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ENGLISH PROFICIENCY: THE GROWTH OF POPULARITY

ВОЛОДІННЯ АНГЛІЙСЬКОЮ МОВОЮ: ЗРОСТАННЯ ПОПУЛЯРНОСТІ

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Language is a powerful tool and must be wielded properly. The linguistic and cultural divide in former Soviet Republics poses a potential threat to the current state of the international system [1].

Over the last few decades, education in many countries, including the countries of the former Soviet Union, has undergone a number of cardinal changes. With the appearance of English as a lingua franca in international arena, many independent countries that opt to be recognised in political, economic, financial, educational and cultural fields tend to put the main emphasis on the teaching of English to young generation in order to cultivate a nation able to represent them overseas [2].

When Yugoslavia disintegrated in the early 1990s, competence in English was not widespread. English came to be equated with economic survival for

many during and after the ensuing war through a range of diverse social and professional contexts, from the classroom to the military to the International Criminal Court [3].

English, as a global language, is now being spoken in many non-English countries, due to globalization and the expanse of English as the leading language in the field of business and entertainment. The post-Soviet and post-Socialist republics, such as Ukraine and former Yugoslavia are no exception, and the dominance of English language expertise among their citizens has shown a progressive increase lately.

Although much attention has long been paid to the numerous language aspects [4; 5; 6; 7], there is a necessity of detailed focus on the growth of popularity in English proficiency, thus becoming the purpose of the study.

Among the many factors, promoting the increase of English expertise among the citizens of post-Soviet and post-Socialist republics is the fact that it is viewed as one of the best means to expand their career opportunities both in the countries and abroad.

One of the main grounds why English is becoming progressively more popular as a second language in Ukraine and former Yugoslavia is the possibility it brings to the citizens in getting opportunities for better job options. With the advance of globalization, more and more enterprises are seeking employees with English language skills. Many domestic companies are looking for individuals with English language proficiency in order to better collaborate with their foreign partners or customers.

Moreover, the fluent English speakers have an advantage in being employed for better positions in international companies, as international companies are also choosing to set up operations in Ukraine and former Yugoslavia, and they are often looking for English-speaking personnel. Therefore, having knowledge of the language has become an important asset for the people looking for jobs. English knowledge enables the citizens' communication with different people from other countries and boosts their prospects for better employment abroad.

In addition to better job opportunities, English also provides better chances to get to know more about various cultures and to perceive the world in different perspectives. A lot of Ukrainians and citizens of former Yugoslavia are seeking to study English for travelling internationally, or communicating with foreigners in order to learn more about their country and traditions. English is also a commonly spoken language in many international events, and having good language skills opens up many doors to learning about different cultures all over the world.

Furthermore, English knowledge is an important factor when it comes to education. Many domestic universities have partnerships with foreign universities, and having a good command of English makes it easier to take

advantage of these opportunities. Additionally, English is the language of instruction for many international courses and certifications. Thus it is often viewed as an efficient means to enhance one's education, as lots of learning resources, written, oral and visual, are available in English.

The level of English proficiency in Ukraine and former Yugoslavia is predicted to steadily increase in the next decades. This is mostly caused by the advancement in the government's initiatives and the increase of private investment in teaching English as a foreign language. Besides, many organizations are providing English language courses and other programmes to teach the language. Finally, the exponential increase of English-language media over the internet is also an essential reason providing the advance of English expertise among the citizens of Ukraine and former Yugoslavia.

Since gaining independence from the Soviet Union in 1991, Ukraine has become increasingly involved in the international community. As a result, English has become more important for Ukrainians to learn. While English is not an official language in Ukraine, it is widely spoken by many people [8].

Since the Revolution of Dignity in 2014, Ukraine has witnessed a significant increase in the demand for improved English language skills, as a means of engaging with, sharing experiences with, and learning from, the wider world [9].

While English provided social mobility for many, its abrupt arrival also contributed to the marginalization of those without the adequate language skills. The high level of international intervention in Bosnia and Herzegovina over the last two decades has contributed to a sense of normalization of the presence of English [3].

Hence, the perspectives seem to be very positive for the English language in Ukraine and former Yugoslavia. As the countries keep on their progressive development and more worldwide-oriented enhancement in business and communication, the level of English proficiency among their citizens will steadily advance for many decades ahead.

To sum up, English language proficiency is gaining its popularity in Ukraine and former Yugoslavia, both as a way of communication and for career advancement. Lately, the dominance of English language expertise among their citizens has been progressively growing, and the tendency is going to prolong in the future. With the enhancement of English proficiency level, the citizens' access to a wide range of opportunities will increasingly grow as well, both in their country and abroad.

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