

# Research proves that employees are entering the workforce lacking in English proficiency – and they’re looking to employers to help them upskill

English has solidified its status as the global language of business. Almost 20% of the world’s population speaks English as a first, second or additional language – with many using it in their jobs.

At the same time, **many employees don’t have the skills or confidence to use English at work, expecting their organization to provide on-the-job English training.** So far, only a third of employers are making this link and proactively supporting employees to improve their English proficiency.

New research by Pearson, in partnership with PSB Insights, [How English empowers your tomorrow: The life-changing impact of learning English on your career and beyond](#), demonstrates the direct impact that good English proficiency has on employee retention, engagement, job satisfaction and productivity. Ultimately, good English skills point to more confident employees and stronger teams.



## Here’s what you need to know:



employees say it’s important for employers to provide language training, yet only a third say they have access to it at work.

**54%** of respondents say their formal education did not give them a good enough level of English proficiency, and they’re looking to their employers for help.

**85%** of respondents agree that English is important at work and 61% say they use it at least every week.

# Employee retention and engagement, productivity, teamwork and self-confidence are reliant on language proficiency



of respondents told us their job would be easier with better English skills.

Those who work for a company that offers language training are more than twice as likely to say they are very satisfied at work.

**Only 25%** of respondents felt confident in reading, writing, speaking and listening.

**Only 10%** of those with limited English feel they can express themselves at work (with 19% of them saying they felt 'stupid' because of their lack of English skills).



## Develop better English skills to promote inclusion

Managers and department heads are more likely to be offered language training (**56%**) than more junior employees (**19%**), suggesting a current lack of equity in learning and development strategies.

By raising English proficiency levels among second language speakers, employers will help to maximize the potential of their talent and support DE&I initiatives.

## What needs to change?

It bears repeating – 88% of employees say it's important for employers to provide business training, but only a third have access to it.

Better English language skills equal better business. If you're looking for a way to gain a competitive edge, this is it. Here's what you need to do:

1. Implement workplace English proficiency training as standard for all employees.
2. Let your employees know you're prioritizing language training.

3. Incorporate language learning into annual performance reviews.
4. Make language skills an integral part of your learning and development culture.

[Download the full research report to find out more, including how Pearson can support your organization to strengthen employees' workplace English skills.](#)