



# **Achieving a Higher Level of Communicative Competence in English for Specific Purposes**

**Zuzana Hrdličková**

**2024**

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University of Hradec Králové  
Gaudeamus Publishing House

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The monograph was published by Gaudeamus as its 1,872th publication.

ISBN 978-80-7435-938-5

 University of Hradec Králové  
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## List of Abbreviations

abbr.	abbreviation
AcadE; AE	academic English
adj	adjective
adv	adverb
AmE	American English
attrib. use	attributive use
BEIT	Business English Idiomatic Test
BNN	Business News Network
BrE	British English
BusE	business English
CEFR	Common European Framework of Reference for Languages
CLT	Communicative Language Teaching
coll.	collocation
conj	conjunction
e.g.	for example
EAP	English for Academic Purposes
EFL	English as a Foreign Language
ESP	English for Specific Purposes
esp.	especially
FBS	Forbes
FLA	foreign language acquisition
FMCG	Fast-Moving Consumer Goods
fml	formal
FRT	FORTUNE
GEIT	General English Idiomatic Test
GenE	general English
GRD	The Guardian
HR	Human Resources
i.e.	that is
INC	Inc.
infml	informal
IT	Information Technology
n	noun
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PISA	Programme for International Student Assessment
PLT	POLITICO
prep	preposition
sb	somebody
sth	something
v	verb

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## Introduction

“Reading is to the mind what exercise is to the body.”

Joseph Addison (1672 – 1719)

English essayist, poet, playwright and politician

In the simplest sense, the word ‘function’ can be thought of as a synonym for the word ‘purpose’ or ‘use’. When scholars talk about functions of language, they may mean no more than the way people use their language. Stated in the most general terms, people do different things with their language, that is, they expect to achieve different objectives by talking and writing as well as by listening and reading.

There are many classifications of linguistic functions. For instance, Malinowski (1923) classifies functions of language into two broad categories: ‘pragmatic’ and ‘magical’. A quite different classification is that associated with Bühler (1934) describing ‘expressive’, ‘conative’ and ‘representational’ functions of language. His scheme was adopted by the Prague School and later extended by Jakobson (1960) who adds three more functions – ‘poetic’, ‘transactional’ and ‘metalinguistic’. Bühler’s scheme was adopted and developed by Britton (1970), who proposes a framework of ‘transactional’, ‘expressive’ and ‘poetic’ language functions. The functionalist approach to describing language is the one that has its roots in the traditions of Firth (1951), who views language as ‘interactive’ and ‘interpersonal’. Halliday (1978) uses the term ‘function’ to mean the purposive nature of communication and outlines seven functions of language: ‘instrumental’, ‘regulatory’, ‘interactional’, ‘personal’, ‘heuristic’, ‘imaginative’ and ‘informative’.

Speakers or writers convey messages via language. Most of them use language depending on the immediate situation and their social background. They often have considerable difficulty in expressing themselves in the language of which they are not native speakers. Reasons for continuing difficulty in communicating in a foreign language derives from their problems with pronunciation, a lack of knowledge of actual speech use of idiomatic expressions and slang, differences in the ability to acquire language, and the motivation to produce native-like speech. Another important factor that contributes to the incompetent use of language is that speakers do not know which utterances are appropriate in the social situation in which they are speaking (Mizne, 1997).

The knowledge and skills required to deal with the social dimension of language are concerned with in sociolinguistic competence (Council of Europe, 2020). One of the factors that makes sociolinguistic competence hard to acquire is a large amount of

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variance in cultural speaking rules. Learners are often unaware of these differences and use the rules of speaking of their native culture when communicating in a foreign language. Slovak undergraduates must be trained to use language flexibly and effectively for different purposes. They should learn how to adjust their level of formality (register and style) to suit the context: formal, informal or colloquial and maintain a consistent register. To become efficient interlocutors or writers, they need to be competent linguistically. That is, apart from dealing with grammar, semantics, phonology and orthography, they need to learn and acquire frequent and essential vocabulary, avoid repetition of the exact words, produce and use collocations systematically and appropriately in different contexts as well as master idioms (Fernando, 1996; O'Dell & McCarthy, 2008; Gillet, 2010; O'Dell & McCarthy, 2010, and others).

Acquiring linguistic and pragmatic competences is equally essential. Pragmatic competence concerns the functional use of linguistic resources (production of language functions, speech acts), drawing on scenarios or scripts of interactional exchanges. It also concerns the mastery of discourse, cohesion and coherence, the identification of text types and forms, irony and parody. For this component, even more than the linguistic component, it is hardly necessary to emphasise the main impact of interactions and cultural environments in which such abilities are constructed (Council of Europe, 2001).

Chapter 1 of the monograph describes four discrete understandings of 'literacy', i.e. literacy as skills – reading, writing and oral skills (numerical skills are excluded) as well as skills that enable access to knowledge and information; literacy as applied, practised and situated; literacy as a learning process; and literacy as text. Literacy skills are not only used for practical purposes but they are also practised for a diverse range of cultural, social and emotional purposes.

Chapter 2 discusses 'reading literacy' as an essential academic competence. It looks at the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development *Programme for International Student Assessment* (OECD, PISA), which examines the extent to which students near the end of their compulsory education have acquired key knowledge and skills essential for full participation in modern society. Based on the PISA results (see Hrdličková, 2018a), Slovak pupils and students do not achieve satisfactory results in the assessments; the mean performance in reading is constantly decreasing, which directly impacts communication skills. The chapter further investigates linguistic features causing difficulties in processing reading texts. It also discusses *Europe 2020: A Strategy for innovative, sustainable and inclusive growth* (European Commission, 2010) and the *Lisbon Strategy evaluation document* (European Commission, 2010) and considers recent research on improving reading skills at the university level. In addition, the chapter deals with professional competence; it highlights the most

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important English language skills and the level of English for tasks required by employers.

Since reading contributes to language proficiency and competence, Chapter 3 describes developing communicative language competences in 'English as a Foreign Language' (EFL), namely 'linguistic competence', 'sociolinguistic competence' and 'pragmatic competence'. It considers the aspects and descriptors of particular competences at Levels B2 – C1 (to see what Slovak students should master) presented in the *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, teaching, assessment* and the *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, teaching, assessment – Companion volume* (CEFR, Council of Europe, 2001, 2020).

Chapter 4 focuses on developing communicative competence in 'English for Academic Purposes' (EAP) and 'English for Specific Purposes' (ESP). It discusses the design of language programmes, the communication situations requiring integrated skills in both academic and professional spheres, and the 'integrated-skills' approaches in ESP or EAP. Next, it outlines an ideal language programme for a business English course recommended by the scholars participating in an international project within the Leonardo da Vinci programme 'Transparency in the Acquired Language Competences' (TALC) that may serve as a prime example for course designers and educators. Finally, it discusses current challenges in teaching and learning ESP.

Chapter 5 deals with teaching business English at the Department of English Language of the Faculty of Applied Languages of the University of Economics in Bratislava and describes what students are supposed to master in the field of **Economics**, where they can work when they accomplish their studies and what skills they are required to have. It looks at the purpose, content, and syllabi of business English courses for students who have just achieved Level B2 of proficiency. The chapter investigates the core book (*Market Leader Upper Intermediate*) and analyses lexis since 50.00% of the tasks included in departmental end-of-term tests are focused on testing students' vocabulary. Next, it is devoted to practising specific skills and learning and acquiring vocabulary. In addition, it describes the use of technology in teaching and learning business English.

Chapter 6 briefly discusses teaching business English at the Department of English Language and Culture of the Faculty of Education of Constantine the Philosopher University in Nitra since the only course was taught here in the summer semester of 2022/2023. It analyses the content of the 'Course Information Letter' and the core book (*Market Leader Advanced*). It investigates if an 'integrated-skills' approach is also applied in ESP and examines how students' specific skills are practised.

Chapter 7 introduces research methodology and presents, summarises and discusses research findings. There were more reasons for carrying out the first three

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phases of the research, namely unsatisfactory results achieved by Slovak 15-year-old pupils and students in the PISA assessments, and poor grades achieved by undergraduates of the University of Economics in Bratislava in written examinations and frequent retaking of examinations.

Firstly, this chapter aims to confirm the effectiveness of an alternative form of teaching and learning business English at the University of Economics in Bratislava using a textbook, a self-study reference and practice book, newspaper and magazine articles, the Internet and LMS Moodle. The methods applied in the first three phases of the research are as follows: the *General English Idiomatic Test* (GEIT; Hrdličková, 2017), *Business English Idiomatic Test* (BEIT; Hrdličková, 2017), *Hypothesis Testing*, the parametric *t-Test* (*Independent Samples t-Test*, *Paired Samples t-Test*), quantitative and qualitative analyses, and end-of-term business English tests. Alternative and Null hypotheses  $H_1$ ,  $H_0$ ;  $H_2$ ,  $H_0$ ;  $H_3$ ,  $H_0$ ;  $H_4$ ,  $H_0$  are expected to be confirmed or refuted (Kučerová & Fidlerová, 2012). The research will try to provide an answer to the following research question: Research question (RQ1): “To what extent will the specific teaching/learning techniques/methods, such as working with authentic texts and identifying idioms, terms, frequent and essential words, and collocations in them, support reading literacy?”

Secondly, the fourth phase of the research aims to determine if and how integrated skills are developed in a business English course at Constantine the Philosopher University in Nitra and if written assignments impacted students' results in the end-of-term test. Other methods/techniques applied are as follows: content analysis, case studies, written assignments, and an end-of-term test. Research will try to provide an answer to the following research questions: Research question (RQ2): “How much time is devoted to the listening section in the given units?” Research question (RQ3): “How can the right amount of time be given to developing each skill and competence?”

Chapter ‘Conclusion’ discusses the results of the pedagogical experiment and case studies and the overall asset of the research.

A brief outline of implications and perspectives for further research, ‘Resumé’ ‘References’, articles from newspaper and magazine sources, and ‘Appendices’ are inseparable parts of the monograph.

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# 1 Discrete Understandings of ‘Literacy’

For most of its history in English, the word ‘literate’ meant to be ‘familiar with literature’ or ‘well educated, learned’. Since the late nineteenth century, it has also come to refer to the abilities to read and write text while maintaining its broader meaning of being ‘knowledgeable, educated in particular fields’. Since the mid-twentieth century, scholars have dedicated substantial attention to defining **literacy**, and their work has had direct implications for approaches to practice and policy (Fransman, 2005). Academics from different disciplines such as history, philosophy, psychology, sociology, anthropology, economics, and linguistics have engaged in an ongoing debate over the meaning and definition of ‘literacy’ and how it relates to the broader notions of education and knowledge. Considering these evolving debates, including the significant traditions, critiques and approaches to literacy, there are four discrete understandings of literacy: (a) literacy as an autonomous set of skills, (b) literacy as applied, practised and situated, (c) literacy as a learning process, and (d) literacy as text (see Hrdličková, 2018b).

In the 1960s and 1970s, the term ‘functional literacy’ initially emphasised the impact of literacy on socio-economic development. After that, the notion has evolved considerably to acknowledge other dimensions (e.g. personal, cultural and political). In the 1980s and 1990s, reflecting the challenges in economic and social life, the emergence of the economies of knowledge, and the impact of new technology and information media, the term ‘literacy’ became a metaphor for many skills. An emphasis was put on skills and practices relevant to the changing dynamics of modern life. The late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries brought a fundamental change in the development of technologies such as the Internet, gaming software, virtual and augmented reality, and telecommunication technologies. Due to this, the field of New Literacies Studies started a new era in the study of literacy. While the definition of new literacy is variable and evolving, it is often understood that it identifies questions, locates information, evaluates the information, synthesises information to answer questions, and communicates the answers to others (Shliakhovchuk, 2021).

Those mentioned above four broad areas of investigation accommodate almost all theoretical understandings of literacy. The following subchapters rely on academic research from the Anglophone tradition, which has had, by a great amount, the most significant influence on international policy.

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## 1.1 Literacy as Skills

**Reading, Writing and Oral Skills.** The most common understanding of literacy is that it is a set of tangible skills, mostly the **cognitive skills of reading and writing**, which are independent of the context in which they are acquired and the background of the person who acquires them. Scholars continue to disagree on the best way to acquire literacy. Some of them advocate the 'phonetic' approach and others 'reading for meaning', resulting in what has occasionally been called the 'reading wars' (Adams, 1993; Goodman, 1996; Street, 2004). The emphasis on meaning has given way to a 'scientific' attention to phonetics, word recognition, spelling and vocabulary. This approach has turned to research in the cognitive sciences on important features of human memory (e.g. how the brain processes reading patterns) and to techniques such as phonological awareness training and giving more and more faster reading tasks (Abadzi, 2003, 2004).

A tendency to favour the 'scientific' principles of phonetics has given rise to claims that writing is the transcription of speech and in consequence 'superior' to it. Likewise, some claim the alphabetic system is technologically superior to other script forms, since it is phonetic, rather than reliant on pictures to denote meaning (Olson, 1994). Street (2004) notes that many such views are founded on deeper assumptions about the cognitive consequences of learning to read and write. The cognitive argument has been linked to broader societal development, so that literacy becomes a condition for economic growth, 'progress' and the transition from 'oral' to 'literate' cultures (Goody, 1977; Olson, 1977, 1994; Ong, 1982).

The transition from oral to literate modes has a fundamental impact on human consciousness. It does not only allow for the representation of words by signs, but it also gives a linear shape to thought, providing a critical framework within which to think analytically. While rational consciousness is taken to be a given good, it derives from a classical epistemology, which may be less appropriate for societies founded on different patterns of thought and interaction. Consequently, an understanding of literacy that maintains some focus on oral skills is desirable.

In the 1970s, some social psychologists argued that many of the assumptions about literacy in general were linked to school-based writing, resulting in serious limitations in accounts of literacy – especially in the claim that it improves faculties of reasoning (Olson, 1977; Scribner & Cole, 1978).

**Skills Enabling Access to Knowledge and Information.** The concept 'literacy' has begun to be used in a much broader, metaphorical, sense to refer to **other skills and competences**, for instance, 'information literacy', 'visual literacy', 'media literacy' and 'scientific literacy'. The OECD through its publications *Literacy in the Information Age: Final Report of the International Adult Literacy Survey* (2000) and *Literacy Skills for the Knowledge Society: Further Results from the International Adult Literacy Survey* (1997)

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have given impetus to the use of such terms. The meaning of these terms tends to be diverse and shifting, ranging from the view of literacy as a set of largely technical skills to the idea that these skills should be applied in critical ways to examine one's surroundings (e.g. the workplace and the media) and push for social change (Hull, 2003). For example, 'information literacy' predominantly refers to the ability to access and use a variety of information sources to solve an information need. In addition, it can be defined as the development of a complex set of **critical skills** that allow people to express, explore, question, communicate and understand the flow of ideas among individuals and groups in quickly changing technological environments.

Some scholars have suggested that a more useful term would be that of multiple literacies, i.e. ways of 'reading the world' in specific contexts: technological, health, information, media, visual, scientific and the like (Cope & Kalantzis, 2000; Lankshear & Knobel, 2003; Street, 2003).

Nevertheless, the concept of multiple literacies is not without controversy. By attracting a lengthy list of modifiers, 'literacy' has become a debased term, its core reference to reading skills undermined (Hull, 2003; Jones, 1997). However, some scholars emphasise that **reading**, in the broadest sense of the word, remains integral to the concept of 'literacy'. Therefore, reading may mean not only the decoding and understanding of words, but also the interpreting of signs, symbols, pictures and sounds, which vary by social context (Cope & Kalantzis, 2000). To put it briefly, different everyday contexts present different literacy demands, perceptions of literacy, and types of power relations and hierarchies of knowledge (Barton, Hamilton, & Ivanic, 2000; Street, 2003).

## **1.2 Literacy as Applied, Practised and Situated**

Acknowledging the limitations of a skills-based approach to literacy, some scholars have tried to concentrate on the application of these skills in 'relevant' ways. One of the first coordinated efforts to do so was through the development of the concept of 'functional literacy'. In the 1960s and 1970s, this concept initially emphasised the impact of literacy on socio-economic development. Views of functional literacy often assumed literacy could be taught as a universal set of skills, applicable everywhere, and that there was only one literacy, which everyone should learn in the same way. Literacy was seen as neutral and independent of social context.

This understanding evolved as scholars argued that the ways in which literacy is practised vary by social and cultural context (Barton, 1994). Ethnographic research into literacy practices in specific settings was particularly instrumental in the development of this approach, normally known as 'New Literacy Studies' (Barton & Hamilton, 1999; Collins, 1995; Gee, 1999; Street, 1998). This approach argues literacy is a social practice, embedded in social settings.

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Among key concepts in this view of literacy are **literacy events** – ‘any occasion in which a piece of writing is integral to the nature of the participants’ interactions and their interpretative processes’ – and **literacy practices** – ‘the social practices and conceptions of reading and writing’ (Street, 1984).

Nevertheless, this approach has been criticised by some scholars, who claim it overemphasises local needs and insufficiently recognises how external forces (e.g. international communication, economic globalisation, etc.) have infringed on the ‘local’ experiences of specific communities (Collins & Bolt, 2002). Some scholars question the unwillingness of advocates of this approach to examine the potential of literacy to help people move out of ‘local’ positions into fuller economic, social and political participation.

### **1.3 Literacy as a Learning Process**

As individuals learn, they become literate. This idea is at the core of the approach that views literacy as an **active and broad-based learning process**. Building on the scholarship of John Dewey, an American philosopher, psychologist and educational reformer, and Jean Piaget, a Swiss psychologist, constructivist educationalists focus on ways in which individual learners, principally children, make sense of their learning experiences. In the area of adult education, some scholars see personal experience as a central resource for learning. Experience is one of Knowles’s (1980) five principles of ‘andragogy’ in which he argues for a learner-centred educational process, with critical reflection as central. Kolb (1984) developed an experiential learning cycle, with ‘concrete experience’ as a starting point for learning, based on critical reflection.

Social psychologists and anthropologists have used concepts like ‘collaborative learning’, ‘distributed learning’ and ‘communities of practice’ to shift the focus away from the individual mind and towards more social practices building on newer understandings of literacy (Lave & Wenger, 1991; Rogoff, 2003; Rogoff & Lave, 1984). By way of illustration, Rogers (2003) distinguishes between ‘task-conscious’ learning, typically evaluated by test-based task completion, and ‘learning-conscious’ learning, that is assessed from the perspective of the learner. The more traditional learning methods of children (‘task-conscious’ test learning) are often used for adults, as obvious in many adult literacy programmes.

Paulo Freire (Freire & Macedo, 1987), a Brazilian educationalist and philosopher, and a leading advocate of critical pedagogy, is maybe the most famous adult literacy educator whose work integrated the concepts of active learning within socio-cultural settings. He emphasised the importance of bringing the learner’s socio-cultural realities into the learning process itself and then using the learning process to challenge these social processes. Central to his pedagogy is the concept of ‘critical literacy’, a goal to be achieved, to a certain extent, through engaging with books and

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other written texts, but, more profoundly, through reading (i.e. interpreting, reflecting on, interrogating, theorising, investigating, exploring, probing and questioning) and writing (acting on and dialogically transforming) the social world.

#### **1.4 Literacy as Text**

Literacy as text means to look at it in terms of the 'subject matter' (Bhola, 1994) and the nature of the texts that are produced and consumed by literate individuals. Texts vary by subject and genre (e.g. textbooks, technical or professional publications and fiction), by complexity of the language used and by ideological content (explicit or hidden).

This approach pays peculiar attention to the analysis of discrete passages of text, referred to by sociolinguists as **discourse**. Influenced by broader social theories, it locates literacy within wider communicative and socio-political practices that construct, legitimate and reproduce existing power structures (Gee, 1990). Language represents one of several modes through which communication is conducted (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2001). The broader policy question raised by this work is whether the types of literacy taught in schools and programmes for adults are relevant to the present and future lives of learners (Gee, Hull, & Lankshear, 1996).

To sum up, these four approaches broadly reflect the evolution of the meaning of 'literacy' in different disciplinary traditions. While international policy has not evolved in direct response to these views, there has been a mutual influence between evolving theories and policy-oriented approaches to literacy (UNESCO, 2005).

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## 2 Reading Literacy as an Essential Academic Competence

As discussed above, **reading** remains integral to the concept of 'literacy'. It is not an isolated activity that takes place in some vacuum. Usually, it is undertaken for some purpose in social context and the context itself contributes to the reader's notion of what it means to read, or, as some scholars tend to put it, to be 'literate' (Alderson, 2000). Reading is one of the most important skills since it serves as an important source of comprehensible input as well as it contributes to the development of overall proficiency and competence of an individual in a language. According to Holloway (1999), **reading skills** are substantial to the academic achievement of middle- and high-school students. Olson (1977) claims that in today's society **reading literacy** introduces a bias because it provides advantages to those who acquire the necessary skills. As the currency used in schools, literacy provides access to literate institutions and has an impact on cognition or thinking processes (Olson, 1994); it also shapes the way in which people think. Achievement in reading literacy is not only a foundation for achievement in other subject areas within the educational system, but also a prerequisite for successful participation in most areas of adult life (Cunningham & Stanovich, 1997).

Since the monograph is primarily devoted to improving university students' reading and speaking skills, this chapter looks at the importance of reading literacy in all three levels of education and discusses linguistic features causing difficulties in processing reading texts. In addition, it deals with research on improving reading skills as well as it considers the importance of English in the workplace.

### 2.1 Reading Literacy and Slovak Students' Results in PISA Assessments

According to Švrčková (2011), the concept 'reading literacy' means functional use of an acquired skill in an individual context. Being literate means that one has to develop a broader set of skills, which activate functional use of an acquired skill, e.g. language, in everyday life. Hence, reading literacy does not only refer to mastering the reading skill, but also the ability to work with texts, communicate in writing, and acquire and process information contained in texts.

Delgadova (2015) states that reading literacy is a comprehensive set of skills and abilities that are needed to work with texts effectively. It does not only refer to a mere

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speed reading of words, phrases or full texts, but also to being able to comprehend the contents properly, find both explicit and implicit meanings, analyse the content and the information obtained, and being able to interpret the content properly and pass it on. First of all, it is the ability to make one's own judgements about texts and apply their content to innovate and create new knowledge as a result of the information received.

In the *PISA 2015 Assessment and Analytical Framework: Science, Reading, Mathematic, Financial Literacy and Collaborative Problem Solving* (OECD, 2017), 'reading literacy' is described as one's ability to understand, use, reflect on and engage with written texts to achieve one's goals, develop one's knowledge and potential, and participate in society. The definition goes beyond the traditional notion of decoding information and literally interpreting what is written. PISA's notion of 'reading literacy' includes the range of situations in which participants read, the different ways in which written texts are presented, and the variety of ways in which readers approach and use texts from functional and finite to the deep and far-reaching.

In each round of PISA, one of the core domains (reading, mathematics, science) is tested in detail. In 2018, 79 countries/economies participated in the assessment and the core domain was reading, as it was in 2000 and 2009. The data (OECD, 2019) indicate that seven countries/economies, including the Slovak Republic, saw declining mean performance in all three domains. Concerning the performance in reading, Slovak participants achieved unsatisfactory results in the assessments in 2003, 2006, 2009 and 2012. Additionally, mean performance in reading together with science did not change significantly between 2015 and 2018 (see Hrdličková, 2018a). When comparing countries and economies' performance in reading in the last assessment, the Slovak Republic was in the 41st place, i.e. statistically significantly below the OECD average.

The data also reflect that there is a close inter-relationship between a student's performance in PISA and his or her parents' level of education. Countries with more highly educated and skilled adults are at an advantage over countries where parents have less education or where many adults have low literacy skills (OECD, 2019).

Results from PISA indicate the quality and equity of learning outcomes achieved allow educators to learn from the policies and practices applied in other, more successful, countries. Based on these unsatisfactory results, reading literacy must be improved since it has an important role in the life of every individual. Additionally, the overall level of reading literacy has a big impact on society.

### **2.1.1 Difficulties in Processing Reading Texts in L1 and L2**

A negative trend with performance in reading provided the main motivation for investigating the linguistic features of reading texts in detail. Many researchers have

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been concerned with the difficulties in processing reading texts by L1 (mother tongue) and L2 (second/foreign language) readers. To put it briefly, Schlesinger (1968) examines the hypothesis that syntactic complexity may be a factor in processing difficulties experienced by L1 readers. Berman (1984) discusses a number of linguistic variables that lead to the text being harder to process for L2 readers. In Freebody and Anderson's view (1983), lexical complexity has consistently been shown to have an impact on comprehension for both L1 and L2 readers. It has also been shown that topic (un)familiarity cannot be compensated for by easy vocabulary: both difficult vocabulary and low familiarity diminish comprehension, but texts discussing unknown topics with complex vocabulary do not become easier if more familiar words are used, and vice versa. Lexical complexity, mainly high occurrence of idiomatic expressions, the meanings of which are difficult to understand, give rise to difficulties that L2 readers experience in comprehending such passages (Williams & Dallas, 1984). Besides, homonyms are especially hard to process as readers usually seem to fix on one meaning. However, in Cooper's study (1984) experienced readers manifested much greater ability to use linguistic cues within larger context to disambiguate homonyms (Alderson, 2000).

Research also shows that conventionalised multiword expressions and the lexis itself have been relatively neglected in language studies. This neglect can be ascribed to the vocabulary being viewed as the non-generative component. It is mainly evident in respect of the functions of idioms and kindred expressions (Fernando, 1996; Kvetko, 2006). Idiomatic expressions have the potential of appearing anywhere and occur in mature written or spoken discourse. The abundance of such expressions in English makes the recognition of an **idiom principle**, strongly realised in idioms, weakly in collocations, very useful as an explanation of the way an important part of vocabulary works (Fernando, 1996). Bilá (2016) states that phrases with both strong and low collocation affinity make the text more difficult to comprehend. Idioms make up a substantial part of spoken language, but nowadays they often appear in written language. Proper understanding of ideational idioms (packages of information) in communication is difficult for non-native speakers as their meanings cannot be derived from the meanings of its individual components (Fernando, 1996).

## 2.2 Reading Literacy in an Academic Setting

In their pre-research project, Delgadová, Gullerová and Oltra-Albiach (2016) try to determine the level of the reading comprehension competence of university students at three European universities – two in Spain and one in the Slovak Republic. The results from testing a small sample of Slovak first-year university students indicate reading literacy deficiencies, i.e. they are not sufficiently prepared to work with

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academic texts of intermediate level of complexity, and lack analytical and critical thinking.

The fundamental academic competences required for effective learning are **reading comprehension** and **reading literacy**. We agree with Delgadova (2015) who states that reading literacy is one of the key skills in an academic setting, since the vast majority of knowledge is acquired through textbooks, monographs and other written materials. Academic competence is a cluster of abilities, skills, knowledge and dispositions of cognitive and non-cognitive nature that enable university students to perform the necessary activities as required, and consequently to graduate and be successful in their career. Reading literacy, along with professional, technical and other academic competences, ranks among the essential competences. It is considered to be the core academic competence in terms of processing the information gained, innovating it and as a result creating new knowledge (Delgadová et al., 2016).

At the Lisbon Summit in 2000, the Council of Europe set an ambitious strategic goal for the European Union (EU) for the next decade – to build a competitive and dynamic **knowledge-based economy** with greater social cohesion and higher employment. A comprehensive strategy designed to achieve the following aims was adopted: the transition to the economy and the knowledge society, modernising the European social model, mainly by investing in people and combating social exclusion, maintaining a healthy economic environment and economic growth by applying appropriate macroeconomic policies (Delgadova, 2015).

To build a competitive knowledge-based society, the EU needs educated, creative and well-prepared **human capital** to be able to respond in a flexible way to rapid societal changes. In the process of creating human capital, education plays a key role (Delgadová et al., 2016). One of the strategic and ambitious goals set at the Lisbon Summit was to attain the best possible quality of teaching and learning processes. University students need to be prepared for challenges of higher education and ready to get adapted to all the demands set by the society. Considering relevant changes in the academic setting, they mostly occurred in the sphere of application of information technologies into higher education, what enabled the establishment of different forms of distance education such as e-learning, online education, virtual education, network education, etc. (Krajňáková & Vojtovič, 2014). New technologies have brought great benefits and opportunities in terms of getting information quickly and efficiently, but they hinder the development of reading literacy.

The **information society** is referred to as a knowledge-based society. Its essence is the knowledge economy, in which the ability of economic entities to assess their **knowledge capital** plays a major role, whereas knowledge capital refers to creating added value through applying commonly acquired knowledge and experience and its further enhancing and exchanging with others. To be informed is of strategic

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importance to survive in the information society, thus the ability to identify, acquire and process information intellectually, as well as to apply, enhance and innovate it and as a result create new knowledge is of immense significance. However, this is only possible when having top-level reading literacy (Delgadova, 2015; Delgadová, Gullerová, & Oltra, 2015; Delgadová et al., 2016).

### ***2.2.1 Research on Improving Reading Skills***

In this digital era, it seems that printed-book readers start to shift to digital-book readers using new technologies. Novela, Asrowi and Widyastono (2022) analyse students' reading ability and the characteristics of the media needed to facilitate students' reading activities. In their research, they asked 100 high-school students questions that refer to the indicators of PISA issues to find out what difficulties they face while doing the PISA test. The results show that the overall level of students' reading ability is still relatively low and that students need innovation because they are very interested in developing a learning media, with one of the prominent characteristics of the media being interactive.

According to Ntereke and Ramoroka (2017), the ability to read and interpret textbooks and other assigned materials is a critical component of success at the university level. In their research study, they evaluate the reading levels of first-year students to determine how adequately they are prepared for university reading. They also try to find out if there is any significant improvement after having completed the course in 'Communication and Academic Literacy'. Altogether, 51 first-year humanities students from the University of Botswana were enrolled on it. The data were collected through a reading test which was administered at the beginning of the first semester and the same test administered at the end of the semester. The findings indicate that there is a mixed and wide variation of students' reading competency levels and that a significant number of first-year entrants are inadequately prepared for university reading.

In Hermida's view (2009), success at the college level mainly depends on existing pre-entry college attributes, including the mastery of some fundamental academic skills such as **reading, writing, critical thinking, oral presentation and media literacy**. Despite the importance of these skills for academic success, lecturers seldom teach them. They generally take them for granted, as they tend to presuppose that all students have already acquired these skills either as part of their secondary education or elsewhere in college. However, most first-year students lack academic reading skills, especially because college-level reading greatly differs from high-school reading. Thus, most student employ non-university strategies to read academic texts, which results in students taking a surface approach to reading. Hermida (2009) discusses some strategies, examples and resources aimed at promoting students to take a **deep**

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**approach to reading.** According to the Hermida (2009), if lecturers explicitly teach students how to read academic texts in aligned courses where students have ample opportunities to engage in reading activities throughout the term, students are more likely to adopt a deep approach to reading. The scholar conducts action research study to analyse whether explicitly teaching academic reading skills, coupled with the introduction of teaching and learning activities designed to encourage students to actively engage in deep reading in courses, makes a difference in the approach students take to reading.

Shaw (1999) also states that **reading** is basic in all academic disciplines. However, training in reading and comprehension is not properly incorporated in many college courses. On the one hand, some lecturers hold mistaken assumptions that college textbooks are not significantly different from the common literature and that most college students read academic materials willingly and adequately. On the other hand, some lecturers throw out reading requirements because they see no effective way to improve students' reading skills. The most detrimental to students, some faculty abandon reading requirements because they perceive their implementation as time-consuming and inconvenient.

Even though students read advanced academic materials, it does not always mean that they comprehend what they have just read. According to Lei, Rhinehart, Howard and Cho (2010), college-level courses do not put an emphasis on reading comprehension. Many lecturers believe that students possess the skills to succeed at the college level. However, in the United States, freshman college students typically finish their first year with rather poor reading comprehension skills. Then, they need to attend reading classes as well as enrol in assistance labs. According to the scholars, there are many strategies that can be applied to improve students' reading comprehension skills, for instance, non-reading related information like background knowledge or experiences, homework and class work and learning aides. Lecturers can also teach students how to use other strategies, including the SQ3R method, peer teaching, encoding, and reading flexibility.

From our experience, we can also say that many Slovak undergraduates do not possess the skills needed to succeed at university. We agree with Shaw (1999) that training in improving reading comprehension skills requires a change of attitudes, experimentation, and conscientious efforts by lecturers. Therefore, in our Project KEGA 'Idioms in Business Communication' we focused on working with written texts, developing reading skills, and acquiring business terms and idiomatic vocabulary.

### **2.3 Reading Literacy and Professional Competence**

English is the real global language that is important not only in education but also in international relations and business. In 2016, **Cambridge English** in collaboration

with **QS (Quacquarelli Symonds** – the leading global provider of specialist higher education and careers information and solutions) published *English at Work: global analysis of language skills in the workplace* – a global, cross-industry overview of English language skills at work. The findings are based on data from over 5,373 employers in 38 countries/territories that completed the annual QS Global Employer Survey, as well as insights from industry experts at Cambridge English. They asked employers across the world a series of questions about the importance of English in the workplace.

Regarding the topic of our monograph, we have chosen the following two questions. In Figure 1, employers told Cambridge English experts that it is important to have proficiency in all four language skills, but the most important one is **reading**. In Figure 2, it can be seen that sectors such as Banking, Finance and Law have the highest English language requirements compared to Travel, Leisure and Hospitality, where they have lower requirements.



Figure 1. Reading as the most important language skill (Source: Cambridge English & QS; accessed on 20 June 2023)



## English at Work

### What level of English do employers require for tasks at work?

All company sizes — All sectors — Showing Global

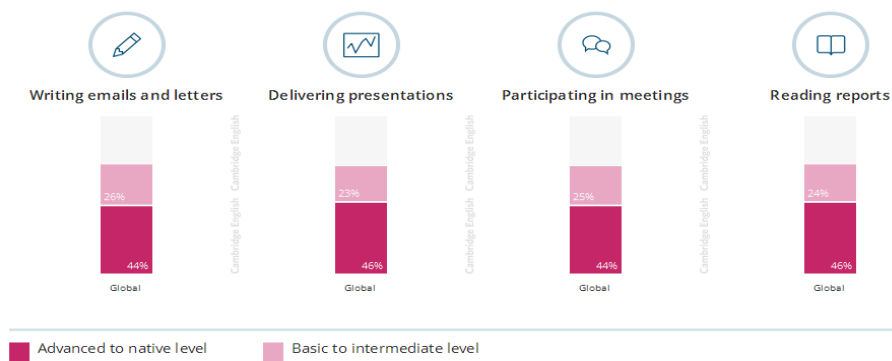


Figure 2. Advanced to native level of English required by employers (Source: Cambridge English & QS; accessed on 20 June 2023)

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### 3 Developing Communicative Language Competences in EFL

Naturally, **reading** contributes to the overall proficiency and competence of the individual in a language. However, there are other aspects that need to be discussed. In Slovakia, 'English as a Foreign Language' (EFL or *General English*) is taught in primary and secondary schools, usually in small classes where students use topic-based textbooks. As they learn English, they develop their language skills – reading, writing, listening and speaking. In the teaching process, each of these skills is addressed and different activities integrating all four skills are utilised since each skill reinforces the other.

The view of 'competence' in the *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages* (CEFR) does not only come from applied linguistics but also from applied psychology and sociopolitical approaches. Hymes (1967) coined the term 'communicative competence' as a reaction to Chomsky's notion of 'linguistic competence'. The concept has developed over years and different models of communicative competence have been offered by Hymes (1967, 1972), Canale and Swain (1980), Canale (1983), Bachman (1990), Celce-Murcia, Dörnyei and Thurrell (1995), Littlewood (2011), and others.

Chomsky (1964), in coining the terms 'competence' and 'performance' to refer to the language knowledge and language use, gives a modern reinterpretation to the Saussurean (1916) notions of 'langue' and 'parole'. His concept of 'competence' encompasses the non-reducible core of language – those aspects that form the autonomous, purely linguistic, system characterised by a formal grammar. Chomsky (1965, p. 4) defines the term 'performance' to refer to "the actual use of language in concrete situations". Thus, competence is one of many systems that contribute to the performance. As Chomsky (1965, p. 4) puts it, "To study actual linguistic performance, we must consider the interaction of a variety of factors, of which the underlying competence of the speaker-hearer is only one. In this respect, study of language is not different from empirical investigation of other complex phenomena".

In the 1970s, the term 'competence' began to be used in a much broader sense to refer to any systematic knowledge about language, not just grammatical knowledge. For instance, McCawley (1972) uses the term 'competence' with a meaning that encompasses much of what has previously been considered part of performance. He takes **linguistic competence** here as referring to a speaker's internalised system for

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relating meanings to possible ways of expressing them and the characteristics of linguistic and extra-linguistic contexts under which particular ways of expressing them are appropriate.

Hymes (1971) has **communicative competence** as “the most general term for the speaking and hearing capabilities of a person” (p. 16). Hymes (1972, p. 271), while accepting the superiority of Chomsky’s terminology over de Saussure’s, contends: “Such a theory of competence posits ideal objects in abstraction from sociocultural features”. Hymes believes that grammatical competence described by Chomsky is only one sector of communicative competence. The other ones mentioned by Hymes are the psycholinguistic (i.e. implementational feasibility), sociocultural (contextual appropriateness) and de facto (actual occurrence) sectors.

Canale and Swain (1980) propose a model of communicative competence consisting of grammatical, sociolinguistic and strategic competences. According to them, grammatical competence includes the knowledge of **lexical items** and of rules of morphology, syntax, sentence-grammar semantics and phonology. Strategic competence is made up of verbal and non-verbal communication strategies that may be called into action to compensate for breakdowns in communication due to performance variables or to insufficient competence. Even though strategic competence is not included in our as well as CEFR classification, it is undoubtedly important for the language user’s immediate communication. Piccardo et al. (2011) divides overall language proficiency into: general competences, communicative language competences, communicative language activities, and communicative language strategies (reception, production, interaction, mediation), that is also called strategic competence, which are further subdivided into planning, execution, evaluation and repair.

Canale (1983, p. 7) revised this model of communicative competence, and he proposed a four-component framework which includes grammatical competence, sociolinguistic competence, discourse competence and strategic competence. Here, grammatical competence is concerned with “features and rules of the language such as **vocabulary**, word formation, sentence formation, pronunciation, spelling and linguistic semantics”. Canale (1983, p. 12) believes this theoretical framework is not a model of communicative competence, because a model “implies some specification of the manner and order in which the components interact and in which the various competences are normally acquired”.

According to Paradis (2002), Chomsky’s interpretation is purely syntactic, while it is a more comprehensive term for lexicalists within the generative school of thought (Jackendoff, 1997; Pustejovsky, 1998). They assume a **modular lexicon** and account for both the rules governing the structure of language (syntax) and the source and nature of the lexical material (the lexicon) that enters into the derivations. The modular

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lexicon is a set of lexical entries which contain semantic, syntactic and phonological information that is deemed necessary to parse a sentence. In the generalist lexicalist view, this information is tied up with linguistic competence.

Since the monograph deals with developing reading literacy, learning and acquiring vocabulary, improving oral and written communication, this chapter discusses linguistic, sociolinguistic and pragmatic competences. It also looks at Levels B2 – C1 (CEFR) of English language proficiency in order to see what is required from Slovak students to do, or be able to do, with language at both levels.

### 3.1 Linguistic Competence

Communicative language competence can be considered as including several components: linguistic, sociolinguistic and pragmatic. Each of these components is postulated as comprising, particularly, knowledge and skills and know-how.

The concept 'linguistic competence' refers to the unconscious knowledge of grammar that allows speakers to use and understand a language. It is also known as **grammatical competence** or **I-language**. According to Newmeyer (1983), linguistic competence represents the speaker's tacit knowledge of the structure of his or her language.

In the CEFR, linguistic competences include **lexical, phonological, syntactical knowledge and skills** and other dimensions of language as system, independently of the sociolinguistic value of its variations and the pragmatic functions of its realisations. This component, considered here from the point of view of a given individual's communicative language competence, relates not only to the range and quality of knowledge (e.g. in terms of phonetic distinctions made or the extent and precision of **vocabulary**) but also to cognitive organisation and the way this knowledge is stored (e.g. the various associative networks in which the speaker places a **lexical item**) and to its accessibility (activation, recall and availability). Knowledge may be conscious and readily expressible or may not (e.g. once again in relation to mastery of a phonetic system). Its organisation and accessibility vary from one individual to another and vary also within the same individual (e.g. for a plurilingual person depending on the varieties inherent in his or her plurilingual competence). It can also be held that the cognitive organisation of vocabulary and the storing of expressions, etc. depend, amongst other things, on the **cultural features** of the community or communities in which the individual has been socialised and where his or her learning has occurred (Council of Europe, 2001).

#### 3.1.1 Lexical Competence

Lexical competence, knowledge of, and ability to use, the vocabulary of a language, consists of lexical and grammatical elements. **Lexical elements** include:

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(i) **fixed expressions**, consisting of several words, which are used and learnt as wholes. They comprise: (a) sentential formulae, including: direct exponents of language functions such as greetings (e.g. *Good morning! How do you do?*), proverbs, and relict archaisms (e.g. *Be off with you!*), (b) phrasal idioms, often: semantically opaque, frozen metaphors (e.g. *it's a long shot* – 'unlikely to succeed', *he kicked the bucket* – 'he died'), intensifiers – their use is often contextually and stylistically restricted (e.g. *as white as snow* – 'pure' as against *as white as a sheet* – 'pallid'), (c) fixed frames, learnt and used as analysed wholes, into which words or phrases are inserted to form meaningful sentences (e.g. '*please may I have...*'), (d) other fixed phrases, such as: phrasal verbs, compound prepositions, and (e) fixed collocations, consisting of words regularly used together (e.g. *to make a speech/mistake*) (Council of Europe, 2001, p. 110)

(ii) **single word forms** – a particular single word form may have several distinct meanings (polysemy) (e.g. *tank* – 'a liquid container' or 'an armoured armed vehicle'). Single word forms include members of the open word classes: noun, verb, adjective, adverb, though these may include closed lexical sets (e.g. days of the week, months of the year, weights and measures, etc.). Other lexical sets may be also established for grammatical and semantic purposes (Council of Europe, 2001, p. 110).

**Grammatical elements** belong to closed word classes, i.e., articles, quantifiers, demonstratives, personal pronouns, question words and relatives, possessives, prepositions, auxiliary verbs, conjunctions and particles.

### *Vocabulary Range*

In the CEFR, the 'Vocabulary range' scale (Council of Europe, 2001, 2020) concerns the extent and variety of expressions used. It is generally acquired through **reading** widely. The vocabulary range is taken to apply to both reception and production.

As far as Level B2 is concerned, the user/learner can understand and use the main technical terminology of his or her field, when discussing his or her area of specialisation with other specialists; has a good range of vocabulary for matters connected to his or her field and most general topics; can vary formulation to avoid frequent repetition, but lexical gaps can still cause hesitation and circumlocution; can produce appropriate collocations of many words in most contexts quite systematically; can understand and use much of the specialist vocabulary of his or her field but has problems with specialist terminology outside it.

Considering Level C1, the user/learner has a good command of broad lexical repertoire allowing gaps to be readily overcome with circumlocutions, however, little obvious searching for expressions or avoidance strategies can still be seen/heard; can select from several vocabulary options in almost all situations by exploiting synonyms of even words less commonly encountered; has a good command of common

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**idiomatic expressions** and **colloquialisms**; can play with words quite well; can understand and use appropriately the range of technical vocabulary and idiomatic expressions common to his or her area of specialisation.

### *Vocabulary Control*

The 'Vocabulary control' scale concerns the user/learner's ability to choose appropriate expression from his or her repertoire. As competence increases, such ability is driven increasingly by association in the form of **collocations** and **lexical chunks**, with one expression triggering another (Council of Europe, 2020).

As far as Level B2 is concerned, the user/learner's lexical accuracy is quite high, but, some confusion and incorrect word choice does occur without hindering communication.

Considering Level C1, the user/learner uses less common **vocabulary idiomatically** and appropriately. Occasional minor slips also occur in his or her speech or writing, but he or she makes no significant vocabulary errors.

### **3.1.2 Grammatical Competence**

Grammatical competence may be defined as knowledge of, and ability to use the grammatical resources of a language (Council of Europe, 2001). Formally, the grammar of a language may be seen as the set of principles governing the assembly of elements into meaningful sentences. Grammatical competence is the ability to understand and express meaning by producing and recognising **well-formed phrases** and **sentences** in accordance with these principles. The grammar of any language in this sense is highly complex and, so far, defies definitive or exhaustive treatment. There are several competing theories and models for the organisation of words into sentences. The user/learner should be encouraged to state which he or she has chosen to follow and what consequences his or her choice has for his or her practice. Here, some parameters and categories which have been widely used in grammatical description are identified.

The description of grammatical organisation involves the specification of: (a) **elements** (e.g. morphs, morphemes-roots and affixes, words), (b) **categories** (e.g. number, case, gender; concrete/abstract, countable/uncountable; (in)transitive, active/passive voice; past/present/future tense; progressive/(im)perfect aspect), (c) **classes** (e.g. conjugations, declensions; open word classes: nouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs, closed word classes (grammatical elements)), (d) **structures** (e.g. compound and complex words; phrases: noun phrase, verbs phrase, etc.; clauses: main, subordinate, co-ordinate; sentences: simple, compound, complex); (e) **processes** (descriptive) (e.g. nominalisation, affixation, suppletion, gradation, transposition, transformation), and (f) **relations** (e.g. government, concord, valency).

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### *Grammatical Accuracy*

The scale 'Grammatical accuracy' concerns both the user/learner's ability to recall **prefabricated expressions** correctly and the capacity to focus on **grammatical forms** while articulating thought (Council of Europe, 2001). This is difficult because, when formulating thoughts or performing more demanding tasks, the user/learner has to devote the majority of his or her mental processing capacity to fulfilling the task. This is why accuracy tends to drop during complex tasks. In addition, research in English, French and German suggests that inaccuracy increases at Level B1 as the learner is beginning to use language more independently and creatively.

As far as Level B2 is concerned, the user/learner has good grammatical control, however, occasional 'slips' or non-systematic errors and minor flaws in sentence structure may still occur, but they are rare and can often be corrected in retrospect; shows a relatively high degree of grammatical control; does not make mistakes which lead to misunderstanding; has a good command of simple language structures and some complex grammatical forms, although he or she tends to use complex structures rigidly with some inaccuracy.

Considering Level C1, the user/learner consistently maintains a high degree of grammatical accuracy; errors are rare and difficult to spot (Council of Europe, 2020).

### **3.1.3 Semantic Competence**

Semantic competence deals with the learner's awareness and control of the organisation of meaning. **Lexical semantics** deals with questions of word meaning, e.g. (a) relation of word to general context: reference, connotation, explication of general specific notions, and (b) interlexical relations, such as: synonymy/antonymy, hyponymy, collocation, part-whole relations, componential analysis and translation equivalence.

**Grammatical semantics** focuses on the meaning of grammatical elements, categories, structures and processes. **Pragmatic semantics** considers logical relations such as entailment, presupposition, implicature, etc. (Council of Europe, 2001).

Questions of meaning are central to communication. The functional/notional approach adopted in the Council of Europe publications offers an alternative to the treatment of linguistic competence. Instead of starting from language forms and their meanings, it starts from a systematic classification of communicative functions and of notions, divided into general and specific, and secondarily deals with forms, lexical and grammatical, as their exponents. Languages are based on an organisation of form and an organisation of meaning. The two kinds of organisation cut across each other in a largely arbitrary manner. Many practitioners find it more advantageous to go from meaning to form rather than more traditional practice of organising progression in

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purely formal terms. On the other hand, some may prefer to use a ‘communicative grammar’ (Šajgalíková & Breveníková, 2014). What is clear is that a language learner has to acquire both forms and meanings (Council of Europe, 2001).

### **3.1.4 Phonological Competence**

Phonological competence involves a knowledge or, and skill in the perception and production of: (a) the sound-units (**phonemes**) of the language and their realisation in particular contexts (**allophones**), (b) the phonetic features which distinguish phonemes (**distinctive features**, e.g. voicing, rounding, nasality, plosion), (c) the phonetic composition of words (**syllable structure**, the sequence of phonemes, word stress, word tones), (d) sentence phonetics (**prosody**): sentence stress and rhythm, intonation, and (e) phonetic reduction: vowel reduction, strong and weak forms, assimilation and elision.

#### *Phonological Control*

The ‘Phonological control’ scale (Council of Europe, 2001) is very brief.

As far as Level B2 is concerned, the user/learner has acquired a clear, natural pronunciation and intonation.

Considering Level C1, the user/learner can vary intonation and place sentence stress correctly to express finer shades of meaning.

However, the ‘Phonological scale’ in the Council of Europe (2020) is much more detailed. It is presented as a grid with the categories ‘Overall phonological control’, ‘Sound articulation’ and ‘Prosodic features’ (stress and intonation). In our view, it is recommended to follow Levels B2 and C1 in the teaching process, since the phonological control of an idealised native speaker has traditionally been seen as the target (see the ‘Course Information Letter’).

### **3.1.5 Orthographic Competence**

Orthographic competence involves a knowledge of and skill in the perception and production of the symbols of which written texts are composed. The writing systems of all European languages are based on the alphabetic principle, though those of some other languages follow an ideographic principle (e.g. Chinese) or a consonantal principle (e.g. Arabic). For alphabetic systems, the learner should know and be able to perceive and produce: (a) the form of letters in printed and cursive forms in both upper and lower case, (b) the proper spelling of words, including recognised contracted forms, (c) punctuation marks and their conventions of use, (d) typographical conventions and varieties of font, etc., and (e) logographic signs in common use (e.g. @, &, \$) (Council of Europe, 2001).

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### 3.1.6 Orthoepic Competence

Conversely, the user/learner required to read aloud a prepared text, or to use in speech words first encountered in their written form, needs to be able to produce a correct pronunciation from the written form. This may involve: (a) knowledge of spelling conventions, (b) ability to consult a dictionary and a knowledge of the conventions used there for the representation of pronunciation, (c) knowledge of the implications of written forms, particularly punctuation marks, for phrasing and intonation, and (d) ability to resolve ambiguity (homonyms, syntactic ambiguities, etc.) in the light of the context (Council of Europe, 2001).

#### *Orthographic Control*

The 'Orthographic control' scale concerns the ability to copy, spell and use layout and punctuation (Council of Europe, 2001, 2020).

As far as Level B2 is concerned, the user/learner can produce clearly intelligible continuous writing which follows standard layout and paragraphing conventions. Spelling and punctuation are reasonably accurate but may show signs of mother tongue influence.

Concerning Level C1, layout, paragraphing and punctuation are consistent and helpful. Spelling is accurate, apart from occasional slips of the pen.

To sum up, Subchapter 3.1 discussed the descriptors available for different aspects of linguistic competence, namely 'Vocabulary range', 'Vocabulary control', 'Grammatical accuracy', 'Phonological control' and 'Orthographic control'. The range/control distinction is a common one that reflects the need to take the complexity of the language used into account rather than just registering mistakes.

From our pedagogical experience, we can state that reality is quite different – worse. All students constantly need to develop all aspects of linguistic competence to eliminate shortcomings in their speech or writing.

## 3.2 Sociolinguistic Competence

As mentioned above, many scholars present their models of communicative competence. Canale and Swain (1980) state that **sociolinguistic competence** in their model is made up of sociocultural rules of use as well as rules of discourse. Sociocultural rules of use help language users produce and understand appropriately language data based on the speaking components of communicative events outlined by Hymes (1967). Rules of emerging discourse include cohesion and coherence principles which focus on communicative functions of the combination of utterances.

According to Canale (1983), sociolinguistic competence “addresses the extent to which utterances are produced and understood appropriately in different

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sociolinguistic contexts depending on contextual factors such as status of participants, purposes of the interaction, and norms or conventions of interaction” (p. 7), appropriateness of both form and meaning. Appropriateness of meaning also includes kinesics and proxemics.

Holmes (1992) states that using language appropriately involves knowing the sociolinguistic rules for speaking in a community. It means understanding the influence of social factors on speech behaviour. People in different communities acquire varied types of knowledge and they learn to use language appropriately in their own community. The knowledge that underlies people’s ability to use language appropriately is known as their sociolinguistic competence.

In multilingual communities, choosing the appropriate **variety** or **code** to use involves choosing from distinctly different languages as well as *styles* within a language. Children learn their ethnic language first and later other languages are added for purposes such as education and communication with a wider range of people in a wider range of contexts. **Vernacular languages** are the first languages people learn. A language of wider communication, or **lingua franca**, is often essential addition to a person’s repertoire. Vernacular languages contrast with lingua francas in many ways which reflect their different functions for speakers. For the same reason, they differ from **standard languages**, too. The factors that result in the promotion of a particular variety to the status of standard are social rather than linguistic. However, as a result, members of a speech community generally need to acquire some familiarity with a standard language as part of their sociolinguistic competence (Holmes, 1992).

In a monolingual community, sociolinguistic competence includes learning to use the community language in a way which reflects a person’s membership of various overlapping social groups. People belong to a particular social group, and they also live in a particular region. It is possible that these factors are evident in their speech, but the first will almost certainly be indicated linguistically. If they live in a monolingual community, the social group to which they belong may be indicated by their **pronunciation, grammar** or **vocabulary** – or by all of these. People almost certainly also indicate in their speech whether they are female or male, children or adults. People unconsciously acquire as part of their sociolinguistic competence the linguistic features which convey these messages in their own community. They learn how to speak appropriately for their gender and age group. Using language appropriately involves learning to take into account *who* they are talking *to*. The setting itself and the purpose of interaction are further factors which influence speech style – choosing vocabulary typical of more formal or less formal speech (Holmes, 1992).

In the CEFR (Council of Europe, 2001), sociolinguistic competences refer to the sociocultural conditions of language use. Through its sensitivity to social conventions

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(rules of politeness, norms governing relations between generations, sexes, classes and social groups, linguistic codification of certain fundamental rituals in the functioning of a community), the sociolinguistic component absolutely affects all language communication among representatives of different cultures, even though participants may not often be aware of its influence.

### 3.2.1 Linguistic Markers of Social Relations

These are widely divergent in **different languages and cultures**, depending on such factors as (i) relative status, (ii) closeness of relation, (iii) register of discourse, etc. (Council of Europe, 2001, p. 119). The examples given below for English are not universally applicable and may or may not have equivalence in other languages: (a) use and choice of greetings: on arrival (e.g. *Hello! Good morning!*), introductions (e.g. *How do you do?*), leave-taking (e.g. *Goodbye, See you later*), (b) use and choice of address forms: frozen (e.g. *My Lord, Your Grace*), formal (e.g. *Sir, Madam, Miss, Professor* (+ surname), *Dr*), informal (first names only, e.g. *John!, Suzan!*), familiar (e.g. *dear, darling*; (popular) *mate, love*), peremptory (surnames only, e.g. *Smith!, You (there)!*), ritual insult (often affectionate, e.g. *you stupid idiot!*), (c) conventions for turntaking, and (d) use and choice of expletives (e.g. *Dear, dear!, My God!, Bloody Hell!*, etc.).

### 3.2.2 Politeness Conventions

Politeness conventions provide one of the most important reasons for departing from the straightforward application of the **co-operative principle** (Grice, 1975; Rusiňáková, 2022). They vary from one culture to another and are a frequent source of inter-ethnic misunderstanding, mainly when polite expressions are literally interpreted: (a) **‘positive’ politeness**, e.g. showing interest in a person’s wellbeing; sharing experiences and concerns, ‘trouble talk’; expressing admiration, affection, gratitude; offering gifts, promising future favours, hospitality, (b) **‘negative’ politeness**, e.g. avoiding face-threatening behaviour (dogmatism, direct orders, etc.); expressing regret, apologising for face-threatening behaviour (correction, contradiction, prohibitions, etc.); using hedges, etc. (e.g. *I think*, tag questions, etc.); (c) appropriate use of *please, thank you*, etc., and (d) impoliteness (deliberate flouting of politeness conventions), e.g. bluntness, frankness; expressing contempt, dislike; strong complaint and reprimand; venting anger, impatience; and asserting superiority (Council of Europe, 2001, p. 119-120).

### 3.2.3 Expressions of Folk Wisdom

These **fixed formulae**, which both incorporate and reinforce common attitudes, make a significant contribution to **popular culture**. They are frequently used, or

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perhaps more often referred to or played upon, for instance in newspaper headlines (Burcl, 2013, 2014). A knowledge of this accumulated **folk wisdom**, expressed in language assumed to be known to all, is a significant component of the linguistic aspect of sociocultural competence: (a) proverbs (e.g. *a stitch in time saves nine*), (b) idioms (e.g. *a sprat to catch a mackerel*), (c) familiar quotations (e.g. *a man's a man for a' that*), and (d) expressions of: belief, such as – weathersaws (e.g. *fine before seven, rain by eleven*); attitudes, such as – clichés (e.g. *it takes all sorts to make a world*) and values (e.g. *it's not cricket*) (Council of Europe, 2001; see Hrdličková, 2021)

Graffiti, T-shirt slogans, TV catch phrases, workplace cards and posters now often have this function.

### 3.2.4 Register Differences

The term 'register' is used to refer to systematic differences between varieties of language used in different contexts. It is a very broad term, which could cover what is dealt with under **tasks** (communicative tasks and purposes), **text-types** (texts and activities) and **macrofunctions** (functional competence). This section deals with differences in the level of **formality**: (a) frozen (e.g. *Pray silence for His Worship the Mayor!*), (b) formal (e.g. *May we now come to order, please.*), (c) neutral (e.g. *Shall we begin?*), (d) informal (e.g. *Right. What about making a start?*), (e) familiar (e.g. *O.K. Let's get going.*), and (f) intimate (e.g. *Ready dear?*).

In early learning (up to Level B1), a relatively neutral register is appropriate, unless there are compelling reasons otherwise. It is this register that native speakers are likely to use towards and expect from foreigners generally. Acquittance with more formal or more familiar registers is likely to come over a period of time, perhaps through the reading of different text-types, especially novels, at first as a receptive competence. Some caution should be exercised in using more formal or more familiar registers, since their inappropriate use may lead to misinterpretation and ridicule (Council of Europe, 2001).

### 3.2.5 Dialect and Accent

Sociolinguistic competence also includes the ability to recognise the linguistic markers of, for example: (i) social class, (ii) regional provenance, (iii) national origin, (iv) ethnicity, and (v) occupational group. Such markers include: (a) lexicon (e.g. Scottish *wee* for 'small'), (b) grammar (e.g. Cockney *I ain't seen nothing* for 'I haven't seen anything'), (c) phonology (e.g. New York *boird* for 'bird'), (d) vocal characteristics (rhythm, loudness, etc.), (e) paralinguistics, and (f) body language.

No European language communities are entirely homogenous. Different regions have their **peculiarities in language and culture**. These are usually most marked in those who live purely local lives and therefore correlate with social class, occupation

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and educational level. Recognition of such **dialectal features**, therefore, gives significant clues as to the interlocutor's characteristics. Stereotyping plays a big role in this process. It can be reduced by the development of intercultural skills (and know-how). Learners will in the course of time also come into contact with speakers of various provenances. Before themselves adopting dialect forms, they should be aware of their social connotations and of the need for coherence and consistency.

### *Sociolinguistic Appropriateness*

In the CEFR, one scale is offered for 'Sociolinguistic appropriateness' (Council of Europe, 2020).

As far as Level B2 is concerned, the user/learner can with some effort keep up with and contribute to group discussions even when talk is fast and colloquial; can recognise and interpret sociocultural/sociolinguistic cues and consciously modify their linguistic forms of expression to express themselves appropriately in the situation; can express himself/herself confidently, clearly and politely in a formal or informal register, appropriate to the situation and person(s) concerned; can adjust his or her expression to make some distinction between formal and informal registers but may not always do so appropriately; can sustain relationships with users of the target language without unintentionally amusing or irritating them or requiring them to behave other than they would with another proficient user; and can express himself/herself appropriately in situations and avoid crass errors of formulation.

Considering Level C1, the user/learner can recognise a wide range of **idiomatic expressions** and **colloquialisms**, appreciating register shifts; however, may need to confirm occasional details, especially if the accent is unfamiliar; can understand humour, irony and implicit cultural references, and pick up nuances of meaning; can follow films employing a considerable degree of **slang** and **idiomatic usage**; can use language flexibly and effectively for social purposes, including emotional, allusive and joking usage; can adjust his or her level of formality (register and style) to suit the social context: formal, informal or colloquial as appropriate, and maintain a consistent register; and can frame critical remarks or express strong disagreement **diplomatically** (Council of Europe, 2020).

To sum up, in business English courses taught at the University of Economics in Bratislava, lecturers put a great emphasis on developing and testing lexical and grammatical competences. However, Subchapter 3.2 shows that they should also deal with sociolinguistic competence since doing business internationally occurs among different cultures. They should consider what range of greetings, address forms and expletives, which politeness conventions, which proverbs, clichés, folk wisdoms, which registers, etc. their students should be equipped with and use themselves.

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### 3.3 Pragmatic Competence

The concept 'pragmatics' emerged in the philosophy of language (Morris, 1938). However, from this field, it has developed to be related to sociolinguistics and other subdisciplines. Crystal (1997) defines **pragmatics** as "the study of language from the point of view of users, especially of the choices they make, the constraints they encounter in using language in social interaction and the effects their use of language has on other participants in the act of communication" (p. 301).

Nowadays, this concept is extensively used in the field of foreign language acquisition and teaching, mainly in reference to **pragmatic competence** as one of the abilities subsumed by the overarching concept of communicative competence. Chomsky (1980) defines 'pragmatic competence' as the "knowledge of conditions and manner of appropriate use (of the language), in conformity with various purposes" (p. 224). This term was seen in opposition to grammatical competence that in Chomskyan terms is "the knowledge of form and meaning". In a more contextualised manner, Canale and Swain (1980) include pragmatic competence as an important component of their model of communicative competence.

Pragmatic competence is identified as sociolinguistic competence and defined as the knowledge of contextually appropriate language use (Canale, 1983; Canale & Swain, 1980). However, Canale (1988) expands this definition and states that pragmatic competence includes "illocutionary competence, or the knowledge of the pragmatic conventions for performing acceptable language functions, and sociolinguistic competence, or knowledge of the sociolinguistic conventions for performing language functions appropriately in a given context" (p. 90).

In Bachman's (1990) model of language competence, pragmatic competence is a central component incorporating the ability to use the language to express a wide range of functions and interpret their illocutionary force in **discourse** according to the sociocultural context in which they are uttered. Rose's (1999) working definition of pragmatic competence has been accepted by scholars in the field of interlanguage pragmatics. It is described as the ability to use available linguistic resources in a contextually appropriate manner, i.e., how to do things appropriately with words (Leech, 1983; Thomas, 1983). Blum-Kulka, House and Kasper (1989) also describe these two aspects of pragmatics. **Pragmalinguistics** deals with the words or linguistic resources that enable the speaker to perform a speech act. **Sociopragmatics** investigates the use of speech acts in social contexts and the social factors that affect them. According to Kasper's (1997), pragmalinguistics "includes strategies like directness and indirectness, routines, and a large range of linguistic forms which can intensify or soften communicative acts" (p. 1). On the other hand, sociopragmatics refers to the social perception of communicative action.

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In the CEFR (Council of Europe, 2001, 2020), **pragmatic competences** are concerned with the user/learner's knowledge of the principles of language use according to which messages are: (a) organised, structured and arranged ('discourse competence'), (b) used to perform communicative functions ('functional competence'), and (c) sequenced according to interactional and transactional schemata ('design competence').

### **3.3.1 Discourse Competence**

Discourse competence is the ability of a user/learner to arrange sentences in sequence to produce coherent stretches of language. It includes knowledge of and ability to control the ordering of sentences with regard to: (a) topic/focus, (b) given/new, (c) 'natural' sequencing, (e.g. temporal), (d) cause/effect (invertible), (e) ability to structure and manage discourse as regards thematic organisation, coherence and cohesion, logical ordering, style and register, rhetorical effectiveness, and the **co-operative principle** (maxims of quality, quantity, relevance, manner) (Grice, 1975; Rusiňáková, 2022). Departure from these criteria for straightforward and efficient communication should be for a specific purpose.

**Text design** – knowledge of the design conventions in the community regarding, e.g. how information is structured in realising the various macro-functions (description, narrative, exposition, etc.); how stories, anecdotes, jokes, etc. are told; how a case is built up (in law, debate, etc.); how written texts (essays, formal letters, etc.) are laid out, signposted and sequenced.

A good deal of mother tongue education is devoted to building a young learner's discourse skills. In learning a foreign language, he or she is likely to start with short turns, usually of single-sentence length. At higher levels of proficiency, the development of discourse competence (its particular components), becomes of increasing importance (Council of Europe, 2001, 2020).

#### *Flexibility to Circumstances*

Flexibility is concerned with the ability to adapt language learnt to new situations and to formulate thoughts in different ways (Council of Europe, 2020).

As far as Level B2 is concerned, the user/learner can adjust what he or she says and the means of expressing it to the situation and the recipient and adopts a level of formality appropriate to the circumstances; can adjust to the changes of direction, **style** and **emphasis** usually found in conversation; can vary formulation of what he or she wants to say; and can reformulate an idea to emphasise or explain a point.

Considering Level C1, the user/learner can make a positive impact on an intended audience by effectively varying style of expression and sentence length and the use of **advanced vocabulary** and word order (Council of Europe, 2020).

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### *Turntaking*

Turntaking is concerned with the ability to take the discourse initiative. This ability can be viewed as an interaction strategy or as an integral aspect of discourse competence.

As far as Level B2 is concerned, the user/learner can intervene appropriately in discussion, using appropriate language to do so; can initiate, maintain and end discourse appropriately with effective turntaking; can initiate discourse, take his or her turn when appropriate and end conversation when he or she needs to, though he or she may not always do this elegantly; and can use stock phrases (e.g. *that's a difficult question to answer*) to gain time and keep the turn while formulating what he or she wants to express.

Considering Level C1, the user/learner can select a suitable phrase from a readily available range of discourse functions to preface his or her remarks appropriately to get the floor, or to gain time and keep the floor while thinking (Council of Europe, 2020).

### *Thematic Development*

This scale is concerned with the way in which ideas are logically presented in a text and related to each other in a clear rhetorical structure. It also comprises following relevant discourse conventions (Council of Europe, 2020).

As far as Level B2 is concerned, the user/learner can develop an argument systematically with appropriate highlighting of significant points, and relevant supporting detail; can present and respond to complex lines of argument convincingly; can follow the conventional structure of the communicative task concerned when communicating his or her ideas; can develop a clear description or narrative, expanding and supporting his or her main points with relevant supporting detail and examples; can develop a clear argument, expanding and supporting his or her points of view at some length with subsidiary points and relevant examples; can evaluate the pros and cons of various options; and can clearly signal the difference between fact and opinion.

Considering Level C1, the user/learner can use the conventions of the type of text concerned to hold the target reader's attention and communicate complex ideas; can give elaborate descriptions and narratives, integrating sub-themes, developing particular points and competing with an appropriate conclusion; can write a suitable introduction and conclusion to a long, complex text; and can expand and support the main points at some length with secondary points, reasons and relevant examples (Council of Europe, 2020).

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### *Coherence and Cohesion*

Coherence and cohesion refer to the way in which the separate elements of a text are interwoven into a coherent whole by using linguistic devices like referencing, substitution, ellipsis and other forms of textual cohesion, plus logical and temporal **connectors** and other forms of **discourse makers**. Both cohesion and coherence operate at the level of the sentence/utterance and at the level of the complete text (Council of Europe, 2020).

As far as Level B2 is concerned, the user/learner can use a variety of **linking expressions** efficiently to make clearly the relationships between ideas; can use a limited number of **cohesive devices** to link his or her utterances into clear, coherent discourse, though there may be some ‘jumpiness’ in a long contribution; can produce text that is generally well-organised and coherent, exploiting a range of linking expressions and cohesive devices; and can structure longer texts in clear, logical **paragraphs**.

Considering Level C1, the user/learner can produce clear, smoothly flowing, well-structured language, showing controlled use of organisational patterns, connectors (mainly logical and temporal) and cohesive devices; and can produce well-organised, coherent text, exploiting a variety of cohesive devices and organisational patterns (Council of Europe, 2001, 2020).

### **3.3.2 Functional Competence**

Functional competence includes **flexibility** in the use of one’s repertoire and the selection of appropriate sociolinguistic choices. All the scales for communicative language activities describe different types of functional language use. Knowledge of interactional and transactional schemata relates also to **sociocultural competence** and is to some extent treated under ‘Sociolinguistic appropriateness’ on the one hand and ‘General linguistic range’ and ‘Vocabulary range’ on the other, with regard to range of settings and, at lower levels, repertoires for them. In addition, pragmatic competence involves ‘speaker meaning’ in context as opposed to the ‘sentence/dictionary meaning’ of words and expressions. Thus, articulating exactly what one wants to say requires another aspect of pragmatic competence: ‘Propositional precision’. (Council of Europe, 2001, 2020).

Finally, saying anything requires **fluency** that is understood in two complementary ways: firstly, in a holistic way, representing the speaker’s ability to articulate a (possibly complex) message. This more holistic usage is reflected in statements like *he’s an articulate speaker* or *her English is very fluent* and implies an ability to talk at length, with appropriate things to say in a wide range of contexts. In a narrower, more technical interpretation, talking at length means a lack of distraction through breaks and long pauses in the flow. Putting ‘fluency’ under pragmatic competence cuts across

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the traditional competence/performance dichotomy used by linguists since Chomsky. As was mentioned in discussing the CEFR model, the CEFR does not continue that tradition. The view taken is that, in an action-oriented approach, competence exists only in action (Council of Europe, 2001)

### *Propositional Precision*

In the CEFR (Council of Europe, 2020), this scale concerns the ability to pinpoint how to formulate what one wishes to express. It considers the extent to which the user/learner can communicate detail and shades of meaning and can avoid compromising his or her ideally intended message.

As far as Level B2 is concerned, the user/learner can pass on detailed information reliably; and can communicate the essential points even in more demanding situations, though his or her language lacks expressive power and **idiomaticity**.

Considering Level C1, the user/learner can qualify opinions and statements precisely in relation to degrees of, for instance, certainty/uncertainty, belief/doubt, likelihood; and can make effective use of **linguistic modality** to signal the strength of a claim, an argument or a position (Council of Europe, 2020).

### *Spoken Fluency*

Fluency, as discussed above, has a broader, holistic meaning (i.e. articulate speaker) and a narrower, technical and more psycholinguistic meaning (i.e. accessing one's repertoire). The broader interpretation includes 'Propositional precision', 'Flexibility', and at least to some extent 'Thematic development' and 'Coherence and cohesion'. For this reason, this scale focuses more on the narrower, more traditional view of fluency.

As far as Level B2 is concerned, the user/learner can communicate spontaneously, often showing **remarkable fluency** and **ease of expression** in even longer complex stretches of language; can produce stretches of language with a fairly even tempo; although he or she can be hesitant as he or she searches for patterns and expressions, there are few noticeably long pauses; can interact with degree of fluency and spontaneity that makes regular interaction with users of the target language quite possible without imposing strain on either party.

Considering Level C1, the user/learner can express himself or herself fluently and spontaneously, almost effortlessly. Only a conceptually difficult subject can hinder a natural, smooth flow of language (Council of Europe, 2001, 2020).

From our pedagogical experience at university, we can state that developing pragmatic competences, namely discourse competence concerning the ability to design texts, including the generic aspects, and functional competence concerning the use of spoken discourse and written texts in communication for particular purposes is

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often neglected. Having considered the results of Slovak students in state written and oral examinations as well as end-of-term written and oral examinations, lectures definitely need to pay greater attention to developing pragmatic competence. They should decide what discourse features the learner is required to control, what macrofunctions (i.e. description, narration, commentary, exposition, exegesis, explanation, demonstration, instruction, argumentation, persuasion, etc.) and microfunctions (i.e. imparting and seeking factual information, expressing and finding our attitudes, suasion, socialising, structuring discourse, communication repair) he or she is required to produce, what interaction schemata (e.g. the general schema for the purchase of goods and services) are required of the learner at each level of proficiency, etc.

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## 4 Developing Communicative Competence in EAP and ESP

English language programmes exist in colleges and universities, extended education programmes, language schools and institutes, vocational and technical schools, adult schools and in the 'workplace' (companies and corporations). Cutting across those institutional contexts there are many purposes for which languages are taught. 'English for Academic Purposes' (EAP) and 'English for Specific Purposes' (ESP) are among six broad types of curricula that are designed to fit such varying student goals. EAP is a term that is very broadly applied to any course, module or workshop in which students are taught to deal with academically related language and subject matter. It is common at the advanced level of Pre-academic programmes as well as in several other institutional settings. ESP programmes are specifically devoted to a professional field of study. A course in 'English for Agriculture', 'English for Business Studies' or 'Business Writing' falls under the general rubric of ESP. Usually ESP courses are differentiated from Vocational/Technical English in that the former apply to disciplines in which people can get university majors and degrees, and the latter to trades and other non-baccalaureate certificate programmes. Voc/Tech (Vocational and Technical) English targets those who are learning trades, arts and other occupations not commonly included in university programmes (Brown, 1994).

It is universally acknowledged that the *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, teaching, assessment* (Council of Europe, 2020), even though it has proved itself to be a crucial tool for language teachers throughout the world, is still in need of further development and refinement, particularly in the area of specific languages and in the language of professional domains. Although some studies have focused on the CEFR in the context of business English, the major force of such studies is usually directed towards testing, which means that many aspects of language competence that cannot easily be tested are in all probability to be left out of the question (Šajalíková & Breeze, 2012).

Owing to numerous initiatives of the European Union, Slovak undergraduates have many opportunities to study and complete work placements in other European countries. After graduation, they plan to work or pursue further or doctoral studies outside their home country. Taking this into consideration, it is unfortunate that university-level language programmes often provide inadequate preparation. There may be several reasons for this, e.g., large class sizes and mixed-level groups, but one

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of the main problems is the lack of clear teaching objectives after Level B2 has been reached (Amalyah, 2021; Breeze, 2007).

To tackle the problem of what to teach at Level C1, scholars from four different European higher education institutions in Spain, Germany and Slovakia held interviews with university lecturers (who received Erasmus and other exchange students) and human resources directors, managers and internship tutors (who received interns and junior employees from other European countries) to define the language skills they needed. The research was conducted between 2005 and 2007 within the Leonardo da Vinci TALC project (Transparency in the Acquired Language Competences) which represented an attempt to establish a bridge between lecturers and language programme providers on the one hand and host universities and employers on the other. Based on the project, the defined and ranked competences provide useful guidance for any professional involved in teaching or designing language programmes in higher education.

In both spheres, academic and professional, the interviews brought to light a large number of situations in which students' and participants' language competences were of the utmost importance. Each of these situations was explored in detail to identify relevant speech events or types of language use, which were then defined more closely in terms of different skills and sub-skills. Research findings also show that a wider variety of genres is used in the professional than academic sphere (Breeze 2007; Šajgalíková & Breeze, 2012).

#### 4.1 Design of Language Programmes

The picture of language use across a range of academic or professional situations gained from the TALC project provides useful information for programme designers and lecturers. Based on data analysis in terms of skills, speaking, listening, reading and writing are all important, and more loosely defined **sociolinguistic competences** are also significant. Additionally, the traditional division into four skills may not offer the best framework for understanding what students really need. The pattern emerging from the project is characterised by a high level of integration, particularly between the two oral and the two written skills, but also across modalities. In this, the scholars' results complement the framework offered by the CEFR, which contemplates the **integration of various skills** under headings such as 'reception' and 'production'. In particular, the CEFR understands the two oral skills as essentially connected in the form of 'interaction', which was confirmed by the scholars' study (Breeze, 2007; Šajgalíková & Breeze, 2012). Their analysis suggests that integration of reading and writing is also important, as is the ability to handle language across a range of skills within the same situation. Their final taxonomy of competences includes many examples in which a single genre or communicative event involves coordinated use of

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two skills (e.g. writing reports includes reading and writing; handling inquiries includes listening and speaking). There are also cases in which all four skills are integrated (e.g. negotiations centring on the production or adaptation of written material like contracts or brochures). In our view, it is useful to consider the following communication activities requiring integrated skills, with the aim of designing classroom tasks that encourage students to operate effectively in more than one mode simultaneously.

#### ***4.1.1 Situations Requiring Integrated Skills in the Academic Sphere***

Some academics may wish to argue that the integration of the four skills diminishes the importance of the rules of listening, speaking, reading and writing that are unique to each separate skill (e.g. in a course in listening comprehension). Such an argument rarely holds up under careful scrutiny of integrated-skill courses. If anything, the added richness of the latter gives university students greater motivation that converts to better retention of principles of effective speaking, listening, reading and writing. Rather than being forced to plod along through a course that limits itself to one mode of performance, they are given a chance to diversify their efforts in more meaningful tasks (Brown, 1994).

A proficient lecturer who professes to follow principles of 'Communicative Language Teaching' (CLT) would never conduct, for instance, a 'Reading' class in the EAP or ESP classroom without extensive use of speaking, listening and writing.

#### **Listening and speaking:**

- (a) understanding lectures and asking or answering questions about their content;
- (b) following and participating in group discussions, arguing effectively to defend one's views;
- (c) maintaining conversations about administrative matters, personally or on the phone; and
- (d) recognising and adapting to sociolinguistic dimensions of the target culture.

#### **Reading and writing:**

- (a) reading and analysing academic papers, articles, textbooks and reports, and synthesising material from more sources;
- (b) when writing, acknowledging information from other published sources, and translating quotations into the target language;
- (c) understanding examination questions and writing brief and precise answers; and
- (d) understanding published information and writing letters in response.

**Listening and writing:** understanding lectures and note-taking.

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**Reading and speaking:**

- (a) reading seminar material, case studies, etc. and presenting an analysis or opinion based on the material;
- (b) reading seminar material, case studies, etc., and explaining the solution to complex technical or academic problems clearly and coherently; and
- (c) reading written instructions, information packs, etc. related to student mobility, and asking pertinent questions.

**Reading, writing and speaking:** making and giving a well-structured presentation with audio-visual support.

In addition to the areas in which two or three skills are integrated, there may be situations such as certain types of practical class or seminar in which students need to integrate all four skills:

**Reading, writing, listening and speaking:** seminars and group work requiring: reading of seminar materials, case studies, etc., oral presentations of views or solutions; listening to other students' interpretations and participating in debates; writing summaries or explanations of the case or issue under discussion (Breeze, 2007; Duttlinger, Fanizza-Scheiper, & Linares i Zapater, 2007; Šajgalíková & Breeze, 2012).

#### ***4.1.2 Situations Requiring Integrated Skills in the Professional Sphere***

In the professional sphere, the integration of the four skills is also the only plausible approach to take within a communicative, interactive framework.

**Speaking and listening:**

- (a) giving lectures, courses and presentations, and presenting information or viewpoints clearly and concisely;
- (b) asking and answering questions appropriately;
- (c) understanding, note-taking and summarising for others;
- (d) negotiating with business partners persuasively and sensitively;
- (e) participating effectively in discussions, presenting and defending one's views;
- (f) promoting a positive image of one's company in interviews;
- (g) handling inquiries and dealing with clients and their problems tactfully;
- (h) holding successful telephone conversations; and
- (i) managing social encounters, entertaining visitors, etc., and showing sensitivity to cultural dimensions of communication.

**Reading and writing:**

- (a) reading and writing project documents, instructions, reports;
- (b) reading and writing business reports;

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- (c) understanding, interpreting and using a range of commercial documents;
  - (d) reading and writing letters, e-mails and memos; and
  - (e) writing using the appropriate register, format, formulae and technical vocabulary, and maintaining cohesion through longer texts.

**Reading, writing, speaking and listening:** presentations and negotiations involving written material, group discussions, analysis of data, etc. (Breeze, 2007; Duttlinger et al., 2007; Šajgalíková & Breeze, 2012).

#### ***4.1.3 'Integrated-Skills' Approaches in ESP or EAP***

As far as an integrated-skills focus in the teaching of ESP or EAP is considered, it can be maintained by two models which are in common use: 'content-based teaching' and 'theme-based teaching'. They pull the direct attention of the learner away from the separateness of the skills of language and towards the meaningful purposes for which he or she uses language (Brown, 1994).

**Content-based** (also known as 'content-entered') **language teaching** integrates the learning of some specific subject-matter content with the learning of a foreign language. The overall structure of a content-based curriculum is dictated more by the nature of the subject matter than by language forms and sequences. The foreign language, then, is simply medium to convey informational content of interest and relevance to the learner. ESP (e.g. for engineering, medicine, business) is an example of content-based curriculum.

It is perhaps already clear that content-based teaching allows learners to acquire knowledge and skills that transcend all the bits and pieces of language that may occupy hours and days of analysing in a traditional language classroom. Research on foreign language acquisition (FLA) at various ages indicates the ultimate strength of learning that is pointed towards practical non-language goals. The meaningful learning principle applies well here. Learners are focused on very useful, practical objectives as the subject matter is perceived to be relevant to long-term goals. This also increases the intrinsic motivation that is so important to learning of any kind.

Content-based teaching usually pertains to academic or occupational teaching over an extended period of time at intermediate to advanced proficiency levels.

It presents some challenges to language teachers. Allowing the subject matter to control the selection and sequencing of language items means that they have to view their teaching from an entirely different perspective. They are first and foremost teaching finance, management or marketing; secondarily they are teaching language. So, they may have to become double experts.

Content-based teaching allows for the **complete integration of language skills**. As the lecturer plans a lesson around a particular sub-topic of his or her subject matter

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area, his or her task becomes one of how best to present that topic or concept or principle. In such lessons it would be difficult not to involve at least three of the four skills as he or she has students reading, discussing, solving problems, analysing data, writing opinions and reports.

To distinguish **theme-based teaching** from content-based, it is important to distinguish between what Brown (1994) calls 'strong' and 'weak' versions of content-based teaching. In the strong version, the primary purpose of a course is to teach students in a subject-matter area. Language is of secondary and subordinate interest. The examples of content-based teaching named above are good illustrations of the strong version. ESP at university level, for instance, gathers engineering majors together in a course designed to teach terminology, concepts and current issues in engineering. Because students are EFL students, they must naturally learn this material in English, with the help of the lecturer.

A weak form of content-based teaching actually places an equal value on content and language objectives. While the curriculum is organised around subject matter area, both students and teachers are fully aware that language skills do not occupy a subordinate role. Students have chosen to take a course because their language skills need improvement, and they are now able to work towards that improvement without being battered with linguistically based topics. The ultimate payoff is that their language skills are indeed enhanced, but through focal attention to topic and peripheral attention to language.

This weak version is actually very practical and very effective in many instructional settings. It typically manifests itself in what has come to be called theme-based, or topic-based teaching. Theme-based teaching provides an alternative to what would otherwise be traditional language classes by structuring a course around themes or topics. Theme-based curricula can serve the multiple interests of students in a classroom and can offer a focus on content while still adhering to institutional needs for offering a language course, by itself. So, for instance, an intensive English course for intermediate pre-university students might deal with **topics of current interest** such as public health, environmental awareness, world economics, etc. In the classroom students read articles or chapters, view video programmes, discuss issues, propose solutions and carry out **writing assignments** on a given theme. EAP at university is an appropriate instance of theme-based teaching.

Granted, there is a fuzzy line of distinction between theme-based teaching and 'traditional' language teaching. It is not important to dichotomise here. What is important here is to put **principles of effective learning** into action. The major principles underlying both theme-based and content-based teaching are: (a) the automaticity principle, (b) the meaningful learning principle, (c) the intrinsic motivation principle, and (d) the communicative competence principle. All these

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principles are well served by theme-based teaching and by courses that are successfully able to get students excited and interested in some topic, issue, idea or problem rather than weary of overanalysing linguistic rules.

Numerous EFL textbooks, especially at the intermediate to advanced levels, offer theme-based courses of study. They catch the curiosity and motivation of students with challenging topics and as they grapple with a whole array of real-life issues ranging from simple to complex, they can also focus on improving their linguistic skills (Brown, 1994).

## 4.2 Structure of Language Programmes

The competences described above should serve as guidelines in two important senses. Firstly, they should be used to develop the basic **functional, lexical and structural syllabi** of the language programme, determining what kind of language will be taught and learnt. Secondly, they should influence the methodology which underpins the syllabus design: lecturers or language programme designers should put an emphasis on practising and acquiring skills in the specific context of business, management and engineering, rather than on de-contextualised language practice. Such an approach will maximise the possibility that students will build up a solid basis of transferable skills that can be applied in various academic and professional situations in business and management. Breeze (2007) and Šajgalíková and Breeze (2012) make suggestions for programme lengths of 40, 60 and 90 hours. In all cases, it is presumed that students enter the programme with a general Level B2 of competence in the target language. Table 1 proposes a structure and contents for an ideal language programme for 40-hour course ensuring acquisition of the needed language competences for students and graduates in business, management and engineering. It has been chosen since it is the most suitable one regarding 26-hour courses in business English provided by the Department of English Language.

The findings of the TALC project described above concur with the general definition of Level C1 (CEFR), filling out the bare descriptors with evidence of what communicative competence means in the specific context of business, management and engineering. For instance, in terms of reading, the descriptor ‘can understand a wide range of demanding, longer texts and recognise implicit meaning’ can be understood here as the ability to cope with textbooks, academic articles, business documents and reports. Regarding to speaking skills, the general competences described in the statements ‘can express fluently and spontaneously without much obvious searching for expressions’ and ‘can use language flexibly and effectively for social, academic and professional purposes’ are seen in the context of formal academic or business presentations, courses, workshops and seminars as well as conducting negotiations, dealing with clients and handling social encounters.

<b>Integrated skills</b>	<b>Genre</b>	<b>Hours</b>
Academic and professional listening and speaking	Lectures with questions, discussions, workshops, group work	10
Academic and professional reading, writing and speaking	Giving presentations based on published material, using audio-visual support	10
Reading and writing	Reading several texts to write an analysis or synthesis, using appropriate style or conventions	10
Personal reading and writing	Understanding official documents, writing letters of application and CVs	5
Personal listening and speaking	Conversations about accommodation, health care, etc.	5

Table 1. Ideal language programme (Source: Breeze, 2007; Duttlinger et al., 2007)

In our opinion, the greater degree of specificity provided by the TALC project will enable academics or professionals to empower their students through more effective language programmes, designed to achieve outcomes that are defined in connection with genres and competences. Furthermore, teaching methodology needs to promote a shift towards the acquisition of integrated skills at Level C1, so that students leave the university with a rigorous grounding in the techniques for communication that they will need in an international professional setting (Šajgalíková & Breeze, 2012).

### 4.3 Current Challenges in Teaching and Learning ESP

Due to the growing importance of globalisation, English has acquired an even more influential role at the tertiary level of education (Meristo & López Arias, 2021). It has provoked the necessity of teaching ESP which meets the demands of students' field of study. Furthermore, preparing undergraduate students for both entering the labour market or continuing their academic path has prioritised the significance of ESP. The increasing demand of ESP has resulted in the need for a lingua franca of science, technology, education and business. The field of ESP has promptly flourished recently to play an important part in ELT and research. Accordingly, the desires to master technical terms to meet job requirements force people to know ESP rather than basic English for daily communication (Huong, 2021).

Teaching ESP presents several challenges. Since the list of publications on current challenges in teaching ESP is endless, so, having considered at least five recent studies, the major challenges include: (a) vocabulary mastery, (b) limited sources, (c) coping

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with changes, (d) a lack of collaboration, (e) instability in conducting courses, (f) the need for pedagogical competence and technical skills in online environments, (g) students not being ready for ESP courses, (h) large class sizes, (i) a decrease in motivation, (j) differences between ESP and general English and (k) inappropriate teaching methods (Amalyah, 2021; Huong, 2021; Meristo & López Arias, 2021; Prasetya, 2021; Solihah, Kartika, & Setiawan, 2023).

Research findings of the study written by Solihah et al. (2023) have shown that the main challenge is students' vocabulary mastery, which can hinder their comprehension of ESP materials. Another challenge is the need for lecturers to prepare ESP materials from limited sources, such as textbooks and articles. In their study, they prioritise doing students-centered activities and building interactions between the lecturer and students when discussing ESP materials and practicing. It encouraged their students to be active in improving their skill of speaking as well as assisted them to enhance new vocabulary relating to the specific fields. The authors also deal with developing ESP materials and choosing the right teaching methods to deliver ESP contents in an optimal way.

In their abductive qualitative research, Meristo and López Arias (2021) seek to obtain a deeper insight into the challenges posed by teaching ESP and detect problematic issues to better support university lecturers in Estonia to improve their work. Their research findings highlight three major challenges: difficulties in coping with changes through the lenses of professionalism, a lack of collaboration and instability in conducting ESP courses.

Prasetya (2021) does not list challenges in teaching ESP in her paper. However, we have chosen it since it focuses on the effectiveness of teaching ESP in an online environment from the perspective of English lecturers. According to her, the English lecturers' challenge is to obtain interaction and adaptability with their online classroom. In our view, it is a big challenge, and we strongly agree with her that it requires both pedagogical competence in English and experience with learning management systems such as Moodle.

Huong (2021) does not provide specific information about challenges of teaching English for specific purposes. In his view, the increasing demand for ESP also puts pressure on lecturers to use the most effective approaches and teaching methods. Research on teaching and learning ESP has been conducted widely not only in Vietnam but also other countries by scholars and researchers with the main aim of figuring out the most effective approaches, which enables lecturers and learners to adopt best teaching methods to accomplish their goals. Based on an overview of studies on teaching and learning ESP, as well as background knowledge on ESP teaching and learning, the researcher indicates the challenges, opportunities and benefits brought to lecturers and learners in ESP training.

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Amalyah (2021), in her empirical study at Vietnam universities, tries to identify the difficulties in teaching ESP and finds out that the challenges of teaching ESP include: students are not ready for ESP courses, large class sizes, a decrease in motivation, differences between ESP and general English, and passive teaching methods.

As mentioned above, the list of scholars and researchers who deal with teaching and learning ESP is endless. All researchers mentioned in this subchapter provide solutions to the challenges ESP has to face nowadays.

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## 5 Teaching Business English at the University of Economics in Bratislava

Teaching **business English** presupposes teaching English to adults working in businesses, e.g. in large multinational corporations, small private companies or even state concerns dealing with providing goods or services. In the case of university studies, it means teaching English to students preparing to work in the field of business.

Business English is very different from general EFL. In general English classes, students' needs are rarely so urgent. Aims for a business English course always relate to students' work. Sometimes it means developing generalised business skills (e.g. giving presentations) and sometimes something much more technical or academic (e.g. participating in meetings, taking notes, etc.). Business English is special because of the opportunity it gives the lecturer to fulfil students' immediate needs for English. Since course organisers often fail to differentiate between business English and ESP or EAP, the lecturer needs to be open-minded when going into this area of teaching.

The study of **Economics** is vital to understand the society people live in. Economic decisions have an impact on people as consumers, employees and taxpayers. To study Economics effectively, students need to learn the **language of the domain**. Some of the key terms and concepts that they will need are, for instance, goods and services, consumer goods and capital goods; investment, savings and consumption; private and public sector, economic models, deciding at the margin, real and nominal and so forth. Different classifications of Economics include, firstly, 'positive economics' and 'normative economics' and, secondly, 'microeconomics' and 'macroeconomics'. In business English courses, a particular attention needs to be devoted to the second division.

**Microeconomics** aims at the choices made by individual decision-making units in the economy – typically consumers and firms. It focuses on the demand and supply for goods and services within a particular market such as the market for housing or labour. It helps to explain the price of a good, people's decision whether to work in a particular industry or the impact of an increase in the supply of a product. Microeconomics might analyse the determinants of the price of oil or a firm's shares, for example.

In microeconomics, Gillespie (2016, 1998) and Taišl (2002) discuss: (a) defining economics, (b) the production possibility frontier (PPF), (c) demand, (d) the elasticity of demand, (e) supply, (f) market equilibrium, (g) the free market system, (h)

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intervening in the market system, (i) short-run and long-run costs, (j) revenue, costs and profits, (k) perfect competition, (l) monopoly, (m) oligopoly, (n) monopolistic competition and non-price competition, and (o) the labour market.

**Macroeconomics** analyses the economy as a whole. For example, rather than focusing on the price level in one market, macroeconomics considers the general price level in the economy; rather than examining one individual's decision whether to work, it considers the overall numbers employed in the economy. Macroeconomics therefore deals with topics such as inflation, unemployment, economic growth and international trade, and usually analyses these from a government's perspective.

In macroeconomics, Gillespie (2016, 1998) and Taišl (2002) discuss: (a) equilibrium in the economy, (b) national income and the standard of living, (c) aggregate demand, aggregate supply and the price level, (d) consumption, (e) investment, (f) fiscal policy, (g) money, (h) economic growth and the economic cycle, (i) unemployment, (j) inflation and monetary policy, (k) exchange rates, (l) international trade and balance of payments, and (m) protectionism and globalisation.

As far as the sectors of the economy are concerned, the 'private sector' is made up of organisations owned by individuals and firms. Companies such as Facebook, Twitter, Tesco plc. and Barclays Bank plc. are owned by private investors. In this sector, the owners can pursue their own interests; this is to maximise profits. Business will seek to produce products where they can make the most profits; if the rewards are not high enough, they will shift resources elsewhere in search of better returns (Gillespie, 2016). On the other hand, 'public sector' organisations (e.g. the National Health Service in the UK) are run by the government. They may have social objectives as well as, or instead of, profit targets. The government may measure success in a much broader way than private businesses do; it may consider the effect on jobs, happiness, inequality, the community and the environment (Gillespie, 2016, 1998; Taišl, 2002).

Taišl (2002) further describes primary, secondary and tertiary sectors of the economy. Kenessey (1987) and Rosenberg (2020) add quaternary and quinary sectors to this list. According to Rosenberg (2020), a nation's economy is divided into sectors to define the proportion of a population engaged in different activities. Job sectors, or the industry of work, are the areas of the economy which include various occupations. Each sector requires a workforce with diverse skills and various specialties. There are dozens of job sectors and many of the work positions within the particular fields require skills that span a multitude of sectors.

Whether the private or public sector, the following list comprises the most common job sectors or industries that graduates of the University of Economics in Bratislava are most likely to work in. Each job sector covers more fields of work and so they can work as economists, financial managers, financial analysts, accountants, actuaries, directors, diplomats, assistants, managers, IT specialists, lawyers,

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salespeople, retail buyers, advisors and so on. The following division shows the skills required of employees:

- (a) *Accountancy/Finance* (to be good at numeracy, to have analytical thinking, to be able to work under pressure);
- (b) *Business Management/Consulting* (to have good **interpersonal skills**, to be good at strategic planning, to have commercial awareness);
- (c) *Engineering/Manufacturing* (to be good at computer modelling and higher mathematics, to be creative);
- (d) *Diplomacy* (to have important skills, knowledge of foreign policy and experience to navigate one's way through different countries and cultures around the world);
- (e) *FMCG* (to have good cross-functional skills, the need of commercial exposure, to be good at customer relations);
- (f) *Hospitality* (to have good **communication skills**, to have basic computer and technology skills and to have good interpersonal skills);
- (g) *HR & Recruitment* (to have good recruiting skills and negotiation skills, to be able to multitask);
- (h) *IT* (to have good programming skills and time management);
- (i) *Law* (to have good research skills and **written communication skills**);
- (j) *Leisure/Tourism* (to have good **oral and written communication skills**, to be able to resolve conflicts);
- (k) *Logistics/Transport* (to be good at numeracy, to have analytical thinking);
- (l) *Marketing/Digital Media* (to be creative, to be able to work in a team);
- (m) *Retail* (an attention to detail is important, to have good customer service skills) and
- (n) *Sales* (to be good at negotiating and public speaking, to have analytical thinking).

### 5.1 Purpose, Content and Syllabi of Courses in Business English

The purpose of a business English course is to fulfil students' work-related needs that are almost always very specific and cover a wide range of language. If students are employed by multinationals, their primary need will be to be able to use the phone, report to foreign managers, reply to or write e-mail messages, read periodicals on their subject area and perform other tasks typically associated with the workplace. If they do business with companies abroad, their fundamental need might be to survive on business trips, communicate on the phone or by e-mail and negotiate contracts. Those who work in an industry whose language is English will need to be able to digest large quantities of **reading material** in English; they may also need to be able to give presentations or discuss their work in English (Donna, 2000).

Investigating, analysing and fulfilling business English students' needs is thus important for the success of any business English course. A business English lecturer needs to consider tasks or concerns which may seem peripheral or beyond a normal

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lecturer's role. His or her priority should be to run successful courses, and in order for this to be possible in the field of business English he or she needs to consider wider issues such as setting things up for success, starting up courses and awareness-raising and ongoing adjustment of the **needs analysis**. Breeze (2007) provides an in-depth analysis of the language competences needed by undergraduates, graduates and young professionals in the areas of business, management and engineering. She defines the areas of language use with regard to genres (e.g. speech situations or contexts) used in the real world, which are then analysed by skills to facilitate the work of lecturers and course deliverers.

Since courses are set up for many different reasons, the **content** of individual courses may vary greatly. However, the content of any particular course is usually quite specific and will always be determined by the students' needs and goals. The most successful courses are those which identify appropriate content and which fulfil students' needs most completely. Needs can usually be fulfilled most quickly if the content is chosen with students' learning and affective needs in mind, and if as much as possible is made job-related. The balance of specific elements will depend on students' priorities and the learning process, i.e. some things can be learnt faster than others or are more easily learnt before or after other language areas (Donna, 2010).

According to Breeze (2007), courses for students in the fields of business, management and engineering who have just achieved Level B2 of general English language competence need to be organised with the purpose of promoting C1-Level competence within the specific professional target area. The competences should underpin the basic **functional, lexical and structural syllabi** of the course, determining what kind of language will be taught and learnt. The **language** studied in class will also be governed by students' needs. This often means a high **technical content**, with frequent use of common **business terms**. It also means a focus on **styles of speaking or writing** which are appropriate to the students' working environment and to the tasks they have to perform. This means students will need to develop a keen awareness of style – **formality** vs. **informality** and **directness** vs. **indirectness** (see Chapter 3). Most importantly, through language study in class students will need to become aware of the **cultural context of language use**, i.e. national or local cultures, industrial cultures and corporate cultures (Donna, 2000).

The Department of English Language provides courses in business English for students of five faculties of the University of Economics in Bratislava. For the full-time study, it is 26 hours of teaching per course and 2 hours per week.

In 2014/2015, a brief syllabus of the course 'Business English for Advanced Students I' included: (a) Internal and external communication in business, (b) Trends in the development of the current economy, (c) Marketing, (d) Products; Global brands, (e) The company, and (f) Case study.

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In the same academic year, a brief syllabus of the course 'Business English for Advanced Students II' consisted of: (a) Job and work, (b) Trends in the development of the economy in English-speaking countries, (c) Successful entrepreneurship, (d) Management, (e) Characteristics of a good manager, and (f) Case study.

Finally, a brief syllabus of the course 'Business English for Advanced Students III' (for the Faculty of National Economy) comprised: (a) Raising finance, (b) Mergers and acquisitions, (c) Securities and financial markets, (d) Economics and trade, and (e) Accounting and financial statements. A syllabus for the Faculty of Commerce included: (a) Raising finance for business, (b) Crisis management, (c) Customer service, (d) Mergers and takeovers, (e) Multinational companies, and (f) Case study.

The *Market Leader Business English Course Book Upper Intermediate* (Cotton, Falvey, & Kent, 2011), the core book, was used in all courses. Additionally, *English for Business Studies* (MacKenzie, 2010) was recommended for use with students from the Faculty of National Economy (<http://old.euba.sk/kp/predmety>).

## **5.2 The Core Book – Market Leader Upper Intermediate**

*Market Leader* is a five-level business English course for businesspeople and students of business English. It has been developed in association with the *Financial Times*, one of the leading sources of business information in the world. Its material introduces businesspeople and students to topical business issues and builds the language and communication skills required in the world of business.

The *Market Leader Business English Course Book Upper Intermediate* (Cotton et al., 2011) comprises units based on topics of great interest to people involved in or studying international business. However, at present, the core book features a range of resource material that reflected the trends in the business world twelve years ago. Nevertheless, if students are interested in business, they will improve their ability to communicate in English in a wide range of business situations. They will also develop the communication skills they need to succeed in business and enlarge their knowledge of the business world.

The core book includes 12 units, namely: Communication, International marketing, Building relationships, Success, Job satisfaction, Risk, Management styles, Team building, Raising finance, Customer service, Crisis management, and Mergers and acquisitions. Each unit consists of the following sections:

**Starting up.** Students are offered a variety of interesting activities in which they discuss the topic of the unit and exchange ideas about it.

**Vocabulary.** Students learn important new words and phrases which they can use when they carry out the tasks in the unit. They can find definitions and examples and listen to the pronunciation of new vocabulary in the i-Glossary feature on the DVD-ROM. The DVD-ROM also contains further practice exercises. A good business

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dictionary (e.g. *Oxford Business English Dictionary*, 2005; *Longman Business English Dictionary*, 2007) will also help them increase their business vocabulary.

**Reading.** Students read authentic (but not the latest) articles on a variety of topics from the *Financial Times*, other newspapers and books on **business**. They develop their reading skills and learn essential business vocabulary. Additionally, they discuss the ideas and issues in the articles.

**Listening.** Students hear authentic interviews with businesspeople and a variety of scripted recordings. They develop listening skills like listening for information and note-taking. They can also find further practice exercises on the DVD-ROM.

**Language review.** This section focuses on common problem areas at this level. Students become more accurate in their use of language. Each unit contains a 'Language review box' that provides a review of key grammar items. A 'Grammar reference' section can be found at the back of the book and on the DVD-ROM. The DVD-ROM also provides extra grammar practice.

**Skills.** Students develop essential business communication skills such as making presentations, networking, negotiating, cold-calling and dealing with communication breakdowns. Each 'Skills' section contains a 'Useful language' box, which provides them with the language they need to carry out the realistic business tasks. The DVD-ROM supplements the course book with additional activities.

**Case study.** Case studies are linked to the business topics of each unit. They are based on realistic business problems or situations and allow students to use the language and communication skills they have developed while working through the unit. They give students the opportunity to practise their speaking skills in realistic business situations. Each case study ends with a writing task.

**Working across cultures.** The four units focus on different aspects of international communication. They help raise students' awareness of potential misunderstandings or problems that may arise when doing business with people from different cultures.

**Revisions units.** The Course Book also contains four revision units, each based on the material covered in the preceding three Course Book units.

### 5.3 Practising Students' Specific Skills

Developing students' skills in the business English classroom is most effective if very specific areas of weakness are identified, e.g. dealing with question and answer (Q&A) session after giving a presentation. If they are identified with regard to performance skills, i.e. specific language use in work contexts, students' on-the-job performance is presumably to show a marked improvement. Generalised notions of 'speaking skills', 'listening skills', 'reading skills' and 'writing skills' are usually **too general** in the business English context.

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Donna (2000) discusses the following areas to improve students' specific skills: (a) talking to clients, (b) snail mail, (c) telephoning, (d) dealing with visitors, (e) talking to colleagues, (f) reporting to foreign managers, (g) presentations and Q&A sessions, (h) meetings, (i) negotiating, (j) note-taking, (k) e-mail and memos, (l) **report-writing**, and (m) understanding the news. According to Taylor (2006), the following areas are important to students: (a) networking and socialising, (b) telephoning, (c) negotiations, (d) presentations, (e) writing emails, (f) meetings, (g) **reading business texts**, (h) listening, (i) **business vocabulary**, and (j) grammar.

Gillet (2010), in one of the world's most popular books for learning conversational English, deals with meetings, negotiations, etc. However, she focuses on using **idioms** in the areas such as (a) talking about a new project, financial issues, manufacturing and company strategy, (b) discussing a new ad campaign, good/bad results, a difficult decision, a difficult request, a mistake, (c) dealing with a dissatisfied customer, (d) motivating co-workers, (e) running a meeting, (f) taking credit for good results, (g) shifting a blame, (h) disagreeing with someone politely, (i) complaining about a co-worker, (j) requesting a bank loan, (k) negotiating a purchase, a salary, (l) conducting a performance review, (m) promoting an employee, (n) having a job interview, etc.

When developing students' **specific skills** for performance areas, the lecturer should not expect perfect performance before moving on to the next performance area. Ongoing recycling is more effective and more motivating for students. This sub-chapter explains some business skills and important areas of language to practice.

### **5.3.1 Listening and Speaking**

**Talking to clients.** Only some students will need to deal directly with clients as part of their normal job. However, all students should be capable of introducing themselves and their company in case they ever meet a potential client (e.g. on a plane, at a conference, etc.). In addition, all students should be able to make clients feel relaxed to avoid embarrassment and 'keep conversation going' (Donna, 2000).

**Telephoning.** Non-native English speakers need to be able to use the telephone effectively if they are to survive in an international office environment. Since many students suffer when using the telephone, the first aim of skills practice must be to help them overcome their fear. The second aim is helping students understand how telephones are typically used in British or American corporations because telephone etiquette can be very different in different parts of the world. It may, for instance, be normal for anybody to pick up the phone or for very direct, or indirect, forms of speech to be used in the students' home country. Students may also find it difficult to have a casual chat over the phone before getting down to business. Thirdly and equally importantly, the lecturer has to help students improve their **pronunciation** and audible non-verbal language; these aspects of communication obviously become so much

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more important on the telephone because of the absence of the visual image which is present in any face-to-face conversation (Donna, 2000).

**Dealing with visitors.** Nearly all students will have to deal with foreign visitors to their company, so this is an important skill area to practice. Chance or planned introductions and chats with visitors can be the first step to building relationships with people who matter, so can their career prospects. Students practise language for this area most enthusiastically when the lecturer helps them imagine a situation (e.g. a day when they are suddenly introduced to someone by their superior). The lecturer can help his or her students practise common beginnings, useful questions and typical responses so that they have a good 'springboard' for a freer conversation in real life. Since intonation, voice range, sentence stress, backchannelling and **body language** (especially eye contact and body space) are all extremely important if students want to make a good impression, realistic role-play is essential (Donna, 2000).

**Networking and socialising.** Most people included in business want to create long-term business relationships based on trust and mutual respect, i.e. networking and socialising are important activities, mainly when working internationally. In some **cultures**, the relationship is even more important than the particular business being dealt with. A good deal of time and energy goes into building and maintaining good personal relationships so as to make difficult business discussions and decisions easier to handle (Taylor, 2006; see also Fine, 2005; Ford-Bartfay, 2002a, 2002b; RoAne, 1999).

**Talking to colleagues.** For some students, chatting to foreign colleagues or superiors is an unconventional idea that involves a big conceptual leap. However, since students' relationships with them might have a great effect on their career, this is an important area of language to practise. Practice means considering three main areas. First, since acceptable subjects of conversations, **turntaking** and topic management may differ dramatically from culture to culture, students may need to be sensitised to the **cross-cultural angle** of 'casual chatting'. Second, students need to be made aware of any body language they use which might seem inappropriate in an international context. Third, they need to consider what specific language they can use in this seemingly relaxed situation (Donna, 2000).

**Reporting to foreign managers.** All students working in a multinational corporation need to gain a clearer understanding of their relationships with their foreign colleagues or boss with regard to the company's corporate culture. For students who report directly to a foreign manager – who, although English-speaking, could be any nationality – **awareness-raising** and language practice is particularly important in terms of both career development and day-to-day survival. Students may be surprised by the way in which English is commonly used with superiors and may have a very

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different concept from their bosses as to what constitutes ‘helpful’ behaviour, simply because these things are **culturally defined** (Donna, 2000).

**Participating in meetings.** Successful participation in meetings in English is often necessary for advancement within a company, mainly if it is a multinational, so practice of this language area is essential, even if difficult for many students. As might be expected, students may find participation much more difficult than comprehension of conversation, especially if some participants are native speakers of English. **Turntaking** patterns and rules for **etiquette** may be quite different in the students’ home culture so these naturally need to be the focus of attention when the lecturer is practising relevant language. In addition, people in real-life meetings do not often use language in ways that students might expect. They make suggestions in surprising ways and use many subtle ways of influencing others. They also use indirect ways of agreeing and disagreeing, which are very dissimilar to the phrases presented to students in many course books. So, students need language to be able to exert influence themselves and strategies for coping if they encounter difficulties (Donna, 2000; see also Laws, 2009).

**Negotiating.** Even if students are not involved in major negotiations for contracts, most of them need to conduct small-scale negotiations (e.g. to arrange or change meetings, get rooms reserved, persuade foreign colleagues to change procedures or systems, etc.). The most successful negotiations involve a sharing of problems and a final agreement which is satisfactory and beneficial to both parties. Students have to be very much aware of **cultural differences** if they are to be successful negotiators. In Taylor’s view (2006), the key attributes of the successful negotiator are the willingness to take risks, the ability to think under stress, and stamina and patience. Also, three key skills for the international negotiator are to be able to see the world as others see it, deal with ambiguous situations and express oneself so that everyone can understand. According to him, the last one is a key skill for second-language speakers. When dealing with certain nationalities, students may find that they have to do a lot of ‘chatting’ before or during serious negotiating sessions because personal relationships between people who do business are considered especially important in some cultures (e.g. Japan, China, etc.). In any cross-cultural situation, the ability of students to build rapport with their negotiating partners is of paramount importance, i.e. initial chatting, effective listening and the ability to stress areas of common ground (i.e. points of agreement) are especially important. Additionally, students need to understand that negotiators in many cultures may not be able to make decisions, as their counterparts often do in the United Kingdom and the United States, because power and decision-making structures may be completely different in students’ home or corporate culture (Donna, 2000; see also Fisher, Ury, & Patton, 2011; Laws, 2001).

**Giving presentations and practising Q&A sessions.** Presentations can take many forms. They can be given at a conference at home or abroad, in one’s own company,

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at a client's, etc.; they can be for one person or many people. They are often part of a meeting or constitute the beginning of a meeting. Since students at all levels may find them frightening – maybe because they can have an impact on a person's career – this is an important area of language to practise. Q&A sessions can be even more nerve-racking, even for the advanced students, because they cannot be planned and practised in quite the same way as the presentations which trigger them; they need to be an integral part of presentations practice if students are to feel well-prepared and confident (Donna, 2000). In the past, *FORTUNE* magazine ran an article about the hidden fears and phobias of top managers in the United States. They discovered that the number one fear, among others, was giving presentations. The reason was that people were frightened that they would make mistakes in front of others, and that their personal and professional credibility would suffer (Taylor, 2006; see also Forsyth, 1997; Genard, 2016).

As far as the students of the University of Economics in Bratislava are concerned, first- and second-year students of five faculties (depending on the type of the faculty) take courses in 'Business English for Advanced Students I, II, III'. They are supposed to make and give a **10-minute PowerPoint presentation** based on a 10-page academic paper. After giving a presentation, a Q&A session follows. Furthermore, apart from this type of presentation, students in the second and third courses in business English were supposed to give oral mini presentations (2-5 minutes) about newspaper or magazine articles read within the KEGA project between 2017 and 2019.

Before focusing on language for this area, students need to understand what makes a presentation good. To do this, students' comments are invited and then the whole class discusses and considers the following notes:

- (a) the speaker's audience carefully – how much it already knows and how much the speaker needs to tell it;
- (b) the speaker's aim in giving the presentation; discarding any material which does not directly help achieve this aim; if something is not directly relevant, it is likely to distract the speaker's audience and dilute his or her message;
- (c) making the speaker's message easy to understand by organising his or her material carefully and using visual aids at appropriate moments;
- (d) checking the speaker knows how to use any equipment he or she plans to use; and
- (e) being confident; saying what the speaker can do and being honest in the Q&A session; encouraging constructive discussion.

After that, 'Making a presentation' in the 'Skills' section of Unit 12 Mergers and acquisitions (Cotton et al., 2011) is discussed in the 'Useful language box' containing phrases to refer back, look forward, ask rhetorical questions, make points in threes, summarise, use emotive language, talk about the future, repeat and ask for feedback.

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When practising the language for this area, the lecturer helps students refine their non-linguistic skills as well as their linguistic skills; body language, planning and the effective use of visual aids are all as important as language. Students are helped to avoid being an 'impolite audience' through inattention or poor, or offensive, body language because attending presentations might provide excellent opportunities for making contacts or building rapports.

Students are also helped to avoid being egocentric. If they want to influence others, their language needs to reflect **co-operative** and empathetic **attitude**. They need to put themselves in the shoes of the people they are addressing, see the world from their perspective and address their concerns. The word 'I' is a distancing word that separates them from the very people they want to connect with. Usually, they do it accidentally. They need to use the words 'you', 'us' and the inclusive 'we', which means both the speaker and the listener. Sometimes, naturally, they need to show their personal beliefs or strength of opinion, and then the word 'I' really means something. However, they should not dilute this powerful effect by overusing it.

### ***5.3.2 Listening/Speaking/Reading and Writing Skills***

**Note-taking.** It involves practising the difficult skill of writing while listening and/or speaking. It is an important skill for most students working in the field of **international business** because they are bound to need to take notes at meetings or presentations conducted in English. Since notes taken are not read by anyone else, their purpose is to be functional. It is probably the easiest if students take notes in the language of the meeting or if they use an 'international' note-taking system which does not necessitate ongoing translation. To provide useful guidance and practice for students the lecturer should find out how notes are usually written up in the students' companies because this may affect the style of note-taking and the level of detail he or she recommends (Donna, 2000).

**Snail mail.** Letters ('snail mail') are still used, although in many countries they have been replaced by e-mails, which, if formal, are often simply the same text e-mailed. Letters are only used to communicate with people in other companies, so they are likely to be more consistently formal than other types of correspondence. Their relative slowness, compared to e-mails, adds to this sense of formality, probably because everyone is aware that there is time to express things more carefully. It is very easy for students to achieve the right level of formality, because many **formulaic expressions** (e.g. *I look forward to hearing from you, Yours faithfully, Yours sincerely, etc.*) have become standard in letters. Students benefit if they learn these formulaic expressions because as well as helping with their letter-writing, the same expressions can usually be used in other types of correspondence, too. Varying the **style** to make

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letters to long-term contacts more friendly is, certainly, relatively easy to do (Donna, 2000).

**E-mail and memos.** E-mail has been used in **international business** to replace letters, memos and even telephone calls, partly because it is convenient and inexpensive and partly because e-mail is so easy to use within a networked system. The **style** of writing can vary as much as for letters (depending on relationships of correspondents and the purpose for writing) but is usually much more informal than in other types of written communication. Old-fashioned paper memos have been phased out by many companies in favour of faster and more convenient e-mail. However, written messages are still frequently sent around within companies so 'message-writing' practice, which can be thought of as a message sent on paper or e-mail, still needs to be done by most business English students (Donna, 2000; see also Bly & Kelly, 2009). Quick email messages about company happenings have become a common method of communication in offices, but this form of communication is not suitable for all occasions. While informal e-mails may have replaced the interoffice memo in some situations, business memos still have a place in the office. The format, style and organisation of memos can vary enormously, mainly because of the influence of **corporate culture** but also because memos can be used to communicate with one or many people, who may be of similar or very different status. According to Kelchner (n.d.), business memos follow strict guidelines with regard to format – with a header, opening, summary and closing. The business memo should be formal and managers may send the formal document to employees via e-mail.

**Report-writing.** Reports can be anything from a long memo (i.e. a single page) to a 40-page, well-organised and formatted analysis of a particular situation. Whatever their length, reports can effect enormous change, so they are extremely important to students. When teaching report-writing, the most important area to focus on is probably organisation of material, especially if students are unused to Western forms of content organisation. Students must also take care to gear their message to their reader(s) and differentiate between fact and opinion. Obviously, the consequence of suggesting something in fact, when it is merely opinion, could be far-reaching and could cause bad feeling if found out (Donna, 2000).

Regarding the practising listening/speaking/reading and writing skills in business English courses, the core book (Cotton et al., 2011) offers a wide range of case studies that integrate these skills. The lecturer can help students write these assignments:

- (a) e-mails (e.g. Case study 1 – The price of success);
- (b) the action minutes (e.g. Case study 2 – Henri-Claude Cosmetics);
- (c) sales letters (e.g. Case study 3 – Al-Munir Hotel and Spa Group);
- (d) press releases (e.g. Case study 4 – Kensington United);
- (e) sets of guidelines (e.g. Case study 5 – Just good friends?);

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- (f) reports (e.g. to the CEO/the Board of Directors/the Director of Customer Services: Case study 6 – Winton Carter Mining; Case study 7 – S&L Selig and Lind; Case study 10 – HURRAH airlines; Case study 11 – In Range; Case study 12 – Rinnovar International);
  - (g) formal letters (e.g. to the CEO: Case study 8 – Motivating the sales team); and
  - (h) summaries (e.g. Case study 9 – Last throw of the dice).

Donna (2000) states that visit reports and minutes of meetings can vary very greatly from company to company. When practising **report-writing**, students of different faculties are supposed to write a single page well-organised report with information presented in a logical order. As there is no set layout for a report, this format is common for many formal reports: Title, Executive summary, Introduction, Findings, Conclusion and Recommendations. Another possible structure is: Title, Terms of reference, Procedure, Findings, Conclusions and Recommendations.

When writing the **action minutes**, students follow this format: Title, Date, Time, Venue and Participants. The following table is divided into three columns with headings of Point, Discussion and Action. The minutes can be an important record of what really is discussed at a meeting, so it is important to make sure that the summary of each point is as accurate as possible. The action column is important for showing who is supposed to do what by when. Below, there is some information about next meeting – Date, Time and Venue.

When teaching writing **formal letters**, students are aware that conventions and layout of letters vary to some extent but the following are widely accepted:

- (a) block layout with open punctuation (i.e. no commas, etc. in addresses);
- (b) initials must always be included with the surname above the address of the recipient; in other words, *Mr Gibson, Sales Manager, CWS-Boco, ...* is not acceptable; one has to write *Mr K Gibson, Sales Manager, CWS-Boco*;
- (c) salutation (when one does not know the name of the recipient: *Dear Sir/Madam* (BrE), *Ladies and Gentlemen* (AmE), when one knows the name of the recipient: *Dear Mr/Mrs/Ms/Miss Bennett* (BrE, AmE);
- (d) endings (when one does not know the name of the recipient: *Yours faithfully* (BrE), *Sincerely yours* (AmE), when one knows the name of the recipient: *Yours sincerely* (BrE), *Sincerely* (AmE);
- (e) signing the letter, then printing one's name and position under his/her signature; and
- (f) common abbreviations such as *Re.*, *pp*, *encl.*, *cc* (i.e. regarding, on behalf of, documents enclosed and copies).

Since writing a **summary** of a reading article was one of the tasks included in business English tests, students were asked to express the most important facts or points about something in a short and clear form. It included: (a) selecting the most important ideas of facts from a text, (b) rewriting those ideas/facts in a short concise form, using one's own language, and (c) producing a text which is shorter than the original.

Moreover, students from all the faculties are supposed to write a 10-page **academic paper** in the final course in business English.

### 5.3.3 Reading and Writing/Speaking Skills

Within the three courses in business English, between 2017 and 2019, an emphasis was put on practising **reading skills** and acquiring **business vocabulary**.

**Understanding the news.** Many business English students need to understand the news in English on TV, on the radio or in newspapers in order to be able to keep up with **international business** developments. A large number of them also has to read newspapers or periodicals in English to keep up with changes in their industry. Coverage by different news sources can be quite different, so students often get a much better insight into possibilities in their domestic (or foreign) markets if they can watch BBC News or CNN, for instance, or read periodicals published in English (Donna, 2000).

We have to agree with the scholar. One of the first-year students from the Faculty of National Economy studying in the bachelor's study programme *Finance, Banking and Investments* was, naturally, interested in money and within the KEGA project read articles in *Bloomberg* and *BNN Bloomberg*. The former delivers business and markets news, data, analysis and video to the world, featuring stories from *Businessweek* and *Bloomberg* News and the latter is Canada's Business News Network, reporting on finance and the markets.

No.	Headline	W. count
1	Italian Markets Find Relief After Budget-Deficit Concessions	575
2	New Era of Rising Rates Finally Dawns On U.S: Treasury Investors	755
3	Markets Are Broken and Nothing Is Working	1,545
4	Markets Seek a Silver Lining That Isn't There	1,485
5	For GE's Saviour, Earnings Debut Is Haunted by Same Old Problems	830
6	Wall Street's Turnaround on Saudis Signals Return to Business as Usual	1,181
7	Sear's Latest Hope for Cash: Bidding War Among CDS Traders	868
8	Texas Is About to Create OPEC's Worst Nightmare	1,249
9	Germany Intensifies Plans to Fix Deutsche Bank With Merger	593
10	AMLO Saddles Mexico With a \$5 Billion Loss	813

11	Trump Expresses Optimism for China Deal With Ties at Crossroads	834
12	Sears May Stay Alive With Rescue Bid Cobbled by Lampert	730
<b>TOTAL:</b>		<b>11,458</b>

Table 2. *Bloomberg* and *BNN Bloomberg* articles (Source: Author's data)

This student was extremely intelligent and later had a chance to study in Denmark within the Erasmus+ exchange programme.

Before considering classwork for this language area, it was checked that all students had their own notebooks, tablets or mobile phones and equal access to the Internet. Then they were encouraged to find English-language news sources. Since speed and careful, selective reading was of the greatest importance it was helpful for students to develop skills for skimming and scanning. In class, they did the following:

- (a) They scanned contents pages for articles on areas of interest.
- (b) Having set a time limit, students were asked to skim an article for overall gist. When time was up, they were asked to summarise the text as far as possible. If students came up with few ideas, the lecturer improvised some simple comprehension questions on the article which she had thought students would be able to answer without difficulty. After inviting questions about **vocabulary** and allowing students another five minutes for **reading**, the lecturer continued with a few more detail questions. This was a realistic approach given that they would have limited time in real life and given the fact that the tasks reflected the real-life situation (i.e. reading through an article quickly, then checking a few words in a dictionary).

**Reading business texts.** Many students are eager to improve their English. However, they state that the ever more pressing reading demands are placed on them from study or work. They have to read in English to pull out quickly the key and relevant facts from **textbooks** or **reports** written in technical, scientific, financial or administrative English. If they could do this more effectively, they would be able to set aside more time for reading books and magazines for pleasure (Taylor, 2006).

To read in a more effective and business-like way in English, Slovak students were recommended to: (a) try rapid reading (when working with reports or textbooks), (b) use newspapers or magazines as a learning tool, and (c) practice reading.

Newspapers use **modern vocabulary** and **expressions** aimed at native speakers. Not only tabloid newspapers, e.g. *The Sun*, are filled with **idioms**, slang and national **top culture references** which often make them more difficult to understand, but nowadays also broadsheet newspapers are filled with them. To improve reading skills, students worked regularly with articles in British and American newspapers or magazines. They had some linguistic fun with the sources they had chosen – *The Guardian*, *Forbes, Inc.*, *FORTUNE*, *POLITICO*, etc. They did the following:

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- (a) They skimmed through the whole newspaper or magazine and tried to decide what kind of readership it was aimed at attracting: which social class, educational background, gender or political leanings.
  - (b) They checked if there were any references to their own country (Slovakia) and if so in what context. If there were reports on their own country current events, they saw what opinions were expressed. They decided if the reporting was fair.
  - (c) They looked at some headlines and worked out what the stories were about. This was sometimes more difficult than they thought, as many newspapers or magazines used double meanings of words in their headlines. Then they checked by skimming through the article just to get the main ideas.
  - (d) They chose a short article that looked interesting and **read it intensively**, i.e. looking up every word they did not understand and were prepared to summarise it orally to a classmate.

#### 5.4 Learning and Acquiring Vocabulary

Apart from skills that need to be developed in business English courses, Taylor (2006) suggests dealing with grammar and **business vocabulary**. Language needs a structure and rules on which the student can hang the vocabulary. English has a complicated grammar system. Learners of English struggle to make sense of complicated grammar and wonder if it really helps to communicate better. According to Hrdličková (2016), learning and acquiring vocabulary is equally important as learning grammar. In the self-study reference and practice book, she shows how vocabulary works; she defines business terms in context, lists idiomatic expressions in example sentences and provides their non-idiomatic or formal equivalents. Moreover, Gillet (2010) recommends learning **idioms** to succeed on the job since workplaces are full of idiomatic expressions.

**Business vocabulary.** The English language has a rich vocabulary based on a mixture of Latin, French, Germanic and Scandinavian languages with a seasoning of words from Africa, the Middle East and Asia. The standard *Oxford Dictionary* has over half a million entries. However, experts estimate that people only need an active vocabulary of about 4,000 words to be able to function effectively internationally. With the right words and expressions, they can make excellent presentations in English, run and take part in meetings, negotiate prices, write clearly, deal with difficult telephone calls, have informal conversations with business counterparts, network and socialise in English and the like (Taylor, 2006; see also Aspinall & Bethell, 2003; Flower, 1990).

Regarding the Slovak students, they are helped to learn and acquire frequent and essential business vocabulary. They need to: (a) activate their words, (b) be creative, (c) look on the bright side of life (think positively), and (e) avoid 'false friends'.

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**Activating one's words.** It is very difficult to measure accurately a user's active vocabulary. In Germany and Sweden, some studies have been made on businesspeople. Those with a higher-education background who used their English regularly but had not lived in an English-speaking country had active vocabularies of between 2,500 and 3,500 words. This level allows the people to function internationally with some hesitations and mistakes. Another 500 words would give the people more confidence and make them more effective in international business situations.

There are several ways of identifying the extra words students need. Most of the reading they do in English for their study or work is **extensive reading**. In other words, they do not try to understand every single word but try to get the overall message and understand the main ideas. Just occasionally, they should read a part of a report or magazine article **intensively**. They need to make sure they understand every word and idea. They should write down the words or phrases that they judge to be useful so they can learn them later. They should do the same when listening to their native-speaker colleagues in meetings or on the phone. They should pick up just one word per meeting or per phone call and write it down. In addition, they should use a dictionary as an identification tool. In this way, they can build their own vocabulary list of relevant words and phrases to be systematically learnt. Everyone learns in a different way, but Taylor (2006) provides some tips that work with most people: (a) using Post-its<sup>TM</sup>, (b) using native-speakers, (c) using a notebook, (d) talking to oneself, (e) using one's left hand, (f) counting words, and (g) finding a partner.

**Being creative.** Students need to be creative in their approach to vocabulary, i.e. using the words they know in as a creative and flexible way. The English lecturer uses a wide variety of methods to explain words to students. Slovak students can use some of these lecturer's secrets to find alternative ways of explaining the words they have forgotten or even to explain concepts where they do not actually know the correct English word. For instance, there might be many ways of getting any concept across to the other person:

- (a) using core or near synonyms;
- (b) using antonyms;
- (c) looking for an example;
- (d) describing the word students are looking for (definition) – it usually takes longer but it is easy for the speaker;
- (e) putting the word into a sentence – putting the word in a context is self-explanatory;
- (f) finding words associated with the concept;
- (g) just saying the word for the term in one's own language – many people understand more than they can speak and are often familiar with foreign words in their line of business;

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- (h) using one's hands – for certain concepts they can use gestures to describe them; and
  - (i) drawing a picture – this is very useful when explaining technical details or when one's business partner has very limited English language skill.

If one of these techniques fail, students are taught to jump straight to an alternative. When they practise this, they find that those embarrassing moments get less and less frequent, and that they gain more and more confidence. Then those words they knew two minutes ago are less likely to disappear in the first place.

**Avoiding 'false friends'.** When students speak a foreign language, they need to avoid the vocabulary that lets them down or works against their interests. English has a great many words in common with other languages, e.g. with German. There are estimated 30,000 words which are more or less the same or similar between English and German. At the simplest level there are words like 'hand', 'finger' and 'arm' or words that are easily recognisable like 'comical', 'clinic' and 'author'. What is true for German is true for many other languages, too – but to different degrees. Many of the formal words in English are based on Latin or French and are easily recognised and learned by Romance language speakers.

These words in common can be described as 'instant English' for foreign-language speakers. However, there are also many words which look as if they are 'instant English', but are not. These are generally called 'false friends' and they are often the reason for misunderstandings in international business meetings.

People often know intellectually which words are 'false friends' and which are not. The problem is that in the heat of the discussion the word from one's own language pops into his or her mind. He or she translates it directly and, if it is a 'false friend', incorrectly. His or her colleagues who also speak the same language do not help, because they understand the 'false friends' perfectly. To recognise 'false friends', the students should:

- (a) look for clues in the facial expression of their native-speaker business colleagues; when they see a look of sight puzzlement or when the eyes glaze over for a second – they should stop and check they are both talking about the same thing;
- (b) look up 'false friends' on the Internet; they will find a variety of sites specialising in 'false friends' for one's mother tongue; and
- (c) make a 'false friend' mini dictionary based on their experience and reading; there are usually twenty to thirty key 'false friends' for speakers of European languages; they are the words that radically change the listener's understanding of what is being said.

All of the students have been in a situation that they were in the middle of a sentence and suddenly the word they knew two minutes ago had disappeared from

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their mind. They felt stressed and irritated with themselves as they failed to get their message across clearly. These memory lapses can be overcome using one of these techniques.

#### **5.4.1 Lexis in the Glossary Section of the Course Book**

Vocabulary plays an important role in both linguistic and sociolinguistic competences. In the 'Vocabulary' section, students learn important new words, phrases and definitions. Students of the University of Economics in Bratislava sit for departmental end-of-term business English tests consisting of six or seven tasks; three of them focus on testing vocabulary. Students learn new words from the vocabulary list in the 'Glossary' section of the core book (parts of speech: (n) – noun, (v) – verb, (adj) – adjective).

**A:** account (n); bank account, accountable (adj); accountability (n), accounts (n), acquire (v), acquisition (n), actuary (n), admission of liability (n), advertising campaign (n), agenda (n), agent (n), appoint (v), assess (v), asset (n), auction (n), audit (n), award (n, v);

**B:** backer (n), bankrupt (adj), bankruptcy (n), benefit (n), benefits package (n), bid (n), billboard (n), bond (n), bond market (n), bondholder (n), bonus (n), boost (v, n), brainstorming (n), brand (n), brand image (n), brand name (n), budget (n, adj), bureaucracy (n), bureaucratic (adj), business angel (n), bust (adj);

**C:** cashflow (n), CEO (n), chair (v, n), chairman (n), client (n), collateral (n), commission (n), commodity (n), compensation (n), compensation package (n), competitive (adj), competitive advantage (n), conglomerate (n), consensual (adj), consensus (n), consumer (n), consumer goods (n), contract (n), control (n, v), convertible bond (n), corporate (adj), credit (n), credit crunch (n), creditor (n);

**D:** damage (n, v) damages (n), deadline (n), debt (n), debtor (n), deceive (v), decline (v, n), default (v), delivery (n), demand (n), deregulate (v), devolve (v), differentiate (v), diligence (n), discount (n), distribution (n), distributor (n), diversify (v), divest (v), dividend (n), domestic market (n), downturn (n), draft (n);

**E:** earn (v), earnings (n), edge (n), emerging (adj), empower (v), empowerment (n), entrepreneur (n); entrepreneurial (adj), equity (n), equity capital (n), equity stake (n), exceed (v), exchange (n), exchange rate (n), expand (v), expansion (n);

**F:** fair trade (n), flexible (adj), fluctuate (v), fringe benefit (n), fund (n), fundraising (n);

**G:** globalisation (n), glocalisation (n), goodwill payment (n), growth (n);

**H:** headhunt (v); headhunter (n); headhunting (n), headquarters (n), hire (v, n), holding (n), hospitality (n), hostile (adj);

**I:** incentive (n), income (n), income stream (n), instalment (n), interest (n), interest rate, invest (v), investment (n), investor (n);

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**J:** jeopardise (v), job loss (n), joint venture (n);

**L:** launch (v, n), lease (v), ledger (n), liability (n), liquidation (n), liquidity (n), loan (n), loan shark (n), logo (n), loss (n), loyal (adj), loyalty (n);

**M:** management buyout (n), manufacture (v), market share (n), merger (n), minutes (n), mismanage (v); mismanagement (n), mortgage (n);

**N:** negotiate (v), nepotism (n), networking (n);

**O:** occupancy (n), outlet (n), outsource (v); outsourcing (n), overdraft (n), overtime (n), overwork (n);

**P:** partner (n), partnership (n), pawnbroker (n), performance appraisal (n), perk (n), pitch (v), portfolio (n), position (v), positioning (n), premium (n, adj), principal (n), production (n), promote (v), promotion (n); promotional (adj), public offering (n), purchase (n, v);

**R:** rate (n, v), rebrand (v); rebranding (adj), recession (n), recipient (n), recruitment (n), reduce (v), redundancy (n), refund (n, v), reinsurer (n), reliable (adj), relocate (v), rep (n), repay (v), replace (v), retail (n), retailer (n), retain (v), return (v, n, adj), returnable (adj), revenue (n);

**S:** savings account (n), savings bond (n), second (v); secondment (n), security (n), segment (n, v); segmentation (n), service contract (n), sever (v), severance (n), share (n), shareholder (n), slogan (n), slowdown (n), sponsor (v, n), sponsorship (n), stake (n), standard (n), statement (n), stock (n), stockbroker (n), stock market (n), strategic (adj), strategy (n), subsidiary (n), supplier (n), supply (n, v), supply chain (n), sustainable (adj);

**T:** take over (phr. v.), takeover (n), target (n, v), term (n), trade (n), turnover (n);

**V:** venture (n), venture capital (n), viral (adj), voice mail (n);

**W:** wage (n), wannabe (n), webinar (n), wholesaler (n), withdraw (v), work load (n), workforce (n), work-life balance (n), worth (adj);

**K: ---, Q: ---, U: ---, X: ---, Y: ---, Z: ---.**

It is surprising that the vocabulary list is quite short and no words beginning with K, Q, U, X, Y, Z are included in it. Underlined lexis in this list can be compared with the terms and frequent and essential words in Phase 2 of the research (see Tables 6, 8, 10, 12, 14).

#### ***5.4.2 Idioms Used in Business, Academic, and General English***

An **idiom** is a group of words with a meaning of its own that is different from the meanings of its individual components. In the language of business, idioms and metaphors (Burcl, 2013, 2014) are often used with reference to the domains of sport, war and gambling. Apart from 18 idioms explained in the 'Grammar reference' section, no other idioms or collocations are included in the 'Glossary' section.

Since business English is taught in an academic setting, students need to be aware of academic style and vocabulary that is used in academic contexts. In **writing**,

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academics use many neutral expressions as well as they use rather formal expressions that are not common in everyday language. However, very informal vocabulary can be used in **speech** while giving lectures by academics. Students should learn informal language when they hear it but have to be careful not to use it in essays and written assignments (Lea, Bull, Webb, & Duncan, 2014; McCarthy & O'Dell, 2016). A detailed analysis of idioms provides more information on this fascinating language. Firstly, it focuses on idioms used in **business English** (Parkinson & Noble, 2005) and, secondly, on idioms in **academic English**. They are compared with general English since some of them also occur in it.

Idioms are explained in the following way: (a) idiom in immediate context, (b) lexical meaning, and (c) idiom in bold italic type, core synonym(s) in bold, near synonyms and antonyms. In association with synonyms, it is sometimes argued that no two words have exactly the same meaning. Even words as similar in meaning as 'close' and 'shut' may have slightly different nuances, so students need to choose the right synonym carefully. This analysis supplies synonyms that will be most useful to users as well as those that can be used to get the same message across in some contexts.

The following analysis comprises idioms from 12 units as well as 'Working across cultures' section in the core book, practice file and teacher's resource book (Cotton et al., 2011; Mascull, 2011; Rogers, 2011).

## Unit 1 COMMUNICATION

### I. Idioms used in business English texts of the textbook

#### [1] **be/get/keep, etc. in touch (with sb)** (also *AcadE*)

(a) *E-mail is a marvellously economical tool for **keeping in touch with** far-flung commercial contacts; you can send them a note at your leisure, 24 hours a day.* (Cotton et al., 2011, p. 9)

(b) to communicate with sb, for example, by writing to them or by telephone or email

(c) communicate (v) – **liaise, be in touch**, be in contact; *AmE infml* shoot the breeze; correspond with (v) – **exchange letters**, communicate, **keep in touch**; *infml* drop sb a line; reach (v) – **get in touch with**, contact; *infml* get hold of

#### [2] **be/keep, etc. in touch (with sth)** (also *AcadE*)

(a) *Heads of Department should send weekly reports to the Board of Directors. This would enable Directors to **keep in touch with** key developments in the company.* (Cotton et al., 2011, p. 13)

(b) to know what is happening in a particular subject or area

(c) keep track of – **monitor**, follow, keep an eye on; **keep in touch with**; antonyms – lose track of

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[3] **in the loop** *AmE infml*; (in *GenE*) **(be) in the loop** *esp. AmE infml*

(a) *I'll need regular updates about the progress of the project. I'll also need to know what's going on when I'm away. Please keep me **in the loop**.* (Cotton et al., 2011, p. 10)

(b) part of a group of people who know what is happening and are dealing with important matters

(c) in on (adj) – **privy to**, aware of; *infml* in the know about, **in the loop**

[4] **out of the loop** *AmE infml*; (in *GenE*) **(be) out of the loop** *esp. AmE infml*

(a) *When have you been kept either **in or out of the loop**? How did you feel?* (Cotton et al., 2011, p. 10)

(b) not informed about important matters and so unable to help make decisions about them

[5] **put/keep sb in the picture** *infml*; **put sb in the picture** *esp. BrE infml*

(a) 1. *A lot happened while you were on holiday. Let me **put you in the picture**.* (Cotton et al., 2011, p. 10); 2. *When is it necessary to **put someone in the picture**?* (Cotton et al., 2011, p. 10); 3. *Even though I'd **put them in the picture**, they didn't seem to grasp what I was on about.* (Rogers, 2011, p. 6)

(b) to give sb the information they need in order to understand a situation

(c) **put sb in the picture** – **inform**, fill in, give details to, keep posted; apprise (v) **inform**, notify, let know, keep posted, keep up to date; *infml* **put in the picture**

## II. Idioms used in academic English

[1] **at a loss**; (in *GenE*) **(be) at a loss (to do sth)**; (in *GenE*) **(be) at a loss for words/a word**

(a) *When she was told she'd been nominated Businesswoman of the Year, she was **at a loss for words**.* (Rogers, 2011, p. 6)

(b) not knowing what to say or do

(c) **at a loss** – **baffled**, nonplussed, (all) at sea, at sixes and sevens, at one's wits' end; not have a clue *infml* – **have no idea**, not have any idea, **be at a loss**

[2] **keep an eye on sb/sth**

(a) *Surely, a monthly report is sufficient – or is it simply that Head Office wants to **keep an eye on us** and know what we're up to each day?* (Cotton et al., 2011, p. 153)

(b) to keep sb/sth under careful observation

(c) stake sth out (v) *infml* – **observe**, watch, **keep an eye on**; *infml* keep tabs on

[3] **state of the art**; (in *GenE*) **state of the art | state-of-the-art**

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(a) *Based in Seattle, US, W.C. Hooper Inc. (WCH) is a manufacturer and distributor of high-tech electronic products, ranging from executive toys to **state-of-the-art** digital cameras.* (Cotton et al., 2011, p. 12)

(b) the most modern or advanced techniques or methods in a particular field

(c) **state-of-the-art** (adj) – **modern**, ultra-modern, futuristic, avant-garde, the latest

## Unit 2 INTERNATIONAL MARKETING

### I. Idioms used in business English texts of the textbook

[1] **fall short of** sth (also *AcadE*); (in *GenE*) **fall/come short of** sth

(a) *Mr Kent says he regards the potential obstacles to Coca-Cola's China ambitions coming from broader political pressures as China's growth could still **fall short of** expectations.* (Mascull, 2011, p. 120)

(b) to fail to reach the standard that one expected or need

(c) **fall short** – **fail to meet**, fail to reach; antonyms – measure up (to)

[2] **a level playing field** *rather infml* (also *AcadE*)

(a) *There must be no unfair competition in the EU, and we shall continue to stress the need for **a level playing field**.* (Cotton et al., 2011, p. 146)

(b) a situation in which everyone has a fair and equal chance of succeeding

(c) **a level playing field** – a fair situation (*GenE*); a state of equality, an equal opportunity (www.thesaurus.com)

### II. Idioms used in academic English

[1] **come/spring to mind**; (in *GenE*) **come/spring to (one's) mind**

(a) *Say whatever **comes to mind**.* (Cotton et al., 2011, p. 19)

(b) to remember or think of sth

(c) occur (v) – **enter one's head/mind**, cross one's mind, **come/spring to mind**

[2] **with a view to** (doing) sth

(a) *The government decided to introduce a quota **with a view to** limiting exports of textile products from India.* (Rogers, 2011, p. 10)

(b) with the intention, aim or hope of doing sth

## Unit 3 BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS

### I. Idioms used in business English texts of the textbook

[1] **be/get/keep, etc. in touch (with sb)** (also *AcadE*) (see Unit 1)

(a) *He can probably give you some facts and figures. Tell him that Judy Milligan suggested you **get in touch**.* (Cotton et al., 2011, p. 35)

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- [2] **over sb's head** (also *AcadE*); (in *GenE*) **(go) over sb's head**; **do sth over sb's head**  
(a) *Well, I went over my contact's head and went directly to his boss at Toyota Motors Europe. I was really trying to clinch a deal.* (Cotton et al., 2011, p. 26)  
(b) to a higher position of authority than sb; to talk or deal with sb's boss without talking to them first

## II. Idioms used in academic English

### [1] **facts and figures**

- (a) *If you want to talk to someone about Brazil's petroleum industry, e-mail João Pereira. He can probably give you some **facts and figures**.* (Cotton et al., 2011, p. 35)  
(b) accurate and detailed information  
(c) material (n) – **information**, data, facts, **facts and figures**; *infml* info, low-down

### [2] **have/with sb/sth in mind (for sth)**

- (a) *If they want you to give talk at their company, find out what date they **have in mind** and mention that your fee for an afternoon session is \$2,000 + transport costs.* (Cotton et al., 2011, p. 142)  
(b) to be thinking of sb/sth, esp. as a possible aim, target or solution  
(c) **have sth in mind** – **think of**, contemplate; intend, aim, plan; drive at (v) – **suggest**, imply, **have in mind**

### [3] **(on the one hand...) on the other (hand)...**; (in *GenE*) **on (the) one hand ... and on the other (hand)**

- (a) *Negotiating prices and securing orders is very exciting. **On the other hand**, ensuring that the customer remains a customer can be less stimulating.* (Rogers, 2011, p. 14)  
(b) used to introduce different points of view, ideas, etc., esp. when they are opposites  
(c) but (conj) – **whereas**; **conversely**, but then, **on the other hand**, by contrast, in contrast, on the contrary; antonyms – and; alternatively (adv) – **on the other hand**, as an alternative, or; otherwise, but

## Unit 4 SUCCESS

### I. Idioms used in business English texts of the textbook

#### [1] **a ballpark figure/estimate/price** esp. *AmE infml*

- (a) *I don't know the exact price, but \$500 is **a good ballpark figure**.* (Cotton et al., 2011, p. 146)  
(b) a number, an amount, etc. that is approximately correct  
(c) approximation (n) – **estimate**, estimation; *AmE infml* **ballpark figure**; idea (n) – **estimate**, estimation; *AmE infml* **ballpark figure**

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[2] **make a go of** sth *infml*

(a) *It's been a lot of hard work, but she seems to be really **making a go of** her dry-cleaning business.* (Rogers, 2011, p. 17)

(b) to be successful in sth

[3] **make one's/a mark (on sth)** (also *AcadE*)

(a) *New employees are often anxious to **make their mark** and impress their bosses.* (Rogers, 2011, p. 17)

(b) to become famous or successful in a particular area

(c) **make one's mark** – **be successful, distinguish oneself**, succeed; *infml* make it, make the grade

[4] **out of line (with sb/sth)** esp. *AmE*; (in *GenE*) **(be) out of line** (also *AcadE*)

(a) *"I never admit mistakes and I am always correct." I read this and laughed. It was so shocking, so **out of line** that I thought it a joke.* (Mascull, 2011, p. 126)

(b) different from sb/sth

(c) at odds – **at variance**, not in keeping, **out of line**, out of step; saucy (adj) – **cheeky**, impudent, **out of line**, shameless; antonyms – polite, respectful

## II. Idioms used in academic English

[1] **at (long) last; at long last**

(a) ***At long last**, their hard work and investment is beginning to bear fruit.* (Rogers, 2011, p. 17)

(b) after much delay or effort; in the end; after a long time

(c) finally (adv) – **eventually**, ultimately, in the end, at length; at last, **at long last**, in the long run; *BrE infml* at the end of the day; eventually (adv) – **in the end**, in due course, at last, **at long last**; antonyms – immediately; never

[2] **bear fruit**

(a) *At long last, their hard work and investment is beginning to **bear fruit**.* (Rogers, 2011, p. 17)

(b) to have a successful result

(c) **bear fruit** – **yield results**, get results, succeed; antonyms – come to nothing

[3] **bear/keep sb/sth in mind | bear/keep in mind that...**

(a) *Your negotiating objectives are listed below. **Keep them in mind** when you plan your strategy and tactics.* (Cotton et al., 2011, p. 141)

(b) to remember sb/sth; to remember or consider that...

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(c) **bear sth in mind** – take into account, be mindful, remember; antonyms – forget, ignore; **bear/keep in mind** – remember, note, make a mental note of, take into account/consideration

[4] **get there**; (in *GenE*) **get there (in the end)**

(a) *The reorganisation of our business is not finished yet, but we are **getting there**.* (Rogers, 2011, p. 17)

(b) to achieve an aim or complete a task

(c) make strides – **make progress**, make headway, gain ground; *infml* **be getting there**

[5] **have/with sb/sth in mind (for sth)** (see Unit 3)

(a) *Well, what sort of quantity do you **have in mind**?* (Cotton et al., 2011, p. 41)

[6] **in excess of sth**

(a) *Carlos Slim is either the world's richest or second-richest man, with a fortune estimated to be **in excess of** \$67bn.* (Cotton et al., 2011, p. 39)

(b) of more than a particular amount

(c) **in excess of** – **more than**, over, over and above; antonyms – fewer than, less than; above (prep) – **greater than**, more than, **in excess of**; antonyms – less than, below

[7] **only time will tell**; (in *GenE*) **time (alone) will tell (saying)**

(a) *The question is: will Obogu provide the winning touch that will enable Kensington United to win the European Champions League Cup? **Time will tell**.* (Cotton et al., 2011, p. 157)

(b) one will have to wait for some time to find out the result of a situation

[8] **state of the art**; (in *GenE*) **state of the art | state-of-the-art** (see Unit 1)

(a) *Our ultramodern factory has **state-of-the-art** machinery.* (Cotton et al., 2011, p. 37)

## Unit 5 JOB SATISFACTION

### I. Idioms used in business English texts of the textbook

[1] **get down to business**

(a) *Since everybody is here, I suggest we **get down to business**.* (Rogers, 2011, p. 23)

(b) to start dealing with the matter that needs to be dealt with, or doing the work that needs to be done

(c) start (v) – **make a start**, begin; *infml* **get down to business**; antonyms – stop; hang about; give up; set about (v) – **begin**, start, get going on, put/set the wheels in motion, **get down to business**; *fml* commence

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[2] **go/turn sour**

(a) *She didn't get the job. She claims now that it was because she'd had a personal relationship with Walters which had **gone sour**.* (Cotton et al., 2011, p. 50)

(b) *figuratively* (situation) to become unpleasant or bad; to fail

(c) (*milk, wine*) turn (v) – **go/become sour**, go off, go bad, spoil (*literally*)

[3] **have/get/keep one's head down**

(a) *I just try to **keep my head down** and do a good job.* (Cotton et al., 2011, p. 157)

(b) to start/continue to work very hard

[4] **take a (heavy/terrible) toll (on sb/sth) | take its/their toll (on sb/sth)** (also *AcadE*)

(a) *Job satisfaction has dropped to a record low – with a particularly sharp fall among young people – as the pressures of recession **take their toll**, according to a leading business group.* (Mascull, 2011, p. 130)

(b) to have a bad effect on sb/sth; to cause a lot of damage, suffering, etc.

[5] **work/have long hours/days**

(a) *Workers become demotivated if they **work long hours** for low pay.* (Cotton, 2011, p. 45)

(b) to work more hours in the day than usual

## II. Idioms used in academic English

[1] **bear/keep sb/sth in mind | bear/keep in mind that...** (see Unit 4)

(a) *There's another thing you should **bear in mind**.* (Cotton et al., 2011, p. 49)

[2] **change one's/sb's mind**

(a) *A: Mmm, KB Finance? They are a very good company. But I don't know. I'm fairly happy here, actually. B: People often say that to me, Mr González, but they **change their mind** when they hear more about the offer.* (Cotton et al., 2011, p. 158)

(b) to change a decision or an opinion

(c) **change one's mind** – think again, think twice, have second thoughts; get cold feet – **hesitate**, falter, drag one's feet, think twice, **change one's mind**

[3] **come/spring to mind; (in *GenE*) come/spring to (one's) mind** (see Unit 2)

(a) *I think job priorities have changed in the last 10 years, since I've been working in this field. I think there are several areas that I can think of that **come to mind**.* (Cotton et al., 2011, p. 158)

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## Unit 6 RISK

### I. Idioms used in business English texts of the textbook

#### [1] **do battle (with sb) (for/over sth)**

- (a) *You may have to **do battle with** the insurers because they won't want to pay up.* (Cotton et al., 2011, p. 146)
- (b) to argue or be in competition with sb
- (c) encounter (v) – **confront**, accost, oppose; clash with, **do battle with**

#### [2] sb's **fall from grace**

- (a) *As Tiger Woods tees off at The Masters tournament, the humbled athlete is not the only one counting the cost of **his fall from grace**.* (Mascull, 2011, p. 134)
- (b) a situation in which a person or a company becomes less popular and successful, esp. after doing sth wrong and losing people's trust
- (c) vice (n) – **depravity**, degeneracy, **fall from grace**; antonyms – virtue, righteousness

#### [3] **in/over the long run | in the long term**; (in *AcadE*) **in the long/short/medium run**; (in *AcadE*) **in the short run**

- (a) *Our employees need to interact and to share information in a friendly setting. **In the long run**, good relationships can only benefit the company.* (Rogers, 2011, p. 92)
- (b) over a long period in the future; (in *AcadE*) used to describe what will happen a long, short, etc. time in the future; (in *AcadE*) concerning the immediate future
- (c) **in the long run** – **eventually**, in the end; *BrE infml* at the end of the day

#### [4] **out of the question** (also *AcadE*); (in *GenE*) **(be) out of the question**

- (a) *That's **out of the question**, I'm afraid.* (Rogers, 2011, p. 64)
- (b) impossible and not allowed and therefore not worth discussing
- (c) **out of the question** – **impossible**, beyond the bounds of possibility, impracticable

#### [5] **pave the way for sth**

- (a) *In fact, it was internationalisation that **paved the way for** the beginnings of the insurance industry back in the fourteenth century, as shipowners sought to protect the increasing value of their ships and cargoes.* (Cotton et al., 2011, p. 55)
- (b) to create a situation in which sb will be able to do sth or sth can happen
- (c) **pave the way for** – **prepare for**, prepare the way for, get ready, set the scene; usher in – **herald**, mark the start of, set the scene for, **pave the way for**; start, put in place, open the door to, get going, get off the ground, set in motion

#### [6] **take a back seat (to sth)**

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(a) *All organizations need to nurture a ‘safety culture’. Company policy and workstation practice must dictate that safety never **takes a back seat** to other interests.* (Rogers, 2011, p. 27)

(b) to be given less importance than sth else

## II. Idioms used in academic English

[1] **in excess of** sth (see Unit 4)

(a) *The largest container ships today, with cargoes of up to 13,000 containers may be worth far **in excess of** \$1bn.* (Cotton et al., 2011, p. 55)

[2] **in the wake of** sth | **in sth’s wake**

(a) ***In the wake of** the Tiger Woods scandal, DeWitt Stern, the insurance broker, saw an opportunity to publicise a product it had launched to cover reputational risk, including how to deal with celebrity endorsers becoming engulfed in scandal.* (Mascull, 2011, p. 134)

(b) coming after or following sb/sth

(c) because of – **on account of**, as a result of, on grounds of; thanks to, on the strength of; through, **in the wake of**

[3] **make up your mind** | **make your mind up**

(a) *Well, our New Business Department are doing some research now. They’ll report their findings at our next management meeting, and that’ll help up to **make up our minds**.* (Cotton et al., 2011, p. 160)

(b) to decide sth

(c) decide (v) – **resolve**, determine, **make up one’s mind**; have in mind; antonyms – dither

[4] **come/spring to mind**; (in *GenE*) **come/spring to** (one’s) **mind** (see Units 2, 5)

(a) *Recent examples of recalls that **spring to mind** include toys coated with lead paint and toothpaste contaminated with the antifreeze diethylene glycol.* (Cotton et al., 2011, p. 55)

## Unit 7 MANAGEMENT STYLES

### I. Idioms used in business English texts of the textbook

[1] **work/have long hours/days** (see Unit 5)

(a) *Managers should **work longer hours** than their staff.* (Cotton et al., 2011, p. 66)

### II. Idioms used in academic English

[1] **at all costs** | **at any cost**

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(a) *Deadlines must be met **at all costs**. I won't accept excuses.* (Cotton et al., 2011, p. 73)

(b) under any circumstances and without considering the amount of effort or money that may be used

[2] **catch sb's eye/the eye**; (in *GenE*) attrib. use: **eye-catching**

(a) *You can see from the slide that the bottles are beautifully designed, very **eye-catching** and appealing.* (Cotton et al., 2011, p. 161)

(b) to attract sb's attention

(c) **eye-catching** (adj) – **striking**, arresting, conspicuous, out of the ordinary; antonyms – inconspicuous; unexceptional; flamboyant (adj) – **colourful**, brilliantly coloured; **eye-catching**; antonyms – dull, restrained

[3] **the chances are (that)** *rather infml*

(a) *So if you treat people with politeness and dignity, **the chances are**, the majority of staff will respond in a similar manner.* (Cotton et al., 2011, p. 160)

(b) it is likely that...

(c) probably (adv) – **in all likelihood**, in all probability, ten to one, **the chances are**, doubtless, no doubt, on the face of it

[4] **the end justifies the means**; (in *GenE*) attrib. use: **ends-justify-the-means**; **the means become the end**

(a) ***The ends** do not always fully **justify the means**, but wherever possible, place emphasis on not time-keeping, or what people appear to be doing, but the level of the performance actually achieved.* (Cotton et al., 2011, p. 160)

(b) used to say that bad or unfair methods of doing sth are acceptable if the result of that action is good or positive

[5] **on top of** sth/sb

(a) *Our manager never shows any understanding if we let the work get **on top of us** and never encourages us.* (Rogers, 2011, p. 30)

(b) 1. on, over or covering sth/sb; 2. in addition to sth; 3. in control of a situation

[6] **to the letter** *slightly infml*

(a) *They have to decide how to do it. Their job? To carry out my instructions – **to the letter**!* (Cotton et al., 2011, p. 73)

(b) doing exactly what sb/sth says, paying attention to every detail

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(c) **to the letter** – **strictly**, precisely, exactly; antonyms – in general terms, approximately; verbatim (adv) – **word for word**, letter for letter, line for line, **to the letter**, literally, exactly; antonyms – loosely, imprecisely

[7] **trial and error**

(a) 1. *In the end though, the majority of parents work things out for themselves through a process of **trial and error**. But what about leadership?* (Rogers, 2011, p. 29); 2. *So it seems that for both parents and leaders, it is back to **trial and error** and gut instinct.* (Rogers, 2011, p. 29)

(b) the process of solving a problem by trying various methods, amounts, etc. until one finds one that is successful

(c) experiment (n) – **research**, experimentation, observation, **trial and error**; antonyms – theory

## **Unit 8 TEAM BUILDING**

### **I. Idioms used in business English texts of the textbook**

[1] **back on track** (also *AcadE*) rather *infml*; (in *GenE*) **get (sb/sth)/be back on track; on track (to do sth)** (in *GenE*, also *AcadE*); **put/get sb/sth back on track**

(a) 1. *Where necessary, steer them **back on track** if they veer off, but a team really is a group of people who are feeling enthusiastic towards achieving the same objective and they're feeling encouraged by their leader throughout.* (Cotton et al., 2011, p. 161); 2. *See if you can put him **back on track**.* (Rogers, 2011, p. 34)

(b) once again following a course that is likely to achieve what is required, after a mistake or failure; (in *AcadE*) on track (to do sth) – following a course that is likely to achieve what is required

[2] **hard and fast** (esp. after a negative); (also *AcadE*) rather *infml*

(a) *At the moment we have no **hard and fast** information about the reorganisation of Human Resources.* (Rogers, 2011, p. 32)

(b) that cannot be changed in any circumstances

(c) **hard and fast** – **definite**, fixed, clear-cut; antonyms – flexible; cut and dried – **definite**, decided, clear-cut, black and white, **hard and fast**; antonyms – vague

[3] **keep sb posted (about/on sth)**

(a) *Find out what's wrong with him. ... **Keep me posted**.* (Rogers, 2011, p. 34)

(b) to regularly give sb the most recent information about sth and how it is developing

(c) **keep sb posted** – **keep informed**, inform, keep up to date, keep in the picture, let sb know; *infml* keep up to speed; update (v) – **brief**, bring up to date, inform; keep sb

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informed, **keep sb posted**, keep sb up to date, keep sb in the picture; *infml* keep sb up to speed

[4] **pull one's weight** (also *AcadE*); (in *GenE*) **pull one's (own) weight** *infml*

(a) *What you're saying is, you're unhappy with Sophie, you don't think she's **pulling her weight** in the department, and it's putting pressure on you and the rest of the team.* (Cotton et al., 2011, p. 161)

(b) to work as hard as everyone else in a job or activity

[5] **(put sth) on the line** (also *AcadE*) rather *infml*

(a) *He is well aware that if he cannot motivate the team to raise its performance, his own job will be **on the line**.* (Cotton et al., 2011, p. 80)

(b) at risk; put at risk

(c) **on the line – at risk**, in danger, endangered, imperilled; risk (v) – **endanger**, put at risk, **put on the line**, take a chance with, jeopardise, venture

[6] **think out of/outside of the box**

(a) *There are creative people who solve problems either by being creative as we would expect inasmuch as they have random ideas and they, um, they're able to really **think outside of the box**.* (Cotton et al., 2011, p. 161)

(b) to think in a new or different way in order to solve a problem

(c) ingenuity (n) – **inventiveness**, creativity; sharpness; sophistication; *infml* **thinking outside the box**; ingenious (adj) – **inventive**, creative; clever; sharp; elaborate; *infml* on the ball, **thinking outside the box**; antonyms – unimaginative

## II. Idioms used in academic English

[1] **at... length**; (in *GenE*) **at (great) length**

(a) *The pros and cons of a thorough reorganisation have been discussed **at length**.* (Rogers, 2011, p. 32)

(b) for a long time and in great detail

(c) **at length – 1 for a long time**, for ages, **2 thoroughly**, fully, in detail, in depth, **3 after a long time**, after a considerable time, in the long run; finally, at last, at long last, in conclusion; antonyms – immediately, straight away; on and on – **for a long time**, for ages, **at (great) length**

[2] **by and large** (also *GenE*) *infml*

(a) ***By and large**, news of reorganisation of the department was welcomed by the staff.* (Rogers, 2011, p. 32)

(b) used to say that sth is, generally but not completely, true

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(c) **by and large** – **on the whole**, generally, in general, all in all, for the most part, in the main, as a rule; on average, on balance, to all intents and purposes

[3] **change** one's/sb's **mind** (see Unit 5)

(a) *It might be quite difficult to make him **change his mind**.* (Rogers, 2011, p. 69)

[4] **make up** your **mind** | **make** your **mind up** (see Unit 6)

(a) *You want to hear the opinions of the other directors before **making up your mind**.* (Cotton et al., 2011, p. 136)

[5] **(on the one hand...)** **on the other (hand)...**; (in *GenE*) **on (the) one hand ... and on the other (hand)** (see Unit 3)

(a) ***On the one hand**, some of the complaints about Alan seem justified. ... **On the other hand**, it is clear that there are problems within the team as a whole and that they need to learn to work together more effectively.* (Rogers, 2011, p. 35)

[6] **speak** one's **mind**; **speak** one's **(own) mind** (*GenE*)

(a) *OK, OK, sorry if I offended you, Max – I just like to **speak my mind**, that's all.* (Cotton et al., 2011, p. 162)

(b) to say exactly what you think, in a very direct way

(c) express oneself – **communicate one's thoughts/opinions/views**, put thoughts into words, **speak one's mind**; speak out/up (v) – **speak publicly**, speak openly, speak frankly, **speak one's mind**, stand up and be counted

[7] **trial and error** (see Unit 7)

(a) *Some of the best teams are built after a painful process of **trial and error**.* (Rogers, 2011, p. 33)

## Unit 9 RAISING FINANCE

### I. Idioms used in business English texts of the textbook

[1] **be/remain, etc. in the black** | **move into/return to, etc. the black**; (in *GenE*) **(be) in the black** *infml*

(a) ***Being in the red/black** means you are in credit.* (Cotton et al., 2011, p. 83)

(b) 1. to be making profit; to start to make a profit; 2. (*Stock Exchange*) if markets or shares are **in the black**, they are higher in value than they were previously

(c) **in the black** – **in credit**, in funds, debt-free, out of debt, solvent; antonyms – in debt; profitable (adj) – **moneymaking**, profit-making, **in the black**; antonyms – unprofitable, loss-making

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[2] **be/remain, etc. in the red | move into/return to, etc. the red**; (in *GenE*) **(be) in the red** *infrm*

(a) **Being in the red/black** means you are in credit. (Cotton et al., 2011, p. 83)

(b) 1. to be operating at a loss; to be spending more than one earns; 2. (*Stock Exchange*) if markets or shares are **in the red**, they are lower in value than they were previously

(c) **in the red** – **overdrawn**, in debt; antonyms – in the black; bankrupt (adj) – **insolvent**, bankrupted; in debt, **in the red**; *BrE* in administration, *infrm* bust; antonyms – solvent

[3] **hedge one's bets** (also *AcadE*)

(a) 1. *We are trying to **hedge our bets** and not put all our eggs in one basket.* (Cotton et al., 2011, p. 146); 2. *It's a good idea to **hedge your bets** by applying to more than one MBA programme.* (Cotton et al., 2011, p. 85)

(b) to reduce the risk of losing or making a mistake by refusing to completely support one idea or by keeping more than one option available

(c) hedge (v) – **prevaricate**, equivocate, **hedge one's bets**, beat about the bush; antonyms – come to the point

[4] **money talks** (*saying*)

(a) **Money talks.** (Cotton et al., 2011, p. 82)

(b) people who have a lot of money have more power and influence than others

[5] **pay/spend over the odds** *BrE infrm*

(a) *They're **paying over the odds** for the site, but it's a prime location.* (Cotton et al., 2011, p. 146)

(b) to pay more than one would normally expect

[6] **throw good money after bad** (*saying*)

(a) *Don't **throw good money after bad**.* (Cotton et al., 2011, p. 82)

(b) to spend more money on sth, when one has wasted a lot on it already

## II. Idioms used in academic English

[1] **deep pockets**; (in *GenE*) **(have) deep pockets**

(a) *Um, the public markets, um selling shares to the public markets has the advantages of **having a much deeper pocket**.* (Cotton et al., 2011, p. 162)

(b) if sb/sth has deep pockets they have a lot of money available to spend on sth

(c) prosperous (adj) – **affluent**, wealthy, **with deep pockets**, well-to-do; antonyms – poor; rich (adj) – **wealthy**, affluent, well-to-do, **with deep pockets**; antonyms – poor

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[2] **get hold of** sth *rather infml*

(a) *Although bank finance is easier to **get hold of** than it was a year ago, the costs remain stubbornly high.* (Cotton et al., 2011, p. 85)

(b) to find sth that one wants or needs

(c) **get hold of** *infml* – **1 obtain**, acquire; *infml* get one's hands on; grab (v) *infml* – **obtain**, acquire; *infml* get/lay one's hands on, **get hold of**

[3] **have/with sb/sth in mind (for sth)** (see Units 3, 4)

(a) 1. *What did you **have in mind**?* (Cotton et al., 2011, p. 87); 2. *Could I ask what sort of repayment terms you **have in mind**?* (Cotton et al., 2011, p. 87)

[4] **state of the art; state of the art | state-of-the-art** (*GenE*) (see Units 1, 4)

(a) *Our **state-of-the-art** machinery is our major asset.* (Cotton et al., 2011, p. 83)

## Unit 10 CUSTOMER SERVICE

### I. Idioms used in business English texts of the textbook

[1] **be/get/keep, etc. in touch (with sb)** (also *AcadE*) (see Units 1, 3)

(a) *The captain was great, too. He warned us of any turbulence well in advance and **kept in touch with us** during the flight.* (Cotton et al., 2011, p. 165)

[2] **have/keep an open mind (about/on sth)** (also *AcadE*)

(a) ***Keep an open mind** at all times.* (Cotton et al., 2011, p. 138)

(b) to be willing to listen to or accept new ideas or suggestions

[3] **on hold** (also *AcadE, GenE*); (in *GenE*) **put sth on hold; be on hold**

(a) *I'm writing to you because I can't get through to your helpline. I've been trying all week, but I get put **on hold** and then no one answers me.* (Cotton et al., 2011, p. 102)

(b) delayed or remaining the same until a later time or date; (in *GenE*) if one is on hold when he or she is using the phone, he or she is waiting to speak to sb; to decide one will leave an activity until a later time

(c) in limbo – **in abeyance**, unfinished; suspended; *infml on hold*; antonyms – in hand

### II. Idioms used in academic English

[1] **all/just the same** *infml*

(a) *A: Medium wine's not the same as dry wine. B: I know that. But **all the same**, it was fat too sweet ...* (Cotton et al., 2011, p. 164)

(b) despite this

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(c) nevertheless (adv) – **in spite of that/everything**, nonetheless, that said, **just the same, all the same**; regardless (adv) – **anyway**, anyhow, no matter what, **just the same, all the same**, (come) rain or shine

[2] **the bread and butter of** sth; (in *GenE*) sb's **bread and butter** *infml*; attrib. use: **bread-and-butter**

(a) *By using customer service experts and the latest technology, these companies were able to focus on dealing with their **bread-and-butter** business.* (Cotton et al., 2011, p. 99)

(b) the main part of a company or organisation's work

(c) living (n) – **livelihood**, income; job, work, employment; *infml* **bread and butter**

[3] **make a point of** doing sth

(a) *We **make a point of** not letting the customer off the line until the query is fully resolved.* (Rogers, 2011, p. 41)

(b) to make sure one does sth because it is important or necessary

(c) **make a point of** – **make an effort to**, go out of one's way to, put/place emphasis on; emphasise (v) – **bring/call/draw attention to**, focus attention on, **make a point of**; antonyms – understate, play down

[4] **no matter who/what/where etc.**; (in *GenE*) **no matter (how/what/who/where etc.)**

(a) **No matter what** a company does, it is always in the business of providing customer service. (Rogers, 2011, p. 40)

(b) used to say that sth is always true, whatever the situation is, or that sb should certainly do sth

(c) anyhow (adv) – **anyway**, in any case, **no matter what**, regardless; however, be that as it may; however (adv) – **in whatever way**, regardless of how, **no matter how**; by hook or by crook – **by any means**, by any means whatsoever, somehow, **no matter how**

[5] **(on the one hand...) on the other (hand)...**; (in *GenE*) **on (the) one hand ... and on the other (hand)** (see Units 3, 8)

(a) *All successful companies, **on the other hand**, understand and deliver what their customers want and strongly believe in the value of customer service training for management and front-line employees.* (Rogers, 2011, p. 40)

[6] **on your/its own** ; (in *GenE*) **(be) on one's own** *infml*

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(a) *I'm Brazilian, a single woman and **on my own** in London. I must get my suitcase back.* (Cotton et al., 2011, p. 102)

(b) 1. alone; without anyone/anything else; 2. without help

(c) solo (adj) – **unaccompanied**, single-handed; alone, all alone, **on one's own**; antonyms – accompanied; solo (adv) – **unaccompanied**, alone, all alone, **on one's own**, under one's own steam; antonyms – accompanied, in company, with help

[7] **word of mouth**; (in *GenE*) **by word of mouth**

(a) 1. *They can secure continuous business as well as positive **word of mouth** by keeping things personal when working globally.* (Cotton et al., 2011, p. 99); 2. **Word of mouth** is one of the best ways of getting business. (Cotton et al., 2011, p. 98)

(b) the process by which people hear about sth because they are told about it by other people and not because they read about it or watch it on television

(c) spoken (adj) – **verbal, oral**, uttered, unwritten; **by word of mouth**; *Latin*: viva voce; antonyms – unspoken, unwritten; verbal (adj) – **oral**, spoken, said, **word-of-mouth**; *Latin*: viva voce; antonyms – non-verbal, unspoken; written

## Unit 11 CRISIS MANAGEMENT

### I. Idioms used in business English texts of the textbook ---

#### II. Idioms used in academic English

[1] **come/get to grips with** sth

(a) *How our leaders **get to grips with** a scare story (heading)* (Mascull, 2011, p. 156)

(b) to begin to understand and deal with sth difficult

(c) **come/get to grips with** – **deal with**, cope with; tackle, undertake; antonyms – avoid; undertake (v) – **tackle**, take on; engage, take part in, turn one's hand to, **get to grips with**; *fml* commence; antonyms – neglect, forgo

[2] **for the sake of** (doing) sth; (in *GenE*) **for sb's/sth's sake**

(a) *If you are not completely sure what you are talking about, resist the temptation to give out information just **for the sake of** seeming cooperative.* (Rogers, 2011, p. 46)

(b) in order to get or keep sth

(c) on behalf of/on sb's behalf – **in the interests of**, in support of, **for the sake of**

[3] **learn a lesson/learn lessons**; (in *GenE*) **learn one's lesson/the lesson**

(a) What **lessons can be learned**? (Cotton et al., 2011, p. 106)

(b) to learn what to do or not to do in the future because of a bad experience in the past

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[4] **no matter who/what/where etc.**; (in *GenE*) **no matter (how/what/who/where etc.)** (see Unit 10)

(a) **No matter how** hard we try, I fear the public won't regain confidence in our products. (Rogers, 2011, p. 46)

[5] **on one's hands**; (in *GenE*) **(have sb/sth) on one's hands**

(a) OK, it's pretty clear we've got a crisis **on our hands**, Bob, but before we decide how to handle this one, could you run me through our plans for the launch? (Cotton et al., 2011, p. 165)

(b) if you have sb/sth **on your hands**, you are responsible for them/it

## Unit 12 MERGERS AND ACQUISITIONS

### I. Idioms used in business English texts of the textbook

[1] **tie the knot (with sb/sth) infml**

(a) Merging companies are said to '**tie the knot**'. (Rogers, 2011, p. 50)

(b) (used esp. in newspapers) to join together with sb/sth else in order to form a single business or organisation

(c) marry (v) – **get/be married**, wed; *infml* **tie the knot**

### II. Idioms used in academic English

[1] **back and forth**

(a) 'There's been a good give and take, **back and forth** with the organizations', he says. (Cotton et al., 2011, p. 115)

(b) from one place to another and back again many times

(c) here and there – **from place to place**, around, to and fro, **back and forth**

[2] **(on the one hand...) on the other (hand)...**; (in *GenE*) **on (the) one hand ... and on the other (hand)** (see Units 3, 8, 10)

(a) A merger, **on the other hand**, involves two companies or organisations coming together to form a larger one. (Cotton et al., 2011, p. 166)

## WORKING ACROSS CULTURES

### I. Idioms used in business English texts of the textbook

[1] **get down to business (BusE)** (see Unit 5)

(a) 1. In India, it is likely that there will be some general discussion before people **get down to business**. Such discussion helps both sides to get to know each other better. (Cotton et al., 2011, p. 139 [Doing business internationally]); 2. Tactics which work well when doing business with people from your own culture do not necessarily apply internationally – for example, the idea that everyone likes to **get down to business** and

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*focus on the result and get a contract drawn up.* (Cotton et al., 2011, p. 167 [International negotiations])

[2] **have/keep an open mind (about/on sth)** (*BusE*) (also *AcadE*) (see Unit 10)

(a) 1. **Keep an open mind** and be flexible. (Cotton et al., 2011, p. 121 [International negotiations]); 2. You **have an open mind about** the items on the agenda, so you should listen carefully and try and see the different points of view. (Cotton et al., 2011, p. 139 [Doing business internationally])

[3] **keep/lose track of sb/sth** (*BusE*) (also *AcadE*)

(a) For others, meetings are more about **keeping track of** what's going on – to share ideas about progress, to talk about problems and mistakes and how to rectify them. (Cotton et al., 2011, p. 163 [Managing international teams])

(b) to be aware of what is happening or where sb/sth is

(c) **keep track of** – **monitor**, follow, keep an eye on; keep in touch with; antonyms – lose track of; monitor (v) – **observe**, watch, keep an eye on, **keep track of**; *infml* keep tabs on, keep a tab on

[4] **you scratch my back and I'll scratch yours** (*BusE infml*; (in *GenE*) (if) **you scratch my back (and) I/I'll scratch yours**

(a) *There's also a group of cultures which operate at the level of mutual debt, which is the idea of an exchange. What this means is, one person will give information if someone does something for them in return – you know, I'll scratch your back if you scratch mine!* (Cotton et al., 2011, p. 163 [Managing international teams])

(b) used to say that if sb helps you, you will help them, even if this is unfair to others

## II. Idioms used in academic English

[1] **around/round the clock** (*AcadE*)

(a) *The western practice of compartmentalising work and personal life has not caught on in Russia, where business carries on **round the clock**.* (Mascull, 2011, p. 124 [Doing business in Russia])

(b) all day and all night without stopping

(c) continually (adv) – **constantly**, continuously, **round the clock**; *AmE infml* 24-7

[2] **bear/keep sb/sth in mind | bear/keep in mind that...** (*AcadE*) (see Units 4, 5, 6)

(a) 1. *Once again, you should **bear in mind** the importance of talking about the right things at the beginning of your relationship.* (Cotton et al., 2011, p. 161 [Working in new markets]); 2. *Well, Steve, one thing to **bear in mind** right at the start is actually the way a team is seen in different cultures.* (Cotton et al., 2011, p. 163 [Managing

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international teams]); 3. *So I don't really want to talk about specific cultures, but to outline a few general principles and differences which are worth **bearing in mind** when getting involved in international negotiations.* (Cotton et al., 2011, p. 167 [Managing international teams]); 4. *I know my colleague spoke at length this morning about body language, eye contact and the role of silence, but it's also important to **bear in mind** the social aspect.* (Cotton et al., 2011, p. 167 [International negotiations])

[3] **keep sb at arm's length** (AcadE); (in GenE) **(keep ... sb) at arm's length**

(a) *Usually in Kazakhstan, people **keep at arm's length** during a conversation, and it's important to keep good eye contact when talking to people – they expect that.* (Cotton et al., 2011, p. 160 [Working in new markets])

(b) to avoid being very close to or friendly with sb/sth

(c) distance (v) – **withdraw**, detach, **keep at arm's length**; antonyms – draw closer

[4] **learn a lesson/learn lessons** (AcadE); (in GenE) **learn one's lesson/the lesson** (see Unit 11)

(a) *What **lessons can be learned** about Indian business culture from Christina's experience?* (Cotton, et al., 2011, p. 31 [Doing business internationally])

[5] **on one's mind** (AcadE)

(a) *The extent to which people are direct varies considerably across cultures. In some places, you have to pay careful attention even to understand if the person is saying yes. In other places, people may seem very abrupt when they say what's **on their mind**.* (Cotton et al., 2011, p. 35 [Doing business internationally])

(b) if sb/sth is on one's mind, he or she is thinking and worrying about them/it a lot

[6] **tried and tested/trusted** BrE, AmE, AustrE | **tried and true** AmE (AcadE)

(a) *Bob, was there much competition in the Chinese pizza trade? Yes, but we felt our **tried-and-trusted** marketing approach would work well there. And certainly we expected to get a foothold in the market pretty quickly.* (Cotton et al., 2011, p. 155; [Doing business internationally])

(b) that you have used or relied on in the past successfully

(c) trustworthy (adj) – **reliable**, dependable; true-blue; **tried and trusted**, **tried and true**; antonyms – untrustworthy, unreliable, shifty; tried (adj) – **proven**, proved, **tried and tested**, put to the test; antonyms – experimental, novel

The analysis contains idioms that are used in business, academic as well as general English. The most frequently used idioms are as follows:

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- (a) 4x – *be/get/keep, etc. in touch (with sb)* (Units 1, 3, 10, FRT), *bear/keep sb/sth in mind (that)* (Units 4, 5, Working across cultures), *(on the one hand...) on the other (hand)* (Units 3, 8, 10, 12);
- (b) 3x – *come/spring to mind* (Units 2, 5, 6), *get down to business* (Unit 5, Working across cultures), *have/with sb/sth in mind (for sth)* (Units 3, 4, 9), *have/keep an open mind (about/on sth)* (Unit 10, Working across cultures), *state of the art/state-of-the-art* (Units 1, 4, 9); and
- (c) 2x – *change your/sb's mind* (Units 5, 8), *fall short of sth* (Unit 2, PLT), *go/turn sour* (Unit 5, PLT), *in excess of sth* (Units 4, 6), *a level playing field* (Unit 2, PLT), *no matter who/what/where, etc. ...* (Units 10, 11), *trial and error* (Units 7, 8), *work/have long hours/days* (Units 5, 7).

As international trade exchange intensifies, there is a growing effort on the part of academics and multinational organisations to improve communication. It is desirable not only to learn foreign languages on a wider scale, but also to show sympathy to other people's customs, societies and cultures. The interaction takes form of both verbal and non-verbal behaviour, i.e. communication (Šajgaliková, 2016).

Even in today's globalised world, there are wide cultural differences and they influence how people do business. Culture has an impact on many elements of business, e.g. (a) the pace of business, (b) business protocol (how to physically and verbally meet and interact), (c) decision-making and negotiating, (d) managing employees and projects, (e) propensity for risk-taking, and (f) marketing, sales and distribution. Understanding other people's cultures is important to successful business interactions as well as to accomplishing business goals.

## **5.5 Modern Digital Technologies in Teaching Business English**

Part of the monograph is devoted to the development of communicative competence. However, it is necessary to consider and discuss the development of individual skills and systems of students with regard to various digital tools, applications, platforms, etc. Modern digital technologies do play a very important role in the process of developing particular sub-competencies of communicative competence in current pupils and students as well as in teaching EAP and ESP students. Therefore, this subchapter focuses on the development of a different kind given prominence by the author of the monograph on the basis of her pedagogical experience.

The emergence of Web 2.0 technologies such as weblogs, wikis and social networks has created new opportunities and challenges in the sphere of foreign language learning (Dosik & Dong, 2013). Weblogs are used as learning tools in higher education due to their popularity, flexibility, and as new methodologies and learning

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environments (Hrdličková, 2015; Luján-Mora, 2006; Stradiotová, 2012). Within the KEGA project 'The Influence of Web Applications on Language Skills' working weblogs were created to modernise the teaching and learning process. The primary aim of using weblogs was to explore their impact on developing students' reading and writing skills. Non-philological students participating in the project were divided into two groups: experimental and control. Both groups were required to write essays at the beginning and end of the semester. Weblogs facilitated the experimental group of students to publish their essays regularly and simultaneously lecturers to provide feedback and monitor students' performance more effectively. At the end of the semester, the outcomes of both groups of students were compared and evaluated. Research findings have shown the improvement in educational results of both groups. In her paper, Hrdličková (2015) offers valuable insight into the impressive impact weblogs as part of modern learning environment can have on improving students' language skills.

There is no doubt that teaching foreign languages via blended learning benefits both lecturers and students. The findings of Klímová's study (2017) confirm the prevalence of the use of blended learning. The platform LMS Moodle has been widely used by universities and scholars all over the world (e.g. Gluchmanova, 2016; Hrdličková, 2023a, 2023b; Lasić-Lazić, Ivanjko, & Grubješić, 2017; Prasetya, 2021; Shaykina, 2015; Tang, 2013, and many others). In the KEGA project 'Idioms in Business Communication' students of the Faculty of Economic Informatics had the possibility of improving their English grammar by doing two exercises focused on tenses. The lecturer made corrections in the exercise done by the student who achieved B1 level of English language competence at high school. As it can be seen in the paper written by Hrdličková (2019), it clearly demonstrates that there is a big difference between students who achieved B1, B2 or C1 (CEFR) level of proficiency in English who were his/her classmates at university. This student was really struggling with doing exercise focused on practising 'Present perfect and past' tenses. Also, the lecturer provided students with feedback on exercises focused on revision of tenses and gave them some recommendations.

Computer-Assisted Language Learning (CALL) and Mobile-Assisted Language Learning (MALL) approaches have had positive effects on language education. As technology continues to shape the landscape of education, platforms like Quizlet are prime examples of how innovative applications can revolutionise the learning experience. Quizlet is a helpful tool for mastering vocabulary and many students prefer it due to its convenience and effectiveness. In addition, it has helped many language learners to achieve their learning goals (Bayaksud, Degeng, & Razali, 2024; Pham, 2022). This application is still used as a warm-up activity for practising business English vocabulary by the students of the University of Economics in Bratislava.

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Regarding vocabulary development, different approaches, methods and techniques can be used. For instance, anyone can practise with the free high-quality resources provided by the world's English teaching experts – the British Council, the United Kingdom's international organisation for cultural relations and educational opportunities. In the past, students from the University of Economics in Bratislava did various activities that helped them learn the meaning, pronunciation and spelling of new words. Learning vocabulary helped them improve their language level and communicate in English confidently and effectively.

If students from the University of Economics in Bratislava wanted to practise their listening and find out about business topics and issues at the same time, they could try podcasts. They could listen to audio recordings for upper intermediate (CEFR Level B2) learners and improve their listening skills in English. They could learn useful language for a wide range of business topics from talks, presentations and dialogues, as well as tips and techniques for dealing with business issues. Each recording had interactive exercises and a transcript to help them understand and use the language ([learnenglish.britishcouncil.org](http://learnenglish.britishcouncil.org)).

Finally, LMS Moodle has also been used in the KEGA project 'ePortfolio as Pedagogy Facilitating Integrative Learning' by students from two universities – Constantine the Philosopher University in Nitra and Trnava University in Trnava. Within one or two semesters, they focused on practicing writing different genres, such as formal or semi-formal e-mails, minutes of meetings, short summaries, résumés/CV, covering letters, study abroad grant applications, reports, etc. By submitting them to LMS Moodle they gathered the material that can/could be displayed in their own portfolios. Finally, the students created their own e-portfolios in LMS Moodle or web-based platforms like Mahara or Google Sites (Hrdličková, 2023a, 2023b).

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## 6 Teaching Business English at Constantine the Philosopher University in Nitra

The Department of English Language and Culture of the Faculty of Education offers bachelor's and master's study programmes 'Teacher Training of English Language and Literature' where students do courses in English phonetics and phonology, lexicology and phraseology, morphology, syntax, stylistics, British and American literature, history and culture of English-speaking countries, academic English, business English, didactics, etc.

Philological and non-philological students from the five faculties of Constantine the Philosopher University in Nitra (Faculty of Education, Faculty of Arts, Faculty of Central European Studies, Faculty of Natural Sciences and Informatics, Faculty of Social Sciences and Health Care) can take a course in business English. The rationale for taking it might be: (a) English is the **lingua franca** of business, (b) it can help them do their jobs better (if employed in any sector of the economy), (c) it can help them build rapports, (d) it is necessary for **cross-cultural communication**, (f) it will bring them new opportunities and innovation, and (g) they can advance their careers with business English skills.

First and foremost, studying English gives philological students access to knowledge. However, learning English for business is one of the best things they can do for their careers and lives. Acquired business English skills of writing and speaking at Level C1 – C2 (CEFR) will improve their communication with people, co-workers or clients from different countries and backgrounds. They will have the opportunity to travel the world, go to unknown places, meet new people, learn something new about other people's cultures, etc. As a result, they will come up with new ideas. Using technology, they can access any kind of information on the Internet and use it for innovation. Employees with new ideas are valuable for any company. His or her business English skills might also lead to financial benefits. He or she can take on new tasks and responsibilities, e.g. talking to more clients, visiting business partners in foreign countries, taking a course to get a certificate, expand the business. The possibilities are endless. Consequently, he or she might earn more and advance his or her career.

In addition to language skills, they need to develop a **global mindset**. Among countries and regions, there are vast cultural differences that range from different tastes to labour laws and business customs. As discussed above, rules and behaviours

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vary dramatically from country to country, e.g. greeting people in different countries, formal meetings, small talk, calling business partners by first names or surnames, etc. If they do business internationally, they will need to know these business customs. This is called **global competence** or business etiquette.

### 6.1 Purpose, Content and Syllabus of Business English Course

As discussed in Chapter 5, the purpose of any business English course is to fulfil students' work-related needs. No matter whether philological or non-philological students, nearly all of them are partially employed by local, international or multinational companies and they realise what skills and competences they are required to be able to work for them.

The Department of English Language and Culture of the Faculty of Education provides a course in business English for its students in two bachelor's study programmes – 'Teacher Training of English Language and Literature' (single major study) and 'Teacher Training of English Language and Literature' (double major study). Thanks to digesting large quantities of reading materials in English, philological students from the Faculty of Education are at an advantage when compared with students from other faculties of the University who can also enrol on the course, if it is a compulsorily elective subject. For the full-time study, it is 26 hours of teaching per course and 2 hours per week.

Based on the analysis of the 'Course Information Letter', the brief outline of 'English for Commercial Practice' shows how the following skills are developed:

- (a) developing listening comprehension for commercial practice (2 seminars, i.e. 180 minutes);
- (b) developing reading comprehension for commercial practice (2 seminars, i.e. 180 minutes);
- (c) developing speaking for commercial practice (2 seminars, i.e. 180 minutes);
- (d) developing writing for commercial practice (2 seminars, i.e. 180 minutes);
- (e) developing lexical and semantic competence for commercial practice (1 seminar, i.e. 90 minutes);
- (f) developing grammatical and phonological competence for commercial practice (1 seminar, i.e. 90 minutes); and
- (g) developing intercultural communication competence for commercial practice (1 seminar, i.e. 90 minutes).

Naturally, two more seminars are devoted to the introduction into the course and the summarising of thematic units. Having completed the course, the user/learner will be able to: (a) use appropriate strategies to streamline the comprehension of spoken and written text, (b) identify, extract, generalise and summarise information in the

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process of reading and listening to various texts, (c) know the basic principles of spoken and written performance, (d) apply knowledge in the process of creating spoken and written texts, (e) evaluate the adequacy of specific business English expressions and grammatical phenomena in spoken and written performance, and (f) use appropriate strategies to streamline spoken and written performance in English in the field of commercial practice.

From our experience at the University of Economics in Bratislava, we can state that it is a completely different approach to teaching business English, where the four skills are integrated as indicated in the 'Course Information Letter'. At Constantine the Philosopher University in Nitra we used the Course Book from the same multi-level business English course, however the level was higher – *Market Leader Advanced*.

Apart from the Course Book, some of the following resources are recommended, e.g. *English for Work: Everyday Business English* (Badger, 2003), *English for Work: Business Presentations* (Freitag-Lawrence, 2003), *Business Vocabulary in Use Advanced* (Mascull, 2010), *Test Your Business Vocabulary in Use Advanced* (Godwin & Strutt, 2005), *Oxford Handbook of Commercial Correspondence* (Ashley, 2003), and other authentic material.

## **6.2 The Core Book – *Market Leader Advanced* – and Supplementary Materials**

The third edition of the Advance level of *Market Leader Business English Course Book* (Dubicka & O'Keeffe, 2011) features updated content and an enhanced range of authentic resource material, reflecting the trends in the business world. It includes 12 units based on topics of great interest to everyone involved or interested in business, namely First impressions, Training, Energy, Marketing, Employment trends, Ethics, Finance, Consultants, Strategy, Online business, New business, and Project management. Each unit consists of the following sections:

**Vocabulary.** Learners are offered a variety of discussion questions as an introduction to the topic of each unit. They hear authentic interviews with businesspeople. They develop **listening skills**, such as listening for key information, notetaking and summary writing. They also extend their vocabulary by learning useful new words and phrases. A good business dictionary (e.g. *Longman Business English Dictionary*, 2007) or a monolingual dictionary for advanced learners (e.g. *Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English*, 2014) will also help them increase their business vocabulary.

**Reading and language.** Learners read authentic articles on a variety of topics from the *Financial Times*, other newspapers and books on **business management**. They develop their reading skills and discuss and respond to the issues in the articles. There is a language review after each article and related exercises in the 'Language reference' section for each unit. They revise language and structures which are common problem

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areas for advanced learners. They will become more accurate in their use of English at an advanced level.

**Business skills.** Learners develop essential business communication skills – giving presentations, dealing with questions, taking an active part in meetings, negotiating, strategies for telephoning and teleconferences, networking and using the language for a variety of business writing tasks. Each ‘Business skills’ section comprises a ‘Useful language’ box which provides them with the language they need to carry out realistic tasks.

**Case study.** The *Market Leader* case studies, linked to the business topics of each unit, are based on business problems or situations and allow learners to use the language and communication skills they have developed while working through each unit. They give them the opportunities to practise their listening, speaking, reading and writing skills in realistic contexts. Each of them ends with a follow-up writing task.

**Working across cultures.** The four units focus on different aspects of international communication. They help to raise their awareness of potential problems or misunderstandings that may arise when doing business with people from different cultures.

**Revision units.** The third edition of *Market Leader Advanced* also contains four review units that recycle and revise material covered in the preceding three units. Each of them is designed so that it can be completed in two seminars or on a unit-by-unit basis.

### **6.3 Practising Students’ Specific Skills**

Since the only course ‘English for Commercial Practice’ was taught in the summer semester of 2022/2023, we tried to develop integrated skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing in Unit 1 First impressions, Unit 2 Training and Unit 3 Energy (Dubicka & O’Keeffe, 2011) in concordance with the ‘Course Information Letter’. A special emphasis was put on the final outputs of the case studies – written assignments (see Subchapter 7.5).

#### **6.3.1 Listening and Discussion**

As far as Unit 1 is considered, students discuss some of the techniques for making effective and even inspirational presentations, and listen to an expert in this area, Anneliese Guérin-LeTendre, who works with Communicaid, a culture and communication-skills consultancy. Here, they also work on vocabulary related to presentations.

Considering Unit 2, students discuss training they have had and listen to Dr Bernd Atenstaedt, Chief Executive of German Industry-UK, talking about the apprenticeship

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system in Germany. They listen to four people talking about their training experiences and work on training-related vocabulary.

Regarding Unit 3, students discuss sources of energy and ways of saving energy. They then listen to an energy expert talking about alternative energy and learn and practise some energy-related language.

### **6.3.2 Reading and Language**

In Unit 1, students discuss the importance of networking in different professions, and read an article about it. Then they look at the use of adverbs.

In Unit 2, students read about a Chinese manufacturing company and how its boss transformed quality through training. Then they work on vocabulary from the article and discuss whether the training methods in the article could be used in the contexts that they deal with. After that they look at language used for emphasis in business communication.

In Unit 3, students read an article about the head of a Norwegian oil company and his views on how the world economy should respond to the need to limit greenhouse gases.

### **6.3.3 Business Skills**

In Unit 1, in the 'Networking' section, students discuss tips for communicating with people they do not know or do not know very well. They listen to some delegates meeting for the first time and **networking** at a conference, and then introduce themselves to another participant at an international conference. In the 'Writing' section, students complete a formal e-mail invitation and write a reply, accepting the invitation.

In Unit 2, in the 'Clarifying and confirming' section, students listen to two telephone conversations where people need to clarify and confirm information, and work on related language. In the 'Writing' section, students look at tips for writing e-mails, analyse a sample e-mail and practise writing more and less formal e-mails.

In Unit 3, in the 'Decision-making' section, students look at meetings where decisions are made and the language that is used for this. In the 'Writing' section, students look at the structure and layout of reports.

### **6.3.4 Case Studies**

The first case study 'Movers and shakers' presents 'Logistaid', a non-governmental organisation, that is trying to raise its profile by holding a charity dinner. Students work on organising the event and on follow-up activities promoted at the dinner to support the organisation's work in developing countries.

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In the second case study ‘Training at Carter & Randall’ students come up with some solutions for a large multinational that is looking for a fast and efficient way of training its staff based in different locations around the world.

In the third case study ‘Energy saving at Tumalet Software’ students look at the problems of energy cost at a software company and make proposals for savings.

### ***6.3.5 Working Across Cultures***

In the ‘Working across cultures’ unit, students deal with international presentations. First, they need to understand the term ‘cultural awareness’ – the idea that people should be aware of different attitudes, ways of behaving, taking decisions, using time, etc. that other cultures may have, and how these attitudes must be taken into consideration when doing business in different cultures.

Then, they talk about the language used in presentations, audience response and interaction, as well as the numbers and figures and pronunciation. Using visuals can help compensate for these sorts of problems. After that, they talk about dress style, age, greeting styles, attitudes to authority, body language, attitude to time, emotion shown in public, physical gestures, directness of speech and humour (Dubicka & O’Keeffe, 2011).

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## 7 Research

In 2016, Cambridge English in collaboration with QS presented a global, cross-industry overview of English language skills at work. The results are based on data from 5,373 employers in 38 countries (e.g. United States, United Kingdom, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, Ireland, Malaysia, India, Singapore, Hong Kong, China, Russia, Indonesia, Ukraine, South Korea, Japan, Brazil, France, Germany, Italy, Spain, Portugal, Denmark, Belgium, Switzerland, etc.) that completed the annual QS Global Employer Survey, as well as insights from industry experts at Cambridge English.

English is the language of international business, so it is equally important for business in native and non-native English-speaking countries. The survey reveals that English language skills are important for over 95,00% of employers in many non-native English-speaking countries.

Reading in English is essential for maintaining professional knowledge, as it is the language most often used in international journals, contracts and instructions. Speaking tends to be the most important skill in service industries like Travel, Leisure and Hospitality, where social interaction is a big part of the job.

The highest English language requirements are in business sectors like Banking, Finance and Law, where business publications tend to use complex and technical English. Language requirements are lower in Travel, Leisure, Hospitality, Transportation, Distribution and Utilities, probably because customer-facing roles tend to use more everyday English, and issues in understanding can be resolved with relatively simple English. (Cambridge English, 2016a, 2016b).

Unfortunately, Slovakia did not participate in the survey. However, recent research findings indicate that the level of Slovak, Indonesian, African or other students' reading ability is still relatively low and that a large number of undergraduates are inadequately prepared for university reading (e.g. Delgadová, Gullerová, & Oltra-Albiach, 2016; Hrdličková, 2018a; Novela, Asrowi, & Widyastono, 2022; Ntereke & Ramoroka, 2017).

### 7.1 Introductory Note

Delgadova (2015), Delgadová et al. (2015, 2016) regard reading literacy as one of the most significant academic competences for university students. In the teaching and learning process, Delgadova (2015) also focuses on two genres used in an academic setting – writing abstracts and making PowerPoint presentations. According to Spišiaková and Kittová (2020), the graduates of the University of Economics in

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Bratislava are required by their employers to improve communication and presentation skills.

There are many possibilities how students' communicative skills can be improved. The rapid digitalisation of communication has an extensive impact on the kind of information literacy that young adults will need to demonstrate in their future jobs and wider social interactions. Progressing technologies have changed the way students read and exchange information at school or people in the workplace. The rapidly changing world, including fast advances in science and technology, points to the growing demand for digital skills and competences. The development of digital skills and competences not only represents the basis for the effective digital transformation in education (Pokrivčáková, 2021), but also strengthens the profile of the graduate who can successfully participate in society.

Universities all over the world use modern information and communication technologies to improve the quality of the teaching and learning process itself as well as to contribute to the development of students' skills. E-learning, i.e. learning where the Internet plays an important role in the delivery, support, administration and assessment of learning, has been preferable for many years since it has many advantages (Cimermanová, 2016; Kováčová & Záhonová, 2009; Mohammadi, Ghorbani, & Hamidi, 2011). The benefits of teaching foreign languages via blended learning have been accrued. The platform Moodle has been widely used by many scholars (Gluchmanova, 2016; Lasić-Lazić, Ivanjko, & Grubješić, 2017; Prasetya, 2021; Shaykina, 2015; Tang, 2013, and others).

Owing to fast digitalisation, Slovak undergraduates have higher digital literacy, which gives them an advantage. The real essence of the pedagogical experiment performed at the Department of English Language of the University of Economics in Bratislava from 2017 to 2019 is to find out to what extent the specific aspect – working with texts and identifying idioms, terms, frequent and essential words, and collocations in them – will support reading literacy. In addition, research aims to confirm the effectiveness of an alternative form of teaching and learning business English by using a core book, a self-study reference and practice book, newspaper or magazine articles, the Internet and LMS Moodle. Also, we will try to find an answer to the following research question: Research question (RQ1): "To what extent will the specific teaching/learning techniques/methods, such as working with authentic texts and identifying idioms, terms, frequent and essential words, and collocations in them, support reading literacy?"

Owing to the course 'English for Commercial Practice', supported by the education portal Moodle at UKF, first-year university students had the possibility to develop digital skills and integrated skills of reading and writing, listening and speaking, respectively, and thus improve their communication. The aim of the research done at

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the Department of English Language and Culture of Constantine the Philosopher University in Nitra in 2022/2023 is to find out if and how integrated skills were developed in the course and if written assignments done regularly influenced students' results in the end-of-term test. Also, we will try to find an answer to the following research questions: Research question (RQ2): "How much time is devoted to the listening section in the given units?" Research question (RQ3): "How can the right amount of time be given to developing each skill and competence?"

The present research is divided into four phases. In the first and third phases of the research (Subchapters 7.2 and 7.4) students' knowledge is tested via the statistical method of *Hypothesis Testing*, namely the parametric *t-Test* (Kučerová & Fidlerová, 2012). In the second phase of the research (Subchapter 7.3), the quantitative and qualitative analyses provide the lists of business vocabulary, namely idioms, terms, frequent and essential words, and collocations. In the fourth phase of the research (Subchapter 7.5), a content analysis, case studies, written assignments, and an end-of-term test have been chosen. Based on the research findings, implications and perspectives for further research will be offered.

## **7.2 Phase 1 – Research Design I**

**Research sample.** In the winter semester of 2017/2018, 137 first-year students of the Faculty of National Economy, the Faculty of International Relations and the Faculty of Commerce of the University of Economics in Bratislava participated in the pedagogical experiment. They were divided into two groups; 71 students formed the experimental group and 66 students the control group.

**Methodology.** The textbook contributes to the development of reading literacy and, therefore, the material for the analysis (reading texts) was taken from two English course books series that were approved for use in secondary schools by the Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport of the Slovak Republic. Since the *New Opportunities Upper Intermediate Students' Book* (Harris, Mower, & Sikorzyńska, 2006) and the *Success Upper Intermediate Students' Book* (Comyns Carr & Parsons, 2007) includes idiomatic vocabulary, we wanted to find out if students master this kind of vocabulary.

In the first semester, within the course 'Business English for Advanced Students I', four lecturers tested their two groups of students on idiomatic expressions. In the *General English Idiomatic Test* (GEIT), 60 idioms excerpted from secondary school textbooks were used in immediate context and the students were asked to translate them from English into Slovak or to provide their English synonyms (see Appendix 1). Based on the achieved results, each lecturer set up one experimental group and one control group.

During the semester, both groups of students learned/acquired business terms and idiomatic expressions from Units 1 – 4 (Communication, International marketing, Building relationships, and Success) in the *Market Leader Business English Course Book* (Cotton et al., 2011). The experimental group of students learned/acquired formal and informal vocabulary from a self-study reference and practice book, as well (Hrdličková, 2016). Additionally, this group started to work in LMS Moodle (see Appendices 3 – 4) and sent short summaries of reading texts presented in the textbook to their lecturers. By doing this assignment, the students started to prepare for one out of six tasks in the departmental business English test (see Appendix 5). At the end of the semester, both groups of students were tested on idiomatic expressions, as well. The *Business English Idiomatic Test* (BEIT) included 30 idioms (see Appendix 2) excerpted from reading texts presented in business English textbooks (Hrdličková, 2016). The test consisted of two exercises; in Exercise 1, the students were asked to complete fifteen sentences with the appropriate form of an idiom from the box, and in Exercise 2 to translate fifteen idioms from English into Slovak.

**Data analysis.** The main aim of the research done in the winter semester of 2017/2018 is to find out to what extent the experimental and control groups of students acquired idioms. The comparison of the results has revealed the state of their knowledge of idioms used in general English textbooks and business English course books. In the research, the following methods are applied: *General English Idiomatic Test* (GEIT; Hrdličková, 2017), *Business English Idiomatic Test* (BEIT; Hrdličková, 2017), the method of *Hypothesis Testing*, namely the parametric *t-Test*, which tests the significance of the difference between the sample means. Alternative and Null Hypotheses  $H_1$ ,  $H_0$ ;  $H_2$ ,  $H_0$ ;  $H_3$ ,  $H_0$ ;  $H_4$ ,  $H_0$  are expected to be confirmed or refuted (Kučerová & Fidlerová, 2012).

At the end of the semester, both the experimental and control groups of students sat for departmental end-of-term tests in business English, as well. These results will be compared with the results of departmental end-of-term test in business English in the academic year 2018/2019 (see Phase 3).

### 7.2.1 Results and Discussion

Table 3 shows the number of students who participated in the research in the winter semester of 2017/2018.

Number of students	Experimental group	Control group
Lecturer 1	20	17
Lecturer 2	17	17
Lecturer 3	18	13
Lecturer 4	16	19

<b>Total</b>	<b>71</b>	<b>66</b>
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Table 3. Number of students in 2017/2018 (Source: Author's data)

Table 4 shows the summarised results achieved in the *General English Idiomatic Test* (GEIT) and the *Business English Idiomatic Test* (BEIT) by the students of the experimental groups and the control groups. The results are in the percentages since it was possible to gain maximum 60 points for the GEIT and maximum 30 points for the BEIT.

Statistical characteristics	Experimental group		Control group	
	GEIT (%)	BEIT (%)	GEIT (%)	BEIT (%)
Number of students	71	71	66	66
Sum	2997	4954	2961	3654
<b>Average</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>55</b>
Minimum	2	17	2	13
Maximum	78	98	82	93
Median	45	73	43	57
<b>Standard deviation</b>	<b>20.47</b>	<b>19.23</b>	<b>17.05</b>	<b>20.58</b>

Table 4. Statistical characteristics calculated from the achieved results (Source: Author's data)

Figure 3 shows the graphical representation of the results achieved in the *General English Idiomatic Test* (GEIT) and the *Business English Idiomatic Test* (BEIT) of the experimental group and the control group. Considering both groups, it is obvious that the initial level of the knowledge of idioms is nearly the same. The percentages are surprisingly quite high, when compared with the results achieved by both groups of students in departmental end-of-term business English tests focused on business vocabulary and grammar.

To analyse the achieved results or to compare the level of students' knowledge, the method of *Hypothesis Testing* is used. A parametric test aimed at testing the significance of the difference between the sample means, the so-called *t-Test*, is used.

1. In order to compare the BEIT results of the experimental group and the control group, the *Independent Samples t-Test* (or *2-Sample t-Test*) is used.

The tested hypotheses are as follows:

Alternative Hypothesis ( $H_1$ ): There is a significant difference between the BEIT results of the experimental group and the control group (there is a significant difference between the knowledge of business English idioms of the experimental group and the control group).

Null Hypothesis ( $H_0$ ): The difference between the BEIT results of the experimental group and the control group is random.

Findings: On the level of significance at 5% ( $\alpha = 0.05$ ), the Null Hypothesis ( $H_0$ ) is refuted since the p-value = 0.00004 ( $p < \alpha$ ), i.e. the difference can be considered as **statistically significant**.

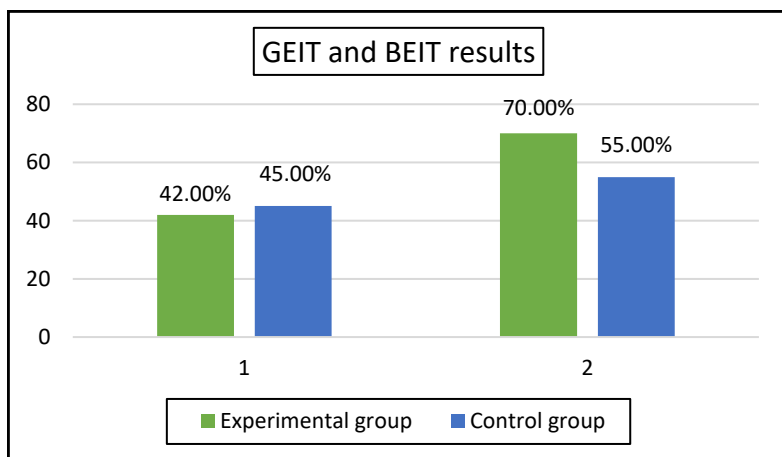


Figure 3. Results achieved in GEIT and BEIT (Source: Author's data)

When comparing the GEIT results of the experimental group and the control group, the difference is random, as it can be seen in Figure 3.

2. To compare the GEIT and BEIT results of the experimental group, or the control group, the *Paired Samples t-Test* (or *Dependent Samples t-Test*) is used.

The tested hypotheses are as follows:

The experimental group

Alternative Hypothesis ( $H_2$ ): There is a significant difference between the knowledge of general English idioms and the knowledge of business English idioms of the experimental group.

Null Hypothesis ( $H_0$ ): The difference between the knowledge of general English idioms and the knowledge of business English idioms of the experimental group is random.

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Findings: On the level of significance at 5 % ( $\alpha = 0.05$ ), the Null Hypothesis ( $H_0$ ) is refuted since the p-value = 0 ( $p = 0.5 \cdot 10^{-20}$ ), i.e. the difference can be considered as **statistically significant**.

The control group

Alternative Hypothesis ( $H_3$ ): There is a significant difference between the knowledge of general English idioms and the knowledge of business English idioms of the control group.

Null Hypothesis ( $H_0$ ): The difference between the knowledge of general English idioms and the knowledge of business English idioms of the control group is random.

Findings: On the level of significance at 5% ( $\alpha = 0.05$ ), the Null Hypothesis ( $H_0$ ) is refuted since the p-value = 0 ( $p = 0.4 \cdot 10^{-8}$ ), i.e. the difference can be considered as **statistically significant**.

There is an interesting striking difference here between the p-value = 0 for the experimental group and the p-value = 0.015 for the control group. It can be explained that the improvement (an increase in the level of knowledge of idioms) in the experimental group is much bigger than in the control group.

It can also be documented by the following *t-Test* where the differences between the knowledge of general English idioms and the knowledge of business English idioms of the experimental group and the control group are tested.

Alternative Hypothesis ( $H_4$ ): An increase in the level of knowledge of the experimental group is significantly higher than an increase in the level of knowledge of the control group.

Null Hypothesis ( $H_0$ ): There is not a significant difference between an increase in the level of knowledge of the experimental group and the level of knowledge of the control group.

Findings: On the level of significance at 5% ( $\alpha = 0.05$ ), the Null Hypothesis ( $H_0$ ) is refuted since the p-value =  $0.3 \cdot 10^{-8}$  ( $p < \alpha$ ), i.e. the difference can be considered as **statistically significant**.

In Figures 4 – 5, there are obviously greater differences between the results of individual students achieved in the *General English Idiomatic Test* and the *Business English Idiomatic Test* in the experimental group than in the control group.

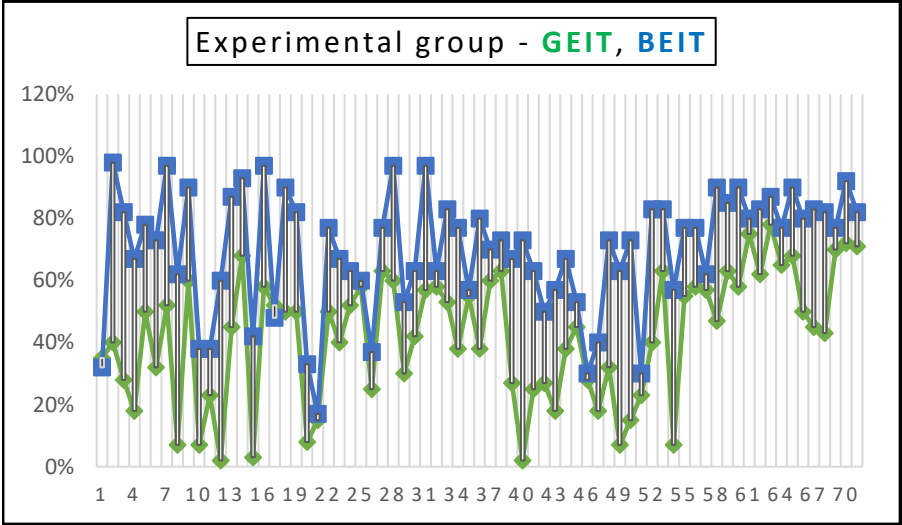


Figure 4. Results of individual students of the experimental group achieved in GEIT and BEIT (Source: Author’s data)

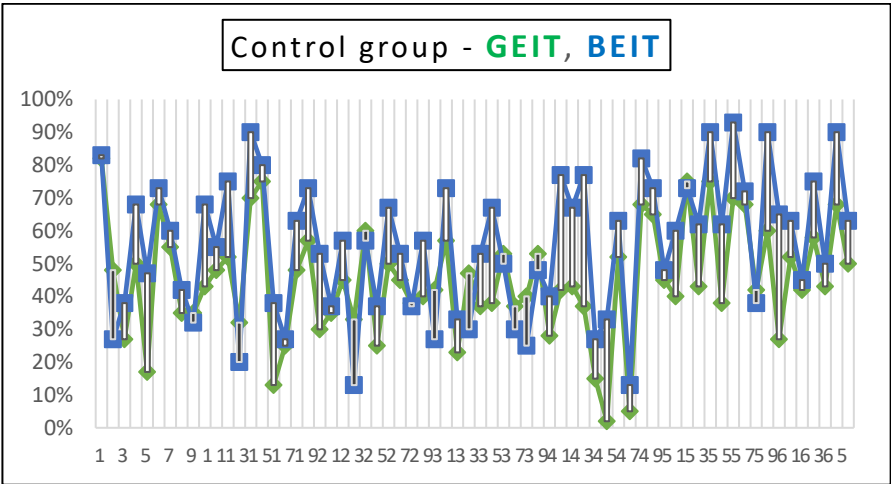


Figure 5. Results of individual students of the control group achieved in GEIT and BEIT (Source: Author’s data)

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### 7.3 Phase 2 – Text Analysis for Business Vocabulary

Learners of English with Level B2 of general English language competence studying ‘English for Specific Purposes’ need to know what the new words mean and how to use them correctly, what words can combine with other words and make collocations as well as what idioms are used in business English. In general, not only learners of English, but also learners of German and Spanish do not find it easy to use business terms and idiomatic expressions fluently in both spoken and written discourse (Adamcová, 2020; Spišiaková, 2018; Spišiaková & Kittová, 2020).

Vocabulary being viewed as the non-generative component has been neglected in lexical studies of the language. Although multi-word expressions, often but not always non-literal, are hardly marginal in English, they have been neglected in language studies, too. It is especially evident in respect of the functions of idioms – (a) ideational (packages of information carried by its co-text to convey a message), (b) interpersonal (indicating a speaker and addressee, usually physically present, in an interpersonal exchange), and (c) relational (signifying cohesive relationships within a text) (Fernando, 1996).

According to Weinreich (1969) and Makkai (1972), idioms are only multi-word expressions, however, scholars like Hockett (1958), Katz and Postal (1963), and others accept even single words as idioms (e.g. *breadwinner*). As opposed to the term ‘idiom’, ‘idiomaticity’ is the mechanism that enables phrases to take on meanings that go beyond the meaning of their individual components. According to Weinreich (1969), “It is important for this reason, if for no other, that there is so much of it in every language.” (p. 23). Fillmore, Kay and O’Connor (2003) state that “an idiomatic expression or construction is something a language user could fail to know while knowing everything else in the language” (p. 247).

The rationale for the analysis of newspaper or magazine articles in this part of the research was, firstly, to identify idioms and, secondly, to determine the terms, frequent and essential words, and collocations used in business English. The whole corpus includes informative articles about economics, business, entrepreneurship, human resources, management, finance, mergers and acquisitions, cryptocurrencies and so on. Some articles were particularly difficult for students to read/understand, but with the help of the lecturer, extensive corpuses of business vocabulary were built. The investigated sources were as follows:

*POLITICO*, launched in Europe in 2015, is a global nonpartisan politics and policy news organisation. POLITICO Europe is a joint venture between POLITICO LLC, based in the United States of America and Axel Springer, the leading digital publisher in Europe. With operations based in Brussels and additional offices in London, Paris and Berlin POLITICO connects the dots between global power centres. Its journalism lives online at [politico.eu](http://politico.eu), in POLITICO Pro, in daily morning newsletters (e.g. Brussels

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Playbook and London Playbook), in print via weekly newspaper and through live events.

*FORTUNE* is one of the world's leading business media brands and comprises a multinational monthly magazine *FORTUNE* (that competes with *Forbes* and *Bloomberg Businessweek*), daily website and conference series. Their print, digital and live products aim to inform, delight, illuminate and help their readers, viewers and attendees become successful in business.

*TheGuardian.com* is a British news and media website. It includes nearly all of the content of the newspapers *The Guardian* and *The Observer* as well as substantial body of web-only work produced by its own staff, including a rolling news service.

*Forbes* is an American bi-weekly business magazine. Primary competitors in the national business magazine category include *FORTUNE* and *Bloomberg BusinessWeek*. It provides articles on finance, industry, investing and marketing topics as well as reports on related subjects such as technology, communications, science, politics and law.

The *Inc.* magazine is an innovative and informative entrepreneurship resource. It provides readers, viewers and attendees with business ideas that they can implement into their own lives. As a magazine focused on small businesses and entrepreneurship, it comprises articles highlighting successful entrepreneurship and how to replicate it.

**Research sample.** In the summer semester of 2018/2019, the same experimental and control groups of students as in the winter semester of 2017/2018 participated in the pedagogical experiment. Both groups of students analysed professional articles for difficult vocabulary and idiomatic expressions. Some analyses have already been published (see Hrdličková, 2018a, 2018b). This analysis of newspaper or magazine articles was done by 21 first-year students (included in the experimental group) of the Faculty of International Relations of the University of Economics in Bratislava.

**Methodology.** Within the course 'Business English for Advanced Students II', both the experimental and control groups of students dealt with Units 5 – 8 (Job satisfaction, Risk, Management styles, and Team building). They did the same kind of tasks as in the winter semester of 2017/2018, i.e. they acquired business terms and idiomatic expressions and wrote short summaries of reading articles in the textbook. However, each student of the control group was supposed to read ten professional articles from the fields of economics, business, management or diplomacy. Since some students had an exceptionally good command of English, they did not have problems to read longer articles from more difficult sources such as *POLITICO* and *FORTUNE*. This study explores a 160,536-word corpus of 205 articles collected from *POLITICO* (PLT; read by 8 students), *FORTUNE* (FRT; read by 5 students), *The Guardian* (GRD; read by 4 students), *Forbes* (FBS; read by 2 students) and *Inc.* (INC; read by 2 students). One student did not complete the task since she finished her study at the University.

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To improve reading skills, students were recommended to use strategies such as predicting, summarising and clarifying. While working with articles, they first tried to get the main idea of each one. Next, they analysed articles for difficult vocabulary – unknown words and idioms and tried to identify their meanings by using print or online versions of English-language dictionaries like merriam-webster.com, dictionary.cambridge.org, idioms.thefreedictionary.com, en.oxforddictionaries.com, and others. Hakim, Abidin and Bahari (2020) believe that dictionary usage is one of the potential vocabulary learning strategies as well as it increases students' vocabulary mastery, no matter whether an electronic or printed one. However, it must be emphasised that the result is tremendous. In a digital dictionary, students only find the expression they need. In a print dictionary, they go through the expressions listed in alphabetical order and they find many others they did not intend to search for in it. Then, they submitted their work with each article into LMS Moodle to receive immediate feedback. Apart from marking their homework, the lecturer underlined all business vocabulary in every article that was important to learn and acquire during the first, second and third semesters. To check (in)correct idioms and terms, the lecturer consulted dictionaries and reference books by the authors and editors like Gillet (2010), Walter (2006), Parkinson and Noble (2005), Cowie, Mackin and McCaig (1993), O'Dell and McCarthy (2010), McCarthy and O'Dell (2016), Lea et al. (2014), Mayor et al. (2013) and Waite (2009). After receiving feedback from the lecturer, students were supposed to prepare for a mini presentation of each article.

**Data analysis.** The main aim of two quantitative analyses was to excerpt business vocabulary from a 160,536-word corpus of articles. The first analysis was aimed at identifying different types of idioms used in business English. For this analysis, Fernando's (1996) classification of ideational idioms was used, i.e. units smaller than the clause – 'nominals', 'adjectivals', 'adverbials' and 'verbals', which function as parts of clauses, and 'clauses' themselves. The main aim of a qualitative analysis of idioms was to provide their lexical meanings and their synonyms or antonyms. The main aim of the second analysis was to consider the terms (occurring in particular areas of business), frequent and essential words, and collocations used in business English (Mascull, 2005; Mascull, 2010; Parkinson & Noble, 2005) (see also Appendices A – E).

### **7.3.1 Results and Discussion – Business Vocabulary in Professional Articles**

Tables 5 – 14 show business vocabulary, i.e. idioms, terms, frequent and essential words, and collocations, excerpted from *POLITICO*, *FORTUNE*, *The Guardian*, *Forbes* and *Inc*. Idioms are explained in the following way:

- (a) the register – *fml* (formal – idioms used in a serious or polite way, e.g. in business documents, newspapers and books, lectures, etc.) and *infml* (informal – idioms used with friends and family or people the person knows in relaxed situations);

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- (b) varieties of English – *BrE* (idioms only used in British English), *AmE* (idioms only used in American English), *AustrE* (idioms only used in Australian English);
  - (c) idiom is also used in academic English (*also* AE, *AcadE*) (Lea et al., 2014; McCarthy & O'Dell, 2016) and general English (*GenE*) (Cowie et al., 1993; Kvetko, 2014; Walter, 2006);
  - (d) examples of idioms used in immediate context (*italic type*); and
  - (e) core synonym (in bold) (in some cases two core synonyms), near synonyms, idiom (*bold italic type*), if possible – antonyms and the origin of idiom (*Latin, French*) (Waite, 2009).

The following labels show that a word or phrase is used in a particular area of business (Mascull, 2005; Mascull, 2010; Parkinson & Noble, 2005):

- (a) *Accounting* – technical words used to describe a company's accounts, common financial equations, types of taxation, etc.;
- (b) *Commerce* – words relating to the retail sector and buying/selling in shops/stores;
- (c) *E-commerce* – words connected with buying and selling products on the Internet;
- (d) *Economics* – economic terms and institutions, including words describing the control of money and markets, economic trends, etc.;
- (e) *Finance* – words connected with banking and financial markets, including ways of borrowing money, types of investment, major financial institutions, etc.;
- (f) *HR (Human Resources)* – words relating to employee and labour issues such as hiring new staff, salaries, motivation, company structure, etc.;
- (g) *Insurance* – terms used in insurance contracts, ways of calculating risk, kinds of insurance policy, organisations that offer insurance, etc.;
- (h) *IT (Information Technology)* – vocabulary relating to computer software, IT equipment, networks such as the Internet, etc.;
- (i) *Law* – the language of contracts, legal titles and organisations, legal processes, financial crime, etc.;
- (j) *Manufacturing* – words used to describe manufacturing processes and the materials and equipment involved;
- (k) *Marketing* – words relating to the marketing and promotion of products, ways of analysing products, markets and customers, etc.;
- (l) *Production* – vocabulary relating to the management of production processes and the supply of goods and materials;
- (m) *Property* – words connected with the buying, selling and renting of property and the people and organisations involved in this;
- (n) *Stock Exchange* – words related to dealings on stock exchanges, the names of major exchanges, ways to describe prices and orders, market traders, etc.;
- (o) *Technical* – scientific, mathematical and statistical terms;

- (p) *Trade* – words relating to importing/exporting and international trade, including terms used in documents about tax, insurance, delivery and payment for goods; and
- (q) *Transport* – words connected with the transportations of goods.

Tables 5 – 14 are followed by four example sentences including idioms (in bold italic type) used in context in business English (also in academic English (*AcadE*) or general English (*GenE*)) along with their lexical meanings, synonyms or antonyms as well as terms, frequent and essential words, and collocations (underlined). Then, the tables are followed by further comments. The complete analyses of business vocabulary can be found in Appendices A – E.

### *Business Vocabulary in POLITICO*

The *POLITICO* articles chosen by the students discussed the politics, policy and personalities of the European Union, namely Britain, Germany, Denmark and France. Within the *Policy Areas*, they read articles included in the subcategories like *Agriculture and Food*, *Brexit Transition*, *Competition and Industrial Policy*, *Cybersecurity and Data Protection*, *Health Care*, *Energy and Climate*, *Financial Services*, *Technology*, *Trade*, and *Trade UK*. Since the students were not limited in choosing the articles, they were interested in the concrete themes. For instance, they dealt with EU budget, EU referendum (Brexit), Eurozone reform, trade, a trade war, a trade deal (NAFTA), steel protectionist measures (tariffs and quotas), customs duties, British business after Brexit, Brexit negotiations, GDPR rules, green transformation, greenhouse gas emissions, emissions from trucks, shipping waste, the ‘America First’ agenda, skilled workers, and Nord Stream 2.

<b>POLITICO</b>	<b>TOTAL:</b>
<b>Nominals</b>	<b>4</b>
the big picture <i>infml</i> (also AE), deep pockets, the letter of the law, a level playing field <i>rather infml</i> (also AE)	
<b>Adjectivals</b>	<b>7</b>
at risk (also AE), at stake (also AE), in place (also AE), in question (also AE), in reserve (also AE), on hold (also AE), up for sth (also AE) <i>rather infml</i>	
<b>Adverbials</b>	<b>19</b>
at your/sb’s disposal (also AE), back on track (also AE) <i>rather infml</i> , behind closed doors (also AE), below/under the radar (screen) (also AE), in advance (of sth) (also AE), in due course (also AE), in the hands of sb (also AE), in line with sth (also AE), in/over the long/medium/short/far/near term (also AE), in/out of the picture <i>infml</i> , in principle (also AE), in/with reference to sth <i>fml</i> (also AE), in terms of sth, (also AE), on balance (also AE), on the job (also AE), on time, on top of sth (also AE), on the table (also AE), to the tune of sth	
<b>Verbals</b>	<b>28</b>

be in the firing line <i>BrE</i> , break new ground, bring/call/throw sth into question ( <i>also</i> AE), come/enter into force ( <i>also</i> AE), fall short of sth ( <i>also</i> AE), get your act together <i>infml</i> , get (sth) off the ground ( <i>also</i> AE), go it alone, go/put sb out of business ( <i>also</i> AE), go/turn sour, knock on/at sb's/the door <i>infml</i> , make headway, make it ( <i>also</i> AE), make money ( <i>also</i> AE), name and shame <i>BrE</i> , open doors for sb, pave the way for sth, play a (key/major/vital, etc.) part/role (in sth), play by the rules ( <i>also</i> AE) <i>rather infml</i> , raise/up the ante <i>esp. AmE</i> , run short (of sth) ( <i>also</i> AE), strike a balance (between), take advantage of sth/sb ( <i>also</i> AE), take effect ( <i>also</i> AE), take a hit, take part (in sth) ( <i>also</i> AE), turn your back on sb/sth ( <i>also</i> AE), turn sth on its head ( <i>also</i> AE)	
<b>TOTAL:</b>	<b>58</b>

Table 5. *POLITICO* – Idioms used in business English (Source: Author's data)

<b><i>POLITICO</i></b>	<b>TOTAL:</b>
<b>Terms occurring in different areas of business</b>	<b>21</b>
application (n) ( <i>IT</i> ), apprentice (n) ( <i>HR</i> ), budget (n) ( <i>Accounting; Economics</i> ), cargo (n) ( <i>Transport</i> ), cash flow (n) ( <i>Accounting</i> ), coder (n) ( <i>IT</i> ), deal (n) ( <i>Commerce</i> ), distribution (n) ( <i>Marketing</i> ), entity (n) ( <i>Accounting; Law</i> ), exclusion (n) ( <i>Law</i> ), fiscal policy (n) ( <i>Economics</i> ), hire (v) ( <i>HR; esp. AmE</i> ), input (n) ( <i>Economics; IT</i> ), macroeconomics (n) ( <i>Economics</i> ), monetary policy (n) ( <i>Economics</i> ), norm (n) ( <i>Technical</i> ), on-the-job training (n) ( <i>HR</i> ), parental leave (n) ( <i>HR</i> ), shipping (n) ( <i>Commerce; Transport</i> ), tariff (n) ( <i>Trade; Commerce</i> ), trading partner (n) ( <i>Economics; Trade</i> )	
<b>Frequent and essential words</b>	<b>91</b>
action (n), administration (n), allowance (n), assessment (n), assign (sb) to sth (v), banker (n), benefit (v), business (n), campaign (n), Commission (n), company (n), compete (v), complaint (n), comply (v), consultant (n), consumer (n), contract (n), cost (n, v), customer (n), customs (n), data (n), deal (n), deal with sth (phr v), designer (n), director (n), domestic (adj), economic (adj), economics (n), economy (n), employee (n), exemption (n), facility (n), fair (adj), figure sth out (phr v), final (adj), firm (n), fraud (n), global (adj), goal (n), hierarchy (n), hit (v), import (n), industry (n), innovation (n), international (adj), interview (n), invest (v), investment (n), issue (v), job (n), launch (v), lawyer (n), legislation (n), license (n) ( <i>AmE spelling</i> ), manufacturer (n), market (n), negotiation (n), officer (n), official (n), open sth up (phr v), partner (n), partnership (n), policy (n), port (n), price (n), project (n), proposal (n), range (n), reception (n), regulatory (adj), reform (n), report (n), research (n), revenue (n), revise (v), security (n), senior (adj), service (n), ship (n), standard (n), startup (n), statement (n), strategic (adj), structure (n), target (n), technology (n), trade (n), trade union (n) ( <i>also</i> union <i>BrE, AmE</i> ), transformation (n), waste (n), worker (n)	
<b>Collocations</b>	<b>18</b>
the aviation sector, collect data, the construction sector, cut costs, a financial crisis, financial resources, follow the rules, a high price, a high standard, miss a target, privacy rules, provide incentives, reach an agreement, set a target, skilled workers, small business, a small/big company, state aid	

<b>TOTAL:</b>	<b>130</b>
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Table 6. *POLITICO* – Terms, frequent and essential words, and collocations used in business English (Source: Author’s data)

[1] **break new ground** (also *AcadE*); (in *GenE*) **break new/fresh ground**; **ground-breaking** (always before the noun)

(a) *It’s not a n email scam but rather an experiment by the Finnish government which has selected at random a group of unemployed citizens across the country to participate in a **ground-breaking** two-year study.* (Burtsov, 2017, January 25)

(b) to make a new discovery or do sth that has not been done before

(c) pioneer (v) – **develop, introduce**, launch, put in place, set the ball rolling, break new ground; inventive (adj) – **original**, innovative, **groundbreaking**; antonyms: hackneyed

[2] **deep pockets**; (in *GenE*) **(have) deep pockets**

(a) 1. *Higher standards will make it harder for anyone other than the most **deep-pocketed** multinationals to compete for business in a world where failure to adhere to Europe’s privacy rules carry a hefty cost – up to €20 million or 4 percent of companies’ global revenue, whichever is higher.* (Scott, 2018, April 22); 2. *And the extra regulatory burden may cement the dominance of a few **deep-pocketed** companies with the financial resources to comply with the regulation, which even its biggest cheerleaders admit will put a significant burden on companies, big and small.* (Scott, 2018, April 22)

(b) a lot of money; an organisation/person has a lot of money available to spend on sth

(c) rich (adj) – **wealthy**, affluent, well-to-do, **with deep pockets**; antonyms: poor

[3] **on the job** (also *AcadE*); (in *GenE*) **(be) on the job**

(a) *Germany’s vocational apprentice system, in which companies offer high-school students **on-the-job** training, is admired around the world.* (Karnitschnig, 2017, September, 6)

(b) while doing a particular job

(c) busy (adj) – **occupied (in)**, engaged (in); at work (on), **on the job**; antonyms: idle

[4] **turn one’s back on** sb/sth (also *AcadE*)

(a) *The U.S. has **turned its back on** these globally recognized rules and its own commitments.* (Ming, 2018, April 4)

(b) to reject sb/sth that one have previously been connected with

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(c) ignore (v) – **snub**, slight, **turn one's back on**, give sb the cold shoulder, steer clear of; antonyms: acknowledge; **turn one's back on** – **abandon**, give up; reject, *informal* quit

### Further comments

It is obvious from Table 5 (see also Tables 7, 9, 11, 13) that 'verbals' and 'adverbials' were the most frequently used idioms in the newspaper or magazine articles. No clauses themselves, i.e. proverbs, sayings, catchphrases, etc. were found in them. Even though there are 58 idioms in Table 5, a detailed analysis (see also Appendix A) only provides idioms in immediate context related to economics, business and human resources.

Table 6 (see also Tables 8, 10, 12, 14) shows terms occurring in different areas of business, frequent and essential words, and collocations used in business English. In example sentences, this kind of business vocabulary is underlined, e.g. 'apprentice', 'business', 'company', 'privacy rules', 'revenue', etc. (see also Appendix A).

In Table 6, the term 'on-the-job training' (n) (*HR*) and an idiom 'on the job' in Table 5 are worthy of notice (Parkinson & Noble, 2005). Some different parts of speech can be formed from the basic idiom. In this case, the idiom is used attributively; 'on-the-job' collocates with 'training'. According to Mayor et al. (2013), 'learn/be trained on the job' (= learn skills by doing a job) is a collocation and 'on-the-job learning' is a collocation.

Other examples of basic idioms used attributively are 'deep pockets', 'go it alone' and 'break new grounds' (see also Appendix A).

It is also useful to acquire the synonyms of 'domestic' (adj) – 'internal' (adj), 'figure sth out' (phr v) – 'work sth out' (phr v), and 'goal' (n) – 'objective' (n) and 'target' (n).

Although the following nouns are not frequently used in business English, it is recommended to pay attention to 'breakdown' (n), 'fair trade' (n), 'multinational' (n, adj), 'private company' (n), 'emission' (n), 'environmentalism', (n) and 'trade war' (n). They either occur in the textbook (pp. 24, 52, 115, 123, 153, 158) and students are required to master them or their meanings need to be discussed to better understand how to protect the environment, to support producers in developing countries and why there are disagreements between countries in which they take action to damage each other's trade.

On the other hand, the adjective 'global' is frequently used in business English as well as in the textbook. Furthermore, 'globalisation' (n) also occurs in the textbook. In the example sentence, the adverb 'globally' can be found.

### *Business Vocabulary in FORTUNE*

The *FORTUNE* articles read by the students were chosen from the following categories: *Venture* (the destination committed to inspiring and informing entrepreneurial founders, creators and disruptors), *Leadership* (management news and leadership advice for anyone who aspires to the C-suite), *Careers* (levelling up one's career with the news, Q&As with industry leaders and tips to position oneself to get a fantastic new job), *Health* (the innovations in healthcare, including biotechnology, genetic research, pharmaceuticals and the like) and *Technology* (the news, analysis and insight into technology and business, including Silicon Valley giants like Apple, Google, Facebook, etc.).

Some articles were chosen from the *Rankings* category, e.g. *Most Powerful Women* and *100 Best Companies to Work for*.

<b>FORTUNE</b>	<b>TOTAL:</b>
<b>Nominals</b>	<b>1</b>
the breadwinner	
<b>Adjectivals</b>	<b>6</b>
at risk ( <i>also</i> AE), at stake ( <i>also</i> AE), in place ( <i>also</i> AE), in the works, one-size-fits-all ( <i>also</i> AE) rather <i>infml</i> , under wraps <i>infml</i>	
<b>Adverbials</b>	<b>11</b>
all the time   the whole time, below/under the radar (screen) ( <i>also</i> AE), from scratch, in business, in effect ( <i>also</i> AE), in lieu (of sth) <i>fml</i> , in/over the long/medium/short/far/near term ( <i>also</i> AE), in/with reference to sth <i>fml</i> ( <i>also</i> AE), in/with regard to sb/sth <i>fml</i> ( <i>also</i> AE), on the table ( <i>also</i> AE), on your feet	
<b>Verbals</b>	<b>17</b>
be hit hard (by sth), be/get/keep, etc. in touch (with sb) ( <i>also</i> AE), be on track ( <i>also</i> AE), come under fire ( <i>also</i> AE), have/get/give sb a head start (in sth/on sb/over sb), keep/lose track of sth/sb ( <i>also</i> AE), let sb go <i>infml</i> , play a (key/major/vital, etc.) part/role (in sth), play to your strengths, pull the plug on sth/sb <i>infml</i> , recharge your batteries, ride on (the) coattails of sb/sth, run out of time, take advantage of sth/sb ( <i>also</i> AE), take a nosedive, take risks ( <i>also</i> AE), turn a (small/modest/\$10 million, etc.) profit <i>infml</i>	
<b>TOTAL:</b>	<b>35</b>

Table 7. *FORTUNE* – Idioms used in business English (Source: Author's data)

<b>FORTUNE</b>	<b>TOTAL:</b>
<b>Terms occurring in different areas of business</b>	<b>10</b>
app (n) ( <i>IT</i> ; <i>infml</i> ), balance sheet (n) ( <i>Accounting</i> ), creative director (n) ( <i>Marketing</i> ), fire (v) ( <i>HR</i> ), gender pay gap (n) ( <i>HR</i> ), hire (v) ( <i>HR</i> ; esp. <i>AmE</i> ), interim (adj) ( <i>Accounting</i> ), performance review (n) ( <i>HR</i> ), rebranding (n) ( <i>Marketing</i> ), tariff (n) ( <i>Trade</i> ; <i>Commerce</i> )	
<b>Frequent and essential words</b>	<b>32</b>

assess (v), assignment (n), boss (n), business (n), challenge (v), chief executive officer ( <i>also</i> chief executive; <i>esp.</i> BrE) (n) (abbr. CEO), company (n), customer (n), demand (v), development (n), economy (n), employee (n), employer (n), employment (n), import (n), industry (n), information (n), job (n), leader (n), leadership (n), lender (n), management (n), market (n), network (n), pay (n), raise (n), researcher (n), standard (adj), taxation (n), trade (n), work (v), workplace (n)	
<b>Collocations</b>	<b>9</b>
a big challenge, do (an) analysis, a financial advisor, go on vacation ( <i>AmE</i> ), impose a tariff, land a job, middle-income countries, product development, a slow rate	
<b>TOTAL:</b>	<b>51</b>

Table 8. *FORTUNE* – Terms, frequent and essential words, and collocations used in business English (Source: Author’s data)

[1] **the breadwinner**

(a) “The male is addicted to smoking, he’s **the breadwinner** of the family, he gets a disease and the family spends a fortune to keep him alive, and usually fails,” Jha says, illustrating a common situation in low- and middle-income countries. (Ducharme, 2018, April 12)

(b) the person who earns the money the family needs

(c) worker (n) – **employee**, member of staff, working man, working woman; blue-collar worker, white-collar worker; wage-earner, **breadwinner**

[2] **in the works**; (in *GenE*) **(be) in the works** *AmE*

(a) You hear there’s a big shakeup **in the works**. So often there’s a kernel of truth in the gossip. (Oliver, 2017, May 30)

(b) sth that is being discussed, planned or prepared and will happen or exist soon

(c) in progress – **under way**, **going on**, ongoing, on the stocks; *AmE infml in the works*

[3] **in lieu (of sth)** *fml*

(a) What else is on the table and can be considered **in lieu of** a raise at this time? (Linville, 2016, November 29)

(b) instead (of sth)

(c) instead of – **as an alternative to**, as a substitute for, in place of, **in lieu of**; antonyms: as well as; in place of – **instead of**, as an alternative for, **in lieu of**

[4] **recharge your batteries**; (in *GenE*) **recharge one’s batteries**

(a) And when you do go on vacation, are you really **recharging your batteries** or just draining them at a slightly slower rate by checking email a bit less frequently? (Colvin, 2014, July 24)

(b) to get back your energy by resting for a while

(c) rest (v) – **relax**, take a rest, ease up/off, slow down, have/take a break, take time off, **recharge one's batteries**, put one's feet up

### Further comments

Even though there are 35 idioms included in Table 7, the detailed analysis (see also Appendix B) only provides idioms in immediate context related to the fields of economics, business and human resources.

As regards the frequent and essential words, e.g. 'fire' (v) (*HR*) and 'assess'(v), their synonyms should also be noticed, e.g. 'sack' (v) and 'evaluate' (v), respectively.

Considering the term 'performance review' (n), the student needs to be aware of the frequent and essential term 'appraisal' (n) (*HR*) as well as 'performance appraisal', 'performance assessment' and 'performance evaluation', since they can be used interchangeably when describing a meeting between an employee and their manager to discuss the quality of the employee's work and to plan future tasks.

When looking at 'rebranding' (n), it needs to be mentioned that a frequently used term 'rebrand' (*Marketing*) can be used as a noun as well as a verb.

It is interesting to see that 'middle-income' and 'low-income' are adjectives usually used before the noun. While 'middle-income' collocates with 'countries', 'low-income' does not collocate with it. In addition, while 'check emails' is a collocation in business English, 'check email' is not a collocation (Parkinson & Noble, 2005). However, 'check your email(s)' is a collocation in Mayor, et al. (2013).

Even though the nouns such as 'diversity', 'environment' 'global market' and 'shakeup' do not directly belong to the core, it is recommended to pay attention to them. For example, to talk about managing diversity in an organisation that leads to more satisfied employees, the diversity of jobs to emphasise one's skills, etc., a pleasant working environment, the world population who might buy goods, and a situation in which a lot of changes are made in an organisation to improve the way in which it works.

### *Business Vocabulary in The Guardian*

*The Guardian* articles chosen by the students discussed the topics of *Economics* (global economy, economic growth, the price of crude oil, UK interest rates, UK debt, ECB, cryptocurrencies, Bitcoin), *Banking* (the Royal Bank of Scotland, Williams & Glyn, Barclays plc, ECB), *Markets* (Gloo Networks), *B2B* (E-commerce), *Money* (council tax, mobile phones, savings), *Energy*, *US Politics*, and *Northern Ireland* (*Brexit*).

<i>The Guardian</i>	TOTAL:
Nominals	2
the big three/four, etc., conflict of interest(s) (also AE)	

<b>Adjectivals</b>	<b>3</b>
at risk ( <i>also</i> AE), at stake ( <i>also</i> AE), in the pipeline ( <i>also</i> AE)	
<b>Adverbials</b>	<b>16</b>
at all times ( <i>also</i> AE), in advance (of sth) ( <i>also</i> AE), in the hands of sb ( <i>also</i> AE), in line with sth ( <i>also</i> AE), in place ( <i>also</i> AE), in/over the long run ( <i>also</i> AE), in the long/short/medium term ( <i>also</i> AE), in terms of sth ( <i>also</i> AE), on balance ( <i>also</i> AE), on/off the radar (screen), on the road ( <i>also</i> AE), on the table ( <i>also</i> AE), on top of sth ( <i>also</i> AE), there is/was no question of (sth happening/sb doing sth), to the tune of sth, with respect to sth ( <i>also</i> AE)	
<b>Verbals</b>	<b>29</b>
be hit hard (by sth), be made redundant <i>BrE</i> , be on track ( <i>also</i> AE), bring/get/keep sth under control ( <i>also</i> AE), come into effect ( <i>also</i> AE), come/enter into force ( <i>also</i> AE), deal a (serious/severe, etc.) blow to sb/sth, down tools <i>BrE</i> , <i>AustrE</i> , foot the bill <i>infml</i> , get (sth) off the ground ( <i>also</i> AE), get (sb) off the hook <i>infml</i> , the jury is (still) out on sth ( <i>also</i> AE) <i>rather infml</i> , make one's/a mark (on sth) ( <i>also</i> AE), make up for lost time, name and shame <i>BrE</i> , pave the way for sth, pick/take up the slack <i>AmE</i> , <i>AustrE infml</i> , play a (key/major/vital, etc.) part/role (in sth), put sth/itself up for sale/auction, run out of time, shut up shop <i>BrE infml</i> , take advantage of sth/sb ( <i>also</i> AE), take a back seat (to sth), take effect ( <i>also</i> AE), take sb for a ride <i>infml</i> , take sth on board <i>BrE</i> , take its/their toll (on sb/sth) ( <i>also</i> AE), tighten one's belt, tighten/loosen the purse strings	
<b>TOTAL:</b>	<b>50</b>

Table 9. *The Guardian* – Idioms used in business English (Source: Author's data)

<b><i>The Guardian</i></b>	<b>TOTAL:</b>
<b>Terms occurring in different areas of business</b>	<b>15</b>
budget (n) ( <i>Accounting; Economics</i> ), cyclical (adj) ( <i>Economics; Finance</i> ), distress (n) ( <i>Law</i> ), financial services (n) ( <i>Finance</i> ), fiscal (adj) ( <i>Economics; Finance; Accounting</i> ), fund (n, v) ( <i>Finance</i> ), inbox (n) ( <i>IT</i> ), infrastructure (n) ( <i>Economics</i> ), insolvency (n) ( <i>Accounting; Law</i> ), listed (adj) ( <i>Stock Exchange</i> ), site (n) ( <i>IT</i> ), sector (n) ( <i>Economics</i> ), tariff (n) ( <i>Trade; Commerce</i> ), upside (n) ( <i>Economics; Finance</i> ), website (n) ( <i>IT</i> )	
<b>Frequent and essential words</b>	<b>82</b>
action (n), aim (v), allocate (v), allowance (n), analysis (n), authority (n), bank (n), benefit (v), bill (n), bonus (n), branch (n), charge (n), chief executive (n), company (n), compensate (v), complaint (n), condition (n), conflict (n), construction (n), consumer (n), contract (n), corporate (adj), customer (n), debt (n), department (n), design (v), development (n), earnings (n; plural) (n), economist (n), email (n), entrepreneur (n), expert (n), finance (n), financial (adj), firm (n), flood (v), forecast (n, v), growth (n), head (n), hit (n, v), increase (n, v), industry (n), inflation (n), interest rate (n), investor (n), maintain (v), management (n), operator (n), output (n), pay (n), payment (n), practice (n), price (n), produce (v), profit (n), project (n), proposal (n), raise (v), rate (n), reduce (v), regulator (n), report (n), resume (v; <i>fml</i> ), review (n), risk (n, v), salary (n), save (v), saving (n), schedule (n), secretary (n), service (n), skill (n), spending (n), staff (n), standard (n, adj), supplier (n), tax (n), team (n), terms (n; plural), trade (n), value (n, v), worker (n)	

<b>Collocations</b>	<b>17</b>
borrowing costs, close a branch, the construction industry, a cyclical downturn, economic activity, economic data, a financial crisis, financial resources, household wealth, a media company, a price increase, price rises, provide information, raise prices, (a) rising demand, a senior manager, send a message	
<b>TOTAL:</b>	<b>114</b>

Table 10. *The Guardian* – Terms, frequent and essential words, and collocations used in business English (Source: Author's data)

[1] **come/enter into force** (of a law, rule, etc.) (also *AcadE*) (see PLT)

(a) 1. *Cuts to welfare benefits that **came into force** earlier this month are evidence that austerity remains a drag on activity.* (Elliott, 2018, April 27); 2. *Some companies push new onerous terms of service on users as GDPR rules **come into force**.* (Hern & Waterson, 2018, May 24); 3. *Dozens of websites shut down their activities completely, others forced users to agree to new terms of service, and inboxes have been flooded with emails begging customers to remain on mailing lists as the GDPR rules **come into force** on Friday.* (Hern & Waterson, 2018, May 24)

(b) to start being used

(c) take effect – **come into force**, come into operation; antonyms: lapse

[2] **down tools** *BrE, AustrE* (about workers); (in *GenE*) **down tools | lay down tools** *BrE infml*

(a) *The extreme weather was likely to have the biggest impact on the construction industry, which experts said could lose up to £2bn over the three worst days, as sub-zero temperatures forced building workers to **down tools**.* (Inman, Topham, & Vaughan, 2018, March 3)

(b) to stop work; to go on strike

(c) strike (v) – **take industrial action**, go on strike, **down tools**

[3] **tighten one's belt**

(a) *Consumers have been **tightening their belts**.* (Elliott, 2018, April 27)

(b) to spend less money because there is less available

(c) **tighten one's belt** – **economise**, cut back, make cuts, husband one's resources, be frugal, use less, cut corners, cut costs

[4] **with respect to** sth (also *AcadE*)

(a) b. *New York's Department of Financial Services has also been looking into Staley's behaviour and on Friday, Barclays said it continued "to provide information to,*

and co-operate with, authorities in the US **with respect to this matter**". (Fletcher, 2018, May 11)

(b) *(only used in written English)* concerning; as regards, with reference to (ENOD.com)

(c) **with respect to/in respect of – concerning**, regarding, as regards, in/with regard to, with reference to, as for, as to, in connection with; *French* vis-à-vis; *Latin* in re

### Further comments

Even though Table 9 shows 50 idioms, the detailed analysis (see also Appendix C) only provides idioms in immediate context related to the fields of economics, business and human resources.

Example sentences present terms, frequent and essential words, and collocations such as 'inbox', 'website', 'customer', 'consumer', 'worker', 'provide information' and so forth (see also Appendix C). Students need to learn their definitions in order to be able to identify the right word in end-of-term tests.

It is useful to notice the synonyms and antonyms for 'forecast' (v, n) – 'predict' (v) and 'prediction' (n), 'increase' (n, v) – 'decrease' (n, v), and 'insolvency' (n) – 'solvency' (n). This vocabulary is often used in business English.

Frequent and essential adjectives are, for instance, 'digital' and 'sustainable'. In the example sentences, the adverb 'digitally', the noun 'sustainability', and the antonym 'unsustainable' are used (see Appendix C).

Additionally, it is useful to learn and acquire the nouns such as 'upswing' and its synonym and antonym 'upturn' and 'downturn'.

The 'due diligence' (n), mentioned in the example sentence, is often used in the mergers and acquisitions, and it causes difficulty for students when they are asked to explain the exact meaning.

### Business Vocabulary in Forbes

Many informative and interesting articles read by students in the *Forbes* business magazine were included in the categories such as *Leadership* (Chevron Corporation, Apple, Berkshire Hathaway and brands), *Money* (the Federal Reserve, taxes, council tax, markets) and *Business* (a trade war, policies and transport).

<b>Forbes</b>	<b>TOTAL:</b>
<b>Nominals</b>	<b>1</b>
conflict of interest(s) ( <i>also</i> AE)	
<b>Adjectivals</b>	<b>3</b>
in place ( <i>also</i> AE), on hold ( <i>also</i> AE), up for sth ( <i>also</i> AE) <i>rather infml</i>	
<b>Adverbials</b>	<b>9</b>

in (the) aggregate <i>fml</i> ( <i>also</i> AE), in/over the long/short run ( <i>also</i> AE), in/over the long/medium/short/far/near term ( <i>also</i> AE), in one's (own) backyard, in/with regard to sb/sth <i>fml</i> ( <i>also</i> AE), in terms of sth ( <i>also</i> AE), on the road ( <i>also</i> AE), on the table ( <i>also</i> AE), year after year ( <i>also</i> AE)	
<b>Verbals</b>	<b>11</b>
be/remain, etc. in the red   move into/return to, etc. the red, be/get/run out of control ( <i>also</i> AE), come out on top, dip a toe in/into the water, get your hands on sth/sb, give/lose ground (to sb/sth), go all out to do sth, make good on sth, make up for lost time, take advantage of sth/sb ( <i>also</i> AE), turn sth on its head ( <i>also</i> AE)	
<b>TOTAL:</b>	<b>24</b>

Table 11. *Forbes* – Idioms used in business English (Source: Author's data)

<b><i>Forbes</i></b>	<b>TOTAL:</b>
<b>Terms occurring in different areas of business</b>	<b>12</b>
agency (n) ( <i>Commerce</i> ), cut expenses (coll.) ( <i>Accounting</i> ), developer (n) ( <i>Property</i> ); development (n) ( <i>Property</i> ), infrastructure (n) ( <i>Economics</i> ), the market (n) ( <i>Economics</i> ), market value (n) ( <i>Accounting; Stock Exchange</i> ), portfolio (n) ( <i>Commerce</i> ), retirement (n) ( <i>HR</i> ), return on investment (n) (abbr. ROI) ( <i>Accounting</i> ), tenant (n) ( <i>Law; Property</i> ), transit (n) ( <i>Transport</i> )	
<b>Frequent and essential words</b>	<b>62</b>
affordable (adj), asset (n), benefit (n), brand (n), brief (n), build (v), buyer (n), challenge (n), company (n), contractor (n), control (n), cost (n), debt (n), deliver (v), economic (adj), economics (n), economy (n), extend (v), firm (n), gain (n), global (adj), growth (n), guidance (n), handle (v), hit (v), increase (v), inflation (n), investment (n), job (n), launch (n), loan (n), loss (n), maintain (v), marginal (adj), market (v), marketing (n), money (n), operate (v), planning (n), plant (n), prioritise (v), produce (v), production (n), profit (n), project (n), purchase (n), rate (n), reform (v), relationship (n), rent (n), representative (n), resolution (n), retain (v), revenue (n), schedule (n), senior (adj), spending (n), team (n), trade (v), value (n), wage (n), work (n)	
<b>Collocations</b>	<b>7</b>
achieve a goal, company finance, financial software, a low rent, a management style, a new client, set a target	
<b>TOTAL:</b>	<b>81</b>

Table 12. *Forbes* – Terms, frequent and essential words, and collocations used in business English (Source: Author's data)

[1] **go all out for sth | go all out to do sth**

(a) *After all, if you wanted to win a brand new client, you'd **go all out** to impress, make waves, think differently, with razzle-dazzle ideas.* (Goodson, 2012, December 14)

(b) to make a very great effort to get sth or do sth

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(c) bend over backwards *infml* – **try one’s hardest**, try as hard as one can, do one’s best; strive, struggle; *infml* do one’s damndest, **go all out**

[2] **get one’s hands on** sth/sb; (in *GenE*) **lay/get one’s hands on** sth

(a) “*Mau-Mauing the Flack Catchers*” tells the story – as representative of a central phenomenon in its own way as the piece of Noyce – of how, in the late 1960s, representatives of the “urban ghetto” shook down bureaucrats to **get their hands on** all the new welfare-state money. (Domitrovic, 2018, May 17)

(b) to find or get sb/sth

(c) **get/lay one’s hands on** *infml* – **obtain**, acquire, come by, secure, *infml* get hold of

[3] **give/lose ground** (to sb/sth)

(a) *The three heavyweights* **lose ground**. Much is written about the inevitable ascendancy of large global cities, but in terms of job growth none of the three largest in America – New York, Los Angeles and Chicago – are burning down the barn right now. (Kotkin, 2018, May 7)

(b) to allow sb to have an advantage; to lose an advantage for oneself

(c) retreat (v) – **withdraw**, retire, draw back, **give ground**; antonyms: advance; dig in

[4] **in/with regard to** sb/sth *fml* (also *AcadE*) (see FRT)

(a) *Tesla may have made poor choices* **with regard to** contractors, yet Musk has maintained an unusually tightfisted management style and been very specific about the goals he wants to achieve. (Ohnsman, 2018, April 17)

(b) (often used in letters, etc.) concerning, referring to sb/sth; as far as sth is concerned

(c) in terms of – **with regard to**, as regards, regarding, with reference to, in connection with; regarding (prep) – **concerning**, as regards, **with regard to**, **in regard to**, with reference to, apropos, on the subject of; *French* vis-à-vis; *Latin* in re

### Further comments

In Table 11, there are 24 idioms and Table 12 shows 81 terms, frequent and essential words, and collocations. Eleven out of them are used in context in example sentences, e.g. ‘brand’ (n), ‘job’ (n), ‘global’ (adj), ‘management style’ (coll.) and so on (see also Appendix D).

The verb ‘increase’ and its antonym ‘decrease’ also occurred in the analysis of *The Guardian* articles. Synonyms for ‘produce’ (v) and ‘retain’ (v) are ‘manufacture’ (v) and ‘keep’ (v), respectively.

The verb ‘retain’ is also used in *Human Resources* and the noun ‘downside’ is a term in *Economics* and *Finance*.

As mentioned previously, in *POLITICO* and *FORTUNE*, the meanings of ‘trade war’ (n) and ‘global market’ (n) need to be understood clearly.

#### *Business Vocabulary in Inc.*

The *Inc.* magazine covers three main areas: *Start Up and Grow*, *Innovate and Use Technology* and *Money and Leadership*. Investigated articles can be found in the subcategories such as *Safeguards*, *Taking Care*, *Conscious Leadership*, *Peak Performance*, *Best in Business*, *Female Founders*, *Company Culture*, *Diverse in Business*, *Public Speaking*, *HR/Benefits*, *Icons & Innovators*, *Productivity*, and *Serial Entrepreneurs*.

<b>Inc.</b>	<b>TOTAL:</b>
<b>Nominals</b>	<b>2</b>
the big picture <i>infml</i> ( <i>also AE</i> ), wear and tear (on)	
<b>Adjectivals</b>	<b>3</b>
at risk ( <i>also AE</i> ), in place ( <i>also AE</i> ), up and running	
<b>Adverbials</b>	<b>3</b>
all the time   the whole time, by default ( <i>also AE</i> ), back on track ( <i>also AE</i> ) <i>rather infml</i>	
<b>Verbals</b>	<b>9</b>
get (sth) off the ground ( <i>also AE</i> ), go/put sb out of business ( <i>also AE</i> ), let sb go <i>infml</i> , make (both) ends meet ( <i>also AE</i> ), (put sth) on the line ( <i>also AE</i> ) <i>rather infml</i> , save (sb’s) face ( <i>also AE</i> ), take advantage of sth/sb ( <i>also AE</i> ), take risks ( <i>also AE</i> ), take its/their toll (on sb/sth) ( <i>also AE</i> )	
<b>TOTAL:</b>	<b>17</b>

Table 13. *Inc.* – Idioms used in business English (Source: Author’s data)

<b>Inc.</b>	<b>TOTAL:</b>
<b>Terms occurring in different areas of business</b>	<b>7</b>
hire (n, v) ( <i>HR; esp. AmE</i> ), pricing (n) ( <i>Commerce; Economics</i> ), program (n) ( <i>IT</i> ), protect (sb/sth) (against/from sth) (v) ( <i>Insurance</i> ), return (n) ( <i>Accounting; Finance</i> ), shareholder (n), ( <i>Finance</i> ), site (n) ( <i>IT</i> )	
<b>Frequent and essential words</b>	<b>22</b>
administration (n), business (n), company (n), compensation (n), customer (n), damage (n), deliver (v), e-commerce (n), employee (n), executive (n), fair (adj), global (adj), maximum (adj) (abbr. max), price (n), protection (n), rate (n), report (n), risk (n), salesman (n), store (n; <i>AmE</i> ), strategy (n), technology (n)	
<b>Collocations</b>	<b>11</b>

business property, company culture, a company grows, an essential tool, good service, a high margin, personal finance, run a business, start a business, travel costs, use funds	
<b>TOTAL:</b>	<b>40</b>

Table 14. *Inc.* – Terms, frequent and essential words, and collocations used in business English (Source: Author's data)

[1] **get (sth) off the ground** (also *AcadE*) (see PLT, GRD)

(a) *However, with so much technology out there, it can be hard to know what programs and tools are essential for **getting a company off the ground** and growing.* (Anon., 2017, July 14)

(b) to start happening successfully; to make sth start happening successfully

(c) start – **establish**, set up, put in place, **get sth off the ground**, get sth going; *infml* kick sth off; antonyms: end, wind up

[2] **make (both) ends meet** (also *AcadE*)

(a) *The report also points out that Dreamers start businesses at more than twice the rate of the general population, **in large part** because they are used to **making ends meet** without help from the government.* (Henry, 2018, March 5)

(b) to earn just enough money to be able to buy the things one needs, pays, what one owes, etc.

(c) exist (v) – **survive**, subsist, keep one's head above water, **make ends meet**; *infml* get by, keep the wolf from the door

[3] **take a risk | take risks** (also *AcadE*); (in *GenE*) **run/take a/the risk | take risks** (see FRT)

(a) *Do women and men run businesses differently? ... Men **take more risks** than women.* (Calhoun, 2018, April 9)

(b) to do sth even though one knows that sth bad could happen as a result

(c) gamble (v) – **take a chance, take a risk**, take a leap in the dark, speculate, venture

[4] **up and running**; (in *GenE*) **(be) up and running**

(a) *It only takes a few hours to get a store **up and running** and turn your company into a potentially global business.* (Anon., 2017, July 14)

(b) (about a system, e.g. a computer system) working; being used

(c) in force – **effective**, in operation, operative; *infml* **up and running**

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### Further comments

Table 13 shows 17 idioms and Table 14 shows 40 terms, frequent and essential words, and collocations (see also Appendix E).

The noun 'stockholder' is usually used in *AmE*.

The following words need to be learned/acquired: 'environment' (n), 'empower' (v), 'margin' (n) (*Accounting*), since they all of them appear in the textbook, and a collocation 'a company grows', as well.

To sum up, based on the analysis of reading texts in a textbook and newspaper or magazine articles, most frequently used idioms in the context of business are as follows:

- (a) 5x – *in place* (PLT, FRT, FBS, INC, GRD), *take (full) advantage of sth/sb* (PLT, FRT, GRD, FBS, INC);
- (b) 4x – *on the table* (PLT, FRT, FBS, GRD);
- (c) 3x – *at risk (from/of sth)* (PLT, FRT GRD), *at stake* (PLT, FRT, GRD), *back on track* (Unit 8, PLT, INC), *get (sth) off the ground* (PLT, GRD, INC), *in the long run* (Unit 6, GRD, FBS), *in the long term* (PLT, FRT, GRD), *on hold* (Unit 10, PLT, FBS), *on top of sth* (Unit 7, PLT, GRD), *pave the way for sth* (U6, PLT, GRD), *play a (key/major/vital, etc.) part/role (in sth)* (PLT, FRT, GRD), *take a (heavy/terrible) toll (on sb/sth) | take its/their toll* (Unit 5, GRD, INC); and
- (d) 2x – *all the time* (FRT, INC), *below/under the radar (screen)* (PLT, FRT), *the big picture* (PLT, INC), *come/enter into force* (PLT, GRD), *conflict of interest(s)* (GRD, FBS), *go/put sb out of business* (PLT, INC), *in advance (of sth)* (PLT, GRD), *in the hands of sb | in sb's hands* (PLT, GRD), *in line with sth* (PLT, GRD), *in/with regard to sb/sth* (FRT, FBS), *let sb go* (FRT, INC), *make up for lost time* (GRD, FBS), *name and shame* (PLT, GRD), *on balance* (PLT, GRD), *on track (to do sth)* (FRT, GRD), *take a back seat* (Unit 6, GRD), *take effect* (PLT, GRD), *take a risk | take risks* (FRT, INC), *to the tune of sth* (PLT, GRD).

As comes from the analysis, more idioms (*BusE*, *AcadE* or *GenE*) are (sometimes, but not always) used in one sentence, for instance:

[1] *Many startups and small non-tech businesses have been unable to make similar investments, and are hoping that they will fly **under** authorities' **radar** as they struggle to bring their data practices **up to snuff**.* (Scott, 2018, April 22)

[2] *"Now, the City may lose up to 15 percent of its revenue if Brexit **goes sour**, and the government seems intent on **showing** foreigners **the door**," said a saddened London-based French banker.* (Briancon, 2018a, May 16)

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[3] *This might work **in the short term**, but it'll be **an uphill battle in the long term**.* (Vanderbloemen, 2016, January 19)

[4] ***That said**, Jha cautions against thinking of taxation as a **one-size-fits-all** solution to public health problems.* (Ducharme, 2018, April 12)

[5] *And investors still face **a number of** other uncertainties, **not least** the US sanctions on Russia which has **hit** the rouble **hard**.* (Fletcher, 2018, April 10)

[6] *Cancellations due to weather may see Network Rail **footing the bill** in “schedule 8 payments”, compensating train operators for infrastructure issues – although operators whose trains have broken down may find themselves presented with bill **in reverse**.* (Inman, Topham, & Vaughan, 2018, March 3)

[7] *After all, if you wanted to win a brand new client, you'd **go all out** to impress, **make waves**, think differently, with **razzle-dazzle** ideas.* (Goodson, 2012, December 14)

To conclude, the students from the University of Economics in Bratislava doing courses in business English are tested on vocabulary in end-of-term tests. They need be aware of the essential business vocabulary as well as they should distinguish between formal and informal vocabulary and use it in the particular situations. Working with authentic newspaper or magazines articles is a great method/technique that shows how students' vocabulary can be widened and their knowledge deepened, as well.

#### 7.4 Phase 3 – Comparison of Final Study Results

**Research sample.** Altogether, 241 first- and second-year students of the Faculty of National Economy, the Faculty of International Relations and the Faculty of Commerce of the University of Economics in Bratislava participated in the pedagogical experiment. In the academic year 2017/2018, 74 students were included in the experimental group and 70 students in the control group. In 2018/2019, 64 students formed the experimental group and 33 students the control group.

**Methodology.** Both groups of students worked systematically for three semesters in 'Business English for Advanced Students I, II, III'. The control group of students attended traditional courses, i.e. they used the *Market Leader Business English Course Book* (Cotton et al., 2011). The experimental group of students participated in traditional courses, too, but these courses were supported by an e-course (see Appendices 3 – 4).

In the winter semester of 2018/2019, both groups of students dealt with Units 9 – 12 (Raising money, Customer service, Crisis management, and Mergers and acquisitions). Again, each student was supposed to read twelve newspaper or magazine articles and do the same tasks as in the second semester, i.e. to acquire business terms and idiomatic expressions as well as to write short summaries. In the third semester, they read articles in the sources: *Forbes*, *The Guardian*, *Newsweek* (an American weekly news magazine) and *The Economic Times* (an Indian English-language business-focused daily paper). Moreover, students from the Faculty of National Economy who concurrently studied *Economics* and *Law* at the University of Economics in Bratislava and the University of Comenius in Bratislava searched for legal terms in *New Law Journal* (a weekly legal magazine for legal professionals) and *The Law Society Gazette* (a British weekly legal magazine for solicitors in England and Wales). By working with professional articles and using the Internet and LMS Moodle, the group developed reading and communication skills and it was supposed to achieve better study results than the control group.

**Data analysis.** The main aim of the third phase of the research is to compare the study results achieved by both the experimental group of students and the control group of students in departmental end-of-term tests in the first and third semesters, and to confirm the effectiveness of an alternative form of teaching business English.

At the end of the first and third semesters, both groups of students sat for departmental business English tests and idiomatic tests. To compare the level of knowledge acquired in business English courses and the achieved results/grades by both groups of students, the method of *Hypothesis Testing* is used. The *Independent Samples t-Test* (or *2-Sample t-Test*) tests the significance of the difference between the sample means, while the samples are of a large scale. In addition, the *Paired Samples t-Test* is used to test the difference between the grades achieved in the end-of-term and idiomatic tests. Alternative and Null Hypotheses ( $H_1$ ), ( $H_0$ ) are expected to be confirmed or refuted (Kučerová & Fidlerová, 2012).

#### **7.4.1 Results and Discussion**

*The Comparison of the Results Achieved in Departmental Business English Tests in the Academic Years 2017/2018 and 2018/2019*

Table 15 shows the number of students who participated in the research in both academic years.

Academic year	Experimental group	Control group	Total
2017/2018	74	70	144
2018/2019	64	33	97

Table 15. Number of students in 2017/2018 and 2018/2019 (Source: Author's data)

Group of students	ECTS Grades (absolute frequency)					
	1 – A Excellent	1,5 – B Very good	2 – C Good	2,5 – D Satisfactory	3 – E Sufficient	4 – FX Failed
<b>Experimental</b>	11	16	15	18	4	0
<b>Control</b>	5	5	8	8	6	1

Table 16. Grades achieved in a departmental business English test (in absolute frequencies) in 2018/2019 (Source: Author's data)

Group of students	ECTS Grades (relative frequency)					
	1 – A Excellent	1,5 – B Very good	2 – C Good	2,5 – D Satisfactory	3 – E Sufficient	4 – FX Failed
<b>Experimental</b>	17.2%	25.0%	23.4%	28.1%	6.3%	0.0%
<b>Control</b>	15.2%	15.2%	24.2%	24.2%	18.2%	3.0%

Table 17. Grades achieved in a departmental business English test (in relative frequencies) in 2018/2019 (Source: Author's data)

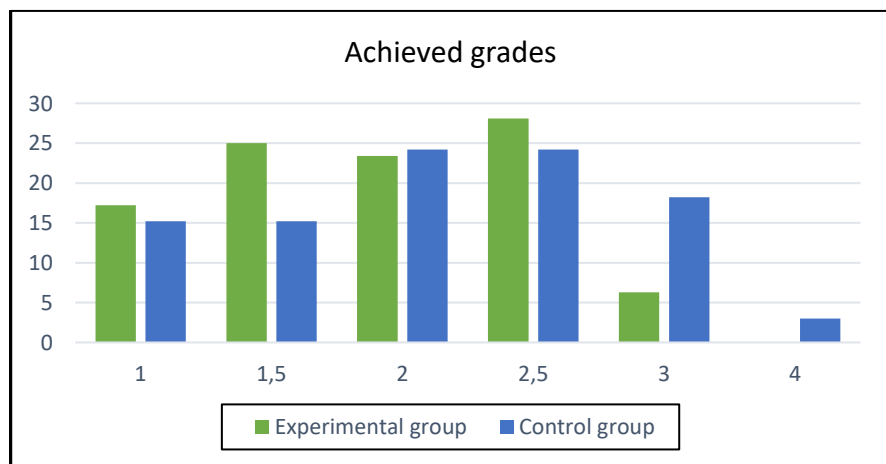


Figure 6. Grades achieved in a departmental business English test in 2018/2019 (Source: Author's data)

Tables 16 – 17 and Figure 6 show the grades (absolute and relative frequencies) achieved in a departmental business English test in the academic year 2018/2019 by 64 students of the experimental group and 33 students of the control group as well as the graphical representation of achieved grades.

Group of students	ECTS Grades (absolute frequency)					
	1 – A Excellent	1,5 – B Very good	2 – C Good	2,5 – D Satisfactory	3 – E Sufficient	4 – FX Failed
<b>Experimental</b>	3	10	11	17	23	10
<b>Control</b>	4	11	13	22	17	3

Table 18. Grades achieved in a departmental business English test (in absolute frequencies) in 2017/2018 (Source: Author's data)

Group of students	ECTS Grades (relative frequency)					
	1 – A Excellent	1,5 – B Very good	2 – C Good	2,5 – D Satisfactory	3 – E Sufficient	4 – FX Failed
<b>Experimental</b>	4.0%	13.5%	14.9%	23.0%	31.1%	13.5%
<b>Control</b>	5.7%	15.7%	18.6%	31.4%	24.3%	4.3%

Table 19. Grades achieved in a departmental business English test (in relative frequencies) in 2017/2018 (Source: Author's data)

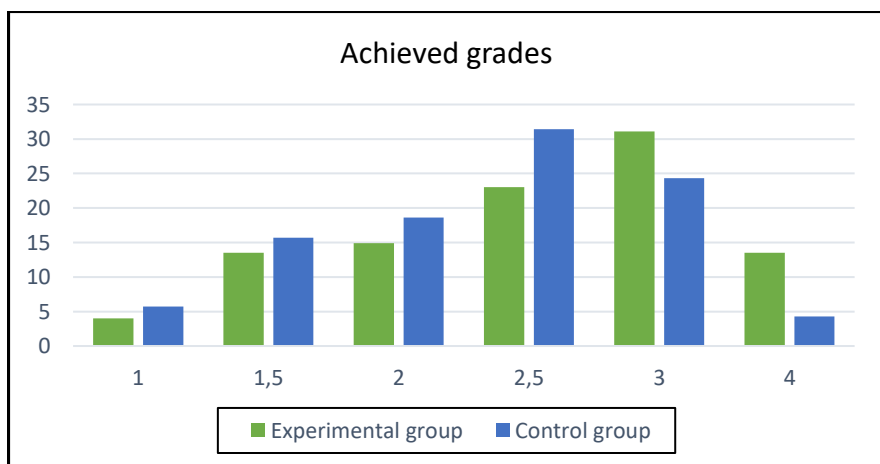


Figure 7. Grades achieved in a departmental business English test in 2017/2018  
(Source: Author's data)

Tables 18 – 19 and Figure 7 show the grades (absolute and relative frequencies) achieved in a departmental business English test in the academic year 2017/2018 by 74 students of the experimental group and 70 students of the control group as well as the graphical representation of achieved grades. (ECTS – European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System).

To analyse the achieved results, that is, to compare the level of students' knowledge, the method of *Hypothesis Testing* is employed. The parametric test, *t-Test*, aimed at testing the significance of the difference between the sample means, is used.

*Testing the Difference Between the Study Results/Grades Achieved in the Academic Years 2017/2018 and 2018/2019*

To compare the level of all students' knowledge acquired in the academic year 2017/2018 and the academic year 2018/2019, the *Independent Samples t-Test* (or *2-Sample t-Test*) is used, while the samples are of a large scale.

The tested hypotheses are as follows:

Alternative Hypothesis ( $H_1$ ): There is a significant difference between the study results (the level of knowledge is different).

Null Hypothesis ( $H_0$ ): There is not a significant difference between the study results (the level of knowledge is not different).

Academic year	2018/2019	2017/2018
Expected value	1.98	2.42
Variance	0.4347	0.5504
Observation	97	144
Hypothetical difference of expected values	0	
Difference	221	
Test statistics	4.8049997	
$P(T \leq t)$ (1)	0.0000014	
t crit (1)	1.65	
$P(T \leq t)$ (2)	0.0000029	
t crit (2)	1.97	

Table 20. Comparison of the study results of all students (the experimental group and the control group)

Findings: On the level of significance at 5% ( $\alpha = 0.05$ ), the Null Hypothesis ( $H_0$ ) is refuted since the p-value = 0.0000029 ( $p < \alpha$ ), i.e. the difference can be considered as significant.

When comparing the academic years 2017/2018 and 2018/2019, on the basis of all respondents (students of the control group and the experimental group), there is a **statistically significant** difference between the achieved results/grades (see Table 20).

*Comparison of the results – the experimental group of students*

Academic year	2018/2019	2017/2018
Expected value	1.91	2.53
Variance	0.3641	0.6636
Observation	64	74
Hypothetical difference of expected values	0	
Difference	133	
Test statistics	-5.12759	
$P(T \leq t) (1)$	0.0000005	
t crit (1)	1.656391	
$P(T \leq t) (2)$	0.000001	
t crit (2)	1.977961	

Table 21. Difference between the study results of the experimental group of students in a departmental business English test

Regarding the experimental group of students, the tested hypotheses are as follows:

Alternative Hypothesis ( $H_1$ ): There is a significant difference between the study results of the experimental group of students (the level of knowledge is different).

Null Hypothesis ( $H_0$ ): There is not a significant difference between the study results of the experimental group (the level of knowledge is not different).

Findings: On the level of significance at 5% ( $\alpha = 0.05$ ), the Null Hypothesis ( $H_0$ ) is refuted since the p-value = 0.000001 ( $p < \alpha$ ), i.e. the difference can be considered as statistically significant.

When comparing the achieved study results of the experimental group of students in the academic years 2017/2018 and 2018/2019, on the basis of the *t-Test* it can be stated that there is a **statistically significant** difference between the achieved results/grades (see Table 21).

*Comparison of the results – the control group of students*

Academic year	2018/2019	2017/2018
Expected value	2.14	2.35
Variance	0.5511	0.4574
Observation	33	70
Hypothetical difference of expected values	0	
Difference	55	
Test statistics	-1.41187	
P(T<=t) (1)	0.081811	
t crit (1)	1.673034	
P(T<=t) (2)	0.163622	
t crit (2)	2.004045	

Table 22. Difference between the study results of the control group of students in a departmental business English test

Regarding the control group of students, the tested hypotheses are as follows:

Alternative Hypothesis ( $H_1$ ): There is a significant difference between the study results of the control group of students (the level of knowledge is different).

Null Hypothesis ( $H_0$ ): There is not a significant difference between the study results of the control group (the level of knowledge is not different).

Findings: On the level of significance at 5% ( $\alpha = 0.05$ ), the Null Hypothesis ( $H_0$ ) is not refuted since the p-value = 0.163622 ( $p > \alpha$ ), i.e. the difference can be considered as random, or it cannot be considered as statistically significant.

When comparing the study results of the control group of students in the academic years academic years 2017/2018 and 2018/2019, on the basis of the *t-Test* it can be stated that that there is not a statistically significant difference between the achieved results/grades (see Table 22).

*Testing the Difference Between a Departmental Test and an Idiomatic Test in the Academic Year 2018/2019*

	Departmental test	Idiomatic test
Expected value	1.90625	2.101563
Variance	0.364087	0.874442
Observation	64	64

<b>Pearson correlation coefficient</b>	0.636033	
<b>Hypothetical difference of expected values</b>	0	
<b>Difference</b>	63	
<b>Test statistics</b>	-2.16519	
<b>P(T&lt;=t) (1)</b>	0.017084	
<b>t crit (1)</b>	1.669402	
<b>P(T&lt;=t) (2)</b>	0.034168	
<b>t crit (2)</b>	1.998341	

Table 23. Difference between a departmental test and an idiomatic test in the experimental group in 2018/2019

To compare the difference between the study results achieved in a departmental test and an idiomatic test by the experimental group of students the *Paired Samples t-Test* (or *Dependent Samples t-Test*) is used.

The tested hypotheses are as follows:

Alternative Hypothesis ( $H_1$ ): The grades achieved by the experimental group of students in a departmental test are significantly better than the grades achieved in an idiomatic test.

Null Hypothesis ( $H_0$ ): There is not a significant difference between the grades achieved by the experimental group of students in a departmental test and an idiomatic test.

Findings: On the level of significance at 5% ( $\alpha = 0.05$ ), the Null Hypothesis ( $H_0$ ) is refuted since the p-value = 0.017084 ( $p < \alpha$ ), i.e. the difference can be considered as statistically significant.

When comparing the results achieved by the experimental group of students in a departmental test and an idiomatic test, on the basis of the *t-Test* it can be stated that there is a **statistically significant** difference (see Table 23).

	<b>Departmental test</b>	<b>Idiomatic test</b>
<b>Expected value</b>	2.136364	2.212121
<b>Variance</b>	0.551136	0.922348
<b>Observation</b>	33	33
<b>Pearson correlation coefficient</b>	0.68136	
<b>Hypothetical difference of expected values</b>	0	

Difference	32	
Test statistics	-0.6143	
P(T<=t) (1)	0.271682	
t crit (1)	1.693889	
P(T<=t) (2)	0.543364	
t crit (2)	2.036933	

Table 24. Difference between a departmental test and an idiomatic test in the control group in 2018/2019

To compare the difference between the study results achieved in a departmental test and an idiomatic test by the control group of students the *Paired Samples t-Test* (or *Dependent Samples t-Test*) is used.

The tested hypotheses are as follows:

Alternative Hypothesis ( $H_1$ ): The grades achieved by the control group of students in a departmental test are significantly better than the grades achieved in an idiomatic test.

Null Hypothesis ( $H_0$ ): There is not a significant difference between the grades achieved by the control group of students in a departmental test and an idiomatic test.

Findings: On the level of significance at 5% ( $\alpha = 0.05$ ), the Null Hypothesis ( $H_0$ ) is not refuted since the p-value = 0.271682 ( $p > \alpha$ ), i.e. the difference cannot be considered as statistically significant.

When comparing the grades achieved by the control group of students in a departmental test and an idiomatic test, on the basis of the *t-Test* it can be stated that there is not a significant difference (see Table 24).

## 7.5 Phase 4 – Research Design II

**Research sample.** In the summer semester of 2022/2023, 10 second- and third-year students of the Faculty of Education and the Faculty of Arts of Constantine the Philosopher University in Nitra participated in the research: 9 students from the bachelor's study programme 'Teacher Training of English Language and Literature' (single major study) and 1 student from the bachelor's study programme 'Marketing Communication and Advertising' (single major study).

**Methodology.** All the students enrolled on a course 'English for Commercial Practice', which was supported by a university e-learning portal – UKF Moodle (all materials and instructions were provided in it; see Appendices 7 – 8; Figures 10 – 11). The *Market Leader Business English Course Book Advanced* (C1 – C2; Dubicka & O'Keefe, 2011) was used as a textbook. Students dealt with Unit 1 First impressions, Unit 2 Training, Unit 3 Energy, and the first 'Working across cultures' section. Apart

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from developing listening and speaking skills, they focused on practising writing skills. As discussed above, the final outputs of the three case studies finished with written assignments. Students had to carry them out and submit them to UKF Moodle (could also be added to their own portfolios). Subsequently, they were evaluated by the lecturer.

**Data analysis.** The main aim of the fourth phase of the research is to find out if written assignments done regularly had an impact on students' results in the end-of-term test. In order to find out how integrated skills are developed in a business English course run at the Department of English Language and Culture, a content analysis has been chosen. Other methods applied are as follows: case studies, written assignments, and an end-of-term test. This research study will try to answer the following research questions: Research question (RQ2): "How much time is devoted to the listening section in the given units?" Research question (RQ3): "How can the right amount of time be given to developing each skill and competence?"

### **7.5.1 Results and Discussion**

Having analysed the contents of the textbook (Dubicka and O'Keeffe, 2011), the following units and individual sections are included:

#### Unit 1 First impressions

- (a) Listening and discussion – First impressions in presentations;
- (b) Reading and language – It's not what you know; Adverbs;
- (c) Business skills – Networking; *Writing: formal and informal register*;
- (d) Case study – Movers and shakers; *Writing: formal letter*.

#### Unit 2 Training

- (a) Listening and discussion – Apprenticeships;
- (b) Reading and language – Training leaders to connect the dots; Emphasising your point;
- (c) Business skills – Clarifying and confirming; *Writing: effective e-mails*;
- (d) Case study – Training at Carter & Randall; *Writing: e-mail (summarising decisions)*.

#### Unit 3 Clean energy

- (a) Listening and discussion – Clean energy;
- (b) Reading and language – The danger of losing touch with reality; Articles; Countable and uncountable nouns;
- (c) Business skills – Decision-making; *Writing: layout and structure of reports*;
- (d) Case study – Energy saving at Tumalet Software; *Writing: report*.

Research question (RQ2): “How much time is devoted to the listening section in the given units?”

Answer: Tables 1 – 4 show that the overall time devoted to ‘Developing listening comprehension for commercial practice’ is **55.16** minutes (Audio scripts; T – track). It means that other sources in recommended literature in the ‘Course Information Letter’ need to be integrated, as well.

Track	T1	T2	T3	T4	T5	TOTAL:
Unit 1	1.45	2.13 (2x)	1.29 (3x)	3.20 (2x)	2.52	<b>18.50</b>

Table 25. Unit 1 First impressions – Listening exercises

Track	T6 T7	T8 T9	T10 T11	T12 T13	T14 T15	T16 T17	TOTAL:
Unit 2	1.05 2.39	1.04 1.11	0.47 1.12	1.43 (2x) 1.56 (2x)	0.57 0.47	0.51 0.53	<b>15.24</b>

Table 26. Unit 2 Training – Listening exercises

Track	T18	T19	T20	T21	T22	T23	TOTAL:
Unit 3	1.05	1.22	1.54	2.58	1.51 (2x)	2.30	<b>11.71</b>

Table 27. Unit 3 Energy – Listening exercises

Track	T24	T25	T26	T27	TOTAL:
Working across cultures	1.29	0.54	1.00	3.44 (2x)	<b>9.71</b>

Table 28. Working across cultures – International presentations

Research question (RQ3): “How can the right amount of time be given to developing each skill and competence?”

Answer: Considering, for example, ‘Developing grammatical and phonological competence’ (1 seminar, i.e. 90 minutes), Unit 1 presents ‘Adverbs’; Unit 2 includes ‘Emphasising your point’, and Unit 3 deals with ‘Articles’ and ‘Countable nouns’.

When revising adverbs, the students need to consider the topics such as ‘Position of adverbs’, ‘Adverbs in American English’ and ‘Adverbs and adjectives’.

When dealing with emphasising one’s point, the students need to be aware of the topics such as ‘Using lists of three’, ‘Using superlative forms’, ‘Using two contrasting

ideas', 'Using interesting or extreme adjectives', 'Emphasising a negative statement' and they should also discuss other emphatic expressions.

As far as 'Developing intercultural communication competence for commercial practice' (1 seminar, i.e. 90 minutes) is concerned, for example, the first 'Working across cultures' section included in the textbook focuses on 'International presentations'. The given time is sufficient to go through this topic.

The following Tables 29 – 30 show the evaluation of written assignments (S – student) and the grades (A – E) of an end-of-term test.

Task 1 – A reply to accept an invitation (p. 11), Task 2 – Case study – Writing: formal letter (p. 13), Task 3 – Emphasising your point (p. 17), Task 4 – Case study – Writing: effective e-mails (p. 19), Task 5 – A covering email to your colleague (p. 21), and Task 6 – Case study – Writing: reports (p. 29).

Student	S1	S2	S3	S4	S5	S6	S7	S8	S9	S10
Task 1	B	B	D	D	B	B	C	E	E	E
Task 2	D	D	E	D	C	A	E	C	E	D
Task 3	D	C	C	A	A	A	B	D	E	D
Task 4	C	B	D	A	C	A	D	B	E	C
Task 5	D	C	D	A	C	A	C	E	E	E
Task 6	D	D	---	C	C	A	A	D	E	C

Table 29. Evaluation of written assignments

Student	S1	S2	S3	S4	S5	S6	S7	S8	S9	S10
%	80%	66%	78%	66%	72%	66%	72%	78%	74%	74%
Grade	C	E	D	E	E	E	E	D	D	D

Table 30. Evaluation of an end-of-term test

In concordance with the 'Course Information Letter', the conditions for being given the evaluation 'passed' are, apart from other things, compulsory written tests with the minimum of 65%. The evaluation, therefore, is: 'passed' (100 % – 65%) and 'failed' (64% and less %).

The results in Tables 29 – 30 are very surprising. It is obvious that students had much more time to complete their written assignments at home and subsequently to submit them to UKF Moodle. For instance, student S6 nearly got six A-s for the tasks. His or her written discourse was almost always perfect (see Table 31). Nearly all students had better evaluation from the tasks, however, there were also students, S1

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and S9, whose evaluation from the tasks was worse than from an end-of-term test. We can also say that despite the worse evaluation from written assignments, students S1 and S4 were excellent at speaking.

As far as the limitations of the research study are concerned, the following ones must be mentioned: (a) a low number of students, (b) the only course in business English, (c) no grades given for passing a written examination, and (d) the fact that the students did not have enough time to get ready for the end-of-term test as it was done during the last week of the teaching period and the evaluation had to be recorded in the Academic Information System in the same week. In addition, when no grades are given for the final written examination, students usually do not care much about their results.

To conclude, research findings prove that students improved their written communication. However, doing written assignments did not have a big impact on the students' results in the end-of-term test.

## **ENERGY PROJECT REPORT**

### **Executive summary**

Increasing energy efficiency is one of the main and necessary directions for our business. This is a very successful method in terms of both costs and production volumes. And many companies and organizations around the world are already practicing energy conservation. As for Tumalet, it is predicted that the incorrect and excessive use of energy may squeal problems in the future and harm the environment. Also, as a result, our electricity bills will increase and our company's productivity will decrease.

Currently in Tumalet it is found that electricity is being used to the full extent and there are no actions to reduce consumption. That is why Joanna Hopper asked me and the rest of the Energy Project Team to study and implement energy-saving ideas. And our research shows that there is a need to improve energy efficiency, which I have outlined in this report.

### **Introduction**

#### **This report will look at:**

- Issues related to current energy use;
- Results of excessive energy consumption;
- Recommendations and ideas for improving the energy efficiency of our company.

### **Findings**

<p><b>1. Improper use of energy</b></p> <p>In interviews and meetings with managers and staff throughout the company, a number of issues have been raised:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Lack of energy-saving light bulbs in the entire office.</li> <li>b) Non-use of renewable resources.</li> <li>c) Lack of interest and uninformed staff to the problem of excessive energy use.</li> </ul>
<p><b>2. Results of excessive energy consumption</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Increasing production costs.</li> <li>b) Increase in electricity bills.</li> <li>c) Reduction of production volumes.</li> </ul>
<p><b>3. Energy-saving ideas</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Use of energy-saving light bulbs.</li> <li>b) Use of renewable energy resources (solar energy, wind power, etc.)</li> <li>c) Permission to work remotely or online from home.</li> <li>d) Reduction of equipment (coffee machines, printers, etc.)</li> <li>e) Painting the surfaces of the rooms with light or bright colours.</li> <li>f) Painting the roof white, or with another highly effective colour.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Conclusion</b></p> <p>It was generally felt that the productivity of the company is reduced due to improper and excessive use of energy. In addition, it affects future production.</p> <p>These findings indicate that improving energy efficiency is an important direction for Tumalet. It will help solve many problems.</p> <p><b>Recommendations</b></p> <p><b>Therefore, I would like to make the following recommendations:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Employees should pay more attention to the problem of energy use.</li> <li>2. The company must inform all employees about the changes.</li> </ul>

Table 31. A sample of student's report (Source: Student S6)

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## Conclusion

The monograph deals with discrete understandings of literacy and focuses on reading literacy since Slovak pupils and students do not achieve satisfactory results in the PISA assessments. In primary and secondary schools, in general English classes, pupils and students develop their receptive and productive skills, i.e. reading and writing, listening and speaking, respectively. They learn to use language for different purposes to successfully participate in society. During their studies, they achieve competences and the level of mastering the English language can be identified with regard to individual aspects of linguistic competence, sociolinguistic competence and pragmatic competence.

We absolutely agree with Delgadová et al. (2016) that reading literacy is a basic academic competence. The European Commission aims to enhance the performance and international attractiveness of Europe's higher education institutions and raise the overall quality of all levels of education and training in the European Union, combining both excellence and equity, by promoting student mobility and trainee's mobility, and improve the employment situation of young people (Council of Europe, 2010).

In courses in EAP or ESP, provided by university, students should do communicative activities that require the integration of all four skills (see Chapters 4 – 6). In business English courses, Slovak students should acquire specific business English skills, for example, report-writing, making and giving presentations, participating in meetings, negotiating, talking to colleagues, understanding the news and so forth. Whether the students attend courses in EAP or ESP, they need to be trained to become successful interlocutors. The vocabulary must not be neglected. Reading and listening texts in the textbook (Cotton et al., 2011) contain a large number of terms, collocations and idioms (268) that are not included in the vocabulary list (see Subchapter 5.4). A self-study reference and practice book (Hrdličková, 2016) presents an overview of basic business terms (in terms of the topics in the textbook) and 319 idioms from contemporary British, American or Australian English together with their definitions, and in case of idioms with their meanings and non-idiomatic equivalents.

The real essence of the pedagogical experiment performed at the Department of English Language from 2017 to 2019 was to find out to what extent the specific aspect – working with texts and identifying idioms, terms, frequent and essential words, and collocations in them – will support reading literacy. It also aimed to confirm the effectiveness of an alternative form of teaching business English. Research provided an answer to Research question (RQ1): “The specific techniques/methods, i.e. working

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with texts, identifying idioms, terms, frequent and essential words, and collocations in them, support reading literacy to a significant extent.”

In the winter semester of 2017/2018, the experimental and control groups of students learned/acquired idiomatic expressions from the textbook. The traditional course in business English (done by the control group of students using a compulsory textbook) was supported by ‘Business Communication’ e-course in LMS Moodle (done by the experimental group of students). The experimental group of students was presupposed to achieve better study results than the control group of students as it simultaneously used a self-study reference and practice book, too (Hrdličková, 2016).

The main aim of the first phase of the research was to find out to what extent the experimental and control groups of students mastered idioms. In the research, the following methods were used: the *General English Idiomatic Test* (GEIT), *Business English Idiomatic Test* (BEIT), *Hypothesis Testing*, namely the parametric t-Test (*Independent Samples t-Test*; *Paired Samples t-Test*). Alternative and Null Hypotheses  $H_1$ ,  $H_0$ ;  $H_2$ ,  $H_0$ ;  $H_3$ ,  $H_0$ ;  $H_4$ ,  $H_0$  were expected to be confirmed or refuted (Kučerová & Fidlerová, 2012). Results prove that the alternative form of teaching business English was effective (see Tables 3 – 4, Figures 3 – 5).

In the second phase of the research, in the winter semester of 2018/2019, both the experimental group of students and the control group of students analysed professional articles for idioms, terms, frequent and essential words, and collocations used in business English (with the help of the lecturer). The main aim of two quantitative analyses was to excerpt business vocabulary from a 160,536-word corpus of articles. In addition, the aim of a qualitative analysis of idioms was to provide their lexical meanings and their synonyms or antonyms. The rationale for the second quantitative analysis was to consider the terms (occurring in the particular areas of business), frequent and essential words, and collocations used in business English (see Appendices A – E).

In the third phase of the research, in the summer semester of 2018/2019, both the experimental group of students and the control group of students did the same tasks as in the second semester, i.e. they acquired idiomatic vocabulary, wrote short abstracts of reading texts presented in the textbook and worked with twelve professional articles, i.e. they identified idioms, terms, frequent and essential words, and collocations used in business English. At the end of the first and third semesters, both groups of students, control and experimental, did common departmental business English tests. The method of *Hypothesis Testing* was used to compare the study results/grades achieved by both groups. By using the *Independent Samples t-Test* (or *2-Sample t-Test*) we tried to find out the significance of the difference between the sample means, while the samples were of a large scale. In addition, the *Paired Samples t-Test* tested the difference between the grades achieved in end-of-term and

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idiomatic tests. Alternative and Null Hypotheses  $H_1$ ,  $H_0$  were expected to be confirmed or refuted (Kučerová & Fidlerová, 2012).

To compare the level of all students' knowledge acquired in the academic years 2017/2018 and 2018/2019, the parametric *Independent Samples t-Test* (or *2-Sample t-Test*) was used, while the samples were of a large scale. The tested hypotheses were as follows:

Alternative Hypothesis ( $H_1$ ): The difference between the study results is significant (the level of knowledge is different).

Null Hypothesis ( $H_0$ ): The difference between the study results is not significant (the level of knowledge is not different).

Findings: On the level of significance at 5% ( $\alpha = 0.05$ ), the Null Hypothesis ( $H_0$ ) is refuted since the p-value = 0.0000029 ( $p < \alpha$ ), i.e. the difference can be considered as significant.

When comparing the academic year 2017/2018 and the academic year 2018/2019, on the basis of all respondents (students of the control group and the experimental group), there is a **statistically significant** difference between the achieved results/grades (see Table 20).

Taking into consideration the experimental group of students, the tested hypotheses were as follows:

Alternative Hypothesis ( $H_1$ ): The difference between the study results of the experimental group of students is significant (the level of knowledge is different).

Null Hypothesis ( $H_0$ ): The difference between the study results of the experimental group of students is not significant (the level of knowledge is not different).

Findings: On the level of significance at 5% ( $\alpha = 0.05$ ), the Null Hypothesis ( $H_0$ ) is refuted since the p-value = 0.000001 ( $p < \alpha$ ), i.e. the difference can be considered as significant.

When comparing the achieved study results/grades of the experimental group of students in both academic years 2017/2018 and 2018/2019, on the basis of *t-Test* it can be stated that there is a **statistically significant** difference between the achieved results/grades (see Table 21).

Taking into account the control group of students, the tested hypotheses were as follows:

Alternative Hypothesis ( $H_1$ ): The difference between the study results of the control group of students is significant (the level of knowledge is different).

Null Hypothesis ( $H_0$ ): The difference between the study results of the control group of students is not significant (the level of knowledge is not different).

Findings: On the level of significance at 5% ( $\alpha = 0.05$ ), the Null Hypothesis ( $H_0$ ) is not refuted since the p-value = 0.163622 ( $p > \alpha$ ), i.e. the difference can be considered as random, or it cannot be considered as statistically significant.

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When comparing the study results of the control group of students in both academic years 2017/2018 and 2018/2019, on the basis of *t-Test* it can be stated that there is not a statistically significant difference between the achieved results/grades (see Table 22).

Unfortunately, research findings in the winter semester of the academic year 2017/2018 showed that the experimental group of students achieved worse results in the departmental end-of-term test than the control group of students. One of the main reasons was the fact that the Department of English Language started to create its own end-of-term tests for the course 'Business English for Advanced Students I' common for the five faculties of the University of Economics in Bratislava. The tests, therefore, were not prepared by the lecturers who taught their experimental and control groups during the pedagogical experiment. In our view, successful tests are only the ones that are tailor-made for students.

While working with a self-study reference and practice book (written in academic style; Hrdličková, 2016), first of all, students dealt with unfamiliar topics, saw many unknown words, struggled with pronunciation as well as understanding the contents of individual units. Secondly, even though they learned terms and frequent and essential business vocabulary, they were more interested in acquiring idioms than commonly tested vocabulary. Thirdly, they primarily focused on passing examinations from core economic courses and not from courses in business English.

As far as the research findings in the academic 2018/2019 are concerned, the difference between the level of knowledge of both groups acquired in business English is **statistically significant**. One of the reasons was the fact that in the third semester, the lecturers prepared their own end-of-term tests (since the common departmental ones were not prepared yet). They had to follow the same structure as in departmental tests, however, they included similar tasks or exercises in them that were done with students within the subject matter. The next reason was the fact that both groups were more committed to doing extra tasks and assignments in business English courses. They enriched their lexical repertoires with terms, frequent and essential words, and idiomatic expressions. Moreover, considering the study results of the experimental group there is a **correlation** between an end-of-term and idiomatic tests (see Tables 23).

Regarding the fourth phase of the research, in the course 'English for Commercial Practice', a completely different approach to teaching business English (with the course book from the same edition, but the higher level) was applied. The course focused on developing receptive and productive skills as well as lexical, semantic, grammatical, phonological, and intercultural communication competences. When looking at an ideal language programme (see Table 1; Breeze, 2007; Duttlinger et al., 2007), students were involved in or practised the genres such as seminars with

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questions, discussions, group work, giving presentations, writing official documents, etc. So, it can be stated that the syllabus designed for the course is close to the syllabus of the ideal language programme.

Considering the results of this phase of the research, we can state that written assignments did not have a big impact on the students' results in the end-of-term test. However, it is possible to state that their written communication was improved.

Taking into account the limitations of this phase of research, no statistical comparison was done since there was a low number of students (only 10), we taught the only course in business English at UKF, no grades were given for passing this written examination, and the fact that the students did not have enough time to get ready for the end-of-term test as it was done during the last week of the teaching period in the summer semester of the academic year 2022/2023.

To summarise the evidence, lecturers should use both a wide range of supplementary materials and modern technologies as they facilitate blended learning. It has been proven that using Moodle at both universities is a valuable asset in the teaching and learning process which supports the major features of Communicative Language Learning, e.g. the learner autonomy, alternative assessment, diversity, etc. Activities that can be done through Moodle or open educational resources will be definitely explored in the future to improve learners' skills and broaden their knowledge.

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## Implications and Perspectives for Further Research

Individuals apply literacy skills to serve a multiplicity of purposes in their lives, e.g. to communicate with officials, complete application forms, read medical instructions, extract information from newspapers, read religious texts, strengthen ties with family and friends, read literature, keep diaries, learn about their ancestors and cultural heritage and so forth. These literacy practices are an integral part of people's lives and contribute to their sense of identity and self-worth.

The following chapters discussed developing communicative language competences in EFL, EAP and ESP and addressed the problem of what to teach after Level B2 (CEFR) has been reached, i.e. skills that university students need to acquire in language programmes.

The substantial part of the monograph discussed teaching business English at two universities. It investigated the purpose, content and syllabi of business English courses, the core books, developing specific skills, learning/acquiring business vocabulary, and doing written assignments.

The real essence of the pedagogical experiment done at the University of Economics in Bratislava was to find out to what extent the specific aspect – working with texts – would support reading literacy. One of the objectives of the research was to find out to what extent the experimental and control groups of students mastered idioms. The genre of textbook was chosen since it is an aid neither the lecturer nor the learner of English can avoid using it at university. Via GEIT and BEIT, and *Hypothesis Testing*, their knowledge of idioms, included in general English textbooks and business English course books, was measured. The first phase of the research showed surprisingly positive results.

The next objective of the research was to do two quantitative analyses of a 160,536-word corpus of articles for business vocabulary. By means of excerpted idioms, terms, frequent and essential words, and collocations from 205 articles published in *POLITICO*, *FORTUNE*, *The Guardian*, *Forbes* and *Inc.* extensive corpuses of currently used business vocabulary were built. The qualitative analysis of idioms consisted of identifying their lexical meanings and their non-idiomatic synonyms or antonyms. The glossaries of idioms (see Appendices A – E) was an obvious outcome of the analysis.

Idiomatic language in the textbook (Cotton et al., 2011) has already been explored. Reading texts, listening texts and dialogues in other business English course books were analysed for idiomatic expressions (cf. Hrdličková, 2016). This analysis provided a rough outline for the basic characteristics of idiomatic expressions and their

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functions performed in professional texts (Fernando, 1996). Corporuses of terms, frequent and essential words and idiomatic expressions have already been built by analysing professional articles in *POLITICO*, *FORTUNE*, *The Guardian*, *Forbes*, *Inc.*, *Newsweek*, *The Economic Times*, *New Law Journal* and *The Law Society Gazette*.

The main of the research done at Constantine the Philosopher University in Nitra was to find out if and how integrated skills are practised in courses in business English. Having analysed the 'Course Information Letter', it can be stated that it has similar features with the syllabus designed for the ideal language programme (see Subchapter 4.2).

However, there are even more challenging possibilities for further research. Firstly, the TALC project definitely has the potential to transform the teaching of languages for academic or specific purposes in higher education. Research findings point towards the need for integrated skills, practised in the context of tasks designed to resemble those that students will encounter in host universities, work placements or first professional positions. In addition, from our own experience in teaching university courses in business English, and giving lectures in Marketing and Project Management in Finland and Denmark, the syllabi of business English courses for advanced students need to be carefully examined and compared with the syllabi of these or other European higher institutions. To have the basic functional, lexical and structural syllabi of courses in business English for each faculty of the University is a necessity.

Secondly, the most obvious and common form of material support for language instruction comes through textbooks. New lecturers should creatively use the textbook that has been handed to them by their supervisor and use as many of its suggestions as they feel are appropriate. Apart from this, they can use supporting materials, as well. We agree with the claim that neither textbook is perfect. The best choice would be to write a textbook with the appropriate content for each faculty.

Thirdly, as discussed above, (see Subchapter 5.4), students learn new important words and phrases which they can use when they carry out the tasks in the unit. They can find definitions and examples in the textbook. We recommend lecturers to do research into business vocabulary and provide students with the Glossary of terms and frequent and essential words with their definitions that are tested in end-of term tests, i.e. to exclude the ones that are of less importance or are not included in business English dictionaries.

Fourthly, using authentic materials or real-life situations will help lecturers make practice in class relevant to real life, especially if materials are sourced from the students. Reading literacy in English was promoted by working with texts that were investigated for frequent and essential business vocabulary (needed to learn and acquire within the compulsory topics), collocations and idioms. In the future, professional texts can be used to explore vocabulary in the particular areas of business,

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e.g. Production, Marketing, Finance, IT, Economics, etc., or they can be analysed for business vocabulary relating to the study fields of the students, e.g. Commerce, Management, International trade, IT, Finance, etc.

Fifthly, it can be very useful for Slovak students to investigate written discourse produced by both L1 and L2 users of English, so that they can see what idiomatic expressions the native speaker of English typically uses in writing, and to what extent and in which contexts idiomatic expressions are used by the non-native user of English.

Finally, research findings in the academic year 2017/2018 showed that the experimental group of students did not achieve better study results/grades in the departmental end-of-term test than the control group of students. Since the Department of English Language has its own tests for the courses in business English common for all the five faculties of the University, they, therefore, cannot be successful. In our view, successful tests are only the ones that are tailor-made for students. The tasks included in the end-of-term tests should also be carefully considered when preparing tests at both the University of Economics in Bratislava and Constantine Philosopher University in Nitra because it is not easy to administer valid and reliable tests.

To sum up, it is hoped that the monograph will help course designers or course providers design ideal language programmes, then ESP or EAP lecturers who want to teach in a more effective way, and, finally, students who want to get a bigger picture of what business English is about.

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## **Appendices**

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## Appendix 1

**General English Idiomatic Test (GEIT) (WS 2017/2018)** (Source: Author's data)

*New Opportunities Upper Intermediate Students' Book* (Harris et al., 2006)

*Success Upper Intermediate Students' Book* (Comyns Carr & Parsons, 2007)

**Name:** ..... **Date:** ..... **Time: 60 mins** **Score: .../60 pts**

**Translate the idioms into Slovak.**

- 1 He's **knee-deep in** work at the moment. ....
- 2 He lives in the city and when he goes to the countryside he's **like a fish out of water**. ....
- 3 We went to a little cottage in the countryside right **off the beaten track**.  
.....
- 4 The job wasn't **all plain sailing**. ....
- 5 Science fiction is **right up my street**. ....
- 6 Nevertheless, the importance of this work is that it has proved this strategy can work. It has been **a breath of fresh air** for gene therapy. ....
- 7 I **can't make head or tail of** these instructions. ....
- 8 When I discovered I had made a mistake, I had to **eat humble pie** and apologise for my behaviour. ....
- 9 We fought **from the word go**. ....
- 10 My parents **are giving me a hard time** because they want me to work harder.  
.....
- 11 I'm going to **give it to you straight**. I don't love you any more. ....  
.....
- 12 His health **went downhill** after the accident. ....
- 13 They'll be pleased to see me this afternoon, although **my heart sinks** when I see that Genevieve is on TV this afternoon. ....
- 14 He's **got a bee in his bonnet about** graffiti. ....
- 15 I had one problem after another. **The last straw** was when the car broke down. ....
- 16 She **let the cat out of the bag** about the surprise party. ....
- 17 Don't **make a song and dance about** your homework. ....
- 18 London is **a melting pot** with people from every part of the world.  
.....
- 19 Don't be upset, I'm only **pulling your leg** about your girlfriend! .....  
.....

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- 20 They've **put him out to grass** and given him the job of making the coffee.  
.....
- 21 Let's **set the ball rolling**. Who wants to talk first? .....
- 22 I want to be a chef but I work in a restaurant as **a stepping stone** for the future. ....
- 23 All that hard work **has taken its toll on** her health. ....
- 24 He has travelled to **the four corners of the globe**. ....
- 25 He is in **a vicious circle**. He's homeless. This means he can't get a good job and so he stays poor. ....
- 26 Going to the pictures aged thirty-five with your mum and dad and their insane friends does not **take your mind off** things, I discover. ....
- 27 Cliché: An idea or expression that is very common or overused, e.g. '**There's no smoke without fire**'. ....
- 28 A: Is anyone else going from across the road? B: Only Yvonne and Brian. But **get a move on**. It starts in half an hour. ....
- 29 Then, two young scientists at Cambridge University saw the results of some studies by Rosalind Franklin. The last piece of the jigsaw puzzle **had fallen into place**. In 1953, Watson and Crick published their model of the DNA molecule.  
.....
- 30 My dad is a bit dim but something of **a know-all**, which is a pretty fatal combination; you can tell from his silly, fussy beard that he's going to be the sort who doesn't talk much sense and won't listen to any reason.  
.....
- 31 I don't believe Tom. He's **a bad egg**. ....
- 32 They thought I was ungrateful and not interested in the presents but my parents **didn't bat an eyelid** – they know what I'm like now. ....
- 33 Martin is **the brainbox** of the class. He always gets top marks. ....  
.....
- 34 Better leave Craig – he's **dead to the world**. ....
- 35 A: Why are you **in Mr Smith's bad books**? B: Oh, I wasn't paying attention in class today. ....
- 36 A: Ernie's **the life and soul of the party!** ..... 37. B: Yes, he's **larger than life!** .....
- 38 Steve's a bit of **a dark horse**. I wonder what he's really like. ....
- 39 Daria's **an eager beaver**. She comes in earlier than anyone else and leaves later. ....
- 40 What can you do when you are **given the green light**? What about the red light? .....

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- 41 He **has gone to great lengths** to preserve the country's deep-rooted Buddhist culture and ancient traditions from the rapidly-developing world outside its borders. ....
- 42 He lived in Paris when he was younger so he **had a head start** in our French classes. ....
- 43 She now **has itchy feet** and has started looking for a new challenge. ....
- 44 I've just had a pay rise! Let's go out and **live it up!** .....
- 45 Some of the people on our estate really **look down their noses at us**, just because we aren't as rich as them. ....
- 46 **Love makes the world go round.** .....
- 47 In the end I left home but I just couldn't **make ends meet** – I spent my money on useless things and didn't have enough to cover the rent and bills. ....
- 48 A: Are you going to work for him then? B: **Not on your life!** .....
- 49 You haven't got any real responsibility. You're just a **pen pusher.** ....
- 50 Dad, I can't do my homework. Can I **pick your brains?** .....
- 51 Dave and I never **see eye to eye** and can't agree about anything. ....
- 52 Even though I felt embarrassed by my mistake, I could still **see the funny side.** ....
- 53 When he didn't call, I finally **saw the light** and ended the relationship. ....
- 54 I was so furious when he criticised my work, I **saw red.** .....
- 55 It didn't take us long to get to know our fellow time travellers, who willingly **showed us the ropes.** .....
- 56 I lost my project on the computer so I had to **start from scratch.** ....
- 57 Jack and I **started off on the wrong foot** but we're quite good friends now. ....
- 58 You'll have to be nice to Celina. She's **the top dog** in this company. ....
- 59 People of **all ages** and **walks of life** are dragging themselves away from their sofas and TVs and discovering the pleasures of moving their bodies to the rhythms of music. ....
- 60 I'm still all for people getting fit, but I think more should be known about exercise addiction. It's **a slippery slope**, and like all other addictions, it can be taken to extremes. ....

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## Appendix 2

**Business English Idiomatic Test (WS 2017/2018)** (Source: Author's data)

*Market Leader Business English Course Book* (Units 1 – 4) (Cotton et al., 2011)

**Name:** ..... **Date:** ..... **Time:** 30 mins **Score:** .../30 pts

**Exercise 1 Complete the sentences with the appropriate form of an idiom from the box.**

can't make head nor tail of it, put ... in the picture, get the wrong end of the stick, from time to time, state-of-the-art, (be) like talking to a brick wall, get the picture, practice makes perfect, get it straight from the horse's mouth, small talk, keep in touch (with sb), made ... fortune, face-to-face, hear(d) it on the grapevine, money is no object

- 1 I ..... that she's been fired. Is this true?
- 2 Stella ..... and it caused enormous problems.
- 3 I've told Joan many times not to be ruthless! It's .....
- 4 A: I don't believe it! Is Rachel getting married? Who told you that?  
B: I ..... She met someone at the conference a year ago and they're planning to get married in May.
- 5 Before you take over my office, I'll ..... you .....
- 6 A: I've read the instruction booklet, but I couldn't understand it.  
B: I've looked at it too, and I ..... either!
- 7 If ....., where would you like to run your own business?
- 8 We didn't talk about any significant topics. It was just ..... really.
- 9 They say that nobody is perfect. Then they tell you .....
- 10 We may revise the Company Policy ....., and will post the most current version on our website.
- 11 Wealthy entrepreneurs always buy the latest ..... computers.
- 12 E-mail is a marvellously economical tool for ..... with far-flung commercial contacts.
- 13 Slim puts his success down to his admiration for his father Julián – who emigrated from Lebanon aged 14 and ..... his ..... investing in proper-ty in the 1910-17 Mexican revolution.
- 14 Mm. OK, Bill, I ..... You're not too keen on the recommendations.
- 15 There's already too much in the company, and for that matter, too many e-mails floating around, instead of staff having ..... contacts.

---

## Exercise 2 Translate the idioms into Slovak.

- 1 There must be no unfair competition in the EU, and we shall continue to stress the need for **a level playing field**. .....
- 2 Bill's **on the warpath** again – there are mistakes in the publicity material sent out. ....
- 3 If you can convince the commercial attaché here, that's **half the battle**. ....
- 4 Although much of the **day-to-day** communication within organisations is written, oral communication has an important place. ....
- 5 Applied to a firm's internal organisation, the owner, the middle management, the lower management and the **rank-and-file** are included in communication. ....
- 6 **The customer is always right**. ....
- 7 Similarly, many friends of mine with Spanish or Chinese last names have reluctantly adopted the American pronunciation of their surname. As some of them say, '**When in Rome, do as the Romans so**'. ....
- 8 In general, if companies really want to insist they are 'right' about pronunciation and all their customers are wrong, these companies **run the risk of** being a little lonely. ....
- 9 Even worse than the **tit-for-tat** mentality is the lack of foresight many networkers display. ....
- 10 Without **going overboard**, express your genuine interest in becoming closer friends. ....
- 11 **Short-term** thinking can create a downward spiral for new entrepreneurs. ....
- 12 'You can't be content with maintaining **the status quo**', Sandler said. 'You must push the limits. Dare to be different!' .....
- 13 You can't communicate with the outside world until your internal message is **crystal clear**. ....
- 14 The **rosy pictures** they **paint** for you should be **taken with** more than a few **grains of salt**. .... 15 .....

## Appendix 3

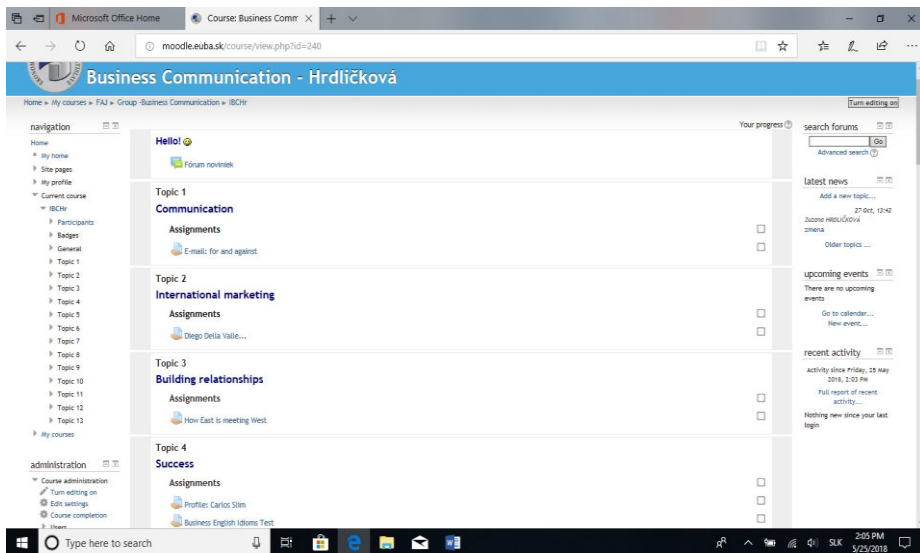


Figure 8. 'Business Communication' e-Course (Units 1 – 4) (Source: Author's data)

## Appendix 4

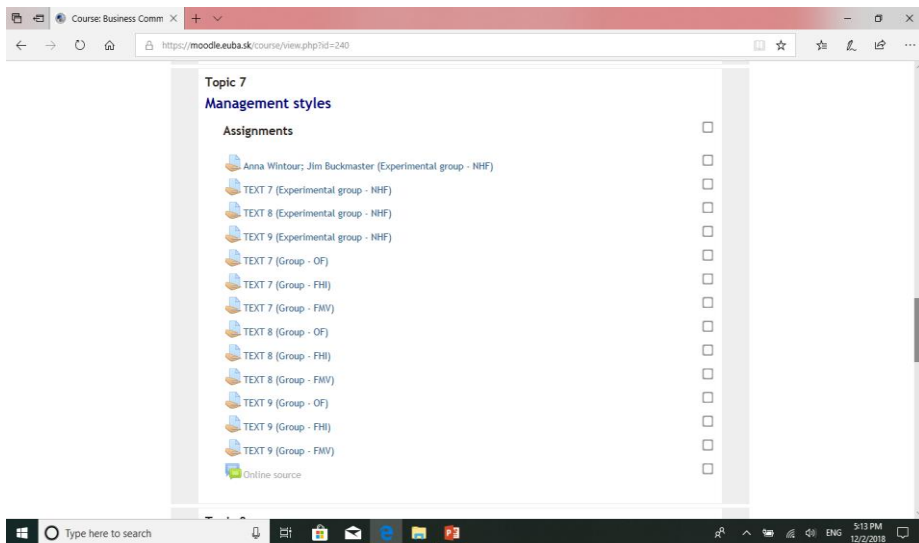


Figure 9. 'Business Communication' e-Course (Units 5 – 8) (Source: Author's data)

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## Appendix 5

**Test (WS 2017/2018 (Source: Department of English Language) (Total – 60 points)**  
*Market Leader Business English Course Book (Units 1 – 4) (Cotton et al., 2011)*

**I. Explain these expressions:** (Total – 10 points)  
buying spree, staff, competitive advantage, adapt, license

**II. Match a word/words from Column A with their definitions from Column B.**  
(Total – 10 points)

<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>
1 supplier	A a new business that is started by two or more companies, often in the form of an independent company whose shares they own
2 trust	B a statement saying that someone has done something morally wrong, illegal or is guilty of a crime
3 launch	C a company, person, etc. that provides things that people want or need, especially over a long period of time
4 homogenous	D much lower than usual
5 stockbroker	E very distant
6 knock-down	F an arrangement in which a group of people or an organization have legal control of money or property for another person or group of people
7 venture capital	G a person or an organization that buys and sells shares for other people
8 far-flung	H money that is invested in a new company to help it develop or expand, which may involve a lot of risk but can also bring good profits
9 joint venture	I to start selling a product or service for the first time
10 accusation	J consisting of people or things that are all of the same type

**III. Complete the gaps in the sentences with a word/words from the above in Column A. Make the appropriate changes if necessary.** (Total – 10 points)

- 1 They were forced to sell the business at a ..... price.
- 2 But there's still plenty of ..... out there looking for bright new ideas.

- 
- 3 The company is now the main ..... of educational software to schools.
  - 4 The French company has a ..... with Dongfeng Motor in China.
  - 5 The company is ..... a new telephone service in Japan this year.
  - 6 In classifying the aim is to sort objects by their selected properties into ..... categories.
  - 7 His administration now faces ..... of corruption.
  - 8 The money will be held in ..... until she is 18.
  - 9 Our job is to organize the company's ..... offices.
  - 10 More than 120 ..... in Britain's offer share-dealing services to private investors.

**IV. Put each verb in brackets into a suitable tense. (Total – 10 points)**

- a) A: Tom 1) ..... (think) of emigrating. B: What 2) ..... (you/think) of the idea?
- b) Will customers please make their way to the cash desk as the store 3) ..... (close) in five minutes.
- c) She sacked him before he 4) ..... (have) a chance to explain his behaviour.
- d) We 5) ..... (work for) IBM for ten years by Christmas.
- e) While I 6) ..... (negotiate) the contract, my boss phoned me to say that he wanted completely different conditions.
- f) We wanted to talk to the manager in charge but she 7) ..... (just, leave).
- g) We 8) ..... (receive) over 5,000 entries for the competition so far.
- h) A: We've got a lot of bills to pay. B: I know. I 9) ..... (do) them all next Monday.
- i) You won't be able to park here tomorrow; they 10) ..... (mend).

**V. Read the text and decide if the statements (1 – 10) are true or false. (Total – 10 points)**

**Why it pays to put the workers in the picture** (by Alicia Clegg)

When workplace disputes flare up, the blame is often laid on a breakdown in communication. Talking may not always resolve disagreements, but withholding management plans until the last moment can certainly make a difficult situation worse. From 6th April 2005, UK employees gain the legal right to know about, and be consulted on, matters that affect them at work. This covers anything from the

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economic health of the business to decisions likely to cause redundancies or changes in how work is organized. The new rules, which implement a European Union directive, move the UK closer to other European states, most of which already require workplace consultation. There are good reasons for businesses to move forward with such agreements voluntarily. First, there is the belief, backed by academic research, that companies do better when their employees are well informed and have a say in decisions that affect them. Second, by kick-starting negotiations the employer effectively takes charge. The regulations give organizations free reign to agree internally what consulting and informing employees amounts to in practice – what topics will be discussed, how often and by what means. In the UK – in contrast to most other EU states – once a framework for information and consultation has been agreed, there is no requirement to work through elected representatives. If the workforce agreed, a business could rely only on face-to-face and electronic communication.

The mobile operator 3 prefers the personal approach, whenever possible, it uses video calls and e-mail to put its young workforce in contact with senior managers. At the other end of the spectrum is AstraZeneca, the Anglo-Swedish pharmaceuticals group, which has a history of consulting employees through elected forums and union representatives. Consulting through intermediaries can yield dividends, particularly during a change of ownership or under a redundancy program. Another point in favour of a mediated approach, says Ross Hutchinson, head of internal communication at KPMG is that management can trust representatives more than an entire workforce.

But do the positives form indirect consultation outweigh the attractions of more direct approaches? Not everyone is persuaded that they do. Alison Gill, co-founder of Getfeedback, a talent management consultancy, argues that knowledge exchange and online polling, not elected assemblies, produce better performance. “The goal is to involve people directly and profit from their ideas.” In spite of earlier opposition, a growing number of companies believe that putting employees in the picture is good for business. If the remainder do not follow suit, they may now find their workers give them little choice.

*(Adapted from: <https://www.ft.com/content/513ad412-a5f8-11d9-b67b-00000e2511c8>)*

- 1 Soothing working disputes causes a breakdown in communication.
- 2 It is a good idea for businesses to set up consultation agreements before they are put under any legal pressure to do so.
- 3 Academic research shows that it is risky for companies to keep their employees informed and give them a say in decisions that affect them.

- 
- 4 The regulations give organizations limited reign to agree internally what consulting and informing employees amounts to in practice.
  - 5 AstraZeneca is dependent on face-to-face communication.
  - 6 Employers are better able to be in control if they do not even start these negotiations about consultation.
  - 7 Under the new regulations, bosses and employees can agree on the format of the information and consultation process.
  - 8 There is a duty to use face-to-face and electronic communication.
  - 9 Allison Gill argues that knowledge exchange and online polling suppress better performance.
  - 10 The gains from indirect consultation diminish the attractions of more direct approaches.

**VI. Write down a summary of the main points of the text in 50 words. (Total – 10 points)**

**Medzinárodný marketing** je proces, ktorého cieľom je optimalizácia zdrojov a vyhľadávanie príležitostí na svetovom trhu. Medzinárodný marketing zlepšuje možnosti uplatnenia týchto výrobkov na zahraničných trhoch, v ktorých má podnik konkurenčnú výhodu. Vedie k uspokojeniu potrieb a želaní zahraničných zákazníkov. Podnik sa orientuje na zahraničného zákazníka, jeho potreby a želania, a snaží sa ich uspokojiť lepšie ako konkurencia. Filozofia domáceho a medzinárodného marketingu vzhádza z rovnakého základu. Formálne princípy marketingu sú v národnom i v medzinárodnom marketingu identické. Je to predovšetkým rozdielnosť prostredia, v ktorom spočívajú dôvody na oprávnené rozlišovanie medzi národným a medzinárodným marketingom.

**Špecifiká medzinárodného marketingu**

Medzinárodný marketing má vlastné špecifické vlastnosti a musí poskytnúť vedeniu podniku konkrétne podklady na rozhodovanie o vhodnej stratégii na uplatnenie podniku v medzinárodnom prostredí. Podnik realizuje výskum zahraničného trhu a volí formu vstupu na zahraničný trh, robí segmentáciu, výber cieľového trhu, volí vhodný positioning a realizuje medzinárodný marketingový mix.

Proces internacionalizácie marketingových činností podniku je ovplyvňovaný mnohými faktormi, ktoré musí brať podnik do úvahy pri rozhodovaní o svojom vstupe na zahraničný trh:

- sociálno-kultúrne odlišnosti a ich vplyv na správanie a rozhodovanie spotrebiteľov na zahraničných trhoch

- 
- obchodno-politické podmienky
  - legislatíva upravujúca podnikanie zahraničných subjektov
  - problémy pri výskume zahraničných trhov
  - uprednostňovanie domácich výrobkov
  - potreba adaptácie marketingového mixu
  - práca v cudzom prostredí a odlišný životný štýl
  - jazykové bariéry
  - ďalšie faktory v závislosti od miestnych podmienok.

*(Adapted from: <https://www.euroekonom.sk/marketing/medzinárodný-marketing/medzinarodny-marketing-definicia/>)*

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## Appendix 6

### Business English Test (WS 2018/2019) (Source: Author's data)

*Market Leader Business English Course Book* (Units 9 – 12) (Cotton et al., 2011)

**Name:** ..... **Date:** ..... **Time:** 60 mins **Total score:** .../70 pts

**I. Explain the expressions.**

**(Score: 10)**

mortgage, budget, refund, controlling interest, crisis

**II. Match the words/expressions (1 – 10) with their definitions (a – j). (Score: 10)**

**A**

1 bankruptcy

2 subsidiary

3 venture

4 profile

5 contingency plan

6 takeover

7 market leader

8 press conference

9 goodwill payment

10 pawnbroker

**B**

**a** an act of taking control of a company by buying most of its shares

**b** the company that sells the largest quantity of a particular kind of products

**c** an amount of money that a company believes it should pay to somebody even though they may not have a legal right to it

**d** a meeting at which somebody talks to a group of journalists in order to answer their questions or to make an official statement

**e** a person who lend money in exchange for items left with them

**f** a business project or activity, especially one that involves taking risks

**g** a description of somebody/something that gives useful information

**h** the inability to pay one's debts, or a particular example of this, involving the sale of one's property or some other arrangement to pay as much as possible of the money one owes

**i** a company that is owned or controlled by another company

**j** a plan a business makes that will be followed if a particular disaster or other event happens

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**III. Complete the gaps with the words from Column A. Make changes if necessary. (Score: 10)**

- 1 Money borrowed from the ..... did not have to be repaid for twelve months.
- 2 ..... were made by the electricity company to 10,000 customers affected by power cuts.
- 3 We have a ..... to deal with a strike.
- 4 The publishing company was his first large business .....
- 5 The company held a ..... to announce its shutdown.
- 6 We built up a detailed ..... of our customers and their requirements.
- 7 California First Bank is a 77%-owned ..... of the Bank of Tokyo.
- 8 The company was forced into .....
- 9 They are in second place behind ....., Tesco plc.
- 10 An airline has announced details of the planned ..... of its arrival.

**IV. Complete the sentences with the appropriate form of the verbs. (Score: 10)**

- 1 James says that in two years' time he ..... (work) in London.
- 2 Large corporations often ..... (find) it easier to acquire than to innovate.
- 3 Mr. Moller ..... (finish) his work by six.
- 4 ..... you ..... (post) off your order yet?
- 5 Intel ..... (suffer) a huge and unforeseen crisis when it emerged that a small proportion of its Pentium microprocessors were faulty.
- 6 ..... (use) analytics can be the difference between a positive and negative experience for the customer.
- 7 Global corporations ..... (have) millions of customers.
- 8 Small businesses ..... (profit) from the new legislation.
- 9 The extra money ..... (give) us the scope to improve our facilities.
- 10 The Jones' wanted to place a larger order. I thought they ..... (want) a bigger discount.

**V. Put the verbs in brackets into the correct form. (Score: 10)**

- 1 If sales don't improve, we ..... (have) to declare bankruptcy within a year.
- 2 If McLaren had withdrawn its pushchairs, there ..... (not be) a crisis.

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- 3 If I ..... (get) a guarantee for the loan, I would lend them the money.
  - 4 If you ..... (operate) the stroller properly, your child is not at risk.
  - 5 If I ..... (be) you, I would not ignore the media.
  - 6 If we ..... (act) quickly, we will limit the damage.
  - 7 If you ..... (not go) to university, you would not earn so much money.
  - 8 You can't get a job unless you ..... (have) experience.
  - 9 If we had invested our savings in the company, we ..... (make) a fortune.
  - 10 Supposing I ..... (not have) to work that day, we would love to come and see you on Friday.

**VI. Read the text. Decide whether the following statements (1 – 10) are true (T) or false (F). (Score: 10)**

**Seeking Startup Capital? Ask Your Family and Friends.**

Say goodbye to your hopes of securing venture capital. New data confirms that most startups turn to family and friends for financial backing.

A recent report by the Kauffman Foundation highlights financing trends among today's startups. Based on data from Annual Survey of Entrepreneurs, which sampled approximately 290,000 businesses across the U.S., the report reveals the primary sources of startup capital, as well as how access and cost of capital impact a business's profitability.

Nearly 64% of U.S. entrepreneurs say they rely on personal and family savings as their primary source of startup capital. The other two top sources for startup capital are business loans from banks (17.9%) and personal credit cards (10.3%). Less than 1% of respondents report VC investment as their number-one startup capital source.

While personal and family savings are the primary source of startup capital across all U.S. demographics, the Kauffman report goes further to examine how specific ethnic groups rely on various financing sources. A larger proportion of Asian-owned businesses rely on personal and family funds than any other demographic. To the contrary, a greater percentage of white entrepreneurs rely on rely on business loans from banks than any other group, a greater percentage of black entrepreneurs rely on personal credit cards than any other group. Of businesses who avoided subsequent funding, whites and American Indians were more likely to have debt worries, while native Hawaiians and blacks were most deterred by anticipated rejection from lenders.

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However, alternate funding sources have gained momentum in recent years. In 2015, angel investments reached a high of \$20 billion, which likely can be attributed to websites that match investors with startups such as AngelList and Gust.com, according to another Kauffman study, “Changing Capital: Emerging Trends in Entrepreneurial Finance.” Crowdfunding sites such as Kickstarter and Indiegogo have also been major resources for entrepreneurs.

*(Adapted from: <https://www.entrepreneur.com/article/284506>)*

- 1 Venture capitalists are no longer securing the start-up businesses.
- 2 Kauffman Foundation is the organization that sets financial trends among today's startups.
- 3 290,000 businesses across the USA turn to family and friends for financial backing.
- 4 More than 5% of U.S. entrepreneurs say they rely on personal and family savings as their primary source of startup capital.
- 5 Business loans from banks and personal credit cards are minor sources for startup capital.
- 6 Specific ethnic groups rely on various financing sources differently in comparison with other ethnic groups.
- 7 White entrepreneurs rely on business loans from banks as well as black entrepreneurs.
- 8 American Indians worry about being in debt when it comes to subsequent funding.
- 9 Websites that match investors with startups such as AngelList and Gust.com helped angel investments to reach a high of \$20 billion in 2015.
- 10 “Changing Capital: Emerging Trends in Entrepreneurial Finance” is the title of a new book published by Kaufman Foundation.

**VII. Read the text in Slovak and write a 50-word summary of it in English.  
(Score: 10)**

**Vernostné programy**

Všetko zlé je vraj na niečo dobré, teda aj úbytok zahraničnej klientely z hlavných zdrojových trhov – z Poľska, Maďarska, Ruska, Ukrajiny či Čiech. Tento prepad totiž prebudil záujem slovenského hoteliera o domáceho hosťa. Všetci máme totiž skúsenosti s nerovnakým prístupom personálu ku štedrým – „západným“ a neskôr aj ruským hosťom a domácemu. Návšteva aj tých najluxusnejších (nielen) tatranských hotelov nám však potvrdí, že slovenský klient už nie je chudobný

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príbuzný. V prepychových foyer najmä pobytových hotelov nájdeme posedávať úspešné dvojice, zrelé páry, no najmä mladé rodiny s deťmi. Napokon, je známym faktom, že vlašajšiu letnú sezónu zachránil práve domáci hosť, ktorý sa rozcestoval do rôznych kútov Slovenska. Jednou z foriem boja o zákazníka, v zahraničí veľmi rozšírenou, sú *vernostné programy*. Pozrime sa teda do sveta, ako tieto neraz dokonale prepracované nástroje fungujú.

Veľké hotelové siete prevádzkujú vernostné programy ako jedu zo svojich obchodno-marketingových aktivít, ktoré sú súčasťou balíka služieb poskytovaných hotelom v rámci siete. Sú pre klienta motiváciou vybrať si konkrétnu značku hotela a sú tiež prejavom vďačnosti k pravidelným zákazníkom. Tá je vyjadrená nielen hmotnou formou vo forme zliav a nazbieraných bodov, ale aj nehmotne – poskytovaním bonusov nadštandardných služieb a exkluzívnym prístupom k niektorým službám, akou je napríklad špeciálna rezervačná telefonická linka či vyhradená samostatná časť recepcie na prednostný check-in.

Hotely spolupracujú aj s inými firmami, ktoré prevádzkujú vernostné programy. Sú to napríklad letecké spoločnosti, autopožičovne a pod. Niektoré hotely tiež spolupracujú s prevádzkovateľmi platobných kariet, kedy hosť môže získať body aj za každú platbu kartou.

Individuálne hotely mimo sieťových reťazcov niekedy vytvárajú zjednodušené schémy pre pravidelných zákazníkov, a to poskytovaním zliav na ubytovanie, bezplatných služieb alebo špeciálneho prístupu.

V zahraničí má výhodné vernostné programy takmer každá väčšia či menšia hotelová sieť a každá sa snaží prísť s triumfom a exkluzivitou. Zákazníci, ktorí cestujú často, sú obvykle členmi viacerých vernostných programov, a preto je pre značkové hotely vernostný program samozrejmosťou a prestáva byť konkurenčnou výhodou. Je ťažké vyniknúť a zaujať, lebo skvelé bonusy a výhody dáva každý. To však na slovenskom hotelovom trhu zatiaľ nehrozí. V našich hoteloch, s výnimkou sieťových, fungujú v praxi vernostné programy minimálne.

Slovenské nezávislé hotely sa snažia spolupracovať s lokálnymi vernostnými a zákaznickými programami ako *Orange* či *Sphere*, kde nájdeme 500 hotelov a penziónov, ako aj 400 reštaurácií. Niektoré vytvárajú zjednodušené schémy pre pravidelných zákazníkov poskytovaním zliav na ubytovanie, bezplatných služieb alebo špeciálneho prístupu.

Menšie nezávislé hotely a penzióny sa tiež niekedy marketingovo spoja a „posúvajú“ si klientov, čo je systém nanajvýš praktický a užitočný pre hosťa i pre majiteľov. Tento spôsob prirodzene funguje aj pri viacerých zariadeniach s jedným majiteľom.

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*(Adapted from: Kramárová, Z., Mišík, R. Vernostné programy. Hotelier: direct-mailový časopis pre majiteľov a riaditeľov hotelov, penziónov a reštaurácií. Roč. 4, č. 1 (2010), s. 38-42. Žilina: Direct press, 2010)*

## Appendix 7

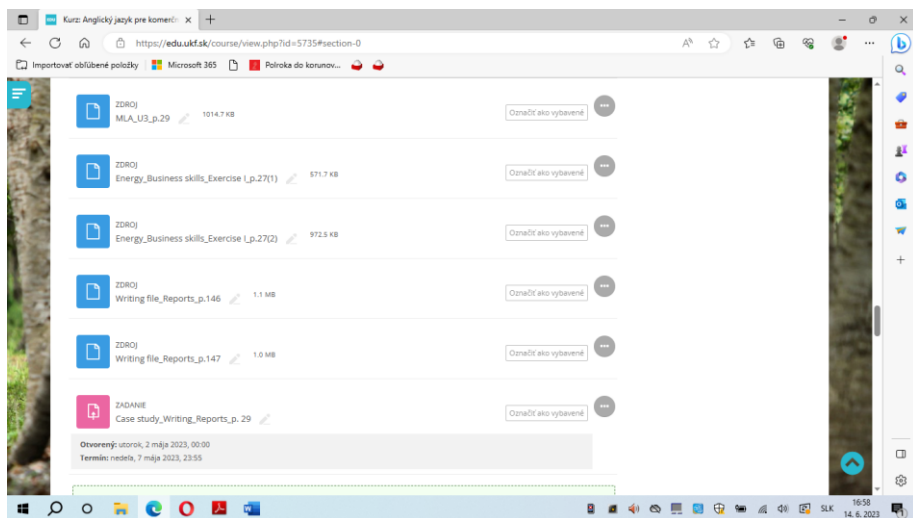


Figure 10. 'English for Commercial Practice' course supported by Moodle (Units 1 – 3)  
(Source: Author's data)

## Appendix 8

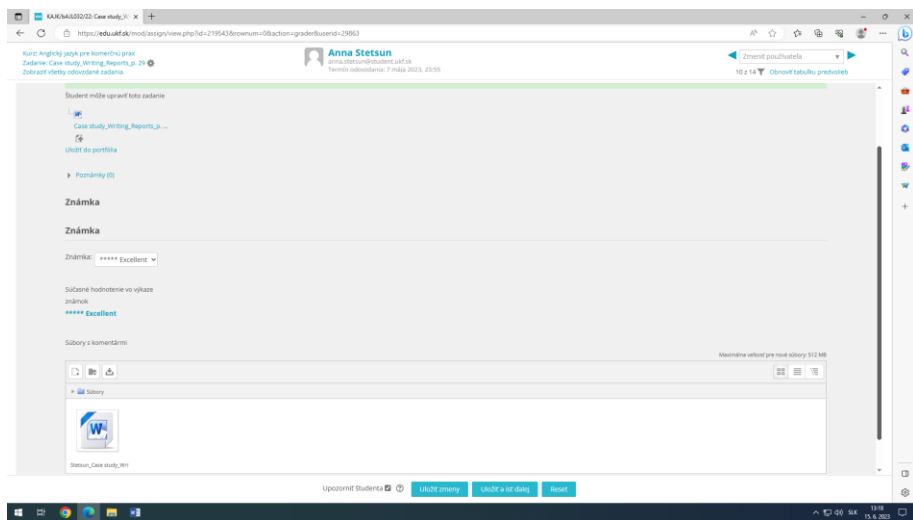


Figure 11. Lecturer's feedback to written assignments (can be added to e-portfolio)  
(Source: Author's data)

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## Appendix A

### Business Vocabulary in POLITICO

#### [1] **at risk**; (in AcadE) **at risk (from/of sth)**

(a) 1. *The European Commission's latest country assessment, published earlier this month, found that Germany is **at** "considerable **risk**" of missing its national energy efficiency target of 20 percent by 2020.* (Oroschakoff, 2018, March 23); 2. *Four out of five companies say the difficulty they have in finding skilled workers is preventing them from investing in innovation, while half see their economic future **at risk**, according to another report.* (Karnitschnig, 2017, September 6)

(b) in danger of being lost or damaged; in danger of losing sth or being injured; (in AcadE) in danger of sth unpleasant or harmful happening

(c) vulnerable (adj) – **in danger**, in peril, in jeopardy, **at risk**; antonyms: well protected, invulnerable, resilient; vulnerable to – **exposed to**, open to, prone to, in danger of, **at risk of**, an easy target for; **in the firing line**; antonyms: immune to, above

#### [2] **at stake** (also AcadE); (in GenE) **(be) at stake**

(a) *"... Real structural change is necessary. Nothing less than the future of tens of millions of American jobs is **at stake**," he said.* (Warmbrodt & Palmer, 2018, May 21)

(b) that can be won or lost, depending on the success of a particular action

[3] **back on track** (also AcadE) rather *informal*; (in GenE) **get (sb/sth)/be back on track; on track (to do sth); put/get sb/sth back on track** (see Unit 8)

(a) *The new government is going to have to figure out how to get the green transformation **back on track**.* (Oroschakoff, 2018, March 23)

[4] **be in the firing line** BrE | **be on the firing line** AmE; (in GenE) **in the firing line/line of fire** esp. BrE, **on the firing line** AmE

(a) *Even countries not **in the firing line** may be wary of giving Brussels such power to turn off the EU cash flow.* (Bayer & Gray, 2018, May 1)

(b) to be in a position where people can criticise or blame one

(c) vulnerable to (adj + prep) – **exposed to**, open to; **in the firing line**; antonyms: immune to, above

#### [5] **below/under the radar (screen)**; (in AcadE) **below/under the radar**

(a) *Many startups and small non-tech businesses have been unable to make similar investments, and are hoping that they will fly **under** authorities' **radar** as they struggle to bring their data practices up to snuff.* (Scott, 2018, April 22)

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(b) used to say that people are not aware of sth; not getting attention; unnoticed

[6] **the big picture** *infml* (also *AcadE*); (in *GenE*) **look at big picture** esp. *AmE*

(a) Senior strategic consultants assigned to the project are told they will need “a close attention to detail, being comfortable moving between **the big picture** and the supporting detail, being adept at distilling a wide range of complex inputs to the simple ‘so what?’” Non-British employees of the two firms were banned from working on the project because of security concerns, the contract states. (Cooper, 2018, May 18)

(b) the situation as a whole; the most important facts about a situation and effects of that situation on other things

[7] **come/enter into force** (of a law, rule, etc.) (also *AcadE*)

(a) LONDON – There’s just over a month before Europe’s new privacy standards **come into force**, and back-slapping has already begun. (Scott, 2018, April 22)

(b) to start being used

(c) take effect – **come into force**, come into operation; antonyms: lapse

[8] **fall short of** sth (also *AcadE*); (in *GenE*) **fall/come short of** (*GenE*) (see Unit 2)

(a) Germany is also set to **fall short of** its national climate target of cutting greenhouse gas emissions by 40 percent by 2020. (Oroschakoff, 2018, March 23)

[9] **get one’s act together** *infml*

(a) PARIS – Governments talk a lot about eurozone reform but can’t **get their act together**. So it’s time for academics to step in. (Briangon, 2018, January 17)

(b) to behave in a more effective or responsible way

[10] **get (sth) off the ground**

(a) The fact that a government makes a competing entity to a private company and needs to use state aid to **get it off the ground** is a fantastically wild principle case that nobody wants to deal with. (Posaner, 2018, May 16)

(b) to start happening successfully; to make sth start happening successfully

(c) start – **establish**, set up, put in place, **get sth off the ground**, get sth going; *infml* kick sth off; antonyms: end, wind up

[11] **go it alone** *infml* (also *AcadE*)

(a) France has a message for Donald Trump: America’s aggressive **go-it-alone** tariff tactics are doomed. (Hanke Vela & Von Der Burchard, 2018, March 9)

(b) to do sth without help from anyone

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[12] **go/put sb out of business**; (in *AcadE*) **out of business**

(a) *We were a three-quarter-of-a-billion dollar company with a couple of thousand workers that **went out of business**.* (Palmer, 2018, March 7)

(b) to stop or to make sb stop operating as a business because there is no more money or work available; (in *AcadE*) having stopped operating as a business because there is no more money or work available (*AcadE*)

(c) close (v) – **cease activity**, shut down, come to a halt; fail, collapse, **go out of business**, go bankrupt, go into liquidation; *infml* go bust; antonyms: open

[13] **go/turn sour** (see Unit 5)

(a) *“Now, the City may lose up to 15 percent of its revenue if Brexit **goes sour**, and the government seems intent on **showing** foreigners **the door**,” said a saddened London-based French banker.* (Briançon, 2018a, May 16)

[14] **in advance (of sth)** (also *AcadE*)

(a) 1. *Unlike other sectors, aviation cannot fall back on World Trade Organization rules, and air tickets are typically sold a year **in advance**, creating a need for certainty by March 2018 – 12 months ahead of Brexit.* (Buyck, 2017, September 4); 2. *But agreeing to a legally binding framework **in advance** would mean that the structure would, at least, be unlikely to alter over the course of the detailed negotiations following Brexit.* (Niblett, 2017, December 18); 3. *In the near future, customers will expect elevators to alert them weeks **in advance** of an imminent breakdown.* (Delcker, 2018, February 1)

(b) 1. before sth happens; 2. more developed than sb/sth else

(c) **in advance** – **beforehand**, before, ahead of time, earlier, in readiness

[15] **in due course** (also *AcadE*)

(a) *“... We take customs fraud very seriously and we continue to evolve our response as new threats emerge,” Her Majesty’s Revenue and Customs said in a statement, adding that it would “carefully examine the formal notice from the Commission and respond **in due course**.”* (Paravicini & Marks, 2018, March 8)

(b) at a later or the right time and not before

(c) **in due course** – **at the appropriate time**, when the time is ripe, in time; afterwards – **later**, later on, subsequently, **in due course**; *fml* thereupon

[16] **in line with sth** (also *AcadE*); (in *GenE*) **(be) in line (with)**

(a) *After years of treading ultra cautiously with Beijing, Brussels suggested this week that it would consider stronger action **in line with** the Trump administration’s*

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wish list. On Monday, Brussels launched a safeguard investigation into how it could combat surges of steel imports. (Von Der Burchard & Hanke Vela, 2018, March 27)

(b) similar to sth or so that one thing is closely connected with another

(c) in accordance with – **in agreement with**, in conformity with, **in line with**

[17] **in/over the long/medium/short/far/near term**; (in AcadE) **in the long/medium/ short term**

(a) 1. “It doesn’t matter to Trump whether this will hit back at the U.S. economy **in the longer term**,” said Hosuk Lee-Makiyama, director of the European Centre for International Political Economy (ECIPE). (Von Der Burchard & Hanke Vela, 2018, March 27); 2. Earlier this month, she also expressed her conviction that Trump’s tariffs will come back soon enough to bite him – just as the U.S. steel tariffs did back in 2002, when the resulting trade disruption cost thousands of American jobs. The implication is clear: **In the long term**, Trump will lose. (Von Der Burchard & Hanke Vela, 2018, March 27); 3. Even if the pipeline would appear to benefit Germany and Russia **in the short term**, Europe as a whole will eventually lose, and the ultimate winner will turn out to be Russia. (Szymanski, 2018, May 14)

(b) used to describe what will happen a long, short, etc. time in the future

[18] **in place**; (in AcadE) **in place (also into place)**

(a) 1. Facing retaliation from the European Union and others, Bush removed the tariffs after just 18 months, instead of having them **in place** for three years as he wanted. (Palmer, 2018, March 7); 2. Part of the reason the tariffs’ effects on domestic manufacturers and trading partners was not as bad as expected was because Bush began granting exclusions almost as soon as they were **in place**. (Palmer, 2018, March 7); 3. For Russia, circumventing Ukraine is the main geopolitical rationale behind Nord Stream 2. It is highly unlikely Moscow would give up that goal once the pipeline is **in place**. (Szymanski, 2018, May 14)

(b) 1. working or ready to work; 2. (in AcadE) in the correct position; ready for sth

(c) **in place** – 1. **ready**, set up, established; 2. **in position**, in situ

[19] **in principle** (also AcadE)

(a) 1. While a deal with Europe has heavy political significance, Trump’s renegotiation of NAFTA has far greater economic consequences for Mexico. ... Saturday’s deal was an “**agreement in principle**,” which means that it will still need fine-tuning in the coming months. (Von Der Burchard & Oliver, 2018, April 21); 2. Faced with the prospect of steel tariffs, Seoul announced Sunday that it had reached an agreement “**in principle**” with Washington. (Von Der Burchard & Hanke Vela, 2018, March 27)

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(b) 1. there is no good reason why sth should not be done although it has not yet been done and there may be some difficulties; 2. in general but not in detail

(c) **in principle** – 1. **in theory**, theoretically, on paper, in an ideal world; *French* en principe; 2. **in general, on balance**, generally, by and large, on the whole, all in all, in the main

[20] **in reserve** (also *AcadE*)

(a) *That includes putting the tariffs on hold, but keeping them **in reserve** if needed.* (Warmbrodt & Palmer, 2018, May 21)

(b) available to be used in the future or when needed

(c) **in reserve** – **available**, at hand, ready; accessible; at one's disposal, on tap

[21] **the letter of the law**; (in *GenE*) **(keep, ...) the letter of the law** (also *pejoratively*) | **keep/stick to the letter of the law**

(a) *The likes of Google, Facebook and the world's largest financial institutions, for instance, spent years investing in new compliance structures and hiring hundreds of new lawyers, coders and designers to make sure they would follow **the letter of the upcoming law**.* (Scott, 2018, April 22)

(b) the exact words of a law or rule rather than its general meaning

[22] **a level playing field** rather *infml* (also *AcadE*) (see Unit 2)

(a) *Asked for comment, PhRMA pointed to its statement on the recent U.S. trade report, which praised the administration for trying to create **a more level international playing field**.* (Karlin-Smith & Wheaton, 2018, May 9)

[23] **make headway**; (in *GenE*) **make headway/head**

(a) *But truckmakers have **made** little **headway** on slashing emissions from trucks over the last two decades, green groups argue, despite the availability of new technologies.* (Posaner & Oroschakoff, 2018, May 16)

(b) to rise in value; to move forward or make progress

(c) flourish (v) – **progress**, make progress, **make headway**, make strides; antonyms: decline

[24] **make it** | **make it big** (also *AcadE*)

(a) 1. *"If there's a line-up of lorries at the border because of Brexit, we'll be in trouble. The prawns need to **make it** to Europe alive," he says.* (Bolongaro, 2018, May 8); 2. *The shellfish must **make it** to market alive to command a decent price.* (Bolongaro, 2018, May 8)

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(b) 1. to be successful in your career or business; 2. to succeed in reaching a place in time, esp. when this is difficult (*AcadE*)

(c) succeed (v) → **triumph**, be victorious; *infml* make it; antonyms: fail; **make it – survive**, come through, recover

[25] **make money** (also *AcadE*)

(a) Kelber noted that some firms, like their American or Chinese counterparts, wanted a free hand to collect as much data as possible and then see how they could **make money** from derived applications. (Delcker, 2018, February 1)

(b) to earn a lot of money; to make a profit

(c) profit (v) – **make money**, make a killing; *infml* line one's pockets; *AmE infml* make big bucks, make a fast/quick buck

[26] **name and shame** *BrE*

(a) 1. However, the report did **name-and-shame** more than a dozen countries – including close partners like Japan and Canada – based on complaints about pharma patent protections. (Karlin-Smith & Wheaton, 2018, May 9); 2. Arthuis said countries that violate EU norms should be “**named and shamed**” while Brussels should also provide incentives for national governments to follow the rules. (Bayer & De La Baume, 2018, April 26)

(b) to publish the names of people or organisations who have done sth wrong or illegal

[27] **on balance** (also *AcadE*)

(a) **On balance**, the policy has not been nearly as helpful to the US steel industry as partisans hoped,” the report said. (Palmer, 2018, March 7)

(b) after considering all the information

(c) **on balance – overall**, all in all, all things considered, taking everything into consideration/account, by and large, for the most part

[28] **on hold** (also *AcadE, GenE*); (in *GenE*) **put sth on hold**; **be on hold** (see Unit 10)

(a) 1. “We’re putting the trade war **on hold**,” Mnuchin said in an interview on “Fox News Sunday.” (Warmbrodt & Palmer, 2018, May 21); 2. “Right now, we have agreed to put tariffs **on hold** while we try to execute the framework.” (Warmbrodt & Palmer, 2018, May 21)

[29] **open doors** for sb; (in *GenE*) **open (new) doors (+ for/to)**; **open (the) doors (for/to sb/sth) | the door is open**

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(a) But political costs of **opening** Germany's **doors to** foreigners – as illustrated by the recent refugee crisis – can be considerable. (Karnitschnig, 2017, September 6)

(b) to provide opportunities for sb to do sth and be successful

(c) assist (v) – **facilitate**, aid, ease, **open the door for**; antonyms: impede

[30] **on the table** (also AcadE)

(a) Tackling shipping waste: The Commission is due to issue in November a proposal to revise the directive on port reception facilities for ship-generated waste and cargo residues – the only maritime legislation **on the table** under the Estonian presidency. (Buyck, 2017, September 4)

(b) 1. (BrE) (about a plan, a suggestion, or an idea) offered to people so that they can consider or discuss it (AcadE); 2. (esp. AmE) (about a plan, a suggestion, or an idea) not going to be discussed or considered until a future date

[31] **pave the way for** sth (see Unit 6)

(a) EU ambassadors agreed in June to continue the exemption, as proposed by the Commission: The Parliament votes in plenary in September, **paving the way for** negotiations with the Council on the details. (Buyck, 2017, September 4)

[32] **play by the rules** rather infml (also AcadE)

(a) 1. “Uber deserved to lose its license,” he wrote in an op-ed for the Guardian on Friday, adding that “all companies in London must **play by the rules** and adhere to the high standards we expect.” (Von Der Burchard, 2017, September 23); 2. In the build up to May 25, Europe has eagerly trumpeted its new privacy standards as both good for consumers and companies, ensuring everyone who wants to do business on the Continent must **play by the same rules**. (Scott, 2018, April 22)

(b) to follow the rule of a particular system and act fairly and honestly

(c) conform (v) – **follow convention**, be conventional, swim with the stream; comply, acquiesce; submit, yield; infml **play by the rules**, go with the flow; antonyms: rebel

[33] **play a (key/major/vital, etc.) part/role (in sth) | have a (key/major/vital, etc.) part/role to play (in sth)**; (in AcadE) **have a part to play (in sth)**; (in GenE) **play/have a part in sth**

(a) 1. They will **play a major role in** negotiations and must give unanimous approval to the final budget. (Bayer & De La Baume, 2018, April 26); 2. “The details will be **down the road**. These things are not so precise. Macroeconomics **plays a big role**. But our view is China must open up. They must become fair traders,” Kudlow said. (Warmbrodt & Palmer, 2018, May 21)

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(b) to be involved in sth and have an important effect on it; (in *AcadE*) to be able to help to achieve sth AE

(c) engage (v) – **participate in**, take part in; **play a part in**, **play a role in**, have a hand in, be a party to

[34] **run short | run short (of sth)** (also *AcadE*)

(a) *But mostly, I'm concerned that in spite of some recent progress, our societies are more fragile than they were 10 years ago at the onset of the financial crisis. First of all, both monetary and fiscal policies would be very constrained – they're **running short of ammunition**.* (Briançon, 2018b, May 16)

(b) to not have enough of sth

[35] **strike a balance (between)**

(a) *Catriona Graham, policy and campaigns officer at the European Women's Lobby, said policy must **strike a "hard balance" between** women's economics and environmentalism.* (Tamma & Hervey, 2018, April 27)

(b) to find an acceptable position which is between two things

(c) compromise (v) – **meet each other halfway**, find the middle ground, come to terms, make a deal, find a happy medium, **strike a balance**; give and take

[36] **take advantage of** sth/sb (also *AcadE*); (in *GenE*) **take (full) advantage of** sth/sb

(a) 1. *For example, Germany has generous allowances for Elternzeit (parental leave) yet only 35 percent of fathers **take advantage of** it and of those who do, most only take the minimum two months.* (Craigie, 2018, April 24); 2. *Amid rising trade tensions between the U.S. and key trading partners, Trump and top administration officials have repeatedly blamed high U.S. prices in part on foreign countries that **take advantage of** the significant U.S. investment in medical research without paying their fair share.* (Karlin-Smith & Wheaton, 2018, May 9); 3. *President Donald Trump has repeatedly said China has **taken advantage of** trade deals, telling reporters on Thursday that the nation has become "very spoiled".* (Warmbrodt & Palmer, 2018, May 21)

(b) to make use of sth/sb well; to make use of an opportunity

(c) **take advantage of** – **make use of**, utilise, make the most of, capitalise on

[37] **take effect** (also *AcadE*)

(a) *Both sides agree on the need for a transition period to ensure EU-U.K. economic continuity until a new trade deal can **take effect**, which – given its complexity – could take anywhere between a further two to five years.* (Niblett, 2017, December 18)

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(b) to come into use; to begin to apply

(c) **take effect** – **1 come into force**, come into operation, come into being, become valid, apply; antonyms: lapse; be effective – **have an effect, take effect**, take hold; *infml* do the trick; antonyms: have no effect

[38] **take a hit**

(a) *Construction, distribution and other service sectors would **take the biggest hit** – a combined loss of 142,305 jobs – because demand for their services would be reduced as companies cut costs to deal with the effects of higher steel and aluminum prices, the new Trade Partnership report found.* (Palmer, 2018, March 7)

(b) to be damaged or badly affected by sth

[39] **take part (in sth)** (also *AcadE*)

(a) *He reiterated his promise that not a single current worker of the state company would have their contract changed as a result of his reform, and called on unions to **take part in** liberalizing the French system, which is mandated by the EU.* (Briançon, 2018b, April 12)

(b) to be involved in sth

(c) **take part in** – **participate in**, engage in, play a part in, play a role in, have a hand in, have sth to do with, be (a) party to

[40] **to the tune of** sth *infml*

(a) *But the U.K. is heavily reliant on the EU market to sell its seafood – **to the tune of** £1.17 billion in 2016.* (Bolongaro, 2018, May 8)

(b) used to emphasise how much money sth has cost; at the cost of (a named sum of money, usu. large)

[41] **turn sth on its head**; (in *AcadE*, *GenE*) **stand/turn sth on its head**

(a) *“If you drop the safeguards that we included in the Parliament’s position, you **turn the waste hierarchy on its head**,” Martens said.* (Tamma, 2018, May 16)

(b) to make people think about sth in a completely different way; to change sth completely

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## Appendix B

### Business Vocabulary in FORTUNE

#### [1] **all the time | the whole time**

(a) “You can’t just do a rebranding and leave it,” he says. “If you really believe that you are not acting like a company, that you just want to talk and have a voice and be a real person, you have to do it **all the time**.” (Entis, 2018, April 16)

(b) 1. during the whole of a particular period of time; 2. very often; repeatedly

(c) **all the time** – **constantly**, the entire time, around the clock; *infml* 24-7; antonyms: never; intermittently; always (adv) – **every time**, each time, at all times, **all the time**; antonyms: never

#### [2] **at risk**; (in *AcadE*) **at risk (from/of sth)** (see PLT)

(a) About 10% of jobs in the U.S. are **at high risk**, the researchers found. When adding in the jobs that are also **at risk of** changing significantly due to automation, the U.S. will be considered among the least affected in OECD countries. (Shen, 2018, April 2)

#### [3] **at stake** (also *AcadE*); (in *GenE*) **(be) at stake** (see PLT)

(a) 1. **At stake** is the future direction of Germany’s biggest lender. (Anon., 2018, April 8); 2. But that doesn’t change the reality of this situation – these tariffs represent a looming threat to the entire agricultural economy. Our jobs are **at stake**. (Guernsey, 2018, April 18)

#### [4] **be/get/keep, etc. in touch (with sb)** (also *AcadE*) (see Units 1, 3, 10)

(a) Guillaume was on the TV, talking on a food channel, so I **got back in touch with** him, and we started planning a business. (Eng, 2018, April 23)

#### [5] **be on track**; (in *AcadE*) **on track (to do sth)**

(a) It may be a good idea to ask your boss for a six-month interim performance review so that, together, you can assess if you’re **on track** to receive a more standard raise. (Oliver, 2017, May 30)

(b) to be doing the right thing in order to achieve a particular result; (in *AcadE*) following a course that is likely to achieve what is required

#### [6] **below/under the radar (screen)**; (in *AcadE*) **below/under the radar** (see PLT)

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(a) *But if not for a major rebranding five years ago, they would likely still be flying **under the radar**. In 2013, John Schoolcraft was brought on as creative director to breathe new life into the look and feel of the company.* (Entis, 2018, April 16)

[7] **from scratch**; (in GenE) **(start) from scratch** *infml*

(a) *By 2013 Edward Jones had an orientation program to prevent new financial advisors from having to start **from scratch** as she did. But Giuseffi took this “No Scratch Start” initiative and added a diversity and inclusion component.* (Frauenheim, 2018, March 27)

(b) without any previous preparation or knowledge; to begin from a point at which nothing has been done yet

[8] **have/get/give sb a head start (in sth/on sb/over sb)**

(a) *Don’t panic, but don’t ignore the gossip. Heeding it can **give you a head start** on reactivating your network and looking for new opportunities.* (Oliver, 2017, May 30)

(b) to have or give sb an advantage at the beginning of sth

[9] **in/over the long/medium/short/far/near term**; (in AcadE) **in the long/medium/ short term** (see PLT)

(a) *This might work **in the short term**, but it’ll be an uphill battle **in the long term**.* (Vanderbloemen, 2016, January 19)

[10] **in place**; (in AcadE) **in place** (also **into place**) (see PLT)

(a) *I adopted the ‘hire slow, fire fast’ mantra and learned that when the right people are **in place**, a leader can simultaneously be demanding and trusting of their employees.* (Timashev, 2017, February 9)

[11] **in/with reference to** sth *fml* (usually in written English) (also AcadE)

(a) *Do not follow the “We don’t wake up for less than \$10,000 a day” attitude, coined by model Linda Evangelista **in reference to** her and fellow model Christy Turlington’s then-dominance in the industry.* (Linville, 2016, November 29)

(b) used to say what sth refers to or is about (AcadE)

(c) **with reference to** – **apropos**, with regard to, regarding; in relation to, in connection with; over (prep) – **on the subject of**, about, concerning, **with reference to**, with regard/respect to; *Latin* in re

[12] **in/with regard to** sb/sth *fml* (also AcadE)

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(a) *Still, if being a great workplace for women is about treating each gender equally **with regard to** voice in company decisions, development, and pay – big challenges remain for business.* (Rohman & Russell Wilhelmsen, 2016, September 15)

(b) (often used in letters, etc.) concerning, referring to sb/sth; as far as sth is concerned

(c) in terms of – **with regard to**, as regards, regarding, with reference to, in connection with; regarding (prep) – **concerning**, as regards, **with regard to**, **in regard to**, with reference to, apropos, on the subject of; *French* vis-à-vis; *Latin* in re

[13] **let sb go** *infml*

(a) *Is your boss new? He may have been hired with the understanding that he would clean up shop. He may be looking for reasons to **let you go**.* (Oliver, 2017, May 30)

(b) to make sb have to leave their job

(c) **let sb go** – **make redundant**, dismiss; *infml* give sb the sack, fire; antonyms: retain

[14] **on your feet**; (in *GenE*) **be on one's feet/legs**

(a) *Eventually, nine years after his release from prison, Bronson landed a job at a nonprofit in New York that aimed to help ex-convicts get back **on their feet**.* (Alsever, 2018, January 20)

(b) in a normal state again after a period of trouble or difficulty

[15] **on the table** (also *AcadE*) (see PLT)

(a) *What else is **on the table** and can be considered in lieu of a raise at this time?* (Linville, 2016, November 29)

[16] **one size fits all** *rather infml*

(a) *That said, Jha cautions against thinking of taxation as a **one-size-fits-all** solution to public health problems.* (Ducharme, 2018, April 12)

(b) used to describe a situation where one action, policy, solution, etc. is considered suitable for everybody

[17] **play a (key/major/vital, etc.) part/role (in sth) | have a (key/major/vital, etc.) part/role to play (in sth)**; (in *AcadE*) **have a part to play (in sth)**; (in *GenE*) **play/have a part in sth** (see PLT)

(a) *Every single person **has a role to play** when it comes to this issue. For women who are working, it's important to ask management if they're doing a gender pay gap*

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analysis and ask for that information to be transparent and reportable. (Zarya, 2018, April 10)

[18] **play to one's strengths**

(a) *I also worked twice as hard at **playing to my strengths**, hiring excellent people with skills that complemented mine, diving deep into product development, and talking extensively with our customers to fully understand their pain points and how best to solve them.* (Timashev, 2017, February 9)

(b) to give one's attention and effort to things that one does well; to give sb the opportunity to do this

[19] **pull the plug on sth/sb infml**

(a) *But if the situation can't be resolved, try to put a plan in place for new employment before you **pull the plug**.* (Oliver, 2017, May 30)

(b) to put an end to sb's project, a plan, etc.

(c) discontinue (v) – **stop**, end, terminate, bring to an end, bring to a halt, call to a halt; *infml pull the plug on*; antonyms: continue

[20] **ride on (the) coattails of sb/sth | ride sb's/sth's coattails**; (in *GenE*) **ride (on) sb's coat-tails/coattails**

(a) *If you log in to any app store on your phone, you will find knockoffs to every popular app out there. They're easy to **ride on the coattails of** something popular – like getting people who already play Angry Birds to want Poultry Pal.* (Vanderbloemen, 2016, January 19)

(b) to benefit from sb else's success

[21] **run out of time**

(a) *But what if it's your employer who is plotting to push you out? Pay careful attention to any of these warning signs that could signal your **time is running out**.* (Oliver, 2017, May 30)

(b) to have no more time available

[22] **take a nosedive**

(a) *Since my last Sino-Saturday edition, much has happened on the trade front: Donald Trump announced plans to impose tariffs of as much as \$60 billion on imports from China; China fired back with tariffs of \$3 billion against imports from the US, a promise to challenge US penalties at the World Trade Organization and some tough language threatening more painful countermeasures to come: global markets **took a nosedive**.* (Chandler, 2018, March 24)

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(b) to fall suddenly and quickly

(c) nosedive (v) *infml* – **fall sharply, take a nosedive**, plunge, plummet; antonyms: rise, soar

[23] **take a risk | take risks** (also *AcadE*); (in *GenE*) **run/take a/the risk | take risks**

(a) 1. *In the beginning, we didn't even know how to do a balance sheet. We were stupid, but we were willing to **take a risk**. It's paid off.* (Eng, 2018, April 23); 2. *VF Corp CEO says leadership success comes from **taking risks**.* (Gharib, 2018, April 25); 3. *He's the CEO of VFCorporation and he says "you need to be willing to **take some risks**" if you want to get leadership assignments.* (Gharib, 2018, April 25)

(b) to do sth even though one knows that sth bad could happen as a result

(c) gamble (v) – **take a chance, take a risk**, take a leap in the dark, speculate, venture

[24] **turn a (small/modest/\$10 million, etc.) profit** *infml*

(a) *A few years ago, we had to leave the dairy business entirely because market conditions created an environment in which we simply could not **turn a profit**.* (Guernsey, 2018, April 18)

(b) to make a profit in business

[25] **under wraps** *infml*; (in *GenE*) **keep** sth **under wraps** *infml*

(a) *In 2012, Chief Executive Officer Tim Cook pledged to double down on **keeping** the company's work **under wraps**.* (Anon., 2018, April 14)

(b) being kept secret until some time in the future

(c) **under wraps** *infml* – **secret**, top secret, confidential, off the record; *Latin*: sub rosa; off the record – **unofficial, confidential**, in (strict) confidence, **(to be kept) under wraps**; antonyms: official

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## Appendix C

### Business Vocabulary in The Guardian

[1] **at all times** (also AcadE)

(a) Mark Steward, the FCA's executive director, said: "Mr Staley breached the standard of care required and expected of a chief executive in a way that risks undermining confidence in Barclays' whistleblowing procedures. Chief executives must act with a high degree of care and prudence **at all times**. ..." (Fletcher, 2018, May 11)

(b) always

(c) always (adv) – **every time**, each time, **at all times**, all the time, consistently, regularly; antonyms: never; seldom; sometimes

[2] **at risk**; (in AcadE) **at risk (from/of sth)** (see PLT, FRT)

(a) Our debt sustainability analyses indicate that 40% of low-income countries are currently **at high risk of** or already in debt distress. (Elliott, 2018, April 18)

[3] **be hit hard (by sth) | be hard hit (by sth)**

(a) And investors still face a number of other uncertainties, not least the US sanctions on Russia which has **hit** the rouble **hard**. (Fletcher, 2018, April 10)

(b) to be affected very badly by sth

(c) affect (v) – **upset**, trouble, **hit hard**, overwhelm, devastate, damage; antonyms: be unaffected, be indifferent to

[4] **be made redundant** BrE

(a) The bank said 109 branches would close in July and August and 53 would shut in November, with 792 staff to **be made redundant**. (Kollewe, 2018, May 1)

(b) to lose one's job because one's employer no longer has work for one

(c) dismiss (v) – **give sb their notice**, throw out, get rid of; lay off, **make redundant**; *infml* **sack**, fire, show sb the door; antonyms: engage; fire (v) *infml* – **dismiss**, discharge, **make redundant**

[5] **be on track**; (in AcadE) **on track (to do sth)** (see FRT)

(a) 1. 'I am 24 and live with my parents but I'm **on track** to save £50,000 before I'm 27'. (Burns, 2018, March 31); 2. Again, I am aware this all sounds eccentric and I am sure I am the only person in the world who is this obsessed, but I am bang **on track** to hit my £50,000 savings on 5 June 2020. (Burns, 2018, March 31)

[6] **the big three/four, etc.**

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(a) *Comparison sites said the increase would be a “bolt from the blue” for millions, and other large suppliers could follow with their own rises. “The danger now is that the rest of **the big six** may be tempted to follow suit.* (Vaughan, 2018, April 10)

(b) the three/four, etc. most important countries, companies, people, etc.

[7] **bring/get/keep sth under control** (also *AcadE*)

(a) *The head of the International Monetary Fund said authorities around the world could harness the potential of cryptocurrencies to help **bring them under control**, warning that failure to do so would allow the unfettered development of a “potentially major new vehicle for money laundering and the financing of terrorism”.* (Partington, 2018, March 13)

(b) to succeed in dealing with sth so that it does not cause any damage or hurt anyone

[8] **come into effect** (also *AcadE*); (in *GenE*) **come into effect | go into effect**

(a) *It is unusual for financial regulators to investigate and censure chief executives in the City and the FCA and PRA said this was the first case they had brought under the senior managers regime, which **came into effect** in March 2016.* (Fletcher, 2018, May 11)

(b) to come into use; to begin to apply

[9] **conflict of interest(s)** (also *AcadE*)

(a) *The regulators said Staley failed to act with due skill, care and diligence, saying he should have identified that: He had **a conflict of interest** in relation to the letter and needed to maintain an appropriate distance from the investigation.* (Fletcher, 2018, May 11)

(b) 1. a situation in which sb has a role or responsibility that may prevent them from treating another role or responsibility equally and fairly; 2. a situation in which sb's aims or needs are in opposition to the aims or needs of another person or group

[10] **deal sb/sth a (serious/severe, etc.) blow | deal a (serious/severe, etc.) blow to sb/sth**

(a) *The Federation of Small Businesses said the closures would **deal another blow to small firms** and high streets.* (Kollewe, 2018, May 1)

(b) to be very harmful to sb/sth

[11] **foot the bill infml; (in GenE) foot the bill (for sth)**

(a) *Cancellations due to weather may see Network Rail **footing the bill** in “schedule 8 payments”, compensating train operators for infrastructure issues – although*

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operators whose trains have broken down may find themselves presented with bill in reverse. (Inman, Topham, & Vaughan, 2018, March 3)

(b) to be responsible for paying the cost of sth

(c) **foot the bill** *infml* – **pay**, pay up, pay out, pay the bill; *infml* pick up the tab; subsidise (v) – **give money to**, pay a subsidy to; *infml* pick up the tab for, **foot the bill for**

[12] **get** (sth) **off the ground** (also *AcadE*) (see PLT)

(a) *Giving something back should always be part of an entrepreneur's game plan. In 2016, I got involved with an initiative to provide breakfast to primary school children in Derby, and funded it for a year to **get it off the ground**.* (Oberoi, 2018, April 5)

[13] **get** (sb) **off the hook** | **let sb off the hook** *infml*

(a) *It was a show designed to **get** Zuckerberg **off the hook** after only a few hours in Washington DC. It was a show that gave the pretense of a hearing without a real hearing.* (Teachout, 2018, April 11)

(b) to free oneself or sb else from a difficult situation or a punishment

(c) **off the hook** *infml* – **out of trouble**, in the clear; **acquitted**, cleared, found not guilty; *infml* let off

[14] **in advance** (of sth) (also *AcadE*) (see PLT)

(a) *With the bank expected to raise rates next month, remarks from the voting members will take on a greater importance in the coming weeks with the previous hike in November – the first such increase in more than a decade – being widely telegraphed **in advance**.* (Fletcher, 2018, April 10)

[15] **in the hands of sb** | **in sb's hands** (also *AcadE*)

(a) *Once the complaint was **in the hands of** the compliance team, it was important they kept control of the investigation process.* (Fletcher, 2018, May 11)

(b) 1. owned or controlled by a particular person or group; 2. being dealt with by sb; being taken care of by sb

(c) at sb's disposal – **for use by**, in reserve for, **in the hands of**

[16] **in line with** sth (also *AcadE*); (in *GenE*) **(be) in line (with)** (see PLT)

(a) 1. *"We at the ECB are fully **in line with** his views and we have similar worries," he told Bloomberg TV.* (Kollewe, 2018, February 8); 2. *First, construction had a terrible start to the year, with a drop in output of more than 3%. Without that, growth would have been 0.3%, **in line with** City forecasts.* (Elliott, 2018, April 27); 3. *Regular users of outside-of-allowance calls who are likely to suffer material detriment as a result of the*

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price increase will be given the right to leave without charge, **in line with** our terms and conditions. (Brignall, 2018, April 30)

[17] **in/over the long run | in the long term**; (in AcadE) **in the long/short/medium run**; (in AcadE) **in the short run** (see Unit 6)

(a) But **in the long run**, industry players say the answers may lie in a coming revolution in how we use energy in our homes, turning them into mini power stations and reducing our reliance on energy companies such as British Gas and EDF. (Vaughan, 2018, April 14)

[18] **in/over the long/medium/short/far/near term**; (in AcadE) **in the long/medium/ short term** (see PLT, FRT)

(a) A National Audit Office report earlier this month said the finances of many local authority finances were unsustainable **in the long term**, with one in 10 councils providing social care responsibilities vulnerable to insolvency because of rising demand and shrinking financial resources. (Butler, 2018, March 28)

[19] **the jury is (still) out on** sth (also AcadE) rather *infrm*

(a) And **the “jury is still out”** on whether the inflationary hit from the fall in the value of the pound after the Brexit vote in 2016 would fade as quickly as expected, he said. (Fletcher, 2018, April 10)

(b) used when you are saying that sth is still not certain

[20] **make your/a mark (on sth)**; (in GenE) **make one’s/its/a mark (in/on)**

(a) Nearly 17 months of cuts by major oil-producing countries, led by Saudi Arabia and Russia, have **made their mark**. (Vaughan, 2018, May 17)

[21] **make up for lost time**

(a) But the construction industry struggles to **make up for lost time** and bad weather tends to delay projects permanently, says the CPA. (Inman, Topham & Vaughan, 2018, March 3)

(b) to do sth quickly because one wishes he or she had started it earlier or had worked more quickly

(c) neutralise (v) – **counteract**, offset, **make up for**

[22] **on balance** (also AcadE) (see PLT)

(a) **“On balance**, those three arguments give me some potential modest upside risks to the (inflation) forecasts,” McCafferty said. (Fletcher, 2018, April 10)

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[23] **on the table** (also *AcadE*) (see PLT, FRT)

(a) *Within hours Brexit secretary David Davis responded by saying new proposals would be **on the table** this week when talks on border resume in Brussels.* (O'Carroll, 2018, April 30)

[24] **on top of** sth; (in *AcadE*) **on top of** sth/sb

(a) 1. *The new price rises come **on top of** a 4% increase in Three's contract charges, which took effect in February.* (Brignall, 2018, April 30); 2. *The Fed has indicated it could increase borrowing costs another two times in 2018 but some expect another rise **on top of that** if the economic data merits it.* (Fletcher, 2018, April 10)

(b) 1. in control of a situation; knowing about a situation; 2. in addition to sth; (in *AcadE*) 1. on, over or covering sth/sb; 2. in addition to sth; 3. in control of a situation

(c) **on top of that – as well**, in addition, too, also, besides, into the bargain, to boot

[25] **pave the way for** sth (see Unit 6, PLT)

(a) *"I'll be **paving the way** in this autumn budget 2018 **for a** spending review in 2019 which will look at public spending from 2020 onwards, what the total envelope should be, how we allocate it between individual departments and, indeed, local government," he said.* (Walker, 2018, March 11)

[26] **pick/take up the slack** *AmE, AustrE infml*

(a) *Over the last eight years, council budgets have been reduced by 50% and services cut, with local people forced to **pick up the slack** as council tax bills soar.* (Butler, 2018, March 28)

(b) to do sth, to supply sth, etc. that is needed but is not being done or supplied

[27] **play a (key/major/vital, etc.) part/role (in sth) | have a (key/major/vital, etc.) part/role to play (in sth);** (in *AcadE*) **have a part to play (in sth);** (in *GenE*) **play/have a part in sth** (see PLT, FRT)

(a) *Whistleblowers **play a vital role in** exposing poor practice and misconduct in the financial services sector.* (Fletcher, 2018, May 11)

[28] **put sth/itself up for sale/auction;** (in *GenE*) **be for sale**

(a) *RBS resurrected the Williams & Glyn name for the branches it **put up for sale** – which were RBS banks in England and Wales together with NatWest branches in Scotland.* (Kollewe, 2018, May 1)

(b) to make sth available to be bought

(c) market (v) – sell, retail, **put up for sale**, merchandise, trade

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[29] **shut up shop** esp. BrE infml; (in GenE) **close (up) shop** esp. AmE infml

(a) An activist investor has criticised the management of Gloo Networks – the listed vehicle that aimed to buy digitally focused media companies valued up to £1bn but is **shutting up shop** – for pocketing millions in salaries and bonus payouts despite failing to strike a single deal in three years. (Sweney, 2018, May 3)

(b) to close a business permanently or to stop working for the day

[30] **take advantage of** sth/sb (also AcadE); (in GenE) **take (full) advantage of** sth/sb (see PLT)

(a) “Decisive action is needed now to strengthen fiscal buffers, **taking full advantage of** the cyclical upswing in economic activity,” the fund said. (Elliott, 2018, April 18)

[31] **take a back seat (to sth)** (see Unit 6)

(a) Corporate profits have **taken a back seat to** trade tensions and increased volatility over the past few weeks, but as the US earnings season starts **in earnest** this week, they will take on huge significance. (Fletcher, 2018, April 10)

[32] **take effect** (also AcadE) (see PLT)

(a) 1. The move comes days after energy regulator Ofgem raised a price cap on 5m vulnerable households, and ahead of the government’s wider price cap for 11m households on standard variable tariffs. That ceiling is due to **take effect** before the end of the year. (Vaughan, 2018, Apr 10); 2. The new price rises come on top of a 4% increase in Three’s contract charges, which **took effect** in February. (Brignall, 2018, April 30)

[33] **take sb for a ride** infml

(a) Customers can send the clearest message that they won’t tolerate being **taken for a ride** by switching supplier to a cheaper tariff, with savings of up to £491 on offer,” said Claire Osborne, energy expert at uSwitch.com. (Vaughan, 2018, April 10)

(b) to cheat or trick sb

(c) take advantage of – **exploit**, abuse; infml **take for a ride**

[34] **take a (heavy/terrible) toll (on sb/sth) | take its/their toll (on sb/sth)** (also AcadE) (see Unit 5)

(a) “The ongoing escalation of tensions between Saudi Arabia and Iran, continuing conflicts in Iraq, Libya, Syria and Yemen have significantly **taken their toll on** the region,” Mitsubishi UFJ Financial Group said. (Vaughan, 2018, May 17)

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[35] **tighten/loosen the purse strings**

(a) *On Sunday Hammond said that although government debt was forecast to start falling, people should not expect an immediate **loosening of the purse strings**.* (Walker, 2018, March 11)

(b) to spend less/more money

[36] **to the tune of** sth *infml* (see PLT)

(a) *The average British household benefited from the Bank of England's emergency interest rate cut in the financial crisis **to the tune of** almost £9,000 in pay and £90,000 in household wealth, according to its chief economist.* (Fletcher, 2018, April 10)

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## Appendix D

### Business Vocabulary in Forbes

[1] **be/remain, etc. in the red | move into/return to, etc. the red;** (in *GenE*) **(be) in the red** *infml* (see Unit 9)

(a) *After suffering a huge fall on the 2017 list, Chevron CVX -0.36% is back at the #12 spot from #176 – when the company's profits were **in the red**.* (Stoller, 2018, May 9)

[2] **be/get/run out of control;** (in *AcadE*) **be out of control**

(a) *The total of all student loan debt just hit \$1.5 trillion, so prepare for a slew of stories telling you how student loan debt is **out-of-control** and we must reform the program to avoid a crisis.* (Dorfman, 2018, 10 May 10)

(b) to be or become impossible to manage or to control

[3] **come out on top (of sth)**

(a) *Though Apple beat Berkshire Hathaway in both profit and market value, Warren Buffett's investment firm **came out on top** in terms of revenue and assets, at \$241.4 billion and \$702 billion, respectively.* (Stoller, 2018, May 9)

(b) to win a competition, argument, election, etc.

[4] **conflict of interest(s)** (also *AcadE*) (see GRD)

(a) *But before laying out my concerns, I need to disclose **a major conflict of interest**. My company, www.economicsecurityplanning.com, markets economics-based personal financial planning software, which produces, I believe, far more appropriate guidance than conventional planning.* (Kotlikoff, 2018, April 24)

[5] **dip a toe in/into sth | dip a toe in/into the water;** (in *GenE*) **dip/put/stick a/one's toe in the water** *infml*

(a) *What no one will have failed to notice of course is that while many brands are AOR relationships, some briefs these days are project-based. Making it easy for a brand to **dip its toe in the 'maverick' waters** next gen agencies thirsty for new challenges.* (Goodson, 2012, December 14)

(b) to start doing sth very carefully to see if it will be successful or not

[6] **in (the) aggregate** *fml* (also *AcadE*)

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(a) *In **aggregate**, these costs represent billions in economic waste-massive spending with no resultant value for our economy as a whole.* (Schwartz, 2017, December 4)

(b) added together as a total or single amount

[7] **in/over the long run | in the long term**; (in AcadE) **in the long/short/medium run**; (in AcadE) **in the short run** (see Unit 6, GRD)

(a) 1. *In the **short-run**, rent control delivers tenants benefits through lower rents, but in the **long-run**, affordable housing actually shrinks and the losses far outweigh the gains.* (Dorfman, 2018, January 9); 2. *Hopefully, in the **long run**, the modest resurgence seen in other parts of the Heartland will someday extend to these areas as well.* (Kotkin, 2018, May 7); 3. *Given the excellent return on investment from college educations, why is society acting like student loan debt is a problem? Instead we should be glad so many people are acting in a way that will make the country better off in the **long run**.* (Dorfman, 2018, May 10)

[8] **in/over the long/medium/short/far/near term** (also AcadE)

(a) *Nonetheless the NFP print was a little stronger than expected, although not so powerful as to significantly shift expectations on where the Federal Reserve (Fed) is going in the **medium term**.* (Aitken, 2018 June 1)

(b) used to describe what will happen a long, short, etc. time in the future

[9] **in place**; (in AcadE) **in place** (also **into place**) (see PLT, FRT)

(a) 1 *This would allow developers to build any project they think has buyers and would greatly increase housing availability exactly in the locations most likely to have the infrastructure **in place** to handle that new growth.* (Dorfman, 2018, January 9); 2. *The downside is that mass transit availability does not ensure that all infrastructure is **in place** (roads, water, sewer, schools, etc.) so this upzoning could put significant pressure on local governments to keep up.* (Dorfman, 2018, January 9)

[10] **in one's (own) backyard**

(a) *NIMBYs, those continually opposing new development under the umbrella of 'not in my backyard,' control local housing politics in most of California.* (Dorfman, 2018, January 9)

(b) in or near the place where one lives or work

[11] **make good on** sth AmE, AustrE infml

(a) *The President is at it again, having **made good on** his promises to punish foreigners in the United States he is working hard to punish foreigners outside the*

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United States as well as the Americans who trade with them. Trump has tweeted that it is “easy” to win a trade war. (Carden, 2018, April 5)

(b) to do sth that you have promised to do, pay back money that you owe, etc.

[12] **make up for lost time** (see GRD)

(a) When work restarts, the plants will also operate on a 24/7 schedule to **make up for lost time**. (Ohnsman, 2018, April 17)

[13] **on hold** (also *AcadE*, *GenE*); (in *GenE*) **put sth on hold**; **be on hold** (see Unit 10, PLT)

(a) The company's finance team is instructed to cut any expense that lacks “strong value justification,” while purchases of a \$1 million or more are **on hold** unless explicitly approved by Musk. (Ohnsman, 2018, April 17)

[14] **on the road** (also *AcadE*)

(a) Yet since its July 2017 launch, there are no \$35,000 Model 3s **on the road** – initial production prioritizes high-end cars selling for about \$50,000 – and it's unclear when Tesla can fill the roughly 500,000 reservations that began piling up two years ago. (Ohnsman, 2018, April 17)

(b) 1. travelling in vehicles using roads; 2. moving from place to place, and not staying in one place for very long

[15] **on the table** (also *AcadE*) (see PLT, FRT, GRD)

(a) Marvin Loh, a senior Global Market strategist at BNY Mellon, commenting on the landscape, said: “Whether the June rate hike, which has been almost universally affirmed by Fed speak over the past few weeks, will prompt them to more aggressively signal a fourth rate hike this year is certainly **on the table**, although we would tend to lean towards the status quo, particularly given the recent bouts of global volatility.” (Aitken, 2018, June 1)

[16] **take advantage of sth/sb** (also *AcadE*); (in *GenE*) **take (full) advantage of sth/sb** (see PLT, GRD)

(a) Retaining this flawed methodology is not a path to seeking alpha. It's the opposite. Seeking alpha means **taking advantage of** every free lunch. (Kotlikoff, 2018, April 24)

[17] **turn sth on its head**; (in *AcadE*, *GenE*) **stand/turn sth on its head** (see PLT)

(a) As the New Year looms, the resolution for brands and agencies alike should be to **turn marketing on its head**. (Goodson, 2012, December 14)

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[18] **up for** sth (also AcadE) rather *infml*

(a) *Yet the extent to which marginal gains for wages leads to inflation remains **up for debate**.* (Aitken, 2018, June 1)

(b) being considered for sth (BusE); that can be discussed, sold or considered (AcadE)

[19] **year after year** (also AcadE)

(a) *Second, conventional portfolio Monte Carlo simulations assume the household will spend, in retirement, the same amount (the target they set when they did their planning – potentially decades earlier) **year after year** regardless of whether they **hit the jackpot** in the market or lose virtually on the market.* (Kotlikoff, 2018, April 24)

(b) every year for many years

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## Appendix E

### Business Vocabulary in Inc.

[1] **all the time | the whole time** (see FRT)

(a) Shareholders want maximum returns. Customers want good service and prices. Employees want fair compensation and a good working environment. And those of us who write about airlines hear from all three constituencies, **all the time**. (Murphy Jr., 2018, March 25)

[2] **back on track** (also *AcadE*) rather *infml*; (in *GenE*) **get** (sb/sth)/**be back on track**; **on track** (to do sth); **put/get** sb/sth **back on track** (see Unit 8, PLT)

(a) This was an unfortunate and alarming setback. However, learning from it and empowering its employees to be a part of the solution will help it get **back on track** and prevent instances like this from happening in the future. (Schneider, 2018, April 16)

[3] **the big picture** *infml* (also *AcadE*); (in *GenE*) **look at big picture** *esp. AmE* (see PLT)

(a) 1. You have to hire someone who has an awareness of both **the big picture** and the tiny details. (Green, 2018, March 20); 2. They hire people who are accustomed to being **“big picture” executives**. (Green, 2018, March 20)

[4] **by default** (also *AcadE*)

(a) Otherwise, **by default**, Facebook is logging your calls and texts. (Zetlin, 2018, April 11)

(b) sth happens because nothing has been done to make things happen differently or because sb has not done what they should have done

[5] **go/put** sb **out of business**; (in *AcadE*) **out of business** (see PLT)

(a) Protecting your business property against damage, destruction and theft is critical. No one wants to think about catastrophic events that could **put you out of business**; but these things can and do happen. (Anon., 2017, September 13)

[6] **in place**; (in *AcadE*) **in place** (also **into place**) (see PLT, FRT, FBS)

(a) Make sure the people you hire clearly understand the company culture. Cultures vary from company to company, and they should agree with what's already **in place**. (Green, 2018, March 20)

[7] **let** sb **go** *infml* (see FRT)

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(a) *Avoiding a toxic hire, or **letting one go** quickly, delivers \$12,500 in cost savings.* (Levin, 2018, April 10)

[8] **(put sth) on the line** (also *AcadE*) rather *infml*; (in *GenE*) **put/lay sth on the line** (see Unit 8)

(a) Consider using your personal funds only as a last resort. **Putting** your personal finances **on the line** only adds more risk. (Anon., 2017, September 13)

[9] **save (sb's) face** (also *AcadE*)

(a) *Instead, you want to give that person a way to **save face**. For example, in some of my keynotes, I tell a funny story about a salesman I've dubbed "Justin".* (Altman, 2018, May 21)

(b) to avoid or help sb avoid embarrassment

[10] **take advantage of sth/sb** (also *AcadE*); (in *GenE*) **take (full) advantage of sth/sb** (see PLT, GRD, FBS)

(a) E-commerce has **taken advantage of** a well-known pricing strategy to drive higher margins. (Emmer, 2018, April 24)

[11] **take a (heavy/terrible) toll (on sb/sth) | take its/their toll (on sb/sth)** (also *AcadE*) (see Unit 5, GRD)

(a) *However, in the past six months, the uncertainty of whether she'd be allowed to remain in the U.S. has **taken its toll**. The Trump administration has vowed to dismantle Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA), an Obama-era program that offers short-term protections for undocumented immigrants like Garcia.* (Henry, 2018, March 5)

[12] **wear and tear** (also *GenE*)

(a) *Google Hangouts, Skype for Business, Zoom.us and GoToMeeting are just some of the popular video conferencing sites to choose from. While it may not be quite as good as a **face-to-face** meeting, it saves a fortune in travel costs and **wear and tear**.* (Anon., 2017, July 14)

(b) the damage to objects, furniture, property, etc. that is the result of normal use; the damage that happens to an object or a person when they are used or when they do sth

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Vydavateľ: Vydalo Nakladateľstvo Univerzity Hradec Králové, Gaudeamus, ako svoju 1872. publikáciu

Vydanie: prvé

Rok vydania: 2024

ISBN 978-80-7435-938-5