

”Kansallisten kulttuurien ja kielten merkitys kasvaa, jos halutaan erottua hyvin yritysten valtavrasta”



The first results of the 2016 language needs analysis *LangBuCom*

The research project *Kielet kansainvälisessä yritysviestinnässä* [LangBuCom](#)¹ addresses language needs and use in Finnish companies from the perspective of internationalization. Additionally, the language needs analysis focuses on multilingual communication and the (parallel) use of multiple languages. As a first step, an online survey collected data from 272 employees in Finnish companies, which have business contacts with companies in the German-speaking countries. Nearly all of them work in Finland, predominantly in management in small and medium sized companies.



Saksan kielitaito on mahdollistanut kaupankäynnin Keski-Eurooppaan jonka johdosta kielen käyttö on lisääntynyt.

Almost all the respondents are plurilingual with four and more languages, 71 % have knowledge in five and more languages (regardless of their levels of proficiency). And they use their languages: 90 % of the respondents experience multilingual situations as completely normal (63 % daily, 27 %

weekly). These results correspond with the respondents' attitudes towards multilingualism: They find multilingualism useful for efficient international communication (99 %) and enjoy working in multilingual situations (95 %). Although 46 % think that it requires a lot of effort to keep up several languages, 84 % disagree that it would be sufficient if everyone could speak English.

In contact with German partners, the respondents use mostly English and German. More than half the respondents use German on a regular basis. The attitudes towards German are positive: 71 % like using the language and 66 % do not avoid using German even if their command of the language is poor. Furthermore, the respondents perceive that German is economically significant: 86 % report better business opportunities for their company due to staff with knowledge of German. Or negatively: 21 % state that their company missed out on business opportunities in the past because of a lack of German skills.

The importance of languages in the working context is changing: According to the respondents, the importance of English and German has increased during the past years and they anticipate that this trend will continue for the next years.

This article only shows some first results based on a general quantitative analysis. In the near future, after completing the qualitative analysis, we will present more results and more detailed results on language combinations as well as language use and challenges in multilingual situations in international business communication. These results can be used for further improvement of language and business communication courses and as background information for language policy.

Margit Breckle, University of Vaasa & Joachim Schlabach, University of Turku



Neuvottelutilanteissa käytetään toki englantia kansainvälisten asiakkaiden kanssa, mutta neuvottelut pääsevät kunnolla eteenpäin, kun käytetään neuvottelukumppanin kieltä. Luottamus ansaitaan nopeammin ja kielitaidosta on selvä etua.²



Jag tror att det alltid är lättast att kommunicera på det språk som handelspartnern pratar. Vill man göra affärer utomlands bör man kunna språket. Talar båda ett främmande språk blir missförstånden större och det kan vara svårare att få in foten.

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² Quotes from the respondents.