

THE STATE OF AFFAIRS AND PROSPECTS OF TEACHING ACADEMIC DISCIPLINES IN FOREIGN LANGUAGE

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Abstract

The purpose of this study is to find out the state of the English language teaching process. A report by the British Council in Ukraine affirms and confirms the extremely low level of foreign language proficiency not only of higher education applicants but also of teachers. Increasing B2 higher education requirements for foreign language students make the scientific and academic community not only pay attention to the state of affairs but also to reflect on how to prepare for 2023 when proficiency or lack of proficiency in English can become with a sentence of professional unfitness. Even the knowledge of English at a professional level does not guarantee the provision of professional knowledge, for example, in economics, so special attention is paid to the methods of increasing the level of language proficiency by teachers of professional disciplines.

DER STAND DER ANGELEGENHEITEN UND AUSSICHTEN DES UNTERRICHTS VON AKADEMISCHEN DISZIPLINEN IN FREMDSPRACHE

Zusammenfassung

Ziel dieser Studie ist es, den Stand des Englischunterrichts herauszufinden. Ein Bericht des British Council in der Ukraine bestätigt und bestätigt die äußerst geringen Fremdsprachenkenntnisse nicht nur der Bewerber, sondern auch der Lehrer. Die zunehmenden Anforderungen an die B2-Hochschulbildung für Fremdsprachenstudenten lassen die Wissenschaft nicht nur auf den Stand der Dinge achten, sondern auch darüber nachdenken, wie man sich auf das Jahr 2023 vorbereiten kann, wenn die Beherrschung oder der Mangel an Englischkenntnissen mit einer Berufsunfähigkeit geahndet werden kann. Selbst die Kenntnis der englischen Sprache auf professionellem Niveau garantiert nicht die Vermittlung von Fachkenntnissen, beispielsweise in den Wirtschaftswissenschaften, weshalb den Methoden zur Verbesserung der Sprachkenntnisse von Lehrern der Fachdisziplinen besondere Aufmerksamkeit geschenkt wird.

Keywords:

Level of foreign language proficiency
Professional knowledge
Language screening

Schlüsselwörter:

Niveau der Fremdsprachenkenntnisse
Professionelles Wissen
Sprachprüfung

1 Introduction

Any engineer or technologist, economist or civil servant who wants to learn best practices must know English to read or watch videos without a translator or dictionary. There is a wealth of important professional information on the Internet, but specialists cannot get to know it because of a lack of knowledge of a foreign language.

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In July 2019, the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine developed and approved at the meeting of the Ministry of Education and Science, the Conceptual foundations of the state policy on the development of English language in the field of higher education, concerning the process of teaching specialized disciplines in foreign language and the introduction of “language screenings”.

Recently, the introduction of English as a language of instruction in professional disciplines in higher education institutions, where English is not an official or traditional language of teaching specialized disciplines at the master's level has increased significantly.

2 Chapter

2.1 Section

About 50% of the programs are in non-English speaking countries, but Ukraine ranks only 62 places, and the number of masters programs in English is only three. While in Turkey 393, Poland 287, and in the US in general 15178 (Fig. 1) (EF English Proficiency Index, 2019).

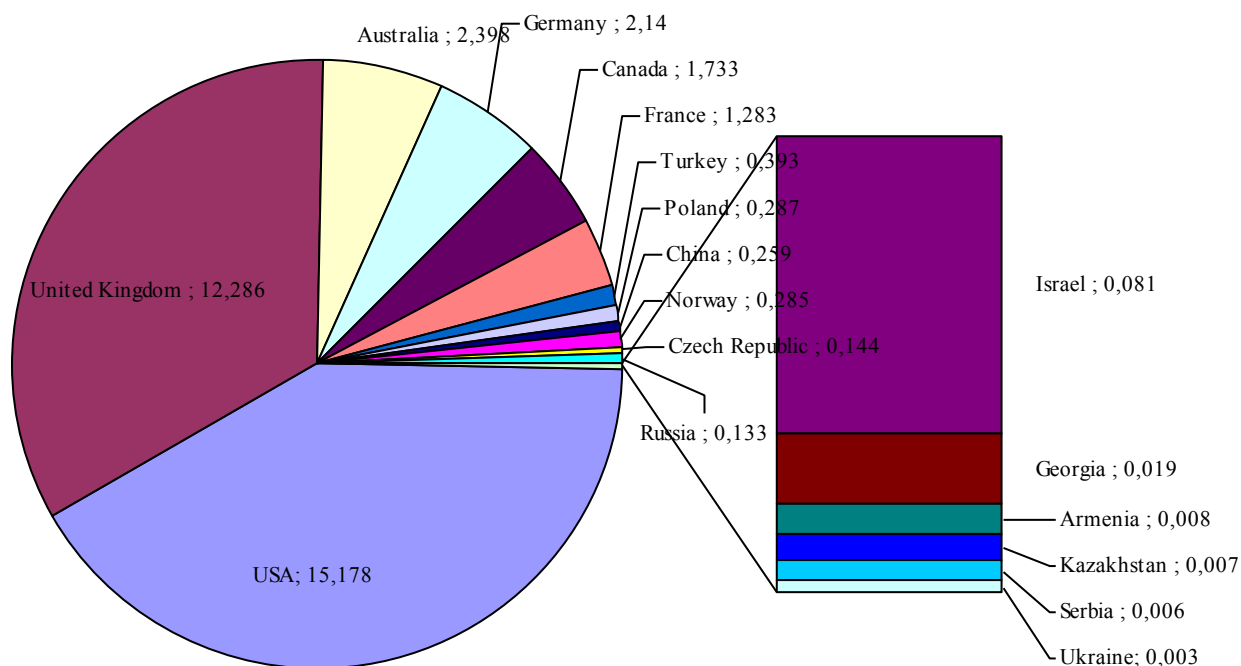


Fig. 1: Number of Masters Degree Programs in English.

In this regard, the report of the British Council in Ukraine, which shows the required or recommended levels of language proficiency in countries of Europe (Table 1), deserves attention (British Council in Ukraine, 2019).

Country	School graduates	Graduates of universities (non-linguistic major)	Teachers of English at universities	Teachers of English of vocational direction, teachers of professional disciplines	Place in the rating	Number of masters programs in English teaching

Armenia	A2	B2	(B2)	?	55	8
Israel	B1	B2	C1	?	36	81
Kazakhstan	?	?	(B1)	(B2)	56	7
Russia	No criteria have been set yet				30	133
Serbia	?	B2	?	?	57	6
Turkey	No criteria have been set yet				16	393
Ukraine	B1	B2	B27	B2	62	3

Table 1: Recommended levels of language proficiency.

The results of a study by the British Council in Ukraine prove and confirm the extremely low level of foreign language proficiency not only of higher education students but also of teachers. Overall, English is low in English. According to the English Proficiency Index (EPI), in 2019, Ukraine ranked 49th among the 72 countries surveyed. The result is worse than from 2013 to 2019. In addition, Ukraine is among the last of ranked (EF English Proficiency Index, 2019).

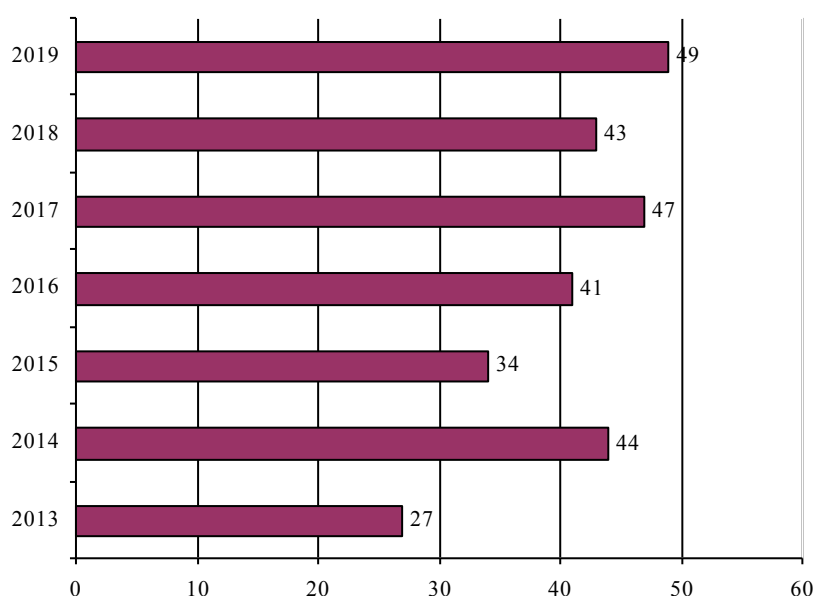


Fig. 2: The results of a study by the British Council in Ukraine of the level of foreign language proficiency in Ukraine.

The EF English Proficiency Index places the surveyed countries and territories into five proficiency bands, from Very High to Very Low. The bands make it easier to identify countries and regions with similar skill levels and to draw comparisons between and within regions (EF English Proficiency Index, 2019).

In the table below, we give examples of tasks that an individual could accomplish at each proficiency band.

Country	CEFR level		
Netherlands	Very high proficiency	B2	Use nuanced and appropriate language in social situations
Singapore			Read advanced texts with ease
Sweden			Negotiate a contract with a native English speaker
Hungary	High proficiency	B1	Make a presentation at work
Kenya			Understand TV shows
Philippines			Read a newspaper
China	Moderate proficiency	A1	Participate in meetings in one's area of expertise
Costa Rica			Understand song lyrics
France			Write professional emails on familiar subjects

Bolivia	Low proficiency	A2	Navigate an English-speaking country as a tourist
Pakistan			Engage in small talk with colleagues
Ukraine			Understand simple e-mails from colleagues
Bangladesh	Very low proficiency		Introduce oneself simply (name, age, country /regions of origin)
Maldives			Understand simple signs
U.A.E.			Give basic directions to a foreign visitor

Table 2: Level of English proficiency in countries around the world (based on EPI 2019 report).

Current workforce English proficiency as measured by this data should not be interpreted as the target English level for particular industries or job functions. Rather, it offers a snapshot of current average English skills in the global workforce. Many working professionals do not have a sufficient mastery of English to be fully productive in their current roles or to evolve into new ones. Those charged with employee training and development must take a strategic view of the English proficiency requirements in each function and for each individual within their organization.

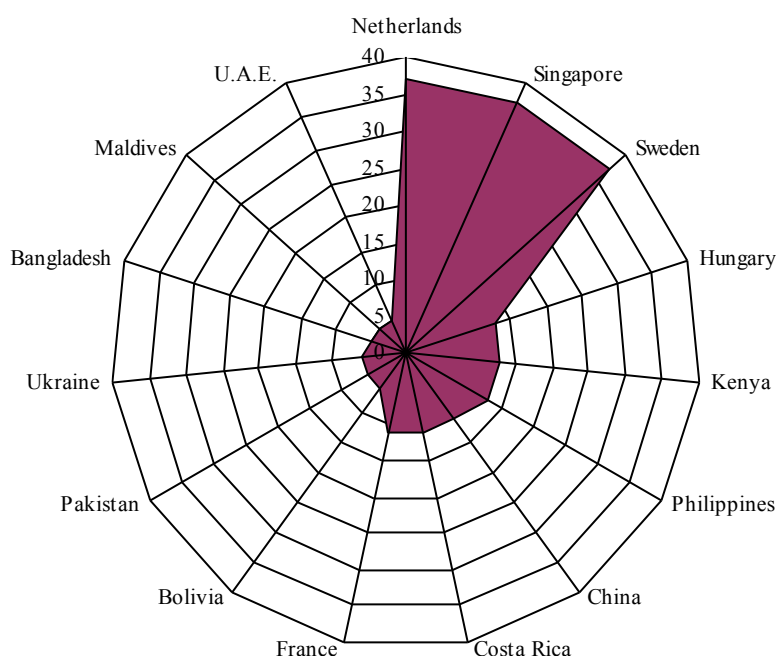


Fig. 3: The impact of English language proficiency on wages in countries around the world. (based on EPI 2019 report).

The EF EPI seeks to compare countries and territories, which necessitates overlooking individual strengths and weaknesses.

We have found a consistently positive correlation between English proficiency and a range of indicators of human and economic development, including adjusted net income per capita (Table 2).

English proficiency and		English proficiency correlates with
Economy	Human capital development	the higher gross domestic product, higher net income, and higher productivity
	Services	a country's service exports as well as the value added per worker in services
	Trust	a drive to use English as the fastest and cheapest mode of communication between speakers of different languages, but investment in other languages is high, too
Doing Business		doing business is easier when English skills are better
Public education		average years of schooling
Technology		Internet penetration

Table 3: English proficiency correlates with human and economic development

In developing countries, the transition to a knowledge-based economy requires building both infrastructure and a skilled workforce. In the past 35 years, many emerging economies closed the gap with developing countries to thanks to manufacturing. As those opportunities dry up, they will need to focus more on education, for both children and adults, if they are to tap into international trading opportunities and develop service-sector industries. Also besides, existing a correlation between a country's level of human capital development, and it is English proficiency. In many developing countries, English is treated as a luxury, taught well only at private schools and universities. Because English proficiency plays a central role in determining employability and professional success, English is today a core skill. Considering the growth in the importance of English over the past 15 years, a strong working knowledge of the language for today's children will be even more essential when they enter the workforce. Indices of quality of life, such as the Human Development Index and the Legatum Prosperity Index, correlate positively with the EF EPI. The Human Development Index considers education attainment, life expectancy, and income, whereas the Legatum Prosperity Index includes economic growth, entrepreneurship and opportunity, governance, education, health, safety and security, personal freedom, and social capital. There are a few low and moderate proficiency countries that display high levels of development. However, all high and very high proficiency countries do very well on the Human Development Index and the Legatum Prosperity Index. Although technology and artificial intelligence will increasingly assist in routine translation, we are a long way from a language engine that can understand the cultural nuances humans routinely navigate in everyday communication. Far from the English-only business environment decried by linguistic protectionists, today's multinational firms engage with a diverse linguistic landscape.

English proficiency in Ukraine is not improving either: in 2019 found that 72% of Ukraine adults don't admit to having knowledge of any foreign language, and only 14% said they could have a conversation in English.

The World Bank and the International Finance Corporation's Ease of Doing Business Index ranks the regulatory environments of economies around the world by how conducive they are to starting and operating a business (The World Bank, 2019).

In countries where English is not an official language, doing business is easier when English skills are better. Around the world, companies today are conducting more and more of their business in English. An increasing number of companies are adopting English as their corporate language. Those that are not may be lagging behind their competitors.

A country's education system is the primary provider of English training. Historically, most students have received their formal education through the public school and university system, and they have relied on that system to set appropriate competency goals, align curricula and teaching methods, and evaluate success before delivering diplomas. Despite the diversity of education systems across political, economic, and cultural contexts, there remains a strong correlation between average years of schooling and English proficiency. Countries looking for improved English proficiency, and the benefits it brings, must keep all children in school long enough for them to master the language.

Technological advances are helping students learn English more effectively. In countries where English proficiency is high, Internet penetration is also high.

Using online tools is a self-reinforcing activity: better English skills allow people more access to online tools and resources, and accessing these resources improves people's English. In countries with lower English proficiency, online tools offer the opportunity to make English learning more individualized, more interactive, and more accessible.

Governments and education authorities	Consider the hours available in the curriculum and the proficiency level achievable for each major educational milestone.
	Use large-scale assessment of both teachers and students to benchmark a starting point and track progress over time.
	Adjust entrance and exit exams so that they evaluate communicative English skills.
	Include English in the training regimens for all new teachers.
	Re-train English teachers in communicative teaching methods if they were initially trained using other methods.
	Ensure that English is taught only by people who speak the language well enough to instruct in it.

	Set a minimum level required to teach English, test instructors regularly, and train those who miss the mark.
	Teach children to read and write in their own native language first.
	Assess the English skills of all public servants and provide training as necessary, not only for their current jobs, but also for their careers.
	Provide English language instruction in job centers and unemployment reduction programs.
	Give adults access to lifelong learning programs.
	Ensure that government-funded adult language courses are long enough and intensive enough for learners to meet their goals.
	Develop standardized micro credentials that certify course quality and improve skill portability.
	Allow TV shows and movies to be shown in their original language, with subtitles rather than dubbing.
Teachers, schools, and universities	Teach English using a communication based methodology.
	Give students frequent opportunities to speak English through activities like English clubs, theme days, classroom twinning, school trips, and guest speakers.
	Provide a forum for teachers to share best practices and get advice about teaching English effectively.
	Give teachers a straightforward path to improve their own English.
	Include English language requirements for all university majors.
	Allow subject classes to be taught in English if both the students and the professor meet the requisite English level.
Individuals	Play the long game: plan for the hundreds of hours it takes to move from one proficiency level to the next.
	Be aware of growing competence at different stages and celebrate your successes.
	Study English every day, even if only for a few minutes.
	Study in sessions of 20-30 minutes rather than for hours at a time.
	Set specific, achievable goals and write them down.
	Memorize vocabulary relevant to your job or field of study and begin using it immediately.
	Practice speaking, even if it's just reading a book aloud.
	Watch TV, read, or listen to the radio in English.
	When traveling to an English-speaking country, speak as much as possible.

Table 4: Common elements of successful English proficiency

Business is not only driving the demand for English speakers, but also helping to satisfy it. Thousands of companies invest in English training for their employees, often with poor or unknown results. Companies can be encouraged to share best practices, evaluate their English training programs' performance, and define their hiring requirements so that educational institutions can make adjustments.

By evaluating what other countries have tried, individuals, governments, and companies can avoid the most common pitfalls and identify the most effective strategies for improving English proficiency. So, the common elements of successful English proficiency include: aligning the education system; defining English proficiency as a core competency for all graduates; implementing comprehensive training programs for all English teachers, with an emphasis on communication skills and mentoring; using English as a medium of instruction at a variety of levels in the public education system. Studies of these schemes show that there is a real trade-off between learning English and learning the subject being taught. As English proficiency improves, that gap closes; developing assessment standards that evaluate effective communication, providing incentives for students and teachers to focus on the most useful foreign language skills; supporting adults in learning English efficiently; lowering barriers to study abroad by negotiating visa agreements with host countries, offering free English tests, organizing scholarships, standardizing credit transfers, and setting up official research partnerships; recognizing companies as major investors in English teaching; using global events such as the Olympics and the World Cup to launch city- or nationwide English improvement campaigns. When national attention is focused and people are energized, they are more likely to learn.

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