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**LINGUA FRANCA – THREAT TO NATIONAL LANGUAGES OR
SAVING GRACE FOR INTERNATIONAL COMMUNICATION**

Lingua Franca, according to Oxford Online Dictionary is “a language that is adopted as a common language between speakers whose native languages are different.” English has been crowned as international lingua franca and is going strong in this role. The success of English is impressive. But can it interfere national languages? Definitely it gives us some food for thought.

That leads us to the *aim* of our research which is to find out whether English as lingua franca poses a threat to national languages.

The *object* of our research is English as lingua franca.

How did the English language attain such success? It is spoken of in every part of the world. In fact, today 80 % of English interactions in the world are carried out by non-native English speakers. Through colonialism and imperialism, the British took their culture and language round the world, from India to Africa to North America. They succeeded in establishing their language around the globe. And with the establishment of the United States of America and the United Kingdom as world superpowers, it is only logical they came to dictate the modus operandi of world’s affairs including business language [1].

In hot debates over global spread of English an issue which remains controversial is the threat of English to other languages, particularly those of less known communities and minority languages. Minority languages are rich reflection of multiethnic cultures and societies and carry a wealth of linguistic, historical, social, cultural, and anthropological information. These languages are under pressure in the modern world [3; P. 33].

But the idea of English as a killer language sounds unrealistic. Even some French politicians say EU officials should stop speaking English after the Brexit vote. The language has spread rapidly in an era of globalisation, but could

political decisions kill it? Yes, say some. People only learn English because it creates opportunities and is exported by open, liberal societies which are attractive to emulate. Fewer people will need to speak it if English-speaking countries become more closed. It will be replaced by another tongue or, as the world divides, there will be no international language [2].

The widespread use of the English language irritates many in France. So when the UK voted to leave the EU, French politicians seized the chance to send the anglophone world into retreat. English is currently one of the EU's 24 official languages and one of the three used by the European Commission to conduct day-to-day business. Soon English will only be an official language in two EU member states, in neither case exclusively so, reducing the proportion in the EU population of native English speakers from 14 % to 1 % [2].

But will this matter? English has arguably outgrown its creators. It is the most popular foreign language in all but five European nations. In the EU, two in three citizens have at least a fair working knowledge of it and 94 % of non-English-native secondary school pupils are learning it.

In 2014, an estimated 1.5 billion people were learning English worldwide. The British Empire spread it for centuries. US supremacy, increasing trade across borders and the internet have sped up the process. English is now often seen as the international lingua franca, dominating industries including aviation and cinema.

But this may not last. One expert estimates the proportion of online content in English has already halved since 1996 [2].

According to the article from BBC News, China can boast the most English speakers. Up to 350 million people there have at least some knowledge of English and at least another 100 million in India. The World Economic Forum estimates about 1.5 billion people around the world speak it but fewer than 400 million have it as their first language. This article suggests that thanks to advances in computer translation and voice-recognition technology, people can each speak their own national language, and hear what their interlocutor is

saying, machine-translated in real time. So English's days as the world's top global language may be numbered. To put it at its most dramatic: the computers are coming, and they are winning.

At present, if you want to do business internationally, or play the latest video games, or listen to the latest popular music, you're going to have a difficult time if you don't speak any English. But things are changing fast. In California, Wonkyum Lee, a South Korean computer scientist for Gridspace, is helping to develop translation and voice-recognition technology that will be so good that when you call a customer service helpline, you won't know whether you're talking to a human or a computer [4].

English owes its global dominance to being the language of what until recently were two of the world's most powerful nations: the US and the UK. But now, especially with the rise of China as an economic superpower, the language is being challenged. If you are an ambitious young jobseeker in sub-Saharan Africa, you might be better off learning Mandarin Chinese and looking for work in China than relying on your school-level English and hoping for a job in the US or UK.

In the US itself, learning Chinese is becoming increasingly popular. In 2015, it was reported that the number of school students studying the language had doubled in two years and, at college level, there had been a 50 % rise over the past decade [4].

So has the modern world put the future of English as lingua franca at risk? And can English itself put the existence of national languages at risk? ***In conclusion*** we can say that time is likely to bring some changes. English may lower its positions as lingua franca but it may evolve and adapt to new conditions as well. Also it doesn't pose any threat to national languages. Moreover some national languages can take English down as lingua franca in future.

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