

# **ENGLISH AS A GLOBAL LANGUAGE**

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# WHY ENGLISH? THE CULTURAL FOUNDATION

*'I have undertaken to write a grammar of English, because there is clearly a great demand for it from foreigners, who want to be able to understand the various important works which are written in our tongue'.*

*John Wallis in the preface to his Grammar  
of the English language*



# WHY ENGLISH? THE CULTURAL FOUNDATION



*“And who in time knows whither we may vent  
The treasure of our tongue, to what strange shores  
This gain of our best glory shall be sent,  
To enrich unknowing nations without stores?  
Which worlds in the yet unformed Occident  
May come refined with the accents that are ours”*

***Samuel Daniel, in his poem Musophilis, wrote in 1599***

# WHY ENGLISH? THE CULTURAL FOUNDATION

*'English is destined to be in the next and succeeding centuries more generally the language of the world than Latin was in the last or French is in the present age. The reason of this is obvious, because the increasing population in America, and their universal connection and correspondence with all nations will, aided by the influence of England in the world, whether great or small, force their language into general use, in spite of all the obstacles that may be thrown in their way, if any such there should be'*

***2nd President of the United States - John Adams***



# POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS

- the growth of the British Empire

*“The British Empire covers nearly a third of the earth’s surface, and British subjects are nearly a fourth of the population of the world”*

**□ Isaac Pitman**

- the language as a guarantor, as well as a symbol, of political unity

# ACCESS TO KNOWLEDGE

- the Industrial Revolution were of British origin;
- access to the new knowledge was also much helped by progress in transportation;
- the growth of new communication systems;
- increasingly rapid and robust methods of transportation transformed the availability of the products of the Industrial Revolution;
- the rapid growth of the international banking system, etc.



# TAKEN FOR GRANTED

*“There was nothing novel about taking English for granted in this way”*

**David Crystal**



# WHY ENGLISH? THE CULTURAL LEGACY

- International relations
- The media
- International travel
- International safety
- Education
- Communications



# INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS



A sample of 500 organizations (taken from the beginning of the alphabet) showed that 85per cent (424) made official use of English – far more than any other language.

□ a 'relay' system

# THE MEDIA

The media are at the centre of everyone's life – the press, radio, advertising, and especially television.



## The press

The English language has been an important medium of the press for nearly 400 years.

Newspapers are solely international media.

# ADVERTISING



- Cocacolonizzare
- Macdonaldization

# INTERNATIONAL SAFETY

- ‘Seaspeak’
- ‘Police Speak’
- ‘Airspeak’; e.g. ‘Roger’, ‘Wilco’, and ‘Mayday’



*National Ocean Service*



*The Police*



*National Atmospheric*



# COMMUNICATIONS



*“If you want to take full advantage of the Internet there is only one way to do it:  
learn English”*

*by Michael Specter ‘World, Wide, Web: 3 English Words’, The New York Times 1996*

**IS THERE A COMMON THEME WHICH CAN  
HELP US EXPLAIN THE REMARKABLE GROWTH  
OF THIS LANGUAGE?**

**The right place at the  
right time**