

**Ministry of Education of the Republic of Moldova
The Financial-Banking College “A. Diordita” from Chisinau**

REPORT

Theme:

English as a global language

Elaborated by:

**Michicin Cristina
Group CI 0401 G**

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The plan of the report:

1. What is a Global Language?
2. English isn't suitable for an international language.
3. Why English is and should be an international language?
4. Who speaks English?
 - a)The origins of the English language
 - b)The state of English at the present time
 - c)English in Europe
 - d)Reactions
- 5.Conclusion

1. What is a Global Language?

“Global English” in a sociolinguistic context refers almost literally to the use of English as a global language. It means a common language for the world.

A language achieves a genuinely global status when it develops a special role that is recognized in every country. Having such a status, the global language has to be of a great importance, influencing all the domains of the human activity in the world.

For example English dominates such fields as the media, foreign language teaching, business etc.

But still, it should be quite uncontroversial to state that English definitely plays an enormously important role in all the countries all over the world. Even though the enormous importance of English for communication in Europe and its remarkably high prestige are undeniable facts, it is questionable whether it is entirely justified to talk of English as a global language in the European Union. Global on a global scale it definitely is but perhaps not global in the meaning of dominating all parts of the world or rather all areas of human activity in all parts of the world to the same extent. For example in EU, English is not being the language with the highest number of native speakers. It is only the national official language of the UK and one of the national official languages of the Republic of Ireland.

2. English isn't suitable for an international language.

Some people have the opinion that English isn't suitable for use as an international language. The reasons are, firstly, that English is a national language. They think no national language is suitable for international use. Why? Because if we accept a national language as international, that gives enormous political and cultural advantages to the country or countries for which the chosen language is the native tongue. Secondly, they find, English is very difficult for most Asian people. They say that if we take English as the international language, 90% of people of the world who don't know English will be discriminated and they find it unreasonable.

3. Why English is and should be an international language?

a) Who speaks English?

English is present on every continent. In over 60 countries it is used officially or without the sanction of government and is prominent in 20 more.

There are three kinds of English speakers, those who speak it as their first language, those who speak it as a second language and those who learn it a foreign language.

Today about 400 million people speak English as their mother tongue or

first language. Over 50 million children study English as an additional language at primary level and over 80 million study it at secondary level.

b) The origins of the English language

English we know is derived from the language of the Angles, Saxons and Jutes. Until the early 1600s only a few million people spoke English. They lived on a small island in the North Sea. The English traveled all over the world and settled. The areas where the English settled were called colonies. Trade between the mother country and the colonies became an important factor. The language used was English. Now English has for more than 150 years been called a world language.

c) The state of English at the present time

Today, we will acknowledge that English is sweeping the planet's physical, economic, cultural and cyber space. Hollywood, Microsoft, Coca-Cola, the hegemony of the American empire in the world battered by two global wars – English is the language of pop-culture, of tourism, of markets and trade, of the Internet. It's the language the young in the developing world, the formerly powerful world, and the world yearning the democracy feel compelled to learn. It is becoming a global language unlike any other in the history. English is an increasingly classless language. English encompasses more than just a convenient means of communication among the globe's denizens; it's an ideological movement – even if by accident.

d) English in Europe

Even though in Europe English is only one of the 11 official and working-languages, that isn't the largest spread here, it has a primordial influence in this region.

In the UNO English is used as a working-language since 1945 and this means it is used on all levels of running the organization as well as on all official occasions. As well, English is used as an official language of the Council of Europe that is used for daily work and official statements.

But still, English doesn't dominate daily business in the EU institutions, but French, for two obvious reasons, namely their French-speaking surrounding and the historic fact of the UK joining the organization as late as 1973.

Surveys among the citizens of the European Union underline the fact that English is seen as an enormously important language but at the same time not seen as the only language that should or could even be used for communication on an official EU-level.

When trying to assess what English means for both the countries that already constitute the EU and the countries that are most likely going to join the organization, it is extremely important to examine the existing educational

systems. Since it would be simply impossible to find out about the real knowledge of foreign languages, this seems to be the closest one can get in exploring possible future choices of language in a more global society. In this matter we can use a table that shows figures for the school year 1994-1995, dashes indicate missing numbers or cases where a given language is the mother tongue.

Only English and French are important foreign languages in the time-tables of schoolchildren in primary schools in the EU and selected countries aspiring membership.

| | Foreign languages at primary school level | |
|------------------------------|--|--------------------------------------|
| | English | French |
| Country/Region | //////////////////////////////////// | //////////////////////////////////// |
| Austria | - | - |
| French Community Belgium | 1 % | - |
| Flemish Community Belgium | 0.0% | 35% |
| Denmark | 27.2% | 0.0% |
| Finland | 63.8% | 1.0% |
| France | 14.1% | - |
| Germany | 6.0% | 2.3% |
| Greece | 49.0% | 4.8% |
| Ireland | - | 0.0% |
| Italy | 23.2% | 4.5% |
| Luxemburg | 0.0% | 82.3% |
| Netherlands | 33.3% | 0.0% |
| Portugal | 30.0% | 6.5% |
| Sweden | 48.2% | 0.0% |
| Spain | 63.3% | 1.8% |

| | | |
|----------------|-------|-------|
| United Kingdom | - | - |
| Bulgaria | 6.5% | 0.2% |
| Czech Republic | - | - |
| Hungary | - | - |
| Poland | 17.6% | 1.8% |
| Romania | 34.6% | 59.6% |
| Slovakia | 23.9% | 2.2% |

In secondary school English, French, German and Spanish are taught to some extent in the schools of the EU and of some future member states.

| | Foreign languages at secondary school level | | | |
|------------------------------|--|---------------|---------------|----------------|
| | English | French | German | Spanish |
| Country/Region | | | | |
| Austria | - | - | - | - |
| French Community Belgium | 59.6% | - | 5.2% | 2.6% |
| Flemish Community Belgium | 70.0% | 98.2% | 22.7% | 0.2% |
| Denmark | 94.1% | 16.4% | 68.3% | 5.4% |
| Finland | 99.0% | 11.1% | 32.7% | - |
| France | 95.3% | - | 28.0% | 31.9% |
| Germany | 93.2% | 23.7% | - | 1.0% |
| Greece | - | - | - | - |
| Ireland | - | 70.2% | 26.4% | 3.8% |
| Italy | 73.0% | 34.6% | 3.5% | 0.4% |
| Luxemburg | 76.7% | 98.9% | 98.9% | 10.0% |
| Netherlands | 98.9% | 65.3% | 78.1% | 0.0% |
| Portugal | 74.4% | 52.3% | 2.4% | 0.1% |

| | | | | |
|----------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| Sweden | 99.5% | 16.6% | 45.1% | 2.4% |
| Spain | 95.4% | 8.3% | 0.2% | - |
| United Kingdom | - | - | - | - |
| Bulgaria | 59.3% | 27.5% | 24.4% | 3.1% |
| Czech Republic | 90.0% | 12.2% | 70.0% | 2.4% |
| Hungary | 76.4% | 14.3% | 59.3% | 2.1% |
| Poland | 69.9% | 19.6% | 55.5% | - |
| Rumania | 56.1% | 75.8% | 9.8% | 19.6% |
| Slovakia | 86.8% | 10.3% | 69.1% | 1.5% |

Analysing these two tables we can underline the tendency of English being the most widely taught foreign language in the school of Europe, so we can suppose that in short time English will become an global language and in this region of the world.

Today English is spread and used largely in the mass media. The BBC and news channels like CNN are watched by a relatively small group of viewers, but channels showing music videos and popular films, such as NBC Super Channel and Sky Television are hugely popular. In Eastern Europe especially many newspapers have started to be published in English. There is a statistic that talks of as many as 17 English-language newspapers established in Eastern Europe including the former Soviet Union.

English continues to be the chief *lingua franca* of the Internet. More than 80% of the data stored on Internet are in English.

The linguistic legacy of the British Empire and the indisputable excellence of the United States in many technological areas has led to the use of English as a *lingua franca* in many commercial and industrial situations, with the consequence that the need for foreign language competence has not always been perceived or rewarded in British commerce and industry.

Job offers for a number of branches will expect applicants to speak English without even mentioning this fact, so an even greater need of English in business is to be expected

Just to take one particular subbranch of business, accounting, English does not dominate here on a national level but as soon as companies decide to use more than one reporting language for their annual reports it is mainly English as table 10 (adopted from Parker 2000: 50) clearly shows.

| Secondary reporting language | number of companies |
|------------------------------|---------------------|
|------------------------------|---------------------|

| | |
|------------|-------|
| English | 100% |
| French | 28.6% |
| German | 14.3% |
| Spanish | 9.5% |
| Italian | 4.8% |
| Portuguese | 2.4% |
| Swedish | 2.4% |

e) Reactions

The situation of English is peculiar in that perhaps no other language has ever been so important on a global scale and at the same time met with outright hostility. Many languages are undergoing a process of massive lexical transformation due to loans from English. For decades now the German-speaking countries have had heated debates about the necessity and use of Anglicisms. Interestingly enough protests against English becoming dominant in certain areas are especially strong in countries with so-called major languages, whose speakers are not used to not being able to use their own language.

4. Conclusion

International organizations use English in their communication. Scientists write their reports in English. It is used by pilots and at sea. English is the favorite language of a lot of pop-artists and lyrics writers. It is used for television productions, films and video games. In recent years computer technology has helped to give the English language even more importance.

At present there is no sign that any other language will replace English as a world language.