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FOREIGN LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY AS A FACTOR IN EXPANDING PROFESSIONAL AND EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES IN THE CONTEXT OF GLOBALIZATION

In the modern world, globalization affects almost all areas of life, including work, science, culture, and education. As the global exchange of information and labor grows, foreign language skills have become essential competencies for academic success and professional achievement. Foreign language proficiency supports personal mobility, increases employability, and enables deeper access to global knowledge networks.

The work aims to explore how knowledge of foreign languages affects career prospects, academic performance, intercultural competence, and lifelong learning in a global context.

Overall, foreign language proficiency can be viewed as a form of human capital that strengthens both educational and professional competitiveness in a globalized society. Globalization intensifies international communication and increases interaction between different linguistic communities. As global networks expand through trade, technology, and education, effective communication becomes essential. English, in particular, functions as a global lingua franca in science, business, and digital environments. A significant proportion of academic publications, international conferences, and multinational corporations operate primarily in English.

However, globalization does not simply promote one dominant language – it reshapes the entire linguistic landscape. According to A. Salih, intensified global interaction leads to greater contact between languages, contributing to the spread of dominant global languages while simultaneously influencing local linguistic practices (Salih, 2023). It reflects the growing demand for efficient cross-border communication

in education, international business, and digital media. At the same time, globalization may create challenges for minority languages, as global languages increasingly dominate formal domains such as higher education and professional communication.

The growing dominance of English demonstrates that language proficiency functions as a strategic advantage. Individuals with foreign language skills are better prepared to engage in international collaboration and participate fully in global professional and academic environments. In the labor market, multilingual professionals are often more competitive, as companies increasingly operate across borders and require effective communication with international partners and clients.

Foreign language competence also plays a crucial role in academic advancement. Many international scholarship programs and exchange initiatives, such as Erasmus+, require proof of language proficiency. Students who master foreign languages can participate in global academic programs, attend international conferences, and pursue postgraduate studies abroad. Research shows that students with stronger language skills are more likely to study internationally, indicating that linguistic competence directly influences academic mobility.

English, in particular, has become the primary language of academia. Many of the world's leading universities operate as English-medium institutions, offering internationally recognized degrees and intercultural learning opportunities. This trend is further supported by research on English-medium instruction (EMI) in higher education, which demonstrates the rapid expansion of English as the language of teaching and research across European universities (Coleman, 2006). Consequently, standardized examinations such as IELTS, TOEFL, and Cambridge English are often required for admission (Nadeem, 2024).

Furthermore, a large proportion of academic journals and research publications are written in English. Students with strong language proficiency can access original sources directly, improving the quality of their research and academic performance.

Language competence, therefore, expands educational mobility, supports lifelong learning, and facilitates integration into global academic networks.

In conclusion, foreign language proficiency has become a fundamental requirement in the context of globalization. It expands academic mobility, improves access to scientific knowledge, and enhances professional competitiveness in an interconnected world. English, as the dominant language of global communication, plays a particularly significant role in higher education and international cooperation. As globalization continues to shape educational systems and labor markets, mastering foreign languages is no longer an optional skill but a strategic necessity for personal and professional success.

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THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN LANGUAGE AND THOUGHT

The interaction between language and thought is a subject of discussion in the fields of linguistics and cognitive science. Language is not only a tool of communication but also a means through which people perceive and interpret reality. Thought involves mental processes such as reasoning, understanding, and decision-making. Studying the influence of language and thought on each other is essential for understanding cognitive