

**NEED FOR ENGLISH IN THE 21ST CENTURY**

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The world is in various stages of social, economic, and demographic transition. Economically and politically, the world has changed more rapidly after the second world war. A drastic change has come all the fields in this period. Many of English speaking countries like America. Australia and European Countries decide the developing nations destiny because of their Economic status. So, we need to be concerned about the future of the English language in the 21st century.

According to The Economist (1996), English continues to be the world standard language, and there is no major threat to the language or to its global popularity. 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. Internal migration and urbanization may restructure areas, thereby creating communities where English becomes the language of interethnic communicationâ neutral language. Universities using English as the medium of instruction will expand and rapidly create a generation of middle-class professionals. So need of English language is essential in 21 st century.

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**INTRODUCTION**

The Role of English in the 21st Century The world is in various stages of social, economic, and demographic transition. Economically and politically, the world has changed more rapidly in the past few years than at any time since 1945. The emerging global economy is both competitive and interdependent. It reflects the availability of modern communications and production technologies in

most parts of the world. So, do we need to be concerned about the future of the English language in the 21st century? According to The Economist (1996), English continues to be the world standard language, and there is no major threat to the language or to its global popularity. But, changes are coming. An international economy Two factors drive this global marketplace. First, many manufactured products have one or more foreign components. Ford



cars and IBM computers are just two examples of this. Second, more than half of all imports and exports, which governments label foreign trade, are transacted between domestic companies and their foreign affiliates. The increasing globalization of the marketplace is forcing companies to pay more attention to international developments. Domestic firms are adjusting their structures and methods of operation to fit a broader and rapidly changing economic environment.

### EXPLANATION

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. Today, the information age has replaced the industrial age and has compressed time and distance. This is transforming world economies from industrial production to information-based goods and services. Ignoring geography and borders, the information revolution is redefining our world. In less than 20 years, information processing, once limited to the printed word, has given way to computers and the Internet. Computer-mediated communication is closing the gap between spoken and written English. It encourages more informal conversational language and a tolerance for diversity and individual style, and has resulted in Internet English replacing the authority of language institutes and practices. English, like many languages, uses a phonetic alphabet and fairly basic syntax. But most importantly, it has a large and extensive vocabulary, of which about 80% is foreign. As the concept of "Englishes" evolves into the 21st century, issues of access evolve as well. Indeed, we must continually consider neurological, gender, race, language, technological skill, and socio-economic diversities, among many others, and the effects such diversities have on teacher, student, and citizen access to educational, professional and social opportunities. Thus, it is vital that graduate students craft their understanding of "Englishes" and the resulting issues of access, in order to create spaces where such

opportunities are abundant for themselves and others.

Toward this aim, we welcome proposals that address how Englishes might manifest in theory, practice, and praxis; and how considerations and definitions of Englishes impact various forms of access. We are especially interested in explorations that defy or reconceptualize more traditional approaches to scholarship and teaching, and how changing landscapes affect disciplines such as literary studies, rhetoric and composition/writing, creative writing, TESOL, technical writing, and linguistics. We also encourage submissions that explore the conference themes through creative representations and readings, as well submissions that instruct others on the affordances of specific technologies in the Englishes.

Designed for teachers of English, *Reviewing English in the 21st Century* provides an overview of changes in English teaching in Australia over the last six decades, and the theories behind such changes. This edition also explains current popular theories for teaching English, and suggests methods for implementing them in the classroom. The first section of the book, 'Reviewing', relates how new models of English teaching, such as the cultural heritage, skills, personal growth and cultural studies models, have been influenced by developments in learning theories. The second section of the book, 'Developing and Contextualising', is concerned with providing effective pedagogies for English teachers in many areas, including ESL students, indigenous students and students with learning difficulties. The final section of the book, 'Applying', provides practical applications and student activity suggestions for teaching English, such as methods in drama, media, novels, poetry, visual representations and information technologies.

This book focuses on the student as an active participant in their learning, and advocates a student-centred curriculum. By placing value on what the student brings to the classroom, awareness is raised in areas such as youth culture, media and oral practices in English. The significance of traditional English texts is not undermined, however they may be more harshly judged in terms of their relevance to the students (Doecke & McClenaghan, 2004, p. 54).



Another strength of the book is the broad spectrum of areas and activities presented for consideration. The syllabus outcomes of reading, writing, speaking, listening, viewing, representing, thinking and communicating are all addressed, within the differing texts of fiction, poetry, film, non-fiction, drama, media and multimedia. Also, an important structural feature of this book is the accessibility of teaching ideas: all suggestions for classroom applications are highlighted by an indented margin, making them easy to identify from the theory.

One weakness of the book is that it can lend itself to being slightly political. For example, after reviewing the popular models of English teaching, the suggested model is justified by presenting a certain aspect of Government funding, which, when all factors in the wider context are considered, ceases to be an issue (Thompson, 2004, p. 21).

Both teachers and student teachers will benefit from reading this book. Besides providing many teaching strategies, lists of books suitable for particular stages of the syllabus are included (Tucker, 2004, pp. 210 – 214), as well as some useful web resources (Sawyer & Watson, 2004, p. 289). Established teachers may be challenged by some of the new approaches to teaching, recognising flaws in themselves mentioned by the book in regards to traditional teaching methods. However, the ideas presented aim to broaden teachers' knowledge and understanding.

The slaves were shipped in barbarous conditions to the Caribbean islands and the American coast. By the time of the American Revolution (1776) their numbers had grown to half a million, and there were over 4 million by the time slavery was abolished, at the end of the US Civil War (1865). The policy of the slave traders was to bring people of different language backgrounds together in the ships, to make it difficult for groups to plot rebellion. The result was the growth of several pidgin forms of communication, and in particular a pidgin between the slaves and the sailors, many of whom spoke English. Once arrived in the Caribbean, the pidgin English continued to act as a means of communication between black population and the new landowners, and among the blacks themselves. Then, when their children were born, the pidgin

gradually began to be used as a mother tongue, producing the first black creole speech in the region. In this creole English which rapidly came to be used throughout the southern plantations, and in many of the coastal town and islands. At the same time, standard British English was becoming a prestige variety throughout the area, because of the emerging political influence of Britain.

### **THE DIFFERENT PROSPECTS OF ENGLISH**

These statistics do hide some important prospective differences between English however. The numbers of native speakers of both English will shrink proportionally to a smaller percentage of the world's population, which will make the search for an international lingua franca more significant. There is little doubt that this will be English, (There are already many countries in Africa and Asia in which English

Christopher J. Pountain: Spanish and English in the 21st century 3 is an official language whilst not being spoken natively, the advantage of English being that it is neutral between ethnic and linguistic divisions; to my knowledge, this situation only occurs in the Spanish-speaking world in Equatorial Guinea: see Lipski 1985). What sort of English this lingua franca will be is not clear. The likelihood is that it will not simply be an imitation of American or, still less, British, English, or necessarily readily understandable by monolinguals of these areas (Graddol 1998:24-5); we can see this process happening already in India and many African countries, though these are not necessarily to be taken as paradigmatic since users of such varieties of English are embedded into a worldwide English speaking cultural matrix to which they have now begun to contribute themselves. It is unlikely that Spanish will be used as a lingua franca in this way: the vast majority of Spanish speakers will continue to be native speakers, and so Spanish may be expected to maintain a greater degree of unity than English.

This question highlights another major difference, often pointed out, between the English speaking world and the Spanish-speaking world. English has no international standard and no overall legislative body; by contrast, Spanish has the Real Academia, whose standing probably because of its sensitivity to change and variation within the



Spanish-speaking world, is paramount. The fundamental linguistic unity of the Spanish-speaking world is acknowledged and much-prized (Tamarón 1995:53). If these trends continue, it could be that Spanish, despite not being a lingua franca, fragments less than English. One could imagine, for example, that following the excellent beginnings of the Academia on the Internet,<sup>3</sup> the time would soon come when provisional decisions on standardised words and usages could be posted almost instantly and updated regularly as actual usage is monitored. This is not to say that the differences between the various regional varieties of English and Spanish, which are already fairly gross at the informal spoken level, will not continue to intensify.

A possibly significant statistic is that of published translations into and out of various languages. In this, English and Spanish are very different indeed, English showing ten times as many works translated out of English, as into English while Spanish shows almost exactly the reverse situation (Otero 1995:260). This of course may be a reflection of 'image' referred to above. On the other hand, it highlights the fact that Spanish is not read as widely as English and that material written in Spanish is therefore not as widely known.

They are neither: we may anticipate that within the near future, machine translation will have advanced to a point where it can be routinely used for the translation of formulaic non-literary material at least, but it will for the foreseeable future be an aid to, rather than a substitute for, human translators and will if anything boost the demand for translation and the numbers of texts translated (Graddol 1998:28-9). I reproduce below an example of what is currently possible, a translation of a paragraph from a news item in El País, the whole of which was made, in seconds, by the Babelfish on-line translation service of the Altavista websearch site.

### CONCLUSION

But within the next 50 years, substantial language shifts could occur as economic development affects more countries. Because of these shifts in allegiance, more languages may disappear. Those remaining will rapidly get more native speakers. This includes English. Internal migration and urbanization may restructure areas,

thereby creating communities where English becomes the language of interethnic communicationâ neutral language. Universities using English as the medium of instruction will expand and rapidly create a generation of middle-class professionals. Economic development will only increase the middle class, a group that is more likely to learn and use English in jobs. While languages such as English, German, and French have been international languages because of their governmentsâ political powers, this is less likely to be the case in the 21st century where economics and demographics will have more influence on languages. Conclusion English has been an international language for only 50 years. If the pattern follows the previous language trends, we still have about 100 years before a new language dominates the world. However, this does not mean that English is replacing or will replace other languages as many fear. Instead, it may supplement or co-exist with languages by allowing strangers to communicate across linguistic boundaries. It may become one tool that opens windows to the world, unlocks doors to opportunities, and expands our minds to new ideas.