

**Boundaryless careers or career boundaries? The impact of language barriers
on academic careers in international business schools**

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ABSTRACT

Following the globalization of higher management education and the view of academics as autonomous professionals, academic careers in business schools are deemed to typify the boundaryless careers of the 21st century. We scrutinize the validity of this assumption, focusing on the language barriers internationally mobile management scholars are facing. Based on qualitative interviews with foreign faculty working at leading business schools in Finland, Japan, Spain, and the USA, we investigate how careers in different national academic systems are bounded by the dual challenge to speak both English and the local language. Revealing different degrees of linguistic challenges across national academic systems, we contribute to career research by presenting language barriers as an impediment to global careers in business schools and by establishing “knowing where” as a previously neglected career competency. Our study also maps the process of academic “Englishization”, shows that different career antecedents are influenced by different types of language barriers, and suggests a classification scheme for national academic systems according to their “linguistic difficulty level” for foreigners. On this basis, we develop important practical recommendations for internationally mobile management scholars and business schools aiming to attract international faculty.

Keywords: Language Barriers; Boundaryless Careers; Academic Careers; Internationalization of Business Schools

INTRODUCTION

The rapid globalization of multinational corporations, which are the preferred employers of most business students (Moy & Lee, 2002), has also converted management education into a “global phenomenon” (Hardy & Tolhurst, 2014: 265). Business schools around the world have recognized the need to internationalize in order to obtain accreditation and keep a leading position in institutional rankings (Delgado-Márquez et al., 2012; Baruch et al., 2014). This academic internationalization entails “a process of organizational change motivated by an increase in the proportion of non-native students and staff” (Tange, 2010:138).ⁱ Considering this increasing international mobility of management academics (Pherali, 2012; Hardy & Tolhurst, 2014) and the fact that scholarly careers are largely self-guided (Baruch and Hall, 2004), academia appears to typify the concept of the “boundaryless career” (Baruch, 2013).

However, the view of academic careers as boundaryless has recently come under scrutiny. A number of studies investigated how institutions, faculty management policies, and cultural factors can raise boundaries to academic career mobility (for an overview see Baruch et al., 2014). We focus on a surprisingly understudied source of boundaries, which may limit the international career opportunities of academic migrants (Montgomery, 2013): language. Given the “key role of language in the production of knowledge and in the delivery of education” (Śliwa & Johansson, 2014: 1134), we investigate to which extent language barriers constrain management scholars’ international careers in a supposedly boundaryless academic world.

We particularly focus on foreign academics’ dual challenge to work in English and in the local language of their host country. So far, initial studies have centered on the necessity for all management scholars to publish in English, which reduces non-native English speakers’ academic competitiveness compared to their anglophone colleagues (Śliwa & Johansson, 2015). However, Richardson and Zikic (2007) already indicated that the need to additionally learn the local language of business schools in non-anglophone countries may also take its toll on academic expatriates. Career boundaries created by local language barriers were so far largely neglected in research, which constitutes an important gap, considering that 48 of the top 100 business schools according to the Financial Times’ 2016 Executive MBA ranking (Financial Times, 2016) are located in non-anglophone countries. We therefore aim to elucidate *how English and local language barriers create boundaries to foreign management scholars’ careers.*

We investigate these so far uncharted, language-induced career boundaries with an exploratory qualitative study, which is appropriate for studying “how”-questions in complex subject areas (Suddaby, 2006). Aiming to capture the variety of foreign scholars’ experiences across different country settings with varying needs for linguistic proficiency, we study individuals working at leading business schools in Finland, Japan, Spain, and the USA. We also go beyond the initial studies on language in academia by systematically investigating the impact of language barriers on antecedents to academic careers and on components of the careers themselves. We consider publication success, the acquisition of research funding, teaching performance, and administrative service as the key antecedents of academic careers. By contrast, a successful academic career is signaled by recruitment offers and promotion opportunities as crucial career components.

Our findings reveal substantial cross-national variation in language-induced career boundaries depending on a) the English proficiency of local faculty and staff, and b) international recruits’ ability to work in the local language. We contribute to research on boundary-sensitive careers by investigating the role of language as an understudied, yet crucial source of boundaries; add contextual nuance by mapping the process of academic “Englishization”; show that different career antecedents are influenced by different types of language barriers; and suggest a classification scheme for national academic systems according to their “linguistic difficulty level” for foreigners.

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

International academic careers in business schools: boundaryless or bounded?

The concept of the boundaryless career is increasingly prominent in career research. Whereas Baruch et al. (2015) identified 5,140 publications using the term “boundaryless career”, an equivalent Google scholar search in May 2018 already yielded 9,970 hits. While some authors invoke “the era of the boundaryless career” (Eby et al., 2003: 689), others proclaim the absence of boundaries as the “new ‘status quo’ concerning modern careers” (Inkson et al., 2012: 323).

First coined by DeFillippi and Arthur (1994), the concept of boundaryless careers refers to “careers that move dynamically in nontraditional ways in time and space and across different employers” (Baruch & Reis, 2016: 14). It is conventionally referred to with a view to organizational boundaries, but geographical (Arthur & Rousseau, 2001; Arthur, Khapova, &

Wilderom, 2005), national (Inkson et al., 2012), or cultural (Sullivan & Arthur, 2006) boundaries may also apply. The concept's particular focus lies on proactive individuals as "mobile, self-determined ... free agents, who are able to seamlessly connect with work in multiple contexts" (Harrison, 2006: 20) and "unilaterally take charge over their careers" (Banai & Harry, 2004: 98). Whereas boundaryless careers have become predominant in the business sector (Inkson et al., 2012), the notion appears particularly applicable to academia and here specifically to business schools. In line with a view of academics as autonomous professionals, who are more committed to their profession than to their organization and pursue self-guided career transitions (Baruch & Hall, 2004), the academic career is propagated as a "role-model" for the concept of the boundaryless career (Baruch & Hall, 2004: 242).

However, studies situating careers within their institutional and cultural contexts have come to challenge the notion of unbridled career agency (Inkson et al., 2012). Their authors find the idea of working in a completely boundaryless environment "unrealistic" or "utopian" (Baruch, 2013: 205) and conclude that "there is no such a thing as a pure boundaryless system" (Baruch & Reis, 2016: 14). Acknowledging that individual careers are influenced by many contextual factors, Inkson et al. (2012) call for studies on the effects of career boundaries in constraining and punctuating careers. Along these lines, scholars have discussed a series of potential obstacles to supposedly boundaryless careers in general (for a review see Sullivan & Baruch, 2009) and to academic careers in particular (for an overview see Baruch et al., 2014). Surprisingly, they largely neglected the possible impact of language differences as a source of boundaries. To fill this gap and to study how boundaryless or bounded international academic careers in business schools currently are, we investigate the impact of language barriers on the careers of internationally mobile business scholars.

The influence of language barriers on international academic careers in business schools

The fast growing literature on language in international business (for overviews see Piekkari, Welch & Welch, 2014; Tenzer, Terjesen & Harzing, 2017) has associated language differences with disruptive influences on communication (see e.g. Harzing, Köster, & Magner, 2011; Hinds, Neeley & Cramton, 2014; Piekkari & Tietze, 2011) due to a lack of vocabulary, grammatical mistakes, or diverse accents. Miscommunication may also arise from cultural variations in

pragmatic cues, i.e. differences in the way speakers use language to create meaning (Pütz and Neff-van Aertselaer, 2008).

Language differences were found to harm emotional climate (Neeley, Hinds, & Cramton, 2012; Tenzer & Pudelko, 2015), distort power relations (Tenzer & Pudelko, 2017), impede trust formation (Tenzer, Pudelko & Harzing, 2014), and cause conflicts among colleagues (Harzing & Feely, 2008). Due to these effects, language barriers can constrain the career advancement of employees with low proficiency in the organizational language (often English) and/or the parent country language of the employing organization (see e.g. Järnlström, Piekkari, & Jokinen, 2013, 2014; Piekkari, 2008; Piekkari et al., 2005).

With specific focus on business schools, to our knowledge only four studies have so far explored the impact of language barriers on the work of internationally mobile scholars. Śliwa and Johansson (2014) showed how power and status disparities between domestic and foreign faculty in UK business schools are construed based on language. They found that native English speaking business scholars are evaluated more positively compared to their accented non-native colleagues, who can appear less intelligent due to their non-standard way of speaking. Śliwa and Johansson (2015) investigated how the necessity for non-native English speaking business scholars to work in English reduces their competitiveness, which frequently creates feelings of inadequacy among foreign faculty. Horn (2017) portrayed non-English nativeness as a stigma in business schools and showed how individual stigma consciousness and self-efficacy influence perceptions of identity threat in English-dominated settings. Ryazanova (2015) found that linguistic capabilities significantly influence individual research outcomes of business scholars. All four studies describe negative effects of language barriers on the work situation of international faculty members in business schools. These effects are likely to create immediate career disadvantages, which we intend to investigate further.

The relative importance of English compared to the local language for international academic careers in business schools

All of the above reviewed publications focus on management scholars' English skills, as English is widely considered the lingua franca of international business (Nickerson, 2015), of higher education (Curry & Lillis, 2004; Tietze, 2008b; Tietze & Dick, 2013), and particularly of higher education in business and management (Lueg & Lueg, 2015; Horn, 2017). As “national

academic systems [now] enthusiastically welcome English as a key means of internationalising, competing, and becoming ‘world class’” (Boussebaa & Brown, 2017: 9), individual researchers recognize English as an important tool to establish their scholarly reputation (Lillis & Curry, 2006). Tietze (2008b) therefore notices the emergence of an “international faculty”, which is fluent in English and creates knowledge almost exclusively through the English language. According to Tietze and Dick (2009), this “English ideology” creates a hegemony of Anglo-American researchers and influences publication practices across the globe, a trend that is particularly evident in management. Horn (2017: 3) concluded: “Scholars who wish to be taken seriously must develop an Anglophone fluency, and this at an exceptionally high level.” As publications, recognition, and promotion depend on English language mastery (Curry & Lillis, 2004), these proficiency requirements may create boundaries to academic careers in management studies.

However, success in academia may also require knowledge of the business school’s local tongue to gain a localized knowledge base (Pherali, 2012). Our study therefore extends the sole focus of previous studies on the English language by investigating the interplay between English and the local language informing career boundaries in different national contexts. To this end, we first have to distinguish between academic systems where English coincides with the local language and where it is a foreign language. Second, we should differentiate national academic systems with respect to the relative importance of proficiency in English compared to the local language for academic career advancement. To explore how the interplay between these languages shapes boundaries to foreign management scholars’ careers, we compare their situation at business schools in the USA (where English is the local language), Finland (70% of the population speak English well enough to have a conversation; European Commission, 2012), Spain (22%; European Commission, 2012), and Japan (15% of corporate employees in management positions are able to conduct daily conversations in English; EconomicNews, 2013).

The indirect and direct impact of language barriers on international academic careers in business schools

We consider it necessary to study the impact of language barriers on different antecedents of academic careers (indirect effect) and on various components of careers success itself (direct

effect). Regarding *antecedents*, academic career success depends on performance in the most important domains of academic activity (Blaxter, Hughes & Tight, 1998; Baruch & Hall, 2004), which Baruch (2013: 2002) calls the “holy trinity” of research, teaching, and administrative service. Research and the resulting publications constitute the “standard measure” to evaluate scholars (Baruch & Hall, 2004: 251; Baruch, 2013). Under the “publish or perish” imperative (Miller, Taylor & Bedeian, 2011), scholarly success in management research hinges on publications in internationally ranked journals, which are exclusively published in English and therefore require highly sophisticated English writing skills. Accordingly, Ryazanova (2015) found that non-native English speakers’ acquired English skills significantly increase research productivity and therefore constitute career capital. Given the overwhelming relevance of top management journals written in English (FT-50, ABS ranking, etc.), excellent English proficiency appears to be of significantly higher relevance than local language skills in terms of publication success. Furthermore, career-relevant research excellence is also increasingly determined by the acquisition of research funding (Teodorescu, 2000; Kaulisch & Enders, 2005). The write-up of international grant proposals often requires highly polished English skills, further disadvantaging scholars with non-native proficiency. By contrast, proficiency in the local language may be important for national grant applications, implying a disadvantage to those international scholars not being sufficiently proficient in that tongue.

Besides research, also teaching and administrative service influence academic career prospects (Baruch & Hall, 2004). This could refer to English-language teaching and administration in an anglophone country or a non-anglophone country where English is used as a lingua franca. Ultimately, it would also refer to teaching and administration in a local language other than English. Śliwa and Johansson (2014) revealed that accent-based stereotyping may lower teaching evaluations of academics delivering classes in a foreign language (see also Boyd, 2003; Derwing & Munro, 2009; Luxon & Peelo, 2009). Given that business schools often link promotions to high teaching evaluations, this practice additionally imposes a career boundary to non-native speakers. Śliwa and Johansson’s (2015) informants reported similar disadvantages in administrative communication. In sum, language barriers in English or the local language influence academic careers through their negative impact on publications, funding, teaching, and administrative service.

In addition, language barriers can also impact the *components* of international academic careers in a more direct way. These components are recruitment options, promotion opportunities (Glick et al., 2007), and salary increases. Having attractive recruitment opportunities constitutes a crucial factor for career development, particularly since the mobility of academic careers across institutions and countries has increased (Baruch & Hall, 2004). Promotions are frequently linked in the academic world to making the step from temporary contract positions to obtaining tenure (Baruch & Hall, 2004; Blaxter et al., 1998; Richardson & Zikic, 2007). Furthermore, business academics can increasingly negotiate pay rises as a result of excellent performance. Language barriers may directly affect these career components, as accent-based stereotyping (Śliwa & Johansson, 2014) and stigmatization (Horn, 2017) can afflict tenure committees evaluating accented foreign candidates in comparison to their rhetorically more polished domestic competition.

Whereas the few initial studies about language influences on academic careers hint at differential effects on various career antecedents and components, none of them has disentangled these far enough to show how English and/or local language barriers influence the academic career either indirectly or directly. Our study will shed light on indirect and direct effects of English and local language barriers to provide a nuanced picture of the boundaryless or bounded nature of international academic careers in business schools. In addition, it yields targeted recommendations for individual scholars and policy makers at internationalizing business schools.

METHODOLOGY

Research design and setting

Given that “little is known about international academics’ lived experiences” (Pherali, 2012: 315), we consider an explorative, qualitative interview study most appropriate for obtaining insights into the perspectives of management scholars working outside their native language area.

We developed our study design based on ten pilot interviews with non-German academics of different mother tongues working at a German university. This preliminary study revealed various language-induced boundaries to academic careers and demonstrated the need to take a closer look at the interplay between English and the local languages in business schools

across various country settings. From this pilot study, we distilled the following career antecedents to investigate in our subsequent core study: performance in publishing, grant applications, teaching, and administrative service. These are also in accordance with the previously outlined literature on academic careers. We also identified recruitment and promotion opportunities as career components to be covered, while salary increases did not play a relevant role.

Given that academic systems and linguistic challenges vastly vary across countries, we aimed for a broad variety of contexts in terms of academic institutional set-up and linguistic situation. The United States, Finland, Spain, and Japan not only have very different academic traditions, but also differ according to two linguistic dimensions: their population's English proficiency and the difficulty to learn their local languages.ⁱⁱ The USA represents a country where the academic lingua franca English coincides with the local language. Finland has a high proportion of second language English speakers among her citizens (Gerhards, 2014), whereas Finnish is very difficult to learn (Foreign Service Institute, 2017) and therefore spoken only by very few foreigners on a professional level (Ethnologue.com 2017a). Spain and Japan have lower proportions of English speakers in their population (Gerhards, 2014; Tsuneyoshi, 2005), but Spanish is easier to acquire for most foreigners than Japanese (Foreign Service Institute, 2017) and consequently spoken by a larger number of second language speakers (Ethnologue.com 2017b, c). This academically and linguistically varied sample permits us to systematically explore language-induced boundaries to foreign management scholars' careers.

In line with Eisenhardt's (1989) more positivistic principles of inductive, qualitative theory building (Welch, Piekkari, Plakoyiannaki, & Paavilainen-Mäntymäki, 2011), we focus on the discovery of previously unrecognized relationships that are replicated across most of our respondents' accounts. Whereas our emerging theory abstracts from the "idiosyncratic detail" of individual cases (Eisenhardt & Graebner, 2007: 30), however, we still reveal striking differences between the various settings of our study and explore their underlying mechanisms.

Data collection

We conducted semi-structured interviews, which enabled us to capture emerging topics of relevance, while assuring consistency among all interviews for comparison (Barribal & While, 1994). Our interviews consisted of four sections. The rather short introductory section covered

the interviewees' demographic basics. We subsequently asked interviewees to rate their listening, speaking and written proficiency in English and in the local language of their host institution. Self-assessed fluency is important to informants' lived experiences, as it determines how they explain their feelings and actions (Neeley, 2013). The third section was dedicated to the language policies (if existing) of their business schools, the language practices in daily work and the communicative networks resulting from this. In the final section, we similarly asked interviewees to reflect on the impact of language skills on those career antecedents and components they considered most relevant. Exemplary interview questions are listed in the Appendix. Interviews generally moved from initial descriptive questions to interpretations of personal experiences which informants considered crucial.

Since it was impossible for us to conduct interviews in all 18 native languages of our interviewees, we conducted the bulk of interviews in English, either face to face or by video Skype. The use of English as an interviewing language was in accordance to the typical profile of internationally mobile academics. Our sample includes 43 scholars at leading business schools at different career stages, ranging from PhD students close to their viva and postdoctoral researchers to assistant, associate and full professors. Those still pursuing a PhD have not yet fully committed to a lifetime in academia, but are laying the foundation for potential scholarly careers and still have to determine whether or not to remain in academia.

We purposefully selected initial interviewees from our personal networks and subsequently took advantage of snowballing to increase the variance of our sample. We carefully selected informants to represent the widest possible variety of perspectives on our topic (Higginbottom, 2004) which is consistent with the qualitative principle of seeking variation in informants' experiences in order to develop a more formal and generally applicable theory (Locke, 2001). Aiming specifically for large linguistic variety, we sampled speakers of 18 different mother tongues who mostly had fairly high English proficiency levels (with nuanced differences) and significantly more variety in the proficiency of their business school's local language. Given that the proportion of international faculty varies across academic disciplines (Kim et al., 2012), we sampled our informants from different fields within business and economics. Our informants have spent two months to 14 years in their current academic system. The recent arrivals vividly remember their recruitment process and the possible role of language in this context, whereas those with longer host country experience can comment also on academic promotions. The

former might find themselves still in a state of “language shock” (Montes, 2014), while the latter have accumulated various language-related experiences over the years. Table 1 summarizes their relevant characteristics.

[INSERT TABLE 1 HERE]

As a consequence of this purposive interviewee selection, we thought to have reached the point of data saturation (Locke, 2001) after about two thirds of our interviews in each country, as we received only marginal new information from this point onwards. Nevertheless, we conducted further interviews with informants from additional mother tongues to make sure that we really covered our topics exhaustively. Interviews varied between 28 and 104 minutes in length with an average of 45 minutes. All 43 interviews were digitally recorded and transcribed verbatim, yielding over 1200 double-spaced pages of transcripts.

Data analysis

Our qualitative data analysis was aided by the software ATLAS.ti. During the initial stage of open coding (Glaser & Strauss, 1967), we labeled each passage of our interviews with codes reflecting the topics informants touched upon. We used English code labels across all transcripts, but left the transcripts themselves in their original languages to preserve their specific meanings.ⁱⁱⁱ In this initial analysis, we combined in vivo codes emerging from informants’ specific perspectives and codes derived from the career boundaries literature.

In the second step of content analysis, we related these codes to each other in a process resembling Strauss and Corbin’s (1998) notion of axial coding. Using the constant comparative method (Glaser & Strauss, 1967), we separately analyzed and compared interviewees’ experience of language barriers by languages, career antecedents and components. To probe for variation or agreement within these areas, we compared different interviews within each business school according to informants’ career levels, English and local language skills. We then juxtaposed our findings from different business schools within each country and finally contrasted the results between national academic systems. We cycled back and forth between our data, codes, emerging patterns and the literatures on language in international business and academic careers. When comparing our data along different dimensions, we discovered some apparently common language-induced career boundaries, but also found stark differences between languages, work domains, and country environments. We will outline these findings in

the following.

FINDINGS

We found both indirect as well as direct effects of language barriers on international academic careers in business schools. Regarding the former, language barriers influence performance in research, teaching, and administrative service, which in turn impacts the academic career.

Regarding the latter, language barriers directly influence the decision making process regarding academic careers. Comparing the situation of foreign scholars working in Finnish, Japanese, Spanish, and U.S. business schools, we found striking cross-national variations in the extent to which language proficiency requirements created boundaries to foreign scholars' careers.

English language barriers creating boundaries to international academic careers

Regarding the language barrier in English, the more embedded this lingua franca was in an academic system, the higher proficiency was needed for career advancement. In this sense, English proficiency requirements constituted “an invisible barrier to advancement based on attitudinal or organizational bias” (Ragins et al., 1998: 28). Similarly to Piekkari et al.'s (2014: 136) notion of a “language ceiling” in multinational corporations, i.e. a barrier which “slows down or even prevents those who have limited skills in the corporate language from pursuing vertical career opportunities”, we will therefore speak of a *linguistic glass ceiling*. As we will show throughout this section, it affected the various career antecedents and career components in different ways.

The impact of English language barriers on the career antecedent ‘publishing’. Non-native English speaking interviewees across all host countries highlighted, despite their fairly high levels of English proficiency, that their lack of native English skills still slowed down their academic writing and additionally made it harder to target high-ranking management journals. This double effect was particularly challenging for foreign scholars pursuing tenure in U.S. business schools, many of which demand a series of publications in domestic (and internationally leading) journals. Supporting Ryazanova's (2015: 146f) view that “publishing success in social sciences is greatly influenced by story-telling ability and writing style”, our U.S.-based interviewees saw impeccable English as a prerequisite for publication success. Even after 13 years in the U.S. academic system, a Chinese interviewee reported to spend substantially more

time on his publications than his American peers did. Still, he experienced language-based hurdles to journal acceptance:

That has become a major barrier for many international scholars, like the Chinese, to get published: their writing is not that polished. Reviewers will say the topics are interesting, but reject the work. How to evaluate our research is quite subjective – you have to attune it to the U.S. culture somehow. ... This is different in very mathematically oriented journals. You see the percentage of Asian scholars publishing there is much higher. - US4/CHI

Whereas this statement may suggest that data-focused fields such as finance or information systems research posit lower language barriers than more “people-oriented” areas such as HRM or marketing, informants from all fields reported similar difficulties with English-language publications. Their reports indicate that purely lexical and syntactical proficiency in English, i.e. knowledge of vocabulary and the ability to produce correctly structured sentences, do not suffice for publication. The above-cited scholar’s perception that research papers need to be “attuned to the U.S.” culture means that foreign business scholars additionally need so-called pragmatic proficiency, i.e. knowledge of how American writers use language to create meaning (Pütz and Neff-van Aertselaer, 2008).

Our data support Cho’s (2004) finding that non-native English speaking researchers have trouble in writing up their results and negotiating feedback from the leading journals. Especially interviewees facing a high linguistic distance between their mother tongue and English found it challenging to compete with native speakers of English for these journals. Scholars with more limited English proficiency faced rejection both from English native speakers and from proficient internationals. Those of our U.S.-based interviewees, who demonstrated higher confidence in their English skills, admitted being rather judgmental when reviewing the work of other non-native English speakers:

Even at the conference level, for instance at the Academy of Management, when I get a paper to review and I see that their language is very poor, then I can’t help – and I know that this shouldn’t be the case – but I really cannot help than questioning the quality of the study. It is such an unfair assumption to make, but it also shows the degree of care that has gone into a paper. – US8/SPA

These attributions support Horn’s (2017: 7) proposition that “deviant linguistic behavior may overlap with imputations of poor scholarship”, suggesting severe career implications.

Foreign academics in Finland evaluated the Finnish Business School system quite unanimously in that faculty members face substantial pressure to publish in high-ranking

journals, which translated into considerable demands on their English skills. Some mentioned the same insecurity as their colleagues in the U.S. did. However, the competition with locals appeared less linguistically skewed:

Finnish people need to publish in English and we need to publish in English, so in the end this cannot be a barrier. It would be different if they could publish in Finnish in really highly ranked journals. But if you are a Finnish speaker, or Spanish speaker, or whatever speaker, you still need to publish in English! - FI10/SPA

Interviewees working in Finland often coped quite well with the requirements of publishing in English, although some of them lamented the hegemony of English language journals.

The majority of our informants at Spanish business schools felt that writing in English took them longer and required more effort compared to native speakers. Echoing Pherali's (2012) and Horn's (2017) observation that scholars operating in a foreign language often invest extra effort into their work, but are still afraid of communication errors, some informants doubted the quality of their writing:

Most feel that their work might not be so good. You think 'okay, I did my best, but probably it's not as good as if I were a native speaker.' – ES8/ITA

The experiences of foreign management scholars working in Japan widely differed between institutions. Whereas a few noted that publications in English were a sought-after selling point in business schools aiming for internationalization, the large majority felt that publication success (and consequently English language proficiency) took a back seat to local engagement when it came to scholarly career advancement. Having spent 13 years in Japan, a German professor of management studies summarized his experiences:

The best business schools here in Japan do emphasize publications, the others not so much. At the normal, average universities, people look down on you. It is like: 'None of us writes anything, why are you doing this?' Unfortunately, this is really true. - JP9/GER

Many Japan-based interviewees mentioned that foreign academics publishing in English at Japanese business schools did not experience local career advancement, but continued publishing in international journals to enhance their career prospects elsewhere. Others believed that the system was slowly gravitating towards rewarding publications more. In any case, English language barriers to publication purposes were much lower in Japan compared to the other countries under study.

The impact of English language barriers on the career antecedent ‘grant applications’.

Successful applications for research grants also constitute an increasingly important career antecedent for management scholars. Similar to their publication activity, many interviewees in U.S. business schools reported slowdowns and additional efforts in writing English-language grant applications compared to their native speaking colleagues. Informants from other host countries reported that many funding agencies had started accepting applications in English besides the local language, which partly offset their disadvantage compared to native speakers of the host country language. As we will show below in the context of local language barriers, however, some barrier remained for foreign scholars seeking grants from smaller funding agencies, which operated in the local language.

Most publications and grant applications in management studies are team efforts. In this context, many of our informants strategically sought out native English speaking research partners to bridge language barriers in academic writing. This was particularly crucial for those facing a high linguistic distance to English, such as this Chinese informant:

You also think about, well, does the co-author help me in some sense? If you are all the same, you offer the same skills, then probably it's not a good strategy. Everyone can solve the equation, but who writes the paper? So because of that I think people tend to work with native speakers who can be more complementary to their skills. - US4/CHI

However, even a Swedish Assistant Professor, who listed English her second mother tongue, considered such cooperation beneficial for her research outcome:

I don't feel that I suffer from writing in English, but one of my co-authors with whom I have probably written most of my articles, he is a native English speaker from the UK. He just always finds the right words, and it just flows smoothly. - FI3/ENG-SWE

This practice aligns with Horn's (2017) recent recommendation to co-author with native English speaking colleagues (see also Cho, 2004) (who consequently gain a strategically more advantageous career development position over non-native English speakers). However, some of our informants found it difficult to enlist high-level English speaking academics for their projects, so barriers remained. Moreover, academic partnerships could only address English language barriers to publication success and grant applications. As we will show in the following, foreign academics were on their own when it came to teaching.

The impact of English language barriers on the career antecedent ‘teaching’. Consistent with Urbig et al.’s (2016) recent observation that business schools around the world are increasingly offering courses or even entire study programs in English, our interviewees highlighted the importance of English proficiency for teaching in all four countries. Given that business students typically consider English-language instruction as crucial for their own careers (Lueg & Lueg, 2015), they tended to evaluate non-native English speaking teachers negatively. Even an informant who spoke English as one of his mother tongues, but with an Indian accent, reported such bias:

Students demand perfection, because they pay a lot of money - in the MBA program especially. For them, if you don’t speak perfect English, even if you have the knowledge and everything, they judge you on that. We get these comments from students all the time: ‘This is an international school. We come here to study in an international group. So what about the faculty? Some of the faculty that taught us, their English was not up to the mark. That should change.’ - ES7/ENG-PA-HIN

This quote shows that in addition to lexical, syntactical, and pragmatic challenges, teaching in a foreign language also required high phonetic skills, i.e. the ability to articulate speech sounds similar to the way speakers from English speaking countries pronounce them. The latter appeared highly problematic, as accent-based stereotyping among students was very salient in our data. In line with Lindemann’s (2005) finding that accents can determine how a speaker is appraised, some non-native English speaking interviewees felt taken less seriously than their native speaking colleagues. This was felt particularly acutely by foreign scholars from Asia:

I don’t think students don’t understand me - but they still think ‘this a Chinese who has no idea.’ I can always see it for the first couple of weeks, when I bring up some specific terminology. Even if it makes perfect sense, students will give me that face: ‘Well, is that even a word?’ If I write it out, it turns out they are the ones who don’t know the word. – US4/CHI

As people tend to focus on how others perceive them, accent-based stereotypes can negatively affect their behavior (Gluszek & Dovidio, 2010) and induce higher stress levels and tension at work among people with a foreign accent (Wated & Sanchez, 2006). This constituted a serious burden for some of our interviewees. A Colombian Associate professor constantly suffered from accent-based discrimination, took specialized classes to reduce her accented speech and proactively addresses the issue in her very first class each semester. Nevertheless, she still experienced discrimination by students, which triggered very negative feelings:

One time I was teaching when a student raised his hand and said ‘Dr X, I want to tell you that my colleague next to me is making fun of your accent in every single class and I have already told him to stop and he doesn't stop.’ This was in the middle of the class in front of everyone. I just wanted to die. I listened to him and I thought: ‘Oh my God, how should I react?’ – US3/SPA

The demands on instructors’ English proficiency varied across countries depending on local colleagues’ average skills in that language. Pressures for impeccable speech were highest in the USA, where students compared foreign faculty with native English speakers. Expectations were also quite high in Finland, where local colleagues on average had an exceptional command of English. They were slightly lower in Spain, where interviewees observed large variation in local colleagues’ English skills.

Whereas many interviewees working at U.S., Finnish, and Spanish business schools believed that their own imperfections in English held them back, our informants from Japan identified their students’ unsatisfactory English proficiency as a much higher hurdle to effective English-language teaching.

The impact of English language barriers on the career antecedent ‘administrative service’. Since administrative communication requires less perfection than publishing, applying for grants or teaching, all interviewees appreciated the opportunity to conduct these duties in English. Informants from U.S. business schools, who exclusively spoke English with support staff and in faculty meetings, did not perceive language as a barrier to effective administrative service:

The moment you can teach, communicating all the administrative stuff will not be much of an issue. - US4/CHI

Interviewees working in other countries, however, produced mixed reports about language use in administration. Instead of their own non-native English skills holding them back, as we observed in publishing and teaching, the limited communicative value of the academic lingua franca constrained their administrative potential. Whereas meetings in the Finnish business schools under study were largely in English, code-switching to Finnish excluded foreigners from conversation. Some informants from Spanish institutions also noticed an increasing prevalence of English, whereas others lamented the continued relevance of Castellano and regional languages such as Catalan. On an aggregate level, it appeared that formal higher-level meetings were more frequently held in English, whereas smaller informal discussion rounds often

remained in the local language. Overall, our interviewees working in Finland and Spain noticed pronounced changes in administrative language use over the past years. After seven years in Spanish academia, a professor of marketing observed:

Nowadays it's mostly English. But it has evolved, I could see this change over the last seven years. So when I first arrived here, the two most important yearly meetings within the school, are that we call 'claustró'. 'Claustró' means all members will come. These meetings used to be in Spanish and now they are in English. - ES7/ENG-PA-HIN

Japanese business schools differed widely in their language choices. Whereas some schools still conducted their administration exclusively in Japanese, others employed English-speaking administrative staff and even offered translation services to foreign faculty. Language barriers in administrative service therefore varied alongside their institutions' administrative language use.

So far, we have discussed the impact of English language barriers on key antecedents of international academic careers, suggesting an indirect effect of language barriers on careers. Now we turn to the question of how the requirement to be proficient in English directly affects recruitment and promotion as crucial career components.

The impact of English language barriers on the career component 'recruitment'. Given the above-described importance of publishing in high-ranking journals, outstanding English proficiency was on one side a non-negotiable requirement for prospective faculty at prestigious business schools in the USA, Finland, and Spain. On the other side, the ability to publish in English was largely assumed and not subject to specific examination by recruitment boards, because previous publications were taken as sufficient evidence for English writing skills:

English is important. I mean everything is about publications right now. If you have a good publication record, the language might be completely irrelevant for getting hired. –
FI5/POL

The situation was more exigent with regard to teaching. The ability to teach eloquently in English was an indispensable recruitment criterion, particularly in U.S. business schools, where committees routinely screened candidates' English proficiency during job interviews and presentations. An Argentinean PhD student at one of the top 5 U.S. business schools believed that her institution selective recruited candidates who could proficiently teach in English:

I don't think that our school would hire someone who could not communicate in the classroom. I don't think they are looking for perfection, but I do believe that they are shooting for someone being able to communicate and create a memorable session. –
US8/SPA

Interviewees based in Finland reported a similar emphasis on the English skills of new recruits. In the Spanish business schools under study, English proficiency has only recently become a recruitment criterion due to the increasing number of English-language study programs. An Assistant Professor from India explained:

In the last five, six years I have been here, they have hired only those people who can speak and write good English. They could be from Spain, they could be from outside, but that's a very important criterion. They have to be proficient in English and they have to have the capability of publishing and teaching in English. ... We need teachers who have good command over the English language in order to teach courses at different levels. - ES7/ENG-PA-HIN

The evidence from Japanese business schools was contradictory. Whereas the leading institutions also appreciated international publications and the related English proficiency among foreign candidates to increase their international standing, informants from other Japanese business schools ranked local involvement much higher. In terms of teaching, English was important for teaching international students (often in separate classes), but English skills were largely assumed to exist with international faculty. Thus, English language barriers appeared less disruptive to starting a scholarly career in Japan compared to other countries.

The impact of English language barriers on the career component 'promotion'. Whereas the initial recruitment decision might still have been based to some degree on publication potential, the actual research output was more relevant for later promotion decisions along the tenure path. U.S.-based interviewees and to a somewhat lesser degree informants working in Finland and Spain believed that English proficiency became rather unproblematic once a candidate had passed the initial language threshold in the recruiting process. In contrast, foreign scholars at Japanese business schools found English skills a negligible direct criterion for promotion. Salary increases as a further possible career component were not mentioned by our informants and therefore dropped from our consideration.

Supporting Tietze's (2008b) argument that English is a crucial factor for establishing a scholarly career in business academia, our findings demonstrate for various countries how English language barriers create boundaries to the key antecedents of academic careers (indirect effect) and to the key components of those careers themselves (direct effect). The interview excerpts reproduced in Table 2 further illustrate these results. Our dataset clearly demonstrates that higher English skills among local academics increase the proficiency level expected from

foreign academics, thus creating a glass ceiling, which is likely to hold back subpar English speakers. In our sample, this became most evident in the native speaking USA. Where the academic lingua franca is distinct from the local language, however, its embedding in a national academic system increases its communicative value, converges the linguistic standing of domestic and foreign faculty, and integrates the latter into the institution. We found that this was particularly the case in Finland and Spain.

[INSERT TABLE 2 HERE]

Local language barriers creating boundaries to international academic careers

Whereas the academic lingua franca English coincided with the local language in U.S. business schools, foreign scholars in the other three countries faced additional career boundaries created by local language requirements. The extent of these boundaries varied between different career antecedents and components. It also differed between host countries, depending on the above-mentioned level of English proficiency among domestic colleagues and staff and on foreign scholars' skill levels in the local language.

The impact of local language barriers on the career antecedent 'publishing'. Given that the leading business schools in the countries under study emphasized publications in internationally ranked, English-language journals, local language skills appeared to bear little direct relevance for management scholars' publication success. However, we found limited proficiency in the host country's tongue to indirectly affect their research output by restricting access to local companies as data sources. A German assistant professor with knowledge of Swedish picked her data collection sites in Finland according to her own language skills:

I just finished a large data collection project, which went really well because I concentrated on Swedish-speaking companies [in Finland]. But it was very hard to find those, because most companies use Finnish. If you do research there, I find it crucial to be able to communicate with your subjects. - FI2/GER

Proficiency requirements in the local language appeared more formidable in interview-based qualitative research compared to survey-based projects. Some informants circumvented these boundaries by outsourcing their data collection to local colleagues or even research companies.

More importantly, the time it took to learn the local language (and culture) substantially detracted from research productivity. An Indian researcher reportedly did not publish a single paper during his first years in Spain, as he was too occupied with learning Spanish:

I had four publications already as a PhD student. And after coming here, for the first two to three years: zero publications, because I was learning the language, I was trying to understand the culture, I was in a big shock. So for the first two, three years, my productivity just went down. And after that, when I was settled in, assimilated, I felt comfortable with the language, then my publications started to happen. ... It took a while to get here and if I compare myself with my colleagues in the U.S., for them nothing changed, so they just kept on producing from day one. - ES7/ENG-PA-HIN

Overall, our comparisons between individuals in different host countries demonstrated that learning investments differed depending on a) the difficulty of learning a specific local language and b) the pressures to become proficient in it, thus forming different degrees of career boundaries. There were some pressures for Spanish proficiency at the Spanish institutions under study. Fortunately, Spanish was quick to learn for native speakers of other Romanic languages and also relatively easily for speakers of other European languages. By contrast, most foreign academics would need to spend significantly more time and effort to acquire Finnish. However, many foreign management scholars based at Finnish business schools did not even make this investment thanks to the excellent English proficiency of locals. Japanese was also very difficult to learn (specifically written Japanese), but the Japanese business schools under study nevertheless used the local language as the main means of communication. This made foreign academics' functioning at Japanese business schools very challenging and required high investments in learning the local language. Even fourteen years in Japan still had not made this Indian associate professor fully proficient:

Before I started at [business school], it [my Japanese] was broken and really bad. But then it got better, because the pressure was there. Still, I cannot follow a lot of things.” – JP3/HIN

As mentioned above, however, the Japanese institutions which hosted our informants did not penalize language learning-induced delays in publication activity as much as other national academic systems.

The impact of local language barriers on the career antecedent ‘grant applications’.

Compared to publishing, which was only indirectly affected by local language requirements, foreign scholars encountered more immediate obstacles when applying for research funding from their host countries' national agencies. Although the larger agencies in all four countries accepted English-language grant proposals, many interviewees lamented the difficulty to learn about funding opportunities in the first place. Even at the Finnish institutions under study, where

faculty and support staff were generally highly proficient in English, much information was provided only in the local language. A German researcher lamented:

There are national agencies like the Finnish Academy, where you can either apply in Finnish or English. I still find it more difficult than the locals, because much of the required information is only available in Finnish on their homepage. That limits my search for information, but also my understanding what exactly each foundation is aiming at and looking for. If you know that, you can apply in English. But finding this information in the first place is the real problem. - FI2/GER

Foreign scholars at Spanish business schools also reported substantial obstacles to grant applications despite the extensive support they received from their schools:

If we have to apply for a grant, some of the grants and the related paperwork are in Spanish, some in Catalan. Then we have to talk to the people who are working at the research department to help us out with that. ... We have three or four people working at different levels, who specifically help us with the grants if we want to understand what exactly a certain terminology means. They also help us to write sometimes. But we still sometimes have to let go of the grants, because it's a big hassle. - ES7/ENG-PA-HIN

In the Japanese system, the local language bureaucracy of many funding agencies similarly deterred many foreign scholars from grant applications. Even after fifteen years in the Japanese system, this assistant professor of economics ruled out Japanese agencies as a source of funding:

I never thought about actually applying because it is just too troublesome. I simply don't understand the forms. I can read it but I don't know what it means. - JP5/PAG-TGL

As foreign scholars submitted fewer funding applications due to prohibitive local language requirements, they found it harder to build their reputation through research grants, which in turn constituted a substantial impediment to their career advancement. Funding agencies' local language usage thus created a notable career boundary for non-native speakers.

The impact of local language barriers on the career antecedent 'teaching'. Given that classroom communication required a highly sophisticated command of language, limited local language proficiency also barred many foreign scholars from offering courses in their host country's national language. They assembled a less varied teaching portfolio, which was problematic in institutions offering a large number of local-language courses. A Chinese scholar residing in Spain explained:

If we are teaching programs, which are mainly for the Spanish community, knowing Spanish would definitely be something very, very powerful to connect to the participants. So when we taught the program [XX], which has mainly local participants and is also

mainly run in Spanish, being able to use Spanish definitely would have been a plus. – ES1/CHI

We found a consistent pattern across informants working at Finnish, Spanish, and Japanese business schools: whereas some reported explicit expectations to teach in the local language, others did not report any such pressures, because their schools' growth ambitions were geared mostly towards English-language courses or (in the case of Japan) because foreigners were supposed to concentrate on English teaching to relieve locals. Even in these settings, however, foreign scholars' shortcomings in the local language negatively affected their standing among students:

I remember one case when I was teaching the executive MBA program early on in my career. I was teaching in English, but the group was all Spanish. When I was joining them for lunch, my level of Spanish was much lower than now and I really felt that I was losing credibility. First of all being a junior professor for people that are all older than me and then not being able to command the discussion at the table as it would be expected from the professor joining the group. I felt that I didn't have the same authority or credibility in Spanish that I would have had in English. - ES2/GER

On the flipside, some interviewees also reported advantages of not speaking the local language fluently regarding their teaching load. They appreciated not being burdened with large Bachelor-level courses, which were often taught in the local language. Teaching smaller, more research-oriented Master-level courses in English, they consequently gained more time for their own research. Whereas local language requirements created boundaries to broad teaching engagement, they may have indirectly benefited other, possibly more important career antecedents.

The impact of local language barriers on the career antecedent 'administrative service'. The most salient boundaries raised by local language requirements emerged in the domain of academic administration, where the local tongue was most deeply engrained. Average levels of English proficiency were very high among Finnish faculty and staff, yet even in Finland, foreign management scholars reported difficulties to communicate with older support staff in English. In the two Finnish institutions under study, their access to crucial information was still restricted due to the limited amount of English-language information on their schools' websites. Not only PhD students found this highly discouraging when looking up the regulations of their respective programs; local language skills became even more important for administrative and managerial purposes on the professorial level and above. In some instances,

local faculty insisted on local language use in academic committees, thus excluding foreign scholars with low proficiency in this tongue. A senior faculty member perceived this as a serious hurdle to his engagement in faculty politics:

There was the question of who is going to represent the department in the university council. I said 'I think I should claim a seat in the university council', because it is strange if it is not the head of the department doing this. But that is problematic, because the meetings are supposed to be in the local language. That is written down somewhere in the language policy. So in the first one or two meetings the Rector would announce topics in the local language and give short English translations or updates and all of that just for me. It was really funny, because at the very first meeting when we were halfway through there was an issue on the agenda which was the installation of new members to the university council and I was one of those members who needed to be introduced in the university council. Before that agenda item they were trying to involve me in what was going on, but then at that part of the agenda somebody said the meetings should still be held in the local language. Whenever the Rector said something in English then, somebody raised their finger and said 'No, we should not speak English in this meeting'.
– F11/DUT

Our interviewees reacted strongly to these language-induced boundaries, which in their view called their institutions' international aspirations into question. Many informants working at business schools in Spain reported similar experiences. In their view, the prevalence of local tongues at the expense of English usage restricted their prospects to build an academic career based on administrative engagement:

If you want to develop a managerial career within the school, if you want to start taking on more administrative tasks, not being able to speak Spanish becomes an obstacle to a large extent. And now I'm starting to see that. Certainly, I mean to have an administrative role. There are a broad variety of people with whom you have to work here. Not all of them are fluent in English. That puts you at a disadvantage, because you are not able to be as effective in managing people. - ES3/RUS

This issue became even more salient in many Japanese business schools, where faculty meetings were almost exclusively held in Japanese and most support staff was unable to communicate in English. Consequently, Japanese native speakers dominated basic decision-making and institutional management, whereas foreigners hardly made it to positions of deans or department heads. This language-induced glass ceiling triggered severe discontent among some foreign faculty:

They do not care. Their structure and administration makes no sense. It is not adjusted to modern requirements of academia. You can't hire foreign staff to get higher rankings and just continue doing everything in your language. And then even expect them to have no issues with it! There is no consistency at all. That does not make any sense. - JP4/DUT

Whereas most interviewees criticized the dominance of Japanese in administrative structures as an impediment to their careers, some also appreciated the additional research time they gained from their reduced involvement in committee work. How disruptive local language barriers were to individuals thus depended on whether they aspired in the long term to a research-driven career abroad or to a service-driven career in the Japanese system. Overall, our results appear to support Tsuneyoshi's (2005: 76) argument that "the Japanese language is a crucial key" to getting involved in Japanese academia, where English is still nearly absent.

The impact of local language barriers on the career component 'recruitment'. The impact of local language barriers on publications, grant applications, teaching, and service was reflected in linguistic impediments to specific career components. We found that the extent of these boundaries varied significantly between national academic systems. Whereas the Finnish business schools which hosted our informants aimed to hire a certain proportion of domestic faculty to offer courses in the local language, international publications constituted a much more important hiring criterion. A British informant found it possible to succeed in his host institution with English proficiency only:

I still think that you can be hired here by just being great in the classroom and publishing in good journals. I don't think your local language ability is a problem. I don't see that. I think if you've got a very strong track record in publication and education, all that kind of things, language wouldn't hold you back. Not here. - FI7/ENG

Recruiters based at the Spanish business schools under study appeared to face a stronger dilemma regarding candidates' language skills. On the one hand, they aimed to select the best-published scholars from an international pool of candidates. On the other hand, they believed that speakers of Spanish would show a stronger and more long-term commitment to their new host institution:

For the newcomers, there is quite a strong focus also from the institution I think on making sure that those people that come, that are recruited, have the ability to speak Spanish. So even though I would say Spanish has become slightly less important in the day-to-day business of the institution, I feel there is still a strong focus in the recruitment process to ensure that people, international people, have a good level of Spanish. - ES2/GER

This duality did not apply to the Japanese business schools in our sample. In those settings, recruitment opportunities were severely limited for foreign academics, as hiring decisions largely

depended on foreign scholars' Japanese proficiency and their related ability to get involved in administrative service. A Russian assistant professor residing in Japan believed that his advanced command on Japanese was decisive for obtaining a position there:

I do not know anyone at our university that has poor [Japanese] abilities. I do not think they would hire foreign professors with low language skills because there are so many things that require Japanese. Everybody has to do administrative work, which is entirely in Japanese. It would be way too complicated to have someone who cannot cope with that. It would mean more work for the other professors. - JP7/RUS

Given this linguistic entry barrier, foreign applicants were often merely offered contract positions, whereas the more attractive tenure positions remained largely reserved for domestic applicants.

The impact of local language barriers on the career component 'promotion'. Regarding local language requirements for promotions, the Japanese system again constituted an exception. Since administrative responsibilities increased along the career ladder at the Japanese business schools under study, foreign scholars' language-based ability to shoulder these was essential for their promotion in these institutions. Some foreign candidates were therefore quite disillusioned regarding their career prospects:

It is impossible. Everything is in Japanese. How am I supposed to get the same opportunities as a Japanese person? People that have been here for only one or two years might not see that. But for me, being here on and off for about 17 years, I can see the differences. - JP5/PAG-TGL

However, others believed that being recruited in the first place constituted the main hurdle for non-native speakers of Japanese, whereas subsequent promotions would be determined mainly by seniority. Again others emphasized the need for connections to older faculty members supporting the promotion.

Interviewees at Spanish business schools also highlighted the importance of local language skills for promotion. A Dutch assistant professor, for instance, expected Spanish skills to influence her future career trajectory:

In a few years, when they will decide on promoting me to the associate level, they will probably weigh in the extent to which I can communicate well in Spanish, because it is also of a sign of integration in the institution. I think the organization finds it important that you should be able to speak in the local language - be it in coffee breaks, while consulting, in any relation to the public, people who work at organizations, I think it is important to signal that you can speak in the local language. - ES4/DUT

Some informants even claimed that investment in administrative services, which was very much facilitated by local language proficiency, could partly offset a lack of publications when it came to tenure decisions.

The statements from our interviewees working at Finnish business schools were contradictory. Whereas many early-career informants felt disadvantaged compared to domestic colleagues, more established scholars believed that the publication record takes precedence:

In a university like this, it is difficult to deny someone a promotion if they have a list of great publications. And if they have that, it normally means their English is pretty good. It also means that their language ability of Finnish can be great or can be terrible. It won't make much of a difference. - FI7/ENG

Tenure committees at these schools apparently struggled with a tradeoff between their proclaimed focus on international publications and the desire to promote scholars with local language skills. Overall, local language requirements created a linguistic glass ceiling to positions focusing on teaching and administrative services, whereas they mattered less for very research-oriented career tracks. The interview excerpts reproduced in Table 3 further illustrate these results.

[INSERT TABLE 3 HERE]

THEORETICAL IMPLICATIONS

Contributions to research on academic careers

Our study makes several contributions to the literature on academic careers, which comprises an under-researched area in the scholarly field of career studies (Baruch et al., 2014). First, our study contributes to the debate in careers research about the persistence and location of boundaries (Arthur, 2014). The concept of individuals being “the primary career owners and ... responsible for taking the lead in defining career ‘destinies’” (Itani, Järilström, & Piekkari, 2015: 368) arguably applies to management scholars even more than it does to corporate employees. However, this does not mean a complete absence of boundaries. On the contrary, we support Inkson et al.'s (2012: 332) view that “boundaries are central to the shaping of careers” and heed their call for “bringing boundaries back” into careers research. Whereas geographical and cultural boundaries were already acknowledged (Baruch & Reis, 2016), we introduce language as an understudied, yet crucial source of boundaries in globalized academia and provide a

nuanced account of the career barriers that insufficient English and local language proficiency pose in different domains of academic work and different national systems. Given the growing academic migration across language areas (Pherali, 2012), we find it important to recognize these boundaries. Thus, we contribute to boundary-sensitive career research by studying under which conditions language creates career boundaries and how they may be crossed. Specifically targeting academic careers, we challenge the traditional view that they are completely self-enforced (e.g. Baruch & Hall, 2004; Nixon, 1996), since external factors such as implicit language requirements or institutional support play an important role in developing academic careers across language barriers. These contexts and contingencies of individual careers need to be acknowledged (Baruch & Reis, 2016).

Language-induced career boundaries are particularly salient in our academic research setting, which has been described as typifying the concept of the boundaryless career (Baruch & Hall, 2004; Baruch, 2013). However, we argue that language proficiency requirements may also constrain careers in certain corporate and other organizational contexts. Even in multinationals operating with English as the corporate language, the use of the parent country language frequently remains pervasive at headquarters, whereas local languages are spoken in foreign subsidiaries (Harzing & Pudelko, 2013). Especially corporate expatriates, who need to broker information between headquarters and subsidiaries, face as complex proficiency requirements as our academic informants did (Tenzer & Schuster, 2017). We argue that self-initiated expatriates (Cerdin & Pargneux, 2010) in the corporate but also the not-for-profit context (NGOs etc.) are particularly likely to experience language-induced career boundaries, as they share the self-guided nature of their career transitions with our academic research subjects.

Our boundary-sensitive perspective also contributes to research on career competencies by extending the set of factors deemed to predict success. Three variables are commonly considered in research on boundaryless careers (Eby et al., 2003; Colakoglu, 2011; Dickmann et al., 2016). The first one, *knowing why*, captures individual values, interests, and career motivation, which in turn determine the energy to explore different opportunities and adjust to changing work situations (Eby et al., 2003; Dickmann et al., 2016). Academia requires a particular intrinsic motivation to explore (Baruch & Hall, 2004), making this career competency a prerequisite for scholarly success. We have portrayed internationally mobile academics as highly proactive personalities, thus emphasizing their strong motivational capabilities. The

second career competency, *knowing whom*, refers to career-related networks, relationships, and connections, which benefit the individual by providing information, influence, guidance, and support (Eby et al., 2003; Colakoglu, 2011). Studies in the academic realm associate personal networks with career success in terms of publications (Baruch & Hall, 2004). Supporting this view, we have demonstrated the need for connections with literacy brokers, who may help bridging language barriers. The final commonly considered career competency, *knowing how*, captures career- or job-relevant skills, abilities, insights, and knowledge (Defilippi & Arthur, 1994; Dickmann et al., 2016). In this respect, our study has highlighted English and local language skills as crucial career competencies. Based on our cross-national analysis, we suggest adding *knowing where* as a further important career competency and predictor of academic success. Management scholars planning an international career need to know the relevance of linguistic and other framework conditions of their envisaged host countries and analyze them carefully to assess the extent of career boundaries they are going to face. Based on this analysis, they can recognize and target those country and institutional environments, which provide the most favorable conditions for their career advancement.

Contributions to language research in international business

We contribute to the fast growing research on language in international business by examining the role of English compared to local languages in academia. Our data clearly supports recent accounts of English being the dominant language of research and publications across national systems (Horn, 2017; Tietze, 2017). Some suggest that this dominance might even influence the general development of management thought, considering that the use of a specific language induces individuals to accommodate their thoughts and behaviors to the cultural norms associated with that language (Akkermans et al., 2010; Oyserman & Lee, 2008). Previous studies not only observed the phenomenon of *cultural accommodation* in the speech of biculturals, who are socialized into two cultures and change their frames of reference along with language switching, but also for monocultural learners of a second language (Harzing et al., 2002). Following this logic, the global use of English as the lingua franca of management studies could prime management scholars towards Anglo-American perspectives on markets, market participants and management. Accordingly, Tietze (2008a) argues that management terminology is a tangible manifestation of American or British ideologies, transferred across boundaries

through English usage in business schools. Similarly, Wierzbicka (2013) sees English as a “conceptual cage” and talks about the social sciences being “imprisoned in English”. A growing stream portrays Englishization as a hegemonic force (Tietze & Dick, 2013), which is recreating power structures between the “Anglosphere” and the “Rest” (Boussebaa, Sinha & Gabriel, 2014: 1152).

Whereas our data unambiguously confirms the hegemony of English in management research, our respondents were rather vague when having been asked about the possibility of cultural accommodation due to using English for their research. All were surprised about this suggestion, none ever thought about it, some considered its possibility but most deemed this phenomenon to be unlikely. Given the mostly unconscious nature of cultural accommodation, all we could show here was that this aspect was not on the mind of our respondents.

While the dominance of English in *research* was evident for our interviewees across all host country contexts, reality appeared more complex for *teaching* and *service*. To put the dire warnings against “linguistic imperialism” (Phillipson, 2008) into perspective, we studied the relationship between English as the lingua franca of academia and the local languages in different national contexts. Whereas English is deeply engrained in the Finnish business schools we sampled, Finnish is still used in many study programs (teaching) and academic committees and meetings (service). Our results from the Spanish institutions under study confirm Hultgren et al.’s (2014) and Boussebaa and Brown’s (2017) view that English is gradually becoming more and more relevant in academic life, but Castellano and regional languages such as Catalan continue to matter both in teaching and service. Our informants from Japanese academia also witnessed certain tentative efforts to promote the use of English in their Schools, however, these endeavors have made only slow progress so far. Consequently, we found that the process of Englishization proceeds, at least for now, at a significantly different pace depending on the national academic system and various domains of academic life, indicating the need for more context-sensitive studies.

Our results also showed that different types of language barriers influence different areas of scholarly work. A lack of *lexical* proficiency, i.e. knowledge of vocabulary, and *syntactical* proficiency, i.e. the production of correctly structured sentences (Akmajian et al., 2001), in English and/or the local language, were readily noticed by colleagues, therefore creating what Tenzer and Pudielko (2012) call “visible language barriers”. They became evident in research,

teaching, and administrative tasks alike. Equally evident were *phonetic* shortcomings, i.e. the inability to articulate speech sounds (Akmajian et al., 2001) the way native speakers do. These deficiencies reduced teaching success and administrative involvement through accent-based stereotyping. Our results also clearly showed evidence for the relevance of cross-cultural pragmatics, i.e., the ability to create meaning through divergent speech patterns across different languages (Pütz and Neff-van Aertselaer, 2008). As speakers are often unaware of pragmatic differences, Tenzer and Pudelko (2012) speak in this context of “invisible language barriers”. Not knowing Anglo-American pragmatic conventions can alienate editors and reviewers of U.S.-based academic journals. A lack of familiarity with a local tongue’s pragmatic rules can detract from a teacher’s classroom performance, but particularly matters for foreign scholars pursuing academic leadership positions through committee work.

Furthermore, our cross-national perspective demonstrates that language barriers influence foreign management scholars’ careers in distinctly different ways, depending on locals’ proficiency in English and the difficulty of learning the host country’s language. Language creates especially salient boundaries, either as invisible entry barriers or even as glass ceilings, to academic careers in target countries like Japan, where domestic colleagues and particularly the support staff often have a below average proficiency in English, and where most foreigners find it hard to learn the local language due to different grammar, complex scripture, demanding phonetics, and a high linguistic distance to their native tongue. Career challenges are slightly lower in countries like Spain, where some colleagues and support staff members still lack satisfactory English skills, but many foreigners can learn the local language faster. Those challenges are still lower in countries like Finland, where the large majority of local employees are highly proficient in English and therefore put less or no pressure on foreigners to learn the difficult local language. Language barriers and career obstacles are lowest in English-speaking countries like the USA, as their local language equals the lingua franca of academia, which most internationally mobile management scholars speak at a high level. Even there, however, the cognitive effort of constant foreign language processing (Volk, Köhler & Pudelko, 2014) can burden foreign scholars’ daily work. Figure 1 visualizes these distinctions.

[INSERT FIGURE 1 HERE]

PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS

Implications for management scholars aiming to pursue an academic career abroad

Our findings yield valuable recommendations for management scholars planning to pursue a career outside their native language area. More specifically, we suggest including language-induced career boundaries as a criterion for selecting target countries and institutions (“knowing where”). Rather than relying on public relations statements of business schools which praise their own diversity and advertise their international outlook, internationally mobile academics should scrutinize the lived reality in the school’s national academic system. They can minimize language-induced career boundaries by seeking out countries with a) high levels of English proficiency among local colleagues and staff, and b) a local language close to their own mother tongue, which may be acquired with comparative ease. If other reasons cause them to select a target country with high language-induced career boundaries, management scholars need to prepare for delays in career advancement. In rather inward-looking academic systems, such as Japan, foreigners must additionally recognize that pursuing a domestic career (which requires high involvement in administrative services) may reduce their chances of future international career moves (which require highly ranked international publications). The longer they stay in a highly particularistic academic system, the more difficult it will be to move elsewhere on an adequate position.

Whereas the above recommendations concern the academic’s situation before taking a position abroad, the following will focus on those already working in a foreign country. These scholars can overcome language barriers by partnering with colleagues who complement their academics skillsets with the required language proficiencies. Regarding *English* proficiency requirements, management scholars may optimize their chances for publication in leading international journals by involving native English-speaking co-authors as boundary spanning “literacy brokers” (Lillis & Curry, 2006), who edit manuscripts and grant applications before they are sent out to journals or international funding agencies. This function could also be fulfilled by native English speaking PhD students, who grow into valuable co-authors and receive international mentorship in return. To overcome boundaries raised by *local language* needs, management scholars working abroad can team up with domestic colleagues or PhD students, who may act as “bridge individuals” (Harzing et al., 2011) in collecting data (especially via interviews), preparing publications for domestic journals or domestic research grant

applications, or helping with teaching preparation. We found academic partnerships to be most synergistic when local scholars contribute access to local data and internationally experienced academics take the lead in preparing manuscripts for leading international journals.

Implications for business schools

Given that many business schools aim to attract international staff to enhance their academic output (Pherali, 2012), our findings are also highly relevant for their strategic orientation. To gain accreditation with professional bodies, business schools are required to address matters of cultural diversity in their study programs (Hardy & Tolhurst, 2014). We argue that they should also proactively address the challenges of *language* diversity, not only among students, but also among faculty and staff. Given that two of the “triple crown” accreditation associations, the U.S.-based AACSB and the U.K.-based AMBA, are based in English-speaking countries, our study suggests that business schools around the globe need to strategically prioritize the use of English among their faculty if they strive to gain international accreditation. Hiring local academics and administrative staff who can cope with a multilingual setting and are able to master the English language is a first step in this direction; using English on websites, mailing lists, and in faculty meetings is another step.

Echoing prior studies recommending active language management and language support structures for multinational corporations (Feely & Harzing, 2003; Harzing et al., 2011), we further argue that all business schools, including U.S.-based institutions, should proactively offer language support to both local staff and foreign faculty. Whereas the former often require training in English, the latter would benefit particularly from local language courses. Considering that the editors of leading U.S. or U.K. journals urge non-native English speaking management scholars to pay particular attention to their writing style (George, 2012; Linton, 2012), schools may additionally improve their faculty’s research output by funding English-language editing and copy-editing services, which remedy grammatical and stylistic imperfections (Tietze, 2008b; Horn, 2017) and help researchers to find their “English-speaking voice” (Ryazanova, 2015: 174). Such offers would not only benefit international faculty, but also enhance domestic scholars’ academic competitiveness.

To reduce boundaries related to the local language, native speakers of the host country language should avoid using dialect, jargon, or slang and speak in standard language while

conversing with foreigners. Business schools can also offer translation services for the documentation provided by national funding agencies. Language training for international faculty will be particularly effective, if it targets the respective academic fields foreign academics are teaching. Moreover, institutions should be transparent regarding which proficiency level in English and the local language is required for recruitment and subsequent promotions. The fact that international faculty can be found particularly in non-tenured positions, whereas the ranks of tenured professors are still often dominated by domestic scholars (see Kim et al., 2012 for U.S. data), suggests that language-induced boundaries impede promotions more than recruitment. Thus, especially the (often implicit) prerequisites for promotions may need reconsidering or should at least be made more explicit.

Agreeing with Ryazanova (2015: 141), we believe that creating a favorable environment for scholars speaking different mother tongues will not only contribute to job satisfaction and employee well-being, but can also facilitate “the attraction, retention and motivation of unique human capital in a global market”. Top scholars from abroad are more willing to consider positions in an institution where they are not judged on their lack of local language skills. They are more likely to stay if business schools actively support their integration into academic life. Reducing the language barriers internationally mobile management scholars are facing will not only improve their career prospects; they will also be empowered and motivated to contribute more effectively to their host school’s international standing. Overall, our study reinforces Tange’s (2012) call that the increasing national and linguistic diversity among university faculty requires institutions to make constant adjustments to improve their faculty’s and consequently their own situation.

LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

Our study is subject to a number of limitations. First, our sample size for each of the four host countries under study is limited. Having interviewed only ten individuals per country and having sampled them from only two to six different institutions, we certainly cannot claim to cover these national academic systems exhaustively. However, we would argue that our careful selection of a linguistically and hierarchically diverse sample increased the robustness of our results and allows us to suggest certain patterns.

Second, we only interviewed native speakers of English and German in their respective mother tongues. Compared to these informants, speakers of the remaining 16 languages might have been constrained in their self-expression, particularly regarding emotional issues (von Glinow et al., 2004). However, as management academics, all of our respondents use English on a daily basis, which is why we don't consider this to be a factor constraining the quality of our data in any significant way. Nevertheless, proponents of language accommodation theory might argue that usage of English can prime interviewees to adapt their thought towards Anglo-American values (Akkermans et al., 2010). We therefore encourage future projects of international research teams, which collect data in a variety of different languages.

Third, we did not consider which other languages informants had studied besides English and their host country's local language. Future studies on related topics could capture their full range of language proficiencies.

Fourth, as our study was on academics working at foreign business schools, by definition all informants succeeded in obtaining employment at such institutions. As such, our sample may reflect the outcome of what Schneider et al. (1995) describe as the attraction-selection-attrition process: those with particular interest in international environments and concomitantly high language abilities are attracted to international academic careers; business schools select those who are deemed compatible with scholarly jobs; and those who turn out not to fit those workplaces after all, leave or are forced out. To counteract a possible bias towards the most successful academics, we also included respondents with short organizational tenure and PhD students who have not yet fully committed to a lifetime in academia.

Fifth, our coverage of academic service as a career component only includes administrative services within the institution, but neglects outreach towards the larger society. This focus also reflects the most salient concerns among our informants. However, societal impact was included, for example, as a performance criterion for the first time in the latest Research Excellence Framework for UK universities (REF, 2014) and is likely to gain importance in other national academic systems. We therefore encourage future research that investigates the impact of local language barriers on foreign scholars' ability to engage with public, private, and third sector organizations or directly with the public at large.

Our findings open several promising avenues for further research. Our qualitative exploration of language-induced boundaries to global career mobility in management academia

could be complemented by quantitative studies testing the direct and indirect effects of language barriers on different career components. By choosing a representative sample of internationally mobile scholars across different host countries and business disciplines, large-scale surveys could tease out generalizable differences between host country academic systems and disciplines with regard to language effects. Future studies could also go beyond the focus on language-induced *boundaries* by exploring the unique *value* speakers of specific mother tongues might be able to add to a business school's teaching and research portfolio. This might concern in particular native speakers from countries which are particularly targeted for student intake (e.g. China), as they might guide and mentor students from these countries particularly well. Additionally, native speakers from countries which are considered highly attractive research settings might benefit from privileged access to data (again: China).

CONCLUSION

The scholarly community agrees that “the internationalization of higher education is inevitable” (Doh, 2010: 165) and is profoundly changing the academic working environment (Baruch & Hall, 2004; Kaulisch & Enders, 2005). Some scholars have highlighted the benefits of international hiring for business schools (Adler, 2014; Eisenberg, Hartel & Stahl, 2013) and stated that this process has expanded business academics' career perspectives to a global scale (Richardson & Zikic, 2007). Countering this enthusiastic view of a boundaryless academic world, others believe that business schools around the world have not yet progressed far enough in terms of their globalization (Doh, 2010) and that certain boundaries to academic career mobility are remaining in place (Inkson et al., 2012). Applying a language lens to these dynamic shifts, our study provides a nuanced account of the career boundaries created by language barriers across different academic systems. On this basis, we advise internationally mobile management scholars to seek employment in linguistically favorable settings and simultaneously urge business schools to create an enabling environment for foreign academics.

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TABLES

Table 1: Key interviewee characteristics

Country	Interviewee code	Native language(s)	Rank	Research field	Gender	Age group	Business school	Years in host country	Interview mode
Japan	JP1/ENG	English	Full Prof.	Economics	M	66-70	Japan I	7	Face to face
	JP2/ENG	English	Full Prof.	Marketing	M	41-45	Japan I	14	Face to face
	JP3/HIN	Hindi	Associate Prof.	Finance	M	36-40	Japan I	14	Face to face
	JP4/DUT	Dutch	Full Prof.	OB	M	51-55	Japan II	12	Face to face
	JP5/PAG-TGL	Pangasinan/ Tagalog	Assistant Prof.	Economics	M	36-40	Japan III	15	Face to face
	JP6/BUL	Bulgarian	Associate Prof.	Economics	M	51-55	Japan III	15	Face to face
	JP7/RUS	Russian	Assistant Prof.	Marketing	F	31-35	Japan IV	12	Face to face
	JP8/CHI	Chinese	Assistant Prof.	Accounting	F	36-40	Japan IV	10	Face to face
	JP9/GER	German	Full Prof.	HRM	M	41-45	Japan V	13	Face to face
	JP10/FIN	Finnish	Associate Prof.	IB	M	46-50	Japan VI	12	Skype
	JP11/CHI	Chinese	PhD student	IB	F	26-30	Japan VII	5	Skype
	JP12/CHI	Chinese	PhD student	OB	F	26-30	Japan VII	4	Skype
	JP13/URD	Urdu	PhD student	HRM	F	26-30	Japan VII	3	Skype
Finland	FI1/DUT	Dutch	Full Prof.	OB	M	61-65	Finland I	2	Skype
	FI2/GER	German	Assistant Prof.	Entrepreneurship	F	31-35	Finland I	7	Skype
	FI3/ENG-SWE	English/ Swedish	Assistant Prof.	HRM	F	36-40	Finland I	10	Skype
	FI4/FIN-ENG	Finnish/ English	PhD student	HRM	F	26-30	Finland I	4	Skype
	FI5/POL	Polish	PhD student	IB	F	26-30	Finland I	6	Skype
	FI6/CHI	Chinese	PhD student	IB	F	26-30	Finland I	0.5	Skype
	FI7/ENG	English	Full Prof.	HRM	M	36-40	Finland II	11	Face to face
	FI8/FRE	French	Full Prof.	HRM/IB	M	36-40	Finland II	3	Face to face
	FI9/GER	German	Assistant Prof.	Finance	M	31-35	Finland II	0.15	Face to face
	FI10/SPA	Spanish	Assistant Prof.	Marketing	M	41-45	Finland II	4	Face to face
Spain	ES1/CHI	Chinese	Associate Prof.	HRM	F	41-45	Spain I	1	Face to face
	ES2/GER	German	Associate Prof.	IB	M	36-40	Spain I	6.5	Face to face

	ES3/RUS	Russian	Associate Prof.	Strategy	F	36-40	Spain I	6.5	Face to face
	ES4/DUT	Dutch	Assistant Prof.	HRM/OB	F	31-35	Spain I	0.75	Face to face
	ES5/FRE	French	Assistant Prof.	OB	M	31-35	Spain I	3.5	Face to face
	ES6/GER	German	Assistant Prof.	Accounting	M	46-50	Spain I	6	Face to face
	ES7/ENG-PA-HIN	English/ Punjabi/ Hindi	Assistant Prof.	Marketing	M	36-40	Spain II	7	Skype
	ES8/ITA	Italian	Assistant Prof.	Innovation Management	F	26-30	Spain II	1.5	Skype
	ES9/ITA	Italian	PhD student	Strategy/IB	M	26-30	Spain II	4	Skype
	ES10/GRK	Greek	PhD student	Entrepreneurship	F	41-45	Spain II	2	Skype
	ES 11/GER	German	Postdoc	Entrepreneurship	F	31-35	Spain II	1.5	Face to face
USA	US1/SPA	Spanish	PhD student	Strategy	F	31-35	USA I	16	Skype
	US2/SPA	Spanish	PhD student	Accounting	M	26-30	USA I	9	Skype
	US3/SPA	Spanish	Associate Prof.	Finance	F	41-45	USA II	14	Skype
	US4/CHI	Chinese	Assistant Prof.	Operations Management	M	36-40	USA II	13	Skype
	US5/HEB	Hebrew	Associate Prof.	Economics	M	36-40	USA III	4	Skype
	US6/CHI	Chinese	Assistant Prof.	Strategy	M	36-40	USA IV	8	Skype
	US7/ITA	Italian	PhD student	Marketing	F	26-30	USA V	9	Skype
	US8/SPA	Spanish	PhD student	Strategy	F	36-40	USA V	5	Skype
	US9/FRE	French	Assistant Prof.	OB	F	41-45	USA VI	17	Skype

Table 2: The impact of foreign scholars' English proficiency on their careers

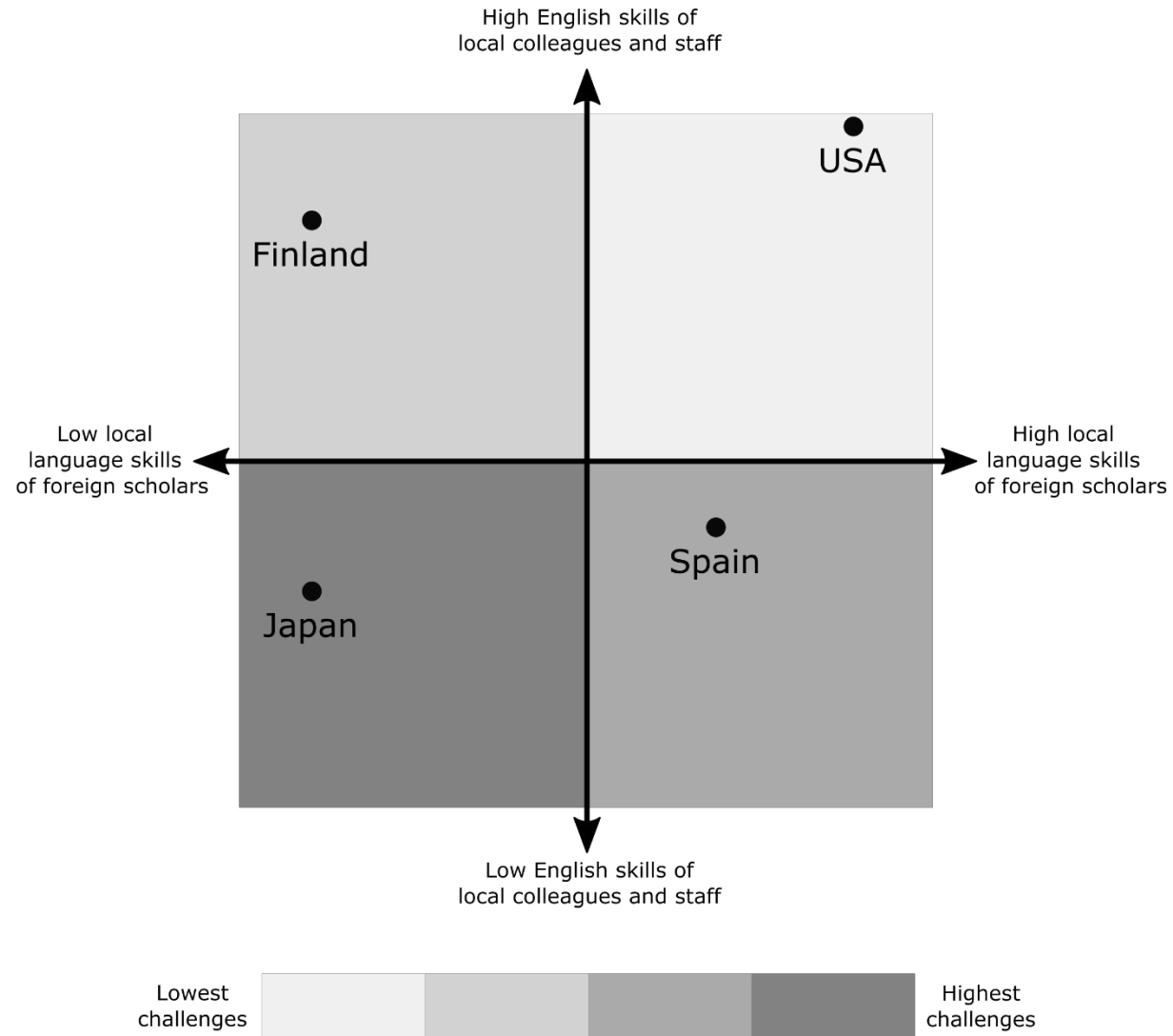
Career antecedents	Publishing	<p>They told me that I should learn how they write and how they use English [in the top journals]. But this is too difficult for me. – JP12/CHI</p> <p>Once you open yourself up to English, working in any other language just simply does not make sense if you are thinking about progressing your career. Research is so dominated by British and U.S. journals right now. I think it shouldn't be like that since there is also much knowledge captured in other cultural and linguistic contexts, which, however, doesn't make it into English language journals. But that is unfortunately the reality. - FI5/POL</p>
	Grant applications	<p>[For grant applications] everything has to be done in English and English speakers will therefore have an advantage since it is difficult for me to know how to write everything. - US2/SPA</p> <p>Everything is done in English, so everybody is aware that they will be writing it [their grant application] in English. But of course it's a hurdle in the sense that for some people it's naturally more difficult to write in another language than their mother tongue. So, even if they know that it's the expectation and the requirement and they're happy to go for that, some things are more difficult to write and express in English. – FI3/ENG-SWE</p>
	Teaching	<p>When we go to the third year in my PhD program, it is a standard requirement to teach. That is the time all international students feel pressure. Especially two students ahead of me, they did a poor job so that eventually the school got super worried whether they can put Chinese students into a classroom. I remember there was one year even I got worried. ... I spent very long time rehearsing every class, reciting every script I wrote. - US4/CHI</p> <p>I'd like to think my great teaching evaluations are because of my pedagogical brilliance, but when you talk about performance in the classroom, you can't separate it from my level of English. There I think I have an advantage over the non-English natives. - FI7/ENG</p>
	Administrative service	<p>Sometimes it will just occur that people speak to each other in different languages. But most of the time, I would say 90 percent of our conversations are in English. There are only few faculty members who don't feel very comfortable in English. - ES5/FRE</p> <p>I get many e-mails in Japanese and I just delete them. If somebody wants to speak with me, they can speak to me in English. I know that they can. If I don't respond, they usually get back to me in English. - JP2/ENG</p>
Career components	Recruitment	<p>We have conference interviews. You get your initial assessment mostly by research, but they also get a sense whether you can teach. If you cannot communicate with two or three people, they know you can't communicate in a larger classroom. Then you have a big presentation, like a public speech for an audience. So you have twenty people in a room who have time to assess you and your language proficiency. - US4/CHI</p> <p>There are international executive MBAs. So as they have gradually turned towards international students, basically everyone they hired since would speak English. - ES10/GRK</p>
	Promotion	<p>They look at the publications, they look at teaching evaluations and then how well you assimilated. So I believe I should be okay. But yes, it has taken me a lot of time to assimilate to be part of the system, to learn the language. Otherwise, in another English speaking school, I would just focus on my research. - ES7/ENG-PA-HIN</p> <p>Once you are hired, you will go the same way as everybody else. I don't think that there is any discriminatory promotion path. But again, most of the job positions offered in academia are only for Japanese speakers. - JP2/ENG</p>

Table 3: The impact of foreign scholars' local language proficiency on their careers

Grant applications	<p>If I were speaking fluent Spanish, I probably would have more funding opportunities. I mean, it's a lot easier for me to find these opportunities outside of Spain, given the fact that I'm not from here, I don't know the locals specifics, I don't speak the language. - ES3/RUS</p>	
	<p>The application was entirely in Japanese, which I got help for. When they invited me, the interview was also entirely in Japanese, even though they knew my research was going to be conducted in English. I don't know why I didn't get the grant. - JP4/DUT</p>	
Career antecedents	Teaching	<p>I find it difficult to read in Finnish students' faces what they are really thinking, because they often look quite expressionless. But generally, I do have the impression that they understand what I am saying. - FI2/GER</p>
	<p>It is one thing to speak the language in a business environment, in meetings. It is a different thing to teach in that language, especially if you teach case method or discussion-based learning that we use here. Your command of language has to be at a completely different level! Could you teach case method with limited command of the language? Yes, you could. But would you do as good of a job? Absolutely not! - ES3/RUS</p>	
Administrative service	<p>They were launching a new website in the beginning of January and then I could only find the graduation instructions in the local language. They were also changing the rules, like whether you need to submit hardcopies or not, what are the requirements, the supporting documents, etc. ... I emailed then and had to be very persistent. I said 'Could you please send me the document in English if the website doesn't update so fast?' So instead of one simple click, it was two days of work. ... I don't know what the university wants and I don't think they know it either. Advice is usually not taken so well coming from people that don't speak the local language. I don't really know, but I kind of got the impression that they don't care about us. - FI6/CHI</p>	
	<p>In our university, there are several foreign professors. Some of them are assistant professors and some of them are full professors, but I have never seen a foreign professor who is dean of a department and who does management work. - JP11/CHI</p>	
Career components	Recruitment	<p>We have two different profiles: the research profile professors and the teaching profile professors. The research professors are not asked to teach in Spanish or to speak Spanish. If you know English, it is fine. But for the teaching professors, they have a specific need for teaching to locals, so they look for someone who can speak Spanish. - ES8/ITA</p>
	<p>If they hire foreigners, they still want to be sure that they will speak and understand Japanese without a problem. This is important because they have to communicate with the school's administration and they need to be involved in its management. We cannot afford somebody who just does his own research and that is it. - JP6/BUL</p>	
Promotion	<p>In the management board - that was interesting - we got an ex Finnish professor who was working in Sweden, but he was only appointed to the board because he could still speak Finnish. - FI7/ENG</p>	
<p>If you want to get a high position [at a Japanese university], Japanese need to be able to evaluate and assess you. They need to know whether or not you are a good person. If you don't speak any Japanese, then it is very hard for them to identify you as a good person. Consequently, you will not get promoted. - JP1/ENG</p>		

FIGURES

Figure 1: Cross-national comparison of language-induced boundaries to foreign management scholars' academic careers



APPENDIX

Sample interview questions

The wording and sequence of questions varied between interviews, as conversations followed the respondents' narratives.

Introduction: demographic basis

Nationality, mother tongue, age, professional status, research field, length and location of prior studies or work abroad, time spent in the current academic system

English and local language proficiency

- How do you rate your listening comprehension / speaking skills / written proficiency in English / in the local language?
- How would you compare your English / local language proficiency to the skills of your colleagues?

Language policies and practices

- Does your School have a (formal / informal) language policy? If yes, what does it look like?
- Are there any expectations from your School for you to learn the local language? If yes, how do you feel about these expectations?
- In which professional situations do you speak English / the local language? How do you feel in these situations?
- Have you experienced language requirements as a barrier? If yes, could you please illustrate such experiences with an example?
- Have you observed any misunderstandings at work, which might have been due to language difficulties? If yes, could you please describe an example?
- Are there any professional situations in which you might have felt excluded due to your lack of English / local language capabilities? Example?
- How do you think speaking English / the local language might influence your academic networks?

Impact of language skills on academic careers

- To what extent was language (English / local) an issue when deciding to work for your current School?
- In which domains of academic life, if any, have you experienced English / local language barriers? Could you please describe an example?
- Do you think native speakers of English / the local language might have an advantage in terms of achieving higher research output / better teaching evaluations / more effectiveness as administrators?
- Which strategies, if any, do you use to overcome language challenges?
- Do you believe native speakers might have higher chances to get recruited/promoted?

Do you think your career might advance faster if you were working in your home country?

ⁱ Interestingly, this change is most evident outside the United States. Whereas only 5.1% of faculty in U.S. business schools were non-U.S. citizens in 2014-15, 16.6% of business scholars working at Asian universities and 31.3% of those employed in Europe were born outside the country where they were employed. The figures are even more impressive for Canada (44.9%), Oceania (52.8%), and the Middle East (54.8%) (AACSB, 2016). Particularly for non-U.S. business schools, comparisons to previous years show a substantial increase in international hiring.

ⁱⁱ Given that English has become the most used international language and part of school curricula in many countries, adult foreigners are assumed to generally find it easier to learn host country languages with a small linguistic distance to English (Selmer & Lauring, 2015; for the concept of linguistic distance see Chiswick & Miller, 2005). Regarding the distance between host country languages and foreign scholars' mother tongues, local languages which are part of smaller language families (such as Finnish or Japanese) are easily accessible only to those few foreigners speaking a tongue from the same family. In contrast, local languages from larger families (such as Spanish) are easy to learn for a larger proportion of foreign academics. Demanding phonetics and complex or inconsistent grammar may also influence the difficulty of learning specific languages (Selmer & Lauring, 2015).

ⁱⁱⁱ Two of our initial codes, "English" and "local language", reflected a key distinction in our research question. We linked these codes to career antecedents and components touched upon in the interviews, i.e. labelled reports about English proficiency requirements in specific domains as "English_publishing", "English_grants", "English_teaching", "English_admin", "English_recruitment", and "English_promotion". Accounts of local language requirements were labelled accordingly. We simultaneously coded interviewees' statements by perceptions of language-induced career boundaries with labels such as "boundary_spanning", "boundary_raising", or "linguistic_glass_ceiling".