

THE FUTURE IS NOT ENGLISH

English is a language which only showed its dominance in the last 200 years or so, and before that, Latin was the ruling language of the world. Of course, now, Latin has diverged into different languages, known as the Romance languages such as French, Italian, Spanish, and so on. English started to grow exponentially and became the common lingua franca due both the powerful military of and the spread of the British Empire, which was closely followed by the industrial revolution in America. This piece of history is common knowledge, but the real question linguists are asking is, will English follow the fate of its late Latin predecessor?

When the globalisation of English occurred, through media, business, luxury goods, communication, etc., it became a common second language amongst non-natives and was passed down as such to future generations, being encouraged to learn. But not all Englishes that are spoken in different countries exactly the same. For example, Indian English may be spoken with a syllable timed rhythm, to reflect the heavy influence of their own native language, in contrast with American English, which is spoken with a stress timed rhythm. Even in one country, the United Kingdom itself, there are different accents in different places and some may be completely unintelligible to others.

English may go through fragmentation, the signs of which are already seen as increasing varieties of English come into use, Singlish, Chinglish, Tenglish, Hinglish, etc. There is talk about the spread of not only English as a language itself, but the spread of certain varieties of English over others, and at that point, these varieties may not be understood by each other anymore and could possibly develop into creoles. Some varieties are already unintelligible to others, such as Irish English, which can barely be understood by anyone who hasn't heard it frequently.

The fact that there are more non-native speakers of English versus native speakers of English was seen as a positive statement even a few years ago, but this may not be the case anymore. English was first learnt as a result of colonisation, but then was kept due to the necessity for communication. Moreover, the development of technology may have helped in the spread of English but now it may turn on it and be a major reason for killing it. With the spread of technology, the ability to learn more languages is much easier, cheaper, faster and accessible to more people. Where, before, two non-natives who didn't know each other's language may have turned to English to communicate, they might not need to do so anymore due to the existence of advanced translators and voice-recognition technology which would render English useless in one of its major uses. With the majority of speakers being non-native and the speculation of an increasing lack of need for English, as less people learn and preserve it, only the native speakers will remain who remember how to speak, read and write English.

The fall of English may also be linked to the difference in cultural values between different countries, especially corporate in nature. Every country differs in their culture, their mannerisms, thoughts, morals, etc. and where some actions may be acceptable or encouraged, another

country may deem them offensive. Western culture is enforced or seen as 'correct' in colonised and foreign countries, and the locals of those countries may resist these views being insisted upon them. *This* resistance may create a new resistance in learning English as it's associated with those views and cause the language to die down even further.

Finally, while English is currently a powerful and undeniably dominant language, it is uncertain if this will be the case in the future. Will another language rise up to challenge the influence of English? Will it just split into different varieties, or is it here to stay? Nevertheless, what we do know is that English has had a great impact on language and cultural norms and it may not be easy to undo or replace these effects.