**TEXT**

**THE SPREAD OF ENGLISH ACROSS THE GLOBE:**

**SOCIAL, POLITICAL AND CULTURAL FACTORS**

From the seventeenth century onwards, the English began to extend their language over the world. It is due to so important factors as the power of the British Empire, the importance in the Industrial revolution taking place in England for the first time or the supremacy of America in all over the world. Moreover, we all know that English has become a global language in the last fifty years, being the official language of the international and multinational companies and industries, and the language of Internet.

It is important to have in mind how and why English has spread across the globe the way it has:

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| **Date** | **Facts** |
| **17th and 18th centuries** | English spread as a result of British colonialism |
| **18th and 19th centuries** | English spread as the language of British leadership in the Industrial Revolution |
| **Late 19th and early 20th c.** | English spread as the language of American economic superiority and political leadership. |
| **Second half of 20th c.** | English spread as a consequence of American technological domination. |

a) British Colonialism

We all know that long before this expansion of English as a global language, there were other minor spreads of the language, as for instance the spread of English to Scotland because of the military escapades of William the Conqueror (11th century) or to Ireland with the Anglo-Norman troops sent by Henry II.

But in global terms, the spread of English began in 16th century, when the language became a tool of imperial expansion, and end up by gaining a special place in the history of a significant number of countries. This was what happened in USA, but also in other colonial areas. You have here a table in which you can find how English spread took place in different territories conquered by the English.

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| **Place** | **Facts** |
| ***Canada*** | French were present in Canada from 1530, and vied with Britain for domination. Finally, French defeated by Britain. French and English languages there, but French-speakers remained in the East when process of English colonization began. English in contact with native languages, but the former predominated. However, the French of Quebec remained. |
| ***The Caribbean*** | The most spoken language is Spanish, but there are also other European languages (complex colonial history). African slaves in this area, they developed creoles as a means of communicating among themselves. It gained societal status. However, no creole has gained enough status to be accepted as a national language. Nowadays, English and Spanish are the official languages. |
| ***Australia*** | Discovered by Captain James Cook in 1770, it served as the first penal colony. British prisons were overcrowded and convicts were sent to Australia. By 1900 it had 4 million inhabitants from British Isles. Contact between indigenous and colonizers led to borrowing items. English as the official language. There has been American English influence, and vocabulary has been affected. |
| ***New Zealand*** | No convicts in New Zealand, and slow settlement. It became an official colony in 1840. By 1900, it has a quarter of million people. People there are more inclusive of the indigenous population and it is one reason why the language contains a large number of Maori words, in contrast to Australian English. They reject American English in favor of British English. |
| ***South Africa*** | British control in 1806, and settlement from 1820 onwards, when Englishmen got lands there. English became the official language of the region in 1822 and by the end of 19th c., there were half a million immigrants there, most of them spoken English. Afrikaans-speakers used English as a second language, and nowadays English is one of the 11 official languages in South Africa. |
| ***South Asia*** | About 40 million users of English, the 3rd-larger English using area after USA and Great Britain. English developed as a medium of control –administration, education, etc.-  in the period of the British Raj (1765-1947), creating an English-based subculture in the subcontinent. The basis for the subculture was the English language –as language is equated with power. |
| ***Former Colonial Africa: West Africa*** | Bu the 19th c., the increase in trade and activities in opposition to slave trade brought English to the entire West African coast, and several English-based pidgins and creoles developed. English is still taught and used, being an official language there. British varieties of English develop in 6 particular countries, which have English as an official language: Sierra Leone, Ghana, The Gambia, Nigeria, Cameroon and Liberia. |
| ***East Africa*** | Visited by English in the 16th century, it was not explored until 1850s. The Imperial East Africa Company was founded in 1888, and a series of colonial protectorates was established. There are 6 main states with a history of British rule that gave English official status when they gained their independence: Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda, Malawi, Zambia and Zimbabwe. |
| ***South-East India and South Pacific*** | There is a mixture of English and Australian English, and American influence increased in the 1940s. The British influence there began with Captain James Cook and English become rapidly an influential language in the British territories of South Pacific. And because of the very different cultural circumstances in different parts of the region, no one South Asian English variety has emerged. |

b) Industrial Revolution

As we can imagine, British colonialism was the first step of the expansion of English across the world. But it is also very important the Industrial Revolution in terms of the spread of English. Britain was the leader of the Industrial Revolution, and large-scale manufacturing and production machinery were just some of the major technological advancements being pioneered there. Countries which needed this new industrial knowledge could access it via the medium of English, something which made powerful again the language internationally.

And the development of technology was side by side with the spread of English. For instance, English was the language in which the system of telegraph was developed, and English became the international language of all telegraph operators.

c) American Economic superiority and Political Leadership.

Although Britain had been the greatest political, economic and industrial power in the world in the 18th century, by the end of the 19th and the early 20th centuries USA emerged as an economic and political superpower. During this time, the countries if the world began to came together in international organizations, and they need to be able to communicate. However, it was very expensive to run multilingual operations, so they decided that English would be the language used in their international interactions. Moreover, The League of Nations was created after the World War I, but then it was replaced by the United Nations, which ends up in New York. Thus, the world´s focus shifted to the United States.

The influence of United States combined then the economic and political factors and the huge seize of its population: The United States has 70 per cent of all native speakers of English in the world.

d) American Technology Leadership.

After the World War II and particularly in the 1980s and 1990s, the computer revolution began all over the world. It was due to the American technology and the American know-how. So, it is logic that the language of the computers is English. The main reason why it is like this is the fact that, although it could be designed with languages of one own country, this process it very expensive.

e) Other factors.

*-****Advertising****:* During the 19th century the use of advertisements in publication increased, especially in more industrialized countries, due to the fact that there was more money and also more people interesting on them. In USA, however, they realized that if they put advertisements in their magazines, they could put lower the price of their magazines, something which led them to sell more and more of them. And as the international market grew, the media spread to all parts of the world, and became one of the most noticeable global manifestations of English language use. American English ruled.

-***Broadcasting***: As it has been already mentioned, the invention and use of telegraph supposed a very great impulse to English language. Britain was the pioneer in the use of telegraph, and all communications were made in English, having being necessary that all telegraph operators spoke English. So, it was one of the most important fact in the spread of English through the world.

- ***Motion pictures***: The new technologies altered the way of public entertainment, and it also serves as a thrust of the English language. The development of the cinema was made initially by France and England, but the years during the World War I supposed a kind of blockage of cinema, and then American began to dominate it. Moreover, when the sound was added to the films, it was the spoken English which came to the movies. And although the film industry was developed also in other countries, it is still English language the dominant medium, maybe because the main studio, Hollywood, is in an English-spoken area.

- ***Popular music***: The other important entertainment technology was the recording industry, and also here the English language had the dominance. All the major recording companies in popular music had English-language origins, and when popular music arrived, it was in English scene mostly. The pop groups of English-speaking nations dominated the recording world: Elvis Presley in USA or the Beatles and the Rolling Stones in UK. No other single source has spread English around the world so rapidly.

-***International travel and safety****:* The medium in transportation and accommodation is English. Equally, English instructions about safety on international flights and sailings and indications about emergency procedures are in English. English then has become the international language. “Airspeak”, the language of international aircraft control, emerged after the Second War World, and it was decided that English would be the international language of aviation.

- ***Education***: Internationally, areas as science and technology have the medium of English language to spread over the world their ideas. It is the main reason why many countries have adopted English as the chief foreign languages in schools. It is obvious that people all over the world have to know English if they are students, as most of the important words in the field of education are written in English.