

BALANCE OF LANGUAGE COMPETENCES

Report on the performed study



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SUMMARY

This report presents the results of the research activities conducted within the project “Balance of language competences for the city of Kraków”. Foreign languages and their knowledge play a significant role in Kraków, which results directly from the unique profile of the labour market in Kraków, its academic character and the dynamic development of the outsourcing, IT and tourism sectors. An accurate diagnosis together with a forecast of changes in language competences on the labour market in Kraków, which are the objective of this report, constitute therefore a basis for establishing a medium and long-term strategy of the city’s development, in particular with regard to the establishment of a platform for cooperation within the triangle business-administration-science.

Within the scope of the conducted study, in analysing job advertisements and in-depth interviews with opinion leaders and representatives of companies, several challenges were identified for the foreign language market in Kraków and several expectations were specified which are defined by local employers towards graduates of local universities in terms of foreign languages. In terms of the demand analysis, the report includes information about the most important language competences sought currently by employers – both in terms of the type of language competences and the specific foreign language in demand. English, German and French are the most frequently sought foreign languages.

Representatives of companies operating in the BPO/ITO sectors, which usually recruit graduates of Kraków’s universities in terms of their knowledge of foreign languages, point out at the same time that candidates possess correct languages skills, however often too low to take up a job. On the one hand, employers draw attention to the difficulty in foreseeing the demand for specific languages and their proficiency being dependent on the dynamics of the very sector (new projects, new employers), on the other hand, indicate however limitations due to the scope and teaching methods at universities and vocational schools. Experts and employers also confirm that the knowledge of English ceases to be sufficient in order to get a job and develop professionally in the services sector.

A particular added value, which is provided by this report, is the study on the scope of language education in language schools, philological studies, as well as colleges and language centres of Kraków’s universities. In terms of the supply analysis, information about universities and fields of study are presented, which, in the opinion of employers, educate in foreign languages. It appears that universities are the main reservoir of language competences for the labour market in Kraków – both in terms of philological fields of study (led by the Jagiellonian University and the Pedagogical University), as well as language centres and colleges.

The self-assessment of students of four Kraków’s universities (Jagiellonian University, AGH University of Science and Technology, Cracow University of Technology and Cracow University of Economics) was also subject to an exploratory survey in terms of language competences, incl. with regard to the effectiveness of different sources of language skills and attitudes towards the learning of foreign languages. Students notice that foreign languages play a significant role in gaining a job, while highly evaluating their language competences at the same time. The quality of language teaching at universities is assessed moderately positively – slightly more than a half of students are satisfied with the level of classes at their universities; at the same time, almost one third of students are satisfied with classes at private language schools.

The comparison of students' self-assessment, on the one hand, opinions of colleges and languages, on the other hand, with employer's reflections gives a very interesting picture. It turns out that a consensus between all three parties exists with regard to the compulsory nature of language competences in terms of English, and that Kraków's graduates are quite fluent in reading, listening and speaking. The rift refers to their opinions about writing skills (employers pay much more attention to graduates' gaps) and the very level of competences (employers again notice an insufficient level of language competences to talk fluently in foreign languages - students and language schools do not notice any big issue in this context).

The cooperation between universities and representatives of business is not systematic, while the cooperation between language schools and employers refers exclusively to the provision of services. Employers point out the passivity of universities and their career offices in terms of contacts between graduates and companies, while suggesting at the same time that the City Council might, on the one hand, support the teaching of foreign languages in the organizational and promotional way, on the other hand, support financially universities and companies in the language development of students and employees to a greater extent, at least to the extent it supports the development of the IT sector.

As a final point, the conclusions drawn from the performed analyses are presented together with suggested actions aimed at the development of universities and companies in terms of the development and flow of language competences.

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INTRODUCTION

As a result of the initiative and commitment of the City Council of Kraków, we are pleased to present you the results of the fourth edition of the “Balance of competences in the academic centre in Kraków”, which concentrate on the relationship between the demand and supply of competences within the key fields in which business and universities operate. In previous years, the studies covered 9 sectors in total¹: BPO and ITO, life science, power industry, creative sector, passive and energy-efficient construction, construction and architectural sectors and IT sector together with IT technologies. In 2015, the survey was focused on the following sectors:

1. tourism,
2. transport and logistics,
3. **cross-sectional studies of foreign languages.**

A unique solution applied this year was the extension of sector-specific studies to cross-sectional studies on the demand for and supply of foreign languages. Although the study are conducted locally and are focused on the city of Kraków, their results are nationwide, while inspiring, among others, to conduct nationwide sector-specific studies within the programme “Balance of the Human Capital”.

Similarly as in previous years, the reports present the demand of Kraków’s companies for particular skills, on the one hand, and their supply at Kraków’s universities, on the other hand. The objectives specified for the research team have not been changed and are focused on answering questions on the expectations of employers towards graduates of Kraków’s universities and the factual level of their teaching in the educational sector. With regard to the applied methodology, in comparison to the studies performed in 2013 and 2014, except for the first edition of the “Balance of foreign languages”, no major changes have been made. All introduced modifications were aimed at decreasing time burdens for respondents by maintaining a high quality of collected data.

The conclusions included in the reports were formulated on the basis of surveys and several dozens of interviews with sector experts, representatives of companies and universities. The studies covered also job advertisements and, to a smaller extent, documents related to curricula in selected fields of study at universities. **In the case of the “Balance of foreign languages”, surveys were additionally conducted among students and language schools, interviews with representatives of recruitment agencies and detailed analyses of job advertisements.**

The project commissioned by the City Council of Kraków was performed in cooperation with the Centre for Evaluation and Analysis of Public Policies of the Jagiellonian University and the Interdisciplinary Centre for Organizational Research and Development by the Institute of Psychology of the Jagiellonian University. The friendliness and professional assistance of the representatives of the City Council of Kraków, the Voivodship Employment Office in Kraków, business, representatives of Kraków’s universities and language schools, business support institutions and the very students made it possible to conduct the study. We would like to thank

¹ The studies in 2012 and 2013 were commissioned by the City Council of Kraków and the Voivodship Employment Office in Kraków; in 2014, the studies in the construction sector were supplemented by studies at upper-secondary schools, as commissioned by the Voivodship Employment Office in Kraków.

the **Association ASPIRE**, the partner of the “Balance of foreign languages”, while taking, as the research team, full responsibility for any potential imperfections and deficiencies of the reports.

Special thanks are due to, in the alphabetic order:

- Sector experts and persons who enabled us to understand the essence of the functioning of all analysed sectors in a wider context and submitted their, often very critical, comments to improve the quality of applied tools and definitions: Małgorzata Bednarczyk (Jagiellonian University), Adam Biernat (Voivodship Employment Office in Kraków), Barbara Bukowska (Tourist Guides Association in Kraków), Mirosław Furmanek (Voivodship Employment Office in Kraków), Andrew Hallam (ASPIRE), Grzegorz Jurczyk (Centre of Quality of Cracow University of Technology), Joanna Kaim-Kerth (ASPIRE), Wojciech Kardas (Wo-Kar), Zygmunt Kruczek (University of Physical Education in Kraków; Association of Couriers of Lesser Poland), Rafał Kulczycki (City Council of Kraków), Konrad Kuźma (City Council of Kraków), Maria Leńczuk (Voivodship Employment Office in Kraków), Wojciech Liszka (Z-Factor), Piotr Litwiński (Association of International Road Transport Operators; Litwiński), Anna Malina (University of Economics), Joanna Ostrowska (Hotel “Kossak”), Dariusz Pastuła (Aon Corporation), Artur Paszko (Kraków Nowa Huta Przyszłości), Jan Paździorko (F.H.U. Liber), Rafał Perłowski (City Council of Kraków), Agata Piątek (Hays), Andrzej Poznański (City Council of Kraków), Jerzy Raciborski (University of Physical Education in Kraków), Magdalena Radwan (AG Test HR), Tomasz Turaj (New Administrative Centre), Jan Sala (Cracow University of Economics), Andrzej Sowa (Cracow University of Technology), Monika Stawicka (Jagiellonian Language Centre), Andrzej Witek (Hotel and Conference Centre “Witek”), Katarzyna Wysocka (City Council of Kraków), Tomasz Ziaja (MTD Tomasz Ziaja),
- Representatives of companies, institutions and universities²: Accent for Professionals, Accent School of Polish, AG Test HR, Efektywny rosyjski, Aon Corporation, Elingwista, Language School “eMKa”, Hays, Helen Doron English, Lingua Session, Jagiellonian Language Centre (Jagiellonian University), Language School “Prolog”, Salon “SITA”, Association “ASPIRE”, Foreign Language Centre (AGH University of Science and Technology), Foreign Language Centre (Cracow University of Economics), Foreign Language Centre (University of Agriculture in Kraków), Foreign Language Centre (Cracow University of Technology), Language School “Mały Rynek”, Language School “Kakadu”, Language School “Infinity”, Language School “Mr Brown”, English School “Three Lions”.

Similarly as in previous years, we intended to write individual reports in such a way so that they may be used independently by employers, universities, public authorities, students and graduates, on the one hand, and they may serve as a bridge and communication medium among these groups, on the other hand. We believe that the presented results of our study will remain one of the solid elements in the discussion in terms of the relations between the labour market and the educational sector in Poland.

² The list of companies includes exclusively institutions which gave their consent to be included in the report. Both with regard to companies and universities, the list includes institutions which completed survey questionnaires partly or completely or took part in in-depth interviews.

RESEARCH TEAM

Leading experts:

Jarosław Górniak – prof. dr hab., dean of the Faculty of Philosophy of the Jagiellonian University, head of the Centre for Evaluation and Analysis of Public Policies of the Jagiellonian University, head of the Department of the Sociology of Economy, Education and Research Methods of the Institute of Sociology of the Jagiellonian University. A sociologist and economist, expert in social research methods and data analysis, methodology of evaluation and analysis of public policies and the sociology of economy and organization. Scientific patron of the systematic research project “Study of Human Capital”, and former director of many research projects and author of studies on the labour market and public policies. He is a member of the Consulting Council at the Presidium of Kraków.

Małgorzata Kossowska – prof. dr hab., vice-dean for General Affairs of the Faculty of Philosophy of the Jagiellonian University, head of the Social Psychology Unit, President of the Polish Association of Social Psychology in the years 2008-2011 and 2011-2013, President of the Management Board of the Interdisciplinary Centre for Organizational Research and Development by the Institute of Psychology of the Jagiellonian University (ICBRO). She conducts research projects on such topics as: individual differences, political attitudes and beliefs, conditions of political beliefs, cognitive rigidity. She has been awarded many prestige prizes and distinctions. She is an author of numerous books and scientific articles.

Team members:

Piotr Prokopowicz – a doctor of philosophy, holds a double master’s degree in both sociology and psychology from the Jagiellonian University. He is an assistant professor in the Institute of Sociology of the Jagiellonian University, analyst in the Centre for Evaluation and Analysis of Public Policies of the Jagiellonian University, coordinator of the JU Strategy Implementation Monitoring Team. He acts as an associate and lecturer at the Cologne Business School and the Jagiellonian University, Visiting Fellow at Saint Mary’s University in Halifax. He is an expert in studies on organizations and data analysis. While working as a methodology consultant for the Great Place to Work Institute Europe in Copenhagen, he took part in the elaboration of the list of top 100 employers in Europe and South America. He is an author and editor of numerous reports, books and articles in the field of sociology and psychology of management.

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Maciej Taraday – a psychologist, PhD student in the Experimental Psychology Unit of the Jagiellonian University. A participant of the trial PhD studies in educational measurement. His scientific interests include: relation between working memory with intelligence, cognitive control, methodology of studies and statistics. He has been awarded many prizes and scholarships. He specializes in statistical analysis using the development environment R, SPSS, STATISTICA and AMOS.

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BASIC ASSUMPTIONS OF THE BALANCE³

With regard to the study in the tourism and transport and logistics sectors, basic assumptions and the applied methodology, have not been significantly changed in comparison with the studies conducted in 2013 and 2014. Taking into consideration the lower time burden for respondents, there was an attempt this year to reduce the list of soft and business competences by integrating them into more general categories. The question about the responsibility assigned to universities for teaching individual competences was also abandoned – model answers from previous years were coherent between distinct sectors and the research team was of the opinion that the advantage of reperforming the study in this respect is much lower than relevant costs. It turned out in previous years that despite the fact that representatives of business expect graduates to possess advanced soft and business skills, they do not share the opinion at all that universities should be responsible for their teaching to the largest extent. Such sources for developing this kind of competences, as lower educational levels and the engagement of parents and guardians, were mentioned equally often. Representatives of universities felt responsible for developing soft competences among their graduates to a larger extent, although they pointed out the difficulties in performing the tasks. As far as specialist competences (knowledge and skills) are concerned, the vast majority of representatives of business and universities were unanimous that this is a responsibility of the institutions of the higher education.

One of the most important objectives of the report is to present opinions of sector experts, representatives of companies and universities about the state of competences demonstrated by graduates of Kraków's universities without making too big simplifications and valuations. Despite being quite a big challenge, we have made every attempt to present the issue of the flow of the intellectual capital from universities to business, mutual expectations and adopted perspectives in an objective way.

Similarly as in previous years, the balance of competences is based on the analysis of the demand of Kraków's enterprises. We intended to maintain a previous standard in this respect which included no assumptions with regard to the necessity of adapting absolutely the educational offer to the current shape of the labour market. We are of the opinion that the requirements of employers should be one of the main factors to be taken into consideration in elaborating curricula, but definitely not the only one. We are also of the opinion that it is not true that potential problems within the cooperation result exclusively from a lack of readiness of employers and their possibilities to use the potential of universities.

Similarly as in previous editions of the project, the term "competence" means the "collection of behaviours of common category which allow to perform efficiently objectives and tasks of the organization at a particular post, determined by different psychological factors". In this sense, competences are collections of behaviours related to the characteristics expected at a particular post. The below list includes categories of these factors which are identifiable within the analysis of the demand:

- knowledge – information gathered during the process of learning (eg knowledge in the flow of heat within the building, knowledge in sector-specific law),

³ Elaborated on the basis of the Balance of competences of 2012, 2013 and 2014. Please refer to previous publications for detailed assumptions.

- skills – learnt actions in a particular field (eg operation of MS Office, communication skills),
- capabilities- innate predispositions in a particular field (eg analytical skills),
- other – other properties which may not be assigned to listed categories (eg mobility, honesty, etc.).

Further in this report, the term “competences” should mean all behavioural indications of expectations expressed in the above mentioned categories, which is compliant with both Polish research traditions and commonly accepted international conventions.

Competences, one of the basic terms in business institutions, have their academic equivalent in the form of educational results. As specified by Kraśniewski⁴, the essence of educational results „is nothing but a statement (...), what a student should know, understand and be able to do after graduating from a specific stage (process) of education”. Educational results are usually divided in Poland into three categories: **knowledge, skills and social competences**, although these categories may not always be separated. Within our study, we simplified and translated expected competences into the language of educational results. Similarly as in previous years, we decided to use quite a general catalogue of results, so that they can be easily specified and adjusted to the specificity of particular fields of study.

Cross-sectional studies within the balance of language competences, based on the same assumptions, were conducted in a slightly different way. To understand better the demand for language competences and their supply in the education sector, the following steps were taken:

1. Preliminary stage

- a. In-depth interviews with experts, persons related to the business sector and education sector and consultations with the City Council of Kraków to learn the context of functioning and the importance of foreign languages within the development of the city.
- b. Desk research analysis to identify the key challenges related to the demand for foreign languages and their teaching and the listing of the relatively most important foreign languages which should be subject to the study.

2. Analysis of demand for competences

- a. In-depth interviews with representatives of selected companies which enabled us to review their experiences in recruiting, selecting and training employees in terms of their language skills.
- b. Analysis of all job advertisements which were active for Kraków during October 2015, on one of the most popular job portals.
- c. Desk research analysis of other linguistic studies.

3. Analysis of supply of competences

⁴ Comp. also: A. Kraśniewski (2011), Jak przygotować programy kształcenia zgodnie z wymaganiami Krajowych Ram Kwalifikacji dla Szkolnictwa Wyższego. Warszawa: MNiSW; E. Chmielecka (2010). Autonomia programowa uczelni. Ramy kwalifikacji dla szkolnictwa wyższego. Warszawa: MNiSW; Ordinance of the Minister of Science and Higher Education of 2 November 2011 on national framework of reference for higher education.

- a. Creation and testing of the tool “Supply Datasheet” and the self-assessment questionnaire for students.
- b. Creation of the research sample of language colleges and centres at universities and language schools invited to take part in the survey.
- c. Structured interviews combined with the completion of the Supply Datasheet.
- d. Survey among language colleges and centres at universities and language schools with regard to their offer of foreign language teaching by teaching levels.
- e. Survey (auditorium survey) among students of Kraków’ universities with regard to the self-assessment of their language skills, possessed certificates and the assessment of the language teaching level at universities and language schools.

BASIC INFORMATION ABOUT COMPETENCES RELATED TO FOREIGN LANGUAGES IN KRAKÓW⁵

IMPORTANCE OF LANGUAGE COMPETENCES

Globalization is one of the major phenomena observed currently all over the world. The development of technology allows people to move now much more freely than ever before. What's more, information faces almost no geographical barriers anymore. In order to be able to fully exploit the potential of IT technologies and globalization processes, it is necessary to possess appropriate competences. The knowledge of foreign languages is the most important.

The knowledge of foreign languages becomes particularly important in the context of the current labour market. It is pointed out that the knowledge of foreign languages impacts economic growth and creation of new jobs. Employees with high language competences, which are usually related to the knowledge of other cultures, become an asset increasing a company's competitiveness⁶. The knowledge is also important in other fields of life: education, participation in culture, entertainment, information searches. Proficiency in foreign languages significantly increases our opportunities in different fields of social life. Learning foreign languages increases our knowledge of the world also because in learning them, we get to know the culture and way of life of people speaking these languages. Therefore, foreign languages become one of the factors which may improve the mutual understanding between representatives of different cultures.

The importance of foreign languages is noticed by politicians both on a national and European level. Proficiency in foreign languages is considered by the European Commission⁷ to be the key competence, in particular in the context of further deepening of the European integration. It is translated into concrete actions. Already in 2002, the Council of the European Union recommended the introduction of the compulsory teaching of two foreign languages in regular schools⁸. In the Polish education system, the importance of foreign languages was emphasized by introducing them to subjects taken at external examinations. In 2015, foreign languages were included at each of the following examinations: the examination after completion of the sixth grade of the primary school, the lower secondary school examination and the bacalaureate examination⁹.

In the past, the knowledge of foreign languages was a domain of the intellectual elite of the particular country. It was an indicator of social status, while being a pragmatically assessed professional skill at the same time, which enabled common communication with representatives

⁵ This chapter was written on the basis of a desk research analysis of documents and professional publications, as well as information gathered during interviews with experts, representatives of companies, language schools and universities.

⁶ Kutyłowska, K., (2013) „Polityka językowa w Europie”, IBE.

⁷ European Commission (2006), Recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 December 2006 on key competences for life long learning (2006/962/EC).

⁸ Council of European Union (2002), Council Resolution of 14 February 2002 on the promotion of linguistic diversity and language learning in the framework of the implementation of the objectives of the European Year of Languages (2002/C 50/01).

⁹ At the lower secondary school and bacalaureate examinations, the examination may be taken at a basic and advanced level; at the bacalaureate examination, the oral examination is to be taken in case a foreign language taken as a compulsory subject.

of other countries' elite¹⁰. Nowadays, the knowledge of foreign languages is commonly perceived as one of the skills which are necessary to move efficiently within the labour market. To what extent is this a common skill? Table 1 presents results of three studies on the knowledge of foreign languages, which were carried out on representative samples of Poles during the years 1993-2015. As questions related to language competences were formulated in a different way during these studies, the content of the questions is also included.

The results of the survey conducted by TNS Poland in 2015 point out that the knowledge of at least one foreign language is declared by 56% of Polish citizens. A slightly different picture emerges from two editions of the survey conducted by POLPAN. In 2013, 43% participants of the survey declared the knowledge of a foreign language sufficient for communication. In 1993, the knowledge of a foreign language sufficient for effective communication was declared by 41% of respondents. Why are there such huge differences in Poles' declarations between the surveys conducted by TNS Poland and POLPAN?? The most probable cause is the fact that questions were formulated in a different way. The results presented by TNS Poland refer to the knowledge of a foreign language without specifying the language proficiency, while the questions used in the survey of POLPAN indicated directly the knowledge of a foreign language sufficient for communication. Therefore, the results may be interpreted in the following way: 56% of Polish citizens declared a basic knowledge of at least one foreign language in 2015. However, the knowledge of a foreign language sufficient for communication was declared by a lower percentage of respondents, i.e. 43%.

Survey	Content of the question	Do not know foreign languages (%)	Do know at least one foreign language (%)
TNS Poland 2015 ¹¹	How many foreign languages do you know?	44	56
POLPAN 2013 ¹²	Can you speak any foreign language at a level sufficient for communication?	57	43
POLPAN 1993	Ca you speak any foreign language at a level you can communicate easily?	59	41

Table 1. Results of nationwide surveys on the knowledge of foreign languages which were conducted among adult Poles

The majority of reports point out that English "is the most important language for international communication, in particular in business and politics"¹³. For example, the report of the Global English Corporation of 2007 points out¹⁴ that 77% of employees uses English at least once a week in their workplace. The fact confirms the universality of English which becomes a universal language for communication within global business and translates into its popularity, while the positive knowledge of English in Poland is confirmed by the survey conducted by EF English Proficiency Index (EF EPI), according to which Poland is ranked 9th, among others,

¹⁰ Wysmulek, I., Oleksiyenko, O., (2015) „Strukturalne różnicowanie znajomości języków obcych”, PAN.

¹¹ The report titled "Knowledge of foreign languages", TNS Poland, June 2015.

¹² The survey of POLPAN was conducted within the project "Polish Panel Survey, POLPAN 1988-2013: Structure and Social Mobility", financed by the National Centre for Science (grant no. 2011/02/A/HS6/00238).

¹³ Kutylowska, K., (2013) „Polityka językowa w Europie”, IBE.

¹⁴ Global English Corporation (2007), "The Globalization of English Report: Globalization Accelerates Need for Business English Communication Skills". The survey was conducted in 152 countries all over world and covered approx. 26 thousand respondents.

before Germany, the Czech Republic and Switzerland, in terms of communication skills in English. In accordance with the above mentioned survey conducted by TNS Poland, 57% of respondents declaring the knowledge of a foreign language point to English, 38% to German, while 34% to Russian. So the biggest popularity of English corresponds to the trends which are observable in Europe and other parts of the world.

SPECIFICITY OF THE DEMAND FOR FOREIGN LANGUAGES IN KRAKÓW

Kraków has a unique position in terms of the demand for competences based on foreign language proficiency. Above all, it results from a dynamic development of sectors based on business process (BPO) and IT (ITO) outsourcing¹⁵. In 2014, Kraków was considered to be the most important place in Europe in terms of the development of such services¹⁶. Specific trends may be observed in this sector in Kraków. Initially, relatively simple processes were transferred, which were related mainly to IT (technical services for databases, managing changes in ERP systems)¹⁷ and accounting. At the moment, these are more and more advanced IT (development of software and applications), accounting and business processes¹⁸. The strong position of Kraków in the BPO and ITO sectors was built, among others, on the availability of highly qualified specialists with specific competences, out of which the knowledge of at least one foreign language enabling the work in an international environment is absolutely the most crucial. Such a strong academic centre as Kraków offers steady access to a large number of such employees. Moreover, they are ready to take up a job at lower remuneration rates than in Western Europe.

The development of start-ups in IT solutions is another important aspect which accounts for the specificity of Kraków in terms of the demand for foreign languages. This sector has been developing very quickly, while many products are immediately prepared for an international market¹⁹, which requires fluency in foreign languages. What's more, such ventures often engage persons who are not native speakers of Polish. It is thus possible to risk the claim that English is the natural language in the environment.

The position of the very city as a popular tourist destination is also of great importance. In order to provide services for foreign tourists, it is necessary to communicate with them in a language understandable for both parties. "Of course, the level of proficiency in a foreign language is then dependent on the form of services which are provided for tourists. However, a large number of guests not knowing Polish makes it undoubtedly necessary that people having contact with them learn foreign languages. It should also be noted that the unique character of the city accounts for

¹⁵ A detailed description of the BPO and ITO sectors and their demand for competences, incl. language competences, is provided in the report "Balance of competences in the BPO and ITO sectors in Kraków", elaborated in 2012 by the Centre for Evaluation and Analysis of Public Policies and the Interdisciplinary Centre for Organizational Research and Development of the Jagiellonian University on the commission of the City Council of Kraków.

¹⁶ In the ranking "2014 Tholos 100 Outsourcing Destinations".

¹⁷ Comp. the report "Balance of competences in the BPO and ITO sectors in Kraków".

¹⁸ It is worth mentioning that the dynamics of processes and projects transferred to Kraków translates directly into the balance between the demand for and supply of foreign languages; the opening of one Centre focused on one of popular languages may destroy the equilibrium between competences available on the market and the demand for them.

¹⁹ The report "Balance of competences in the IT sector", elaborated in 2014 by the Centre for Evaluation and Analysis of Public Policies and the Interdisciplinary Centre for Organizational Research and Development of the Jagiellonian University on the commission of the City Council of Kraków.

the fact that a part of tourists makes a relationship with the city for longer. It allows to build an international environment in there, which requires fluency in foreign languages to communicate effectively.

The academic status of Kraków plays an important role within the context of language competences. Firstly, the participation in the world-wide scientific community has always required fluency in foreign languages from its participants. Of course, English is the current language. The most significant scientific publications are written in English. Therefore, to follow them, it is necessary to know the foreign language very well, incl. the context of specific terms being used within the particular thematic scope. Current trends in science lead to an increasing role of publications for the evaluation of scientists. This means that to become known and appreciated in the scientific community, it is not enough to conduct high quality (even breakthrough) studies, but it is also necessary to describe their results in English in such a way that they are accepted to be printed in the best scientific journals in the world. The pressure makes employees of universities improve their language competences. It also makes the conducting of classes in foreign languages easier. The other important process, which impacts the development of the specificity in terms of foreign languages in Kraków from the point of view of universities, is the conducting of courses in foreign languages. They are directed to both foreign and Polish students. In enrolling in such studies, it is possible to acquire language competences not only in terms of fluency in communication, but also the knowledge of a professional language.

Of course, the development of the above mentioned sectors is not the only element impacting the specificity of the demand for foreign languages in Kraków. Contemporary economic processes lead to the globalization of business activity, which is the cause of the fact that almost all kinds of activities require specific fluency in foreign languages. The learning of foreign languages starts currently at the primary school and is continued until the end of regular education. The results of external examinations in foreign languages point out that pupils of Kraków's schools usually have slightly higher competences in foreign languages than their peers in the Lesser Poland (Małopolskie) voivodship. For example, in 2015, pupils of grammar schools scored an average of 84% in the written examination in English at a basic level (the average score in the whole Poland amounted to 77%)²⁰. This was the highest score among all powiats within the Lesser Poland (Małopolskie) voivodship. It means that the level of proficiency in English among pupils of Kraków's grammar schools exceeds the average level of such competences in the country and is the best within the voivodship. Thus, pupils at secondary schools possess such a knowledge of this language that they are able to communicate in basic situations.

DEVELOPMENT PERSPECTIVES

Kraków is a part of the global market of business services. In terms of such activities, its competitors are not other Polish cities hosting similar companies. These are different municipalities located all over the world. From the interviews with experts, which were conducted for the purposes of this study, results that Kraków's strengths on this market are currently: the diversity of competences related to foreign languages among available employees

²⁰ The stores were extracted from the website of the Central Examination Board (www.cke.edu.pl) and the Regional Examination Board in Kraków (www.oke.krakow.pl).

in the city and the cost effectiveness of the performed work. The above means that highly qualified people fluent in foreign languages become the most important capital. However, experts point out that trends in the sector's needs in terms of foreign languages should be carefully observed.

Firstly, the knowledge of only English ceased to be an asset, and became a work requirement in companies operating globally²¹. Employees knowing English and other foreign languages are recruited more and more often, while expectations towards the knowledge of English are steadily on the rise (incl. the knowledge of local accents and the colloquial language). During the interviews, experts pointed out that it is still quite easy to find employees knowing their language in developed economies (apart from English, the above refers to German, although the demand for the language has significantly increased from the opening of the Lufthansa centre, and French). The recruitment of employees with less popular languages, eg Scandinavian, Dutch or Greek, poses problems. Therefore, companies strive more and more often to employ employees with two foreign languages or fluent in a less popular language.

The other trend, being currently observable in terms of the demand for language competences, is the drawing of attention to the necessary language fluency in the context of performed professional duties. The above refers to the knowledge of a particular vocabulary, its efficient use both oral and written and its practical use at work. The trend results from the introduction of more complex processes to Kraków's services centres than before. They require more advanced skills related to the very essence of the performed work. It is also important to know foreign languages better to move efficiently in an international environment and adapt to the culture of the particular nationality. This is equivalent to the ability to speak a foreign language at a high level of fluency, eg enabling to recognize accents of the speaker and adjusting it to the particular country or region of the world.

During the interviews, interlocutors often emphasized the role of universities in teaching foreign languages. In their opinion, in learning foreign languages, graduates of universities do not pay enough attention to the learning of languages related to business or technical activities. It is not sufficient to possess a general knowledge of a language. It is important to communicate efficiently in the work-related context, both if it refers to advanced IT processes or accounting. The use of a specific vocabulary is a huge asset. In the experts' opinion, a good solution would involve the conducting of workshops in foreign languages for future graduates interested in working in the BPO and ITO sectors, which would be precisely devoted to the issues specific for the type of work performed in such companies.

²¹ The report "Aspire Languages Survey 2010".

ANALYSIS OF THE DEMAND: DEMAND FOR LANGUAGE COMPETENCES IN KRAKÓW

Several sources of information were used to identify needs of Kraków' companies for language competences. Apart from in-depth interviews with experts and companies' representatives, job advertisements and existing data were also analysed – linguistic studies made available by the association ASPIRE and data from the study "Balance of competences in the academic centre in Kraków in the years 2013-2015".

The picture emerging from the study is not very attractive, however, it is worth mentioning some factors which hinder the precise specification of the demand for language competences. One of the most important factors of this kind is the **specific dynamics of the development of the business services sector (BPO/SSC)**, which accounts for the absorption of a large part of the "market of language competences". The sector is highly sensitive to changes resulting from the establishment of new companies and gained projects in Kraków, while not rarely causing a high increase in the demand for specific foreign language skills in a very short period of time. The above refers not only to less popular languages – over the last years, the entering of one of big companies onto Kraków's market increased the demand for German several times. While almost all experts and companies' representatives unanimously admit that the demand for foreign language skills will be steadily on the rise, a detailed specification of languages and proficiency levels is already a challenge. The demand for foreign languages is also driven by the specificity of employees' tasks to a large extent. Therefore, companies need to employ persons with more than one foreign language more and more often- the most popular combination being the combination of English with a different foreign language, but this trend also ceases to be a rule. Apart from the demand for specific foreign languages, the labour market is differentiated in terms of the importance assigned to language skills. **Oral communication** is key according to the majority of companies' representatives, incl. the specificity of conducting phone calls. What's important, companies pay attention to **poor skills of graduates in terms of using more colloquial languages, understanding slang, knowing the specificity of particular regions of the country, etc.** Although **written communication, knowledge of grammar and professional languages** are less important for a part of companies, there is a large number of institutions, where such skills are crucial. The situation is, for instance, characteristic of **translation and documentation development services** – companies in this sector decide to employ *native speakers* much more often.

ANALYSIS OF JOB ADVERTISEMENTS

Within the performed analysis of job advertisements, all advertisements for Kraków (N=3039), which were placed on one of the most popular Internet job portals during October 2015, were analysed in terms of expected language competences. A specific limitation of this analysis is related to the fact that the analysis covered advertisements placed on a website, which means that some sectors/fields may be underrepresented (eg physical works), although it seems that it is less important just in the case of job advertisements for graduates of universities. A similar issue is related to more specialist positions, and partly less popular languages, which are usually recruited by means of other tools, eg *direct search*. Another limitation is due to the fact that one job advertisement does not often mean that the employer intends to recruit only one employee. On the contrary, the content of the advertisement relatively often suggested that it was directed to a higher number of employees (although the exact number of employees was never specified) – it is thus important to remember that the results included in this study refer to the percentage

share of particular foreign languages in job advertisements, which may slightly differ from the share in the number of recruited employees. At the end, it is worth mentioning that the forms of job advertisements are highly differentiated and express the demand for foreign languages in different ways. In the majority of cases, employers referred to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (A1-C2), but non-standard descriptions are also quite common (eg fluent, excellent, good knowledge, etc.)²², which may be interpreted by different subjects in many different ways, or the required level is not specified at all.

GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS OF THE DEMAND FOR FOREIGN LANGUAGES IN KRAKÓW'S JOB ADVERTISEMENTS

Among all analysed job advertisements (N=3039), the demand for **English** is the most frequent necessary or optional requirement (2209 job advertisements, equivalent to approx. 73% of all job advertisements), **German** (278, over 9%), **French** (150, almost 5%) and **Italian** (70, over 2%). **Spanish, Dutch, Swedish, Czech** and **Russian** are further languages required, while **Norwegian** ranks at the end of top ten languages. In total, job advertisements asked for 29 different foreign languages, while 25% of them did not specify any foreign language. A relatively large group is a "foreign language", which is usually defined as another European language with its knowledge being an additional asset of applicants. Table 2 below presents detailed data.

No.	Language	N	% ²³
1	English	2209	72.69%
2	German	278	9.15%
3	French	150	4.94%
4	Italian	70	2.30%
5	Spanish	58	1.91%
6	Dutch	43	1.41%
7	Swedish	41	1.35%
8	Czech	34	1.12%
9	Russian	31	1.02%
10	Norwegian	26	0.86%
11	Dannish	24	0.79%
12	Finnish	21	0.69%
13	Hungarian	18	0.59%
14	Slovak	16	0.53%
15	Portuguese	15	0.49%
16	Netherlandish	12	0.39%
17	Greek	9	0.30%
18	Flemish	8	0.26%
19	Romanian	8	0.26%
20	Turkish	6	0.20%
21	Hebrew	4	0.13%

²² Within the performed analysis, the non-standard descriptions were „translated according to the rule: communicative (A2), good (B1), very good (B2), fluent, excellent (C1).

²³ Percentages do not sum up to 100 – a part of job advertisements required proficiency in more than one foreign language (in the vast majority of job advertisements, English was treated as the second required language).

22	Arabic	3	0.10%
23	Lithuanian	3	0.10%
24	Luxembourg	2	0.07%
25	Nordic	2	0.07%
26	Ukrainian	2	0.07%
27	Latvian	2	0.07%
28	Croatian	1	0.03%
29	Estonian	1	0.03%
30	Foreign language	83	2.73%
31	No foreign language required	763	25.11%

Table 2. Frequency of appearance of the demand for foreign language skills in all analysed job advertisements (N=3039).

Among the job advertisements with the compulsory knowledge of the particular foreign language, the minimum level of proficiency in foreign languages sought by employers was subject to the analysis. It is noticeable that **in the case of English, the most required knowledge is at least at the C1 level** (over 32%). In other cases, apart from Russian with the minimum required level of C1, the knowledge of foreign languages is mostly required at the B2 level. Figure 1 and Table 3 present detailed results.

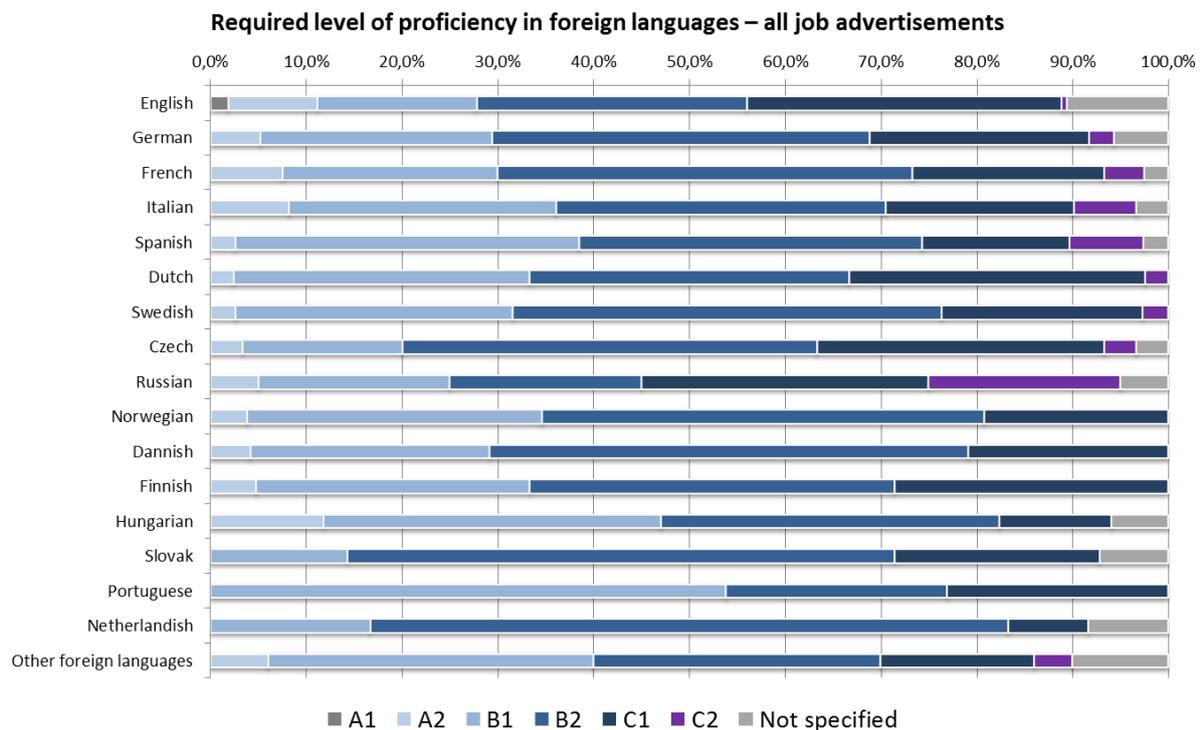


Figure 1. Required level of proficiency in foreign languages – all job advertisements with the compulsory knowledge of particular foreign languages.

Foreign language	A1	A2	B1	B2	C1	C2	Not specified
English	1.8%	9.3%	16.6%	28.2%	32.9%	0.6%	10.5%
German	0.0%	5.2%	24.2%	39.4%	22.9%	2.6%	5.6%
French	0.0%	7.5%	22.5%	43.3%	20.0%	4.2%	2.5%
Italian	0.0%	8.2%	27.9%	34.4%	19.7%	6.6%	3.3%
Spanish	0.0%	2.6%	35.9%	35.9%	15.4%	7.7%	2.6%
Dutch	0.0%	2.4%	31.0%	33.3%	31.0%	2.4%	0.0%
Swedish	0.0%	2.6%	28.9%	44.7%	21.1%	2.6%	0.0%
Czech	0.0%	3.3%	16.7%	43.3%	30.0%	3.3%	3.3%
Russian	0.0%	5.0%	20.0%	20.0%	30.0%	20.0%	5.0%
Norwegian	0.0%	3.8%	30.8%	46.2%	19.2%	0.0%	0.0%
Dannish	0.0%	4.2%	25.0%	50.0%	20.8%	0.0%	0.0%
Finnish	0.0%	4.8%	28.6%	38.1%	28.6%	0.0%	0.0%
Hungarian	0.0%	11.8%	35.3%	35.3%	11.8%	0.0%	5.9%
Slovak	0.0%	0.0%	14.3%	57.1%	21.4%	0.0%	7.1%
Portuguese	0.0%	0.0%	53.8%	23.1%	23.1%	0.0%	0.0%
Netherlandish	0.0%	0.0%	16.7%	66.7%	8.3%	0.0%	8.3%
Other foreign languages	0.0%	6.0%	34.0%	30.0%	16.0%	4.0%	10.0%

Table 3. Required level of proficiency in foreign languages – all job advertisements with the compulsory knowledge of particular foreign languages.

JOB OFFERS FOR STUDENTS AND GRADUATES

Job offers with the compulsory or desired higher education diploma or the status of a student and a maximum of 1-year work experience were selected out of all job offers (N=865). **The knowledge of a foreign language was not required or desired in only 10% of such advertisements.** Top ten foreign languages are the following: **English** (N=715, 82.7%), **German** (N=108, 12.5%), **French** (N=69, 8%), **Swedish** (N=25, 2.9%), **Dutch** (N=23, 2.7%), **Hungarian** (N=19, 2.2%), **Dannish** (N=18, 2.1%), **Spanish** (N=18, 2.1%), **Norwegian** (N=18, 2.1%) and **Italian** (N=16, 1.8%).

No.	Language	N	% ²⁴
1	English	715	82.7%
2	German	108	12.5%
3	French	69	8.0%
4	Swedish	25	2.9%
5	Dutch	23	2.7%
6	Hungarian	19	2.2%
7	Dannish	18	2.1%
8	Spanish	18	2.1%
9	Norwegian	18	2.1%
10	Italian	16	1.8%
11	Czech	15	1.7%
12	Finnish	15	1.7%

²⁴ Percentages do not sum up to 100 – a part of job advertisements required proficiency in more than one foreign language (in the vast majority of job advertisements, English was treated as the second required language).

13	Portuguese	9	1.0%
14	Russian	9	1.0%
15	Flemish	7	0.8%
16	Greek	7	0.8%
17	Slovak	7	0.8%
18	Ukrainian	7	0.8%
19	Netherlandish	5	0.6%
20	Turkish	4	0.5%
21	Romanian	3	0.3%
22	Lithuanian	2	0.2%
23	Hebrew	2	0.2%
24	Arabic	1	0.1%
25	Croatian	1	0.1%
26	Nordic	1	0.1%
27	Foreign language	35	4.0%
28	No foreign language specified	91	10.5%

Table 4. Frequency of appearance of the demand foreign languages in job advertisements directed to students and graduates (N=865).

As far as the expected, minimum level of proficiency in foreign languages compulsory at the particular position is concerned, **the dominant level is the B2 level**, although there are some exceptions (comp. Figure 2 and Table 5). In the case of **Italian, Dutch and Czech**, the most frequent level is **the C1 level**. For the vast majority of foreign languages, **the proficiency at a level below the B2 level does not matter at all or its significance is marginal**. English serves as an exception, although its knowledge at the B1 level (approx. 20% of job advertisements) is accepted by employers mainly together with a better knowledge of a different foreign language.

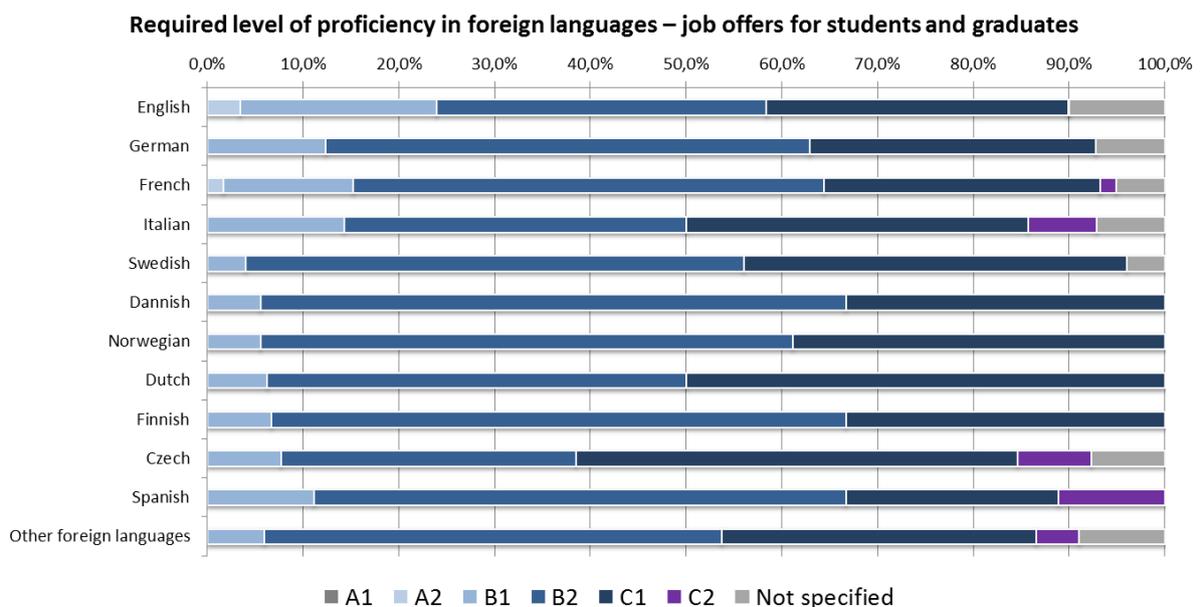


Figure 2. Required level of proficiency in foreign languages –job offers for students and graduates with the compulsory knowledge of particular foreign languages.

Foreign language	A1	A2	B1	B2	C1	C2	Not specified
English	0.0%	3.4%	20.5%	34.5%	31.5%	0.1%	10.0%
German	0.0%	0.0%	12.4%	50.5%	29.9%	0.0%	7.2%
French	0.0%	1.7%	13.6%	49.2%	28.8%	1.7%	5.1%
Italian	0.0%	0.0%	14.3%	35.7%	35.7%	7.1%	7.1%
Swedish	0.0%	0.0%	4.0%	52.0%	40.0%	0.0%	4.0%
Dannish	0.0%	0.0%	5.6%	61.1%	33.3%	0.0%	0.0%
Norwegian	0.0%	0.0%	5.6%	55.6%	38.9%	0.0%	0.0%
Dutch	0.0%	0.0%	6.3%	43.8%	50.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Finnish	0.0%	0.0%	6.7%	60.0%	33.3%	0.0%	0.0%
Czech	0.0%	0.0%	7.7%	30.8%	46.2%	7.7%	7.7%
Spanish	0.0%	0.0%	11.1%	55.6%	22.2%	11.1%	0.0%
Other foreign languages	0.0%	0.0%	6.0%	47.8%	32.8%	4.5%	9.0%

Tabela 5. Required level of proficiency in foreign languages –job offers for students and graduates with the compulsory knowledge of particular foreign languages.

JOB OFFERS IN THE BUSINESS SERVICES AND IT SECTORS

More than a half of job offers which were included in the analysed sample come from two huge sectors: the business services sector (BPO/SSC, N=1101) and the IT sector (N=673). Table 6 below presents detailed data for BPO/SSC both for all positions and *entry level* positions. **It is particularly noticeable that in both cases the knowledge of English is required in almost 90% of job advertisements.** The above means that the knowledge of the language is **not longer an asset, as several or more than ten years ago, but is an absolute requirement.** What is also not surprising in the case of the sector, **the number of job offers for candidates not knowing any foreign language is very low** (over 2.5% for all job offers and over 1.5% for entry level positions). The structure of the demand for foreign languages is quite similar, however, **in the case of entry level positions, the demand for Nordic languages seems to be slightly higher.**

No.	Language	In general	
		N	%
1	English	971	88.19%
2	German	183	16.62%
3	French	112	10.17%
4	Italian	56	5.09%
5	Spanish	43	3.91%
6	Dutch	40	3.63%
7	Swedish	37	3.36%
8	Czech	28	2.54%
9	Norwegian	25	2.27%
10	Dannish	23	2.09%
11	Finnish	20	1.82%

Language	Entry level	
	N	%
English	552	88.04%
German	113	18.02%
French	76	12.12%
Italian	36	5.74%
Dutch	30	4.78%
Swedish	29	4.63%
Dannish	21	3.35%
Norwegian	21	3.35%
Czech	20	3.19%
Spanish	20	3.19%
Finnish	17	2.71%

12	Hungarian	16	1.45%
13	Russian	15	1.36%
14	Portuguese	14	1.27%
15	Slovak	13	1.18%
16	Netherlandish	12	1.09%
17	Greek	9	0.82%
18	Flemish	7	0.64%
19	Romanian	5	0.45%
20	Hebrew	4	0.36%
21	Arabic	3	0.27%
22	Lithuanian	3	0.27%
23	Turkish	3	0.27%
24	Luxembourg	2	0.18%
25	Latvian	1	0.09%
26	Foreign language	53	4.81%
27	No foreign language specified	29	2.63%

Portuguese	10	1.59%
Hungarian	10	1.59%
Netherlandish	9	1.44%
Russian	9	1.44%
Slovak	9	1.44%
Greek	8	1.28%
Flemish	6	0.96%
Hebrew	3	0.48%
Turkish	3	0.48%
Arabic	2	0.32%
Lithuanian	2	0.32%
Romanian	2	0.32%
Foreign language	22	3.51%
No foreign language specified	10	1.59%

Table 6. Frequency of appearance of the demand for foreign language skills in job advertisements in the BPO/SSC sector (N=1101 in total, entry level N=627).

In the case of the business services sector, a similar picture emerges from the **data gathered by the Association ASPIRE**. They are not directly comparable with the data presented above, as they differ in the percentage basis²⁵ and refer to the professional use of foreign languages by persons already employed in the sector. However, the dominance of the following three foreign languages is quite visible: **English, German and French**. The percentage of **Netherlandish speakers** is higher than in the case of job advertisements. Table 7 presents the results.

Foreign language	%
English	53.55%
French	10.82%
Polish	7.89%
German	7.70%
Netherlandish	5.53%
Spanish	2.66%
Italian	2.59%
Russian	2.27%
Czech	1.22%
Hungarian	0.93%
Finnish	0.76%
Portuguese	0.69%
Slovak	0.65%
Romanian	0.50%

²⁵ The data were made available by the Association ASPIRE for the purposes of this report, gathered on the basis of surveys conducted in 2014, reflect the number of positions requiring the particular foreign language and not the number of speakers of the foreign language or foreign languages.

Greek	0.47%
Swedish	0.27%
Turkish	0.24%
Slovenian	0.21%
Ukrainian	0.17%
Croatian	0.13%
Lithuanian	0.13%
Bulgarian	0.09%
Hebrew	0.08%
Chinese	0.05%
Dannish	0.05%
Estonian	0.05%
Norwegian	0.05%
Serbian	0.05%
Byelorussian	0.03%
Flemish	0.03%
Japanese	0.03%
Latvian	0.03%
Arabic	0.02%
Persian	0.02%
Afrikaans	0.01%
Latin	0.01%
Moldavian	0.00%

Table 7. Structure of foreign languages used at work among all positions requiring foreign languages in the BPO/SSC sector (data made available by the Association ASPIRE, N=8595).

With regard to the required level of proficiency in foreign languages declared by employers from the BPO/SSC sector in job advertisements, it is again quite observable that **the knowledge of foreign languages at a level lower than B2 is of little significance**. In the case of **English**, the biggest category is the **C1 level** (almost 40%) and **B2** (over 35%). The status of Russian is interesting, as 18% of job advertisements asked for the **C2 level**. It seems to be related to an easier access to the language due to a relatively large number of native speakers who decided to move to Kraków. Companies may thus increase their expectations towards this language. Figure 3 and Table 8 present detailed data about the expected levels for particular foreign languages.

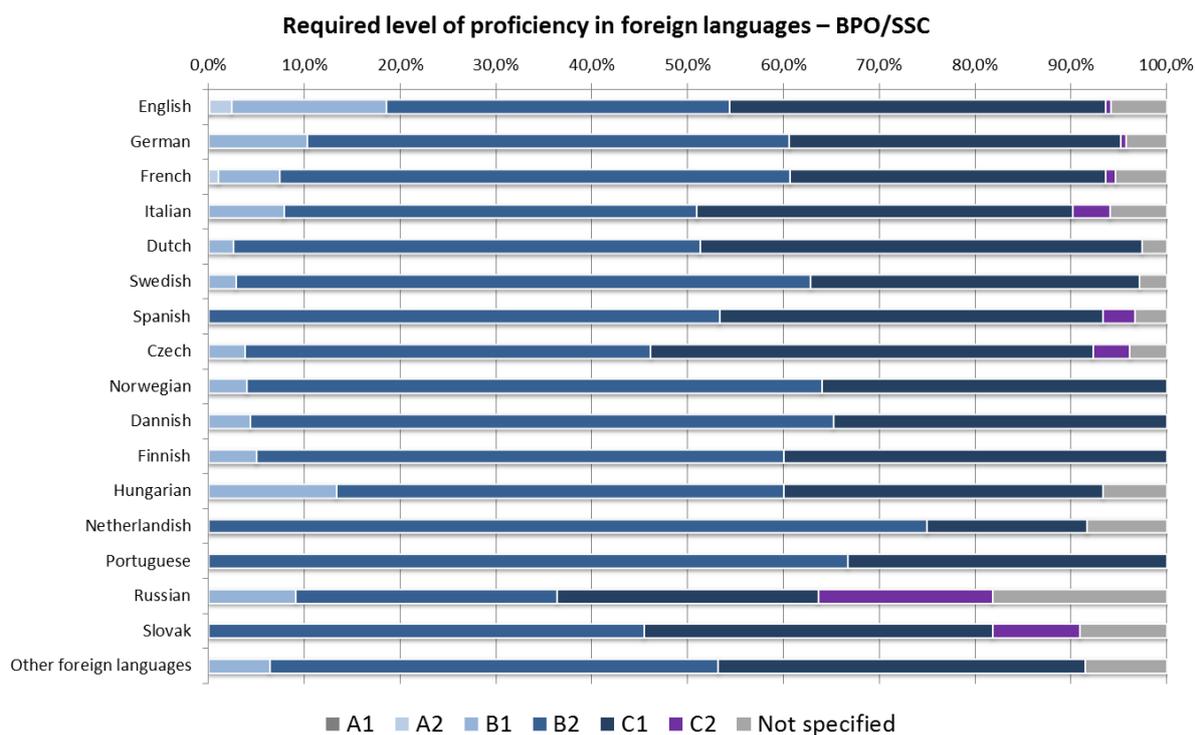


Figure 3. Required level of proficiency in foreign languages – job offers in the BPO/SSC sector with the compulsory knowledge of particular foreign languages.

Foreign language	A1	A2	B1	B2	C1	C2	Not specified
English	0.1%	2.3%	16.2%	35.9%	39.2%	0.6%	5.8%
German	0.0%	0.0%	10.3%	50.3%	34.5%	0.6%	4.2%
French	0.0%	1.1%	6.4%	53.2%	33.0%	1.1%	5.3%
Italian	0.0%	0.0%	7.8%	43.1%	39.2%	3.9%	5.9%
Dutch	0.0%	0.0%	2.6%	48.7%	46.2%	0.0%	2.6%
Swedish	0.0%	0.0%	2.9%	60.0%	34.3%	0.0%	2.9%
Spanish	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	53.3%	40.0%	3.3%	3.3%
Czech	0.0%	0.0%	3.8%	42.3%	46.2%	3.8%	3.8%
Norwegian	0.0%	0.0%	4.0%	60.0%	36.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Dannish	0.0%	0.0%	4.3%	60.9%	34.8%	0.0%	0.0%
Finnish	0.0%	0.0%	5.0%	55.0%	40.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Hungarian	0.0%	0.0%	13.3%	46.7%	33.3%	0.0%	6.7%
Netherlandish	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	75.0%	16.7%	0.0%	8.3%
Portuguese	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	66.7%	33.3%	0.0%	0.0%
Russian	0.0%	0.0%	9.1%	27.3%	27.3%	18.2%	18.2%
Slovak	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	45.5%	36.4%	9.1%	9.1%
Other foreign languages	0.0%	0.0%	6.4%	46.8%	38.3%	0.0%	8.5%

Table 8. Required level of proficiency in foreign languages – job offers in the BPO/SSC sector with the compulsory knowledge of particular foreign languages.

In the case of the **IT sector**, the demand for foreign languages looks completely differently and is focused mainly on the **knowledge of English** (comp. Table 9). **German** and **French** are much less desired than in the BPO/SSC sector, while other foreign languages occasionally appear in job advertisements. The percentage of job advertisements with no requirements in terms of any foreign languages is also higher (over 10% in total).

No.	Language	In total	
		N	%
1	English	590	87.67%
2	German	32	4.75%
3	French	15	2.23%
4	Spanish	6	0.89%
5	Russian	6	0.89%
6	Italian	4	0.59%
7	Turkish	2	0.30%
8	Czech	1	0.15%
9	Dannish	1	0.15%
10	Finnish	1	0.15%
11	Flemish	1	0.15%
12	Dutch	1	0.15%
13	Norwegian	1	0.15%
14	Swedish	1	0.15%
15	Foreign language	20	2.97%
16	No foreign language specified	75	11.14%

Language	Entry level	
	N	%
English	269	85.67%
German	17	5.41%
French	7	2.23%
Russian	2	0.64%
Czech	1	0.32%
Dannish	1	0.32%
Finnish	1	0.32%
Flemish	1	0.32%
Dutch	1	0.32%
Spanish	1	0.32%
Norwegian	1	0.32%
Swedish	1	0.32%
Foreign language	10	3.18%
No foreign language specified	39	12.42%

Table 9. Frequency of appearance of the demand for foreign language skills in job advertisements in the IT sector (N=673 in total, entry level N=314).

With regard to the required level of proficiency of foreign languages, it is noticeable that **40% of job advertisements** required a minimum of the **C1 level in German**, and **over 10% of job advertisements** required the **C2 level in French**. Figure 4 and Table 10 present detailed data.

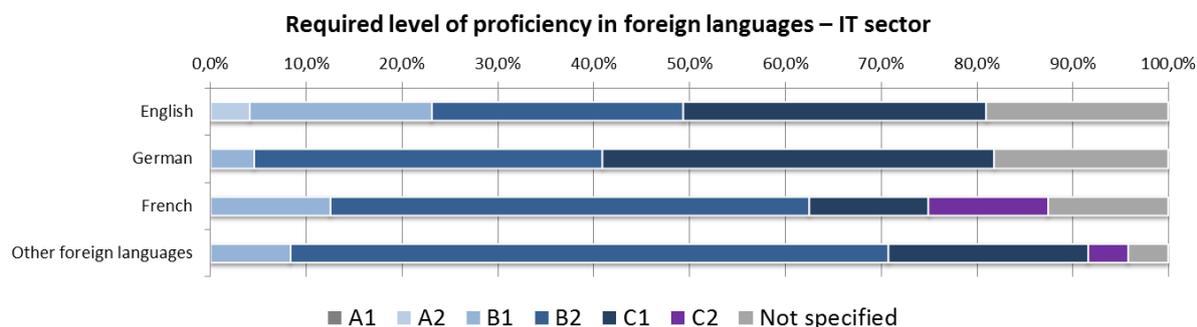


Figure 4. Required level of proficiency in foreign languages –job advertisements in the IT sector with the compulsory knowledge of the particular foreign language.

Foreign language	A1	A2	B1	B2	C1	C2	Not specified
English	0.0%	4.1%	19.0%	26.3%	31.6%	0.0%	19.0%
German	0.0%	0.0%	4.5%	36.4%	40.9%	0.0%	18.2%
French	0.0%	0.0%	12.5%	50.0%	12.5%	12.5%	12.5%
Other foreign languages	0.0%	0.0%	8.3%	62.5%	20.8%	4.2%	4.2%

Table 10. Required level of proficiency in foreign languages – job offers in the IT sector with the compulsory knowledge of particular foreign languages.

IMPLICATIONS FROM PREVIOUS BALANCES OF COMPETENCES

Language skills desired by employers were also, in a slightly different scope, subject to the study within the “Balance of language competences in the academic centre in Kraków” in previous years. As results from several tables below (comp. Table 11, 12, 13 and 14), **English, technical English, German (excluding life science) and technical German were the most important foreign languages in all sectors.** As a rule, **the recruitment of candidates with satisfactory language skills in English is also easy or at most medium-difficult**, while the recruitment of candidates with appropriate skills in technical English and German is more difficult on the labour market. With regard to other foreign languages, the situations looks much worse – they are not so important from the point of view of the sectors (they are important for a lower number of subjects), but **companies searching for employees with French, Russian, Italian and other languages face significant difficulties.** It may be also concluded in general that companies expect the importance of foreign languages to increase in future – generally in all analysed sectors, the increase in the importance of language competences in the 5-year perspective refers to 64% of cases, the maintenance of the importance level 19%, and the decrease only 17%.

Foreign language	Passive and energy-efficient construction			Power industry			Life science		
	Importance		Recruitment difficulty	Importance		Recruitment difficulty	Importance		Recruitment difficulty
	2014	2019		2014	2019		2014	2019	
English	4.11	↑	3.00	4.67	→	2.91	4.50	→	3.00
Technical English	4.11	↑	3.63	4.58	↘	3.50	4.50	→	3.80
German	3.19	↑	3.82	3.29	↗	3.40	2.67	↑	3.00
Technical German	3.25	↑	3.91	3.14	↗	4.00	3.50	↑	4.00
Russian	2.67	↑	4.33	3.00	↑	4.00	2.50	↓	3.00
French	2.20	↑	3.67	2.14	↗	2.67	3.00	↓	3.50
Chinese	1.92	↑	4.80	2.33	↑	5.00	3.33	↑	4.50
Spanish	1.80	↑	4.25	2.00	↗	4.00	2.50	↓	3.50
Italian	1.70	↗	4.20	2.17	→	4.50	2.67	↓	3.00
Japanese	1.60	↑	4.80	1.83	↑	4.00	3.00	↓	5.00

Table 11. Importance and recruitment difficulty with regard to language competences in the sectors: passive and energy-efficient construction, power industry and life science, subject to the analysis in 2013 within the project “Balance of competences in the academic centre in Kraków” (scores assigned from 1 to 5 (in terms of importance: 1 – definitely not important, 5 – definitely important; in terms of recruitment difficulty: 1 – very easy to recruit, 5 – very difficult to recruit).

Foreign language	Creative sector – creation sector			Creative sector – cultural sector		
	Importance		Recruitment difficulty	Importance		Recruitment difficulty
	2014	2019		2014	2019	
English	4.80	↓	3.21	4.88	→	2.75
Technical English	4.33	→	3.77	3.57	→	3.60
German	2.33	↑	3.20	3.00	↑	4.00
Technical German	2.20	↑	3.60	2.67	↑	4.00
Russian	2.18	↗	3.33	2.50	↑	4.00
French	1.90	↘	3.00	2.20	→	4.00
Chinese	1.38	↗	3.50	2.20	↗	4.67
Spanish	1.78	↘	3.00	2.00	→	3.67
Italian	1.78	↘	3.00	2.20	↘	3.33
Japanese	1.38	↗	3.50	1.40	↗	4.67

Table 12. Importance and recruitment difficulty with regard to language competences in the creative sector, subject to the analysis in 2013 within the project “Balance of competences in the academic centre in Kraków” (scores assigned from 1 to 5 (in terms of importance: 1 – definitely not important, 5 – definitely important; in terms of recruitment difficulty: 1 – very easy to recruit, 5 – very difficult to recruit).

Foreign language	Construction sector			Architectural sector			IT sector		
	Importance		Recruitment difficulty	Importance		Recruitment difficulty	Importance		Recruitment difficulty
	2015	2020		2015	2020		2015	2020	
English	4.38	→	2.60	4.31	↑	3.17	4.82	→	3.00
Technical English	3.20	↗	3.70	4.31	↑	3.92	2.72	↑	3.44
German	4.31	→	3.60	3.00	↑	4.10	4.38	↘	3.15
Technical German	3.13	→	4.11	3.17	↑	4.10	2.39	↑	3.63

Tabela 13. Importance and recruitment difficulty with regard to language competences in the construction, architectural and IT sector, subject to the analysis in 2014 within the project “Balance of competences in the academic centre in Kraków” (scores assigned from 1 to 5 (in terms of importance: 1 – definitely not important, 5 – definitely important; in terms of recruitment difficulty: 1 – very easy to recruit, 5 – very difficult to recruit).

Foreign language	Tourism sector			Transport and logistics		
	Importance		Recruitment difficulty	Importance		Recruitment difficulty
	2014	2019		2014	2019	
English	5.00	→	2.45	4.75	↗	2.61
German	3.73	↑	3.37	4.32	↗	3.35
Italian	3.38	↑	4.00	-	-	-
Spanish	3.05	↑	3.91	-	-	-
French	2.86	↑	3.78	-	-	-
Russian	2.84	↑	4.00	-	-	-
Technical English	-	-	-	4.00	↑	4.00
Technical German	-	-	-	3.38	↑	4.10

Table 14. Importance and recruitment difficulty with regard to language competences in the tourism and transport and logistics sectors, subject to the analysis in 2015 within the project “Balance of competences in the academic centre in Kraków” (scores assigned from 1 to 5 (in terms of importance: 1 – definitely not important, 5 – definitely important; in terms of recruitment difficulty: 1 – very easy to recruit, 5 – very difficult to recruit).

ANALYSIS OF THE SUPPLY: RESULTS OF THE LANGUAGE TEACHING AT UNIVERSITIES AND LANGUAGE SCHOOLS

While the analysis of the effects of teaching at universities is always difficult, the same issue in terms of language competences seems to be even more complex. Firstly, the effects of teaching inherently refer to an “average student”, which means in practice that both better and worse prepared graduates leave universities than on average. Secondly, in the case of foreign languages, students use a wide range of tools for improving language competences (consumption of media in foreign languages, private classes and tuition, foreign travels), which are difficult to be taken into consideration in the analyses at the level of universities.

In the below presented survey of supply of language competences, we considered three types of subjects:

- **Colleges and language centres** operating by Kraków’s universities (8 invited subjects; 5 took part in the survey; in general, colleges and language centres educate almost 44000 students at all language levels),
- **Language schools** operating in Kraków (93 invited subjects; 25 took part in the survey; in general, these schools educate over 5000 students at all language levels),
- **Fields of study and fields in philology** in Kraków (21 fields of study at 2 universities – the Jagiellonian University and the Pedagogical University; in total, these universities accept approx. 2000 students a year; we took the assumption in the study that they enter the labour market with the C2 level of specialist languages).

Each of the above mentioned subjects was sent a questionnaire listing a wide range of foreign languages popular on the labour market in Kraków together with a request to specify the number of adult students learning individual foreign languages at different levels. **Finally, the data gathered by us refer to the approximate level of language teaching for approx. 50 thousand students and graduates in Kraków**²⁶.

At a general level, in interviews and experts’ opinions, answers given by companies and universities with regard to the teaching quality are quite unanimous. The general evaluation of the educational offer of Kraków in terms of foreign languages seems to be high, only quite a limited scope of teaching the ability to use the language in practice may be considered as a challenge.

As far as the level of foreign languages is concerned, the natural reservoir are philologies at the Jagiellonian University and the Pedagogical University. A high level of English is also demonstrated by graduates of the Cracow University of Economics, irrespective of the completed field of study. The AGH University of Science and Technology, Cracow University of Technology are classified slightly lower in terms of language competences, which, in the opinion of experts, provide their graduates with a too limited spectrum for using languages in practice.

²⁶ It is necessary to make an important reservation – both language schools and college provided the number of students studying at individual levels, however, the categories were not disjunctive. It means that individuals may be classified into several categories, if they study more than one foreign language.

Table 15 presents the number of students studying at different levels of foreign language education, irrespective of the institution²⁷. With regard to the most popular foreign languages, the situation reflects business needs to a large extent – the most popular languages studied are **English, German, Spanish, Russian and French**. The only difference in comparison with the demand for language competences may be a higher popularity of Spanish – it may result directly from the popularity of this language in other contexts apart from business. **It is worrying that only five foreign languages are taught at the highest levels of language education (C1 and C2) at language schools and colleges. Other foreign languages are taught either at lower levels (A1-B2) or only in the fields of philology.**

No.	Foreign language	A1	A2	B1	B2	C1	C2	N	%
1	English	103	838	10133	18207	6684	1481	37446	73.94%
2	German	1452	1294	1432	563	160	371	5272	10.41%
3	Spanish	1301	343	195	108	12	280	2239	4.42%
4	Russian	383	309	303	565	28	272	1860	3.67%
5	French	291	668	141	58	40	0	1198	2.37%
6	Italian	668	141	58	40	0	176	1083	2.14%
7	Norwegian	150	100	50	50	0	0	350	0.69%
8	Swedish	78	58	48	40	0	48	272	0.54%
9	Chinese	126	30	6	10	0	24	196	0.39%
10	Netherlandish	85	59	26	8	0	0	178	0.35%
11	Czech	60	43	20	15	6	2	146	0.29%
12	Arabic	0	0	0	0	0	76	76	0.15%
13	Finnish	40	20	5	0	0	0	65	0.13%
14	Dannish	35	15	5	0	0	0	55	0.11%
15	Japanese	0	0	0	0	0	53	53	0.10%
16	Hungarian	0	0	0	0	0	50	50	0.10%
17	Turkish	0	0	0	0	0	37	37	0.07%
18	Greek	30	0	0	0	0	0	30	0.06%
19	Romanian	0	0	0	0	0	25	25	0.05%
20	Lithuanian	5	6	0	0	0	0	11	0.02%

Table15. Number of persons learning particular foreign languages at different levels of education in Kraków, in the fields of philology, at language schools and language centres and colleges of Kraków's universities (due to the method of analysis, students learning more than one foreign language may be classified to more than one category).

A similar picture results from the analysis of the percentage distribution of education levels for different foreign languages at Kraków's language schools and colleges and philological studies (Figure 5 and Table 16).

²⁷ The data cover both studies in philologies at the Jagiellonian University and the Pedagogical University, and the biggest language colleges by universities and private language schools. The figures do not reflect the complete picture of Kraków's labour market in terms of proficiency in foreign languages, the presence of the biggest subjects makes it possible to present the supply of foreign languages quite appropriately.

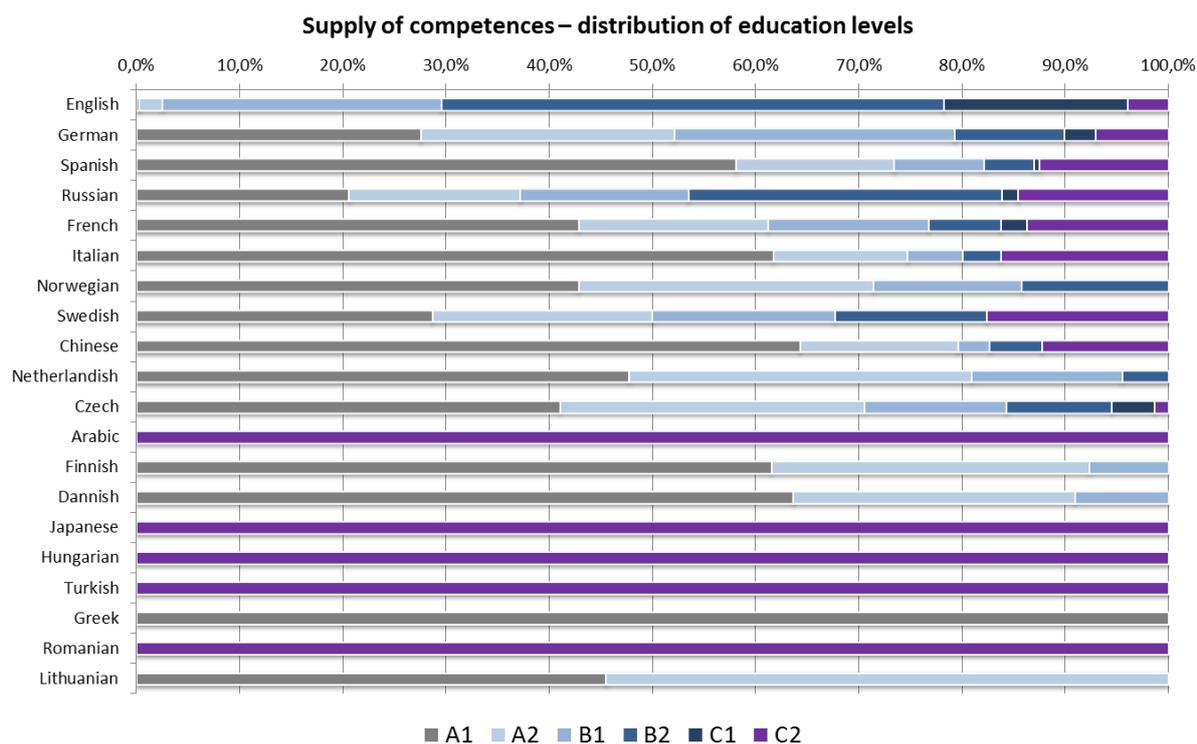


Figure 5. Percentage distribution of education levels for different foreign languages at Kraków's language schools and colleges and studies in philologies.

Foreign language	A1	A2	B1	B2	C1	C2
English	0.3%	2.2%	27.1%	48.6%	17.8%	4.0%
German	27.5%	24.5%	27.2%	10.7%	3.0%	7.0%
Spanish	58.1%	15.3%	8.7%	4.8%	0.5%	12.5%
Russian	20.6%	16.6%	16.3%	30.4%	1.5%	14.6%
French	42.8%	18.3%	15.6%	7.0%	2.5%	13.7%
Italian	61.7%	13.0%	5.4%	3.7%	0.0%	16.3%
Norwegian	42.9%	28.6%	14.3%	14.3%	0.0%	0.0%
Swedish	28.7%	21.3%	17.6%	14.7%	0.0%	17.6%
Chinese	64.3%	15.3%	3.1%	5.1%	0.0%	12.2%
Netherlandish	47.8%	33.1%	14.6%	4.5%	0.0%	0.0%
Czech	41.1%	29.5%	13.7%	10.3%	4.1%	1.4%
Arabic	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%
Finnish	61.5%	30.8%	7.7%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Dannish	63.6%	27.3%	9.1%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Japanese	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%
Hungarian	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%
Turkish	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%
Greek	100.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Romanian	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%
Lithuanian	45.5%	54.5%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%

Table16. Percentage distribution of education levels for different foreign languages at Kraków's language schools and colleges and philological studies.

STUDENTS' SELF-ASSESSMENT OF LANGUAGE COMPETENCES

The study on the self-assessment of language competences covered 758 students from four universities in Kraków (AGH University of Science and Technology: 219; Jagiellonian University: 211; Cracow University of Economics: 178; Cracow University of Technology: 150) and four fields of study (informatics: 369; economics: 178; law and administration: 118; psychology: 93)²⁸.

With regard to sources of language competences used by students, the consumption of foreign media seems to be the dominant one, classes in foreign languages at universities play also an important role – 1 out of 4 students has also private tuition. Almost one third of students taking part in our study declare also that they intend to go abroad during the next year to gain additional language competences. If asked about additional sources apart from the ones listed in the questionnaire, students pointed out classes in foreign languages at universities, mobile applications for learning foreign languages and computer games. Figure 5 presents detailed results.

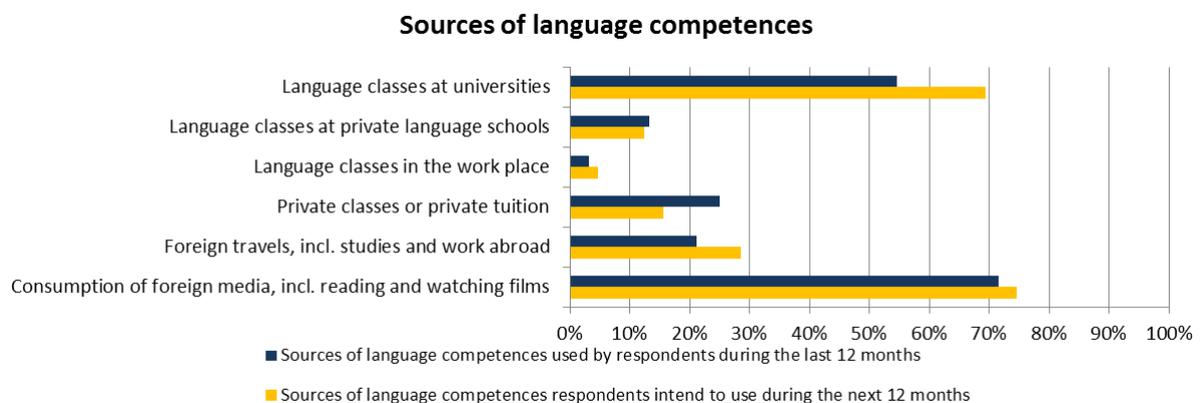


Figure 5. Using different sources of language competences by students of Kraków's universities.

Attitudes and beliefs of students taking part in the study are also very interesting in terms of their proficiency in foreign languages. **85% of students are of the opinion that nowadays it is impossible to achieve professional success without speaking foreign languages** – at the same time, **3 out of 4 students are quite optimistic that their skills are sufficient to gain a job on the labour market in Kraków**. Unfortunately, the optimism does not go in hand with a positive evaluation of language teaching at universities – **only a half of participants in the study assess language education at their universities in a positive way**. Language schools are assessed slightly better in this respect – **almost 75% of students are satisfied with the level of education**. Figure 6 presents details about students' opinions about foreign languages.

²⁸ The average age of participants of the study amounted to 22.8; men accounted for 61% of participants.

Students' opinions about their own language competences

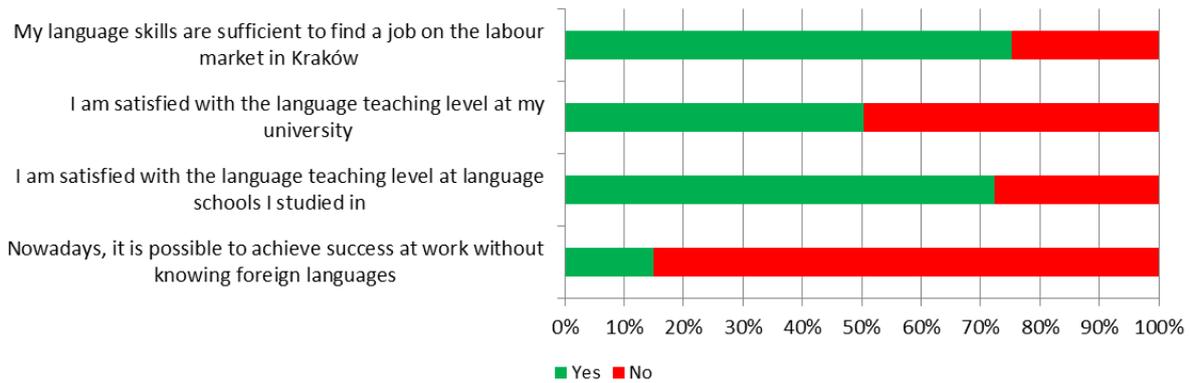


Figure 6. Using different sources of language competences by students of Kraków's universities.

Students' opinions about their strengths and weaknesses are interesting, in particular in the context of the above mentioned demand for language competences and employers' assessment in terms of individual areas of language proficiency. It turns out, and there is a considerable unanimity between employers and students, that **students assess their competences in listening, writing and reading quite well** (the latter is considered to be strength by the highest percentage of participants of the survey, i.e. almost two thirds). **It is surprising that written translation and speaking are considered to be strengths – employers treated these areas as problematic.** Students evaluate **their competences in terms of simultaneous interpreting, specialist languages and business communication to be decidedly the weakest** (less than 1 in 3 students consider them to be their strength).

Self-assessment of strengths and weaknesses of one's own language competences

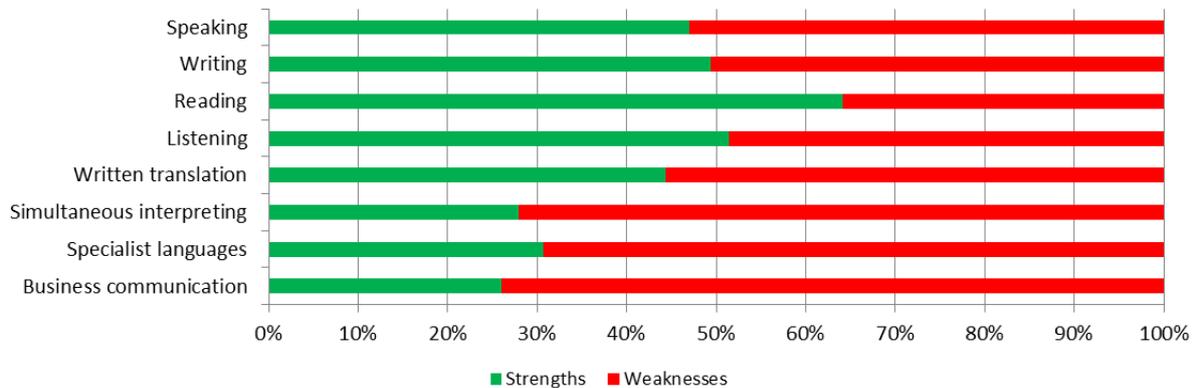


Figure 7. Using different sources of language competences by students of Kraków's universities.

Distinctive and again reflecting employers' perceptions, the fact is that **almost all students taking part in the survey declared that they can speak English at least at the A1 level** (Table 17), while **over 80% at least at the B2 level** (Fig. 8). It is surprising that **many participants of the survey also declared that they can speak German (over 70%), although less than 10% of students can speak it at least at the B2 level.** The two top languages were followed, as usually, by Spanish, French, Russian and Italian, which is familiar to at least 10% of students. What's interesting, participants of the survey were also speakers of languages almost disregarded by employers, eg sign language, Hindi, Aramaic or Yiddish.

Foreign language	% of students declaring any knowledge of the particular foreign language
English	98.5%
German	70.1%
Spanish	16.4%
French	16.1%
Russian	11.1%
Italian	10.3%
Japanese	4.3%
Czech	3.3%
Slovak	2.7%
Greek	2.5%
Netherlandish	2.2%
Swedish	2.1%
Arabic	1.9%
Hebrew	1.9%
Latin	1.7%
Bulgarian	1.7%
Hungarian	1.7%
Romanian	1.7%
Dannish	1.6%
Finnish	1.5%
Lithuanian	1.5%
Turkish	1.5%
Ukrainian	0.9%
Norwegian	0.5%
Sign language	0.3%
Chinese	0.3%
Portuguese	0.1%
Hindi	0.1%
Aramaic	0.1%
Yiddish	0.1%
Korean	0.1%
Catalan	0.1%

Table 17. Percentage of participants of the survey who can speak particular languages at least at the A1 level.

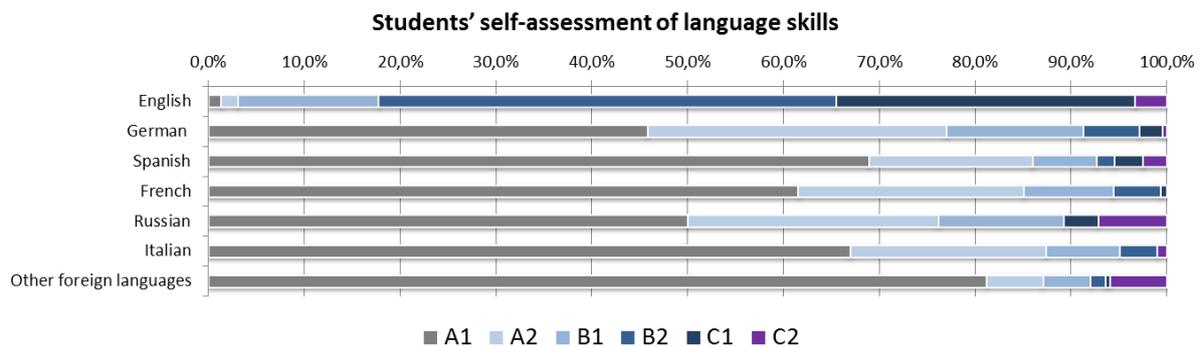


Figure 8. Percentage distribution of self-assessment of language competences among participants of the survey.

	A1	A2	B1	B2	C1	C2
English	1,3%	1,7%	14,7%	47,7%	31,2%	3,4%
German	45,8%	31,2%	14,3%	5,8%	2,4%	0,4%
Spanish	68,9%	17,1%	6,7%	1,8%	3,0%	2,4%
French	61,5%	23,6%	9,3%	5,0%	0,6%	0,0%
Russian	50,0%	26,2%	13,1%	0,0%	3,6%	7,1%
Italian	67,0%	20,4%	7,8%	3,9%	0,0%	1,0%
Other foreign languages	81,2%	5,9%	5,0%	1,6%	0,4%	6,0%

Table 18. Percentage distribution of self-assessment of language competences among participants of the survey.

Slightly over 20% of students taking part in the survey possess a certificate confirming their language competences, out of which the vast majority are certificates in English.

	N	%
English	120	15,8%
German	21	2,8%
French	7	0,9%
Spanish	5	0,7%
Other foreign languages	5	0,7%

Table 19. Percentage distribution of self-assessment of language competences among participants of the survey.

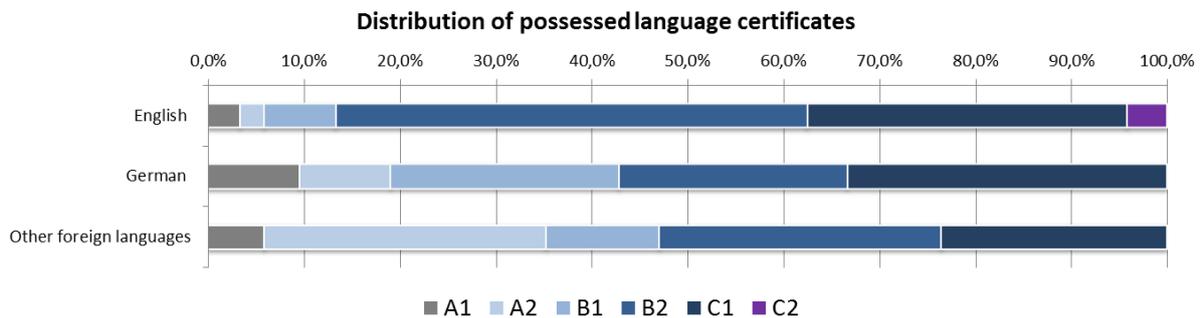


Figure 9. Percentage distribution of possessed language certificates.

	A1	A2	B1	B2	C1	C2
English	3,3%	2,5%	7,5%	49,2%	33,3%	4,2%
German	9,5%	9,5%	23,8%	23,8%	33,3%	0,0%
Other foreign languages	5,9%	29,4%	11,8%	29,4%	23,5%	0,0%

Table 19. Percentage distribution of possessed language certificates.

BALANCE OF COMPETENCES: SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Our analysis of the demand pointed out key types of language competences which are in demand among employers in Kraków, while the analysis of the supply pointed out languages and proficiency levels among Kraków' universities, language colleges and language schools. Which conclusions from this report may be drawn by employers, universities, private sector and public administration?

One of the most significant competitive advantages of Kraków is the availability of a large number of students and graduates speaking foreign languages. An additional advantage of the city is its cultural and entertainment offer and tourist nature – **it motivates citizens to improve their language competences, as well as enables companies to attract employees from abroad.**

Language competences, although important in the majority of analysed sectors, **are of particular importance from the point of view of the development of the business services sector** (nearly 98% of job offers in the BPO/SSC sector require candidates to know a foreign language). The dynamics of the development of this sector creates also some challenges for the education – at the general level, the significance of the knowledge of foreign languages increases, but the demand may fluctuate significantly due to new projects and companies (eg the opening of only one big company increased the demand for German several times). The above leads to the situation, in which **it is practically impossible to achieve an ideal balance between the demand and supply of language competences.** However, the knowledge is not just a value in itself, and the market in Kraków seems to be able to accommodate to changes in the demand for foreign languages in the long term; in the short term, the demand for key foreign languages may be ensured by **a better cooperation between public authorities (eg in terms of subsidizing the education in niche foreign languages) and business.** At the same time, **promotional activities to improve one's own language competences** should be continued. As history shows, the educational market has quite big opportunities to adapt to business needs, as exemplified by Netherlandish (very scarce a few years ago, quite sustainable nowadays).

In terms of the dynamics of the balance of language competences, changing expectations towards the level of proficiency in foreign languages may become a significant challenge. Business increases its demand in terms of proficiency in foreign languages quite visibly, which is particularly visible in the case of English (**expectations at the C1 level are becoming dominant**), while in the educational sector, English teaching at the B1 level is still over-represent. **It seems that it is necessary to change the way of thinking of universities and the very students to reject the prevailing belief that the knowledge of English is common nowadays.** Indeed, the statement is true, however, the element, which is decide about the adaptation of competences and individual career paths of particular graduates is the level (fluent at the best), and not the very fact that one is able to communicate in a foreign language. A significant challenge Kraków is to face shortly is **the implementation of more complex tasks in BPO/SSC centres,** which will also require greater fluency in foreign languages and their combination with other competences.

Students are aware of the importance of foreign languages and take up additional activities to a large extent to improve them (among others, additional classes at language schools, foreign travels, private tuition). However, as results from the results of the study, they slightly overvalue their skills. **Companies pay particular attention to the necessity to supplement language**

learning with such activities as foreign travels and consumption of cultures in foreign languages, which enable to learn a colloquial language more in depth, understand a specific slang, etc., which are of particular importance in customer services. It would be worth **introducing language classes** (in particular in specialist languages) **to be conducted by employees from sectors which are mostly interested in recruiting candidates fluent in a foreign language, short “language apprenticeships” for students of philologies in Krakow’s BPO/ITO centres, as well as introducing niche languages at language colleges with greater courage.**

Language skills must go in hand with communication skills – this is one of weakest points of Krakow’s students and graduates, who are not always able to use the vocabulary or grammar to communicate easily in the particular language in business or in practice. High **reservations in this respect are addressed to otherwise highly rate graduates of philologies**. In terms of **translation skills**, Krakow’s companies decide to employ *native speakers* more and more often – it seems that **universities may also undertake a wider range of activities in this respect by introducing translation fields of studies appropriate and adjusted to the labour market.**

The cooperation between business and universities is quite neglected. In the opinion of employers, **career offices of Krakow’s universities are usually passive**, the same being applicable to university authorities, which do not address the needs of the labour market by combining language teaching with practice (BPO Education Centre by the Sopot University of Applied Science serves as a positive example in this respect), the tardiness and defeatism of university bureaucracy is also subject to criticism. On the other hand, such opinions point out that **universities are interpreted quite narrowly as schools whose task is to provide their graduates with a good professional start**. It seems that it would be worth **creating as many opportunities as possible for cooperation and both formal and informal communication between business and language colleges (may be facilitated by the City Council of Krakow)** – existing events, eg the European Day of Languages or the Forum of Languages, provide a ready idea for cooperation.

As far as the expectations towards the City Council of Krakow are concerned, employers are of the opinion that there are certain disproportions in financial aid for the development of the IT sector and competences and the support in terms of language teaching. There was an opinion repeated in the interviews that the development of both areas provides graduates with similar benefits, while the IT sector is definitely favoured in terms of finance. **It would be suggested to promote both the self-improvement of language competences and increase the direct financial support by public authorities for the development of language competences, in particular competences higher in demand on the labour market in Krakow.**

ANNEX 1: LANGUAGE LEVELS USED IN THE STUDY

Language levels in accordance with the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages		
A1	Beginner	Can understand and use familiar everyday expressions and very basic phrases aimed at the satisfaction of needs of a concrete type. Can introduce him/herself and others and can ask and answer questions about personal details such as where he/she lives, people he/she knows and things he/she has. Can interact in a simple way provided the other person talks slowly and clearly and is prepared to help.
A2	Pre-intermediate	Can understand sentences and frequently used expressions related to areas of most immediate relevance (e.g. very basic personal and family information, shopping, local geography, employment). Can communicate in simple and routine tasks requiring a simple and direct exchange of information on familiar and routine matters. Can describe in simple terms aspects of his/her background, immediate environment and matters in areas of immediate need.
B1	Intermediate	Can understand the main points of clear standard input on familiar matters regularly encountered in work, school, leisure, etc. Can deal with most situations likely to arise whilst travelling in an area where the language is spoken. Can produce simple connected text on topics which are familiar or of personal interest. Can describe experiences and events, dreams, hopes & ambitions and briefly give reasons and explanations for opinions and plans.
B2	Upper/post-intermediate	Can understand the main ideas of complex text on both concrete and abstract topics, including technical discussions in his/her field of specialisation. Can interact with a degree of fluency and spontaneity that makes regular interaction with native speakers quite possible without strain for either party. Can produce clear, detailed text on a wide range of subjects and explain a viewpoint on a topical issue giving the advantages and disadvantages of various options.
C1	Advanced	Can understand a wide range of demanding, longer texts, and recognise implicit meaning. Can express him/herself fluently and spontaneously without much obvious searching for expressions. Can use language flexibly and effectively for social, academic and professional purposes. Can produce clear, well-structured, detailed text on complex subjects, showing controlled use of organisational patterns, connectors and cohesive devices.
C2	Mastery	Can understand with ease virtually everything heard or read. Can summarise information from different spoken and written sources, reconstructing arguments and accounts in a coherent presentation. Can express him/herself spontaneously, very fluently and precisely, differentiating finer shades of meaning even in the most complex situations.