



WINDS OF CHANGE IN THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE – AIR OF PERIL FOR NATIVE SPEAKERS?*

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Abstract

English today is one of the most hybrid and rapidly changing languages in the world. New users of the language are not just passively absorbing, but actively shaping it, breeding a variety of regional Englishes, as well as pidgins and English-lexified creoles. Also, as in an increasing number of countries English is becoming an element of core education, a near-universal basic skill, native-speaker norms are losing both in relevance and in reverence. This unique linguistic phenomenon has immediate consequences for the language classroom which is the subject of this present paper.

Keywords: English, power, status, diversity, young

Özet

İngilizce dünyada en hızlı değişime uğrayan ve en çok karmaşıklaşan dillerden biridir. Bu dili yeni yeni kullanmaya başlayan insanlar bile bu dili pasif bir şekilde almamakta ama onu etkilemekte, değiştirmekte ve bir çok yerel İngilizce kullanımlarının ve İngilizce sözcüklü kreolelerin ortaya çıkmasına katkıda bulunmaktadır. Buna ek olarak, gittikçe artan sayıda ülkede İngilizce ders programlarının da dili olmak durumunda kalmıştır ki bu durumda bu dili anadil olarak kullanan insanların dilsel özellikleri kaybolmakta ya da değişime uğramaktadır. Bu özel dilbilimsel olgu dil öğretimi sınıflarına önemli etkisi bulunmaktadır. Bu çalışmanın konusu dabu olguyu irdelemektir.

Anahtar sözcükler: İngilizce, erk, statü, çoğulculuk, genç

Introduction

English became what it did from its overwhelming receptivity to input from the outside, especially in the Age of Empire and the Age of Industry. Now in the Digital Age, it's doing it again – following the natural ebb and flow of the tides of change. For those who would pull up the moat, who would turn English into a museum, who would laminate the dictionaries so that nothing new can be added or amended, a la the French Academy, I say be careful what you wish for.

—Ruth Wajnryb, Australian linguist (2005, Dec 3) *The Sydney Morning Herald*

Before embarking on any serious discussion of ELT, one cannot fail to take into account the multidirectional pressures exerted on English during the last decades. While English-speaking countries are witnessing an emergent population that does not speak the language of the majority,

* A condensed overview of some of the issues raised in this paper is going to appear in a book chapter, referenced here as Paradowski (forthc.)

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other countries are working hard to ensure that their citizens do – by the time they finish lower primary school, pupils across the globe have attended a host of lessons.

English today is one of the most hybrid and rapidly changing languages in the world, and no longer the preserve of its native speakers. Academics such as Peter Lowenberg (1993, 2000), who highlights numerous examples of items in commercially produced language tests which give a clear handicap to speakers of a specific internationally accepted standard while disadvantaging other candidate groups,¹ have been taking the view that the natural and inevitable process of language evolution which has always affected English as a Native Language (ENL), is currently shaping English as a Lingua Franca (ELF)—or English as an International Language (EIL)—and that the resulting changes and divergences cannot be dismissed as ‘errors’ (Jenkins 2004) and deplored as a deterioration in the ‘standard’. This fact was already recognised over two decades ago by Smith (1983:1), who argued that “English belongs to any country which uses it, and may have as wide or as limited a use (either as an international or auxiliary language) as is felt desirable,” with a very similar point made by Strevens:

[The question “Whose language is it?”] implies that some merit accrues to us [NSs] because we possess in some unique sense, the English language. As we have seen this is not true. But it is undoubtedly true that we acquire great benefits from being as it were co-possessors, with seven hundred million others of the English language. Whose language is it? It is ours and everyone’s: the English language is truly a world possession. (1982:427f.)

The rapidly changing sociolinguistic profile and glossography of English (i.e. “the historical-structural and functional aspects of the global spread, status, role and entrenchment of [the] language”; Nayar 1994:1) are both qualitatively and quantitatively unprecedented. Responsible for the drastic changes that ensued have been primarily the processes of globalisation and internalisation, influencing speakers from numerous social, economic, political and—the most important in our case—linguistic backgrounds. Globalisation has fostered the ubiquity and domination of English in such important international arenas as mass media, education, international relations, travel, safety, and communication (Crystal, 2003). Unprecedented changes in economics, in commerce, in the demographic shape of the world with the erosion of national boundaries and global migration higher than ever before, in society, in the nature and control of news media, in the increasing consumption of English-language entertainment, in international education markets, and in new communication technologies (ICT)—especially the Internet, in which lack of familiarity with English is frequently equal to illiteracy—have all accelerated the spread of the language and influenced its current shape (Crystal, 2002; while being themselves feedback-wise affirmed and propelled by the growing availability of this global language; Kinnock, 2006: “The successes of those who learn English, of course, have reinforced the worldwide dominance of English that motivated the need to learn it in the first place”).

9.1 Learners ever younger...

To achieve fluency, learners are starting out at an ever-younger age. English learners worldwide are massively increasing in number while decreasing in age, with the number (1.9 billion on one recent estimate²) projected to reach 2 billion in less than a decade (Graddol, 2006:14; 99-101), to peak 3 billion—about half the world’s population of today—by around 2040 (*op. cit.*:107). Parents keen for their children to achieve are themselves driving industry changes, forking over tuition for English-language schools from Caracas to Kuala Lumpur, while education ministries from Taiwan to Turkey are mandating the teaching of the language to at least a basic level, recognising it—alongside computers and mass migration—as the turbine engine of globalisation (Power, 2005). Under an ambitious language-instruction programme launched by the government in 2006, Czechs began accumulating basic English skills as early as kindergarten, with teachers using techniques such as counting games and simple songs to start familiarising toddlers with English ahead of their formal

¹ For instance, Michigan restricts itself to ‘standard AmE’, ETS to ‘standard North AmE’, while London Chamber of Commerce and Industry provides alternative versions of its ELSA—British and American.

² <http://www.xefl.com/modules.php?name=News&file=article&sid=18>

language lessons (these to begin in third grade; Markowitz, 2006). At a private Prague children's language school, 3-year-olds sing about snowmen and chant colours in English, with 2-year-olds having a class of their own as well (Power, 2005). Across the German border, most kids begin English as early as Grade 2 or 3, with all primary schools required to provide English lessons since 2004, the consequence being that language schools no longer target beginners—now to be found among immigrants from places such as Turkey and Russia, eager to catch up with the natives in their newfound *English*-speaking land—but clients pursuing more expert niches (Power, 2005). Greek children begin learning English from the first year of primary school onward, with the aim of gaining a top certificate by the first class of upper secondary—a trend that began in the 1990s—with the language now spoken by 80 percent of the population under 54 (according to the Panhellenic Association of Foreign Language Schools and the EU), and one in 10 residents possessing a Cambridge University certificate attesting to their advanced level, their average preparation time for the CPE being a mere 15 months, and many opting for other diplomas (Lakasas, 2005). Even linguistically protectionist governments are beginning to acquiesce. A report by Claude Thélot, president of the Higher Council of School Assessment in France, command centre of the Académie Française whose members are charged with defending the sanctity of the home language (and whose purpose “is to amuse journalists from other countries with bitterly argued decisions that the French gaily ignore;” Pinker 2000: 385), recommended in October 2004 that basic English be part of the mandatory core curriculum—alongside French and mathematics—beginning in primary school (Randall, 2004). Despite the Minister of Education's disagreement to the above, 96% of French schoolchildren are already taking the language as an elective in school (Power, 2005), beginning it at seven (Woodward, 2002).

Further afield, in 2001 China made English mandatory in primary schools from Grade 3 rather than middle school, while metropolises such as Beijing and Shanghai already had it at Grade 1. In 2004 a new English learning curriculum was launched, enlarging students' vocabularies from 3,500 to 5,000 words, paying more attention to developing communicative skills, promoting CALL at college level, and making basic-level English a mandatory requirement on all degree courses, allowing the inclusion of an oral English component in college entrance examinations (Gill, 2004). A growing number of parents are even enrolling their preschoolers in the new crop of local language courses, with some pregnant women speaking English to their foetuses, according to Zhou Min, anchorman of several English programs at the Beijing Broadcasting Station (Power, 2005). With an estimated 176.7 million pupils in the state education sector in 2005 (nearly twice as many as there are Britons), more people are learning English in the Middle Kingdom than in any other country, annually releasing over 20 million new users of the language (*ibid.*), the primary aim being to help future employees interact more successfully in the business market.³

9.2 ... and older

At the other end of the spectrum, courses for OAPs are also oversubscribed. In Poland, thousands of grandmas and grandpas are learning English. They want to communicate with their grandchildren who live on the British Isles and may not speak a word of Polish (on the spot or via Skype or webchat), to travel, surf the Internet, and understand foreign television channels (Iwanciw, 2007a). Language schools have responded to the demand launching special offers targeted at this clientele (e.g. morning meetings in a narrow circle over tea, coffee and biscuits), hitting a niche in the market that has now become a distinct trend in education. According to Agnieszka Jeran, a sociologist and lecturer at the Higher School of Economics in Bydgoszcz (quoted in *ibid.*), the elderly today—who go into retirement in full possession of their mental faculties—take up languages not just to kill the time and train grey matter, but also because they find them handy in everyday use, and out of the desire to get to

³ Taxi drivers in Taiwan, frequently described in travel guides as speaking no foreign languages, are working hard to break the stereotype. You no longer need to worry as long as the chauffer belongs to the English Taxi Drivers Association, having finished an ESP training program and passed a speaking test, whereupon s/he receives a certificate and a sticker reading “Yes, I speak English,” to be prominently displayed on the cab for easy identification. Since the launch of the program in 2001, more than 1,000 drivers have been awarded the certificate. ETA general director asserted that the drivers often speak English with one another as daily practice, and some even read English newspapers daily (‘Taipei cab drivers brushing up their linguistic skills.’ *Taipei Times*, Jun 13 2006).

know the world and new people, while an increasing number can afford language classes. The declining birth rate and changes in the image of the grandparents present in the media as well-clad, full of vigour and plenty of spare time, result in their not having or being willing to take care of grandchildren, while choosing to develop their own skills. Seniors far and wide enrol in not only English, but also e.g. German and Spanish courses, they learn systematically, with diligence and lots of enthusiasm; in just one language school in Gdynia over 700 OAPs completed Callan-method-taught courses, while another in Bydgoszcz immediately had 150 applicants (*ibid.*)!

9.3 The ‘ownership’ of English

The English language is not a square with definite sides containing its area; it is a circle ... nowhere bounded by any line called a circumference. It is a spot of colour on a damp surface, which shades away imperceptibly into the surrounding colourlessness.

—Sir James A. H. Murray, British lexicographer (1884) *Oxford English Dictionary*

At such a pace, when according to David Crystal non-native English speakers now outnumber native ones 3:1 (in the EU, 2001 estimates put down the number of speakers of English at 180m, only a third of whom used it as the mother tongue; de Lotbinière, 2001), the traditional custodians of English no longer remain in control of how their—actually, now only partly their—language is developing (Graddol 2006: 12), and no longer can a single country or culture—or the overall Anglosphere even—claim exclusive sovereignty over the language. As Crystal has observed many times, “there’s never before been a language that’s been spoken by more people as a second than a first” (*cf.* e.g. Hogg & Denison 2006: 425). These new users of the language are not just passively absorbing it—they are actively shaping it, breeding a variety of regional Englishes⁴ (dialects), as well as by-products of colonisation – pidgins⁵ and English-lexified creoles⁶:

New Englishes are mushrooming the globe over, ranging from “Englog,” the Tagalog-infused English spoken in the Philippines, to “Japlish,” the cryptic English poetry beloved of Japanese copywriters (“Your health and loveliness is our best wish,” reads a candy wrapper. “Give us a chance to realize it”), to “Hinglish,” the mix of Hindi and English that now crops up everywhere from fast-food ads to South Asian college campuses. “Hungry kya?” ... queried a recent Indian ad for Domino’s pizza. In post-apartheid South Africa, many blacks have adopted their own version of English, laced

⁴ Richards (1972) proposed that these varieties should properly be regarded as interlanguages which have developed as a consequence of the particular social contexts of their learning and use. However, once they have become established in their communities of speakers and gained the status of the L₁ for subsequent generations, they can now be seen as independent varieties in their own right.

⁵ Or ‘contact language’ – any language created—usually spontaneously—out of a mixture of other languages as a result of prolonged contact between different communities and a means of communication between speakers of different tongues in the absence of a widespread accessible lingua franca, with an uncomplicated grammar and few synonyms, serving as an auxiliary contact language, and learnt as a SL rather than natively (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pidgin>). Examples are Russenorsk (an 18th-19th c. mixture of Norwegian and Russian, used by whalers and Arctic traders), Haitian Kreyol, Jamaican Patois, Papiamentu (widely spoken in Aruba and the Netherlands Antilles), Bislama (in the Pacific), the now creolised Hawai`ian Pidgin (where locals mixed the traditional dialect with English, Japanese, Portuguese, and the languages used by other immigrants and traders), and Pitcairnese (spoken on Pitcairn Island and Norfolk Island). A pidgin develops into a creole when a new generation of users acquire it as the L₁; from the *external* perspective of the ‘parent’ languages, it can thus be called a fossilised lingo (although *internally* it is in a state of flux, evolving all the time).

⁶ A well-defined and stable language variety which originated from a non-trivial combination of two or more languages, typically with many distinct features not inherited from either parent and generally more linguistically complex than a pidgin; evolved from a pidgin that has become the native language of a community (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Creole_language). Most creoles with English as the superstrate language are found in the former colonies, e.g. Englog (English infused with Tagalog and some Spanish, spoken in the Philippines), Jamaican Creole, Gullah (spoken by the ‘Geechees’, an African American population living in the coastal region of Georgia and South Carolina and on the Sea Islands; based on English with strong influences from West and Central African languages), Krio (lingua franca in Sierra Leone, with vocabulary derived primarily from English and phonetics and grammar from Yoruba), Roper River Creole (spoken among Aboriginal Australians), Nigerian Pidgin English, Singlish (an amalgam of mainly Malay, Mandarin, Hokkien, Tamil and BrE, originating in Singapore and spoken in parts of Malaysia), Malenglish, Taglish (spoken in the Philippines; Crystal 2006), or Tok Pisin (spoken throughout Papua New Guinea, with grammatical and lexical input provided by various Papuan languages, Japanese, Portuguese, English and German; http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/English-based_creole_languages).

with indigenous words, as a sign of freedom—in contrast to Afrikaans, the language of oppression. (Power, 2005)

These languages which have evolved as amalgams of different codes are now unintelligible to many Anglophone monolinguals. At the same time, they have begun to take on a literary identity, with e.g. *Don Quixote* translated by Amherst College professor Ilan Stavas into Spanglish, the code-switching hybrid spoken by bilinguals in the US and Mexico. In the 2004 spring issue of *English Today*, Hu Xiaojiong argued for a reorientation of China's English curriculum toward one incorporating Chinese phrases within the standard (Power, 2005). If this still fails to convince you, pray muse over the following passage:

Wakonahana, facing one of the few rikishi smaller than himself, had little trouble with No. 6 maegashire Mainoumi, who could use none of his tricks against the technically-sound sekiwake. (*The Daily Yomiuri* 1993, quoted in Crystal 2006)

How long did it take you to decipher this cryptic sumo match commentary?

At the same time, with the growing economies of developing countries (especially such 'Asian tigers' as the PRC or India), many former economic US immigrants may later choose to return to their homeland, bringing with them their young, English-speaking families (Graddol, 2006:29). Also, as in an increasing number of countries English is becoming an element of core education, becoming a near-universal basic skill (*op. cit.*:15)—no longer one of the important skills, but *the* skill—native-speaker norms are losing both in relevance and in reverence. English is no longer the codified and standardised language found in the course books and grammar books of a few decades ago, but one whose status is being fundamentally transformed!⁷ According to the somewhat sweeping appraisal in his mission statement (2004) by former naval commander, retired vice president of IBM, and now French education expert Jean-Paul Nerrière, the international language of today is a rudimentary dialect which (after Gogate, 1998) he calls 'Globish', or 'English light', comprising no more than 1,500 words but used increasingly by the 88 per cent of the NNES world population. Crystal (2003: 113; 'A tridialectal future') suggests that the future may see a tri-English world, in which one would speak a local English-based dialect at home, a national variety at school or the workplace, and an international standard to communicate with foreigners (Power, 2005). For this reason, more and more linguists begin to claim that the language is no longer the exclusive cultural signature of the NSs. This is confirmed in studies of students' attitudes towards foreign languages, where English was not associated with its native speakers as much as other languages such as Dutch, French, German, and Spanish, which bore stereotypical images (*cf.* e.g. Lochtman, 2006). Still, despite—or maybe because of—all the new varieties cropping up, it is the UK and US versions that continue to carry prestige, particularly with tuition-paying parents (*op. cit.*).

The global population movements which at the same time propel changes in the shape and role of the English language in the world are summarised by Graddol (2006: 29) as follows:

People on the move:

Migrant workers
Refugees and asylum seekers
Immigrants

⁷ If language didn't evolve, we would still be speaking 'Beowulfian'; consider for instance the disappearance of pluperfect in Polish, or the full declination of the noun 'radio' as opposed to the pre-war "W radio mówili, że ..." John McWhorter points out this fact, frequently ignored by those who have been conceiving of the possibilities of time travel:

Language ... change is still going on every day in all languages. If we could transport ourselves in a time machine to America of the year 4000, our first problem would not be the quaint cultural misunderstandings so entertaining in movies like Woody Allen's *Sleeper*, but the fact that we wouldn't understand a word anyone was saying, even though they would consider themselves to be speaking "English." Moreover, new slang and technical terms would be the least of our worries — more to the point, the very sounds, structure, and word meanings of English would have changed so much that we would have to learn it again as a new tongue. (1998:10f.)

a fact already recognised by Geoffrey Chaucer:

Ye knowe ek that in forme of speche is change
Within a thousand yeer, and wordes tho
That hadden prys now wonder nyce and straunge
Us thinketh hem, and yet they spake hem so.
(*Troilus and Criseyde*, c. 1385)

Tourists, visits to friends and family
 Business workers
 International students
 Troop movements, peace-keeping
 Emergency aid work, NGOs

9.4 NS teachers in short supply

Native speakers can no longer satisfy the escalating demand for ELT services, which far outstrips supply, even in their own countries. The UK alone, where Whitehall wants immigrants to learn English to encourage greater community integration and social cohesion, has seen a soaring demand for oversubscribed ESOL classes, with enrolment rising from 150,000 in 2000-01 to 538,700 in 2004-05 (the numbers for Polish nationals being 151 and 21,313, respectively) and the waiting lists continuing to grow, according to the report of October 3 2006 on the findings of a “More Than A Language...” inquiry led by the National Institute for Adult Continuing Education (NIACE; Salman, 2006), the lack of trained teachers being a problem that has been recurring in London for a number of years and is now spreading throughout the country. While e.g. in Ireland TEFL has fast become first choice among students, persons seeking to upskill, career breakers, and retired people⁸, China—whose authorities estimate they need about 1 million English teachers—and the Middle East have now began to import English teachers from India (Power, 2005), while more and more language TAs are coming from India or Singapore, while the definition of a ‘NS teacher’ is slowly being relaxed to embrace teachers from the ‘outer circle’.

9.5 Expansion of English in the workplace

Another notable phenomenon brought about by globalisation (itself accelerated to a large extent owing to the position of English, in conjunction with cheap communication technologies such as e-mail, VoIP and Skype⁹, replacing landline technology and enabling calls across the world at marginal cost) is the outsourcing of products and services to locations with lower labour costs (India and China in particular; Graddol, 2006:34). This desirability of English in the outsourcing business is caused by the fact that the majority of the offshore contracts are commissioned by English-speaking corporations (42% from the USA and 17% from the UK for the year 2004, according to data provided by the US-based sourcing advisors, Technology Partners International; *ibid.*). Currently, even call centres are being located in distant countries such as India, whose competitive edge over its economic rivals in Asia is—not surprisingly—due precisely to the English language skills of its workforce – the ready supply of professionals speaking English has been one of the main factors in the growth of the BPO, IT and other service sectors in the country’s economy. A three-month English course in a dank room with rickety chairs in a storefront shop at the edge of a congested Delhi suburb costs \$16, forming the ragged edge of a massive English-learning industry which in India alone is a \$100 million-per-year business (Power, 2005), with the country having the largest number of English language speakers in the world.¹⁰ No wonder, if for lower-middle classes the language can mean a ticket to a prized call-centre job (*op. cit.*). This, and one other phenomenon mentioned by Graddol (2006:35) merit some detail:

In some branches of US McDonald’s eateries, customers placing an order speak to a call centre hundreds of miles away, whose operators dispatch it back to the kitchen together with a digital

⁸ ‘Tralee course to train teachers.’ *The Kingdom*, Feb 9 2006.

⁹ Internet telephony (Voice over Internet Protocol) is judged to be the greatest revolution in telecommunications since the time of ‘enter the mobile phone’, with Skype—the most widespread application for Internet calls, created by the pioneers of peer2peer networks, Dane Janus Friis and Swede Niklas Zennström—rocketing from 4.1m users in April 2004 to as many as 100 million users worldwide in May 2006, with over 2 million in Poland alone, our country being the third market in the world (after US and China; the rank mainly owing to the high costs of traditional landline connections). In Poland there are already several dozen local services offering Internet telephony, with chain stores and Dominican orders among their customers. The survey company eMarketer forecasts 30% of households in the US to use VoIP by 2010. The technology is to be soon introduced in cellular phones, predicted to gain 100 million users by 2011, according to ON World consulting firm (*Gazeta Wyborcza* 2006, May 29).

¹⁰ ‘English speakers.’ ABC NewsRadio 2006, <http://www.abc.net.au/newsradio/txt/s1363471.htm>

snapshot of the buyer. Though marginally cheaper, this solution can apparently accelerate the process by 30 seconds, allowing more burgers to be sold per hour, with fewer mistakes (Friedman, 2005). Another peculiarity of current-day world is homework tutoring from India. While Americans have by now grown accustomed to their customer-service and computer-help calls being answered on the other end of the globe, now each day at 4.30 a.m. well-educated Indians start work in their call centre in Kochi—or 1.5 hours later in New Delhi—providing one-on-one tutorial assistance to US schoolchildren in subjects such as maths and science (Das & Paulson, 2005). On one recent estimate (Anirudh Phadke from Career Launcher, quoted in *ibid.*) over 20,000 American students now receive such e-tutoring support from Indian math and engineering graduates. At the same time, while employees at these overseas call centres are discouraged from conveying their cultural identity via language, with a ‘bland’ register of English being preferred (Śpiewak, p.c.; while the Indian tutors undergo training in the American accent), we again have an example of English rapidly becoming a contact and intermediary language between speakers of different L₁ backgrounds, Anglophone or not, which poses an immediate menace to the defendants of the ideal of linguistic ‘purity’—especially as numerous studies confirm that bilingualism can stimulate diachronic linguistic change (e.g. Gutiérrez, 1992; de Jonge, 1993; Silva-Corvalán, 1994; Guijarro-Fuentes & Geeslin, 2006).

Moreover, “[i]n the course of [the] worldwide trend towards economic mergers it has become evident that—although a newly merged international company may not have its headquarters in an English-speaking country, as is the case, for instance, with Daimler-Chrysler—such joint ventures typically adopt English as their working language, a policy which, again, promotes a local need for English” (House, 2000:245f.). In the globalising world, we experience transnational corporations shifting abroad not only their research and development centres (business process outsourcing), but also commissioning high-value intellectual work overseas (outsourcing of knowledge processes, i.e. “services involving specialised knowledge which requires research skills and the exercise of professional judgment;” Graddol, 2006: 36). Needless to say, it is English that is going to be used as the medium of communication in these multinationals, and this will—again—rather not be RP. At a new Toyota Peugeot Citroën Automobile assembly plant near Kolín in the Czech Republic, English is the working language of the Japanese, French and Czech staff. A working knowledge of English is required in an ever-growing number of fields and occupations, and companies are universally demanding higher FL proficiency from their employees. The economic imperative is also consequential for governments; according to the Department of Philology at the University of Salamanca, 90% of companies in Iberia would like graduates to be fluent in English as a basic requirement of employment, and the country is already losing economic opportunities due to its English-language deficiencies and failure to compete with more proficient EU members (Kessler, 2005).

9.6 Anglophone monoglots on the defensive

*Imagine the Lord talking French! Aside from a few odd words in Hebrew,
I took it completely for granted that God had never spoken anything but the most dignified English.*
—Clarence Shepard Day *Life with Father* (1935:ch. “Father Interferes with the Twenty-Third Psalm”)

Qualified multilingual foreigners are already proving to have a competitive advantage over their monoglot British counterparts in global companies and organisations in the increasingly interdependent world (Kinnock, 2006:4). In the old world, Ireland and the UK (plus Portugal) open the list of Europeans with the lowest ratios of polyglots (with less than a third of the populations speaking another language; EC 2006, or 66% and 62%, respectively, according to another source¹¹:

¹¹ ‘English considered as second language by majority of Maltese.’ Mar 13 2006, retrieved from MaltaMedia News website at http://www.maltamedia.com/news/2005/eu/printer_9243.shtml

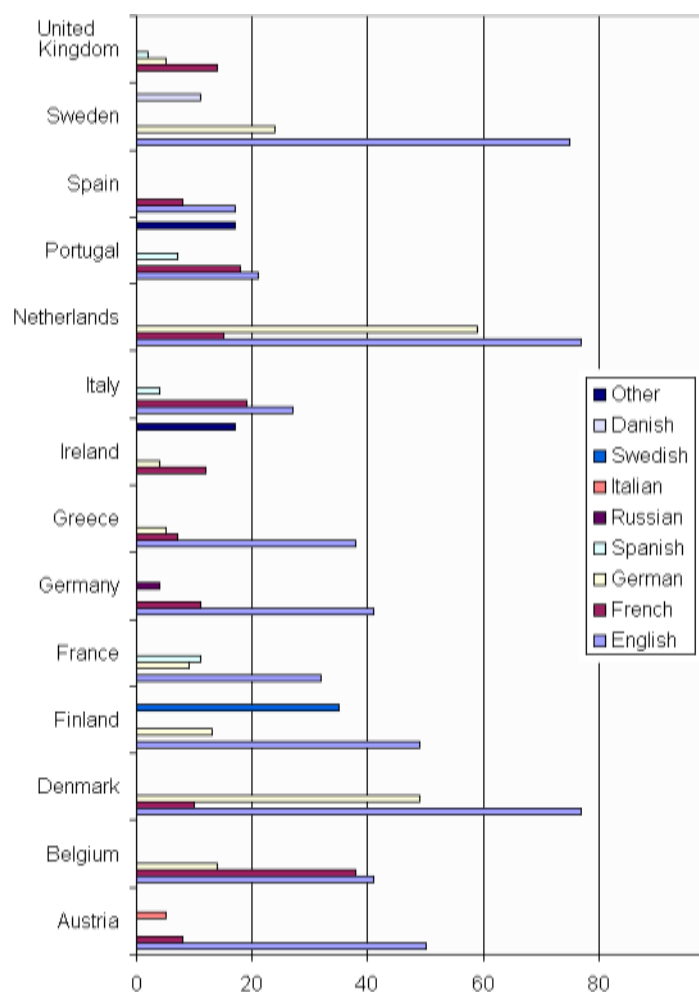


Figure 1: Three most widely spoken foreign languages in EU 15 Member States (EC 2006)

The teaching of French and German on the British Isles is in crisis in both schools and universities, the number of pupils going to study them at A-level (GCSEs generally claimed to be relatively undemanding) in steady decline for the past decade, at a level of 5% in independent fee-charging schools and 2% in state schools. With language learning established part of the British class system, unless you go to a private fee-charging prep and take up French at seven, in the state system you will not commence until in secondary at 11, with languages having the second lowest percentage of students from blue-collar backgrounds at university (after medicine; Beckett, 2002); in this context, the expression “Pardon my French” may take on an entirely new meaning. Apart from the deeply-rooted British distrust of all things European, responsible is also the increasing disenchantment with the thought of taking up what many consider a redundant subject, appositely expressed by a 14-year-old: “What’s the point of wasting time learning a foreign language when everywhere you go, people speak English? You might as well bring back Latin” (quoted in Woodward, 2002). In some colleges and universities English can even decide the future of the faculties. Institutions of higher education release fewer language graduates by the year; in just three years $\frac{3}{4}$ of the universities in a UCML sample survey, including Glamorgan, Hull, Stirling, and Cambridge, responded to the shrinking market by slashing language departments and courses (Beckett, 2002). And although the government pointed out in its 2002 Language Learning consultation paper that “[f]or too long in this country there has been an assumption that because English is spoken in many parts of the world, there is no need for English speakers to learn other languages,” in its 14-19 green paper it still suggested taking modern languages out of the core national curriculum post-14, proposing an earlier uptake instead. Without overseas FL influence, language teachers, in short supply themselves, face an uphill battle persuading pupils of the need to learn a FL (Woodward, 2002). As one *Guardian* journalist observed,

At all the international conferences I’ve attended, most delegates speak English, and when someone has the temerity to use his or her own language, the British and the Americans noisily put on their earphones for a translation. (Beckett 2002)

It may be for this reason that a language degree on the Isles now offers better employment opportunities than any other (except medicine), with the graduates more employable than those in computing, science, or even business studies, according to the Higher Education Statistics Agency. “[UK] employers cannot get enough people with language skills. According to the University Council of Modern Languages (UCML), surveys by regional development agencies show that one in five respondents believe they have lost business because of language skill failures, and nearly half found language and cultural issues were a barrier to international business. Even the Foreign Office is signalling alarm about its future staffing” (Beckett, 2002). Isabella Moore, president of the British Chamber of Commerce, confirms that companies are losing international business opportunities because of lack of skills and cultural awareness (i.e., being ‘monocultural’, they fail to recognise factors important in the cultural context of the FL interlocutor, and interpret events only in terms of their own culture; Meyer (1991)).

The United States (in which it took a Supreme Court decision to strike down laws in over twenty states which, while making English the official language, prohibited the teaching of others in schools¹²) also remains a linguistically underdeveloped country: while immigrants are importing their home languages at record rates and with time become bilingual, the vast majority of native-born citizens remain stubbornly monoglot (Crawford, 1997). According to the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages, “only 3 percent of American high school graduates, and only 5 percent of [US] college graduates, reach a meaningful proficiency in a second language – and many of these students come from bilingual homes” (ACTFL, 1987). While many proponents of English Only education wish to force the assimilation of newcomers or fear that the escalating Hispanic population—especially dramatic since 1990—and visibility of Spanish-language media in the US threaten the status and use of English,¹³ the latter still remains the dominant language of the country. Moreover, studies have shown a rapid shift to English among settlers and their children (Portes & Hao, 1998). Opponents of the divisive character of English Only policies have come forward with an alternative – English Plus: a movement to encourage monolingual Americans to learn other languages as well as newcomers to retain their valuable L₁ and cultural knowledge, rather than forfeit this resource and focus on their deficiencies in English. Pedro Ruiz, president of the National Association for Bilingual Education in Washington follows suit saying: “We want to compete in the global market right now, and the only way to do that is with kids who have embraced another language early on” (Llana & Paulson, 2006) Celebrating the country’s cultural and linguistic pluralism and treating its multiethnic and multilingual communities as important national strengths (“[t]he ability to communicate in English and other languages has promoted and can further enhance American economic, political, and cultural vitality;” EPIC, 1987), the concept “holds that the national interest is best served when all members of [US] society have full access to effective opportunities to acquire strong English language proficiency plus mastery of a second or multiple languages” (*ibid.*). Beginning in 1989, similar resolutions have been passed in the states of New Mexico, Oregon, Washington (all in 1989), and Rhode Island (1992). Even the Amerocentric TESOL in a *Position Paper on English-only Legislation in the United States* (June 2005) calls for helping immigrants better integrate into the country, as English Only policies, contrary to their stated objectives, will only polarise and divide rather than unify, excluding migrants and other ELLs from civic life, hence further stigmatising, disenfranchising and marginalising them (pp. 3-4). The US Department of Defense and other security agencies are also expending millions annually teaching foreign languages to native English citizens, with the former even going so far as to develop an action plan for building the nation’s language capacity (US Department of Defense, 2005).

9.7 The language of power and prestige?

Language follows its own path. It can bridge gulfs of class and geography in the most remarkable ways.

¹² During WWI, there was a widespread campaign in the US against the use of the German language, which included taking books in that language off library shelves (Martin, 1988).

¹³ Attempts derided by Pullum (1987) with the words that “making English the official language of the United States of America is about as urgently called for as making hotdogs the official food at baseball games.”

—Robert McCrum, British novelist, editor, and critic, in McCrum *et al.* (1986) *The Story of English*

English still represents progress, social prestige, and economic power, even if no longer colonial power (though Queen Elizabeth II still remains the monarch of 16 sovereign states¹⁴), an indicator of the level of education, or the desire for upward mobility. Over two decades ago Kachru remarked:

Competence in English and the use of this language signify a transmutation: an added potential for material and social gain and advantage... English is considered as a symbol of modernization, a key to expanded functional roles, and an extra arm for success and mobility in culturally and linguistically complex and pluralistic societies. As if all this were not enough, it is also believed that English contributes to yet another type of transmutation: It internationalizes one's outlook... Knowing English is like possessing the fabled Aladdin's lamp, which permits one to open, as it were, the linguistic gates to international business, technology, science, and travel. In short, English provides linguistic power. (1986:1)

English is widely recognised as a window to success and a gateway to wealth—if not a gate-keeping device—by individuals (students, teachers, and others), organisations, and governments, especially as proficiency therein can no longer be said to denote membership of a select, educated elite (in the way in which the display of FL skills once acted as an indicator of social class), rather a requisite, basic skill in jobs involving contact with customers or colleagues who may—just like yourself—be its non-native users, but sharing no other common language (Graddol, 2006:38):

Hegemonic practices through English have created the need for people all over the world to learn this language as a medium to gain access to knowledge and have an opportunity to participate in globalized competitive job markets (Chacón & Girardot, 2006)

9.8 English as the basic skill

A generation ago, only elites such as diplomats and CEOs needed the language for work. While in 2000 Warschauer asserted that the spread of English brings benefits for non-native elites while excluding those who do not have the opportunity to learn it, not knowing English nowadays may in some countries mean condemnation to poverty and relegation to an excluded minority rather than majority of the population. New constituencies of English users are being created by the ascent of urban middle class (Graddol, 2006:50). In Poland, an increasing number of billboard and newspaper adverts as well as radio and TV commercials are only relying on English-medium slogans, which is slowly becoming a standard in copywriters' workshop – not to mention the omnipresent 'Sale' signs which have practically supplanted 'Wyprzedaj'. As one 12-year-old self-taught Sichuan learner professed, "If you can't speak English, it's like you're deaf and dumb," the sentiment echoed by one of the editors of the OED who said that any literate educated person is in a very real sense deprived if s/he does not know the language (Burchfield, 1985: 160). English has become one of the basic, generic skills necessary to acquire new knowledge and specialist expertise in professional development (Graddol, 2006:72), with success in life becoming contingent on success in English; a necessity becoming part of literacy. Recognising this reality, increasing proportions of language learners do not bewail homework load – to the contrary, they request it (Power, 2005). In an increasing number of countries English is losing its function and separate place in the curriculum as a discipline—a foreign language—becoming instead a component of basic education, an ESP integrated with other subjects in projects such as CLIL/EMILE¹⁵, bringing with it changes in the learners, their

¹⁴ Apart from the UK, Antigua and Barbuda, Australia, the Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Canada, Grenada, Jamaica, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Solomon Islands, and Tuvalu. As Edge (2003: 702) points out:

It has become a commonplace of commentary on the worldwide hunger for English that this demand arises historically as an inheritance of the British Empire and, in the contemporary world, from the hegemonic status of the United States across many domains of human life, including the occupational, commercial, and cultural.

¹⁵ Content and Language Integrated Learning/Enseignement d'une Matière par l'Intégration d'une Langue Étrangère, which refers to an equilibrium between content and language learning, where a non-linguistic subject is taught *through* the medium

needs, motives, the target of instruction, and the methodology—with disciplinary knowledge of language sometimes swept aside in favour of more pragmatic and fragmentary “‘can do’, ‘just in time’, ‘no more than is needed’” approaches to language learning (*ibid.*). For instance, following an encouraging pilot CLIL programme introduced in 1997, in September 2004 José Luís Rodríguez Zapatero’s Socialist government put forth a plan to deliver a range of primary and secondary state-school curriculum subjects in English from the age of six, the language to be introduced into kindergartens from three, with the objective of seeing students fluent in two foreign languages by secondary-school graduation (Kessler, 2005). This is also why the British Council and Cambridge ESOL in New Delhi launched a nationwide programme for training English language teachers in June 2006, aiming to establish international benchmarks in English language skills and brush up those of college graduates so that they can meet the requirements of the corporate sector, precisely as a result of the need to shift towards the teaching and learning of English as a skill rather than an academic subject in state education (Tankha, 2006).

9.9 From the FL to the SL

In 2003 Malaysia made basic proficiency in English a prerequisite for all foreign employees, followed by a decision a year later to teach school-level maths and science in this language, too (*ibid.*). Actually, in several Asian countries a language shift can be observed within families, with one of the best-documented cases being Singapore, where English has advanced from the status of an L₂ to the main language of the home (Graddol, 2006:55):

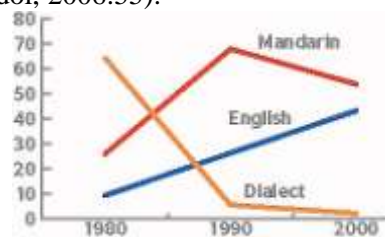


Figure 2: Shifts in the language of the home in Singapore according to census information (Graddol 2006:55)

A similar diglossia phenomenon (the term¹⁶ employed by Ferguson (1959) to refer to a conflict of two variants—one formal of high prestige and a vernacular—also known as *societal bilingualism*) has occurred in Indian middle-class families where—especially when the mother and father may come from different linguistic backgrounds—family communication typically takes place via the medium of English (Graddol 2006:55). There are more countries in Asia which count English as a colonial legacy—such as Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Malaysia, Brunei, the Philippines—and use the language as an official or *de facto* common one, teaching it in all public and private schools as a mandatory subject, helping it in its raid as an ever more valuable *lingua franca* (*op. cit.*:94); rather than Mandarin, it is English that provides the main means of communicating with the Asian pace-setter—the PRC—which has a well-established tradition for teaching ESL. The country’s English fever, elevated to epidemic proportions by the recent accession to the World Trade Organisation and the upcoming 2008 Olympics, even has its own Mandarin term, *Yingwen re*, and over 400 English-teaching companies are trying to break into China to tap on the money (Power, 2005). The Beijing Organizing Committee for the Olympics is pushing English among staff, tourist guides, taxi drivers and ordinary citizens (*op. cit.*), with the government’s drive to raise English language levels and standards of teaching nationwide predicted by professor Li Yong-tao from Shanghai University to create bilingual populations in major urban centres within the next decade (Gill, 2004). Shanghai followed—in a mission to become an international metropolis, backed by the World Expo slated for

of a second/foreign language, and the L₂ is developed through the non-linguistic content. The challenges in implementing CLIL are usually many, including shortage of teachers with the requisite skills in both subjects and training in content-based instruction, limited existing linguistic skills of the majority of students, and lack of time to achieve the academic level required (Jonathan Dykes, director of International House in Barcelona, quoted in Kessler, 2005).

¹⁶ Although the French adaptation of the Greek *διγλωσσία* had already been introduced to French in the 19th c. by philologist Psikharis (Psichari 1886, 1888), with Dozon (1889) rendering it as ‘*bilinguisme*’, and at the time of the publication of Ferguson’s paper the term was also being used in English, though not in the sociolinguistic meaning (Lubliner, 2002).

2010—forming a Committee of Experts to correct the English names on official signs as part of a city-wide English language promotion (Gill, 2004). At the same time, since 2002 hundreds of teachers have been deployed to the UK for training, in order to cascade the methodology skills to others upon their return (alongside 32,000 Chinese students in 2003 alone). This is already delivering results; according to Jeff Streeter, head of the British Council in Shanghai, the general level of English in the Middle Kingdom is well in advance of Japan (Gill, 2004), with the result that, as professor Yong-tao points out,

English is the virtual second official language in China today, although the Chinese authorities will never acknowledge that. In more and more formal conferences, symposiums and forums, English is even conditioned as the only language to be used in speeches. (quoted in Gill, 2004)

For instance, the World Chinese Physics Annual Symposium, held in Shanghai in August 2004 and attended *exclusively* by people of Chinese descent, ruled that Chinese be not allowed to be used in speeches, making no exception for the opening and closing ceremonies (Gill, 2004). In the eyes of some parents, English is more important than the mother tongue as it is closely associated with better positions and promotion opportunities. No wonder this is galvanising the region, with Thailand, the Philippines, Japan, and Taiwan following in PRC's footsteps. The president of Turkmenistan Saparmurat Niyazov has ordered his entire government to learn English within six months or face the sack (Gilyeat 2006). The 350m English users topped in Asia is roughly the combined population of the UK, US and Canada (Power, 2005). Closer to our environment, in Europe such countries as the Netherlands, Denmark and Sweden have reached a stage of English penetration (77%, 77%, and 75%, respectively; EC 2006) which has practically made the language a second, not foreign one.¹⁷

9.10 The advance of English in school education

In education systems across Europe, English has steadily taken the lead as the compulsory first FL in schools, not infrequently ousting another that had been sitting in that position for decades, e.g. Russian in Baltic and post-soviet-domination states (such as Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, Poland, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, or Bulgaria; where it has been experiencing a marked if not dramatic increase, additionally brought about by the fall of the Soviet Union (Graddol, 2006:92*f.*) and the change of the political system in our country in 1989, when Poland began to tighten its ties with the West) and French in Russia—where conversing in French was once a prized talent among the tsars—and in some big German-speaking cantons in Switzerland (a country where the dominance of English is ensured by the relatively high (20%) foreign-born population)—crowding one of the country's four national tongues out of the classroom (Simonian, 2006). According to a Eurydice study of February 10 2005 (DPA) English is now the most widely-taught foreign or second language in primary and secondary schools throughout the 27-nation EU (except the Anglophone Member States, of course), with 89% of schoolchildren learning it (26% in the primary), followed by French with 32% (4%), German (18%), and Spanish (8%; EC 2006). The picture of EFL-speaking citizens for 2001 looked as follows:

¹⁷ This implies that the SL/FL distinction might more appositely be treated as a continuum rather than dichotomy.

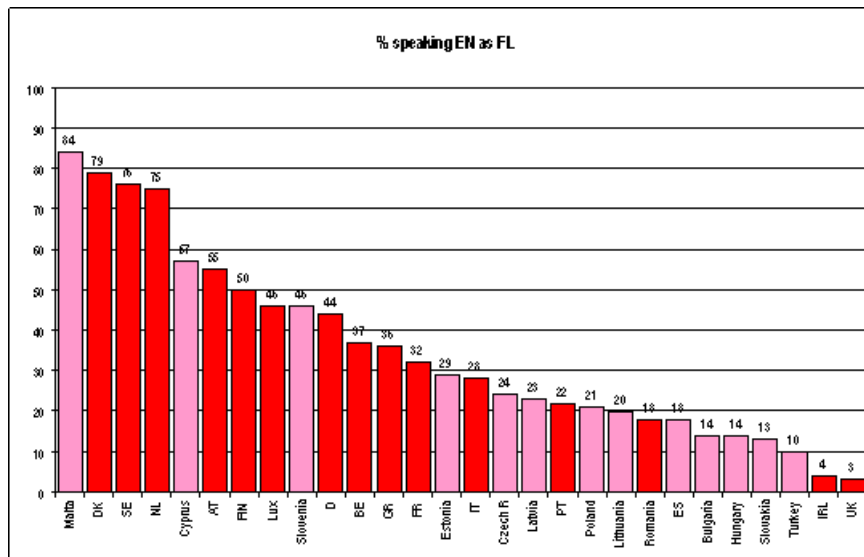


Figure 3: Percentage of EFL speakers by country (EC 2006)

At the same time, nearly 70% of Europeans considered English to be the most useful FL¹⁸:

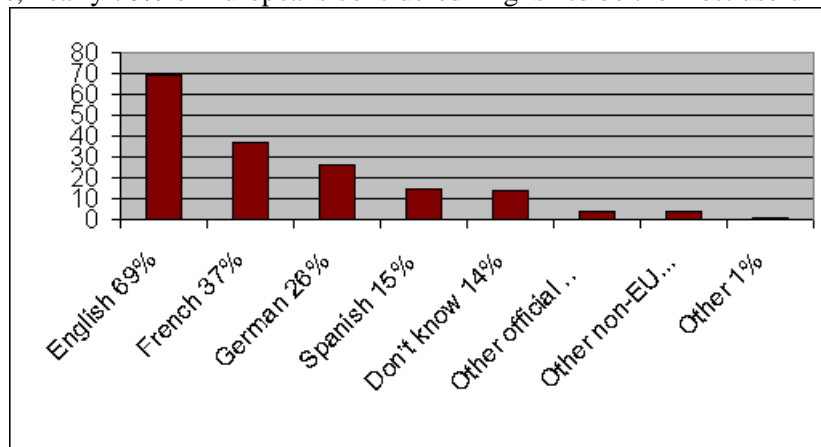


Figure 4: Foreign languages deemed most useful (Eurobarometer 2001)

9.11 The vehicle in higher education

At higher stages of education, with its rapid globalisation and universities competing against one another on the world market, English has become the primary medium of instruction in both English-speaking and non-Anglophone universities that take on foreign students. Of course, in order to comprehend native speakers or foreigners lecturing in the language, a relatively high degree of proficiency is necessary at the outset. Partly responsible for the status of this 'key ingredient' has been the domination in the global 1st league in higher education of universities from the English-speaking world; the latest annual ranking provided by the Shanghai Jiao Tong University Institute—a standard international reference—lists 17 US and 2 UK universities in the lead, with institutions in English-speaking countries altogether occupying roughly two-thirds of the world's top 100:

¹⁸ Not unimportant here may be the relative ease of learning the basics of the language. On the other hand, British linguist Hogg warns:

A quasi-Darwinian approach to English might attempt to account for its widespread use by claiming that somehow English is more suited, better adapted, to use as an international language than others. But that is nonsense. English is no more fit than, say, Spanish or Chinese. The reasons for the spread of English are political, cultural, and economic rather than linguistic. (1992:xvi)

The truth, probably, lies mid-way.

SJT			THES - QS		
rank	Institution	Country	rank	Institution	Country
1	Harvard Univ	US	1	Harvard Univ	US
2	Stanford Univ	US	2=	Univ Cambridge	UK
3	Univ California – Berkeley	US	2=	Univ Oxford	UK
4	Univ Cambridge	UK	2=	Yale Univ	US
5	Massachusetts Inst Tech (MIT)	US	5	Imperial College London	UK
6	California Inst Tech	US	6	Princeton Univ	US
7	Columbia Univ	US	7=	California Inst Tech	US
8	Princeton Univ	US	7=	Univ Chicago	US
9	Univ Chicago	US	9	Univ College London	UK
10	Univ Oxford	UK	10	Massachusetts Inst Tech (MIT)	US
11	Yale Univ	US	11	Columbia Univ	US
12	Cornell Univ	US	12	McGill Univ	Canada
13	Univ California – Los Angeles	US	13	Duke Univ	US
14	Univ California – San Diego	US	14	Univ Pennsylvania	US
15	Univ Pennsylvania	US	15	Johns Hopkins Univ	US
16	Univ Washington – Seattle	US	16	Australian National Univ	Australia
17	Univ Wisconsin – Madison	US	17	Univ Tokyo	Japan
18	Univ California – San Francisco	US	18	Univ Hong Kong	Hong Kong
19	Johns Hopkins Univ	US	19	Stanford Univ	US
20	Univ Tokyo	Japan	20=	Carnegie Mellon/Cornell Univ	US

Table 1: The world's top 20 world universities in 2007, according to Shanghai Jiao Tong University (SJT)¹⁹ and the QS Quacquarelli Symonds survey for the UK's Times Higher Education Supplement²⁰

It is also estimated that of the 2 to 3 million young people who travel abroad each year to study, over a third choose the US or UK as their destination, whilst all 'major English-speaking destination countries' admit around 46% of all international students:

¹⁹ Institute of Higher Education, Shanghai Jiao Tong University 2007; retrieved from http://ed.sjtu.edu.cn/rank/2007/ARWU2007_Top100.htm

²⁰ Data compiled for *The Times Higher Education Supplement* by QS Quacquarelli Symonds and Evidence Ltd, published Nov 9 2007; retrieved from http://www.topuniversities.com/worlduniversityrankings/results/2007/overall_rankings/top_100_universities/ & <http://www.timeshighereducation.co.uk/Magazines/THES/graphics/WorldRankings2007.pdf>

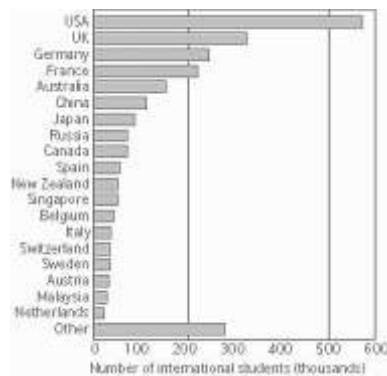


Figure 5: Top destination countries for international students (estimated numbers in thousands; Graddol 2006:76)

The total share of international students who are taught in English is over 50%, as more and more countries, both in Europe and Asia, are offering courses taught through the medium of English (with e.g. Singapore and Malaysia—but also Germany, where a colonial history never existed—establishing themselves as ‘education hubs’; Graddol,2006:77).

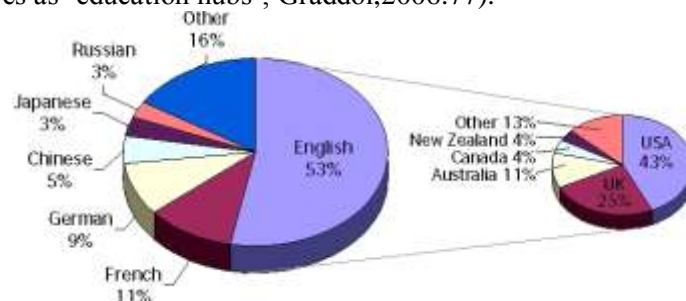


Figure 6: The languages of international education (Graddol, 2006:76)

This is due to the fact that the language is a means of attracting both an international student community, teaching staff, and researchers (for scholars desiring to gain fresh experience, English as the academic *lingua franca* facilitates international mobility; Graddol, 2006: 73, 75), and the chance to polish it is additionally being perceived as a key educational investment itself – especially as the students have contact with the professional jargon of their field²¹, which no language course could guarantee. With an international student diaspora, out-of-class exchanges will also take place in the *lingua franca*, additionally enhancing the linguistic skills (apart from nurturing intercultural awareness—which may not only promote personal growth, but also come useful when seeking employment in a foreign setting with a different work culture) and enabling to establish contacts.

Furthermore, not infrequently better handbooks and scholarly aids are available in English, the relevant terminology is often better established and recognised than in the local language, not to mention to fact that—if one wishes to be up to date with the latest rapid developments—95% of scholarly publications appear in English (even though only half of them come from authors in the ‘inner circle’; Science Citation Index, 1997). Thus English is often selected by the writer in order to maximise the potential readership, even if the great majority of the target audience may be sharing the same native tongue. Consequently, in science a poor command of the language hinders a successful career, while improving proficiency may alone suffice to give confidence (Madeleine, 2007). International scientific projects, no longer dependent on linguistic proximity, also rely on English as a shared language. English has thus now become a relay language rather than an end in itself. The Dutch are even debating whether not to conduct all higher education in the language of reference books and doctoral theses (Morrison, 2002).

Prominent—both short- and long-term—visiting scholars are an additional magnet, as are the opportunities to spend part of the studies in a partner educational institution abroad; for instance, since 2001 B.Sc. students at the Wrocław University of Technology spend the first year of their higher

²¹ Not infrequently, this manifests itself in the user coming to know some terms in English without their L₁ equivalents; this concerns not only the students but often also their professors as well; a case in point: in a recent response to my query Professor Wierzbicka switched—“for practical reasons”—into English.

education at the Technical University in Liberec and the third at the Higher Technical School in Zittau/Görlitz, going through the program in the language that is not native to any of the three participating countries, and obtaining a diploma nostrificated by all three institutions; similar mobility awaits students of international business and public management and administration at the Karol Adamiecki University of Economics in Katowice. Even the prospects of obtaining a scholarship for study in a foreign country are considerably higher. A diploma in a FL-medium program is a ticket to positions in both companies out of the country and renowned foreign-capital companies in one's own land. Even at Grenoble School of Business, much of the teaching is carried out in English, which the UK students appreciate (Beckett, 2002).

Additionally, an even steadier student interchange within and into Europe was facilitated with the 'Bologna Process', signed in 1999 and now involving 45 countries, harmonising university education on the continent along the lines of the Anglo-Saxon model, with the idea being considered of establishing an European Higher Education Area by the year 2010. An estimated 1,500 European Master's programmes are offered in English where it is not the L₁ (Graddol, 2006:75). The deans and representatives of High Wycombe University near London, Boccioni University in Milano, Jönköping University in Sweden and Danish Business Academy hunt students in Poland, drawing crowds of prospective applicants – 80 per cent of the graduates of the 1st Private Upper-Secondary in Poznań left to study in the UK, Germany, Austria, Italy, and Portugal, while a quarter of last year's graduate from another school in Bydgoszcz enrolled in a British institution (Iwanciw, 2007b). They can afford it with the practically non-repayable governmental loan and university stipends, and are able to reconcile their education with gainful employment.

Although the number of Polish students enrolling in programs offered by foreign universities is still far in excess of that of foreigners in our country, 62 higher education institutions in Poland are already offering courses and programs taught through the medium of this language,²² also in the hope of roping in and increasing the number of lucrative students from the EU and other countries around the world (the population decline is an additional factor quoted as responsible for seeking new recruiting areas). They are attracting candidates through a rich program offer and relatively low tuition fees. One can choose from—among others—technical and economic subjects, marketing, psychology, political sciences, nursing, medicine, biotechnology, or IT; both one- or two-term courses, designed with consideration of students coming in as part of the Socrates/Erasmus exchange programs, and complete, immensely popular study programs offered via the medium of English. Technical universities are in the lead, as engineers competent in foreign languages have better employment opportunities, both in the country and abroad. The Technical University of Łódź established an International Education Centre in cooperation with the University of Sydney in 1992, with five engineering majors in English, and each student going to study abroad during the sixth term. Obtaining the diploma of a foreign university is highly regarded in the labour market, and most of the students already have a secured position during studies. The AGH University of Science and Technology established its International School of Engineering 11 years ago. Master's and Engineering programs at the Warsaw University of Technology are all filled, despite tuition fees for some of these. The Silesian University of Technology offers three macrospecialisations for their students.

Other academic institutions are not behind. At the University of Warsaw, two-year supplementary English-medium Master's programs in philosophy and economics of development were slated for October 2007, next to the already available programs in European finance, international management, international economics, American studies, political science, international relations, and psychology – run by lecturers from the UW and renowned European and American universities and research institutions; the results – over 500 foreign candidates submitted their entrance applications in 2006. The Jagiellonian University in Cracow has around 1,500 foreign students, with the halls of the department of medicine—owing to high tuition fees—dominated by... Americans. A similar trend is observed at the Medical Academy in Poznań with over 600 foreign students, notably from the USA, Canada, Scandinavia, Taiwan and Malaysia. The University of Szczecin went so far as to recruit a London head-hunter agency. The Agricultural University of Kraków offers an English-medium program in agroecology run by lecturers from 14 higher education institutions in eight countries

²² Data: Conference of Rectors of Academic Schools in Poland, May 2006.

(France, Hungary, Italy, Lithuania, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, and Romania), with the graduates obtaining a double diploma – of the home and French university. The Medical University of Gdańsk advertises its Bachelor nursing program, whose students learn the work routines of nurses in the United States as well as American legal acts regulating this profession, while the University of Silesia—already getting 80 foreign students per year, mostly from Ukraine, Belarus, Russia and Germany—is now addressing its English-medium offer to Chinese nationals. The front runners are found in Wrocław, which—together with the municipal authorities—promote themselves in the world under the catchphrase “Study in Wrocław.”

Private educational institutions promote the trend themselves. Leon Koźmiński Academy of Entrepreneurship and Management, offering management and marketing as well as finance and banking—including courses of other foreign languages!—exclusively in English, and offering programs administered jointly with the University of Bradford, is a prime example of a truly international educational setting, with 61 foreign lecturers and 320 students from Angola, Belarus, China, the Czech Republic, Finland, France, Germany, Hungary, India, Indonesia, Ireland, Mexico, the Netherlands, Nigeria, Russia, Sweden, UK, USA, and Vietnam. Until 2006, the Higher School of Information Technology and Marketing in Rzeszów used to offer a program for foreigners only, with 250 students every year from countries as remote as China, Iran, India, Russia, Ukraine, and the USA. In Collegium Civitas around 50 per cent of the student population come from other countries in Europe, Asia, North America and Africa, with the English-medium program including the latest history of... Poland.²³ Graduates of Ryszard Łazarski Higher School of Trade and Law’s two BA programs receive a diploma issued by the University of Wales.

Concurrently, the trend is going to expand owing to the copious successful examples of international English-medium distance education (not least the UK Open University), with the growing strand of e-learning, and US, British and Australian universities establishing joint-venture and branch campuses overseas. For instance, in September 2005 the University of Nottingham opened two Asian outposts (in Malaysia and in the PRC), drawing transnational students wishing to study for a UK degree (Graddol, 2006:79). In 2006, Iraqi first English research-based university—government-funded Kurdistan University of Hawler—opened its doors to 400 students²⁴, with the curriculum and courses set and accredited by a British University and English being the teaching language. On a smaller scale, in August 2004 an English immersion camp subsidised by the provincial authorities opened on a tiny island in South Korea, complete with a Hollywood-style mock bank, airport, and television studio, where all transactions are carried out in English.

9.12 English in the media, entertainment, and mass culture

In the news media, English still remains—and becomes used more and more widely as—the preferred lingo for global reach, with several stations which had so far operated in other languages establishing channels in this *lingua franca* (Graddol, 2006: 46f.). English-language magazines and newspapers (such as *Time* or *Newsweek*) are available around the world. On November 15 2006 Al Jazeera, whose English-language website (<http://aljazeera.net/english/>) established itself as a major source of news from the region also for US Internet users, rolled out its new news and current affairs channel—Al Jazeera English—with regional headquarters in Doha, London, Washington and Kuala Lumpur, broadcasting to over 80 m cable and satellite households across the globe. Iran is working on its international channel code-named ‘Press’. Following the example of the radio station Voice of Russia (Голос России), launched by decree of president Boris Yeltsin in December 1993 with the aim of familiarising the world community with Russian life and presenting a ‘realistic’ picture of home events, which now beams in 31 foreign languages to 160 countries, a Kremlin-funded 24-hour English-language information channel ‘Russia Today’—with a staff of nearly 500, including over 100 journalists—began broadcasting in December 2005 to Europe, Asia and North America, with the primary objective to give Western viewers a positive image of the country, with news, business, sports, culture, and weather broadcasts (Borodina & Tirmaste, 2005). After the successful bilingual model of the international ‘Deutsche Welle’, France 24 began broadcasting on a 24/7 basis with the

²³ Data for Polish schools quoted after *Rzeczpospolita* (inserts ‘Moja kariera’ from May 31 and July 26 2006).

²⁴ ‘Kurdistan English university launched.’ *Hewler Globe*, 2006, Apr 18.

aim to offset the “unified, Anglo-Saxon” outlook, while a Kenyan based media entrepreneur seeks to establish a 24-hour pan-African French-and-English news service, ‘A24’, planned to debut by the end of 2007. In this way, the media carry the language to once isolated areas where it was formerly only learnt in school.

English pervades not only the serious news media, but also the movie industry (Hollywood), light entertainment broadcasting (mostly American TV shows and series), commercials, and US mass culture which is present on every step of our daily life through fashion and designer shoes, comestibles, beverages, popular music, computers and high-tech (Chacón & Girardot, 2006). In the Eurovision song contest the lion’s share of the entries are delivered in English, with nearly all the others weaving in English refrains or phrases (Morrison, 2002). All this additionally fosters the perception that English is ‘cool’.

9.13 Technology

[A]s the Internet comes increasingly to be viewed from a social perspective, so the role of language becomes central ... [W]hat is immediately obvious when engaging in any of the Internet’s functions is its linguistic character. If the Internet is a revolution, therefore, it is likely to be a linguistic revolution.

— Crystal (2001) *Language and the Internet*

A huge role in the global triumph of English has simultaneously been played by technology. The expanse of the Internet, replacing traditional modes of communication – not only in research and education, but also marketing, trade, entertainment and hobbies; the exponential rise of IT and the increasing availability of textual resources in the electronic format have enormously promoted the dissemination of knowledge. It goes without saying that the primary language of scholarly publication is English (approx. 2/3, according to the British Council, reaching 80 per cent when it comes to all electronically stored information in the world; Power, 2005), even though the majority of the texts may be written by professionals for whom it is not the native tongue:

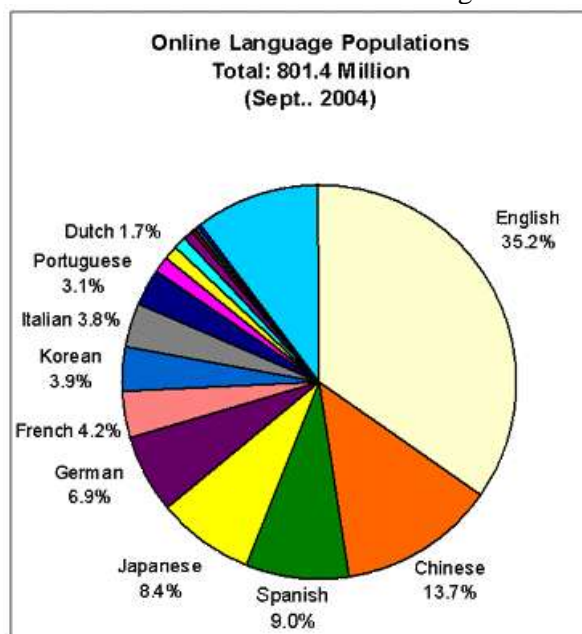


Figure 7: Top ten languages of the Internet – online language populations (data correct March 2004; Global Reach²⁵)

Consider also the distribution of languages on the Internet:

English	56.4%	68.4%
German	7.7%	5.8%

²⁵ <http://www.greach.com/globstats/index.php3>

French	5.6%	3.0%
Japanese	4.9%	5.9%
Spanish	3.0%	2.4%
Chinese	2.4%	3.9%
Italian	2.0%	1.6%
Dutch	1.9%	
Russian	1.7%	1.9%
Korean	1.5%	1.3%
Portuguese	1.5%	1.4%
Swedish	0.7%	
Polish	0.7%	
Danish	0.6%	
Czech	0.6%	
Turkish	0.2%	
Hungarian	0.2%	
Greek	0.1%	
Other	8.3%	4.6%
Total	100.0%	

Table 2: Distribution of languages on the Internet (webpages by language, first column data for 2002 Internet Statistics: Distribution of languages on the Internet – Ebbert (2002),

second Vilaweb.com as quoted by eMarketer)

Similarly, with 57% English is also the primary language used to access Google, the runner-up (German) tallying a relatively mere 12% (data for January 2002; Ebbert, 2002). New technologies themselves are also helping users pick up the language: Chinese and Japanese students can obtain English-usage tips and lessons on their mobile phones and iPods, while word processors and Internet browsers will correct your spelling, grammar and style (Power, 2005), and Dubliner Ken Carroll, following the success of his ChinesePod.com teaching Mandarin to English speakers, which has been invited to collaborate with Qinghua University in Beijing—the Oxford of China—and attracted by the personal interaction, low entry costs, fast turnaround time, and scalability, with the enormous potential of one teacher able to reach an audience of potentially hundreds of thousands, plans to deliver language learning to millions of Chinese users through EnglishPod.com podcast feeds.

9.14 The lingua franca of the 21st century

keine unter allen neueren sprachen hat ... eine größere kraft und stärke empfangen als die englische
 ...
sie darf mit vollem recht eine weltsprache heißen und scheint ... ausersehen künftig
noch in höherem maße an allen enden der erde zu walten
 (Grimm, 1852:50)

This observation made by the German linguist remains as timely today as a century and a half ago, while a similar observation had been made a century earlier by John Adams in a letter to the Congress (1780):

English is destined to be in the next and succeeding centuries more generally the language of the world than Latin was in the last or French is in the present age. The reason of this is obvious, because the increasing population in America, and their universal connection and correspondence with all nations will, aided by the influence of England in the world, whether great or small, force their language into general use, in spite of all the obstacles that may be thrown in their way, if any such there should be.

The reason why this widely diffused and highly cultivated West Germanic dialect has gradually become the planet's predominant language for international communication is that, in David Crystal's (1997a:8) words, "it was in the right place at the right time." Although English did not acquire its current status in other parts of the planet until the late 20th c., a key role in introducing it as a language of local use in a variety of locations across the globe was ultimately played by five centuries of colonial expansion of the British Empire—particularly following the great expansion of British naval military power and trade in the 17th and 18th c.—the Commonwealth of Nations, and— particularly after World War II—the economic primacy, political importance (or neo-imperialism), cultural influences and technological exports of the US (hence it is, essentially, a by-product of imperialism). While '*lingua franca*' originally denoted a stable trading-language variety (House 2006), or a formal language of diplomacy such as *français* from the 17th century until its recent displacement in the wake of World War II, over the years English has established itself as *the* means of interaction not only in commerce and business negotiations, but also diplomacy, scientific symposia, entertainment, and wherever the speakers of 'less common' (or simply different) languages need to communicate with either their similars or users of the 'dominating' language (House, 2000: 245).²⁶ It is used both in the public and private sphere, occupying a prominent place in international academic and business communities ("the linguistic equivalent of the business suit, slipped into for official occasions;" de Lotbinière, 2001), by international treaty it is the official language of aviation and maritime communication (Airspeak and Seaspeak, respectively, designed by Edward Johnson in the 1980s), of most international athletic organisations (including the Olympic Committee), and the language of backpackers travelling across continents. Its current trans- and supranational status at the start of the new millennium compares with that of Latin in most of Western Europe since the fall of the Roman Empire (when it was "the language of church and state, and for a long time the sole language of learning, the only medium of instruction in the schools. ... the language in which all academic learning was done;" Mackey 1965:141):

Whether you're a Korean executive on business in Shanghai, a German Eurocrat hammering out laws in Brussels or a Brazilian biochemist at a conference in Sweden, you're probably speaking English. (Power 2005)

A Finnish scientist coming to Vienna for a conference on human genetics; an Italian designer negotiating with prospective clients in Stockholm; a Polish tourist chatting with local restaurateurs in Crete: they all communicate successfully in "English". (Jenkins & Seidlhofer, 2001)

English is being used in the most unlikely places; German and Italian schoolchildren on exchange trips chat with one another in this lingo, much to the exasperation and annoyance of their teachers (Morrison 2002). Even in the EU—whose officials insist that the members have the right to work in their own languages—in practice English and French serve as a bridge between less-spoken patois in exchanges, to reach the wider public, and because of the prohibitive number of language combinations for interpretation (the bureaucratic machinery consuming millions of EURO—one third of the Commission's administrative budget; de Lotbinière, 2001—spewing out over 1,500,000 pages of translations before the enlargement, Morrison 2002). A landmark recognition of its dominance on the continent came in 1995 when it joined French and German as one of the *working* languages of the EU on the accession of ... Austria, Finland and Sweden (the federation having 23 *official* languages as of January 1 2007; EC, 2007). The prospect of trading in the European market with both a single currency and a common language would be compelling for business as well (approximately one fifth of US exports and imports is done with EU member states). Thus, English opens the list of the world's ten most influential languages, compiled by Weber (1997) after weighing six factors²⁷:

²⁶ To say nothing of omnipresent English loanwords, indicative of the technological and cultural influences of their original users. Many labels have been coined for particular non-English languages with a very high proportion of English words, e.g. Franglais, found on the Channel Islands, Frenglish in Québec, or Common European English, spoken by NNSs in the institutions of the EU, characterised by a high incidence of non-standard expressions influenced by a mixture of several other languages (symptomatically, the most difficult to understand for the Britons and Irish themselves!; http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/English_language).

²⁷ Number of primary and secondary speakers, number and population of countries where used, economic power of the countries, number of major fields using the language internationally, and socio-literary prestige.

1	English	37
2	French	23
3	Spanish	20
4	Russian	16
5	Arabic	14
6	Chinese ²⁸	13
7	German	12
8=	Japanese	10
8=	Portuguese	10
10	Hindi/Urdu	9

Table 3: The world's 10 most influential languages (Weber, 1997)

Where the global importance of a language once used to depend on the number—and wealth—of its native users, with the declining veneration of NSs as the ‘gold standard’ for English, of growing significance in providing the status of a world language are the second/foreign language speaker populations:

1	Mandarin	1,502 ²⁹	English	1,900
2	English	508 (of which 341m L ₁) ³⁰	Mandarin	1,000
3	Hindi	487	Hindi/Urdu	550
4	Spanish	417	Spanish	450
5	Russian	277	Russian	290
6	Bengali	211	Indonesian/Malaysian	200
7	Portuguese	191	Arabic	180
8	German	128	Portuguese	180
9	French	128	Bengali	175
10	Japanese	126	Japanese	140
11			French	130

Table 4: The estimated ranking of languages (a) when second language use is taken into account on top of the first (left hand side: Graddol 2006:62, based on Ostler (2005) and Ethnologue), (b) by competent speakers (right hand-side, after Morrison 2002); in millions

In the context of the European Union, it is also English that tops the list of most widely spoken languages, despite the fact that it does not have the highest proportion of mother-tongue speakers: while it is the L₁ for 16% of the European population (on a par with French and Italian, and in comparison with 24% for German and 11% for Spanish), a further 31% speak it well enough to hold a conversation (compared with e.g. only 12% for French, 8% for German, 4% for Spanish and 2% for Italian). The rank order of the remaining languages roughly follows that of inhabitants:

²⁸ Although many dialects of Chinese are mutually unintelligible, they are considered to be varieties of the same language because they are spoken in the same country and share the same writing system. (On the other hand, Swedish, Danish, and Norwegian, though mutually comprehensible, are considered to be three separate languages since they are spoken in different countries.) Thus in some cases political criteria outweigh linguistic considerations (“The range of world languages.” National Virtual Translation Center website, <http://www.nvtc.gov/lotw/months/november/worldlanguages.htm>)

²⁹ Despite the colossal numbers for Mandarin Chinese and Hindi (exceeding that for English when only NSs are concerned), their geographical distribution is much more limited than that of English.

³⁰ Although the estimates now usually exceed 400-450m in terms of L₁ use and vary between 350m and 1.5b for SL use (approaching those for Mandarin; Graddol 2006: 62), especially with the exponential increase of the already highly frequent NNS-NNS interactions.

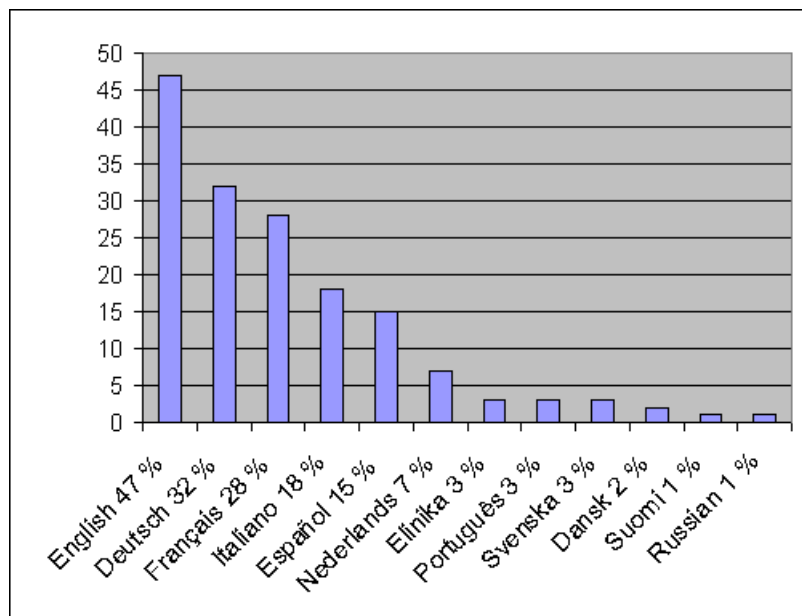


Figure 8: Total proportion of European citizens speaking each language (as NL or FL; Eurobarometer, 2001)

This importance of non-native use of the language was already recognised in 1985 by sociolinguist Braj B. Kachru, who is best known for introducing the representation of the global diaspora of English speakers in terms of three concentric circles:

- the 'inner' or 'core' one representing *NSs* from predominantly English-speaking countries (UK, US, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, etc.),
- the 'outer' one consisting of *SL* speakers, where English (actually indigenous, full-fledged and functionally adequate varieties thereof, yet non-native or 'non-standard' ones; Kachru, 1966, 1986, 1992b) is in wide use as the additional official language of the country (e.g. former colonies or current dependent territories of the UK and the US, such as India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Malaysia, Singapore, Hong Kong, South Africa, Ghana, Kenya, Nigeria, Zambia, Tanzania, Mauritius, or the Philippines),
- and the ever 'expanding' or 'fringe' circle comprising the learners of English as a *foreign* language in countries where it is neither an official language nor a former colonial language, but where it is nevertheless increasingly part of many people's skills, influential in trade, tourism, etc. (e.g. continental Europe, the Arab world, the Far East, or Mexico):

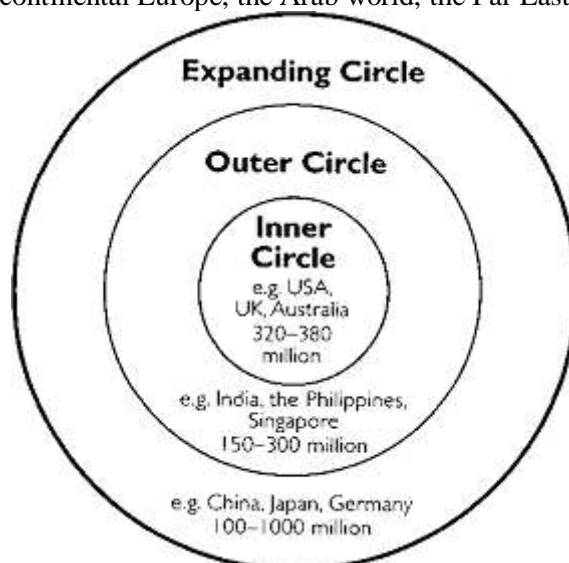


Figure 9: The 'three circles of English' as conceived by Kachru (1985, 1992a), after Crystal (1995:107)

Today, however, English being a pluricentric language with no Founding Fathers of its constitution and no central linguistic authority, regional and inter-speaker variation exists even in the inner circle. Various forms of indigenous and indigenised standard British and American, Australian, Canadian, New Zealand, Jamaican, West and South African, and Hiberno-Englishes exist, in many cases including several subvarieties such as Cockney³¹, Estuary English, Geordie³², Scouse, Newfoundland English, Anglo-Québec, AAVE³³, Chicano³⁴, Yooper³⁵, or Southern American... (G. Cook 2003:26).³⁶ In the outer circle, “English is ... at home in much of the South and Southeast and parts of Africa to that extent that we can speak of Malaysian English, South African English, or Indian³⁷ English as we do American or British English” (professor Margie Berns, quoted in PhysOrg 2005). The various Englishes you hear in the streets of Glasgow, Delhi, Brisbane, the Bronx, Cape Town and Kingston—leaving aside their local cultural conventions and pragmatic norms—may well become mutually incomprehensible³⁸ (Morrison 2002); Jamaican English, for one, has at least 10,000 distinctive lexical items (Crystal 2006)! In *The Canterville Ghost*, Oscar Wilde (1887) wrote perversely: “we have really everything in common with America nowadays, except, of course, language.”

Moreover, this colonial and ethnic dialectal diversity is not dying out (which, true, is afflicting certain rural vernaculars³⁹), but increasing, being fostered and hastened by (Crystal 2006):

- new literatures;
- media and broadcasting (e.g. BBC celebrating diversity with its 2005 Voices project, taking auditory snapshots of the linguistic variants in Britain);
- the Internet, which—beginning in 1991—is now bigger than all other writing in the world.

Additionally, the traditional concept of SL speakers as using the language for communication *within* their country of residence has become diluted and no longer reflects the current situation. It has been predicted, for instance, that in countries such as the Nordic ones with relatively ‘small’ languages, English is moving from FL to SL status, supplanting ‘Scandinavian’ in inter-Nordic

³¹ At the other side of the Atlantic, Labov (1972), for instance, illustrated how variation in /r/ in the speech of New Yorkers reflects their social class.

³² Spoken in Newcastle-upon-Tyne and the Tyneside area.

³³ African-American Vernacular English, also known as ‘Black English’ or ‘Ebonics’.

³⁴ Used primarily by people of Mexican descent in the US

³⁵ North Central AmE dialect mostly spoken in the Upper Peninsula of Michigan, influenced by Finnish, Scandinavian, Flemish, and German.

³⁶ Not to mention the fact that the inner circle is no longer 100% English-speaking; this is probably particularly visible in the United States, with the huge growth of the 4% quota of the population speaking little or no English since the 2000 Census (US Census Bureau, 2003), but also on the British Isles since the enlargement of the EU. Importantly, this diffusion is not confined to any distinct, geographically or culturally isolated enclave, but is rather a distribution throughout the country. On both sides of the Atlantic, the demand for affordable adult ESL programs far outpaces the supply, with thousands on waiting lists.

³⁷ or Indo-Pakistani

³⁸ Such differences also exist within the boundaries of one country; the BBC Voices Language Lab website welcomes you with the words: “In Liverpool, you’re made up; in the Black Country, you’re bostin. All around thye UK, you’re chuffed.” (<http://www.bbc.co.uk/voices/results/wordmap/>) I am here leaving aside texts requiring expertise in a specialised field, which will probably be gobbledygook to a native speaker unfamiliar with the rules of the games, as the following two excerpts quoted by Crystal (2006):

Brown was hit in the helmet by a Jim Taylor pitch in the top of the eighth inning and was down at home plate for three minutes. (baseball)

Hussein has placed two slips and a gully and a backward short-leg for the occasional ball zipping in off the seam. (cricket)

³⁹ At the same time, with the hegemony of English, such more fragile languages as Scottish Gaelic are in chronic decline, facing extinction (Morrison 2002). Hundreds of native Australian and North American languages were wiped out by ‘assimilation’ programmes that were reversed far too late. Hopefully, at the same time globalisation can foster localisation and stimulate the use and revival of indigenous languages and dialects for identification (see the examples of Welsh, Cornish, or Hawai‘ian).

encounters (Viereck, 1996; Hoffman, 2000; McArthur, 2003: 57) aptly summarises the blurring of the distinction between native, SL and FL speakers:

Once they were fairly clear: the first were born to English, the second had it thrust upon them in colonial times and the third was everybody else who knew any English. Now, however, they have very fuzzy edges. Many native users have low opinions of the English of other native users, at home or abroad; many second-language users are manifestly more fluent in some aspects of the language than many natives, especially in professional activities; and many foreign users know and use the language better than many native- and second-language users ... The distinction 'second' and 'foreign' seems therefore much less valuable than it may once have been.

With the increasing necessity to rate *proficiency* in the language rather than linguistic background (Graddol, 2006: 110), Kachru (2004) replaced his earlier oft-cited 'us-and-them' paradigm with a spatial continuum where the 'inner circle' is conceived of as comprising highly proficient speakers of English, "those who have 'functional nativeness' regardless of how they learned or use the language" (Graddol, 2006:110):



Figure 10: Representing the community of English speakers as including a wide range of proficiencies (Graddol, 2006:110)

This recognises the fact that many individuals in the outer and expanding circles use English just as expertly as NSs, exhibiting only minor differences in their linguistic ability (e.g. in grammaticality judgements), while at the same time having a command of the language which is often "accompanied by additional expertise which a traditionally defined NS may not have" (Cook 2003: 29) Also in language teaching, nativeness ceases to become an issue. Thus, for instance, the concern in South Korea is not who is a native speaker, but who speaks "better" English – which is why the students there prefer e.g. Canadians to Australians or New Zealanders (Ezberci & Snyder, 2006), despite the fact that Australia and Britain (including Scotland, with SELTiC now targeting the Russian market⁴⁰) in particular have invested heavily in branding themselves internationally as high quality destinations for the study of the language (Power, 2005).

The numbers for English are going to peak even more as a now surprising number of governments (e.g. Colombia, Mongolia, South Korea, and Taiwan) declare an intention to introduce English as a second official language (Graddol, 2006:87), following the model of not the UK or the US, but of practically bilingual countries such as Singapore, Finland and the Netherlands. Importantly, rather than monolingual native speakers of English, they are increasingly likely to seek bilingual language teachers (*ibid.*). At the same time, the variety of English that is going to develop in these populous states will again leave the language as we know it not unaffected, thus reiterating the process that American English has gone through since it became distinct from its British ancestor in the 18th century: "[a]s the language is picked up by other cultures, there will be differences in how things are pronounced, and the meaning of words and phrases can vary among cultures to suit local communicative needs," says professor Margie Berns, director of Purdue's ESL Program in the Department of English (PhysOrg, 2005). For instance, in some African English-speaking communities it is customary to greet another person by saying "You have put on some weight," thus acknowledging how healthy and prosperous s/he looks (*op. cit.*) – the reaction of a Brit would probably hardly be favourable.

⁴⁰ 'Scotland "is top place to learn English".' *Evening Times* Apr 5 2006.

The prognosis for the evolution of the two varieties of English, EFL and ELF, is illustratively presented in the following graph:

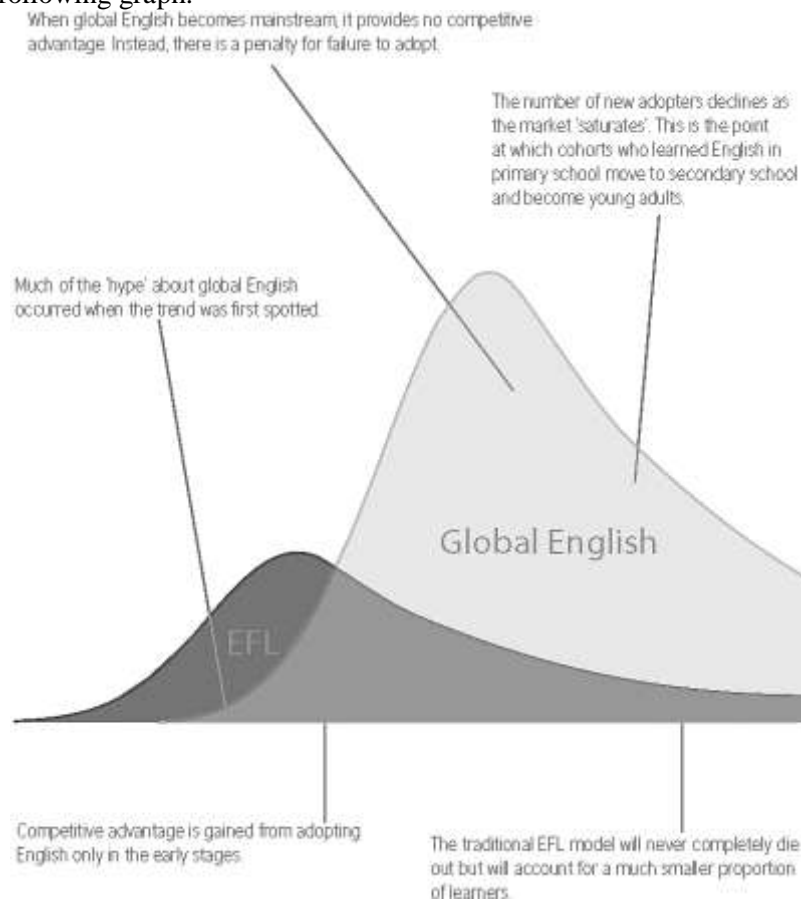


Figure 11: Global English as an innovation (Graddol, 2006:108)

Conclusion

A valid question that presents itself in ELT is: which of the sociolinguistic varieties should we choose as the most relevant to the learner's needs? At the same time, the N/NS distinction becomes irrelevant, as everyone is a NS of his/her particular dialect and a non-native of all the others – the same speaker can be perceived as indigenous in some parts of the Anglosphere and as foreign in others.

The question: "Whose language should be taught?" does not restrict itself to the native varieties only. The majority of communication and exchange taking place in English today does *not* involve monolingual native speakers of this language, but multilingual *non*-native users, rendering them the norm rather than an exception to the rule. The answer may then not be the idiom you hear in American chat shows and action series or British soaps and comedies, but a range of *assimilated* varieties, with a sufficient 'common core' for interpersonal communication but not infrequently quite distinct from its forefather. The question is, do we want to teach ENL as the foreign language, or would a more legitimate learning goal be a *lingua franca*, a medium of international communication (and survival interaction with NSs as well, where necessary), approaching communication between non-natives on *sui generis* terms (vide e.g. Meierkord & Knapp 2002)? A NS model rapidly loses in relevance, and the new evolving hybrid lingoes will increasingly turn to continental Europe or Asia for their norms of correctness and appropriateness rather than grounding them in UK or U.S. uses. In addition, as NSs themselves speak with accents that diverge from the 'standard', one might wonder if the enormous time, effort and resources expended on polishing these sounds are justified and why the FL learner should be required to master those distinctions rather than do something more practical during the hours of their lives they spend in the language classroom.

Even today, in the TESOL industry of the 21st century, highly experienced and qualified teachers find their credentials and expert status as practitioners questioned on the grounds of their nonnativeness, becoming condemned to more or less subtle ostracism (Derbel 2005). In a taxonomy

which plays down such inextricable aspects of professionalism as formal education, linguistic proficiency and expertise, professional preparation, and teaching experience they find themselves discriminated against, oftentimes implicitly, but at times explicitly as well, in hiring practices and/or in receiving working assignments. The confidence of local, NNS teachers should be boosted by bestowing on them a sense of legitimacy, rather than undermining their qualifications for not measuring up to 'the standard'.

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