

Therefore, there is an obvious tendency to shorten words, which negatively affects the practical literacy of teenagers. The use of slang, violation of orthography, use of abbreviated words – all this, undoubtedly, has a negative impact on the culture of speech. On the plus side, the use of abbreviations helps to replace long words or expressions, to save time for typing. The abbreviation of words is just one of the many specific features that occur in online communication.

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### **ENGLISH AS A LINGUA FRANCA IN INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION PROGRAMMES: BENEFITS AND CHALLENGES**

#### **Английский язык как язык межкультурного общения в международных образовательных программах: преимущества и трудности**

English is widely used in academic, scientific, and technological fields. In education, English is often used as the medium of instruction. The use of English as a lingua franca in international exchange programmes allows participants from different countries to communicate effectively.

International education encompasses a variety of interpretations, but primarily it refers to a dynamic concept that involves a journey or movement of people, minds, or ideas across political and cultural frontiers [1]. International programmes have promoted the growing recognition of the importance of embracing diversity and fostering cross-cultural understanding in a rapidly changing world.

The object of our research is the benefits and challenges of using English as a lingua franca in international education programmes.

The overall aim of the study was to analyze the attitudes of students and teachers of Belarusian universities who participated and / or are currently participating in international education programmes towards English as a lingua franca in hosting countries, its influence exerted in the process of studying and cross-cultural communication. The research objectives were to identify the kinds of international education programmes and to look at how students' and teachers' perceptions of communication and learning transformed based on their experience of participation in international education programmes.

The survey was conducted among 25 representatives of Belarusian universities. The respondents answered a number of questions in terms of evaluating their proficiency in English before and after taking part in international educational programmes; revealing instances where cultural differences influenced effective communication in English; presenting insights from their participation in terms of English / cultural awareness / soft skills.

The questionnaire demonstrated that 48 % of participants had the upper-intermediate level of English before participation; followed by the intermediate, advanced and proficient levels that equally constitute 16 %, and only one person was at the pre-intermediate stage of learning English.

96 % of respondents answered positively to the question about the good influence such programmes have on improving their knowledge of the language after being in an English-speaking environment. The largest part of the respondents noted that there was an improvement in their speaking, active listening, soft skills, vocabulary, and understanding of cultures.

The questionnaire statistics show that the participants' most common challenges were difficulty in understanding foreign accents, illegibility of speech due to its fluency, as well as complexity in perceiving and using discipline-specific terms. The benefits of English as a lingua franca during participation were identified: English serves as a link between people who do not know each other's languages, fosters cultural understanding, and increases chances of employment.

Among the mentioned insights are the importance of soft skills and celebrating cultural differences along with the necessity for continuing development and being culturally aware in order to overcome language barriers and misunderstandings. 80 % of participants would recommend taking part in international education programmes.

Overall, the following research has shed light on the benefits and challenges of using English as a lingua franca in international education programmes. Through international educational programmes, English serves as a bridge between individuals from diverse backgrounds, promoting global cooperation.

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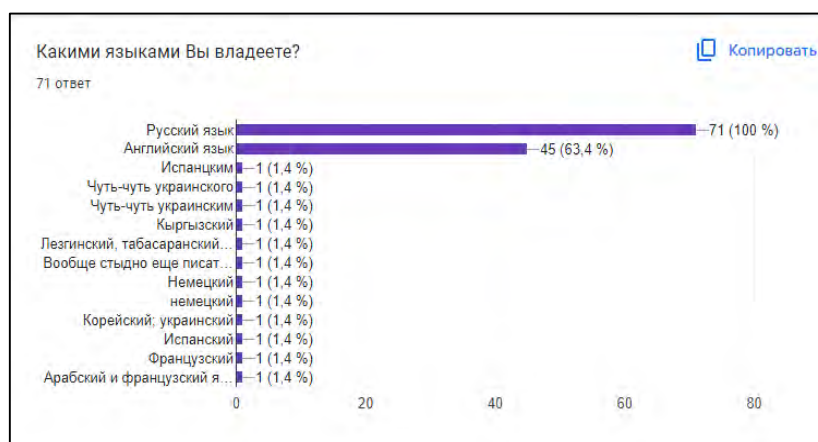
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## THE COGNITIVE EFFECTS OF LANGUAGE LEARNING: HOW ENGLISH SHAPES THE BRAIN

### Когнитивные эффекты изучения языка: как английский язык формирует мозг

English, like any other language, is a constantly evolving system, which complicates the process of learning the language and assimilating information [1]. The purpose of this work is to consider the influence of the English language on the formation of cognitive effects in thinking. Cognitive effects are cognitive distortions in which a person may overestimate his own qualities and abilities in relation to the same qualities and abilities in other people [2].

As part of this work, an experiment was conducted. The main objective of the experiment is to observe how knowledge of the English language affects the formation of thinking. The experiment involved people of different ages from 7 to 50 years. Among the participants there were those who spoke in English and those who did not speak in it. The respondents could understand that they had to answer in English only from the questions contained in the survey, for example. On the graph you can see that 45 people surveyed knew English, that is, 63.4% of all respondents (picture 1).



Picture 1