

ENGLISH AS A LINGUA FRANCA AND NEW MEDIA

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The study highlights the essentiality of English in East-Central Europe (Poland, Slovakia, and Ukraine). It examines the increase of new media and non-native speakers that use the English language as a lingua franca in their multifarious intercultural communication. The aim of this paper is to depict different roles and functions of English among the East-Central European nations with diverse native languages.

Key words: *new media, East-Central Europe, ELF*

Multilinguism is an essential element of European cultural diversity (Adamka – Zelenická, 2010, 7; Michelčíková, 2011, 12). Scientific English has come a long way since the first scientific publications appeared in the eighteenth century, notably by national scientific academies (see Meneghini et al.). English is generally considered to be the lingua franca of the scientific community, for instance, approximately 80% of all the journals indexed in Scopus are published in English (for details see D. van Weijen). Similarly, Czech, Hungarian, Polish and Slovak journals indexed by Scopus and Thomson Reuters Scientific are frequently published in English (see <http://thomsonreuters.com/>).

The annual revenues generated from English-language scientific, technical and medical (STM) journal publishing were estimated at about \$8 billion in 2008, up by 6-7% compared to 2007, within a broader STM publishing market worth some \$16 billion (The STM Report, September 2009).

The Internet is regarded by many as the leader of global English. About 80% of all computer information is stored in English and more than 50% of the world's technical and scientific publications are printed in English (Delahunty et al. 1994, 426). However, even if English is the dominant language in science and the Internet, it is certainly not the native language for the majority of scientists. As stated in the STM report, about 55% of global STM revenues (including non-journal STM products) come from the USA, 30% from Europe, 10% from Asia/Pacific and 5% from the rest of the world. Moreover, the STM report has also pointed to the fact that “the main English-language trade and professional associations for journal publishers collectively include 657 publishers producing around 11,550 journals, that is, about 50% of the total journal output by title” (The STM Report, September 2009).

Some linguists suggest that though there exist key themes and publications of growing interest to a nationwide audience, authors prefer publishing their scientific works in international journals with a high impact factor and these journals use the English language as the *lingua franca*. Rogerio Meneghini and Abel L. Packer stress that if these journals could establish a continued tendency

towards a more equal and appropriate proportion of language use in scientific publications, this might stop the decrease of some languages in international scientific communication.

Nikolas Coupland points out that by the middle of the 20th century, several European languages such as English, French, Russian, and Spanish had evolved as ‘world languages’, “...in the sense of languages spoken as vernaculars or as *lingua francas* outside their homelands and by populations other than those ethnically or nationally associated with them” (Coupland, 2010, 42) and then “the intake of English lexis has been dramatic in the eastern countries in particular” (Görlach, 2005).

Consequently, scientists have to learn English to follow significant publications from their field. Although, many scientists in Europe and worldwide still publish their works in national journals, argue R. Meneghini and A. L. Packer, it is usually their native language, which prevents the results of their investigations to be widely recognized, since they are not instantly available to the international scientific community (Meneghini – Packer, 112-116).

As Laurie M. O’Reilly (1998, 72) points out: “Language culture refers to the organic environment of a language in which social, economic, and political elements evolve in an interrelated context”. The cultures within the English language (i.e., British English and American English) could each have a place in the social, political, and economic environment ... As nations vied for power and influence, language cultures developed”. It is in accordance with J. Grzegza’s (2005, 44) understanding that: “By looking at the history of other *linguae francae*, it is shown that English can remain in this position only if it is continually used in all forms of international communication and if it is bound to some form of global culture that still allows for regional identities”.

East Central Europeans had historically infrequent contacts with English-speaking foreigners during the Soviet occupation in the XXth century. However, broad and interdisciplinary connections with English language speakers and scientists were established only after the fall of the Soviet block. I.P. Ustinova explains that “contact with English is also fulfilled through the reading of British and American publications” circulating worldwide (e.g. Daily Mail, Daily Express, Daily Mirror, Daily Star, Guardian, Independent, Telegraph, The Sun, Times, New York Times, Wall Street Journal, USA Today, etc.), and TV channels and Internet resources (e.g. BBC News, Sky News, Fox News, Voice of America, etc.).

As C. Truchot noted in 2002 “It would be superfluous to stress the dominant role of the American production and distribution in the audiovisual sector. The report published in 1999 by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) shows that the world market for cultural products is increasingly concentrated around Hollywood (50% of its revenue comes from abroad compared

with scarcely 30% in 1980): “[The US] claimed 70% of the film market in Europe in 1996 ... and 83% in Latin America and 50% in Japan” (extract quoted by *Le Monde*, 13 July 1999) (Truchot, 2002, 18).

“Satellites can supply programmes and advertising instantaneously in 24 western European languages but television viewers - as has been shown on several occasions by market surveys - want television in their own language” (Truchot, 2002, 18). This demand almost certainly elucidates why the content of TV programmes has advanced in the way it has. During the 1980s US TV serials prevailed. In addition to the cinema, innumerable possibilities for encounters with global English are supplied by the spread of such cultural products as computer games, pop culture, sporting events and new media.

Global media and technology have the power to affect and shape cultures around the world. Traditional media (television or paper-based publications) have determined the nature of cultures. New media (streaming videos and the Internet) additionally help the transformation of cultures. The Internet has promoted the interchange of thoughts and images across cultures and shaped the way people communicate and perceive each other.

On the one hand the Internet helps people to nourish their culture’s values, norms, and social practices, but on the other it hastens and changes the nature of the culture itself (Lustig et al., 2010, 38).

It is important to note that the media is a special form of technology that has had a major influence on cultures around the world. Media enable and extend our ability to communicate beyond the limits of face-to-face encounters. Generally speaking, the media allow humans to extend their sensory capabilities, to communicate across time and long distances, and to duplicate messages with ease (Lustig et al., 2010, 37).

Poland

According to the report prepared by the European Audiovisual Observatory (Kevin et al., 2013, 90), the distribution of news channels over Polish satellite packages was dramatically reduced between 2009 and September, 2013 and the only international news channel on the satellite packages is CNN International. The Euronews channels are available on cable and IPTV. Poland has no foreign national news channels, but there are five national TV news channels and two national business news channels. TVP1 (the public service channel) and TVN (the private channel) are the most important news broadcast channels in Poland.

According to BBC Poland Profile, Poland’s broadcasting market is the largest in Eastern and Central Europe. There is freedom and diversification of information, albeit “laws against deriding the nation and its political system are still in force” (for more details see <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-17753721>). There are more than 300 newspapers in Poland, most of them local

or regional. However, as BBC Poland Profile has noted, fewer than 30% of Poles read any kind of printed newspaper. The press is almost completely privatised and foreign ownership is high. The biggest-selling daily is the *Fakt* tabloid.

As for the English newspapers in Poland, *The Warsaw Voice* (www.warsawvoice.pl), *Warsaw Business Journal* (www.wbj.pl) and *New Poland Express* (www.newpolandexpress.pl) are English-language weeklies. Polish Radio's news site *TheNews.pl* is also in English. *Polish Press Agency* (for more details see <http://www.pap.pl/>) is the single largest source of news from Poland delivering news in Polish and English to leading media outlets, government and financial institutions in and outside of Poland. Polish Press Agency continues the work of the Polish Telegraphic Agency PAT established in 1918 by a group of Polish journalists who took over the two bureaus of the Vienna Correspondent Office in Krakow and Lviv (when Poland regained independence after 123 years of partitions). The Polish Press Agency specializes in business, political, science and sports topics (see <http://www.pap.pl/>).

Brief (for more details see www.brief.pl; www.brief4poland.pl) magazine was created in 1999. It is the first trade magazine about marketing and sales, directed at those involved professionally in marketing and sales, media, advertising companies, media houses, and testing companies. *Brief* for Poland is a cooperation platform for self-governing and central authorities with the professional marketing environment.

In Your Pocket (for more details see www.inyourpocket.com) is an information portal and guide for more than 50 European cities and resorts, including Warsaw. It has been delivering urban information since 1992.

The New Warsaw Express (www.nwe.com.pl), is Polish leading weekly source of English-language news, covers politics, business, sports and entertainment.

Poland Monthly (www.polandmonthly.pl) is an English-language publication specializing in business news and insight, politics, and lifestyle issues in Poland. *Poland Monthly's* target audience is mid- to upper-level management and executives. *Poland Monthly* is the first English-language publication that consistently covers business, politics, current affairs and lifestyle issues on a nationwide and in-depth basis.

The *Warsaw Business Journal* (the WBJ, www.wbj.pl) is the leading international business publication in Poland. Since 1994 the WBJ has been a source of news and information for international investors, senior managers, etc. in every industry. Each week the WBJ provides readers with a full range of information, including a comprehensive review of the week's news, and journalistic commentary in finance, law, sales management, human resources and investments.

The Warsaw Insider (www.warsawinsider.pl) is a comprehensive monthly guide to good living and past times in Poland's capital. Entertainment, information, culture, travel, food and drink in a compact glossy magazine.

Warsaw point (www.warsawpoint.com) is a magazine with four sections about political, economic, cultural and social news as well as trends in culture and art. There are also historical and traditional sections, reviews of books, films, and plays.

The Warsaw Voice (www.warsawvoice.pl) is an English-language guide to developments in Poland and other Central and Eastern European countries since October 1988. This is a general news magazine which provides readers with current political, economic, social and cultural news on a weekly basis. In its special reports, it presents crucial socio-political and economic facts.

Its circulation and influence make the *Wprost* magazine the biggest opinion-forming weekly in Poland, being perceived, as one of the most prestigious periodicals in the mass media market. Not only is it the biggest magazine in Poland, but it also has, in a certain sense, become an institution of Polish political and social life. Readers can also brush up on their local knowledge with articles concerning local issues, translated from the leading opinion weekly "*Wprost*".

WIK (www.wik.com.pl/english) is an exclusive city magazine where readers can learn about the most important events from the world of culture, the arts, and entertainment. Each month, "*WiK English Edition*" recommends film premieres, concerts, exhibitions, and interesting weekend getaways. The publication also provides a guide to Warsaw's dining and nightlife. *Wprost* and *WIK* both have Polish versions.

Discover Poland (www.discoverpl.com/epages) is a glossy monthly magazine that introduces English-speaking visitors to the highlights of Warsaw. *Discover Poland* contains articles about travel, culture, lifestyle and business in Poland. Produced in co-operation with the Polish National Tourist Office in London, 40,000 copies of *Discover Poland* magazine are distributed each month – it can be found at selected distribution points throughout the United Kingdom and Poland.

As A. Lara claims, following the fall of communism in the 1990s, the Polish internet and audiovisual media sectors grew rapidly. There are 25.6 million internet users in Poland (see www.InternetLiveStats.com, 2014). These developments led to the establishment of a public and private duopoly in the media sector. As A. Lara has noted, none of the Polish daily magazines and newspapers publish on Sunday or in the afternoon. Instead, Polish dailies offer weekend editions, which tend to have significantly higher circulation than weekday editions. All in all, Poland has more than 5,000 press titles including national and regional dailies, weeklies, monthly magazines, and the specialized press.

Slovakia

The European Audiovisual Observatory states that in the Slovak Republic (September, 2013), the Euronews channels are no longer available (in comparison to 2009) on any of the satellite packages (Kevin et al. 2013: 98). The English version is still available on cable. BBC World News and CNN are the most widely distributed pan-European channels. As for local production, the Slovak Republic has one news channel TA3 with an audience share of almost 2% in the Slovak Republic (2012), which is quite significant for a news channel which is also widely distributed in the Czech Republic.

The European Audiovisual Observatory has noted that the news channels of neighbouring countries such as the Czech Republic (CT24), Germany (N24, n-tv) and Hungary (Hir TV) are an important part of the news landscape in Slovakia and widely distributed (for more details see Kevin et al., 2013, 98). Appropos news programmes, the broadcasts of private channels TV Markiza and TV JOJ are the market leaders. Public Radio and TV Slovakia (RTVS) have two TV networks and nine radio stations. Moreover, Freedom House states that Slovakia's constitutionally guaranteed press freedom is generally respected and the media freely present diverse views.

Also, some experts talk about the so-called "oligarchization" of the media in Slovakia, the recent tendency in which large domestic financial groups and moguls have taken hold of the market. By the end of 2014 the majority of Slovakia's media was directly or indirectly controlled by two Slovak financial groups: Penta and J&T. Foreign investment remains important, though less so than before the 2007-2008 global financial crisis (for details see <http://www.bbc.co.uk/monitoring/slovak-ownership-prompts-freedom-fears>). However, all major newspapers are privately owned and the best-selling daily is the tabloid *Nový Čas*.

There are 4.5 million internet users in Slovakia (InternetLiveStats.com, 2014). Azet.sk is the leading online portal, and traditional media as well as new media have an online presence. Facebook is the most popular social network in Slovakia, nevertheless, it is closely followed by Slovak platform *Pokec.sk*.

The BBC's Slovakia profile suggests that "another notable aspect of the Slovak media is the emergence of a paywall which aims to monetize online content; for instance, Piano Media, whose paywall system now encompasses leading media in Slovakia, has expanded to cover media in other European countries as well as the United States".

In their view, "on the Slovak media scene, the amount and nature of the content placed behind a paywall varies from outlet to outlet", for example "in print-linked titles it is usually high-value analytical material and comment, while everyday news content remains available for free and as for JOJ and JOJ Plus TV, the subscription gives access to their archive content", in this way the

Slovak press outlets are trying to monetize online content. (for details see <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-17847682>).

The radio and television channels of the public service RTVS have in recent years increased their rankings in spite of financial pressures resulting from one of the lowest licence fees in Europe. Internet penetration is above 80 per cent (for more details see <http://www.bbc.co.uk/monitoring/slovak-ownership-prompts-freedom-fears>).

As elsewhere in Europe, newspaper circulations and public interest in the daily press in Slovakia are in long-term decline. Circulation and readership surveys confirm the decline when only about 50 percent of the adult population reads the daily press regularly (see Školkay A. Media Landscapes. Slovakia. http://ejc.net/media_landscapes/slovakia). According to S.J. Kirschbaum (2013, 215), “there are in total 13 dailies published in Slovakia, the most important of which are *SME*, *Pravda*, *Nový čas* (*New Time*), *Šport*, *Hospodárske noviny* (*Economic news*), and *Korzár*”.

The Slovak Spectator (www.spectator.sk) is Slovakia’s only English-language newspaper and also accessible on the Internet. It is published weekly and covers local news and comment, business and culture. The company also publishes special publications, including the acclaimed *Spectacular Slovakia* travel guide, the Book of Lists business directory, and comprehensive guides to local real estate, investment environment and human resources.

The Daily Slovak News (see www.TheDaily.SK) is an English online newspaper for everyone living or interested in the country who doesn’t speak Slovak. *The Daily Slovak News* covers current affairs, politics, business, legislation, foreign affairs, sport and culture. The daily has the motto “Your independent English news for Slovakia”. *SK Today* (www.sktoday.com) is an electronic English language newspaper based in Slovakia, providing breaking news, media reviews and coverage of national issues from around the country. *Slovensko.com* is an online comprehensive guide to Slovakia in English.

The News Agency of the Slovak Republic (*TASR*) is a public service that provides information in Slovak in the area of news coverage and is the leader on Slovakia’s news agency market. It is a member of the the European Alliance of Press Agencies (EANA).

Ukraine

According to C. Truchot (2002, 19), “Information technology together with its applications is considered to have been a major factor in the introduction of the use of English. In actual fact, all computing tools and products can in principle be used in any other language. However, extension to other languages is limited by the often insurmountable obstacles caused by under-development

problems in various parts of the world". On the one hand, in the European Union there are a wide range of computer products in the languages of the largest and richest countries (English, German, French, Russian, etc.). On the other hand, as C. Truchot points out, "the languages of the central and eastern European countries (where the GDP is on average 75% below that of the European Union), less widely used national languages and minority languages are handicapped" (Truchot, 2002, 19). In order to acquire software in its own language, a country such as Ukraine has to ask for computer software in the Ukrainian language and persuade companies such as Microsoft to provide it, which do not consider that it is a part of a profitable market.

As was mentioned above, the Internet was created in English in the United States and initially developed exclusively in English. In the early 1990s, 98% of sites were in English. But nowadays, in the 21st century many other languages are now amalgamated into the global network under certain economic conditions (Truchot 2002: 19). There are studies that attempt to demonstrate this integration. There are 16.8 million internet users in Ukraine (37.49 percent of the total population) (InternetLiveStats.com, 2014).

The level of Internet penetration in Ukraine is approximately 30 percent lower than the average European rate (Poland – 67.15%, Slovakia – 82.65%). But because of market size, Ukraine is among the countries with the highest numbers of Internet users compared to other smaller European countries; countries share of world Internet users: Poland – 0.88%, Ukraine – 0.58%, the Czech Republic – 0.28%, Hungary – 0.25%, Slovakia – 0.15%.

Officially, Ukraine has about 4,000 periodicals – 2,400 newspapers and 1,700 magazines – published at least once a year. *Kyiv Post* (<http://www.kyivpost.com/>) is Ukraine's leading English-language newspaper. The *Kyiv Post* played a vital role as one of the few independent media outlets under former Presidents Leonid Kuchma and Viktor Yanukovich. Over the years, the weekly newspaper has led the charge for a free press in Ukraine, and has played roles in the Georgiy Gongadze scandal, the Orange Revolution, the Revolution of Dignity, and other significant Ukrainian events. It is produced by a team of Western and Ukrainian journalists. Launched in 1995, the newspaper's circulation is 11,000 copies.

The DAY (<http://www.day.kiev.ua/en>) is an English and Ukrainian-language weekly digest specializing in business news, politics, and cultural issues in Ukraine. *Mirror Weekly*, launched in 1994, is Ukraine's international newspaper (<http://mw.ua/>) providing breaking news in politics, economics, and opinionative coverage of national as well as international issues.

The Interfax-Ukraine News Agency (<http://en.interfax.com.ua/>) is a company belonging to the international group Interfax Information Services which has been a provider of information in the political and economic information mar-

ket of Ukraine since 1992. Over this time, the agency has earned a reputation of being the most authoritative and competent supplier of timely and objective information, in the format of high-quality and popular news products.

Among its clients are leading Ukrainian and foreign mass media, commercial and mediatory companies, investments funds, banks and financial institutions, foreign companies and representative offices, public organizations, embassies and trade missions. News reports from Ukraine are available in almost all countries of the world through the distribution channels of Interfax International. Currently the agency markets 45 information products on political and economic subjects in three languages (Ukrainian, English and Russian).

The information agency *UNIAN* (<http://www.unian.info/>) provides newspapers, radio, television, banks, enterprises, government bodies and foreign representative offices fresh political and economic news on the most important events in Ukraine's capital and regions, official decisions of the highest legislative and executive bodies, as well as comments of experts and politicians. The publication comes out 6 days a week, in Ukrainian, Russian and English. Besides this, there are up-to-the-minute news reports on important events. Total daily output is up to 50 pages a day.

The magazine *Lviv Today* (<http://www.lvivtoday.com.ua>) is West Ukraine's monthly English-language lifestyle magazine. Launched in May 2008, the magazine is a first for Ukraine and the only English-language publication outside of the capital city, Kiev. Every month *Lviv Today* offers news of upcoming events and regular features offering an insight into local history and traditions. *Lviv Today* is distributed free of charge via a selected network of airlines and leading regional hotels, restaurants, business centres and arts venues. Its readership includes Lviv's growing international audience, tourists visiting the city and members of the Lviv business and cultural communities.

The English edition of *The Ukrainian Week* (<http://ukrainianweek.com/>) is published bi-monthly and contains a selection of articles considered to be of interest to non-Ukrainian readers.

The Ukrainian Weekly (<http://www.ukrweekly.com>) has been published continuously since 1933. Founded at first to serve the Ukrainian American community and to function as a vehicle for communication of that community's concerns to the general public in the United State, *The Ukrainian Weekly* today publishes news about Ukraine and Ukrainians around the world.

The *US Ukraine Observer* (<http://usukraineobserver.com/>) is a magazine about general business, political, social, religious and cultural issues in Ukraine.

The *Ukraine Business online* (<http://www.ukrainebusiness.com.ua/>) provides business related news from Ukraine daily as well as issues about health, science, culture, tourism and sports. .

UkrainianJournal.com is the website for the *Ukrainian Journal*, the leading English-language daily newsletter covering breaking political and business news from Ukraine. The *Ukrainian Journal* was launched in August 2002 by a team of professional reporters and editors. *UkrainianJournal.com* publishes stories from the *Ukrainian Journal* newsletter, but also has its own features and runs a searchable archive of articles, comments and analyses.

New media technologies further extend the capabilities of the traditional media to influence cultures. The Internet alone has radically transformed the way in which people are able to interact with one another. A counterpoint to these beneficial consequences of the Internet is its availability for introducing new ideas and images into cultures, which may speed up and change the nature of the culture itself (Lustig et al. 2010: 38).

As a result, media can be responsible for minimizing the effects of geographic distance by increasing the speed, volume, and opportunities with which ideas can be introduced from one culture to another in a matter of seconds (Lustig et al., 2010, 38).

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