



THE UNIVERSITY of EDINBURGH
School of Philosophy, Psychology
& Language Sciences

SELL YOUR LANGUAGE SKILLS

team
work

communication

flexible
thinking

Information for students and graduates

Languages are good for business

- Only 6% of world speak English as a first language; 75% don't speak it at all
- 76% UK employers are not satisfied with young people's language skills
- Two thirds of businesses cite language skills as a barrier to expansion
- Eight out of ten companies worry that cultural differences affect their work
- Poor language skills cost Scottish economy £591 million a year

All of this gives people with languages and international experience a definite advantage in the jobs market. But it's not just about highly developed written and oral communication skills. Learning another language also involves lots of other skills that employers value.



Top ten languages for UK's future
according to the British Council:

SPANISH, ARABIC, FRENCH,
MANDARIN, GERMAN, PORTUGUESE
ITALIAN, RUSSIAN, TURKISH, JAPANESE

Thinking skills and attention to detail

- Speakers of multiple languages perform better on some memory tasks
- Research also suggests advantages in switching between different tasks
- Knowing another language is linked to advantages in focussing attention and ignoring irrelevant information
- Language learners are good problem solvers - especially if you've lived abroad

Interpersonal and team work skills

- Understanding other languages improves awareness of cultures at home and abroad and encourages a truly global mind-set
- People who speak multiple languages tend to be better at negotiating and taking other people's perspective
- Knowledge of other languages is associated with enhanced team work and communication skills in your own language
- Time spent immersed in another culture learning to think in a new language can improve self-reliance and flexibility

Fluency or competency?

- These advantages apply to people who started learning a language at high school or later, as well as those who grew up in bilingual families
- All sources agree that ability to communicate is more important than "perfect", native-like fluency

The benefits of language learning have been recognised by both Scottish and UK Governments, who now require languages to be taught at Primary Schools in an attempt to bridge this skills gap.

**RIGHT NOW HOWEVER, LANGUAGE SKILLS ARE RARE
... DON'T SELL THEM SHORT!**

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