

## Unit 5

### English: a world language?

#### I. Pre-Reading

1. What language do you speak?
2. Are you interested in learning English? Why or why not?
3. In what way is your native language different from English?

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Global English has become the one foreign language that much of the world wants to learn. While this appears to be a nearly universal aspiration, some countries (Singapore, Japan, China, Indonesia, and the Philippines) exhibit it more than others. One basic force is an international need and desire to communicate. The more English-speaking the world becomes the more desirable the language becomes to all societies. English is the language of the 'media' industries—news-journalism, radio, film, and television. Almost any international press conference held to disseminate information about an internationally significant event will be conducted in English. The roll-call of contemporary world figures who have spoken to the press in English includes the Chancellor of Germany, Helmut Kohl; the Libyan leader and Islamic fundamentalist, Colonel Qadhafi; the late President of Pakistan, General Zia; and President Cory Aquino of the Philippines; in the recent past, moreover, it was well known that the former leaders of France and Germany, Valery Giscard d'Estaing and Helmut Schmidt, used to speak to each other in English.

The demands of modernization, technological change and international bank funding, still largely controlled by Anglo-American corporations, provide the main reason for global English, the language of the multinational corporations. Of the leading countries in the world trade, eight are countries in which English either is an official language or was an official in colonial times: Australia, Canada, India, Malaysia, New Zealand, South Africa, the United Kingdom, and the United States. These countries

accounted for more than 25 per cent of the world's imports in 1974. By contrast, the leading-French speaking countries (Belgium, Canada, France, and Switzerland) accounted for only 15 per cent, the second highest figure for a language bloc.

Many multinational Japanese companies (like Nissan or Datsun) write international memoranda in English. The Chase Manhattan Bank gives English instructions to staff members on three continents. Aramco—a big oil multinational—teaches English to more than 10,000 workers in Saudi Arabia. In Kuwait, the university's language center teaches predominantly English, much of it highly specialized. 'The engineering faculty has its own English language, geared to its own profession,' the director, Dr Rasha Al-Sabah, reports, 'so we provide a course in engineering English.' The pressure to learn English in this environment is strictly commercial. A businessman who doesn't know English and who has to run to his bilingual secretary is at a serious competitive disadvantage. The 'necessity of English' had created some interesting business enterprises, perhaps the most famous being the IVECO heavy truck company. Based in Turin, financed by French, German and Italian money, staffed by Europeans for whom English is only an alternative language, it none the less conducts **all** its business in English. Giorgio Bertoldi describes a monthly board meeting in which 'the vast majority of the people attending are Italian, or French, or German. But the common language is English. Everybody talks English and the minutes of these meetings are written in English.' Peter Raahauge, a Dane, commented that 'you wouldn't get a job at a certain level in IVECO if you didn't speak good English'. Company executives take courses to improve their proficiency. Jean Pierre Neveu, an IVECO product planner, points out that, for successful trading in the international truck market, the advantage of communicating with the outside world in English is that the company gets its answer in English. 'This gives two advantages. One is first to have a language which is easier for everyone to understand, and second, it does without translation.'

What is true of individuals and companies applies, writ large, to countries. If the people do not know English, they cannot benefit from multinational development programmes. The classic case is China. For centuries, China preserved a lofty isolation

from the outside world. After the Revolution of 1949, it sustained a Marxist contempt for Anglo-American culture. Briefly, the 1960s, there was a Russian-learning phase. Then, in the late 1970s and 1980s, the decision to develop China's industrial and technological base by encouraging Western investment and Western expertise has led to a crash-programme of English teaching. Chinese television began to transmit several English –language classes each week, with titles *Yingying Learns English* and *Mary goes to Peking*. The most popular was a BBC-produced series, *Follow Me*, which achieved an audience of more than fifty million and transformed the presenter of the Programme, Kathy Flower, into a media celebrity. Kathy Flower describes the contemporary craze for English in China: 'You go into a shop and find two sixty-year olds practicing the dialogue from *Follow ME* the night before.' The passion for English drives people to make extraordinary sacrifices. A young man whose monthly wages are 36 yuans spends one-third of his total income on English classes, dictionaries, cassettes, and novels.

For a developing country like China, Singapore or India, English is vital. As well as being the language of international trade and finance, it is the language of technology, especially computers, of medicine, of the international aid bodies like Oxfam and Save the Children, and of virtually all international, quasi-diplomatic exchanges from UNESCO, the WHO, the UN, to Miss World, to the Olympic Committee, and to world summits.\*

## II. Working with Vocabulary

### A. Focus on the word meaning: context clues

Try to guess the meanings of the words in **bold** type in the following sentences by using a context clue.

1. Lisa has **aspirations** to become a best-selling novelist; she writes stories and descriptions of people every day.= \_\_\_\_\_
2. Young children nowadays seem to have a **craze** for computer games.= \_\_\_\_\_

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\* From pp 35-37 of "The Story of English" by Robert McCum, William Cran and Robert MacNeil, BBC Books, Faber and Faber, New and Revised Edition, 1992

3. The government tried to prevent the **dissemination** of the news of the riots by controlling the newspapers, TV and radio. = \_\_\_\_\_
4. The company has already started work on the **modernization** of its methods of production. For instance, they have purchased several thousand dollars' worth of new machinery and they are now beginning to recognize the structure of the company. = \_\_\_\_\_
5. Mr. Hardley works for a large American **corporation** which has offices in over thirty different cities in East Asia. = \_\_\_\_\_
6. I felt only **contempt** for the people who broke into my house, stole my things, and even damaged all my furniture. = \_\_\_\_\_
7. The village was **isolated** from the rest of the country by the floods, and it was several days before anyone could reach it. = \_\_\_\_\_
8. The Chinese government is now encouraging more **investment** in its industries from America and Europe. It is trying to persuade foreign business people that they will be able to make large profits if they put money into new business in China. = \_\_\_\_\_
9. The new company wanted to appoint someone **expertise** in modern methods of weaving cloth. = \_\_\_\_\_
10. "Has the new TV program on trade between Europe and Taiwan been **transmitted** yet?" "Yes, it was shown earlier this evening. = \_\_\_\_\_

#### **B. Focus on the definitions**

Complete the blanks in the following definitions with the best words from those in **bold** type in the sentences in **A**.

1. A \_\_\_\_\_ is a very popular fashion which lasts only a short time.
2. If you buy a few shares in a company, you make a small \_\_\_\_\_ in that company in the hope that you will make a profit.
3. When something is \_\_\_\_\_, it is sent out or broadcast.
4. When \_\_\_\_\_ takes place in a business, new equipment, the latest production methods and an up-to-date system of operation are introduced.
5. Someone who has \_\_\_\_\_ to do something great or important has a strong desire to it.

6. A large business or company is sometimes referred to as a \_\_\_\_\_.
7. When someone or something is \_\_\_\_\_ from other people or places, they are kept apart or separated from them.
8. If you have \_\_\_\_\_ for someone or something, you have no respect at all for them and regard them as completely worthless.
9. The \_\_\_\_\_ of information or ideas refers to spreading of information or ideas to many people.
10. Someone who has special knowledge and skill in a particular field or in doing something has \_\_\_\_\_ in it.

### III. Understanding the Reading

#### A. Scanning

Read the passage again as fast as you can and then answer the following questions.

1. Who was General Zia?

\_\_\_\_\_

2. Which bank gives instructions in English to staff members in different countries?

\_\_\_\_\_

3. Who is Kathy Flower?

\_\_\_\_\_

#### B. Comprehension questions

1. Read the passage once again. This time read it carefully and decide whether the statements which follow are **true** or **false**. Write **T** after each statement which is true and **F** after each false statement. If you can't decide it, put a question mark (?).

1. People in almost every country in the world want to learn English.
2. The more English is used in a country, however, the less need there is to teach it to such a high standard.

3. A large number of new programs on TV throughout the world are presented in English.
4. Press conferences held for the purpose of giving information to foreign journalists about important events are usually held in English.
5. Large multinational corporations tend to use English in order to keep up with new developments and technology as well as banking.
6. The new technology used in international banks encourages the use of Global English.
7. It is always easier to borrow money from international banks if you can use English in your application for a loan.
8. Large multinational Japanese companies, especially car manufacturers, prefer using Japanese to using English in the notes and letters employees write to one another.
9. IVECO uses English for important meetings even though most of the people present are not native English speakers.
10. English is needed for people in developing countries to obtain maximum benefit from international aid programs.
11. In China, people learned Russian as the chief foreign language from 1949 to 1970.
12. In 1980s, programs for learning English began to decline.
13. The host of *Follow Me* became a famous television star in China.
14. It is not as important as to learn English in developing countries like Indonesia.
15. Important international meetings between government leaders take place in English.

**2. Answer the questions**

1. Why do so many people throughout the world want to learn English?

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2. Why is English called “the language of the media industries?”

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3. Who controls a large part of international bank funding?

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4. What is there of special significance about Australia, Canada, Malaysia, New Zealand, South Africa, the United Kingdom, and the United States?

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5. For what purpose do Nissan and the Chase Manhattan Bank use English?

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6. What does IVECO claim to be advantages of communicating with other companies in English?

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7. Why was so little English taught in China for almost thirty years after 1949?

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8. Why is English encouraged now by the Chinese government?

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9. Why did Kathy Flower become famous in China?

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10. Why is English essential for developing countries?

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11. Why has English become the major language in the world?

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### C. Reference

Write a sentence giving the general statement or principle of which the following are examples. The first two sentences have been done as examples.

1. **Follow me**

*Learning English is extremely popular in China.*

2. The Chancellor of Germany, Helmut Kohl; the Libyan leader and Islamic fundamentalist, Colonel Qadhfi; the late President of Pakistan, General Zia; and the former President Corazon Aquino of the Philippines

*Many contemporary world figures have spoken to the press in English.*

3. Singapore, Japan, China, Indonesia, and the Philippines

4. Nissan

5. The Red Cross and Save the Children

6. "You go into a shop and find two sixty-year olds practicing the dialogues from *Follow Me* the night before."

7. New-journalism, radio, film, and television

8. China, Singapore, or Indonesia

9. A young man whose monthly wages are barely enough to live on spends one-third of his income on English classes, dictionaries, cassettes, and novels.

10. Chinese television began to transmit several English-language classes each week, with titles like *Yingying Learns English* and *Marey Goes to Peking*



## IV. Word Study

### A. Prefix

The prefix **multi-** means “many”. A **multifamily** dwelling is a building that many families live in. Every time you see **multi-** at the beginning of a word, you can guess the meaning of the word.

The word **multiply** (for example,  $2 \times 3 = 6$ ) comes from this prefix.

Now guess at the meaning of the following words and write it in the space provided.

1. multicolored \_\_\_\_\_
2. multilevel \_\_\_\_\_
3. multinational \_\_\_\_\_
4. multipurpose \_\_\_\_\_
5. multilingual \_\_\_\_\_

### B. Understanding the meaning from the context.

Read each of the meanings of the word in **bold** type. Then decide which of the two meanings the word has in the text which you have read. Check (✓) in front of the appropriate meaning.

1.     **exhibit**     \_\_\_ a. to show in public  
                          \_\_\_ b. to give a sign of
2.     **press**       \_\_\_ a. (writers working for) newspapers, TV and radio  
                          \_\_\_ b. a machine used for printing, a printing business
3.     **conduct**     \_\_\_ a. to guide, to lead  
                          \_\_\_ b. to carry out, to control, to manage
4.     **base**         \_\_\_ a.. the lowest part of something  
                          \_\_\_ b. the starting point, the main part which provides what is  
  necessary for something to exist or develop
5.     **crash**        \_\_\_ a. a sudden severe business failure  
                          \_\_\_ b. done intensively and with great effort to obtain quick  
  results

6. **summit** \_\_\_\_\_ a. the highest point or degree  
\_\_\_\_\_ b. a meeting between heads of government

### C. Connecting words

Complete each blank in the following sentences with most suitable connective from the list below. Remember to begin the connective with a capital letter when it is used at the beginning of a sentence.

|         |            |             |         |
|---------|------------|-------------|---------|
| because | because of | in order to | so that |
|---------|------------|-------------|---------|

1. English is becoming more and more popular \_\_\_\_\_ people throughout the world have an increasing need to communicate with one another.
2. English is becoming more and more popular \_\_\_\_\_ an increasing need for people throughout the world to communicate with one another.
3. A lot of people learn English \_\_\_\_\_ get a better job.
4. Many business companies teach English to their employees \_\_\_\_\_ they can understand memos and instructions written English.
5. An increasing number of world leaders are learning English \_\_\_\_\_ they find English a useful language to use at press conferences.
6. Many businessmen and politicians learn English \_\_\_\_\_ read foreign newspapers in English.
7. It is important for office workers in Nissan to know English \_\_\_\_\_ they can understand many of the memos which are written in English.
8. \_\_\_\_\_ obtain Western investments and expertise, China has expanded its English teaching in schools throughout the country.
9. Suddenly Kathy Flower became widely known throughout China \_\_\_\_\_ the popularity of the English teaching program *Follow Me*.
10. English is essential in developing countries \_\_\_\_\_ get the maximum benefits from modern technology, especially computers and medicine.
11. \_\_\_\_\_ it is the language of international trade, an ability to speak and write English has become vital for developing countries.
12. English is also important \_\_\_\_\_ its widespread use by international aid bodies such as The Red Cross and Save the Children.