



What Makes English the Global Language of Commerce?

Recent reports from around the world are increasingly showing that English is spreading as the language of business success. Spoken by 1.75 billion people worldwide, English is now spoken by 1 in 4 people globally. See the below links to various news stories in which English is cited as a language of global commerce.

FRANCE

- SGS, a multinational organization based in 140 countries, provides all communications from its Swiss headquarters in English.
- Pierre de Rauglaudre, Associate Director at Aciat (a small computing company in France that quality-tests software), has said, "Out consultants frequently do business abroad with India, China or other foreign countries. Every other project is carried out in English."
- Marc Verger, CEO of Berlitz France (a training provider) has said, "It is not enough for a manager to be able to speak English with a client. The demand [for English] must be met at every level of the company, right down to the switchboard operator."

Source: Los Echos, April 10, 2012, "Oh Mon Dieu! English Invades French Workplace" by Laurance N'Kaoua, <http://www.worldcrunch.com/oh-mon-dieu-english-invades-french-workplace/5075>

JAPAN

- In March 2010, Hiroshi Mikitani, the CEO of Japan's largest online marketplace, Rakuten, mandated that English be the company's official language of business.
- Half of Rakuten's employees can now communicate in English, and 25% communicate in English with partners and coworkers in foreign subsidiaries on a regular basis.

Source: Harvard Business Review, May 2012, "Global Business Speaks English" by Tsedal Neeley, <http://hbr.org/2012/05/global-business-speaks-english/ar/1>

TAIWAN

- Ed Moore, who received a Fulbright Specialist Grant from the U.S. Department of State and the Council for International Exchange of Scholars, wrote of his experience in Taiwan, "I engaged with people who not only wanted to pick my brain about the U.S., but jumped at the chance to work hard on their conversational English. They viewed English learning as a critical part of their education."

- He goes on to explain the extent to which the English language was used abroad: "I sat in on classes at universities where elements of some of the degree programs were offered fully in English; MBA programs, banking and finance, literature, the entire gamut of coursework all tailored to preparing students to compete in a global marketplace. These classes were filled with students from around the world. One banking class had students from across Europe, South America and several Asian countries, but was delivered completely in English."
- He adds, on the importance of the English language to the Taiwanese: "I was in a country where Mandarin is the language of trade and education, yet I found a consistent orientation toward English as a global language, one that should be mastered to advance."

Source: The Tallahassee Democrat, May 4, 2012, "We must communicate so we can compete" by Ed Moore (Opinion Piece), http://www.tallahassee.com/article/20120505/OPINION05/205050305/Ed-Moore-We-must-communicate-we-can-compete?odyssey=mod%7Cnewswell%7Ctext%7Cfrontpage%7Cs&nclink_check=1

UGANDA

- In 2008, Rwanda became a member of the East African Community and the government affirmed English to be the official language of instruction. This English designation was meant to help future workers ease into the international business community, where English is the overriding language.
- Theogen Kayinamuro, a teacher in Rwanda, has said, "When Rwanda joined EAC we wondered what we would benefit. Most of us spoke French and never expected to compete with our counterparts in the region, who spoke exclusively English. But, the trend of events show that we shall be competitive in the region as well."

Source: The Independent (Kampala), March 27, 2012, "Uganda: English Language No Longer an Issue, Teachers Say," <http://allafrica.com/stories/201203280590.html>

VIETNAM

- BBC Reporter Jennifer Pak discovered through her reporting in Vietnam that "wherever you turn in Vietnam, people are learning English." This PRI story goes on to declare that 'In Vietnam, English is king.'

Source: Public Radio International, April 12, 2012, "In Vietnam, people clamor to learn English" <http://www.pri.org/stories/world/asia/in-vietnam-people-clamor-to-learn-english-9414.html>