

II. English in the 21st century

Crystal (1997, 2000)

- “...there is no single source of statistical information on totals of English language users of all countries in the world”

1) Demographic Profile

Kachru (1997):

- The estimates of the users of English range from a conservative figure of 700 to 800 million, and to a rather liberal figure of two billion people with some competence in English.

Christian Science Monitor (1996)

- One out of 5 people in the world speaks English at some level of competence;
- By 2000 it is estimated over 1 billion people will be learning English;
- Worldwide, more than 1.4 billion people live in countries where English is an official language;

- More than two-thirds of the world's scientists read in English;
- Three-quarters of the world's mail is written in English;
- Eighty percent of the world's electronically stored information is in English;
- Of the estimated 40 million users of the Internet worldwide, the majority group communicates in English;

- Crystal 1997 states that a conservative estimate of the number of users of English with a native and native-like fluency would be 670 million. The figures end up with a total of 1,800 million if we consider users who have ‘reasonable competence’.

2. Reasons of spreading English

- How does English become a global or an international language? There are several reasons such as migration, colonialism, the military power, economic power, technology etc.
- Crystal (1997): there are several geographical historical, and sociocultural

Widdowson (1997)

- One of the primary reasons for the spread of English today is because it has such a variety of specific purposes. Here a term specific purpose means three-prolonged development of first-language, official language, and foreign-language. Global language should be used by more people than any other language and English has already reached this stage.

- Military power
- A language becomes an international language for one chief reason: the political power of its people.
- **Economic power supported by the new communication technologies**

McKay (2002): Speaker migration/ Colonialism/ The new technology

- (a) International organization: 85 percent of international organizations make some official use of English; some organizations carry on their proceedings only in English
- (b) The development of global culture: motion pictures (in the mid 1990s the US controlled about 85 per cent of the world film market);
- (c) popular music
- (d) International Travel
- (e) Communications: 85 percent of biology and physics papers written in English
- (f) Education:

3) Kachru (2002)

- The First Diaspora: English spread largely because of the migration of English speakers. In time each settlement developed its national variety (McKay 2002, 10)
- The Second Diaspora: English is spread a result of colonization by English-speaking countries.

- Regarding the question why was it English?
As Crystal (1997) argues that **English was in the right place at the right time (8)**.