



Cambridge Assessment
English



Cambridge Assessment English
Perspectives

English for Development:

a review of research into the role of English
as a driver for socio-economic development

Daniel Brooker



Executive summary

With the acceleration of globalisation and the integration of the world economy, English is increasingly viewed as a means of achieving competitive economic advantage. English has also become a key strand in the debate on what makes good human capital and what skills are needed by labour in order to produce economic value. English skills can attract mobile flows of capital and inward investment from multinational firms. English is also often cited as part of the '21st century skill set', and a 'must have' for participation in the global knowledge economy. This is particularly relevant to developing countries, which regard English as the key to higher value, knowledge-based economic activities which can accelerate progress up the value chain.

This literature review collects the leading research into the relationship between English language skills and economic growth. Policy makers can use this review as to inform and support decisions about why and how to implement educational reforms for English language learning, teaching and assessment.

A number of these papers illustrate the benefits of English for facilitating flows of trade and investment. English is the lingua franca for international trade and plays a significant role in promoting trade between countries. In some sectors English is a pre-requisite for attracting inward investment. For example, business process outsourcing industries have grown over the last 10 years due to the availability of skilled, English-proficient labour in countries like India, Malaysia and the Philippines. There is also a sectorial bias; English is more important in more international sectors like finance, accounting, law, management consulting and IT.

Other papers show the impact of English on individual earnings and occupational mobility. Research in South Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa found a 25% salary gap between those who speak English and those who do not. Further research shows salary disparities in India, the Gulf States and North Africa. English is particularly valuable for more complex jobs and senior-level posts.

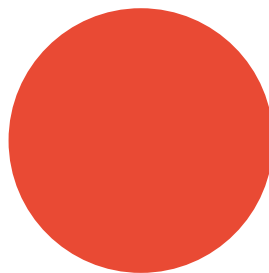
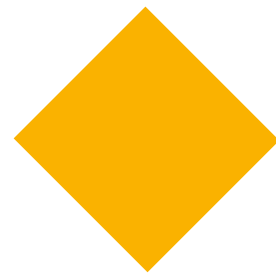
In order to realise the benefits that English can bring, Cambridge Assessment English recommends an evidence-based approach to language education reform. The first stage is to understand a particular context in terms of strengths, weaknesses and areas for improvement. Cambridge English works around the world in education systems and in labour markets to identify existing language levels through benchmarking studies which help policy makers to develop appropriate language education strategies aligned to local needs and targets.

Coherence is crucial in developing the right approach for improving language systems. A key principle of the Cambridge English approach is not to look at areas in isolation, but to establish how they relate to each other, as well as to other elements of the whole education system. The aim is a holistic environment where pedagogy, the curriculum, classroom materials, teaching practice and assessment are aligned and reinforce one another. Without this coherence, it is unlikely that any initiative or project will realise its intended potential benefits.

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Introduction:

The socio-economic returns of education are well understood, and are evidenced in research by academics and policy makers dating back to the 1960s. However, there has been less research into the relationship between language proficiency and socio-economic development, including research to support the arguments made by language specialists, educationalists and governments that English language education can bring significant benefits to individuals, societies and economies at a local, regional and national level. Such research does exist, however, and is growing in breadth and depth; this review provides an overview of the most important research published since 2010 (as well as a key paper published in 1988), summarising these papers and publications, and providing a commentary on each paper's empirical and conceptual contribution to the field.

The aim is to provide supporting evidence to enable political leaders, policy makers and practitioners gain a better understanding of recent debates surrounding 'English for Development', a broad term which defines English language education as:

- a tool for socio-economic development
- a provider of opportunities for mobility and employability
- a contributor to the sustainable development agenda and global Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)
- a key part of education for development programmes (not a 'could have').

In the context of these debates English language ability is perceived as a valuable asset for the individual and increasingly for national economic growth; but what are the bases for these assumptions?

Firstly, English is now considered critical for national participation in the globalised economy, a means of providing the individual with access to knowledge, skills and employment opportunities, and also an enabler of social mobility. As a result, investment in English language education is increasing worldwide as Ministries of Education, schools and universities seek to maximise the economic, social, cultural and political returns of English language proficiency.

Underpinning this investment is the recognition that English is now a global language for communication, and therefore linked to economic value through the opportunities it brings for employment and entrepreneurialism, alongside a range of socio-cultural and political benefits realised by facilitating international mobility and communications.

However, for a government to justify a major investment in English language education, evidence for these wide-ranging benefits must be presented. This review consolidates this evidence into a coherent framework by organising the research thematically in order to generate a fully rounded understanding of all the drivers within the English and development debate – economic, socio-cultural and political.

Section I: Economic Drivers

This is an area of considerable research activity by academics, think tanks and policy makers. A number of economic drivers have been identified, including:

- inward investment
- export activity with English speaking nations
- internationalisation of small to medium-size enterprises (SMEs)
- increasing entrepreneurialism
- scientific and technological advancement.

Almost all the literature assumes a virtuous cycle whereby improved English language skills directly increase salaries and national income, and economic evidence cited to prove this assumption includes:

- the significantly positive effect of English-language skills on the wages of immigrants to the USA (Bleakley and Chi, 2004)
- the cost to immigrant workers of limited English ability in terms of reduced observed earnings and altered occupational opportunities (Kossoudji, 1988)
- the strong and statistically significant effect of English on bilateral trade flows (Ku and Zussman, 2010)
- the positive correlation between English language proficiency and economic growth in Europe and Asia (Lee, 2012).

S J Kossoudji, 1988

English Language Ability and the Labor Market Opportunities of Hispanic and East Asian

Immigrant Men *Journal of Labor Economics* 6(2): pp. 205–28

- Kossoudji identifies the economic cost of English language deficiency both in terms of occupational earnings and mobility.
- He argues that there is an economic cost to the migrant who is not proficient in English language skills, looking at the examples of foreign-born East Asian men and foreign-born Hispanic men in the USA.
- **'The results of this study suggest that not being able to speak English imposes a real cost on some immigrant workers, both by reducing observed earnings and by altering occupational opportunities.'** (p. 224).
- Generally, immigrants who do not speak English are 'pushed down' the occupational ladder; this effect is much stronger for Hispanics than for Asians, and some workers (especially Asians) appear to successfully pursue strategies which minimise and, in some cases, eliminate the English language ability penalty.

Cambridge English Commentary

Although outside the five-year review period, this is an important paper from a labour economist who uses a quantitative approach to model the effects of language proficiency on labour market inequalities. We shall return in other papers to Kossoudji's assertion that English language ability is often seen as a measure of assimilation in the broadest economic and social sense and, at the same time, is a specific skill necessary for mobility in the labour market.

H Ku and A Zussman, 2010

Lingua Franca: The Role of English in International Trade

Journal of Economic Behavior and Organization 75(2), pp.250–60

- The authors construct a dataset based on mean national scores in the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) spanning 30 years in 100 countries in which English is not a first language.
- They argue that countries participate in trade relationships by communicating in a non-native language, namely English.
- Controlling for other factors influencing trade, the authors argue that English proficiency has a strong and statistically significant effect on bilateral trade.

Cambridge English Commentary

Economists Ku and Zussman explore the role of English in international trade through analysis of an extensive dataset of national English test scores and trade statistics. The paper presents a unique quantitative approach and provides clear evidence for the role of English in increasing national trade and investment activity.

Euromonitor International, 2010

The Benefits of the English Language for Individuals and Societies: Quantitative Indicators from Cameroon, Nigeria, Rwanda, Bangladesh and Pakistan

Euromonitor International Report, commissioned by the British Council

- The report identifies a number of key findings on the economic benefits of English language across five countries through survey data and labour market analysis.
- The key finding is that the average salary gap of someone who can speak English versus someone who cannot is approximately 25%. This finding is often cited in the English for development literature and also received attention in international press (e.g. the Guardian).
- Other key findings presented are that 72% of all companies interviewed stated that employees with English language skills progress more quickly, and 67% of these companies also said that English is beneficial for growth.
- Of all the companies who were interviewed, over 50% said that their workforce was required to speak English.

Cambridge English Commentary

The report takes a detailed country-by-country view of five countries in diverse geographical locations but with the common goal of accelerated development through English upskilling and investment in education. A robust argument is made for the economic benefits of English, and the 25% salary gap statistic is now widely cited in academic and policy debates concerning English and development.

C H Oha *et al.*, 2011

International Trade, Foreign Direct Investment, and Transaction Costs in Languages

The Journal of Socio-Economics 40, pp. 732–5

- This paper seeks to examine the role of language within the flow of international trade and foreign direct investment (FDI).
- There is a lack of literature in this area, with a handful of studies showing how trading partners who speak the same language, experience a significant decline in transaction costs; the paper builds on this exploratory work through quantitative analysis of OECD data from 115 countries.
- Language learning and competency are considered part of the transaction costs in economic exchange, and the paper considers the effort required to learn languages and their role on exchange.
- The results show that if either country in a pair speaks English, bilateral imports increase by 95%; English as a common language also increases inward FDI flows for host countries.
- Of all the major languages, English has the lowest transaction cost for trade and investment; this doesn't mean that English is easier to learn than other languages (such as French or Arabic), rather that it allows individuals to accrue more benefits.

Cambridge English Commentary

The authors Oha *et al.* provide robust analysis of official data from the OECD, grounded in a quantitative approach, to examine the link between language learning and international trade and investment. A clear argument on the role of English as a facilitator of trade and investment is presented, along with a future agenda to extend research into other domains of economic activity, including mergers, acquisitions and the locational choices of multinational firms.

Euromonitor International, 2012

The Benefits of the English Language for Individuals and Societies: Quantitative Indicators from Algeria, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Tunisia and Yemen

Euromonitor International Report, commissioned by the British Council

- This report follows on from the 2010 Euromonitor study and widens the scope of research to a further eight countries to examine the benefits of English language to individuals and societies. The report observes that despite very different contexts across the eight countries, English is highly valued and seen as beneficial to development.
- The theme of salary gaps is examined again by Euromonitor and evidence presented that English fluency clearly has a profound effect on income levels; the salary gap between similar-skilled individuals that speak English and those who do not varies between 5% and 95%.
- Comparing between the eight countries covered in the report, the salary gap in Tunisia was lowest, ranging between 5% and 10%, rising to 75% in Egypt and 95% in Iraq; in Baghdad, the difference in salary may rise to 200% in certain cases, depending on the specific skills of the individual.
- The different ranges in the eight countries reflect different stages of development, conflicts within the region, and former colonial links.

Cambridge English Commentary

This report from Euromonitor provides an insightful regional view of the English language strategies employed by countries in order to accelerate socio-economic development and its varied benefits. Across the eight countries identified, English is increasingly used by policy makers as a tool for promoting for economic and individual advancement.

C G Lee, 2012

English Language and Economic Growth: Cross-Country Empirical Evidence

Journal of Economic and Social Studies 2(1): pp. 5–20

- The paper uses detailed cross-sectional statistical analysis using data on TOEFL test scores, GDP per capita and economic investment statistics to explore the link between English language and economic growth.
- The results find a positive correlation between English language proficiency and economic growth in Europe and Asia. The paper posits that English language is an important component of human capital development and affects the absorptive capacity of individuals to identify, assimilate, transform, and apply external knowledge.
- While it is difficult to attribute direct causality between English test scores and economic development data, the research shows a positive correlation and findings can be triangulated with other sources.

Cambridge English Commentary

The main argument from Lee is that countries with populations which demonstrate higher levels of English proficiency are likely to enjoy more rapid economic growth. The paper makes an important contribution to the economic case for English and opens the way for more empirical research to correlate English language levels with other economic growth indicators.

A Chin, A Mehtabul, and N Prakash, 2013

The Returns to English-Language Skills In India

Economic Development and Cultural Change 61(2), pp. 335–67

- The research presented is based on detailed analysis of the India Human Development Survey, 2005, to quantify the effects of English-speaking ability on wages.
- The paper presents evidence that being fluent in English (compared to not speaking any English) increases male hourly wages by 34%, which is as much as the return gained from completing secondary school, and half as much as the return from completing a Bachelor's degree.
- A further finding is that speaking a little English significantly increases male hourly wages (by 13% in the Indian context), and more experienced and more educated workers receive higher returns from speaking English; the complementarity between English skills and education appears to have strengthened over time.
- The premium for English is concentrated on younger, educated workers who possess English skills needed to enhance their employability and career progression.

Cambridge English Commentary

The study brings together Chin, Mehtabul Prakash; academics from US universities and the World Bank, to explore the human capital development question in India. Drawing on analysis from the India Human Development Survey (2005) the authors provide compelling evidence on the positive correlation between English skills and increased hourly wages in India.

E J Erling, 2014

The Role of English in Skills Development in South Asia: Policies, Interventions and Existing Evidence

British Council

- The main argument of the paper is that English language skills are highly rewarded in the labour market. The returns to English language skills are heterogeneous and, like education in general, they accrue along with other socio-economic variables such as gender, ethnicity, class and location.
- The paper argues that while much research focuses on the benefits of English in higher level, white-collar jobs, little is understood about the impact of English on blue-collar workers or those in the informal economy in South Asia or elsewhere.
- In examining the returns of English the author observes that it is difficult to separate the benefits of English language education from those of high-quality education: the two are closely linked in developing world contexts because English is generally offered in more internationalised institutions offering English-medium programmes.
- Given the perceived economic returns for English skills there is growing realisation in South Asia that skills development initiatives must include English language training, born out in projects such as English in Action (Bangladesh), and Skills for Life (Sri Lanka).
- The paper considers the challenge of how demand for English can be met in South Asia given that the shortfall in skilled individuals runs into millions.

Cambridge English Commentary

Authored by Erling, a leading academic in the English and development area from the Open University, this paper critically unpacks the demand for English and its benefits to the individual in the South Asian regional context. In common with the Cambridge approach, Dr Erling urges policy makers to communicate clear messages about the importance of English education alongside measures to build sustainable education systems.

Economist Intelligence Unit, 2015

Skills Needed: Addressing South Asia's Deficit of Technical and Soft Skills – Analysing the Gap in Afghanistan, Bangladesh, India, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka

Economist Intelligence Unit Report, commissioned by the British Council

- This wide-ranging report considers the skills deficit in South Asia and identifies English language skills as part of the skills gap challenge.
- The report identifies English as an important soft skill needed to support economic development; it is particularly vital for technology industries, information and communication technologies, and business process outsourcing.

Cambridge English Commentary

The respected Economist Intelligence Unit presents a wide-ranging report on the skills gap in six case study countries in the South Asia region. Importantly, English is discussed in the context of wider skills development challenges in the region and identified as a key enabler in specific economic sectors.

M Beblavý et al., 2016

The Importance of Foreign Language Skills in the Labour Markets of Central and Eastern Europe

Brussels, Centre for European Policy Studies 129

- The paper provides an analysis of job advertisements across Central and Eastern Europe and demonstrates that English is the most needed foreign language skill.
- Over half of the 74,000 job adverts analysed identified a need for English, with a positive relationship identified between the complexity of an occupation and the demand for English language skills.
- More broadly, the paper argues that foreign language skills are an important determinant of employability prospects for individuals, and this, in turn, impacts on European labour market dynamics
- In highly internationalised sectors, the right English language skills can provide an individual firm with a competitive advantage, and evidence showed that English was most needed in sectors such as IT, finance, accounting and law.
- At the regional level, having the right language skills for the job is important for ensuring Europe's economic strength vis-à-vis international regional competitors for increasingly mobile flows of trade, investment and capital.
- The report observes that in many countries, the population's foreign language skills remain relatively poor; the authors argue that this presents a challenge for governments, which need the right human capital in place if they are to attract the right jobs.

Cambridge English Commentary

The report is authored by the respected Centre for European Policy Studies and considers the case for English from an employer demand perspective. The evidence presented is compelling, and uses an extensive dataset on job vacancies and cross-country and occupational analysis to present the case for English. Beyond national labour market analysis, the report also posits that English skills are important for enhancing regional economic competitiveness in Europe. In turn, as the demand for English grows the challenge is set for politicians and policy makers to ensure that language skills are effectively mapped to labour market needs in Europe and the globalised economy.

10 T Chakraborty and S K Bakshi, 2016

English Language Premium: Evidence from a Policy Experiment in India

Economics of Education Review 50, pp. 1–16

- The paper focuses on the experience of West Bengal, and compares the experience of students attending government schools, where Bengali is the medium of instruction, with those attending private schools where English is the medium.
- Evidence illustrates the lack of occupational mobility and progression for individuals with little or no English skills but with otherwise similar educational attainment.
- English is considered to have a high premium in terms of earning capacity and opportunity.

Cambridge English Commentary

The authors Chakraborty and Bakshi make an important contribution to the literature through a case study approach and analysis of national survey data. The authors found that a 10% decrease in the probability of learning English in primary school led to a decline in weekly wages of 8%. The argument that a lower probability of learning English reduces the chances of an individual working in a higher ranked or better salaried occupation is persuasive, and the authors make an important point when they say that their results 'are particularly relevant in the context of many developing countries which face the dilemma of whether to encourage local or global languages in primary schools'.

J M Hagan and J Wassink, 2016

New Skills, New Jobs: Return Migration, Skill Transfers, and Business Formation in Mexico

Social Problems 63(4), pp. 513–33

- This paper examines the factors that influence the formation of new businesses by migrants returning to Mexico; much of the scholarship in this area assumes that migrants acquire not only financial but also human capital while working abroad, and this expands their opportunities when they return.
- English language skills are identified as an important factor in helping migrants integrate into their host country, and also helping them re-integrate when they return to their country of origin.
- Drawing on the findings of a survey of return migrants and non-migrants in Mexico, the paper argues that the benefits of English, alongside social and technical competencies, help promote entrepreneurialism and the launch of new businesses by migrants returning to Mexico.
- Through exploration of individual migrant narratives, the paper reveals that English language skills were significantly associated with the formation of new businesses, particularly in the tourism and hospitality industries.

Cambridge English Commentary

Through in-depth interviews and ethnographic research with returning migrants in Mexico, this paper provides rich qualitative information on the benefits of English as a transferable skill, and its importance for both employability and entrepreneurialism. In the case of migrants, English proficiency is identified as key to encouraging new business formation. There is much scope for further similar research in other regions and countries in order to examine whether such a phenomenon also occurs within returning migrant populations.

A Thomas *et al.*, 2016

English Communication Skills for Employability: The Perspectives of Employers in Bahrain

Learning and Teaching in Higher Education: Gulf Perspectives 13(1), pp. 1–17

- This paper uses a mixed methods approach when examining the role of English as a communication skill in Bahrain.
- Research data was gathered through telephone interviews, student workplace simulations and employer focus groups.
- There is an ongoing debate in the Middle East region regarding the skills required by the labour market and whether higher education institutions are adequately helping students acquire those skills.
- Through a survey of major employers, the paper finds that English is an essential skill when employers consider graduate job applicants.
- Furthermore, alongside English proficiency there is a growing demand for graduates who are linguistically and sociolinguistically competent, with the right communicative skills to function in a 21st-century English speaking global workplace.

Cambridge English Commentary

Using a case study approach, the authors Thomas *et al.* provide useful findings on graduate skills supply and labour market demands. The research makes several important observations that are relevant beyond Bahrain:

- that graduates need to be employable within national and international labour markets
- that employers no longer pay for what graduates know but for what they can do with their knowledge
- English skills are seen as a pre-requisite for graduate employment, but there is also a growing need for communicative competency and wider 21st century skills.

Section II: Socio-cultural Drivers

Socio-cultural drivers are variously interpreted in the literature. The spread of English as a global communication tool is seen as delivering a common language in linguistically diverse places and contexts (Mehtabul *et al.* 2013), while knowledge of English can also bring social status and opportunities for social mobility. In the Indian context, for example (Graddol 2010), English skills are considered a way to access the middle classes, and to achieve geographical mobility from less developed to more affluent localities.

Within the area of development studies, the literature clearly shows the ways in which English education is being used as a tool for economic and social empowerment and participation. For example, internationally and government-funded projects such as English in Action (Bangladesh), English in Action (Rwanda), Punjab Education, and the English Language Initiative (PEELI) have been deliberately set up to realise the socio-cultural and development benefits that English language can bring to national education systems.

However, it is important to acknowledge the conclusions reached by many researchers that whereas English is necessary, it is not sufficient for supporting development goals, and that there is a clear need to create multilingual learners, by developing L1 literacy in parallel with improvements to English, as both are tools for mobility and employability. Policy makers and practitioners therefore need to ensure that English becomes a facilitator for quality education and life skills, and that a lack of English is not a barrier for students outside those elite education institutions which provide EMI (English as a medium of instruction) or bilingual programmes.

H Coleman, 2010

The English Language in Development,

British Council

- The paper provides a critical examination of the relationship between language and development. The relationship is defined as a 'contested area', with a number of issues yet to be resolved.
- The analysis identifies various context where English is linked to socio-cultural development. These are English:
 - as a medium for accessing information (e.g. Laos) - as a means of international communication between researchers (e.g. Philippines)
 - as a neutral language in a particular multilingual context (e.g. Myanmar)
- The economic benefits of English for development are also covered and the general lack of research is noted, as well as the contested interpretations of how English contributes to economic development.
- English is also considered to have a role to play in the following aspects of international mobility and the paper calls for more research to explore its influence:
 - international tourism
 - international student mobility
 - international migrant working.

Cambridge English Commentary

An Honorary Senior Research Fellow at Leeds University, Coleman provides an excellent overview of the English for development debate and the wide-ranging arguments as to the socio-cultural benefits of English. He articulates two important ideas to guide researchers in the field: (1) the need to define the terms clearly in the debate; (2) the need to consider carefully where we look for evidence of the relationship between English and development.

M Wedell, 2013

'More Than Just Technology': English Language Teaching Initiatives as Complex Educational Changes, 2013

Dreams and Realities: Developing Countries and the English Language

ed. H Coleman, British Council, pp. 269–91

- The chapter explores the background and motivations for the rapid increase in the teaching of English in state schools globally, especially in the developing world.
- **'For the first time in foreign language teaching history, national Governments and individuals worldwide seem to see teaching a language (English) to all learners in state schools as an important means of increasing the human capital on which future national economic development and political power depends.'** (p. 269)
- Ministries of Education have invested in English as a deliberate socio-economic development strategy
- examples cited include Kenya, Philippines and Bangladesh.
- There has been massive investment in teaching, learning and curriculum projects but no clear evidence of the impact on standards and English ability.
- The major challenge is that educational change requires long-term investment and **'sustained effort over time, to change what actually happens in school classrooms rather than just the surface language, or appearance of the curriculum or the materials, or the manner in which schools are evaluated'** (p. 271).
- **'Implementation of national educational change takes place in numerous classrooms. Schools in different parts of a city, region or country are different. The classrooms within them are different. Implementation will never look identical across the whole of any education system anywhere. Any evaluation of success will need to bear this in mind.'** (p. 271)
- **'Those directly affected by large-scale educational change include educational leaders, teachers and learners. However, other components and actors in the existing education system and wider society are also affected and can critically influence implementation outcomes.'** (p. 271)
- Problematically, many ELT initiatives tend to be top-down and centralised- with a focus on prescriptive methods of teaching rather than communicative learning approaches.
- The chapter examines case studies and considers how unsuccessful initiatives are based on poor planning and short-term activities.
- **'We need to face up to the fact that ELT education initiatives designed to enable the majority of citizens to develop an ability to use English will take a very long time to yield visible results.'** (p. 287)

Cambridge English Commentary

The chapter argues for more effective approaches to policy planning and implementation in order to reap the benefits of English for development. Wedell rightly points to the complexity of change required to reform English language education and the need for context-specific and holistic interventions.

Section III: Political Drivers

The English language has political advantages but is also heavily politicised, although it can be used as a politically neutral language to support nation building and to harmonise ethnically or linguistically diverse national contexts, as evidenced in countries such as Rwanda. Research into the political impacts of English is limited, and this can be partly explained by the empirical difficulties of understanding the nuanced relationship between language, identity and nationhood. Much current research focuses instead on the wider political benefits to the nation state, for example the importance of English when applying to join international organisations such as the British Commonwealth, or participation in organisations where English is the lingua franca, such as the World Bank, or ASEAN.

In addition, the majority of research in this area focuses on the developing world and on unpacking the discourse in which English is evidently a powerful tool to support development, but where it can also be appropriated for wider political and economic objectives.

Although English skills are a valuable asset, they may also be resisted, with research (including research from Cambridge English) acknowledging that English should not be considered a 'miracle cure' for development, and that other languages, especially Chinese and Arabic, are becoming increasingly influential in our multilingual world.

N Negash, 2011

English Language in Africa: An Impediment or a Contributor to Development?

Dreams and Realities: Developing Countries and the English Language ed. H Coleman,
British Council, pp. 161–85

- The chapter focuses on the growth of the English language on the African continent, where English is used for different communicative purposes in every country in Africa, depending on the language and education policy of each country.
- The chapter explains that English remains the dominant language of business and politics.
- Africa is complex as it is multilingual with a number of minority language competing for space.
- English is associated with modernisation and development and there is a strong impetus to invest.
- **'English is going to be even more important as Africa, its member states and its citizens engage with the rest of the world more meaningfully. As Governments and people become more confident to have their say in global economic, social and political matters, the demand for English will increase.'** (p. 179)

Cambridge English Commentary

Africa has been at the centre of much debate and research in the field. Dr. Negash, an Associate Professor at the Ethiopian Civil Service College, makes an important contribution to our understanding of the role of English for social and political development in the continent. He argues that English is taught and spoken in diverse ethnic and linguistic contexts and more research is needed to understand the implications of English for development in Africa.

P Seargeant and E J Erling, 2011

The Discourse of 'English As A Language for International Development': Policy Assumptions and Practical Challenges

Dreams and Realities: Developing Countries and the English Language

ed. H Coleman, British Council, pp. 248–69

- **'The increased status of English within a global economy of languages has meant that English language education has also begun to be promoted as an important factor in international development programmes.'** (p. 248)
- The chapter considers how English is linked both to routes for poverty alleviation and routes to individual economic independence and emancipation.
- In the context of the wider debate, the chapter approach the question of English for development critical and identifies a number of assumptions, namely that English is:
 - a global language
 - linked to economic value
 - the language for education
 - the language of technology.
- The authors argue that, to understand the benefits English can produce, it is important to understand the rhetoric and discourses surrounding English.
- ELT development programmes need to be targeted, tailored to outcomes and set with realistic goals in mind.

Cambridge English Commentary

Written from a critical development studies perspective, the chapter seeks to unpack the discourse of English and development and the fundamental assumptions, regarding achievements, around which English is being promoted in developmental contexts. The authors, Seargeant and Erling, return to a key Cambridge principle; the need for evidence-based policy making to support effective English education reform planning and delivery.

17 J Melitz, 2016

English as a Global Language,

The Palgrave Handbook of Economics and Language

Ed V Ginsburgh and S Weber, Palgrave Macmillan UK, pp. 583–615.

- The chapter gives an overview of English for development and the growth of English as the global lingua franca. The central argument is the dominance of English can be explained by its use across multiple spheres of economic, social, cultural and political activity.
- Although Chinese is similar to English in terms of speaker numbers, English is far ahead of all other languages, globally, as a learnt language used by non-native speakers, and is the only language to be well represented in all five continents.
- There are several key drivers for this, including the use of English:
 - in political spheres, where English is used by major international organisations and is the official language of the IMF and World Bank
 - as a global administrative language for civil aviation and international maritime authorities
 - in cultural products such as film, music and television, even though many consumers do not understand or consume these products in English
 - in trade, whereby a common language is used to promote bilateral trade.

Cambridge English Commentary

Published within an insightful edited collection, this paper by Melitz looks at the rise and role of English as a global language across social and cultural spheres. The ascendancy of English as the lingua franca cannot be attributed to its use in a specific sphere, but rather it is the breadth and diversity of use that encourages the use and value of English.

Summary

Given the economic, social, cultural, and political benefits of English, research clearly shows the increasing global demand for English language education from both state and independent school systems. As a result, the number and scale of English-medium schools and programmes is also growing, and at the national level, bilingual and trilingual education policies have been mandated to address the demand for English from students and parents around the world.

However, the research also shows the challenges faced by countries looking to improve national English ability, evidenced by the gaps in essential infrastructure ranging from learning approaches to teacher supply, curriculum design to classroom materials, and also in assessment. These challenges extend to financial capacity, the technical knowledge required to implement English education reforms, and the political resolve to plan and make evidence based decisions on policy.



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