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THE ROLE OF LANGUAGE IN INTERNATIONAL
BUSINESS

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SUMMARY

Communication is a vital process that allows us to interact with people around us. In business, communication is a means of interacting with others and transmitting information that is directed towards achieving business goals. Successful communication requires the proficiency of a language as well as the understanding of cultural backgrounds that enables us to accurately decipher the meaning of a message being communicated. Interactions with languages and cultures that differ from our own can often result in misunderstanding and miscommunication - in the corporate sense this can also mean loss of business. Confronting these situations therefore requires a certain degree of foreign language proficiency and cultural awareness.

Keywords: language, communication, inter-cultural communication, business communication, communication barriers, multilingualism.

POVZETEK

Komunikacija je ključen proces, ki nam omogoča interakcijo z ljudmi okoli nas. V poslovnem svetu uporabljamo komunikacijo za interakcijo z drugimi in za prenos informacij, ki sta pomembna za doseganje poslovnih ciljev. Za uspešno komuniciranje je potrebno znanje jezika in razumevanje kulturnega ozadja, s katerim lahko natančno razberemo pomen sporočila. Soočenje z jeziki in kulturami, ki se razlikujejo od naše, lahko hitro vodi v nesporazum, kar pa v poslovnem svetu lahko pomeni tudi izgubljeno priložnost. Uspešen spopad s tovrstnimi situacijami zato zahteva določeno stopnjo znanja tujega jezika in kulturne zavesti.

Ključne besede: jezik, komunikacija, medkulturno komuniciranje, poslovno komuniciranje, komunikacijske ovire, večjezičnost.

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1 INTRODUCTION

Communication is an inevitable process that enables us to function as social beings. It provides the means for exchanging information through language, signs and symbols shared by a certain community. When interacting with individuals from communities different to our own we discover that languages and cultures can be very different. Much as communication is important in everyday interactions, it is also important in the corporate world. When doing business locally, the language and customs are familiar and individuals may be unaware of the impact that language has on business outcomes. But, when the business is expanded over borders, efficient communication in a different linguistic environment is even more important.

1.1 Defining the Topic

The thesis examines the communication process in the business environment with an emphasis on the role of language, proving that it plays an important role in international business. It points out that there are many factors involved in the communication process and that knowledge of the language alone is not enough to successfully decode a message. Since the success of business is measured by the business outcome it can also be said that the success of business communication can be measure in the same way. If business is prosperous then communication is successful and the opposite – lack of communication skills can result in loss of business. The first chapters are therefore dedicated to the theoretical background of communication, business communication, inter-cultural communication, languages and communication barriers.

1.2 Purpose and Goals

The purpose and goals of the thesis are to examine the role of language in international business, highlight communication barriers, analyze multilingualism in the European Union and research the importance of foreign language skills in Slovenian export companies. The main goal is to confirm the hypothesis that language skills play an important role in the success of international business and prove that Slovenian export companies also place importance on foreign language skills in their operational policies.

1.3 Methodology

The methods used in the theoretical part of the thesis include gathering theoretical data from domestic and foreign literary sources to define and describe the topics included. The second part consists of empirical data collected through a survey conducted among Slovenian companies exporting to the European Union. The data of this survey is also compared to data gathered through the ELAN study conducted by the European Commission. Interpretation of

data collected combined with the theoretical findings enabled the acceptance of the hypothesis that languages do play an important role in international business.

2 COMMUNICATION

2.1 The Communication Process

The Merriam-Webster dictionary defines communication as “a process by which information is exchanged between individuals through a common system of symbols, signs, or behavior” (Merriam-Webster 2011b). The exchange of information is a two-way process where the roles of sender and receiver are alternated. Communication can be further specified depending on the situations in which it takes place and the channels used to transmit information. Examples of different forms of communication include (Kavčič 2008, 10):

- intra-personal communication – when one communicates with oneself;
- interpersonal communication – taking place between two or more individuals;
- organizational communication – taking place within an organization, according to its rules, statutes and organizational structure;
- medium communication – communicating with the assistance of transmitting mediums such as the telephone, Internet, telefax, etc.;
- mass communication – communicating to a larger population through mass media;
- non-verbal communication – communicating without the use of words through gestures, facial expressions, body language, eye contact, etc.

The basic elements of the communication process are the sender, message, communication channel, and receiver. The sender encodes information in the form of a message which is then forwarded to the receiver through a channel, in an attempt to achieve a communicative goal. The communication channel is the actual system through which the message travels. It can vary from the air carrying a voice or a technical medium such as a telephone, computer or other source used to transmit the message from sender to receiver. Disturbances referred to as noise are random interferences that can modify the message on its path to the receiver. These can be in the form of actual background noise present in the environment where individuals are communicating, or can be of technical nature when communicating through means of a telephone, computer, fax, etc. Once the message is received, it is then decoded using knowledge of the codes used to interpret the message. The last stage of the communication process is referred to as feedback, which is any kind of verbal or nonverbal message or signal that the sender receives back from the receiver (Hartley and Bruckmann 2002; Kavčič 2008).

Hartley and Bruckman (2002, 20) stressed the following important features of the communication model:

- The meaning is not found in the message alone but is decoded by the receiver given their own background.
- These differences in background can greatly influence the outcome of the message, which may be different than the sender initially intended.

- Effectiveness of the message can be measured based on the feedback sent from the receiver.
- The more similarities are shared by sender and receiver, the less information is needed when encoding and decoding a message.

Communication as a whole is a two-way process but the underlying purpose, to transmit some kind of information, is a one-way process that takes place between the sender and the receiver. In order for this process to be successful the information sent must be viable, useful, complete, accurate, relevant and sent/received at the appropriate time (Kavčič 2008). The information however, cannot be sent directly but must be transformed into a message that can be understood by the receiver. Transforming information into a message requires the use of a system of symbols, or language, which put together have a certain meaning. The meanings of symbols used to communicate are acquired through communication within a certain social group and can thus be interpreted differently by individuals from a different background. It is this feature of symbols in communication that can be misinterpreted if the receiver decodes them differently than the sender intended.

Therefore, there are a number of conditions that should be fulfilled in order for communication to be successful (Mead 1990, 52):

- The basic elements of the communication process should be chosen appropriately. This includes the reason for communication, the individuals engaging in communication and the content and means of communicating the message.
- The language chosen should be common to both parties.
- The contents of the message should be of common interest to both parties.
- Access between both parties must be available and appropriate.

2.2 The Specifics of Business Communication

Business communication is any communication used within the workplace, intended to achieve business oriented goals; it is the basic necessity that drives all business processes. It includes communication between individuals, communication within/between certain work groups and communication within/between organizations and other external bodies.

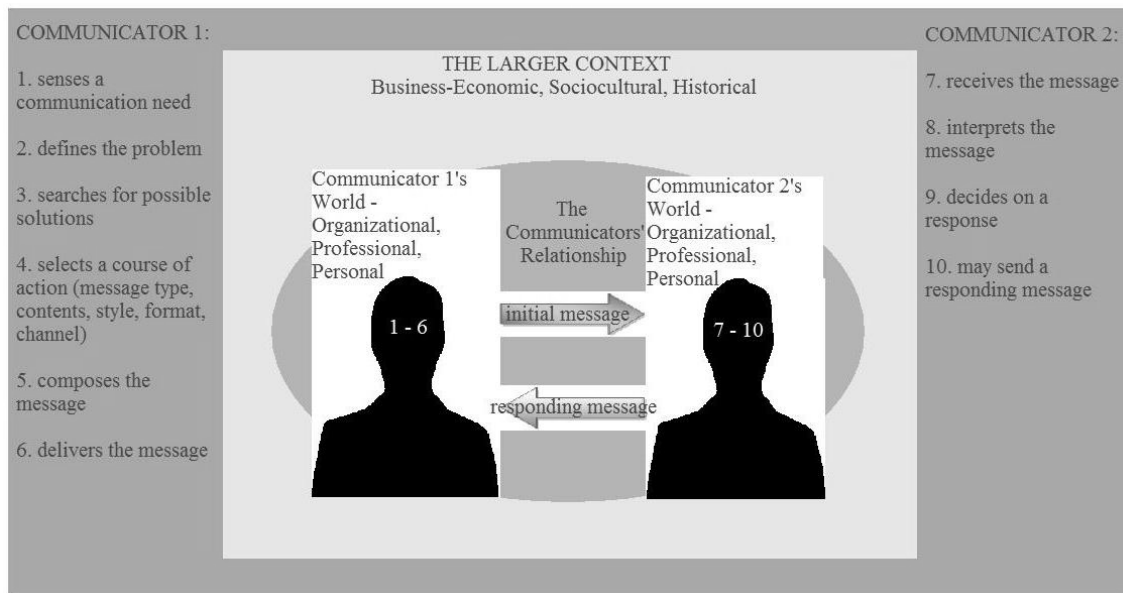


Figure 1: The business communication process

Reference: Lesikar, Flatley, and Rentz 2008, 11.

Kohut and McFarland Baxter (1987, 4–7) described the following business communication characteristics:

- The purpose of business communication is to achieve a business goal. This makes it an easily assessable type of communication as its success can be measured according to whether or not the business goals have been achieved.
- Business communication is specific in that it provides answers to specific questions and guidelines that are directed toward achieving specific goals.
- Business communication must be adjusted to the receiver in order to ensure that the message is easily and fully understood.
- Business communication is a means of making a good impression. On the path to achieving business goals communicators try to make a good impression of themselves and the organization in order to guarantee business results.
- Business communication is economical. In order to capture the attention of the receiver the messages must be short and precise. In the corporate world time is money meaning that long and indirect messages can often be ignored due to lack of interest on behalf of the receiver.

Lesikar, Flatley and Rentz (2008, 5–7) point out that business communication can be divided into three main categories: internal-operational communication, external-operational communication and personal communication. Internal-operational communication refers to all communication that takes place within a business. This covers both verbal and written communication on all hierarchical levels. External-operational communication refers to all communication that takes place outside a business. This is not only limited to business

communication with other organizations but also communication with manufacturers, suppliers, customers, the general public, etc. This can be either direct communication with other individuals or indirect communication with the wider public through various advertising mediums. Internal and external communication comprise the formal channels of business communication, corresponding to the upward, downward or lateral flow of communication within an organization or the outward flow of communication to the organization's external environment. Lastly, personal communication refers to any communication not connected to the operational aspect of business. It refers to social interaction and the relationship among employees, which can either positively or negatively influence the working environment and consequently the motivation and productivity of individuals. Personal communication corresponds to the informal communication channels within an organization.

Business communication can be further analyzed according to the characteristics, benefits and limitations of written versus oral communication. Written communication refers to any communication in written form, usually in a language understood by both parties. The benefits of written communication are that it can be documented, the messages can be analyzed repeatedly, the content can be composed more carefully and can be altered before sending, the message can be sent to multiple receivers simultaneously. The disadvantages of written communication are that it travels relatively slowly depending on the medium chosen, the level of privacy is low as multiple individuals can read the message, technical errors can delay the delivery of the message, and the content of the message is less spontaneous (Kavčič 2008, 84–85).

Oral communication on the other hand is faster, the combination of the message said and the accompanying nonverbal signals provide more credibility, the sender is able to follow the verbal and nonverbal feedback as the message is being transmitted, the privacy level is higher. On the other hand, the limitations of oral communication are that, in most cases, the conversations are not recorded, which in turn means that the content cannot be repeatedly analyzed as in the case of written communication. The participants in the conversation have less time to prepare what they would like to say in comparison with the time taken to communicate a message in written form. Lastly, oral communication can require all individuals to be physically present at a certain location, which makes it less cost efficient in this case (Kavčič 2008, 126–127). However, since business today largely relies on technology to assist in communication, especially long distance communication, technical errors can also be a disadvantage in oral communication when it comes to the use of mobile telephones, video conferences, etc.

2.3 International Business and Inter-cultural Communication

Domestic business and international business differ in many aspects. While domestic business is familiar and almost routine there are certain factors in the international environment that can be the cause of misunderstandings, miscalculations and even loss of business. These factors include foreign laws, currency exchange, foreign dispute resolutions, inter-cultural differences and language differences (Kameda 2005). The figures below present the differences between communication in domestic and international business.

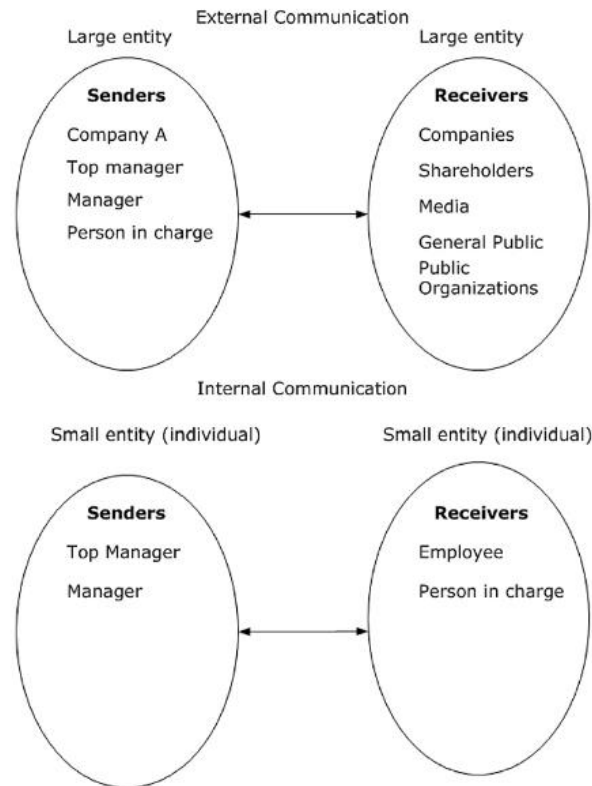


Figure 2: Domestic business communication

Reference: Kameda 2005, 170.

In order for communication to be successful, the individuals must share a certain degree of common knowledge and common experiences. Without this, additional information must be added to the message in order to ensure that the receiver will fully understand the sender's intentions. While communicating in the domestic market, most of these experiences and backgrounds are common but when expanding a business across borders, the cultures, experiences, backgrounds and common knowledge differ. This is one aspect that makes international business communication more complex than general communication.

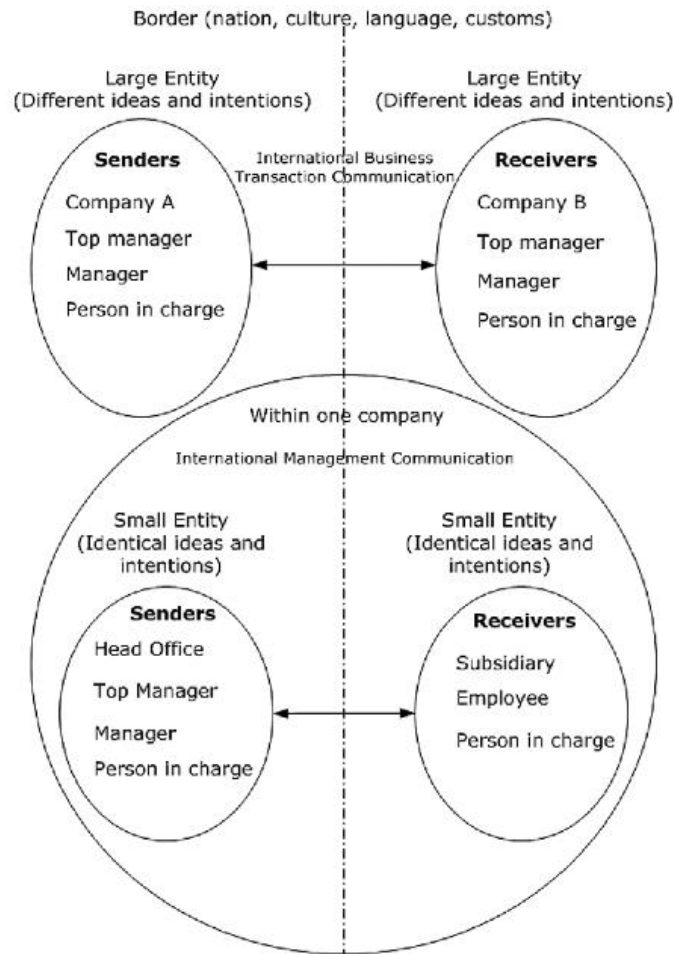


Figure 3: International business communication

Reference: Kameda 2005, 171.

Doing business internationally therefore also means communicating internationally, which is more complicated than simply speaking the same language. While language fluency is a necessity, it does not guarantee that communication with individuals from different backgrounds will be effective. Communicating with individuals from different cultural backgrounds requires the ability to understand both the verbal and the non-verbal aspects of communication since beliefs and attitudes that are culture specific can also be conveyed through a person's behavior and not necessarily through speech. Whether it's expanding a business across borders to other countries or employing foreign citizens in a local company, an international environment opens doors to interactions with different cultures and consequently, different ways of doing business. Since advanced communication technology and higher mobility have made business today more global, the chances of having to communicate with people from different cultural backgrounds are higher.

Culture can be defined as a system of meanings, symbols, norms, that is shared by a certain group of people (Collier 1997). Gudykunst (2002) refers to culture as a consensus about the

meanings of symbols shared by the members of a community, used to encode and decode messages; it is the basic necessity for social interaction. Culture can be further broken down into a “totality of that group’s thoughts, experiences, and patterns of behavior and its concepts, values and assumptions about life that guide behavior and how those evolve with contact with other cultures” (Jandt 2007, 7). According to Guirdham (2005, 43), “individuals are rarely conscious of their culture, yet culture affects practically all aspects of the way the people of a group interact with each other or with outsiders.” Guirdham continues to stress that cultural differences can affect many aspects of international business such as the purchasing behavior and marketing trends of a foreign market as well as the success or failure that results from international interactions and communication. It is these hidden aspects of our cultural background deeply rooted in our behavioral and communication patterns that are expressed when we communicate with individuals from a different cultural background than our own.

Inter-cultural communication therefore requires a number of different skills such as message skills, behavioral flexibility, interaction management and social skills (Jandt 2007, 47). Message skills refer to understanding the language used in the communication process and having the ability to use that language and provide feedback. Behavioral flexibility refers to the ability to adapt to diverse situations and selectively chose the most appropriate behavior in a given situation. Interaction management is linked to the actual process of communication and whether an individual has the ability to engage in communication and communicate successfully. Social skills encompass the skills needed and used when communicating and interacting with other individuals.

The ability to use these communication skills together with the knowledge and awareness of other cultures can be referred to as inter-cultural communication competence. A competent communicator is able to adapt their verbal and non-verbal communication to various social functions, obtain personal goals and accommodate to the expectations of the situation (Gudykunst 2002). Spitzberg and Cupach (1984) identified that competent communicators must possess knowledge, motivation and skills. The communicator must possess knowledge of the people, communication rules and norms guiding social interactions. They must be positively rather than negatively motivated to communicate with individuals from different cultures and they must possess the appropriate behavioral skills. Being competent in intercultural communication therefore requires the knowledge and understanding of different cultures and languages. It requires the ability to recognize different situations, the ability to assess which behavior is acceptable in certain situations and the ability to adapt the content and use of the message to situations in different cultural environments. Since the basic purpose of communication is to obtain certain goals it can be said that competent communicators have the ability to identify their goals, select the appropriate means of achieving their goals and predict the communicator’s feedback.

The ability to apply cultural meaning to a situation means understanding who can communicate to whom, what they can communicate, how the message can be communicated, where the communication can take place, when and why (Mead 1990). The sender must take into consideration that cultures set rules for who can communicate with whom directly, which can be observed in how junior positions communicate with seniors in an organizational hierarchy, for example. Factors such as professional specialization, social status and age determine how and whether individuals communicate and interact with each other. Cultural background also determines which information can be shared and what is regarded as private and personal. Where in Anglo countries business associates ask only general questions about each other's private lives, West Africans might discuss family matters with business acquaintances within minutes of their first meeting (Mead 1990, 74). Business matters are also dealt with at a specific time and place according to the cultural background. An American perspective for example is not to lose the possibility of a business deal, which makes them more open to discussing business anywhere, within or outside of working hours. Whereas the Scandinavian culture puts a high importance on family and the home therefore business matters are not often discussed outside of office hours (Mead 1990, 76). In international business relations it is therefore important to be able to determine what information is relevant and appropriate in which situations.

When initiating communication in an international environment the careful selection of the channel and mode of communication can already make the difference between a successful business deal and big misunderstanding. Cultural differences are evident in both the choice of communication channel and the effects of using it. Where in a country such as the United States it is normal to directly contact a stranger for business purposes, this approach would receive an opposite, negative reaction due to its directness in a country such as Japan (Mead 1990, 84). From this perspective, countries can therefore be divided according to the values that are linked to oral or written forms of language. An oral culture is one where word of mouth plays a significant role in business, personal contacts are of high importance and the written language is composed as if it were spoken. Literary cultures, on the other hand, tend to be more individualistic and place a higher importance on the written mode of communication, which is more formal and concise (Mead 1990, 85).

In order to be successful in inter-cultural business communication, individuals must be aware of the cultural differences and develop positive and constructive attitudes. Managers of international organizations must be able to identify the differences that cause communication difficulties and find ways to manage cultural diversity. Miscommunication in business can bring many negative consequences which is why organizations must acknowledge the importance of communication. Despite all efforts to communicate successfully there are many barriers that can affect the way a message is interpreted.

2.4 Communication Barriers

A communication barrier is regarded as any factor that might decrease the accuracy of a delivered message, prevent it from being delivered or influence the misunderstanding of the message (Kavčič 2008, 23). These barriers can be of technical nature or can be influenced by a human factor. Technical barriers are those that are influenced by a technical error in the medium used for communication. Since a significant amount of global communication takes place over computers, mobile phones, fax machines or other devices, technical errors are likely to delay the deliverance of a message or influence the reception of the content. However, most communication, especially inter-cultural, is influenced by communication barriers set by humans and not by technology.

Humanly influenced communication barriers include socio-cultural barriers, which are barriers that are influenced by a group, organization or culture. Culture is an important yet invisible part of our daily lives that shapes the values and norms that govern our behavior and provide us with a sense of right and wrong. Since we are often not aware of the influence culture has on communication, we are sometimes unable to register that behaviors and communication styles differ greatly across cultures and may not be equally accepted worldwide. One such barrier is a stereotype. This is a certain perception of a social group, applied to all individuals belonging to it (Kavčič 2008). Jandt (2007) points out four ways in which stereotypes can impair communication:

- When considering a stereotype the belief is assumed to be true, even when it may not be.
- By accepting a stereotype, we assume that all individuals belonging to a certain group comply to it.
- By labeling an individual with a stereotype, we behave towards them according to the stereotypical traits.
- The behavior of individuals is interpreted according to the stereotype accompanying them rather than to their individual traits.

Therefore, by considering a stereotype while communicating we anticipate certain behavior linked to the perception that has already been made and we apply it to the stereotypes of the group instead of acknowledging the person as an individual.

Another such barrier is ethnocentrism, whereby we consider the group to which we belong as the norm and assess other groups according to our own. These groups can be as small as a family or applied on a larger scale to a region, nationality or continent. Ethnocentrism can take on a more extreme form where individuals consider the group to which they belong to be superior to others and believe that their values and norms should be applied globally. This leads to a belief that other groups and their members are inferior and that their behavior is immoral and wrong. Such opinions can be expressed mildly as disinterest in certain groups and their members, avoidance of certain groups and their members or more extremely as

hatred towards certain groups and their members (Kavčič 2008). Since people base their expectations on the rules and norms of their own culture, the interaction can result in a misunderstanding of values, actions and statements, creating miscommunication rather than intercultural communication.

Apart from technical and behavioral barriers, it is sometimes the language alone that can become a communication barrier. With thousands of languages being spoken in the world, miscommunication is a concept that seems highly likely to occur in international interactions. Lesikar, Flatley and Rentz (2008) point out that differences in languages are linked to the concepts, experiences and views of the cultures that developed them. Italians for example have several words for types of pasta, as do Eskimos for snow. Language differences can be furthermore identified according to the different grammatical structures and multiple meaning words. Certain expressions can be used in a way, that a literal dictionary definition cannot define, such as in the case of “Business couldn’t be better”. A native English speaker would understand that this means business is prospering whereas a non-native speaker might interpret this in a negative way, that business is poor (Lesikar, Flatley and Rentz 2008, 494).

Blundering with words

- When Coca-Cola first attempted to market its drink in China, the characters representing it sounded like Coca-Cola but translated to “a wax-flattened mare”.
- Olympia tried to introduce a copier in Chile under the name “Roto”, which is the Spanish word for *broken*.
- Ford encountered problems when it introduced a low-cost truck it named “Fiera”. The name translates to “*ugly old woman*”.
- Bacardi developed and launched a fruity drink, calling it Pavian. In German it means *baboon*.

Figure 4: Blundering with words

Reference: Lesikar, Flatley and Rentz 2008, 495.

Because of the differences in languages and cultures, translation is often a solution that facilitates inter-cultural communication. It can also however, become a barrier in communication. Reasons for this include the lack of vocabulary equivalence, idiomatic equivalence, grammatical equivalence, experiential equivalence and conceptual equivalence (Jandt 2007). It is not only the words, expressions and differences in grammar that cause difficulties in direct translation but also the experiences and concepts of a certain culture that can influence translation. Finding words to describe an object, idea or experience that exists in one culture but not in the other is problematic. By using the method of back translating – translating from the first to second language and then from the second back to the first – and

comparing the results, translation can be improved. The most efficient way to overcome the differences however, is to be proficient in more than one language.

3 LANGUAGE

3.1 The Role of Language in Communication

Language refers to a system of symbols in which the sounds and written symbols have a meaning common to individuals of a certain group (Rouse and Rouse 2002, 56). Together they form words or gestures, which, combined according to a specific system, are used by individuals to communicate. Clyne (1999) stresses that language has four main functions:

- Language is the most important means of communication.
- Language is used as a means of identification by which we express our membership to a particular social group.
- Language is an instrument for intellectual development. In childhood, learning language skills is interconnected with experiences from the environment. In adulthood, language is used to discover new ideas and concepts.
- Language is not simply passing on information, it is also a product of our actions – many things we say are connected to the things we do.

Although language is essentially a medium through which we communicate information, it is also used to express various levels of meaning that vary depending on the situation.

With thousands of languages spoken globally, it is common that a person's mother tongue is often different from the language spoken by the other communicators. The actual number of languages spoken is unknown as it is difficult to determine what exactly qualifies as a language. It can be stated however, that 389 languages are spoken by at least 1 million people, which accounts for 94% of the world's population. The highest number of living languages recorded are geographically tied to Asia (2,322) and Africa (2,110) followed by the Pacific (1,250), the Americas (993) and Europe (234). Given the world population, 60.8% speak Asian languages, 26.1% speak European languages, 12.2% speak African languages, 0.8% speak languages originating from the Americas and 0.1% speak languages originating from the Pacific region (Lewis 2009). This data refers to the percentage of people speaking the language as their first language, regardless of where they live. The top ten languages spoken are presented in the table below.

Table 1: Top ten languages with at least three million first-language speakers

Rank	Language	Primary country	Total countries	Speakers (millions)
1	Chinese	China	31	1,213
2	Spanish	Spain	44	329
3	English	United Kingdom	112	328
4	Arabic	Saudi Arabia	57	221
5	Hindi	India	20	182
6	Bengali	Bangladesh	10	181
7	Portuguese	Portugal	37	178
8	Russian	Russian Federation	33	144
9	Japanese	Japan	25	122
10	German, standard	Germany	43	90.3

Reference: Lewis 2009.

When the communicators come from different linguistic backgrounds it is essential that they share the knowledge of a language that is common to them both. A certain degree of knowledge of the local language provides direct access to members of that specific culture and lessens the possibility of messages being lost in translation. Since learning a foreign language is a long process, competence can be determined according to needs required. In some situations, simply learning a few basic phrases can demonstrate eagerness and goodwill.

Looking from the corporate perspective where business communication can influence the outcome of business related goals, language competence plays an important role. The advantages of a manager learning the local language include (Mead 1990, 222):

- A low level of dependency on interpreters and local managers leading to increased control;
- Higher authority both from within the organization and outside of it;
- A greater ability to negotiate;
- Foreign language skills add value to the manager and hence, the organization;
- Job mobility;
- A better understanding of the other culture.

When language learning is not an option, communication can be assigned to an interpreter, which has both advantages and disadvantages. In this case, the organization is able to avoid the costs and time needed for language training but direct contact with partners is reduced and a dependency on a third person for communication is formed.

3.2 English as a Lingua Franca

According to Crystal (1998), a language can become a global language if it gains a special role in every country. It can be spoken as a first language such as English is in the United Kingdom, the United States of America, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa and Ireland, or it can be recognized as an official or joint-official language and is used as the primary language of communication in various domains such as government and law. English has a form of administrative status in over 70 countries such as India, Ghana, Nigeria, Zimbabwe, Singapore and most former colonies. The image below highlights the countries where English is spoken as the majority language (dark blue) or where it has the status of an official but not majority language (light blue).

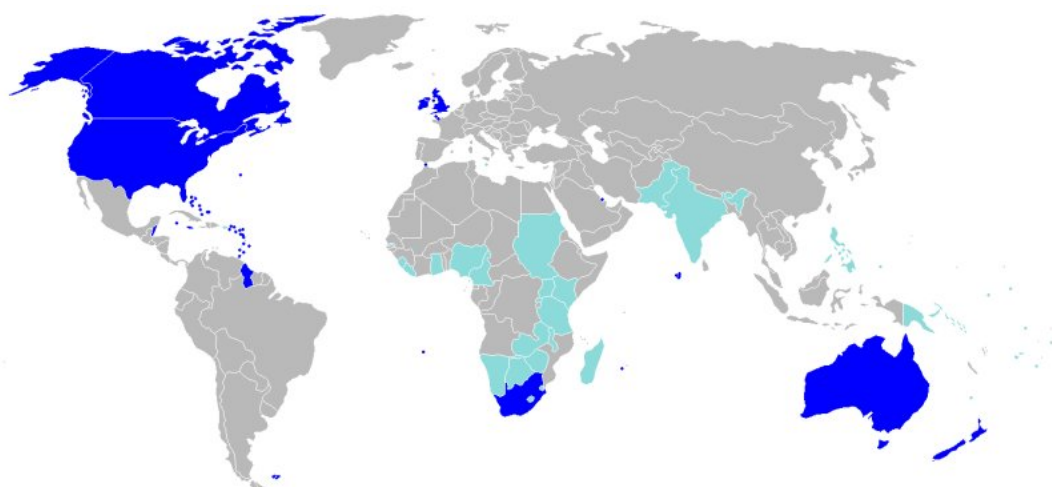


Figure 5: Geographical distribution of the English language

Source: Webster's Online Dictionary 2011.

The number of people speaking English as a first language ranges from 309 to 400 million, the number speaking it as a second language ranges from 199 to 1.400 million which is an overall estimate of 500 million to 1.8 billion English speakers worldwide (Webster's Online Dictionary 2011). The English language is being taught as a foreign language in over 100 countries and in most is considered the primary foreign language taught in schools. It is not only the linguistic properties, vocabulary size, or association with culture or religion that make a language global but rather the political, economic and military power of the nation (Crystal 1998, 3–7). The success of English as a global language can therefore be explained from a geographical-historical and socio-cultural perspective.

Britain was the leading colonial nation in the 17th and 18th centuries, as well as the leader of the industrial revolution in the 18th and 19th centuries. The role of leading economic power was then later taken by the United States of America in the 19th and 20th centuries. New technologies emerging in fields such as the press, broadcasting, film and communications

brought new linguistic opportunities and further spread the influence of English. The 20th century also saw rise to many international unions, such as the United Nations, where a common language became the more efficient alternative to the use of translators. The 20th century was also a period of political independence, during which several nations adopted English as an official language or language of special status. It was also the electronic revolution and development of computer technology by the United States in the late 20th century that strengthened the role of English as a global language. After centuries, English gained an important role in various fields such as international business, politics, entertainment, media, computer science and more and its' use has greatly facilitated global communication (Crystal 1998, 110–112).

Whereas it might be thought that native English speaking nations have gained the most from English becoming a global language, statistics show that more people speak English as a second language than they do as a mother tongue. Research done by the European Commission has shown that the number of adults using English as a second language has risen, and the number using German and French has fallen. It is also more commonly used within the Commission itself, with 60% of the memos in English, 25% in French and under 5% in German (Wylie 2006). It is also the sole official language of many international organizations such as the European Central Bank, the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank and the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Companies and is among the official languages of organizations such as the United Nations, the World Trade Organization, the European Union, the International Olympic Committee and many others.

Although English has been generally accepted as the global language of communication, there are different ways in which it is used. With the number of non-native English speakers rising, it is no longer the language of the United Kingdom and the United States of America but has become an international language spoken worldwide. The expanding use of English has resulted in many variations of the use of the language, especially in countries where it is not spoken as the primary language. Bloch and Starks (1999) point out some differences in language structure, style and language use among non-native English speakers, that are often the cause of misconception and miscommunication.

Spoken language can differ in pronunciation, code switching, turn-taking and accents/dialects. Non-native forms of English vary in pronunciation. Examples include using a simplified sound system where there is little or no difference in the pronunciation of certain words, where final consonants are not fully articulated or where equal stress is placed on all syllables of a word. These differences may be the cause of initial confusion but do not have a greater impact on inter-cultural communication. Code switching however, can lead to miscomprehension if used when communicating with individuals from different backgrounds. It refers to members of the same group mixing languages when they communicate, such as the mix of Spanish and English along the U.S.-Mexican border. Different cultures also have

different norms for turn-taking during a conversation. They determine the length of pauses between speaker turns, the way the conversation moves from one person to the other and the degree of overlapping speech that is acceptable in a certain culture. These are conversational patterns that do not necessarily change when an individual switches from their first to second language and could lead to misconceptions across cultures.

A difference observable in written communication is the different use of format such as that of a business letter. Japanese, for example, place the date, sender and receiver at the bottom of the page. Observable in both written and spoken language is the difference in communication style such as in the use of inappropriate and informal tone in formal applications, documents or correspondence. Since the communication style also reflects different degrees of politeness, appearing impolite in job applications or business correspondence can lead to complications. However, it is not only the style that is different but also the difference in grammar. Grammatical differences from the different linguistic backgrounds can be insignificant in English but can also be the cause of confusion. Minor differences are, for example, evident in the non-use of an article (“I go to hotel now”) but some forms of adapted English can confuse or equate certain words. In Singaporean English, for example, the words “hear” and “understand” or “lend” and “borrow” are often used in the same sense (Bloch and Starks 1999, 83).

There are also other aspects of the language that can cause problems for those who do not speak it fluently. Two common problems that arise for non-native English speakers are the use of two-word verbs and culturally derived words (Lesikar, Flatley and Rentz 2008). Two-word verbs or phrasal verbs consist of a verb and an adverb or preposition that combined produce a certain meaning. The two words used separately have an entirely different meaning than they do combined. The verb break, for example, can be combined in the following ways to form phrasal verbs: break up, break in, break out, break down (Lesikar, Flatley and Rentz 2008, 496). Since the list of phrasal verbs is quite long, language courses usually do not cover them fully. Therefore it is often advised to use substitutes for two-word verbs when communicating with non-native speakers as this will minimize the possibilities of misunderstandings.

Culturally derived words refer to words and expressions that are culture specific and often cannot be translated directly, such as slang and colloquialisms. While it is commonly known that slang should not be used in situations that require formal communication, non-native speakers with poorer knowledge of the foreign language may not be aware of the difference between slang expressions and the more appropriate alternative. Whereas some slang expressions can be found in dictionaries, most of them are not listed therefore they are better left unused. Colloquialisms are also words and expressions that are culture specific. The Merriam-Webster dictionary defines colloquialism as “a colloquial expression” or “a local or regional dialect expression” (Merriam-Webster 2011b). The definition of slang on the other

hand is a “language peculiar to a particular group” or “an informal nonstandard vocabulary composed typically of coinages, arbitrarily changed words, and extravagant, forced, or facetious figures of speech” (Mirriam-Webster 2011c). The table below refers to commonly used colloquialisms and a substitution that would be more easily understood by a non-native English speaker.

Table 2: Colloquialisms

Colloquialism	Alternative expression
That’s just off the top of my head.	Here’s a quick idea.
They couldn’t make heads or tails of the report.	They couldn’t understand the report.
The sales campaign was a flop.	The sales campaign was a failure.
Take an educated guess on this question.	Answer this question to the best of your knowledge.
Your sales report put us in orbit.	Your sales report pleased us very much.
We will wind down manufacturing operations in November.	We will end manufacturing operations in November.
Your prediction was right on the beam.	Your prediction was correct.

Reference: Lesikar, Flatley and Rentz 2008, 498.

As is the case when learning any foreign language, there are also aspects of the English language that can cause difficulties to non-native speakers. Regardless of these difficulties, English is the most widely spoken foreign language in the world and its widespread use enables us to communicate and form business ties globally.

3.3 British vs. American English

Although English is the official and common language of many countries worldwide, there are differences between the English spoken in them. The differences can be noted when comparing countries and also when comparing certain regions within a country. The most commonly compared differences are those of British and American English, which are considered the norms for spoken, written and taught forms of English. Despite the fact that the variations are mutually intelligible, there are enough differences to cause occasional misunderstandings. Most English speakers may not be fully aware of these differences but nevertheless it is estimated that some 4,000 words used daily in Britain have a different meaning or are used differently in the United States of America (Davies 2005, 1).

Early settlers came to America from many different countries and although English was the dominant language, it was influenced by other languages such as German, Dutch, Spanish and French. The written language however, was not altered much since most books were imported

from England up until the 1900s. It was Noah Webster who greatly influenced American English when he published his *American Dictionary of the English Language* and the *American Speller*, which made a big mark on differences in pronunciation. As is the case with all languages, also English changed over time and so did the British and American variations of the language (Davies 2005).

The table below highlights some words and expressions used in British and American English.

Table 3: British and American terms

British English	American English	British English	American English
anticlockwise	counterclockwise	flyover	overpass
bank holiday	legal holiday	football	soccer
bill	check	footway	sidewalk
boot (<i>of a car</i>)	trunk	hire purchase	installment plan
cinema	movie theater	holiday	vacation
share	stock	advertisement	commercial
flat	apartment	jumper	sweater
lift	elevator	lorry	truck
mobile phone	cell phone	postcode	zip code
queue	line	recorded delivery	certified mail
solicitor	lawyer	trading estate	industrial park
tram	streetcar; cable car	underground	subway

Reference: Oxford Dictionaries 2011a.

Another area in which differences between dialects can be found is spelling. Some of the main areas are presented in the table below.

Table 4: Spelling differences between British and American English

British English	American English	British English	American English
centre	center	licence	license
litre	liter	offence	offense
colour	color	catalogue	catalog
labour	labor	dialogue	dialog
recognise	recognize	manoeuvre	maneuver
analyse	analyze	paediatric	pediatric

Reference: Oxford Dictionaries 2011b.

While the spelling differences are not so great that the words could not be understood, differences in vocabulary could be the cause of slight confusion if the communicators are unaware of these terms. Perhaps the biggest cause of confusion between the two variations is pronunciation, which differs also in Australia, South Africa, Canada, Ireland and within the UK. Also specific to regions and countries is the slang used in informal communication. The basic structure of the written language however, is the same, thus enabling individuals to communicate successfully.

4 LINGUISTIC AWARENESS

4.1 Multilingualism in the European Union

The European Union is an economic and political partnership established shortly after the Second World War. Its purpose was to bring together European countries to strengthen economic ties and promote peace among European countries. Initially, it was known as the European Coal and Steel Community whose founding countries were Belgium, France, Germany, Italy, Luxembourg and the Netherlands. After the Treaty of Rome in 1957 it became known as the European Economic Community and later as the European Union or EU. The first enlargement of the Union occurred in 1973 when Denmark, Ireland and the United Kingdom joined the founding members. Spain, Greece and Portugal joined in the 1980s. Following them were Austria, Finland and Sweden in the 1990s. Ten more countries joined the Union in 2004 – the Czech Republic, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Hungary, Poland, Slovenia, Slovakia, Malta and Cyprus – and Bulgaria and Romania followed in 2007, increasing the number of members to 27 (Europa 2011a). Since its' founding in the 1950s, the EU has grown from an economic union of countries to an organization that unites, regulates and encourages developments in various fields such as agriculture, economy, employment, culture, energy, humanitarian aid, regional policies, transport and more. It has developed into a single market with the common currency of the Euro and has encouraged the free movement of its citizens by abolishing border controls.

United as a single market, the European Union is responsible for approximately 20% of global exports and imports. Of this, two thirds of the trades take place within the country members (Europa 2011b). With increasing globalization and international interactions, the learning of language skills is increasing in importance and also encouraged by the EU. The European Union recognizes 23 official languages: Bulgarian, Czech, Danish, Dutch, English, Estonian, Finnish, French, German, Greek, Hungarian, Irish, Italian, Latvian, Lithuanian, Maltese, Polish, Portuguese, Romanian, Slovak, Slovene, Spanish and Swedish. The recognition of these languages as official and working languages allows member countries to communicate with EU institutions in their native tongue. It is also an act against discrimination since the populations of countries and hence the number of native speakers differs in size. In order to provide members with access to documents in all official languages and facilitate communication with EU institutions, the EU commits 1% of the budget to translating and interpreting annually (European Commission 2008c).

Recognizing these languages as official languages was almost a necessity since the number of members increased with each expansion. For this reason, the European Union began to emphasize multilingualism.

The main visions behind this policy area are (European Commission 2008b):

- that all EU citizens should have equal opportunities to communicate and explore the opportunities given to them by the EU;
- that they should have access to language training or should not have to undergo linguistic obstacles while residing, working or communicating in the EU;
- that they should have equal access to the multilingual environment even when the opportunity to learn foreign languages is not available.

In order to carry out these visions, the European Union has enforced the program of multilingualism and increased the budget for linguistic programs. It wishes to promote the life-long learning of languages in order to sustain and value linguistic diversity, removing communication barriers in intercultural communication. In order to do so, the EU is promoting the learning of two foreign languages instead of only one. The long-term goal of this concept is to broaden the personal and professional opportunities that would be offered to individuals should they be fluent in languages other than their own.

In 2006, the European Commission's survey and analysis center Eurobarometer conducted a survey on the attitudes of European citizens towards languages. They found that 56% of EU citizens are able to hold a conversation in a language other than their own, 28% are able to hold a conversation in two languages other than their own and 11% are able to hold a conversation in at least three foreign languages. The most widely spoken language is English, with 38% of citizens able to hold a conversation in it. When this statistic is combined with the number of native English speakers it can be concluded that approximately 51% of EU citizens speak English either as a mother tongue or foreign language. After English, the most widely spoken foreign languages are German, French, Spanish and Russian with German being the most widely spoken mother tongue at 18% (European Commission 2006b).

Table 5: Foreign languages learnt per pupil in upper secondary education

	Pupils learning English in general programmes		Pupils learning French in general programmes		Pupils learning German in general programmes	
	2002	2007	2002	2007	2002	2007
EU-27	69.7	83.5	17.7	21.8	17.7	22.5
BE	94.1	94.1	47.7	48.1	30.1	28.5
BG	80.8	86.2	18.7	15.0	39.3	38.5
CZ	98.9	100.0	17.3	24.5	73.5	65.8
DK	:	91.8	:	10.7	:	35.6
DE	90.9	91.0	27.1	27.4	-	-
EE	91.2	95.0	4.7	6.7	45.6	41.6
IE	-	-	65.7	59.6	18.7	18.3
EL (²)	95.2	94.0	10.3	8.6	2.1	2.9
ES	95.9	95.3	27.7	27.7	1.1	1.1
FR	99.4	99.4	-	-	30.5	21.8
IT	85.9	95.3	27.2	20.5	8.2	7.2
CY	100.0	78.5	60.4	32.2	1.0	2.4
LV	89.3	96.0	3.1	4.1	48.1	32.2
LT	76.5	85.1	6.8	4.9	35.1	25.4
LU	96.3	96.5	96.3	96.5	96.3	96.5
HU	57.6	76.4	6.3	6.5	49.3	50.1
MT	78.5	70.2	8.3	9.6	0.8	2.2
NL	99.9	100.0	22.7	70.3	23.3	86.3
AT	96.9	96.9	42.8	54.1	-	-
PL	90.6	91.2	14.1	9.8	61.5	62.7
PT (²)	:	50.7	:	15.1	:	1.6
RO (²)	87.8	95.9	85.1	83.0	10.7	11.6
SI	98.2	98.3	9.1	10.8	83.0	76.0
SK	96.0	97.9	12.4	16.0	78.2	71.2
FI	99.7	99.3	21.9	19.3	41.5	33.2
SE	99.8	99.9	25.8	21.1	48.9	29.6
UK	-	-	:	32.0	:	11.7
IS (⁴)	66.2	76.1	14.7	17.1	32.1	30.7
NO (²)	:	100.0	:	20.3	:	31.3
HR (²)	:	98.3	:	3.4	:	65.6
TR (²)	:	67.3	:	0.7	:	6.5

(¹) Refer to the Internet metadata file (http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/cache/ITY_SDDS/en/educ_esms.htm).

(²) 2006 instead of 2007.

(³) Pupils learning German: 2006 instead of 2007.

(⁴) Pupils learning English, French or German: 2006 instead of 2007.

Source: European Union 2011.

The table on the previous page shows the percentage of pupils learning English, French and German in upper secondary education in the 27 European member countries as well as Iceland, Norway, Croatia and Turkey. The results show that the percentage of pupils learning all three languages has risen since 2002, with the highest percentage (83.5%) of pupils within the EU member countries learning English. It is taught most widely in the Czech Republic and the Netherlands, where 100% of pupils learn the language in their upper secondary education. Closely following are Sweden with 99.9%, France with 99.4%, Finland with 99.3% and Slovenia with 98.3%. The smallest percentage of pupils learning English live in Portugal (50.7%). French is most widely taught in Luxembourg (96.5%) and Romania (83%) and least in Latvia (4.1%) and Lithuania (4.9%). German is learned by 96.5% of pupils in Luxembourg and 86.3% of pupils in the Netherlands, but least taught in Estonia (1.1%) and Portugal (1.6%).

These results can be interpreted as a mirror of the European Union's strategic objectives in the area of education and training, which are directed towards language learning as a life-long learning process. These goals include: 1) making lifelong learning and mobility a reality; 2) improving the quality and efficiency of education and training; 3) promoting equity, social cohesion and active citizenship; 4) enhancing creativity and innovation, including entrepreneurship, at all levels of education and training (Council of the European Union 2009). The ideas behind these objectives are that education and training play an important role in facing the challenges awaiting the EU and its members in the future. Additionally, the implementation of these goals and investment in human capital allows citizens to develop their knowledge, interact in the multilingual environment and freely pursue their professional careers in other EU countries.

The European Commission also wishes to promote the importance of language skills in business. For this reason, they set up the Business Forum for Multilingualism in 2007 in order to assist companies in increasing their linguistic abilities and using them as a competitive advantage. Some of the recommendations put together by the group include: that national governments should promote the learning of a variety of languages; that national bodies should support firms in the strategic use of linguistic skills; that the management of firms should push forward the implementation of language strategies (European Commission 2008a).

4.2 ELAN – a Study on Languages and Business

ELAN – Effects on the European Economy of Shortages of Foreign Language Skills in Enterprise – is a study commissioned by the Directorate General for Education and Culture of the European Commission in December 2005. The purpose of the study was to examine language skills in European countries, the consequences of insufficient language skills on business performance, foreign language strategies of companies, foreign language training in

companies and intercultural skills. It included roughly 2000 small and medium sized enterprises from 29 European countries. The areas covered in the survey are language skill deficits, future trading intentions, cultural barriers, usage of languages in trade and foreign language competence and training.

The area of languages in business reveals that 48% of the firms surveyed confirmed having a formal language strategy intended for their international business affairs. The percentage of companies that hire staff with knowledge of a specific language is on average 40%. The countries with the highest percentage of companies adopting this strategy are Hungary (72%), Romania (67%) and Belgium and the Czech Republic (62%). The ones employing the least number of employees with specific language skills are Cyprus (9%), Greece (10%), Malta (11%) and the UK (15%). Of the companies surveyed, 22% have employed native speakers full-time. The companies most often employing native speakers are in Austria (45%), Germany (44%) and Latvia (39%). Whereas, 31% of companies have turned to local agents or distributors in the local markets who also speak the language used by the firm. This practice is most common in Austria (79%) and France (66%). The average percentage of companies that have employed external translators for international business purposes lies at 45%. The employment of translators is most common among companies in Lithuania (84%) and Austria (80%) (European Commission 2006a).

The results also confirmed that almost half of the sample (49%) have offered their employees language training and 42% expect that they will need to obtain further language training within the next three years. The countries where most companies offered language training are the Czech Republic (90%), Slovakia (84%) and Austria (76%). The top 10 languages selected for language training are English, German, French, Italian, Chinese, Czech, Dutch, Portuguese, Danish and Estonian. Additionally, 62% of the European firms surveyed have adapted their website for foreign markets. The highest percentage of firms who have done this are located in Norway (92%) and Finland (91%) and the lowest in Ireland and the UK (5%). The lowest percentage of firms adapting their websites in countries where English is not the primary language are located in the Netherlands (25%) and Latvia (33%) (European Commission 2006a).

The most stressed finding of the study is that 11% of the survey participants confirmed having lost business due to the lack of language skills. The approximate values of contracts lost range from under 100.000 Euros to over one million Euros. Of this 11%, the value of the actual or potentially lost contracts is over 8 million Euros and the potential loss is between 16 and 25 million Euros. The export companies having confirmed the most losses are in Turkey (26%) followed by Finland (26%), Romania (25%) and the Netherlands (25%). The table below presents an insight into the number and values of lost or potentially lost contracts. The results below are of the 91 firms that shared the actual values of lost or potentially lost contracts. The other 104 firms confirming loss of business chose not to share the values.

Table 6: Actual/Potential loss due to lack of foreign language skill

Actual / Potential approximate loss	N	%
Actual loss (approx.): over €1 million	4	4%
Actual loss (approx.): €0.5 million – €1 million	2	2%
Actual loss (approx.): €100.000 – €0.5 million	11	12%
Actual loss (approx.): less than €100.000	4	22%
Potential loss (approx.): over €1 million	10	11%
Potential loss (approx.): €0.5 – €1 million	5	5%
Potential loss (approx.): €100.000 – €0.5 million	16	8%
Potential loss (approx.): less than €100.000	23	25%
Total	91	100%

Source: European Commission 2006a.

The chart below presents the language situations that most commonly lead to missed contractual opportunities.

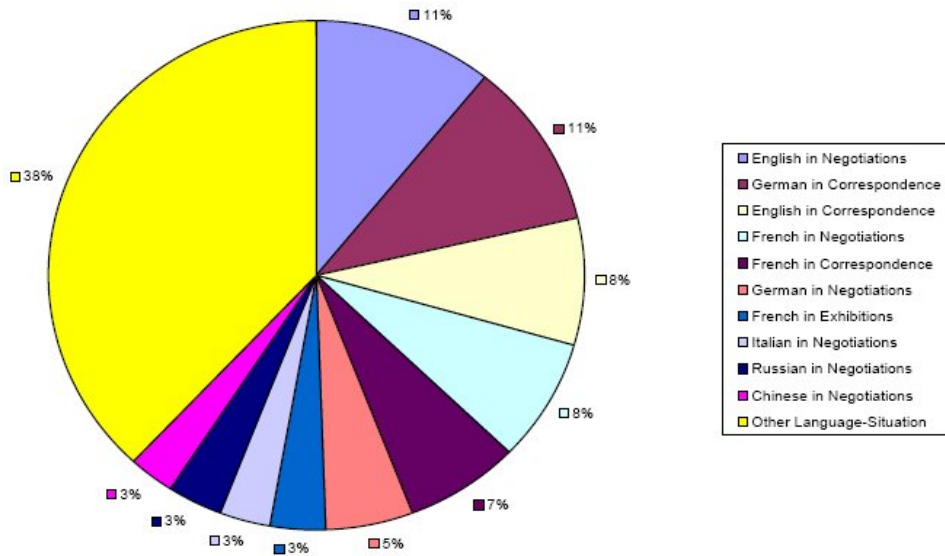


Figure 6: Top ten languages/situations mentioned by firms as a cause of missing export contracts

Source: European Commission 2006a.

Although English is globally accepted as the lingua franca of business, the lack of English knowledge in negotiations accounts for 11% of missed business opportunities and lack of written knowledge in correspondence accounts for 8% of missed business opportunities. The majority, 38%, refers to languages other than English, German, French, Italian, Russian and

Chinese. The lack of language skills was recorded as the most common reason for the losses recorded, followed by failure to follow up on enquiries and lack of confidence.

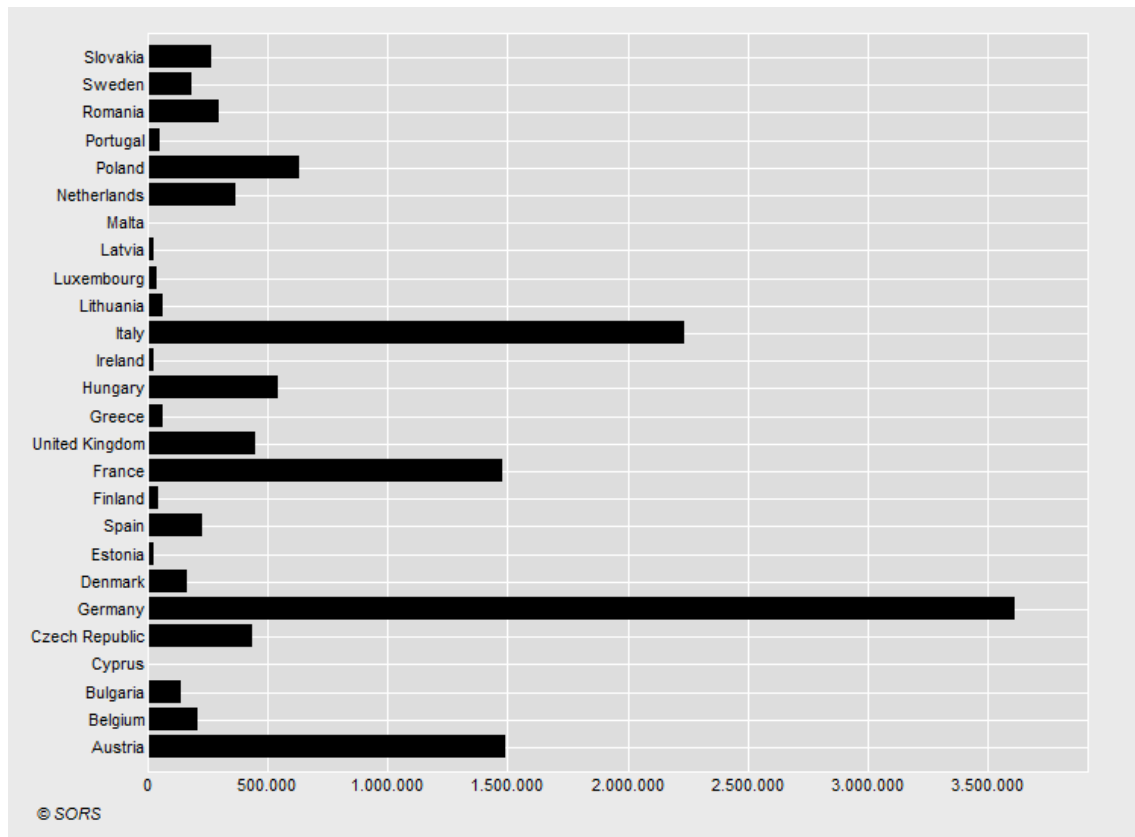
The ELAN study also included questions referring to the cultural aspect of international business. When asked about their cultural interactions, 18% of firms confirmed having encountered cultural differences with their foreign customers. The countries experiencing most difficulties are located in the Scandinavian region – Norway (42%), Sweden (37%), Iceland (39%) and Finland (30%). The cultural aspects causing most difficulties include negotiation styles, mindset and correspondence. 4% of companies stated that the lack of culture competence also resulted in missed business opportunities. The highest percentage of such companies are located in Sweden (12%) and Finland (10%).

A number of conclusions can be drawn from the results of this study:

- Businesses emphasizing foreign languages and employing staff with appropriate language skills are more successful in international business.
- A significant number of companies have previously invested or plan to invest in language training for their employees.
- Those with insufficient language skills and cultural competence are at loss of business.
- Although English is globally accepted as the lingua franca it is not the only language used in international business.
- Investing in foreign language training produces economic benefits.

4.3 Foreign Language Policies of Slovenian Export Companies

According to statistics for 2010, Slovenia exported goods worth 1,459.3 million Euros, which amounts to a 13.7% increase compared to 2009. The value of trade with EU Member States in 2010 amounted to 999.6 million Euros for dispatches (68.5% of total exports) and 1,294.4 million Euros for arrivals (77.2% of total imports) (Statistical Office of the Republic of Slovenia 2011b). The EU countries accounting for the biggest percentage of exports are Germany, Italy, Austria and France. Evident from the chart on the following page, Slovenian companies export goods to all EU countries, the smallest amounts being delivered to Malta and Cyprus.



* unit = 1000 EUR

Figure 7: Exports by countries for 2010

Source: Statistical Office of the Republic of Slovenia 2011a.

With a high level of international activity, Slovenian export companies often face the challenges of doing business in an international environment. Since Slovenia was not included in the ELAN study, it was necessary to conduct a survey among Slovenian export companies to determine their attitude towards language skills and their impact on business. The questionnaire is composed of 14 questions and was sent electronically via an internet website to Slovenian companies exporting to the European Union. The contacts were obtained from the database of Slovenian exporters, which is supported by the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Slovenia and the Public Agency of the Republic of Slovenia for Entrepreneurship and Foreign Investments (JAPTI). In order to rule out sole proprietorships with few employees, the second criteria selected, after international business, was a minimum of 50 employees. Of the 144 participating companies, roughly half of them are predominantly export oriented, meaning that 80% to 100% of their business is comprised of international business. The majority of participating companies have between 100 and 300 employees (38%). The underlying hypothesis behind the survey is that Slovenian companies are aware of the importance of foreign languages in international business and are willing to invest in the training of their employees.

Of the 144 companies participating in the survey, 99% confirmed that knowledge of foreign languages is necessary in order to achieve results in international business and 71% require potential employees to already possess the knowledge of at least one foreign language when applying for work in their companies. The companies employing staff with pre-existing knowledge of a foreign language have different levels of knowledge requirements. 14% of the companies require basic written and spoken knowledge, 68% require intermediate written and spoken knowledge applicable in daily situations and 18% require a high level of written and spoken knowledge applicable in all situations.

The range of importance that employers place on language skills ranges from unimportant to very important. Under 2% of respondents find language skills to be neither important nor unimportant while 98% find this knowledge either important or very important. The results also show that 84% of those surveyed confirmed having provided their employees with additional language training at least once in the past. Of those who have not done so, 33% plan to organize language training in the future. In most cases (97%) language training was executed by an external organization. When relying on translations, 34% of respondents hire a translating agency, 42% take advantage of the skills of their own employees and 24% combine the two. When doing business internationally, the languages most often used by respondents are English, German and languages of the former Yugoslav states. The chart below provides an overview of the frequency of languages used.

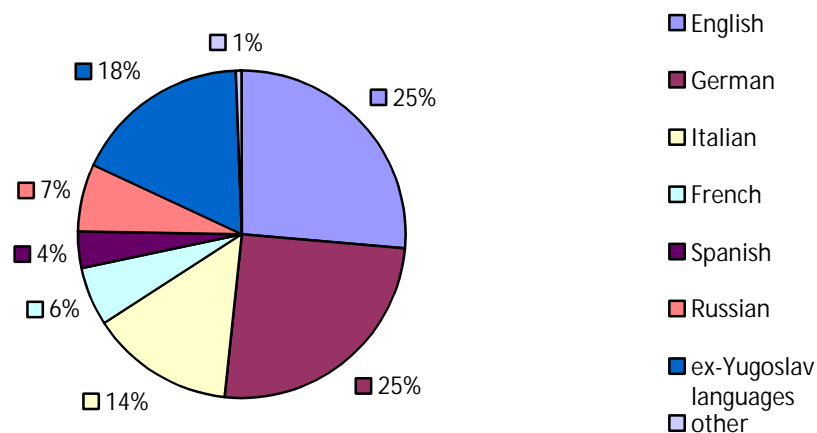


Figure 8: Languages most commonly used by Slovenian export companies

When asked if they ever encountered cultural differences, 75% claimed that they did however, only 21% considered this encounter to be a setback when doing business. The lack of language skills however, did prove to be a setback, since 19% of respondents confirmed having lost business opportunities due to the lack of appropriate language skills.

When analyzing the results it can be said that Slovenian export companies are aware of the importance of language in business. The majority of companies include language knowledge as a requirement in staff recruitment and are also willing to invest in further language training if necessary. They also recognize a variety of different languages needed for business communication, the most commonly used being English, German and languages of former Yugoslav states. In comparison to the ELAN study, a significant percentage of Slovenian export companies have also lost business due to insufficient language skills.

4.4 Case of Good Practice – Gorenje

Gorenje is one of the leading internationally oriented Slovenian companies, with exports comprising over 90% of their revenue. They are present in over 70 countries worldwide and employ more than 11,000 people. Gorenje is also among the leading European manufacturers of home appliances, selling appliances under the brand names of Gorenje, Gorenje+, Atag, Asko, Pelgrim, Mora, Etna, Körting, Sidex and Upo. Their primary sales markets include Germany, Austria and Russia (Gorenje 2011b).

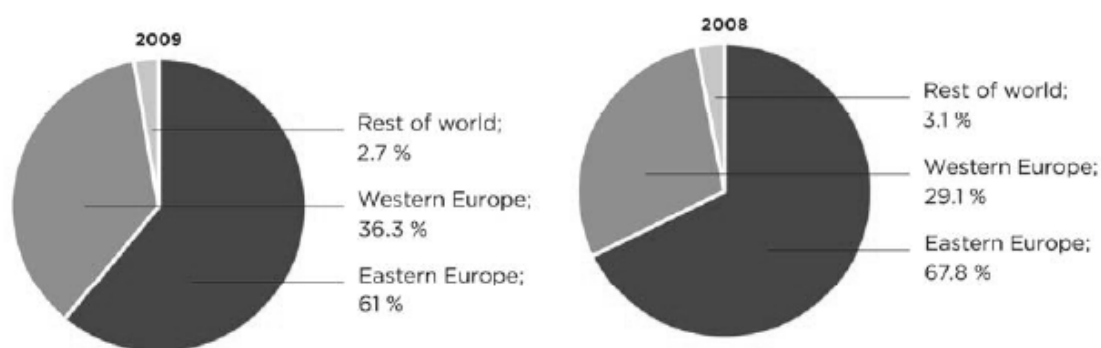


Figure 9: Sales revenue structure by geographical segment

Source: Gorenje 2009.

The history of Gorenje dates back to the 1950s, when the company began manufacturing agricultural machinery. Throughout the years, the production expanded to solid-fuel cookers, washing machines and refrigerators. Barely a decade after its founding, Gorenje became the leading manufacturer of household appliances in Yugoslavia and delivered its first shipment to Germany. Gradually, the range of products increased, eventually covering a complete assortment of home products and employing approximately 20,000 people by 1980. Gorenje first expanded its sales markets to other European countries and made its first overseas expansion to the United States of America in the 1980s. The fall of Yugoslavia resulted in big alterations in the domestic market resulting in the company shifting its policy towards export expansions (Gorenje 2011c). In the recent years, Gorenje has acquired many foreign and

domestic companies and formed partnerships with top designers. They have invested in the development of new technologies, superior design and environmentally friendly products.

At Gorenje they are aware, that in order to be competitive in such a demanding international market, they must excel in know-how and innovation while encouraging the development and loyalty of their employees. They provide a safe and motivating work environment with opportunities for corporate success and personal growth. They also invest in the education of their employees in various fields such as leadership, technology and foreign languages. Given that the majority of their revenue comes from international sales, they place high importance on language skills and their impact on business. They have also adapted their website for 39 of the markets in which they operate (Gorenje 2011a).

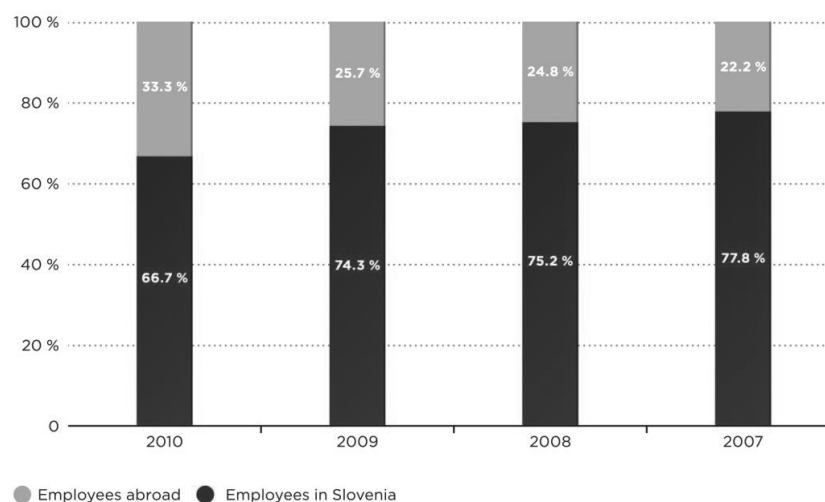


Figure 10: Structure of employees by countries

Source: Gorenje 2010.

Since their products are present in 70 countries worldwide, they encounter a wide range of languages in communication, thus demanding a certain degree of foreign language skills from their employees, excluding the manufacturing sector. The expansion of their international markets also requires additional staff in foreign countries. As can be seen from the figure above, the percentage of Gorenje employees abroad has increased from 22.2% in 2007 to over 30% in 2010. In order to meet the language requirements dictated by international business, Gorenje additionally provides foreign language training for employees, which is carried out by external organizations. The training courses are performed in groups of up to 12 participants and are carried out 1-2 times weekly, outside office hours. Should the specific need arise, individual courses are also available. In 2010, 0.3% of employees participated in foreign language training. This statistic does not however, provide a clear picture of the actual percentage of participants, since the programs commence in one calendar year and are completed in the next. In comparison, the percentage of employees undergoing foreign

language training in 2006 was 9.5% and 7.7% in 2007. Individuals preparing for mandates in any of Gorenje's international offices also take part in language training of the local language spoken in that particular country, if they are not already proficient in the language and if English is not widely used as a primary or secondary language.

Gorenje was chosen as a case of good practice due to its success in the history of its development and its presence in a variety of markets worldwide. Their approach to innovation and corporate success sets an important example for other Slovenian companies striving to succeed abroad. The company policies also reflect the ideas presented in this thesis, recognizing language as an important factor and asset in international business.

5 CONCLUSION

The basic process necessary for any exchange of information to take place is communication. Communication allows us to gather information and send it to other people in the form of a message, which they then decode successfully or unsuccessfully. The chances of successful communication are increased when all parties included in the communication process share a common culture, knowledge and common experiences. Transmitting thoughts and ideas into actual messages requires a shared system of symbols, words, sounds and gestures that together form a language. Language is therefore the primary means of communication. It allows us to pass on information, share experiences and develop intellectually.

The variety of languages spoken globally is in the thousands, which could make communicating internationally seem impossible if it wasn't for the widespread use of certain languages that make this task easier. The most commonly accepted global language is English, spoken by more people as a second language than it is as a first language. It is ranked third by the number of native speakers after Chinese and Spanish. Throughout history certain English speaking nations, such as the United Kingdom and the United States of America, were the driving forces of historical periods such as colonialism and the industrial revolution. The United States continued to be the leading force in fields such as economy, entertainment and information technology. These factors along with many others have contributed to English becoming a global language.

Although the language is spoken by hundreds of millions of people as a primary language and is being taught to hundreds of millions as a foreign language, it can still be the cause for misunderstandings and miscommunication. One of the reasons is the variations of English spoken in different countries such as British English and American English. The grammatical differences are small but there are bigger differences in vocabulary and slang, and minor differences in spelling. It is said that several thousand words are used daily in Britain that have a different meaning or are used differently in the United States. These differences generally do not cause big problems in communication but can lead to misunderstandings among native or non-native speakers not aware that they exist. The most common cause of misunderstanding can be attributed to the differences in pronunciation, dialect and accent of the different variations of English. There are also aspects of English that cause difficulties to non-native speakers who are not proficient in the language. Such difficulties include two-word verbs, culturally derived words, code-switching, turn-taking and different formats of written texts. Despite these factors, English facilitates global communication, especially in situations where the languages spoken by both parties share no similarities.

Since language is the basic means of communication it also plays an important role in business. Business communication is specific in that it is used within the workplace for the purpose of achieving business oriented goals. If this would be the only criteria, then the success of business communication could be measured by whether or not the business goals

were achieved. It is used in a variety of situations including informal communication among colleagues or formal communication with superiors or external organizations. There are also differences in business communication used domestically and internationally. Expanding a business to international waters opens doors to new business opportunities and hence to new customs, cultures, languages, laws and currencies. The common language, culture and experience shared by the domestic environment are replaced by different ones, which can also affect the communication process. Using a language common to both parties greatly facilitates communication but language is not the only element necessary to successfully decode a message. It is the common background and experiences that influence the way a message is encoded and decoded; the fewer similarities the more information needed if the message is to be interpreted correctly.

Combining the definitions of various authors it can be concluded that culture is a system of meanings, symbols, norms, thoughts, experiences, behavioral patterns and values that is shared by a group of people and guides their behavior (Collier 2007; Gudykunst 2002; Jandt 2007). Cultural differences combined with linguistic differences are what make international and intercultural communication a complex process. Even when a communicator is proficient in a foreign language they must also possess certain social skills including the ability to adapt to different situations and select the appropriate behavior. These skills combined with knowledge and awareness of other cultures is what defines inter-cultural communication competence. Individuals or businesses unaware of the possible cultural differences can encounter many communication barriers when operating abroad. Leaving aside possible technical errors that can occur when using technology to communicate, the most frequent communication barriers are of social or cultural nature such as stereotypes and ethnocentrism. In some cases even language itself can become a communication barrier since language is also closely linked to the cultural views and experiences of those who speak it. For this reason also translation can become a communication barrier due to lack of vocabulary equivalence, grammatical equivalence, conceptual equivalence and experiential equivalence.

Promoting the learning of foreign languages is one of the many objectives of the European Union. The Union of 27 member countries recognizes 23 official languages as official and working languages thus allowing all countries to communicate with the many EU bodies in their mother tongue. While embracing linguistic diversity and facilitating the communication between country members and EU institutions, the EU also promotes an ambitious foreign language strategy where they encourage the learning of two foreign languages. By doing so, they wish to increase the number of languages spoken thus encouraging their citizens to learn languages other than the global language of English, promoting linguistic diversity among the countries. The purpose is also to ease the mobility of people throughout countries of the EU, allowing them to take full advantage of the opportunities offered to them. By learning 2 foreign languages, citizens could pursue their careers in other countries or have a wider range of universities to choose from. Strategies such as this one were in part also developed as a

response to a study done on the effects of language skills on business and the European economy. The ELAN study conducted throughout 29 European countries in 2005 showed that 11% of the respondents had lost business due to the lack of language skills. With contract values ranging from 100.000 to over one million Euros, the impact of these losses on the businesses and generally on the European economy was not insignificant. These results are not surprising considering that under half of the companies surveyed had a formal language policy or have ever provided language training for their employees. Under half require the knowledge of a foreign language while hiring and less than a quarter have employed native speakers full-time.

In comparison, the survey conducted among Slovenian export companies for this thesis showed that 19% of the participating companies had lost business contracts due to the lack of language skills. Slovenian export companies however, put a bigger emphasis on the necessity of foreign language skills. Nearly all companies surveyed confirmed that language is important in international business, over 70% require their employees to already possess the knowledge of a certain foreign language when hiring new staff members and over 80% have provided foreign language training for their employees at least once. These findings confirm that Slovenian export companies are aware of the importance of language in business and willing to invest in the language competence of their employees; among them is also the domestically and internationally successful Gorenje.

The theoretical and practical findings have therefore confirmed that language plays an important role in international business. It is the basic means of communication, allowing us to interact with others and pursue certain goals. Without language, none of these intentions could be communicated. The importance of language can however be taken for granted when used to communicate in everyday situations. The role it plays in communication and the impact it has on business success are noticeable when business is expanded across borders where the language, customs and culture are different from our own. Without a common language, communication is not possible and if communication is not possible then contracts cannot be understood and business cannot be successfully conducted. Hence, it is the knowledge of foreign languages and the cultures accompanying them that must be added to the formula for corporate success.

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APPENDICES

- Appendix 1 Razširjeni povzetek
- Appendix 2 Anketni vprašalnik

RAZŠIRJENI POVZETEK

Naloga obravnava komunikacijski proces v poslovnem okolju, s poudarkom na vlogi in pomenu jezika v njem. Ta proces velja za osnovni način sporazumevanja, prek katerega izmenjujemo informacije. Komunikacija tako opredeljuje oblikovanje, potek in interpretacijo sporočila od pošiljatelja do prejemnika. Pošiljatelj zakodira informacijo v obliki sporočila, ki ga pošlje pošiljatelju prek določenega kanala z namenom, da doseže komunikacijski cilj. Kanal je sistem, prek katerega je sporočilo poslano in je lahko zrak, po katerem potuje glas, ali pa tehnološki medij, kot sta telefon in računalnik. Motnje v komunikacijskem procesu sporočilo spreminjajo ali vplivajo na potek dekodiranja sporočila. Pojavijo se lahko v obliki hrupa iz ozadja, kjer se nekdo pogovarja, ali v tehnični obliki pri komunikaciji prek telefona, računalnika in drugih medijev. Prejemnik ob sprejemu sporočila uporabi znanje določenih kod za interpretacijo sporočila in nato pošiljatelju pošlje povratne informacije.

Osnovni model komuniciranja je videti preprost, a nanj vplivajo številni dejavniki. Eden pomembnejših dejavnikov, ki omogoča prejemniku, da razume sporočilo, ki ga je poslal pošiljatelj, je jezik. Vendar jezik ni edini dejavnik: da bi bilo kodiranje in dekodiranje znakov v sporočilu čim bolj uspešno, morata imeti pošiljatelj in prejemnik skupno ozadje ter si deliti čim več skupnih izkušenj. V domačem okolju ne namenjamo veliko pozornosti jeziku in kulturi, ker sta skupna vsem. V mednarodnem okolju in poslovanju pa se soočamo z drugačnimi jeziki, drugačnimi kulturami in drugačnimi navadami, ki lahko v veliki meri vplivajo na uspešnost komunikacije in poslovne rezultate.

Za uspešno komunikacijo v poslovnem svetu je torej potrebno tudi znanje tujih jezikov in poznavanje poslovnih navad, ki se v različnih delih sveta lahko bistveno razlikujejo. Ker je cilj poslovne komunikacije tudi poslovna uspešnost, se način poslovne komunikacije razlikuje od navadne. Tako se tudi lažje ocenjuje učinkovitost komunikacije, saj se meri po tem, ali so bili poslovni cilji doseženi ali ne. Poslovno komuniciranje je posebno tudi zato, ker nudi odgovore na točno določena vprašanja, ki so usmerjena v doseganje poslovnih rezultatov. Sporočila so oblikovana tako, da je možnost nesporazuma čim manjša in poslovna uspešnost čim večja. Poslovno komuniciranje je hkrati tudi način, da naredimo dober vtis o sebi in o svojem podjetju. Tako kot v poslovnem svetu se tudi v komuniciranju upošteva rek, da čas pomeni denar. To se zrcali v kratkih in jedrnatih sporočilih, ki morajo pritegniti pozornost prejemnika. Poslovno komuniciranje lahko poteka na različnih ravneh tako znotraj kot izven organizacije in se loči tudi po načinu komuniciranja, ki je lahko pisno ali ustno. Ne glede na namen in namembnost pa mora biti sporočilo natančno, razumljivo in jedrnat, saj lahko napačna interpretacija vodi do manjših ali večjih nesporazumov. Čeprav je osnovni cilj poslovne komunikacije povsod po svetu usmerjen v poslovno uspešnost, so načini, kako ga doseči, različni, na kar močno vpliva tudi kultura.

Ker kultura zajema prepričanja, vrednote in izkušnje, oblikuje tudi vzorce vedenja in odnose med ljudmi. Ti nevidni dejavniki našega kulturnega ozadja se najmočneje izražajo v komunikaciji z ljudmi iz različnih kultur, kar je mogoče opaziti tudi v načinu poslovanja in poslovnega komuniciranja na svetovni ravni. V nekaterih zahodnih državah se želje po uspešnosti zrcalijo v tem, da so pripravljene marsikaj podrediti službi z namenom, da dosežejo določene cilje. Zato so se pripravljene pogajati izven delovnika in temu nameniti veliko prostega časa. V vzhodnih državah bi se njihova neposrednost in individualistični pristop lahko interpretirala tudi kot znak nespoštljivosti. Da bi se uspešno spopadli s tovrstnimi razlikami, moramo imeti sposobnost medkulturne komunikacije, ki zahteva razumevanje različnih kultur, ter sposobnost oceniti situacijo in temu primerno prilagoditi vedenje.

Uspešna medkulturna komunikacija torej zahteva veliko več kot le znanje jezika in kulture. Oseba mora biti seznanjena s pravili komuniciranja v različnih družbah in z normami, ki narekujejo medsebojne interakcije. Kultura namreč postavlja tudi pravila o tem, kdo sme komunicirati s kom, kar se lahko razlikuje glede na spol, položaj v družbi, položaj v organizaciji ipd. Velik korak k uspešni medkulturni komunikaciji znotraj ali izven organizacije je zavedanje kulturnih razlik, kar lahko pripomore k odpravljanju nesporazumov.

Zaradi kompleksnosti procesa komunikacije in številnih dejavnikov, ki vplivajo na njeno uspešnost, se mnogokrat srečujemo tudi s komunikacijskimi ovirami. V nekaterih primerih nastopi ovira zaradi slabega delovanja tehničnih pripomočkov, s katerimi komuniciramo. Zelo pogoste pa so ovire socialno-kulturne narave, ki se pojavljajo v obliki stereotipov ali etnocentrizma. V prvem primeru označujemo ljudi glede na njihovo pripadnost določeni skupini, namesto da bi jih obravnavali kot posameznike. Tako jim predhodno pripisujemo določene lastnosti, ne da bi jih upoštevali kot individualne subjekte. V primeru etnocentrizma razumemo družbo, ki ji pripadamo, kot glavno ter ocenjujemo vse druge družbe in njihove pripadnike na podlagi svojih norm. Razumevanje različnosti in odprtosti do tujih navad je prav tako eden od pomembnih pogojev za uspešno medkulturno komunikacijo.

Jezik kot osnovni medij, prek katerega komuniciramo, igra glavno vlogo v procesu sporazumevanja. Je namreč sistem simbolov, ki skupaj tvorijo besede, povezane na podlagi določenih pravil, in omogoča, da posamezniki komunicirajo med seboj. Je najpomembnejši medij komunikacije, prek katerega se posamezniki identificirajo z določeno skupino, in je hkrati tudi pripomoček za intelektualni razvoj. Po svetu razlikujemo na tisoče jezikov, od tega nekatere uporablja več milijonov ljudi, nekatere pa zgolj nekaj sto. Najbolj razširjeni jeziki so kitajščina, španščina in angleščina, ki jih skupaj govorita skoraj dve milijardi ljudi. Vendar je ne glede na število ljudi, ki določen jezik uporabljajo, pomembno, da si znanje jezika delijo, saj sicer komunikacija ni uspešna. Določena raven znanja tujih jezikov posamezniku torej omogoča komuniciranje s širšim krogom ljudi in mu nudi tudi dostop do različnih kultur. To hkrati zmanjšuje verjetnost, da bi se pomen sporočila napačno interpretiral, ter zmanjšuje tudi odvisnost od prevajalcev.

Angleščina je eden najbolj razširjenih svetovnih jezikov, ki se poučuje po vsem svetu in se uporablja na številnih področjih, kot so mednarodno gospodarstvo, pravo, računalništvo in filmska industrija. Zaradi razširjenosti uporabe znatno olajša mednarodno sporazumevanje. Pomen, ki ga ima v mednarodnem poslovnem okolju, omogoča komunikacijo z družbami, katerih jezik se lahko popolnoma razlikuje od našega. Uspešnost in razširjenost angleščine je v veliki meri povezana z zgodovinskimi obdobji, v katerih so Velika Britanija in Združene države Amerike igrale ključno vlogo. Fenomen razširjenosti angleščine sicer ne leži v številu ljudi, ki jo uporabljajo kot materinščino, temveč v številu ljudi, ki jo uporabljajo kot tuji jezik. Kljub razširjenosti uporabe in številnih prednostih, ki nam jih angleščina nudi, lahko včasih nastopi tudi kot ovira.

Čeprav je pisna angleščina skoraj povsem enaka v vseh angleško govorečih državah, so razlike v izgovorjavi in narečjih velike. Najbolj izpostavljene razlike so med britansko in ameriško angleščino, ki se razlikujeta zlasti po uporabi določenih besed in izrazov, izgovorjavi ter črkovanju. To lahko predstavlja težave za tiste, ki niso naravni govorniki. Večje razlike so opazne v situacijah, ko je angleščina edini jezik sporazumevanja, raven znanja jezika se pa med ljudmi razlikuje. Čeprav je angleščina pogosta rešitev za komunikacijo med ljudmi iz različnih držav, ni v pomoč, če je znanje jezika slabo in besedišče skromno. Jezik, ki je sicer najpomembnejši medij komunikacije, lahko postane tudi ovira v komunikaciji.

V velikem združenju držav, kot je Evropska unija, se prepleta mnogo različnih kultur in jezikov, vendar so ti sprejeti kot lastnost, priložnost in ne ovira. Evropsko unijo sestavlja 27 držav članic, v njej je priznanih 23 uradnih jezikov. Zaradi številnih širitev se je poudarek na raznolikosti jezikov povečeval. Za tem stoji vizija, po kateri naj bi imeli vsi državljani Evropske unije enake možnosti komuniciranja in učenja tujih jezikov ter se ne bi soočali z jezikovnimi ovirami v času bivanja ali dela v Evropski uniji. Ta tako zagovarja večjezičnost, aktivno spodbuja učenje tujih jezikov in podpira jezikovno politiko učenja jezikov kot procesa, ki poteka skozi celo življenje. S pristopom večjezičnosti želi vsem članicam omogočiti enake možnosti komunikacije z institucijami Unije in hkrati izničiti diskriminacijo manjših držav, katerih jeziki so manj razširjeni kot jeziki večjih držav. Evropska unija je tudi pobudnica ambiciozne akcije, s katero spodbuja učenje dveh tujih jezikov namesto enega. Tak pristop naj bi državljanom Unije omogočil osebni razvoj in večjo mobilnost znotraj držav članic ter preprečil jezikovne ovire na poti do osebne in poslovne uspešnosti. Hkrati bi bila to tudi prednost za evropska podjetja, ki bi se lahko uspešno razširila čez meje in ob tem ne trpela slabih poslovnih rezultatov zaradi pomanjkanja znanja tujih jezikov.

Obsežnejša raziskava o vplivu znanja tujih jezikov na poslovne rezultate je namreč pokazala, da je velik delež anketiranih evropskih podjetij izgubil posle prav zaradi slabega znanja tujih jezikov. Študija ELAN je bila izvedena leta 2005 z namenom, da bi preučila znanje tujih jezikov v evropskih državah, posledice slabega znanja tujih jezikov na poslovanje, tujejezične politike evropskih podjetij ter medkulturne veščine. Ugotovitve so pokazale, da ima skoraj

polovica anketiranih podjetij uradno jezikovno politiko in da je slaba polovica podjetij zaposlenim že ponudila dodatno izobraževanje na področju učenja tujih jezikov. Najpomembnejša ugotovitev pa kaže, da je kar 11 odstotkov anketiranih podjetij izgubilo posel zaradi pomanjkanja znanja tujih jezikov. Po rezultatih študije so torej podjetja, ki poudarjajo znanje tujih jezikov in zaposlujejo kadre z ustreznim znanjem tujih jezikov, bolj uspešna v mednarodnem poslovanju. Ugotovitve so tudi pokazale, da je znaten delež podjetij že investiral v dodatna izobraževanja na tem področju ali to načrtuje v prihodnosti ter da lahko neznanje tujih jezikov vodi v slabo mednarodno poslovanje.

Teoretičnim ugotovitvam o vplivu in pomenu jezika v komunikaciji in mednarodnem poslovanju sledi empirični del naloge, ki predstavlja izsledke ankete, v kateri so sodelovala slovenska izvozna podjetja, ki izvažajo v Evropsko unijo. Anketa služi tudi kot primerjava z evropsko študijo ELAN, v kateri slovenska podjetja niso sodelovala. Anketirana podjetja so odgovarjala na vprašanja o jezikovni politiki, pomenu tujih jezikov v mednarodnem poslovanju in morebitnem vplivu neznanja tujih jezikov na poslovne rezultate.

Rezultati so pokazali, da so skoraj vsa anketirana podjetja mnenja, da je znanje tujih jezikov pomembno v mednarodnem poslovanju, približno tri četrtine podjetij pa že vnaprej zahtevajo znanje določenih tujih jezikov pri zaposlovanju. Večina sodelujočih podjetij je kljub tem predhodnim zahtevam pripravljena vlagati v dodatno izobraževanje za zaposlene na področju tujih jezikov. Tretjina tistih, ki tega še niso storili, to namerava storiti v prihodnosti. Jeziki, s katerimi se slovenska izvozna podjetja najpogosteje srečujejo, so angleščina, nemščina in jeziki držav nekdanje Jugoslavije. Čeprav se anketirana podjetja zavedajo pomembnosti uspešnega komuniciranja v tujih jezikih, je znaten delež podjetij priznal, da so izgubili posle zaradi pomanjkanja znanja tujih jezikov. Ta ugotovitev je primerljiva z rezultati omenjene evropske študije.

V zadnjem delu naloge je bilo podjetje Gorenje izpostavljeno kot primer dobre prakse na področju mednarodnega poslovanja in jezikovne politike. Podjetje velja za eno vodilnih mednarodno usmerjenih podjetij v Sloveniji. Prisotni so v več kot 70 državah po svetu, z glavnimi trgi v Nemčiji, Avstriji in Rusiji ter zaposlujejo več kot 11.000 ljudi. Leta 2010 je tretjina zaposlenih delala v tujih predstavništvi, dve tretjini pa doma. Zaradi mednarodno usmerjene politike je naložba v dodatno izobraževanje zaposlenih ključna, to pa zajema tudi izobraževanje na področju tujih jezikov. Gorenje priznava jezik kot pomemben dejavnik v mednarodnem poslovanju, kar je pripomoglo k izboru podjetja za primer dobre prakse, saj zrcali ideje, ki so predstavljene v diplomski nalogi.

Teoretične in empirične ugotovitve so potrdile, da jezik igra pomembno vlogo v mednarodnem poslovanju. Je osnovni medij komunikacije, ki nam omogoča interakcijo z drugimi in nam pomaga uresničiti določene cilje. Pri vsakdanji komunikaciji se redko osredotočimo na pomembnost jezika, saj je ponavadi skupen vsem. Vloga, ki jo ima v

komunikaciji, in vpliv, ki ga ima na poslovno uspešnost, postaneta očitna, kadar se poslovanje širi čez meje, kjer se jezik, običaji in kultura razlikujejo od naše. Brez skupnega jezika je komunikacija nemogoča, onemogočeno pa je tudi sklepanje poslov. Poslovna uspešnost ne temelji samo na uspešnem poslovanju, temveč tudi na znanju tujih jezikov in poznavanju kultur, s katerimi poslujemo.

ANKETNI VPRAŠALNIK

Moje ime je Maruša Uranjek in študiram na Fakulteti za management Koper. V okviru diplomske naloge o vlogi jezikov v mednarodnem poslovanju sem pripravila anketo o jezikovni politiki slovenskih podjetij, ki izvažajo v EU. Bilo bi mi v pomoč, če bi si za reševanje te ankete vzeli nekaj minut tudi vi.

1. Ali menite, da je za uspešno mednarodno poslovanje potrebno znanje tujih jezikov?
 - Da
 - Ne

2. Kolikšen pomen pripisujete znanju tujih jezikov v vašem podjetju?
 - Zelo pomembno
 - Pomembno
 - Niti pomembno niti nepomembno
 - Skoraj nepomembno
 - Popolnoma nepomembno

3. Ali je znanje vsaj enega tujega jezika predpogoj za delo v vašem podjetju?
 - Da
 - Ne

4. Če ste na prejšnje vprašanje odgovorili z »da« – Kakšen nivo znanja tujih jezikov zahtevate od zaposlenih?
 - Osnovni nivo – preprosto govorno in pisno sporazumevanje
 - Srednji nivo – tekoče govorno in pisno sporazumevanje v vsakdanjih situacijah
 - Visoki nivo – bogata komunikacija in sposobnost komuniciranja na vseh področjih

5. Ali ste za potrebe mednarodnega poslovanja kdaj organizirali jezikovni tečaj za zaposlene?
 - Da
 - Ne

6. V kolikor ste zaposlenim že ponudili jezikovni tečaj, ali ga je izvedel ...
 - strokovnjak iz vašega podjetja
 - zunanja organizacija
 - drugo: _____

7. V kolikor tega še niste storili, ali imate namen to storiti v bližnji prihodnosti?
- Da
 - Ne
8. Za prevajalske potrebe ...
- najamemo prevajalsko agencijo
 - uporabimo lastne kadre
 - drugo: _____
9. S katerimi jeziki se najpogosteje srečujete v mednarodnem poslovanju?
- angleščina
 - nemščina
 - italijanščina
 - francoščina
 - španščina
 - ruščina
 - jeziki bivše Jugoslavije
 - drugo: _____
10. Ali se v mednarodnem poslovanju srečujete tudi s kulturnimi razlikami?
- Da
 - Ne
11. Če ste na prejšnje vprašanje odgovorili z »da« – ali so predstavljale kulturne razlike kdaj oviro pri poslovnem komuniciranju in sklepanju poslov?
- Da
 - Ne
12. Ali ste kdaj izgubili kakšen posel na račun pomanjkanja znanja tujih jezikov zaposlenih?
- Da
 - Ne
13. Kolikšen delež poslovanja predstavlja mednarodno poslovanje vašega podjetja?
- 0–10 %
 - 10–20 %
 - 20–30 %
 - 30–40 %
 - 40–50 %

- 50–60 %
- 60–70 %
- 70–80 %
- 80–90 %
- 90–100 %
- Podjetje ne posluje mednarodno

14. Koliko je zaposlenih v vašem podjetju?

- 0–50
- 50–100
- 100–300
- 300–500
- 500–750
- 750–1000
- 1000–1500
- 1500–2000
- 2000+

Hvala za sodelovanje!