

ENGLISH AS LINGUA FRANCA

A lingua franca is a language employed by individuals to communicate when they lack a shared native language. Historically, various languages like Russian, Spanish, French, German, and Arabic have served this role. Today, English is the primary lingua franca, often called ELF (English as a Lingua Franca). This type of language is typically used in specific social contexts, leading to its simplification. Additionally, the influence of speakers' native languages often introduces errors into the lingua franca.



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ENGLISH AS A LINGUA FRANCA (ELF)

- ELF is characterized by the fact that it is a *contact language* between persons who do not share the same language.
- ELF is therefore the third language.
- Often, people using ELF do not share the same (national) culture.

English became the world's lingua franca partly because England was a major colonial power. As a result, English spread across its colonies and became the language used for politics, trade, and education. By 1922, the British Empire spanned nearly a quarter of the Earth's land area, with about one fifth of the global population living within it.



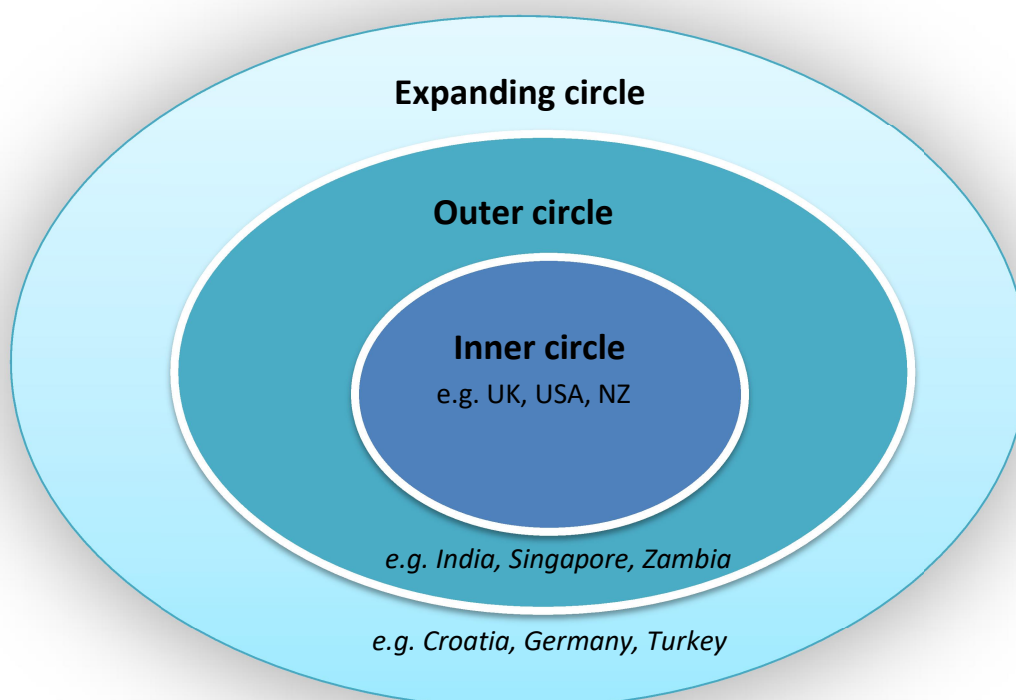
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After World War II, the United States began to significantly promote the English language globally. Unlike other Western superpowers, the U.S. emerged from the war without political, educational, or scientific damage, giving it the influence to reshape the world, such as through the creation of the United Nations, where English became one of the four main languages. However, there are several other reasons why English has become the world's lingua franca. These reasons are as follows:

ENGLISH AS A DOMINANT WORLD LANGUAGE

- ☞ English is widely spoken in many countries across the globe.
- ☞ It is the main international language for communication in business, science, technology, education, aviation, entertainment, research, mass media, and diplomacy.
- ☞ Proficiency in English, to varying degrees, has become essential in many major fields of study and professions.
- ☞ Manufacturers and businesses aiming to enter the international market often tailor their products and services to English-speaking audiences.
- ☞ The economic power of the United States facilitates the global spread of English.
- ☞ The cultural impact of the United States, exemplified by products like Coca Cola and jeans, also contributes to the worldwide proliferation of English.
- ☞ The internet, a vast information resource, predominantly features content in English.
- ☞ English is the primary language used in computing.

Kachru's model¹



¹ Braj Kachru: Standards, Codification and Sociolinguistic Realism - The English Language in the outer circle. In: Quirk R., Widdowson H. (Eds.): English in the World. Cambridge University Press, 1985.

The Inner Circle: English in the inner circle refers to countries where English is the native language (ENL). In these countries, English sets the standard, meaning it is norm-providing. The countries in this circle include the United Kingdom, the United States, Australia, New Zealand, and Canada.

The Outer Circle: English in the outer circle is used as a second language (ESL) in countries that were often former colonies, a period referred to by Kachru as the second diaspora. In these countries, English has become institutionalized and has developed its own standards, making it norm-developing. Examples of these countries include Nigeria, Jamaica, Sri Lanka, and India, where English varieties such as Caribbean English have emerged.

The Expanding Circle: English in the expanding circle is spoken as a foreign language (EFL). These countries do not use English as an official language but use it for communication. The standard for English in these countries is set by the native speakers from the inner circle, and the English spoken here is based on performance varieties. Countries in this circle include Denmark, China, Japan, Israel, and Germany.

Today, more people use English as a lingua franca (ELF, Kachru's expanding circle) than there are native speakers. This means that English is being shaped not only by its native speakers but also by its non-native speakers, reflecting its dynamic nature. Research shows that ELF speakers often make similar grammatical and vocal errors. In the following sections, you will find a list of common mistakes made by ELF speakers, some of which you might recognize in your own use of English.

VOCAL MISTAKES

- ☞ Pronunciation of certain consonant sounds, such as "th."
- ☞ Distinguishing between vocal lengths, for example, "live" and "leave."
- ☞ Correctly placing stress in sentences or words.

GRAMMAR MISTAKES

- ☞ Omitting the 3rd person singular "s" in the present simple (e.g., "he work for Siemens").
- ☞ Leaving out definite articles (e.g., "he has just gone to shops").
- ☞ Adding definite articles unnecessarily (e.g., "We took photos of the Trafalgar Square").
- ☞ Making uncountable nouns plural (e.g., "informations," "advices," "staffs," "furnitures").
- ☞ Overusing general-purpose verbs (e.g., "do," "make," "have," "take," "put").
- ☞ Overusing "that" clauses (e.g., "I want that we talk about the...").
- ☞ Using a universal question tag (e.g., "They are going to town, no?").

As previously mentioned, non-native speakers now outnumber native speakers, and this will likely influence how English is spoken and written in the future. This raises several questions:

- ☞ Which version of English will dominate in the future given the significant influence of non-native speakers on standard English?
- ☞ In a rapidly changing modern society, what new forms of English are emerging, and how will this impact our understanding of the language?
- ☞ What effects might this have on international communication overall?
- ☞ How will cultural codes embedded in the language be affected?

These questions cannot all be answered today, but they are important to consider and discuss when studying the English language and its prominent role as a lingua franca.

(...)

Pidgin and Creole

Pidgin: This is a simplified language created for communication between two social groups. Typically, the language of the dominant group is adapted by the less dominant group to form a pidgin. Historically, pidgin languages emerged in colonies where colonizers interacted with indigenous peoples through trade, maritime activities, or plantations. The resulting pidgin combined elements of the dominant language (often English) with the native language and was limited in scope, serving primarily as a means of communication with the colonizers. Pidgin speakers use it as a second language alongside their native tongue, and pidgin vocabularies usually contain around 300 words. Examples of pidgin include Hawaii Pidgin English, Aboriginal Pidgin English, and Butler English (India).

Creole: This is a more developed form of pidgin that evolves over generations. As pidgin becomes more complex and begins to serve as the mother tongue for a community, it transforms into a creole. Unlike pidgin speakers, who retain their native language, speakers of a creole have adopted the creole language as their primary language, often replacing their original mother tongue. Creole languages generally have a vocabulary of 1,000 to 3,000 words. Examples of creole include Haitian Creole and Louisiana Creole.