

Global English is the tendency

Estimates of the number of present and future speakers of English suggest English will be spoken across the globe for the foreseeable future. But what kind of English will it be? Evidence from other languages indicates that there are two opposing movements of linguistic change at work within a language.

The first movement is convergence - in which speakers of separate languages come together either using a pidgin - a mixture of their languages - or using a different second language. The Scandinavian countries are examples of this: although the languages Swedish, Norwegian and Danish are similar, and from a common Old Norse root, an overwhelming number of speakers use English as their second language.

The second movement is divergence - in which speakers of a common language differentiate their speech from each other and create first a distinct dialect then in due course a separate language. We see this from Latin which fractured into Italian, Spanish and Portuguese.

Both forces are constantly at work. Which force is more likely to take control of English as a world language? Only major changes in the political climate are likely to make an impression in the short term, though a series of minor external influences could cause a not so important change.

The major change could well be a change in the power of English's main speakers, the USA. In a parallel with Latin following the decline of the Roman Empire, it is likely that any decline in the political, economic or technological power of the USA would lead to greater divergence and the development of separate mutually incomprehensible varieties. The general change of increased global communications and travel has already had a strong influence on the use of English, leading to significant convergence on English as a second language, this is the tendency.

1. Comprehension exercises (2 points)

1.a. According to the text (0.5 points)

- a. Convergence is a movement in which speakers of separate languages eventually only use a different second language.
- b. Old Norse is spoken in Scandinavia as a second language.
- c. **Latin is a good example of divergence.**

1.b. According to the text (0.5 points)

- a. Both big changes in politics, and minor external influences will influence deeply in English as a world language.
- b. Convergence and divergence are only two of the many forces that influence in a language.
- c. **Due to travels and the increase of worldwide communications English is going to be spoken as a second language.**

1.c. English would be a world language even if the USA had an economic, political or technological decline.

(Answer 'True' or 'False' AND write the sentence supporting this idea) (0.5 points)

- **FALSE - In a parallel with Latin following the decline of the Roman Empire, it is likely that any decline in the political, economic or technological power of the USA would lead to greater divergence and the development of separate mutually incomprehensible varieties.**

1.d. A pidgin is usually the result of mixing different languages.

(Answer 'True' or 'False' AND write the sentence supporting this idea) (0.5 points)

- **TRUE - speakers of separate languages come together either using a pidgin a mixture of their languages.**

2. Do the following grammar exercises according to the instructions given (2 points)

2.a. Complete the second sentence with 'used to' so that it has a similar meaning to the first one (0.5 points)

- When I was little I usually spent all my money on chocolates.
- When I was little **I used to spend all my money on chocolates.**

2.b. Transform the second sentence into reported speech (0.5 points)

- Please can you describe the thieves?
- **The policeman asked her to describe the thieves.**

OR

- **The policeman asked her if she could describe the thieves.**

2.c. Complete the second sentence so that it has a similar meaning to the first one (0.5 points)

- I know how to sing and dance.
- I am good **at singing and dancing.**

2.d. Finish the following sentence (0.5 points)

- When I was young I used to be scared **of going to bed at night.**
of spiders. (of+ing, or of+noun).

3. Identify ONLY FOUR words from their definitions (1 point)

- Being such as that it may reasonable be anticipated. **(foreseeable)**
- So strong as to be irresistible. **(overwhelming)**
- Recognizable, easy to perceive. **(distinct)**
- Worldwide. **(global)**
- Power to affect persons or events especially power based on prestige. **(influence)**
- Act of improving by expanding or enlarging. **(development)**

4. Write a summary of the text of about 30 – 45 words using your own words (2 points)

5. Write a composition of about 100 – 150 words on ONLY ONE of the following topics (3 points)

5.a. Do you think long-distance love can last? Discuss.

5.b. Why do you think English is so important?