

Language Competence Needs in Business, Management and Engineering

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Abstract

The purpose of a Business English course is to fulfil students' work-related needs. Many first-year students of the University of Economics in Bratislava are temporarily employed by multinational corporations or work in an industry whose language is English. Apart from their primary needs such as using the phone, reporting to foreign managers or writing e-mails, they need to be able to read periodicals in English on their subject area and perform tasks typically associated with the workplace. A large number of them also has to read newspapers in English so as to keep up with changes in their industry. The paper aims to present the research findings of the KEGA project carried out at the Department of English Language of the Faculty of Applied Languages. It describes ideal language programmes for university students ensuring the acquisition of needed skills. Using LMS Moodle, it also demonstrates how students enrich their vocabulary by digesting large quantities of reading matter in English published in prestigious online newspapers and magazines. Qualitative research reveals acquired formal and informal business vocabulary. In addition, the paper shows how to focus on giving domain-specific presentations.

Keywords:

Text
Terminology
Idiom
Communication
Presentation

1 Introduction

Countless initiatives furthered by the European Union ensure that undergraduates in Europe have many opportunities to study and complete work placements in other European countries. After graduation, an increasing number of students pursue further studies or seek work outside their home country. When university-level language courses are taken into account, the Slovak ones often provide inadequate preparation. As Breeze (2007) states, there may be several reasons for this, for instance, large-class sizes, mixed-level groups, but one of the main problems is the lack of teaching objectives after a B2 level has been reached. To tackle this problem, between 2005 and 2007 four different European higher education institutions were involved in a transnational research project that was aimed at identifying language competences in a foreign language, determining the academic and professional profile of university students and adapting language courses at higher education institutions to real-life needs (Duttlinger et al., 2007). The project results enabled to determine language-related genres and tasks needed in business and engineering within the academic and professional spheres, and develop indicators for language competences at linguistic, sociolinguistic and pragmatic levels.

The above-mentioned scholars describe language programmes in terms of genres and tasks and integrated skills. Donna (2000) provides a synthesis of her experience working with a wide range of Business English students of many nationalities who work in American or European companies, or who need English to

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conduct business abroad or study their subject. Along with Taylor (2006), they make suggestions for developing integrated skills. Even nowadays, when looking at the syllabi of Business English courses, these major sources can serve as an inspiration for improving the quality and efficiency of language learning, teaching and testing at a European level.

The paper is part of the KEGA project carried out at the Faculty of Applied Languages. Its main aim is to look at a language programme (Duttlinger et al., 2007) ensuring acquisition of the necessary language competences for a graduate in business, management and engineering. Apart from following a compulsory one-term syllabus of a Business English course, it shows how integrated skills can be developed via LMS Moodle. The paper focuses on extra work of an experimental group of students from the Faculty of National Economy.

2 Developing Business English skills

In Slovak secondary schools, students have General English classes in which they are taught to try to become perfect speakers of 'Oxford' English. Everyone tries to get fifty out of fifty in language tests – perfection is demanded and marks depended on it. As far as university testing is concerned, perfectionism is still demanded. But in real life, language is an imperfect tool. Any attempt to become a 'perfect' speaker of English is doomed to failure (Taylor, 2006).

According to Donna (2000), a General English course has much in common with a Business English course but in many ways it is very different since the aims of a course may be quite radically different. Aims will always relate to students' work; sometimes it will mean developing generalized business skills, and sometimes something much more technical or academic. Donna (2000) describes the skills that need to be developed, e.g. talking to clients, telephoning, dealing with visitors, talking to colleagues, reporting to foreign managers, participating at meetings, negotiating, note-taking, giving presentations, writing e-mails, report-writing, and understanding the news. In Budden's (2008) view, students should read the news. The media sources, such as the Internet, newspapers or magazines will give them opportunities to talk about the news and express their own opinions.

In accordance with Donna (2000), Taylor (2006) provides tips for developing and improving Business English which are included in sections on networking, socialising, presentations, telephoning, negotiations, writing e-mails, meetings, reading business texts, listening, business vocabulary, and grammar. Joyce (2003) believes that newspapers are a useful tool in the ELT classroom for improving reading skills. She encourages students to read newspapers outside the classroom because ongoing reading can help them discuss ideas more fluently as well as read and understand a whole variety of texts.

Regarding the vocabulary, Parkinson and Noble (2005) add that people studying English for business need to know how to use words correctly, what they mean, what frequently used terms and collocations they should acquire. In addition, Taylor (2006) stresses that with the right vocabulary people can make excellent presentations, run and take part in meetings, negotiate, write clearly and deal with difficult phone calls. Also, Donna (2000) states that the language studied in class is governed by students' needs. This often means a high technical content with frequent use of common business or technical terms. It also means a focus on styles of speaking or writing which are appropriate to the students' working environment and to the tasks they have to perform. This means students need to develop a keen awareness of style – formality vs. informality, directness vs. indirectness. Most importantly, through language study in class students need to become aware of the cultural context of language use, i.e. national or local cultures, industrial cultures and corporate cultures. British and American workplaces are full of idioms and people are likely to encounter them in today's business world. Gillet (2010), as might be expected, recommends studying idioms to succeed on the job.

3 Developing skills for academic purposes

Regarding the academic and professional sphere, both Duttlinger et al. (2007) and Breeze (2007) recommend language programmes for students in business, management and engineering. The courses of different lengths (40-, 60-, and 90-hour) define genres or tasks and integrated skills that ensure acquisition of the necessary

language competences. Courses are for students with a B2 level of general language competence and are organized with a view to promoting C1-level competence.

These language programmes would be ideal for the students of the University of Economics in Bratislava who study, for example, at the Faculty of Commerce, the Faculty of Business Management, the Faculty of Business Economy, the Faculty of National Economy, or others. Therefore, special attention is devoted to them.

According to the scholars, students are involved in many different communication activities. First of all, they are supposed to attend lectures which means being able to follow their content and the teacher's instructions, taking notes and understanding the explanations given in them, including the use of technical and professional terminology. They should contribute to lectures by expressing their ideas clearly, precisely and without hesitation. Students also need to be capable of spontaneously asking questions relating to the specific content of the lectures, attracting the lecturer's attention and starting and ending an exchange with him/her appropriately. They should also be capable of following various presentations using technology on a scientific or technical subject (Duttlinger et al., 2007).

Students are asked to read and extract the relevant information from written case studies and to present complex arguments as solutions to particular domain-specific problems. *Market Leader* (Cotton, Falvey, Kent, 2011), a compulsory textbook, includes case studies that are linked to the business topics of each unit. They give the students the opportunity to practice their speaking skills in realistic business situations.

In teams, students are expected to cooperate with other students and simultaneously to effectively argue to defend their views. They can maintain an adequate level of fluency in discussions, and explain solutions to complex academic or technical problems coherently and clearly (Duttlinger et al., 2007).

Students are supposed to give well-structured, audience-oriented presentations on domain-specific information, with the use of audio-visual materials (Duttlinger et al., 2007). Regarding the presentations, students attending Business English courses are taught how to make a good presentation.

For their studies they are also asked to read and analyze published materials and other written sources such as academic papers, textbooks and reports, and synthesize information from them (Duttlinger et al., 2007).

To find materials that are relevant to their studies, to select information from many different webpages and to abstract and summarize them students are expected to use the Internet (Duttlinger et al., 2007).

In order to find and select appropriate complementary material from published sources, they need to understand and follow the instructions for library retrieval systems.

Avoiding plagiarism, students are supposed to use the above mentioned materials and information appropriately in their writing (e.g. term papers). They need to write assignments respecting the conventions of the discipline and use an appropriate academic writing style. They are also supposed to maintain coherence over an extended piece of writing. Using LMS Moodle, Slovak students work on their assignments.

Students are also asked to write a one-page summary or report in which language errors do not impede comprehension of content (Duttlinger et al., 2007). Reading sections in *Market Leader* (Cotton, Falvey, Kent, 2011) offer authentic articles on a variety of topics from the *Financial Times* and other newspapers and books on business. Students are asked to read them and write short summaries.

In written examinations, they are expected to understand exam instructions and to interpret adequately the exam tasks. They select information critically and express the important facts in the appropriate and concise way. They also write short, but highly technical texts explaining solutions to problems specific to their field of studies. In oral examinations, they need to answer questions spontaneously (for which no preparation has been given) and defend clearly their opinions on technical topics related to their field of studies. They use a variety of **vocabulary resources** and rhetorical structures (Duttlinger et al., 2007).

In order to study abroad, students are expected to ask people and fully understand various instructions and information packages related to accommodation, bank services, health care, etc. They must also write appropriate letters asking for information on these subjects, apply for studies or employment in written form, and understand news on TV or radio related to their field of interest. (Duttlinger et al., 2007).

Finally, students need to identify dimensions of academic and professional culture in their field of studies and respect them. Similarly, they are expected to identify dimensions of the target national culture and respect these. Students must adapt to the social conventions typical for the target professional and national

culture. They should also identify and understand elements of non-verbal communication, particularly those typical of the target national culture, adapt their body language to the target culture to avoid misunderstanding, and try to pronounce clearly. (Duttlinger et al., 2007).

4 Research methodology

In the summer semester of 2018, seventy-eight first-year students from four faculties of the University were enrolled on the same Business English course for advanced students. Apart from the compulsory units – *Job satisfaction, Risk, Management styles, and Team building in Market Leader* (Cotton, Falvey, Kent, 2011), they were asked to find an English-language newspaper or magazine that will suit their tastes and read articles of their own interest. The following four British, American and Indian newspapers or magazines were chosen: *The Guardian* (GN), *Forbes* (FS), *Newsweek* (NW) and *The Economic Times* (ET) as all of them provide sections and subsections on the economy, business, finance, management, leadership, technology, and the like.

A group of twenty students from the Faculty of National Economy participated in the KEGA project as an experimental group. Each student was supposed to read 12 articles to get the main idea, to learn new specialized vocabulary, and to look for, at least, two idioms. The previous quantitative research (Hrdličková, 2018) revealed that the students approached this task with great effort. They read articles from seminar to seminar on various topics and were able, as a whole group, with the help of Learning Management System (LMS) Moodle, to create a 137,678-word corpus. Nimritta (2016) states that LMS Moodle is a supportive environment for the independent nature of learning in higher education. According to her, there is no population more technologically skilful than post-secondary students. Online learning platforms like LMS Moodle are ideal for students in higher education. It was believed that individual work of Slovak students would also be ambitious.

At the end of the semester the students responded to a simple questionnaire, consisting of ten questions, to provide feedback for the teacher. One of the questions was: ‘What was the most difficult text?’ ‘Why?’ A small number of students stated they only chose easy articles and others had no problem with reading comprehension or understanding the context. Eleven out of eighteen students, all of them with a B2 level of language competence, encountered serious difficulties. The following qualitative analysis will reveal their causes.

5 Findings and discussion

The research demonstrates the topics of the most difficult texts, e.g. business, economics, inflation, finance, banking, digital transformation of European business, investing in emerging markets, stock exchanges, entrepreneurs, leaders, social networks, and supermarkets.

Each student was asked to work with twelve articles in order to enlarge his/her small vocabulary with business, specialized, or technical vocabulary. Via LMS Moodle, they were provided with immediate feedback.

No.	Headline/Newspaper/Magazine	Word count
1.	T6 ‘Beast from the east’ cost UK supermarkets £22m	418
2.	T4 Facebook bans Britain First and its leaders	656
3.	T1 Here is a step-by-step guide to buy bitcoin in India	509
4.	T10 States get ‘wallet’ for timely GeM payments	358
5.	T1 Thank Goodness the Stock Market Is Sliding. It’s About Time	760
6.	T2 How To Survive (And Thrive) In A Time Of Crisis	969
7.	T1 Banks May Be Turning Into ‘Dumb Pots’ Of Money	733
8.	T8 UK inflation is falling fast – that’s good and bad news	371
9.	T4 Europe’s Recurring Financial Crisis Has Not, Repeat, Not Ended	884
10.	T7 For Now, Stock Market Is Overreacting To China	921
11.	T4 President Trump’s Trade Tariffs Signal A New Global Trade War	1,319
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Table 1: Articles under investigation.

This 7898-word corpus will be further analysed for important words (marked with a star (*)) in a business dictionary), less important words (Parkinson, Noble, 2005) and idioms. The words are not listed in alphabetical order but according to their occurrence in a text. Example sentences show how articles can be made more difficult when using idioms. After acquiring specialized vocabulary, students will be ready to give a presentation on any topic. Eight articles have been chosen for the analysis. The following abbreviations are used: Text 1 (T1), Text 11 (T11), parts of speech: noun (n), adjective (adj), verb (v), phrasal verb (phr v), adverb (adv); collocation (COLL), especially (esp.), usually (usu.), abbreviation (abbr.), somebody's (sb's), (for example (e.g.), that is (i.e.), British English (BrE), American English (AmE), plural (pl.). Subject labels indicate the area of business for this meaning, e.g. (*Accounting*), Cambridge Idioms Dictionary (CID), Oxford Dictionary of English Idioms (ODEI), Oxford Business English Dictionary (OBED), Merriam-Webster (MW), and Oxford Dictionary (OD), Cambridge Dictionary (CD),

Important words
cost (v), sales (n) (pl.), customer (n), venture (v), shop (n, v) (<i>esp. BrE</i>), consumer (n), head (n), retail (adj) (<i>Commerce</i>), increase (v), value (n), chain (n), boost (v), discount (n) (<i>Commerce</i>); COLL: discount chain, share (n), market (n), market share (n) (<i>Marketing</i>), price (n), research (n), firm (n), inflation (n)
Less important words
supermarket (n) (<i>AmE also grocery store</i>); COLL: supermarket chain, shopper (n), grocery (n) (<i>esp. BrE, AmE usu. grocery store</i>), fall (v), jump (v), name (n), establish (v), dip (v), sharp (adj)
Idioms
play havoc with, at the expense of

Table 2: 'Beast from the east' cost UK supermarkets £22m (GN, 4 Apr 2018).

*"The beast from the east **played havoc with** consumers' usual shopping plans," said Fraser McKeivitt, head of retail and consumer insight at Kantar. (GN, 4 Apr 2018, CD)*

*Discount chains Aldi and Lidl continued to increase their share of the UK grocery market over the first 12 weeks of the year, **at the expense of** some of the bigger, more established names. (GN, 4 Apr 2018, MW)*

According to Student 1, the article about supermarkets contained the words he did not know and caused him difficulties to understand it.

Important words
ban (v), leader (n), network (n), post (v, n) (<i>IT</i>), content (n), design (v), minority (n), group (n), standard (n), set th up (phr v), company (n), organization (n), break (v), allow (v), confirm (v), responsible (adj) (+ for), include (v), label (v), distribution (n), online (adj) (<i>IT</i>), achieve (v), international (adj), president (n), share (v), support (n), employ (v) (<i>formal</i>), report (n), deposit (n); COLL: lose a deposit (<i>Commerce, Property</i>), head (n), research (n), strong (adj), access (n) (+ to), website (n), bank account (n)
Less important words
page (n), platform (<i>IT</i>), express (v), community (n), remove (v), crime (n), investigation (n) (+ into), leaflet (n), driver (n), deputy (n), tactic (n) (<i>usu pl.</i>), drum sth up (phr v); COLL: to drum up support, media (n), appeal (n), release (v), category (n), mainstream (adj), stand for sth (phr v), charity (n), fold (v), follow sth up (phr v), site (n), sole (adj)
Idioms
on the basis of, overstep the mark, behind the scenes, be downhill all the way

Table 3: 'Table 3 Facebook bans Britain First and its leaders (GN, 14 Mar 2018).

*"More than any other group, Britain First **overstepped the mark**, even going as far as to show Isis-style beheadings," Matthew Collins, the head of research at the charity Hope Not Hate, told the Guardian: "The group became the real 'Facebook fascists' and there may be reason to believe the group could even fold if Facebook stays strong and follows up on the mirror and back-up sites Britain First has. (GN, 14 Mar 2018, CID)*

*"With Paul Golding and Jayda Fransen jailed, there are already significant problems **behind the scenes** over access to the group's social media, website and bank accounts. It could very well **be all the way downhill** for them from here." (GN, 14 Mar 2018, CID, OD)*

Under the topic of 'The far right', this article was considered as difficult since Student 2 was not able to find at least two idioms, only some phrasal verbs, e.g. *abide by these standards*, *drum up support*, etc. However, the teacher helped him to fulfil his task.

Important words
buy (v), application (n) (IT), sell (v), currency (n), purchase (v) (formal), online (adj, adv) (IT), store (v) (IT), digital (adj), exchange (n), base sth on sth (phr v), feature (n), security (n), account (n), register (v), secure (adj), payment (n), method (n), convert (v) (+ into) (Finance), order (n), rate (n), value (n), level (n); COLL: a high level, risk (n); COLL: financial/security risks, regulate (v), issue (v), statement (n), state (v), holder (n), investor (n), trader (n) (Finance, Stock Exchange), deal with sth (phr v), virtual (adj) (IT), website (n), financial (adj), legal (adj), customer (n), protection (n), transaction (n), money (n), key (n), confidential (adj); COLL: to be kept confidential, balance (n), transfer (n), recover (v), trade (v) (Stock Exchange), underlying (adj) (Economics, Finance), project (n), market cap (n) (Stock Exchange), performance (n), research (v), analyse (v), invest (v), fraud (n), agent (n), return (n) (Finance); COLL: deliver a high return
Less important words
guide (n), grow (v), find (v), available (adj), platform (IT), service provider (n) (IT), place (n), local (adj), push (v), fraction (n), reserve bank (n), user (n), flag (v), concern (n), potential (adj), digital wallet (n) (E-commerce, Commerce, Finance), username (n) (IT), password (n) (IT), irrecoverable (adj), worthless (adj), steal (v), hacker (n) (IT), fake (adj)
Idioms
step-by-step (as modifier), do sth at your own risk

Table 4: Here is a step-by-step guide to buy bitcoin in India (ET, 21 Sep 2017)

*In case you are also looking to find out how to buy and sell bitcoin currency in India, here's a **step-by-step** guide for you.* (ET, 21 Sep 2017, OD)

*'Any user, holder, investor or trader dealing with virtual currencies is **doing it at their own risk**,' the RBI had cautioned on its website in February this year.* (ET, 21 Sep 2017, OBED)

The Economic Times was not popular with students as it offered many articles about India. In spite of this, some students remained loyal to this webpage and used to choose shorter articles where they found at least two idioms as required. Others switch to *The Guardian* or *Forbes*. According to Student 3, this text was full of difficult words about banking and finance.

Important words
stock market (n), stock (n) (Finance, Stock Exchange (usu. pl.)), per cent (n), investor (n), the Federal Reserve (also the Fed (informal)), chair (n), maintain (v), interest rate (n); COLL: interest rates rise, asset (n) (usu. pl.), market (n), rate (n); COLL: cut a rate, recession (n) (Economics), return (v), return (n) (Finance), hit (v), lending (n), investment (n), hold (v), damage (n); COLL: to cause damage (to sb/sth), retirement (n) (HR): COLL: to near retirement; COLL: retirement funds, invest (v), saving (n), savings (pl.), interest (n), inflation (n), account for sth (phr v), economist (n), yield (n, v), investment (n); COLL: a risky investment, equity (n), equities (pl.) (Finance, Stock Exchange), value (n), portfolio (n), benefit (n), price (n), career (n); COLL: to pursue a career (+ in), incentive (n) (+ for), engineering (n), reward (n), finance (n), profit (n); COLL: to make a profit, sell (v), growth (n) (Economics); COLL: slow growth, cash (n), capital (n), boost (v)
Less important words
slide (v), S&P 500™, real estate (n) (esp. AmE), fall (v), index fund (n) (AmE, BrE) (Finance), plunge (v), sell-off (n) (Finance), accelerate (v), pace (n), hike (n) (informal) (esp. AmE), hike sth (up) (v), pundit (n) (informal), trigger (v), saver (n), bear market (n) (Finance, Stock Exchange), free enterprise (n), bootstrapping (n), crisis (n); COLL: a financial crisis, sharp (adj), collateral (n), senior (n) (esp. AmE), certificate of deposit (n) (abbr. CD), government bond (n), depositor (n), underestimate (v), Treasuries (pl.) (n) (= Treasury bond) (n) (Finance), rate of return (n); COLL: a low rate of return, retiree (n) (AmE), need (n); COLL: meet sb's needs, principal (n), junk bond (n), bull market (n) (Finance, Stock Exchange), volatile (adj), valuation (n), all-time (adj); COLL: an all-time high, common stock (n), decrease (n) (+ in), distress (n) (Law), Social Security (n) (AmE spelling), resurgence (n), day-trade (v) (Stock Exchange), spiral (v), accrue (v),

instrument (n) (<i>Finance</i>), cheap money (n) (<i>Economics</i>), contributor (n), bubble (n) (<i>usu. sing.</i>) (<i>Economics</i>), speculator (n), drive (v), deflate (v) (<i>Economics</i>), healthy (adj), kill sth off (phr v), hemorrhage (n) (<i>AmE spelling</i>), job creation (n) (<i>Economics</i>), monetary policy (n) (<i>Economics</i>), thrift (n)
Idioms
get a bloody nose, rock-bottom, make sense, a baby boomer, lose money, a nest egg, get rich quick, the bubble bursts, in the long run, long-run

Table 5: Thank Goodness the Stock Market Is Sliding. It’s About Time (NW, 13 Feb 2018).

The S&P 500 has **got its first bloody nose** in years, dropping almost 5 percent since February 1. (NW, 13 Feb 2018, CID)

A decade of **rock-bottom** interest rates has clobbered middle-class savers and distorted markets. (NW, 13 Feb 2018, CID)

The Fed’s decision has caused immense collateral damage -- especially to **baby boomers**. (NW, 13 Feb 2018, CID)

‘Acute distress’ is certainly one way to describe what retirees would feel if their **nest eggs** halved in value. (NW, 13 Feb 2018, CID)

Now, many brilliant young people rush to **get rich quick** in finance instead. (NW, 13 Feb 2018, MW)

It’s better to start deflating asset **bubbles** now rather than let them get bigger and dramatically **burst**. (NW, 13 Feb 2018, CID)

But recessions, while painful, help make the economy healthier **in the long run**. (NW, 13 Feb 2018, CID)

In general, articles about stocks and shares and stock markets were the most difficult ones. To fulfil the task of finding idioms in the article, Student 4 chose this one from the category ‘Opinion’. It can be said that this article was extremely difficult.

Important words
business (n), deal with sth (phr v), PR (<i>abbr.</i>) (public relations) (<i>Marketing</i>), company (n); COLL: a company grows, manage (v), control (n); COLL: (re)gain control, content n), team (n), stability (n) relationship (n), handle (v), career (n), issue (n), lead to sth (phr v), ability (n), access (v), method (n), require (v), goal (n), creative (adj), state (n), standard (adj), operate (v), focus (v) (+on), flow (n); COLL: a continuous flow of sth, allow (v), work (v), abandon (v), task (n), founder (n), firm (n), bill (v), resume (v), maintain (v), function (v), professional (n), agent (n), specialist (n), partner (n), requirement (n), objective (adj), outcome (n)
Less important words
thrive (v), crisis (n); COLL: face a crisis, momentum (n); COLL: gain momentum, potential (n), regain (v), crisis management (n), internal (adj), situation (n), learning (n), concentration (n), focused (adj), narrow (v), hammer away at sth (phr v), limited (adj), diminishing returns (n) (<i>Economics</i>), routine (n), mode (n), consume (v), downtime (n) (<i>esp. AmE</i>), response (n), stress (n), mount (v), struggle (n), litigation (n) (<i>Law</i>), external (adj), drop (v), go through (phr v), slow down (v), power (n), step (n), find (v), attorney (n) (<i>esp. AmE</i>) (<i>Law</i>), advisor (n), counsel (n) (<i>AmE</i>), tie (n)
Idioms
gain momentum, in place, chances are, peace of mind, at risk, sleep on it, back and forth, pay attention to, fight or flight, take action, make a decision, on sb’s terms, go it alone, make sure, a blind spot, no matter what

Table 6: How To Survive (And Thrive) In A Time Of Crisis (FS, 25 Feb 2018).

Especially when your company grows and **gains momentum**, it can seem like the problems get bigger — or at least the potential for problems gets bigger. (FS, 25 Feb 2018, ODEI)

Managing public relations problems and regaining control can be difficult, and whether you’re using content to defuse the situation or have a PR or crisis management team **in place**, **chances are** you’ll need help calming the internal storm that starts brewing. (FS, 25 Feb 2018, ODEI)

It’s natural to let this stuff bother us, but learning how to deal with it and give ourselves some sense of **peace of mind** is important, too. (FS, 25 Feb 2018, MW)

*But how do you handle the internal storm when your career is **at risk**?* (FS, 25 Feb 2018, OBED)

*It naturally occurs while taking a walk or during sleep, hence the phrase "**sleep on it.**"* (FS, 25 Feb 2018, CID)

*Locking yourself up at home, making lists, and pacing **back and forth** in constant agitation are not going to help.* (FS, 25 Feb 2018, CID)

*Invest in yourself, and **pay** extra **attention to** your sleep, diet, and fitness.* (FS, 25 Feb 2018, MW)

*Our animal nature ensures that the **fight-or-flight** response kicks in when stress mounts.* (FS, 25 Feb 2018, OD)

*It's your game. Play it **on your terms.*** (FS, 25 Feb 2018, OBED)

*Don't **go it alone.*** (FS, 25 Feb 2018, CID)

*They will be better able to see your **blind spots.*** (FS, 25 Feb 2018, CID)

The author of this article writes about entrepreneurs, leadership and content marketing. In spite of the fact that the topic differs from the previous and following ones, it must be stated in agreement with Student 5 that the text contains difficult expressions.

Important words
reform (n); COLL: fundamental reforms, obligation (n); COLL: meet sb's obligations, currency (n); COLL: national currency; COLL: depreciate a currency; fund (n); COLL: have funds, loan (n), flow (n); COLL: a free flow of sth, perform (v), payment (n), debt (n), spendthrift (adj), tax (n); COLL: increase taxes, spending (n), budget (n); COLL: a budget surplus, surplus (n), revenue (n) (<i>often</i> revenues pl.), cost (n), costs (pl.), expense (n) (<i>Accounting</i>), GDP <i>abbr.</i> (<i>Economics</i>) (gross domestic product), demand (n); COLL: demand rises, economy (n), (<i>often</i> the economy), negotiation (n) (<i>usu.</i> pl.), deficit (n) (<i>Accounting, Economics</i>); COLL: reduce a deficit, statistic (n), unemployment (n), leadership (n), measure (n), labour (n), product (n), law (n), liberalise (v), tentatively (adv), restriction (n); COLL: ease restrictions, business (n), investor (n); COLL: private investors, confidence (n), lend (v), money (n), COLL: lend money, rate (n), production (n), competition (n), standard (n), maintain (v), goods (pl.), buyer (n), supplier (n), employment (n); COLL: full-time employment, change (n), regulatory (adj), gain (v), put (v), put sth up (phr v), advantage, creditor (n), export (n), global (adj), income (n), borrow (v)
Less important words
recurring (adj), crisis (n); COLL: financial crisis, austerity (n), fundamentals (n) (pl.) (<i>Economics</i>), counterproductive (adj), recipient (n) (<i>formal</i>), failure (n), loom (v), rescue (v), (n) (<i>Finance</i>), impose (v), hardship (n), IMF <i>abbr.</i> International Monetary Fund, shrink (v), statistics (n), need (n), step (n), regulation (n) (<i>usu.</i> pl.) (<i>abbr.</i> reg), job seeker (n), unwind (v), crony capitalism (n) (<i>informal</i>), keep (v), keep sth up (phr v), stiff (v) (<i>AmE</i>) (<i>informal</i>), Eurozone (n), tourism (n), buying power (n), breakdown (n), succession (n), script (v)
Idioms
in this regard, an uphill battle, at best, back and forth, in the face of sth, go hat in hand, take steps, red tape, in favour of, at the expense of

Table 7: *Europe's Recurring Financial Crisis Has Not, Repeat, Not Ended* (FS, 6 Mar 2018)

*Its Europe Department head, Paul Thomsen, explained during this last round of negotiations how the austerity so constrains the economy that revenues fall and demands for social services rise, making deficit reduction **an uphill battle at best.*** (FS, 6 Mar 2018, CID, ODEI)

*In all these instances of **back and forth** over the years, no one --- neither the Germans nor the IMF nor the government in Athens nor the European Union leadership in Brussels --- have considered the fundamental reform measures that just might get Greece and other problematic EU members out of this seemingly impossible situation.* (FS, 6 March 2018, CID)

*If Greece and some of these other troubled countries, such as Italy or Spain or Portugal, were to liberalize their infamously constraining labor and product laws, as France tentatively has begun to do, and ease their restrictions on new business formation, their economies might have a chance to grow, even **in the face of** stringent budget measures.* (FS, 6 Mar 2018, ODEI)

*In such a case, private investors might even gain enough confidence to lend Athens and these other governments' money at supportable rates and so obviate its need for them to **go to Europe hat in hand.*** (FS, 6 Mar 2018, CID)

*Instead, established business interests have managed to keep down competition with a regime of government **red tape**, extreme even by European standards.* (FS, 6 Mar 2018, ODEI)

Those who have protected themselves in this system have done so **at the expense of** new job seekers, especially the young. (FS, 6 Mar 2018, MW)

The author of this article writes about finance and economics. Student 6 stated that the article contains a lot of difficult words and terms and therefore it was difficult to work with.

Important words
stock market (n), measure (n), target (v), bull (<i>Finance, Stock Exchange</i>), equity (n), equities (pl.) (<i>Finance, Stock Exchange</i>), analyst (n), overtime (n); COLL: work overtime, (re)calculate (v), profit margin (n) (<i>Accounting</i>), company (n), hit (v), policy (n), profit (n), (re)allocate (v), emerge (v), fund (n) (<i>Finance</i>), flow (n), data (n), product (n), account for sth (phr v), GDP <i>abbr.</i> (<i>Economics</i>) (gross domestic product), economy (n); COLL: a strong economy, investor (n), support (v); COLL: give your support, the market (n) (<i>Economics</i>), sales (n) (pl.), manufacturing (n), index (n) (<i>Economics, Finance</i>), economist (n), estimate (v), quarter (n) (<i>Accounting</i>), growth (n), consumption (n), spending (n), rate (n), forecast (v), job (n), slowdown (n), employment (n), income (n), lead (v), lead to sth (phr v), consumer (n), COLL: consumer spending, inflation (n), confidence (n), interest rate (n), survey, board (n), business (n), investment; COLL: business investment, spending (n), technology (n); COLL: technology investment, indicator (n); COLL: indicators point towards, decline (n), report (n), outlook (n); COLL: an economic outlook, corporation (n); COLL: a big corporation, productivity (n); COLL: productivity gains, export (n), global (adj), cycle; COLL: a growth cycle, head (n), debt (n), buy (v), rally (v) (<i>Finance</i>), retirement (n) (<i>HR</i>), exposure (n) (+ to) (<i>Finance</i>), settlement (n) (<i>Finance, Stock Exchange</i>), strength (n)
Less important words
the bell (n) (<i>Stock Exchange</i>), NYSE <i>abbr.</i> New York Stock Exchange, low (n), retaliatory (adj), momentum (n), tariff (n) (<i>Trade</i>), trade war (n), the Fed <i>abbr.</i> , central bank (n), quantitative (adj), easing (n), easy money (n), lock (v), be locked in/into sth, impact (n, v), fundamentals (n) (pl.) (<i>Economics</i>), come in at sth (phr v), rebound (n), job market (n); COLL: strong labour market, volatile (adj), volatility (n) the Federal Reserve, hike sth (up) (v) (<i>informal</i>), prospect (n), solid (adj), unemployment (n), pickup (n), mid-sized (adj), capital expenditure (n) (<i>Accounting</i>), pent-up (adj), lift (v), advancement (n), overheat (v), capex <i>abbr.</i> (<i>Accounting</i>), upswing (n), reinforce (v), recessionary (adj) (<i>Economics</i>), slow (v), grow (v), strategist (n), co- (prefix) (<i>used in nouns</i>), co-head (n), the dollar (n), response (n), (+ against) basket of currencies (n) (<i>Economics</i>), winning (adj), CIO <i>abbr.</i> , diversify (v) (+ into), real estate (n) (<i>esp. AmE</i>), resort to sth (phr v), WTO <i>abbr.</i> , dispute (n), scale (n), picture (n)
Idioms
tit-for-tat, set in stone, easy money, fire on all cylinders, in the works, going forward, over the long term, a long while, in accordance with, long-term, see the light of day

Table 8: Table 8 For Now, Stock Market Is Overreacting to China (FS, 4 Apr 2018)

The stock market is overreacting to the China **tit-for-tat** trade spat. (FS, 4 Apr 2018, CID)

Nothing is **set in stone** at this time, though that does not mean that equity analysts, in particular, will not have to work overtime recalculating profit margins for companies that will be hit by a trade war. (FS, 4 Apr 2018, CID)

This has been a Goldilocks market for the last few years, pushed forward by quantitative easing at the Fed and policies at the other core central banks' **easy money** machine. (FS, 4 Apr 2018, CID)

On Wednesday, ISM Non-Manufacturing came in at 58.8 on the index, meaning the economy is **firing on all six cylinders**. (FS, 4 Apr 2018, MW)

HSBC economist Kevin Logan estimates first-quarter growth in overall consumption spending is a lower than expected 1.2%, but a rebound of 3.2% in the second quarter is **in the works**, he thinks. (FS, 4 Apr 2018, OBED)

Survey data available so far in the first quarter have not shown any negative signs yet, though that will change **going forward** as big companies like Boeing rethink tariff impacts. (FS, 4 Apr 2018, OBED)

Greater capital expenditures and pent-up productivity gains from technology investment could lift growth even more **over the long term**, not just this year and next. (FS, 4 Apr 2018, OBED)

(We) will resort to the WTO dispute settlement mechanism and take corresponding measures of equal scale and strength against U.S. products **in accordance with** Chinese law, he says. (FS, 4 Apr 2018, MW)

We hope that the U.S. side with sense and the **long-term** picture in mind, and refrains from going further down the wrong path. (FS, 4 Apr 2018, CID)

Speaking on CBNC this morning, Jared Bernstein, chief economist at the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, said there is a 40% chance that these tariffs **see the light of day**. (FS 4 Apr 2018, CID)

The author of this article writes about business and investing in emerging markets. This topic was outside Student 7's sphere of interest so it was difficult for her to understand it.

Important words
claim (v), steel (n), import (n), imports (pl.), security (n), commodity (n), exempt (v), (re)negotiation (n), concession (n), exemption (n); COLL: seek an exemption, legislation (n), quantity (n), global (adj), produce (v), producer (n), economy (n); COLL: weaken the economy, production (n), facility (n); COLL: production facility, domestic (adj), requirement (n); COLL: meet requirements, risk (n), demand (n, v); COLL: meet a demand, industry (n), reduce (v), skill (n), hire (v) (<i>HR</i>), worker (n), maintain (v), increase (v), foreign (adj), supply (v), goal (n), legal (adj), contract (v), protection (n), interest (n), measure (n), challenge (v, n); COLL: meet a challenge, procedure (n), administration (n), set th up (phr v), policy, aim (v) (+ at), (re)balance (v), trade (n), unfair (adj), practice (n), allow (v), barrier (n), technology (n), transfer (n), capacity (n), industrial (adj), subsidy (n), support (n, enterprise (n), gain (v), advantage (n); COLL: an economic advantage, break (v), opportunity (n); COLL: provide opportunities, export (n), expand (v), fair (adj), compete (v) (+ for), business (n), strengthen (v), international (adj), target (n), goods (n), negotiate (v) (+ with), deal with (phr v), adviser (n); COLL: an economic adviser, price (n)
Less important words
tariff (n) (<i>Trade</i>); COLL: impose a tariff, imposition (n), subject to sth (adj), satisfactory (adj), determine (v) (<i>formal</i>), fail (v), price tag (n), decree (n), bypass (v), empower (v) (<i>formal</i>), finding (n), recourse (n) (<i>formal</i>), COLL: without recourse to, excess capacity (n) (<i>Economics, Production</i>), weaken (v), internal (adj), closure (n), shrink (v), (in +) emergency (n), welfare (n), amend (v), weakness (n), reinforce (v), reliance (n), revive (v), relief (n), idle (v), mill (n) (<i>Manufacturing</i>), need (n), current (adj), self-sufficiency (n), power (n), approval (n), WTO <i>abbr.</i> , blanket (adj), rule (n), warning (n); COLL: adequate warning, dispute (v), dispute resolution (n) (<i>Law</i>), protectionist (adj), embed (v), jurisdiction (n) (<i>Law</i>), trade deficit (n) (<i>Economics</i>), grow (v), dump (v), discriminatory (adj) (<i>Law</i>), non-tariff barrier (n) (<i>Economics</i>), forced (adj), imbalance (n), break down (phr v), oppose (v), closed (adj), block (n), incentivize (v), prosperity (n), trade surplus (n) (<i>Economics</i>), legitimate (adj), trade war (n), penalty (n), external (adj), cheat (n), cut (n); COLL: a big cut, resistance (n), bilateral (adj), message (n)
Idioms
hold sb's feet to the fire, bear sth in mind, take into account, crystal clear, at sb's disposal, take action, in effect, see fit, on the grounds of sth, a matter of sth, as far as sb/sth is concerned, in sb's eyes, play by sb's rules, flex sb's muscles, come to an end

Table 9: President Trump's Trade Tariffs Signal A New Global Trade War (FS, 11 Mar 2018)

But this should not be seen as a concession. Rather, it is **holding their feet to the fire**. (FS, 11 Mar 2018, OD)

Other countries seeking exemptions from these and other tariffs should **bear this in mind**. (FS, 11 Mar 2018, CID)

Because of these risks and the risk that the United States may be unable to "meet [steel] demands for national defense and critical industries in a national emergency," and **taking into account** the close relation of the economic welfare of the Nation to our national security, see 19 U.S.C. 1862(d), the Secretary concluded that the present quantities and circumstances of steel articles imports threaten to impair the national security as defined in section 232 of the Trade Expansion Act of 1962, as amended. (FS, 11 Mar 2018, CID)

Reinforcing this, the President's proclamation makes it **crystal clear** that the purpose of the tariffs is to reduce reliance on imports by reviving domestic production. (FS, 11 Mar, 2018, CID)

Self-sufficiency is the goal, and the U.S. government will use all the powers **at its disposal** – including trade tariffs – to achieve it. (FS, 11 Mar 2018, OBED|

Nothing in this Agreement shall be construed to prevent any contracting party from **taking any action** which it considers necessary for the protection of its essential security interests. (FS, 11 Mar 2018, ODEI)

*The U.S. government can now apply whatever tariffs and other measures it **sees fit**, and all of them can be justified **on grounds of** national security.* (FS, 11 Mar 2018, CID, ODEI)

*If the U.S. government says the whole of its trade policy is necessary for national security, then **as far as** the WTO is **concerned**, it is.* (FS, 11 Mar 2018, ODEI)

*In President Trump's **eyes**, a country that runs a persistent trade surplus versus the U.S. is a threat to national security and therefore a legitimate target for trade war.* (FS, 11 Mar 2018, CID)

***Play by our rules**, or we will beat you up.* (FS, 11 Mar 2018, OBED)

*America is **flexing its muscles** and preparing for trade war.* (FS, 11 Mar 2018, CID)

*The era of international trade cooperation is **coming to an end**.* (FS, 11 Mar 2018, MW)

The author of this article writes about banking, finance and economics. In Student 8's opinion the most difficult articles were about a stock exchange, the American economy, long articles and containing a large amount of unknown words.

6 Conclusion

All eight students included in this small study have reached a B2 level of general language competence in secondary schools. Even though, for example, T1 was short, it was quite difficult, as the student states. As far as other articles are considered, it can be stated that they really were difficult for such young adults. Our Business English students have to study hard for the examinations since definitions of many business or technical terms are required in final tests. This is an example of how they can be helped with learning new words, collocations and idioms on an individual basis. With an extended vocabulary, students can easily follow lectures, discussions, workshops, group work, can give presentations, read several texts, write a synthesis or analysis, understand official documents, write letters of applications, and CVs, have conversations etc. When integrated skills are taken into consideration, academic and professional listening and speaking, academic and professional reading, writing and speaking; and academic and professional reading and writing should be more developed than personal reading and writing and personal listening and speaking, as Breeze (2007) suggests.

On the basis of professional experience, it can be stated that students have the potential and will to absorb interesting materials, if they have them at their own disposal. This paper has been written as an inspiration for students of business, management and engineering and experienced business people who need to read, write and speak English in their work, as well as for those who give them language training and advice. Skills acquired on degree courses will definitely enable students to meet the needs of European employers.

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