

16:30-18:00, March 3rd (Thu.) 2011
4F Conference Room, Slavic Research Center (North 9 West 7, Sapporo North)
Hokkaido University

Old Borders in New Contexts: On the Language Situation in Multinational Companies Operating in Central Europe

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Paper presented at Hokkaido University, Slavic Research Center, GCOE Special Seminar, March 3, 2011

Abstract

Central European political elites have been successful in materializing the language ideology ‘one state – one nation - one language’, which has led more or less to the co-extension of the state and language borders. Given this situation, in the period of the industrial economy, the language of the nation-state, that is, the national language, also became the language of the national economy (Williams 2010). In the 1980s, the nation-state began to lose its decisive role in the controlling of economic processes of the country, and the so-called network society (Castells 2010) began to be formed. This trend, also called ‘globalization’, manifests itself in the rapid growth of multinational companies (multinationals). In this paper, I address what happens with the old ethnic/national identities bound to particular (national) languages in this New Economy. I deal with the social position of the members of differing ethnicities employed in the multinationals and pay attention to the differing functions of the languages used. The subject of the analysis is German-based multinationals with branches on the territory of the Czech Republic. In addition to German and Czech, I discuss the role of English.

References

- M. Castells (2010) *The Rise of the Network Society*. Second edition. With a new preface. Malden, Oxford, Chichester: Willey-Blackwell.
G. Williams (2010) *The Knowledge Economy, Language and Culture*. Bristol, Buffalo, Toronto: Multilingual Matters.

*Everyone interested in this topic is welcome to attend.
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