

Inglés para fines profesionales. Grado en Turismo. “Englishes”

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ELENA BÁRCENA. Hello! Today we're going to talk about not only the English language, but “Englishes”. The different Englishes within the English language. We'll see and reflect together how English is spoken around the world, and the countries where English is a major language. Also, English is the main second language in the world. So, we'll reflect a little bit about that as well. We'll see a few sample differences and we'll end up this presentation with a final remark about being “socio-culturally competent”. Something that we have to think of because it's not so common that we are invited to think of English as more than a set of grammar rules and a ward of vocabulary.

Perhaps English is not the most widely spoken in the world. True, perhaps it's not. As a native language, that is. But it's a must in modern society. There is no doubt about that. English is truly a lingua franca all over the world for business, commerce, science, technology, mass media, etc. And, of course, tourism. So, we need to know more about our topic, like: how many European countries do you know where English is an official language? And Asian? How many Asian countries are there that have English as an official language? India, remember... American? How many? African? There are plenty of countries apart from the United Kingdom and the United States of America where English is an official language.

Let's see for example in Europe. I've just mentioned the UK, or Britain, as it is sometimes called. And of course the neighbouring country, Ireland. But there is also Malta. And there are plenty of islands around the British Isles that speak English and also Gibraltar. So, for example, do you know the full name of the UK? Because we typically speak about England, UK, Britain... But, as you know, it's got a long name, and this course wants you to know all the major facts about the language which you are studying. The United Kingdom and Northern Ireland. Can you describe its political system? The fact that it's a unitary state with four different countries? Can you describe its geographical limitations? Have you ever heard the full term “The Commonwealth of Nations”? Do you know what it refers to?

Well, if we move on from Europe a little bit and we go on to America, then in America we'll find the USA, the United States of America, has English as an official language, and so does Canada, and many Caribbean countries: Barbados, Jamaica, Bahamas, etc. Very exciting countries too! So, what is the name in English of America's political system? Federal State, yes? Why does the capital have D.C. after its name? Washington D.C. And do you know any cultural and linguistic distinctive features of the US? For example, national holidays or celebrations that they have. Just the major ones. What do you think? Is Canada culturally closer to the US or the UK? Well, it's interesting because geographically it's obviously a lot closer to the US, but, however, as you very well know, it used to be a British colony and it has important cultural

and political links to the UK, still nowadays. And, the name of the people who live in the northern part of the country of Canada? The Inuit, yes? What is linguistically peculiar about Canada? It's a bilingual country, isn't it? Why is that? What is a Celt? What's the relationship between Galicia and Ireland? If we study all these issues, not only we become more cultured and knowledgeable about the language that is the object of our study, but also we'll see the connections that we have with the Anglophone world. There are terms like "The Great Irish Famine" that we see in the literature, in history books... what does it refer to? They are fundamental issues about fundamental countries that have English as a Foreign Language, and probably they are basic facts about our future... present and future interlocutors when we speak in English.

But English, apart from these countries and many others that you will see throughout this year, like India, South Africa, Australia, of course, just to mention different continents, English is also the main second language in the world. And we have very interesting mix-ups. One of them is more familiar to us: Spanglish. It's spoken in areas like Gibraltar, where you'll find lexical items of one language when you are using grammatically another language. It's a very interesting phenomenon. And also Singlish, for example. Singapore is a very important part of the world for business and finance and there is a... there is an interesting linguistic phenomenon because of the influence of the Chinese language and also the English language. And here lies the main treasure of the English language. The fact that it is the main second language in the world, without any doubt. So, a language that's well known to be more important for a number of people who speak it as a second language than the number of people who speak it as a first language.

These differences, even within native English communities show in all... permeate along all linguistic levels. In this course you'll be studying that vocabulary is sometimes different... some vocabulary items are different, depending on whether you're a speaker from the UK, Australia, the United States. We're just going to concentrate on some of them, because of course we can't teach you all the differences, but we want to create certain awareness about this fact, so that when you go through life and you encounter these words and you check that they are not being understood by other people, other natives, you know why. You grow some sensitivity towards this phenomenon.

Also, pronunciation. An obvious example is the rolling "r" of Americans. They roll the "r" a lot more, while in British English, for example, the tendency is to omit the post-syllabic "r", the "r" that appears after a vowel in a syllable. That way, for example, we say words like "work". Also, at the grammatical level we see differences. In British English, for example, we tend to say: "I have got", to express possession. "I have got... a book". "I have got... a bag". While in American English and in other forms of English, you tend to express that just with the lexical verb "to have". "I have a book". "I have a computer". Prosodic features such as intonation. It's different in the different communities. And, finally, non-verbal language. That's a very important factor. You'll see how in the different native English communities, the use of gestures is different and how they have, therefore different significance. Something that we have to be aware of. It's not only the vocabulary and the grammar; there is a lot more to it.

So, we need, as I said, to develop awareness. That's the main point of all the sections in the textbook, where you'll find texts about the UK, Canada, etc.,

the language of marketing, the lexical differences in different communities. Just to give you a taste for a phenomenon that is really important. And we would like you to develop that metacognitive ability to go through life expecting these differences. And also the cultural reasons or the cultural background to many of them. And, why is this important? Well, in order to interpret them correctly, because the differences, the socio-linguistic differences when you are interacting, speaking, writing to other people; be them natives or non-natives of English, you need to interpret them correctly so that there are no misunderstandings. So that you don't think that they're trying to imply something different to their communicative intents, you don't think they're angry or they're being too friendly. You know, how to interpret them right. And also to communicate efficiently, especially in professional environments, so that you don't create the wrong impression. Of course, we do with our private lives, we communicate the way we want, but if we are working more and more everyday in an international context and travelling all around the world, we need to know how our possible use of the language might be interpreted.

Thank you for your attention. I hope that... from now onwards, you keep an eye on these important issues within the English language. And the Englishes inside. Goodbye!

Transcript: Tomás Costal