

## STUDY ON THE LEVEL OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE SKILLS IN THE AGRICULTURAL SECTOR. CASE STUDY

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### **Abstract**

*The objective of this study is to find out the level of English language skills and knowledge of the persons who work in the agricultural sector. The young graduates graduate a faculty knowing very well a foreign language. The effort to learn foreign languages must be made daily, especially for the persons in the agricultural sector who get in touch with foreigners and develop international business affairs. A foreign language is the key for communication. The study was carried out based on a questionnaire on 50 respondents with the occupation in the rural area. The questions were clear, easy to understand and the answers to the questionnaire provide information about the English language skills of the persons who work in the agricultural sector and the modalities to improve their language skills in the future. The respondents were from 5 communes in Calarasi County. From this study, we draw the conclusion that English language is important for the persons in the agricultural sector, those who have farms, associations in the agricultural area, as they can extend their business, they can form partnerships with foreigners and gains new experience from them*

*Key words:* business sector, foreign language skills

### **INTRODUCTION**

A language is the key to communication, without communication I do not know how we could live. Knowledge of a foreign language is important.

A foreign language is important because if we arrive in a foreign country and we know the language of origin, we can understand the inhabitants of the country well, we can read films that are not yet in Romanian, although we are not outside the mother tongue, we can speak in a foreign language with a friend. Another reason why a language is important is that we can speak a foreign language without other people understanding us, a foreign language adds more to our experience, or brings new experiences or we can meet other people who know a certain language. language and to connect friends with them, for example, in an intensive language classroom.

English is not a difficult language, which is why many people learn it very easily.

English is a global language, the language of media industry, the language of Internet, the

language of international business, a language which opens a door to multiple cultures [9].

Agricultural universities include English Language and other foreign languages in the syllabus of their faculties to prepare the students to encounter global communication challenges.

After the completion of graduation and post-graduation studies, having a high proficiency in English or any other foreign language, the graduates are ready to serve in various local and multinational organizations and companies. Many company managers are willing to employ people having abilities and skills in speaking and writing in English to be more effective in developing international collaborations. Therefore, teaching and learning English in the agricultural universities enhance the chance of the graduates for getting a better paid job [1].

In order to develop skills and abilities in English language, both qualitative and quantitative methods have to be applied by the teaching staff in order to increase proficiency in using this international language [8].

In the increasingly integrated global business community, the ability to communicate in foreign languages is becoming more and more important.

Business relationships between partners and with clients founded on a direct communication in their native language are stronger and longer lasting.

"Learning to communicate fluently in multiple languages provides additional job security and advancement opportunities in uncertain economic times" [3].

In this context, the purpose of the paper was to study English language skills in agricultural sector, making a field survey among the managers and employees of various agricultural holdings in Calarasi County, Romania.

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

The questionnaire is an efficient method, often used to collect data that require even more precision and consult multiple sources in order to formulate the answer.

The questions included in the questionnaire aim to obtain data necessary to know the situation existing in the analyzed area.

A questionnaire can be developed either for a larger area (a unit function, a subsystem) or for a problem with a smaller area (an activity, a special problem, a solution, etc.). The questionnaire was applied in 5 municipalities in Calarasi county, more exactly in the following communes: Cuza Voda commune, Dichiseni commune, Gradistea commune, Modelu commune and Roseti commune.

For this purpose, in this research it was used a sample of 50 respondents with occupation in the rural area, in the period May 2018.

The questionnaire was applied face to face. It is not standardized it contains 14 questions. The questionnaire is clear, easy to understand and does not influence the answer.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The study was elaborated using the answers of the respondents questioned in the 5 communes in Calarasi county.

The communes are the following: Cuza Voda commune, Dichiseni commune, Gradistea commune, Modelu commune and Roseti commune.

The commune of Cuza Voda, is located in the southeast of the Romanian Plain, in the southern part of Călărași county, in the contact area of the Southern Bărăgan with the Călărași Terrace. East-west oriented, The commune of Cuza Voda has a total area of 14,050 hectares, of which 655 ha are lands for glazes. The inhabitants of the commune deal more with agriculture and animal husbandry, cultivating their lands with wheat, corn, barley, oats and sunflower, but also with the cultivation of vegetables from which we mention: carrot, parsley, dill, red fleas, pepper, onion, etc. Through the courts have planted fruit trees such as: apple, hair, clam, plum, cherry, etc. [2].

Dichiseni commune Dichiseni commune is located in the south-eastern part of Călărași county, on the left bank of the Danube, on the border with Constanța county. It is crossed by the Borcea arm, the arm on which the component localities are located. Through the commune passes the national road DN3B, which connects Calarasi with Fetești. has been certified documentary since 1896 [7].

Grădiștea Commune The commune is located in the central-south part of the county, to the west of the city of Calarasi, on the north bank of the Danube. It is crossed by the national road DN31 that makes the connection between Calarasi and Oltenița, and which ends, east of the village of Grădiștea, in DN3, which connects Calarasi with Bucharest. In the commune is located Lake Gălățui. The total area occupied by the commune is 7,480 hectares, of which the village hearth and the surface occupied by water represent 965 hectares. In the territory of Grădiștea commune, agriculture has the best natural conditions to develop [4].

Modelu commune has an area of 14,407.68 hectares and is composed of three villages: Modelu, Tonea and Radu Negru [5].

Roseți commune is located in the southern part of Călărași county on the left bank of the Borcea arm, between Coslogeni villages to the east, Dragalina and Perișoru to the north,

Stefan Voda and Modelu to the west and Constanța county to the south [6].

Table 1. Presentation of the agricultural companies from which the respondents were selected

Crt. No.	Name of the firm	Legal status	Locality
1	Ranch Bucur SRL	Limited Liability Company (LLC)	Modelu
2	Dumtru Impex	LLC	Modelu
3	Agramiv	LLC	Modelu
4	Agromodel	Joint Stock Company (JSC)	Modelu
5	Agromtind	JSC	Modelu
6	Ilisei Rodica	Family Association (FA)	Modelu
7	Negrila Ionel	Authorized person	Modelu
8	Dorna Agri	LLC	Roseți
9	Algap	LLC	Roseți
10	Mustatea Nicu Petronel	Individual enterprise (IE)	Roseți
11	Mesca Marian	Authorized person	Roseți
12	Constantinescu Liviu	FA	Roseți
13	Tudor 92	LLC	Dichiseni
14	Radu Germina	Authorized person	Dichiseni
15	Agroprest Mailat	LLC	Grădiștea
16	Mig Agro	LLC	Grădiștea
17	Leca T Marian	IE	Grădiștea
18	Agromec Tractorul	LLC	Cuza Vodă
19	Agromixt	JSC	Cuza Vodă
20	Vlasceanu Victor	IE	Cuza Vodă

Source: Field Survey, 2018.

The study was conducted on a sample of 50 respondents with the occupation established in the rural area, in May of 2018. As a research method, the quantitative study was carried out through a questionnaire applied face to face by the researcher.

The questionnaire is non-standardized and contains 14 questions that correspond to the purpose and objectives proposed. The questions are clear, easy to understand for any questioned person and do not influence the answer.

The questionnaire has in its composition: direct questions, some having control role; multiple choice closed questions and open questions that give the interviewee the opportunity to express their own opinion freely.

The first part of the questionnaire contains questions relating to sex, age, education, occupation and the category of agricultural holding of which they belong.

In the second part of the questionnaire are positioned questions to obtain information about the knowledge of English, the level at which they are located, ways to deepen the knowledge and skills they would like to develop within the English language.

Regarding the structure of respondents, on gender, 56% of the respondents were men and 44% were women. Regarding the structure of respondents, on studies, 4% had primary and secondary school, 54% high school and 42% higher education.

Regarding the structure of respondents by age groups, 4% were between 18-25 years old, 20% were between 26-35 years old, 54% were 36-50 years old, and 22% were over 50 years old.

The predominant age group of the subjects is 36-50 years old, being 54 percent, followed by the group of those over 50 years old with a percentage of 22%, then the group of 26-35 years old with a percentage of 20% and last group 18-25 years with a value of 4 percent (Table 2).

Table 2. Respondents' age structure

Age Group (years)	%
18-25	4
26-35	20
36-50	54
Over 50	22

Source: Field Survey, 2018

The respondents have various occupations and their structure based on this criterion is presented in Table 3.

Most of respondents are engineers (30%), farmers (14%), economists (12%), technicians (5%), accountants (5%) and workers (5%).

Table 3. Structure of respondents according to occupation

Crt. No.	Occupation	No. of answers	Percent
1.	Manager	3	6
2.	Engineer	15	30
3.	Economist	6	12
4.	Technician	5	10
5.	Accountant	5	10
6.	Worker	5	10
7.	Farmer	7	14
8.	Clerk	2	4
9.	Others	2	4

Source: Field Survey, 2018.

Regarding the type of agricultural exploitation, of the total number of respondents, 42% are part of the agricultural holding limited liability company, 20% of the joint stock company, the category of agricultural enterprise individual company and the family association is equal to a percentage of 14% and the last category is a authorized natural person with 10 % (Table 4).

Table 4. Respondents distribution by type of agricultural holding

Crt. No.	Farm	No. of answers	Percent
1.	Individual enterprise	7	14
2.	Authorized person	5	10
3.	Family association	7	14
4.	Limited liability company	21	42
5.	Joint stock company	10	20

Source: Field Survey, 2018.

At the question „Do you know English language?” **86% respondents said Yes, and 14% said No.**

**Regarding the level of learning at which the interviewees are positioned**, 34% of them are at the advanced level, also at 34 percent are located and those who are at the beginner level and at the intermediate level have a value of 32 percent.

**As to why the respondents learned English**, 36% of them stated for the current job, 32% for communicating with business partners in the European Union, 20% for personal development, 10% stated for a work abroad and 2% other special situations.

**To the question “Were there situations when you felt you needed English?”**, 96% answered yes and 4% answered yes to this question. As you can see on the graph, the difference is a very significant one and fortunately in a positive sense with respect to the need to know English.

Table 5. Importance of a foreign language, especially English

Crt. No.	Answer	No. of answers	Percent
1.	Yes, because it is an international language	11	22
2.	Yes, because it is the official language of the European Union	8	16
3.	Yes, because it is an usual language	7	14
4.	Yes, because it is needed for the interaction with the foreign partners	10	20
5.	Yes, for a better paid job	2	4
6.	Yes, it is needed for vocabulary development	4	8
7.	Yes, for the personal and professional life development	2	4
8.	Yes, it is essential for communication when travelling abroad	6	12

Source: Field Survey, 2018.

Therefore 22% agreed that it is important to know a foreign language, especially English because it is a language of international circulation, 20% say it is important because it is necessary in the interaction with foreign partners, 16% say it is an official language in the Union European, 14% say it is important because it is a common language, 12% think it is essential to communicate when travelling abroad, 8% say it is necessary for vocabulary development, and the last two positions are occupied by an equal number. 4 percent claims that it is important for a better paid job and for the development of personal and professional life

**To the idea of participating in English language learning programs**, subjects answered yes in a very large number with a percentage of 80%, and 20% of them do not

agree with these programs. **When asked "What types of materials would you like to study in English?"** 46 percent said they would use written materials, 34 percent would do much more easily through interactive exercises, 30 percent would study them thoroughly on the basis of video, and 26 percent would learn using audio materials.

**Regarding the context considered by the subjects that they would learn English language skills,** 44% stated that they agree with the in-depth studies at the faculty, 28% are interested in language skills training courses under the guidance of a teacher, 18% stated that they would accept online courses and 10% agree with the studies learned in school.

Table 6. What skills do you want to develop in English language?

Crt. No.	Answer	No. of answers	Percent
1.	Oral expression	20	40
2.	Grammar	8	16
3.	Written expression	19	38
4.	General vocabulary	14	28
5.	Understanding oral messages	14	28
6.	Understanding written messages	10	20

Source: Field Survey, 2018.

**Regarding the skills that the respondents want to develop in English,** 40 percent would learn to speak orally, 38 percent would write in writing, 28 percent would be topics for understanding oral messages and deepening Of the general vocabulary, 20 percent would gain understanding of written messages and 16 percent would assimilate English grammar

## CONCLUSIONS

At present, communication in English has become indispensable in all areas of social life. The accelerated rise of specific technologies has led to major changes in the knowledge of English language content and communication channels both inside and outside organizations.

Following the study, there were emphasized the advantages and disadvantages in learning English.

### **Advantages:**

- We can study or even get a job abroad
- To communicate with friends from other countries.
- To handle our travels.
- To have access to information in the target language without calling for translation.
- To advance in your career.
- To develop our cultural life.
- We can cooperate in business with any nationality of people.

### **Disadvantages:**

- Old age can be an obstacle.
- Insecurity about one's own learning powers.
- Poor knowledge of mother tongue.
- Installing a false sense of knowledge.
- Lack of constant and profound practice.

The case study carried out was based on the application and interpretation of the questionnaire, among the questioned persons, the male gender had a higher weight, having average education and they were between 36 and 50 years old.

The occupation that holds the widest area is that of an engineer, which shows that in the field of agricultural affairs, the engineer is the ubiquitous function and represents the essential pawn in making decisions to reach the economic optimum. The predominant category of agricultural holding is the limited liability company.

Regarding the knowledge of a foreign language, in the case of my study of English, a significant part affirms its knowledge. Those at the advanced level and those at the beginner level are at equal percentages. The main reason they learned English is their current job. The subjects consider that it is important to know the English language by expressing openly different and broad arguments such as: the idea that it is a language of international circulation, is an official language in the European Union, is necessary in collaboration with foreign business partners. They agree with the participation in programs of learning this language and argue that the most reliable context is the faculty. Interactive exercises are the most practical and efficiently help to develop oral speaking skills [9].

To increase the level of knowledge of English among children, the first meeting with this language should take place from the kindergarten period. When the first acquaintance takes place with its accent and pronunciation. Teachers should use video and audio because they are the methods that increase the attention of children.

At the school level, the continuation of the knowledge process takes place by adding the written and interactive materials. Here it is essential and compulsory the continuous and effective training of the teachers.

There are countless English language learning resources for adults, both alone with the help of books, online environment and other materials, and in a framework organized through a faculty, through a specialization course in English under the guidance of a teacher or by organizing courses in the online area.

Although we have access to many methods of learning English, the most effective and safe method is to attend a course in a college, because in this way we are motivated to devote time to study. In addition, the teacher is the most important actor who transmits the necessary knowledge to the students, decides the interactive activities for in-depth tailored to the particularities of the subjects in front of them and solves the exercises and problems encountered by them.

Taking into account the technological explosion of the means of communication through which people interact so easily, I propose to organize meetings at the level of groups or organizations whose theme is the need for communication in English.

This research work demonstrates and argues the need for continuous and constant study of the English language and it is necessary and useful to observe the evolution of the English language knowledge of the businessmen in the agricultural field in the rural area.

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