

ENGLISH IN GLOBALISED BUSINESS ENVIRONMENT

L. Y. Shapran, PhD

National University of Food Technologies

The global spread of English over the last 40 years is remarkable. It is unprecedented in several ways: by the increasing number of users of the language; by its depth of penetration into societies; by its range of functions. English has official or special status in at least 75 countries with a total population of over 2 billion. One out of four of the world's population speaks English to some level of competence. Demand from the other three-quarters is increasing. Nowadays, English is used for more purposes than ever before. It is the main language of books, newspapers, airports and air-traffic control, international business and academic conferences, science, technology, diplomacy, sport, international competitions, pop music and advertising.

English has become the international language of business, finance, and technology. Everyone working in the corporate bodies is feeling the pressure to learn a common tongue as companies globalize and democratize. These days in formerly national companies such as Renault and BMW, managers, engineers, even leading blue-collar workers are constantly calling and e-mailing colleagues and customers in Europe, the U.S., and Japan. The language usually is English, an industrial tool now as basic as the screwdriver. [1]

The Directorate General for Education and Culture of the European Commission commissioned the study "Effects on the European Economy of Shortages of Foreign Language Skills in Enterprise" held in December 2005 and undertaken by the UK National Centre for Languages, in collaboration with an international team of researchers. Its objective was to provide the Commission and decision-takers in Member States with practical information and analysis of the use of language skills by small and medium size enterprises and the impact on business performance. The study shows that a significant proportion of European companies are losing export business and miss out on contracts as a result of their lack of language skills and intercultural skills. The findings suggest that there is enormous potential for small

businesses in Europe to increase their total exports if they invest more in languages and develop coherent language strategies. Recent research shows that companies that enhance their language skills can exploit better the business opportunities in the EU's internal market, which, with nearly half a billion people, is the world's largest. [3]

And how much is English worth for job seekers? In jobs from offices to the factory floor, recruiters say that workers who speak English often command salaries 25% to 35% above those who don't. More important, they can aspire to a host of higher-level jobs that are off-limits to monolingualists. Across all sectors and ranks, non-English-speakers face a harder hunt for fewer and poorer jobs. Many of the leading employers in Europe, including Vivendi Universal and CAP Gemini rarely even consider job applicants without English. Secretaries who lack English can expect to make 30% less – if they're lucky enough to find a job, says temporary-work agency Manpower Inc. And for head-hunters such as Sarah Mulhern of Spencer Stuart in Paris, English is not an option anymore: "It's a requirement." [1]

We witness that English has spread to every corner of the globe, and has become the most important asset in financial success. English, unlike any other language, has come to possess a *global market value*. [2] Professionals who seek a dynamic and successful career in today's diverse global business environment must be able to function at a high level of competence in English in order to achieve their professional goals; otherwise, they risk losing important career opportunities. The basic skills they need are: (1) be confident in their ability to conduct business in English, (2) have verbal fluency for face-to-face business situations, (3) demonstrate professional approach and interaction with clients in English, (4) be confident to effectively represent the organisation at an international level, (5) be able to conduct cross-border communication with colleagues and clients, (6) have good comprehension skills and clear pronunciation.

So, English is increasingly being used as international company language, a trend that will only gain momentum in the coming years. English will replace local languages at certain levels within the workplace. Team-working, project management and leadership will become established parts of the skill base for professionals.

Internationalization demands business professionals to be also prepared for the increasingly international roles that they need to play outside the local context. Nowadays, Ukraine needs highly qualified economists, able to work both in the domestic and international economy. The process of integration into the international community, particularly in the fields of economy, leads to changes in the requirements to young professionals. To be competitive on the job market, young professionals should have good knowledge in Business and ESP English, namely have skills in oral (communicating in work situations, making effective presentations, conducting negotiations, communicating effectively in international meetings, handling a wide range of telephone calls, etc.) and written (formal letters, CVs, application letters, memos, faxes, etc.) business communication, and skills for expressing and discussing business ideas and economic concepts in the fields of management, human resources, marketing and advertising, finance.

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