

English as a Global Language

Namrata Kumari

Research Scholar, Dept. of English, BRA Bihar University, Muzaffarpur

Abstract

People often talk about English as a global language or language Franca. With more than 350 million people around the world speaking English as a first language and more 430 million speaking it as a second language, these are English speakers in most countries around the world. Why is English so popular? And why has it become a global language?

People often call English the international language of business, and it is increasingly true as international trade expands every year, bringing new countries into contact. Many of the best MBA programs are taught in English, so speaking it well can put you in a position to get the best training and credentials. Most multinational companies require a certain degree of English proficiency from potential employees, so in order to get a choice position in any company or office, more and more people are learning English.

Key Words: Language, English, India, Academic, Communication

In the preface to his critical book 'THE STORY OF ENGLISH' Robert Mc-crum exclaims '*the success of English sometimes induces a kind of sentimental triumphalism that's reminiscent of President Reagan's 'Morning in America' political nostalgia. If English today is a global phenomenon, this is due to non-linguistic forces, not because it has unique or special qualities. Despite the myths, English is from some points of view, a spectacularly bad choice as the world's alternative language. It is not easier to learn as French or Russian. It is not more beautiful, mellifluous or eloquent than Italian or German or any other language. Its bizarre spelling conventions are a source of weakness, not strength. But weak or strong, global English now has a supranational momentum that has set it free from the political fates of Britain and United States. The classical global financial underpinning of the language ensures its supremacy. The estimated*

Gross Language Product (GLP) of English is \$7815 billion (compared to \$2455 billion for German and \$1789 for Spanish)

'English is the global language; A headline of this kind must have appeared in a thousand newspapers and magazines in recent years. '*English rules is an actual example presenting to the world an uncomplicated Scenario suggesting the universality of the language's spread and the likelihood of its continuation*'². No doubt, a language achieves a genuinely global status when it develops a special role that is recognized in every country. There are two main ways in which it can be done. Firstly, a language can be made the official language of a country, to be used as a medium of communication in such domains as government, the law courts, the media and the educational system. Such a language is often described as 'a second language' because it is seen as a complement to a person's mother tongue

or 'first language'. Secondly, a language can be made a priority in a country's foreign-language teaching, even though this language has no official status. At this point we may say that there are several ways in which a language may be opted as an official or semi-official; similarly, there may be various reasons for choosing a particular language as a favoured foreign

language. It is mainly because of the complexity, related to the three-pronged development of first language, second language and foreign-language speakers that a global language will eventually come to be used by more people than any other language. English has already related that stage which may be justified with the statistics given below.

Table-1

Sl. No.	Territory	Population	Usage Estimate	
			L1	L2
1	American Samoa	67,000	2,000	65,000
2.	Antigua & Barbuda (c)	68,000	66,000	2,000
3.	Aruba	70,000	9,000	35,000
4.	Australia	18,972,000	14,987,000	3,500,000
5.	Bahamas (c)	298,000	260,000	28,000
6.	Bangladesh	131,270,000		3,500,000
7.	Barbados (c)	275,000	262,000	13,000
8.	Belize (c)	256,000	190,000	56,000
9.	Bermuda	63,000	63,000	
10.	Botswana	1,586,000		630,000
11.	British Virgin Island (c)	20,800	20,000	
12.	Brunei	344,000	10,000	134,000
13.	Cameroon (c)	15,900,000		7,700,000
14.	Canada	31,600,000	20,000,000	7,000,000
15.	Cayman Island	36,000	36,000	
16.	Cook Island	21,000	1,000	3,000

17.	Dominica (c)	70,000	3,000	60,000
18.	Fiji	850,000	6,000	170,000
19.	Gambia (c)	1,411,000		40,000
20.	Ghana (c)	19,894,000		1,400,000
21.	Gibraltar	31,000	28,000	2,000
22.	Grenada (c)	100,000	100,000	
23.	Guyana (c)	700,000	650,000	30,000
24.	Hong Kong	7,210, 000	150,000	2,200,000
25.	India	1,029,991,000	350,000	200,000,000
26.	Ireland	3,850,000	3,750,000	100,000
27.	Jamaica (c)	2,665,000	2,600,000	50,000
28.	Kenya	30,766,000		2,700,000
29.	Kiribati	94,000		23,000
30.	Lesotho	2,177,000		500,000
31.	Liberia (c)	3,226,000	600,000	2,500,000
32.	Malawi	10,548,000		540,000
33.	Malaysia	22,230,000	380,000	7,000,000
34.	Malta	395,000	13,000	95,000
35.	Marshall Island	70,000	60,000	2,000
36.	Mauritius	1,190,000	2,000	200,000
37.	Micronesia	135,000	4,000	60,000
38.	Montserrat (c)	4,000	4,000	
39.	Namibia	1,800,000	14,000	300,000
40.	Nouns	12,000	900	10,700

41.	Nepal	25,300,000		7,000,000
42.	New Zealand	3,864,000	3,700,000	150,000
43.	Nigeria (c)	126,636,000		60,000,000
44.	Noshern Marians (c)	75,000	5000	65,000
45.	Pakistan	145,000,000		17,000,000
46.	Palau	19,000	500	18,000
47.	Papua New Guinea (c)	5,000,000	150,000	3,000,000
48.	Philippines	83,000,000	20,000	40,000,000
49.	Porto Ricoa	3,937,000	100,000	1,840,000
50.	Rwanda	7,313,000		20,000
51.	St. Kitts & Nevis (c)	43,000	43,000	
52.	St. Lusia (c)	158,000	31,000	40,000
53.	St. Vincent & Grenadines (c)	116,000	114,000	
54.	Samoa	180,000	1,000	
55.	Seychelles	80,000	3,000	30,000
56.	Sierra Leone (c)	5,427,000	500,000	4,400,000
57.	Singapore	4,300,000	350,000	2,000,000
58.	Solomon Islands (c)	480,000	10,000	165,000
59.	South Africa	43,586,000	3,700,000	11,000,000
60.	Srilanka	19,400,000	10,000	1,900,000
61.	Surinam (c)	434,000	260,000	150,000
62.	Swaziland	1,104,000		50,000
63.	Tanzania	36,232,000		4,000,000
64.	Tonga	104,000		30,000

65.	Trinidad & Tobago (c)	1,170,000	1,145,000	
66.	Tuvalu	11,000		800
67.	Uganda	23,986,000		2,500,000
68.	United Kingdom	59,648,000	58,190,000	1,500,000
69.	UK Islands (Channel Isman)	228,000	227,000	
70.	United States	278,059,000	215,424,000	25,600,000
71.	US Virgin Islands (c)	122,000	98,000	15,000
72.	Vanuatu (c)	193,000	60,000	120,000
73.	Zambia	9,770,000	110,000	1,800,000
74.	Zimbabwe	11,365,000	250,000	5,300,000
75.	Other Dependencies	35,000	20,000	15,000
	TOTAL	2,236,730,800	329,140,000	430,614,500

(The category other dependencies consist of territories administered by Australia, New Zealand, and the United Kingdom)³

The present day world status of English is primarily the result of two factors: the expansion of British colonial and the emergence of the United States as the leading economic power of the 29th century. The USA has nearly 70 percent of all English mother tongue speakers in the world, and such linguistic dominance currently gives America a controlling interest in the way, the language is likely to develop. According to the US linguist BrajKachru, there are three concentric circles representing the spread of English around the world:
 The three circles of English

The inner circle refers to the traditional bases of English where it is the primary

language: it includes the USA, UK, Ireland, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand.

The outer or extended circle involves the earlier phases of the spread of English in non-native settings, where the language has become part of a country's chief institution, and plays an important 'second language' role in a multilingual setting: it includes Singapore, India, Malaise, and over fifty other territories.

The expanding or extending circle involves those notions which recognize the importance of English as an international language, though they do not have of colonization by members of the inner circle, nor have they given English any

special administrative status. It includes China, Japan, Greece, Poland and a steadily increasing number of other states. In these areas, English is taught as a foreign language.

*'The worth of English language as a global tongue lies in its social usefulness because in relation to so many of the major socio-cultural developments of the past 200 hundred years, it can be proved that the English language has repeatedly found itself in the right place at the right time'*⁴. The writer David Crystal justifies the above-mentioned phrase by saying that in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries English was the language of the leading colonial nation-- Britain. In the eighteenth and the nineteenth centuries it was the language of the leader of the industrial revolution-- also Britain. In the late nineteenth century and early twentieth, it was the language of the leading economic power -- the USA. As a result, when new technologies brought new linguistic opportunities, English emerged as a first-rank language in industries which affected all aspects of society- the press, advertising, broadcasting, nation pictures, sound recording, transport and communication. At the same time, the word was foreign fresh networks of international alliances, and there emerged an unprecedented need for a lingua franca. Here too, there was a clear first choice.

*'International Socio-Political Association- During the first half of the twentieth century English gradually become a leading language of international political, academic, and community meetings'*⁵ The first step in the political consolidation of English were taken during the decision-making which followed the First World War in 1919. The League of Nations was

the first of many modern international alliances to allocate a special place to English in its proceedings. At the time of the first Assembly of League in 1920, it had forty-two members, most of them from outside Europe. English played the role of lingua Franca among them, and its role of a common tongue for all members became critical when the League was replaced in 1945 by the United Nations. Now, English is one of the official languages of over fifty distinct organs, programmes, specialised agencies, as well as many regional and functional commissions, Standing committees, expert bodies, and other organizations of the UN; for example the association of South - East Asian Nations, the common wealth the council of Europe, the European Union and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. We may also include the fact that English is the only official language of the organization of Petroleum Exporting countries and the only working language of the European Free Trade Association.

Not to speak of political bodies, but several international exporting organizations have also restricted them to English only. When exporting organizations like the African Hockey Federation, the Asian Amateur Athletic and the Association of Oceanic National Olympic committees hold international competitions, English automatically becomes the lingua Franca of their gathering. In the field of science and law also, we find no other language than English playing dominant role. The European Academy of Anaesthesiology and the European Academy of Facial Surgery use only English in their proceedings, as do the European

Association of Cancer Research and the European Association of Fish pathology. legal bodies like European Air law Association, The European Bridge League and the European Aluminium Association make use of only one language which is English. International politics operates at several levels and in many different ways, but the presence of English is always there. The overriding impression is that, wherever in the world an organization is based, English is the chief auxiliary language. The Andean commission of Jurists recognizes Spanish -- and English. The German anatomical association Anatomische Gesellschaft recognizes German- and English. The Arab Air Carriers Association recognizes Arabic- and English.

The Media and The Press: The English language has been an important medium of the press for nearly 400 years, but the nineteenth century was the period of greatest progress, mainly because of the introduction of new printing technology and methods of mass production and transportation. By the end of the century, popular journalism, in the form of The Daily Mail (1896), brought Britain into line with America. From then on, no headlines screamed with greater visual force from the news-stands of the world than those published in the English language. Newspapers are not solely international media; they play an important role in the identity of a local community. Most papers are for home circulation, and naturally they are published in a home language. It is, therefore, impossible to gain an impression of the power of English from the bare statistics of newspaper production and circulation. According to the data compiled by the Encyclopaedia Britannica in 2002, about 57 percent of the

world's newspapers were being published in those countries where the English language has special status, and it is reasonable to assume that majority of these would be in English. The influence of the individual newspapers on world scale. As The New York Times, The Washington Post, The Wall Street Journal, The Time, and The Sunday Times, proves the fact that English- language newspapers intend for global leadership.

Advertising and Broadcasting: Towards the end of the 19th century, a combination of social and economic factors led to a dramatic increase in the use of advertisements in publications, especially in the more industrialized countries. English in advertising began very early on, when the weekly newspapers began to carry items about books, medicines, tea and other domestic products. An advertising supplement appeared in the London Gazette in 1666, and within a century advertisements had grown both in number and in style- so much so that Dr. Johnson was led to comment caustically about their '*magnificence of promise and... eloquence sometimes sublime and sometimes pathetic*'.⁶ During the 19th century the advertising slogan became a feature of the medium, as did the famous 'trade name'. Many products which are now household names received a special boost in that decade, as Ford, Coca Cola, Kodak and Kellogg. As international markets grew, the posters, bill boards, electric displays, shop signs and other techniques became part of the everyday scene, and their prominence in virtually every town and city is now one of the most noticeable globe manifestations of English language use. In all of this, it is the English of American products which rules. By

1972, only three of the world's top thirty agencies were not 45- owned (two in Japan and one in Britain). The official language of international advertising bodies, such as the European Association of Advertising Agencies, is invariably English.

In Britain, experimental broadcast was being made as early as 1919, and the British Broadcasting Company, later Corporation, was established in 1922. During the early 1920's English- language broadcasting began in Canada, Australia and New Zealand. The Indian Broadcasting Company had stations in Bombay and Calcutta by 1927. Most European countries commenced radio services during the same period. There are also several important regional organizations, such as the Commonwealth Broadcasting Association and the European Broadcasting Union, as well as cultural and educational organizations such as the London-based International Broadcasting Institute. In these cases, we find a growing reliance on English as a lingua-Franca, similarly with the dramatic high-speed expansion of public television, English, the tongue of Anglo-Saxon, became the world English. A more specific indication in Broadcasting aimed specifically at audiences in other countries. The international standing of BBC programs, especially its news broadcasts, achieved a high point during the Second World War, when they helped to raise morale in German- occupied territories. Later, the USA rapidly overtook Britain, becoming the leading provider of English-language services abroad. The Voice of America, the external broadcasting service of the US Information Agency was founded during the Cold War years. The International Broadcast Station offers a

shortwave service to Latin America in English, and Radio New York Worldwide provides an English language service to Europe. During the past-war years, many countries launched English - language radio programs, as the Soviet Union, Italy, Japan, Luxembourg and others. The language of these broadcasting stations and programs was only English, and still it is only English.

Cinema and Music: The technology of cinema had its roots in Europe and America during the nineteenth century, with 'Britain and France providing an initial impetus to the artistic and commercial development of the cinema from 1895. With the boom of cinematic technology in 1929's, it was the English language which suddenly came to dominate the movie world. For example, in 1933, appeared the first edition of The Picturegoer's who's who and encyclopaedia of the screen today⁶. Despite the growth of the film industry in other countries in later decades, English language movies still dominate the medium, with Hollywood country to rely increasingly on a small number of annual productions aimed at huge audiences- such as Star wars, Titanic, and The Lord of The Rings. It is unusual to find a blockbuster movie produced in a language other than English. The Oscar system has always been in English, and half of the Best Film awards are given at the Cannes Festival have been to English - language productions.

In 1877, when Thomas Edison devised the phonograph, the first machine that could both record and reproduce sound, the first words to be recorded were 'what God hath Wrought' followed by the words of the nursery- rhyme 'Mary had a little lamb'.

All the major recording companies in popular music had English- language origins. Radio sets around the world hourly testify to the dominance of English in the popular music scene today. During the 19th century, popular music was embedded within the dance halls, beer halls, and popular theatres, producing thousands of songs. Similarly, during the early twentieth century, European light Opera developed an English - language dimension. When modern popular music arrived, it was almost entirely an English scene. The pop groups of two chief English-speaking nations were soon to dominate the recording world. In the 2000s the English language character of the international pop music world is extraordinary. Although every country has its popular singers, singing in their own language, only a few manage to break through into the international arena, and in order to do so, it seems they need to sing in English. 'Happy birthday to you' is widely -sung at children's birthday parties in many countries. The social, political and spiritual messages carried by the words, such as 'we shall overcome' resounded at gatherings in many countries, producing many people with a first- and often highly charged- experience of the unifying power of English in action. And the language has continued to play this role, being the medium of such international projects as 'Live Aid'.

Educations and Communications: Since the 1960's, the English has become the normal medium of instructions in higher education for many countries- and is increasingly used in several where the language has no official status. A 1980 study of the use of English in scientific periodicals showed that 85% of papers in

biology and physics were being written in English at that time, whereas medical papers were some way behind (73%), and papers in mathematics and chemistry further behind still (69%). This can be seen even in a language- sensitive subject such as linguistics, where in 1995 nearly 90 percent of the 1,500 papers listed in the journal Linguistics Abstracts were in English. In computer science, the proportion is even higher. Recently, the pressure to use English has grown as universities and colleges have increasingly welcomed foreign students, and lectures have found themselves faced with mixed - language audiences. The English Language teaching (ELT) business has become one of the major growth industries around the world in the past half-century. However, its relevance to the growth of English as world language goes back much further. In the final quarter of the eighteenth century, we find several examples of English grammars, such as Lindley Murray's, being translated into other languages. An illustration of the scale of the development can be seen from the work of The British Council, which in 2002 had network of offices in 109 countries promoting cultural, educational and technological cooperation. In 1995-96, over 400,000 candidates worldwide sat English language examination administered by the council, over half of these being examinations in English as a foreign language. At any one time during that year, there were 12,000 students learning English and other skills through the medium of English in council teaching centres.

In a 1995 global consultation exercises initiated by English 2000, a British Council Project, people professionally

involved in ELT in some ninety countries were asked to react to a series of statements, concerning the role and future of English language. Nearly, 1,400 questionnaires were returned one of the statements was: 'The global market for English language teaching and learning will increase over the next 25 years' over 93 percent agreed strongly. Certain other statements in the Council questionnaire were also given an unequivocal response. They include:

- ❖ English will retain its role as the dominant language in world media and communication.
- ❖ English is essential for progress as it will provide the main means of access to high-tech communication and information over the next twenty-five years.
- ❖ English will remain the world's language for international communication for the next twenty-five years.

Exercise of this kind has no clear predictive value, but they do provide a useful glimpses of the way specialists are thinking in the world market- place, and they help undoubtedly to confirm the picture of English emerging as a global language.

Communication skill in English play a vital role in equipping students with the knowledge, skills and attitudes, required for employability. In the developing countries, related to Asia and Africa, there is a need for curriculum change and innovative approaches-methodologies to acquire to acquire and learn English fluency and accuracy. New paradigms and competency based approaches have been rapidly becoming dominant forces in the

field of knowledge transmission. Learners learn the language in various styles like sensory, cognitive and personality- related style preferences. Monte More (2009) has stated the tree Metaphor of English language teaching I.e. roots of the tree are represented as the concepts: Language, Knowledge and Pedagogy and the stem is represented as the teaching methods and the branches of the tree are represented as classroom techniques. In language teaching and learning, we have an allowance to select from the world of technology: Radio, TV, CD-ROM, Computers, (All, the internet, Electronic Dictionary, Email, Blogs and Audio cassettes, Power Point, Videos, DVD's or VCD's. The last two decades have been a revolution due to onset of technology, and has changed the dynamics of several industries, and has also influenced the industries and the way people interact and work in society. This rapid rising and development of information technology has offered a better pattern to explore the new teaching model. Of course, technology, particular Internet, plays a very important role in English teaching. Using software to create a context to teach English has its exceptional advantages. It has been a nation that being good at oral communication will provide better chances to get selected during recruitment process till date. In India, the multi-national companies are testing basic knowledge of writing skills, to the level of ELTS, TOEFL, iBT& GRE.

English also become the lingua-franca in the field of Travelling, Tourism and International Safety. As world travel has grown, more people and goods are being transported more quickly and simultaneously to more places than ever

before. The communicative demands, placed on air and sea personnel, given the variety of language backgrounds involved, have thus grown correspondingly. In 1980, a project was set to produce Essential English for International Maritime use—often referred to as 'Seaspeak'⁷. Progress has also been made in recent years in devising systems of unambiguous communication between organizations which are involved in handling emergencies on the ground - notably, the fire service, the ambulance service and the police. Research has therefore been ongoing into a way of standardizing communication between the UK and the continent of Europe: it is called 'police speak'. The arguments in favour of a single language of air traffic control are

obvious. Even within a single language, terminology and phrasing need to be Standardized, to avoid ambiguity, and great efforts have been made to develop such a system for English, widely called 'Airspeak'. They include terms as 'Roger', 'Wilco' and 'Mayday'; phrases as 'Maintaining 2500 feet' and 'Runaway in sight'; and the use of a phonetic alphabet to spell out code names as 'Alpha', 'Bravo', 'Charlie', 'Delta', to express unambiguously all possible air situations. It may well be the case, as was intimated earlier, that the English language has already grown to be independent of any form of social control. In 500 years-time will it be the case that everyone will automatically be introduced to English as they are born, or no wonder, as soon as they are conceived?

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