

How English Became a Global Language



by Jennifer Claerr

I. Read the text and fill in the blanks with the correct forms of the verbs in brackets.

English 1) _____ (evolve) naturally as a global language over time, despite the attempts of various people 2) _____ (create) artificial languages such as Esperanto, as global languages.

A language of global commerce

- One important argument in favor of English as a global language is its effectiveness. In 1887, L.L. Zamenhof 3) _____ (publish) his treatise on Esperanto, an artificial language which he 4) _____ (construct) for the purpose of international communication. Today it is the most widely spoken artificial, constructed language, and even 5) _____ (have) native speakers. However, it 6) _____ (fail) to become a language of global commerce. English 7) _____ (appear) to have taken this role, becoming a lingua franca (a language widely used by non-native speakers). Esperanto, on the other hand, seems to have found its place as a cultural, educational and literary language. Since English 8) _____ (so widely speak), many non-native speakers 9) _____ (find) that they've been required 10) _____ (learn) it to stay in business. 11) _____ (do) business globally on eBay, I have found that there are a tremendous number of people from non-English speaking countries who speak English fluently. English has approximately 370 million native speakers, born in the United Kingdom, the United States, Canada, Australia and other countries. However, it 12) _____ (estimate) that there are over a billion non-native speakers of English.

Widespread use

- Today, English is widespread largely due to the fact that it 13) _____ (use) so heavily in television, film and music. Hollywood's global spread 14) _____ (contribute) strongly to the international popularity of English. It is also the predominant language on the internet. Pages in other languages even tend 15) _____ (have) an English translation. The British Empire and the dominant nature of American popular culture 16) _____ (contribute) overall to the spread of English across the planet.

Breaks barriers

- There are still significant language barriers between people of different countries. If more people learn English, and come 17) _____ (speak) it fluently, these barriers 18) _____ (can) be broken down. A person in Holland 19) _____ (not need) to learn Chinese in order to 20) _____ (communicate) with his friends in China. Instead, he could use English as a neutral language.

Rewarding experience

- While English can be very difficult to learn, 21) _____ (learn) it can be very rewarding. A knowledge of English 22) _____ (make) it possible for natives of non-English speaking countries 23) _____ (enjoy) English-language film, television, music, magazines, novels and nonfiction, among other things, without the need for any translation. English 24) _____ (make) communication with people of other countries and cultures possible. More importantly, English 25) _____ (offer) a wide range of possible expressions for similar concepts. For example: I am sad. I am unhappy. I am miserable. I'm in a rotten mood. I am down in the dumps. I am blue.

English in its modern form 26) _____ (use) for poetry, sonnets and songs for nearly five hundred years, and thus 27) _____ (allow) the speaker much more freedom 28) _____ (express) himself.

Grammar simplicity

- Another thing in favor of English is relative simplicity of conjugation of verbs.

An international language

- which 29) _____ (bridge) cultures and language barriers - I sincerely hope I live to see the day when English 30) _____ (eliminate) all communication boundaries worldwide.