

Review: *English Next*
David Graddol

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What makes this British Council commissioned report so fascinating is how the notion of 'global English' is explored in connection with international, economic, technological and cultural changes, and how these changes, in turn, could weaken the 'unassailable' position of English as the language of the world market.

The report is divided into three parts: *A World in Transition*, *Education*, and *Conclusions and Policy Implications*. The first part has five main sections entitled: demography, economy, technology, society, and languages. The second part deals primarily with higher education and learning English. Part three, as a conclusion, is centered around the question: "*Who is a native speaker?*"

Right after his introduction, the author offers a small section as an aperitif called '*Key Trends*,' urging readers to think about vital issues surrounding English as a global language. Some of the trends mentioned in this section would appear to support the author's suggestion that native-speaker norms are becoming less than hegemonic as English is included in the basic education of an increasing number of countries. He also suggests that Asia—India and China in particular—probably now hold the key to the long term future of English as a global language, and that the end of 'English as a Foreign Language' may be drawing near.

Much of the statistical information featured throughout this report may well challenge many readers' preconceptions. An example of this is how tables are used to give readers a clearer picture of why Mandarin has emerged as what many might now consider a 'must-have' language which may even have the potential to eventually usurp English. A comparison of different learning models, including English as a Foreign Language (EFL), English as a Second Language (ESL), English for Young Learners (EYL), and Global English is also provided in table and graph form showing the potential demand for English in the educational systems of the world as part of the 'World English Project,' which if successful could have implications which would most probably be of interest to most readers.

The section entitled *Who is a native speaker?* attempts to challenge traditionally narrow definitions of this term with figures and a quote from Braj Kachru which support a broader understanding of what range of qualities may be considered to constitute 'nativeness' with an inner circle redefined around 'functional nativeness' which disregards when and how people learned English.

All in all, *English Next* by David Graddol is a nice little must-read report for those who want to find out more about the future of English and other rising global languages. As ELT professionals, it not only gives us an overall picture of what's happening with English around the globe at the moment but also prepares us for where these changes may be leading.

A full text of this book is available online at www.britishcouncil.org/files/documents/learning-research-english-next.pdf

The Author

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