President for Global Functions, and followed by Tuija's suggestion Riikka Walden, Director for Human Resource Development. I also openly discussed my Thesis subject in general with colleagues from my team and the HR community at UPM. Another important contributor for the preparation of interviews was our research group at Aalto University School of Economics and the University of Vaasa who were conducting similar interviews at other case companies with the difference that my research approach of the organizational aspect in language effects on careers was unique to my research.

During the course of autumn 2010 and the preparations for the empirical research I formed the view of a few initial interviewees that I contacted by e-mail asking for their contribution. The primary interviewees contacted included Timo Lahtinen and Anja Veenker from the HR interviewee group and Rikki Law, Nina Law and Piia Teppinen from the individual interviewee group.

The interviewees were happy to contribute to the research and it was not difficult to secure their commitment to the research. The most pressing matter was probably finding a time for the interviews that suited both parties, especially as Rikki and Nina Law worked in China. The participants were asked to fill out a background questionnaire form that was sent back to the interviewer. The background questionnaire was used to gather basic information about the interviewee so that the interview time could be focused. As the interviews contained specific terminology I wanted to familiarize and explain those to the interviewees as well. Thereafter, the interview was scheduled. I also told some background information about my Thesis subject in general at the start of the interview.

From these initial interviews, I used the snowballing technique for further interviewee selection and asked who the interviewees thought would also be valuable interviewees for me to contact. The result was that Timo Lahtinen suggested Katri Länsiluoto, Anja Veenker suggested Tomasz Stoma, Rikki Law suggested Jonathan Mitchell and Piia Teppinen suggested Sergio Bolivar. The interview with Nina Law had to be pushed back due to time constraints and was conducted later in the process among the last interviews. I thereafter contacted the suggested persons once again by e-mail, they sent me back their background forms and their interviews were scheduled.

In addition to these interviewee selections I later decided to interview Minna Palho from Global Functions HR in order to get a global viewpoint from HR perspective about the language practices and their influence on careers. I have worked with Minna for over four years and knew that she had almost ten years' experience from working at UPM in HR. Also Jaana Piikkilä, a former close colleague of mine from Northern Europe Human Resource Development was chosen to get a more complete view of training practices and the role of language in the company in that area. Jaana had also a specialty area as the UPM contact for educational institutions in Finland. In the individual interviewees' group I also decided to include Aila Ahvenainen from the Finnish Logistics unit in Kotka as my other interviewees worked in a decidedly more global environment.

<u>Structure of the interviews</u>

The interviews were scheduled either face-to-face or over the phone in the situation when a meeting otherwise could not have been arranged in a reasonable timeframe. From the individual interviewees Rikki Law, Nina Law, Jonathan Mitchell were interviewed over the phone due to the geographical distance. From the HR interviewees Anja Veenker and Jaana Piikkilä were interviewed over the phone because of interview scheduling would have been pushed back in order to manage a face-to-face meeting.

First, the interviewees received an e-mail where the general approach of the research was explained and they filled in a background questionnaire where the most important

terms used in the interview were explained, those were: career path, career mobility, career strategy and language strategy.

The interview questions were developed on the basis of the questions prepared by Maria Järlström and Tiina Jokinen at the University of Vaasa. For the HR interviewee group questions about the language practices and their effect on careers at UPM were added and for the individual interviewee group some questions in the original set of questions were omitted or replaced by more specific questions that focused on careers at UPM. However, the interviewees were encouraged to talk freely and the questions were asked in order to take the interview forward and receive the most important answers regarding the study.

The most important questions for individual interviewees were:

- *How planned has your career path been?*
- *Is career mobility important to you?*
- *How does know-how affect career mobility?*
- *What about knowledge, skills, attitude and other attributes?*
- *How has your own language skills affected your career decisions?*
- *How do your language skills affect your career mobility?*
- *Has UPM's choice of making English the official corporate language had an effect on your career? How?*
- *What does the term career success mean to you?*
- *How does career mobility affect career success?*
- *How important is career success for you personally?*

The most important questions to HR interviewees were:

- *Do you think career paths have changed in the past years?*
- *Is it possible to say what kind of career paths there are in UPM the most?*

- *How do persons' at UPM deal with changes in their career and does that affect career mobility?*

- *Do language skills influence career mobility in UPM? How?*

- *Does UPM's choice of English as official language affect career mobility?*

- *Do you think native English speakers have an advantage in advancing in their career more easily than for instance Finns?*

- *In your opinion, what are the main attributes that influence career mobility?*

- *Would UPM need an official language strategy? Why, or why not?*

- *Are there situations in your daily work when you struggle with language issues? Please give an example if yes*

- *What does the term career success mean to you?*

- *How does career mobility affect career success?*

- *What kind of changes/ developments do you think there will be in the future in terms of career management?*

The full extent of the interview questions can be found in Appendix 1.

The interviews were conducted either in Finnish or in English depending on the mother tongue of the interviewee. For the 'Findings' part of this research I have translated quotes from the interviews that were conducted in Finnish. All the interviews were recorded in order to ease the transcription process. The interviews were transcribed during the beginning of April, 2011.

3.3.2 Other Sources of Data

In order to receive a complete picture of language practices at UPM, especially due to the absence of an official language strategy, also other sources of data, besides the interviews, were used to construct the picture of language practices and language effects on careers in UPM.

Recruitment

Recruitment practices and the use of language in recruitment were derived from an informal interview with the member from the recruitment team. The discussion was documented but no specific questions or guidance was given to the interviewee, Marja Jaatinen, Senior Specialist for the North Europe recruiting team. I asked Marja to tell me how the recruitment language and media are determined and what kind of applications UPM receives. Also, I enquired what kind of image UPM has in the eyes of both external and internal candidates from what she has heard. Recruitment volumes were also under discussion.

Training & Development

UPM provides various trainings that are available for both managers and employees. According to the 70-20-10 learning principles applied in the company, 10 per cent of personal and professional development happens through class room training. Some training is targeted for managers only. Those include for example people leadership and team leadership courses. Moreover, there are also generic courses that provide expertise in a specific area like change agent training and project management courses that are available for also employees. Furthermore, some training courses like fire safety and first aid are legally mandatory for example at Mill Sites.

The observations on languages used in training were used to shed light on whether the language used in training acts as a facilitator or a barrier for participating in training as it can affect both career mobility and career success.

Development efforts are also made as a team or department. In general UPM's own HR personnel are trained to provide team development and related trainings to teams in different locations. The team development sessions are organized and conducted by the local Site HR on location together with regional HR training contact. In that way, it is possible to ensure that the local needs are met and development efforts are targeted where they are needed. The internal training language in team sessions can also be seen

as a facilitator or a barrier for participation and it can affect the outcome and usefulness of the sessions.

Employee Engagement Survey and Internal Partner Satisfaction Survey

The Employee Engagement Survey (EES) is a yearly survey conducted in the whole UPM in order to map employee engagement and manager effectiveness. EES is a major part of personnel development actions in the company. The languages used in EES were investigated in order to gather information on the multilingual practices of the company.

The Internal Partner Satisfaction Survey (IPSA) is also a survey conducted yearly by the Global Functions to their Business and Production customers. The purpose of the survey is to map how well the services of the support functions are serving business needs. The target group of the IPSA is mainly business management teams and some middle management representatives from key locations. The IPSA is used as contrast to the EES to reflect how UPM remains in line with the common corporate language policy.

Internal information sources & Human Resources practices

UPM's intranet pages were used as one data source as it is one of the main locations that employees use in order to receive news and information about the company.

Additionally, many HR related practices like availability of collective agreements and language of employment contract were considered and used as data sources for the study.

UPM's Internet pages and other public data

UPM's regional internet sites with the focus on the use of language were investigated. They represent the key operational countries or regions of UPM. Moreover, the language in which UPM provides its Code of Conduct was investigated.

Furthermore, other official publications, such as the Annual Report, the Griffin magazine and the language used in those was examined. Some recent additions to the UPM websites have been interactive sites such as UPM Forest Life and UPM Carbon Life. UPM Forest Life is an interactive video about the UPM Raflatac Innovation Proliner PP 30 presenting the latest innovation of UPM Label business. UPM Carbon Life is an interactive website about coexistence of paper making and environmental responsibility. In addition to these also promotional career videos were studied.

Before the reliability and validity of the research is discussed a final summary and the use of the various sources of data are documented below in *Table 3*.

Table 3: Data sources used in the empirical research

Timing, method and reason of use in study	Semi-structured interviews	Informal discussions and interviews	Recruitment practices	Training and Development practices	EES & IPSA	Internal information sources & HR practices	UPM's Internet pages and other public data
Timing & Method	Beginning of formal data collection process, method: face to face and phone interviews	Before beginning the research on previous literature and also at the end of the data collection process, method: informal open discussion about Thesis	Formal collection of recruitment practices made as informal interview at the end of the data collection process, observations made throughout the research process	Formal collection of languages used in training done at the end of the data collection process, observations made throughout the research process	Information gathering at the end of the data collection process, method: Research conductor as key informant as Global Functions HR contact for these practices	Information gathering at the end of the data collection process, method: Research conductor as key informant as member of Global Functions HR team	Information gathering at the end of the data collection process, method: review of UPM.com and related pages
Reason	Provide personal insight of interviewee to the research questions	Pinning the focus of the research in the beginning and providing additional insight to other findings made in the empirical research	Recruitment language has been found to affect careers in previous research → theory testing	Training and development opportunities relationship to career mobility and career success	Illustration of companywide Human Resource practices with differing approaches to language management	Illustration of multilingual language practices → theory development	Public and official examples of company language environment → theory development

3.4   Reliability and validity

The case study as research method has been questioned over time in terms of reliability and validity of the study. The quality of the research can be examined by looking at reliability and validity of the research methods (Yin, 2009). Yin (2009) states that there are four different criteria for determining the quality of the research: construct validity, internal validity, external validity and reliability.

The testing of internal validity is not valid for this study because this is an exploratory study (Yin, 2009). The testing of construct validity was achieved by using multiple sources of data to build up the chain of evidence of the findings of the study. I also asked two key informants, one individual interviewee and one HR interviewee to review the Thesis. The external validity was secured by using the theory from previous literature as basis for theory building. The reliability of the study was attained by using the case study protocol of the single-case study described by Yin (2009: 81).

The term triangulation means gathering data with different methods or gathering data from different sources regarding the same phenomenon (Ghauri, 2004). In this research data was collected from two interview groups, all together from 12 individuals, also observations on HR practices such as recruitment and training language were made, and data from other sources such as publications and company websites were used. This was done in order to receive a wholesome picture of the language practices and strategies in the case company and the effects on careers.

The reliability of the study relates also to the scenario that same data and same results could be obtained by another researcher conducting the same research. To ensure the reliability of this research the chain of evidence for the results in this study has been built up since the beginning for example in the literature review and documentation of the data collections process in this Thesis.

Nonetheless, it should be noted that some of the observations made have been formed during my four year career in the case company UPM and can be backed up by internal

process and guidelines yet an outside researcher would need a considerable amount of time to gather such information. However, this should not be seen as a limitation in the study but an advantage as very few Master's Thesis writers have the opportunity to make long-term observations in the case company.

As such, the validity and reliability of the study have been dealt with and in the next section the findings of the empirical research will be presented.

4   Findings

In this chapter the empirical findings of the Thesis will be presented. First, the case company will be presented followed by the discussion of the UPM approach to language management. Second, the language effects on careers in UPM will be presented based on the results from the interviews and other sources of data used in the empirical research part. The effects of language on careers will be discussed both from the organization's and individual's point of view.

4.1   Presentation of the Case Company

UPM was established in autumn 1995 when Kymmene Corporation and Repola Ltd and its subsidiary United Paper Mills Ltd announced their merger. UPM-Kymmene, officially started its operations on 1 May 1996. UPM has a long tradition in the Finnish forest industry. The company's first mechanical pulp mill, paper mills and sawmills started operations in the early 1870s. Pulp production began in the 1880s and paper converting in the 1920s followed by plywood production the decade (About UPM History).

UPM launched a new company vision and purpose in 2010 and started to profile itself as a *Biofore* company, wanting to differentiate itself from other more traditional forest industry companies. The transition from traditional products, such as paper, to more sustainable products like biofuels and nanocellulose guide the way of the company towards being the front runner of the new forest industry (UPM – The Biofore Company).

In 2009, UPM's sales reached € 7.7 billion and the company has shares listed on the NASDAQ OMX Helsinki stock exchange. The company has production plants in 15 countries and it employs approximately 23,000 people worldwide. The official company language is English (UPM – The Biofore Company).

4.2   The UPM approach to Language Management

When I started this research I knew already from working at UPM that the company does not have an official language strategy, yet being Finnish based multinational company the language issues affect the daily work of employees. The company official language is English as it is stated in official documents, for example UPM's website, and it is also something that is widely known and recognized by the work force (UPM – The Biofore company).

<u>Interview findings</u>

During the course of the interviews it became clear that at least the Global Functions in the company operate in the company official language very effectively. This view became strong especially when interviewing the English native speakers and non-Finnish speakers for the research. According to some comments the ability to use English language is enough in the business world, especially when working in the global functions; or when the native speakers have travelled around for business in UPM, people make an effort to speak English. However, it was recognized that the phenomenon of English as business language does not stretch throughout the entire company. One interviewee currently working in China with an extensive career around the world commented that:

"Of course I understand that if the position I got was in France or Germany in the Mill Site there, of course there would be a requirement to learn the local language but working in a global function, the business language is English"

Another comment from an interviewee who has worked in large scale global projects involving local Mill Site roll-outs commented:

"I faced difficulties when travelling to France to the Mill Sites, they are not very keen on speaking English. And I also worked in Rauma for a while where they have their own language…"

One of the HR interviewees had a strong opinion that UPM would need an official language strategy because the official common corporate language does not work in practice. In Finland, you cannot survive with only English, and encounter exactly the same challenge when talking about France and Germany.

In addition to the common corporate language policy, UPM applies a lot of multilingual elements to the everyday language practices of the company. This can be noticed when looking at the different websites of UPM which are represented in nine different languages. Most of the HR interviewees and also many of the individual interviewees were familiar with the policy of translating important documents and for instance the EES survey to English and "the big eight" other operational languages such as Finnish, German, French, Chinese and Spanish. Some of the interviewees wondered why there could not be an official strategy that would align what is anyway done in practice when it comes to language practices. The reason might have been given in their own answers to the question if they encounter difficulties caused by language issues in their daily work; some reported misunderstandings but the general view was that the existing practices were enough and it was clear that English is the main language for communication.

Yet, there were some reports of cultural misunderstandings and communication difficulties caused by English. An individual interviewee who is a native English speaker himself reported being in a meeting with Singaporeans and Chinese, where the Chinese claimed to the native English speaker that they do not understand what the Singaporeans meant. One HR manager who works in English on a daily basis reported difficulties when communicating with a colleague from the US about labour law matters. The latter example possibly stresses the importance of dealing with especially HR matters in each individual's mother tongue in order to avoid confusion. Many

interviewees also used the term "business English" as opposed to just "English" stressing the wide varieties of the level of English used in today's business world.

The multilingual approach to language matters was often seen as a must by the HR interviewees. It was clear to all that Global Function employees are expected to work in English and speak at least a good level of English; and it was also seen as a prerequisite to work in Global Functions in the first place. This view was also supported by the fact that the recruitment advertisements for Global Functions are as a rule in English and the applicant does not have to know Finnish at all in most positions. However, the lack of local language skills was seen as a barrier in social side by the individual interviewees.

"In Helsinki and in Poland, I have local friends, but their level of English has been good /.../of course when people relax they speak the local language but they also make an effort, when you're a foreigner, to include me and involve me and explaining the smaller things that I would definitely miss, if I didn't have local people around me that spoke English."

The extent of the barrier may also vary depending on the country in question:

"In Finland I felt much more comfortable in outside the office, on dinners and others, but in China, on the street, you have to adjust your sensitivity to fit in."

However, even basic language skills seemed to lower that language barrier:

"To clarify, I have always, whenever I have been in a foreign country, just in the sense of good manners, and being polite, wanted to learn to say "Hello" and "Good Morning" and "Thank you"… and have some basic skills outside work situations. I think it's part of this cultural chameleon thing to try and find the small things that help you fit in a bit.

On the other hand, the common corporate language was seen as a facilitator for career mobility by all interviewees both on HR and individual side. One native English speaking interviewee commented that:

"Anybody who can speak English at any level has the same advantage as native (English) speakers because anywhere you go in the world then you can communicate."

Also, the HR interviewees pointed out that the official common corporate language is also a statement from the company side to the employees on what the key language requirement is and where the company wants to position itself in the global world.

Recruitment

Based on a discussion I had with Marja Jaatinen, the Senior Specialist from Resourcing, the recruitment language in Global Functions is by rule English. Marja stated that it is really not even a discussion but a rule that all the recruitment advertisements are published in the official language of the company. In contrast, on Mill Sites the recruitment advertisement, both internal and external ones, are still in Finnish. The same is also true for the Forest department. The recruitment team plays an important role in providing their expertise in finding the right talent for the company. Marja says that the recruiting language plays a role in both building the image of the company and attaining the right talent for each position.

The choice of recruitment media is also important. Marja points out that an open vacancy advertisement in Sunday's Helsingin Sanomat, the biggest newspaper in Finland, is also an advertisement for the company as such. Still, most open vacancies are advertised online only; however, about 10 per cent ends up in printed media as well.

UPM receives more and more applications from people that do not speak Finnish at all. The European Union has made it possible for European citizens to choose where they work freely, but there are also increasing amounts of applications from Asia and the

Middle Eastern countries. Also, the recruits coming from outside the company have a global image of UPM. When asked why they have applied for a position in the company, many say that the reason is the willingness to work for a global firm with rotation possibilities and the option to work abroad and on a global scale, yet many stress the fact that they value UPM's Finnish origin.

According to Marja the most important information about the applying candidate is prior work experience and previous employers. As good as all positions in Global Functions require a very good, or at least good level of English. That is often non-negotiable, yet other languages are seldom a must but merely an asset. If the applicant is Finnish and the recruiting manager speaks Finnish, the interview is often held in Finnish but English language skills are still tested by asking the candidate to tell about his/ her current position or hobbies. Marja also explains that she often asks the reason the candidate has left his or her previous jobs in order to ensure that there is a natural and understandable reason for the career moves.

Given the size of UPM as a company the recruitment levels have been increasing again after a few years of cut-backs. The North Europe recruitment team took care of almost 1000 internal recruitments in the year 2010, and of those, over 200 were at the end external searches.

Training & Development

UPM provides various trainings that are available for both managers and employees. According to the 70-20-10 learning principles applied in the company, 10 per cent of the personal and professional development happens through class room training.

The language of training depend a lot of the subject matter and target group. Mill Site training is often held on the local language in order to ease the threshold of enrolling to training. Manager training like mentioned in the previous paragraph and general expertise training like change management or project management are often seen as also

networking opportunities. The common language is often English and the target group is such that they operate in English in their daily work as well.

The HR training centres are divided regionally so that managers and personnel have a local or regional contact person in charge of training management. The enrolment to training happens via a global portal for employees where all trainings are listed regionally and there is also a separate category for global trainings.

In that way, it is possible to ensure that the local needs are met and development efforts are targeted where they are needed. The sessions are held in the local language or in English if participants do not share a mother tongue. In general, all HR personnel are prepared to train and provide development sessions in the local language or the common corporate language.

Employee Engagement Survey and Internal Partner Satisfaction Survey

As described earlier, the Employee Engagement Survey (EES) is a yearly survey conducted in the whole UPM in order to map employee engagement and manager effectiveness. EES is a major part of personnel development actions in the company. The survey languages are English, Finnish, Chinese, French, German, Polish, Russian, Spanish and Estonian, so altogether nine languages. EES is a good example of how much time and resources are spent on translation activities that stretch beyond the official language of the company which is English. Naturally, the survey being one of the key indicators of the satisfaction and commitment of personnel, it is vital that as many people as possible answer the survey and provide their feedback. By providing it in the local languages, especially on local Mill Sites around the world, the risk of the survey language presenting itself a barrier for answering is lowered. The decision of providing it in eight languages besides English is defined by the major production countries that UPM is operational in.

The Internal Partner Satisfaction Survey (IPSA) described in the other sources of data is mainly business management teams and some middle management representatives from

key locations. The purpose of the survey is to map how well the services of the support functions are serving business needs. In IPSA the survey language is solely English. The target group is such that the language should not serve as a barrier for giving feedback.

<u>Internal information sources & Human Resources practices</u>

UPM has intranet pages available in English (for UK and US), Finnish, Chinese, German, French, Russian and Spanish. In addition to those most Mill Site locations have their own intranet pages or location/ country pages that link to relevant material for the site. For example, many HR related matters about employment are set by the nation's legal standards and have to be available in the person's mother tongue.

Many HR related practices for example in Finland are dealt with in Finnish; usually the person's employment contract is done with the person's mother tongue. This is done in order to ensure that everything that is stated in the contract is correctly understood. In the Global Functions HR team, we have noticed that more and more documents about employment, like the collective agreements, would also be needed in English and sometimes even Swedish, even when operating inside Finland. That is why also the HR personnel together with Corporate Communications does translation work internally in addition to outsourced translation services. In personnel related matters it is often most vital to ensure that the correct information is available for those who need it, in the required language. Due to the fact that there is no official language strategy the main rule is that everything is primarily available in English and in most cases Finnish, and many times also the most common seven other languages (Chinese, German, French, Polish, Russian, Spanish and Estonian).

<u>UPM's Internet pages & other public data</u>

UPM has 12 regional internet sites besides its main site upm.com which is in English. They represent the key operational countries or regions of UPM. All together you can find UPM websites in nine different languages. The German speaking countries:

Germany, Switzerland and Austria share the same main site even though they can be found as separate regional sites. The internet pages for UPM Spain and Uruguay are both in Spanish but they are two separate sites. The UPM main site and a separate site for the North American region are both in English (UPM Regional Websites).

The UPM Code of Conduct is available in 11 languages: English, German, Spanish, Estonian, Finnish, French, Malay, Polish, Russian, Swedish and Chinese.

Official publications, such as the Annual Report, are available in English and in Finnish. Another official publication that UPM produces is the Griffin magazine that is available as printed version in six languages: English, Swedish, German, Finnish, Spanish and Russian and as online magazine in addition to the previously mentioned languages in French (The Griffin Magazine).

UPM has produced interactive sites during recent years that also operate with multiple languages. UPM Forest Life is available in English, German, French, Finnish and Chinese (UPM Forest Life). Interactive video presenting the UPM Raflatac Innovation Proliner PP 30 is available in seven languages: English, German, French, Italian, Polish, Spanish and Russian (UPM Raflatac Proliner PP 30).

Some sites still pertain in only English. The UPM Carbon Life interactive website which tells about coexistence of paper making and environmental responsibility is only in English (UPM Carbon Life) as are the promotional career videos (Meet UPM).

4.3   Language effects on careers in UPM

In this section the language effects on careers in UPM are presented from the point of view of the organization and the individual. In the next chapter, a discussion of the findings in relation to the previous literature and theoretical framework will be discussed with suggestions to UPM.

<u>Language effects on careers in UPM from organizational point of view</u>

UPM is one of the biggest multinational companies with headquarters and majority of personnel in its country of origin which is Finland. Yet, like most other Finnish companies with international operations the common corporate language of UPM is English.

In my research problem statement I outlined that my premature insight on this matter based on my own experiences in working at UPM was that despite English being the common corporate language, especially Finnish would be raised as an important language skill among the interviewees and the non-Finnish speakers would possibly see that as a barrier for their career development.

During the course of the empirical research I quite quickly realized both from the interviews and other sources of data that despite UPM's Finnish roots the position of the Finnish language was not as strong as I believed. One of my non-Finnish speaking interviewees said that before he started working at UPM he felt that not knowing Finnish was a difficulty for him at his previous employers but since joining UPM it has not been an issue.

Most HR interviewees, especially those working in a global role felt that English was the one and only language skill that is really critical. However, the result might be affected by the fact that my individual interviewees were all from UPM's Global Functions, and Mill Site personnel were not included in this research. Even so, the result surprised me a bit because even though the HR interviewees on local level stressed the fact that in Mill Sites it is fairly important to know the local language in order to get into, and understand, the local culture, Finnish did not rise specifically above for example Polish, German or Chinese.

Therefore, the common corporate language being English can be seen as a facilitator for career mobility with a positive influence on the variety of the individual's career possibilities and success. From organizational point of view the outcome can be

interpreted as positive since by defining the common corporate language as English, UPM seems to be able to get the full potential from manning positions with the right people when language matters are not a hinder. The fact that English was recognized so strongly as the main language in UPM and no other local languages were raised to its level also lowers the potential for the gatekeeper effect of individuals with certain language skills.

Also in training and recruitment English was a rule in the Global Function environment. In this area, the global versus local differences became greater though; the recruitments and trainings in local production environment were almost as a rule in the local language.

In recruitment, the open vacancies in Global Functions were announced internally and externally always in English, enabling anyone with English language skills to apply for the position and allowing the company to choose the best candidate with the right set of skills and background. Also in recruitment, no other language skill requirement was raised to the level of English, but they were seen as an asset. One of my HR interviewees stated that career mobility can be influenced positively by language skills in the sense that if you are for instance a Business Controller in a local Mill Site in Finland, performing well in your work and possessing some other language skill, you might get the opportunity to move and work in a Mill Site in for example France or Germany and get valuable experience there. In that sense, multilingual people can be seen as a real asset for the company because they are able to transfer their professional skills to multiple environments.

From organizational point of view, English as common corporate language seems to work in favour of career mobility with a positive influence on success. However, the overall perspective of the linguistic environment did have an effect on the daily life and networking of the individual employees. For example, in HR many documents, rules and guidelines are primarily in Finnish which then requires translation activities to English. The cut between the Global Function environment and the Business cannot and definitely should not be so big that one does not influence the other. Besides the

resources needed for heavy translation activities, English being the choice of common corporate language also means for most members of the personnel that they are at least required to speak two languages, their mother tongue and English.

Moreover, as the focus has shifted so much from the importance of knowing local languages foreigners working in countries like China and Russia can experience major difficulties in understanding the local culture and settling in the country. For example, the level of English language skills in Russian sawmill is so low that you cannot even communicate with colleagues without an interpreter. Furthermore, two out of three from my individual interviewees currently working in China stressed that knowing Chinese brings you miles closer to understanding the Chinese culture and Chinese way of thinking which is essential when doing business there. Hence, there might lay a risk in trusting the common corporate language in the sense of cultural understanding and personnel well-being which should not be overlooked.

Language effects on careers in UPM from individual point of view

When asked what the interviewees thought affects career mobility the most, the most popular answers were attitude, experience and flexibility. Language skills were also seen as important when asked specifically if language skills affect career mobility. What was interesting is that the interviewees that were multilingual stated that their language skills affected more their own reasoning of what kind of positions they strived for because they wanted to use their language skills at work.

One interviewee explained that he had gotten additional task beyond his current positions thanks to his mother tongue and said that in general that had a positive effect on his perception of his own career success. Another interviewee told that she needs to help out her colleague who struggles with English on a daily basis, thus receiving also the helping role besides her own work. The extra helping role was experienced as stressful from time to time but in general made her more familiar with the colleague's area increasing her own professional skills in the unit. Many of the native Finnish interviewees told that they rather used German or French with respective colleagues

instead of English whenever possible and felt that it had a positive effect on how approachable they appeared to the colleagues. On HR side, the networking abilities and capabilities were identified as an important facilitator for career mobility and success.

One interviewee said that she had applied for a position that she did not get due to the fact that she did not know the local language well enough. Naturally, this was something that she felt was one of the major reasons herself but we can only speculate if it is in fact the case. Of course, there are positions with a local language requirement and that was also brought up by the HR interviewees. There are many tasks that can be delegated and shared within the team but in some cases, like dealing closely with personnel matters, that require an understanding of the local legislation that need to be handled in the local language.

In the recruitment side, from individual perspective I was surprised to learn that more and more non-Finnish speakers apply to work for UPM in Finland and the role of Finnish has really taken the backseat in terms of the position as Lingua Franca even in Finland. It was positive to find that despite the historical roots in the Finnish Forestry business UPM was seen as an international player by applicants. Interestingly, Marja Jaatinen said that many applicants value UPM's Finnish roots and also my Polish HR interviewee Tomasz Stoma said that applicants often say that they want to work for UPM because of the stability.

My second insight made at the start of this research was that on individual level, persons working at UPM feel that language skills are a facilitator for their career development, especially if they have Finnish, German or French language skills which are large non-English speaking operational countries

This statement can be confirmed by many of my interviewees. However, I was partly surprised how easily my native English interviewees spoke about their lack of language skills. It was actually something that was discussed quite a lot with Rikki Law and Jonathan Mitchell. They both stressed the fact that being native English speaker, in business, people always make the effort to speak English and sometimes that has even

had a negative effect on their own desire to learn the local language. But both stressed the fact that English is the business language, which was also stressed by many other, and local languages help you adapt to the culture and feel more comfortable yourself.

5 Discussion and recommendations

In this chapter the implications of further theory building on the relationship between language and careers will be made based on the findings of this research. Furthermore, recommendations to the case company UPM will be made in terms of language effects on careers.

5.1 The relationship between language and careers

The research on previous literature presented pros and cons of language strategy options from the viewpoint of career mobility, the findings were summarized in Figure 2. The empirical research on the common corporate language strategy as facilitator or barrier for career mobility implicated that the choice of English as common corporate language was generally seen as a facilitator for career mobility. Moreover, if the individual possessed English language skills it had a positive effect on the individual's career mobility within the Global Functions and that in turn had a positive influence on the individual's perception of his/ her own career success.

On the other hand, the empirical research did not suggest that the interviewees, in the individual interviewee group or HR interviewee group, saw foreign language skills as unimportant for career mobility and career success as suggested by Enderwick and Akoorie (1994) and Bloch (1995). Rather language skills were seen as a competitive advantage, a facilitator for relationship and network building for new career opportunities.

Also, the common corporate language being English was seen as a neutral and clear language choice for an international company. Additionally, the level of English language skills of employees was ensured always in the recruitment phase in order to neutralise disturbances in communication due to lack of language skills. This

counteracts the phenomenon described by Mäkelä et al. (2007) where inadequate language skills have a negative impact on interaction and knowledge sharing.

According to the empirical findings the individual's own language competence affected his/ her career decisions in the way that multilingual employees strived to make career choices that enabled them to benefit and use their language skills. The same phenomenon was found by Muukari (2008) in her research about employees of Handelsbanken in Finland. The multilingual interviewees also reported similar events such as Borenius (2009) about receiving additional tasks beyond the scope of their regular duties thanks to their language skills which had a positive influence on their own perception of their career success.

The native English interviewees did not see their level of English language knowledge as an advantage over anyone with any level of English language. Some interviewees used the term "business English" which also came up in the research of Rossander et al. (2005) describing that the English language skill requirement in business being relatively achievable for also non-native speakers. In addition to language skills, when asked about what affects career mobility, the interviewees identified professional skills and track record of previous positions, attitude and communication/ social skills as factors affecting career success. The open recruitment process of UPM was also identified as a major facilitator for career success by all the interviewees.

Figure 5 illustrates the revised empirical research based on the findings of the empirical research. In the framework the factors perceived as facilitators for career mobility in UPM were identified in the middle box of the left hand side. The facilitators' positive effect on career mobility also influenced the employee's subjective as well the objective measures of career success. The perceived facilitators were: UPM strategy, practices and common corporate language, professional competences, common corporate language skills, local language skills, attitude and communication skills.

Organization level barrier for career mobility was local language requirement in certain positions where local language knowledge is needed. That was found to be a barrier for career mobility and affecting the subjective but not objective perception of the

employee's career success. Furthermore, the individual level barrier: lack of local language skills was not necessarily perceived as a hindrance from the company side for career mobility as the common corporate language is perceived as enough in Global Functions in general. However, on individual level, the barrier can affect subjective career success in terms of difficulties with fitting into the culture and social life of the country.

Figure 5: The revised theoretical framework of the Thesis based on findings from the empirical research
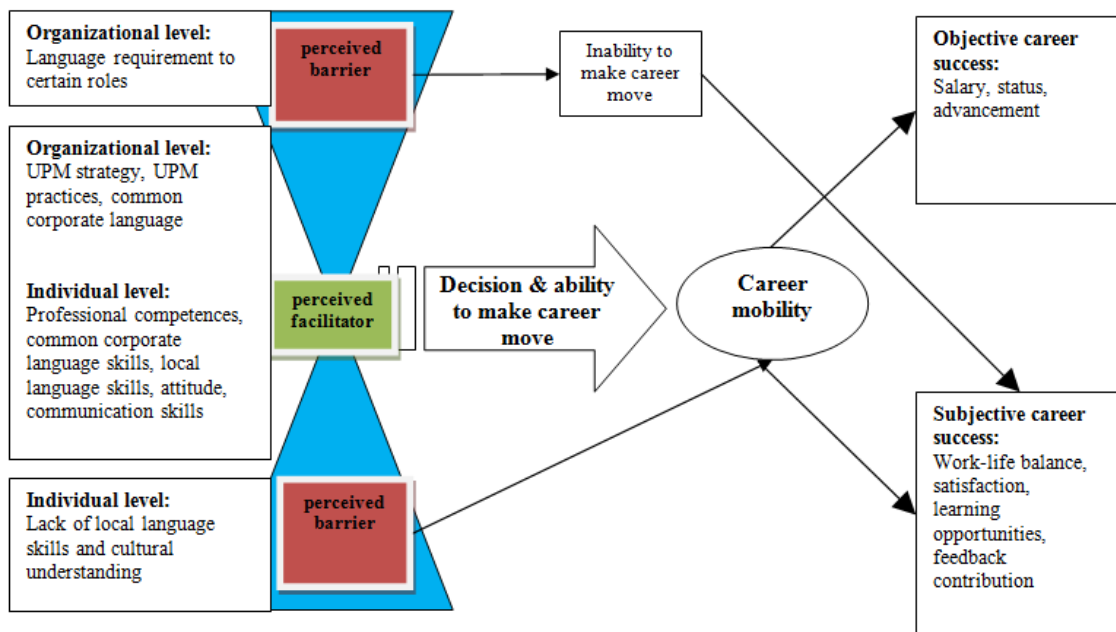
5.2 Recommendations to UPM

The findings of this research should be seen as case sensitive to UPM and the Global Functions operational environment but some general suggestions that highlight the importance of language strategies and practices can be made.

Multinational companies and employees working in them operate in a multilingual environment on a daily basis. Even though the case company UPM does not officially admit to having an official language strategy apart from the common corporate language being English, one HR interviewee questioned why the common corporate language could not be made an official language strategy.

Also, the interviewees felt that the unofficial practices and the case by case determination of what needs to be available in also certain local languages seemed to be enough to guide their daily work. In UPM, the variety of languages which were used in internal processes like the Employee Engagement Survey or the availability of important documents such as the Code of Conduct varied a lot from process to process and therefor, one implication of the study is that an official language strategy could bring clarity to the variations. One suggestion for UPM would be to gather these practices and make the documentation official.

In terms of the effects of language skills on individual career mobility and success the empirical findings in this study suggest that in the case of UPM's Global Functions the position of English is in practice so strong that it is a facilitator for career mobility.

Moreover, other language skills we found to provide additional opportunities for employees to widen the scope of their responsibilities and building networks which had a positive effect on their perception of their own career success. Also, the interviewees currently working in a country they did not fully speak the language of stressed the importance of learning the basics in order to understand the culture better and facilitating their own abilities to settle in the country.

Overall, the findings in this study implicate that despite the dominant position of English as the Lingua Franca of the business world the importance of language skills should not be overlooked especially by the individual. Furthermore, employees' language skills and the use of them to a full extent seem to be an untapped resource in the case company.

6   Conclusion

In this final chapter the main findings and limitations of this study will be presented. Finally, suggestions for further research on this topic, the relationship between language and careers in MNC's, will be made.

6.1   Main findings of the study

The case company UPM's official common corporate language is English yet the empirical research showed that in internal processes such as recruitment and training as well as most publications are often also provided in the local language of the largest operational countries. The result is this mix of official common corporate language and different practices, some determined on a case by case basis, which can be confusing.

Still, in my research focusing on the Global Functions operational environment where business is conducted mostly in English, the common corporate language was seen as a facilitator for career development, as well as facilitator for knowledge sharing and communication in general. However, it was acknowledged that English language skills would not suffice in Mill operation environment where the local language is needed due to the fact that English is not widely spoken despite its official status as common corporate language. This limitation will be further dealt with in the next sections describing the limitations of the study in general and suggestions for further research.

It was particularly interesting to find that the English language did not only have the official status of common corporate language but the English language really dominated the linguistic playing field in the Global Functions at UPM. This was confirmed by many aspects of the study; among those the interviewees that had worked in many different countries from Poland to China, as well as the fact that despite UPM's strong Finnish roots, more and more employees working at UPM in Finland do not in fact speak Finnish at all.

The second research question was harder to decipher. The interviewees defined their perception of career success mostly by subjective terms meaning that career success for them was being happy about what they got to do, contributing to the company's and co-worker's success and being able to develop and challenge themselves.

When specifically asked about the importance of salary level, or other subjective career success determinants, one interviewee said that of course it was something that had to be on a certain level. Moreover, two interviewees, one of the individual group and one HR interviewee said that their career goal was definitely not aiming to be a Director for something but being recognized as an expert in their own field and getting experiences to widen their knowledge rather than moving up in the hierarchy.

The questions how language skills affect the interviewees' career success were approached from the angle if their language skills had affected their career decisions and if that in its turn had had an effect on their perception of career success. The multilingual employees felt that their language skills had affected their career decisions either so that they had chosen positions that allowed them to use their language skills or so that they had gotten additional responsibilities at work thanks to their language skills which had given them new opportunities and made it easy to build networks. This had a positive influence on their perception of their own career success.

On the other hand, the interviewees who used only one or two languages at work did not feel that their lack of language skills had affected their career success, however many noted that they had always worked in an English speaking business world so language had not been an issue.

As the second matter of individual language skills affecting career mobility the individual interviewees all stressed the fact that English being the common corporate language at UPM enables anyone with English language skills to move from position to position, from country to country or from project to project in the Global Functions where English is the dominant business language.

Especially one of the HR interviewees with experience from the Sawmill business pointed out that knowledge of local languages was still a must when it comes to understanding the culture of the countries and being able to get into the social life. This was backed up especially by the interviewees currently working in China where they all felt that understanding the Chinese language helped considerably in understanding the Chinese way of thinking.

All interviewees felt that it was probably important from the social, non-work related perspective, to know the local language yet it was not seen as a barrier for career mobility if you did not know it.

Communication in MNC's is one of the daily challenges among the employees and being bilingual or almost in practice trilingual myself (I use Finnish, Swedish and English almost on a daily basis at work) I felt that knowing different languages must be an asset for career mobility and success. At least it has helped me to establish wider networks in a faster pace that I would imagine I would have been able to do without any language skills.

One key contribution this Thesis can make is to emphasize the importance of sufficient language management in the case company UPM and underline the potential of multilingual employees in terms of effective knowledge sharing. I was happy to find that in the Global Functions the English language has both officially and in practice reached the status of common corporate language thus enabling effective communication among those who work across borders. Furthermore, this finding emphasized how globalization and the changing nature of careers becoming boundaryless will also change the linguistic thinking in global companies in the future.

However, the importance of language skills cannot be overlooked, especially by companies originating from a small Nordic country of only little over five million Finnish speakers and many companies have made the choice already to choose English as their official language. Without any official status, the local language used in UPM lead their own lives in the daily work of its employees meaning that sometimes

resources might be wasted in translation activities that could be counteracted by having a clear language strategy stating what is needed and reflecting the actual operational environment more truthfully.

6.2 Limitations

The focus of the empirical research is limited to UPM as the case company and more specifically, the Global Functions in UPM, meaning the Functions supporting the core businesses in Paper Business Group, Engineered Materials and Energy and Pulp. . By definition the scope of the Global Functions is global and the language effects on careers might differ greatly from a research done from local Mill Site or production point of view within the same MNC.

Moreover, the empirical study does not include several data collection points which would shed more light on the subject by providing long-term data from the case company. *The data collections process was limited to autumn 2010 and spring 2011. The interviews were conducted in February 2011 and March 2011.*

Furthermore, the informant group was limited to six Human Resources representatives and six Global Functions personnel representatives. This limitation was set due to time constraints in order to be able to complete the study during spring 2011.

6.3 Suggestions for further research

It is obvious that globalization has had its effect on companies as well as how we view careers. In terms of how companies define their view on language matters is still quite vague as the findings show in this case study of UPM. *Language skills of employees is probably one of the most untapped resource companies possess, yet it seems to be quite difficult to tap into without generating a lot of extra work like databases with language skills and other attributes to match the company needs.*

In terms of suggestions for further research relating to this study I feel that the aspect of UPM's Mill Site, local operations, could have provided more controversial results than this study of the fairly monolingual Global Functions. Already in Finland alone, UPM operates with three languages, Finnish, Swedish and English and my belief is that the local languages will remain important to UPM for a long time still, largely due to the production intensity of the industry.

Furthermore, on a larger scale, the same kind of study on careers and languages could be conducted in a different MNC, taking the same theory away from the context of UPM and seeing if the results would differ for instance in the metal industry or some other field which would be more knowledge intensive putting more emphasis on the importance of communication overall.

It will be interesting to see if the dominance of English will continue to persist in business or if the importance of language skills will rise from the weakening economic growth in the west and the rise of Asia. Certainly, changes to one side or the other will also affect career paths, career mobility and career success.

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8   Appendix I

8.1   Preparation for the interviews

<u>Primary e-mail to interviewees</u>
<u>Finnish</u>

Hyvä xxxx,

Kirjoitan graduani aiheesta kielen ja kielitaidon merkityksestä työuriin UPM:ssä. Empiirinen tutkimukseni koostuu haastatteluista UPM:n HR henkilöstön sekä funktioiden henkilöstön kanssa.

Toivoisin että Sinä suostuisit yhdeksi haastateltavaksi ja kertoisit omien kokemustesi kautta mikä on kielen merkitys omaan uraasi ja miten näet että kielitaito vaikuttaa työuriin UPM:ssä henkilöstöhallinnon näkökulmasta. Jos sinusta tuntuu siltä että et halua yhdeksi haastateltavaksi sinun ei ole missään nimessä pakko suostua. Toivoisin että voisit silloin suositella jotakuta muuta ketä voisin mahdollisesti haastatella sinun sijaan.

Liitteenä tässä sähköpostissa on taustatietolomake sekä muutama määrittely aihealueista joita haastattelu pitää sisällään. Toivoisin että voisit lähettää taustatietolomakkeen täytettynä minulle takaisin sekä samalla ehdottaa sinulle sopivia haastatteluaikoja (haastattelu kestää noin tunnin). Voit tietenkin soittaa minulle ja sovitaan puhelimitse sopiva haastatteluaika.

Odotan innolla yhteydenottoasi!

Ystävällisin terveisin,
Aija

<u>English</u>

Dear xxx,

I'm writing my Thesis on the effects of language and language skills on careers in UPM and my empirical research will consist of interviews with UPMers both from HR and from Global Functions.

I was hoping that You would agree to be one of my interviewees to tell about your own experience on how language has affected your career and how language affects careers in UPM from Human Resource Management point of view. However, if you do not wish to take part in the interview, it is by no means mandatory. I would then really appreciate it if you could suggest someone from UPM that would be a possible candidate I could interview in your place.

Attached in this e-mail is a background form for all interviewees, together with some key definitions that I will be asking you about in the interview. Please send back your filled in form together with some suggestions for available times we could schedule the interview (approx 1 hour) for. Or you can naturally call me to set up a time as well.

I'll be looking forward to talking to you.

Best Wishes,
Aija

<u>Background questionnaire sent to Interviewees</u>

<u>Taustatiedot/ Background information</u>

Nimi/ Name:

Nimike/ Title:

Korkein tutkinto/ Highest Degree attained:

Työssäolovuodet (ei ainoastaan UPMllä)/ Number of years in the work force (not only UPM):

Palvelusvuodet nykyisessä toimessa/ Number of years in current position:

Tärkeimmät työtehtävät tähän mennessä/ Most important previous positions

Nimike/ title	Organisaation taso/ organisation level*	Työvuodet/ no of years in position

* trainee, specialist, senior specialist, manager

Kielitaito/ Language skills
Äidinkieli/ Mother tongue:
Muut kielet/ Other languages

  PUHEKIELI/ SPOKEN SKILLS   KIRJOTUSKIELI/ WRITTEN SKILLS
(merkitse taso X:llä/ mark level with X)   (merkitse taso X:llä/ mark level with X)

Kieli/ language	Sujuva/ fluent	Hyvä/ good	Kohtalainen/ Fair	Sujuva/ fluent	Hyvä/ good	Kohtalainen/ Fair

Haastattelussa käytettävien termien määrittelyt/ definitions of terms used in the interview

Urapolku/ Career path

Urapolku viittaa henkilön työssään kohtaamiin tapahtumiin sekä hänen tekemiinsä päätöksiin jotka ovat vaikuttaneen hänen uransa kehittymiseen ja nykyiseen tehtävään päätymiseen./

Career path refers to events a person encounters and decisions that he/she makes that affect his/ her career formation and brings him/her to the position that he/she is today.

Uraliikkuvuus (vertikaalinen – horisontaalinen)/ career mobility (vertical – horizontal)

Uraliikkuvuus viittaa henkilön tekemiin tehtävien vaihtoon joko saman työnantajan palveluksessa eri työnantajien välillä. Uraliikkuvuus on perinteisesti käsittänyt hierarkkisesti ylöspäin suuntautuvaa urakehitystä mutta voi hyvin myös viitata horisontaaleihin siirtymisiin hierarkkisesti saman tai jopa alempitasoisten tehtävien välillä./

Career mobility refers to career moves and changes of positions that a person can make either in the service of one employer or several different employers. Traditionally, career mobility has been seen as only upward vertical movement to a higher position but it can entail moving horizontally or even to a hierarchically lower position than the current one.

Urastrategia/ career strategy

Urastrategia viittaa henkilön itse tekemään suunnitelmaan siitä mitä haluaa saavuttaa urallaan./

Career strategy refers to a plan a person himself/ herself makes about achievements he/she wants to attain during his/her career.

Kielistrategia/ language strategy

Kielistrategia viittaa yhtiössä olevaan viralliseen sisäisen ja ulkoisen viestinnän strategiaan. Kielistrategia ohjaa yhtiössä työskentelevien henkilöiden työtä viestintään

ja kielikysymyksiin liittyvissä asioissa. Kielistrategia määrittelee esimerkiksi yhtiön virallisen kielen tai millä kielellä viralliset julkaisut on oltava saatavissa./

Language strategy refers to an official internal and external communication strategy. A language strategy guides the personnel's work in communication and language related matters. A language strategy defines for instance the official corporate language of the company as well as sets the rules for in which language official documents have to be available.

Interview questions to Human Resources interviewees

Urapolku/ Career path

1. Millainen urapolku sinulla itselläsi on ollut?/ What kind of career path have you had yourself?

2. Kuinka monta kertaa olet urallasi vaihtanut/ How many times have you changed your
- tehtävää/ position
- työnantajaa/ employer

3. Tekisitkö jotain toisin?/ Would you do something differently if you had the choice again?

4. Ovatko urapolut muuttuneet mielestäsi viime vuosina?/ Do you think career paths have changed in the past years?

5. Onko mahdollista kuvailla, millaisia urapolkuja UPM:stä löytyy eniten?/ Is it possible to say what kind of career paths there are in UPM the most?

6. Kuinka pitkään kokemuksesi mukaan henkilö on samassa tehtävässä tai samalla työnantajalla?/ In your experience, how long does a person stay in one position/ employed by same employer?

7. Vaihtavatko ihmiset nykyään useammin työtehtävää/ työnantajaa kun ennen?/ Do people change jobs more often than before?

UPM on tehnyt mittavia muutoksia kaikkiin liiketoimintaryhmiinsä ja yleisiin toimintoihin (funktioihin) viime kahden vuoden aikana./ UPM has undergone significant

changes in its business structure in all business areas and functions in the last two years.

8. Miten mielestäsi ihmiset yleensä käsittelevät muutoksia työpaikalla/ työtehtäviinsä? In your opinion, how do people in general handle changes at work/ in their career?

9. Miten ihmiset UPM:llä suhtautuvat muutoksiin urallaan ja onko sillä vaikutusta uraliikkuvuuteen yhtiössä? /How do person's at UPM deal with changes in their career and does that affect career mobility?

10. Onko se mielestäsi lisännyt tai vähentänyt ihmisten halukkuutta aktiivisesti hakea muutosta uralleen?/ Has it increased or decreased people's willingness to actively seek changes in their career?

11. Pitäisikö ihmisten hakea enemmän liikkuvuutta uralleen?/ Should people seek more career mobility?

12. Onko mielestäsi uraliikkuvuus tärkeää toimihenkilölle/ työntekijälle? Miksi?/ In your opinion, is career mobility important for an employee? Why, or why not?

13. Onko uraliikkuvuus on mielestäsi yhteydessä henkilön ammatilliseen osaamiseen?/ In your opinion, is career mobility related to the employees professional skills?

14. Vaikuttaako mielestäsi kielitaito uraliikkuvuuteen yleisesti? Miten tai miksi ei?/ In your opinion, do language skills influence career mobility in general? Why, or why not?

15. Vaikuttaako kielitaito uraliikkuvuuteen UPM:llä? Miten?/ Do language skills influence career mobility in UPM? How?

16. Onko UPM:n virallisen yrityskielen valinnalla (englanti) merkitystä uraliikkuvuuteen?/ Does UPM's choice of English as official language affect career mobility?

17. Onko mielestäsi äidinkielenään englantia puhuvilla etulyöntiasema uralla etenemisen mahdollisuuksiin verrattuna esimerkiksi suomalaisiin?/ Do you think native English speakers have an advantage in advancing in their career more easily than for instance Finns?

18. Mitkä ovat mielestäsi tärkeimmät uraliikkuvuuteen vaikuttavat tekijät?/ In your opinion, what are the main attributes that influence career mobility?

19. Minkälainen ympäristö, henkilöstöpolitiikka ja käytännöt tukee uraliikkuvuutta?/ What kind of environment, policies and practices enhance career mobility?

20. Minkälainen ympäristö, henkilöstöpolitiikka ja käytännöt estävät uraliikkuvuutta?/ What kind of environment, policies and practices hinder career mobility?

UPM does not have an official language strategy

21. Tarvitseeko mielestäsi kansainvälinen yritys virallisen kielistrategian nykypäivän liiketoimintaympäristöön?/ In your opinion, do you think an international company needs a language strategy in today' business world?

22. Tarvitsisiko UPM virallisen kielistrategian? Miksi?/ Would UPM need an official language strategy? Why, or why not?

UPM follows certain guidelines in language issues (for instance availability of documents in different local languages)

23. Onko UPM:llä tarpeeksi kielikäytäntöjä ja ohjeita päivittäisen työn tarpeisiin?/ Are there enough language practices and guidelines in UPM to guide everyday work?

24. Puuttuuko joku tarvittava ohje?/ Is the something that is missing that would be needed?

25. Onko sinulla päivittäisessä työssäsi kielellisiä haasteita? Millaisia?/ Are there situations in your daily work when you struggle with language issues? Please give an example if yes

Uramenestys/ Career success

26. Mitä sana *uramenestys* tarkoittaa sinulle? What does the term *career success* mean to you?

27. Onko uramenestyksen mittarit mielestäsi muuttuneet viime vuosina? Miten?/ Have the measures for career success changes during recent years in your opinion? How?

28. Onko mielestäsi y-sukupolven (1980 jälkeen syntyneet) suhtautuminen uramenestykseen erilainen kuin aikaisempien sukupolvien?/ Do you think there is a difference in how the younger generation (born after 1980) perceives career success apart from previous generations?

29. Miten uraliikkuvuus liittyy mielestäsi uramenestykseen?/ How does career mobility affect career success?

30. Minkälaisia muutoksia/ haasteita näet työurien hallinnassa tulevina vuosina?/ What kind of changes/ developments do you think there will be in the future in terms of career management?

(Ketä muu sinun lisäksesi sopisi haastateltavaksi tähän tutkimukseen?/ In addition to yourself, who do you think I should interview for this research?)

Interview questions to individual interviewees

Uratausta/ Career background

1. Miten olet päätynyt nykyiseen tehtävääsi?/ How did you end up in your current position?

2. Millainen urapolkusi on ollut?/ What kind of career path have you had?

Suunnitelmallisuus ja urastrategiat/ Structure and career strategies

3. Kuinka suunniteltu urapolkusi on ollut?/ How planned has your career path been?

4. Onko urasi edennyt suunnitelmien mukaan? Miksi?/ Has your career developed according to your plans? Why?

5. Oletko pyrkinyt edistämään uraasi? Miten?/ Have you strived to enhance your career? How?

6. Miten haluaisit urasi kehittyvän jatkossa?/ How would you like your career to develop in the future?

7. Tekisitkö jotain toisin urallasi? Miksi?/ Concerning your career would you do something differently/ change something? Why?

Uraliikkuvuus (vertikaalinen – horisontaalinen)/ Career mobility (vertical – horizontal)

8A. Miten arvioisit sanallisesti valmiuttasi harkita esim. uutta työtä, vastuualuetta, tiimiä, organisaatiota, tai työnantajaa?/ How would you evaluate your readiness to pursue for example, a new job, responsibility area, team, organization or employer?

8B. Arvioi valmiutesi asteikolla 1-10 (1 matala -10 korkea)/ Evaluate your readiness on the scale from 1 to 10 (1=low; 10=high)

9. Onko uraliikkuvuus tärkeää sinulle? Miksi on tai ei ole?/ Is career mobility important to you? Why or why not?

10. Millaisiksi koet omat mahdollisuutesi uralla liikkumiseen? How would you evaluate your ability to make career moves?

11. Miten mielestäsi UPM pyrkii edistämään uraliikkuvuutta?/ In your opinion, how does UPM aim to enhance career mobility?

Osaaminen ja ura/ Competences and career

12. Millainen merkitys osaamisella on uraliikkuvuuteen? How does know-how affect career mobility?

13. Miten tiedot, taidot, asenteet, tai muut ominaisuudet vaikuttavat?/ What about knowledge, skills, attitude and other attributes?

14. Osaatko kertoa esimerkin omasta kokemuksestasi? Can you tell an example from your own experience?

Kielitaito ja ura/ Language skills and career

15. Miten oma kielitaitosi on vaikuttanut urapäätöksiisi?/ How has your own language skills affected your career decisions?

16. Miten kielitaitosi vaikuttaa uraliikkuvuuteesi?/ How do your language skills affect your career mobility?

17. Millainen merkitys äidinkielelläsi on uraasi? How has your mother tongue affected your career?

18. Miten kielitaitosi vaikuttanut uraasi UPM:llä?/ How do language skills affect a persons' career at UPM?

19. Onko konsernikielellä on merkitys uraan?/ Does the corporate's official language affect person's career?

20. Onko UPM:n konsernikielen valinta (Englanti) vaikuttanut uraasi? Miten?/ Has UPM's choice of making English the official corporate language had an effect on your career? How?

21. Oletko huomannut sen vaikuttavan lähityöpiirisi uraan? Miten?/ Have you noticed it having effect on your close job circles careers? How?

22. Suhtautuisitko UPM:ään työnantajana erilailla jos konsernikieli olisi suomi? Miksi?/ Would you think differently of UPM as an employer if the official corporate language was for example Finnish? Why?

Uramenestys/ Career success

23. Mitä sana *uramenestys* tarkoittaa sinulle? What does the term *career success* mean to you?

24. Onko uramenestyksen mittarit mielestäsi muuttuneet viime vuosina? Miten?/ Have the measures for career success changes during recent years in your opinion? How?

25. Miten uraliikkuvuus liittyy mielestäsi uramenestykseen?/ How does career mobility affect career success?

26. Miten tärkeää uramenestys on sinulle?/ How important is career success for you personally?

27. Miten tyytyväinen olet omaan uramenestykseesi?/ How satisfied are you with your career success?

28. Mitä uskot urallasi tapahtuvan tästä eteenpäin?/ What do you think will happen in your career in the future?

(Ketä muu sinun lisäksesi sopisi haastateltavaksi tähän tutkimukseen?/ In addition to yourself, who do you think I should interview for this research?)