

# English as a global language

[Linguistics](#), [Language](#)



English as a global language English is spoken in most parts of the world, for instance in Great Britain, the USA, Canada, Australia, New Zealand and in many more countries. Moreover in African states English serves as main form of communication. English is, after the Chinese one, the language most people speak and it is the most popular second language and foreign language pupils learn in school. The English language is often named as a “killer language” that wipes out smaller languages and their cultures by exclusive use (f. e. media, economy).

English is not popular because of its linguistic properties but there are conscious, co-ordinated promotion programmes. But if there are so many speaking the same language there remains the question of human’s diversity – concerning biological, cultural and political matters. We also have to take into consideration, that English as a global language is also linked to social costs, because the teaching and accommodation of the languages for immigrant minorities is rather irrational. Language policy in the post-colonial situation:

There are a lot of colonial states with multilingual character because of the imperialist powers in the 19th and 20th century. In Africa, for example, there are no attempts to use any African language in high-status functions, they are not even taught in schools. The period during colonialism changed a lot in the world’s history and following development, and colonialism make us think about cheap rawmaterials and workers the imperialist powers wanted to gain, but we often forget about something else, which an African statesman expresses in his speech: The real aim of colonialism was to

control the people's \_wealth... but) economic and political control can never be complete or effective without mental control.

To control a people's culture is to control their tools of self-definition in relationship to others. For colonialism, this involved two aspects of the same process: the destruction or the deliberate undervaluing of a people's culture, their art, dances, religions, history, geography, education, orature and literature, and the conscious elevation of the language of the coloniser. The domination of a people's language by the languages of the colonising nations was crucial to the domination of the mental universe of the colonised.

Ngugi wa Thiong'o (extract from his famous essay on " The language of African literature") But there are several arguments for the demand of the adoption of the ex-colonial languages as official ones. First, regarded politically, the choice of any indigenous language would destabilise African states which are multilingual. A second argument would be, that the continue use of the ex-colonial language is rather " practical" because in the end it was accepted by the majority.

From having been the language of the oppressor, English, for instance, became the language of national unity and national liberation. There was a sense (economically and technically) in ex-colonial languages, because then they are linked to their " mother country" and the language-infrastructure delivers a pool of skills, like as prorate books, dictionaries, registers, etc. It would be useless to imitate and duplicate in any of African languages. But these arguments were not often used in cultural discussions, because the

European languages often affect as superior to the indigenous “vernaculars”.

The development seems to be inevitable because with the problem of unemployment, the ability to speak English is very important, but English can't be blamed for the developments demanding an international lingua franca to facilitate a world wide exchange of knowledge everyone can understand. Killer languages were always introduced by those who were in control of power. The USA with the strongest currency the Dollar, shows that it is not coincidental that English is the leading candidate as a global language.

Because of the English predominance in the industrial world, more and more peoples will have to join in and the question remains if they are able to keep their own identities. There is no danger if regional groups manage to keep their own language for internal communication, but in less developed countries the members of small linguistic groups have to change to a language of a higher rank in the language hierarchy. Because that way they are more flexible and the chances in world-wide competition are bigger.

In Australia parents even force their children to speak English instead of their own indigenous mother tongue, because they want to provide them better chances for their future. Shortly, you can say that by surviving in a capitalistic system of competition many peoples are forced to support a process which destroys their own culture. In Countries of GB's old colonial empire (e. g. : Australia, USA, Canada, New Zealand) the native populations were either killed or enslaved, and the Anglo- Saxon culture and language

were adopted. This seemed to be a natural process. In Africa the new system of additive bilingualism shall be introduced now.

That means that the 1st language maintains and a second one is added. This system developed out of the Bantu Education, which enforced black schoolchildren to learn English with the help of a racist curriculum (Stundenplan). But African children rebelled which is called the\_ Soweto Uprising of 1976, by now. This truly baneful legacy of Apartheid and a lack of will amongst most of the political leadership are the main reasons why there is no successful policy of multilingualism and multilingualistic education in Africa yet. On contrary, there's really a language problem like in India and other former colonies.

The leaders followed the French or English only (or mainly) language policies after formal independence from the colonial rule. Most of these countries returned to their mother – tongue within. Prof. Alexander Neville thinks, that if additive bilingualism is carried out systematically but flexibly, there should be a high level of literacy in Africa in the course of the next century (1 African language and at least some fluency in English for all Africans). African schools could normalise (competent language teachers like most countries of the world). We think this is a rather optimistic view. But what is the right way to learn a language?

In the Internet Research there are some conditions quoted as important to learn a 2nd language: Teachers' language proficiency Teachers' competence as teachers (understand and overcome pupils' problems) Exposure to the language outside the classroom Adequate textbooks and material There's a

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need for one or two world languages in the fields of trade, technology and diplomacy. But there's a global tension between this need on one hand, and the national and regional need for a language in which the history and treasures of the cultures of the world's diverse peoples, are captured, on the other hand.

Nowadays, as English is the lingua franca of the EU, massive efforts of translation and interpretation have to be taken. A lingua franca and Multilingualism should stand side by side, forming a common language policy. Changes in the Teaching of English David Crystal (Author of „ English as a Global Language“) thinks that English became the world language, not because of any intrinsic linguistic qualities, but because at significant moments in history it happened to be 'in the right place at the right time'.

" The Future of English? by Graddol, suggests that English is at a turning point in its development as an international language: it has become a global language at a time when the world itself is undergoing rapid change. Indeed, English is very much a part of the process of transformation, which is creating a more closely interconnected world in which people and machines talk easily to each other from one country to another in the world. It is clear that more and more people learning English as a foreign language do so in order to communicate with other non-native speakers of English.

This marks a significant change in the nature and purpose of teaching and learning English around the world, which has hitherto been built on the idea of teaching a native speaker model of English (usually British or American) to allow communication between the learner and native speakers. If you

consider, that the number of people speaking English as a second language will soon outnumber the one of those speaking it as a first tongue, you will understand, that also the way of teaching English has to change.

Therefore new methods of English Language teaching (ELT) have been developed to be able to teach also the diverse and changing contexts in which English will be used in the future. There are courses on the Internet and special groups, where English teachers from all over the world discuss about the new challenge of their profession. Diana and Julia Brugger

Opinions: What makes a global language? Why is English a leading candidate? Will it hold this position? A few years ago I traveled around Europe with a friend. Although we knew only a little French, we were able to travel with no problem.

Everyone we encountered, with a few exceptions, spoke English. It was comforting to be able to communicate with others when we were lost, needed help or just wanted to talk. Personally, I think a universal language would benefit most people. I agree, however, that one should not replace native languages. Native languages are symbols of culture, the past and its people. From what we have learned so far I think a universal language would have maybe eliminated some of the oppression and subordination some peoples faced at the hands of colonizers.

Cheryl Fonda Undoubtedly, the English language is a powerful tool and has been a dominant force in suppressing the colonies during Imperialism.

Fortunately, Pakistan ( my native country) which was under British rule did not let go of it's native language despite British influence. English remains

the official language, but we have our own national language called Urdu, which is quite dominant. Shandana \*Khanzada\* (Pakistan) I guess from the heading of this posting that we would assume that English would be a great candidate for this universal language.

I do feel that it might eliminate some tension if everyone had access to a certain universal language and couldn't be exploited as easily. However, most diplomats and such already speak English. It is the poor of every nation that don't have access to English education, so the hierarchy still continues. The universal language would cause the exploitation of the poor by the rich. The only difference is that it would not be a nation exploiting another but people of a nation exploiting their own countrymen.

We as English speakers take a lot for granted... when it comes to languages we are very self-centered. True a universal language would make business and politics much easier, but each language carries much of a culture. If you have ever tried translating poetry from one language to another you know how words don't have exact translations and almost all subtleties are lost. Think about even within the English language... each dialect ( southern, Midwest, New England) has its own character.

A universal language sounds great in theory but the work that implementing it would entail is overwhelming to say the least. I too have travelled to other countries and have felt very lucky when others know English and were able to help me. —Americans should really know other languages well considering the resources we have here, but the truth of the matter is that we do not. I think a universal language would be more convenient but it would eventually



wipe out certain differences among us that serve as positive vehicles for learning and experience.