

READING COMPREHENSION EXERCISE

Read the following text:

From Lingua Franca* to Global English

English has unmistakably achieved global status as the world's lingua franca. How did it get that way?

At his new job in the accounting department of a cell phone company that recently opened in Kurdistan, Iraq, Saryas Jamal discovered rather quickly that he had to deal with managers who did not speak Kurdish. He realized he would have to learn English if he was going to be able to prove himself on the job. So he enrolled in English classes and found that he was not alone - English-language classes are a booming business in Sulaimaniyah, and the classes are always full. On of the English teachers there, Faraydoon Abdulrahman, says that increasing access to information



technologies like the internet and satellite television brought on by globalization has spurred the growth of private English language-learning centers in Kurdistan. Though Iraqi children have always learned English in school, there has been an increase in Iraq of private institutes where citizens of all ages may become more adept at speaking and understanding English and therefore can gain a foothold in competing in the global marketplace.

The English language has unmistakably achieved status as the world's lingua franca through globalization. English is now the official or dominant language for two billion people in at least 75 countries. According to the British Council, speakers of English as a second language probably outnumber those who speak it as a first language, and around 750 million people are believed to speak English as a foreign language. English is the most common language to communicate scientific, technological, academic, and international trade information. English is clearly the world's lingua franca, but how did it get that way? Part of the reason is the feedback loop driving its history - a dynamic which may serve to illustrate how globalization often is the result of a natural course of events: before English infiltrated the world, many of the world's languages infiltrated English. Now with mass media, contemporary English slings its patchwork of historically adopted words and new pop slang back at the world in a very big way. Some say, too big a way. John Swales describes English as "Tyrannosaurus Rex" let loose in the world to gobble up other languages and, thus, their cultures.

It is the "different functions" aspect of English vs. 'other languages' that is fiercely debated today. The speaking of English often functions as an elevated socio-economic currency on the international market and in international diplomacy, while local languages are pressured to be kept within the home or within communities, or for entertaining tourists. English is the official language of the European Central Bank even though the bank is in Frankfurt, Germany, and no predominantly English-speaking country is a member of the European Monetary Union. English has become a commodity.

English, like so many other aspects of Western culture, has the potential to bring people together, or the power to divide people into classified groups. As the debate goes on, English will continue to grow and change with the same force that has always driven the patchworking of language: the natural desire to exchange goods and ideas.

Terri Kelly, in <http://www.globalenvision.org> (shortened)

* **lingua franca**: a language adopted as a common language between speakers whose native languages are different.

A. Are these sentences TRUE OR FALSE? SUPPORT ALL your answers with quotations from text (1st paragraph).

1. Jamal's new job required knowledge of the English language.

2. In Iraq people working in international cell phone companies need to learn English.

3. The necessity to learn English and the general invasion of the information technologies are not closely related.

4. Iraqi children's education comprehends the learning of at least one foreign language.

5. Fluency in English is an important tool in the worldwide competition for a job.

B. COMPLETE the sentences according to the ideas in the second paragraph of the text:

1. The English language owes to globalisation _____

2. The British Council has reasons to suppose there are less _____

3. The reason why John Swales compares English to a Tyrannosaurus Rex is that _____

C. MATCH the words taken from the 1st and 2nd paragraphs with their synonym.

- | | | |
|------------------------|-------|---------------------|
| 1. enrolled (l. 4) | _____ | a) be more than |
| 2. booming (l. 5) | _____ | b) invaded |
| 3. spurred (l. 8) | _____ | c) became a student |
| 4. outnumber (l. 14) | _____ | d) absorb |
| 5. infiltrated (l. 18) | _____ | e) encouraged |
| 6. gobble up (l. 21) | _____ | f) expanding |

D. ANSWER the following question about the last two paragraphs, USING YOUR OWN WORDS as far as possible.

Why has English become a "commodity"?

II

A. Complete the table with the equivalent words in American English.

BRITISH ENGLISH	AMERICAN ENGLISH
recognise	
neighbour	
theatre	
lift	
dialogue	
biscuit	
dustbin	
skillful	
car park	
licence	

