

Spread of English

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Abstract:

The global spread of English over the last 50 years is remarkable. It is unprecedented in several ways: by the increasing number of users of the language; by its depth of penetration into societies; by its range of functions.

English is found on every continent. It has major speech communities in over seventy countries. It is the language of the internet. It is language of air-traffic control, of international travel, international business and science.

Keywords: global language, youth culture, bilingual, official status, computer information.

Introduction

Today more and more disputes are caused by the enormous spread of the English language throughout the world. Some scholars claim that it has already become the first global language. Moreover, this statement is not far from truth. In this era of consolidation and trying to unify various aspects of life, it will not be long before English can be made as a single language of the world like the single currency and the union of various nations. The level of sentimental attachment or genuine liking for English falls far short of the level of necessity-based desire to learn it. In many countries, local authorities are engaged in language planning to foster the positive image of the national language for many functions for all people, and simultaneously to foster the spread of English in its function - a difficult set of co-occurring goals. Thus, all these countries are gradually becoming bilingual [2].

The spread of English around the world can be visualized as three concentric circles representing different ways in which the language has been acquired and is currently used. English is used for more purposes than ever before. Vocabularies, grammatical forms, and ways of speaking and writing have emerged influenced by technological and scientific developments, economics and management, literature and entertainment genres.

Three factors continue to contribute to this spread of English: English usage in science, technology and commerce; the ability to incorporate vocabulary from other languages; and the acceptability of various English dialects.



In science, English replaced German after World War II. With this technical and scientific dominance came the beginning of overall linguistic dominance, first in Europe and then globally.

English is becoming the first world's universal language. It is the mother tongue of 500 million of people in 12 countries of the world. It is, of course, less than about 900 million of people speaking Mandarin. But English is thought to be second language of 600 million of people. About 200 million of people know the English language to some extent. It has official and semi-official status in 62 countries of the world. No doubts that English is much more geographically spread and more universal than Chinese. And the rate of the development of its use is incredible [4].

English is the language of the world's youth culture. Throughout the world young people sing the lyrics of The Beatles, U-2, Michael Jackson and Madonna, sometimes not even knowing what these words mean. "Break dance", "bodybuilding", "computer hacking" and many other words are included in the youth slang.

Different linguists have provided a variety of labels to categorise the spread of English. Although these labels all describe the same phenomenon, they are by no means synonyms; rather, they exemplify different theoretical backgrounds and different approaches. It is therefore necessary to give a brief overview of the terms the reader is likely to encounter in the relevant literature [1].

The English language predominates in the spheres of transport and mass media. English is the language of the travels. All the International airlines use English as the language of communication. Five largest television networks - CBS, NBC, ABC, BBC and CBC (Canadian Broadcasting Company) - broadcast in English for the audience of about 500 million of people. It is also the language of satellite television.

English is the language of Information Era. More than 80% of computer information is stored in English. 85% of all the telephone conversations are held in English, as well as three fourths of the world's mails, e-mails, faxes and telegrams. Software manuals and the software itself are often available in English only. Earlier German was the language of the science, but today about 85% of scientific works are published in English first. English is the language of the medicine, electronics and space technologies. The Internet is inconceivable without the English Language.

It is the official language of Oxfam, UNESCO, NATO and UN [3].

English comes in a huge variety forms across time from Old English through Middle English to Modern English and through space from Australian through Jamaican and Indian to Zimbabwean. It exists in a thousand dialects, slangs and street forms. It exists in two major written forms, American and British. Those forms are not materially different, and the uniformity of written English provides the world with a consistent and flexible mode of intercommunication. Today, about 400 million people have English as their first language or mother tongue. More than this have English as their second language. These are mainly people living in former British colonies, people who also often have a native tongue. Being so widespread, English picks up words from other languages.

In conclusion, we can say that English is widely spread throughout Africa and Asia. It is becoming the first world's universal language. There has never been a language so widely spread or spoken by so many people as English. So, there are no precedents to help us predict what happens to a language when it achieves genuine world status.

References

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