

LSP4Employability conference: 10-11 May 2022

Our keynote speakers

Valter Mavrič *Director General for Translation of the European Parliament*

Biographical information Valter Mavrič has been Director-General of the Translation Service (DG TRAD) at the European Parliament since 2016, where he was previously acting Director-General (from 2014), Director (from 2010) and Head of the Slovenian Translation Unit (from 2004). With an MA in applied linguistics and further training in translation, interpretation, linguistics and management, he has a long experience as manager, translator, interpreter and teacher of languages. He works in Slovenian, Italian, English, French, and Croatian and is currently preparing a PhD in strategic communication.

Abstract When we think about employable graduates for the language services at the European Parliament, we think about the whole person with a package of different skills and competences. We look for intercultural and language professionals with excellent language skills, in the mother tongue and two other official EU languages, who can facilitate communication with citizens in clear language through translation, subtitling, adaptation, transcreation, and much more. At the same time, we also look for someone who can become a member of a team and of an administration, who can give colleagues linguistic advice and help maintain high multilingual standards. We also offer opportunities for a series of other profiles, such as clear language professionals, legal language professionals and proof-readers.

Tatjana Babrauskiene *EESC, Section for Employment, Social Affairs & Citizenship; Head of International Relations, Lithuanian Education & Science Trade Union*

Biographical information Tatjana Babrauskiene has been a member of the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) since 2015. She has been the EESC rapporteur of several opinions, amongst which: [SOC/715](#) – *Higher education package*; [SOC/684](#) – *Adult learning*; [SOC/663](#) – *Promoting skills for a more just, cohesive, sustainable, digital and resilient society*; [SOC/637](#) - *Updated skills agenda*; [SOC/636](#) – *Towards an EU strategy for enhancing green skills and competences for all*; [SOC/629](#) – *Sustainable funding for lifelong learning and development of skills, in the context of a shortage of skilled labour*. At national level, Tatjana is the Head of International relations of Lithuanian Education and Science Trade Union (LESTU) and an expert of the Lithuanian Trade Union Confederation (LPSK) in the field of VET, CVET and HE. She has long experience in advocating for adult education and Life-long learning (LLL) at the European level, including as a member of the European Commission's Advisory Committee on Vocational Education and Training (ACVT) and European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training (Cedefop). In 2010, when the European Social Dialogue in Education was established, she was appointed Lithuanian delegate of the Sectoral Social Dialogue Committee for the Education sector (ESSDE). She is also a representative of the European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC) and the European Trade Union Committee for Education (ETUCE) in three European Commission working groups on education: adult learning, VET and school education.

Abstract The presentation will give a short overview of what is happening in the EU labour market /skills development area and the role of the EESC in the EU and MS policy formation and implementation, also looking at some of the EESC recommendations, which emphasise that skills development is seen as a fundamental part of the response to the challenges we are facing now. On 18 January 2022, the

European Commission launched a new higher education package, including a [European Strategy for Universities](#) and a [Commission proposal for a Council recommendation on transnational higher education cooperation](#). At its 568th plenary session, held on 23 and 24 March 2022, the European Economic and Social Committee adopted the following opinion, where our keynote was the rapporteur: [SOC/715 - Higher education package](#). In short, this EESC opinion welcomes the fact that the initiative encourages Member States and higher education institutions (HEI) to strengthen transnational cooperation to improve students' skills and competences for the twin transitions of the labour market and economy and to uphold the EU's values, identity and democracy. It points at the important role played by HEI in improving green skills acquisition, environmental responsibility and sustainable development and welcomes in this regard the Commission's intention to help Member States and HEI develop national and whole-institutional approaches to sustainability, climate and environmental literacy. The EESC calls for a more effective involvement of learners, academics and researchers in the governance of higher education policy and the protection of academic freedom and institutional autonomy as fundamental values.

Ana Carla Pereira *Cabinet Expert - Cabinet of Nicolas Schmit, Commissioner for Jobs & Social Rights, EC*

Biographical information Ana Carla Pereira is Cabinet Expert and employment & social policy adviser to Nicolas Schmit, European Commissioner for Jobs and Social Rights. Previously she was Head of Unit in the Directorate General for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion at the European Commission, firstly being responsible for skills and qualifications policies as well as multilingualism and later on for social protection policies (including pensions, long-term care and health). As Head of Unit she coordinated several Commission policy initiatives such as the New Skills Agenda for Europe, the initiative on "access to social protection" or the Pensions Adequacy Reports. She has also worked for more than ten years on the implementation of the European Employment Strategy and for several years in the private sector as a business consultant specialised in human performance. She graduated in Economics at University of Coimbra (PT) and holds a MA in European Human Resources Studies from the College of Europe (BE). She speaks Portuguese as a mother tongue and is fluent in English, French and Italian.

Abstract Ana Carla Pereira's talk will set out the main challenges for the future European labour markets and the key role of skills, and in particular languages, for employability. She will also present the European Commission initiatives that are relevant in this context.

Our presenters (in alphabetical order)

Natasha Costello *Independent Legal English Teacher (Paris)*

Biographical information Natasha Costello (LLB, PGCE) is English, a Solicitor (non-practising) and former senior lecturer in law at Manchester Metropolitan University. She has a teaching qualification in higher education and over 20 years' teaching experience. She is an independent Legal English teacher and lecturer in law, working in Paris, France. She teaches Legal English and English law at various universities in the Paris area, including Université Panthéon Assas (Paris II) and Université Paris Nanterre. She also provides training in Legal English for practising French lawyers.

Abstract (presented with Louise Kulbicki) *Teaching English for networking: using small talk to build professional relationships*

Networking is an important skill for graduates. Being able to introduce yourself, participate in small talk, and exchange contact details are essential for building professional relationships. This presentation will

include a selection of practical English teaching activities on the topic of small talk, focusing on language for starting a conversation, bringing other people into a conversation, and ending a conversation politely. While the examples given in the presentation will relate to networking in the legal profession, the activities will be appropriate for teaching students in other English for Special Purposes disciplines. The presented activities will also be suitable for use in an online or offline setting. The presenters, both board members of the European Legal English Teachers' Association, are passionate about helping English learners feel confident in the modern working environment. They are currently co-writing a book on practical English language skills for lawyers. The aim of this book is to provide real-life, scenario-based activities for students to practise the skills that they will need in their daily working lives as lawyers.

Jean-François Desoutter *Université Libre de Bruxelles (Solvay Brussels School of Economics & Management/SBS-EM)*

Biographical information Jean-François Desoutter has been managing quality, international accreditations and rankings at SBS-EM since 2017. As the School is implementing an Assurance of Learning process in all its degree programmes, one of his tasks is to check the level of employability of Master's graduates and link their career outcomes with the programmes' objectives. These include the ability to communicate in different languages. Before that, Jean-François was a teaching manager in higher education, also developed training programmes, was active in distance education and taught English for more than 15 years.

Abstract *Languages and careers*

The SBS-EM has engaged in a systematic follow-up of all its Master's graduates since 2019. Among the information that is tracked and analysed is their international mobility, i.e. their ability to work in multilingual environments and expatriate, leveraging adaptability and skills in English or Dutch. The school's quality office also focuses on phenomena such as repats (foreign students contributing to the development of their home country) and non-repats (foreigners staying in the Brussels area in international companies where everyone is able to work and communicate through the medium of English). Inputs from other stakeholders such as enrolled students and internship supervisors allow the office to draw conclusions on how important languages are in job applications and everyday operations. At the end of 2021, the office started building up detailed competency profiles for its degrees in management, in the jobs typically exercised upon graduation. The importance of languages is highlighted as such but also through other functions or skills that require a good command of English which is the main vehicle for having a career in an international environment.

Dita Hochmanová *Masaryk University (Czech Republic)*

Biographical information Dita Hochmanová (PhD) graduated from Masaryk University in Brno, Czech Republic, and is currently employed as an assistant professor at the Faculty of Education at Masaryk University Language Centre. She specialises in teaching and designing courses of English language for special educators and her research interests cover task-based learning, communication strategies and learner autonomy.

Abstract *Designing a task-based course for Special Educators*

This paper presents the design of a series of task-based courses of English for Special Educators at B1-B2 level recently introduced at Masaryk University, Czech Republic. Following the need to progress from traditional forms of teaching to more contemporary approaches, the courses are centred on a set of tasks, which students complete and present as their portfolio. Rather than fulfilling the idea of teaching

specific content related to special education in English, the tasks and scaffolding activities included in the courses have the ambition to develop transferable skills which have been identified as crucial for successful graduation and future career by specialists in the field. First, the presentation explains how the tasks included in the courses are related, integrated and sequenced to provide the students with a meaningful structure of skills they will find useful in their future practice. Then, it shows how the tasks align with the CEFR framework and assesses how the participants responded to the assignments in course evaluation surveys. Finally, the paper describes the experience of running the courses online at the times of pandemic and discusses the challenges and possibilities of teaching transferable communication skills on online platforms.

Kelsey Hull *Université Libre de Bruxelles*

Biographical information Kelsey Hull has been working in language teaching for 15 years. She has been an English teacher and teacher trainer in Azerbaijan, South Korea, and Belgium. She is currently an ESP language teacher and course developer as well as a CLIL/EMI pedagogical advisor at the Université libre de Bruxelles. She holds an MSc in Social and Cultural Anthropology and a Delta (Cambridge Diploma in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages). She is particularly interested in more autonomous forms of learning, the influences on/of student motivation, and blended learning approaches.

Abstract *Training learners for lifelong learning: a case study of an autonomous ESP course*

Overloaded course schedules, limited funds, increasing student numbers, and a range of student needs/wants make it challenging to implement a traditional, F2F, small-group language course. To respond to these issues, a semi-autonomous, online ESP course was launched in September 2021 to approximately 375 2nd-year bachelor students in the architecture faculty at the Université libre de Bruxelles. Influenced by the ULB Langues Portfolio Program, this course, conducted on the university's Moodle platform, guides the students asynchronously through understanding their individual language needs/strategies, building learning contracts and assembling autonomous learning portfolios while developing self-reflective practices. At first, many students struggled with autonomy, but through the learner training materials, they have come to see the value in creating their own action plan, particularly the influence of their motivation on their self-directed learning skills, and vice-versa. While the course was proposed due to institutional constraints, it has increased learner autonomy, engagement, and reflective practices, all of which are transversal skills applicable to the students' content studies and careers. This paper will look at theories of self-directed learning by detailing the course design and giving examples of student output. It is intended for course designers and teachers who are interested in alternative learning programs.

Thibaut Issindou *Gapsmoov (France)*

Biographical information Thibaut Issindou is the co-founder of *Gapsmoov*, a cross-cultural digital learning platform. After 10 years at Berlitz, Thibaut gathered a team of intercultural management consultants to create a unique model. Thanks to the use of new learning methods, *Gapsmoov* helps students and companies decode the cultural behavior of their foreign speaking partners, for improved efficiency in an international environment.

Abstract *Unlock your cultural intelligence with the Gapsmoov culture decoder*

Working in an international environment involves challenges related to cultural specificities. The way of doing things in one culture may not be the way in other culture. What is good in one culture may be bad in other culture. Cross-cultural management is the study of management in a cross-cultural context. It explains the behavior of people in organizations around the world and shows how to work in

organizations with populations from many different cultures. Depending on our culture, we may have a different vision of the world, a specific body-language, a way of expressing (or not expressing!) certain things, or even different attitudes to complex situations. Why is cross-cultural management an essential soft skill for graduates?

- To communicate effectively with future colleagues, clients, suppliers, and partners in other countries.
- To conduct negotiations and understand the nuances of the postures of the other parties.
- Understand ethical standards and concepts of social responsibility in various countries.

With an innovative digital learning platform, Gapsmoov is the leader in cross-cultural management for students (short presentation: <https://www.gapsmoov.com/en/our-solutions/>).

Magdalena Jimenez *Università di Roma Tre / Università di Roma “Tor Vergata” (Italy)*

Biographical information Magdalena Jiménez Naharro (PhD) is a plurilingual teacher, translator, and clinical psychologist currently working in the Language Centres of Università Roma Tre and Università di Torvergata. She has extensive experience of teaching SFL and is particularly interested in bilingualism and multilingualism and is committed to ongoing research on the psychological aspects of L2 learning and academic writing. In her PhD she carried out research on the complexity of academic writing by students of Spanish L2 and on the implications of teaching history in bilingual contexts. Research areas of interest: methodologies such as CLIL, the task-based approach, telecollaboration, computer-mediated communication and drama techniques.

Abstract *University training in Spanish as a Foreign Language (SFL) for future professionals*

This paper aims to describe the linguistic training for future professionals, particularly for university students of travel and tourism. After a brief introduction about acquisition models, the work concentrates on different didactic B1 level experiences and proposes some final reflections. From a didactic point of view, both a task-based and a flipped classroom approach are described for all situations presented. In general, learners prepare communicative activities prior to the sessions and during the sessions they role play real situations. These courses end with a group or individual presentation of a final project. An important strategy is to involve professionals with a high degree of L2 fluency who can participate in the courses and talk to the students in Spanish in order to offer a more realistic experience of the working environment and to be aware of the competencies students should develop, including intercultural competence. In short, I believe that these strategies should contribute to making students feel more confident and motivated to face many different tasks that they will probably have to deal with in their future work and that this will help them to be more competitive.

Ewa Krawczyk *Bydgoszcz University of Science and Technology (Poland)*

Biographical information Ewa Krawczyk (PhD) specialises in English Language Studies (BA, Poland), International Communication (MA, London, UK) and EU Migrations (PhD, Surrey, UK). She lived and worked in the UK for nearly fourteen years. In her studies and work, she came across a wide range of social interactions that involved communicating with people of diverse cultural backgrounds. She has learned about and experienced in various workplaces which skills are most useful to facilitate intercultural communication in social interactions and, most importantly, achieve goals set by employers in the competitive global market.

Abstract *How to improve your communication skills to succeed in a culturally diverse workplace*

The aim of this presentation is to discuss both the methods employees of various cultural backgrounds can apply to succeed in achieving mutual goals set by the company as well as briefly explore the key

factors contributing to a successful intercultural communication that employers should apply in their multicultural work environment. First, I will examine intercultural communication from the employee's perspective. Their performance and ultimate success depends largely on effective communication across their diverse cultural backgrounds. The key steps such as acceptance of new cultures, self-awareness of one's subconscious biases and prejudices as well as openness and willingness to learn about other people's cultural backgrounds will be discussed in this part of the presentation. Terms like *languaculture* (i.e. learning and using the language together with the variety of its cultural aspects) or non-verbal (intercultural) communication skills will be explored in more of a detail. The second part of this presentation will explore how employers can use intercultural communication techniques to achieve a healthy working dynamic and help target new markets, thus enhancing the scope of their businesses. Aspects such as inclusivity, multicultural company's profile, integration, respecting cultural sensibilities will be analysed and exemplified by relevant case studies.

Louise Kulbicki *Independent Legal English Teacher (Founder of "Study Legal English"*
www.studylegalenglish.com)

Biographical information Louise Kulbicki (LLB, LLM) is a British legal English teacher and founder of Study Legal English which provides online legal English resources to language learners. Louise gained practical experience working in the legal field on the development of international environmental law before turning to legal English teaching. Since 2013 she has been teaching legal English to lawyers and law students from around the world specialising in online teaching and online resources development. Currently she is a board member of the European Legal English Teachers' Association (EULETA) in charge of social media, tech and communications.

Abstract (presented with Natasha Costello) *Teaching English for networking: using small talk to build professional relationships*

Networking is an important skill for graduates. Being able to introduce yourself, participate in small talk, and exchange contact details are essential for building professional relationships. This presentation will include a selection of practical English teaching activities on the topic of small talk, focusing on language for starting a conversation, bringing other people into a conversation, and ending a conversation politely. While the examples given in the presentation will relate to networking in the legal profession, the activities will be appropriate for teaching students in other English for Special Purposes disciplines. The presented activities will also be suitable for use in an online or offline setting. The presenters, both board members of the European Legal English Teachers' Association, are passionate about helping English learners feel confident in the modern working environment. They are currently co-writing a book on practical English language skills for lawyers. The aim of this book is to provide real-life, scenario-based activities for students to practise the skills that they will need in their daily working lives as lawyers.

Ilze Laurinaite *NGO Education Innovations Transfer Centre (Latvia)*

Biographical information Ilze Laurinaite is a guest lecturer at Latvia University of Life Sciences and Technologies, English language for professional purposes and a member of the NGO Education Innovation Transfer Centre, working with various educational, language, culture and social inclusion projects for adults. She specialises in educational innovations (IT tools and solutions), and in mythology on teaching creativity. Her interests are linguistics, psychology, history and culturology. Currently she is learning the Finnish language.

Abstract (paper co-authored by Anna Vintere) *Comparative study on professional English language skills for better performance*

This study of the situation in professional foreign language teaching and learning was carried out in three business sectors: logistics, transport, service industry. It includes employers, English and professional teachers as well as students' survey. Employers were asked to name language skills which employees need most to perform work, to express opinion on the role of employers in English language learning process as well as to identify topics, most common words, phrases, or specific professional terms which would be important for their employees. Students were asked about motivation and foreign language needs, training environment and teaching methods as well as about their learning styles. English teachers' questionnaires contained evaluation of teaching process and methods used, lessons preparation and evaluation of learning. In the framework of this study, a comparative analysis was performed in three Baltic countries: Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia. The study results show that foreign language competences are considered by employers as one of the most important skills for the employees. However, the level of language competences varies according to the position and role within the company. The most important foreign language skills are speaking skills. Professional terminology is the most commonly referred as the second most important skill.

Simon O'Donovan *Université Libre de Bruxelles*

Biographical information Simon O'Donovan is a language for specific purposes (LSP) educator in English at the ULB Langues centre. He was trained in the fields of applied linguistics, sociolinguistics and linguistic anthropology at UCL IOE London. Alongside working as an LSP educator he also trains teachers on the Cambridge CELTA and DELTA certificates. As well as training teachers on pre-service certificates he has also worked on post-service teacher and leadership training projects across West Africa, South Asia and Latin America for Ministries of Education, the University of Manchester and the British Council. He is interested in language, institutions and social interaction and has carried out research on migration, national identity and the neoliberalisation of integration.

Abstract *Skilling the self: Language skills for Employable Graduates*

A graduates' employment 'value' can depend on their skills, and more specifically their foreign language skills, thus skilling the self (Allan, 2013; Duchêne, 2013) and/ or engineering the worker (Del Piero, 2018) can be seen as a neo-liberalised commodity-based practice which attempts to transform the division of labour. This commodification of foreign language skills indexes both the graduates sense of personhood (Agha, 2011), as well as aligning them to corporate values (Urciuoli, 2008). The mobilisation of expertise in language and communication by LSP courses can be seen as controlling and regulating communicational conduct as a means to a desirable professional self. The talk will discuss some of the literature on the semiotic characteristics of the discourses that enable the commodification of foreign language skills and the potential effects of this linguistic skilling on the employability of graduates for the changing labour market in the 21st-century.

Séadna O'Maoldomhnaigh *Institut Mines-Télécom Business School (France)*

Biographical information Séadna O'Maoldomhnaigh is a Senior Lecturer of English in the Department of Language and Human Sciences at the Institut Mines-Télécom Business School in Evry, France. He holds degrees from University College Cork and from Université Paris 3: Sorbonne Nouvelle. As well as teaching, he works actively in online pedagogical innovation for his department.

Abstract *World of Workcraft- A gamified approach to teaching English for Professional Purposes*

World of Workcraft is a Small Online Closed Course (SPOC) that is conducted primarily on Moodle and focuses on training the types of communication skills that are typically required in a traditional professional environment- interviewing, CV writing, report writing, meeting skills, notetaking, small talk, etc. The course involved around 250 students in the final year of their Masters studies in Management and Engineering who were also just beginning their obligatory work placement program. It attempts to address the challenges of teaching busy students while also engaging them through a gamified approach, encouraging teamwork by way of a flipped model. It also innovatively redefines the role of the teacher within the online learning environment. This case-study will examine the adaptation of an existing teaching module on Professional Communication in English for M2 Engineering and Management students, and the application of gamification tools found on the Moodle platform, most notably the 3rd party plugin Level-Up. It will also identify the challenges encountered during the developmental and operational phases of the course, as well as analysing the pedagogical costs and benefits that this approach entails.

Paulina Pietrzyk-Kowalec *WSB University in Warsaw (Poland)*

Biographical information Paulina Pietrzyk-Kowalec holds an MA in English Philology and graduated from MCSU in Lublin, Poland. She has 18 years of experience of teaching English and Polish for foreigners and combines work as a teacher and a university lecturer at WSB, Warsaw, Poland with being a methodologist and a president of a language school in Poland. Apart from teaching general English, she is a coach of vocational English, for example Business English, Legal English, Medical English, English for Engineering, IT, etc. What is more, she is a translator of scientific articles and books. Her work is her great passion.

Abstract *Foreign languages and employability in the European Union*

This paper presents the phenomenon of multilingualism becoming the norm rather than the exception in the European Union. It also seeks to describe the correlation between the command of foreign languages and employability. It is evident that the challenges of today's societies when it comes to employability and to the reality of the current labour market are more and more diversified. Thus, it is one of the crucial tasks of higher education to prepare its students to face this kind of complexity, understanding its nuances and having the capacity to adapt effectively to situations which are common in corporations based in the countries belonging to the EU. From this perspective, the assessment of the impact that the mastery of foreign languages among university students could have on the numerous business sectors becomes vital. It involves raising awareness of future professionals to make them understand the importance of mastering communicative skills in foreign languages that will meet the requirements of students' prospective employers. The direct connection between higher education institutions and the world of business also allows the companies to realise that they should rethink their recruitment and HR policy in order to take into account the importance of foreign languages. This article focuses on the objective of the multilingualism policy developed by the European Commission which is to enable young people to master at least two foreign languages which is crucial in their future career. The article advocates the existence of a significant connection between the research conducted in higher education institutions and the business sector in order to bridge current qualification gaps. Keywords: Multilingualism, Language Attitudes in EU, Employability.

Eva Rudolfová *Masaryk University (Czech Republic)*

Biographical information Eva Rudolfová leads the Masaryk University Language Centre team at the Faculty of Informatics and teaches ESP and EAP classes there. She was first interested in Soft Skills and how these can be used in and for language learning. Later, her focus moved more to Emotional

Intelligence and also Learner Autonomy, as the Language Centre opened an English Autonomously Course for its students. Since then she has been a passionate member of English Autonomously team, a counsellor and an ardent ambassador of life and transferable skills. Her latest challenge is bringing all these skills to computer science students as part of their language classes. Her key concept in her professional career is authenticity.

Abstract *Creating an employability-centered course curriculum*

In recent years, there has been a considerable growth in the number of students reasonably proficient in English and not needing much instruction in the usage of the language itself. Their listening skills are excellent, their fluency almost impeccable, they are able to express complex ideas, and their reading skills are sufficient for their level of expertise. What they do lack, however, is applying that knowledge wisely. They lack communication skills and other soft skills; the ability to distinguish between various levels of formality and different registers; learning skills, and the ability to reflect on what they have learnt and how they could improve; self-management skills, emotional intelligence and taking responsibility for their own learning and achievements and tasks. My presentation, therefore, aims to show how elements of these life skills can be implemented into LSP classes curricula to increase the students' employability, making the classes more authentic and valuable and the students more life-ready. Moreover, it will mention how we gain the necessary knowledge of what the employers require from the students by cooperating closely with the region's business companies (e.g. Kyndryl, previously known as IBM).

Tatjana Sinkus *Latvia University of Life Sciences and Technologies*

Biographical information Tatjana Sinkus (PhD) holds a doctoral degree in Pedagogy (DR. PAED.). She works as an assistant professor and Head of Languages Centre in Latvia University of Life Sciences and Technologies. She teaches professional and Academic English to undergraduate and postgraduate students of IT, Forestry, Business Administration, Environmental Engineering. She research topic is development of competences in the professional English Course.

Abstract *Promoting cross-cultural awareness in the professional English course in business administration studies*

In today's 21st century of multiculturalism, globalisation and rising competition, it has become insufficient for ESP educators to develop business students' foreign language proficiency, nowadays educators should also focus on enhancing students' cross-cultural awareness. Being able to work across cultures is an increasingly crucial skill for potential entrepreneurs. Embracing and appreciating cultural diversity will help them avoid disagreements, misunderstandings and culture barriers in cross-cultural business communication, it will enable students to cooperate and effectively interact with their foreign colleagues and customers in their future workplace, increase business opportunities and establish more resilient interdependent relationship with partners around the world. Thus, promoting cross-cultural awareness should be viewed as one of the most vital ESP teaching goals. To attain this goal, a high priority to teaching cultural aspects should be assigned in the professional English course in business administration studies. The present research focuses on the ways of promoting cross-cultural awareness and emphasises the importance of teaching business students values, traditions, communication and behaviour patterns, levels of formality, visible and hidden aspects of other cultures. The researcher has involved two groups of students in intercultural case-study based communicative activities and investigated students' opinion about them. The results of the survey confirm that students view cultural component as an important integral part of the professional English course and believe that the activities they took part in can promote cross-cultural awareness as they increased curiosity about other countries, encouraged open-mindedness, allowed them to empathise with people different from

themselves, promoted mutual understanding and respect. Keywords: cross-cultural awareness, English for Professional Purposes (ESP), business administration studies, case study.

Jessica van Ginneken *Université Libre de Bruxelles*

Biographical information Jessica van Ginneken studied Germanic philology at the University of Liege. After her studies, she left for Cape Town (South Africa) where she taught French grammar and literature (17th century drama and 19th century realism) at the University of the Western Cape. In 1995 she started at ULB in the Department of Dutch where she currently coordinates the BA3 Commercial Engineers and the Masters in Economic Sciences.

Abstract *The modular Dutch course for the master's in economics*

The language courses in the Bachelor's degree are generally based on the development of the four language skills (reading, writing, listening, speaking). MA students however want to be prepared for the professional world. This is why we have designed a modular program of which the students must choose 5 modules which focus on practical skills essential to the professional world and based on the personal interests of the student. Dutch remains the common thread in these 9 modules, but students also learn practical skills that are very useful in their future careers, skills that have not yet been covered in their academic curriculum. In some of the practice-oriented modules, we pay special attention to the student's personality and help them understand how others perceive them. This helps enormously in learning how to position oneself effectively in the professional world. These modules are also designed to allow the development of many skills related to the professional environment: information processing (Lezingen), problem solving (Grammatica), personnel management (Solliciteren, Vergadertechnieken), communication (Converseren, E-mailen en co, Presenteertechnieken), critical thinking and personal judgment (Vlaamse media en actua, Cultuur beleven), teamwork and self-management (Vergadertechnieken).

Anna Vintere *NGO Education Innovations Transfer Centre (Latvia)*

Comparative study on professional English language skills for better performance

(paper co-authored and presented by Ilze Laurinaite – see above)

Anna Wasilewska *University of Gdansk (Poland)*

Biographical information Anna Wasilewska an independent teacher of Legal and Business English with over 10 years of experience. She holds a Master degree in English Linguistics, major in Specialised Translations, and a post-graduate studies degree in Legal and Economic Translations. For the last 7 years she has been teaching ESP and conducting TOLES preparation courses for Polish learners in a private language centre, Specialize Your English in Sopot, Poland. She is an academic teacher at the University of Gdansk where she conducts Legal and Business Communication courses for students of postgraduate International Business courses. As she also holds an MA degree in Psychology, she conducts soft skills courses and workshops in English for a wide range of business professionals and corporate clients where she mostly focuses on communication, public speaking and presentation skills.

Abstract *Skills of the future – how we should teach English for higher employability*

In my presentation I would like to focus on teaching soft and social skills as part of an English course curriculum. By soft skills also called social skills we mean a set of skills which facilitate our social

functioning, whereas the word "soft" refers to their indefinite nature. Few of us can precisely define what these skills are but most of us know the feeling when we lack them. These days employers increasingly seek and value soft skills in their employees. These competences are also being assessed during job interviews as they are later most useful during meetings or negotiations. On a leader or managerial level these are the skills which often prevail over the knowledge and expertise. Numerous research have proved that a high level of soft skills is a key factor in getting a promotion. From my professional teaching experience I can observe how students (young professionals, university graduates and undergraduates) lack a wide range of soft skills despite their advanced or even proficient English level. These skills include – communication, small talks, conducting meetings, presentations or public speaking, including improvised speaking. Especially public speaking skills are on a low level and that is problematic even in students' native languages. The need of practising such skills is reported by the students themselves. What is more, they report never having been trained in this area in any language course. This leaves a gap that needs to be filled by a modern, more soft approach to teaching English. In my presentation I would like to propose ideas on how to include soft skills aspects in English courses curricula. I will discuss a range of practical exercises which I often use in my teaching practice. The most valuable feedback I have received was: "It was so much more than an English course."

Magdalena Zubiel *WSB University in Torun (Poland)*

Biographical information Magdalena Zubiel-Kasprowicz's (PhD) passion is psychology. Above all, she is interested in neuromarketing and issues related to communication. Founder of the Centre for Neuroscience at the Faculty of WSB in Toruń, she is a linguist and simultaneous interpreter. Author of a dissertation on transgressing taboos of sexuality, she is currently working on a "habilitation" dissertation on issues of neurocommunication with particular emphasis on the depth of information processing transmitted through various forms of communication. An avid advocate of positive psychology, new pedagogy and neuroscience, she is Assistant Professor at the Department of Social Sciences, WSB in Toruń.

Abstract *The role of practical experience on the speed of English language acquisition or why we learn a foreign language faster by telling the truth*

The most fascinating hypothesis in cognitive science today is the theory that cognition is embodied. This is one of the things that interested laypeople know about cognitive science, mainly thanks to the popularisation of the results of experimental research. These studies show how cognition can be guided and shaped by bodily and environmental states, or how abstract cognitive states are rooted in the body and how the use of the former influences the latter. Conclusions from cognitive science about the influence of experiences on the way reality is perceived also apply to the sphere of processing content expressed in a foreign language. And this is why the role of practical experience gathered during our life story is so valid. Especially when we talk about a foreign language used in the workplace, the power of our own professional experience and the fact that as English language teachers we work with material based on real-life texts and cases cannot be overestimated. In the practical aspect, the author will suggest how to shape exercise content in order to be able to exploit the potential in texts referring to students' previous experiences. The role in this is also played by emotions and the way the content is conveyed, which anchors best, as it is built on a story structure, with a clear cause and effect structure.



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