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HISTORICAL DETERMINATION OF THE DYNAMICS OF THE CONCEPT “ENGLISH-SPEAKING SOCIETY”

The English language is probably the biggest and at the same time the least recognized heritage of the United Kingdom. It is the cornerstone of self-identity which unites the minds of hundreds of millions of people around the world.

English is the dominant international language of the 21st century. Coming out of a colorful history, thanks to its Darwinian ability to develop and adapt – and changing almost beyond recognition along the way – English has come of age as a “global common language”. Its seemingly irresistible spread, which began in the last century, but has accelerated rapidly in recent decades, means that there are different varieties. It is constantly being formed and changed by new user communities, both geographical and digital. Thus, it became the property of all its bearers – it no longer has a single center, such as the United Kingdom, which influences its norms of use, but instead has many centers around the world that individually and collectively shape its character. It is a global environment with local identities and messages, and this trend will continue, as the number of non-native speakers now far exceeds the number of native speakers – an estimated 4:1, which can only increase. The forecast is for double-digit growth in demand for English in major countries such as Indonesia, Pakistan, Brazil, Mexico and Nigeria.

About 2 billion people, a quarter of the world’s population, speak English at a useful level. And it is economically active people, thought leaders, business decision makers, young people, present and future, who move and learn, move and speak English. As the language of communications, science, information technology, business, entertainment and diplomacy, it is increasingly becoming the operating system for global conversation. How did it happen? What does it mean?

Two qualities were keys in the evolutionary rise of English-speaking society and the English language itself: momentum and adaptability. The impetus was initially given by the political, military, religious and merchant classes. Due to colonization, ship trade with America, North Africa, India and China, as well as the concomitant role of Christian missionaries, the English language was exported around the world.

The impact of globalisation and economic development has made English the language of opportunity and a vital means of improving an individual’s life. In his book *The Tipping Point* [1, p. 191], Malcolm Gladwell writes of ‘The

paradox of the epidemic: that, in order to create one contagious movement, you often have to create many small movements first'. In the free development of global English and English-speaking society, the language has had many small movements: dialects that are the fittest for purpose and meet the needs of their users (such as EU officials) in context.

English-speaking society makes a significant contribution to sustainable global development. It eases trade between countries that do not share a common language. It is used as a language of convenience, facilitating dialogue and building trust where an understanding of diverse positions is crucial – notably in peacekeeping and conflict resolution, where security forces and other uniformed services increasingly speak to each other in English. A fairer, more prosperous world is a safer and more secure world, and English is increasingly the lingua franca that holds together the international conversation and debate in areas such as social problems, climate change, terrorism and human rights.

For the generation soon to inherit influence in commerce, politics, media and cultural life, 'connectedness' is a major priority; technology is the vehicle that they have chosen; and English is increasingly the fuel on which it will run. It is clear that what we currently think of as the 'English-speaking world' will eventually lose effective control of its 'own' language. 'If there is one predictable consequence of a language becoming a global language,' writes the eminent academic David Crystal [2, p. 189], 'it is that nobody owns it any more. Or rather, everyone who has learned it now owns it – "has a share in it" might be more accurate – and has the right to use it in the way they want'. There is therefore a job to be done. There is a need for high-quality teaching of English even more than ever, if not to protect the purity or integrity of the language, then to ensure that the diverse dialects that are being allowed to flourish are clear about the source code from which they are diverging and share enough common elements to 'interoperate' as a global operating system.

Vladimír Vano, Chief Analyst at Volksbank Slovensko AS, Slovenia, noted that 'knowledge of English is an indispensable tool for daily communication with most of the outside world, both in professional and personal life... It is very important that people can speak English; as important as being able to speak at all'.

New markets for the development of the English language are largely outside the traditional countries of the developed world. China and India are showing huge levels of demand, while differing greatly in terms of demographic change and educational culture. However, it is at the level of large countries below these giants that the most surprising growth is projected. The British Council predicts at least double-digit growth – in some cases up to 40 percent – in demand for English in Indonesia, Pakistan, Brazil and Mexico, as well as in major African countries, including Nigeria, Ethiopia and Sudan. The growing demand for the English language is closely linked to one particularly important

dimension of globalization: the growing trend of urbanization. Elsewhere, the Russian government has said that fluency in English will be a prerequisite for civil servant status in the future. In Vietnam, English has been compulsory since the fourth grade and is now compulsory in all Japanese primary schools. The Thai government has set an ambitious goal of teaching English to 14 million students in 34,000 public schools, from preschool to university.

In the newer states, English may play a special role in nation-building. When South Sudan gained independence from Sudan in 2011, English was declared the new national language of unity.

English has evolved as a global language for a number of reasons, many of which are historical, rather than something specific to the language itself. Huge violations in the English spelling system, for example, can often be perceived by a novice as a disincentive. One of the strongest incentives for learning a language is its use, to which it can be immediately used socially, economically and culturally. From education and the creative economy to IT and advanced engineering, industries in the UK benefit greatly from the use of English. But it also helps the economy abroad prosper. English language skills are life-changing and contribute to prosperity and security around the world, to the point that development efforts have become ‘inextricably linked in government and academia, as well as in the English-language media’.

English has come a long way. It is now spoken by a quarter of the world’s population, creating a true single market for knowledge and ideas. Today, the number of non-native speakers by far exceeds the number of native speakers, and as a result, English belongs to the world rather than to any single nation or country. It also has enormous economic value – it supports trade and exports around the world, as well as the thriving ELT sector. This provides a significant competitive advantage in everything from soft power to commerce, to the media, to universities and academia. This is an important component of building trust and, in turn, building society. All over the world, there is a huge demand and need for English in public and public education systems, especially in developing countries. The UK has unique opportunities to support the development of high quality English language teaching. The United Kingdom must respond to this global demand by involving even more of our brightest and best young people in learning English around the world. Combined with the continued support of competitive forces in the education and cultural and creative sectors, this mixed economy of investment and reciprocity will enhance the UK’s global attractiveness and influence.

Learning English today is very important for many reasons. First, people who speak English have more opportunities. For example, they can attend classes at a prestigious university, as most of them are in English-speaking countries. Secondly, English is spoken in almost every country. For example, signs at most international airports are written in the local language and English.

Also, when you travel to another country, such as Japan or Korea, people try to communicate with visitors in English. Finally, most scientific papers are written in English. When scientists discover something new, they publish information in that language. In addition, there are more scientific books in English than in any other language. In summary, English is a very important language not only in English-speaking countries, but all over the world.

Today, proficiency in English is a key factor in becoming a successful person. This means that English plays an important role in preparing people to become more versatile professionals. In addition, it allows them to communicate with people from all over the world. For example, in football games, the referee must speak English to communicate with players from around the world. Another example is that many of the world's best films, books and music are published and published in English. Therefore, learning English, you can access a lot of entertainment and have the opportunity to better understand the culture. Even though it is difficult to achieve perfect pronunciation, it is important to understand the grammatical structure of the English language. This allows you to speak more clearly and make yourself understood. Although learning English can be difficult and sometimes very expensive, money is not wasted because a person pays to learn something that will be an important part of success. Whether you live in Latin America or China, we all need to learn English to be able to share experiences and even work with people from all over the world. English allows to enrich our knowledge of other cultures and become successful people.

References

1. Malcolm Gladwell. (2000). *The Tipping Point: How Little Things Can Make A Big Difference*, New York: Little Brown.
2. David Crystal. (2003). *English as a Global Language*. Cambridge University Press.