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## LANGUAGE LEARNING

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### LANGUAGE AS AN INDICATOR OF CROSS-BORDER COOPERATION

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*This article examines the growing role of English as an indicator of cross-border cooperation. The language is a powerful tool for communication, exchange of information and ideas, as well as for establishing connections and understanding between people from different cultural and ethnic backgrounds. In the context of globalisation and Ukraine's integration into the global economic space, learning ESP is becoming not just an advantage, but an urgent need for professionals in any field. This article analyses the level of English proficiency according to the EF EPI. But it is important to note that it measures only a certain segment of the population (adults who took the test) and may not reflect the level of English proficiency in specific professional areas, such as the one you are focusing on.*

*Key words: English language, indicator, cross-border cooperation, EF English Proficiency Index*

*В статті розглядається зростаюча роль англійської мови як індикатора транскордонного співробітництва. Мова слугує потужним інструментом для спілкування, обміну інформацією та ідеями, а також для налагодження зв'язків та порозуміння між людьми з різним культурним та етнічним походженням. В*



*умовах глобалізації та інтеграції України до світового економічного простору вивчення англійської мови професійного спрямування стає не просто перевагою, а й нагальною потребою для фахівців будь-якої галузі. В статті проаналізовано рівень володіння англійською згідно EF EPI. Але важливо зазначити, що він вимірює лише певний сегмент населення (дорослих, які склали тест) і може не відображати рівень володіння англійською мовою в конкретних професійних сферах, таких як та, на якій ви зосереджуєтесь.*

*Ключові слова: англійська мова, індикатор, транскордонне співробітництво, індекс рівня володіння англійською мовою EF*

## **Introduction**

Borders are often defined by geographic and political lines. However, they often represent cultural and linguistic differences. One of the key factors that makes cross-border cooperation possible is language.

Language serves as a powerful tool to communicate, exchange information and ideas, as well as to connect and understand people from different cultural and ethnic backgrounds. It plays an important role in aspects of cross-border cooperation such as

- Communication: Language is a necessary tool for communication between partners from different countries. It allows them to exchange information, ideas and opinions and to coordinate their actions.

- Negotiation: Language is an important factor in successful negotiations. It allows parties to clearly express their positions, understand the positions of others, and find compromise solutions.

- Learning: Language is a key factor in collaborative learning and knowledge sharing. It allows people from different countries to exchange experiences and best practices.

- Cultural Exchange: Language is an essential factor in cultural exchange. It allows people from different countries to better understand each other's culture and traditions.

Therefore, language plays a predominant role in the formation of identity, in communication and in the sense of belonging. In cross-border regions, language variations can serve as both a barrier and a bridge, impacting cooperation among neighboring communities.

On the one hand, historical factors such as rivalry or political tensions may aggravate language differences, creating a sense of "otherness" that makes collaboration difficult. This perspective is supported by research within the fields of sociology and political science, which highlights how linguistic nationalism in border regions can exacerbate political divisions and distrust, leading to decreased cross-border trade and social interaction. Language barriers can be a barrier to administrative co-operation in border areas, leading to difficulties in the implementation of joint initiatives and the sharing of cross-border resources.

However, language can also serve as a bridge, facilitating communication and understanding between neighboring communities. This is especially true when a common language or dialect is spoken on both sides of the border. In addition,



proactive efforts to promote multilingualism or investment in effective translation services can overcome communication barriers and pave the way for closer cooperation.

*Purpose of the article* is the study of the role of language as an identifier of cross-border cooperation.

**Literature review.** This topic is reflected in the works of domestic and foreign researchers: Babkina O. (2012) in her monograph examines the theoretical foundations of cross-border cooperation, such as its concept, principles, forms and methods. She also analyzes the factors influencing the development of cross-border cooperation and identifies its main problems, while Danylenko S. (2014) examines the current state of cross-border cooperation in Ukraine. He analyzes its regulatory framework, main directions and forms and determines the prospects of its development. The conceptual basis for the intensification of cross-border cooperation is presented in the monograph by Pavliukha N. and Korneliuk O. (2019). Methodological approaches for evaluating cross-border cooperation are developed. The conceptual basis for strengthening cross-border cooperation has been improved. The work of Cheberyako O. (2016) is devoted to the financial aspects of cross-border cooperation. In the collective monograph on the cross-border cooperation of Ukraine, Polyuzhyn M. (2012) emphasized the importance of the knowledge of foreign languages as an important factor in the competitiveness of Ukrainian university graduates. Jorgen Amani's journalistic article [6] focused on the role of English in cross-border business and diplomatic cooperation, noting the historical factor behind this emergence. The position of English as a universal means of communication has been further strengthened by its dominance in the global media, technology and academia. The dominance of the English language in the world's media, technology, and academia has further strengthened its position as the universal language of communication. The article "How to overcome language barriers in intercultural communication in the workplace" by Hrithik Awasthi (2023, May) provides practical strategies to overcome language barriers in intercultural communication in the workplace. In the paper, "The Impact of Cross-Cultural Language Differences on Social Cognition in Human-Agent Interaction in Cooperative Game Environments," (Bennet, Bae, Hyung Yoon, etc., 2023) researchers found significant differences between languages, including the amount of talk, the frequency of pauses, the analysis of emotions, and the perception of "social presence" in the avatar. The findings are likely to be related to cultural differences between East Asian and Western cultures in terms of the social norms that govern appropriate behavior in social interactions.

Based on this literature review, this study proposes the *following hypothesis*: the degree of linguistic similarity between communities and/or proactive efforts to promote multilingual communication will positively correlate with the level of cross-border cooperation. The main indicators of cross-border cooperation will include the amount and diversity of economic activity between border regions (trade, joint ventures); the incidence and nature of cultural exchanges and joint projects (joint festivals, educational exchanges); the level of coordination and cooperation between local authorities and institutions on issues of mutual interest (infrastructure development, environmental protection).



It should also be noted that depending on the degree of linguistic similarity between regions and the existence of proactive policies aimed at promoting multilingual communication and cultural exchange, Ukrainian cross-border initiatives have had different levels of cooperation and success.

**Methodology.** The research will be conducted using the *following methods*:

- Literature analysis: the scientific literature on the research topic will be analyzed to study the theoretical and practical aspects of the role of language in cross-border cooperation.

- Comparative method: a comparison of different language policies and their impact on cross-border cooperation will be conducted.

- Generalizing Method: The results of the study will be summarized and conclusions will be drawn.

**Results.** In the context of cross-border cooperation in Ukraine, the issue of language is becoming increasingly relevant. This is due to several factors, such as: Initially, growing cross-border ties. Ukraine is increasingly integrated into the European and global space. This leads to the growth of cross-border ties in various fields. Secondly, linguistic diversity, it means that Ukraine is a multilingual country with people speaking different native languages. This can create certain barriers to cross-border cooperation. Finally, political situation, it can explain that the importance of language as a factor of national identification has increased due to the Russian aggression against Ukraine.

The year 2022, the year of the beginning of the full-scale invasion of Ukraine by Russia, created unprecedented challenges for the internationalization of higher education and the international activities of the National Agency. Nevertheless, the National Agency continued to be active in the international arena. Since the declaration of martial law in Ukraine, the traditional areas of international activity of the National Agency have been supplemented by the important task of informing the international community of the truth about the war in Ukraine and its impact on higher education, as well as working to isolate Russian agencies, higher education institutions, educators and scholars.

Nowadays, English is becoming the main language in the field of science, especially in the exact and natural sciences, which is reflected in the refusal of organizers of international scientific meetings to use simultaneous translation. Similar processes are taking place in international business: English is becoming the internal language of the vast majority of multinational corporations, including those whose primary origin is not English or American, as well as the language of communication between businessmen from different countries. English is mandatory in air traffic management, it has almost no alternative in tourism, it dominates the Internet, it provides most of the terminology and abbreviations used in banking, in technology, including computers, and in communications.

In politics and diplomacy, English is the working language of almost all international organizations, including the Council of Europe and the European Union. With the expansion of NATO and the extension of its program to dozens of countries, English is rapidly becoming the only language of international military cooperation. Knowledge of foreign languages is becoming one of the most important requirements



for the education of specialists within the framework of the Bologna process. Today, the requirements for foreign language skills of specialists at all levels are changing significantly, and practical skills, which include knowledge of the language at the oral and written level and the ability to use it in their professional activities, are of paramount importance.

Currently, in Ukraine the knowledge of English language is obligatory only for civil servants of "A" category. However, the need of the hour is for all managers to have at least a B2 level of English. The Verkhovna Rada registered the presidential bill "On the use of English in Ukraine" No. 9432 dated 28.06.2023 (Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine, 2023). It officially establishes the status of English as the language of international communication in Ukraine.

The processes of developing the national economy are accompanied by ever-increasing competition, which affects not only production but other areas, including educational services. First of all, the rigorous selection of educational institutions that want to work in the market is the main reason for this. Moreover, it should be noted that more and more commercial universities are entering the market, which, thanks to their mobility, developed material and technical base, and partly more flexible pricing policy, gradually increase their share in the market of educational services. Secondly, the decreasing budgetary allocations for higher education force the universities to constantly search for other sources of funding to ensure their stable development. And third, Ukraine's entry into the European Education and Research Area will significantly increase the competition between domestic and foreign universities, which will make domestic universities practically uncompetitive in relation to foreign ones, unless the study of foreign languages, especially English, becomes a priority. After all, the conditions of the modern world are dynamically changing, and when we talk about the level of knowledge adequate to the requirements of the present, we mean not only the amount of knowledge, but also the ability of a person to constantly learn, to quickly find the necessary information from different language sources, to systematize it and to correctly apply it in practice.

In December 2022-January 2023, KIIS (Yashnyk, 2023) conducted a nationwide sociological survey for USAID's Communications Transformation Project, implemented by Chemonics International. The survey was commissioned by the Ministry of Digital Transformation of Ukraine and funded by US taxpayers through the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). According to the survey, more than half (56%) would like to improve their foreign language skills. However, 61% say they do not need to know a foreign language for their job. Generally, Ukrainians fall into four traditional categories when it comes to foreign language learning: have a desire and a need (28%); have only a desire (28%); have no desire but a need (2%); and have neither a desire nor a need (42%).

**Discussion.** According to the latest EF English Proficiency Index (EF EPI), published in November 2023 (Education First, 2023) Ukraine ranks 44th out of 113 countries and regions in terms of the English proficiency of its adults. This is equivalent to 569 points, which corresponds to a "medium" level of proficiency. It is important to note that the EF EPI is based on a standardized test administered by a private language testing company. It does not necessarily reflect the English



proficiency of the entire population in a given country.

The Netherlands is ranked in first place with a score of 647, which indicates a "very high" level of English proficiency. However, Poland ranks slightly higher, in 39th place, with a score of 598, Slovakia and Hungary rank lower than Ukraine, at 50th and 52nd respectively, with scores of 554 and 547 (both moderate) (Education First, 2023).

While the EF EPI provides a general picture of the level of English proficiency in different countries, it is important to be aware of the limitations of the EF EPI. It is important to note that it only measures a specific segment of the population (the adults who took the test) and may not reflect the level of English proficiency in specific occupational areas, such as the one you are focusing on.

Thus, due to this reason, learning ESP becomes not only an advantage, but also an urgent necessity for professionals in any field in the context of globalization and Ukraine's integration into the world economic space. In addition to the benefits for the students, there are also advantages for the universities, i.e. raising the rating and prestige, improving the qualifications of teachers and, above all, introducing innovative teaching methods at the institutional level. At the national level, it increases the competitiveness of the economy and investments, furthermore, improves the country's image in the international arena. At the institutional level, it is not difficult to find a solution to the language problem. It requires the development and implementation of ESP programs; the involvement of qualified teachers with experience in the relevant field. Creating conditions for practicing ESP, such as internships in international companies, is another important factor. Last but not least, the use of modern teaching methods, technologies, as well as cooperation with employers to identify the current needs of the labor market.

First of all, the development of a national strategy for the development of ESP and ensuring the financing of ESP programs should be paid attention to at the state level. Moreover, it is necessary to create favorable conditions for language education development.

Discuss the challenges that universities may encounter when implementing quality ESP programs - not just in terms of quality, but also in teacher training and development, adapting programs to meet specific industry needs and student skill levels, and ensuring adequate resources for effective teaching, including potential funding shortfalls.

In the promotion of ESP programs, attention should also be paid to alternative solutions that can enhance the competitiveness of professionals in a globalized world: online courses, seminars, or language exchange programs that are available outside of formal university settings. In addition, there may be government and industry initiatives.

*Conclusions and recommendations.* First of all, the actual impact of ESP programs on graduates' professional careers and employability is identified as an area for further research to deepen understanding of language skills and their impact on professionalism and national competitiveness. It would also be appropriate to compare approaches and methods to language learning and professional development in different countries or regions of Ukraine and around the world.

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