

Language courses as tool to motivate employees in South Bohemian enterprises

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Abstract

Employee motivation is a key to the success of any company. There are many ways to enhance employee motivation. This article deals with corporate training and education in the South Bohemian region with a special focus on language courses as a tool to motivate employees. The authors analyse how and to which extent companies in the South Bohemian region use language courses as an employee benefit in the form of language courses, what foreign languages are mostly taught and required within these courses, and also employee perception of this benefit, and whether there have been any changes related to the Covid-19 pandemic. For the purposes of the research, a questionnaire survey was used and distributed among employees of 20 companies in the South Bohemian Region in order to answer the formulated research questions. Based on the results of the research, it can be concluded that language courses are one of the most commonly used employee benefits, although their form appears to be influenced by the number of employees in a company. The research results also showed that the Covid-19 pandemic has affected the form of the courses and that the respondents are fully aware of the advantages and disadvantages of online and offline language courses.

Keywords: motivation, language courses, intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, employee benefits, corporate training, South Bohemian Region

Introduction

Most companies currently strive for succeeding or even survival in this unstable market environment. Employee motivation plays a major role in gaining a competitive advantage in the strong competition between companies, as motivated employees are usually

efficient ones. Companies, regardless of their size or sector they operate in focus on establishing a strong and positive relationship with their employees.

Nowadays, employers have a wide range of benefits to motivate their employees. In the situation when there is a lack of qualified employees in the labour market, employers, especially when actively looking for new employees, try to attract them by various bonuses and benefits, e.g. extra days off, working from home, flexible working hours, company car or phone, or financial or other support of leisure time activities, one of them being the possibility to attend language courses. Globalisation and internationalisation are two growing trends in the current world, and knowledge of foreign languages is being increasingly emphasized. The knowledge of at least one foreign language increases chances for graduate employability on the job market; the importance of this for companies is obvious. When striving for entering a foreign or international market, having employees who speak the language of the target market provides companies with a competitive advantage, especially those operating in the sector of sales and services, as it enables employees to understand better the culture of the country, helps them avoid misunderstandings in communication, and accept assigned tasks.

The objective of this paper was to analyse the offer of benefits as motivational factors most frequently used in the companies in the South Bohemian region, with a special focus on language courses. The paper aimed at identifying the situation in corporate language education and the motivation of employees to actively participate in such courses. Based on the literary research on this topic, the following hypotheses were formulated:

Hypothesis 1. *Language courses are the most commonly offered benefit in South Bohemian companies.*

Hypothesis 2. *Because of the vicinity of Germany and Austria, German is the most taught language within the corporate language courses.*

Hypothesis 3. *Language courses are motivating for employees*

Hypothesis 4: *The coronavirus pandemic and the measures adopted to prevent the spread of the coronavirus has affected the form of corporate language courses.*

Literary research

The productivity of employees and the whole company is directly related to employee motivation. A way to gain a competitive advantage in the market is to motivate and retain human resources (Salah, 2016). Motivation thus plays an important role.

Mullins (2002) defines motivation as a driving force to achieve personal objectives and to meet their needs or values. Motivation is based on needs, values, and personal goals. According to the author, needs, values, and objectives are individual; logically, motivation is also specific for each individual, as it is based on his or her needs and values, which form individual goals. According to Váchal and Pártlová (2008, p. 41), motivation is “a complex set of various factors that represent a driving force for human activities that regulate

behaviour of an individual; in a way, it is a psychological regulation of an employee's acting." Dessler (2009) claims that motivation is a force that makes an employee behave in the way that leads to achieving the goal set.

There are more types of motivation. Legault (2016) mentions intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, where intrinsic motivation refers to the behaviour motivated by internal reward. Deci (1973) believes that as for intrinsic motivation, there is no apparent reward for the behaviour except for the activity itself (e.g. volunteering just because I want to help). Extrinsic motivation is of instrumental nature; its objective is to achieve a different result separable from the activity itself, e.g. volunteering because it looks good in CV.

According to Dobre (2013), motivation and employee performance are closely interconnected; they are basic factors of the long-term success of any company. Measuring company performance is important for its management, as it provides information on the development and success of the company. On the other hand, there is a relationship between employee motivation and efficiency of the company. Employee dissatisfaction could negatively affect the performance and efficiency of the entire company. Individual employees are different; therefore, they should be motivated in different ways (advantages, benefits, job satisfaction, better working environment, etc.). It is thus necessary for companies and their managers to understand what motivates their employees in order to be able to maximize the performance of the company.

Traditional motivational theories focus on specific elements that motivate employees to improve the efficiency of the company. For example, according to Maslow's theory of needs and motivation (Maslow, 1943), there are five basic categories of needs (physiological, safety, social, ego, and self-actualization), while the theory of equity formulated by Adams in 1963 states that employees strive for equity between themselves and other employees. Current research on motivation, however, is an interdisciplinary issue, which includes neuroscience, biology, and psychology, with the aim to bring traditional theories of motivation together into a more complex theory, which includes traditional management, human resources, behaviour of the company with new perspectives in neuroscience, biology, and psychology. According to Lawrence and Nohria (2002), human nature is the basis of employee motivation. There are four basic drivers – acquiring, bonding, learning, and defending., where the reward system is related to acquiring, company culture is connected with bonding, learning is connected with the possibility to adjust working conditions or work as such, and the processes of managing the performance and acquiring resources are connected with defending (Lawrence and Nohria, 2002, Nohria, Groysberg and Lee., 2008).

Employee motivation is one of the basic tasks of a manager. According to Kmecová and Teřlová (2017), a manager is a person who “stimulates and manages activities of other people in the organization, tries to make employees work so that the objectives of the organization are achieved.” It is important for managers to be aware of employee interests, priorities, and goals. Managers need to know the primary intrinsic motivation of employees prior to creating the motivational system of the organization in order to be able to stimulate the efforts of the employees to achieve maximum results with minimal costs. In some cases, profit or material

rewards are less important than recognition, flexible working hours, more days off, career growth, etc. When adequately used, these methods enable retaining the loyalty of employees and ensure a high level of their motivation.

Companies motivate their employees by means of both financial and non-financial factors that improve employee satisfaction and motivate employees to better performance. Both financial and non-financial factors are directly related to work performance. According to Burton (2012), an efficient system of recognition and rewards might motivate employees, thus increasing the productivity of the whole organization.

Many researchers believe that financial motivation plays a more important role when motivating employees since money enable employees to satisfy their basic needs as well their need to own things and “have power”. Gupta et al. (1998) concluded in their research that financial motivation is indeed effective. However, there are also non-financial (internal) factors which play an important role in motivating employees. According to Mansaray-Pearce et al. (2019), non-financial motivational factors include recognition provided by the superiors, job rotation, degree of independence in performing assigned tasks, success, development of competencies, the possibility to plan and work independently, being informed, possibility to participate in determining the goals. Non-financial motivation is very important because “if employees are not satisfied with these aspects, even well-paid employees may leave the company”. Companies with a sophisticated system of non-financial benefits may attract motivated and talented employees (Armstrong and Brown, 2010).

Preference of financial or non-financial motivation is related to a number of factors such as the age of employees (Ashkanani, 2014, Hitka et al., 2019), job position (Asad and Dainty, 2005), gender (Lorincová et al., 2019), etc. According to Mansaray-Pearce et al. (2019), non-financial rewards affect motivation more when salary achieves a certain level.

Armstrong et al. (2010) admit that management of rewards can never be a hundred percent right. The task of a manager is to find the best system for each organization.

Language competencies are becoming increasingly important mainly due to strengthening cooperation with foreign countries. According to Tlapa et al. (2019) published by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic, Czech export in 2018 amounted to CZK 4.2 trillion, which accounted for 67% of the GDP.

An extensive survey conducted by the Czech statistical office concerning further education and training of adults, the interest in further education increases with the degree of education attained. Further training is predominantly focused on language courses; 78% of the courses were attended for the purpose of work. 88% of such courses were fully or partially financed by employers; 79% of the courses were attended within the official working hours. According to the CSO, one-fifth of the respondents study foreign languages for the purpose of work; on the other hand, almost 42% of adult Czechs believe they do not need any further education. This argument was mentioned mostly by men; women do not attend such courses for family reasons.

Data and methods

For the purpose of the research, employees of 20 companies operating in various sectors in the South Bohemian region were addressed. The data for the research was collected by means of a questionnaire survey containing 20 multiple-choice and open-ended questions. The questionnaire was compiled and distributed among the employees by means of both paper and web-based questionnaire (Survio). The responses obtained by means of paper questionnaire were evaluated together with the responses obtained via a web-based questionnaire. The compiled questionnaire is presented in Appendix 1.

A total of 50 employees of different participated in the survey, where the research sample consisted of 29 women and 20 men; one person did not want to specify the gender. Most responses (29%) were obtained from the respondents aged 41–55 years, which accounted for 58%. As for the job position of the respondents, 20 respondents work in administration, 12 respondents in production, 4 respondents in management, and 14 respondents selected the category “Other”. The structure of the research sample is shown in Tab. 1 below.

Tab. 1 Structure of research sample

GENDER		
Respondents by gender	Number	Percentage
Male	20	40%
Female	29	58%
Doesn't say	1	2%
In total	50	100%
AGE GROUP		
Respondents by age	Number	Percentage
Male (18-25)	4	8%
Male (26-40)	6	12%
Male (41-55)	10	20%
Male (over 55)	-	
Female (18-25)	-	
Female (26-40)	7	14%
Female (41-55)	21	42%
Female (over 55)	1	2%
JOB POSITION		
Job position	Number	Percentage
Management	4	8%
Production	12	24%
Administration	20	40%
Other	14	28%

Source: Authors

Results

In the previous chapters, four hypotheses were formulated to meet the objective set. This chapter presents the results of the individual hypotheses.

In order to verify the hypotheses formulated, the respondents answered a questionnaire (online or paper form) containing 20 open-ended, multiple-choice, and closed questions. The results were processed using the online tools of Survio. The responses to open-ended questions were processed and analysed by the authors. Due to the extent of the questionnaire, only the most important findings will be presented in this contribution. Tables and graphs referring to individual questions are presented in Appendix 2.

The first part of the questionnaire concerned the basic information about the respondents (their age, gender, position in the company – questions 1–3 in the questionnaire). In the following part, we will focus on individual hypotheses.

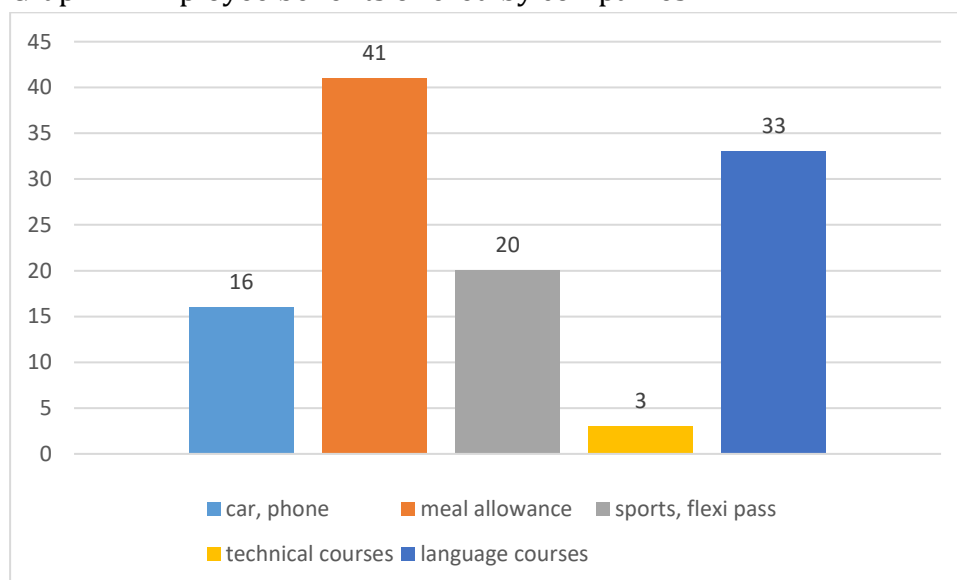
Hypothesis 1: *Language courses are the most commonly offered benefit in South Bohemian companies.*

Hypothesis 1 was formulated to which extent language courses are used as a tool to increase employee motivation. The validity of the hypothesis was verified using question 5 from the Questionnaire in Appendix 1: What benefits does your company offer to its employees? where the respondents choose from car and/or phone, meal allowance, support of sport activities, courses to acquire/improve technical skills, and language courses. The responses indicate that language courses, together with meal allowance, are among the most frequently offered benefits. The analysis of the responses obtained showed that companies usually use a combination of various types of benefits. Only 24% of respondents stated that they can use 1 benefit only, while 4% mentioned a combination of 3 and more types of benefits. Other questions focus in more detail on the support provided by employers. Graph 1 below shows the structure of the responses to Question 5, indicating that the most frequent benefit is meal allowance, while language courses are the second most common benefit.

The remaining part of the questionnaire focuses on a specific employee benefit in the form of language courses. Here, 42% of the respondents stated that language courses are offered to all employees. 34% of the respondents argue that this benefit is offered only to employees in specific positions; 2% of the respondents claimed that the possibility to attend language courses is offered to top management only, while 20% admitted they are not able to answer this question. Question 9 dealt with the support provided to language courses from the side of employers. As a response to this question, 42% of the respondents stated that language courses are paid for by the employer and the employees are allowed to attend them within their working hours. 30% of the respondents claimed that language courses are fully paid for by the employer; however, employees can attend them in their free time only. According to 13% of the respondents, the employer provides only partial financial support (to certain amount) to language courses but allows the employees to attend them within their working hours, compared to 5% of the respondents, whose courses are also

partially paid for by the employer but they can attend them in their free time only. Only one respondent stated that he/she is allowed to attend the courses within his/her working hours but without any financial support from the side of the employer. The possibility that the employer does not provide any support to language courses, be it in the form of enabling their attendance within the working hours or any financial support, was not mentioned; 3 persons mentioned a different form of support.

Graph 1: Employee benefits offered by companies



Source: Authors

Tab. 2: Support provided by employer

Form of support	
Language courses are fully paid for by the employer and I can attend them within my working hours	17
Language courses are fully paid for by the employer but I cannot attend them withi my working hours	12
Language courses are partially paid for by the employer and I can attend them within my workig hours.	5
Language courses are partially paid for by the employer but I cannot attend them within my working hours	2
My employer does not finance the language courses but I am allowed to attend them within my working hours	1
There is no support from the side of the employer	0
Other forms of support	3

Source: Authors

Hypothesis 2. *Because of the vicinity of Germany and Austria, German is the most taught language within the corporate language courses.*

A part of the questionnaire focused on finding out which language is the most taught or required one within the language courses offered by companies in the South Bohemian region. There were several questions concerning the importance of foreign languages for specific companies or specific employees (Question 4 and 14 concerning foreign cooperation of individual companies and the respondents' personal experience with working abroad, and Question 5 concerning specific languages taught and required by employers). Due to the location of the Czech Republic, it was assumed that foreign partners and customers of the companies operating in the South Bohemian region are predominantly from German-speaking countries (Germany, Austria) and thus the language taught and required most by the employers is German. The analysis of the results showed that most commonly taught languages are English (26 responses) and German (29 responses). English was mentioned in 26 responses, while German in 29. 7 respondents admitted they do not know the answer to this question. The discrepancy concerning the number of responses/respondents is due to the fact that most companies offer English and German. Based on the results, we can see that the hypothesis was confirmed; however, there is only a slight difference between German and English in terms of the languages most frequently taught in corporate language courses.

Hypothesis 3: *Language courses are motivating for employees*

Hypothesis 3 focused on employee perception of language courses as a motivational tool. The validity of the hypothesis was verified using questions 7, 11, 12, 13, 15. The questions focused on the form of the courses; from the perspective of Hypothesis 3, specifically question 11 is important on how the respondents perceive the language courses they attend. The results show that the majority of respondents perceive language courses as motivating, as 34 out of 39 respondents stated they attend language courses voluntarily in order to improve their language skills, and 4 respondents claimed that attendance is compulsory, yet they perceive language courses as a benefit. Only one respondent indicated that compulsory attendance in the language courses is perceived negatively.

The motivation of employees to attend language courses is also confirmed by responses to questions 12-14 concerning the practical use of a foreign language. The responses indicate that 74% of the respondents need a foreign language in their position, where 22% communicate in writing only, 2% only for spoken communication, and 44% of the respondents use a foreign language both in written and spoken communication. This information is in a certain contradiction with the responses to Question 14, where only 28% of the respondents claim they have personal experience with working abroad. However, we can say that the hypothesis was confirmed.

Hypothesis 4: *The coronavirus pandemic and the measures adopted to prevent the spread of the coronavirus has affected the form of corporate language courses*

In the period when the whole world faces the coronavirus crisis, it could be expected that various measures taken to prevent its spread will affect a lot of activities within companies. This led to the formulation of Hypothesis 4 above. Question 17 aimed specifically at changes in the form of language courses. The responses indicated that in 55%, language courses were suspended due to the restrictions adopted to slow down the spread of the coronavirus. In 30%, the form of the courses was changed, where respondents mentioned specifically transition from offline to online form. Only 15% of the respondents stated that the form of the courses did not change (see Tab. 2 below). Hypothesis 4 was thus confirmed.

Tab. 3 Influence of the pandemic on language courses

Changes caused by the pandemic		
No change	6	15%
Courses were suspended	23	55%
Change in the form of the courses	13	30%

Source: Authors

Discussion of results

Besides confirming or rejecting the hypotheses formulated, the analysis of the responses provided several other interesting findings.

The first hypothesis concerned the question of whether language courses are the most commonly offered benefit. Although the hypothesis was not confirmed, the results showed that language courses, along with meal allowance, are the most common benefits offered by employers. The support to language courses from the side of employers was analysed using other questions in the questionnaire, which aimed at the nature of the language courses. Less than 50% of the respondents stated that the possibility to attend language courses is offered to all employees in the company; in other cases, there were certain limitations. 38% of the respondents from the companies that support language courses stated they have the possibility to choose the form of the course (individual or group). 22% of the respondents can attend group courses only; 8% stated that the choice depends on the position of the employee. Here, we can assume that company size may play a role. As the questionnaire was anonymous, it was not possible to divide the employees into groups depending on the size of the company they work in; however, it is probably much easier for a small company to ensure the possibility to attend language courses for all companies. Similarly, company size might also influence the offered form of the course. 46% can choose between individual and group courses; 28% are allowed to attend group courses only, while 20% of the respondents admitted that the possibility to choose depends on the position in a given

company. The support provided by employers might be evidenced by the fact that all respondents confirmed support from the side of the employer, either in the form of financing the courses or by enabling the employees to attend the courses within their working hours.

As for Hypothesis 3, we may conclude that language courses are motivating for employees. This is evidenced by the fact that most employees attend language courses even though they are not required to by their employer. The responses to other questions also showed that employees are motivated by the fact that their company has some form of cooperation with foreign companies or customers (Question 4), command of a specific foreign language is necessary in their position, because they actively use a foreign language at work (Question 12 and 13) for written and/or spoken communication. The respondents had also a possibility to describe a preferred focus of the language course, where a vast majority of respondents prefer the combination of a general language and language for a specific purpose depending on the company's specialization.

Interestingly, the progress of employees seems to be not checked anyhow by employers, as the majority of the respondents (70%) state there is no control from the side of the employer. This means most employees do attend the language courses on a voluntary basis; it can thus be concluded that language courses do represent a benefit appreciated and required by employees.

Due to the current situation, we considered it necessary to find out whether and how the pandemic and the related restrictions have affected the offered language courses. The measures adopted by the Czech government aimed at reducing the movement of persons and required most employees to work from home, which was naturally reflected in the organization of the language courses. The changes resulting from the measures taken included suspension of the courses or change of their form from offline to online courses. Only a small percentage of respondents claimed the form of the courses remained unchanged, which may, of course, be due to the fact that some courses had been offered in the online form even before the pandemic. We were also interested in the reactions of the respondents to the changes (Question 18). Most of them were dissatisfied with the suspension or the online form of the courses; as for the transition to online courses, the respondents were asked to specify the advantages and disadvantages of this form of teaching (Question 19). The advantages mentioned by the respondents include saving of time due to the fact that it was not necessary to travel to courses; thanks to this, the lecturers were more flexible and willing to comply with specific requirements concerning the time of the courses. The transition to the online form also required using specific platforms; the necessity to learn to work with them in a way may represent another advantage. The most frequently mentioned disadvantages were technical problems and the resulting worse quality of picture and sound; in group courses, it sometimes happened that more participants spoke at the same time. The respondents also mentioned they miss personal contact with the lecturer; others spoke about various health problems related to spending too much time working with a computer.

In the last question, respondents were asked to provide their opinion to the given issue.

Several interesting findings were obtained, which could lead to adopting certain changes, thus improving the form of the courses for employees. The respondents mentioned e.g. insufficient support of such courses from the side of the state, the fact that language courses represent a way to maintain the knowledge acquired even at the times when the possibility to use a foreign language is significantly limited due to the restrictions adopted, in some cases, the termination of the language course lead the employees to find some others outside and pay for them themselves. A few respondents negatively spoke about the fact that the company does not enable employees at lower positions to attend a language course but expects them to be have a command of a given language. These opinions could make the government think about how to make language courses accessible to a wider range of employees, e.g. by providing financial support from the state.

Conclusion

Currently, companies have many possibilities to motivate their employees. Besides financial motivation, there are also non-financial motivational tools that are often preferred by many employees. For this purpose, a questionnaire was compiled, which examined benefits in general, with a special focus on language courses and employee motivation to active participation in such courses. Language courses might be an employee benefit that would be beneficial both for employees and employers, as having employees who have a command of one or more foreign languages, especially the languages of the target foreign market would provide the company with a clear competitive advantage. For the purposes of this research, several hypotheses were formulated, which were confirmed or rejected on the basis of the responses obtained.

The responses showed that language courses, together with meal allowance, represent one of the most frequently offered benefits. Companies offer various types of support. This can be due to the fact that it is possible to address a relatively high number of employees at the same time at relatively low costs compared e.g. to providing company car or telephone. The possibility to choose a specific form of a language course is probably related to the size of the company; the attendance in language courses is mostly on a voluntary basis. This indicates that language courses are motivating for employees, which is probably also evidenced by the fact that in terms of the content of the language courses, most respondents prefer a combination of a general language and language for specific purposes according to the specialization of the company. The vicinity of Germany and Austria leads us to the assumption that the most frequently taught and required foreign language is German. This was confirmed by the responds of the respondents; however, the difference between English and German is not so big.

The research also confirmed that the coronavirus pandemic has had an impact on corporate language education since language courses were suspended in most companies, or transferred to the online environment. Within the research, the most common advantages and disadvantages from the perspective of employees – participants of the courses were specified.

Given the current situation, other possible restrictions can be expected. However, in a way, this might represent a challenge for both employees and employers consisting in finding a prompt and efficient way to react to such situations. Moreover, online courses bring another advantage, as having to learn to use various platforms may help improve employee IT skills.

The research limitation is a small number of respondents. The added value of the research is the finding what languages and what specific form the respondents need and are interested in, which could improve the cooperation between the educational system and business practice in terms of language education.

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Appendix 1. Language courses as employee benefit - questionnaire

1. Gender *(Choose one answer only)*

- a) Female
- b) Male
- c) I don't want to answer

2. What's your age? *(Choose one answer only)*

- a) 18 – 25
- b) 26 – 40
- c) 41 – 55
- d) Over 55

3. What is your position in the company? *(Choose one answer only)*

- a) Production
- b) Administration
- c) Management
- d) Other (please specify): _____

4. Is there any form of foreign cooperation in your company? *(Choose one or more answers)*

- a) Yes, we have a foreign partner/partners
- b) Yes, we are a foreign company with a subsidiary in the CR
- c) Yes, we are a Czech company with a subsidiary abroad
- d) Yes, we have foreign customers
- e) No

5. What benefits does your company offer to its employees? *(Choose one or more answers)*

- a) Car, phone
- b) Meal allowance (canteen, meal coupons, etc.)
- c) Support of sport activities, flexi pass, etc.
- d) Courses to acquire/improve technical skills (driving licence, welding course, ...)
- e) Language courses – please specify the languages (German, English, French, ...):

If your company does not offer language courses, please continue with Question 20

6. Language courses can be attended by: *(Choose one answer only)*

- a) All employees
- b) Employees in specific positions (those who work with foreign customers, management,)
- c) Top management
- d) Other specification (e.g. only full-time employees, employees with specific qualifications, principle of seniority, etc.) Please specify:

7. Participation in language courses is: *(Choose one answer only)*

- a) On voluntary basis (offered as an employee benefit)
- b) Compulsory (required by employer in order to improve the language skills necessary for a specific position/quality performance)

8. Can you choose a specific form of the language course? *(Choose one answer only)*

- a) Yes, I can choose between individual or group language courses
- b) I can attend an individual course
- c) I can attend a group course only
- d) Only employees in certain positions can choose a form of the course
- e) Other – please specify: _____

9. What is the support from the side of the employer? *(Choose one or more answers)*

- a) Language courses are fully paid for by the employer and I can attend them within my working hours
- b) Language courses are fully paid for by the employer but I cannot attend them within my working hours
- c) Language courses are partially paid for by the employer and I can attend them within my working hours
- d) Language courses are partially paid for by the employer but I cannot attend them within my working hours
- e) My employer does not finance the language courses but I am allowed to attend them within my working hours
- f) There is no support from the side of the employer
- g) Other forms of support – please specify: _____

10. Does the employer check your progress? *(Choose one answer only)*

- a) No
- b) Yes (please specify): _____

11. How do you personally perceive the possibility to attend language courses? *(Choose one answer only)*

- a) My attendance is voluntary, I want to improve my language skills
- b) My employer requires my attendance in the language courses but the courses are interesting for me
- c) I participate in the language courses only because I have to

12. Is knowledge of a foreign language important in your position? *(Choose one answer only)*

- a) Yes
- b) No

13. Do you communicate in a foreign language at work? *(Choose one answer only)*

- a) No
- b) Yes, but only for writing
- c) Yes, for both writing and speaking
- d) Yes, but only for speaking

14. Do you have experience with working abroad? *(Choose one answer only)*

- a) Yes
- b) No

15. What kind of language courses do you prefer? *(Choose one answer only)*

- a) General language
- b) Language for specific purposes
- c) Combination of both

16. Does the current form of language courses suit you? *(Choose one answer only)*

- a) No
- b) Yes
- c) Yes, but I would change some things (Please specify):

17. Has the pandemic and the related restrictions affected the language courses in your company?

(Choose one or more answers)

- a) No, there have been no changes
- b) Yes, the courses have been suspended
- c) Yes, partially – their form has changed (from offline to online, from group courses to individual courses and vice versa, etc.) Please specify:

18. If the courses were suspended, what reaction has it caused?

19. If the form of the courses has changed from offline to online, name please advantages and/or disadvantages you perceive:

20. Would you like to add some more comments?

Appendix 2 Graphs and tables to questions

Questions 1 – 3 *Structure of respondents*

Gender		
Respondents by gender	Number	Percentage
Male	20	40%
Female	29	58%
Doesn't say	1	2%
In total	50	100%
Age group		
Respondents by age	Number	Percentage
Male (18-25)	4	8%
Male (26-40)	6	12%
Male (41-55)	10	20%
Male (over 55)	-	
Female (18-25)	-	
Female (26-40)	7	14%
Female (41-55)	21	42%
Female (over 55)	1	2%
Job position		
Job position	Number	Percentage
Management	4	8%
Production	12	24%
Administration	20	40%
Other	14	28%

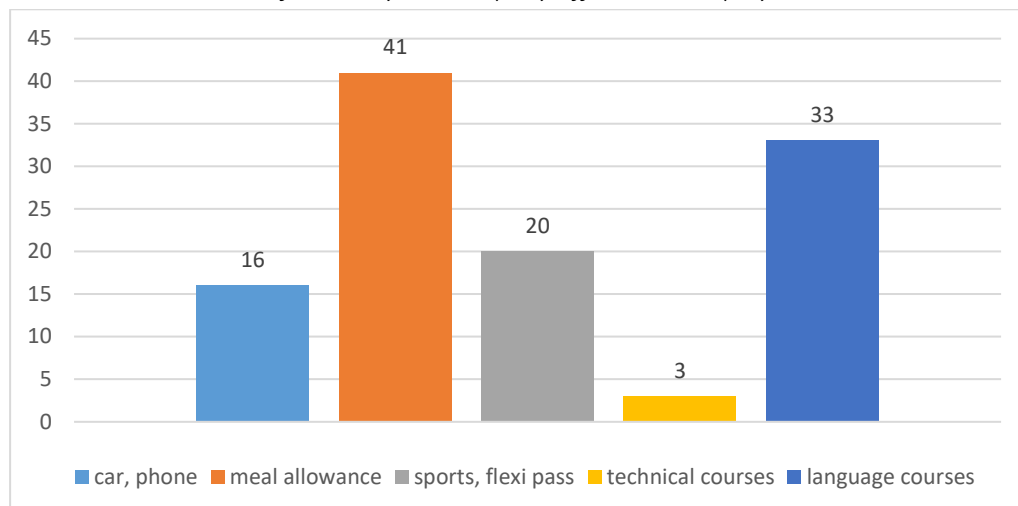
Question 4: *Is there any form of foreign cooperation in your company?*

Foreign cooperation	
Foreign partner/partners	14
Foreign company with a subsidiary in the CR	28
Czech company with a subsidiary abroad	3
Foreign customers	10
No form of foreign cooperation	3

Question 5 *What benefits does your company offer to its employees?*

Language courses as employee benefit		
English only	4	8%
German only	7	14%
English, German	22	40%
No language courses	10	20%
I don't know	7	14%

Question 5: *What benefits does your company offer to its employees?*



Source: Authors

Question 6: *Language courses can be attended by:*

Possibility to attend language courses		
All employees	21	42%
Only employees at specific positions	17	34%
Top management	1	2%
Other criteria	1	2%
I don't know	10	20%

Question 8: *Can you choose a specific form of the language course?*

Possibility to choose a form of the courses	
Individual or group courses	18
Individual courses only	1
Group courses only	11
Only employees at specific position can choose	8
Other	1

Question 9: *What is the support from the side of the employer?*

Form of support	
Language courses are fully paid for by the employer and I can attend them within my working hours	17
Language courses are fully paid for by the employer but I cannot attend them within my working hours	12
Language courses are partially paid for by the employer and I can attend them within my working hours.	5
Language courses are partially paid for by the employer but I cannot attend them within my working hours	2
My employer does not finance the language courses but I am allowed to attend them within my working hours	1
There is no support from the side of the employer	0
Other forms of support	3

Question 10: *Does the employer check your progress?*

Checking progress by employer	
No	27
Yes	12

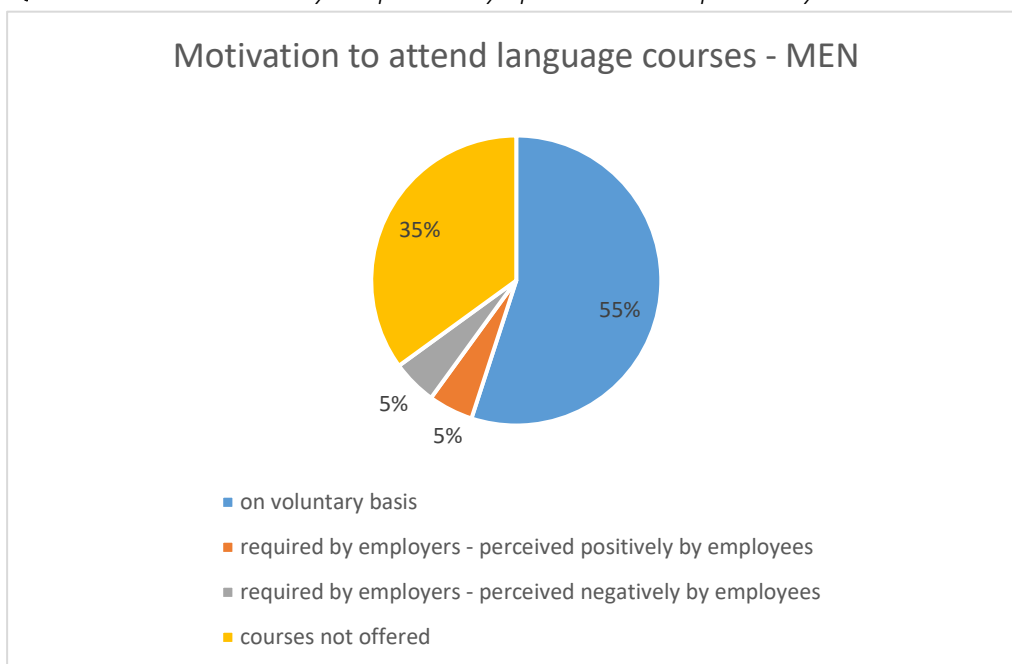
Question 10 *Does the employer check your progress?*

Forms of checking employee progress	
Tests	10
Random participation of employer in language courses	1
Interview with employer	1

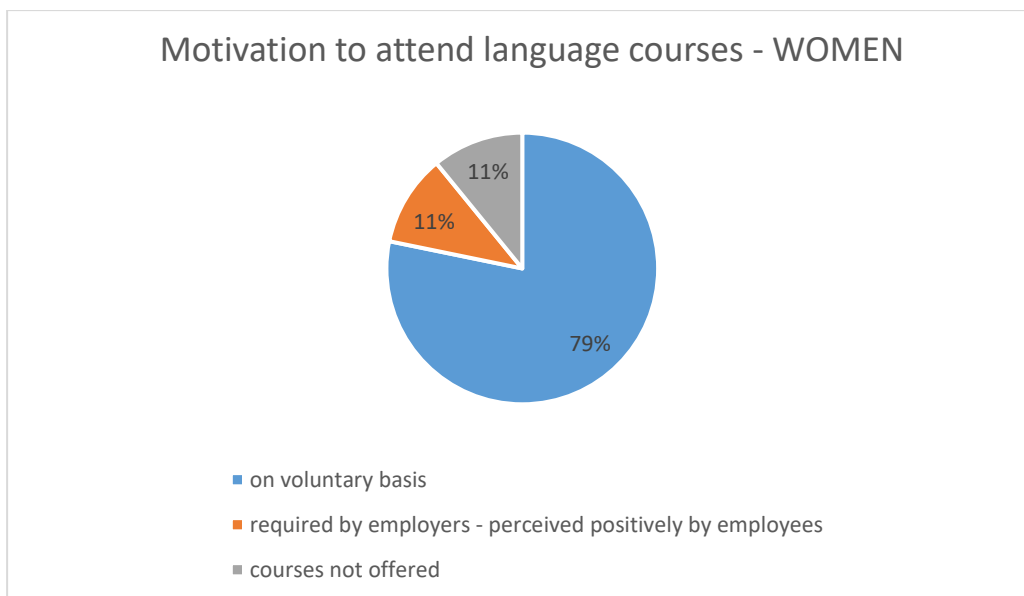
Question 11 *How do you personally perceive the possibility to attend language courses?*

Attendance in language courses	
Voluntary attendance in order to improve language skills	34
Compulsory attendance but perceived positively	4
Compulsory attendance, negatively perceived	1

Question 11 *How do you personally perceive the possibility to attend language courses?*



Source: Authors



Source: Authors

Question 12 *Is knowledge of a foreign language important in your position?*

Language skills required for my position		
Yes	37	74%
No	13	26%

Question 13 *Do you communicate in a foreign language at work?*

Foreign language used for communication at work		
Only for written communication	11	22%
Written communication and speaking	24	44%
Speaking only	1	2%
I don't use foreign language at work	14	28%

Question 14 *Do you have experience with working abroad?*

Personal experience with working abroad		
Yes	14	28%
No	35	70%

Question 15 *What kind of language courses do you prefer?*

Course specialization	
General foreign language	11
Foreign language for specific purposes	5
Combination of both	27

Question 17 *Has the pandemic and the related restrictions affected the language courses in your company?*

Impact of pandemic on language courses		
No changes	6	15%
Courses were suspended	23	55%
Changed form	13	30%