

The Impact of English and Plurilingualism in Global Corporations



The International Research Foundation
for English Language Education

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Introduction



The International Research Foundation for English Language Education (TIRF) is developing a series of reports that addresses key, unanswered questions regarding policies and practices in English language education worldwide. Specifically, TIRF, while promoting individual and community language rights, is interested in better understanding how the language proficiency of individuals who are non-native speakers, or second-language speakers of English influences their ability to access and participate in the global economy. Describing and assessing the current and evolving roles of English are the primary objectives of this research.

The first of these reports addresses the ways in which global corporations define and assess language requirements—including but not limited to the ability to communicate in English—and how these corporations both support and evaluate the development of the language capabilities of their employees. The questions that motivated the research were

- What language requirements do global corporations have?
- What are the economic purposes and benefits of these requirements?
- How do global corporations assess whether workers meet their language requirements?
- What have global corporations done to address the language challenges they face?
- What is the impact of employees' language abilities on individuals, firms, and economies?

The answers to these questions as presented in this report are based on a formal review of the literature surrounding the role of English and plurilingualism (or multilingualism) in global business, and findings from surveys and interviews involving a small but purposive sample of global corporations, or their relevant language assessment and service providers. The research activities aimed at capturing the role of English and plurilingualism in the hiring, training, job advancement, and other human resources and talent development practices of global

corporations. The participating corporations were identified in discussions between the research team and the TIRF Board of Trustees. The respective professional networks of these individuals were then used to identify access points, make contact, administer a survey,¹ and/or conduct electronic, telephone, or in-person follow-up interviews as needed. The industries represented by these corporations and the regions where they currently conduct their operations are listed in Table 1.

Table 1 Business Sectors and Regions of Research Participants

Industries	Regions
Energy	Africa, Asia, Australia, Europe, North America, South America
Publishing	Asia, Central America, Eastern Europe, Western Europe
Professional services	Asia, Europe, Latin America, Middle East
Telecommunications	South America
Advanced manufacturing	Australia, Europe, North America
Information technology	Africa, Asia, Australia, Europe, Middle East, North America, South America
Entertainment	Asia, Europe
Finance	Asia, Europe, North America
Biomanufacturing	Asia, Australia, Europe, North America, South America

The sections following the Executive Summary present the main findings, using the key research questions as an organizing framework. Employer vignettes are interspersed throughout these sections to illustrate related real-world practices. The final section of the report identifies the implications of the study and suggestions for further research. Four appendices which provide additional information on the context of the research, tools used, and selected case study results follow the report.

¹See the full text of the survey in Appendix A.

Executive Summary



The findings in this initial TIRF report empirically confirm a commonly held belief:

Plurilingualism, and proficiency in English as a second or foreign language in particular, matter greatly in the global economy, and they matter to employers as well as to individuals. Indeed, it is possible to estimate the effect of language on business performance.

Effective communication across global corporations requires employees with skills in multiple languages. Surprisingly, however, no significant efforts to date have been made to quantify this effect through formal experimentation and research, even though the results would undoubtedly hold tremendous importance for both firms and individuals, as well as for both local and global economies.

Study conclusions

The economic impact of language proficiency

The literature and the data from the corporations we surveyed strongly suggest that there are measurable economic returns on English and plurilingual skills for individuals, corporations, and economies. TIRF's findings also suggest that there is a considerable price to be paid if corporate global and local communications fail, or are ineffective due to poor language proficiency of employees. It is clear that this entire subject, i.e. the economic return on English and plurilingual skills, as well as on corporate language strategies, begs further research and study.

The language requirements of global corporations

A number of different sets of English language proficiency requirements and assessment tools are used by global corporations, many of which are general, and not correlated specifically to relevant job functions. In the meantime, the language needs of corporate employees are increasing. The fact that major corporations are engaged in such vast efforts to define and assess their language needs clearly indicates that these groups recognize the importance of language proficiency for their performance. It is also a credible sign that corporations are actively trying to find solutions to their language challenges.

Without global sets of standards that reflect not only general language proficiency, but also proficiency in specific job functions, efforts to define and assess language proficiency will continue to carry a substantial economic cost. This cost includes not only a financial impact on the bottom line of corporations, but also the opportunity cost associated with the identification, training, and measurement of employees. The development of more function-specific, globally-recognized standards and tools that reflect the diversity of these language needs warrants further research, and TIRF strongly encourages additional study in these areas.

Language development strategies of global corporations

Despite the current availability of tools to identify, develop, and measure language needs and abilities, there appears to be neither a global consensus on the most effective strategies for realizing these goals, nor enough research data at this time to determine what these strategies should be.

Corporations seeking to implement a successful language strategy are left to sort through an array of methods, tools, and providers. Given that the economic benefits of language proficiency cannot be realized without successful strategies, this critical area offers a key opportunity for research by corporations and other interested parties. There is a growing foundation for such study, but much work needs to be done. Questions of delivery mode, scope, level, duration, and use of technology all beg further investigation.

Implications

This paper represents an early step, though by no means the first, toward a comprehensive, research-based approach to the subject of plurilingualism in the 21st century global environment. It is clear that substantial further research and study is needed across this entire subject. As a next step, TIRF would like to encourage research and study on the following specific questions:

- What is the relative penetration of various corporate lingua franca (e.g., English, Spanish) and what are the growth expectations for the position of these languages in global labor markets?
- What level of proficiency in English or other lingua franca is required for different levels and types of jobs in specific global firms?
- What are the best tools for corporations to assess language proficiency?
- What are the best approaches for corporations to implement language proficiency development?
- What are the potential contributions of technology tools to language proficiency development?
- What are the best ways to assess the economic returns of language proficiency to individuals and corporations?



Section 1

The economic impact of language proficiency

The behavior of individuals, corporations, and governments increasingly suggests that in the 21st century, plurilingual skills matter. What do we know about the impact of plurilingualism on economic outcomes? Does plurilingualism, and specifically English proficiency, facilitate access to and participation in the global labor market? Does it affect the labor market outcomes of individuals? Does it affect firm performance? Does it have an impact on the economy of a nation or region? To answer these questions, we turn to the literature on the economics of language and surveys of globally integrated firms.

The cost of the language barrier

There is considerable evidence that language proficiency in corporations—or the lack thereof—broadly impacts operations and results. In their study on this subject, Feely and Harzing (2003) argued that

the impact of the language barrier cannot be evaluated using simple measures such as dollars spent on interpreters or days lost in translating documents. Instead the true cost needs to be seen in terms of the way it distorts and damages relationships. These in turn impose pressures and constraints on the strategies pursued by the company and the organizations and systems they consequentially adopt (p. 9).

Feely and Harzing identify the key areas that may negatively be affected by such issues: buyer/seller relationships, foreign market expansion, joint ventures, headquarter-subsidiary relationships, and staffing policies. Finally, they call for empirical work to determine future consequences and gather additional evidence.

Language proficiency within corporations broadly impacts operations and results.



Language impact on the individual

From the perspective of language impact on the individual worker, perhaps the most relevant and recent evidence comes from a study by Klein (2007), who tested Grin and Vaillancourt's (1997) hypothesis that language competencies should be an advantage in the labor market, i.e., that individuals who possess these competencies should have easier access to the labor market, should experience a positive effect on their wages, and should experience a positive effect on their professional careers.

Klein also examined the returns to plurilingualism in the European labor market, and found that high plurilingual competencies positively affect active labor force participation of men and women, and that these same competencies have a clear effect on men's wages. In addition, Klein noted that among individual languages, English appeared to be the most important, as it was the only language examined that positively affected both labor market participation rates and employee wages. Klein's study illustrates the importance of European citizens' having a good command of several languages in order to cope with the challenges, and act on the opportunities, presented by the growing globalization of the economy and the deepening of the European integration process. Klein's findings further confirm notions introduced by the Council of Europe (2001) and others that the need to communicate in different languages has become increasingly important. They also show that English continues to matter a great deal in this context.²

Research into the views of employees in global corporations confirms that language abilities have become increasingly important, and shows that Klein's findings extend to English-oriented global corporations beyond the European Union. This research provides an internal view of trends in business communication in global corporations, including but not limited to corporations in Europe. In *Globalization of English: Trends in Business Communication and the Implications for Global Companies* (GlobalEnglish Corporation, 2005), the researchers surveyed employees of global corporations in the Americas (including employees of global corporations in the United States and 17 other countries), the Asia/Pacific region (including employees at firms in 13 countries), and the collective region of Europe, the Middle East,

In Europe, high plurilingual skills positively affect workforce opportunities for men and women.

One study of global firms showed that 91 percent of employees felt they needed English proficiency, but only 8 percent felt they had it.

² For more information on 21st century skills, see Appendix B.

A study by CILT of 2,000 European businesses estimated annual lost revenues due to language challenges to be on the order of tens of millions of euros.

and Africa (including employees at global firms in 52 nations). Based on the responses of over 4,000 global corporation employees, this research identifies several important workforce developments in global corporations:

1. Employees feel increasingly pressured to use English, but feel they are not always prepared. There is a large and growing English gap, with 91 percent of employees indicating English is critical or important for their jobs, but with only eight percent stating that their current English abilities are adequate to be successful on their jobs.
2. The need for English is spreading, affecting all levels of the organization, a broad array of employees, and a growing number of work situations where English increasingly matters for both internal and external communication purposes.
3. Perhaps most importantly, the authors found that English-speaking employees in non-English-speaking countries have a job advancement advantage relative to those who lack proficiency in English.

Language impact on firms

If language proficiency affects both job access and advancement for individuals, does it affect the overall business performance of firms? A 2006 study by the Centre for Information on Language Teaching and Research (CILT) on the effects of shortages of foreign language skills in enterprises on the European economy makes a compelling case for the effect of language on business and economic performance. This comprehensive, five-part study examined prior empirical work, surveyed 2,000 small- to medium-sized exporting enterprises (SMEs). The study identified a set of recommendations for each participating country, surveyed 30 large multinational companies to identify differences among SMEs, and included a microanalysis of the SME survey data to explore the economic impact of investment in language skills for exporters on the overall European economy. This seminal study reported several conclusions of relevance to those interested in language education.

These were key findings relative to business performance:

- Small- to medium-sized exporting firms (SMEs) lose a significant amount of business as a result of language skills. This involves both losing current contracts and not realizing potential contracts. Among the companies in the survey that lost contracts, the actual loss translated into tens of millions of Euros (a conservative figure, according to that report).
- Many of the SMEs surveyed planned to enter new markets, and anticipated that language needs—and the need for intercultural skills, to a lesser extent—would increase.
- Many respondents indicated that they viewed English as a key language for gaining access to export markets. It was frequently identified as a lingua franca, though other languages were also used as a lingua franca in trading with partners in certain regions, such as Russian, German, and Polish in Eastern Europe, French in Africa, and Spanish in Latin America.
- SMEs believed that employees need work experience in other countries to improve their language skills and awareness of other cultures.

Findings from the large, multinational companies surveyed confirmed many of the small- to medium-sized companies' findings:

- Almost 75 percent of large companies in the sample had mechanisms in place for recruiting staff with language skills, and most of the remainder stated that recruitment of staff with these attributes was commonplace.
- English was often highly recommended or officially sanctioned as a corporate language.
- In terms of future needs, Spanish and other global languages held a significantly higher priority for the large multinationals than for the small- to medium-sized companies.

Language impact on economies and nations

If language proficiency has a demonstrable impact on individuals and corporations, logic suggests that it would also impact economies and nations. While there is not a great deal of research available on this topic, a recent study by Ku and Zussman (2008) offers some important evidence that different countries' having different native languages brings about an adverse impact on international trade. These researchers performed a comprehensive analysis of three decades of data from takers of the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL®) from more than one hundred countries, which had been collected to construct mean national TOEFL scores as a measure of English language proficiency.

In their analysis, Ku and Zussman tested the hypothesis that trade partners that do not share a common native language will overcome this barrier by communicating in another, non-native language. They posit that English is the “leading candidate to play this role of lingua franca” (p.3). Their findings show that the ability to communicate in English affects the ability of nations to promote international trade, and they conclude that “an acquired proficiency in English can mitigate the impact of historically determined language barriers” (ibid.).

Impact of language management strategies

If we can describe the impact of language abilities on individuals, corporations, and economies, what kinds of returns can we expect from language development and management strategies designed to enhance language proficiency? The number of studies that address this question is limited. To illustrate, Bartel (1997) showed that in the 1990s, fewer than 50 percent of U.S. firms evaluated the results of their training programs, and they generally limited their training evaluations to the first three levels of Kirkpatrick's initially four-level evaluation approach introduced in the late 1950s (Kirkpatrick, 1959): trainee reactions, identification of learning gains, and/or change in employee behavior. The firms did not examine employee performance or specific return on investment (which became the fifth level of evaluation based on Kirkpatrick's model). In addition, non-U.S. firms evaluated the returns on their training investments on a much larger scale than did their U.S.

counterparts. More recent data from a 2008 report by The Conference Board suggest that this trend has not changed considerably in the early years of the 21st century (The Conference Board, 2008).


One reason for the scarcity of firm-based, return on investment studies may be that firms consider this type of information proprietary in nature, and do not publish it for competitive reasons. Another reason may be that measuring the “bottom line” impact of language training remains challenging. For example, in a recent study of a large manufacturing corporation, The Conference Board (2008) reported that it was able to measure improved language proficiency and increased communication among employees, but that it was only at the early stages of measuring the returns on this effort.

In addition to the scarcity of this type of research, the quality of existing studies is also an issue. As Bartel (ibid.) and others have pointed out, the methodological flaws in the limited number of firm-based evaluation studies for calculating the return on training investments are considerable, and have resulted in return on investment estimates that are too high to be taken seriously. Finally, and most importantly, almost none of the evaluations that examined the return on training investments specifically examined the rates of return on language training programs.

Despite the seeming dearth of reliable reports in this area, the 2006 CILT report provides interesting insights into the impact of language strategies on firms. Among the salient findings, almost half of all firms in the CILT survey were applying language strategies to facilitate effective communication, but they varied widely in the techniques they used. Key strategies included the recruitment of native speakers, website adaptation, the use of translators and interpreters, and hiring of local agents. Almost half of the companies were offering language training to their staff, with many companies reporting returns in the 20- to 50-percent range. The authors concluded that “investment in language skills represents one of the fixed costs of exporting to certain countries” (p.5). Furthermore, their analysis identified a link between language skills and export success, and showed that language skills development efforts yielded returns in terms of expanded exports potential. Using the full sample of EU companies surveyed to model scenarios of the effect

There is a scarcity of research into the impact of language management strategies within corporations.

A study by CILT concludes that language skills development expands exports potential.



Active corporate language strategies are associated with successful export performance.

of the possession of language skills—or lack thereof—on economic performance, the study found that

- Having a language strategy, appointing native speakers, recruiting staff with language skills, and using interpreters/translators are associated with successful export performance.
- Small- to medium-sized firms that invested in these four elements can expect an “export sales proportion 44.5 percent higher than one without these investments” (p.7).
- Some of the productivity gains associated with exporting might also be related to additional impact from language skills investments.

A return on investment study

Besides improved language proficiency and communication among employees, corporations surveyed for this and other studies reported that some of the areas positively affected through language training include: employee satisfaction, performance and productivity, attendance, and mobility. One study of interest involved an attempt to quantify the return on investment of employee language training. The Costa Rican Executive Office of the President (EOP) Impact Project (Martin, 2003) found that having poor communication skills created anxiety in employees (e.g., telephone phobia), and occasionally feelings of inadequacy and stress, and that this situation adversely affected employee job satisfaction. As part of this project, Rodriguez, Brown, and Smith (2005) identified three distinct areas of economic impact and computed global benefits from a language training initiative. The three areas were

- improvement in participant language behavior, translating into speedier handling of phone calls, and faster and more effective e-mail communication;
- reductions in production delays and equipment breakdowns due to language barriers;
- improvement in company procedures.

The authors of the study calculated that the overall return on investment for this project was 7.39 percent. This research—which admittedly has methodological limitations—is one of the few studies that has attempted to estimate the returns on language training.

The economic case for English and plurilingualism

The literature and the data from the corporations we surveyed strongly suggest that there are measurable economic returns on English and plurilingual skills for individuals, corporations, and economies. TIRF’s findings also suggest that there is a considerable price to be paid if corporate global and local communications fail, or are ineffective due to poor language proficiency of employees. It is clear that this entire subject, i.e. the economic return on English and plurilingual skills, as well as on corporate language strategies, begs further research and study.

As Bernie Khalid, Director of Talent and Organization Development at PPG Asia Pacific stated in a recent case study on his company: “PPG emphasizes cross-cultural communication, and if we are going to be able to work together and learn from each other, then we must be able to communicate in a common language” (GlobalEnglish, 2008, ¶ 4).

TIRF believes that now is the time to fully explore and document this issue. All parties—individuals, corporations, and economies—stand to benefit from such research.

Employer Highlight



GlobalEnglish

The highlight illustrates the return on investment (ROI) identified by firms that have made investments in expanding the language capacity of their employees and firms.

Company Name: GlobalEnglish, in partnership with Reuters, Deloitte, Computer Sciences Corporation, PPG Industries China, Emirates Bank, and Hilton International, Inc.

Company Type: Educational technologies

Sector: Professional services/Education

GlobalEnglish is an international company with a global perspective and workforce. Founded in 1997, GlobalEnglish has become one of the leading providers of online learning and support for business English communication. The firm offers scalable, on-demand solutions that help employees improve their ability to communicate effectively in English and enables companies to succeed in the global marketplace.

GlobalEnglish, with over 500 clients in 140 countries helps organizations achieve success by equipping their employees with the business English communication skills necessary to conduct global business. In

addition to survey research examining the role of English from the perspective of tens of thousands of employees at global firms, GlobalEnglish has conducted case studies of the language challenges, solutions, and impacts faced by its global corporate partners. These partnerships have enabled GlobalEnglish to identify how English proficiency influences the bottom line and to specify areas of business performance where language interventions had a direct consequence. Revenue and cost impact are the two main areas where English proficiency adversely affects the corporate bottom line.³

³ For examples of GlobalEnglish case study results, see Appendix D.

Revenue Impact: Lost Opportunities

- Decreased customer satisfaction due to inaccurate and incomplete information or slower response times due to language barriers.
- Reduced sales performance due to missed opportunities and inefficient communication affecting sales cycle, close rates, and order sizes.
- Reduction in expansion speed due to a lack of a common language and poor goal alignment due to inadequate communication.
- Increased merger and acquisition issues such as lack of companywide proficiency to facilitate cultural integration and business process alignment.

Cost Impact: Decreased Productivity

- Increased response times
- Losses in productivity due to translation demands.
- Increased need to provide organizational supports to verify accuracy and quality of work, which can be costly.
- Reduced opportunities in succession planning due to the lack of language-related qualifications.
- Increase in resources diverted to translation.

Specific examples of improvements in the overall performance and efficiency of firms are:

Cost Savings

- Global implementation spanning 40 countries, \$10 MM of cost savings
- Over \$2.2 MM in hard-cost savings over the past three years
- 80 percent reduction in cost versus previous classroom training

Increased Efficiency

- Vendor consolidation
- Quick and accurate global knowledge sharing
- Clearer corporate communication

Improved Talent Management

- Increased retention
- Improved succession planning
- Greater employee mobility

Improved Individual Productivity

- 92 percent of users are immediately able to use their new skills on the job.
- 86 percent of users can verbally respond to questions and requests more effectively in English.
- 85 percent of users can read and respond to emails more effectively in English.





Section 2

The language requirements of global corporations

To assess the language strategies of global corporations and their potential benefits, it is necessary to have a basic understanding of how a globally integrated firm operates. A global corporation

operates across the world, configuring its value chain activities in different countries, to achieve the twin needs of efficiency and local responsiveness. It has the capability to pool together the resources available to its entire system, and use them not only to enter new markets but also to strengthen its competitive position in a market in which it has already established a presence. A truly global corporation believes that learning is important, and puts in place mechanisms to transfer knowledge between subsidiaries, from subsidiaries to headquarters and from headquarters to subsidiaries (Vedpuriswar, 2001, ¶ 16).

Effective knowledge transfer

Effective knowledge transfer is essential to the global corporation's success. It occurs across networks of operations in multiple locations, and can comprise individuals who vary culturally and linguistically, making its coordination particularly challenging (Feely and Harzing, 2003).

In reviewing Palmisano's 2006 discussion of the Globally Integrated Enterprise, Mendoza (2006) points out that the transition from the old multinational company to the globally integrated enterprise is being completed, and that the resulting global, collaborative model is changing the way innovation and business are being done. With much of the work done outside the company, the country-based operations model is eroding, and is being replaced by what Palmisano described as "an array of specialized components: procurement, manufacturing, research, sales, distribution, and so on" (Palmisano, 2006, p. 131). Mendoza points out that in this new model, "more investment in education and skills will be needed in all nations that wish to compete, and management skills must

The transfer of knowledge is critical to the global corporation's success, making an educated workforce essential.

move beyond command and control to the more fluid and collaborative styles that are needed today” (¶ 5).

Varying language requirements, varying functions

Given these coordination and communication challenges, what are the language skills that employees should have for global companies to be effective? The global corporations surveyed for this study use different languages for different purposes, locations, and occupations, and their language requirements or expectations are a function of one or more of the following factors:

- corporate language policy and practice (rigidity, flexibility, tolerance);
- industry regulations, standards, or practices;
- safety requirements;
- specific occupational or functional requirements;
- location of the operation;
- language abilities of workers (i.e., quality of language among the local labor supply);
- status of the operation in the firm’s global network (i.e., headquarters versus subsidiaries);
- extent of required communication between headquarters and subsidiaries.

The lingua franca in several of the corporations examined for this report was English. It was used to facilitate inter- and intra-location business communications among professionals—that is, those holding positions requiring a college degree, or skills acquired through other forms of education or training. English, however, was not the only lingua

Although specific language requirements varied by job function and other factors, plurilingual skills in English and a local language were important to most firms in TIRF’s study.

franca. Some of the firms reported Spanish or Russian as their lingua franca, depending on the region where they were located (i.e., South America and Eastern Europe).

Irrespective of the lingua franca in a particular context among the corporations TIRF surveyed, plurilingualism in English and the local language (i.e., the national or community language of the operation) appeared both attractive and important for most firms, particularly for employees in supervisory roles, and for those expected to interact both with headquarters and peer subsidiaries or operations, and with staff or customers in a given local market. In addition, proficiency in both English and the language of the community where operations are located was viewed as an upward mobility facilitator, all other factors being equal.

For those in local manufacturing or back-office operations of most of the corporations in the study, plurilingualism was often not deemed as critical, and proficiency in local languages alone appeared sufficient. Some entities indicated, however, that English might be required at all levels of their operation, especially where worker and customer safety are critical. Thus, global corporations vary greatly in the language requirements they articulate for employees, and often have varying English language expectations for different levels of occupations and for different locations.

Employee tasks

If global corporations see language skills as critical, how employees see those skills is also important. In a 2005 study of almost 70,000 global workers carried out by GlobalEnglish Corporation, just one out of every ten workers said they don't currently use English to do their job. Nine out of every ten employees surveyed reported that English proficiency is either very important or required in order to receive a promotion at their company. Over half said that they need to use English daily on the job, with the remainder using English a few times a week (22%), once a week (6%), or once or twice a month (8%). These workers reported using English most in the following business situations:

- telephone calls (77%);
- socializing with co-workers and clients (66%);

In a global survey of 70,000 employees, nine out of ten reported that English proficiency was either very important or required for promotion at their company.

-
- meetings (64%);
 - e-mails (63%);
 - answering questions (58%).

Data from the large, global corporations surveyed for this report also confirmed that employees are expected to engage in the functions listed above, as well as in writing letters, memos, and reports. This functional approach to identifying language requirements is consistent with traditional ways that firms have identified occupation-specific language requirements—through language or literacy audits, or other forms of job task analyses. One of the firms surveyed—a large telecommunications firm in Latin America—examined what help desk operators need to be able to do. The analysis revealed that these workers need to master these functions:

- explaining a problem;
- asking for and giving clarification and technical instructions;
- deciding on a course of action;
- agreeing and disagreeing.

These workers needed to be able to attain a certain level of English proficiency in the functions above to do the following:

- participate in conference calls involving persons from the Americas, Europe, and Asia;
- read and write e-mail messages;
- interact with clients and third parties on the phone;
- review company logs and manuals;
- write summaries of problem situations.

These workers, all non-native speakers of English, used English to varying degrees, from a few conference calls in English per week, to conducting 100 percent of their job interactions in English.

Employer Highlight



EMC Corporation

Company Name:	EMC Corporation
Company Type:	Information technologies and tools
Sector:	Information technology
Locations:	Approximately 400 sales offices and partners in more than 60 countries around the world
Employees:	38,000+ people worldwide, about 40 percent of whom work outside the U.S.

EMC for thirty years has provided the technologies and tools that help customers design, build, and manage flexible, scalable, and secure information infrastructures to store, protect, and manage information so that it can be made accessible, searchable, shareable, and, ultimately, actionable.

EMC works with organizations around the world, in every industry, in the public and private sectors, and of every size, from startups to the Fortune Global 500. Customers include banks and other financial services firms, manufacturers, healthcare and life sciences organizations, Internet service and telecommunications providers, airlines and transportation companies, educational institutions, and public-sector agencies.

EMC's revenue in 2007 was \$13.2 billion. Headquarters are located in Massachusetts in the United States. EMC has a presence in more than 70 countries and territories across Europe, Asia/Pacific, the Americas, and the Middle East.

The primary language used by EMC employees to communicate within the corporation is English. English and local languages are used to communicate with customers. EMC requires English for jobs where there is a requirement to communicate outside of the local environment but the corporation does not test, as per the Senior Director of Human Resources.

The most critical spoken applications of English are telephone calls, telecon-

ferences, and presentations in English. The most critical written English applications are memos, reports, and electronic mail. Besides English and technical knowledge, EMC requires all employees to acquire company-specific knowledge. Innovation workers are further required to have extensive computer storage industry knowledge and strong collaboration skills.

EMC uses primarily local hires, non-U.S. workers to staff non-U.S. facilities. Working in the local market, most EMC staff in non-U.S. facilities use their country's language. Communication across borders, to regional management or corporate headquarters is done in English.



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Beyond language proficiency

The global corporations TIRF surveyed were also asked to identify attributes they look for in global workers in addition to good language skills. One of the key characteristics cited was collaboration skills. Several corporations identified the critical role of collaboration—specifically, the ability to work in teams across languages and cultures—as an ability that is clearly enhanced by plurilingual skills.

In their book *The New Division of Labor*, Murnane and Levy (2004) elaborated on the skills employers increasingly value. They identified expert thinking (e.g., identifying and solving uncharted problems) and complex communication as critical abilities for innovation-capable workers. Key elements of expert thinking included: having well-organized knowledge about a problem (i.e., not memorized facts but a well-understood relationship), skill in pattern recognition, initiative, and metacognition. Key elements of complex communication consisted of: observing and listening, eliciting critical information, interpreting information, and conveying the interpretation to others. Again, in global corporations this capability is enhanced by plurilingual skills.

In the global corporation, collaboration is critical—and enhanced by plurilingual skills.



(continued on page 25)

Employer Highlight



IBM

Company Name:	IBM Corporation
Company Type:	Multinational computer technology and consulting
Sector:	Information technology
Employees:	388,000+ worldwide

Headquartered in New York State and with plants and offices in over 100 countries and partners in 145 nations, IBM routinely hires non-U.S. workers to staff its overseas offices and non-U.S. plants. English is the primary language used by IBM employees and is typically spoken between countries at the regional and global levels. The language of the country where operations are located is often used as the working language in the in-country operations. English and local languages are used in customer communications.

IBM has English requirements for professional employees but these requirements tend to vary by position and within a line of business. English is clearly required to move into positions at the regional and global levels. English abilities are assessed by the corporation but the means used can vary.

IBM views these spoken applications of English as most critical to its non-U.S. operations: face-to-face meetings, telephone calls, teleconferences, and oral presentations. Teleconferences, in particular, are essential, as these conferences are increasingly used to conduct business globally. As for written applications, e-mail is viewed as extremely important. Memos are mainly used for announcements, and reports are increasingly in the format of PowerPoint presentations.

Bilingual or multilingual employees are not uncommon in IBM, but leaders find that employees who are truly bi-cultural or multi-cultural are rare. The firm needs its innovation workers to be able to work together in global teams made up of individuals from various countries. These teams must be able to form quickly in response to opportunities

and must be able to move fast through instant messaging, e-mail and phone calls or teleconferences, and solve problems as a team.

There have been instances where English deficiency has had a negative impact on efficiency and productivity. Time wasted due to language barriers has been an important source of frustration for the firm, as business calls may take twice to three times longer than they should.

Improving English skills is often addressed within the context of the em-

ployee's Individual Development Plan in countries where languages other than English are primarily spoken. An Individual Development Plan is prepared every year to assist employees in their development. This plan helps employees identify the skills they need to fulfill current and future business commitments, as well as the available prospects to improve those skills. This plan is also used by employees and their managers to discuss career aspirations, job satisfaction, skills and competency gaps, and priorities for learning.



(continued from page 23)

Language proficiency thresholds

Given the language expectations of both firms and employees, is it possible to identify a minimum level of proficiency that global corporations seek in workers? Not surprisingly, TIRF's research indicates that global corporations would prefer to set high language expectations (for all their workers) that facilitate either immediate entry into the workplace without any supports (i.e., as a screening device), or direct entry into training. These preferences include proficiency in English and one or more additional languages. This type of requirement would eliminate the need for language training and supports, and their associated costs. Equally unsurprisingly, TIRF's research suggested that these preferences are aspirational rather than realistic, and that the supply of such workers is insufficient, forcing firms to have different (i.e., lower) language expectations and to have to provide language learning opportunities.

Global corporations prefer to set high language proficiency thresholds, but find the supply of qualified workers is limited.



In the research conducted for this report, generic language requirements for non-English languages were identified (e.g., working knowledge of Spanish), but no specific minimum requirements were shared by the respondents. As for English proficiency requirements, thresholds varied considerably both among different corporations, and within the corporations themselves, for their various operations and occupations. For professional positions, however, it appeared that a global professional language proficiency standard could be identified that would facilitate job access for workers, while also satisfying the companies' language requirements for effective communication and coordination. These language requirements tended to fall in line with many of the descriptors used to express intermediate and advanced levels of linguistic proficiency on internationally recognized scales used in Europe, the Americas, and Asia in general language education. These levels of proficiency imply that individuals must master vocabulary and structures to a point where they can participate in a number of different types of conversations on practical, social, and professional topics, as long as conversations are at a normal speed.

Our study indicated that a corporate professional English proficiency standard would be at an intermediate to advanced level.

The Common European Framework

Many of the firms in the study reported setting their language proficiency requirements to the levels established by the Council of Europe's Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (2001). This framework is being used as a reference by a growing number of corporations, and as a result, these organizations often use commercially available testing products that are closely tied to this framework to gauge the abilities of their workers. One of the powerful features of this framework is that it is widely recognized and accepted among the member nations of the European Union. Another critical feature is that the framework is not only used to describe proficiency levels in English, but for other languages as well. While corporations may specify for testing companies different levels of proficiency required for employees in specific locations and occupations, the study revealed that, at a minimum, certification of English proficiency at the intermediate level (Level B1 of the Common European Framework, See Figure 1) is what corporations are most interested in, either as an employment requirement, a guideline for training efforts, or as an advancement prerequisite.

Figure 1 Description of Level B1 in the *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (English)*

- **Can understand the main points of clear standard input on familiar matters regularly encountered in work, school, leisure, etc.**
- **Can deal with most situations likely to arise whilst travelling in an area where the language is spoken.**
- **Can produce simple connected text on topics which are familiar or of personal interest.**
- **Can describe experiences and events, dreams, hopes & ambitions and briefly give reasons and explanations for opinions and plans.**

(Source: Council of Europe, 2001, p24)

Assessing proficiency

If this type of standard represents the base requirement for employment, how do corporations determine whether applicants or incumbent workers possess this level of language proficiency? Across the firms surveyed, corporations used both job interviews and standardized tests to determine whether job applicants met their language requirements.

Assessment tools such Cambridge ESOL Examinations available from U.K.-based Cambridge Assessment are recognized by many corporations, higher education institutions, professional associations, and government agencies around the world. An important feature of these tests is that they are highly correlated to the six-level framework of language examination levels from the Association of Language Testers in Europe (ALTE) as well as to the Council of Europe's Common European Framework of Reference for Languages.

The Test of English for International Communication (the TOEIC® Test), developed by U.S.-based Educational Testing Service (ETS), is another English examination widely used in corporate situations. Employers often use this test to document employees' progress in English training programs, recruit and promote employees, and put standard

Job interviews and standardized tests are common ways to determine language proficiency.

measurements in place across different work locations.

One of the larger corporations surveyed—a global energy corporation—uses an assessment vendor to administer English language testing to their employees. The vendor uses the same test battery involving four exams (some of which are standardized, and others of which are customized) in all of the corporation’s operations, plants, and offices across the world, to ensure consistency and uniformity. Testing is done on a regular basis to inform location-based decision making, hiring, training, and advancement. This large energy corporation requires and uses English at all of its locations due to the need for standardized safety and technical training, and because employees at all levels must be able to read and follow instructions in highly technical manuals, as well as participate in corporate and local team meetings (which increasingly include employees from around the world). Because teams consist of native and non-native speakers of English from different parts of the globe, employees must be familiar with and know how to understand many different accents.

This corporation uses the proficiency scale of the Interagency Language Roundtable Oral Proficiency Interview (formerly known as the Foreign Service Institute Oral Proficiency Interview). Employees are expected to have professional working proficiency. A person at this level (Level 3 on a 5-level rating scale) is, for example,

able to speak the language with sufficient structural accuracy and vocabulary to participate effectively in most formal and informal conversations on practical, social, and professional topics; can discuss particular interests and special fields of competence with reasonable ease; has comprehension which is quite complete for a normal rate of speech; has a general vocabulary which is broad enough that he or she rarely has to grope for a word; has an accent which may be obviously foreign; has a good control of grammar; and makes errors that virtually never interfere with understanding and rarely disturb the native speaker (Interagency Language Roundtable, 2007, Speaking 3).

It should be noted that the formal assessment tools mentioned above are measurement of general language proficiency, and the suitability of their application to a specific corporation’s language goals remains to be demonstrated. Some firms surveyed work with language testing

At a global energy firm, ensuring safety is one of the rationales for using English as the corporate lingua franca.

and instruction firms to establish their own minimum proficiency expectations. These language firms—many of which are global corporations in their own right—use proprietary, and increasingly web-enabled assessment tools both to determine the proficiency of employees and to deliver instruction. Firms in this study that do not use formal assessment tools reported that they, instead, conduct job interviews in the language or languages they want workers to be able to speak in order to estimate their level of language proficiency.

The need for further study

While a number of different sets of English language proficiency requirements and assessment tools are used by global corporations, many of the standards and performance indicators around which these tools are built are general in nature, and not correlated specifically to relevant job functions identified by these organizations. In the meantime, the language needs of corporate employees are increasing both in terms of the types of language skills needed, and the frequency of their use. The fact that major corporations are engaged in such vast efforts to define and assess their language needs clearly indicates that these groups recognize the importance of language proficiency for their performance. It is also a credible sign that corporations are actively trying to find solutions to their language challenges.

Without global sets of standards that reflect not only general language proficiency, but also proficiency in specific job functions, the efforts of corporations to define and assess language proficiency will continue to carry a substantial economic cost. This cost includes not only a financial impact on the bottom line of corporations, but also the opportunity cost associated with the identification, training, and measurement of employees. The development of more function-specific, globally-recognized standards and tools that reflect the diversity of these language needs warrants further research, and TIRF strongly encourages additional study in these areas.

Employer Highlight



HSBC Global Technology Center

Company Name:	HSBC Global Technology Center (China, India, Brazil)
Company Type:	Finance and banking
Sector:	Financial services
Employees:	30,000+ worldwide

HSBC Global Technology (GLT) is part of the HSBC Group – one of the world’s largest financial service companies. Its headquarters are in London. The HSBC group network is spread across 9,500 offices in 76 countries. The firm has 125 million customers. The Bank’s international network spans nations in Europe, the Asia-Pacific region, the United States, the Middle East, and Africa.

The HSBC Group has developed within its IT Development Centers, Centers of Excellence (CoE) that provide a competitive advantage to the Group through robust technology solutions. The first HSBC Global Technology Center – GLT was set up in April 2002 in Pune, India with

a mandate to develop software for the HSBC group.

Following the successful establishment and take off of GLT in India, the HSBC group has expanded its GLT footprint and established a Global Technology Center in China (GLTc) and another Global Technology Center in Brazil (GLTb).

HSBC GLT hires citizens from non-English speaking countries for its offices in India, China, and Brazil, as per the Head of Human Resources. The primary language used by employees in these offices to communicate with the corporation is English. English is also the primary language used for

communicating with customers.

HSBC GLT has English requirements for its employees but the firm does not formally test English proficiency; nor does the firm distinguish English requirements by occupation. The most critical English requirements involve the ability to participate in telephone calls and in teleconferencing. As for written language requirements, the ability to use English in e-mail communication is deemed critical. In addition to English and specific technical knowledge and skills, HSBC GLT request some knowledge in project management and would like to see that applicants for available positions have some international experience.

English deficiency has had a negative impact on HSBC GLT. The impact of poor communication with customers is very high. If employees have difficulty communicating in English with customers, then the firm is inhibited in its system development

work for different countries. In one instance, poor communication resulted in the development of an application that was not applicable in that it did not meet the customer's needs. The firm analyzed this problem and discovered that the problem occurred due to "bad" communication skills in the team that was working with this customer.

To avoid these and similar issues and to support employees in improving their English language skills, HSBC GLT has taken many different actions. Inside the firm, all employees make an effort to speak English all the time. Associates from the United Kingdom and Hong Kong work alongside associates with English language needs. E-mails are required to be written in English. Lastly, HSBC GLT is providing English classes for all its GLT associates. At the time of the survey, more than 70 percent of GLT associates were participating in classes.





Section 3

Language development strategies of global corporations

How do corporations support the language development of their employees? Perhaps not surprisingly, TIRF's research suggests that corporations are interested in training and other supports that facilitate rapid language acquisition, can be implemented on a large scale, can be customized, have low to moderate costs, and produce immediate results for employees and tangible returns to the corporation. In addition to these needs, for a number of reasons (e.g., location, scheduling, numbers), traditional classroom-based language instruction is often seen as prohibitively costly or impractical. Alternative solutions are needed.

Traditional vs. workplace-specific training

Literature reviews of workplace education programs in the United States, Canada, Australia, and Europe (e.g., Bloom, 1997; Kelly, 1998; Long, 1997; Roberts and Gowan, 2008; Rosen, 2008) have predominantly focused on the description of customized classroom-based or computer-based training and education programs. With the exception of some interesting programmatic innovations, very few reviews have identified what firms can do or what they have done outside the realm of traditional educational programming.

Innovations that have been discussed include the use of language coaches in Canada in the late 1980s, the introduction of computer-based training in the early 1990s, language apprenticeships/internships for immigrants in the Netherlands in the mid-1990s, and language and skills shadowing and internships in the U.S. in the early 2000s. However, non-traditional language training is clearly an area that would benefit from further study.

Simplified English for rapid acquisition

One non-traditional effort aimed at the rapid acquisition of communicative competence is Globish. First promoted internationally in *Parlez Globish* by Jean-Paul Nerrière (2004), this simplified version of English features only 1,500 words, uses short sentences, and avoids idiomatic usage and humor. Globish is intended to allow users to communicate meaning easily and effectively, as well as help workers understand information essential to personal and group performance.

A second alternative approach is Basic Global English, another reduced form of English, whose advocates suggest provides a rapid acquisition of communicative competence in the language. In a comparative analysis of Globish and Basic Global English, which appears to be a de facto critique of Globish, Grzega (2006) argues that Basic Global English is the preferred alternative. Basic Global English focuses on the rapid acquisition of 750 words to be learned by everybody, and 250 words to be selected by individual learners, coupled with vocabulary expansion techniques. Grzega argues that Basic Global English has the systemic and pragmatic rules that Globish seems to be lacking.

Regardless of their individual merits, both Globish and Basic Global English reflect an interesting perspective: They view English as a tool of business, not unlike the Internet, computers, or other technology tools. Implicit in this approach is the idea that strategies for addressing English proficiency should be based on corporate goals for efficiency and productivity, with results subject to measurement.

How corporations address challenges

While alternative varieties of English represent one approach, there are also language policy, management, and other solutions that firms have used as part of their corporate language management strategies. In their 2003 work, Feely and Harzing provided a useful framework for organizing the responses of firms to these issues, listed in Table 2.

While some of the approaches listed in Table 2 are likely to be further refined (e.g., the use of machine translation) as a result of advances in technology, these ways of dealing with language challenges provide a useful tool for firms considering their language strategy options. Cultural sensitivity, cost, and sustainability are all salient factors in that analysis.

An interesting language strategy is the proposed development of a simplified functional English targeted at corporate productivity goals.

English is increasingly viewed by corporations as a tool—used for efficiency and productivity, with results subject to measurement.

Table 2 Corporate Language Management Strategies (Feely and Harzing, 2003).

Strategy	Description
Lingua franca	use of one language, often relying on the native tongue of the corporate leadership or ownership
Functional multilingualism	multiple languages and interlanguages to get communication to take place with the language assets available
External language resources	translation and interpreting services
Employee training	language training tied to communication needs
Designation of a corporate language	one language as the corporate or working language, which may be the same or different than the native tongue of workers in a given location
Language nodes	extended use of scarce, linguistically skilled personnel as default communication channels to meet the firm's communication needs with the external world
Selective recruitment	hiring strategies that focus on identifying applicants that possess the required language skills
Expatriate management	expatriates in operations/subsidiaries to ensure communication with headquarters
Inpatriation	workers from operations/subsidiaries as inpatriates in headquarters
Machine translation and interpretation	technology-enabled devices for translating and interpreting
Controlled language	reduced, often customized lexicon, vocabulary, structures, and formulaic expressions deemed critical to basic communication

Employer Highlight



Adriatic LNG

The practice featured in this highlight is a form of in-patriation, where employees receive English language and other training abroad in an English-speaking environment before receiving specific technical on-the-job training, and being deployed at various plants across the globe.

Company Name:	Adriatic LNG
Company Type:	Provider of natural gas
Sector:	Energy distribution and trade
Employees:	120 employees locally
Locations:	Italy and terminal located in the northern Adriatic Sea

Adriatic LNG is an Italian company owned by affiliates of ExxonMobil (45 percent), Qatar Terminals Ltd (45 percent) and Edison SpA (10 percent). The company is operating an offshore LNG receiving and re-gasification terminal in the northern Adriatic Sea. The Adriatic LNG project is part of a rapidly expanding global natural gas supply network. The project will create 120 new jobs by the end of 2008.

The company established an agreement with two postsecondary institutions, Cape Breton University and the Marconi Campus of the Nova Scotia Community College for an intensive one-year program to train some of its Italian employees as electricians and technicians for the Rovigo facility in Italy.

The program is structured so that during the first six months a cohort of 17 Italian students/employees spend their time with host families in an intensive English language training program. English language training is critical because English is the language of communication in the energy industry.

The initial six-month language training period is followed by six months of technical training in areas related to future job assignments. After the program, employees will receive additional training before they will be placed at the LNG terminal. Part of this further training involves on-the-job training in Qatar and Spain as trainee technicians.



Employer Highlight



Pearson

The practice featured in this highlight is onsite, classroom-based instruction offered in a group format before, during or after work time, with or without compensation, for participation and/or completion, and using either general or customized, work- or industry-specific (i.e., contextualized) curricula and assessments.

Company Name:	Pearson
Company Type:	International media
Sector:	Education, business, and consumer publishing
Employees:	30,000+
Locations:	Operations in 55 countries in the Americas, Europe, Africa, and Asia

Pearson is a global corporation in the education, business information, and consumer publishing businesses. Pearson employs more than 30,000 employees in almost 60 countries in the Americas, Europe, Africa, and Asia (see Figure 2). All of Pearson's businesses aim at "making the reading and learning experience as enjoyable and as beneficial as it can possibly be" (Pearson, 2008, About Us: Pearson at a Glance, ¶ 1). More than 100 million individuals of all ages across the world are educated using Pearson's textbooks, multimedia learning programs, and testing tools.

Pearson has a strong commitment to diversity and aims to be a company that reflects the societies in which it operates. Diversity considerations drive the company's efforts in the areas of promotion and retention, recruitment, preferred supplier

selection, internship programming, training, leadership appraisal, community programming, compensation, and other areas. To track the impact of its diversity policies and programs, Pearson gathers data on the proportion of women and people from diverse backgrounds in management and senior management, as well as the proportion of women and people from diverse backgrounds in development programs. In addition, Pearson has focused in the near term on improving its retention of people with diverse backgrounds for both entry-level and management positions.

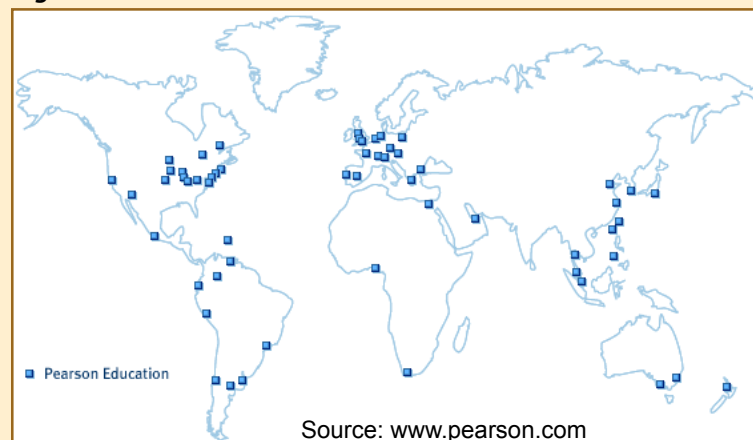
An important component of Pearson's investment in its employees is its workforce development plan. This plan includes the provision of English language classes. Classes start every year in early October and end in June.

Every trimester groups are evaluated and reconfigured, as needed. An almost symbolic fee of six Euros is charged but it is waived if employees achieve an attendance rate of seventy percent or higher. In general, employees are eligible to participate if they have worked for the firm for at least six months. Classes are offered in the morning from 8:00 a.m. to 9:00 a.m. or 9:30 a.m., in the early afternoon from 1:30 p.m. till 3:00 p.m., or in the evening starting at 5:00 p.m. Classes are offered Monday through Friday. Attendance is monitored carefully and evaluated every trimester by faculty. Employees who fail to attend seventy percent of the classes lose their opportunity to participate. The seventy percent attendance threshold is also used to determine whether employees can continue in future courses.

Participation decisions are made by directors or those with responsibilities for specific work areas or departments. Three possible participation decisions are made: essential, advisable, or beneficial. If participation of a given employee is deemed essential, then

employees can select their class schedule and class intensity and participation can be viewed as time worked, that is, the employee receives paid release time to attend classes on the clock. Employees in this category need English in their jobs because they need to make presentations in English, answer phone calls in English, engage in electronic communications in English, or require English in the performance of other job duties. Participation is deemed advisable when English is required only a few times per week to understand English e-mails and for an occasional telephone communication. Employees in this group are usually not expected to participate in oral presentations in English. Fifty percent release time is provided, which means that 50 percent of the class is on the company's time and 50 percent is on the employee's time. If employees work in jobs where English is hardly ever used, then employees attend classes 100 percent on their own time and preferences regarding schedule and intensity are very limited.

Figure 2 Pearson Education locations



A combination of models

To support the development of English or another language, the data from this study showed that firms may use one, or a combination of models. These models can be divided into two main categories: in-person training and other. Models based on in-person contact include onsite classroom-based instruction; offsite classroom-based instruction; one-on-one or small group tutoring by corporate or community volunteers; language coaching, language apprenticeships, and mentoring or advising models; and use of Individual Development Plans.

The rise of technology-based supports

Besides classroom-based instruction, several other, non-classroom forms of instruction are often used, such as job aids and other forms of self study, and just-in-time, on-the-job supports. Job aids—tools that provide assistance to an employee in the completion of a task—are often available in either hard copy or electronic formats, and are increasingly available online, and at employees' work stations. Other forms of just-in-time, on-the-job language supports including e-mentoring, where employees consult with co-workers on language and other issues and obtain input and guidance. E-mentoring and e-tutoring occur in both formal, organized settings, as well as in informal, employee-generated contexts. Corporations also engage language training providers for assessment services, voice-enabled online classrooms, and online curricula with supports in multiple languages, including translators, dictionaries, pronunciation assistance, or other performance supports.

Speech and print translation technology represents another area where non-classroom opportunities for language development seem to be growing. As these technologies continue to improve, and as many of these technologies become web-enabled, one of the corporations surveyed predicts that these “anytime/anywhere” tools for language development may increasingly have a role to play. Many of these tools are readily available at this time, often at low or no cost.

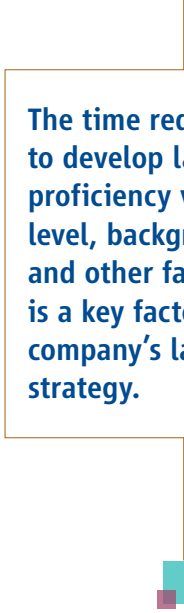
Based on work in over 140 countries, Desai (2008) comments on the value of technology-enabled learning options:

For many companies, e-learning is an ideal solution. Online training is more accessible, scalable, and affordable than traditional classroom training, and participants benefit from its unique effectiveness, engagement opportunities, and ease of use. Self-directed learning keeps content relevant and motivation high, and the flexible approach supports the continued development and focused practice required for advanced learners (p. 2).

How long to proficiency?

When firms decide to invest in language development, one of the first things they want to know is how long it will take employees to develop the proficiency they need to meet communication requirements. Some studies have examined how long it takes children and mostly low-skilled adults to achieve either academic or professional proficiency. While many of these studies focus on the acquisition of English, studies looking at other languages have come to the same conclusion, namely that acquisition time can vary greatly depending on both individual and program factors. Figure 3 provides a listing of languages, compared by relative difficulty, from the Foreign Service Institute.

Clifford (2006) estimated the number of hours required for a native speaker to learn other languages using the American Council on Teaching Foreign Languages (ACTFL) guidelines and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) language guidelines. Taking into account language difficulty and foreign language program characteristics that can enable or block language development of motivated students with above average aptitude, Clifford estimated the instructional hours and study time required in a balanced program to attain automaticity. His estimates ranged from 200 to 600 hours at the ACTFL Novice level, 400 to 1,200 hours at the Intermediate level, 800 to 2,400 hours at the Advanced level, and 1,600 to 4,800 hours at the Superior level. His estimates using the NATO proficiency levels are comparable. The range in instructional hours and study time reflected variations in the difficulty of the language. Clifford also identified the following as factors that can enable or impede learner progress: topics and cultural content taught, typical utterances presented or taught, supporting knowledge, teaching method, learner activities and communication tasks, level of learning required, type of feedback provided to the learner, and type of progress checks and tests used.



The time required to develop language proficiency varies by level, background, and other factors, and is a key factor in a company's language strategy.

Figure 3 Foreign Service Institute approximate learning expectations to achieve general proficiency in speaking and reading (Level 3) by language difficulty.

Category	Description	Class Hours/Weeks	Languages
I	Languages closely related to English	23 - 24 weeks 575 - 600 class hours	Afrikaans, Danish, Dutch, French, Italian, Norwegian, Portuguese, Romanian, Spanish, and Swedish
II	Languages with significant linguistic and/or cultural differences from English	44 weeks 1100 class hours	Albanian, Amharic, Armenian, Azerbaijani, Bengali, Bosnian, Bulgarian, Burmese, Croatian, Czech, *Estonian, *Finnish, *Georgian, Greek, Hebrew, Hindi, *Hungarian, Icelandic, Khmer, Lao, Latvian, Lithuanian, Macedonian, *Mongolian, Nepali, Pashto, Persian (Dari, Farsi, Tajik), Polish, Russian, Serbian, Sinhalese, Slovak, Slovenian, Tagalog, *Thai, Turkish, Ukrainian, Urdu, Uzbek, *Vietnamese, Xhosa, and Zulu
III	Languages which are exceptionally difficult for native English speakers	88 weeks (second year of study in-country) 2200 class hours	Arabic, Cantonese, Mandarin, *Japanese, and Korean
Other	Other languages	30 weeks 750 class hours	German
		36 weeks 900 class hours	Indonesian, Malaysian, and Swahili

Notes: Students at the Foreign Language Institute are approximately forty years old, on average, are native speakers of English, have a good aptitude for formal language study, and tend to have knowledge of several other foreign languages. Students study in small classes (six or less students per class) for 25 hours per week and dedicate between 3 and 4 hours of self-study per day. Languages preceded by asterisks are typically somewhat more difficult for native English speakers to learn than other languages in the same category.

Source: <http://www.nvtc.gov/lotw/months/november/learningExpectations.html>

Impact of native language proficiency

Some of the most comprehensive research into the issue of the development of language proficiency is the work done by Thomas and Collier (1997) on the language development of children and youth. Over a 14-year period, these researchers studied how roughly 700,000 learners acquired English. In their longitudinal study, which was implemented from 1982 to 1996, Thomas and Collier wanted to find out how long it would take students without any English background to reach a performance level on norm-referenced tests comparable to that of native speaker performance at the 50th percentile. The study was quite comprehensive in that it also examined the effects of socioeconomic status, native language, program design, years of prior education in the learner's primary language, and other factors.

The key finding from this longitudinal study was that the amount of formal schooling students received in their first language was the most significant determinant of how long it takes to learn English. Eight- to eleven-year olds with higher levels of first language formal education, but without any English when they started out—regardless of their home language, country of origin, or socioeconomic status—tended to reach native speaker performance levels in approximately five to seven years. Those with limited or no formal education, and those below grade level in first language literacy took seven to ten years, with many never reaching grade level expectations (Thomas and Collier, 1997). These findings do not imply that it must take five to seven years, as some children and youth reached native speaker performance considerably faster. However, they do underscore the value of native language proficiency to second or other language acquisition.

One study suggested that the amount of formal education in a first language is the most significant key to how long it takes to achieve proficiency in English as a foreign language.

Adult acquisition of proficiency

Other estimates from the literature on how long it takes an adult to learn English have shown that there is great variation in the amount of time needed. This variation can be explained by age, educational background, and native language literacy (Young, 2007). The most commonly used and increasingly accepted estimate originates in adult education research. Data from a refugee project in the 1980s (Mainstream English Language Training Project) showed that adults who were literate in their first language, but had received no prior English instruction, required between 500 and 1,000 hours of instruction to reach a level of English that would allow them to satisfy their basic needs, survive on the job, and be able to socialize somewhat in English (Office of Refugee Resettlement, 1985).

Comings, Sum, Uvin, et al. (2000) came to similar conclusions using a state administrative data set containing records on adults participating in ESOL programs in the late 1990s in Massachusetts. Using 1998 data on approximately 19,800 participants in publicly funded adult education programs in Massachusetts, they estimated that if participants in adult basic education and adult ESL programs were to receive 150 hours of instruction that 75 percent of participants would be likely to increase their proficiency by one level. This implies that, on average, a minimum of 900 hours of instruction would be required for someone to progress from the first to the sixth, or highest, level of English proficiency.

More recent data on the performance of federally funded adult English language programs in the United States suggest that these 1980s and 1990s estimates still hold, at least for adults literate in their first or primary language (Young, 2007).

Non-traditional and technology-based approaches

One concern regarding the research mentioned above is that it does not incorporate non-traditional, often self-directed, technology-facilitated language learning approaches. TIRF's research into this issue confirmed that global corporations use both traditional and non-traditional methods to support language learning, making use of technology both to teach and facilitate self-directed learning of English, and to provide just-in-time, on-the-job language supports. Unfortunately, obtaining access to corporate data in this area is difficult, and was not possible in the preparation of this report. It is clear, however, that there is a need for further research in the area of language acquisition and learning times which incorporates non-traditional, technology-based methods.

The need for research-based language management strategies

Despite the current availability of tools to identify, develop, and measure language needs and abilities, there appears to be neither a global consensus on the most effective strategies for realizing these goals, nor enough research data at this time to determine what these strategies should be.

Corporations seeking to implement a successful language strategy are left to sort through an array of methods, tools, and providers that may or may not help them achieve even a portion of their goals. Given that the economic benefits of language proficiency cannot be realized without successful strategies, this critical area offers a key opportunity for research by corporations and other interested parties. There is a growing foundation for such study, but much work needs to be done. Questions of delivery mode, scope, level, duration, and use of technology all beg further investigation.

Section 4

Implications

Plurilingualism as a global imperative

The conclusion drawn from this literature review is that plurilingualism is recognizably a global skills imperative in 21st century business, and that English plays a major role in the need for multiple-language skills around the world. There are implications that individuals, firms, governments, and the emerging global policy community can take specific actions in this regards, and that not doing so carries a negative economic impact at all levels. In addition, there are considerable implications for researchers on these issues and the need for further study.

TIRF's review of the research suggests that individuals can improve their access, participation, and benefit prospects in the global labor market by developing language skills in multiple languages. These include English, Spanish, Chinese/Mandarin, Hindi, Arabic, Japanese, German, and any other languages deemed to have substantial global influence. Basic conversational, reading, and writing abilities in a few of these languages are emerging as the new fault line that could separate globally and upwardly mobile workers from all other workers. In developing these plurilingual proficiencies, current or aspiring global workers can also avail themselves of a growing number of technology-enabled, and increasingly web-enabled language development opportunities for self-directed learning.

We believe that the most promising action that globally integrated firms can take is to create access to language development opportunities, as the language stock of firms operating globally directly affects both their business operations and expansion prospects. Firms can pursue a wide variety of models to create this access. These range from inexpensive ways of providing information about quality language learning opportunities available in the marketplace, to highly customized and often more expensive models, such as the extensive use of interpreters/translators, internal language programming, the creation of multilingual capacities on every work team, or worker rotations across plants in various linguistic or cultural communities.

Workers aspiring to upward mobility will need plurilingual proficiency in the 21st century.

Global corporations need to provide access to language development for their own, and their employees' benefit.



**Governments
need educational
policies that support
plurilingual skill
development.**

Governments—in particular those in governments responsible for public education policy creation at the elementary, secondary, and tertiary levels—can greatly enhance the future abilities of individuals and capacities of firms to become key agents in the globalized economy by committing to plurilingualism as an educational outcome for all. If they have not already made such a commitment, they may do so by revising national or state-based educational policies to incorporate opportunities for language and cultural learning in the primary languages that facilitate access and mobility in the global marketplace, such as English, Spanish, Mandarin, and other select languages.

Suggestions for further research

The globalization of skill requirements, with language abilities forming an integral part of 21st century skills, raises the need for a global discussion about minimal language and cultural thresholds. TIRF, Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL), the British Council, United National Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), and other organizations and individuals interested in creating access to and promoting participation in the global labor market can elevate the discussion regarding minimum language requirements. In turn, this effort could be focused toward establishing global benchmarks for linguistic and cultural competence similar to the international benchmarks being pursued today by progressive leaders of secondary education reforms. In this process of global policy development, it will be important to examine resource adequacy and equity among nations.

More research, knowledge, information creation, and management are needed to enable firms—and individuals—to estimate the returns on language programming and policies that can facilitate access to the global labor market. Current methods for estimating the return on investment in such programs focus on traditional, classroom-based instructional approaches. Refined models of exploration are needed that allow firms and others to estimate the returns on the use of self-directed, web- and other technology-enabled means of developing language abilities. In addition, descriptive studies are needed that capture and make publicly available examples of either promising or effective practices that globally integrated firms have used to address language and cultural barriers.

Finally, this paper represents an early step, though by no means the first, toward a comprehensive, research-based approach to the subject of plurilingualism in the 21st century global environment. It is clear that substantial further research and study is needed across this entire subject. As a next step, TIRF would like to encourage research and study on the following specific questions:

- What is the relative penetration of various corporate lingua franca (e.g., English, Spanish) and what are the growth expectations for these languages in global labor markets?
- What level of proficiency in English or other lingua franca is required for different types of jobs in global firms?
- What are the best tools for corporations to assess language proficiency?
- What are the best approaches for corporations to implement language proficiency development?
- What are the potential contributions of technology tools to language proficiency development?
- What are the best ways to assess the economic returns of language proficiency to individuals and corporations?

For more information on TIRF's commitment to research on these and other questions about English language learning and teaching, go to: <http://www.tirfonline.org/>.

About TIRF

Formed in June 1998, the International Research Foundation for English Language Education (TIRF) is committed to developing knowledge about English language learning and teaching in various settings through a coherent program of research, dissemination, and networking. TIRF's Board of Trustees, which serves on a voluntary basis, is drawn from academia, publishing, business, and government. TIRF raises funds entirely from charitable donations. To date, TIRF has awarded monies to fund 30 research projects involving 50 researchers from around the world.

APPENDIX A:

English and multilingualism in the global innovation corporation:

Employer questionnaire

Corporation:

Your Title:

1. Where/In what countries do you currently have plants and/or offices?

2. Do you currently hire non-U.S. workers to staff your overseas/non-U.S. plants and offices?

Yes

No

3. What is the primary language used by your employees in these offices to communicate within your global corporation?

English

Spanish

French

Cantonese

Mandarin

Other. Please specify:

4. What is the primary language used by your employees in these offices to communicate with customers of your global corporation?

English

Spanish

French

Cantonese

Mandarin

Other. Please specify:

-
5. Do you have English language requirements for these employees?
- Yes
- No
6. If you have English language requirements, do they vary by position?
- Yes
1. What are the requirements for professional staff?
- _____
2. What are the requirements for nonprofessional staff?
- _____
- No
7. Do you test the English proficiency of your non-U.S. employees?
- Yes
- If so, what test(s) do you use to do so?
- _____
- No
8. What specific applications of English are most critical to your non-U.S. operations (e.g., e-mail use, writing business memos)?
- SPOKEN
- i. Face-to-Face Meetings
- ii. Telephone
- iii. Teleconference
- iv. Presentations
- v. Other. Please list:
- _____
- WRITTEN
- vi. Letters
- vii. Memos
- viii. Reports
- ix. E-mail
- x. Other. Please list:
- _____

9. Besides English and specific technical knowledge, what additional knowledge or skills are you looking for in professional staff in your non-U.S. offices?

10. What knowledge and skills should the ideal global innovation worker in your company possess?

11. Has English deficiency had a negative impact on your corporation?

- No
 Yes. What was that impact?

Don't know

12. If you said YES to question 11, what was that impact?

13. How do you support your employees in improving their English language skills?

14. Can we contact you with follow up questions?

Yes. Please provide e-mail:

No

APPENDIX B:

Globalization and workforce skills

Communication and global resources

With the globalization of trade, corporations function as globally integrated networks of natural, capital, and human resources. The success of these globally integrated firms depends greatly on their ability to quickly and effectively coordinate resources that are distributed around the planet. With employees from diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds, strong language skills are needed to facilitate effective communication. Without effective communication, coordination and engagement of globally distributed resources is challenging, inefficient, and in many instances costly. In his paper, “Globalization and the English Skills Gap,” Desai (2008) describes the challenge in this way:

As business goes global, so do projects and employees: Labor is mobile, and companies are sourcing highly skilled workers from every nation in a worldwide race for talent. Seventy percent of U.S. companies rate access to qualified personnel as an important or very important strategic driver of offshoring—the work goes “where it logically belongs.” The flat-world economy means employees at all levels juggle time-zone issues and cultural differences daily. Advanced technologies are connecting workers and enabling interaction like never before, but the convergence of cultures and languages presents incredible complexities for multinational corporations that need to think and act as one (¶4).

The human capital challenge

Being aware of these developments, global business leaders know that the ability of nations to be successful in a global marketplace depends on having an educated workforce, and therefore having the educational system in place to develop one (Corporate Voices, 2008). In addition, public and private employers have acknowledged that their success increasingly depends on the knowledge and capabilities of their employees (American Society for Training and Development, 2003).

Effective communication across diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds is a requirement for the 21st century global corporation.

An educated workforce is increasingly critical to the global corporation.

Faced with this challenge, global corporations are increasingly engaged in talent search and development efforts to ensure they can attract, keep, and develop workers that can add value to their globally integrated operations.

21st century skills


Various policy reports from across the globe have attempted to identify the 21st century skills employers seek in their employees. It is important to highlight those new skills and to examine the role of language skills, in particular, relative to these new expectations. In addition to strong academic skills, corporations want workers with skills and attributes that depend on strong social, emotional, and cognitive development, including professionalism, teamwork, communication, and critical thinking (Corporate Voices, 2008). From the individual's perspective, these critical skill sets are viewed as facilitators of access to meaningful and gainful employment and careers.

The U.S.-based Partnership for 21st Century Skills has developed a comprehensive profile of these new skills, knowledge sets, and attributes. In order to succeed in work and life, individuals should master core subjects (English [reading and language arts], World Languages, Arts, Mathematics, Economics, Science, Geography, History, and Government and Civics), and comprehend 21st century themes (global awareness; financial, economic, business and entrepreneurial literacy; civic literacy; and health literacy). Learning and innovation skills (creativity and innovation, critical thinking and problem solving, and communication and collaboration skills) as well as information, media and technology skills (information, media, communications, and technology literacy) are also essential. Finally, life and career skills (flexibility and adaptability, initiative and self-direction, social and cross-cultural skills, productivity and accountability, leadership and responsibility) are needed as well (Partnership for 21st Century Skills, 2008).

Global awareness as a critical skill

One of the key 21st century skills is global awareness. Part of this awareness is the ability to understand and address global issues, to learn from and work collaboratively with individuals representing diverse cultures, religions, and lifestyles in a spirit of mutual respect and open dialogue in personal, work, and community contexts. Global awareness also entails understanding other nations and cultures, including the use of non-English languages (ibid.).

The research presented in this report examines the language dimension of global awareness. Specifically, it considers the role of plurilingualism or multilingualism from the perspectives of the employer and worker, and identifies implications of findings regarding this form of human capital for business, education, and government. As the report suggests, plurilingualism, including the use of English as a key language skill, provides an economic benefit to individuals, corporations, and economies. Multiple language abilities matter for reasons of labor market access, upward and global mobility, firm sales and exports, and economic competitiveness. The economic case may not be complete, but it is compelling. Its implications for business, education, and government leaders not yet focused on creating a highly skilled, plurilingual talent pool are considerable. Conversely, the economic prospects of monolingual professional workers appear increasingly bleak.



The ability to work collaboratively in a global environment is a key 21st century skill.

APPENDIX C: Assessing the corporate language challenge

If workforce language skills are a critical success component for global corporations, accurate assessment of language capabilities, requirements, and barriers is essential to ensure appropriate action. This section summarizes the literature and incorporates the practices of the corporations surveyed in this area.

Language diversity, penetration and sophistication are key language barrier elements to assess.

Addressing language barriers: a multi-dimensional approach

While noting that few corporations formally assess the language challenges or barriers they face, a 2003 paper by Feely and Harzing presents valuable assessment/audit tools that firms can use to define and understand these challenges: Linguistic Auditing, which was introduced by Reeves and Wright in 1996, and the Language Check Up, which is a less comprehensive, less costly assessment process developed by Reeves and Feely in 2001. These two tools were "... designed to enable international companies to evaluate their foreign language requirements, and to benchmark these against their capabilities" (ibid., p. 8).

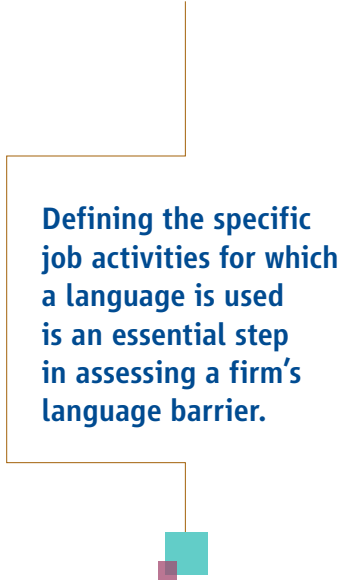
These assessment processes enable firms to specify the magnitude of the language barrier along three dimensions of language barriers: (1) language diversity (the number of different languages a company has to manage), (2) language penetration (the number of functions, and the number of levels within those functions that are engaged in cross-lingual communication), and (3) language sophistication (the complexity and refinement of the language skills required). The literature review and the survey of corporations conducted for this report show that variations of these language barrier assessments, as well as others, are actively used by global corporations (e.g., literacy audits used in workplace education programs, task analyses used in occupational or vocational English language programs, target situation analyses for English for Specific Purposes programs).

Language diversity

While some of the corporations TIRF surveyed featured low levels of language diversity (e.g., two or three languages, often including English, Spanish, or Russian), Feely and Harzing (ibid.) note that language diversity can be quite high in some corporations, depending upon size and geographic distribution. Drawing on prior work by Hagen (1999) and Graddol (1997), Feely and Harzing suggest that most large global firms are likely to have to manage no more than fifteen languages. Based on Graddol's "Engco" model of language use and associated Global Influence Scale, the languages of greatest global influence for global corporations include most European languages, Japanese, Arabic, Chinese (Mandarin/Cantonese), and other selected Asian languages including Malay, Urdu, Hindi, and Bengali.

Language penetration

The assessment of language penetration is extremely useful because it defines where communication is critical. Language penetration will vary greatly depending on how many business functions or activities cut across different operations in the global network. In some cases, language penetration may be minimal. For instance, a manufacturing operation in South America may largely function using Spanish, and English may be used only by a very small number of supervisors or managers interfacing with headquarters or other operations, plants, or partners in the network. In other cases, the penetration may be deep. One of the large energy corporations examined, for instance, has a high level of English penetration because industry standards and safety concerns dictate the use of one language—English in this case—for all training and documentation. The trend toward global coordination of more and more business functions (from human resources to information technology, sales, operations, etc.), according to Feely and Harzing (2003), will increasingly affect a greater number of functions and do so at multiple levels within the organization.



Defining the specific job activities for which a language is used is an essential step in assessing a firm's language barrier.

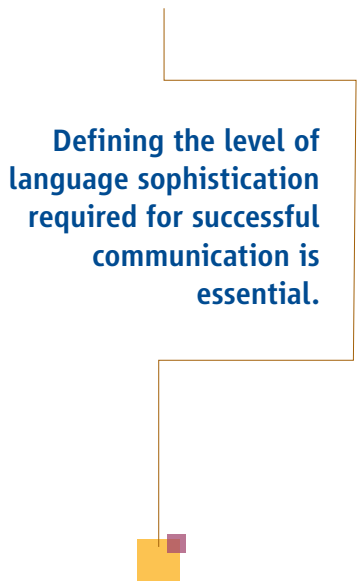
Language sophistication

Language sophistication examines by function and often by occupation, title, or role, how sophisticated language skills need to be to ensure successful communication and coordination. Across the corporations surveyed by TIRF, and consistent with findings by Feely and Harzing (2003), the level of language sophistication within a globally integrated firm can range from low to extremely high. In an instance of low levels of language sophistication, a manufacturing worker might be able to get by with limited listening, speaking, and reading skills in the lingua franca, if that language is different from his or her mother tongue. As for the middle of the range, help desk operators in a large Latin American operation of a British telecommunications firm and a leading U.S.-based information technology firm surveyed for this report reflected a moderate level of sophistication in one language—English—besides the workers’ native language.

At the high end of the spectrum, global managers may need highly developed skills, and may need to be sophisticated speakers of several languages. Feely and Harzing (2003) describe this type of manager as follows: “He or she will need excellent proficiency, embracing the full range of rhetorical skills such as negotiation, persuasion, motivation, and humor. At this level the capability level might well exceed that of a typical Masters graduate in modern languages” (p. 7). Clearly, achieving this level of proficiency requires many years of language learning, if sophistication is required in one or more languages other than the manager’s mother tongue.

Other forms of barrier assessment

One of the more recent and straightforward ways that global corporations can develop a global workforce development plan is used by GlobalEnglish Corporation. This approach uses a set of five critical questions and sub-questions. The answers to these questions provide a blueprint for a responsive plan which, when implemented, will yield financial benefits to both the corporation and its employees. The five critical questions are listed on the following page. While focused on English, these questions can easily be adapted for other languages as well. The 20 sub-questions can be found on the GlobalEnglish website at www.globalenglish.com.



Defining the level of language sophistication required for successful communication is essential.

Figure 4 Language needs assessment questions (Source: GlobalEnglish)

- 1. Is your organization already feeling the impact of insufficient English skills?**
- 2. Does your workforce include significant numbers of non-native speakers of English who need English to do their jobs effectively?**
- 3. How often do employees need to use English during the business day?**
- 4. How many of these employees have the level they need to use in their jobs?**
- 5. What is your current solution for English language learning?**

Employer Highlight



British Telecom - Latin America

The highlight illustrates how one corporation conducts an audit of language requirements.

Company Name:	British Telecom – Latin America
Company Type:	Telecommunications and information technologies
Sector:	Information technology
Employees:	111,900 employees worldwide; 20,500 employees are non-U.K.

Operating in over 170 countries, BT is one of the world's leading providers of communications solutions serving customers in Europe, the Americas, and Asia Pacific. The primary activities of the corporation are networked IT services, local, national, and international telecommunications services, broadband and internet services, and converged fixed and mobile solutions and services.

BT has locations across the globe including facilities/operations in Asia Pacific, Belgium, Canada, Central and Eastern Europe, France, Germany, India, Ireland, Italy, Latin America, the Middle East, Africa, Netherlands, Portugal, Russia, Spain, Switzerland, the Nordics, and the United States. In the United Kingdom, BT serves over 18 million business and residential customers with more than 28 million exchange lines, as well as providing network services (such

as broadband, WLR and LLU) to other licensed operators.

The corporation in its operations in Latin America (Argentina, Brazil, Colombia, Chile, and Mexico) uses job shadowing to collect data and improve its understanding of the daily routines of different positions (e.g., help desk operators and engineers), where written or spoken interactions in English are required. The information gathered through this process of observation can be used in assessment, curriculum, and instruction.

To illustrate, below are the observation notes for one position where conference calls in English are critical.

- **Position:** Help Desk Operator (A).
- **Main Duty:** Monitor changes in client system through e-mail and conference calls.

- **Conference Calls:** Conference calls involve employees in Belgium, Singapore, Scotland, India, Brazil, and several Eastern European countries.
- **Frequency of Calls:** On average, this person has four conference calls per week. All are held in English.
- **Language Functions:** Explaining a problem, asking for clarification, providing clarification, deciding on the best course of action, agreeing and disagreeing.
- **Type of Language:** Examples of language observed include: dates, time, codes, and statements and questions such as
 - "So, this is OK now?"
 - "Do we need to wait for approval?"
 - "They will be unavailable for 3 to 4 weeks."
 - "I have something to say about this change."
 - "He opened a change [status code of operation]"
 - "I classified this as a global change but I'm not sure now."
 - "I was not at the meeting but I read the minutes."
 - "In my change it misses one or two guys."
- **Employee's View Of Main Language Difficulties:** Understanding idiomatic expressions and phrasal verbs, using the right prepositions. Employee would like to speak the language naturally, without "thinking in Portuguese first."
- **Observer's Comments:** Some accents are very hard to understand. The

employee needs to take time to stop and think. Unpredictability of the situation causes anxiety. The fact that it is on the phone adds more pressure to the situation.

While English and Spanish are the two primary languages used in the corporation's Latin American operations to communicate within the global corporation and with customers, English is required for specific positions and English proficiency is assessed through interviews. These spoken applications are deemed critical: participation in business meetings, telephone calls to provide technical support, participation in virtual meetings/teleconferences, and conducting presentations for internal and external clients. Written applications include preparing commercial proposals and use of e-mail for internal and external day-to-day communication.

In addition to solid English skills, the corporation is looking for individuals who have a positive attitude, are good team players, are flexible, have an open mind and a global view, and demonstrate commitment. The ideal global worker must be fluent in English and Spanish and must have strong telecommunications, finance, legal and commercial fundamentals.

English deficiency has had a negative impact on the corporation, as poor communication with clients and partners has resulted in delays and in mistakes in commercial proposals. To address English language issues, the corporation offers in-house English courses.



APPENDIX D: Reported results of language development investments

Specific examples of improvements in the overall performance and efficiency of firms calculated by GlobalEnglish are listed in Table 3.

Table 3 Reported results from case studies (GlobalEnglish, 2008).

Firm	Need	Reported Business Results
Reuters	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Improve communications between regional offices. ■ Manage negative consequence of complexity of managing projects across time zones, cultures, and languages. 	<p>Improved Business Performance:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Ability to produce and understand English e-mails: 86% ■ Ability to participate in meetings in English: 79% ■ Ability to provide assistance and answer questions in English: 81% ■ Ability to help other non-native speakers use English: 54%
Deloitte	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Company declared English to be its official language as it grew from less than 30,000 to over 155,000 employees worldwide. ■ Getting all employees up to speed was challenging. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ High satisfaction rate with online learning system: 86% ■ Improved retention. ■ Cost savings particularly in recruitment area. ■ Improved teamwork. ■ Improved customer service. ■ Improved productivity: 3.5 hours per week saved, on average, per employee based on improved language skills.
Computer Sciences Corporation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Classroom training in English no longer satisfactory, particularly given enormous growth required by one of the firms major projects. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Lower business costs. ■ Expanded reach into burgeoning markets. ■ Expanded talent pool around the globe.

Firm	Need	Reported Business Results
Computer Sciences Corporation (continued)	(continued)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Expanded skill sets available for use in local markets. ■ Easier successions. ■ Rapid readiness in growth markets. ■ Industry expertise is no longer exclusively localized. <p>Employees reported:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Understanding and producing English e-mails: 89% improved. ■ Understanding English documents: 92% ■ Participating in conference calls in English: 79% improved. ■ Responding to requests and offering assistance in English: 85% improved. ■ Delivering presentations in English: 71% improved. ■ Conducting strategic planning and management meetings in English: 67% improved. <p>In India operations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Improved hiring decisions due to appropriate assessment tool. ■ Reduced business English training cycle by 75% to ramp up new employees. ■ Saved \$1.7 million by using online training instead of classroom training, despite a 37 percent increase in training delivered.
PPG Industries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Handle fast growth in China. ■ Find an effective talent management strategy. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Growth in market share due to increased customer confidence. ■ More efficient knowledge transfer. ■ Better management. ■ Improved R & D capacity because of expanded talent pool that can be accessed.
Emirates Bank	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Change from regional to global company. ■ English abilities of employees not at point where they would easily support this transition from regional to global markets. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Earned first European Association of Quality Language Services (EAQUALS) Certification in region. ■ Increased number of employees trained by over 300% through use of online learning. ■ High satisfaction and completion rates of English programs (85%). ■ Improved job performance after three months due to improved English abilities.

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