

## A. Жук

### THE NETHERLANDS AS THE TOP ENGLISH-SPEAKING COUNTRY

Nowadays English is considered to be the universally recognized language of international communication. As for the total number of speakers in the world, it is known to approximately 400 million people. Due to such popularity of the English language around the globe, it brought changes to some language preferences and even lead to multilingualism and linguistic globalization.

There are countries where the official language is not English, but it is spoken by the majority of the country's population. One of these countries is The Netherlands. Out of the total population about 91 % or 15.3 million Netherlanders speak English, despite the fact that the official language of the Netherlands is Dutch. According to the 6th annual EF English Proficiency Index, which ranks countries by the level of English proficiency of their residents, the Netherlands is the best English-speaking country with a total score of 72.16. The reasons are quite simple:

1. About 40–60 % of programs on Dutch television conversational channels are in English. As a result, Dutch children grow up hearing English in popular culture from a very early age.

2. English is compulsory in the field of education.

3. More and more Dutch schools are teaching in English at all levels of education

4. Dutch's genealogical proximity to English since both languages share a closely related West Germanic language origin.

5. Occupations require advanced knowledge of English

6. The Netherlands has become a place where students from abroad can come specifically to study in English.

7. The Netherlands' very open attitude towards the Anglo-Saxon culture

For that matter, there are numerous surveys on whether English is a threat or an enrichment to Dutch. The survey showed that a quarter of respondents see English as a threat to the Dutch language. Conversely, well over half of the respondents felt that English enriched the Dutch language.

All things considered, it can be noticed how essential English for the Dutch community is. It's the language of their everyday and professional communication, the language they use at all levels of education and mass media. No wonder why the Netherlands ranks the 6th in EF English Proficiency Index. At the same time the country does its best to protect the Dutch language by investing in its maintenance, promotion and development and requiring to have an excellent command of Dutch for those who want better career prospects and for migrants coming to the Netherlands. It's a successful example how English can coexist with the national language of a country and an example we can learn from.