

LANGUAGE MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES: THE COMPARISON BETWEEN AUSTRIAN AND SLOVENIAN SMES

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Abstract: *According to the ELAN study and a substantial body of previous research, a significant amount of business is being lost in the European Union as a result of the lack of language skills.*

In our contribution we analyse how Austrian and Slovenian SMEs adopt language management strategies (LMS). We investigate, by means of a questionnaire sent to Slovenian and Austrian small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), how aware they are of ELAN findings, what language strategies they have adopted and if the knowledge of English is sufficient for their successful business operations.

The findings show that Slovenian exporting SMEs are not completely aware of the benefits a language management strategy could bring to their business operations on foreign markets. On the other hand, Austrian exporting SMEs are more likely to provide language training for their staff and employ native speakers much more often than their Slovenian counterparts as well as use local agents for their language needs considerably more often and use the services of professional translators and interpreters almost three times more often than Slovenian SMEs.

Key words: *ELAN study, foreign language skills, language management strategies, SMEs*

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