

## The English language as a Global Force

The English language is the second most widely spoken tongue in the world today. Of the 6912 living languages listed on the Ethnologue language database, only Mandarin is spoken by more people. It is the English language however that seems to be having a bigger impact on the world as a whole and has become the global defacto standard used in business, cultural and political exchange.

The integration, or coming together of the world's cultures and economies is commonly known as globalisation, and a shift in language usage and language demarcations is closely bound to these global changes. These international shifts and trends affect the languages that we all speak, which in turn have a marked effect on the functions and organisation of our brains and the way that we think. Due to the rise of globalisation, it seems that the English language more than any other is having a most pronounced and lasting impact on the collective networks of the world mind.

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The English language has over 500 million people that speak it, with 340 million of these using it as their primary or first language. While Mandarin has over double that amount of speakers, it does not have the same level of ubiquity when it comes to economic and cross cultural communication. Perhaps one reason why the English language has become such an international force is because of its ability to adapt and mutate in the face of change, an open ended philosophy that has certainly served it well.

English as a means of communication is good at incorporating the 'other' into its own language as can be seen with the many words and phrases originally from other languages that most people would now consider authentically English. The strength of the English language is that it accepts these variations and integrates them into itself effectively.

There is a huge cultural uptake of English, with dozens of variations on the language coming into existence as people have shaped it with their own cultural conditioning. These differing versions of the language are still understandable as English however, and have helped it to evolve and grow at a rapid rate.

English has become a sort of common denominator in international affairs, as it has a fairly open ended linguistic structure and is able to be understood in a wide variety of circumstances. The birth of the Internet in an English speaking country has also had a huge impact on this global evolution of the language, with almost 80% of the worlds' digital information now stored in English.

The Internet is basically English oriented, as most of the large search engines are based in the U.S.A and the major computer languages themselves are a kind of sub set of the English language. This alone has been a huge effect on globalisation and has meant that English speaking countries are at a definite advantage when it comes to communicating with the world as a whole.