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The Relationship between Students' Motivation for Studying Business English and Their Knowledge of Business English and Its Terminology

Abstract

The study investigates the relationship between English Philology students' motivation for studying Business English and their actual knowledge of business terminology, some underlying economic concepts and basic rules of business correspondence. It is hypothesized that students who have higher motivation also possess more extensive knowledge of Business English, yet motivation alone is not enough but must be accompanied by a real effort put in studying the language. The study consisted of a test focusing on business terminology, the correction of errors in a business letter, and a test of selected economic concepts, followed by a questionnaire. As the results show, both the students' motivation and knowledge of Business English are varied. In particular, their knowledge varies between years of studies and areas of terminology or skills. In fact, some of the terms proved difficult even for relatively advanced students. Thus, even though motivation does play a role, its role does not seem to be decisive, as Business English is a complex field whose mastery requires extensive study and a lot of sustained effort. However, their awareness of their language needs is quite high, so they are likely to remain motivated and to attain a high level of competence in Business English.

Keywords: Business English, motivation, terminology, language needs

Undoubtedly, English is nowadays the global language as well as the language of international business. As Crystal (2003, p. 10) explains, the maintenance of the global status of a language requires economic power and, indeed, the driving force behind the dominance of English is economics. Thus, it goes without saying that people who want to work in business need to learn English, though not only general English, but also Business English with its terminology and rules of correspondence. As motivation constitutes an essential component of foreign language learning, which is a long and laborious process (Szałek, 2004, p. 22), it can be assumed that they are motivated to learn Business English, regardless of whether their motivation is purely instrumental, based on the desire to obtain, for example, a better-paid job, or integrative, involving willingness to communicate with native speakers and become a member of the English-speaking community (Gardner, 1985, as cited in Dörnyei, 1994, p. 274), or a combination of both. However, motivation alone does not yet guarantee foreign language learning success if it is not accompanied by a concrete learning effort. As Cherciov (2013) has shown for language maintenance in contexts conducive to attrition, a positive attitude and motivation cannot counterbalance attrition but require a language maintenance effort. By the same token, however essential motivation is for learning Business English, it can only help learners to focus on studying this area of English, but it cannot replace the necessary effort.

The purpose of the study is thus an investigation of English Philology students' motivation for learning Business English and of the relationship between that motivation and their actual learning results. More precisely, it is attempted to find out whether and to what extent the participants' knowledge of Business English depends on their motivation, or whether motivation is something they only declare, but their actual knowledge of Business English is independent of it. For example, a student might regard themselves as highly motivated, but not devote enough time and effort to the study of Business English. Therefore, attention is paid not only to the students' motivation, but also to their knowledge of Business English and of selected economic concepts.

As the participants are first- and second-year students, the knowledge of Business English tested here is still quite elementary and includes general business terms and the basic rules of business correspondence, and their motivation can be assumed to be based on a general interest in Business English, combined with plans regarding their future jobs, but it cannot yet be the same as the motivation of employees with specific language needs. In fact, as the present author has shown elsewhere (Włosowicz, 2018), sources of motivation for learning Business English are varied and complex, showing a mixture of instrumental motivation, integrative motivation and an interest in Business English, which does not depend on the year of studies or even the students' nationality (Polish and Czech in that case).

In general, research on the pedagogical aspects of Business English so far has focused mainly on teaching it, on the one hand, and on learners' needs on the other, taking into consideration the content of the course and the teacher's and the learners' linguistic competence and subject-matter knowledge (Donna, 2000; Dudley-Evans & St John, 1998; Hutchinson & Waters, 1987; Sing, 2017), but, arguably, little attention has been paid to the role of motivation in learning Business English. Certainly, the role of motivation has been extensively studied in the context of general language learning (e.g., Dörnyei, 1994; Dörnyei & Ushioda (eds.), 2009), but research on Business English tends to emphasize learners' needs rather than their motivation. As will be discussed in more detail below, needs and motivation can be assumed to be related to each other, as people are generally motivated to meet their needs, whether physiological, emotional or related to knowledge and development (Szałek, 2004, pp. 8–10), but needs and motivation are not the same. Rather, the perception of needs might be regarded as a source of motivation to meet them, for example, by learning what is perceived as useful or likely to become useful. However, in the case of university students who do not work in business yet, needs related to Business English cannot be very specific, such as the need to master general business terminology and understand the underlying economic processes.

Business English as an Area of ESP

Generally speaking, English for Specific Purposes (ESP) constitutes a field of research and teaching in its own right, ruled by a number of principles. It also imposes a number of requirements on the teacher and the content. In their definition of ESP, Dudley-Evans and St John (1998, pp. 4–5) enumerate several absolute and variable characteristics of the field. The absolute characteristics include focus on meeting the learner's specific needs and using the methodology and activities of the disciplines ESP serves; in fact, "the language (grammar, lexis, register), skills, discourse and genres" (Dudley-Evans & St John, 1998, p. 5) ESP focuses on are those which are required by those activities. On the other hand, the variable characteristics are as follows: "ESP may be related for or designed for specific disciplines" (Dudley-Evans & St John, 1998, p. 5), in some cases its teaching methodology may diverge from that of general English, it is most likely to be taught to adults (less frequently to secondary school students), and it "is generally designed for intermediate or advanced students" (Dudley-Evans & St John, 1998, p. 5), who possess at least basic knowledge of English, although it can also be taught to beginners.

At the same time, ESP constitutes a multi-disciplinary activity (Dudley-Evans & St John, 1998, p. 17) in which two kinds of content are used: carrier content and real content. The real content is the language being taught, for example, the language of process, presented to biologists in the context of a text about the life cycle of a plant, which, in turn, constitutes the carrier content (Dudley-Evans & St John, 1998, p. 11).

The ESP practitioner also has five different roles: a teacher, a "course designer and materials provider" (Dudley-Evans & St John, 1998, p. 13), a collaborator, a researcher, and an evaluator. However, in ESP, evaluators do not necessarily have to be teachers. As shown by Zhang (2013), the evaluation of

Business English students' skills may differ between evaluators. While academic teachers focus on language accuracy and the appropriate formats, business practitioners emphasize more practical criteria, such as power relationships, the corporate culture and time constraints (Puvenesvary, 2003, as cited in Zhang, 2013, p. 145). Similarly, the results of Zhang's (2013, p. 153) study confirm that students and professionals approach the business genres differently, which indicates a gap between the classroom and the professional context. As Zhang (2013, p. 154) concludes, "business genres need to be taught in a holistic way," taking into consideration "the goal of the activity" (Zhang, 2013, p. 154).

Moreover, it has often been emphasized that teaching English for Specific Purposes (ESP), including Business English, is closely connected with needs analysis and the effort to meet learners' language needs (Dudley-Evans & St John, 1998; Hutchinson & Waters, 1987; Sing, 2017). As Vandermeeren (2005, p. 176) concludes, before putting learners in contact with a foreign language and culture, "the teachers must know which business-related skills and knowledge their learners need." According to Hutchinson and Waters (1987, p. 53, their emphasis), the main difference between ESP and General English "is not the *existence* of a need as such, but rather an *awareness* of the need." Hutchison and Waters (1987, p. 54) distinguish between target needs, or "what the learner needs to do in the target situation," and learning needs, or "what the learner needs to do in order to learn." Target needs include necessities (knowledge and skills necessary for the learner to function in the target situation), lacks (which of the necessities they have not mastered yet), and wants, or needs perceived by the learner, which may differ from those perceived by the teacher or another person involved, such as the learner's superior. For example, a salesman may speak English fluently but incorrectly. He may regard his English as sufficient and feel no motivation to improve it, though his employer may think he ought to improve his grammatical accuracy in order not to taint the company's image (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987, p. 57). On the other hand, knowing the target situation is not a sufficient indicator of learning needs. In fact, as Hutchinson and Waters (1987, p. 62) put it, "learners may be well motivated in the subject lesson or in their work, but totally turned off by encountering the same material in an ESP classroom." Thus, learning needs analysis should take into consideration such factors as the learners, their background, the reasons for taking the course, the available resources, etc. (pp. 62–63).

However, as Sing (2017, p. 337) has remarked, traditional needs analysis has been challenged by new approaches to learning and teaching. For example, "[t]alking of contradictory needs, the gulf between target genres in education and those in the workplace continues to be a vexing issue" (Sing, 2017, p. 337). For example, Lung (2014, p. 267, as cited in Sing, 2017, p. 337) proposes a "blended needs analysis," which combines three perspectives: the individual, the institutional and the societal one, and involves a shift "from a predominantly language- and genre-based target-situation analysis towards the inclusion of community-based practice and the attainment of institutional goals" (Sing, 2017, p. 337). This confirms Zhang's (2013, pp. 153–154) observation that there is a discrepancy between the teaching of Business English and its actual use, and that teaching should be more holistic and should take into consideration the corporate culture, the target situation, etc.

Still, it must be remembered that the needs of actual business people, company employees, etc., who work in a particular branch of industry or commerce, who have business partners in particular foreign countries and perform a particular role in the company, have much more specific language needs than university students do, who may not know yet where they will work in the future. Thus, while meeting their language needs can be regarded as motivating, it must be remembered that, at that stage, their beliefs about Business English in use and thus their perceived language needs may not be fully accurate and it is rather the teacher who is likely to know what knowledge and skills they may need in the future. Similarly, as it is still impossible to know the target situations in which they will find themselves in the future, they should be taught more general Business English, and be prepared for lifelong learning.

Language Needs and Motivation

By and large, it can be assumed that learners who are motivated to study a foreign language perceive some learning needs. Such needs may be connected, on the one hand, with short-term learning goals, especially ones related to instrumental motivation (cf. Gardner, 1985, as cited in Dörnyei, 1994, p. 274), such as passing a test and obtaining a good grade, and to long-term goals, which may involve either instrumental motivation (e.g., obtaining a good job in the future) or integrative motivation (communicating with native speakers, exploring the target language culture, travelling and becoming a member of the English-speaking community, etc.).

Indeed, motivation can be of many different types and can have different sources. One of the most frequently cited divisions is the one introduced by Gardner (1985, as cited in Dörnyei, 1994, p. 274), into integrative and instrumental motivation. However, as Gardner and McIntyre (1993, p. 4) admit, this division is "too static and restricted" because, in fact, motivation is dynamic and involves a complex set of factors. At the same time, both types of motivation can be conducive to learning. As shown by a number of studies (Dörnyei, 1990; Lukman, 1972; Gardner & McIntyre, 1991, as cited in Gardner & McIntyre, 1993, p. 4), "achievement in a second language is facilitated by instrumental orientation (or motivation) as well as integrative motivation and attitudes" (Gardner & McIntyre, 1993, p. 4).

Another division, proposed by Deci and Ryan (1985, as cited in Dörnyei, 1994, pp. 275–276), distinguishes between intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. While intrinsic motivation is based on learners' natural curiosity and interest, extrinsic motivation involves expecting an external reward or avoiding punishment. However, as Dörnyei (1994, p. 276, his emphasis) remarks, "under certain circumstances—if they are sufficiently *self-determined* and *internalized*—extrinsic rewards can be combined with, or even lead to, intrinsic motivation."

Still, according to Dörnyei (2009, p. 10), the term "integrative" does not apply to many learning environments and, simultaneously, it is ambiguous, as it is often difficult to determine "what the target of the integration is" (Dörnyei, 2009, p. 23). Instead, Dörnyei (2005, as cited in Dörnyei, 2009, p. 29) has proposed "The L2 Motivational Self System," which comprises three components: The Ideal L2 Self, the Ought-to L2 Self, and the L2 Learning Experience. If we imagine our ideal self as fluent in the foreign language, we are more likely to be motivated "to reduce the discrepancy between our actual and ideal selves" (Dörnyei, 2009, p. 29). According to Dörnyei (2009, p. 29), the Ideal L2 Self encompasses "traditional integrative and internalized instrumental motives." By contrast, the Ought-to L2 Self relates to "the attributes that one believes one *ought to* possess to meet expectations and to *avoid* possible negative outcomes" (Dörnyei, 2009, p. 29, his emphasis). Finally, L2 Learning Experience is related to "executive" motives which apply to the learning environment and functions at a different level, as a bottom-up process.

As mentioned by the present author elsewhere (Włosowicz, 2018, p. 109), in the context of Business English it would also be difficult to talk about integrative motivation, unless one meant becoming a member of the international business community. However, the ideal L2 self can play an important role here. Imagining one's ideal self as being able to use Business English correctly in all situations can be a significant motivating factor, which has been confirmed by the present author (Włosowicz, 2018, p. 111). Indeed, as students who still lack experience with Business English in a work environment, they are motivated by imagining their ideal selves.

Moreover, as mentioned above, motivation is dynamic (Gardner & McIntyre, 1993), so it can be assumed to change with time. It may be hypothesised that if students' learning needs are met, they are more likely to feel that they are engaged in a meaningful activity, which, in turn, can motivate them further (cf. Włosowicz, 2016, p. 281). According to the PERMA model (Seligman, 2011, as cited in McIntyre & Mercer, 2014, p. 154), the dimensions of a good life—and, arguably, also of successful learning—include:

> a focus on positive emotion (P), engagement with activities that use one's character strengths I, developing positive interpersonal relationships I, finding meaning by serving a cause beyond oneself (M), and recognizing areas of accomplishment and achievement (A). (McIntyre & Mercer, 2014, p. 154)

Applying these dimensions to the learning of Business English, it might be assumed that students are likely to feel motivated if they focus on the positive emotions of doing what really interests them and what they find meaningful, if they observe progress in their Business English skills, and if their relationships with one another and the teacher are positive. As for the character strengths, they can be supposed to be comparable for Business English and for foreign language learning in general, though students choosing to specialize in Business English might be supposed to possess some interpersonal skills useful in business.

The Study

Participants

The present study was carried out with forty-four English Philology students specializing in Business English at the University of Silesia in Katowice (Faculty of Humanities in Sosnowiec), twenty of whom were first-year students and twenty-four were second-year ones. Thirty-three of them were female (fifteen in the first year and eighteen in the second year), five were male (three in the first year and two in the second year), and six did not indicate their gender (two in the first year and four in the second). Their native language (L1) was Polish, except for one person who indicated Ukrainian, and three participants did not provide any information about their language repertoires. Though no placement test was administrated, they could be assumed to be advanced in L2 English (B2/C1) and they were studying to develop their English language competence with a focus on Business English. Forty of them had German as L3, one had French as L3, and three mentioned Spanish as L4 and one—French as L4. It may thus be supposed that, as multilingual learners, they possessed considerable language awareness and were also aware of their language needs and motivation sources.

For the purposes of the study, each group (i.e., the first and the second year) was divided into a high-motivation and a medium-motivation group on the basis of the overall motivation levels (Question 2: How strong is your overall motivation for studying Business English?) indicated in the questionnaire (see Appendix 2). It was assumed that 1 or 2 on the 1 to 5 Likert scale corresponded to low motivation, 3—to medium motivation (one student marked 3.5, which was not included in the scale, but his motivation was also classified as medium), and 4 or 5—to high motivation. In fact, nobody marked 1 or 2, so none of the students had low motivation for studying Business English.

Hence, seventeen students in the first year had high motivation and three had medium motivation. In the second year, fourteen students had high motivation and ten students had medium motivation, which might suggest some disappointment with the Business English specialization or a change in priorities. In order to check whether the difference between the first and the second years was statistically significant, a chi-square test was performed. However, the difference was not significant at $p = 0.0535$ (df = 1), which indicates that, although some of the second-year students might have lost their motivation for studying Business English, it cannot be said that the second year's motivation is significantly lower.

Method

The study consisted of two parts: a Business English test and a questionnaire concerning the students' motivation for studying Business English, the reasons for studying it, their motivation for studying business vocabulary and business correspondence, and acquiring background economic knowledge, as well as the test they had just taken. The components of the test were: a multiple-choice terminology test, a gap-filling task, the correction of errors in an enquiry about a product, and a multiple-choice test of economic and business knowledge. The test is presented in Appendix 1 and the questionnaire in Appendix 2 at the end of the article.

The Business English test was based on such textbooks as Mascull (2010), Sweeney (2002), Ashley (2003), and Jendrych and Wiśniewska (2012), complemented with the author's general knowledge of business and its terminology. Though most of the terms were supposed to be already known to the participants, some of them could be more difficult, but it was assumed that more strongly motivated students could study Business English on their own and thus their knowledge could go beyond the classes at university.

The research questions were as follows: First, what do the results reveal about the participants' knowledge of Business English as well as about their general knowledge of economics? Second, do the students' results depend on their motivation for studying Business English?

Results

First, the results of the multiple-choice terminology test varied across years and motivation levels, but it can also be observed that some items posed the participants more difficulty than the others. In each item, only one answer was correct (Corr), the other three were incorrect (Inc) and the lack of an answer was classified as avoidance (Av). The results (both numbers and percentages) are presented for all four groups, 1M (first year, medium motivation), 1H (first year, high motivation), 2M (second year, medium motivation) and 2H (second year, high motivation), in Table 1 below.

Table 1

The Results of the Multiple-choice Terminology Test

Item	First year						Second year					
	Medium (1M)			High (1H)			Medium (2M)			High (2H)		
	Corr N %	Inc N %	Av N %	Corr N %	Inc N %	Av N %	Corr N %	Inc N %	Av N %	Corr N %	Inc N %	Av N %
1	2 66.7	1 33.3		8 47.06	9 52.94		10 100			11 78.57	3 21.43	
2	1 33.3	2 66.7		2 11.76	15 88.24		6 60	4 40		8 57.14	6 42.86	
3	2 66.7	1 33.3		14 82.35	2 11.77	1 5.88	7 70	3 30		13 92.86	1 7.14	
4	3 100			16 94.12	1 5.88		9 90	1 10		12 85.71	2 14.29	
5	3 100			15 88.24	2 11.77		9 90	1 10		13 92.86	1 7.14	
6		3 100		5 29.41	12 70.59		5 50	5 50		2 14.29	10 71.43	2 14.29
7	1 33.3	2 66.7		5 29.41	11 64.71	1 5.88	4 40	6 60		5 35.71	9 64.29	
8	1 33.3	2 66.7		13 76.47	4 23.53		10 100			12 85.71	2 14.29	
9	1 33.3	2 66.7		11 64.71	6 35.29		6 60	4 40		10 71.43	3 21.43	1 7.14
10	3 100			10 58.82	4 23.53	3 17.65	9 90	1 10		13 92.86	1 7.14	
Total	17 56.7	13 43.3	0	99 58.24	66 38.82	5 2.94	75 75	25 25	0	99 70.72	38 27.14	3 2.14

In general, there were more correct answers than incorrect ones in all four groups, which indicates that the students were relatively familiar with the vocabulary. Apparently, the most difficult items were 2, 6, and 7, as they had the highest percentages of incorrect answers. In 2, not only did the participants confuse shareholders with stakeholders, but they also accepted the irrelevant answers "involveds" (invented by the author) and "companions." The correct answer was "stakeholders," but it is possible that they had encountered the term "shareholders" more often (in fact, shareholders are also stakeholders, but not all stakeholders are shareholders) and formal similarity influenced their choices as well. In 6, the target answer was "telecommuting," a word not all of them probably knew. In 7, a market where the supply is greater than the demand is a buyer's market, because buyers can choose and may buy from the competition, and also prices are low. This could not so easily be guessed if one did not know the term, as the opposite also seemed logical (a seller's market as a market filled with goods by sellers). By contrast, the easiest items were 3, 4, 5, 8, 9, and 10 for both years, and 1 for the second year (the first year might not have studied it yet, but the percentages of correct answers indicate that some of them had already encountered the term "brand loyalty" or guessed it). "Merger" (5) was certainly known to them, and so were probably such terms as "flexitime" (3), "a trade surplus" (4), "perishables" (8) and "outsourcing" (9), or they were easy to guess. Finally, 10 (the amount of money spent on advertising not being a key indicator of the state of a country's economy) could be supposed to be logical enough to infer.

The results of the first and the second years were then compared by means of a chi-square test in order to check whether their correctness depended on the year of studies.

As $p < 0.01$ ($p = 0.004$, df = 2), it can be concluded that the difference between the first and the second years was statistically significant. However, comparing all four groups (the high and medium motivation groups in the first and in the second year, the difference was no longer statistically significant ($p = 0.036$, df = 6). It can be concluded that the role of motivation is not so straightforward: on the one hand, highly motivated first-year students could do as well as or even better than second-year students. On the other hand, the existence of high scores (even 100% for items 1 and 8 in the 2M group) in the medium motivation groups suggests that moderately motivated students could also possess extensive knowledge of Business English.

The second part, the gap-filling task, consisted of ten sentences, which required filling in the gaps with one word (for example, "accountant" to complete the expression "chief accountant") or with a whole expression (for example, "strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats" for the acronym SWOT). Therefore, the answers were divided into four categories: correct (fully correct, possibly with a small spelling mistake which still showed that the student knew the target term), partly correct (only a part of the expression or one element of a pair was given correctly, for example, the student provided the target expression, "indirect taxes," but in the same sentence they wrote "income taxes" instead of "direct taxes"), incorrect (the wrong term or a non-existent one), and avoidance, which meant leaving a gap. The results of the gap-filling task are presented in Tables 2 and 3, for the first and the second year respectively.

Table 2

Results of the Gap-filling Task (First Year): Numbers and Percentages

	Medium (1M)				High (1H)			
Item	Correct N %	Partly correct N %	Incorrect N %	Avoidance N %	Correct N %	Partly correct N %	Incorrect N %	Avoidance N %
1	2 66.7	1 33.3			8 47.06	4 23.53	1 5.88	4 23.53
2	3 100				15 88.24		1 5.88	1 5.88
3	1 33.3		2 66.7		5 29.41	3 17.65	3 17.65	6 35.29
4	3 100				17 100			
5	2 66.7			1 33.3	8 47.06		1 5.88	8 47.06
6		1 33.3	1 33.3	1 33.3			5 29.41	12
7				3 100			1 5.88	16
8	1 33.3			2 66.7	5 29.41			12 70.59
9	1 33.3			2 66.7	7 41.18	1 5.88	4 23.53	5 29.41
10			1 33.3	2 66.7	4 23.53		2 11.76	11 64.71
Total	13 43.33	2 6.67	4 13.33	11 36.67	69 40.59	8 4.71	18 10.59	75 44.11

Table 3

Results of the Gap-filling Task (Second Year)

Item	Medium (2M)				High (2H)			
	Correct N %	Partly correct N %	Incorrect N %	Avoidance N %	Correct N %	Partly correct N %	Incorrect N %	Avoidance N %
1	9 90	1 10			14 100			
2			10 100		3 21.43	4 28.57	3 21.43	4 28.57
3	8 80	1 10		1 10	11 78.57	2 14.29	1 7.14	
4	8 80			2 20	13 92.86			1 7.14
5	4 40		1 10	5 50	4 28.57			10 71.43
6	3 30			7 70	2 14.29			12 85.71
7			3 30	7 70	1 7.14			13 92.86
8			1 10	9 90	2 14.29		1 7.14	11 78.57
9	5 50	1 10	3 30	1 10	7 50	1 7.14	2 14.29	4 28.57
10	2 20		7 70	1 10			9 64.29	5 35.71
Total	39 39	3 3	25 25	33 33	57 40.71	7 5	16 11.43	60 42.86

As can be seen above, here the results are more varied, as retrieving business terminology from memory was more difficult than choosing the correct answers from the available ones. Therefore, a high percentage of avoidance (possibly, due to the inability to retrieve the terms) can be observed in all four groups. It might seem surprising that the avoidance rates are higher in the high motivation groups than in the medium motivation ones, but a possible explanation is that highly motivated students preferred leaving a gap to making a mistake; indeed, the percentages of incorrect answers are higher in the medium motivation groups. Surprisingly enough, the percentages of correct answers in the high and medium motivation groups are comparable; in the second year the high motivation group provided slightly more correct answers (40.71%) than the medium motivation one (39%), but in the first year it is the opposite (43.33% correct answers in the medium motivation group and 40.59% in the high motivation group). It is possible that the medium motivation groups were more inclined to take risks, that is why they wrote what seemed correct to them, and in some cases it proved correct.

The results were compared by means of a chi-square test to find out whether the correctness of the answers depended, first, on the year of studies and, second, on both the year of studies and motivation. In the former case, the difference between the first and the second years was not statistically significant at $p = 0.3211$ (df = 3). In the latter case, the difference between the four groups 1M, 1H, 2M, and 2H was not statistically significant either at $p = 0.1336$ (df = 9). Thus, the students' performance on the gap-filling task did not depend on the year of studies, nor on their motivation.

The most correct answers were given in sentences 1 and 4, and the most avoidance (or ignorance of the target terms) was observed in sentences 6, 7, 8, and 10. Undoubtedly, the acronyms SWOT (1) and ASAP (4) were familiar to the students, the latter probably not only from Business English classes. By contrast, the expressions "hands-on experience" (6), and "chief accountant" (10), as well as the acronym AGM (8), were much more difficult to retrieve or even unknown to some students. However, "the glass ceiling" (7) might have been familiar to them from the press, etc., not necessarily from Business English classes, but it proved not to be the case. Table 4 shows examples of the students' errors.

Table 4

Examples of Errors in the Gap-filling Task

Example	Group	Student's response (in the sentence context)
1	2H	The acronym USP stands for *Unique Selling Product.*
2	2M	The set of stereotypes, prejudices, etc. which prevent women from reaching senior executive positions is referred to as the *head* ceiling.
3	2M	The person responsible for preparing a company's balance sheets is its chief *executive*.
4	1M	Contact with customers gives salespeople *work*-on experience.
5	1H	This car is more *economic* than the other because it uses less petrol.
6	2M	*Visible* taxes are paid on one's income, while *hidden* taxes are paid when one buys some products and the tax is included in the price of the products (e.g. VAT).
7	2M	*Income* taxes are paid on one's income, while ________________ taxes are paid when one buys some products and the tax is included in the price of the products (e.g. VAT).

As the examples show, the participants' attempts to fill in the gaps often reflected reliance on words which seemed to fit in the contexts (e.g., "work-on experience," instead of "hands-on experience," "Unique Selling Product" for

“Unique Selling Point/Proposition”), or expressions which sounded familiar but did not fit in the context (e.g., “chief executive” for “chief accountant”). In Example 5, the error comes from the confusion of the adjectives “economical” and “economic.” In Example 6, the answer was plausible, but the target terms were “direct taxes” and “indirect taxes.”

As for the background knowledge of economics, again, a multiple-choice test was administered, so the possible response categories were “correct,” “incorrect” and “avoidance.”

Table 5

The Results of the Test of Economic Knowledge (Numbers and Percentages)

Item	First year						Second year					
	Medium (1M)			High (1H)			Medium (2M)			High (2H)		
	Corr. N %	Inc. N %	Av. N %	Corr. N %	Inc. N %	Av. N %	Corr. N %	Inc. N %	Av. N %	Corr. N %	Inc. N %	Av. N %
1		2 66.7	1 33.3	4 23.53	12 70.59	1 5.88	8 80		2 20	14 100		
2	2 66.7		1 33.3	13 76.47	3 17.65	1 5.88	6 60	2 20	2 20	13 92.86	1 7.14	
3	2 66.7		1 33.3	16 94.12	1 5.88		8 80		2 20	13 92.86	1 7.14	
4	2 66.7		1 33.3	11 64.71	6 35.29		3 30	5 50	2 20	3 21.43	10 71.43	1 7.14
5		2 66.7	1 33.3	7 41.18	7 41.18	3 17.65	1 10	6 60	3 30		11 78.57	3 21.43
Total	6 40	4 26.67	5 33.33	51 60	29 34.12	5 5.88	26 52	13 26	11 22	43 61.43	23 32.86	4 5.71

Thus, it can be seen that the highest percentages of correct answers (100%, 94.12% and 92.86%) were provided by the high motivation groups, however, this also depended on the question, as in response to question 5, 78.57% of the second-year high motivation group gave incorrect answers and none gave a correct one. Similarly, in the second-year medium motivation group, there were more incorrect (60%) than correct (10%) answers to question 5. By contrast, there were equal numbers of correct and incorrect answers (seven students, i.e., 41.18%) in the first-year high motivation group. Either they were better at guessing, or they had just learnt the difference between Theory X and Theory Y, while the second-year students might not have learnt it—possibly, with another teacher—or might have forgotten it. On the other hand, in question 1 (about the four P's and the additional three P's) the second-year students did visibly better, and in question 3 (about a mixed economy), all four groups provided many more correct answers than incorrect ones. This suggests that those questions were based on material they had mastered well.

A chi-square test was carried out to compare the first and the second year. At p = 0.795 (df = 2) the difference was not statistically significant at all. However, it all four groups were compared, the difference was statistically significant (p = 0.00695, df = 6, so it was significant at $p < 0.01$), which suggests that the results depended both on motivation and on the year of studies.

Moreover, the students' performance on the error correction task was analyzed. However, as the responses could vary—which was mentioned above (Zhang, 2013)—the evaluation of business correspondence can depend on who evaluates it and what the purpose of the letter is—the analysis was qualitative. Generally, the students noticed that the letter was badly written; as one person remarked, it was slightly chaotic. As for the layout, they noticed that the letter should be divided into paragraphs, two students noticed that the address should be before the date, and some wanted to change the address from "April 21, 2017" to "21 April 2017" and the address from "25, Fox Street" to "Fox Street 25" (in fact, both formats are possible). Some students also tried to make the letter more polite, for example, by adding "or Madam" (there was only "Dear Sir"), "I look forward to hearing from you," or changing "I want" to "I would like," or "Best regards" to "Yours faithfully." Three first-year students insisted that the sender should have indicated his position in the company. In fact, he might have been an individual customer, so his position in the company would have been irrelevant. It is possible that the first year had studied a lot of examples of business letters with the sender's position in the company, which affected their decisions. However, not all corrections were accurate, for example, changing "Best regards" to "Kind regards," which did not increase the level of politeness.

Finally, it is worth analyzing the participants' motivation for studying Business English in general, as well as different components of Business English knowledge. The students' mean overall motivation in all four groups was M = 3.8488 (SD = 0.6412), so it was fairly high and relatively similar among the students. In the 1M group the mean was 3 (SD = 0), as they had all indicated 3, in 1H M = 4.235 (SD = 0.437), in 2M M = 3.05 (SD = 0.158), and in 2H M = 4.1538 (SD = 0.376). This indicates that the groups were fairly consistent in their motivation, that is, that there were not big differences within the groups.

However, the participants' levels of motivation for learning particular components of Business English competence were more varied. Mean motivation for learning business terminology varied from 3 (SD = 0) in the 1M group, thorough M = 3.4 (SD = 0.699) in 2M, M = 4 (SD = 0.612) in 1H and M = 4.1429 (SD = 0.5345) in 2H, which indicates that the second-year students were more motivated than their first-year counterparts; probably, they understood how important terminology was. Still, mean motivation for studying business terminology calculated for all four groups remained relatively high (3.8409, SD = 0.68). On the other hand, motivation for learning business correspondence was already lower: M = 3.5116 (SD = 1.055) for all four groups together, M = 2.667 (SD = 1.1547) for 1M, M = 3.5294 (SD = 0.7998) for 1H, 3 (SD = 1.15) for 2M and M = 4 (SD = 0.7845) for 2H, which suggests that those second-year students who were highly motivated for studying Business English also understood the importance of correspondence skills. Motivation for learning economics to understand the underlying concepts was slightly higher for all four groups together (M = 3.727, SD = 0.924), but also more varied: from M = 2 (SD = 0) in 1M, through M = 3.1 (SD = 0.738) in 2M, M = 4.0588 (SD = 0.748) in 1H, and M = 4.1429 (SD = 0.663) in 2H. Thus, while the less motivated students in the first-year may have regarded economics as irrelevant to Business English, the more motivated ones in both years understood its importance, and even the less motivated second-year students were already more willing to learn it. However, although the mean motivation for acquiring background economic knowledge in the 2H group was the same as that for learning terminology, in the former case it varied more from one student to another.

Last but not least, the students' perception of the difficulty of the tasks was analyzed: the mean difficulty analyzed for all four groups was medium: M = 3.4886 (SD = 0.774), but it varied among the groups. Thus, the mean difficulty level was 4 (SD = 1) in 1M, 3.47 (SD = 0.7174) in 1H, 3.75 (SD = 0.9789) in 2M and 3.2143 (SD = 0.579) in 2H, which shows that the less motivated students found the tasks more difficult than the more motivated ones. This is not surprising, as the less motivated ones can be assumed to have possessed less knowledge of Business English.

Conclusions

In general, the results show a certain relationship between motivation and the students' performance on the tasks as well as their perception of the tasks' difficulty. However, the relationship is not as straightforward as it might be expected.

To answer the research questions, first, the participants' knowledge of Business English is relatively good (taking into consideration the time of studying the field), but also considerably varied. Certainly, some of the terminology and concepts were better-known to them than others, which can be explained by the fact that they were still in the process of learning Business English. Still, some of the general knowledge items could be assumed to be known from the press, the Internet or other media, not necessarily from the Business English course at university. For example, in the economic knowledge task, items 2 (about the benefits of international trade) and 3 (about a mixed economy), which seemed quite logical if one had enough general knowledge, proved fairly easy for all groups. Still, it can be supposed that the highly motivated students read more about economics (for example, press articles) in their free time too, because they were interested in it. Judging by the numbers of correct and incorrect answers, predictably enough, the multiple-choice tasks proved to be easier than the gap-filling task, as recalling partial knowledge or even choosing the most plausible answer using logical thinking was easier than retrieving terms from memory.

Second, motivation certainly plays a role in the learning of Business English, but the relationship between the students' motivation and performance is quite complex. On the one hand, the highly motivated students often provided more correct answers than those with medium motivation, but that was not always the case. In fact, even highly motivated students had difficulty with some terms as well as with economic background knowledge. It is possible that they had not studied them yet or that they had not acquired them well enough. As the chi-square tests show, the differences between the first and the second year were significant at $p < 0.01$ in the terminology task, but not in the gap-filling task and the one concerning economic knowledge. By contrast, the differences between all four groups, taking into consideration both the year of studies and motivation, were significant at $p < 0.01$ for the economic knowledge task, but not terminology, either in the multiple-choice task or in the gap-filling one. On the other hand, the students generally coped relatively well with the error correction task.

Certainly, it can be assumed that the more motivated students are interested in Business English, understand the importance of the different skills, even the less obvious ones, such as correspondence (the less motivated ones might assume that everyone who works in a company and sends emails to foreigners has sufficient correspondence skills; indeed, company employees do send emails which diverge from the rules of formal business correspondence, Włosowicz & Kopeć, 2017) and economic knowledge, and are aware of their language needs. Thus, it may be supposed that they will remain motivated and attain a high level of competence in Business English.

However, one reservation needs to be made: as the motivation levels were indicated by the students themselves, it should be admitted that they were to some extent subjective. For example, one may have felt highly motivated (for example, they found Business English interesting and exciting) but they may not have put enough effort in studying Business English and related economic topics, which led to lower results in the study. On the contrary, a person studying Business English with a view to a well-paid job in the future might study hard but without much curiosity, and such a learner might perceive their motivation as lower than it actually was. Thus, it must be remembered that motivation is a highly complex phenomenon and its role in learning Business English, though important, is not so straightforward and high motivation does not yet guarantee the mastery of all Business English skills.

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Teresa Maria Włosowicz

Zum Zusammenhang zwischen der Motivation der Studierenden, Wirtschaftsenglisch zu lernen, und ihren Sprachkenntnissen in Wirtschaftsenglisch

Zusammenfassung

Gegenstand der vorliegenden Studie ist der Zusammenhang zwischen der Motivation von Anglistikstudenten, Wirtschaftsenglisch zu lernen, und ihren tatsächlichen Kenntnissen in Bezug auf Wirtschaftsterminologie, ausgewählte Wirtschaftsbegriffe und Grundlagen der Geschäftskorrespondenz. Im Rahmen der Studie wurde ein Kompetenzentest im Bereich der Wirtschaftsterminologie, Wirtschaftsbegriffe bzw. Fehlerkorrektur in einem Geschäftsbrief durchgeführt sowie ein Fragebogen ausgefüllt. Die Ergebnisse zeigen, dass es Unterschiede sowohl in der Motivation der Studierenden als auch in ihren Sprachkenntnissen in Wirtschaftsenglisch gibt und dass manche Begriffe selbst für relativ fortgeschrittene Studenten eine Schwierigkeit darstellen. Auch wenn die Motivation eine gewisse Rolle spielt, scheint sie nicht entscheidend zu sein, weil die Wirtschaftssprache ein komplexes Wissensgebiet ist, dessen Beherrschung langfristige Anstrengungen erfordert. Allerdings ist ihr Bewusstsein von sprachlichen Bedürfnissen recht ausgeprägt, so dass es wahrscheinlich ist, dass sie motiviert bleiben und ein hohes Kompetenzniveau in Wirtschaftsenglisch erreichen werden.

Schlüsselwörter: Wirtschaftsenglisch, Motivation, Terminologie, sprachlicher Bedarf

Appendix 1

The Test Used in the Study

PART 1: BUSINESS ENGLISH TEST

1) Choose the most appropriate word:

1. Buying a certain product or the products of a certain company regularly is referred to as
   a) branding,
   b) brand loyalty,
   c) faithful shopping,
   d) company attachment.

2. All people connected with the activities of a company (its owners, employees, customers and potential customers, etc.) are called
   a) involveds,
   b) stakeholders,
   c) shareholders,
   d) companions.

3. This company is particularly valued by students, who need to reconcile work with their studies, because it offers its employees
   a) protectionism,
   b) job satisfaction,
   c) outsourcing,
   d) flexitime.

4. If a country exports more than it imports, it has a trade
   a) balance,
   b) surplus,
   c) gain,
   d) income.

5. Combining two companies of similar sizes and status into one in which they have equal rights is called a(n)
   a) merger,
   b) takeover,

c) acquisition,
d) vertical integration.

6. Working from home and sending one's work (translations, designs, etc.) to the company by email can be referred to as
a) flexibility,
b) job sharing,
c) emailing,
d) telecommuting.

7. A market where **the supply is greater than the demand** can be referred to as a
a) seller's market,
b) buyer's market,
c) social market,
d) free market.

8. Products which go bad quickly, such as food, are called
a) perishables,
b) generic products,
c) fast moving consumer goods,
d) products past the sell-by date.

9. The fact that a company focuses on its core activities and commissions external experts, companies, etc. to do certain things for it is called
a) consultancy services,
b) cost-effective management,
c) outsourcing,
d) a portfolio.

10. One of the key indicators of the state of a country's economy is NOT
a) the amount of money being spent on advertising,
b) inflation,
c) consumer spending, or how much money people are spending in the shops,
d) the jobs market, including the unemployment rate.

2) Fill in the gaps:

1. The acronym SWOT, as in SWOT analysis, stands for: _____________, ____________________, ____________________, ____________________.

2. ______________ taxes are paid on one's income, while _________ taxes are paid when one buys some products and the tax is included in the price of the products (e.g. VAT).

3. The acronym USP stands for __________________

4. The abbreviation ASAP stands for __________________

5. One should not spend all one's life at work. Instead, many experts recommend work-life __________________

6. Contact with customers gives salespeople _____________-on experience.

7. The set of stereotypes, prejudices, etc. which prevent women from reaching senior executive positions is referred to as the _________________ ceiling.

8. The abbreviation AGM stands for __________________

9. This car is more ____________ than the other because it uses less petrol.

10. The person responsible for preparing a company's balance sheets is its chief __________________.

3) Correct the errors in the enquiry. Pay attention to the content, form and layout.

April 21, 2017
Computer World Ltd.
25, Fox Street
London SW 105

Dear Sir,

I want to order a computer from your company, but I have a few questions to ask you.

First of all, do you send any free samples? If so, can I get one?

Secondly, how much would the computer cost? Third, may I have it delivered to my home?

And, finally, is there any after-sales customer care?

Best regards,
Mr Adam Williams

Your comments:

4) General knowledge of business and economics.

1. In marketing, the four P's and the three additional P's include:
   a) 1. product, price, planning and promotion, and 2. people, process and protection of customers,
   b) 1. project, production, place and promotion, and 2. people, physical presence (or physical evidence) and process,
   c) 1. product, price, place and promotion, and 2. people, physical presence (or physical evidence) and process,
   d) 1. production, price, place and planning, and 2. people, physical presence (or physical evidence) and process.
2. One of the benefits of international trade is NOT:
   a) the possibility of buying products which would otherwise be unavailable in one's country, such as citrus fruit,
   b) allowing every country to manufacture products for which it has particularly good conditions, for example, wine in a climate which allows the growing of high-quality grapes,
   c) protectionism,
   d) closer economic ties between countries.
3. A mixed economy
   a) manufactures different kinds of products,
   b) has both private and state-owned companies,
   c) has more than one currency in use,
   d) is chaotic and not controlled by anybody.
4. The term 'fair trade' refers to
   a) trade in which part of the income is donated to charity,
   b) trade in sustainable goods,
   c) a positive balance of trade,
   d) trade that ensures farmers in poor countries a sufficient income and good working conditions.
5. In management, what is the difference between Theory X and Theory Y?
   a) Theory X assumes that people are lazy by nature and have to be forced to work by an authoritarian manager, while Theory Y assumes that people want to feel valued for their work and to participate in decision-making, so management should be democratic,
   b) Theory X assumes that decisions are best made anonymously, and theory Y requires transparence and voting in public,
   c) Theory X is based on past experience, while Theory Y is based on planning future activities,
   d) Theory X involves democratic management, while Theory Y requires managers to be authoritarian.

Appendix 2

The Questionnaire Used in the Study

PART 2: QUESTIONNAIRE

Sex: F___/M___

1. L1 (native language): ___________________
L2: ___________________ Level of proficiency/time of study: __________
L3: ___________________ Level of proficiency/time of study: __________
What other languages have you studied? (Please, indicate the proficiency levels.)

2) How strong is your overall motivation for studying Business English? 1 – very weak, 5 – very strong

1 2 3 4 5

Why? (You can choose as many answers as you want.)

□ I want to use it in my future job, for example, as a translator.
□ I want to become a business person.
□ I want to combine English Philology with another profession, such as economics, management, marketing, etc.
□ I am interested in Business English in general.
□ I am interested in business and economics.
□ It is one of the subjects I study at university and I want to have good marks in it.
□ My motivation is actually weak, because it has turned out I chose the wrong specialization.
□ other (please, specify) ______________________________________

3) How strong is your motivation for studying business vocabulary and terminology? 1 – very weak, 5 – very strong

1 2 3 4 5

Why? (You can choose as many answers as you want.)

□ Vocabulary has to be used with precision.
□ Vocabulary is indispensable to understand Business English texts.
□ Vocabulary knowledge allows me to understand the underlying phenomena better.

□ Business English vocabulary is very interesting.

□ I think that business vocabulary in English and Polish reflects some cultural differences between both countries.

□ I want to have a good mark in Business English.

□ Vocabulary is not very motivating because it only requires learning the English equivalents of Polish terms.

□ Vocabulary is not very motivating because it is very easy to learn.

□ Vocabulary is not very important as long as you possess enough background knowledge of economics and you can make yourself understand.

□ other (please, specify) ___________________

4) How strong is your motivation for learning business correspondence? 1 – very weak, 5 – very strong

1 2 3 4 5

Why? (You can choose as many answers as you want.)

□ It is going to be useful in my future job.

□ I already work in a company and my knowledge of business correspondence is very useful to me.

□ It is an interesting reflection of cultural differences between Poland and the English-speaking countries.

□ I am interested in intercultural communication is general.

□ Correspondence is one of the most important activities in business.

□ Learning business correspondence is fun because it allows me to imagine that I am another person, for example, a manager writing on behalf of my company.

□ Business correspondence helps me to develop my creativity.

□ I want to have a good mark in business correspondence.

□ I am not interested in business correspondence, but I have to learn it.

□ It is boring because I cannot see any significant differences between Polish and English business correspondence.

□ other (please, specify) ___________________

How strong is your motivation for acquiring background knowledge of business and economics? 1 – very weak, 5 – very strong

1 2 3 4 5

Why? (You can choose as many answers as you want.)

□ I do not think I need any economic knowledge; it is enough to know the necessary vocabulary, expressions, etc.

□ Background knowledge is necessary if you want to understand the concepts underlying economic vocabulary.

□ I am interested in business and economics in general.

□ Business communication requires a certain knowledge of the field.

□ Apart from English Philology, I study or want to study economics (or marketing, management, etc.) too.

□ Translation requires a lot of background knowledge and I want to translate business texts.

□ for another reason (please, specify) ___________________

5) What do you do in order to learn Business English? (You can choose as many answers as you want.)

□ I ONLY rely on what we do at university and I do my homework, but I have no time for anything else.

□ I study Business English at university and I do my homework, but I also study on my own.

□ I read books in economics in English on my own.

□ I read press articles in economics in English on my own.

□ I read books and press articles in economics in Polish in order to expand my general knowledge of the field.

□ I do exercises from Business English textbooks on my own.

□ I work in a company and use every opportunity to use Business English there

□ I consult experts in the field, for example, economists who are fluent in English

□ something else (please, specify) ___________________

6) How difficult did you find the test you filled in for the present study? 1 – very easy, 2 – very difficult

1 2 3 4 5

Why? (Please, justify your answer.)