



The Future of English: Global Perspectives

Mina Patel, Mike Solly and Steve Copeland

Edited by Professor Barry O'Sullivan and Professor Yan Jin

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List of abbreviations

ACER	Australian Council for Educational Research
AfL	Assessment for Learning
AI	artificial intelligence
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
BE	basic education
BNCC	Base Nacional Comum Curricular (Common National Curricular Base)
CEFR	Common European Framework of Reference for Languages
CEFR-J	CEFR-Japan
CI	co-investigator
CLIL	content and language integrated learning
CLS	Comprehensive Learning System
CODESRIA	Council for the Development of Social Science Research in Africa
CoP	community of practice
CDP	continuing professional development
CRELLA	Centre for Research in English Language Learning and Assessment
CSE	China's Standards of English Language Ability
CV	curriculum vitae
CWG	Core Working Group
DMT	digital/mobile technology
E&E	English and Exams
EAP	English for academic purposes
EC	expert collaborator
EDI	equality, diversity and inclusion
EdTech	educational technology
EFL	English as a foreign language
ELAG	English Language Advisory Group
ELL	English language learning
ELRG	English Language Research Group
ELT	English language teaching
EME	English as a medium of education/ English-medium education
EMEMUS	English-medium education in multilingual university settings
EMI	English-medium instruction
EP	English Programmes
ESOL	English for Speakers of Other Languages

ESP	English for specific purposes
ESS	English as a school subject
EU	European Union
FE	further education
FoE	Future of English
G20	Group of Twenty
GDP	gross domestic product
HE	higher education
ICT	information and communications technology
IELTS	International English Language Testing System
L1	first language
L2	second language
LAL	language assessment literacy
MENA	Middle East and North Africa
MoE	Ministry of Education
MTBE	mother-tongue-based education
NGO	non-governmental organisation
NNS	non-native speaker
NS	native speaker
ODA	official development assistance
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OPEC	Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries
PISA	Programme for International Student Assessment
R&I	Research and Insight
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SPELT	Society of Pakistan English Language Teachers
SSA	Sub-Saharan Africa
STEM	science, technology, engineering and mathematics
TALE	teaching, assessment and learning of English
TESOL	Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages
TLA	teaching, learning and assessment
TOEFL	Test of English as a Foreign Language
TVET	technical and vocational education and training
UKVI	UK Visa and Immigration
UNAI	United Nations Academic Impact
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNICEF	United Nations Children’s Fund

Foreword

Scott McDonald, British Council CEO

The British Council's vision is a more peaceful and prosperous world built on trust. Our role in the world is to support peace and prosperity by building connections, understanding and trust between people in the UK and countries worldwide.

We do this by combining, in a unique way, the UK's deep expertise in arts and culture, education and the English language; our global presence and relationships in over a hundred countries; our unparalleled access to young people and influencers; and our creative sparkle. We work with governments and our partners in the education, English language and cultural sectors, in the UK and globally. Working together we make a bigger difference, creating benefit for millions of people all over the world. We take a long-term approach to building trust and remain at arm's length from government.

This helps us to create mutually beneficial relationships between the people of all four nations of the UK and other countries. This, in turn, strengthens the UK's global reputation and influence, encouraging people from around the world to visit, study, trade and make alliances with the UK. We work directly with individuals to help them gain the skills, confidence and connections to transform their lives and shape a better world in partnership with the UK.

A key aspect of that is our mission to widen knowledge of the English language around the world, empowering people to access global opportunities and connections. We work with governments, organisations, institutions and individuals to improve standards of English through research and insight, capacity building, teaching and learning resources, assessment and curriculum reform, with an increasing focus on technology-enabled solutions. We contribute to growing the UK's reputation as a leader and trusted partner in quality English language education by driving forward innovation and improved standards of teaching, learning and assessment (TLA).

In recent years there have been signs that the hegemony of the English language as the de facto lingua franca of international business and education is changing. The work reported in this book is based on a cross-British Council initiative called 'The Future of English'. It is designed to make a significant contribution to global thinking and understanding of the role of the English language over the coming decades. The project highlights many of the strengths of the British Council: our internal expertise and creativity; our ability to link with UK-based and international experts; and our considerable international reach, providing access to a wide range of global thought leaders and decision makers, whose insights have helped to shape the findings described in these pages.

The Future of English is a long-term programme of activity, with research and dissemination at its centre. This book is the first in a series of publications and events which will contribute to our long-term agenda to work with partners in the UK and around the world to build a comprehensive evidence base for future English language policy, development and implementation.

London
November 2022

Introduction

Barry O’Sullivan and Yan Jin

In this book, Mina Patel, Mike Solly and Steve Copeland introduce the ambitious Future of English project, which aims to build on the work of David Graddol in his book *English Next* (2006). That book, commissioned and published by the British Council, has remained the primary source of reference for education stakeholders (including teachers, researchers and policymakers) interested in understanding how the position of the English language may change in the coming years.

Graddol’s work was important because *English Next* was the second of a series of monographs written by him on the subject (the first being *The Future of English?* (1997)), which marked the first serious exploration of the subject. In *English Next*, Graddol sets out a series of predictions that focus both on the English language teaching and learning industry (and the individuals who contribute to it) and broader cultural and economic changes. In his foreword, Lord Neil Kinnock (then the British Council’s chair) reflected on these aspects of Graddol’s predictions when highlighting the possibility that ‘the global predominance of the language may fade within the foreseeable future’. While discussing this and other predictions from Graddol, Mike Solly, in a presentation to the Society of Pakistan English Language Teachers (SPELT) in late 2020, suggested that the time might well be right to reflect on Graddol’s predictions. This suggestion was taken on by the English Language Research Group (ELRG) at the British Council and led to the project that forms the basis of the book you are now reading. The authors, Mike Solly included, are key members involved in this important initiative.

Part 1 of the book introduces the background of the Future of English project and the research methodology for Phases 1 and 2. The approach adopted by Graddol was to take a snapshot of the situation as he saw it, based on the data he had access to at the time. The Future of English takes this snapshot as its starting point, reviewing Graddol’s predictions in light of available published data and reports, using a unique combination of traditional desk research together with a futures research approach applied for the first time in the English language context. This led to a revised series of themes and questions to be addressed in the project’s next phase.

The project is important for a number of reasons, not least because in its second phase it brings together expert high-level stakeholders from across the globe to ensure that a broad range of perspectives are taken into account and that we can develop a sound understanding of local or regional trends before starting to see trends on a global basis. The themes proposed earlier form the basis of discussions in a series of 14 focus groups made up of these experts, who are educational policymakers, leading researchers and industry leaders. This results in a set of updated predictions and questions, which are expected to drive the discussion into the future.

Phase 3 of the project then engages with the broader academic community to focus on specific language and policy dimensions through a series of major funded research projects. Ultimately, the great strength of the Future of English project is its ability to generate an ongoing, long-term dialogue on the ways in which the linguistic landscape, as it relates to English and more broadly, is likely to change (or not) in the coming decades.

While it may never be possible to accurately foretell the future of anything, let alone something as ephemeral as language, it is nevertheless critical that researchers and policymakers take a long-term view on possible changes to the linguistic landscape that may affect local communities in different ways, ranging from social to educational to economic equity. The time lag between the introduction of education innovation or reform programmes and the appearance of measurable results limits the opportunity for policymakers to engage in long-term strategic planning (Schleicher, 2018). In terms of the English language, this issue is exacerbated by the lack, up to now, of any serious research and evidence-driven debate on how the position of the language may change in the coming decades and the potential educational, social and economic impacts of such change. However, there is a more immediate confounding factor. That is the failure of many policymakers to fully appreciate the need to extend reform across the entire learning system, to include the materials used in the classroom and, perhaps even more importantly, the whole area of teacher education and continued professional support. It is clear from a number of the stakeholders who contributed to this project that this ongoing support for teachers is critical to the success of any educational reform or innovation. What is also clear is their concern that by not recognising this as a priority, governments and educational institutions risk wasting valuable resources on projects that are doomed to fail even before they are initially implemented. Of course, they also risk failing those key stakeholders who stood to gain from successfully delivered change in the first place.

In Part 2 of the book, the empirical data collected from the roundtables are presented and the findings are discussed. The roundtables leave us with a whole tranche of questions that can drive the ongoing Future of English research agenda. Quite rightly, they wonder about English remaining the world's most spoken language, though they appear to agree that, at least for the coming decade or so, this will remain the case, not least because of the perception among learners, parents and industry of the economic benefits attached to English proficiency. Of course, they recognise the significant changes to the linguistic landscape, with an increased realisation of the importance of multilingualism and the greater influence of companies (particularly large multinationals) on the differing needs of specific industries.

As the roundtables focused primarily on the place of English in TLA, a number of important issues were raised around the place of English language in global education systems. These included any likely change to the currently popular trend towards English-medium education (EME), the future roles of teachers and technology, and, more specifically, how assessment might change to reflect changes in expectations around the language, for example the move towards an action-oriented approach highlighted in the *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages – Companion Volume* (Council of Europe, 2020).

The research projects funded at Phase 3 of the Future of English project reflect some of these questions, with Phase 3 focusing on higher education (HE). These projects include studying the impact of the move to digital or hybrid delivery and examining the demands of EME on students' reading and listening, while the third will undertake to explore the long-term impact of technology on English and the related impact on key stakeholder groups. The final study supported focuses on English as a school subject (a five-year longitudinal study across 40 countries), which we hope will offer the first global insight into this increasingly important research topic.

In Part 3, the final part of the book, implications from the empirical exploration are discussed and a research agenda is set up for the next phase of the project. The pressure on policymakers to constantly strive to improve the prospects of their institutional and national stakeholders means that there will always be a need to review, update or reform education systems. As Schleicher (2018) points out, the challenges faced by the individuals or groups who champion these changes are significant.

Policy driven by ideology rarely delivers the positive benefits predicted. This is due to a number of factors, one of which is the absence of, or lack of, reference to available information in the form of research or routinely gathered data. The Future of English project builds on the excellent work of Graddol (1997; 2006) and offers, for the first time, a fully evidence-driven overview of the main issues to be considered when planning or implementing educational reform. The really exciting aspect of the project is that it is not seen as a short-term snapshot but as the beginning of a long-term global forum that will continue to contribute to our understanding of the area for decades to come. This book offers readers a starting point for this future. By focusing on English in education systems, it can help policymakers to develop the sort of meaningful theories of change and action proposed for assessment by Chalhoub-Deville & O'Sullivan (2020) and for learning systems by O'Sullivan (2020). By clearly defining the theory of change (what is to change and what will be achieved by this change) and the resulting theory of action (how this change will be designed and delivered), the policymaker will take into consideration the needs and expectations of all key stakeholders. By continuing to communicate effectively with these stakeholders throughout the change period, the policy will have a far greater chance of gaining acceptance from the community and, ultimately, succeeding.

While the project to date has already begun to affect thinking around educational change programmes, the focus on English language in the education system will have an important impact. The transformation of English language and developments in the varieties of English, or Englishes, together with social and economic perspectives on possible changes to the status and role of English, will receive increased attention in the coming years, and we expect that this will be reflected in the Future of English project as it develops over time.

Meanwhile, we expect that this book will attract the attention of educational policymakers, researchers and practitioners, and contribute immensely to the development of a detailed and dynamic research agenda that will promote scholarship and positive practice across the globe.

Acknowledgements

The Future of English project couldn't have happened without the game-changing work of the late David Graddol. His British Council-commissioned books, *The Future of English?* in 1997 and *English Next* in 2006, laid the foundations for this book and for the project as a whole. He remains much missed in what would have been his 70th year.

Thanks to the Society of Pakistan English Language Teachers (SPELT) for unintentionally instigating the whole project!

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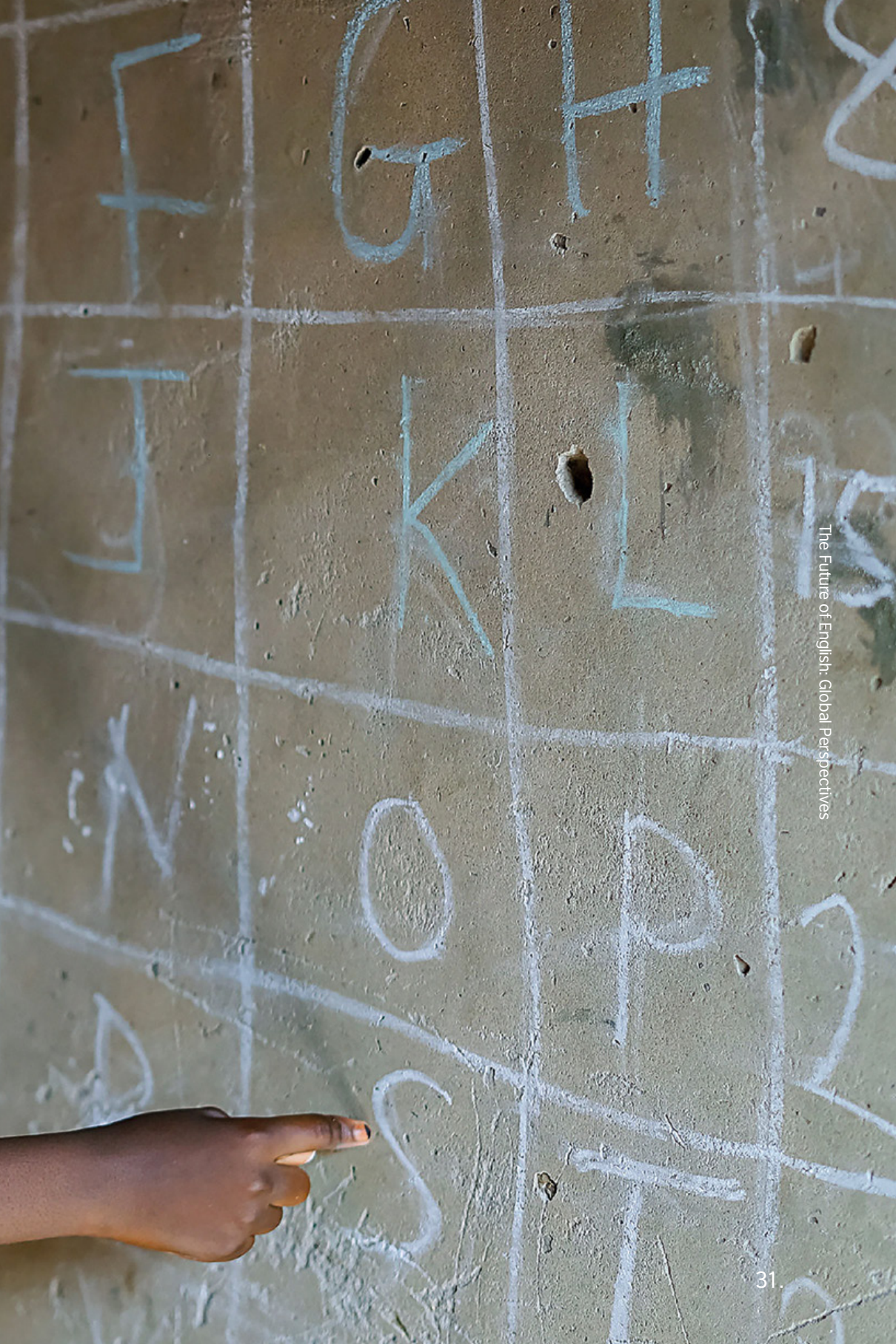
Particular thanks are due to the 92 policymakers and policy influencers who took part in our regional roundtables in 49 countries and territories worldwide – you know who you are – and to Harry Kuchah Kuchah for facilitating the Sub-Saharan Africa roundtable.

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Part 1

The Future of English: Global Perspectives



1 Introduction and background

1.1 Introduction

This book is about the inception and implementation of a British Council research project called 'The Future of English'. The project uses David Graddol's *English Next* (2006) as a starting point to explore the uses and roles of English around the world. We do not claim to have all of the answers; rather, the aim of the project and this book is to initiate a conversation based on our findings. Graddol's study was commissioned by the British Council to explore the impact of globalisation on the uses and role of the English language. Graddol's timeframe was to look 15 years into the future.

The year 2021 marked 15 years since *English Next* was published. In 2021 the world was in upheaval: the pandemic had turned everything upside down. People were physically distanced, some individuals were isolated, and our social, educational and professional worlds moved online. The ability to interact and engage took on importance in this new and seemingly semi-permanent environment.

The British Council operates in over a hundred countries and territories around the world to teach English, deliver UK and international qualifications, develop English language tests, engage in research activities and work with governments on education reform projects. This work in education and cultural relations supports individual, institutional and national aspirations.

The British Council's purpose as laid out in the Royal Charter (British Council, 1993, p.2) is to:

- promote cultural relationships between the people of the United Kingdom and other countries
- develop a wider knowledge of the English language
- encourage educational co-operation between the United Kingdom and other countries, support the advancement of United Kingdom education and education standards overseas, and otherwise promote education.

With these aims, the organisation endeavours to keep abreast of, as much as is possible, current use of the language, any shifts in its role in different contexts, and how it is being influenced and impacted by environmental, social and economic fluctuations, in order to better support the people that engage with it. Therefore, at a time of immense change, when computer-mediated multimodal communication seemed to be the new norm, it seemed an opportune moment for the British Council not only to reflect on Graddol's predictions 15 years on, but also to look to the future again and to explore what was actually happening to the English language and its role in the lives of individuals and in education policies. An undertaking of this nature is necessarily global. Through its work, the British Council has cultivated strong local relationships around the world and is very well placed to realise such an ambitious project.

1.2 Background

In 1997, when the British Council published the first in a series of books written by the renowned linguist and futurologist David Graddol, the position of English as the foremost global language seemed to many to be well established and unassailable. First-language (L1) speakers of English were in huge demand as possessors of the 'gold standard' model of English, and with some basic English as a foreign language (EFL) qualifications could be confident of obtaining teaching work around the world. While the concept that the 'native speaker' is the ideal teacher has been largely debunked (see, for example, Freunberger et al. 2022), it was until recently widely accepted in the linguistics and applied linguistics literatures.

Graddol's *The Future of English?* (1997) was his first publication to examine the possible effects of globalisation on the future development of English. He predicted the need for more communication across increasingly globally dispersed work teams operating in an international language and argued that English was well placed to fulfil this crucial role (pp. 32, 40, 63). This would go hand in hand with an increasing internationalisation of education, in which English would also play a critical role. However, Graddol thought that while the world would become more global, there would also be a demand for localisation of global products and services, such as the dubbing of US TV programmes into local languages (p. 47). He also wondered how changing demography would impact on youth culture and the shared language of young people globally (p. 48).

The initial thinking as outlined in *The Future of English?* was further developed through more detailed research, which led to the publication of the highly influential *English Next* in 2006. Graddol used various lenses (demographic, economic, technological, sociological and linguistic) to look at the potential development of English as a global language and what this might mean for the teaching and learning of English, as well as the changing position of other languages. He encapsulated his findings in 14 key trends (see Table 1.1) that he predicted would frame the development of English and the businesses that work in the English teaching field over the following 15 years.

In 2021, having reached this landmark 15-year point, it seemed an ideal time to pass an evaluating eye over Graddol's predictions and, by investigating available data and gathering informed insights and opinions from around the world, to look at the possible future direction of English.

As it happened, the British Council's Mike Solly was invited to give a talk at the Society of Pakistan English Language Teachers (SPELT) in late 2020 on the topic of the current and future position of English. Solly's talk encouraged participants to reflect on the extent to which the predictions contained in Graddol's 14 trends had been realised and to consider how these or other trends might play out in the future.

While planning for the talk, Solly focused on the evidence presented by Graddol in support of his claims. However, it quickly became clear that there were a number of gaps in our knowledge in terms of how some trends were identified and supported. That said, the innovative nature of the original work sparked major areas of debate and study (English, 2012; Warschauer, 2012; Yano, 2009), which, in retrospect, appears to have been at least as important as the degree of accuracy of the predictions.

At this point it became clear that a larger exploration of Graddol's sources was merited, along with a closer and more rigorous investigation into the degree of accuracy of his trends. Additionally, investigating the future of English within the broader frameworks of English language teaching (ELT) and education seemed particularly pertinent at a time when the Covid-19 pandemic was bringing about major changes throughout all domains of society. Inspired by the work of Solly (2020) when preparing for his SPELT talk, the British Council's ELRG formulated a detailed multiphase project proposal to revisit Graddol's trends and also to explore current and possible future directions of the English language and its uses in different contexts around the world. The project design leveraged two major assets of the British Council: its global reach and its eight decades of global historical ties.



Table 1.1. The 14 trends for global English identified by Graddol (2006, pp. 14–15)

The rise and fall of learners

A massive increase in the number of people learning English has already begun and is likely to reach a peak of around 2 billion in the next 10–15 years. Numbers of learners will then decline.

Widening of student age and need

Over the next decade there will be a complex and changing mix of learner ages and levels of proficiency. The situation will be one of many ages and many needs.

Rising competition

Non-native-speaker providers of ELT services elsewhere in Europe and Asia will create major competition for the UK.

Loss of traditional markets

Within a decade, the traditional private-sector market in teenage and young adult EFL learners will decline substantially.

Irreversible trend in international students

The recent decline in international students studying in the main English-speaking countries is unlikely to reverse.

Irrelevance of native speakers

Native-speaker norms are becoming less relevant as English becomes a component of basic education in many countries.

The doom of monolingualism

Monolingual English speakers face a bleak economic future, and the barriers preventing them from learning other languages are rising rapidly.

Growth of languages on the internet

The dominance of English on the internet is declining. Other languages, including lesser-used languages, are now proliferating.

Other languages will compete for resources

Mandarin and Spanish are challenging English in some territories for educational resources and policy attention.

Economic importance of other languages

The dominance of English in offshore business process outsourcing services will also decline, though more slowly, as economies in other language areas outsource services. Japanese, Spanish, French and German are already growing.

Asia may determine the future of global English

Asia, especially India and China, probably now holds the key to the long-term future of English as a global language.

The economic advantage is ebbing away

The competitive advantage which English has historically provided its acquirers (personally, organisationally and nationally) will ebb away as English becomes a near-universal basic skill. The need to maintain the advantage by moving beyond English will be felt acutely.

Retraining needed for English specialists

Specialist English teachers will need to acquire additional skills as English is less often taught as a subject on its own.

The end of English as a foreign language

Recent developments in English language teaching represent a response to the changing needs of learners and new market conditions, but they mark a 'paradigm shift' away from conventional EFL models.



1.3 Organisation of the book

The Future of English: Global Perspectives is an invitation to engage in thinking and discussions about English in its various roles and what the future holds for it. It describes the inception, implementation and findings of a long-term research project that has started to generate evidence about the use and role of English in education around the world.

Part 1 continues with Section 2, which provides an overview of the project design. The three phases of the project are introduced in more detail, providing information about data-collection methods, participants, analysis and findings.

Part 2 contains three sections. The first of these, Section 3, entitled 'Voices from around the world', presents detailed summaries of the 14 roundtables and represents the main dataset for the ensuing analysis. Section 4 then presents a series of seven individual 'Spotlights' from key individuals who participated in the roundtables. Here, specific issues that emerged in a range of roundtables are presented from a personal perspective. Finally, Section 5 reflects on the eight themes that seem to emerge from the roundtables. These are presented across two broad subsections that focus on issues around the status and position of English and its use and role in different educational and societal domains. These two subsections contain reflections on eight relevant themes and describe the main findings from Phase 2 of the project. Each theme discussion starts with a very brief literature review. This is followed by discussion and, finally, examples from the data that either confirm, contradict or provide additional insights into current thinking about the theme.

Part 3 closes the book with two short sections. The first of these sections summarises the phases of the project and findings, before the final section proposes a broad framework of research for the coming three to five years.

2 Project overview

The ELRG formulated a comprehensive project proposal that was presented to the British Council in November 2020.

The overarching aims of the project were to:

- provide insights into trends that will define the role of English as a global language over the coming decades
- inform language policy and education reform interventions
- lay out a research agenda capable of generating evidence and data to inform those policy decisions and evaluate their impact.

To meet these objectives, research was planned in three phases.

Phase 1: Evaluating Graddol’s 2006 predictions (January–April 2021)

An evaluation of Graddol’s predictions, resulting in a draft list of key predicted trends for the future.

Phase 2: Testing the British Council’s 2021 predictions (June–December 2021)

A ‘stress test’ of these predictions based on a series of high-level roundtables attended by policymakers and influencers. The roundtables were to be conducted across the world in order to gain as broad an understanding as possible. This was expected to result in a new iteration of the predictions that emerged from Phase 1.

Phase 3: Building an evidenced-based research and engagement framework (November 2021–ongoing)

Phase 3 uses the output from the previous phases as the foundation of a long-term programme of critical engagement with the themes that emerged from Phase 2, and to drive research that can inform policy and practice on the future of English in both global and local contexts.

Therefore, using Graddol's (2006) work as a starting point, the Future of English project aims to support evidence-based English language policy and education at all levels. In that respect, we should clarify that the themes of future interest identified during these phases are not seen as offering a definitive view of the future direction of English. Rather, they constitute an informed guide to setting an agenda for further research into the field. In *English Next*, Graddol looked within a 15-year timeframe. At the beginning of this project, we started by looking at the next decade.

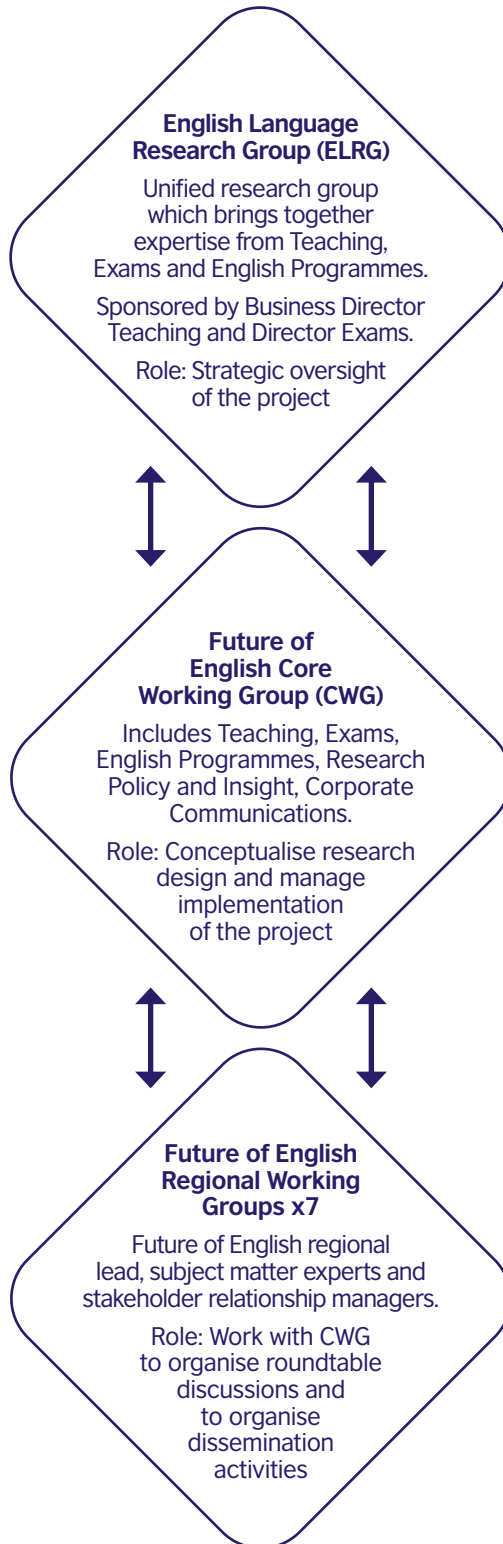
Phase 1 highlighted the fact that Covid-19 had brought about unexpected changes, making it difficult for us to be specific about the timeframe of the Future of English project. In addition, limiting the predictions of future trends to ten years seemed overly conservative in light of these changes. For these reasons we envisage this project as an ongoing undertaking. This flexibility will allow us to take into consideration changes as they happen rather than waiting for a specific date. However, for the purposes of this book we will be looking at an initial ten-year cycle, although the trends identified from the data or emerging through future research will be revisited systematically within this period.

2.1 Methodology

From the outset, the aim of the project was to take a cross-disciplinary approach both internally and externally to reach and include a wide range of audiences. The three phases were designed to draw on research experience and expertise from a range of disciplines: applied linguistics, assessment and sector experts; practitioners across the British Council network with experience in the field; and expert consultants from outside the organisation. The overall research design was exploratory and sequential, with findings from each phase informing the next. The overall design integrated multiple methods of data collection and analysis. Surveys were used to elicit perceptions from educators that might consolidate, confirm or contradict other findings from different sources, such as the desk research and roundtable discussions. We aimed to bring together policymakers and influencers to share experience and evidence-based insights to provide a deeper level of information that was more nuanced and contextualised than responses to surveys could provide.

Due to organisational requirements, Phases 1 and 2 had to be implemented and Phase 3 set in motion within a year. To achieve the project aims in this timeframe, it was necessary to put in place a solid governance structure to manage the project as a whole and to oversee and implement the individual activities. The governance structure is represented in Figure 2.1.

Figure 2.1. The Future of English project – governance structure



The British Council's ELRG brings together existing research expertise from two different departments within the organisation, English and Exams (E&E) and English Programmes (EP), into a unified research group. While relevant knowledge, experience and expertise exist in both departments, the ELRG brings these together to provide the organisation with a broader and more integrated understanding of the whole area of English teaching and learning from the operational, academic and policy perspectives.

The Future of English Core Working Group (CWG) is made up of representatives from the ELRG, Corporate Communications, and the Research and Insight (R&I) team. The R&I team commission and conduct research and analysis to anticipate future global trends that have an impact on countries' soft power, thus enabling policymakers, researchers and practitioners to use this knowledge and insight to shape their thinking.

We work with people in over two hundred countries and territories and are on the ground in more than a hundred countries. See Figure 2.2 for a guide to these regions, but please note that the figure is designed to represent a broad approximation of the regions only.

In Section 2.2 we present the three phases of the project in more detail.

Figure 2.2. The British Council regions, countries and territories

Americas

Argentina | Brazil | Canada | Chile | Colombia | Cuba | Jamaica | Mexico | Peru
Trinidad and Tobago | USA | Uruguay | Venezuela

European Union (EU)

Austria | Belgium | Bulgaria | Croatia | Cyprus | Czech Republic | Denmark | Estonia
Finland | France | Germany | Greece | Hungary | Ireland | Italy | Latvia | Lithuania
Malta | Netherlands | Norway | Poland | Portugal | Romania | Slovakia | Slovenia
Spain | Sweden | Switzerland

Middle East and North Africa (MENA)

Algeria | Bahrain | Egypt | Iraq | Jordan | Kuwait | Lebanon | Libya | Morocco
Occupied Palestinian Territories | Oman | Qatar | Saudi Arabia | Syria | Tunisia
UAE | Yemen

East Asia (EA)

Australia | China | Hong Kong | Indonesia | Japan | Korea | Malaysia | Myanmar
New Zealand | Philippines | Singapore | Taiwan | Thailand | Vietnam

South Asia (SA)

Bangladesh | India | Iran | Nepal | Pakistan | Sri Lanka

Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA)

Botswana | Cameroon | Ethiopia | Ghana | Kenya | Malawi | Mauritius | Mozambique
Namibia | Nigeria | Rwanda | Senegal | Sierra Leone | South Africa | Sudan
Tanzania | Uganda | Zambia | Zimbabwe

United Kingdom (UK)

England | Northern Ireland | Scotland | Wales

Wider Europe (WE)

Albania | Armenia | Azerbaijan | Bosnia and Herzegovina | Georgia | Israel
Kazakhstan | Kosovo | Montenegro | North Macedonia | Serbia | Turkey
Ukraine | Uzbekistan

2.2 Phase 1

2.2.1 Introduction and aims

Funding for the project was agreed in 2020, and work began on Phase 1 in January 2021. The starting point for the project was to continue Solly's (2020) work to evaluate Graddol's predictions, formulated as 14 key trends in *English Next* (Graddol, 2006). The CWG commissioned an external consultant, Dr Sarah Rich, to work with a small British Council team to produce an in-depth and evidence-based analysis of Graddol's predictions.

The main purpose of Phase 1 was to present an initial evidence-based account of the accuracy of Graddol's (2006) trends regarding the future of global English and, drawing upon this, to identify some proposed future directions for global English over the next ten years.

2.2.2 Approach/Methodology

2.2.2.1 Project team

The small research team was headed by Dr Sarah Rich. It was seen as important to have an external member of the team in order to limit any possible organisational bias (positive or negative) in interpreting the emerging evidence. Dr Rich was supported by an academic lead, Mike Solly, and a project manager, Mina Patel, both British Council employees.

2.2.2.2 Activities

The research team developed a research plan which entailed investigating available data sources and identifying and updating those that Graddol had used 15 years earlier.

It should be said that data sources for this kind of investigation are complex, and while it may be possible to obtain reliable information on certain areas of the TLA market, it is often extremely difficult, if not impossible, to obtain a globally accurate picture. This means that any mapping of trends is likely to be partial. This is particularly the case with market-oriented data, for reasons including inaccurate statistics, a scarcity or absence of trustworthy statistics, and market sensitivity about the release of statistics. However, there are areas of educational change where trends can be clearly seen in policy preferences and observed by teachers and educators in the field (Rich, 2021).

A mixed-methods approach was taken for this phase. Initial information and data were gathered through desk research based on Graddol's 14 trends. This was supplemented by a survey of English language educators. To generate an evidence base for each trend, data was sourced in a number of ways.

2.2.2.3 Main data source

- Through an examination of websites and statistics portals
- Through keyword searches using two search engines (Google and Google Scholar)
- Through an examination of British Council reports, both commissioned and internally generated

A list of the key data sources can be found in Appendix 1.

2.2.2.4 Additional data source

English language educators from around the world were invited to complete a short online survey to provide some additional data on four of Graddol's trends that were thought to be particularly relevant for educators, as it was felt that including practitioner perspectives on these trends was one way to establish their veracity. The four trends included were:

- rise and fall of learners
- widening of student age and need
- irrelevance of native speakers
- the economic advantage is ebbing away.

To encourage participation and completion, the survey was designed to be focused and concise. The survey was based on a questionnaire developed by Solly (2020) and comprised 16 close-ended questions and a number of follow-up open-ended questions. A copy of the survey can be found in Appendix 2. The survey was distributed via Survey Monkey, and an invitation and link shared with members of the British Council Teacher Network and the Hornby Scholars network. The survey was open for participation for two weeks.

2.2.2.5 Survey participants

The survey was completed by 390 language educators in 42 countries across all eight British Council regions (see Figure 2.2 for list of regions).

Most participants (58 per cent) were English teachers but there was also good representation from teacher educators (30 per cent) and other educational stakeholders (12 per cent). Most participants (62 per cent) were not first-language speakers of English and a further 14 per cent indicated that they were bilingual. There was a good balance between the number of participants working in the private and state school sectors and in terms of the coverage of the basic (primary and secondary) and post-basic (tertiary) education stages and the range of English language learning specialisms covered. (Rich, 2021, p. 10)

The main findings are presented below, first looking back at Graddol's 14 trends and then looking forward based on Rich's findings.

2.2.3 Looking back at Graddol

The findings of the review of Graddol's (2006) trends in Phase 1 are briefly summarised in Table 2.1.



Table 2.1. Findings of the review of Graddol's (2006) 14 trends (Rich, 2021, p. 39)

The rise and fall of learner numbers

It seems very likely that Graddol's projected estimate of 2 billion English language learners by 2020 has been reached, but there is no real evidence of any substantial fall in numbers to date.

Widening of student age and need

Graddol's prediction that there would be a widening of student age and needs has occurred.

Retraining needed for English specialists

There is no real evidence that the growth of English medium instruction (EMI) has led to a need for English teachers to be retrained, but it has led to a growth in specialist masters provision (programmes focusing on areas such as EME, Young Learners and ICT and the teaching of English for teachers).

Loss of traditional markets

There are some signs of a decline in the enrolment of adults in private language schools in the UK but no evidence of a decline in teenager numbers.

Irrelevance of native-speaker norms

Challenges in creating standards for global English and the uptake of these mean that native-speaker norms are still widely used for standard-setting. While the recruitment of non-native speaker teachers has grown steadily, there has been no downturn in the market for native-speaker teachers.

Rising competition

Graddol's prediction that there would be rising competition for non-native English providers has been verified by data sources.

Irreversible trend in international students

There is no evidence to date of a decline in international students completing degrees in the UK as Graddol predicted.

The end of ‘English as a foreign language’

There are signs that a paradigm shift away from English as a foreign language is underway.

Economic importance of other languages

There are no signs that the economic importance of other languages is impacting on the continued status English holds as global lingua franca.

Growth of languages on the internet

While other languages are increasingly used on the internet, there are no signs that this is impacting on the dominance of English.

Asia may determine the future of global English

The changing demographic and economic landscape means that Asia will likely influence the future of global English but is unlikely to determine it.

Other languages will compete for resources

There are no real signs that other languages are competing with English for resources to date.

The economic advantage is ebbing away

There is a growing interest in the learning of other languages for a variety of reasons, including to maintain an economic advantage.

The doom of monolingualism

There is some evidence that monolingualism is impacting on economic prospects, but recent policy initiatives to increase additional language learning opportunities in the UK mean that some of the barriers identified by Graddol as preventing the learning of other languages are now being removed.


Based on these findings, in her report Rich proposes ten projected trends (see Appendix 3) from Graddol’s original 14 for the coming ten years.


2.2.4 Looking forward based on Rich's findings


The British Council team then further analysed the ten proposed trends with a view to identifying gaps and emerging issues that had not been predicted by Graddol. For example, Graddol only touched on multilingualism in society and education. Nowadays, though, it is clear that the 'multilingual turn' (May, 2014) – the growing importance of leveraging the positive advantages of multilingual classrooms within a pedagogical framework – is being recognised as being increasingly more significant and worthy of more attention. The notion of 'inclusion', while an important background reality in the context of *English Next* (Graddol, 2006), has also now developed and been foregrounded in a significant way, encompassing equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI), and notions such as decolonising the curriculum seem now to be of far greater interest than previously (Harding-Esch and Coleman, 2021). These two areas (multilingual turn and inclusion) were added to the ten trends that emerged from the Rich report. In addition, following a detailed presentation and discussion of the 12 trends with the British Council's English Language Advisory Group (ELAG), a number of additional areas of interest were added. This brought the total number of trends to 16. The 16 trends were not intended to be 'fixed' or final, as they were not all based on empirical evidence. Rather, the purpose of these 16 trends and the summary report was to provide input for further data collection in Phase 2 of the project, with the predictions being 'stress tested' at regional roundtables, leading to an agreed group of themes for future research. The 16 trends are summarised in Table 2.2.





Table 2.2. Projected future trends from Phase 1


- 


1. The number of English language learners globally is likely to remain the same.
- 


2. Online English language learning will be a significant growth area.
- 

3. Primary schoolchildren will start to study English as a subject later than currently, and not before year 3.
- 

4. The teaching of English as a subject will continue to be the main way English is taught in basic education.
- 

5. EME will continue to be widely employed in higher education. However, in some countries, policies for basic education will favour English as a subject over English-medium education.
- 

6. The widening of programmes to cater for English for specific purposes will continue.
- 

7. The paradigm shift away from English as a foreign language will continue, with pedagogies that emphasise global Englishes and multilingual realities gaining more ground.
- 

8. Competition from non-UK (English language teaching) providers will continue to increase, but the reputational quality of UK provision will mean that study in the UK will remain attractive, although possibly to a reduced market.

9.

English will continue as the leading global lingua franca despite the growing economic and geopolitical power of a number of non-anglophone countries.

10.

The importance of multilingualism will lead to concerted efforts to promote additional language learning in anglophone countries in order to enhance international trade and participate in global dialogue.

11.

More emphasis will be given to equality, diversity and inclusion in teaching, learning and assessment.

12.

The use of alternative methods of assessing English as a global language will continue to accelerate, while native-speaker norms will continue to be the standard in some assessment contexts.

13.

The importance of testing and assessment as part of the learning system will increase. As a result, assessment practices will be more fully integrated into learning systems.

14.

There will be more recognition that speaking and listening need to be not only well taught but also well assessed.

15.

There will be a focus on the use of digital technologies to enable access to English language learning for those currently excluded.

16.

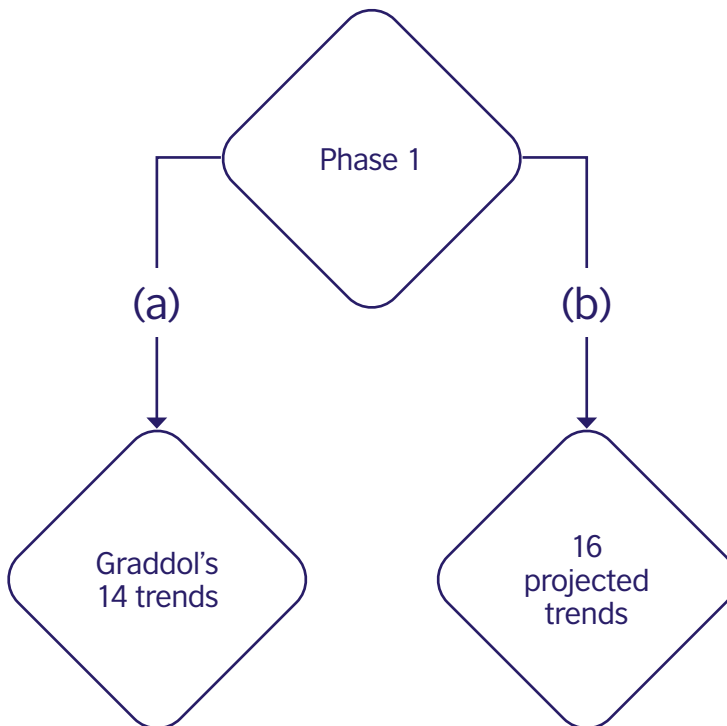
In post-colonial contexts, and in line with the broad movement to decolonise education and society, English will be repositioned in models of education within which indigenous languages are increasingly valued.

2.2.5 Overall findings from Phase 1

An important finding from Phase 1 was that changes had taken place since Graddol's 2006 predictions were made. As Rich (2021, p. 5) points out, 'while not all of Graddol's trends resonate with the situation regarding global English in 2021, there are several that do. For those that don't, there is a sense in which they point to scenarios that may yet emerge in the next ten years'. Because of the scant available data, Rich's claims were regarded as tentative. However, based on Rich's findings, Graddol's trends were updated to create 16 projected trends (see Table 2.2). These projections were designed to be provisional and interim and mainly for the purpose of providing stimulus for the roundtable discussion in Phase 2. To evaluate the predictions, a systematic approach was needed. This project sets an example for adopting an evidence-based, systematic approach to looking into the global trends of English language education, use of English and social/educational/economic impact.

Figure 2.3 summarises the first phase. Here, we can see that the objective (a) was to first evaluate Graddol's (2006) 14 trends from *English Next*. The output from Phase 1 (b) was 16 projected trends developed to stimulate discussion about the future of English during Phase 2.

Figure 2.3. Summary of Phase 1 objectives and output



2.3 Phase 2

2.3.1 Introduction/Aims

In order to stress test the 16 projected trends, a series of roundtable discussions were planned. These would involve high-level policymakers and influencers from across the world in order to ensure that we garnered an appropriate macro-level understanding of the issues as seen from these various perspectives.

The roundtable discussions served two purposes. First, to appraise the 16 predictions that were developed at the end of Phase 1 of the project. Second, to elicit the opinions of a specific group of stakeholders on the future of English in their own contexts based on their expertise in, experiences of, observations of and insights into current and emerging practice and use – an exercise with the potential of broadening the discussion beyond the 16 trends.

2.3.2 Approach/Methodology

2.3.2.1 Participants

Dörnyei (2007, pp. 125–6) states that ‘the main goal of sampling is to find individuals who can provide rich and varied insights into the phenomenon under investigation so as to maximise what we learn’. Therefore, in qualitative research we are seeking out individuals who have the information we want and are willing to share it with us. Given that this phase of the project was expected to generate evidence from a macro-level perspective, we made the decision that the primary aim for these roundtables was to gain insights from policymakers and influencers. We based this decision on the assumption that these participants would have oversight of national and perhaps regional English and education policies, practices and use. And with voices from eight regions across the world (see Figure 2.2 above for a detailed breakdown), we could begin to build a global picture.

The British Council’s global network has established relationships with stakeholders in over a hundred countries across the globe, giving us a unique opportunity to access participants for the roundtables. The project overview and purpose were shared with regional teams both to generate interest and engagement across our own organisation and to identify and invite participants to the roundtables. The participants were policymakers and influencers from a range of backgrounds.

Most of them had direct involvement with English in one way or another, but we also had representation from science, technology, HR, sport and young people, so providing an interesting and wide range of perspectives and insights.

The project design included expertise external to the organisation, with the aim of adding external validation to the project. In this phase of the project we worked with a company called Trajectory, who describe themselves as a team of ‘strategic insight and foresight experts’ (Trajectory Partnership, n.d.). In preparation for the roundtables, Trajectory designed the discussion guides that facilitators would use to steer the conversations and the guides that note-takers would use to document the sessions. They also later analysed the roundtable discussions.

2.3.2.2 Roundtable discussions

A roundtable discussion is a forum where everyone present is on equal footing. No one is ‘the’ expert regarding an issue. It is an excellent strategy for public engagement because it brings together voices from every stratum of concerned citizens. (Bridgeman, 2010, abstract)

The British Council has extensive experience of organising roundtable discussions for engagement in all areas of our work, and though the discussions were managed in a similar way to focus groups, we knew that for the level of stakeholders we wanted, an invitation to a focus group would not carry the same authority or be as attractive as an invitation to a roundtable discussion. Another feature of roundtable discussions is that they allow for the attendance of observers – additional spectators who do not actively participate in the discussion but instead remain silent and listen. The presence of silent observers – on this occasion, British Council regional employees – offered an additional data-gathering opportunity after each roundtable discussion. We observed that British Council regional teams found their involvement in setting up the roundtables, and later contributing to the data, both motivating and rewarding. The project had leveraged their professional networks and also their experience and expertise in the field.

The aim of the roundtables was to generate two sets of rich and useful data from a variety of perspectives. The first data set was notes taken by two note-takers in each roundtable. The second data set was transcriptions of recordings of internal British Council debrief meetings after each roundtable. The debrief meetings were for all of the silent observers and the facilitator present at each roundtable. With that aim, each roundtable consisted of a range of actors with different roles to facilitate the discussion and gather the data (See Table 2.3).

Table 2.3. Roundtable actors' roles and responsibilities

Actor	No.	Role
Facilitator	1	To manage the discussion, to prompt participants when necessary and to ensure that the discussion didn't stray too far from the central theme. The facilitator was either an external consultant or a member of the British Council regional team.
Hook presenter	1	To present the outputs of Phase 1: a short summary of the evaluation of Graddol's trends and the 16 new predictions. Prior to each roundtable, participants had received a report summarising this information to give them some background for the discussion. However, we could not be sure that everyone would have read the summary report before the event. Therefore, the hook presentation served either as revision of the content or as new input for the participants. Either way, it provided a stimulus for the discussion.
Participants	7	We planned for a maximum of seven participants for each roundtable. Previous experience in organising discussions such as these suggested that seven participants would allow for a range of perspectives and still allow enough time for everyone to share their opinions. The same experience indicated that because of the profile of the participants and their busy schedules, one or more participants might drop out of each roundtable, but this would still leave enough participants to generate dialogue and discussion. This proved to be the case on a number of occasions, hence the total of 92 participants for 14 roundtables.
Note-takers	2	To take notes of the discussion. This was necessary as the roundtables were not recorded. The note-takers, one from the CWG and a British Council representative from the region, were given a briefing and a note-taking guide before each roundtable.
Silent observers	3	These were British Council employees from the central project team or from the regional teams. CWG members attended if they were available and/or they had a specific interest in a particular region. Regional colleagues who attended consisted of those that had helped to set up the roundtables or those interested in the themes under discussion.
Logistics support	1	To manage the logistics and administrative aspects of the meeting, including support for any technological issues that arose.

All of the roundtables were online, and this allowed participants from multiple countries to join the discussion at the same time. The platform used was Microsoft Teams, and each roundtable was planned for two hours. A decision was made not to record the discussion in order to eliminate any potential inhibition that recording might cause for participants. Our aim was to create an open and unrestricted forum for participants to speak freely and share their views without inhibition. However, with the consent of the participants, two note-takers were present to capture the main points of the discussion.

From the outset we had decided that the participant group for the Phase 2 roundtables would be focused and strategic. We were seeking regional and national oversight of English language trends and policy. We recognised that as the project progressed we would need to expand our sampling to include a wider range of perspectives, including from educators, learners and perhaps even parents. This situation is expected to be addressed in later phases of the project.

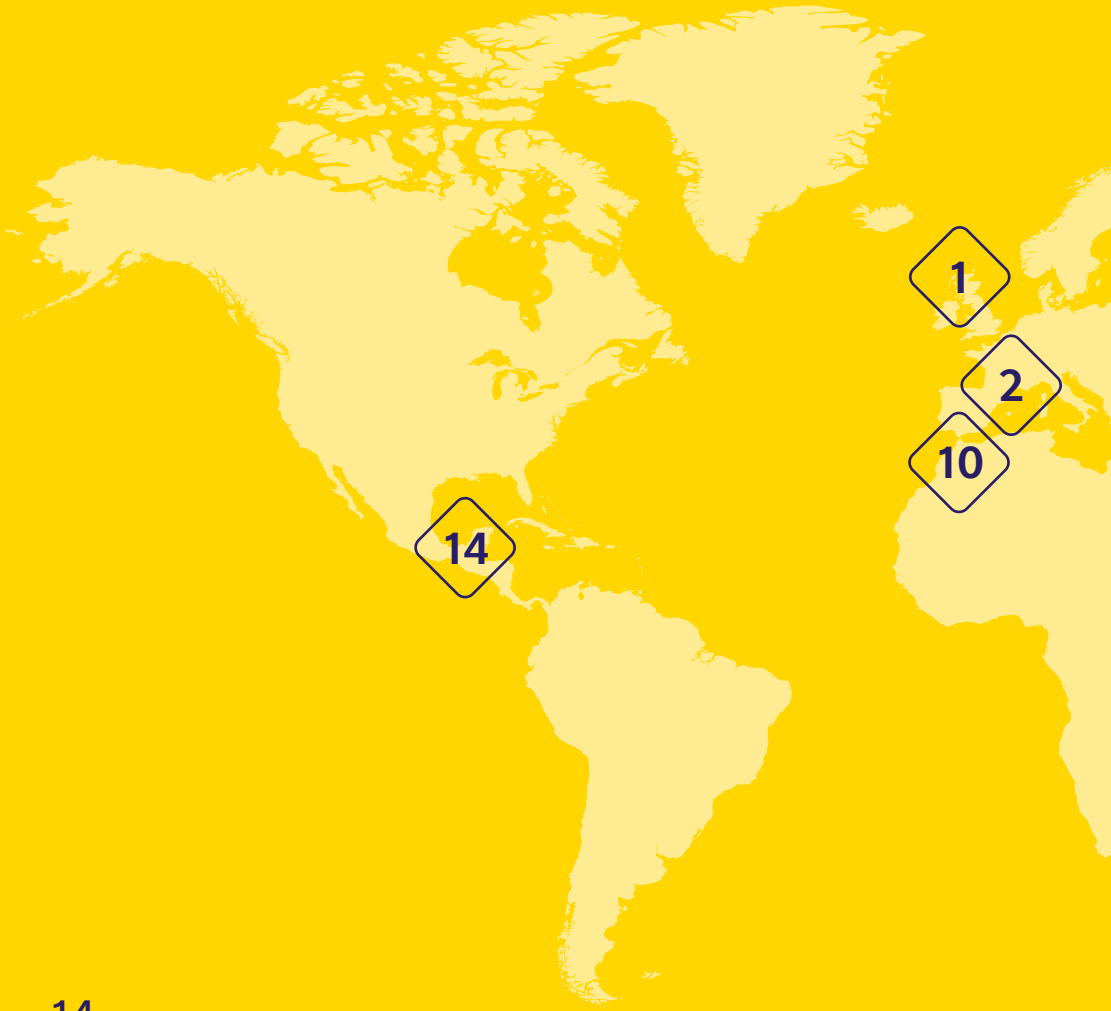
In total, 14 roundtable discussions were facilitated from July to December 2021, involving 92 participants from 49 countries and territories. Figure 2.4 shows the geographical reach of the Phase 2 roundtables.



Figure 2.4: Geographical reach of the roundtables

Future of English regional roundtables

The Future of English: Global Perspectives



14
Roundtables
49
Countries and territories
92
Policymakers
and policy influencers



1. **UK ELAG**
2. **EU Europe**
Germany, Italy,
Poland, Spain
3. **Wider Europe**
Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan,
Turkey
4. **South Asia**
Pakistan
5. **South Asia**
India
6. **South Asia**
Bangladesh, Nepal,
Sri Lanka,
7. **East Asia**
China
8. **East Asia: NE Asia**
Japan, South Korea,
Taiwan
9. **East Asia: ASEAN**
Australia, Indonesia,
Philippines, Singapore,
Thailand, Vietnam
10. **MENA: Maghreb**
Libya, Morocco, Tunisia
11. **MENA: Gulf**
Bahrain, KSA, Kuwait,
Oman, Qatar, UAE
12. **MENA: Egypt
and Levant**
Egypt, Iraq, Jordan,
Lebanon, Occupied
Palestinian Territories,
Syria, Yemen
13. **Sub-Saharan Africa**
Ghana, Nigeria,
Rwanda, South Africa,
Sudan
14. **Americas**
Argentina, Brazil,
Colombia, Mexico,
USA

2.3.2.3 Debrief meetings

The facilitator, silent observers from the regional teams and note-takers were invited to debrief meetings a day or two after the roundtables. The debrief meetings served several purposes. First, they gave British Council employees an opportunity to share their views on the roundtable discussion and to highlight aspects of the discussion they had found particularly interesting or surprising, or that had been omitted. Second, silent observers from the regional teams were asked to provide their own input on the 16 predictions and their opinions on other directions for the future of English. Their input was seen as valuable for these two purposes, particularly as they brought sector expertise and regional experience to the project. Third, as most regional silent observers were involved in setting up the roundtables, they were asked to provide feedback on the internal process. This information would be used to improve future work of this kind. With the permission of the silent observers, all of the debriefs were recorded and transcribed.

2.3.3 Analyses

The roundtable discussions produced two rich and interesting datasets. The first was from the two sets of notes taken at each roundtable discussion, and the second was from the debrief meetings. Additional data was provided by one of the external facilitators, who submitted a summary of the discussion from his perspective. This proved useful as it provided us with another interpretation of the discussion. In order to add further rigour to our coding and analysis, Trajectory were invited to analyse the roundtable discussion notes. They analysed them to identify the common themes and trends that were raised and discussed during the roundtables, including an overview of individual trends as well as their likely future progression, scope and impact.

An initial assessment of these trends was produced after the first set of roundtables, which was iterated after each wave of sessions. Where trends were discussed in multiple roundtables, their description was updated to reflect the new insights, while others were added to the overall analysis. After all the roundtables had been completed, a final presentation was produced, summarising the trends that had emerged.

The British Council thematically analysed the discussion notes taken by the note-takers and the transcriptions from the debrief meetings, based on the themes in the discussion guide. The data from each roundtable was first analysed individually and, a high-level summary was produced and shared with the roundtable participants as an overview of the discussion. All the data was then aggregated for further investigation. This resulted in the identification of eight broad questions, which will be outlined in the following section and discussed in detail in Section 5.

2.3.4 Main findings of Phase 2

Initially, we naively thought it might be possible to emulate Graddol and emerge from this phase of the project with new trends for the future of English. Though the data from the roundtables was extraordinarily rich, and definite areas of interest/themes emerged, it quickly became clear that we were not in a position to make revised or new trends. The data provided us with eight areas of interest that were globally relevant, broad and complex, and as each was explored we soon identified gaps in the emerging information, leading to more questions that needed further investigation.

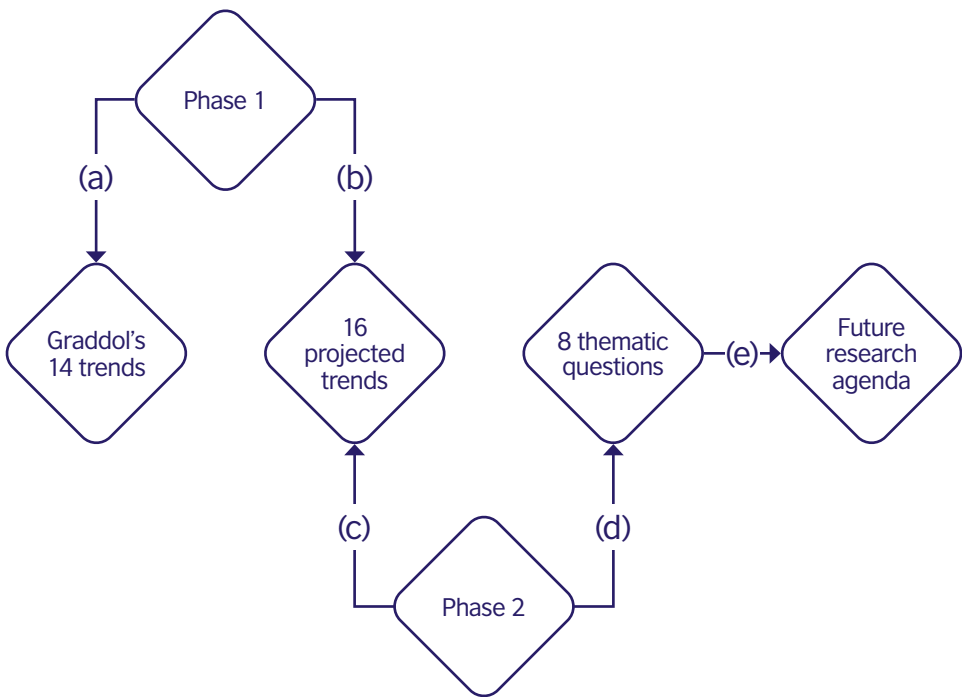
The questions that emerged from the data are:

- Will English remain the world's most sought-after language?
- What role will English play in our multilingual reality?
- What is the future of English as a medium of education?
- How will teachers remain relevant in future English language learning systems?
- Public and private English language provision: who has the answers?
- Can English language assessment meet stakeholders' changing needs?
- Can technology narrow the equity gap in English language education?
- To what extent is employment driving the future of English?

As already stated, the themes are broad and complex and require further, extensive exploration (and more data) to evidence any potential claims that could be made. For a more detailed discussion of the themes, see Section 5.

The process of moving from Graddol's (2006) 14 trends to the eight emerging areas of interest is represented in Fig. 2.5. This figure, which builds on Figure 2.3, shows how in Phase 2 the 16 projected trends from Phase 1 were assessed through the 14 regional roundtables with policymakers and influencers (c). Analysis of the outcomes of these roundtables led to the identification of eight thematic questions (d) which in turn led to the formulation of a preliminary long-term research agenda around the future of English (e).

Figure 2.5. Summary of Phases 1 and 2 objectives and output



2.3.5 Implications for the project going forward

The main conclusion to be drawn from the findings of Phases 1 and 2 was that more data, both qualitative and quantitative, were needed from a wider range of stakeholders. The eight thematic questions needed populating with hard evidence from a variety of sources to enable substantive claims about the directions that global English could be moving in. In order to achieve this, and therefore move closer to achieving the ambitious objectives of this project, the organisation drew on the experience and expertise of the global research community by initiating the Future of English Research Grants scheme. This is reported on in Section 2.4, as Phase 3 of the project.

2.4 Phase 3

Phase 3 of the Future of English project differs from the previous two phases in scope, focus and timelines. Phase 3 takes the outputs from the previous phases and uses them as a foundation for implementing a long-term programme of activity, including supporting an evolving research agenda to drive data collection in collaboration with and from an expanding range of stakeholders. At the time of publication, Phase 3 will be in the early stages of implementing these activities, and as the nature of this phase is thus qualitatively distinct from the previous stages, the overview below will be limited to a brief outline of the aims and some of the initial principal activities that are under way for this phase.

The description in this book of Phases 1–3 clearly shows how the project has been constantly evolving, from inception to the point of publication, with each step helping to shape the evolution, development and implementation of subsequent activities. Since Phase 3 will continue in this same spirit, we do not propose to lay out a definitive linear approach to pursuing a fixed set of research questions. The themes described in this publication, and the research agenda formulated and disseminated as part of Phase 3, are expected to evolve and change as more data is collected, shared and evaluated by a growing Future of English research and practice community.

Figure 2.6. Summary of Phases 1, 2 and 3 objectives and output

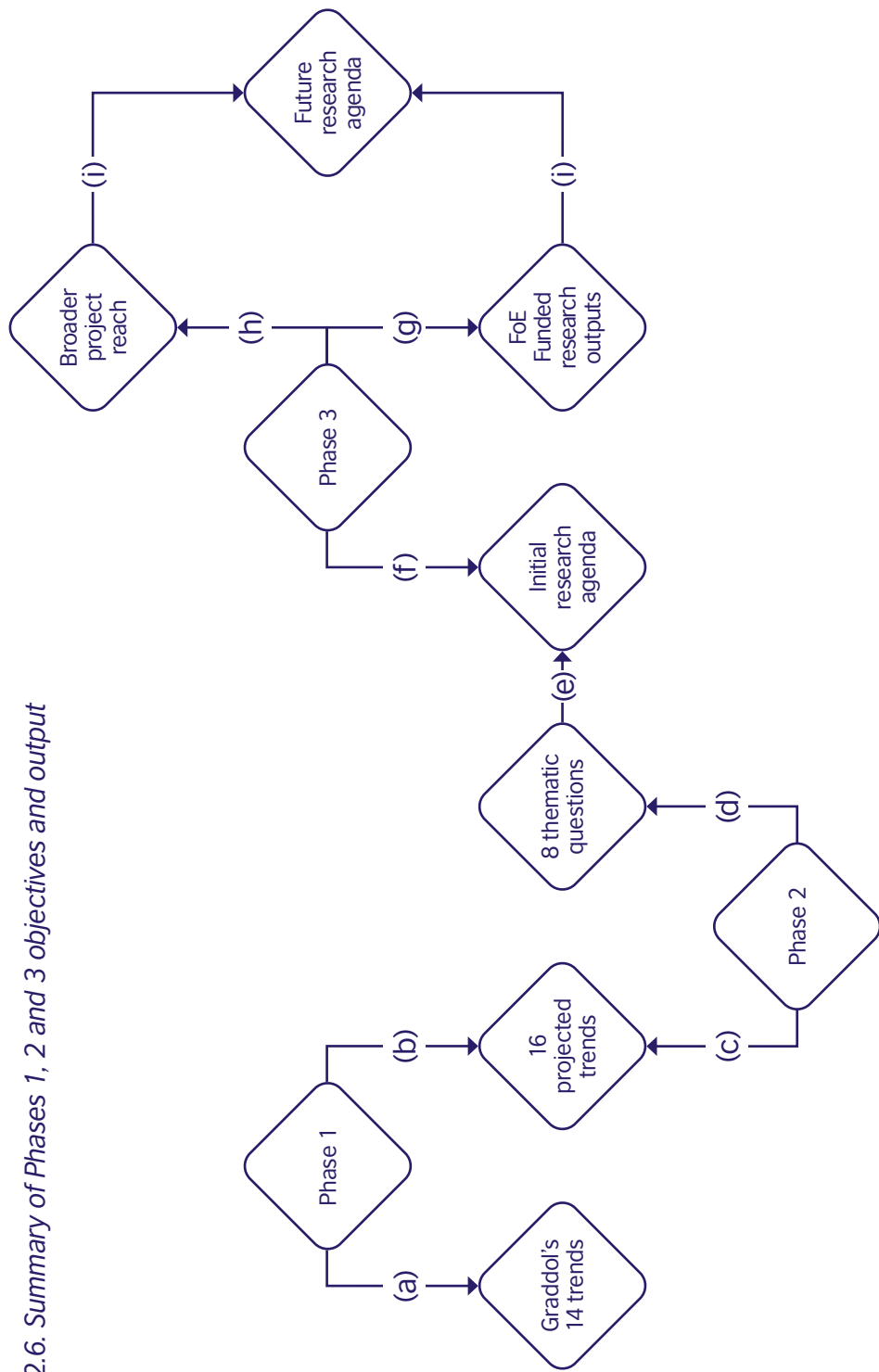


Figure 2.6 adds Phase 3 to the process shown in Figures 2.3 and 2.5. Here, we can see that in Phase 3 a funded research programme was launched based on the initial research agenda (g). In addition, plans were drawn up to broaden the scope and scale of the research (h). These included an additional PhD researcher grant scheme and the creation of a community of practice (CoP) made up of individuals and institutions with an interest in research in the area. Plans were also drawn up to involve other stakeholders in the ongoing research, for example teachers, employers and young people in education or employment. As mentioned above, the ongoing and planned research activities are intended to contribute to a longer-term research agenda (i), which, by its very nature, will not be rigidly linear but will be built around the findings and trends that emerge in the coming years.

Phase 3 has two central aims which overlap and will together contribute to an evolving understanding of how different parts of the world and different stakeholder groups can realise the opportunities – and overcome the challenges – related to the role of English as a global language within their contexts. These are:

- to disseminate the research findings and engage with stakeholders globally to further explore the area
- to establish an evidence-based research and data-collection agenda.

These aims are discussed in the next section.

2.4.1 Dissemination and engagement

The findings from Phases 1 and 2 of the Future of English will be made available through publications, conferences, events for the wider public and other means. The purpose is to share these findings and the methods used to generate them with a widening group of stakeholders globally. Dissemination is not intended as a one-way channel; we expect and encourage critical evaluation and engagement with the themes.

Through this open engagement, a clear framework for extending and developing the research agenda laid out in the Future of English publication will evolve. The dissemination and engagement activities will thus not be a parallel stream of activity but one envisaged as interacting closely with the research and data-collection activities described below. As the research questions and framework evolve, so too will the evidence-based, actionable insights derived from this research by and for policymakers, educators, researchers, practitioners and the broader public.

Dissemination and engagement activities will include:

- **The Future of English publication.** This will form the foundation of activities in Phase 3. It is important, however, to remember that it is a springboard into a longer-term, dynamically evolving field of study around the future of English and not an end point in itself.
- **Participation in conferences and public forums.** The aim of these activities is to engage with stakeholders in critically evaluating the themes identified in Phases 1 and 2, and to help shape a field of study and enquiry with experts globally around the future of English.
- **Future of English Research Forum.** This event will be held as part of the Future of English Grant Scheme described under research activities below. The conference will be an annual event that will help disseminate the findings generated by the three-year projects funded in the 2022–25 round of the Future of English Research Grants.
- **Position papers produced by the British Council.** These will target relevant themes to identify areas of transformation and the steps needed to achieve change that the British Council believes will deliver results for stakeholders, with a particular focus on education policy and practice.
- **Research releases and updates.** In addition to the Future of English Grant Scheme conference, the British Council will initiate a regular programme of releasing research and findings generated by the long-term research, dissemination, and engagement activities in Phase 3.

2.4.2 Towards an evidence-based research and data-collection agenda

2.4.2.1 Data collection by the British Council

The British Council will initiate and carry out an expanding programme of quantitative and qualitative data collection through surveys, interviews and focus groups, policy roundtables and other means of public engagement, which will build on the foundations of Phases 1 and 2 laid out in the Future of English publication. This data collection will also expand the range of stakeholder groups, engaging, for example, with teachers, employers and young people in education or employment.

The data collected will drive our understanding of how the key Future of English themes are playing out at global and local levels and help to answer questions that the themes have raised and for which current levels of data do not provide clear answers. An important part of this range of activities is that the data, and the instruments that are used to collect it, will be made accessible to researchers and other groups who wish to engage with and add to it by adapting the data-collection instruments for use in their own contexts.

2.4.2.2 The Future of English Research Grant Scheme 2022–25

Achieving the objectives of the Future of English in relation to evidence-based research will require contributions from a wide range of experts and organisations using a cross-disciplinary range of research methods. As such, in addition to research carried out directly by the British Council, such as the kinds of data-collection activities described above, an ambitious research grant scheme was launched to attract leading researchers to target key areas of interest identified by the project. The grant scheme was launched in 2022 and was designed to fund multiyear projects that will contribute to the development of the Future of English research agenda.

The Future of English Research Grant Scheme is intended to contribute to a comprehensive, evidenced-based research framework. It is thus a part of what is hoped will be an expanding field of study and research. The range of projects funded in this round of the research grants was not expected to address all of the themes. They are an important, but necessarily partial, step in trying to fill some of the gaps in data identified by the scanning of global data sources described in Phase 1 of the project. In addition to the Future of English Research Grant Scheme, it is, of course, hoped that additional research schemes will be initiated and supported by the British Council and other organisations, to expand the scope of research carried out as part of the global field of study the Future of English project is intended to initiate.

2.4.2.3 The launch of the Future of English Grant Scheme 2022–25

In November 2021, the British Council put out a call for proposals for the Future of English Research Grants 2022. The call encouraged research projects that would review the findings of Phases 1 and 2 included in this publication through more extensive research, and develop the tools and methodology to gather the kind of data that was not available for the work in Phase 1. With these goals in mind, applications were invited to address one or more of the following areas:

- critically evaluate the key trends identified by the Future of English project
- develop new and ambitious methods for measuring and tracking the key trends
- find effective means of measuring and understanding the impact of greater digital engagement and new technology on English as a foreign language
- develop baseline data to enable longitudinal studies of the trends
- track trends through extensive, robust and longitudinal evidence-based data collection
- evaluate and interpret the trends over an extended timeframe
- evaluate educational interventions, analyse policy innovations and recommend new solutions designed to facilitate positive impact for the future use of English, particularly in support of development, prosperity and security in global Official Development Assistance (ODA) contexts.¹

2.4.2.4 Key features of the Future of English Grant Scheme 2022–25

The scheme is intended to support a programme of research to provide data, develop new and innovative research methods and give actionable insights for policymakers, educators and other stakeholders on leading trends associated with the role of English as a global language.

¹ The majority of research projects undertaken as part of these grants must be ODA compliant, with the promotion of the economic development and welfare of developing countries as their main objective.

An important feature of the Future of English Research Grant Scheme is that it prioritises projects that put the economic development and welfare of developing countries as their main objective and are therefore ODA compliant. Although principal investigators were required to be part of a UK-based HE institution eligible for UK Visa and Immigration (UKVI) research council funding, grant applicants were encouraged to include partners and co-investigators from international institutions and to engage with non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and other kinds of partners in the local contexts the research and data collection would target.

2.4.2.5 Funded projects in the 2022–25 Future of English Research Grant Scheme

Of the 13 proposals received from UK universities, four were chosen for funding.

In total, four principal investigators are working with 26 co-investigators in over 40 countries to research the current and future use and practice of English for work and study. For an overview of each project, its research aims, methodology and the lead UK institution to which the principal investigator belongs, see Appendix 4.

2.4.2.6 Community of practice

Successful applicants were expected to join a CoP managed by a committee comprising representatives from the research teams and the British Council. The aim of the CoP is to facilitate information exchange, discussion of best practice and sharing of regular project updates. CoP activities include open webinars, face-to-face seminars and other dissemination opportunities agreed by the CoP committee. These will encourage and enable exchange of knowledge and information between the grant holders, the British Council and policymakers, educators, NGOs and third-sector organisations and professionals in a range of international contexts.

2.4.2.7 Development through a PhD studentship

The Future of English Research Grants 2022 included an optional application for a funded full-time PhD studentship to be attached to the applicant's main research grant project. Each institution was limited to a maximum of one PhD studentship per application. The aims of the studentships are twofold: to support the primary research focus of the grants and to offer a professional development path to emergent researchers in this area of interest. PhD candidates funded by the Future of English PhD Studentship Fund have the opportunity to spend up to three months a year as interns with the British Council on British Council projects. The internships are considered to be an integral part of the funded studentship and are designed to give the PhD candidates valuable experience in working on real-world issues and research projects relevant to their field of interest and study. They also enable the PhD candidates to build strong relationships and networks with stakeholders, inside and outside the British Council.

This concludes the introductory description of the Future of English project. In Part 2 we present an overview of the data gathered from the regional roundtables in addition to the individual Spotlights written by roundtable participants. The section concludes by presenting the eight themes that emerged from our analysis of this data.







Part 2

The Future of English: Global Perspectives



3 Voices from around the world

Part 2 presents perspectives on the future of English from around the world. Sections 3 and 4 are the summaries from the roundtable discussions and 'Spotlights' written by roundtable participants on aspects of English pertinent to them in their contexts, respectively. The summaries provide a high-level overview of the regional roundtable discussions and are loosely structured to reflect the four main areas of discussion observed across all 14 events.

The four areas are:

- the role or status of English
- English as a cultural object
- English in the learning system
- specific learning system issues.

The Spotlights then illuminate one or more components of the summaries in a little more detail. In presenting this combination, we hope that Part 2 gives voice to important contextual insights and opinions from around the world.

3.1 Roundtable summaries: introduction and aims

As presented in Section 2, the purpose of the roundtables was to bring together important policymakers and policy influencers to:

- assess the 16 trends that emerged from Phase 1 of the project
- share perspectives and insights on the current and future trends and drivers for English in their contexts, drawing on the political, social and economic spheres.

All participants received a copy of *The Future of English: Past and Future Predictions Summary Report* prior to the roundtable discussion and were also given a presentation on the main points of the report at the beginning of the roundtable.

The information in the summaries draws from two data sources:

- the analysis of roundtable discussions: the discussions using futures methodology by Trajectory
- thematic analysis of roundtable debrief sessions: these sessions provided an opportunity for British Council staff to share their experience and opinions of the current and future trends and drivers for English.

One roundtable was organised in every region, apart from East Asia, the Middle East and North Africa (MENA), and South Asia. These three regions hosted three roundtables each, to accommodate the diversity represented in these regions and because of their size; for example, we felt that India and China warranted roundtables of their own.

The summaries aggregate this information from the roundtables to present an overview of potential trends and drivers for the countries and territories represented. It is important to note that at this stage the findings presented in the individual summaries were broad and interim. The project was still under way, and the overall data from all the roundtables was yet to be aggregated and analysed together.

3.2 Americas roundtable

The countries represented in the Americas regional roundtable were Argentina, Brazil, Colombia, Mexico and the USA.

Trends and drivers in a nutshell

- Demand for English is high across the region. Access to HE and economic benefits are the big drivers. People are becoming more aware that English can make a big difference in their lives.
- Technology, in one form or another, is here to stay and is seen as important for education. Decisions need to be made about making it accessible and equitable for all.
- Employment is a major driver for the demand for English, particularly in the tourism sector.
- Countries within the region face similar challenges and disparities in all domains. There is potential for them to learn from each other and work together to find solutions.

3.2.1 Similarities across the region

Before presenting the main findings in terms of the four high-level elements introduced above, it is important to identify a series of common challenges across the region. These include (but are not limited to):

- a lack of English teachers as well as teachers with low English language proficiency
- teachers lacking the pedagogy to effectively exploit the technology they may have. All countries represented were interested in capacity building
- the vast size of the countries represented. Within each country the situation and demands can vary drastically, making it difficult to have a centralised education system. Therefore, governments are sometimes managing multiple systems with multiple needs in very different contexts in the same country
- disparities in each country, such as rural–urban, rich–poor, good–poor infrastructure, public–private education systems, to name a few. Learning English and the use of technology could help to equalise those divisions, or it could exacerbate them.

3.2.2 The role or status of English

3.2.2.1 English for employment

- English is seen as the main tool for better access to employment, particularly in the hospitality sector, where it is a primary requirement.
- There is a recognition in the region that being able to use English directly correlates to higher salaries.
- There is a move away from learners needing to show their proficiency through test certificates for work. More valuable is the ability for employees to be able to communicate and hold a conversation in their specific work contexts.
- There is also recognition that different jobs require different skills in English and different levels of proficiency. For example, in the tourism sector there is a difference in the type of English needed by front- and back-office employees.

3.2.2.2 Equality and inclusion (English as a levelling influence)

- Like technology, English could be a driver for equality, but it could also increase existing gaps.
- In order to resolve existing inequalities, two main problems need to be solved: connectivity for all and the supply of good teachers. These two issues were highlighted during the discussion, but other fundamental disparities in the countries represented include divisions between urban and rural, rich and poor, and private and public education systems.
- It was suggested that, for education, the private sector should perhaps support the public sector to help resolve existing issues.
- There is more recognition of indigenous languages. In Colombia, the new basic education (BE) policy recognises the need to acknowledge the range of native languages to encourage functional plurilingualism. In Mexico, tourist areas have many indigenous people who do not necessarily speak Spanish; they often prefer to speak English and, therefore, may be bilingual in their native language and English.

3.2.3 English in the learning system

3.2.3.1 English language learning

- In Argentina, many teenagers are improving their English skills on their own through media and virtual channels, thus not relying as much on the formal school system. This needs to be channelled into the formal school system in some way. There may be a need for school assessments to reflect these new ways of learning.
- In order to encourage and foster autonomous learning systematically, both learners and teachers need additional support in the form of guidelines and resources. This refers to the idea of ecosystems and the need to conceptualise what they are and how they will support learners and teachers.
- If public school systems do not provide sufficient good-quality English teaching, individuals will exercise their autonomy and learn English using the means available to them. This may be by turning to private education or investing in the resources needed to learn at home, for example. This motivation to learn English is positive, but could increase the disparity between those who can afford investment and those who cannot.

- Blended learning is seen as a possible solution to issues of connectivity. However, teachers need to be prepared to deliver and facilitate blended learning, and this will require substantial investment from governments choosing this solution.
- The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA), with its focus on speaking, may well have an impact on curriculum pedagogy and assessment, and possibly even English language policy.
- EME is increasing in the public sector in Colombia to support the government's bilingual education policy, and the Brazilian government is looking into the concept of bilingual schools. EME is a model that is much discussed, but has not been fully conceptualised as to who it is for, how it will be resourced and implemented, and what possible impact it may have.

3.2.4 Specific learning system issues

3.2.4.1 Technology

- Technology, in one form or another, is here to stay, but internet-based technology is not a solution for everything or everyone at the moment. There was general consensus that the infrastructure is not in place for all those who need it, in terms of not just connectivity but hardware as well. This is the case in both schools and homes.
- In some places, for example Mexico and Colombia, people are turning to television and radio as media for learning in the absence of hardware and connectivity. There is a demand for different technologies and solutions for varying situations.
- There was concern that the digital divide will grow and further separate the people who have opportunities to learn English and those who don't, making existing differences more extreme.
- On the other hand, technology could support the inclusion agenda. However, for this to happen, access to hardware and connectivity needs to improve across the region. Augmented realities have a role to play in helping learners with special needs, but, again, connectivity and resources need to be available for this to become a reality.

- English still remains the universal language of social media. Social media is influencing young learners and changing their values, as they think and learn in different ways.
- Artificial intelligence (AI), particularly for instant translation, could challenge the need for English. If people can easily access instantaneous translation, why would they need to learn English?

3.2.4.2 Teachers and teacher education

- A major challenge faced by all countries represented is a shortage of English language teachers. For example, in Brazil there is a concentration of English teachers in the south-west, but a lack of English teachers in the north-east and west. In Mexico, only about ten per cent of the school population have English teachers, and in Colombia there is a shortage of English teachers in primary schools.
- Regardless of technological advances and online learning, teachers remain central to the teaching and learning process. Teacher education and training is a priority.
- With regard to education and training, there are two main areas of focus for teachers: English language proficiency and online pedagogy. Training in the latter is needed to effectively engage learners and offer optimum opportunities for interaction.
- As well as training, it is important to build a supportive ecosystem for teachers to support them in their practice. Such an ecosystem could include additional materials, teaching handbooks, etc.

3.3 East Asia – Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) roundtable

The countries represented in the ASEAN regional roundtable were Indonesia, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam.

Trends and drivers in a nutshell

- There will be a trend away from an emphasis on accuracy and native speaker (NS) norms towards context-based competency – using English in different ways in different contexts in order to get things done.

- Communication will involve a range of linguistic and non-linguistic resources, and the move to ‘transmedia literacies’ will require competence in a variety of media.
- EME will continue to grow, with English as a subject used as a stepping stone to EME, and there will be a corresponding expansion of teacher training.
- Technology will enable high-quality extramural learning, but good teachers will remain essential. The use of AI to translate and assess language could see a step change in language use, learning and assessment.
- English will remain the global and regional lingua franca, despite increasing emphasis on national/local ethnic/indigenous languages. Mandarin may start to compete with English, but not in the near future.

3.3.1 The role or status of English

3.3.1.1 ‘Shape shifting’

- There will be a trend towards language as a utilitarian ability – how to get things done – rather than a focus on knowledge and NS norms; this emphasis on context-based competence is already visible in Thailand’s school curriculum, for example.
- This move away from NS norms towards associating language with specific uses will involve a shift from accuracy to context (although in some contexts, accuracy will be important).
- There will also be a move across the region to make content more focused on the ASEAN context rather than the culture of the former colonial powers. English as a purveyor of culture will be appropriated as a means of disseminating culture – for example, children in Myanmar already use English to learn about the culture of other ASEAN countries.
- British and US English will continue to be preferred – the more English is formalised, the more it is commercialised, with increasing use of English for basic transactions by, for example, taxi drivers and shopkeepers in Vietnam.

3.3.2 English as a cultural object

3.3.2.1 Multilingualism

- There was unanimous support for the prediction that English would continue to be the dominant lingua franca. Evidence for this came from the fact that all the ASEAN governments are committed to English in the curriculum – often as a compulsory subject within a multilingual package – and to the use of English in all the major domains of language use. English will remain a necessary component, even with increasing emphasis on national/local ethnic/indigenous languages. Mandarin will not begin to challenge English in this region until China’s global profile becomes dominant (it is predicted to take over from the US as the world’s largest economy in 2028).
- Translanguaging will involve using multimodal, linguistic and non-linguistic resources to communicate using multiple languages. Teachers will have no control over how students communicate outside the classroom. The move to ‘transmedia literacies’ will require competence in a variety of media.
- However, AI may yet reduce the need for multilingualism. Why learn a foreign language if technology can translate between languages automatically?

3.3.3 English in the learning system

3.3.3.1 English as a subject / English-medium education

- Some universities in the region will increasingly collaborate with overseas universities, meaning lecturers will need training to teach in English. An increase in the number of overseas students will lead to a corresponding increase in the use of EME at tertiary level. English as a subject (and perhaps content and language integrated learning [CLIL] to an extent) will become a stepping stone for ASEAN students to go on to study in HE EME contexts.
- There will be an increased need for teacher retraining, particularly for teachers of young learners as English is increasingly taught at lower levels. Vietnam is already showing success in this area.
- Growth of activity in the private sector across the region will reinforce the continued demand for English. The increase in private tuition will be driven by the desire of parents to improve the life chances of their children.

3.3.4 Specific learning system issues

3.3.4.1 Technology and informal learning

- The explosion in social media has rapidly expanded the use of English, and especially the informal variants of English, particularly for the younger generation, and this trend is set to continue and probably accelerate. Social media is fast becoming a subculture of its own, especially for young people, operating in the intercultural space with its own lexis, syntax and visual markers.
- AI will also be a disruptive technology, especially in the areas of assessment and content generation, once designers acquire a good understanding of methodology, with start-ups rather than multinationals dominating.
- Digital technology (particularly the internet) will continue to erode national boundaries, leading to transnational/transcultural communication.
- The key is for technology to provide students with the quantity and quality of language input, which is not available in the classroom, with the ongoing merging/integration of learning in and outside the classroom.

3.4 East Asia – China roundtable

Trends and drivers in a nutshell

- Interest in English will continue to remain strong despite efforts to de-emphasise it as a subject in schools. The drivers behind the continued interest are education, employment and technology.
- English is seen as a channel for sharing information about China, its people and its culture.
- Technology has an important role to play in English language learning, but issues of access and equity need to be addressed.
- Employment is a major driver for English. As long as employers see English as a requirement, English will thrive.

- Stakeholder opinions and actions about the relevance and importance of English will play an increasingly important role in the future of English in China.

3.4.1 The role or status of English

3.4.1.1 The status of English in China

- English will remain the dominant second language (L2). The number of learners will remain stable or rise in the next ten years. The drivers for this are education, employment and technology.
- However, English is sometimes the default foreign language in schools rather than a choice. Other languages are often not an option because there are not enough teachers to teach them.
- Parents, academics and training providers understand the importance and benefits of English and will find solutions to work around the deprioritisation of English in schools. Those parents who can teach their children at home will do so, and academics will find alternative solutions for students to practise and use their English.
- English is seen as an advantage and an enabler for students to:
 - learn about other countries and cultures
 - access information available in the international context
 - evaluate news in the outside world and establish whether it is fact or opinion.

3.4.1.2 Employment is a major driver for English

- Employers are seen to be the drivers of which language is learned, at least informally. Even if the education system places importance on other foreign languages, if the workplace requires English, then English will continue to be the language to learn.
- Unless more multinational companies require languages other than English, the value of other languages will not be recognised by employers.
- As long as employers require a good command of English, English will remain a factor in decisions about language learning for parents who want to make practical decisions based on workforce needs.

3.4.2 English as a cultural object

3.4.2.1 English as a cultural connector

- English is seen as a lingua franca in its true sense – to share and promote ideas and information about countries, people and culture. English is needed to learn about the rest of the world, but also to allow the Chinese to teach the rest of the world about China.
- China's desire to open up to the world means the future of English in education will remain strong and not decline. The concept of 'cultural confidence' and China's readiness to disseminate its culture and contemporary life came across strongly in the discussion.
- This requires a shift in the content of English language courses to focus on contemporary Chinese culture and life in contemporary China, not just on novels from traditional English-speaking countries.
- A stable language-learning policy is required, in which students are encouraged to learn more foreign languages and not just English.

3.4.3 English in the learning system

3.4.3.1 English in the education system

- There is a need to consider the value of English education beyond being just a tool for communication. Language education should be seen not just as a school subject, but more as part of the wider, holistic development of students, and learning materials should be developed to reflect this. This links to the idea of critical thinking and higher-order thinking skills.
- English is a useful tool to access and check research that may not be accessible in the native language; research about the Covid-19 pandemic was given as an example during the discussion.
- In an ideal future, English will be one of many foreign languages on offer in schools. English should not be prioritised over other languages or the Chinese language. Students need exposure to different languages, not just English, to help them understand the importance of learning foreign languages. The policy to deprioritise English language learning for younger learners may change students' ability to use and learn English at college or university (even though HE policies will remain stable), so there may be a greater need for English for specific purposes (ESP) and content-based English in the future.

3.4.3.2 Technology for teaching and equity

- Because of the Covid-19 pandemic, there has been a massive move to online teaching and learning. However, online learning does not achieve the same kind of positive results as in-person teaching.
- Technology is developing quickly, but online English teaching content and methodology are not progressing at the same rate.
- There is a need to develop online teaching content, materials, tasks and methodology for effective online teaching and learning. At the moment there are animated textbook materials which do not fully exploit the technology and tools that have become available in the last two years, and as a result they do not provide the most effective learning opportunities for students.
- It is extremely important to give support to learners and teachers in rural areas. If the problem of accessibility is not solved, there will be a serious equity problem. The government is recruiting retired teachers to support this education in rural areas.
- Technology is part of the solution, but it cannot provide all the answers. Teachers have an important role to play.

3.4.3.3 Testing and assessment

- There are no foreseeable changes to the Zhongkao or the Gaokao examinations, but there may be changes to the test constructs to take into consideration online assessment.
- There is appetite and expertise in China to develop more local tests with international standing rather than relying on the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) or the International English Language Testing System (IELTS).

3.4.3.4 Teachers and teacher training

- Because teachers will continue to play an important role in the learning of English, they need to be taught to use and fully exploit the technology.
- PISA findings show that nothing is as effective as in-person teaching. As a result, teacher training will strengthen in years to come and improve the overall quality of Chinese teachers.
- That said, teacher training and methodology need to include variety. Teachers need to learn how to better exploit the content and the tools to motivate and engage learners.

- Teachers can have an impact. Teachers have an advocacy role to play through their teaching to convince those who do not see the importance of English that it can be useful and relevant.
- Particular support should be given to teachers in rural areas. In regions such as Tibet, English might be the third language students learn. Therefore, the objectives of teacher training for these regions should be realistic, focused not just on popular approaches, but on approaches that work for the teaching context.

3.5 East Asia – North-East roundtable

The countries and territories represented in the North-East Asia regional roundtable were Japan, South Korea and Taiwan.

Trends and drivers in a nutshell

- English still has a substantial role to play in learning and life.
- Global standards of English still prevail, but other Englishes are beginning to be discussed and possibly even acknowledged.
- Increased emphasis is needed on testing productive skills.
- As AI opens the door to a digital metaverse, we need to find ways to address the challenges of fairness and access across the digital divide.
- While the role of English is being redefined in the three countries and territories, the role of EME will continue to be significant.

3.5.1 The role or status of English

3.5.1.1 The role of English

- The position of English is quite different in the three geographies represented, with South Korea and Taiwan almost at two extremes and Japan somewhere in the middle. South Korea seems to be distancing itself from English, while Taiwan, on the other hand, is embracing it.
- In South Korea, the government is de-emphasising the learning of English in the private sector to reduce the inequalities in learning English and to remove financial burdens from families. English is still important, but parents are spending on other areas, such as online books and resources. One consequence of this shift by the government is a plateauing of the level of English in the country.
- There has also been a decoupling of English from professional success, with employers not finding localised test scores very useful in terms of predicting productive language performance.
- The Korean national curriculum will be revised in 2023, and a new system may be introduced that de-emphasises English. Some parts of English education will be compulsory, but other parts will be elective.
- Taiwan has implemented a policy to become bilingual in Chinese and English by 2030. As part of this commitment, English will become a compulsory subject in the school curriculum, and ambitious targets will be set to see improved results.
- In Japan, English is being introduced earlier in primary school and later as a formal subject.
- In all three countries and territories, English is moving from being a transactional language to being more instrumental, with employees needing a deeper level of English for their work.

3.5.2 English in the learning system

3.5.2.1 English-medium education

- EME is being implemented increasingly at university level in South Korea and Japan; given the aim of attracting overseas students, English is the obvious lingua franca in this context.

- In Taiwan, EME has two drivers: the bilingual policy and the fact that by 2025, 20 per cent of Taiwan's population will be over 60. This will reduce the number of local students, so there is a need to attract students from overseas.
- There are implications for teacher training for EME and CLIL. In Taiwan, both English and subject teachers are involved, and their needs are very different. Standards and competency indicators to assess both the CLIL programmes and the teachers are being discussed. In Taiwan, professional development for both EME and CLIL teachers is needed to help implement learning-oriented assessment and build an organic ecosystem of learning.

3.5.3 Specific learning system issues

3.5.3.1 Technology

- The Covid-19 pandemic has driven considerable advances in distance learning.
- In terms of general education and assessment, the people who need the most support from technology to access opportunities are those who live in places where the infrastructure does not support the technology needed. This may have changed since the pandemic, but there is no real evidence of that yet.
- This issue of unequal access recurred throughout the discussion. We need to find ways to address the challenges of fairness and access across the digital divide.
- AI has the potential to make teaching and learning more cost-effective and provide access to more people, but it is not clear if the technology is sufficiently advanced, or what the implications might be for teacher training and the education system as a whole.
- The general consensus was that AI in assessment is desirable, not as a replacement for human scorers but in partnership with them.
- One way that AI is being used already is in auto-scoring, which is especially useful for the productive skills.
- Using technology to provide access to the excluded means providing non-standardised, individualised learning. This is not currently widely available.

- Machine translation already exists for basic transactional situations, but if and when instant multicontext translation arrives, it may struggle to recognise cultural/emotional meanings. What is the future of English if machine translation becomes dominant?

3.5.3.2 Testing and assessment

- Testing and assessment are of particular importance to Taiwan. An emphasis on receptive skills in testing and assessment has meant that productive skills have not been taught as well in schools. A possible solution to this is to incorporate the testing of productive skills into university admissions exams.
- In Taiwan, in order to align the relationship between learning, teaching and assessment, discussions are under way to introduce learning-oriented assessment and localise the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) (used since 2015) based on the CEFR-Japan (CEFR-J) model.
- The perception of test scores in South Korea is not very positive. There is less reliance on test scores, with the focus moving towards practical skills and real English use.
- In Japan, current discussions revolve around the purpose of university entrance exams and the role of productive skills testing within that. More emphasis on productive skills has implications for online test-preparation materials.
- For Japanese university entrance exams, there was a planned transition from the traditional ‘centre test’ to the ‘common test’, with a decision to use commercial tests for the productive skills. However, this transition has been halted due to issues of access and fairness.
- Testing productive skills is more expensive than testing receptive skills. Is there a way that AI could help to reduce the costs of testing the productive skills?
- There was unanimous concern that although large companies are now implementing online testing, there are few validation studies about the online tests, and issues around access and inclusion still abound.

3.6 Europe roundtable

The countries represented in the EU regional roundtable were Germany, Italy, Poland and Spain.

Trends and drivers in a nutshell

- The demand for English will remain strong, and English will continue as the global lingua franca for the foreseeable future.
- Although English will remain important, the role it plays in the lives of individuals or in policies will begin to change.
- Europe is a multilingual continent, and the importance of intercultural competence will continue to grow.
- Global corporations could disrupt the online language-learning market with data-based AI.

3.6.1 The role or status of English

3.6.1.1 The demand for English

- The demand for English will remain strong, and English will continue for the foreseeable future to be the global lingua franca.
- The support for learning English in all sectors and at all stages of education is strong across the countries represented.
- The drivers for the continued importance of English include social media as a platform for communication and informal education; social and economic success in an increasingly multilingual region; and global mobility.

3.6.1.2 The changing role of English

- English has always changed to meet different contexts and is doing so even more now. The main forces influencing its shape are economic and technological.
- Technological developments, especially social media, are changing the way learners need and use English. The balance between informal and formal methods of learning will become more of a consideration.
- The concept of proficiency is becoming more fluid. Generation Z uses English in lots of different contexts, and the level of proficiency needed for one context is different from that needed for others. The term ‘native users’ was introduced as a way to try to capture this shift.
- This does not mean a lessening in importance for assessment. Certification of proficiency will still be needed for important life experiences, such as employment or study abroad.
- This also does not mean that teachers will become irrelevant. The importance of learning English in the formal sector guarantees a need for good teachers.

3.6.2 English as a cultural object

3.6.2.1 Multilingualism

- Multilingualism reflects the linguistic complexity in Europe; unlike 20–30 years ago it is now part of daily life, and this has implications for national and cultural identities.
- Intercultural competence is increasing in importance, both in society and in education, as contexts become rich in languages.
- English is no longer a foreign language but rather a means to an end – almost a necessity.
- The concept of EME is relevant and interesting. It can lead to greater equity and partnership between non-English-speaking nations, with English as a mutually beneficial language.

3.6.3 Specific learning system issues

3.6.3.1 Technology/AI

- The need and desire for materials for TLA will not diminish, and other international suppliers are already seeking to enter the space.
- Waiting in the wings are the global corporates like Google, which could totally disrupt the teaching and learning of languages at both formal and informal levels with data-based AI approaches to learning and using a foreign language. Their portfolios could include much more individualised coaching and mentoring, or even the use of automatic-translation devices.
- Moving learning and teaching online has implications for teacher education and training. A major challenge is building teacher competency for online and/or digital teaching and learning and ensuring professional development for this new school/society context.
- Concerns were expressed about the low quality of much online teaching provision.

3.7 The Middle East and North Africa – the Gulf roundtable

The countries represented in the Gulf regional roundtable were Bahrain, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Oman and Qatar.

Trends and drivers in a nutshell

- English is the main medium of communication in many domains and, therefore, the demand for English will increase. The drivers are education, employment and national economic policies.
- English will continue to dominate, though care needs to be taken regarding the impact of this on other languages, namely Arabic and French.
- To support students better, state sectors in the region should look at reviewing English language provision and practices to respond to emerging education and employment landscapes.

3.7.1 The role or status of English

3.7.1.1 The status of English

- English enjoys a high status in the countries represented at the roundtable. It is seen as an L2 rather than a foreign language.
- English is seen as important for life, education and employment throughout the Gulf, and its use is proactively promoted in education and social settings. In most countries in the region, English is taught at primary school in the state sector and in pre-school in the private sector.
- There is recognition in all of the countries represented that the levels of English in the region need to improve for young people to have better education and employment opportunities.
- The governments of all of the countries represented are committed to major reform of English language teaching and learning, with the emphasis being on the quality of provision.
- EME is growing at the tertiary level in both the public and private sectors.

3.7.2 English as a cultural object

3.7.2.1 English and other languages

- There is growth and interest in other languages (such as Korean, Spanish and German) for social and education purposes. However, it was generally agreed that these were not in any way a threat to the dominance of English as a lingua franca.
- There were two main concerns about the impact of English on the status and role of Arabic. First, participants acknowledged the importance of a solid foundation in the L1 in order for an L2 to develop effectively, but they were concerned that children were not using Arabic enough for this to happen.

- Second, there was a concern about issues with cultural identity if English replaced Arabic in an increasing number of language domains.
- In Qatar, for example, this has led to the Ministry of Education (MoE) introducing new regulations to include Arabic and cultural identity in the curriculum.
- Most of the countries in the Gulf have a high expatriate population. One of the participants noted that while the focus is increasingly on English and Arabic, the languages of the expatriate communities must not be forgotten and need a space in the linguistic ecosystem.

3.7.3 English in the learning system

3.7.3.1 English in the state sector

- In all of the countries represented, English has been taught in schools for the last 30–40 years. All roundtable participants recognised a need to improve the quality of English language provision in the state school system in order to increase the levels of English attained by school leavers.
- The concern around the quality of state school provision is exemplified by the increase in the number of private schools in the Gulf and the fact that, increasingly, parents who can afford it are sending their children to international or private schools.
- It was suggested that speaking will be an even more important skill for employment in the future. However, there was concern that if speaking and writing are not tested, then they would not be given the due emphasis needed in the curriculum. Speaking tests can be resource-intensive and costly and are, therefore, less likely to be considered for inclusion in national test systems. The use of AI could be one possible solution to this.

3.7.3.2 English language learning

- With the Covid-19 pandemic acting as a catalyst, the way learning happens has started to change. Individuals are finding their own solutions to English through informal channels, such as social media. It was generally agreed that the alternative individualised learning that is already happening will continue into the foreseeable future.
- Additional relevant certificates, gained as supplementary to degrees, are an example of how learners are being proactive about their learning to ensure better education and employment opportunities.
- There was recognition from all of the participants of the important role of technology in education. It has provided, and will continue to provide, new and flexible ways of learning.

3.7.4 Specific learning system issues

3.7.4.1 English language teacher development

- There was discussion about the role of the teacher in the future. Views ranged from ‘the teacher will disappear’ to ‘learning and teaching will depend 20 per cent on teachers’ to ‘technology cannot emulate the social experience and interaction of being in a real classroom’. All of these scenarios have implications for the curriculum, materials, teachers, and teacher education and development.
- There is an increasing need for teachers to be proficient with technology, not only to keep up with young people but also to be able to provide optimum learning opportunities.
- During the pandemic, teachers have had to improvise and, as a default, become content creators, which was seen as positive by the participants. However, for this development to be sustainable, teachers need training in online-materials development. This also brought into question the necessity and role of the traditional textbook.

3.8 The Middle East and North Africa – Egypt and the Levant roundtable

The countries represented in the MENA – Egypt and the Levant regional roundtable were Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Yemen, Lebanon, Occupied Palestinian Territories, and Syria.

Trends and drivers in a nutshell

- English is on the rise in the region, but its status varies in the countries represented.
- The increasing diversity of English language provision needs to be supported to ensure quality in both the public and private sectors.
- Technology is both an enabler and a disrupter. Attention needs to be paid to this in the near future to ensure equity of access and, therefore, opportunities for all.

3.8.1 The role or status of English

3.8.1.1 The status of English

- The status of English in the countries represented differs considerably. In Jordan and Syria, English is considered a foreign language, while in the other countries it is almost a second language.
- In the countries represented, governments are all increasing their investment in English at the primary, secondary and tertiary levels. This is because they have identified the English competence of their citizens as critical to the social and economic development of the country. English is becoming a local, as well as a global, language. This is reinforced by the demands being made by employers for recruits to be proficient in English.
- Participants generally agreed that English will become a basic skill in the future and that multilingualism will be the norm.

3.8.2 English in the learning system

3.8.2.1 English language provision

- There needs to be a focus on the quality of basic provision in the public sector. English starts early on in primary. Teachers need training and ongoing support to deliver and facilitate effective learning.
- Private-sector provision for English is growing, partly due to the state systems being unable to provide the standard of English language provision required. However, there is concern about the quality of provision and the lack of monitoring in the private sector.
- There is concern that both private-sector provision and technology will further increase the divide between the advantaged and disadvantaged.
- One solution to improving the quality of English language provision is to develop partnerships and use networks to meet the demand.

3.8.3 Specific learning system issues

3.8.3.1 Technology and English

- Technology is seen as important, but it brings with it issues of access and infrastructure. Some communities will be disadvantaged because of lack of infrastructure, which could lead to a widening of the social and economic divide. Technology can only be of benefit to all if the infrastructure is there to support it.
- However, for some who do have access to technology there has been growth of English on social media for both personal and education purposes.
- People are looking online for professional courses, but these courses are in English and so they have to learn English to be able to access them.
- The necessity of moving online because of the Covid-19 pandemic has made English more affordable and accessible. In some contexts, in-person teaching and learning is perceived as expensive in comparison.

3.9 The Middle East and North Africa – the Maghreb roundtable

The countries represented in the MENA Maghreb regional roundtable were Libya, Morocco and Tunisia.

Trends and drivers in a nutshell

- The status of English is high, and the number of English learners will probably increase in the future. The main drivers are employment and access to published materials for education purposes.
- English will continue to be taught as a subject in BE and, for the foreseeable future, EME will continue in HE.
- English needs to be positioned alongside Modern Standard Arabic and French, and it should not prevail at their expense.

3.9.1 The role or status of English

3.9.1.1 English now and in the future

- There is a focus, in the countries represented, on the use of English for general communication outside of educational contexts, marking a move away from an emphasis on language knowledge towards language use.
- International communication linked to employment, education and social purposes is the main driver for the continued interest in English. These areas of language use provide positive and tangible reasons for young people to learn English.
- As a result of the demand for English, there is increased provision in the private sector. Libya, for example, has seen a rise in the number of language centres focusing on English.

- English is taught at primary level in both the state and private sectors, and in some private language centres it starts at pre-primary level.
- This increased provision of English in the private sector has the potential to cause issues of inequality and division between those who can afford this provision and those who rely on the public sector. However, there are concerns about the quality of provision in the private sector as there seem to be no monitoring systems in place.
- Most research and innovation is in English, but with new technologies being developed for translation, for example, English could soon have competitors such as Chinese in this area.
- New technologies represent a new dimension to competition for learning languages. The languages that make themselves most accessible and interesting online will prevail.
- English has been associated with global arts and culture – as long as there is growing creativity and innovation, students will follow.

3.9.2 English in the learning system

3.9.2.1 English, French and Modern Standard Arabic

- English, French and Modern Standard Arabic are all languages in use in the countries represented.
- All stakeholders see the importance of English for better individual and national prospects. However, there is a balance to be struck with Modern Standard Arabic and French. English should not prevail at the expense of the other languages but work alongside them.
- However, the perception, in Morocco at least, is that young people would like to see English replace French in the education system. Young people see English as an important language to learn.

3.9.3 Specific learning system issues

3.9.3.1 Learning, teaching and technology

- The volume of published material in English for education purposes is a major motivational factor for students, especially in HE. Most content for study and global information, such as reports about the Covid-19 pandemic, is published in English.
- Most young people are now learning through informal channels such as social media, and the language of communication and learning on these channels is predominantly English.
- The increased use of technology will encourage the learning of English. There are more self-access learning materials available in English than in any other language.
- Generally, the quality of online teaching and learning needs to improve in order to be attractive for learners.
- Partly as a result of the pandemic, online learning and teaching will continue to increase, but this is dependent on local technological infrastructures, which vary among the countries represented.
- Both teachers and technology are here to stay. However, technology will replace those teachers who do not understand and use it.
- The quality of English language provision is an area of concern. There is a need for skilled teachers for the future, and the following areas were identified as necessary components of teacher training:
 - hybrid teaching and learning
 - using technology effectively
 - assessment
 - curriculum evaluation.

3.10 South Asia – Bangladesh, Nepal and Sri Lanka roundtable

Trends and drivers in a nutshell

- Demand for English is high across the region. Access to HE and economic benefits are the big drivers. People are becoming more aware that English can make a big difference in their lives.
- Technology, in one form or another, is here to stay and is seen as important for education. Decisions need to be made about making it accessible and equitable for all.
- Employment is a major driver for the demand for English, as evidenced by Industry 4.0.
- The position of English is strong in the countries represented, but there is an awareness of the need for consideration of local and indigenous languages in the region.

3.10.1 The role or status of English

3.10.1.1 The current status of English

- In Bangladesh, the use of English has increased in all domains of society and throughout the country. For example, there is increased use in government communication and in news broadcasting, and even matchmakers now require CVs for prospective brides and grooms to show proficiency in English. English is seen as prestigious, and this change in increased use is a deliberate gradual change linked to economic and employment aspirations.
- As Nepal was never colonised, English is not as dominant and is taught as a second language. Among learners and parents the demand for English is high, but there is no clear government policy to support this.
- In Sri Lanka, the position of English in all domains is very strong and is strongly linked to educational and employment aspirations.

3.10.1.2 The future status of English

- By 2030, English will play a greater role in Sri Lanka. Sri Lanka's economy depends on trade and tourism, and English will be the driving force.
- The Nepalese recognise that English is a basic skill to survive in sectors such as education, government, work and the private sector. For young people who want to earn money, English is a basic requirement. The way English is learned and used by youth is through culture. English is seen as a life skill.
- In Nepal, the number of speakers of English will increase, but ownership of English may change. People might have different ways of using it, but numbers overall will increase.
- In both Sri Lanka and Bangladesh, English is not seen as elite any more, and it is moving from urban to rural areas. Everyone recognises the importance of English to get ahead in employment and in life.
- The demand for English will definitely remain stable and probably even increase, but there will be some change to other languages for HE and technology.

3.10.1.3 English and employment

- Industry 4.0 is seen as the main driver for English. Young people see the need to be competitive in the labour market, and they are seeking the language skills required to access resources and build global understanding. There is a need to integrate English language skills in the labour market.
- There will be a reconsideration of English in HE and the importance of soft skills to meet changes in the labour market.
- The Nepalese government has introduced a prerequisite exam to enter government service. That exam now includes an English component, which those who are competing for government positions (e.g. administrative service) must pass.

3.10.2 English as a cultural object

3.10.2.1 English and other languages

- Nepal has adopted a multilingual policy as it is a rich polylingual and multicultural country. Public demand is for English, and the dilemma is whether to focus only on English or to include all the other languages as well. English may become the second language in Nepal in the future, but some young people may come to see it as their L1. From a policy perspective, the government wants to bring in all languages, but on the ground the general perspective is mainly focused on English.
- In Nepal, the provision for teaching other languages such as Chinese, Japanese and Korean as optional subjects is becoming popular for employment purposes, for example tourism. Private institutes also cater to the demand of learning these languages.
- In Bangladesh, Bangla is still the dominant language, but English is fast gaining ground. Post independence there was a feeling that Bangla had to be everywhere and have supremacy, but in practice (perhaps not in policy) English plays a very strong role.
- In Sri Lanka, no other languages challenge the position of English. There are two official languages: Tamil and Sinhala. The medium of instruction is predominantly one of these languages, but English plays an equal role in the school system. Other languages include Korean, Chinese, French and Russian, but so far these languages have not challenged the dominance of English.

3.10.3 English in the learning system

3.10.3.1 English-medium education

- In Sri Lanka there is great demand for curricula to progress towards EME. The government has decided to increase the amount of time for English in grades 1 and 2 and has more organised intervention in pre-schools' curriculum framework for teaching English. In government universities English is used as a medium of instruction, and government schools are bilingual.
- In Nepal EME is popular with learners; however, EME is not supported by government policy, and materials are not in English. Therefore, implementation is patchy, and the quality compromised. Teachers are not trained to deliver subjects through English and, therefore, they lack confidence.

- In Nepal, government policy is to have several options for the medium of instruction – it could be Nepali, English or both. There is also another clause in the policy which states that in grades 1–3 the medium of instruction should be the mother tongue. However, even people in favour of multilingual education/mother-tongue-based instruction still send their own children to English-medium schools. Therefore, the situation is complex.
- In Nepal, parents send their children to private schools to learn through English, where English begins at a younger age and the medium of instruction is mostly English. There is a big disparity between private and public schools.

3.10.4 Specific learning system issues

3.10.4.1 Technology and English

- Is technology reinforcing marginalisation? This is already an issue, but we need to find out if technology and English is helping – or deepening – the divide. Concerns were expressed about the urban–rural divide and the role of technology in this. The perception is that it is the responsibility of both public and private sectors to bridge the gap.
- English language plays a significant role in life, education and employment. Without knowing English, it will not be possible to develop professionally and technologically.
- Technology is vital and paramount for education. We need to know how to use it to harness the best opportunities for learners. Teachers need to be more digital-literate. They need to be prepared for hybrid/blended learning.
- It is important that education systems are ready for any future shocks like Covid-19 and they are able to adapt quickly to delivery online etc.
- Technology and English go hand in hand in terms of development. Young people may be very comfortable with technology, but they also need to be able to communicate in English in order to succeed.

- The official sectors and departments in Sri Lanka have all moved to digitalisation, and processes are facilitated in this way. Therefore, English is a must if you need to send and receive certifications and other documents. Technology is already a principal driver as all government systems use it.

3.10.4.2 Assessing English

- In Sri Lanka, GCE O-level exams are now standard entry points for most industries. Listening and speaking are not tested, just reading and writing at present. There is a focus on national reform to emphasise the assessment of listening and speaking for the future.
- In Sri Lanka, general education mainly uses the pen-and-paper tests, but there is a move towards formative assessment. However, there are huge problems to accommodate the numbers involved (700,000+).
- In Nepal, when young people complete their general education they will often go to language institutes for IELTS and TOEFL training, etc. This demand will not be met by the state. Government responsibility lies at the primary and secondary levels. Private sectors will grow, and standardised tests will be the drivers. Assessment standards are international and will probably continue to be in the future.
- Education systems will continue to be the main providers of English language. External providers in the private sector will continue to grow because, even after studying throughout school, students struggle to get the scores they need in external/international exams. Participants saw the role of the public sector as providing basic English language teaching and the role of the private sector to provide test preparation to enable them to succeed in international assessments.
- In HE, there will be more growth and demand for academic English and IELTS/TOEFL to provide opportunities for international education.

3.11 South Asia – India roundtable

Trends and drivers in a nutshell

- The number of English learners will rise in the coming years as English is associated with prestige and economic success.
- There has been an increase in English-medium schools in both the public and private sectors in the hope of giving learners an advantage.
- The importance of technology is recognised and its use is on the rise, but not in a planned or systematic way.
- Private-sector provision for, and through, English is growing rapidly because the public sector is not seen to be meeting learner outcomes.

3.11.1 The role or status of English

3.11.1.1 English for employment

- The importance of English for better employment was evident throughout the discussion and is one of the principal drivers for English. The importance of English for technical education in polytechnics was raised.
- Professional skilling in English is key. There is a definite shift away from English for communication to English for use in specific contexts. English is seen as a tool to access certain kinds of opportunities and perform specific tasks in society. Moving forwards, the teaching and learning of English needs to be relevant and contextualised.

3.11.1.2 Equality, diversity and inclusion

- Inequities that exist in the numbers of Englishes, or levels and usage of English, cut across rural, semi-rural and urban areas. Some people have access to high levels of English, high-quality education and the cultural privilege of access to a globalised world, while others do not.
- English is seen as a gatekeeping language and thought needs to be given to how it can be made more inclusive.

- To make English more accessible and inclusive for all, device-agnostic content and offline content are necessary.

3.11.2 English as a cultural object

3.11.2.1 English and other languages

- English is seen as the global lingua franca, but other languages have a role as well, and this needs to be recognised.
- English should be part of a multilingual education policy that includes the importance of cross-cultural skills.
- The issue of standardisation of English in India was raised. India is linguistically complex, and at the moment there is no single acceptable standard emerging.

3.11.3 English in the learning system

3.11.3.1 English-medium education

- In the last ten years there has been a remarkable expansion of EME in both the public and private sectors. Teachers are comfortable using English but they are not trained in EME. At the same time, teacher English language proficiency has also become a concern. Concerns were expressed about the quality of provision in English-medium schools.
- Parents want to put their children into English-medium schools, as they believe it provides an advantage. Before the pandemic there was an increase in this movement; however, since the pandemic, families are experiencing income reductions and the tide is moving back to government schools.

3.11.3.2 The public school system

- The perception of government schools is that nothing has moved in the last 10–15 years and that because of the Covid-19 pandemic, learning is moving faster than teaching. Learning is happening in different ways outside of formal teaching; the term ‘Internet university’ was used. The school system is not seen to be providing what learners need.

- However, changes are happening and are planned for public schools. There is a move away from rote-based learning to competency-based learning, which will require a change in focus in the curriculum. The aim is for English to begin earlier in the curriculum; the assessment of speaking and listening has been introduced in grades 10 and 12.
- At the moment, teaching languages happens in isolation in school – learners are not using the language that is being taught. English is used in the classroom but not socially.
- The National Education Policy 2020 mentions multilingualism with the aim of textbooks being translated into Hindi and other mother tongues. This is a mammoth undertaking and has implications for teacher education and training. How will the role of the teacher change?
- There was general consensus among participants that the infrastructure of teaching and learning has to change. Moving forwards, policymakers need to think about the teacher, the learner and the classroom working together within one system, rather than working in isolation.
- Hybrid classrooms are desirable for school management, as they see cost-cutting advantages in learning and teaching online. From anecdotal evidence, it would seem that they might be more appealing to learners, particularly as a direct result of their experiences during the pandemic. There has been an 85 per cent increase in smartphone use by learners in government schools, which has obvious implications for learning. However, the concept of a hybrid classroom will have a huge impact on the whole infrastructure of teaching and learning, and if it is to become reality, it will need careful thought and planning.
- However, in the current situation, there is concern about the general quality of teaching in classrooms, and it seems that in the lack of effective pedagogies, any pedagogies are being applied.

3.11.3.3 The private sector

- There have been massive inroads made by corporate houses in recent years. There is almost a parallel education system alongside the public education system. These private-sector centres are not all about teaching English, but almost all of them are teaching through English.

- It seems that the private sector will go from strength to strength, which will cause some inequity and discrimination. However, this could be balanced by state-sector policies that target those who are excluded from private-sector provision.

3.11.4 Specific learning system issues

3.11.4.1 Technology

- As mentioned earlier, there is a rise in the use of smartphones generally and this should be leveraged for learning.
- Technology is making learning more self-directed and, to an extent, innovation is being driven by learners.
- Translation devices speak to an inclusion agenda by providing access for more people. The implication of these devices for English language learning is yet unknown.
- Open-source content will be the drivers for English, whether they are bite-sized learning points or more substantial materials that meet a specific need.
- Technology, to a certain extent, is cancelling inequalities, because we now have globalisation in people's hands through smartphones. However, there is a digital divide that needs to be recognised, as not everyone has access to the hardware and software necessary to access potential opportunities.
- The language of coding in technology is English, which means that English will have continued importance.

3.11.4.2 Testing and assessment

- Assessment of speaking and listening has been introduced in public schools. It was suggested that should this implementation be successful, then other English language providers would follow suit.
- While the big, standardised tests (i.e. IELTS, TOEFL and Pearson) are respected and recognised, there are calls for alternative ways of assessing English that take into account different forms of English or world Englishes.
- How will speech recognition software impact not only assessment but teaching and learning too?

3.12 South Asia – Pakistan roundtable

Trends and drivers in a nutshell

- English will continue to grow both in use and demand. However, languages other than English and Urdu are competing for recognition and roles in society and education.
- Technology is empowering individuals to take ownership of their learning and will continue to do so in many different ways.
- Education systems will need to adapt to changes in the landscape and the learner in order to remain relevant and useful.
- Technology has made learning affordable, or even free, and is therefore accessible to more people. Opportunities that were desirable before are now reality.

3.12.1 The role or status of English

3.12.1.1 The status of English

- English will continue to grow in both use and demand. One example given was the results of a survey conducted by the Australian Council for Educational Research, which showed that in the Katchi Abadi urban slums, English was the ‘language of aspiration’ among the young and outranked Urdu in this regard. Another example was in the workplace. Knowledge of English equates to higher salaries and speed of promotion.
- English and Urdu generally do well in being learned and used because mother tongues are not used as the language of instruction in schools.
- It was suggested that the notion of competency has shifted and that different types of competencies are required for different tasks.

- The motivation to learn English is no longer integrative and cultural. The shift has been made to a much more instrumental approach, and this trend is expected to accelerate as English has established itself as the language of technology and big data. There was a suggestion that the cultural element is still important but is possibly 'forgotten' because of the emphasis now on employment and economy.
- There were several comments about the levels of English language proficiency in schools and HE being lower than before. A question raised here was whether this is a general perception or whether there is evidence to validate these claims.

3.12.2 English as a cultural object

3.12.2.1 Multilingualism

- South Asia is a multilingual region. People operate in several languages as mother tongues, for religion and for state affairs. The region is linguistically very complex, and languages are beginning to compete for recognition and status.
- People are more confident about using their mother tongues and wanting recognition for them. Punjabi and other languages are beginning to challenge the role of Urdu in the education system.
- The tension between English and Urdu is exacerbated by the fact that people would rather use their own mother tongue and English at the expense of Urdu. However, it was pointed out that beyond the major cities, being able to read Urdu is a necessity as it is the official language.
- There is an increased demand for Chinese, as evidenced by the proliferation of Confucius classrooms in schools and the increased uptake of Chinese-language proficiency exams.
- At the moment, the language of technology is English. However, it was felt there will need to be multilingual technological options in the future.

3.12.3 English in the learning system

3.12.3.1 Public-sector provision

- Long-standing problems with the quality of teaching and teachers were identified, but there was also mention of a ‘learning crisis’ affecting primary and secondary levels of education, in particular, and across all subjects, which stemmed from a failure of language planning policy. The result was large numbers of students struggling with identity issues and failing to operate at anything other than a surface communication level in any language. A more intelligent approach was called for at the policy level.
- There was general concern about the capacity of the MoE to deliver on English as the new national curriculum is rolled out.
- Learners feel more empowered to pursue more informal ways of learning. The pandemic has provided people with an opportunity to take ownership of their own learning to meet their goals. What will this mean for mainstream education?

3.12.4 Specific learning system issues

3.12.4.1 Technology

- Connectivity and infrastructure are reported to be at 70 per cent across the country. Therefore, access is not as big a concern in Pakistan as in other parts of the region.
- Technology is predominantly seen as an enabler. It has made learning affordable or even free and, therefore, accessible to more people.
- In this respect, technology has opened up the potential for non-formal education to work in parallel with the formal education system.
- Technology has empowered people and given them a voice. What was once seen as subversive has now become mainstream. Social media is being used to hold people accountable.
- Opportunities that were desirable before are now reality. One example is online teacher training – there is a digital platform in Punjab with 40,000 teachers enrolled on it. This is a huge achievement and has tremendous potential for replication to support teachers all over the country.

- Translation devices have been a reality for a number of years. Will there be a need to learn languages in the future if instant translation is available?
- The language of technology is English. Asia is seen to be leading in this field and, therefore, the perception among the roundtable participants was that English is owned by Asian non-native models, one example being Pnglish.

3.12.4.2 Assessment

- What is the future of standardised testing? Testing needs to be more individualised to take into account equality and diversity.
- There was a perception that more local, non-native-speaker (NNS) standardised models of English were likely to increase, and current testing monopolies would not be sustainable.
- Big, standardised tests will have more competition as more affordable, local tests come onto the market.
- Testing online is still very complex. Important issues of validity and reliability need to be managed, but these are surmountable.

3.13 Sub-Saharan Africa roundtable

The countries represented in the Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) roundtable were Ethiopia, Ghana, Nigeria, Rwanda, South Africa and Sudan.

Trends and drivers in a nutshell

- The demand for English in the region will grow, as English is perceived to create increased education and employment opportunities, and to enable communication with the rest of the world.
- There is growing importance and recognition of local languages in the region, though perhaps not in all sectors of society.

- There will be some experimentation with decolonisation, but English will still have a place at the table.
- The number of English-medium private schools across the region will continue to increase significantly.

3.13.1 The role or status of English

3.13.1.1 The role/position of English

- As local languages negotiate a place in society and state education systems, English may be repositioned alongside them rather than instead of them.
- English will continue to be perceived as the ‘go-to’ language for access and success in education and employment. For example, in Sudan, the use of English is on the rise as people see English as a connector to the rest of the world.
- Local languages may not have the orthographies that are sufficiently developed for education and learning, so English remains the ‘go-to’ language, and demand will continue to grow.
- Commonwealth countries are likely to continue to use English for education and learning.
- English will continue to be the lingua franca in countries such as Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda, as local languages are not always mutually understood.

3.13.2 English as a cultural object

3.13.2.1 Multilingualism

- The multilingual nature of most countries and the transnational properties of some languages make the region culturally and linguistically extremely rich, but educationally, socially and politically very complex.
- While local languages negotiate for recognition and roles in education and society, there is a place for English in the education domain in some cases, perhaps by being repositioned in multilingual education models alongside local languages.

- English is important for business and employment in the region. For example, English is the official language for business in Ghana and for parliamentary debate in Nigeria. In the region as a whole, English is generally believed to provide a competitive advantage for employment opportunities.
- There is interest in the concept of multilingual classrooms. However, this could mean significant changes in education policies, practices and materials. Teacher education and development would have to change considerably to provide teachers with the skills and resources to manage multilingual classrooms.

3.13.2.2 Decolonisation

- The concept of decolonisation is conveyed in different ways in the countries represented, with English not being the colonial language in some countries, such as Rwanda, and being one of multiple colonial languages in others, such as South Africa.
- There have been attempts in the region to move away from the colonial language. For example:
 - In Rwanda there has been a move from French to English, which has necessitated a large-scale change programme in the education system, including teacher training, developing new support materials and bringing in mentors.
 - In Sudan there is a potential issue of expertise drain as Arabic-speaking Sudanese teachers look for employment in Arabic-speaking countries.
 - In South Africa the medium of instruction for years 1–3 is one of the local languages, with a transition to English (and/or Afrikaans) in year 4. There is increasing recognition of and a range of roles for local languages in varying forms across the region.

3.14 Wider Europe roundtable

The countries represented in the Wider Europe regional roundtable were Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan and Turkey.

Trends and drivers in a nutshell

- English is still seen as very important for access to opportunities and information, but its role may be changing.
- Bilingualism and even multilingualism will be seen as important for individual, societal and national economic success, although care needs to be taken around issues of national culture and identities.
- Technology will be necessary for business and employment and important for TLA, although issues relating to the digital divide will need to be addressed.
- Learners will be looking for more individualised learning programmes, and this will have implications for all aspects of national education systems as, if it happens, it will require 'customisation of the educational process' to meet learners' individual needs.
- English is no longer the only foreign language available in schools; it will be included among other languages as part of wider foreign languages policies.

3.14.1 The role or status of English

3.14.1.1 The place and role of English

- The number of learners of English will probably rise due to developing economic prospects and the future skills required to enter the global job market, in particular for employment in science and technology. Access to technology for social communication is also a significant driver.

- With the Covid-19 pandemic acting as a catalyst, learning is becoming an individual experience. The use of English for social media is playing a major role in this move to shape the form and content of language learning. This is reflected in discussions around the need for balance between formal and informal approaches to learning. The concept of customised language learning may become a reality, but will require a 'paradigm shift' by national education systems for the purposes of self-advocacy and self-expression of learners as individuals.
- English is no longer the only foreign language available in schools; it will be included among other languages as part of wider foreign languages policies. For example, in Kazakhstan there is an uptake of learning Western European languages, such as French, German, Spanish and Italian, in pursuit of migration to countries with better economic conditions. Chinese and Arabic are also growing in importance.
- Foregrounding English (or other foreign languages) raises questions around the place of local languages in education and society, and local and national identities within countries and within the region. This was true of all countries represented in the discussion.
- Social media is driving both the content and the methods of individualised learning now. Young people are motivated by being connected internationally.

3.14.2 English in the learning system

3.14.2.1 Education system reform

- There was agreement about a need for education systems to recognise more individual ways of learning and accessing information and, therefore, to find ways to integrate and balance formal education and informal learning. Any system that includes 'customised learning' will be in demand.

3.14.3 Specific learning system issues

3.14.3.1 Technology

- Technological advances are seen as necessary for business and employment, and English is the language for multinational and international companies, not just UK-based companies. Therefore, English and technology are seen as closely connected.
- Digitisation will continue to increase post-pandemic, thus creating more opportunities, more tools and more online English processes. As a result, digital education generally, and for English, will increase.
- Social media is driving both the content and the methods of individualised learning now. Young people are motivated by being connected internationally.
- Online learning may provide opportunities for those who have been excluded previously, such as girls. However, there are concerns about the digital divide creating inequality in education.
- Advances in technology may eliminate the need for translation services in the future. There are already basic digital translation options available. The question then is, if we can use AI to translate, do we need to continue teaching English or any language?

3.14.3.2 Testing and assessment

- Assessment is still seen as a core motivator for young people. The perception is that if they are going to be tested on a particular aspect of their education, they will learn it.
- In light of the changes in ways of learning and possible moves to more instrumental needs for English, models of assessment need to be updated to include skills-based assessment and also focus on assessment for learning (AfL).

3.14.3.3 English language teacher development

- There is a growing awareness that there needs to be a focus on the quality of teacher education and training. For example, in Azerbaijan there is a desire to break away from traditional forms of teaching to an increased emphasis on the content of English courses and new approaches to teaching English as a second language.

3.15 English Language Advisory Group roundtable

3.15.1 Introduction

We end this section with a summary of the outcomes of the ELAG roundtable. The ELAG advises the English (E&E and EP) leadership teams and influences how the British Council's vision and strategy are developed. It is a forum for advice and has no decision-making or executive powers.

The role of the ELAG can be summarised as being to:

- support the British Council in its mission
- act as an advocate for the British Council's work
- advise on the development of the British Council's strategy
- ensure that the English (E&E and EP) leadership teams are kept informed of major developments in the English language and examinations sector
- serve as a channel of professional advice within the areas of expertise represented in the group
- offer insights and identify new opportunities and trends
- create links between the British Council and the communities within the English language and examinations sector for whom our work has particular relevance.

The ELAG consists of up to 15 members, including the chair. Membership is normally for a three-year period and is constituted to offer a broad range of experience and knowledge. Members are normally invited to join in a personal capacity rather than as a representative of their employer or sector. At the time of the roundtable there were 12 ELAG members, of whom eight participated in the event.

The procedures around the ELAG roundtable were the same as for all other roundtables so will not be repeated here.

Trends and drivers in a nutshell

- Demand for English globally is high. The main drivers are education, employment and entertainment. Other drivers such as EDI are also at work
- There may be a need to collaborate with potential competitors as other English language providers have entered the market
- The failure of public education systems to prepare young people for future prospects has enabled the private sector to flourish
- The demand for assessment is intrinsically linked with the demand for English language learning. The question is how will it change to meet changing user/stakeholder needs?
- Technology is here to stay. How does the ELT sector work with it to find educational solutions for all?

3.15.2 The role or status of English

3.15.2.1 The demand for English

- The demand for English is high. From a publishing perspective demand has risen, particularly in the area of young learners. The main drivers for learning English are education, employment and entertainment. Education and employability have been drivers for the last 10–20 years, and entertainment is a more recent addition with the explosion of social media.
- The UK is still an attractive destination for HE for overseas students, despite the increase in courses taught in English in other countries.
- Engagement on social media and access to entertainment are seen as key drivers. Social media is a means for social global interaction and, through that, more informal ways of learning.

3.15.2.2 English for employment

- English for employment is not just about high-level global jobs any more, although these are the examples given in most textbooks. English is increasingly required for lower-skilled jobs, particularly in the tourism sector. One example is the hotels in a developing country, where 90 per cent of applicants are rejected because their English is not good enough to work on reception or in the hotel warehouse.
- In this respect English is seen as a skill for survival – to feed the family – and not as a luxury. This has implications for school syllabuses. We are still teaching general English when more specific English for the workplace is needed. Curriculum developers and textbook writers need to rethink content and make it relevant for learners' contexts and their future needs.

3.15.2.3 Equality and inclusion (English as a levelling influence)

- More and more disabled people want to get access to learning in all forms, and they are willing to complain if learning materials are not properly accessible. This is an important driver that needs to be taken into account.
- Another driver is English for activism. Social media offers indigenous people ways of promoting their culture and even their own language. Activist communities are focusing on human rights. They're becoming more and more united through the use of English in technology and are learning more English so that they can work more effectively within and between communities to raise what they see as critical issues to the outside world.

3.15.3 English in the learning system

3.15.3.1 Expansion of English language provision

- English language education and courses are being offered all over the world. The UK sector is no longer the sole authority, and competition is rising. For example, in the Philippines English is being offered in combination with tourism in further education (FE) programmes, while in the Netherlands all postgraduate courses are taught in English.
- Partnerships could increase access to learning for those who have been left out due to a lack of access to technology and the digital divide. We can hypothesise, for example, that telecom and education technology companies will partner with governments to provide access to appropriate technology for all.

3.15.3.2 Public education systems

- The disillusionment of parents with government education has driven private education. There is a huge expansion in private education, generating increased provision of EME and creating a wider division between public and private education.
- The example referenced above, where young people regularly fall short of the English proficiency levels needed to secure jobs in the hotel industry, suggests that school systems have not adequately responded to changing environments and the resultant changing needs of employers.

3.15.4 Specific learning system issues

3.15.4.1 Technology and EDI

- Those in society who are left behind in terms of technology need to be supported. This is vital if we want to help young people around the world use English as they would like to for employment and educational opportunities. There are millions of people excluded from these opportunities, and they are not being targeted sufficiently; there needs to be a move towards low-tech, open educational resources: free materials. This philanthropic approach is increasingly seen in the US. Could this be replicated in the UK? This has the potential to lead the way towards a focus on digital technologies for inclusion.
- AI opens up the possibility for customised learning pathways. Global technology corporations know us better than our parents do. They will be able to predict what someone needs, wants or prefers to learn and they will be able to serve that person's individual learning needs. The digital divide will become narrower – people will be able to learn English for free ten years from now, a bit like having an entry-level Spotify account.
- The rise of individualised learning packages is something that will really come through – learners will be able to customise their own learning in different contexts. This raises questions of equity and privilege and threatens to create new classes in society: those who can use English and those who cannot.
- Established and emerging technologies such as Google Translate and the Metaverse are playing an increasingly important role in our daily lives and are likely to have a similar impact on TLA.

3.15.4.2 Assessment

- The future of testing is assured because many education and employment systems see it as a prerequisite.
- How will AI shape testing? The skills required by employers will extend to being able to use social media and other technologies. In order to test whether a person has the appropriate language skills for that purpose, assessment will need to change in terms of the technologies that it uses, the feedback that it's able to give and the uses that it is testing for.
- Will international English language examinations feature a more modular, more personalised type of assessment in the future? For example, depending on the purpose of taking a test, could the test-taker select the modules they are being assessed on? Will technological advances make this a possibility? Test-takers could link personal reasons for taking the test (individual target-language-use needs) with the skills required by the test and receiving organisations. For example, a test-taker could focus on the interview needed to get through immigration and also how to build networks once in the chosen country.
- AI could help with the assessment of productive skills. Many ministries have been unable to do this due to the cost, but AI might provide access to and enable the testing of speaking and writing skills. AI can reach everyone really efficiently and there are some assessments that use speech recognition already in the market.
- Assessment needs to reflect more authentically the social (which can also include work and study) and cognitive demands of real-world communication.
- A great deal of current examining of speaking does not cover the interactional element. There is some movement in the right direction, which needs to be followed through by both national and international exam boards. In turn, publishers need to follow through with these trends in their books to reflect best practice in teaching.

3.15.4.3 Teachers and teacher education

- Although technology is changing the educational landscape, a great deal of teaching will carry on in traditional classrooms, and support for teachers will be important. There is still a need to help them to be better teachers of English by enabling them to have better command of English themselves. Will public education systems be able to respond?

4 Spotlights

In this section we present a series of seven Spotlights submitted by roundtable participants from across the world. Here, the writers offer their personal perspectives on issues that were discussed in the roundtables. Collectively, they offer an additional perspective on the issues presented in Section 3, while highlighting some additional changes, either predicted or already under way. The general mood in these pieces sees the continued growth of English as a positive development, in that it is broadly perceived as offering an equitable pathway to a prosperous future to all citizens. The continued spread of EME/EMI and CLIL across public and private education systems is also noted, though the situation reported in India, with a growing private sector that is edging closer and closer to an alternative education pathway for those who can afford it, should be deeply worrying to those concerned with equality and diversity. A number of writers also point to the growing awareness of the educational, economic and cultural benefits of multilingualism.







Fig 4.1 World map of Spotlight authors



EU – Europe

Professor Gisella Langé
Senior Adviser – Foreign Languages Inspector
Ministry of Education, Italy



Sub-Saharan Africa

Dr Harry Kuchah Kuchah
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South America

Dr Ivan Cláudio Pereira Siqueira
Member of the National Council of Education
Full Professor, Federal University of Bahia



East Asia

Dr Jessica Row-Whei Wu
Director General for Research & Development
The Language Training & Testing Center
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South Asia
Professor Amol Padwad
Director
Centre for English Language Education
Dr. B. R. Ambedkar University



MENA – Gulf
Dr Mansoor S Almalki
Vice President for
Development and Quality
Shaqra University
Associate Professor of Applied
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East Asia – ASEAN
Dr Hikyoung Lee
Vice President, International Affairs Dean,
International Summer/Winter Campus Programs
Professor, Dept. of English Language and Literature,
College of Liberal Arts, Korea University

4.1 Ivan Cláudio Pereira Siqueira

The future of English in Brazil (equality, diversity and inclusion)

The teaching and learning of English as an additional language in Brazil has been happening since at least 1808, when the Portuguese Court settled in Rio de Janeiro. However, the outline of a national education system only began in the 1930s, and after the Second World War the English language gradually gained more space in Brazilian education. However, the regulation that makes the teaching of English compulsory in Brazilian BE is more recent, coming into force, together with the Common National Curricular Base (BNCC), between 2017 and 2018.

Along with the BNCC – a set of competencies and skills that aim to ensure learning objectives for all BE – English became compulsory in secondary schools nationally. In 2020, the National Education Council approved National Curriculum Guidelines for Multilingual Education, which were then approved by the MoE in July 2022. The document is a result of the exponential growth of bilingual schools in the country and the absence of a national regulation. Interestingly, one of the first national rules on bilingual education referred to the teaching of French in the 1960s at the Liceu Pasteur in São Paulo.

The demand for learning English explains the growth in supply and demand for bilingual education, especially in private schools, where approximately 20 per cent of students are in BE, although there is also a diversity of students, including scholarship students and students who do not belong to the wealthier classes.

The guideline for bilingual education has fostered the expectation that public schools can also offer bilingual education or bilingual programmes that effectively expand the learning opportunities for students from working-class backgrounds. Part of this expectation is due to a widespread feeling in Brazilian society that one can only learn English in courses offered in language centres or in courses abroad, neither of which are very accessible. But starting the process in early childhood education has shown promising results, hence the growth of bilingual education in private schools and the prospect that public schools will also offer it.

However, public schools face numerous challenges to be able to make the dream of millions of students to 'speak English' come true, and the Covid-19 pandemic and the closure of schools for two years have further exacerbated inequalities and widened the learning gap, especially among the poorest.

In any case, as public schools educate approximately 80 per cent of students in Brazil, the future of English necessarily lies with them. But for this to happen, in addition to reflecting on the limitations of traditional pedagogical and linguistic approaches, it will be essential to add public policies of inclusion.

The search for equality, diversity and inclusion in effective learning opportunities will depend substantially on the ability of pedagogical programmes to include students with disabilities, neurodivergent students, and those who may need specific adjustments or accommodations, for example students who are autistic, d/Deaf or have a visual impairment. To the same end, the indigenous, quilombola, Black, riverine, rural and water populations also have the right to learn English. And so we can glimpse the challenges and also the opportunities to move towards a more equal and happier society.

In order to allow all students to progress through the stages of development at an appropriately similar rate, we must make use of the potential of the arts, music, digital technologies, interactive methodologies, computing, gamification and a set of practices that place the student at the centre of learning.

If all of this seems like a long and winding road, we already have part of the tools necessary for the crossing. What we lack is a national plan that stipulates 'English learning objectives' for each year and stage of BE (similar to what the BNCC indicates for other disciplines in primary education). By developing a national plan, we will be on the way to establishing standards of quality, as well as desirable EDI measures for the various Brazilian schools and realities. Last but not least, the future of English in Brazil will depend on our ability to qualify teaching, i.e. to improve the general paradigm of initial training for degrees and constantly improve ongoing training, which necessarily implies assessment processes for teachers and students.

4.2 Jessica R W Wu

The future of English – a Taiwanese perspective

Taiwan has long attached importance to improving its citizens' English abilities, as related goals have been included in national development plans since as early as the end of the 20th century. The *Bilingual 2030* policy recently launched by Taiwan shows even greater ambition to further the use of English in Taiwan in order to enhance the global competitiveness of its talent and industry. With little doubt, an emphasis on the importance of English will keep increasing in Taiwan in the years to come; however, it is worth noting that there are several significant changes in the focus and practices of English education in this recent policy.

First, the government is encouraging the use of English as an instructional language at all levels of education (e.g. EMI at the tertiary level and CLIL at the primary and secondary levels) to promote the development of a bilingual educational environment, with priority given to the bilingualisation of HE. To enhance students' readiness for EMI, students are required to be equipped with English abilities at or above CEFR B2 level and possess academic literacy. Therefore, academic-situated English learning resources, such as courses and materials for teaching and learning, will be in demand both at the tertiary and secondary levels.

Second, while the broad aim of the policy is to improve overall English competency, greater emphasis has been put on enhancing learners' communicative ability in English. For example, the bilingual teaching approaches adopted by the policy are designed to create an immersion experience where students can use English in authentic contexts, fostering their productive skills in addition to their receptive skills. The emphasis on the productive skills is also reinforced by the MoE's recent support for the development of a speaking and writing test for college students. Relevant to the development of learners' English communicative abilities is the shifted focus from the NS norm to effective communicative strategies, which is influenced by the concept of English as a lingua franca. This conceptual change in the use of English is expected to have an impact on the teaching and assessment of English in Taiwan.

Third, since the outset of the implementation of the *Bilingual 2030* policy, the application of digital technology to language learning has been highly valued in Taiwan. This gives full support to the creation of digital resources for English learning.

It is believed that the different forms of digital learning (e.g. synchronous/asynchronous online learning, blended learning) have the potential to support differentiated instruction in classrooms, reduce resource gaps between regions and provide practical value in this post-Covid-19 era. Other digital learning resources, including but not limited to AI-generated feedback to learners' language output, are believed to support autonomous learning and will thus be welcomed by schools and learners.

In addition to investing abundant resources and workforce in the *Bilingual 2030* policy, Taiwan demonstrates its dedication to the success of the policy by planning to establish a Bilingual Development Centre. However, it should be noted that perception of the policy by educators, students and other commentators in English media is still mixed. Many express concerns regarding the relevance of English to Taiwanese students, the pedagogical approaches adopted by the policy and the impact of the policy on local Taiwanese languages. Despite the controversy, it is predicted that English will continue to gain momentum in Taiwan in the future.

4.3 Hikyoung Lee

English as a driver for equity in Asia and beyond

The future of English in Asia, and particularly in Korea, will be co-dependent on the changing role of English in the world. While the role of English as a lingua franca will continue and flourish even more, the utility of English needs to evolve to become a driver for access, inclusion and diversity in the region and beyond.

In Korea, English has been and is still considered a means for social and economic gain, such as university entrance, career prospects and social mobility. Efforts to curb private spending on English have been recently made by the government. Starting from 2017, the negative washback effects of the College Scholastic Ability Test were mitigated by a change in the scoring system for English, which is a major subject along with Korean language and mathematics. This change to an absolute scoring system resulted in English losing status. While private spending has been diverted to the other major subjects, the focus of English education has shifted slightly from college admissions to early English education, as parents still view English as necessary for their children's advancement.

In terms of Asia as a region, the many and diverse varieties of English are being recognised within Asia and throughout the world from a world Englishes perspective. This once old and newfound mutual respect for diversity can be a way to achieve equity as prejudices are lessened, and exclusion by preferred English varieties or even English itself is eased. It is difficult to pinpoint a unifying aspect of Asia, as the region is relatively more dynamic and fluid than other parts of the world. However, English can play a unifying role through which opportunity and prosperity can be jointly achieved across borders.

In 2015, the United Nations declared 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). SDG 4 is quality education, in which the notions of equal access and inclusion are emphasised along with relevant skills for work. Since 2010, the United Nations Academic Impact (UNAI), an initiative of HE institutions, articulated educational obligations – such as capacity building, education for all, global citizenship and intercultural dialogue – all of which benefit from English competency. In this light, English has not been overtly or sufficiently included in the global dialogue surrounding the attainment of SDG 4 or the UNAI's goals. Equal access to quality English education at all levels should not be an option but an imperative, as it is a prerequisite for development and engaging with the world.

Returning to Korea, the role of English as a means for gatekeeping, judgement and elitism should not be repeated in other countries where the importance of English education is growing. English needs to become a means to break down social barriers and existing power structures. English education should be equally accessible to everyone and should be seen as a driver for access, inclusion and diversity to achieve equity. Asia needs to own English to access the rest of the world as global citizens.

4.4 Gisella Langé

CLIL favouring plurilingualism

CLIL, conceived in the 1990s in Europe, is now adopted in many parts of the world. Over the past two decades, education systems have increasingly developed solutions for language teaching and learning, including CLIL methodology, as a strategic choice. Italy is one of the countries where this choice has been made, with the teaching of a content subject through an additional language, usually English.

The promotion of additional languages (English, French, German, Spanish and, in some cases, Chinese, Russian, Arabic and regional and home languages) in the curricula and pedagogies, reflecting the multilingual realities of Italian classrooms, is reframing teachers' practices and students' linguistic repertoires. Preparation for life as 'active citizens' in democratic societies and education for personal development are nowadays the main goals of European educational policies. The new *Key Competences for Lifelong Learning* set in 2018 by the European Union and the new *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages – Companion Volume* published in 2020 by the Council of Europe offer sound bases for the development of life skills and of plurilingual, pluricultural and intercultural competences among primary and secondary school teachers and their pupils. The introduction of the languages and cultures present in the classroom and the creation of plurilingual activities that can be linked to several subjects of the curriculum are favouring cross-curricular skills (e.g. enquiry-based learning, information processing, critical thinking, problem solving and team working).

Communities of practice are working collaboratively in assisting, guiding and supporting headteachers and teachers in developing CLIL 'vertical curricula' from primary through to upper secondary schools. Training providers and educational publishers are offering innovative learning and teaching materials and new models of teacher training. These focus on the importance of learning environments, the development of crucial skills, the use of interactive tools, and classroom practice based on action-oriented tasks, which taken together help to prepare teachers to meet today's realities and facilitate international partnerships. Digital training, support, infrastructures and public TV programmes available to both teachers and students underpin effective language learning. In June 2022 a new ministerial decree providing continuing professional development (CPD) targeting CLIL subject teachers for students aged 3–19 was passed. It allows in-service teachers who have developed CLIL activities in their classes to opt on a voluntary basis for CLIL methodological courses organised by universities for different subject areas and languages, provided they hold an international language certificate recognised by the ministry (B2 for pre-school and primary; C1 for lower and upper secondary teachers).

In *English Next*, David Graddol identified CLIL as one of the three emerging significant trends and highlighted the need for both a cultural change in educational institutions and new language competences for subject teachers. CLIL has indeed proved to be a powerful agent of change, as it offers an example of an innovative educational model that requires a cultural shift on the part of teachers, trainers and policymakers: no more teacher-led lessons centred on content, but competence-based curricula and classroom tasks in which learners are actively engaged.

What's next for CLIL? Future developments will most likely see more and more educational professionals across the world (head teachers, teachers of languages and of content subjects, advisers, parents, governmental organisations and other stakeholders) working together and developing stronger professional networks and communities thanks to digital tools and platforms. International communication and exchanges will empower CLIL professionals to manage ethnic and cultural heterogeneity, reaching out to all languages, cultures and kinds of knowledge, thus setting up a collaborative body of professionals aimed at encouraging democratic citizenship, social cohesion, mutual understanding and respect among the members of CLIL plurilingual communities.

4.5 Mansoor S Almalki

What are we preparing our students for?

Education is always about the future, but in today's world it feels as if that future might be coming sooner than we think. The information and communication revolution, including emerging technologies, is reshaping everything around us, including the way we work, the way we think and the way we live. The new era of innovative communications will also have a major impact on what skills students need, including language skills, to succeed in their lives. How can we make sure that their education is preparing them, not only for college or other post-secondary opportunities but also for their future beyond graduation? In this spotlight, I am going to shed light on the state of the English language in my evolving country, Saudi Arabia, and on how the emerging and new developments are reshaping both the job market needs and the educational agenda.

Saudi Arabia, one of the world's largest economies, a Group of Twenty (G20) key member, where the level of education and literacy is among the highest in the region, has a strategic plan to develop an economy that is based on knowledge and research, which is expected to account for 65 per cent of the country's gross domestic product (GDP) by 2030. The *Vision 2030* is built around three primary themes: a vibrant society, a thriving economy and an ambitious nation. In line with this vision and its different prominent educational characteristics, English language is fundamentally becoming a compulsory subject at all educational levels in the Kingdom, and the MoE is noticeably heavily investing in designing and implementing different developmental plans in the education sector.

English is considered as the language of opportunities in Saudi Arabia. It is the lingua franca of almost all businesses and the language of tertiary education. The government has taken an active role in promoting English language learning, and the public and private sectors have made English language acquisition a priority. English language has always been an important skill for Saudi graduates, but it has become even more important in recent years. The country's economic diversification strategy aims to reduce the percentage of GDP that is reliant on oil and related industries that can be affected by fluctuating oil prices. To achieve this goal, the government is investing in growing a range of industries, including healthcare, education, tourism, technology and defence. In each of these sectors English proficiency is essential, and, therefore, students who are proficient in English have a much better chance of finding a job after graduation than their less-fortunate peers. Unsurprisingly, the demand for skilled personnel who are bilingual or multilingual is becoming more prominent.

As someone who has been in the HE sector for almost ten years, I have seen the standards for English proficiency being raised year after year, and I have seen the rapid advancement of technology reshaping the way we communicate and the way our students learn English. We have moved from simple two-way communication, via email and social media platforms, to a virtual world where people are not face to face but are interacting via technology. While this has made communication easier, it has also changed the way people learn. Students are not only practising their language skills on written assignments or essays but are also collaborating and communicating with each other, sometimes in real time, via videoconferencing.

Considering such new technologies are reshaping the way we access information, English fluency is becoming more accessible. It is no longer only about knowing the language and its culture, it is about becoming a part of the larger community, being able to engage in meaningful discussions and collaborations and being able to fully participate in the globalised world. This fact has raised a common interest among language professionals that framing English as a foreign language in Saudi somehow needs a reconsideration, especially among the new generations – Generations Z and Alpha – where English is becoming more and more like a second language.

So, to answer our main question, what are we preparing our students for? The answer is simply found in one of the country's 2030 fundamental programmes, the 'Human Capability Development Programme', where it clearly states that we should be preparing people for study, for a career and for life. And in all three of these domains, English remains a core competency, and will potentially remain as such for a long time into the future.

4.6 Amol Padwad

The future of English – some trends in India

Two trends very likely to characterise the next decade of education in India are the rise of EMI and the increasing role of the private sector in education. EMI drew attention as a growing global phenomenon some years ago, as reported by Oxford EMI Centre (Dearden, 2014), which studied 55 countries, including India. While noting the significant presence of EMI in HE and private schools, the Oxford report also noted the absence of EMI in public schools. But things have changed since then, and a dominant trend in the near future will be an aggressive spread of EMI in public-sector education. Now state governments and local governing bodies are launching EMI schools at scale, notable examples of which include states such as Rajasthan, Chhattisgarh, Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh, and the municipal corporation of Mumbai. These ambitious initiatives to build extensive networks of EMI schools are backed by substantial financial investment and administrative support. This new trend is remarkable in at least two ways. First, it is spearheaded top-down by ruling powers on large scales in the state education sector, which has largely stayed away from EMI. Second, it also probably indicates an open acceptance of EMI within the political agendas and discourse, something that was considered politically incorrect until recently.

As state education largely serves the lower and lower-middle classes, which lack affordable access to EMI opportunities, this move implies not only an open acknowledgement of EMI aspirations of these populations but also an explicit placement of these aspirations on the political agenda. By enabling huge sections of the population to access the EMI world, this trend will have major consequences for resource and capacity building.

Coming to the second trend, the private sector has been present in Indian education for a long time, both philanthropically and commercially. However, recently there seems to be a remarkable shift under way in the nature and extent of private-sector involvement in education. Going beyond conventional private education institutions and commercial coaching centres, new business models with diversified and comprehensive portfolios of educational products and services have begun to appear on the scene. These models are quite ambitious in range (pre-school to university), content coverage (from science, technology, engineering and mathematics [STEM] to music and fine arts), reach (thousands of students across the country) and diversity of 'packages' (from a few to hundreds of hours, online, face-to-face or hybrid). While conventionally the private sector indulged in or built on mainstream formal education, these models tend towards independent and parallel comprehensive education with many fewer links to formal education. They work through corporate-style 'verticals', such as content creation, assessment, materials production and teacher recruitment and training, all with independent management structures, dedicated teams and financial resources.

One must not forget that this domain of play is almost exclusively EMI. In perspective, this may turn into a shift of private interventions from something supplementary to mainstream formal education to something set to be independent of, and very probably encroaching on the space of, mainstream education.

One possible consequence of this trend could be the emergence of new breeds of EMI tutors, content designers, assessors and mentors, backed by management executives and IT solution providers, all with different job profiles and career opportunities. Another consequence could be increasing territorial wars between conventional mainstream and new private education provisions, as the new models eventually begin to assert their independence from mainstream formal education.

4.7 Harry Kuchah Kuchah

The decolonisation and decentring of the English language curriculum and pedagogy

As a primary school pupil learning English in a Cameroonian village in the mid 1970s to early 1980s, I read about life in London. I met characters such as Mr and Mrs Brown standing by the train station and talking about arrival and departure times and about the weather, and the teacher helped us learn vocabulary such as winter, snow, autumn, spring and summer. Learning materials were developed in Britain and hardly adapted to a local context where there are only two seasons – the rainy and dry seasons – and no trains. Over the last three decades, there have been significant changes to the cultural content in most textbooks across SSA, particularly because more and more local professionals are involved in developing curricula and/or writing coursebooks. Underlying this shift in cultural representation is a move away from ideologies that position English as a foreign language to African learners and a recognition of its role as a global language to which African languages have contributed significantly (e.g. nouns like banana, chief, chimpanzee, cola, ebony, jazz, jukebox, okra, safari, ubuntu, vodou, vuvuzela, yam, zebra and zombie are from African languages). From this perspective, the contribution of local expertise will be increasingly valued until it eventually replaces native-speaker expertise, and the decolonisation movement will not only reposition English alongside African languages but will appropriate and use English as a tool for the resistance of cultural imperialism. In countries like Cameroon and Côte d'Ivoire, for example, textbooks are now mostly written by local experts and include a heavy focus on the diverse local cultures through the English language. This is partly in response to the body of research in the human and social sciences promoted by the Council for the Development of Social Science Research in Africa (CODESRIA), an organisation whose objectives are centred around developing and promoting African scholarship and values.

There is already an increasing understanding and recognition of Africa's multilingual realities in education, and the development of multilingual resources and pedagogies is gaining momentum in some parts of 'anglophone' SSA. In South Africa, for example, in June 2022, the Minister of Basic Education announced a plan to institute the country's nine previously marginalised languages (other than English and Afrikaans) as 'languages of learning and teaching' from Grade 3 and beyond, drawing on evidence from an experiment in the Eastern Cape province of the country. While this is likely to be a policy shift that will eventually be adopted by many Commonwealth countries in SSA, there is not yet any indication that English language will cease to be a subject from the first year of primary schooling. The perception among parents of English as the language of opportunities is still very strong, and with private schools driving the English language agenda and ministries of education eager to ensure a smooth transition to EME, Commonwealth countries are more likely to maintain some amount of English language education in the early years of primary education than drop it completely. A late start to learning English in primary school is more likely to be observed in francophone and lusophone countries, where English language education is currently growing in popularity.

Finally, the global lockdowns caused by the Covid-19 pandemic gave visibility to African teachers' resilience and creativity, and the subsequent rise in the use of digital technologies opened doors to professional development opportunities for them. The rapid growth of teacher associations and communities of practice in the region means that there is more sharing of local expertise now. This is likely to grow even more in the next decade, leading to a positioning of the ethnocentric experiences and affordances of African teachers and learners at the centre of pedagogic developments.



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5 Discussion of the themes

5.1 Analysis of the roundtable discussions

In this section, we revisit the data represented in the roundtable summaries (Section 3) to explore for communalities that may point to questions upon which a future research agenda might be built. The data from all 14 roundtables was treated as a single set of observations and tagged for underlying focus. Since this process was likely to be, at least to some degree, subjective, two separate teams comprising external experts and internal British Council researchers reviewed the data and later brought their findings together to reach an agreement on the series of questions that are presented below. The eight thematic questions that were identified from this phase of the analysis were then more closely explored in order to confirm their appropriateness, and to propose an agreed series of broad questions which might form the basis for a future research agenda. Overall agreement on the themes was very strong, though some discussion was needed in order to come to a final agreement on the precise wording of the questions.

5.1.1 Questions 1 and 2

Eleven of the 14 roundtables agreed that the role of English would continue to solidify and grow in the coming years. However, over half of these envisioned this growth as occurring within an increasingly recognised multilingual reality. In other words, other languages will also experience growth in interest. These will include local and alternative international languages, such as Chinese, Arabic and major European languages.

Half of the roundtables went on to indicate that increased interest in English was driven by a need to know the language for educational and economic purposes, though increasingly the use of English for entertainment (including social media) was seen as important. The implication of the growing realisation of the practical value of knowing English is likely to mean an increased need for government intervention through innovative policy decisions around the formal and informal learning context.

Over half of the roundtables identified specific government policy initiatives that promoted the early learning of English and/or the learning of ESP. While these purposes tended to focus on education and employment, there was also some indication (e.g. from China) that it could also be valuable as a cultural agent, operating to help understand external cultures while disseminating internal culture.

Not all comments were fully supportive of this optimistic view, pointing to the potential disruption of technology and the reality and complexity (between and within countries) of multilingualism and multiculturalism, which was seen as increasingly important. All roundtables, with the single exception of ELAG, felt English will have to take its place in this new reality, and the issue will be to identify what exactly this place looks like.

This brief overview suggests the following two questions:

1. Will English remain the world's most sought-after language?
2. What role will English play in our multilingual reality?

5.1.2 Question 3

Half of the roundtables commented on the continued growth of EME within both HE and secondary school systems. EME was also seen as having the potential to lead to greater equity by opening up English provision to a larger portion of the population. The growth in interest in EME is reported to come from parents and learners in some regions (who see it as having educational and economic benefits for them) and is clearly driven by government policy in others. This suggests the following question:

3. What is the future of EME?

5.1.3 Question 4

Views on the future role of teachers ranged from ‘the teacher will disappear’ to ‘learning and teaching will depend 20 per cent on teachers’ to ‘technology cannot emulate the social experience and interaction of being in a real classroom’. All of these scenarios have implications for the curriculum, materials, teachers, and teacher education and development. It was generally felt, however, that teachers will continue to have a positive impact on learning systems, though the nature of their work may need to change. Over half of the roundtables indicated their concern that teachers are not currently prepared for future learning systems and will require training in the development and application of technology-based learning systems. Teacher education may well need to focus on new ways of delivering learning and assessment digitally. There is also concern with finding appropriately qualified people to enter the profession – qualified in terms of English proficiency and in teaching pedagogy. This is of particular concern in EME and CLIL contexts.

This suggests the following question:

4. How will teachers remain relevant in future English language learning systems?

5.1.4 Question 5

Half of the roundtables discussed the growth of the private sector in English language provision. While each country faces a range of issues (e.g. size or disparity of resources between urban and rural environments), the reasons offered for this growth in the area are equally complex, ranging from a general dissatisfaction with public provision, to investment from private companies, to parental expectations. While parents tend to have a positive view of private provision, some roundtables saw this growth as potentially contributing to inequality, with wealthier learners benefiting and less-well-off students falling further behind in terms of opportunity to achieve an appropriate level of proficiency.

There was a general feeling (shared by over half of the roundtables) that public English language provision was poor. It was seen as failing learners, often forcing them to find their own way to improve English proficiency through online and social media use. Issues with public schools often focus on the quality of teaching, with teachers urgently in need of language and pedagogy training and support.

A major criticism is that little or no progress is noticed by learners or parents despite years of learning, and years of experience teaching English in public education systems.

It was suggested that, for education, the private sector should perhaps support the public sector to help resolve existing issues. This suggests the following question:

5. Public and private English language provision: who has the answers?

5.1.5 Question 6

The broad consensus was that the future of English language testing is assured because many education and employment systems see it as a prerequisite. In addition, a number of roundtables indicated that the major tests in their country or region were unlikely to change radically in the foreseeable future. However, even here there was a recognition that the constructs being tested are changing (i.e. the language and how we use it are changing) and this may need to be reflected in the tests. While testing is seen as important, the testing of the productive skills, particularly with large populations, is seen as a major stumbling block, though AI may prove to be the disruptor that makes it possible.

The focus of testing is changing. Future tests will focus on the active use of language and on the contexts of language use. By this we mean the focus on a person's ability to use the language, as opposed to their knowledge of the structures of the language (grammar and vocabulary), and the use of language in particular contexts such as education or work. This will have a significant effect on what future standardised tests look like. The roundtables predicted a move away from focusing on two skills to a focus on all four skills. The growing interest in the testing of the productive skills will continue, aided by the emergence of affordable technology.

The challenge for international standardised examinations is to remain relevant to local contexts while still retaining their primary focus (e.g. on studying in an English-medium environment). The move towards locally appropriate tests is growing, although there are issues here with quality and with the general perception within their own societies that they are somehow less reliable than the international competitors.

The trend towards technology-driven or technology-supported testing was recognised, and the general consensus was that AI in assessment is desirable, not as a replacement for human scorers but in partnership with them. Issues around validity and reliability of online tests were raised; developers were urged to demonstrate the quality of their tests and not to rest on their existing reputations.

This suggests the following question:

6. Can English language assessment meet stakeholders' changing needs?

5.1.6 Question 7

By far the most comments made across the roundtables referred to the impact technology has and will continue to have on English language learning (ELL) systems. While it was generally felt that English was necessary for technology, it was also felt that technology would facilitate the learning of English and give people an equitable voice. The roundtables saw English as an enabler on a number of levels, including social and educational.

However, significant concern was raised over the digital divide, with most panels suggesting that while it has the potential to make education more equitable, the reality is that issues around connectivity and access to appropriate devices indicate there is a real likelihood in many regions that the social divide we currently see will be exacerbated.

Concerns were expressed about the low quality of much online teaching provision. While there have been rapid technological developments, the content of programmes available was felt to be often quite poor. Panels therefore urged the development of digital-first content to include resources for teachers and learners.

Of course, the potential for technology was broadly recognised. It was seen as offering a viable roadmap towards a more accessible system, while taking the concerns with the digital divide expressed above into account. The roundtables saw the need for online learning and assessment as a growing area that shows no signs of slowing down, although there are issues, such as the need to train and support teachers and learners in this new environment. Some participants also expressed a hope for new open-source materials.

The flexibility afforded by technology was identified by some roundtables as a very positive thing. This referred to flexibility of learning in terms of when, where and what; the flexibility of whether to learn using formal or informal channels; and, finally, the flexibility of who is actually offering the learning space, with large tech companies likely to be monitoring the area of large-scale learning system provision.

Half of the roundtables discussed the possible impact of emerging translation systems, wondering if they would reach the stage where they might even negate the need for language learning in the first place. In one way, these applications could be seen as positively affecting inclusion, making language proficiency irrelevant as a life skill.

Advances in technology are widely seen as necessary for both education and employment, and the general perception appears to be that while education has remained static over the past decade or more, learning is moving ahead dramatically, spurred on by the Covid-19 pandemic. The critical issue, however, appears to be the digital divide, in which significant portions of the population do not have access to the technology that many believe can revolutionise education systems.

This suggests the following question:

7. Can technology narrow the equity gap in English language education?

5.1.7 Question 8

Mentioned by over half of the roundtables, there appears to be a broad agreement that impetus for English proficiency in the workplace (referred to in discussions around the future need for and role of English, see above) is driven both by employers and by the recognition among ordinary stakeholders that personal economic gain is linked to English proficiency. This is supported in some cases by official government policy to ensure the continued growth in the use of English in business and government.

This suggests the following question:

8. To what extent is employment driving the future of English?

The eight questions presented here now form the basis of the following section, in which each is discussed with reference to the research literature and with further, more specific analysis of roundtable data.

5.2 Will English remain the world's most sought-after language?

In this section we first present the best estimates of numbers of English speakers in the world today. Second, we briefly outline the future of English as a lingua franca alongside other languages and Englishes. Finally, we present views from the roundtable discussion and the educators survey.

5.2.1 The number of speakers of English

The combined numbers of L1 and additional language speakers of English, while difficult to calculate to any degree of precision, make it the mostly widely spoken language in the world. Establishing an accurate estimate of the number of English speakers globally is extremely challenging, not least because of the difficulty of defining what it means to speak a language. Internet search results show estimates varying from 1.35 billion (Assi, 2022; Lyons, 2021) to 1.5 billion (Knagg, 2014; Statista, 2022). While the Knagg (2014) estimate was based on a data-collection project carried out by the British Council in 2012, the origin of others is unclear. A more up-to-date estimate was suggested by Crystal (2018) who refers to calculations he made from a variety of sources in 2017. He suggests that over three billion people who live in the 85+ countries or dependencies he lists 'in which English has held or continues to hold a special place' are routinely exposed to English in their daily lives, representing 41 per cent of the estimated total global population. To demonstrate the complexity of formulating an accurate percentage, we further explore the data presented by Crystal (2018) in Table 5.1 and Appendix 5, an additional table of 227 countries with estimates of the population and the number of English speakers. Looking at these tables we can see that the numbers of English speakers can range from 31 per cent of the world's population (2017 estimate) to 67 per cent of the world's population. The lower of these (representing over 2.3 billion people) might have offered the most reasonable (if conservative) estimate.

Table 5.1. English speakers in the world

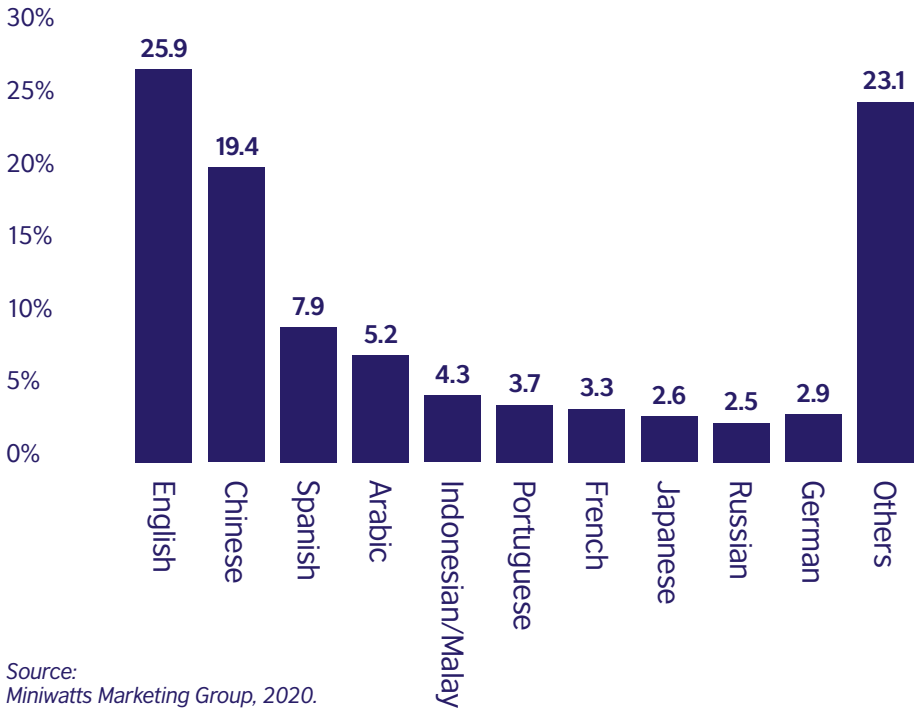
World population (estimated as of 2017)	7,513,416,900
Overall number of people speaking English	2,317,900,100
Percentage of the population exposed to English	41%
Percentage of the population speaking English	31%
Percentage of the population exposed to and/or speaking English	67%
Overall speaking English as a first language	388,219,600
Overall speaking English as additional language	1,929,680,500

Source: Based on Crystal (2018)

English is the de jure or de facto official language of 67 nation states, and in an additional 27 it is widely spoken as an unofficial language. It is used extensively in global trade and is the official working language for the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund and the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC). It is also the official language for communication between ASEAN nations and occupies a prominent place in many other intergovernmental organisations, such as the EU, where the activities of the European Research Council are conducted in English (Rich, 2021), despite Brexit removing one of only two countries in the EU that use English as the primary language of communication.

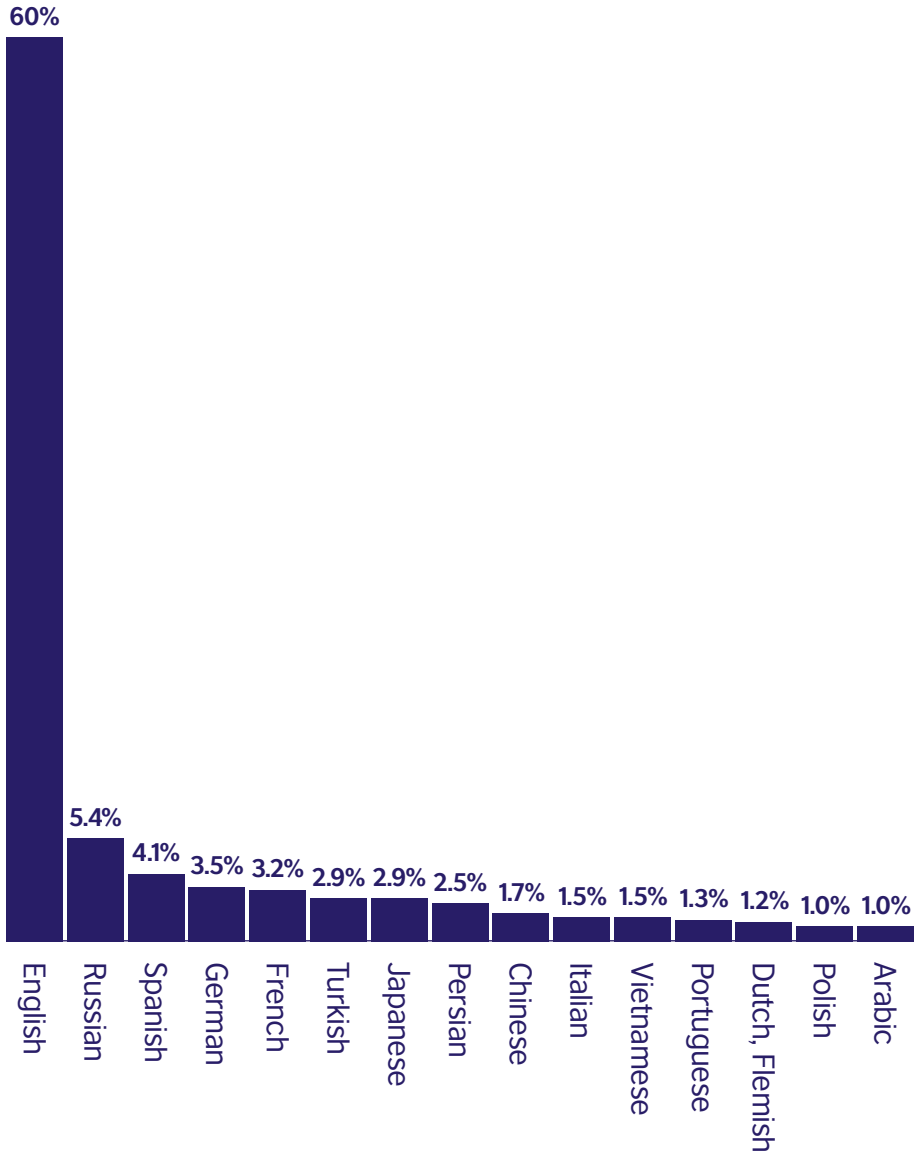
English also dominates in the academic publishing world, with recent estimates suggesting that 90 per cent of all scientific publications are in English (Rich, 2021), although there are some suggestions that this figure is artificially high, as a large number of peer-reviewed journals in other languages are not included in major indexes such as the Science Citation Index Expanded (Clarivate, 2022; Curry and Lillis, 2018). English occupies a prominent position in cultural activities, such as in the film industry, popular music and news- and film-streaming services – although it is, of course, possible to sing along with an English song without understanding the words or watch a dubbed or subtitled film (see Melitz, 2018, for a more detailed discussion). It is also the most widely used language on the internet, with over 60 per cent of content in English, despite only around a quarter of internet users having English as an L1 (See Figures 5.1 and 5.2).

Figure 5.1: First language of internet users



Source:
Miniwatts Marketing Group, 2020.

Figure 5.2: Website content languages



Source: World Wide Web Technology Surveys W3Techs, 2022.²

² https://w3techs.com/technologies/overview/content_language
(site updated with new numbers)

Other languages may increase their percentage share relative to English as internet access continues to expand in Asia and Africa. Nonetheless, it seems probable that English will maintain its strong presence on the internet, in part because the content of English websites is being accessed by many more users than those based in anglophone countries, as Figures 5.1 and 5.2 suggest.

The World Economic Forum produced an index in 2016 of the world's most powerful languages, as measured by geography, economy, communication, knowledge and media, and diplomacy, in which English was top in all five categories, ahead of Mandarin (described as 'only half as potent' as English), French, Spanish and Arabic (Chan, 2016, para. 7). Their prediction for 2050 shows English falling behind Mandarin in communication but remaining number one in the other four categories (Chan, 2016).

5.2.2 English and other languages

Graddol thought that Asia would become the region that determined the long-term future of English as a global language. To date, both India and China have encouraged their citizens to learn English to allow them to participate in global trade and international education, scientific and technological knowledge-sharing, and dialogue with other countries on geopolitical concerns, all areas in which English is currently a key lingua franca. For this to change would require a concerted effort to persuade other countries to change the linguistic status quo (Rich, 2021). Although India promotes local languages as well as English in its education policy (Government of India, 2020), it seems unlikely that it will promote Hindi (or one of the other 22 official languages) as an alternative global lingua franca at any point in the near future, not least because a sizeable proportion of its population (approaching ten per cent in the 2011 census) already speak English, although the vast majority of those (around 129 million) do so as an additional language, with only about 256,000 speaking it as their L1 (2011 Census of India, 2022). Regarding China, estimates suggest that only around one per cent of the population of mainland China can converse in English, although numbers are much higher in the Special Administrative Regions of Hong Kong and Macau.

While languages such as Mandarin, currently second in the World Economic Forum's Power Language Index (Chan, 2016), or Portuguese (currently ninth) may rise in prominence due to the increasing economic strength of China and Brazil, and may even develop the status of regional lingua francas in time, English is uniquely positioned because of its geographical dispersion and large numbers of users. This seems likely to secure its current position as global lingua franca for the next decade, irrespective of a changing economic climate. The emergence of English as a lingua franca is the result of a 'complex set of historical conditions' (Rich, 2021, p. 34) that have enabled it to spread across the globe. The conditions that produced global English would be hard for any other language to replicate, and for a different language to take hold and replace English, it would need to be adopted widely 'as a conscious choice' (Rich, 2021, p. 34).

There is some concern that 'Englishisation' – the use of English in a range of social domains where previously local languages were used – threatens the survival of lesser languages and the integrity of others (Block, 2022; Chan, 2016). The World Economic Forum, for example, describes this process as 'the creep of English into other languages and its displacement of rivals' (Chan, 2016, para. 11). The Académie Française in France is one example of official attempts to prevent the encroachment of English into other languages. Others argue, however, that the real cause of disadvantage and injustice is not English but 'political, economic, social and cultural structures' (Hultgren, 2020, p. 6).

5.2.3 Englishes

It may be the fact that English has an increasing number of regional variants that allows it to retain its dominant status. As early as 1978, the British Council published an edited collection of papers entitled *English as an International Language*. In that collection two quotes stand out as retaining their currency. In the first of these, Brumfit (1978, p. 22) argued that 'we must be prepared to recognize dialectical differences whenever a different cultural framework is to be expressed through English'. Strevens (1978, p.31) later added that 'new forms of English, born in new countries with new communicative needs, should be accepted into the marvellously flexible and adaptable galaxy of "Englishes" which constitute the English language'.

More recent research into global Englishes shows how the language is constantly in ‘a state of flux’, with boundaries between languages blurring and English being used in ‘dynamic and multifaceted ways’, often in multilingual situations (Rose et al., 2021, p. 159; see also Section 6.2 of this book). Local variations such as Hinglish (a blend of Hindi and English in India), Singlish (in Singapore, incorporating Chinese and Malay) and Nigerian English (in both Standard and Pidgin versions) have developed as local lingua francas,³ sparking debate on how the legitimacy of such variants is driving the move away from the assumption that there is only one standard form of the language (Hultgren, 2020).

When it comes to classroom-based teaching of English, however, there is limited evidence of which English or Englishes are actually taught and learned in different places, and there is often little clear guidance in national language education policies. The recently revised National Education Policy in India, for example, while encouraging the use of Indian languages as well as English, makes no reference to localised versions such as Hinglish (Government of India, 2020), despite calls for Hinglish to be ‘freed from the clutches of linguistic-deficiency hypothesis’ given that it is a ‘sustainable hybrid system packed with wide-ranging linguistic innovations’ (Bhatia, 2020, p. 28).

Research with teachers shows that while most are aware of the concept of global Englishes, there is still a focus on standard British and/or American English, albeit mediated through teachers’ own use of English, particularly with regard to pronunciation (Young et al., 2016; and see Section 5.2.4.4 below).

5.2.4 Roundtable views about English now and in the future

5.2.4.1 The status of English

Almost all the roundtable participants agreed that English would remain as the global lingua franca and that the demand for English would remain strong and in many cases increase further in their regions. The main drivers for this are education, employment, technology and, to a lesser extent, global mobility. Employers, parents and learners themselves are very much driving the need for English; they see it as a necessity for success in life, learning and employment. There were, however, some differences between geographies about the role and use of English.

³ For examples of news reporting in Nigerian Pidgin, see <https://www.bbc.com/pidgin>.

In ASEAN, there is an emerging trend towards using English as a utilitarian ability – how to get things done – rather than a focus on knowledge and NS norms, with a corresponding shift of emphasis from accuracy to contextual appropriacy.

There was a similar focus in the Maghreb roundtable on the use of English for general communication outside of educational contexts, marking a move away from an emphasis on language knowledge towards language use. International communication linked to employment, education and social purposes is the main driver for the continued interest in English, providing positive and tangible reasons for young people to learn English. In the Gulf region, English enjoys a high status, and in Kuwait, for example, it is seen as an L2 rather than a foreign language, while in Saudi Arabia, English is recognised as an L2. English is seen as important for life, education and employment throughout the Gulf, and its use is proactively promoted in education and social settings. The status of English in Egypt and the Levant countries represented differs considerably. Roundtable participants reported that in Jordan and Syria English is considered a foreign language, while in the other countries and territories (Yemen, Egypt, Occupied Palestinian Territories and Iraq) it is practically an L2.

In the EU, demand for English will remain high, and English will continue for the foreseeable future to be the main regional lingua franca. The support for learning English in all sectors and at all stages of education is strong, with English seen as a means to an end and almost a necessity. Drivers include:

- social media as a platform for communication and informal education
- social and economic success in an increasingly multilingual region
- global mobility.

In Pakistan, meanwhile, English is predicted to grow both in terms of use and demand. The Annual Status of Education Report in 2021 showed that in the 'katchi abadis' (urban slums) English was the language of aspiration among the young and outranked Urdu in this regard (ASER Pakistan, 2021).

5.2.4.2 Drivers of English as a lingua franca

- *English and education.* The approach to English in education systems was discussed extensively in all of the roundtables. There was variation in the exposure to English in BE and HE across the different contexts. Participants in almost all of the roundtables reported an increase in private-sector provision of English and concern about the quality of provision in both sectors and at all levels. For a more detailed discussion of English in the public and private sectors see Section 5.6.
- *English and employment.* Roundtable data revealed employment as one of the main drivers of the demand for English. Participants shared contextual needs for proficient young people to be able to compete in national and global employment markets. For a more detailed exploration of English for employment see Section 5.9.
- *English and technology.* Across all of the roundtables, access to technology for social communication and learning was seen as a significant driver. Most research and innovation is in English, but with new technologies being developed for translation, for example, English could soon have competitors such as Chinese in this area. In Pakistan, participants stated that the motivation to learn English is no longer integrative and cultural. A shift has been made to a much more instrumental approach, and this trend is expected to accelerate as English continues to establish itself as the language of technology and big data. The theme of English and technology is explored in more detail in Section 5.8.
- *English and culture.* English will be used to disseminate local cultures, rather than those of colonial powers. Children in Myanmar, for example, already use English to learn about culture in other ASEAN countries. The increase in ‘cultural confidence’ reflected in China’s readiness to disseminate its culture will require a shift in the content of English language courses to focus on contemporary Chinese culture and life in contemporary China, not just on novels from traditional English-speaking countries. In the Maghreb roundtable, participants expressed that English is also associated with global arts and culture; as long there is growing creativity and innovation, students will follow.

5.2.4.3 English and other languages

In over half of the roundtables, participants talked about increasingly multilingual contexts and the growing importance of local languages in education and society. All participants considered English to be very important but suggested that the way that it is perceived has to adapt to the increased recognition of other languages in many contexts around the world. Issues and opportunities surrounding English and other languages are explored in more detail in Section 5.3.

5.2.4.4 The survey results

The data from the roundtables was corroborated by the survey data collected from English language educators from around the world (see Appendix 2).

Approximately 92 per cent said that English was (very or quite) important to secure a job in their country, while approximately 85 per cent felt English was important to study in HE. Language learning emerged as a major feature: over 82 per cent thought that the number of people studying English in their country had increased over the last five years, and 78 per cent said that interest in learning other languages had also grown. The main areas of growth in English were identified as ESP (31.4 per cent) and EME in HE (22.7 per cent), although nearly 15 per cent also identified an increase in English as the language of learning and teaching in primary and secondary education. Interestingly, over 85 per cent regarded British and/or US English as the main model promoted in their country, including in teaching materials and exams, with 12.6 per cent saying international English and only 2.2 per cent another variety; two-thirds also thought that it was very or quite important to follow NS norms in teaching and learning. It appears that for all the academic focus on the development of world Englishes, the major NS models remain very much the preferred variants almost everywhere.

5.2.4.5 Conclusion

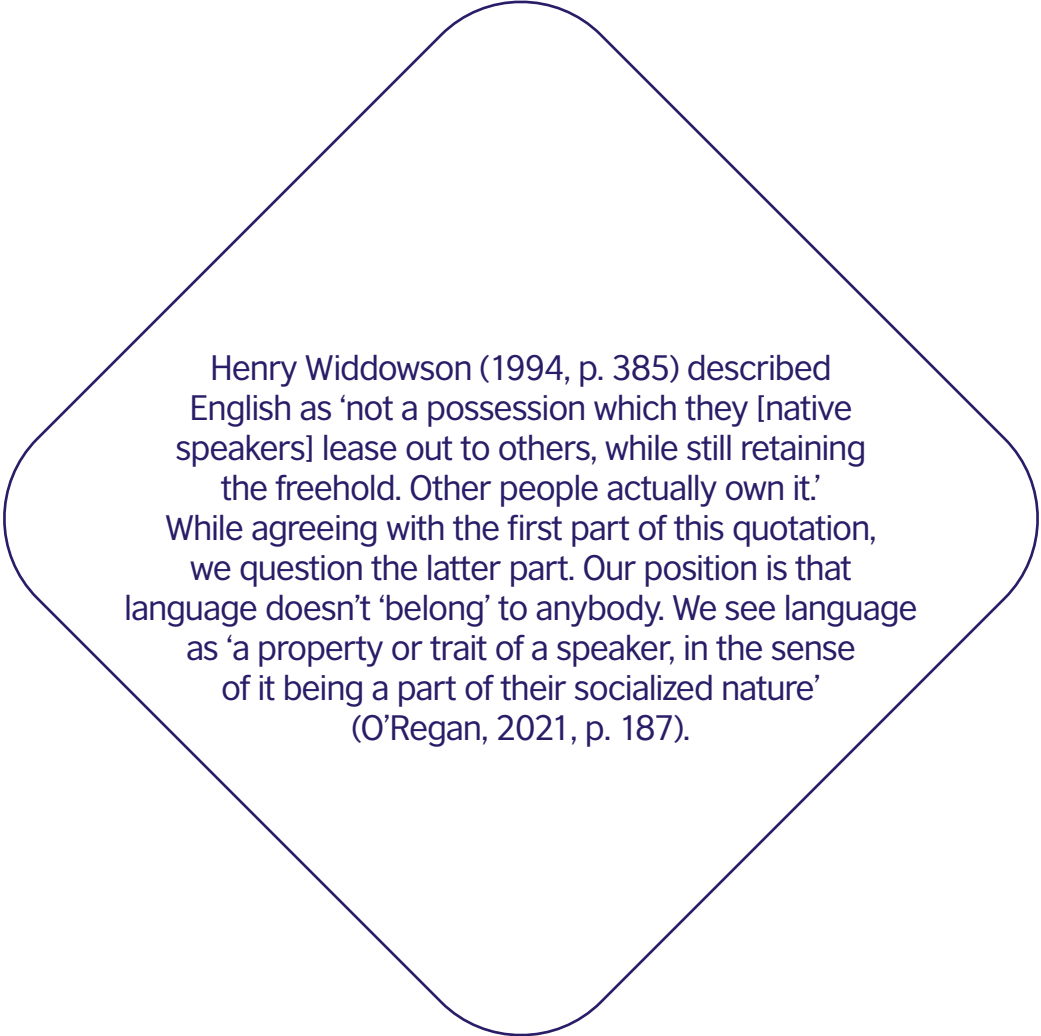
Almost all our roundtable members agreed, then, that English (or possibly Englishes) will continue as ‘a contact language, a lingua franca, and a language in flux’ (Rose et al., 2021, p. 158) for the next decade and beyond, with education and employment continuing to be the main drivers for ELL, and technology also being a driver and a source of access. It appears unlikely that other languages, such as Mandarin, will overtake English in this respect at any point in the short or medium term, although the question of whether other languages may become more dominant at a regional level is an interesting one.

Further research in a number of areas has been proposed recently:

- foreign language learning policy development (Enever, 2020)
- analysis of the political, economic, social and cultural systems and processes that ‘undergird the current world order’ and allow English use to expand (Hultgren, 2020, p. 26)
- the effects of Global Englishes content in teacher education courses on teacher beliefs and pedagogical practices (Rose et al., 2021)
- the effects of curriculum interventions and the attitudes of teachers and learners towards suggested curriculum change (Rose et al., 2021)
- case studies in a range of contexts to explore current practices concerning language variety, including teacher cognitions of language variety and the extent to which these inform classroom practice (Young et al., 2016).

A word about terminology

The terms native speaker (NS) and non-native speaker (NNS) were used by Graddol in *English Next* (2006). However, in this book we only use these terms when referring to their historical use. We recognise that the concept was considered problematic even in Graddol's time. For example, Liu (1999, p. 86) had argued that the dichotomy is 'power driven, identity laden and confidence affecting'. In this book, we reflect the views of the British Council in rejecting the belief that the native speaker is somehow superior to those for whom English is a second or additional language.



Henry Widdowson (1994, p. 385) described English as ‘not a possession which they [native speakers] lease out to others, while still retaining the freehold. Other people actually own it.’ While agreeing with the first part of this quotation, we question the latter part. Our position is that language doesn’t ‘belong’ to anybody. We see language as ‘a property or trait of a speaker, in the sense of it being a part of their socialized nature’ (O’Regan, 2021, p. 187).

5.3 What role will English play in our multilingual reality?

In this section we provide an overview of multilingualism as the norm in contexts around the world today. The focus is on multilingual education, outlining the benefits, the factors to consider when implementing multilingual education and the implications for English. We then present relevant data from the roundtable discussions.

A brief word on terminology

Multilingualism is an area of study that can be weighed down by terminology. As a phenomenon, it is fluid, organic and developing and therefore is subject to new terminology as new ideas and concepts emerge. The aim of this section is not to discuss the terminology and concepts in detail. Instead, it is to present two fundamental terms as the foundations of this section.

The Council of Europe (2007, p. 8) makes the useful distinction between multilingualism and plurilingualism, where multilingualism conceptualises a space or a place where languages convene and connect and plurilingualism characterises an individual's propensity for being competent in more than one language:

Multilingualism refers to the presence in a geographical area, large or small, of more than one 'variety of language', i.e. the mode of speaking of a social group, whether it is formally recognised as a language or not; in such an area individuals may be monolingual, speaking only their own variety.

Plurilingualism refers to the repertoire of varieties of language which many individuals use, and is therefore the opposite of monolingualism; it includes the language variety referred to as 'mother tongue' or 'first language' and any number of other languages or varieties. Thus, in some multilingual areas, some individuals are monolingual and some are plurilingual.

In this section, multilingualism is used in its most general and expansive sense, which aligns to the description proposed by Buendgens-Kosten & Elsner (2018, p. xi):

Multilingualism as a word has a rich history, and is used here in the broadest possible sense, that is not as a word contrasting with bilingual, not as a word contrasting with plurilingual, but encompassing any co-existence or co-presence of two or more languages, within and without language-learning contexts.

5.3.1 Multilingualism in society

Exploration, colonisation, globalisation and migration have all contributed to today's multilingual world (Buendgens-Kosten & Elsner, 2018). For political, social, economic and educational reasons, people have moved around the globe, taking their language and culture with them and in turn having to learn the language of the new place, thus creating linguistically and culturally rich societies. Research indicates that multilingual communication is the norm in most contexts. Any society, and any classroom, is potentially home to multiple languages, which individuals use in different forms and ways to manage the daily business of life and learning (Benson, 2017; Leung & Jenkins, 2020). English, in its position as a global lingua franca, is often one of the languages used in a multilingual situation where everyday communication is managed by individuals using languages (any and all available to them) organically and fluidly. As languages users encounter each other, interlocutors experiment with constructs to negotiate meanings: language is moulded and meshed to create communication that is lively, cultural and contemporary. This dynamic reconstruction of languages for communicative purposes is called translinguaging (Mazzaferro, 2018). Leung & Jenkins (2020, p. 32) suggest that translinguaging is:

becoming the situated emergent norm, with speakers using one or other of their language(s) according to their and their interlocutors' needs at any given moment in an exchange, and switching from one to another as a matter of course.

Translinguaging is context-specific and not bound by the standard forms of any language (Leung & Jenkins, 2020; Mazzaferro, 2018). In multilingual interaction, native-like proficiency is not the aim, and the standards of British and/or American English are obsolete; instead the objective is successful communication in a specific situation (Cenoz & Gorter, 2011; Leung & Jenkins, 2020). Seen in this way, the notion of language proficiency for everyday use in social situations is changing. Rather than prioritising standardised form or accuracy, communicative competence in these situations is about constructing meaning using all available resources and is referred to as 'multilingual competence' or 'plurilingual competence' (Buendgens-Kosten & Elsner, 2018; Cenoz & Gorter, 2011). It is important to note that as language for specific purposes such as law, commerce and education tends to remain more rule based and 'precise' (Douglas, 2000, p. 7), it should not be treated in the same way as usage for everyday communication.

Shohamy (2006. p. 172) understands multilingual competence as:

the competencies derived from hybrids of different languages and the use of multiple codes including not only printed texts but also visuals and a variety of symbols... [T]he traditional boundaries between speech and writing are blurred [and] the boundaries between languages are soft in daily communication because of code-switching and code-mixing.

Multilingual competence encompasses multiple literacies and multimodality and increases the channels of communication available for individuals of different linguistic backgrounds to connect with one another.

One implication for English, with its global prevalence and reach, is that it is no longer about the NS, and it is no longer about so-called standard forms of the language. English belongs to whoever uses it, in whatever form, to interact successfully in any given context. The changing linguistic tapestry of most contexts in the world today has implications for English and also for wider language policies that seek to govern linguistic behaviour in any given place.

5.3.2. Language policies

National language policies are driven by political and economic motives, often leaving room for only one or two dominant languages to flourish and thus marginalising any non-dominant languages that may share that space (Ball, 2011). Since English is recognised as key to achieving success in education and work, it often has a place in national language-in-education policies, usually juxtaposed with a local language.

In many contexts, language-in-education policies are not interpreted or implemented as intended by the policymakers (Wildsmith-Cromarty and Balfour, 2019). Due to governance, infrastructure, resources and classroom practice, policy can be diluted by the time it reaches the classroom, and classroom practice can differ quite starkly within the same country, especially between urban and more remote areas. Classrooms, rather than policy, sometimes mirror the multilingual societal reality in which they are situated, and if effective learning is to happen, teachers and students will use the linguistic resources available to them, even if these are not the ones mandated by the education policy (Bagwasi & Costley, 2022; Cenoz and Gorter, 2011).

5.3.3 Multilingualism in education

Many children have the advantage of growing up with more than one language, if not at home, then in the community or through different media such as radio, television and the internet. However, many children, because of the kind of language-in-education policies discussed above, find themselves using a language other than their mother tongue to study in school. This is a major concern for both a child's general social development and the development of their home language (or languages), as 'education plays a major role in the sustenance of languages' while 'languages are learned, maintained and reinforced through education because learners spend many hours and years of their lives at school' (Bagwasi & Costley, 2022, p. 129). This is important, as a child's mother tongue needs to be sufficiently developed to cognitively support learning content in another language. Research shows that initial learning in a mother tongue provides strong foundations for future multilingual education and that 'six to eight years of education in a language are necessary to develop the level of literacy and verbal proficiency required for academic achievement in secondary school' (Ball, 2010, p. 3). Forcing learners at a young age to learn in a language they do not know is depriving them of their rights of access to quality education and disadvantaging them from the outset. See Section 5.4 for a more detailed discussion of mother-tongue-based education.

The *Strong Foundations: Early Childhood Care and Education* study (UNESCO, 2006) reports that some of the underemphasised benefits of mother-tongue-based education include the increased likelihood of children, particularly girls and children from rural and indigenous communities, enrolling, staying and succeeding in school and more participation of parents in their children's learning. Despite UNESCO's (2011, 2022) repeated encouragement and efforts through the Education for All initiative, which promotes mother-tongue instruction in early childhood and primary education, monolingual education in the dominant or official language is still very much the norm around the world (Ball, 2010).

Monolingual education in multilingual contexts is based on two disputed concepts. The first of these is that languages are separate and discrete entities that should be learned in isolation (Al-Bataineh & Gallagher, 2021; Wildsmith-Cromarty & Balfour, 2019). Al-Bataineh & Gallagher (2021) argue that learners who use more than one language in social situations would benefit from being able to do the same in educational settings to better support their learning. Based on a study in Botswana, Bagwasi & Costley (2022, p. 130) assert that 'conceptualising languages as separate and discrete entities, the [government] policy fails to take into account the lived experience of students and teachers, potentially imposing boundaries and practices which may not exist in practice'. The second concept is that the goal of second or additional language learning should be NS-like competency (Cenoz & Gorter, 2011). This lays the foundations for 'monolingual bias' in second or additional language learning which uses as its reference point 'the educated native speaker' (Cenoz & Gorter, 2011, p. 2). Many systems measure learner achievement against outcomes that are not realistic or relevant for the context. Grosjean (2012) dismisses the idea of mastering two languages in NS-like fashion, arguing that individuals rarely need to use two languages at the same level and in the same way. For example, some people may be able to speak and converse in a language but not need to read and write it.

Multilingual education, on the other hand, embraces each individual's linguistic repertoire and uses the diversity of languages and the differences among them as opportunities to help students not only to learn languages but also learn about languages and other cultures (Benson, 2017). Multilingual education programmes are defined as 'those that intentionally and explicitly teach more than one language; they usually teach using more than one language as medium of instruction, either sequentially or simultaneously' (Garcia, as cited in Benson, 2017, p. 102). Multilingual development is, therefore, a dynamic process involving the interaction of two or more language systems. During the process, an individual's development of each language will differ and change depending on factors such as prior learning, use and classroom practice. Multilingual development by its very definition is not linear but pliable and multidimensional.

5.3.4 Planning and implementing multilingual education

5.3.4.1 Benefits

Multilingual education, if planned and implemented appropriately, can deliver considerable benefits to individuals, communities, institutions and educational authorities. Calafato (2019, p. 1) avers that ‘such an education will not only better reflect the realities of globalization and transnational migration, but will also more effectively prepare individuals to live and work in the 21st century and beyond’.

If implemented well, multilingual education can bolster linguistic and cultural awareness and understanding and improve all-round language-learning confidence. Benson (2017, p. 109) suggests that the inclusion of non-dominant languages in the curriculum contributes to another benefit of multilingual education, namely the ‘equalising of the educational playing field’. If learners see the value of their own language through its recognition and integration in school, they will be more confident learners and individuals. Language, culture and identity are intrinsically linked, and if learners’ own language is accepted in school, they will feel a sense of belonging (Little & Kirwan, 2019). The promotion of mother tongues and home languages through inclusion in the curriculum provides hope for the sustainability and longevity of non-dominant languages and cultures.

For institutions, education systems and employers, Calafato (2019) argues that multilingual education has the potential to develop individuals who are more confident and prepared for courses and jobs in the 21st century.

5.3.4.2 Factors to consider when implementing multilingual policies

The benefits of multilingual education can be significant. However, the difficulties involved in establishing such an education system are considerable. Benson (2017, p. 109) points out that the change from a monolingual to a multilingual learning system represents ‘a paradigm shift for educators and academics as well as parents and community members’. Major changes in education require consultation, planning, piloting and preparation with regard to academic capacity and content, administrative processes, systems and relationship management with wider stakeholders, including parents and the community (Johnstone, 2010). This can take time and considerable resources to achieve.

Teacher preparation also needs to be considered carefully. Teachers, as important agents of change, need to subscribe to the change. Otherwise, learners may not benefit from the policy change to the extent they should. Teachers also need to be pedagogically prepared. Currently, most teacher education programmes are developed based on monolingual education philosophies (Gallagher and Geraghty, 2021). However, decision makers are beginning to recognise the importance of '[d]iversifying the teacher workforce and building teacher capacity' (UNESCO Bangkok Office, 2019, p. 3) in the area of multilingual education. This means significant changes in teacher preparation, placement, mentoring and ongoing development (Calafato, 2019). The Bangkok Statement on Language and Inclusion (UNESCO Bangkok Office, 2019, p.3) recognises that 'additional mentorship and support will be necessary through teacher preparation process' for teachers who have a local language as an L1. It could be argued that this additional support should be available throughout a teacher's career, especially when major change programmes are being implemented.

Another consideration is assessment. This is usually administered in the dominant language, mainly due to lack of expertise and resources in other languages; however, in order to be equitable, assessment should be offered in the language(s) of instruction. For example, during the implementation of the English for Teaching Mathematics and Science (ETeMS) project in Malaysia, students were allowed to choose between English (the medium of instruction for the two subjects) and Bahasa Malaysia (the medium of instruction for all other subjects apart from English) as the language of assessment. Developing bilingual language assessments requires expertise, resources and an element of language assessment literacy for teachers and learners. For learners in particular, there needs to be an awareness and understanding that language assessment is governed by standards and rules. This is important for learners to know, as their experience during the learning process may not reflect this. During lessons, teachers may not want to overcorrect as they encourage learners to experiment with the language and gain confidence, so it is crucial that teachers use effective feedback strategies to motivate, encourage and guide learners.

As already mentioned, stakeholders, within and without the education system, should be consulted prior to decision making regarding educational policy and included in any planned changes. One group of important stakeholders identified by research is parents. If the mother tongue is the medium of instruction, the parents are the 'first teachers', but they 'characteristically receive little attention in the field of early learning' (Ball, 2010, p. 5). Parents need help in understanding the importance of learning in the mother tongue, as many see English as the passport to success and encourage the learning of English at the expense of the mother tongue. The Toronto District School Board in Canada provides a positive example of raising parents' awareness of learning in the home language. They distribute a DVD and booklet, *Your Home Language: Foundation for Success*, in 13 languages. The DVD provides information about dual language learning and the importance of the mother tongue within that process (Ball, 2010).

5.3.4.3 Potential risks of ignoring multilingualism

The potential risks of ignoring multilingualism are apparent. On a micro level, if children have to learn a second or additional language at school before they have a foundation in their mother tongue, there is potential for their development to be compromised and their education as a whole threatened. However, this is not to be confused with the simultaneous learning of languages in a home situation where children have exposure to more than one language, which has been shown to have multiple learning benefits (Simpson, 2019). On a macro level, if local or indigenous languages are excluded from the school curriculum, there is a very real threat of language and culture loss. Finally, if multilingualism is the reality in most places in the world today, and individual and national success and prosperity are the objectives, then it makes sense to prepare current and future generations to operate in meaningful and constructive ways in these contexts.

5.3.5 Roundtable data

Participants in over half of the roundtables described their contexts as linguistically complex and culturally very rich. In SSA, local and indigenous languages are scrambling for recognition and roles in society. In some countries in the region, English has a very specific role: in Ghana it is the official language of business and in Nigeria it is the language of parliamentary debate. Many languages have transnational properties; this kind of linguistic complexity can make policymaking both precarious and problematic.

In all of the roundtables, English was recognised as being important for progress and prospects. However, although participants did not challenge this, there was a strong sense that there is change in the air. As users of non-dominant languages grow more confident in using them and demand recognition for them, English sometimes gets caught in the crossfire. In Pakistan, for example, Punjabi and other languages are beginning to challenge the role of Urdu in the education system. This development has created a tension between English and Urdu, which is exacerbated by the fact that some would rather use their own mother tongue and English at the expense of Urdu.

In SSA, there have been attempts to move away from the use of colonial languages. The concept of decolonisation was conveyed in different ways in the countries represented, with English not being the colonial language in some countries, such as Rwanda, and being one of multiple colonial languages in others, such as South Africa.

In a number of roundtables there was mention of multilingual language policies and curricula. In the ASEAN roundtable, most countries were committed to English, often as a compulsory subject as part of a multilingual package and within the overall increasing emphasis on national/local ethnic/indigenous languages. With regard to policy, the Nepalese government has a slightly different dilemma: they want to introduce a multilingual policy that includes all languages, but there is resistance from parents who see the future as English, even at the expense of local languages. Similarly, in Morocco participants reported that young people, understanding the importance of English for their future, would like to see it replace French in the curriculum. Two issues were raised in relation to multilingual curricula, were they to be introduced into schools: the importance of including intercultural studies alongside more academic subjects to complement language studies, and the importance of teacher preparation and readiness to deliver a multilingual curriculum.

In the Gulf roundtable, participants expressed slight reservations about the impact of English on the status and role of Arabic. Parents understand the significance of English for their children and also that their children need a solid foundation in Arabic in order for them to learn English effectively. However, their concerns are, first, that their children do not speak enough Arabic in order to develop a solid foundation in it, and, second, that cultural identity could be diminished if English replaced Arabic in increasing numbers of language domains. For this same reason, the MoE in Qatar has introduced new regulations to include Arabic and cultural identity in the curriculum. Connected to culture, identity and multilingualism, intercultural competence was mentioned as a topic to be included if multilingual curricula were introduced into schools.

Finally, technology was mentioned, albeit briefly, from two interesting perspectives. One participant in the ASEAN roundtable suggested that AI may reduce the need for multilingual education in the future, as technology can already translate between languages automatically. The other perspective from the Pakistan roundtable questioned the dominance of English as the language of technology by suggesting that there will need to be multilingual technological options in the future.

5.3.6 What does this all mean for English in an increasingly multilingual world?

English is the global lingua franca for now (see Section 6.1 for a more detailed discussion) and as a result it is included in many national and/or educational language policies. At the same time, decision makers should be cognisant of other languages in the same context and develop policies that nurture and recognise local and indigenous languages, while encouraging the use of English where it is appropriate to activate educational, employment and economic objectives. English will continue to be an important component of curricula around the world, but in some contexts it may not dominate quite as much as it does now. In some areas, other foreign languages are becoming popular for economic and social reasons. For example, in the Middle East and in some South Asian countries, Chinese and Korean are gaining popularity, and although these languages are not used as widely as English yet, decision makers should seriously consider foreign-language policies that will serve young people and the country in the immediate future but also in the long term.

5.3.7 Conclusion

Multilingualism is a reality the world over; this is not new but is being increasingly recognised and accepted in academic literature and political legislatures. Examples of multilingual education range from situations that are positive and diverse to those which allow for only token inclusion. The benefits of multilingual education are abundant, as are the related considerations and risks. Language policy makers should try to balance local linguistic practice with wider national economic and political needs, which may not be easy but will become increasingly necessary. National progress does not necessarily have to be made at the expense of non-dominant languages. Language policies do not have to be either/or; languages can support each other to bolster overall educational progress. What does this mean for English? In many societies, English is already part of a melange of languages and is shapeshifting as needs and uses arise. In education, English will continue to play an important role, increasingly doing so alongside other languages to provide rich linguistic opportunities for learners all over the world.

Areas for further research

- Despite considerable research interest in this area, materials and training about the practicalities of teaching in multilingual classrooms are scarce if available at all. Research into the pedagogy and practice of teaching in multilingual contexts and making effective use of students' plurilingual competencies would benefit teachers all over the world. Research is needed into effective translanguaging practices that can inform teaching in different contexts (Leung & Valdés, 2019).
- Research is needed in low-income contexts into building on learners' existing linguistic repertoires; maximising the efficiency of cross-linguistic transfer; and modelling multilingual behaviours (Benson, 2017).

- Multilingual mediation was elaborated as a concept in the 2018 *Companion Volume of the CEFR* (Council of Europe, 2018). Some practical help for teachers has become available, for example *Ideas in action: activities for mediation – building bridges in the ELT classroom* won the 2022 British Council ELTon award for Innovation in Teacher Resources. Nonetheless, there is still a need for more practical resources and pedagogical training and support in this area, particularly in the teaching of refugees and migrants (Stathopoulou, 2021).

Erling et al. (2017) recommend a number of areas for further research:

- a richer understanding of the relationship between language and learning, and of how to effectively implement different approaches to multilingual education, particularly in low-resource contexts
- the role of local language use, classroom code-switching and translanguaging in supporting English language speaking and writing skills
- exploration of students' spoken language abilities in English outside of school and a comparison them with their classroom language use.

Brutt-Griffler (2017) suggests three areas of multilingual teaching and learning that need further research:

- a learner-centred approach and instructional practices
- teacher professional development
- developing national assessment data on learning outcomes.

5.4 What is the future of English as a medium of education?

A word on terminology

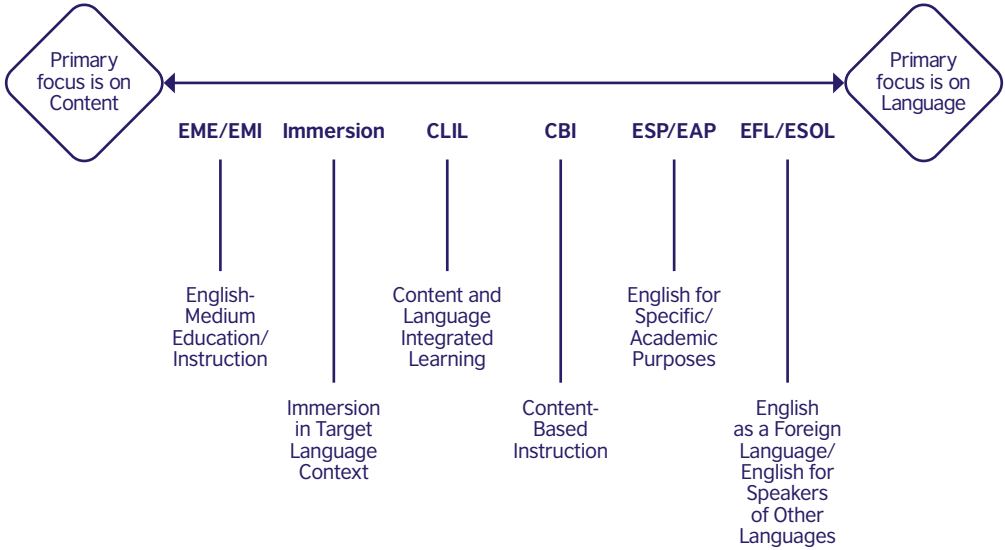
Before presenting an outline of this increasingly important area, we feel that it would be beneficial to first explore the terminology used to describe it. Many academics (Dearden, 2014; Galloway et al., 2017; Macaro et al., 2019; Rose et al., 2020; Shao & Rose, 2022) use the term English-medium instruction (EMI). We feel that the term instruction implies a narrow, teacher-centric focus and does not encompass the dynamic processes of teaching and learning. As suggested by Dafouz & Smit (2016), the British Council uses the alternative term education, as we see the concept as a social phenomenon, within the theoretical frameworks of sociolinguistics and ecolinguistics. The change was first proposed by Dafouz & Smit (2016) as a shortened form of the term English-medium education in multilingual university settings (EMEMUS). Dafouz & Smit (2020, p.3) saw this as a conceptually and semantically wider term 'inclusive of diverse research agendas, pedagogical approaches and different types of education'. We use the term English-medium education (EME) as the British Council's preferred term, reflecting the need for a more holistic approach at macro (or systems), meso (or institutional) and micro (or classroom) levels (see Veitch, 2021). In this section, we use the terms EME and EMI interchangeably. However, while we use the latter when referring to the existing literature, the former should be seen as reflecting our position throughout.

5.4.1 What is English-medium education?

The British Council defines EME as the use of the English language to teach and study academic content in places where English is not the primary language of communication of the majority of the population. In recent years, there has been considerable expansion of EME in the public and private sectors in many education systems across the world, in both BE and HE (Macaro et al., 2018). Reasons for this include improving English language skills, increasing possibilities for young people to study and work abroad, and nation-building (Dearden, 2014). For HE, EME is perceived as contributing to an institutional and/or national internationalisation agenda while enhancing the employability of graduates and increasing income (Galloway et al., 2017). The operationalisation of EME can vary depending on country, region, university, academic discipline, linguistic proficiency and educational level (Shao and Rose, 2022). The perception of governments and parents is often that learning subjects through English is advantageous for current and future learning and ultimately educational, career and national success, but there is little, if any, evidence to support this view (Curle et al., 2020; Dearden, 2014; Simpson, 2019). As Simpson (2019, pp. 4–6) points out, the EMI debate is ‘complicated’, ‘complex’, ‘confusing’, ‘challenging’, ‘controversial’ and ‘multi-faceted’.

One of these complexities is the range of interpretations of the broad concept of education in the medium of English, which can vary from being almost entirely content focused, as is the case with EME, to almost entirely language focused, as is the case with EFL. Figure 5.3 is based on Met’s (1999, p. 7) original diagrammatic representation of what they see as a continuum of focus from content to language, with EMI at one extreme and EFL at the other, along with a number of other approaches that fall between those two extremes: immersion, CLIL, content-based instruction and ESP (see Rose et al., 2020, for a detailed description). We have expanded on the original by including both EMI and EME and, perhaps more importantly, including the increasingly important area of English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL), which can refer to contexts such as professional or academic migration, or economic/political migration.

Figure 5.3: Continuum of EMI in practice



Source: Based on Met (1999, p. 7) and Thompson & McKinley (2018, p. 3).

EME is a relatively new and under-researched field in education. Its increasing global uptake has stimulated discussion at all levels of education systems, including academia. Galloway et al. (2017) aver that there exist two overarching dimensions to the discussion. The first is the use of EME at different levels of the education system (primary, secondary and tertiary), and the second is the extent and nature of its adoption in both the public and private sectors. If we look at BE and HE through the lenses of the public and private education systems, the differing drivers, governance, infrastructure and resources available mean that the models and implementation possibilities are multifarious. Therefore, in this section we will only touch on the uptake of EME in the public sector, leaving a more in-depth discussion of private and public sectors to Section 5.6.

In the public sector, BE and HE, through necessity, are very different systems, though they are intrinsically linked and interdependent; changes in objectives, outcomes, practice and policy in one have implications for the other. EME is implemented in BE and HE in myriad ways. To an extent this is expected, as teaching and learning should be contextualised and are dependent on local infrastructure and resources. However, even within the same country, EME can be interpreted very differently in schools and universities, which can be problematic in terms of equal and optimum learning opportunities for students.

In the following sections, for ease of discussion, we look at BE and HE separately but conclude that the overarching challenges facing both with regard to EME are similar, with clear sector-specific differences.

5.4.2 EME in basic education

5.4.2.1 An overview

The idea that ‘education is best carried on through the mother tongue of the pupil’ long predates Graddol; this has been the view of UNESCO (1953, p. 6) for at least 70 years, and the organisation continues to argue that such education ‘empowers all learners to fully take part in society [and] fosters mutual understanding and respect’ (UNESCO, 2022, para. 2). Mother-tongue-based education (MTBE) has been shown to improve access to education, improve learning outcomes, facilitate learning an additional language, and support local culture and parental involvement (Pflepsen, n.d.). Meanwhile, research shows that six to eight years of studying an additional language as a subject is necessary to allow students to develop the cognitive and academic language proficiency needed to study other subjects in that language (Heugh et al., 2007; Simpson, 2019; Thomas and Collier, 1997). Early education in a non-L1, or a move away from MTBE to EME in primary school, can impair learning, limit educational attainment and prove a barrier to inclusive and equitable quality education (Simpson, 2019).

Despite the clear evidence of the advantages of MTBE, an estimated 2.4 billion people – nearly 40 per cent of the world’s population – lack access to education in a language they speak or understand (Benson, 2017; UNESCO, 2022), rising to 80 per cent in SSA and 87 per cent in MENA (World Bank, 2021), while 35 per cent of children globally begin their education in an unfamiliar language (Eberhard et al., 2022). A British Council study of 55 countries found that EME was an option for teaching and learning in 53 per cent of public primary schools and 87 per cent of private primary schools (Dearden, 2014, p. 9). Parental demand for EME can drive political decisions to introduce it at primary level, as is common particularly in South Asia and SSA, although there is evidence that parents who are shown that children do better academically through MTBE are more willing to support delaying the introduction of EME (Simpson, 2019). Nonetheless, the ‘widespread and uncritical’ adoption of EME at primary level in the Global South has for many children made English ‘a problem that learners need to overcome rather than a resource to support their learning’, with children ‘forced to sink or swim’ in EME (Milligan, 2020, pp. 2–4).

Some countries have moved away from early years EME in recent years. Indonesia, for example, introduced EME for core subjects such as science and maths in some public schools in 2006, but this was overturned by the Constitutional Court in 2013 due to the view that EME might endanger national identity and marginalise Bahasa Indonesia as the unifying national language; the public also had doubts about the need for EME in the public school system and the language proficiency of the teachers. Turkey also abolished the use of EME in some secondary schools because of poor student performance in science and mathematics and returned to the previous policy of teaching English as a subject throughout BE (Dearden, 2014).

In 2002, the Malaysian government announced the decision that mathematics and science should be taught through the medium of English, asserting that 'the future of the world rests upon new breakthroughs and cutting-edge technologies ... [and] that a good command of English would enable students to access the internet, read articles and research papers and other materials published in English' (MoE of Malaysia, 2004, p. 10). In July 2009, six years after the policy had been implemented, it was officially reversed effective from 2012, with the government stating that the policy 'had resulted in lack of mastery of mathematics and science as reflected in the results of the national exams where the number of students who scored good grades for the two subjects had decreased significantly' (Rashid et al., 2017, p. 103). Nonetheless, there was still considerable pressure from some lobby groups to continue with the policy (O'Neill & Chapman, 2015).

However, other countries are moving in the opposite direction by introducing EME at lower levels. Rwanda, for example, moved the start of EME in primary schools from P4 to P1 in 2020, returning to a policy originally introduced in 2008 and reversed in 2011, despite only 28 per cent of teachers at lower-primary level having previously been assessed as having the required language level to teach in English (World Bank, 2018). In fact, the original policy decision from 2008 was made despite the very low English proficiency of pupils reported by Williams et al. (2004), a report which led to the Rwandan government abandoning plans to introduce EME in 2003.

More recently, the Nigerian government announced in December 2022 that MTBE would become compulsory throughout the six years of primary education, with English being added as a language of instruction from junior secondary school. The education minister was quoted as saying that all 625 Nigerian languages were 'equal' (Ogundele, 2022, para. 4) and that the new policy would 'promote and enhance the cultivation and use' of all of them (para. 9).

5.4.2.2 Challenges

Education reform is never easy. These examples from Indonesia, Malaysia and Turkey demonstrate that learning subjects in English when the main stakeholder groups in the education system are not fully consulted or prepared may not result in the predicted linguistic and cognitive gains for students or for the country as a whole. It can be argued, in fact, that even with consultation and preparation, success is not guaranteed. Changing the language of instruction, even for one or two subjects, involves systemic change that needs careful planning and communication. In addition, the examples above highlight two significant issues: teacher readiness and cultural and societal dimensions.

Teacher readiness

Teachers, as the main change agents, often find themselves ill-equipped to implement the changes required of them (Lasagabaster, 2022). This is typically due to a lack of targeted content in initial teacher education (teacher preparation) programmes and CPD (in-service) courses. Dearden (2014, p. 2) also points to the absence in many places of stated expectations of English language proficiency and the resulting lack of adequate language proficiency of teachers in addition to the presence of few organisational or pedagogical guidelines that might lead to effective EME teaching and learning.

The situation is exacerbated by the fact that teachers may need to play a dual role in EME in BE: subject teachers may be required to teach (and teach in) English, while English language teachers may have to teach subject content. Team-teaching, with language and context specialists teaching together, has been suggested as an effective way to foster greater collaboration, but the financial and resource costs of such initiatives are high (Shao & Rose, 2022).

Cultural and societal dimensions

The Indonesia example highlights the culture and identity issues that are intrinsically linked with language policies. Dearden (2014) provides Bangladesh, Israel, Syria, Estonia and Venezuela as examples of countries that have resisted EME because they see it as a threat to the home language and/or national identity and culture. Views from other countries, such as Pakistan and the Netherlands, are more divided; the importance of English for personal and professional prospects is recognised but not at the expense of the home language. These issues are exacerbated as multilingualism becomes the norm and local languages vie for more equitable recognition in social, economic and educational contexts. For a more in-depth discussion of this, see Section 5.3. In light of these concerns, any changes to educational language policies need to be carefully considered and sensitively managed if any level of success is to be achieved.

5.4.3 EME in higher education

5.4.3.1 An overview

In HE in countries where English is not the primary language of communication for the majority of the population, growth in EME often appears to be driven by top-down education policies, rather than bottom-up promotion from enthusiastic key stakeholders such as teachers and students (Macaro et al., 2018, p. 64). The introduction of EME is often tied to universities' increasing recruitment of international students and staff, and also to the development of transnational education, where schools and universities based in countries including the UK and the US open English-medium campuses overseas. In ODA countries, however, where there are often few international students, preparing students for the global job market and enhancing university reputation are often the main drivers for EME (Sahan et al., 2021).

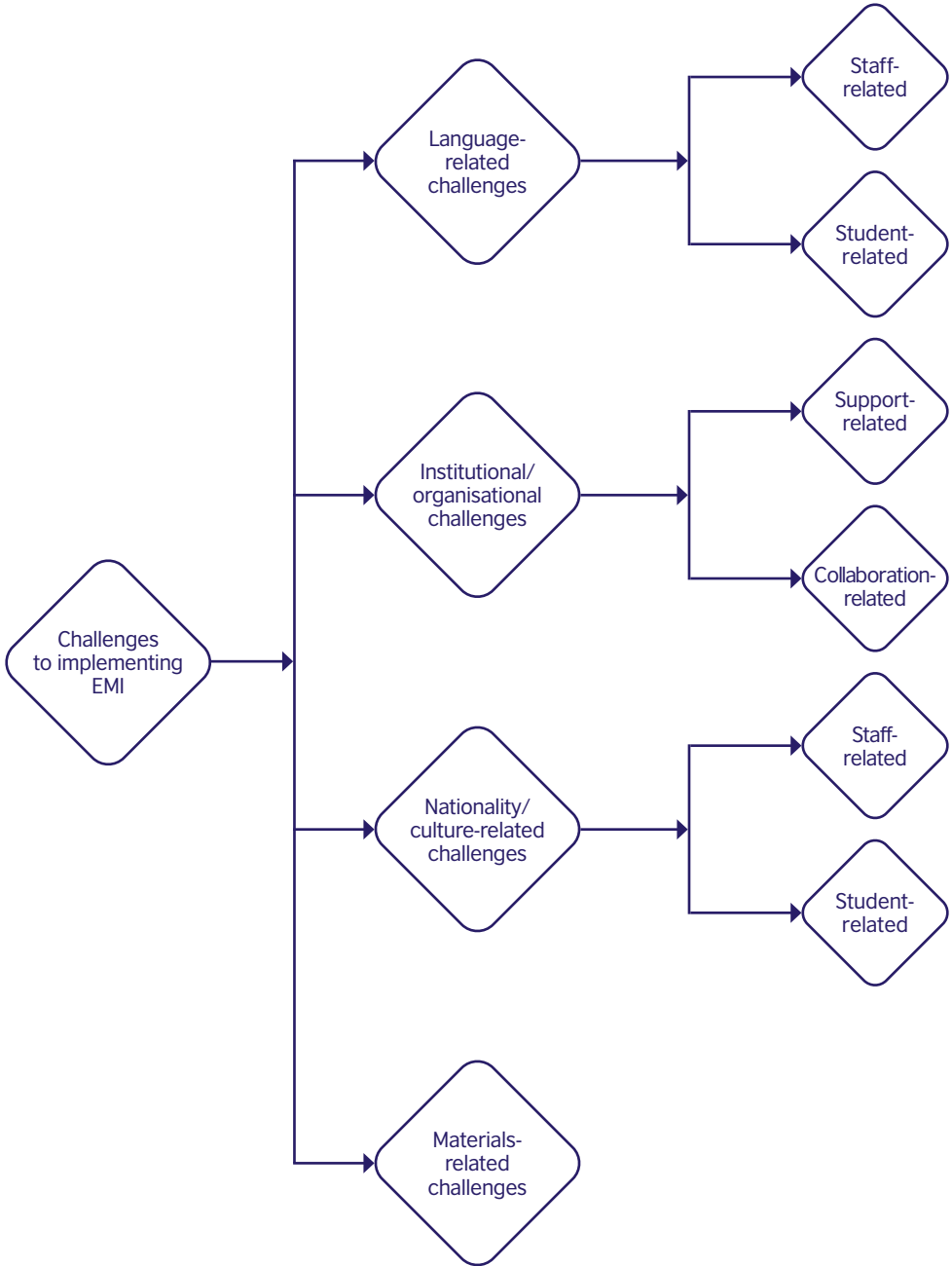
There are several commonly perceived benefits of EME in HE. Institutional benefits include allowing access to intercultural learning, increasing international student revenue, and increasing institutional rankings. Individual benefits include developing students' English competencies, developing students' and staff employability, and providing access to teaching and learning materials that may be unavailable in other languages. However, evidence to support these benefits is limited or lacking (Curle et al., 2020; Macaro et al., 2018). This is due in no small part to a critical lack of monitoring and evaluation of EME programmes, a situation which, if not rectified, makes it difficult to see how the planning and implementation of such programmes can be improved.

Despite the lack of empirical evidence to support the implementation of EME and the many issues raised in the following section, we have to agree with the assertion that 'one thing is sure: English as a medium of instruction is here to stay, and it has a profound impact on the shape of international education' (British Council & Studyportals, 2021, p. 7). This impact is seen in the meteoric rise in the number of English-taught programmes in places outside of the big four anglophone destinations (the USA, the UK, Australia and Canada), from a matter of a few hundred 20 years ago (van Rest, 2022) to a reported 27,874 in 2021 (British Council & Studyportals, 2021, p. 7). This growth is confirmed by the OECD (2021, as cited in British Council & Studyportals, 2021, p.5) who report that the 'number of students enrolled on a course outside their home country has increased from 3.8 million in 2010 to 5.6 million in 2018 and is growing steadily on average by 4.8 per cent per year'.

5.4.3.2 Challenges

It can be argued that 'current EMI implementation produces more challenges than opportunities' (Williams, 2015, as cited in Macaro et al., 2018, p. 68). Research has demonstrated a range of such challenges, facing everybody from students (regardless of L1) to lecturers to administrative staff, as Figure 5.4 summarises.

Figure 5.4: The typology of challenges to implementing EMI for staff and students



Source: Galloway et al. (2017, p. 24).

In Figure 5.4, Galloway et al. (2017) have identified challenges to the implementation of EMI in HE. As the following sections demonstrate, the challenges at the BE level are, despite the very different teaching and learning environments, similar to those identified here.

Language-related challenges

There is no conclusive evidence that EME in itself improves English proficiency – language support is therefore vital, but often lacking, for both students and teachers (Galloway et al., 2017; Galloway & Ruegg, 2020; Macaro et al., 2016; Rose et al., 2019). Lack of proficiency in English can compromise teaching and learning outcomes and impact affective factors in the classroom, such as teacher–student rapport, dynamics and motivation (Doiz & Lasagabaster, 2020).

In HE, the English language abilities of both staff and students are clearly vital elements in EME (Macaro et al., 2018). For lecturers, problems around language can include, but are not limited to:

- having to simplify lesson content because they cannot articulate complex concepts in a meaningful way or they believe their students do not have the language skills to understand them. Research in a number of countries, including Spain, Denmark and Korea, has found that content lecturers can find English proficiency a challenge, adding to their workload and preventing them from teaching effectively through English, with difficulties in explaining subject-specific concepts sometimes leading to a simplification of academic content (Beckett & Li, 2012; Curle et al., 2020).
- the perception of lecturers that supporting students linguistically is not their job; they see their job as teaching content.
- an increased workload in order to prepare lessons to make them accessible to students.
- lack of pedagogical training in teaching through English (Rose et al., 2020).

For students the lack of proficiency in English on an EME course can be problematic for many reasons, depending on whether students are studying in their home country or abroad. Two main issues are included below.

- Failing to fully understand lecture content and materials, as well as struggling with academic reading and writing (Belhiah & Elhami, 2015; Curle et al., 2020), often results in an increased workload for students as they need to review content before and/or after lectures. In some cases, this could mean failing courses or dropping out altogether.
- In some EME contexts (typically involving homogeneous student populations) English may not be the only language used in classrooms. Although EME is usually seen as excluding languages other than English, research shows that students and content lecturers in some EME contexts regard the use of other familiar languages, in addition to English, as a useful resource for understanding content, particularly where English levels are lower (Shao & Rose, 2022). Observation studies have shown that L1 is, in fact, used in the HE classroom in many contexts, mainly to clarify subject-specific terminology, but often more widely in classes with few if any international students (Rose et al., 2020; see Curle et al., 2020, pp. 40–41 for a detailed discussion). In some HE institutions, attracting students from overseas is one of the objectives of internationalisation. In this situation the bi/multilingual approach referred to above is more problematic due to the possible presence of multiple languages among the international students, and/or official English-only policies (Curle et al., 2020).

Institutional/organisational challenges

Institutional challenges for lecturers are mainly related to training and recruitment.

- HE lecturers, in addition to language proficiency, need ‘higher education pedagogical knowledge and a positive attitude’ to work in EME contexts (Curle et al., 2020, p. 34). However, professional development for lecturers, when it is available, tends to focus solely on improving language skills rather than also including the skills needed to teach in an EME context (Sahan et al., 2021; Shao & Rose, 2022); this lack of appropriate training may contribute to the belief of some EME teachers that they are not responsible for their students’ English language difficulties (Dearden, 2014, p. 28; Macaro et al., 2018, p. 67).

- Many universities struggle to recruit lecturers who can teach their academic subject through English (Dearden, 2014), while selection criteria for EME lecturers vary quite widely (Curle et al., 2020).
- Collaboration between content and language teachers, which can be beneficial to both lecturers and students, does happen in some contexts, such as Japan, but is much rarer in others, including China (Shao & Rose, 2022). Such ‘urgently needed’ collaboration (Galloway & Rose, 2021, p. 38) can be ‘rewarding, enriching and transformational’, but only when the content role is not seen to dominate; even then, such interdisciplinary collaboration is ‘hard work and demand[ing]’ with significant challenges, not least the financial cost to the institution (Wilkinson, 2018, p. 609).

In addition to these lecturer-related issues, it is also clear that English language support for students can vary widely between HE institutions. In the context of Chinese HE, Rose et al. (2020, p.3) call for discipline-specific and ongoing language support for students, for example, rather than relying on general English lessons. Macaro (2018), meanwhile, identifies four support models, ranging from a preparatory year model to no language support provided and no language proficiency entry requirements:

- the preparatory year model, most common in Turkey and Arab Gulf countries, where students complete a one-year intensive English programme before their EME course (similar to pre-session courses offered at many UK universities)
- the concurrent support model, where language-support classes are provided during the EME course
- the selection model, where students have to demonstrate specific English proficiency standards in advance in order to be accepted onto an EME course
- the ostrich model, where there is no language support provided and no language proficiency entry requirements (Macaro, 2018, as cited in Curle et al., 2020).

Nationality/culture-related challenges

Where universities have students (and possibly also staff) from a range of countries, the diversity of cultural backgrounds can introduce additional challenges, including a range of expectations of the academic context and a lack of awareness of local educational norms (Curle et al., 2020). Macaro et al. (2018, p.4) further argue that EME may result in ‘the creation or consolidation of socio-economic elites and anti-egalitarian outcomes for students’. As universities increasingly aim to become more multicultural, there is a need to provide lecturers and university staff with intercultural awareness and training as part of each institution’s continuous development programme.

Materials-related challenges

The availability of content-specific materials in English is often quoted as an advantage of EME (Curle et al., 2020; Macaro et al., 2018; see also Section 5.4.4). However, the use of materials from an international context, lacking local relevance, can be problematic, and designing tailor-made materials is a time-consuming process, not least for lecturers whose own language proficiency may be limited and/or for language teachers whose content-specific knowledge may be similarly lacking (Galloway & Rose, 2021).

It is important to remember that the problems discussed above are not universal; they can vary by country, institution and even individual classroom (Curle et al., 2020). In some contexts – for example where English levels of students and lecturers are high or subject-specific materials are not available in local languages (Belhiah & Elhami, 2015) – students report fewer problems related to studying through English.

5.4.4 Views on EME from the roundtables

5.4.4.1 EME in various regions

The use of EME in both BE and HE was discussed in most of the roundtables, with some comments finding broad agreement across the regions and others showing clear contrasts. The undoubted major increase in EME provision globally is, as already mentioned, directly related to internationalisation and perceived personal growth, with English seen by governments, institutions and individuals as a springboard to a brighter future. This short section will provide an overview of EME across the regions as discussed during roundtable conversations.

In the Americas roundtable, EME was mentioned by only two countries. In Brazil, the government is in the early stages of exploring the concept of using EME in bilingual schools and there are no plans for implementation yet. In Colombia, EME is increasing in BE to support the government's bilingual education policy. Cross-curricular strategies have been introduced into some schools with the aim of improving English in BE. In HE, the teaching of ESL is being promoted, with support and development planned for teachers to enable them to do this.

The three roundtables that represented East Asia (ASEAN, North-East Asia and China) presented a wide range of viewpoints and applications of EME. In Japan and South Korea, for example, the aim of attracting students from overseas has increased EME at university level.

For Taiwan there are additional drivers, one of which is the policy of making Taiwan bilingual by 2030. Another driver is the ageing population. By 2025, 20 per cent of Taiwan's population will be over 60, reducing the number of domestic students in HE and creating the need to attract more international students to balance the decline in local numbers. There is an increasing awareness in the region of the importance of professional development for both EME and CLIL teachers, and work is under way to develop training and ongoing support for teachers.

The ASEAN region has already seen an increase in the number of overseas students at universities. This, alongside increasing co-operation with institutions in other countries, is predicted to drive an expansion of EME at tertiary level and a need for lecturers to retrain to teach in English. In an interesting argument against the introduction of EME in BE, English as a subject was seen to offer a stepping stone for ASEAN students to progress to EME-based HE, recognising that a solid knowledge of the English language is key to the success of EME at HE institutions.

In a region like Europe, where English is more established, the concept of EME is relevant and the level of interest high. The perception is that English can be a mutually beneficial language, leading to greater equity and partnership between non-English-speaking nations.

The undoubted growth of EME globally was perhaps most obvious in the discussions of the India roundtable. Here, participants reported a massive expansion of private education provision, where schools do not always teach English as a subject but almost always teach other subjects using EME. This has led to a remarkable expansion of EME in BE in this sector over the past decade. Interestingly, this expansion has also been found in the public sector in the same period. In Sri Lanka, despite demand for EME in BE, this level of expansion hasn't happened yet, although there is movement towards increasing the amount of English in the curriculum. In government universities, however, English is the medium of instruction. In Nepal, although EME is popular with learners and their parents, it is not supported officially through government policy. This has resulted in the rise of private provision of EME.

In the Gulf roundtable (Bahrain, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Oman and Qatar), participants reported increased EME at the tertiary level in both public and private sectors. In Egypt and the Levant (Jordan, Iraq, Occupied Palestinian Territories and Syria), the interest in English both as a subject and the medium of education is very high, although implementation varies quite considerably from country to country. From a student perspective, in our Maghreb (Libya, Morocco and Tunisia) roundtable, the fact that most published materials are in English emerged as a motivational factor for students to choose HE institutions with EME provision.

Participants in the SSA roundtable (Ethiopia, Ghana, Nigeria, Rwanda, South Africa and Sudan) reported an increase in EME in BE in both the public and private sectors, and in local international schools. The main driver for EME in private schools in the regions is from parents, because they believe English will be beneficial for their children's future.

The expansion of EME in every region is evident. However, it was also clear that participants had concerns about teacher readiness in terms of language and appropriate pedagogic knowledge, skills and expertise; therefore, they questioned the quality of provision being offered in both public and private sectors and at all levels. In the ASEAN and Gulf roundtables, participants suggested that a solid knowledge of the English language is key to the success of EME at HE institutions. In other regions, particularly South Asia, SSA and MENA, concerns about national identities emerged when talking about EME. EME is a complex phenomenon in itself; when we then try and make sense of it in different contexts through layers of educational, social and cultural principles and ideologies, it is evident that any decisions about EME should be informed by research and managed cautiously and sensitively.

5.4.4.2 Conclusion

In a study commissioned by the British Council, Dearden (2014) argues that policymakers in many countries insist on introducing EME for reasons of economic growth, prestige and internationalisation without considering the teaching resources needed to ensure its proper implementation. These resources include sufficiently trained teachers and suitable materials and assessment (Dearden, 2014, p. 22). She concludes that given the current momentum of EME, it is highly unlikely that the majority of countries, certainly at tertiary level, will seek to reverse the decision to push forward with even more courses taught in English, with the private sector driving the expansion by portraying EME as ‘the distinguishing feature of its educational offer’ (Dearden, 2014, p. 22). If the growth of EME ‘cannot be slowed down to a speed that will allow reflection, then at the very least it is incumbent on researchers and teachers alike to strive to make the experience for their learners as enabling and as rewarding as possible’ (Dearden, 2014, p. 33).

Macaro et al. (2018, p. 68) agree, arguing that policymakers and university managers are not going to be ‘swayed by sociolinguistic and sociocultural objections to the implementation of EMI as proclaimed in books of the subject’, but may be influenced to introduce the necessary systematic reforms of teacher training and resourcing by ‘hard research’ showing potential damage to their institutions if EME is not adequately planned and resourced. This requires research to ‘better theorise the cost–benefits ratio of EMI based on empirical research and to work out a model whereby the positives and the negatives can be rigorously evaluated’ (Macaro et al., 2018, p. 66).

Dippold et al. (2019, p. 9), meanwhile, argue that ‘HE research would benefit from opening itself up to new approaches to data, research and analysis’ and that it is time to investigate what those involved in HE ‘actually do rather than what they perceive and think’. In that spirit, two of the projects funded in Phase 3 of the Future of English project will be carrying out such research: the University of Bedfordshire will investigate the nature of spoken communication in digitally mediated EME classes, and Lancaster University will develop a corpus of reading and writing in EME university settings.

In order to have a clearer view of ‘what works’ in EME, further research is necessary in a number of other areas, particularly:

- models of measurement to identify success factors in EME
- the effectiveness of L1 use and translanguaging in a variety of EME contexts
- the impact of EME on both English and content learning (see Galloway & Rose, 2021; Macaro et al., 2018)
- the development of appropriate university- and government-level policies on EME
- the types of support that both students and lecturers need to effectively work in EME
- the implications and impact of policy decisions related to EME on the status of English and other languages.

As much of the research to date in this area has looked at teacher and/or student beliefs, perceptions and attitudes, research using objective tests, rather than self-reporting, is particularly needed (Macaro et al., 2018, p. 64), with an emphasis on developing nations, particularly in the Global South, and cross-regional research (Sahan et al., 2021), as well as a focus on equity and gender (Veitch, 2021).

Additional areas for further research

- Investigating how EME policy is developed and implemented.
- Investigating classroom practice and learner outcomes in EME contexts.
- The need to develop evaluation frameworks to identify success factors in EME.

5.5 How will teachers remain relevant in future English language learning systems?

5.5.1 Why teachers are important

As discussed in Section 5.2 the demand for English is high for individuals, institutions and countries and territories. English language teachers are essential in helping to meet this demand. The role of teachers and teaching has always been central to learning. This is particularly the case with language learning, as the teacher is often seen as playing an instrumental pedagogic and motivational role. The centrality of the role of teachers has been considered so self-evident that it is perhaps only with the more recent advent of AI-oriented technologies that there has been some discussion of their position. Graddol, while questioning how teachers may teach in the future, did not dispute their central role. All 14 of Graddol's (2006) original key trends connect to the role of English teachers to a greater or lesser extent. For example, some of Graddol's trends imply the continuing importance of international, so-called 'non-native', English teachers as 'NS' norms become less relevant (trend F), and the increasingly threatened place of monolinguals in the world of work (trend G). One that does refer directly to specialist English teachers (trend M) states that English teachers will need to acquire additional skills as English becomes less often taught as a subject on its own. This trend connects to several other trends, such as EME, technology, assessment and, across all of these, the important concept of EDI and the implications for English teachers of learning new skills.

The perception of the continuing central place for teachers is also reflected in the seven other themes in this current publication, and this was certainly the view from roundtable participants. The desire to learn English and, therefore, the need for teachers has not diminished since the publication of Graddol's (2006) *English Next*, despite technological advances that seem to challenge the central role of teachers. In fact, according to Crystal (2018), the need has continued to grow significantly over the years and is likely to continue in that vein for the foreseeable future.

5.5.2 Threats to the importance of English language teachers

The continuing demand for mediated English and, therefore, for English teachers seems clear (see Section 5.1), but this poses a question: what are the potential challenges that face English teachers and their importance and role in education systems? The main risks faced by English language teachers relate to their readiness for and relevance to changing and dynamic educational environments. Some of the challenges are not of their own making but are to do with education policy and the learning systems and infrastructure teachers work within. On the other hand, some challenges – for example relating to managing change, motivation, confidence and agency – clearly relate to the teachers themselves. In this section we will discuss issues around technology, English language teacher education and development, teacher motivation and teacher capacity.

5.5.2.1 Technology

Technology is not new to ELT or English language assessment. As far back as 1941, a British Council teacher proposed using gramophone recordings to standardise tests of speaking in the Cambridge examinations (Weir & O’Sullivan, 2017). Just over a decade later, the audio-lingual method emerged with the birth of the language laboratory. By the 1970s the availability of cheap tape-cassette recorders saw an expansion of what was often referred to as ‘real-world’ language use, modelled in the classroom for learners. Fast forward another decade and we find the beginning of the computer-in-education age. Hockly (2009, p.4) tells us that ‘the first introduction of computers in teaching involved solitary work on behalf of the teacher – preparing worksheets or basic electronic exercises for their learners to use, often on a woefully under-powered machine’. Since the 1980s, technology has come to play a leading, if not central, role in English (and other) language teaching and learning. Despite educational technology (EdTech) having been with us for a long time, the rapid developments over the past decade or so have created significant issues for teachers. These include their readiness to use technology available to them and the availability of an increasing range of educational/ELL applications.

5.5.2.2 Teachers' readiness to use technology effectively

Li et al. (2019, pp. 213–14) report that teachers' readiness to work with technology essentially rested on three factors:

- technology self-efficacy (i.e. are more confident in using technology)
- instructional approach
- openness towards technology.

Li et al. (2019, p. 511) suggest that 'teachers' self-efficacy in using technology was the only significant predictor of using technology in general and use of technology to support teacher-centred teaching'. In addition, they found that 'teachers' instructional approach and openness to technology significantly predicted teacher use of technology to support student-centred teaching'. Not surprisingly, individual teachers who have higher levels of technology self-efficacy are more likely to use it appropriately in or out of class.

Li et al. (2019) also argue that where traditional instructional approaches are predominant (i.e. teacher-led, lecture-style teaching), the likelihood of teachers using technology effectively to facilitate learning (as opposed to maintaining administrative procedures such as recording attendance or levels of student participation) is limited.

The challenge faced in many parts of the world is to ensure that technology self-efficacy is facilitated through the systematic introduction of instruction and practice in the use of technology during pre-service education. For experienced teachers, the same concepts should be introduced through in-service CPD programmes.

The idea of integrating technology into language learning is not a new concept by any means. Fitzpatrick (2004, p. 19) outlined the information and communications technology (ICT) competencies required by language teachers who are expected to work in a media-rich environment and will, like their counterparts in other disciplines, need to:

- recognise the individual learning problems of learners
- make a careful and considered choice concerning the use of the media

- check the truth of information content offered
- develop efficient search techniques and be capable of conducting effective research with the help of the computer
- be able to use standard software confidently and competently
- make wise and critical choices about information found.

In the same report the author argues that in order to integrate available technology into daily teaching, the approaches and roles of teachers need to change (p. 20), a point also made by Li et al. (2019). It is worth saying here that available technology covers that available to teachers in schools and institutions but also to learners via their mobile devices. Social media platforms and ELL apps are popular, and although teachers do not have oversight of what their learners are accessing, there is an opportunity to make the most of learners' interest and enthusiasm for technology-related learning in the classroom. However, this involves rethinking, reshaping and expanding classroom methodology to include technology in all of its forms. As Nickson & Nudrat (2022, p.38) state in a report about ELT in Pakistan, 'the future of English language learning and teaching both indicates and necessitates a shift in pedagogy'. This, in turn, has implications for teacher development and training.

During the Covid-19 pandemic, teaching changed for most teachers around the world. Schools closed, and teaching and learning went online in a very short space of time. Technology was no longer an optional extra for those who had access and/or interest. Instead, it became a reality in the daily working life of teachers and learners alike. Though many institutions and teachers around the world rallied to provide useful and interesting ways of learning for students, the rapid move to online education highlighted gaps in teacher technological pedagogy, development and training programmes. As we might expect, some teachers responded well, while others struggled (Mavridi, 2022). This undoubtedly had an effect on teacher confidence and motivation, the impact of which we have yet to fully appreciate.

As we have seen here, the threat or challenge is not just related to the technology itself but is about teachers having the confidence, skills and support to be innovative and benefit students while working within the curriculum and the wider educational system.

5.5.3 English language teacher education and development

As stated in a UNESCO (2014, p. i) report, 'An education system is only as good as its teachers. Unlocking their potential is essential to enhancing the quality of learning.' The vast majority of English language teachers are truly professional, constantly striving to do their best for their learners. However, there remain some significant questions around the quality of teachers and English language provision in many learning systems, relating to both teachers' language proficiency and their pedagogical expertise. The issue of language proficiency is complex. Good language proficiency does not guarantee an aptitude for teaching the language (Richards, 2015) in the same way that 'NS' status should not be equated with language teaching excellence. Knowledge about how language is learned is important, as is having a repertoire of methods and competencies at hand to guide individuals or groups of learners to achieve their linguistic goals. Yet a certain level of proficiency is required mainly because, in some contexts, the teacher is the only model of the language that learners are exposed to. Different systems around the world mandate different proficiency levels for teachers depending on many factors, including whether decision makers genuinely understand the needs of the learner and, on a practical level, whether there are enough English language teachers of sufficient proficiency to be able to make decisions of this nature.

The quality of English language teachers and teaching depends on a range of factors, from teacher motivation and beliefs about teaching and learning processes to the quality of initial teacher education and access to relevant CPD opportunities. There are many other social, cultural and systemic factors that may affect the quality of what happens in an ELT classroom on a day-to-day basis. For the purposes of this section, we will focus on teacher education and development, as they provide the backbone of teacher expertise and professionalism and, enmeshed with these, aspects of teacher cognition, such as motivation, belief and agency.

5.5.3.1 Teacher education and continuing professional development

In theory, professional development is longitudinal and multidimensional, although in practice this differs from context to context. It begins with initial teacher training for pre-service teachers and progresses to professional development for in-service teachers. During a teacher's career, development can be institutional, independent, community-based or a combination. In this section we will focus on institutional development. CPD is necessary because the field of ELT is constantly evolving and developing in response to environmental, social and political changes. For teachers, this means staying up to date with the changes and engaging in any related development to continue providing the best learning opportunities for their students.

5.5.3.2 Institutional development: pre-service education

The two main stages of institutional development are pre-service education and in-service development. Most countries, though not all, require English teachers to have a basic teaching qualification. Requirements may differ for teachers in primary, secondary and tertiary, and again for those teaching in public education systems and those in the private sector (see Section 5.6 for more details). Pre-service education can be short, intensive courses or longer courses such as diplomas or teaching degrees, for example TESOL degrees.

Sadeghi and Richards (2021, p.2) state that the goal of initial teacher training is 'practical mastery of basic knowledge and skills or competencies needed in the classroom [to] help student teachers make the transition from the course-room to the classroom'.

The challenge for the teacher is whether this initial teacher training prepares them for the realities of the classroom they will find themselves in and the world that learners want to participate in. The challenge for training providers is that developing appropriate, relevant and flexible content for initial teacher education for dynamic globalised contexts is a formidable task and should not be underestimated. That said, there are many contexts in which teachers, on leaving pre-service education, are ill-equipped to provide the best learning opportunities for their learners (Buendía & Macías, 2019; Indrarathne & McCulloch, 2022; Webster & Valeo, 2011). Some examples of this include the failure of many teacher education programmes to adequately cover assessment and (as we saw above) the similar failure to introduce the area of technology. Other topics of relevance and growing importance in most educational contexts are those of multilingualism and EDI, which are notably absent in most pre-service curricula. An example of how a teacher education system has failed to deal with how its teachers should effectively manage the reality of multilingual classrooms comes from a qualitative study of six newly qualified teachers in Canada. 'Findings indicate that although moving toward greater ELL awareness and inclusive mindsets, there is evidence that well-intentioned teachers lack the competence necessary for effective classroom practice' (Webster & Valeo, 2011, p. 105).

Aside from the academic preparation of teaching, initial teacher education courses often do not fully prepare new teachers for the emotional and social aspects of teaching life either, as can be seen in the following quotation from Hoy (2008, p. 497, as cited in Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2011, p. 175):

The call to serve is deep in many people who enter the teaching profession ... but the realities of teaching can be disheartening, especially for those whose motivations are altruistic. These tensions – between serving and surviving, between caring and control, between deep investment and protective distance – are seldom addressed in teacher preparation.

5.5.3.3 Institutional development: in-service development

After this initial pre-service education, institutional development should ideally continue with ongoing professional development for in-service teachers.

Sadeghi & Richards (2021, p.2) present three main aims of professional development. First, to encourage teacher learning in order to improve student learning, assuming there is a link between the two. Second, professional development provides opportunities for teachers to keep abreast of progress in the field of ELT to enhance their knowledge and skills, keep up to date with the latest resources and build networks with other professionals. Third, professional development can provide motivation and confidence and be empowering, all of which will hopefully feed into the teacher's classroom practice.

As might be expected, the provision of professional development in different contexts varies, as do teachers' understanding and expectations of it and commitment to it. While there are positive examples of the availability of CPD, in a report about ELT in Pakistan, one teacher commented, '[T]here is no concept of CPD in the mainstream education system. I wasn't even aware of the terminology and it is the same for the majority of teachers. That's why we are far behind and not updated' (Nickson & Nudrat, 2022, p. 34).

In other places where it is available, CPD is often top-down and only aligned to policy changes rather than being focused on other, more fundamental, needs of teachers (Buendía & Macías, 2019). Increasingly, though, the literature talks about development as a social, situated phenomenon that evolves and is shaped through interaction with other professionals (Buendía & Macías, 2019; Sadeghi & Richards, 2021).

Much of the literature about teacher professional development suggests that teachers need to be involved in decisions about the content and format of their professional development so that it is relevant and generates investment in such learning opportunities, which in turn may lead to the likelihood of the learning being transferred into the classroom. Development needs to be useful, varied, interesting and continuous, while holistic support needs to be constant (Sadeghi & Richards, 2021).

For teachers to provide teaching that will motivate and benefit their learners, education systems should provide time and opportunity for teachers to learn. Teachers, however, also have to take some responsibility for their own development. In order for this to happen teachers need to be motivated and want to invest in their own professional development.

5.5.4 Teacher motivation

Teacher behaviour is shaped by both external and internal influences. External influences include things like school policies, the curriculum and available resources. Internal influences include teacher beliefs, attitudes and motivation, influences that are not always seen overtly or explicitly. These unseen but influential elements of teacher behaviour are the focus of studies on teacher cognition (Borg, 2019). While we do not have the space in this book to explore each of the elements of teacher cognition listed above, we feel that a brief mention of teacher motivation, or lack of it, is important as it can have a significant impact on teacher quality and retention and therefore affects the capacity of learning systems to function efficiently.

In their detailed conceptualisation of teacher motivation, Dörnyei and Ushioda (2011, p. 161) regard intrinsic motivation as being of central importance: “[T]eaching” as a vocational goal has always been associated with the internal desire to educate people, to impart knowledge and values, and to advance a community or a whole nation’. While extrinsic motivation is also an important factor, studies show that it is intrinsic motivation that is the main driver for teachers.⁴

This is exemplified in Nickson and Nudrat’s (2022) study on ELT in Pakistan, in which they report that:

The passion in the workforce of teachers, curriculum designers, educators and ELT experts in Pakistan is clear. It came through in our interviews and it comes through in the engagement of educators, as reported in projects ... This passion for teaching and learning represents a significant resource. (p. 38)

The motivational imperative (both intrinsic and extrinsic) is a crucial part of what teachers bring to the learning experience and is a further reason why they will remain central, as it is by no means certain that AI will be able to replicate this kind of human emotional complexity. Teachers and students, to quote Roy (2022, para. 7), ‘form a symbiotic and synergistic ecosystem that helps in the mutual enhancement of knowledge’.

⁴ See, for example, Dinham & Scott (2000) and Richardson & Watt (2006).

Since true passion for a subject is primarily intrinsic in nature, it seems clear that education ministries need to nurture such passion in school leaders and teacher educators to help teachers reach their full potential and fulfil wider school and systemic objectives. On the other hand, Dörnyei & Ushioda (2011, p. 168) have suggested several factors that could contribute to teachers losing motivation, thus offering ministries an additional set of potential risks to their learning systems that should equally be addressed. These factors are:

1. the particularly stressful nature of most teaching jobs
2. the inhibition of teacher autonomy by set curricula, standardised tests, imposed teaching methods, government-mandated policies and other institutional constraints
3. insufficient self-efficacy on most teachers' part due to inappropriate training
4. content repetitiveness and limited potential for intellectual development
5. inadequate career structures.

Numbers 4 and 5 are not within the scope of this section. We have dealt with number 3 in the sections about technology and professional development. Here we address numbers 1 and 2.

5.5.4.1 The stressful nature of most teaching jobs

Regardless of the rewards, teaching is stressful. Having a full timetable of classes is demanding, requiring almost limitless energy and continual resourcefulness. In many places there are also issues of class sizes, lack of resources, the pressure of students having to pass tests they are not always ready for, students not having the language level the teacher is teaching to, teachers not having the language level they are supposed to be teaching at, classroom management and so on. Added to this is the pressure of being evaluated, with results shown both internally (to school leaders and administrators) and externally (to parents and policymakers). Commenting on pre-service education, Dörnyei & Ushioda (2011, p. 172) assert that ‘as a result of their lopsided training, many teachers simply lack the skills necessary for doing well in the classroom. For them the task may be overly challenging and thus not intrinsically motivating’. Another layer of stress comes when new policies are introduced and have to be implemented, sometimes with little training or support. In addition, continual change in ELT over the past decade or more has added to the stress levels felt by teachers.

5.5.4.2 The inhibition of teacher autonomy

Many decisions in education that directly affect English language teachers are top-down initiatives, including professional development. Although this is beginning to change slowly, professional development for in-service teachers is led by change programmes and does not always reflect the reality of the classroom, meaning they can lack applicability (Buendía & Macías, 2019). If, due to the absence of relevant training and development, teachers do not have the knowledge and skills to teach their students effectively, then this will affect their personal efficacy. If there is a mismatch between teacher beliefs and expectations about teaching and learning and the classroom experience, this can also affect motivation. If teachers feel that they are constrained within a system that does not allow them to experiment, develop or innovate, then progress at individual (teacher and student) and, consequently, institutional level will be problematic and stagnant. Oder (2014) suggests that classroom practice is driven by teachers’ beliefs about teaching and learning and that successful implementation of new reform – for example, a new curriculum – is dependent upon consideration of teachers’ beliefs.

In many parts of the world, it may not be any single factor that is responsible for demotivating teachers, but rather an amalgamation of several factors. For example, if we consider the factors identified by Dörnyei & Ushioda (2011) and add issues such as low salaries, poor working conditions or low professional status in society, then teachers might find it difficult to sustain high levels of motivation.

Teacher motivation affects the quality of teaching and often – if issues that cause motivation to decrease are not, or cannot be, addressed – this then poses a threat to education systems. Learners will seek other opportunities to learn English if they are to achieve their desired levels. Both of these outcomes will eventually lead to questions about the role of the teacher. Components of teacher cognition, such as teacher beliefs, agency and motivation, are intrinsically connected with the more explicit and tangible elements of being a teacher, such as collaboration with colleagues, access to training and development opportunities, involvement in decision making and adequate resources. If English is considered a valuable and important skill for educational, professional and economic success, then it follows that English language teachers should be looked after, supported, developed and rewarded to reflect the significance of their contribution to society as a whole. Institutions have a pastoral responsibility towards teachers to enable them to continue to perform at a high standard. Being on the frontline of education, although important and rewarding, is no easy feat.

5.5.4.3 English teacher recruitment, capacity and retention

English language teacher recruitment is an issue at all levels, the world over. With the continued, and in some places increased, demand for ELL, the need for English teachers will not diminish in the near future (Howard et al., 2016). In particular, recruiting teachers to rural areas where resources may be low and support minimal is significantly more difficult. Recruitment procedures in what Avalos & Aylwin (2007, p. 525) call an ‘undervalued’ profession varies from context to context, depending on the availability and quality of applicants. This, in turn, depends on variables such as the status of the teaching profession in the society, the salary and working conditions. Some countries have the luxury (and the resources) to recruit teachers from abroad simply because there are not enough individuals in these places who want to become teachers. This, of course, is not an option for all countries.

Becoming a teacher is sometimes that last option for graduates. This is compounded by the practice of posting newly graduated teachers to rural areas with low resources and little support before they can apply for more desirable locations near bigger towns or cities. For these teachers, their initiation into the profession will be challenging and demanding to say the least, and perhaps detrimental to education systems. It has been suggested that the first year of teaching is ‘the most crucial of a teachers’ career’, with the potential for ‘promoting or forever stunting professional development’ (Sharplin et al., 2011, p. 138).

Recruitment is only the first stage of the professional cycle of a teacher; the second, as mentioned above, is professional development and training, and even if this is provided to a satisfactory level, teachers may not choose to stay in the profession (Howard et al., 2016). English language teacher attrition is an area that requires attention by decision makers in both schools and universities. Having invested in teacher recruitment and possibly some professional development, it seems a waste of resources not to try to keep teachers, especially as English is linked to individual success and economic growth.

5.5.5 Roundtable data

5.5.5.1 The demand for teachers

Despite the seemingly inevitable expansion of digital and online learning, and the potential for technologies to act as major disruptors to traditional forms of teaching in the coming decade, the predominant view from all the regional roundtables was that the most dramatic version of potential disruption – namely, there being no further need for teachers – was unlikely over this timespan. Teachers, while their roles and training may need to change considerably, would not just be needed but be much in demand. Some of the regions that spoke most vociferously about the potential disruptive role of technologies, particularly of AI, were also clear that teachers would remain central to the process of learning English, as teachers of the language and/or as teachers of the enabling technologies to learn English. The formal sector in particular will, as was pointed out by a member of the EU roundtable, guarantee the need for good teachers. In the Americas roundtable, it was felt that, regardless of technological advances and online learning, teachers remain central to the teaching and learning process, a sentiment that was echoed in the ASEAN roundtable. PISA was highlighted in China, where participants stressed that PISA findings show that nothing is as effective as the face-to-face teacher and that more emphasis will be placed on the teacher training of Chinese teachers of English.

This continuing need for English teachers was highlighted as one of the biggest challenges facing a number of regions as demand rises and diversifies, given that some systems already lack English teachers, and particularly those with the diverse skills increasingly demanded as the shift to multilingual and hybrid forms of teaching continues (see Section 5.2). In the Americas roundtable it was claimed that only about ten per cent of the school population has qualified English teachers, and across the region training in both English language and online proficiency was urgently needed for English language teachers. Many regions stressed this need for a focus on the quality of ELT and a new training paradigm that would reflect this. In Wider Europe, for example, a growing awareness is emerging of the need for a focus on both the content of courses and the approaches to teaching ESL.

5.5.5.2 English teachers and technology

All regions highlighted the importance of English teachers, in particular, harnessing the opportunities made available by technology, and that technology, rather than posing a threat to the existence of English teachers, could contribute to improved language teaching with teachers still at the heart of the learning process, at least in the foreseeable future. However, in order for this to happen, teachers have to be in possession of the skills required to use technology effectively – discussions in the Americas and China roundtables particularly stressed this point. The Gulf region highlighted the significance for teachers and pupils of the Covid-19 pandemic forcing teaching online, requiring teachers to adapt pedagogies very quickly. The South Asia roundtable gave the example of Pakistan, where online teacher training was already an ambition prior to the pandemic, but through necessity is now a reality, with a digital platform in Punjab having 40,000 teachers enrolled on it. This is proving to be a tremendous support to teachers all over the country and could be replicated in other contexts.

5.5.5.3 English teachers and Englishes

In addition to South Asia, this stress on supportive ecosystems was also strongly echoed in the Americas and Middle East roundtables.

The growth in EME already predicted by Graddol looks likely to continue in various forms, and this could have implications for the number and future training of teachers of English. Graddol felt that retraining programmes would become necessary for English language subject teachers moving to teach other subjects in EME (Graddol, 2006), but there was little evidence found to show that such retraining was happening (Rich, 2021). However, it does seem likely that the move towards EME detailed in Section 5.4, especially in tertiary education, has expanded the need for English language teachers in the future. In the East Asian ASEAN roundtable, there was a particular stress on likely future development of EME and, running in parallel, a need for teachers to be able to use translanguaging pedagogies. In the Maghreb group from the Middle East, the feeling was that English was likely to continue to be taught as a subject in school (although teacher quality needed to improve here), but EME would continue to grow in the HE sector.

The increased interest in using and preserving home languages within education systems and the acceptance of local forms of English have also helped secure the future of English language teachers in many contexts. In the East Asian ASEAN workshop, this trend was emphasised along with a more utilitarian way of using English – to get things done in the local and regional context, rather than to learn a native-speaker model of English. The implication here is that local English teachers would be best equipped to deal with this. This was expressed even more strongly in the EU roundtable, where English was seen not so much as a ‘foreign language’ but as a ‘means to an end’, and the perception from Pakistan participants was that shifting notions of ownership meant that English learning should now be based on Asian non-native models such as *Pinglish*, a hybrid variety that mixes English and Punjabi. Again, the implication is that local English teachers are in the best position to do this effectively in the future.

5.5.6 Conclusion

Teachers are responsible for educating the next generation; their jobs are important for both individual student success and national growth and progress. The data from all of the roundtable discussions suggests that English language teachers will continue to be of vital importance. Teaching is rewarding and challenging, and though many teachers enter the profession with sincere and positive motives, factors related to working conditions, lack of preparedness and self-efficacy can affect motivation levels. Teachers need support and care through quality initial training and ongoing professional development. Supportive and inclusive working environments and the provision of opportunities for career progression might encourage more teachers to remain in the profession, thus working towards ameliorating issues with English language teacher capacity.

There is a general consensus that in the next 15 years teachers will need to learn new skills as the attitudes towards, and models of, ELL and communicating change, with a lot more emphasis on the position of local languages and varieties of English. In addition, as reflected in all the regional roundtables, there will be a continuing need for upskilling English language teachers. AI may indeed present an existential threat when the technology and algorithms associated with it become more targeted. However, there is currently no sign that English teachers will not continue to be central to the learning of English in the medium term at least.

Areas for further research

- Investigating teacher preparation for the use of technology and classroom behaviour in implementing technology in TLA.
- Investigating teacher preparation and classroom behaviour when dealing with the multilingual learning environment.
- Studies into models of teacher support in this changing learning environment to ensure productivity and retention.

5.6 Public and private English language provision: who has the answers?

In this section we look at public-sector education systems in the context of wider national political and economic backdrops and the place of ELT and ELL within those systems. Then an overview of provision for ELL and EME in the private sector is given, followed by a summary of how the issue of public and private provision featured in the roundtables.

5.6.1 Education in context

Over the last two centuries, education and literacy rates have risen quite dramatically, as Figure 5.5 shows.

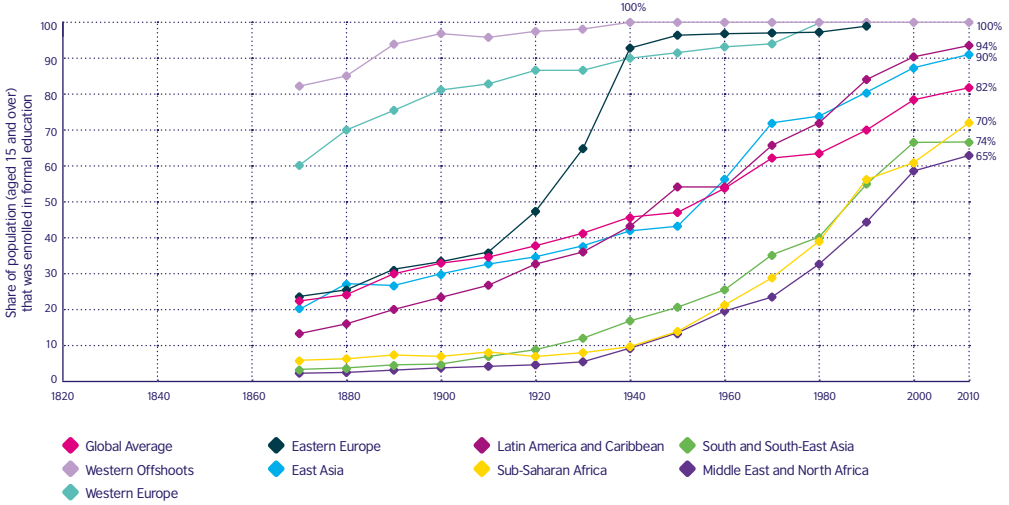
However, to judge by recent articles, global education is actually in crisis. Krishnan (2020, paras. 7, 11) says:

According to UNICEF, more than 72 million children of primary education age are not in school, while 750 million adults are illiterate and do not have the ability to improve their and their children's living conditions. As we take on education transformation, daisy-chaining across three crucial categories (access, equity, quality/impact) is critical for unleashing potential. ... It's in everybody's best interest to solve the global education crisis.

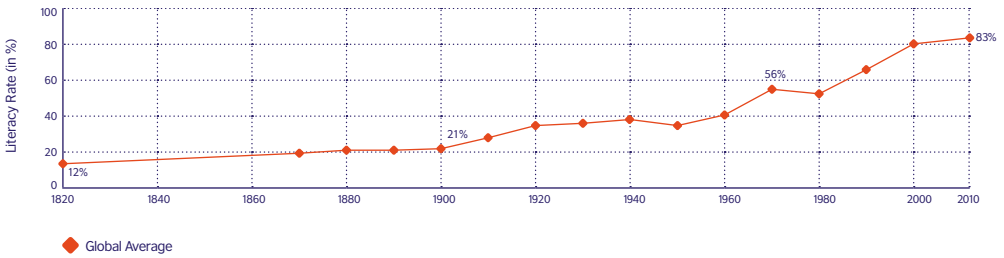
These are just two examples from many similar articles and reports on the state of education today, which combine to paint a rather bleak picture. Education does not exist in a vacuum, but is part of a wider political, economic and social world. Before we discuss the state of education systems and how many are failing young people today, it is worth contemplating how factors outside the education system are contributing to this poor state of play.

Figure 5.5 Rising education around the world, 1820–2010

Share of the population enrolled in education



World literacy rate



Source: Roser & Ortiz-Ospina (2016). Literacy. Published online at OurWorldInData.org. Retrieved from <https://ourworldindata.org/literacy>

Table 5.2 Twenty reasons why, in 2020, there are still 260 million children out of school

Attacks on education	More than 14,000 military attacks on education – including about 10,000 directly on schools – in 34 countries over a five-year period.
Child labour	Over 150 million children aged 5 to 17 – half of them under 11 – are victims of forced labour and often miss out on education.
Child marriage	Around 12 million girls every year are married before the age of 18.
Climate change	Around 37 million children have their education disrupted each year because of environmental threats.
Conflict	UNICEF estimates that 48.5 million children worldwide are missing school because of wars and conflicts.
Disabilities	40% of about 100 million children with disabilities don't go to primary school and 55% are not in secondary education.
Funding	Lack of funding at a local, national and international level has a huge effect on the numbers of children who are in school and on the quality of education.
Gender	The UN estimates that 130 million girls between the ages of 6 and 17 are out of school.
Hunger	Lack of daily nutritious meals can mean children dropping out of school or not being able to concentrate in the classroom.
Journey to school	Many children in remote communities also have to make the most unimaginable and dangerous journeys every day to access education.

Source: adapted from *Theirworld* (7 February 2020).

<https://reliefweb.int/report/world/20-reasons-why-2020-there-are-still-260m-children-out-school>

Lack of teachers	When the SDGs were launched in 2015, the UN said the world would need 25.8 million additional primary school teachers by 2030.
Lack of skilled teachers	Too many teachers don't have the training or qualifications needed to deliver a quality education.
Language	About 500 million children get school lessons in a language they don't speak at home with their families.
Natural disasters	As a result of the floods in 2022, nearly 27,000 schools in Pakistan were destroyed or damaged, and over 2 million children still didn't have access to their schools as of November 2022.
Periods	Periods are a natural part of life for girls but also a major reason for them missing out on education. They often don't have access to sanitary products or separate toilets. They can face discrimination, stigma and bullying during their periods, sometimes even from their teachers, leading to their missing school for several days a month or even dropping out altogether.
Pregnancy	About 16 million girls aged 15 to 19 and one million girls under 15 give birth every year, most in low- and middle-income countries, according to the World Health Organization. In many countries these girls can be excluded from school and not allowed back even after they give birth, while some stay away due to stigma, fees and lack of childcare.
Recruitment as soldiers	There are an estimated 250,000 child soldiers in the world today in at least 20 countries, 40% of them girls. Many miss out on education for years or drop out for good.
Refugee crisis	Of the 7.1 million refugee children of school age, 3.7 million do not go to school, according to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR).
Sanitation	Almost 900 million children have to contend with a lack of basic hygiene facilities during their education, putting their health at risk and meaning some have to miss school.
Violence	An estimated 246 million girls and boys are harassed and abused on their way to and at school every year.

This data sets out the reality in places where the environment is challenging, there is conflict, and/or funding for education is limited, meaning it can be difficult to sustain continuous education; this goes some way to explaining why approximately 260 million children are missing out on BE. In places such as these, from a child's perspective the primary concern is survival on a day-to-day basis, as they live in permanent crisis, and receiving an education may be seen as a luxury. Information such as that in Table 5.2 positions education systems in wider political and economic contexts. It emphasises the local constraints and parameters within which governments and schools have to operate. However, for those children who do go to school, what is the quality of teaching and learning they experience? In more disadvantaged contexts, large classes, a lack of basic facilities and technical equipment, and poor classroom infrastructure are common (Copland et al., in press). Some schools in poorer areas 'appear to be trapped in their states of poverty and disadvantage, with very little hope of emancipation', with children whose attendance may be 'driven more by hunger than the thirst for knowledge' (Maistry, 2022, pp. 9–10). In such circumstances, it is difficult to see how target 4.7 of SDG 4, requiring that all learners 'acquire the knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development', can be met, given its 'middle-classness in contradistinction to the immediate lived experience of the destitute' (Maistry, 2022, p. 1). Other literature on the state of education and the quality of provision is also not optimistic, suggesting that there is a probability that the overall SDG 4, Quality Education for All, will not be met (UNESCO, 2019).

There are, however, pockets of inspiration and excellence all over the world, even in the harshest of environments, but particularly in places where infrastructure is sound, resources are abundant, and education systems are helping young people to achieve their goals. It is reported that there are more children in primary school today than ten years ago, and increasing numbers of children are completing both primary school and secondary school. UNESCO (2019) reported that the global primary school completion rate increased from 70 per cent in 2000 to 84 per cent in 2018 and forecast it would reach 93 per cent by 2030, although only rising to 79 per cent in low-income countries. Lower and upper secondary completion rates stood at 72 per cent and 48 per cent respectively in 2018, forecast to reach 85 per cent and 60 per cent respectively by 2030, but only 53 per cent and 26 per cent respectively in low-income countries. This makes universal primary completion by 2030 a possibility, perhaps, but unrealistic for secondary completion without 'a transformational departure from past trajectories' (UNESCO, 2019, p. 4).

This upward trend is encouraging, but many young people still leave BE without basic skills. Although literacy rates in low- and middle-income countries have also increased in the last 20 years, the global youth literacy rate of 91 per cent leaves over 100 million young people lacking basic literacy skills. In low-income countries, one in three young people still cannot read (UNESCO, 2019, p. 9).

5.6.2 English in public education systems

Education is still considered to be the pillar of most societies and the foundation of nation-building. The public education system is the cornerstone of this process, as echoed by UNESCO (2015): 'Achieving sustainable development is only truly possible through cross-sectoral efforts that begin with education' (p. 11). Language has always been a vital consideration here: 'A society's fate in the end depends on the quality of the schooling its children get in language' (Comenius, 1657, as cited in King, 2018, p. 32).

In an ideal world, the purpose of education is 'to enable students to understand the world around them and the talents within them so that they can become fulfilled individuals and active, compassionate citizens' (Robinson, 2018), thus viewing education as based on diversity, creativity and collaboration. However, for many education systems this is very ambitious, as such aspirations do not always take into consideration the realities of schools in many areas.

English is part of the larger educational system in which policies are set and resources managed according to priorities of the local situational context. English as a subject has been taught in schools for many years and, more recently, it has started to be taught at younger ages in some places (Copland et al., 2022) and with increased contact hours in others. However, the promise of young people able to communicate in English on leaving school has not been fulfilled in many contexts. Honório (2019, p. 9) reports an 'alarming reality of failure' in Brazil on this score.

Similarly, in a report that looked at seven European countries (France, Greece, Italy, Poland, Portugal, Romania and Spain), the Trajectory Partnership (2018, p. 31) reported, 'The impression from employers and linguists was that ... currently in no country did school leavers generally have English that was developed enough for a working environment.'

The teaching and learning of English as a subject is clearly not delivering the expected outcomes, in these contexts at least, and there is simply not enough evidence that EME in BE or HE has a positive impact on English language skills, content knowledge or overall student outcomes either. See Section 5.4 for a more detailed discussion of EME.

Many of the factors that have an impact on the teaching and learning of English in BE are those that affect education more generally. Research reveals four main areas that public education systems should focus on in order to improve educational experiences and outcomes for all stakeholders involved. These are school infrastructure, teachers and teaching methodology, technology, and evaluation and assessment (Honório, 2019; Hosseinnia et al., 2019; Khaliq & Dwivedi, 2016; UNESCO, 2015). Some of these areas are particularly relevant to the teaching and learning of English, but there is considerable variation across contexts.

As discussed above, there are substantial disparities between higher- and lower-income areas in terms of basic infrastructure. While access to clean water and basic sanitation is universal in high-income countries, only 53 per cent of upper secondary schools in low-income contexts have access to basic drinking water (UNESCO, 2019). Some regions have high class numbers – up to 70 students in a class – alongside a lack of basic facilities such as electricity and lighting, and with desks and boards in a poor condition (Zein, 2022). A government report in South Africa in 2021 revealed that nearly 15 per cent of public schools had no or an unreliable electricity supply and over 20 per cent had no flushing toilets (Maistry, 2022).

Teacher training also varies substantially by region: in SSA, only 64 per cent of primary and 50 per cent of secondary school teachers have the minimum required training, figures that have fallen since 2000 in part due to schools taking on unqualified contract teachers to cover shortfalls (UNESCO, 2019). This can be a particular factor for ELT. In some areas, a lack of qualified English teachers can result in teachers of other subjects with very little ability in English being assigned to primary-level English classes (Zein, 2022). Even some qualified teachers feel that their own English ability is weak, and this can lead to teachers avoiding spontaneous English use in class by following traditional whole-class teaching techniques that allow them to plan their language use in advance (Copland et al., 2022). In addition, in some countries, teachers who are better qualified and speak better English tend to work in private schools rather than public ones (Copland et al., in press).

In a study to investigate why ELT in Brazilian schools is not successful, Honório (2019) discovered that, although teachers were well prepared and supported, they were working with curricula that were outdated and did not reflect the latest theories of language acquisition, creating a disparity between teacher preparation and the reality of practice in schools. See Section 5.5 for a more detailed discussion of teacher preparation, training and motivation as potential barriers to teachers reaching their potential.

Technology is seen as a wonderful asset to teaching and learning but, as discussed in Section 5.8, teachers need to know how to incorporate it into the classroom to empower learners and enhance learning. While students are increasingly using technology for independent learning, guidance in this area is crucial: 'the interrelation between pedagogy and technology' has to be explored by teachers to allow both them and their students to maximise the opportunities technology can bring (Esfandiari & Gawhary, 2019, p. 64). It is also important to remember that many pupils do not have access to what others regard as basic technology: while 93 per cent of those at upper secondary level in high-income countries have access to the internet, that figure falls to 59 per cent in middle-income countries and 37 per cent in low-income countries (UNESCO, 2019). Meanwhile, a study in Libya found that teachers in primary schools had no more than a marker pen and a whiteboard to use in the classroom (Hamed & Fadhil, 2019).

Assessment is another area which can be problematic. Schools are often measured against each other based on exam results, which are published in league tables. Competition can be motivating and healthy, but in some cases it can negatively impact the focus of teaching and learning. Just as schools are measured against each other, teachers are evaluated within schools, and often one of the criteria is the grades or the number of passes a teacher's students will attain. As a result, instead of focusing on the process of learning to strengthen learning skills and encourage autonomy and independence, teaching may focus on achieving high grades in the tests, thus equipping students with test-taking skills but, at the same time, depriving them of the range of 21st-century skills needed by young people in today's world. That said, learning and teaching are about balance. Learners need to be aware of the importance of assessment and evaluation as they are, in one way or another, an intrinsic component of many domains of life today (Robinson, 2018). See Section 5.7 for a detailed discussion of assessment.

It is important to bear in mind, however, that public education systems and the contexts in which they operate are complex in a multitude of ways. The four areas identified above are ones that might be seen as a priority, depending on context, for a system or school to consider when thinking about meeting the demands of young people for the future, but there are no easy solutions, and one size definitely does not fit all.

5.6.3 English in private education systems

According to the World Education Forum, 'education must be "fit for purpose" and customised to the national/local contexts' (UNESCO, 2015, p. 18). However, many parents do not think that mainstream English language education is fit for purpose at the moment as, upon leaving full-time education, their children do not possess the knowledge and skills needed to secure employment in many sectors. As a result, some turn to private providers of ELL and international education in order to help their children get ahead in education and work (ISC Research, 2022; Trajectory Partnership, 2018). Many parents find additional employment and make other financial sacrifices to send their children to private language classes or affordable international schools: 'It's expensive to send your kids, but some parents make a big sacrifice to send them to English classes ... Lots of parents are willing to pay for private lessons to improve their children's prospects in the future' (Trajectory Partnership, 2018, p. 32).

Despite still being mostly the domain of the wealthy elite, private education, particularly for the learning of and through English, has mushroomed at all levels in the last decade. As of July 2022, there are 13,180 English-medium international schools now teaching 5.89 million students aged between 3 and 18 (ISC Research, 2022, p. 7), and at tertiary level, as reported in Section 5.3, there have been massive increases in the number of English-taught programmes across the world.

It seems clear, therefore, that private provision for and in English across all levels of the education system is increasing. The influx and establishment of local providers of ELL and EME into the market has made private provision both more affordable and accessible for a wider group of people, although still by no means for all.

Depending on context, different types and combinations of private English language provision are available:

- English pre-schools and nurseries
- top-up English classes (either one-to-one or in groups)
- local EME schools
- local EME or multilingual international schools
- local EME courses and/or universities
- transnational education campuses in non-anglophone countries
- online courses (either one-to-one or in groups).

Because of the rapid expansion of private provision in this area, it is very difficult to compile a definitive list, but this provides an indication of the range of provision that is available. Given this range, it is perhaps inevitable that the quality of private provision will vary substantially by type and by location. Private education will aim to take advantage of the problems in the public sector outlined above, but there is no guarantee that it will provide higher quality or address the needs of employers and other stakeholders better than public education.

As a minimum, private schools usually offer smaller class sizes, better facilities and resources, and teachers who tend to be better paid than in the public education system (Copland et al., in press), which will positively influence their motivation and productivity. Depending on the type of school or institution, teachers in the private sector are usually more engaged in professional development than their peers in the public sector. Hosseinnia et al. (2019), in their study of the Iranian context, attributed this in part to job security in the public sector allowing teachers to avoid professional development, while those in private schools were expected to engage with ongoing CPD.

A recent study in Pakistan found that teachers in private schools were using more appropriate classroom-management techniques than their public-sector counterparts, including managing classroom behaviour, teaching strategies, planning and support, and working with parents (Abdullah, 2020). Another study found that teachers in the private sector in Pakistan were more liable to use communicative teaching methods, as against more traditional grammar-based methods, in part because they did not have the same pressures of overcrowded classrooms and lack of appropriate teaching materials that are common features of public-sector education (Ahmad and Rao, 2012).

Student motivation may also contribute to improved outcomes. A study in Thailand found that students in private schools had higher levels of both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation to learn English than those in public schools (Inngam and Eamoraphan, 2014).

Despite these perceived advantages, however, the rapid expansion of private language education, particularly in developing countries, has led to concerns about the quality of some of the provision and the lack of monitoring and evaluation in many of these institutions. It is also difficult to find studies that report evidence to support the perception that private English language provision actually results in better exam scores or grades. However, with smaller class sizes in most cases, individuals should receive more feedback, and learning can be more personalised. There is a higher status attached to EME provision and international schools, the perception being that if education is being paid for, then it should and will be better than that being offered in mainstream schools. International schools have the advantage of offering international curricula and qualifications, which eventually ease the path to international HE, as ISC Research (2022, p. 32) notes:

... those parents who can afford the international school fees are willing to pay because of the perception that international schools offer better infrastructure along with quality, holistic education, exposure to practical implementation, experiential learning, and avenues for students to look to university admissions abroad.

Aside from the doubts about the quality of some private English language provision, a fundamental concern is the growing divide between those who can afford private provision and those who cannot. UNESCO (2017, p. 106) believes that private tutoring, which is especially prevalent in wealthier urban areas, 'widens the education advantage gap between haves and have-nots'. Their report gives examples of the conflicts of interest that can arise when teachers in public schools also teach privately, including covering less material in school in order to increase the demand for private lessons. It also suggests that much stricter regulation of the private sector is needed 'to ensure that profitability does not trump equity and quality' (p. 106).

5.6.4 Shared stakeholder responsibilities for quality education

According to Piaget (1993, as cited in King, 2018, p. 32), education is:

an integral part of the formative process to which all beings are subject and is only one aspect of that vast development ... It is therefore not limited to the action of school and family but is part and parcel of general social life. Human society is an educational society.

This is echoed in the 2017/18 UNESCO Global Education Monitoring Report, *Accountability in Education: Meeting Our Commitments*. The report states that accountability for quality education resides with all stakeholders at all levels of society and education, from governments who create policies and make decisions to schools who govern and manage teaching, to parents and learners who take advantage of learning opportunities. The report also states that the private sector, represented by international organisations and private schools, should contribute to education systems with quality interventions, setting standards and leading on monitoring and evaluating processes. Accountability, at school or institutional level, tends to be operationalised around test results, and as long as this is the case, education systems will struggle to improve the very systems, processes and pedagogy that are failing young people today. Seen in this way, individuals become the aggregate of the system rather than individuals who learn and achieve in different ways. Measuring success and failure in this way is limiting and narrows both the construct of success and individual potential within education and society.

Efficient and effective education systems will benefit all stakeholders at all levels in the long term. If education systems are struggling, then it seems logical that all stakeholders should work together to find solutions to remedy the problems. UNESCO (2015, p. 27) states:

While the primary responsibility of providing education lies with governments, partnerships with diverse stakeholders are needed. Non-state partners such as civil society organisations, foundations, academia and business are all key actors which have a stake in education outcomes. It is increasingly accepted by many that business can contribute core assets – including but not limited to funding – to support governments and other partners to provide learning opportunities for all. By combining resources and expertise, the impact of education investments can be maximized.

While it is encouraging that education in the primary and secondary sectors has expanded, this has increased pressure on budgets in public education systems, particularly in developing countries, who struggle to allocate the necessary funds for education. Partnerships with non-state actors is one way of relieving this pressure. Creative partnerships between the public and private sectors can bring many benefits to the quality of systems, processes and teaching and learning, although they do need to be managed and monitored to ensure progress is being made and measured against realistic and relevant outcomes for the context.

5.6.5 Roundtable data

5.6.5.1 Public-sector provision

Participants in five of the roundtables overtly stated concerns about the public-sector provision of English. The issues discussed ranged from inappropriate and irrelevant curricula to antiquated systems in desperate need of revision and the resulting rise of private-sector provision of English and subjects taught in English.

In the Gulf roundtable, in all of the countries represented, English has been taught in schools for the last 30–40 years. All of the participants recognised a need to improve the quality of English language provision in the state school system in order to increase the levels of English attained by school leavers.

In the India roundtable, the perception among participants was that government schools have been stagnant for the last 10–15 years and that, because of the Covid-19 pandemic, developments in learning are actually moving faster than in teaching. The school system is not seen to be providing what the learners need. However, changes are happening and planned for in public schools. There is a move away from rote-based learning to competency-based learning. This will require a change in focus in the curriculum, with English being introduced earlier than at present. There was general consensus among participants that the infrastructure of teaching and learning has to change. Moving forwards, policymakers need to think about the teacher, the learner and the classroom working together within one system, rather than in isolation.

Similarly, in Pakistan there were concerns about education policy and capacity at government level to successfully roll out the new curriculum. Long-standing problems with the quality of teaching were identified, but there was also mention of a ‘learning crisis’ affecting especially primary and secondary levels of education across all subjects, which stemmed from a failure of language planning policy. The result was large numbers of students struggling with identity issues and failing to operate in anything other than a surface communication level in any language. Teaching and learning in a language other than L1 at an early age can jeopardise the status of students’ mother tongue and lead to issues of identity uncertainty and confusion.

In the Americas roundtable, participants expressed the diversity of contexts in the region and within countries that makes educational policy and planning a complex process. The countries represented in this roundtable are vast, and within each country there are disparities in wealth, infrastructure and education systems. The situations and demands can vary drastically, making it difficult to have centralised education systems. Governments find themselves managing multiple systems with multiple needs in very different contexts within the same country, making management, administration and implementation very challenging.

Participants in several roundtables, including China, the Gulf and Pakistan, suggested that education systems will need to adapt to changes in the landscape and the learner in order to remain relevant and useful. They voiced a need for decision makers to consider the value of English education beyond being just a tool for communication. In order to better support students to respond to emerging education and employment landscapes, language education should not be seen as just a school subject but more as part of the wider holistic development of students, and learning materials should be developed to reflect this.

A key point raised when discussing state education provision of English was the importance of ensuring that teachers were appropriately trained and equipped with relevant skills to enable them to effectively support learners.

5.6.5.2 Growing private-sector provision of English language learning

There was general agreement among the roundtable participants, particularly in India, Maghreb and Levant, that private-sector provision for English had increased because of the state sector's inability to provide effective and useful English language provision and the resulting failure to meet learner outcomes. In all three regions, parents who can afford it are increasingly sending their children to international or private schools. In India, private companies have made massive inroads in recent years. There is almost a parallel education system alongside the public one. These private sector centres do not all teach English as a subject, but almost all of them are teaching other subjects through English. In SSA, the number of English-medium private schools across the region will continue to increase significantly, and Libya has also seen a rise in the number of language centres focusing on English.

In all of the roundtables, participants expressed concerns that this increased provision for English in the private sector has the potential to cause issues of inequality and division between those who can afford this provision and those who rely on the public sector. However, participants also all shared concerns about the quality of provision in the private sector, as there seem to be few or no monitoring systems in place.

5.6.5.3 Informal learning

Some roundtable participants reported that informal learning – learning outside of formal public and private classrooms – had increased during the last two years, with the Covid-19 pandemic acting as a catalyst. In the Wider Europe roundtable, participants reported that the use of English for social media is playing a major role in shaping the form and content of individual language learning. This was reflected in discussions around the need for balance between formal and informal approaches to learning. In the India roundtable, the term 'internet university' was used to describe individual learning enabled flexibly on the internet. Some participants in the Pakistan roundtable felt that learners feel more empowered to pursue more informal ways of learning. The pandemic has provided people with an opportunity to take ownership of their own learning to meet their goals. The concept of customised language learning may become a reality but will require a paradigm shift by national education systems.

5.6.5.4 Public and private sectors working together

There was agreement about the need for education systems to recognise more individual ways of learning and accessing information and, therefore, to find ways to integrate and balance formal education and informal learning. Any system that includes customised learning will be in demand. In India, it seems that the private sector will go from strength to strength. This will cause some inequity and discrimination. However, this could be balanced by state-sector policies that target those who are excluded from private-sector provision. In the end, though, most participants felt that one solution to improving the quality of English language provision is to develop partnerships and use networks to meet the demand.

5.6.5.5 Roundtables conclusion

Despite considerable regional variations in many of the areas discussed, there was, nonetheless, general agreement about the need for policy development, integrated oversight, and investment in both public and private sectors in every region.

5.6.6 Future learning systems

What will future learning systems look like? The easy answer is that some will look exactly as they do now and others may look different. Policy decisions depend on the conviction of governments that change is required and then the will and the funding to implement it. However, some governments may appreciate that change is required but may not have the inclination, resources or expertise to carry it out.

In order to conceptualise future learning systems, a sound starting point would be O'Sullivan's (2020) Comprehensive Learning System (CLS). The CLS proposes that education systems are based on a single philosophy and that the three overarching elements of the system – curriculum, delivery and assessment – are integrated and aligned within this one system. Looking into the future, within the structure of this single integrated system, teaching and learning will be dynamic, co-constructed and therefore evolving to meet the needs of the many stakeholders involved in any education system. What is likely to be critical is that the needs of the learners and teachers will still be the core components of this system. The parameters of the system should be contextually situated yet, at the same time, include regional and global awareness and insight in order to appropriately prepare students for life as global citizens.

Teaching and learning materials will ideally reflect this approach. In an ideal world, future learning systems will include technology as a tool to stimulate and enhance learning but not to replace teachers. Materials will include an appreciation and recognition of other languages that are used in any given context. Curricula will, as they do now, provide guiding principles for teachers but also allow for flexibility, creativity and experimentation to develop inclusive and diverse practices that will increase motivation and confidence for all concerned (see Sections 5.5 and 5.8). Curricula and materials will also reflect increasingly available non-formal learning opportunities, driven by increased internet accessibility, even in the Global South. This will entail integrating online language practice opportunities that are associated with social media, gaming and more traditional video (e.g. film or short videos) and audio (e.g. radio or podcasts).

Present education systems can evoke images of archaic machinery that is cumbersome and grinds to a halt at the slightest environmental change. As pointed out by Robinson (2012), these systems were designed and built in the 19th century to meet the social and economic needs of the time and have been exposed by the rapid changes in society and the work domain in the latter part of the 20th and early part of the 21st century. In the future, learning systems will need to be far more agile in response to changes in education policies. Ideally, they should not rely on external factors to prompt change but instead be proactive in initiating change in response to the needs of learners, BE and HE institutions, teachers and employers.

Future learning systems will need to communicate both internally, within the system and across all levels of the system, and externally, with stakeholders such as parents, decision makers and sponsors.

The implication of all this for teacher education and training is stark. For this vision to be achieved, a great deal of targeted training in the digital pedagogies that underpin any new thinking will be necessary.

5.6.7 Conclusion, including looking forward

Education systems are, unsurprisingly, failing in some contexts with harsh realities such as conflict, poverty and climate change. It also means that for those children who are lucky enough to go to school anywhere in the world, but particularly in places such as these, there is a serious responsibility for all concerned to try to provide the best teaching and learning opportunities for them.

The private sector has capitalised on this lack to expand exponentially. This can increase opportunities for young people, but only if they can afford to access it, and the quality of private provision can be questionable in some contexts.

There is opportunity for collaboration between the private and public sectors, although this needs to be managed and monitored. Substantial institutional reform will be needed to ensure that all parts of the system can work as one.

There was growing recognition that teaching and learning needed to change even before the Covid-19 pandemic. The pandemic has been a catalyst for this change, and education systems need to reflect the realities of today's world. Learners want to learn in flexible personalised ways, and employers are demanding better-skilled employees. Learning systems of the future will need to reflect this.

Areas for further research

- Comparative evaluation systems for education policy, implementation, teacher and learner proficiency at different stages of the public and private education system.
- Evaluation of the impact of policy-driven innovations across both systems.
- Identify examples of best practice in co-operation across public and private provision globally, both for English language TLA and for education in general.

5.7 Can English language assessment meet stakeholders' changing needs?

The assessment of whether English language assessment can meet stakeholders' changing needs is of critical importance within learning systems, and within the social contexts in which they sit was superbly summed up by Bryan & Clegg (2006, p. 1) when they argued that 'whatever we may think, assessment has become the currency with which we trade; the better the grade, the bigger and better the reward'.

In this section we discuss English language assessment in light of developments in education and the social environment generally. It is clear from the previous sections in this book that the concept of proficiency is changing. People require different types of proficiency for different tasks in different contexts. This has implications for TLA, particularly as we expect that aligning these components will continue to be of interest in the future. This section focuses on different uses of assessments and provides an overview of recent developments and discussions to do with English language assessment. The impact of changing learning environments and evolving stakeholder expectations will be explored, as will the readiness of different stakeholders to implement and practise these different types of assessments. Finally, data from roundtable discussions will be presented, followed by areas for further exploration.

5.7.1 Assessment for learning

Assessment to support teaching and learning, also known as assessment for learning (AfL), is a popular topic of discussion, particularly in close connection with teacher preparation and training. According to Black et al. (2004, p. 10):

Assessment for learning is any assessment for which the first priority in its design and practice is to serve the purpose of promoting students' learning. It thus differs from assessment designed primarily to serve the purposes of accountability, or of ranking, or of certifying competence. An assessment activity can help learning if it provides information that teachers and their students can use as feedback in assessing themselves and one another and in modifying the teaching and learning activities in which they are engaged. Such assessment becomes 'formative assessment' when the evidence is actually used to adapt the teaching work to meet learning needs.

AfL, which can be seen as a form of formative (or developmental) assessment, should be a core and seamless part of teaching and learning and not treated as a separate activity. Depending on the level and age of the learners, teachers may choose different assessment activities (see British Council, n.d.). Information from these activities can be used in two ways. First, as feedback to learners about their strengths and also about areas for improvement. This information can help teachers and learners to plan realistic individual goals that can help learners to map their own progress. Second, AfL can inform future lesson plans in terms of content and classroom management as the teacher is able to identify patterns of progress and areas that require more focus. From a learner's perspective, AfL helps them to understand where they are now, to set realistic goals for learning (together with the teacher) and to understand how they might achieve those goals. Depending on the context and culture of the education system or school, AfL may happen to differing degrees.

Fundamental challenges to the implementation of AfL include lack of teacher preparation or training in this area. Providing feedback requires skills if it is to motivate and encourage learners, and responding to students' needs sometimes requires nimble adjustments or a clever side-step from the lesson plan. These qualities are acquired when teachers understand the purpose of AfL and its role in the learning process, and gain confidence and learn through experience.

Initial discussions about AfL should ideally be in the student's mother tongue, which is possible if the teacher is proficient in that language. However, this becomes increasingly complex and challenging in multilingual classrooms and also in places where EME or CLIL are implemented, not only in BE but also in HE.

5.7.2 Assessment of learning

By far the most common types of assessment used in learning systems are those which are used for judgemental purposes, commonly referred to as summative tests. Here we briefly outline the most common types:

- placement
- achievement
- admissions
- employment.

5.7.2.1 Placement

The objective of a placement test is to estimate the approximate proficiency of a learner in order to correctly place them onto a course or programme of study. To achieve this, the test aims to spread a group of learners across a proficiency continuum so that decisions related to which level (or class) a learner is suited to can be made. These tests normally comprise multiple items, which should focus on the content of the course or programme of study. However, they very often tend to focus instead on grammar and vocabulary knowledge, which are assumed to serve as proxies for the four skills of reading, writing, speaking and listening.

Accuracy of placement decisions is difficult to estimate based on a single indicator (i.e. a placement test result). One possible way is to use longitudinal data to show that learners assigned to a level can achieve academic success in that level. However, other factors such as motivation, learning strategies, etc. may have an effect on the results.

5.7.2.2 Achievement

An achievement test comes at the end of a course or programme of study and is expected to focus on specific elements of that programme. As we saw in the case of placement tests, this is not always the case, and programme developers often go for the easy option of using an existing in-house or external test whose suitability as an achievement test has not been carefully considered – it may focus on the wrong skills or on the wrong proficiency level or employ an inappropriate format, e.g. multiple choice instead of short or extended response items.

The issue of focusing on the wrong skills is of particular concern. It is not uncommon to see such tests focusing on language knowledge (grammar and vocabulary) and/or on the receptive skills (reading and listening) when the actual focus should be on language production (writing and speaking). This situation often occurs because tests of language knowledge and receptive skills are often seen as being easy to administer and mark, while assessing productive skills can be time-consuming and resource-intensive and therefore not always a practical option for programmes. This can have a number of unintended consequences. Perhaps the most obvious of these is related to the fact that many teachers are forced to teach to the test: they focus on what their learners need to pass the test rather on what they need to successfully communicate in the language. In the longer term, this can result in learners leaving the programme without any useful communicative skills in English. They may score highly in exams, but they cannot use their English language skills in any meaningful way. One reason teachers feel they are being forced to teach to the test is that their performance (and the performance of their institution) is sometimes measured on the results of these achievement tests.

Another potential problem with achievement tests is that learners rarely receive feedback on their performance other than a score or a grade. This makes an assumption that learners only want to know their score in such a test – true for many, but not for all, particularly lower-achieving learners (who may wish to know why and/or where they performed poorly) or more motivated learners (who wish to know how they can improve the next time).

In addition to the lack of feedback, the fact that students' grades and positions are sometimes made public (at least within the institution) can be motivating if a student has achieved a high score or grade, but clearly is less so for those who have not.

There is a very important role for teacher-preparation courses here in helping teachers to understand different kinds of assessments, their purposes and the potential impact for teaching, learning and achievement. This will be discussed in the section on language assessment literacy below.

5.7.2.3 Assessment for university admissions

In this section, we briefly outline the issue of university entrance tests from two perspectives. The first of these is the locally developed test (often institutional) used as a part of the entrance process. The second relates to external tests (national or international), which are used as the language requirements for English-medium HE entrance.

There has been an increased recognition in recent years that the concept of language as a school subject to be studied as an end in itself is no longer a valid educational aim. Instead, it should be replaced by the concept of language as a means of communication. The traditional grammar-translation focus of university entrance tests has, where it has endured, had a significantly negative washback on BE as it has ensured that the outcomes of teaching and learning at that level have been severely limited by the focus on test preparation. As the data from the roundtables shows, this focus has consistently resulted in learners who successfully navigate the university entrance system, but do not have the language skills to interact in a meaningful way in either an education or workplace context.

Tests such as IELTS and TOEFL have been used for many years as gatekeepers to English-medium HE. As might be expected, these tests have broad global recognition: IELTS claims over 11,000 recognising organisations (British Council, 2022a), while TOEFL claims that their number is over 11,500 (Educational Testing Service, 2022). With millions of learners taking these tests each year for international migration for both study and work purposes, a massive preparation industry has grown to support learners. While this industry supports many learners in terms of helping them to achieve the required scores, the cost of the tests and the preparation courses mean that they are not readily available to many learners. There is a dilemma here for learners and receiving organisations, i.e. the HE institutions looking to accept these test-takers: should they accept less-valid tests (in terms of their content and evidence-led support) that are more affordable but which do not appear to equip learners with the language skills necessary for university study? (See, for example, Wagner, 2020; Wagner and Kunnan, 2015.)

In recent years, other tests have emerged that are seen as increasingly important. Among these are tests that have been developed primarily for a local context but later accepted for broader international use. One example of this is the General English Proficiency Test (GEPT) from the Language Testing and Training Centre (L TTC) in Taipei. According to the L TTC website, the test is now recognised by over 50 institutions across the world as an appropriate proficiency measure for learners entering HE. While the number of international institutions recognising the GEPT is minute compared to those recognising IELTS and TOEFL, there is a significant amount of research evidence, both internal and independent, that supports this use of the test – a fact which sets it apart from other international players.

5.7.2.4 Assessment for employment

As discussed in Section 5.9, working contexts were changing before the Covid-19 pandemic, changed quite radically during it, and will continue to change as they find a different normality post pandemic. Increasingly, work happens online in multilingual, multicultural environments with dispersed and diverse teams. Very often in situations like this, English is the lingua franca, and therefore knowing how to use it is important. (See Sections 5.1 and 5.9). Intercultural skills are also important and probably more so in online environments where the benefits of non-verbal communication skills are lost or severely curtailed. In light of the changes in ways of learning and of moves to more instrumental needs for English, models of assessment may need to be updated to include more skills-based assessment.

The roundtable data, presented below, shows that in some contexts employers are sceptical of scores attained on standardised English tests, claiming that they do not realistically reflect the English language capability of prospective employees. 'This does not suggest that employers do not value accreditation and certificates, but at this point they are not developed to test the language skills in contexts that matter to employees' (Trajectory Partnership, 2018, p. 28). As a result, employers may use their own in-house assessments or work with an external party to develop assessments for recruitment purposes. For employees who wish to engage in professional development activities while working, time is of the essence as they juggle personal priorities, work and professional development. For this reason, the learning system and any associated assessment may both need to be more accessible, in terms of flexibility and convenience, in order to accommodate busy schedules.

5.7.3 Localisation

Certification of proficiency will still be needed for important life experiences, such as employment or study abroad. While the main standardised tests, such as IELTS and TOEFL, are respected and, as we have seen, broadly recognised, there are calls for alternative ways of assessing English that take into account different forms of English or world Englishes. There is a perception that more local, standardised models of English are likely to increase and that large-scale standardised tests will have more competition as more affordable local tests come into the market. As test-score users learn more about the appropriateness of these local tests when making local decisions – for example, for work in local or regional industry – it is likely that these tests will become increasingly used. While tests that are designed and developed locally can well meet the needs of local or regional test-score users, they must still be supported by evidence to demonstrate that this is indeed the case. In the same way, external tests can be 'localised' to meet specific institutional or national needs; an example of this is the British Council TUFS – Speaking Test for Japanese Universities (BCT-S) which was jointly localised by the British Council and Tokyo University of Foreign Studies (TUFS). In the localisation project for the BCT-S, researchers from both organisations worked with stakeholders from TUFS, including academic and admissions staff as well as students, to identify possible changes to the British Council's Aptis speaking test paper to make it more locally appropriate. Themes and topics were subsequently changed, while the input language (grammar and vocabulary) was also controlled in order to meet the requirements of the Japanese High School Course of Study. In addition, images were sourced to replace existing examples that were thought not to reflect the experiences of prospective test-takers (see British Council, 2022b).

5.7.4 Language assessment literacy

Decisions about English language testing and assessment are sometimes made by people who may not have a background in ELT and, even if they do, they may not know enough about testing and assessment to make informed and appropriate decisions about assessment practices and use. Language assessment literacy (LAL) forms the knowledge base needed to both understand essential language assessment concepts as they apply to an individual, e.g. as a test-taker, a parent, a teacher or a decision maker, and conduct language assessment procedures; that is, to design, administer, interpret, use and report language assessment data for different purposes.

As increasing emphasis is placed on assessment as an integral part of teaching and learning, LAL becomes more important. Anyone engaging with English language assessments within or outside education systems should have the appropriate skills, knowledge and expertise in language assessment in order to make decisions about it, implement it and ultimately benefit from it. Teachers are at the core of the teaching and learning process and so they are usually identified as those most in need of LAL. While this is certainly the case, the reality is that LAL is needed at all levels of the education system by many stakeholders, from high-level policymakers deciding what should be tested and how it should be tested, to teachers integrating classroom-based assessment activities and using information from them to inform their teaching, and to test-takers and parents, who need to understand and interpret the meaning of scores. These are just some of the stakeholders within any learning system that need some degree of LAL in order to fully engage with assessment and its implications for them and the system they operate in.

Findings from several studies on university administrative staff indicate that although they don't all need the same amount or level of LAL, they still need relevant information to be able to engage with faculty and support students (Baker, 2016; Lam et al., 2021; O'Loughlin, 2013). Outside of formal education systems, there are 'hybrid professional contexts or organisations' (Taylor, 2009, p. 24) that develop, deliver and market tests and provide assessment advice about language testing and assessment practices. Employees of these companies, including business development managers, marketing officers, client relationship managers and many more, need to have a solid knowledge and understanding of the basic concepts of English language assessment in order to provide a professional and competent standard of service.

There has been an abundance of research on LAL for teachers (Fulcher, 2012; Scarino, 2013; Vogt & Tsagari, 2014) and scholars have developed frameworks to articulate the LAL knowledge and skills educators need for the classroom (Ellis & Smith, 2017; Xu & Brown, 2016). However, the time spent on assessment of any kind in pre-service education remains minimal and is sometimes even absent (Green, 2012; Vogt & Tsagari, 2014), despite the fact that many teachers are expected to use classroom-based assessment to support their learners, write their own tests and communicate with parents about progress. This seems a tall order without any foundational training and ongoing support. The sad part about all this is that it is not a recently recognised phenomenon. Thirty years ago, Stiggins (1993, p. 40) concluded by arguing that ‘the time has come to change both the image and the reality of assessment training for teachers and other educators’. While we would not necessarily agree with the arguments made by Stiggins (that teachers need training in education measurement), we very strongly feel that some level of LAL is needed by all learning-system stakeholders.

Until recently, there were few studies on stakeholders who work with language testing and assessment but do not have an academic background or any training in assessment. This has changed in recent years as it is apparent that ignoring the LAL needs of relevant stakeholders could lead to negative consequences for individuals, institutions and education systems.

5.7.5 Assessment roundtable data

There was an overall feeling that because of the changes in ways of learning brought on by the Covid-19 pandemic and the call for more instrumental needs for English, models of assessment need to be updated to include skills-based assessment and a focus on AfL. The term ‘instrumental’ is used here as it was by roundtable participants, referring to the use of English to achieve objectives and goals in all domains of use. Another common thread in the roundtable discussions was that global standards of English will still prevail, but other Englishes are beginning to be discussed in academia and possibly even acknowledged at policy level, and this will influence assessment in the future. Technology also featured in conversations about assessment, and though it is seen as an enabler, it also brings with it concerns around equality, fairness and access for those concerned.

5.7.5.1 Standardised international assessments

Generally, roundtable participants recognised the need for standardised international assessments for education and employment. However, while there is evidence that the monopoly that large-scale standardised testing has enjoyed will come under scrutiny in the future, the feeling expressed was that, for now, it is secure. Only participants from Nepal saw the future of tests like IELTS and TOEFL as unrivalled. In Nepal, such standardised tests are the drivers for growth in the private sector. Even after studying throughout school, students struggle to get the scores they need in external/international exams, leaving an opportunity for the private sector to prepare students to take these international tests. The Nepalese participants anticipate growth in demand for academic English and IELTS/TOEFL tests to provide opportunities for international education.

5.7.5.2 Localisation

The concept of localising assessments was discussed on three levels: national systemic, standardised international tests, and context-based assessment.

Overall, the general impression from all roundtable participants was that while the large-scale, standardised tests (e.g. IELTS and TOEFL) are respected and recognised, more local versions will be developed. For example, there is appetite and expertise in China to develop more locally designed tests for international mobility rather than relying on TOEFL or IELTS. In a number of other Asian countries, in order to align the relationship between learning, teaching and assessment, discussions are under way to introduce learning-oriented assessment and to localise the CEFR based on the experience of the Common European Framework of Reference of Languages – Japan (CEFR-J) model (TUFS, 2019).

In the India and Pakistan roundtables there was a perception that the number of local variations of current, standardised models of English was likely to increase, and current testing monopolies would not be sustainable. In the future, large-scale standardised tests will have more competition as more affordable local tests come onto the market.

The idea of context-based proficiency was discussed in a few of the roundtables. In ASEAN, there was a feeling that there will be a trend away from an emphasis on accuracy and NS norms towards context-based competency and the ability to use English in different ways in different contexts in order to get things done. This emphasis on context-based competency is already visible in Thailand's school curriculum, for example.

In Europe, roundtable participants reported that the concept of proficiency is becoming more fluid. Generation X uses English in many different contexts, and the level of proficiency needed for one context is different from that needed for others.

5.7.5.3 Language assessment for employment

Throughout the roundtable discussions, employment was considered a strong driver for ELL and, by extension, English language assessment. This is evidenced by policy decisions based on employment requirements. Some changes come from within the education system. Currently, for English in Sri Lankan schools, only reading and writing are tested. There is, however, a focus on national reform to emphasise the assessment of listening and speaking in the future because these skills are considered important for employment. Other changes are made outside of the education system, and changes such as these will have an impact within the education system. The Nepalese government, for example, has introduced a civil service test to enter government service. That exam now includes English as a component, which people who are competing for government positions (e.g. administrative service) have to pass.

Currently, in South Korea the perception of the quality and usefulness of test scores is not very positive. Roundtable participants reported that employers are less reliant on test scores because they feel that in their contexts these scores do not reflect the language and/or the skills required for practical and real English use in the workplace.

5.7.5.4 Assessing productive skills

Roundtable discussions also elicited information about the assessment of productive skills. With employment as a key driver for TLA, education systems are seriously considering the value of assessing the two skills that have traditionally been omitted – writing and speaking – partly due to insufficient resources and partly due to the lack of assessment literacy of teachers in this area.

In India, assessment of speaking and listening has been introduced in public schools. Roundtable participants suggested that should this implementation be successful, other English language providers would follow suit. In the Americas, the OECD PISA, with its forthcoming focus on speaking, may well have an impact on curriculum pedagogy and assessment and possibly even English language policy. Testing and assessment are of particular importance to the government in Taipei, where an emphasis on receptive skills (reading and listening) in testing and assessment has meant that productive skills (speaking and writing) have not been effectively taught in schools. A possible solution to this is to incorporate the testing of productive skills into university admissions exams.

Meanwhile, in Japan current discussions revolve around the purpose of university entrance exams and the role of productive skills testing within that – for example, the role of English as a school subject or as a language of communication has been keenly debated. In both of these contexts, the role of technology in assessing productive skills was being considered.

5.7.5.5 Technology

The roundtable data revealed three core ideas about assessment and technology. First, technology could assist with the testing of productive skills on a large scale. Testing speaking and writing is seen as resource-intensive (both human and financial), and advances in AI could help to alleviate this burden on education systems. This was discussed as a consideration in a number of contexts. Second, it is important to consider changes in construct when assessing online. For example, in China there are no foreseeable changes to the Zhongkao or the Gaokao examinations (high school and university entrance examinations, respectively) because there may be changes to the constructs being tested to take into consideration online assessment. Finally, there was unanimous concern that although large companies are now implementing online testing, there are few validation studies about such tests, and issues around access and inclusion still abound.

5.7.6 Conclusion

It is clear from this section that the notion of proficiency is changing. Test-score users are increasingly aware of the importance of learning systems (which include curricula, delivery and assessment) focusing not on language as a school subject undertaken primarily as an academic activity but on growing the capacity and motivation of learners to learn how to use the language in various contexts, including study, work and social interactions. While this change in focus is challenging across TLA, it also offers an opportunity to review TLA constructs for their appropriacy and relevance for today's needs. In other words, we can now look to exactly what we teach and test in different educational and employment contexts to ensure that our learning systems help learners achieve a useful and meaningful level of English language proficiency.

An important example of this is where using assessment to gauge readiness for FE or further employment is no longer just about knowing the mechanics of English, i.e. language knowledge, where the primary focus is on grammar and vocabulary with usage limited to translation and low-level reading skills. Instead, it is about being able to use language in different modes – online, face-to-face or hybrid – and often in multilingual and multicultural settings.

Another aspect of language that is becoming increasingly relevant is the recognition that English is no longer seen as an isolated item. Instead, it is seen as part of a range of knowledge, skills and expertise, captured by the concept of 21st-century skills and required for a dynamic globalised world. This presents two challenges for current assessment practices.

1. Assessment needs to be more creative and contextually innovative in order to develop and measure individuals more holistically.
2. LAL needs to be considered more seriously and concepts of LAL need to adapt to be relevant in this changing assessment landscape.

Areas for further research

- Exploring the impact on TLA of changing constructs of language proficiency (from passive knowledge to active use) at all levels of the education system and for all stakeholders.
- Examining the feasibility of assessing the key productive skills (speaking and writing) in large-scale learning systems – with a potential focus on the role of technology and of teachers.
- Defining and operationalising multilingual constructs in classroom assessment.

5.8 Can technology narrow the equity gap in English language education?

It is difficult to pin down a clear definition of technology – it means different things to different people – but in the context of English language education, it could be taken to mean anything that teachers can use in the classroom to aid teaching and learning.

Using that definition, it can be argued that the use of technology in learning and assessment dates almost as far back as learning and assessment itself. We know, for example, that Hongwu, the founder of the Ming Dynasty (1368–1644) in China was a keen supporter of education, issuing a statute in his first year in power exempting all books from taxation (Ho, 1964, p. 212). The massive growth in the standardised Chinese Imperial Examination (605–1905) was facilitated by the printing of not only test papers but all other examination paraphernalia, including the Confucian tomes upon which the test was based, test preparation books and identity cards, in addition to the answer sheets used by candidates.

In 1942, Reynold Johnson filed an update to a ‘scoring apparatus’ which had been invented a few years earlier by Thorne Harold (who filed his patent in 1937). This apparatus was designed to identify marks made on an answer sheet by test-takers and was the first in a long line of optical mark readers that facilitated the industrialisation of testing during the latter part of the 20th century. Weir & O’Sullivan (2017) report that the British Council supported research as early as 1941, when it looked into the use of gramophone recordings to help standardise the examining and scoring of candidates’ speaking ability, while by the following decade the audio-lingual approach to language learning, with its emphasis on the use of language laboratories, was, for a relatively short time, the dominant method.

Over the past six decades we have seen the introduction into the classroom of overhead projectors, cassette players and later CDs, which supplemented printed materials by bringing voices, characters and music from the outside world into the classroom, then slide and later film/video projectors that further linked the language classroom to the world of language use.

The introduction of whiteboards and, more recently, interactive whiteboards, contributed greatly to engagement and interaction within the classroom. Then, in the early years of the 21st century, we saw how the internet eroded classroom walls by making the whole world accessible in the classroom. Most recently, the growth in online learning on community-based platforms has changed the concept of the classroom, as learners study flexibly in the comfort of their homes. Since there has been an increased focus on phone technology rather than on more cumbersome desktop or laptop devices, apps have added another dimension by taking language learning into the realms of gaming – unfamiliar territory for educators but beneficial for learners who struggle with formal classroom environments.

The area of education technology is deserving of a book or more to itself, so this section will focus on three main topics:

- technology in learning systems
- the digital divide
- the application of artificial intelligence.

5.8.1 Technology in learning systems

As outlined above (and also in Section 5.4), technology has long played a part in language-learning systems. English, in particular, ‘makes the use of technology easier, while technology facilitates the learning of English’ (Kukulska-Hulme et al, in print). In recent years the trend has increased dramatically due to innovations in the areas of educational technology (EdTech) and also the need to move almost all education online during the Covid-19 pandemic. While there are significant advantages to using technology to aid learning, both in and outside the classroom, these advantages have not always been built upon. This is because uptake and success depend on a number of factors:

- access to hardware (TV, radio, computers, smartphones, etc.) and the internet
- teacher skills and motivation to support learning
- stakeholder support (within the education system and at home)
- the inclusion in modern curricula of recognition of informal learning (typically online).

5.8.1.1 Access to hardware and the internet

It goes without saying that without ready access to the necessary technology, in terms of hardware, software and the internet, no EdTech solution has any hope of working across the entire learning system. While teachers and students in more affluent (typically major urban) areas may have the level of access they need to succeed, this is not always the case across many developing, or even developed, countries.

In the same way that appropriate training and support in using the technology effectively is vital for the success of a reform or innovation project, so is ensuring that broad and equitable access to all aspects of the technology is in place before the project is initialised.

5.8.1.2 Teacher skills and motivation

For any education reform project or innovation to succeed, it is vital that teachers are recognised as being of central importance to the project and that they are included at the earliest possible juncture.

We saw in Section 5.4 that for teachers to feel ready to work with technology, first and foremost they need to be open to technology and its benefits. In addition, they need to be sufficiently expert in the technology to introduce it to their classroom, while also feeling confident that they are fully prepared in terms of the instructional approach (Li et al., 2019). It is therefore necessary that policymakers and implementers recognise these factors when designing and rolling out educational reform projects or innovations, by providing relevant training (both pre- and in-service) for all teachers and school administrators.

5.8.1.3 Stakeholder support

Decision makers need to be supported with the relevant information to make context-appropriate decisions on the use of technology. This information could be in the form of research, expert advice or collaboration projects with other sectors or other countries. Therefore, although policymakers may have digital literacy at a level necessary for personal and professional use, they also need a level of technological literacy.

All stakeholders – including anyone who will be affected by technology-related decisions or change in the education system – should be introduced to the technology to be used for TLA with an understanding that it is a tool or resource to create more or better learning opportunities and not a solution to all TLA-related concerns. As pointed out above, it is clear that teachers are central to TLA-related innovation.

However, it is important that learners are also exposed to the technology and supported in their learning, both in the classroom and outside, to allow them to take full advantage of less-formal learning opportunities (e.g. accessing English-medium content online). With regard to learners within the system, Clark (2022) argues that ‘the most successful education systems of the future will arguably be the ones that are able to adapt the fastest to new technologies and offer their students access to digital infrastructure’. Clark links the success of Estonian students in PISA 2018 to their access to new technologies in their classrooms, with 91 per cent of their schools having access to Wi-Fi, compared to the European average of 67 per cent.

In addition, parents should be included in the socialisation of new ideas around the appropriate use of technology for TLA. Parents who themselves own a mobile phone may not be aware of the benefits it can bring to their children’s learning. As Shrestha and Gautum (2022) report, parents in Nepal who were reluctant to let their children use mobile phones, for fear of misuse, came to understand their potential educational uses during the pandemic. All principal stakeholder groups within a learning system need to have some level of awareness of the potential efficacy of the technologies planned for introduction to the system.

5.8.1.4 Informal learning curricula

While many modern curricula include some level of technology-supported learning, few have formally recognised the ever-increasing opportunities for learning provided by the internet and the plethora of learning apps available for download to computers, tablets or phones (often for free or at very low cost). If education systems can recognise the value of integrating formal and informal learning as a useful and realistic way of reconceptualising education, then the possibilities are numerous and exciting: joining discussion groups on social media with other students all over the world; effective use of educational gaming; exploiting the plethora of freely available musical and artistic content; and, vitally, the development of personalised learning, which by definition should be more relevant and motivating for learners. The integration of informal learning may provide the autonomy and flexibility that some learners seek to be able to optimise their learning opportunities and therefore move closer to achieving their education and life goals. However, this would require cautious and careful planning, ensuring contextual appropriateness of delivery systems, thorough preparation and support of educators, close monitoring, and evaluation and reporting systems. For a more detailed discussion of possible learning systems for the future, see Section 5.6.

For the learner, the ready availability of smartphones, which are essentially mini-computers, is contributing to the growth in opportunities for informal learning. An interesting statistic, also supported by the India roundtable discussion, is the phenomenal growth of smartphone ownership in India. The India Brand Equity Foundation blog (India Brand Equity Foundation, 2021) points out that in 2011 there were 14.5 million smartphones imported into India; this increased to 150 million in 2020 and was projected to rise to 173 million in 2021. The main drivers for the increase in smartphone ownership are the constant need to stay connected, the increased consumption of online entertainment, online shopping and education. Smartphones in India are no longer seen as a luxury, particularly in urban areas.

5.8.2 The digital divide

As we saw in the previous section, access to technology (hardware, software and internet) is vital to the success of EdTech-related reform or innovation projects. It is not enough to simply make access available to learners and teachers; accessibility and knowledge of the new technology is important for other stakeholders, such as school administrators, parents and guardians, who require at least some concept of what learners and teachers are doing in order to fully support them. The reality is, however, that in many cases there are significant disparities in access across communities. This 'digital divide' can have meaningful social, educational and economic repercussions for those stakeholders affected.

There is plenty of evidence that shows the extent of the digital divide, with problems ranging from students in developed countries who don't have the necessary equipment to participate in online learning, to students in developing countries who may not have a reliable electricity supply, never mind internet connectivity (British Council, 2020b). Dreesen et al. (2020, p. 2) point out that:

While internet use is widespread in everyday life and work for many in high-income countries, this is not the case in most low- and middle-income countries. In 71 countries (out of 183 with data), less than half the population has access to the internet.

The Covid-19 pandemic thrust technology into most of our lives whether we were ready for it or not. Many education systems rallied commendably to continue providing learning opportunities for students all over the world (British Council, 2020a), with teachers demonstrating ‘remarkable determination, adaptability and resilience’ as they were forced to adapt to new modes of teaching (Mavridi, 2022, p. 49). However, the pandemic exposed marked gaps in the skills required by educators to teach remotely and disparities in access to the resources needed by learners to continue learning in any form (British Council, 2020b; Dreesen et al., 2020), as well as a lack of training in online teaching for teachers (Mavridi, 2022). It also exacerbated the digital divide both across and within contexts globally. The relevance of this is highlighted in a study of children learning online in Ecuador during the pandemic. In this study, Sevy-Biloon (2021) reports that access to stable, consistent internet seems vital if all young people are to have equal opportunities to education and therefore improved life chances, and yet many young people do not have such access. As one student in the study said:

I do not have a computer, and we do not have the internet at home. I have to use my cell phone for class and use the internet from my cell phone provider. I simply do not have enough internet to turn on my camera. (p. 20)

Kukulaska-Hulme et al. (in print), in a study of marginalised populations in under-resourced countries, found that ‘those already marginalised in society are [often] the most likely to be further excluded or disadvantaged when ICT is added to educational provision, as they find themselves least favoured in access and least able to participate’. Furthermore, speakers of minority and/or indigenous languages are ‘triple marginalised because they are one step removed from participation at the national level, and two steps removed from access to international resources’.

Though we reported above that the ownership of mobile phones had greatly increased, a recent UNESCO (2021, p. 7) report states that ‘a large proportion of students have had limited or no access to devices and data’. This may be less true for teachers, however; a 2019 survey in three countries in SSA indicated that 93 per cent of English language teachers had access to a mobile phone, more than had access to any type of computer (Motteram & Dawson, 2019).

Of course, it is important to note that in many developing or rural places, technology does not just mean mobile devices, it also means televisions and radios; Dreesen et al. (2020) reported that during the Covid-19 pandemic, in 68 per cent of the 127 countries for which they have data there was no option but to use multiple remote-delivery channels, both digital and non-digital, to provide access to learning for children.

A British Council review of global MoE responses to the pandemic found that 88 per cent of education systems were offering remote learning through TV, radio and print and concluded that more focus was needed on providing quality resources and guidance for this 'not only to respond to future disruptions but also to carry forward benefits of home learning opportunities in combination with classroom learning' (British Council, 2020a, p. 6). However, a subsequent survey found that only 49 per cent of MoEs regarded this as a high priority (British Council, 2020b, p. 16).

A further British Council survey of teachers and teacher educators during the pandemic (British Council, 2020c, p. 21) concluded that:

Development of materials for use in conjunction with television and radio could be further developed for learners in remote areas or with access to low-tech solutions. Furthermore, there is a need for a continued focus on previous 'distance learning' methods, such as text and mail, where resources are low, to support teachers and learners where digital solutions are not available through personal circumstance or policy.

An additional consideration with regard to digital exclusion is gender: technology 'seems to be a heavily gendered space'. Girls in most low-income countries are 'exposed to different forms of social inequality issues, gender-based violence, biases, gender stereotypes, and discriminatory gender norms which create a barrier to girls' education or career development'. Social issues can include fewer opportunities to use mobile phones at home than boys, more duties to carry out at home, less access to internet cafés or similar sources, and more parental restrictions on the use of technology, including mobile phones. (Kukulaska-Hulme et al, in print).

5.8.2.1 Closing the divide

Closing the digital divide is by no means an easy task. To achieve full closure would require massive investment in terms of finances and human resources: physical infrastructure is costly and takes time to construct, while building local expertise is also time-consuming and challenging (e.g. finding the best people, training them and retaining them in light of the attractive salaries and opportunities offered by the global technology industry).

Limitations of space here mean that a detailed discussion of how the digital divide can be closed or limited is not possible. However, one solution could be to make more use of the ubiquitous mobile phone, which most teachers either have or have access to. One of the first English language projects to do this on a large scale was English in Action in Bangladesh.⁵

Solly & Woodward (2018) describe how the project developed video clips of teaching practice that supported written resources tied to the national coursebook. The videos (MAV: Mediated Authentic Video) all reflected the genuine real-life situations of teachers throughout Bangladesh and were downloaded onto teachers' own mobile phones, rendering the need for internet connectivity (or even a phone line) unnecessary.

A recent blog from the World Bank also referred to the use of mobile phones in assessment (Luna-Bazaldua et al., 2022). The blog reported on pilot studies that explored the feasibility of using basic mobile phones for formative assessment to ensure continuity of learning in places where internet access is partial and the ownership of smartphone devices is rare. They identified four key lessons learned when using mobile phones for formative assessment.

1. **Instructional coherence** – ensure that the formative assessment is aligned to the standards in the curriculum to help make it meaningful for students and parents and useful for teachers.
2. **Local adaption** – take into account contextual factors to do with resourcing the project: does the local infrastructure support phone-based learning, family attitudes to phone-based learning, etc.?
3. **Multilingual support** – it is important to know the language that is spoken at home, and initial conversations with caregivers and students in the home language may increase the chances of engagement, even if this may not be the language of instruction.
4. **Appropriate use** – phone-based formative assessment is useful for understanding where students are in their learning, in order to provide useful future learning activities. However, this mode of assessment should not be used for high-stakes assessments where test security and standard procedures are critical.

⁵ See www.eiabd.com for details of the project.

The author concludes that these lessons:

can be valuable for other countries and organisations interested in using phone-based learning assessments to support accelerated learning recovery from COVID-19 and promote education systems' resiliency to future shocks.

While there are certainly creative ways to address the digital divide, the central message here is that authorities must recognise that efforts have to be well planned and sustainable in addition to being provided with sufficient resources, support and training for all of the principal stakeholder groups mentioned above. Perhaps even more importantly, the lessons from the World Bank project suggest that any technology-driven (or other) educational innovation must also be shown to fit within the existing learning system and reflect the realities of the social context, in terms of availability of and familiarisation with the technology, as well as taking into account language considerations. It should also be recognised that no innovation is likely to be able to solve all problems. Limitations should be identified and reflected in how the innovations are used: the example given here relates to the use of phones where the stakes are low, a use for which basic phones might be appropriate, although the same point can be made for any innovation.

5.8.3 The application of artificial intelligence

UNESCO (2022) believes that AI 'has the potential to address some of the biggest challenges in education today, innovate teaching and learning practices, and accelerate progress towards SDG 4', while acknowledging that the multiple risks and challenges associated with technological development 'have so far outpaced policy debates and regulatory frameworks'. However, although the implementation of AI-driven or AI-supported solutions in education is much talked about, it is not so well understood. This distinction is important, as there are subtle differences between the two that have a significant impact on EdTech innovations in learning systems. With *AI-driven* solutions, technology is seen as being at the centre of the process, for example in auto-scoring test performance in speaking and writing or auto-generation of test items. In *AI-supported* contexts, the technology is used to assist existing test development or delivery processes, for example in enabling the development of human-machine hybrid systems that can assist item writers to create reading input or automatically tag learning or assessment tasks for inclusion in task banks to be used in learning or assessment systems.

5.8.3.1 Some benefits of AI in learning systems

A recent systematic review identified three main benefits for learners of the use of AI in language education: intelligent tutoring – answering students' questions and providing explanations; personalisation – offering content tailored to individual needs; and automatic feedback – providing corrections and prompt responses (Weng & Chiu, 2023).

More generally, Robinson (2018) argued that transformative technology can do two things:

- increase reach, allowing us to do what we could not do before
- transform our thinking, for example, in car design or personal computing.

To this could be added a third:

- increase efficiency.

Increase reach

Examples of transformative technology include machine translation between languages for writing (e.g. Google Translate, DeepL Translator) or for speaking – a version under development by Meta, using their open-source Open Speech Translator, specifically allows speakers of Hokkien to communicate directly with speakers of English, and potentially other languages (Meta AI, 2022). It is also feasible that this technology, when combined with the technology behind human-machine communication bots, will allow for realistic, real-time human-machine spoken interaction. This would clearly revolutionise the TLA of spoken language.

In addition, AI has the potential to promote informal learning by linking learners to opportunities that suit their individual needs or preferences and by allowing for non-intrusive assessment of linguistic performance when learners interact with self-selected input. This is a particularly attractive proposition for learners who are not readily accommodated in current systems due to developmental, physical or psychological differences. This increased inclusivity will allow better access to learning for neurodiverse learners and those who have disparity between their spoken and written English, as many language learners do (Parker, 2022). The European Union recently published ethical guidelines on the use of AI for teachers, offering practical advice on its effective use and how to adapt teaching to individual learners, including those with special needs, along with clarification of 'popular and widespread misconceptions about AI that might cause confusion or anxiety over its use, especially in education' (European Commission, 2022).

Transform our thinking

The emergence of human–machine communication in writing and speaking should allow learning system developers the opportunity to make real strides in the delivery of truly personalised learning and assessment systems. This has the potential to fundamentally change how learning systems work and open the door for an exciting new 21st-century pedagogy.

Increase efficiency

Wilson & Daugherty (2020) report that GPT-3, an advanced language model that uses deep learning to produce human-like text, can do routine tasks – including writing and revising essays, designing lesson plans and summarising research papers (Parker, 2022) – and free up time for more strategic work. The model, and others like it, are already in use in test development. One example is AI-assisted text generation (Finetune Learning, 2022), in which human item writers use technology to facilitate the writing of long texts for use on learning and assessment platforms. This can save a huge amount of time and, with appropriate item-writer training, can result in outputs that match traditional approaches in quality.

Since we first wrote this section, we have seen the introduction of GPT3.5, followed by ChatGPT; the latter system in particular has already been shown to effectively generate human-like text on a vast range of topics. This has the potential to revolutionise ways of learning, educating and working. It also has the potential to undermine current assessment practices, and this could lead to a return to traditional centre-based tests.

5.8.3.2 Some limitations of AI in learning systems

While there are a number of areas of concern around the use of technology, some important areas of interest to language assessment stakeholders are:

- personal privacy
- awareness of bias
- efficacy of digital TLA
- translation and text-production apps.

Personal privacy

The growth in the influence of technology in our everyday lives has caused many to question the potentially negative impact on personal privacy of dealing with anonymous (as in non-human) online systems. While this concern is primarily around data security and sharing, in online TLA the increasingly expressed worry is the intrusiveness of online learning systems where the learner is expected to open their home (or living space) to remote invigilators (human and/or machine). Indeed, Young (2020) suggested that remote invigilation was ‘arguably the most controversial tool of the pandemic at colleges’. The European Union’s ethical guidelines mentioned above also consider the privacy, security and safety risks of the use of AI in education, particularly for children (European Commission, 2022).

Awareness of bias

Technology-based scoring solutions have been in place in language testing for over a quarter of a century – the original PhonePass speaking test was introduced in the late 1990s, and the Intelligent Essay Assessor was developed by Knowledge Analysis Technology at around the same time. However, in that time there have been no published explorations of bias within these or other scoring models. This is despite the fact that there have been reported concerns with bias in large-scale AI models in circulation for some time (see, for example, Mitchell et al., 2019). In what appears to be the only study of its type for language testing or assessment, O’Sullivan et al. (in press, 2023) adapt the Model Card approach proposed by Mitchell et al. in their validation of the auto-scoring model used for a low-stakes placement test for speaking. This approach is important in that it acknowledges the likely presence of bias in auto-scoring systems while at the same time proposing a practical system for identifying how such biases are examined and countered.

Efficacy of digital TLA

While a large number of studies into the efficacy of online learning in general education have been published (Basar et al., 2021), not all have looked at actual gain from the perspective of learner achievement; see, for example, Zou et al. (2021), who focused on teacher and student perceptions. The studies that do exist are mixed in their findings. Jabeen & Thomas (2015) compared self, online and classroom language learning in the United Arab Emirates and found a clear preference for the latter format. On the other hand, Green & O'Sullivan (2019) looked at learner gains when using a Chinese online learning system and found that app users performed significantly better on a four-skills language test than might be expected after a relatively short amount of time using the app. There is a need for more studies based on solid empirical data (such as the two studies reported on here) so that learners and parents can make more informed decisions around online programme selection. Such studies would also help education policymakers, who would benefit from data-driven evidence to feed into their key policy decisions.

Translation and text-production apps

The proliferation of translation and text-production apps (two of which are mentioned above) bring with them a real concern among policymakers and teachers alike that the need for language proficiency among learners will diminish in the future. However, while this technology will become increasingly available, particularly for general everyday transactional communication (e.g. translation for tourism or shopping), it would appear that the need for human-to-human interaction across languages will remain strong. There are additional concerns in terms of learners using apps to write school or university essays. Already, there are tools such as Quillbot available to learners that paraphrase existing texts, making plagiarism detection difficult, if not impossible. The emergence of Open AI programmes such as GPT-3 and, most recently, ChatGPT, which can produce original texts on almost any topic, will do nothing to ease these concerns (Parker, 2022). This may have the potentially negative impact of forcing education authorities to return to traditional multiple-choice-based testing or, at the very least, in-centre testing using fixed prompts. Clearly, test developers need to work with EdTech experts to devise alternative systems that either take advantage of these apps – after all, they are probably here to stay – or can detect their use, which may prove to be difficult if not impossible.

5.8.4 Roundtable data

5.8.4.1 The range of technology available for learning

Some roundtables touched on the use of more traditional technology for learning in areas where hardware and internet connectivity are problematic: the Americas mentioned radio and television, emphasising that different situations required different technologies, and in India the rapidly increasing use of smartphones should be leveraged for learning.

Most regions, though, focused on social media as a major influence, particularly on young people. In ASEAN, the explosion in social media use has rapidly expanded the use of English, especially in its informal variants. It is fast becoming a subculture of its own, particularly for younger users, operating in the intercultural space with its own lexis, syntax and visual markers. In the Americas, social media is seen as influencing the values of young learners by allowing them to think and learn in different ways, while in India it is making learning more self-directed, causing innovation to be driven by learners. The Pakistan roundtable added that such technology is empowering people by giving them a voice, while also being used to hold people accountable, for example, some content that was previously seen as subversive is now mainstream. In Wider Europe, meanwhile, young people are motivated by being connected internationally by social media, which is driving the content and the methods of individualised language learning.

5.8.4.2 Technology inside and outside the classroom

Most regions agreed that technology was enabling students to take more control of their learning outside the traditional classroom setting, a process accelerated by the Covid-19 pandemic. In ASEAN, participants felt that the key was the integration of classroom teaching with the extramural use of technology that can provide the quantity and quality of language input not available in the classroom. This was echoed in the Gulf roundtable, where the importance of technology in education was viewed as being, in part, down to the new and flexible ways of learning it can provide. Participants in the Maghreb roundtable thought that the increased use of technology would encourage the learning of English, particularly with more self-access materials available in English than in any other language.

In Pakistan, technology has opened up the potential for non-formal education to work in parallel with the formal education system – a view echoed in the Europe roundtable – while in Wider Europe, the ongoing increase in digitisation of learning will create more opportunities, learning tools and online processes in English.

There was an emphasis on the importance of teachers being proficient with technology. In the Gulf, this was seen as necessary in order for teachers to keep up with young people and be able to provide optimum learning opportunities, while in Sri Lanka, Nepal and Bangladesh, teachers' digital literacy was seen as vital if they are to be prepared for hybrid or blended learning in order to harness the best opportunities for their learners.

There was some discussion on whether technology might replace teachers, but there was general agreement that although technology is part of the solution, it cannot provide all the answers – as the China roundtable emphasised, teachers will still play an important role. The Gulf discussion included a range of opinions on this idea, from 'the teacher will disappear' to 'learning and teaching will depend 20 per cent on teachers' to 'technology cannot emulate the social experience and interaction of being in a real classroom'. Participants recognised that all these scenarios have implications for the curriculum, materials, teachers, and teacher education and development. One Maghreb participant made the interesting point that while both teachers and technology are here to stay, technology will replace those teachers who cannot understand and use it.

5.8.4.3 Online content, materials and methodologies

There was agreement that the Covid-19 pandemic had driven massive growth in online language-learning resources. There was considerable scepticism, however, about the quality of much of this provision, with a general feeling that online English teaching content and methodology were not progressing at the same rate as the technology. In the Maghreb, it was felt that the quality of online teaching needed to improve if it was to be attractive to learners. The China roundtable felt that a lot of online materials do not yet fully exploit the technology and tools that have become available over the last few years, so there is still a need to develop content, materials, tasks and methodology for effective online teaching and learning. The participants also thought that online learning did not achieve the same positive results as face-to-face learning.

In Europe, international providers are seen to be entering this space to help fulfil the increasing need for online teaching and materials. Global corporates like Google could totally disrupt the teaching and learning of languages at both formal and informal levels by offering data-based approaches to individualised coaching and learning portfolios, including automatic translation using AI. Other roundtables, including the Americas, Pakistan and Wider Europe, also raised the question of whether AI translation might remove the need for learning languages altogether, while in ASEAN it was felt that AI could be particularly disruptive in the areas of assessment and content generation once designers acquire a good understanding of relevant methodology, with start-ups rather than multinationals dominating.

AI was seen to have the potential to make teaching and learning more cost-effective and accessible in the North-East Asia roundtable, but it was felt it was not yet clear if or when the technology might become sufficiently advanced, or what the implications might be for teacher training and the education system as a whole. Participants also thought that the use of AI in assessment was desirable – it is already being used in auto-scoring for productive skills – but in partnership with human markers rather than as a replacement for them.

A participant in India thought that open-source content would drive online English provision, whether through bite-sized learning points or more substantial materials targeted at a specific need, while others felt that both device-agnostic and offline content would be important to allow English to be more accessible and inclusive, including the use of automated translation devices to allow access to multiple language use for more people.

5.8.4.4 Access and equity

This issue of how to make English learning more inclusive was a major talking point in many of the roundtables. Access to technology is very unequal in many places, and there were concerns, particularly in the Americas, Egypt and the Levant, North-East Asia, and Sri Lanka, Nepal and Bangladesh, that technology may be reinforcing marginalisation, with the digital divide growing between those who have the opportunity to learn English and those who do not. Concerns were expressed about the role of technology in the urban–rural divide, with the view that it is the responsibility of both public and private sectors to help bridge this gap. In China, it was seen as extremely important to provide support for teachers and learners in more rural areas, or the issue of equity will grow more problematic. The Chinese government is recruiting retired teachers to support education in rural areas to help address this issue.

There were also more positive views of technology in the context of access and equity. In Pakistan, where the roundtable was told that connectivity and infrastructure are available to around 70 per cent of the country, technology is predominantly seen as an enabler, making learning cheaper or even free and, therefore, more accessible to many people. Egypt and the Levant participants agreed, saying that the necessity of moving online during the Covid-19 pandemic has made English more affordable and accessible compared to the relative expense of face-to-face learning. In Wider Europe, online learning is seen as potentially providing opportunities to those who have traditionally been excluded from education, such as girls, although concerns remain about the potential for the digital divide to widen other inequalities. Participants in the India roundtable felt that smartphones were putting globalisation directly into people's hands, helping to reduce inequalities, while acknowledging that not everyone has access to the hardware and software needed to access potential opportunities. In North-East Asia, meanwhile, although the pandemic may have led to more access to education being provided for those who live in areas of limited infrastructure, it was felt there was no evidence yet to prove this had actually happened. One participant also felt that technology would need to provide non-standardised, individualised learning if it is to benefit those currently excluded, and this is not yet widely available.

5.8.4.5 National policy and transnational communication

The Sri Lanka, Nepal and Bangladesh roundtable felt that national education systems needed to be better prepared to adapt quickly to meet future challenges like those raised by the Covid-19 pandemic. Participants also thought that the move to digitisation in official sectors and government departments makes English a must for official interactions. In Europe, the move online was thought to have serious implications for teacher education and training, with a major challenge being the need to build teacher competency in online and digital teaching and learning, and ensuring suitable professional development in this new context for schools and societies. One good example of this is in Pakistan, where a digital teacher training platform in Punjab has enrolled 40,000 teachers – a huge achievement, with tremendous potential for replication to support teachers throughout the country.

On an even wider scale, English is the lingua franca for many international and multinational companies, and with technological advances seen as essential for business and employment, the Wider Europe roundtable saw English and technology as closely connected. In India, the fact that English is the language of international computer coding means that it will have continued importance in employment, while the ASEAN participants felt that digital technologies, and particularly the internet, would continue to erode national boundaries by enabling transnational and transcultural communication.

As the range of discussion points above indicates, technology was a major feature of the roundtable discussions around the world. While it was accepted that the language of technology is usually English, the importance of balancing traditional and newer methods of learning was generally acknowledged, with considerable emphasis on the need to find ways of using technology to help the more disadvantaged access language learning, rather than widening the digital divide that currently exists almost everywhere.

5.8.5 Conclusion

In order to generate a list of the potential advantages of using AI in language learning systems, we asked ChatGPT the following question, ‘What are the main advantages of using AI in language education systems?’,⁶ and received this response:

There are several potential advantages to using AI in language education systems:

Personalised learning: AI-powered language learning systems can adapt to an individual’s learning style and pace, providing a more customized and effective learning experience.

Available anytime anywhere: AI-based language learning systems can be accessed from any device with an internet connection, making it convenient for learners to study at their own pace.

Immediate feedback: AI systems can provide immediate feedback on language skills, helping learners to identify and correct mistakes in real time.

Engaging: Some AI-powered language learning systems use gamification and other interactive techniques to make learning more engaging and enjoyable.

Scalability: AI systems can potentially handle a large number of language learners simultaneously, making it possible to scale language education programmes more easily.

Cost effectiveness: AI-based language learning systems can potentially be more cost-effective than traditional language education methods, especially for learners who may not have access to in-person language instruction.

⁶ Question asked by Barry O’Sullivan on 9 January 2023.

While this list clearly shows that AI has advantages, the fact that AI can generate such a list presented in this form (in many languages) is an example of the point made above – that this technologically has the potential to radically revolutionise language learning and assessment.

When technology is mentioned in relation to TLA, it usually refers to digital technology and the internet. While technology has already revolutionised teaching in some contexts, many teachers and children around the world do not have access to digital technology, thus limiting their learning opportunities and life chances. There are no easy solutions to providing access to technology for those who do not have it, but this may be a real opportunity for public and private collaborations to make a difference to education opportunities for more people in more contexts. Access to technology is not a solution in itself; a solid infrastructure of support, resources and expertise are all required to achieve educational objectives. Some of the benefits and concerns of technology and AI innovations for TLA have been presented in this section from the literature and in the data collected during roundtable discussions. The main points related to:

- equality of access in order to limit or even eliminate the digital divide
- the role of technology in any intervention – from large-scale projects to a classroom activity – with clarity of purpose needed to best understand how to maximise its use
- the importance, in making decisions about technology, its implementation and use, of all stakeholders having the appropriate digital and technological knowledge to play their part competently
- awareness that technology in itself is not the whole solution in any context, but potentially part of it.

Areas for further research

- Exploration of the impact of technology deficit on learners and other key stakeholders in public education systems.
- Evaluation of the efficacy of technology-assisted TLA.
- Exploration of the potential for technology, including AI, to narrow the equity gap.

5.9 To what extent is employment driving the future of English?

In this section we explore the increasingly important area of English language in the workplace. Before considering the input from the roundtables, we first take a brief overview of some of the key areas of interest in this field.

5.9.1 Notions of English for work

The notion of English for employment, or even for specific areas of employment, embraces a huge area of language learning and assessment. An example of this is in the area of career development, where English language proficiency has a positive impact on, among other things, individual employability and international mobility more broadly (Coleman, 2010, p. 10).

Globalisation, together with advances in technology, has changed the way many companies operate and, as a result, the skills required by employees. Whereas previously technical skills in specific areas were highly sought after, now employers are looking for ‘all-round’ employees who can combine technical expertise with the additional skills of teamworking, problem solving, negotiation, intercultural awareness, digital literacy, etc. These skills, among others, come under the umbrella of 21st-century skills, which are seen to represent the competencies required by employees in a globalised world (Geisinger, 2016).

Multilingual and multicultural workforces are not uncommon, whether people are working remotely or in the same location. English is often the lingua franca and sometimes the official language of business chosen by the company. The very concept of international, dispersed teams changes and expands the parameters of English for work. Traditional notions of Business English and ESP have been challenged for two decades now. Employers and some education systems are starting to recognise that as well as 21st-century skills, the types of English that need to be learned for particular sectors and within particular contexts should be more clearly defined in order to clarify the kind of proficiency that might be required in a specific area of employment (Coleman, 2019). This argument supports the claim contained in an earlier study of English in the EU, which stated that ‘even if English is one of the working languages in a major multinational company, the English proficiency requirement differs from role to role’ (Trajectory Partnership, 2018, p. 26).

5.9.2 The global demand for English at work

In 2012, the *Harvard Business Review* published an article entitled 'Global Business Speaks English' (Neeley, 2012). The article talks about the increasing importance of English for employment, citing a number of multinational companies, including Nokia, Rakuten, Renault, Samsung, System Analysis Program Development (SAP) and Technicolor, who have chosen English as their common or official language of communication (Neeley, 2012). One likely driver of this is the prediction that globalisation will continue and grow. With global trade in goods forecast to nearly double to \$18 trillion, up from \$10.3 trillion in 2013 (Cambridge English Language Assessment and Quacquarelli Symonds [QS], 2016, p. 34), the implications for the English language are significant. English is becoming a requirement for all sectors of industry; at all levels of the organisation and all over the world, English at work is no longer only for professional jobs or senior management roles – it has increasingly become necessary for lower-skilled jobs in the tourism and retail sectors (Trajectory Partnership, 2018, p. 25).

Requirements for English in the workplace have diversified due to the increase in the number of jobs that require English. In some cases, the skills and levels of English are being more clearly specified as employers try to respond to increasingly competitive markets and are in need of more skilled and linguistically proficient employees in wide-ranging contexts (Trajectory Partnership, 2018). This has led to the situation where employers and the employability agenda are driving the demand for English and ELL.

The continued growth of English for employment has resulted in increasingly diverse requirements by employers. Findings from a global employer survey developed by Cambridge English Language Assessment in collaboration with QS (2016) found that employers were actually interested in all four skills, but that reading and speaking were seen as being the most important. Reading is preferred 'for maintaining professional knowledge, as it's the language most often used in international journals, contracts and instructions' (Cambridge English Language Assessment and QS, 2016, p. 16). Speaking is recognised as being 'the most important skill in service industries such as travel, leisure and hospitality, where social interaction is a big part of the job' (p. 16). On the other hand, for roles in research and development, employers stressed the importance of writing as a skill, since 80 per cent of journal articles (clearly seen as critical to engaging with new or emerging knowledge or practices) are written in English. Another important factor is that funding in companies is often allocated based on outputs such as publications and the outcomes/impact they achieve (pp. 17–18).

The demand for English for employment is clearly high. Countries, territories and multinational companies need workforces that can communicate efficiently and effectively within their own countries when working with or dealing with visitors, and equally across regional and global borders. On the individual level, English is seen as a passport to better employment and life prospects. This has implications for the TLA of English at all levels of the education system in both the public and private sectors.

5.9.3 What are the implications for English TLA?

The competitive advantage that English is perceived to provide in the workplace has been a key driver for learning English for many years. The implications of such heightened demand for English at work are global and at all levels of society: macro (national education systems), meso (institution and company) and micro (learners and parents). We reflect on each of these in turn below.

5.9.3.1 Implications at the macro level

Education systems have responded to globalisation and the demand for English in different ways. Some education systems, for example in Europe (Trajectory Partnership, 2018, p. 26), have already started to introduce English as a subject at a lower age in schools, while other countries, such as Malaysia and Turkey, have experimented with EME or, in Rwanda's case, have just recently implemented it (see Section 5.4). In making these changes, governments hope that earlier and increased exposure to English will help predominantly with English language proficiency while reaping other benefits. However, meeting the needs of employers in the future will require education systems and English language providers to revisit existing pedagogies to focus on the content and quality of English language provision, and not just its quantity or spread. First, learning may need to become increasingly contextualised 'to shift away from prescriptive teaching and towards language education that more closely suits the real-life needs of both students and their national and even global economy' (Trajectory Partnership, 2021, slide 30). This will clearly involve changing the focus of existing curricula and has enormous implications for education systems. One immediate implication is for teacher education and development. Initial teacher education will need to align to these changing needs, while practising teachers will need retraining (see Section 5.5 for a more detailed discussion).

Second, part of meeting the future needs of employers will involve an emphasis on the productive skills. These have generally been neglected in many learning environments, primarily because they can be difficult and expensive to teach and assess. This has been a particular problem in regions with a lower investment infrastructure, although even those countries with established infrastructure struggle to deal with the issue. Sri Lanka provides an example of an attempt at systemic reform to meet future employment needs. The move there to test what employers require of incoming recruits has seen government reform which prioritises skills-based learning and ‘connecting learning to real life and the world of work’ with the ultimate goal of creating ‘a proactive workforce equipped with knowledge and in-demand and highly valued skills’ (Indrarathne & McCulloch, 2022, p. 39).

Transforming education systems is costly and takes time. However, recent research and literature on English for employment are in agreement about several findings. First, English is the predominant language for global business. Second, employers are now better able to define the skills and proficiency levels they require for specific roles, which should inform TLA. Finally, the English taught in mainstream education in many countries and territories around the world is not aligned with the type of English required in the workplace. Therefore, if education systems want to prepare individuals for the global workforce, systemic change is needed.

5.9.3.2 Implications at the meso level

The need to offer more situational, specific or vocational language provision is reflected in changes in FE institutions and in HE. As Graddol (2006) predicted, there has been a growth in specialist English language training programmes for specific employment opportunities (such as English for tourism, the oil industry and health), and this has also been reflected by the expansion of technical and vocational education and training (TVET) courses and institutions around the world.

As mentioned earlier, some companies, such as Airbus, Renault and Samsung, have introduced English as the common or official language in the workplace (Neeley, 2012; Trajectory Partnership, 2018). Some companies, such as Nissan and Sodexo, provide English language lessons for employees to support them through the transition (Borzykowski, 2017).

External language providers are commissioned to develop tailor-made content for the company as a whole and for the role-specific needs of different employees. For other companies the responsibility for English language proficiency lies with the employee, who will then seek provision to suit their availability and budget (Trajectory Partnership, 2018). However, the use of English is just one of the collection of many skills that are needed and used in today's workplace. As Jonsson & Blåsjö (2020, pp. 361–62) state:

Today work life is often mobile, multilingual and complex ... In modern white-collar workplaces, communication is often characterised by the use of different discourses (e.g. professional and private), different modes (e.g. images, verbal language), different genres (e.g. PowerPoint presentations) and different media (e.g. paper documents, digital tools).

The reality of the situation is that the modern workplace is dynamic and complex linguistically, socially and culturally, and that is without discussing the technical skills needed for any particular role. With this in mind it appears that English for the workplace should no longer be taught in isolation – that is, as a stand-alone subject. Instead, it should be set in the work context, leaning on project-based learning and rooted in problem solving, while incorporating intercultural competence and digital literacy. While this is quite a lot for providers and educators to take into consideration, it may well be that it forms a viable model or roadmap for future English language education in this context.

5.9.3.3 Implications at the micro level

The linguistic capital that can be acquired by learning English in an increasingly globalised world and the perception that English proficiency is a key skill bestowing advantage on those that possess it have influenced parental ambitions for the learning of English (as both a subject and for learning other subjects through English) at school. Parents see the relationship between English and future prospects for their children, and so providing opportunities for their children to be exposed to and learn English is a priority. For example, our data tells us that, because of government policy, in China and Nepal parents will turn to private lessons to help provide the linguistic edge they think their children need.

Learners want to learn useful, relevant English and skills that will help them to get the jobs they want in a very competitive global job market. For learners, time is of the essence. Young people who are yet to join the global workforce are busy with studies, both mainstream and perhaps extra-curricular. Adults in employment looking to enhance their skills or learn new ones do not always have the time to attend regular in-person classes spread over a number of weeks. They need learning that is flexible and convenient and can be done at their own pace. The pandemic accentuated the need for personalised learning and, at the same time, highlighted the flexibility of the online learning environment. When viewed in comparison to what in-person learning can offer (generally rigid and group-oriented), the online context appears quite appealing to many. Online language providers, private schools and institutions have stepped in to meet these demands with flexible, affordable solutions, hence providing opportunities for more people to improve their knowledge and skills to achieve their goals. The quality or washback of this on actual learning has yet to be determined and is clearly in need of research.

5.9.4 Roundtables: regional views of English at work

In this section, we present evidence from the roundtables on the changing attitude towards English TLA for work across the world. The emphasis here on localisation and the personalisation of TLA has an important role to play in how the English needed by individual learners for the workplace may need to change.

5.9.4.1 Personalisation, localisation and contextualisation

Many of the regions talked about the growing need for English learning to be more relevant to local and regional contexts. In India and Sri Lanka, the participants felt that there was a definite shift away from English for use as a generalised form of communication to English for use in specific contexts. In addition, English is increasingly seen as a tool to access certain kinds of opportunities and perform specific tasks in society. The ASEAN roundtable felt that the emphasis on context-based competence is already visible in Thailand's school curriculum, for example.

This has the effect of making the language more personal and local, in that English is seen as just one language in what are often multilingual contexts. Here, communicative competence is seen to involve the active use of various forms or varieties of English in counterpoint with local languages. In the ASEAN roundtable the view was that this idea of plurilinguistic competence would be increasingly demanded by employers in certain contexts, and there would be a need for more personalised forms of learning to meet that need. This idea of using an individual's full linguistic repertoire has been explored in studies about translanguaging, in which bilinguals and multilinguals construct meaning and accomplish actions by navigating linguistic, cultural and social identities (Mazzaferro, 2018). Another dimension of communicative competence that has been recently foregrounded in the *CEFR – Companion Volume* (Council of Europe, 2020) is mediation, a concept and skill that is incredibly relevant in all domains of society today. For more detailed discussions about translanguaging and mediation, see Section 5.3.

This all leads to an increasingly personalised form of TLA, in turn leading to a variety of proficiencies that draw on English as a global, regional and local language and on being able to take full advantage of the other languages that may be used in particular contexts.

5.9.4.2 English in the workplace

The crucial and expanding role of English for employability and the changing perceptions and demands around how to assess the new notions of proficiency (or, perhaps more accurately, proficiencies) were a key part of the discussion in all the roundtables. In the China roundtable there was a strong emphasis on the power of employers to influence which languages should be learned, regardless of education policies. If employers state that there is a high demand for English in the workplace, then English will continue to be the language they will want people to learn.

In other regions, particularly in the Middle East and SSA, the perception, emanating from parents as well as employers, that English is crucial for lucrative employment will continue to drive the expansion of the learning of English. There have been some studies (for example, Seargeant & Erling, 2011) that have questioned the veracity of such perceptions, particularly regarding the perceived relationship between economic gain and employability. However, despite this there was general agreement across the roundtables that employability would continue to be one of the main drivers for learning English.

A variety of employment sectors were highlighted in different regions, and each of these sectors is likely to require a range of skills – for example, some sectors might stress speaking and listening (e.g. call centres) while others might lean towards reading and writing (e.g. the legal sector). The tourism sector was highlighted in the Americas roundtable as a particular driver for the learning of English, while the technical sector was particularly stressed in India. These two sectors are likely to have very different requirements when it comes to the language skills needed, with the probability that productive skills would be required by the tourism area, while receptive skills may be a particular requirement for technical vocational work. As mentioned above, even within these (and other) sectors, the type of proficiency needed will vary from role to role; for example, totally different modes of English are required for front- and back-office employees in the tourism sector. This would mean different learning resources leading to different assessment practices.

A key trend that emerged from the roundtables (either directly stated or clearly implied) was that the concept of proficiency required at work was being redefined, with the real needs of employers becoming more nuanced and subdivided. The EU roundtable described the concept of proficiency as becoming ‘more fluid’ as people use English in a growing number of different contexts, each requiring different types of proficiency. In the EU they reported that the term ‘native user’ has been introduced to capture the shift from identifying the NS as the ideal (which, until recently, was the broadly accepted way of viewing proficiency in English). Other regions also stressed this move away from the NS model as a marker of proficiency, with Pakistan anticipating that more local non-native standardised models of English were likely to develop, and North-East Asia predicting that proficiency in other Englishes may be required for many work situations in the future.

Several of the 2021 roundtables stressed the view that more varied and locally and regionally based forms of English were becoming not only acceptable but key to future proficiency standards for occupational recruitment (see below). An example of this, discussed by Rich (2021), is the increasing acceptance and recognition of multilingualism as a part of the lived reality of most people. This has implications for defining levels and modes of language proficiency for occupational and social purposes. It also highlights the advantage (or even necessity) of taking account of multilingual skills for effective communication in varied contexts.

Many of the roundtable participants felt that the need for change in how notions of proficiency are viewed, and the move from specific learning about the language to learning the skills needed to communicate in English and a range of other languages for work and social purposes, will result in new forms of assessment. This still seemed more of an aspiration than a reality in many of the regions, even though changes are starting to happen. In the European roundtable it was stressed that traditional tests were still seen as an important motivator to learn English and could still be a gatekeeper for the world of work. Despite an acknowledgement from the same roundtable that the concept of proficiency is becoming more fluid, the view was strongly expressed that there would not be a lessening in importance of assessment, and certificates of proficiency would still be required for the world of work and study abroad.

However, in some regions it was pointed out that employers were beginning to question the value of standardised test scores in predicting productive language performance and that an increased emphasis on productive language skills is needed. This was the case in all three participating countries and territories from North-East Asia but particularly Taiwan, where there has traditionally been an emphasis on receptive skills in testing, which has led to a negative washback effect on the teaching of productive skills. There is an awareness of this at governmental level, and discussions are now under way to introduce learning-oriented assessment and to localise the CEFR. In this region it was also predicted that AI would help to provide an answer to the problem of testing productive skills. In the Americas, the OECD PISA was raised; with its focus on speaking, it may well have an impact on curriculum pedagogy and assessment, helping to meet the need for new forms of proficiency for the world of work. In mainland China too, while there are no foreseeable changes envisaged for the Zhongkao and Gaokao examinations, for entry to senior high school and university respectively, an appetite was expressed for developing more tests for international use at the local level – referred to as ‘glocal’ tests by Weir (2020, p. 193) – rather than relying on TOEFL or IELTS. This may establish newer, more localised, forms of proficiency. A similar desire is emerging in India for forms of assessment that would be more contextualised and, therefore, more workplace-appropriate than academically focused tests.

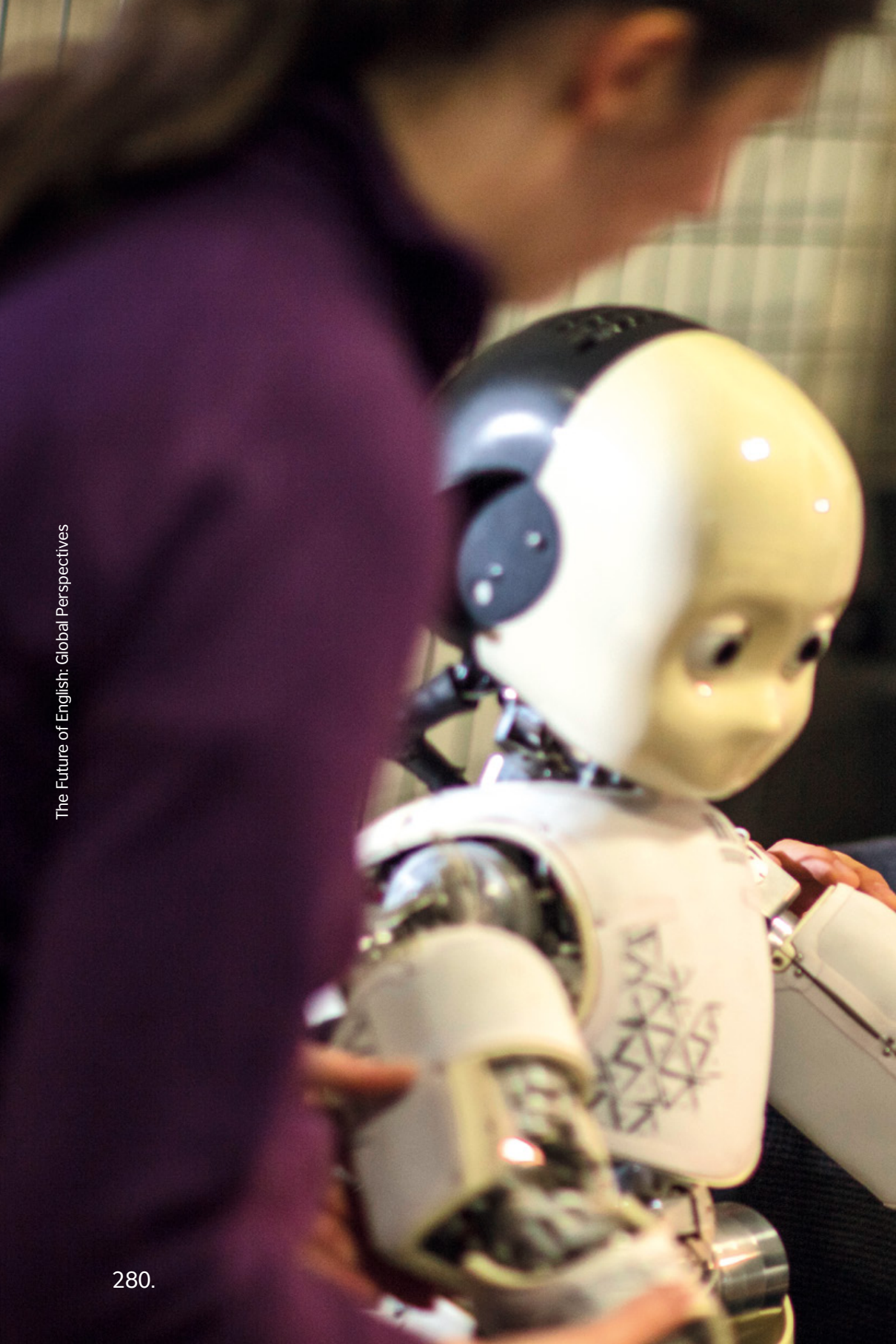
5.9.5 Conclusion

While the current notion of proficiency in English as needed for the world of work differs from one context or region to another, there was a consensus that change is happening. There appears to be an increased understanding that more applied, contextualised and localised forms of proficiency are likely to gain increasing momentum globally in the coming years. Changes in proficiency norms have seen the gradual shift away from the NS as the ideal to a more nuanced and locally or regionally appropriate model. At the same time the move towards a more personalised learning and assessment experience that is situationally relevant (in this case to the needs and expectations of the workplace) is expected to drive change in the coming years. While the changes outlined here are clearly industry-led, there seems to be an awareness among learners that the expectations of the workplace are changing.

Areas for further research

- Investigations into what is actually needed for the world of work in today's globalised environments.
- How useful are the current references and frameworks, such as the CEFR and China's Standard of English Language Ability (CSE), in helping us to identify ESP curricula?
- Case studies that help shape profiles of language use and need for different workplace contexts.







Part 3

In this book we have presented the reader with a detailed overview of the Future of English project Phases 1 and 2, with brief reference to Phase 3, which is ongoing at the time of writing. In Part 3 we reflect on those first two phases in particular, outlining the key findings and discussing what these might mean in terms of future project directions.

6 Summary of project

6.1 Project stages

The Future of English project was initiated by the British Council in 2021 in order to allow for a measured reflection on the work of David Graddol, as represented by his two major publications *The Future of English?* (1996) and *English Next* (2006). Graddol had, particularly in his latter work, outlined a series of hypotheses, which, he argued, reflected potential changes to the status and role of the English language over the ensuing 15 years or so. Members of the ELRG at the British Council had their interest in pursuing the project sparked by a presentation by one of its members, Mike Solly, at a conference in which he presented Graddol's hypotheses and reflected on whether there was evidence that they had proven accurate or not. Discussions within the group led to the proposal, initially of a relatively small-scale project, to revisit Graddol with the intention of finding answers to Solly's questions. It quickly became clear to all concerned that a much larger project should be considered if meaningful answers were to be found, and if we were to be in a position to offer a new set of hypotheses that reflect the current role of English and consider how this might change over the coming decade or decades.

Since the project was outlined in detail in Section 1, in this section we are simply reminding the reader of the various stages and activities

6.1.1 Phase 1: Evaluating Graddol's 2006 predictions

In this phase, which took place from January to April 2021, a desk-research approach was undertaken by an external expert to evaluate as fully as possible Graddol's predictions. The review (Rich, 2021) undertook an examination of key websites and statistics portals, keyword searches using two search engines (Google and Google Scholar), and an examination of British Council reports both commissioned and internally generated. Findings indicated that there were some issues around the original work with regard to sourcing data and information used by Graddol (some appeared not to have been fully referenced and some was simply missing). A thorough analysis of the original predictions and a reflection based on current experience saw the output from this phase delivering a draft list of key predicted trends for the future.

6.1.2 Phase 2: Testing the British Council's 2021 predictions

Phase 2 (June to December 2021) was designed to offer a 'stress test' of the predicted trends from Phase 1. In order to do this, the research team, assisted by colleagues within the British Council globally, set up a series of 14 roundtables in which 97 leading policymakers and policy influencers debated the issues raised. The roundtables were held in the following regions:

- Americas
- East Asia
 - ASEAN
 - China
 - North-East
- Europe
- Middle East and North Africa
 - The Gulf
 - Egypt and the Levant
 - The Maghreb
- South Asia
 - Bangladesh, Nepal and Sri Lanka
 - India
 - Pakistan
- Sub-Saharan Africa
- Wider Europe
- English Language Advisory Group (ELAG)

The roundtables were conducted across the world in order to gain as broad an understanding as possible and resulted in a new iteration of the predictions that emerged from Phase 1. This iteration is presented and discussed below.

In this phase of the project we partnered with Trajectory, a company that specialises in futures methodology and data analytics. Trajectory designed the discussion guides facilitators would use to steer the conversations, although the details were developed by the ELRG team. Trajectory also designed the note-taker guides used by note-takers to document the sessions, since the roundtables were not recorded to allow for a freer expression of opinion from all participants. They also helped with the initial analysis of the roundtable discussions.

6.1.3 Phase 3: Building an evidenced-based research and engagement framework

As mentioned above, this book focuses primarily on Phases 1 and 2 of the Future of English project. However, we have also outlined the early stages of Phase 3, which began in November 2021 and is ongoing at the time of writing. This phase uses the output from the previous phases as the foundation of a long-term programme of critical engagement with the themes identified. The rationale of this phase is to drive research that can inform policy and practice on the future of English in both global and local contexts.

6.1.4 Outline findings

While the data from the roundtables was rich and we were able to identify definite areas of interest or themes, we were unable to propose revised or new trends. The data provided us with eight areas of interest which were globally relevant, broad and complex:

1. Will English remain the world's most sought-after language?
2. What role will English play in our multilingual reality?
3. What is the future of English as a medium of education?
4. How will teachers remain relevant in future English language learning systems?
5. Public and private English language provision: who has the answers?

6. Can English language assessment meet stakeholders' changing needs?
7. Can technology narrow the equity gap in English language education?
8. To what extent is employment driving the future of English?

6.1.5 Discussion

Clearly, making definitive predictions about the future of anything is likely to end in failure, particularly at the micro level. The approach taken in this project is unique in its scope and ambition in that it has striven to include voices from around the world (in recognition of the global importance of the English language) and aims to build a long-term agile research agenda that can contribute to English (and other) language and language education policy.

The decision to present the findings as a series of questions reflects our reluctance to draw definitive conclusions from our data and from the literature. The eight questions posed in the previous section are meant to act as a starting point for future exploration. They should be seen as a reference point only, as we fully expect them to change either in focus or in content as the research progresses in the coming years. We have also stressed at various points in this book the fact that this research is not 'owned' by the British Council. Like the English language itself (or any language for that matter), nobody can claim to own the way in which the language and its position in society evolves over time.

6.2 Implications and recommendations

The project to date has thrown up a number of implications for future research into English language policy and policy implementation, which have been presented at the end of each section in Part 2. The suggestions are not intended to be exhaustive but reflect findings from the literature and from the project data. We have summarised these in Table 6.1, deliberately limiting the table to what we see as the three most relevant areas for each theme.

The four columns to the right of Table 6.1 refer to what we see as the four key underlying research categories to be presented and discussed below.

1. Providing concrete quantitative survey data to answer questions about stakeholders and user groups in the teaching, learning and use of English as a global language.
2. Designing and implementing frameworks for evaluating the effectiveness of educational interventions and methodologies.
3. Designing and implementing frameworks for evaluating the effectiveness of language policies, including education policies.
4. Designing and implementing a framework for building profiles of English capability in countries and regions that will be locally appropriate but also facilitate cross-context comparative evaluation.

Table 6.1. Exploring the recommendations from the eight thematic questions

Theme	Summarised areas for future research	1	2	3	4
Will English remain the world's most sought-after language?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establishing robust data-driven estimates of ELL and proficiency across the globe Exploration of how foreign language learning policy is typically developed, operationalised and evaluated Analysis of the political, economic, social and cultural systems and processes that 'undergird the current world order' and allow English use to expand (Hultgren, 2020, p.26) 	X		X	X
What role will English play in our multilingual reality?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What are the factors that influence the use and role of English in multilingual education systems? To what extent are local communities with varying language backgrounds involved or recognised in language policy development? How does policy implementation impact on such local communities? 	X	X	X	X
What is the future of EME?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Investigating how EME policy is developed and implemented Investigating classroom practice and learner outcomes in EME contexts The need to develop evaluation frameworks to identify success factors in EME 	X	X	X	X
How will teachers remain relevant in future ELL systems?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Investigating teacher preparation for the use of, and classroom behaviour in implementing, technology in TLA Investigating teacher preparation and classroom behaviour when dealing with the multilingual learning environment Studies into models of teacher support in this changing learning environment to ensure productivity and retention 		X		X
Public and private English language provision: who has the answers?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Comparative evaluation systems for education policy, implementation, teacher and learner proficiency at different stages of the public and private education system Evaluation of the impact of policy-driven innovations across both systems Identify examples of best practice in co-operation across public and private provision globally, both for English language TLA and for education in general 	X	X	X	X
Can English language assessment meet stakeholders' changing needs?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Exploring the impact on TLA of changing constructs (from passive knowledge to active use) at all levels of the education system and for all stakeholders Examining the feasibility of assessing the key productive skills (speaking and writing) in large-scale learning systems – with a potential focus on the role of technology and of teachers Examining the viability of multi-construct assessment systems (i.e. to what extent might these differ and what might be the impact on performance?) 	X	X		X
Can technology narrow the equity gap in English language education?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Exploration of the impact of technology deficit on learners and other key stakeholders in public education systems Evaluation of the efficacy of technology-assisted TLA Exploration of the potential for technology, including AI, to narrow the equity gap 	X	X		X
To what extent is employment driving the future of English?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Investigations into what is actually needed for the world of work in today's globalised environments How useful are the current references and frameworks, such as the CEFR and the CSE, in helping us to identify ESP curricula? Case studies that help shape profiles of language use and need for different workplace contexts 	X	X		X

7 An evidence-based research and data-collection framework for the next 3–5 years

As we noted in Section 2.4, an important aim of the Future of English project is to lay out a long-term research programme to drive research that can inform policy and practice on the future of English in both global and local contexts. While Section 5 distilled the findings of Phases 1 and 2 of the project into key thematic areas of interest, here we will describe some specific directions that research should take to help fill the critical gaps in data identified in Phase 1, and to flesh out our understanding and answer some of the questions posed under the eight thematic areas in Section 5. In doing this, we also take into account the suggestions contained in each of the eight thematic areas in attempting to begin the process of defining a medium- to long-term research agenda for this flagship project.

Again, as noted in Section 2.4, future research in Phase 3 will be carried out by British Council teams directly as well as by universities and research organisations through Future of English funded grant schemes. Additionally it is hoped that others will also take up the themes independently and develop their own research questions and projects, which will add another dimension to the rich layers of data and insight that the first two approaches will provide.

Regardless of who is carrying out or funding the research, we feel that we can identify some common directions needed to help provide hard data, defensible insights and evidence-based answers to questions of policy and practice.

To achieve all this, the Future of English needs to become an ongoing, long-term programme, so in this section we attempt to identify a number of key research categories and steps for a three-to-five-year agenda. As we have already stated, research and dissemination for the Future of English is and will remain an interactive and evolving framework. Identifying some clear areas of research and data collection will help evaluate the eight themes in this first research release cycle but may need adaptation and change depending on the findings.

7.1 Identifying a set of research categories

In terms of specific directions of research, Section 2.4 highlighted a number of areas of interest given in the call for proposals for the Future of English Grant Scheme. The areas of interest were generated at an earlier stage of the project and before the finalisation of data analysis and distillation of the eight themes in Phase 2. Given that each of the eight themes in Section 5 throws up further questions, recommendations and gaps in hard quantitative data, we have identified the following five broad research categories that could cut across the themes and provide a focus for designing and carrying out individual studies to increase our understanding of the themes and the roles of English globally and locally, and to provide the data for evidence-based policy and practice. Note that we have added an additional category to the four presented with Table 6.1. This additional category refers to an aspect of the project we had always intended to further explore: that of the social and economic impact of English in education systems, society and the workplace. It can be argued, of course, that we have already made reference to this category in the final recommendation in row one of Table 6.1, which refers to ‘political, economic, social and cultural systems and processes’.

While all taxonomies and categorisation frameworks to some extent create artificial distinctions, they are useful for helping to narrow the focus sufficiently to generate specific research questions and allocate resources, while facilitating the integration of those individual studies within a coherent, overall frame of reference. It is important to note that both quantitative and qualitative approaches to data collection and analysis will be required and usefully contribute. Individual projects, depending on scope and scale, may focus primarily on one or other approach or use integrated mixed-methods approaches.

1. Providing concrete quantitative survey data to answer questions about stakeholders and user groups in the teaching, learning, and use of English as a global language.
2. Designing and implementing frameworks for evaluating the effectiveness of educational interventions and methodologies.

3. Designing and implementing frameworks for evaluating the effectiveness of language policies, including education policies.
4. Designing and implementing a framework for building profiles of English capability in countries and regions that will be locally appropriate but also facilitate cross-context comparative evaluation.
5. Measuring the social and economic benefits of building English language capabilities.

We will now provide some more detail on each of these categories.

7.1.1 Category 1: Quantitative survey data

While large numbers are commonly given in response to questions such as ‘How many English learners are there?’, as we have seen in earlier sections, quite often there is very little transparent evidence or sources for these numbers. As such, within this research category we envision a range of large-scale surveys being undertaken to help provide more transparent and defensible answers to such questions. The purpose of the surveys would be to gather data to answer commonly asked questions about features of language teaching, language learning and language-use ecosystems for English. Taking the question above, we can see that further clarification is required, not only of the broad numbers often used to answer it but also the premise of the question itself. For example, we could identify a number of different dimensions for further qualifying the question according to what type of learner we are focusing on.

Learner characteristics

- age
- gender
- socio-economic status, etc.

Learning goal

- study
- training
- employment, etc.

Education sector

- elementary school
- secondary school
- higher education, etc.

Learning sector

- public
- private
- hybrid

Location

- rural area
- urban area
- country
- region

Language background

- monolingual (specific language, dialect or variant)
- bilingual (specific languages, dialects or variants)
- multilingual (range of languages, dialects or variants)

While we have focused on learners as an example, we could also extend the targets of such surveys to other commonly discussed areas, for example the number of teachers and language educators or the number of actual users of English. Ideally, research in this category would attempt to develop data-collection instruments that could be adapted and used in multiple contexts but which provide sufficient common features to allow for the aggregation and comparison of data across the different dimensions above.

7.1.2 Category 2: Evaluating the effectiveness of educational interventions and methodologies

Key questions for policymakers, practitioners and individual learners and users of English often focus on the *how* of teaching and learning. Similar to the issues with the numbers often bandied about in relation to English, multiple claims are often made for teaching and learning methods and approaches. These can often be difficult to interpret and evaluate effectively due to different underlying theories, different approaches to data collection and analysis, or even simply because they may be available only within one specific stakeholder group. In addition, the claims and evidence used to support them may not be accessible to local stakeholders because they are published in English, while results of local studies involving multilingual societies that are published in one language (often that of the majority) may prove inaccessible to non-users of that language within that society or context. While we recognise that all contexts are, to some extent, local and unique, it is also true that many local contexts share features with others. Although many problems – such as the lack of ability of students leaving formal education to use English effectively for communication – may appear to be local, stakeholders may find that aspects of solutions applied to similar problems in other contexts may be useful for addressing their own situation. The programme of research growing out of The Future of English could thus make a significant contribution by helping to provide coherent frameworks for evaluating educational interventions and by supporting the implementation and dissemination of evaluations using these common frameworks.

Research methodologies used to evaluate the effectiveness of educational interventions as noted above could be quantitative, qualitative or mixed methods, depending on the context. The focus could be on actual teaching and learning methods or the use of educational technologies. Or even, at a higher level, on approaches to the development and implementation of a particular curriculum, syllabus or set of standards, such as those based on the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) or China's Standards of English. The scope of individual studies may be limited to a specific institution or local situation or be applied more broadly to sectors, countries and regions, etc.

As with Research Category 1, we recognise that no one study will provide the answers. The key is to facilitate the creation of a coherent frame of reference and transferable and adaptable research instruments and approaches, which can be replicated for similar groups in different contexts or applied to different groups. Over time, the accumulation of data from such studies will provide a stronger evidence base for the selection of teaching and learning approaches that are likely to be effective for different purposes, groups and contexts. The aim is certainly not to develop a one-size-fits-all approach to teaching and learning, but rather to provide the framework for evaluating different approaches and generating an accumulation of evidence for stakeholders – whether policymakers at a macro level or individual teachers – to make evidence-based choices useful for their context.

7.1.3 Category 3: Evaluating the effectiveness of language policies, including education policies

We see Research Category 3 taking a similar approach to Category 2, while targeting the development of coherent frameworks for evaluating language policies. As with Research Category 2, we do not suggest that there should be only one approach to setting policy. However, we believe there should be coherent frameworks for evaluating policies, for example the proposal for evaluating cultural relations impact by O’Sullivan et al. (2021). Governments and MoEs around the world repeatedly attempt to implement education reform with varying degrees of success. Additionally, policies are often subject to institutional memory loss resulting in a ‘re-invention of the wheel’ approach. Many issues and attempted solutions identified in Weir & O’Sullivan (2017) continue to be debated, discussed, proposed, partially implemented and restarted in different parts of the world. Part of the issue with evaluating policies is that we know that the results of education reform often take many years, even a generation, to fully bear fruit. Yet policymakers often work to shorter agendas, and policies may be subject to change before sufficient evidence of success or failure is available. As with Research Category 2, developing a coherent framework for evaluating language policies would allow for an accumulation of evidence across timescales and contexts and give policymakers more powerful evidence-based insights into what may or may not work for a particular context.

7.1.4 Category 4: Building profiles of English capability in countries and regions

As with the total numbers of speakers, learners, teachers, etc., a similarly much-abused set of claims revolves around the level of English proficiency of particular groups within countries or regions. As with the research categories noted above, one of the key issues for policymakers and researchers attempting to understand the English proficiency of a particular group is how to measure it. Claims of English proficiency are often made using vastly different approaches to assessment, for example using tests of only receptive skills (reading and listening) to make claims about overall language ability, including productive skills. We would go further and suggest that even if a standardised approach to assessment were agreed, this would be insufficient. We prefer the term English capability to English proficiency because it captures a richer version of what it means for a particular group of language learners or users to be able to use language, and to help define goals for learning and teaching. Building a profile of English capability would involve more than a robust and appropriate (and feasible to deliver) form of assessment. It would involve gathering data on other aspects, such as learners' motivation to use English.

As with the other research categories above, we recognise and encourage the necessity to adapt the tools for measuring English capability profiles to local contexts. But equally, we believe that common parameters can be established for particular groups (e.g. students in a particular stage of education) that can facilitate comparisons, either across smaller units of comparison within a particular country or region, or indeed between countries and regions. The British Council has already established a model for building English capability profiles through its English Impact series of projects (Shepherd & Ainsworth, 2017, 2018a, 2018b). This model has been successfully applied to 15-year-olds in secondary school, as this is often a key stage in the formal English education cycle in many countries. The approach could, however, be adapted to focus on other age groups (e.g. HE, or pre-service or in-service teachers, or people in different employment sectors). Once again, the aim is not to standardise outcomes or set a one-size-fits-all approach to the end goal of English capability for all users within a group, but rather to provide a coherent frame of reference for evaluating English capability across contexts that can provide policymakers with points of comparison for setting realistic goals, designing and implementing clear baseline studies, and evaluating the effectiveness of policy over time. As such, research in Category 4 could also be seen to be a useful part of the toolkit to combine with studies in Research Category 3 on evaluating language policies.

7.1.5 Category 5: Measuring the social and economic benefits of building English language capabilities

While the previous four categories have identified significant issues, and offered solutions, in a range of existing research areas in language education, use and policy, with Research Category 5 we aim to broaden the scope of research into an area which has not, to our knowledge, been addressed to date. It also significantly broadens the scope of the Future of English project to a truly cross-disciplinary area and requires the expertise of researchers and practitioners beyond the fields traditionally associated with questions of English as a foreign, second or global language. At the same time it shares the aims of the previous categories, particularly Research Category 1, in providing a coherent framework for collecting and evaluating concrete, quantitative and qualitative data. Also, as with the previous categories, it is designed to address commonly made claims that, when probed, are often not built on substantial or robust evidence. Education reform policies, language teaching and training sectors, and the often extensive and costly efforts of individuals to learn English are frequently based on claims or assumptions of increased economic and social mobility through the acquisition of a certain level of proficiency. While such claims are made real through the implementation of policies such as minimum English standards for immigration, at a macro level very little real data is available on the actual economic and social impact of improving English capability for groups or individuals. The aims of this research category would thus be to provide a coherent framework and approach to modelling, and ultimately quantifying, these effects.

7.2 Implementing and integrating research within and across the five categories

The five categories described above are not intended to be exhaustive. But we do believe they provide a coherent framework for targeting research over the next three to five years that can truly inform policy and practice with evidence-based insights. As already noted, the distinctions are somewhat artificial. We can see clearly that the categories are not always mutually exclusive and, indeed, large-scale comprehensive studies may actually combine projects across the categories for an integrated goal. For example, as already suggested above, studies implementing an approach to building English capability profiles (Research Category 4) could usefully be combined with studies designed under Research Category 3 to evaluate policy and Research Category 5 to evidence economic benefit to individuals, communities or nations. Data collected longitudinally to build English capability profiles for a specific user group such as 15-year-olds in secondary school could contribute to an evaluation of a particular language education policy implemented and evaluated over time (though on its own it would not provide such definitive answers). Similarly, modelling the economic impact of improving English through a particular policy, if English capability was indeed shown to improve, would add another rich dimension of insight into evaluating that policy.

What should also be clear is that no one study, or even set of studies, will be sufficient for addressing these categories. Within and across the research categories, individual projects will need to zoom in and out depending on the context, the focus, the particular group or sector and other factors. But by providing a coherent and, although not exhaustive, comprehensive research framework, we hope to prove a mechanism for collating and integrating data and insights over time. A central feature of this aim is to, as far as possible, make not only the research results available for use by other researchers across the world, but also the data sets, research instruments and evaluative frameworks.

While we expect and encourage a number of different paths to generating research across these categories – directly by the British Council, through UK and international institutions funded through Future of English research grants, and through individual institutions and researchers designing projects independently – we aim to provide a framework and mechanisms for integrating these results and disseminating them through regular research releases that will update the state of the future of English provided in this book.



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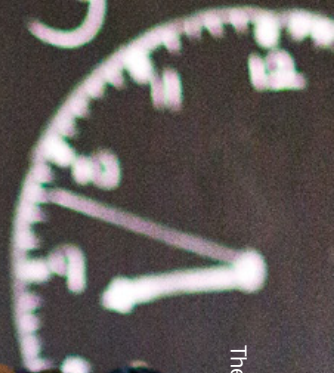


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Appendix 1: Phase 1 key sources

British Council Research Database:
<https://www.britishcouncil.org/research-policy-insight/research-reports>

Centre for Economics and Business Research (CEBR):
<https://cebr.com/>

Confederation of British Industry (CBI): <https://www.cbi.org.uk/>

English UK: <https://www.englishuk.com/>

Ethnologue: <https://www.ethnologue.com/>

Higher Education Statistics Agency: <https://www.hesa.ac.uk>

House of Commons Library: <https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk/>

House of Lords Library: <https://lordslibrary.parliament.uk/>

Institute of International Education: <https://www.iie.org/>

International Association of Language Centres (IALC):
<https://www.ialc.org/>

International Consultants for Education and Fairs (ICEF):
<https://www.icef.com/icefmonitor/>

Internet World Statistics: <https://www.internetworldstats.com/>

Migration Data Portal: <https://migrationdataportal.org>

Migration Observatory: <https://migrationobservatory.ox.ac.uk>

Migration Policy Institute: <https://www.migrationpolicy.org/>

OECD: <https://www.oecd.org>

Our World in Data: <https://ourworldindata.org/>

Statista: <https://www.statista.com/>

Web Technology Survey (w3Tech): <https://w3techs.com/>

World Atlas: <https://www.worldatlas.com>

World Economic Forum: <https://www.weforum.org/>

Appendix 2: Survey for teacher educators

Invitation to complete a survey.

The British Council is currently embarking on an investigation of English as a global language.

We are interested in the views and opinions of people on trends and movements in English from those who work in English language education in a variety of contexts. The results will be used to stimulate thought and discussion about the ever-changing position of the English language in the world. We are aware that some of you may already have completed a survey towards the end of last year. This is a follow-up survey and we would be grateful if you could complete this one too as it is using a more country focused lens.

The survey is completely anonymous and will take around 10 minutes to complete.

If you would like to take part please click on the link below:

[Survey link in original]

Original questionnaire can be seen on page 326 and 327

Many thanks - your participation is greatly appreciated,

Research and Insight Team,
English for Education Systems
British Council

**Thank you for agreeing to complete this short survey.
Please follow the instructions:**

Bio Data

- Nationality
- Country where you work
- Is English your first language? YES / NO / I am bilingual
- What do you do? Teacher / teacher educator / other – please state
- What is your job title?
- Do you work in private sector or state sector / both (please elaborate)
- Please describe the type of programme you work on

Questions:

The importance of English in your country.

1. How important is it to be able to speak and/or write English to securing a job in your country?

Very important / Quite important / Not very important / Not important at all

Please add any additional comments you would like to make here:

2. How important is it to be able to speak and/or write English to study in higher education in your country?

Very important / Quite important / Not very important / Not important at all

Please add any additional comments you would like to make here:

Trends in English Language Learning provision

3. In your opinion, over the last five years have the numbers of people learning English in the country where you work declined, increased, remained stable?

Please add any additional comments you would like to make here:

4. In your opinion, over the last five years which area of English learning (if any) is experiencing the biggest growth in the country where you work?

English as a medium of instruction in Higher Education / English for Specific Purposes (technical education, commercial or professional) / English for Migrants / English for primary school / English for Kindergarten / English as a medium of instruction in primary and secondary school / Other (please state) / No areas are experiencing growth.

Please add any additional comments you would like to make here:

5. In your opinion, over the last five years which area of English learning (if any) is experiencing the biggest decline in your country?

English as a medium of instruction in Higher Education / English for Specific Purposes (technical education, commercial or professional) / English for Migrants / English for primary school / English for Kindergarten / English as a medium of instruction in primary and secondary schools / Other (please state) / No areas are experiencing decline

Please add any additional comments you would like to make here:

6. In the last five years has there been a growth of interest in learning other languages in your country?

If yes, please state which languages.

Models of English.

7. What is the main English model promoted in education in your country (in teaching and learning material and in examinations)?

British English / American English / A combination of both British and North American English / Another variety of English (which one?) ... / International English

Please elaborate:

8. As English becomes increasingly a global language, how important is it to follow “native speaker” norms?

Very important / Quite important / Not very important / Not important at all

Please add any additional comments you would like to make here:

Employment trends for teachers.

9. How easy do you think it will be for English teachers to get jobs in your country in the next 10 years?

Very easy / Quite easy / Quite difficult / Very difficult

Please add any additional comments you would like to make here:

10. In your opinion in the last five years have the numbers of teachers who speak English as a first language working in your country:

Increased / Decreased / Stayed the same

Please add any additional comments you would like to make here:

Appendix 3: Projected future trends for global English

Based on the analysis of the 14 trends for global English, a number of projected future directions for global English over the next ten years can be proposed. These do not take into account the potential effect of Brexit for the UK, which is too difficult to establish given the added impact of the pandemic.

Trend 1 The numbers of English language learners is likely to remain at around 2 billion.

Trend 2 Online English language learning will be a major growth area.

Trend 3 The start age of English language learning in primary schools will revert to Grade 3 or later.

Trend 4 The widening of programmes to cater for specialist English needs will continue.

Trend 5 English-medium instruction will continue to be widely employed in higher education, but the teaching of English as a subject will continue to be the main way English is taught in basic education.

Trend 6 Native-speaker norms will continue to be used as a standard, but efforts to identify alternative ways of assessing English as a global language will accelerate.

Trend 7 The paradigm shift away from EFL will continue, with pedagogies that emphasise global English and multilingual realities gaining more ground.

Trend 8 Increased competition from non-UK providers will continue, but the reputational quality of UK provision will mean that study in the UK will remain attractive, possibly to a reduced market.

Trend 9 English will continue as the dominant lingua franca, despite the growing economic power of several non-anglophone countries.

Trend 10 The importance of multilingualism will lead to concerted efforts to promote additional language learning in anglophone countries to enhance international trade and participate in global dialogue.

Appendix 4: Overview of Future of English Grant Scheme 2022–2025 projects

Lead institution

University of Bedfordshire, Centre for Research in English Language Learning and Assessment (CRELLA)

Project title

Digitally mediated EMI communication in higher education classrooms: Transforming evidence to practical resources

Aims

This project aims to investigate the emerging construct of digitally mediated academic communication in EMI classrooms and to gather a range of higher education stakeholder perceptions from Malaysia and Japan about the medium of learning.

More specifically, this study:

- investigates the nature of spoken communication in digitally mediated EMI classes
- identifies the English language support needed for students and teachers
- explores the implications of moving to digital for a range of HE stakeholders at present and in the future
- develops resources to support students and teachers operating in a digitally mediated environment.

Approach

This research consists of five phases, using a mixed-methods approach. It takes a multiple-case-studies approach to analysing virtual EMI classroom interactions and stakeholder perceptions in specific universities in Malaysia and Japan.

Activities

The five-phased project is carefully designed to ensure pathways to impact and to warrant that the results of the study will lead to useful resources that can be readily applied by a range of stakeholders involved in teaching, learning and testing in digitally mediated EMI contexts.

Phase 1 of the project explores the nature of the EMI construct in digitally mediated modes of classes through surveys and videoed classroom observations.

Phase 2 will gather the voices of current stakeholder groups in universities in Malaysia and Japan and those of prospective students abroad.

Phase 3 will ensure pathways to impact and design impact strategies of the project by focusing on student behaviour.

Phase 4 and **Phase 5** will develop and disseminate a range of resources based on results obtained in phases 1–3. In **Phase 4**, the team will design prototypes of diagnostic English proficiency tests for students and teachers who engage in digitally mediated EMI classes.

In **Phase 5**, these tests will be piloted with small groups of students and teachers in the respective universities.

Contribution to the field

The project will provide baseline data and systematic methodology for gathering further data to understand the current and future trends in the role of English regarding:

- online English language learning
- EME in higher education
- English testing and assessment as part of the learning system.

Given the significance of digital learning and EME in the higher education sector globally, this research will offer critical information on challenges and opportunities for the users of English in diverse contexts and help set an effective agenda for policymakers and educators and a long-term research agenda for researchers all over the world.

Lead institution

Lancaster University

Project title

Linguistic demands of EMI in Higher Education: A corpus-based analysis of reading and writing in university settings in China, Italy, Thailand and the UK

Aims

The project aims to investigate the linguistic demands of student reading and writing across university-level EMI contexts and how these compare to writing and reading in the UK university context.

Approach

This project takes a corpus linguistic approach to addressing the lack of evidence available about actual language use in EMI contexts.

Activities

The project will create a large electronic database (corpus) of reading and writing in EMI university settings. Adopting a multisite approach, the data will be collected from over 1,000 students at six universities in three key countries with large EMI provision (China, Italy, Thailand), with comparable data collected in the UK. The complete corpus will contain approximately 10 million words. A large-scale quantitative analysis will be conducted to describe lexical, grammatical and genre-related patterns in EMI reading and writing across different academic disciplinary areas (from hard science subjects to humanities).

Contribution to the field

The findings will offer new insights into the linguistic experience of students in EMI, providing a robust, empirical basis for research-informed educational policies, addressing students' linguistic needs in this context. The corpus will represent a major contribution to EMI research, allowing for future analyses that will benefit local contexts and English for academic/specific purposes (EAP/ESP) scholarship more generally.

Lead institution

The Open University

Project title

English for the EDI generation: predicting and tracking the role of English and digital/mobile technologies in Higher Education across East and South Asia

Aims

This project aims to track and evaluate a set of three interconnected predicted trends concerning the impact of the growing use of digital/mobile technology (DMT) on regional and local ecologies of teaching, assessment and learning of English (TALE) in the four most populous countries in East and South Asia – Bangladesh, China, India and Indonesia.

Approach

With a focus on higher education, the two-phase longitudinal study will develop and validate an ecological research approach for tracking and assessing predictions and trends for English and TALE practices. The team will employ a mixed-methods approach adopting a time series longitudinal design.

Activities

Data for the study will be collected in two phases through surveys, interviews, focus groups and Padlet discussions. The ecological framework will be used to analyse qualitative data (students', teachers' and other stakeholders' experience and views) on the use of DMT in TALE with gender in focus.

Contribution to the field

The study is significant in that it offers insights into trends in terms of:

- how technological innovation, which drives contemporary learning and communication in English, is shaping the future of the language in education, particularly higher education
- whether issues of gender, equality, diversity and inclusion will be an important consideration in the future of English
- the role that English plays as a linguistic resource alongside other languages
- policy and practice implications for the development of English in Asia.

Lead institution

University of Warwick

Project title

English as a school subject (ESS) in basic education: influencing future policy directions

Aims

The aims of the project are to:

- track key trends in ESS in BE in 40 countries through a longitudinal set of surveys to span five years
- identify the characteristics of ESS in BE in ODA countries
- establish realistic core curricula at micro (country), meso (regional) and macro (global) levels of language systems and skills (content) and classroom activities (pedagogy) for Years 1–7
- draft a sample of descriptors for ESS in BE. These descriptors will be modelled on the CEFR and will therefore take the form of ‘can do’ statements
- analyse gender and other protected characteristics in the coursebooks to identify if and how ELT materials are perpetrating stereotypes, potentially acting as negative input for young girls and other disadvantaged groups.

Approach

The research project uses an innovative hub and spoke research design. Four hubs, representing four geographical areas, will be established, led by four co-investigators (CIs). The hubs will be in Africa (Malawi), Asia (Indonesia), Europe and the Middle East (Turkey) and Latin America and the Caribbean (Mexico). CIs will form a network with expert collaborators (ECs) in the spokes, ensuring that the ECs understand the purpose of the research, are supported to carry out the data collection and analysis, and can contribute expertise and local knowledge about ESS in BE in their own countries. By taking a CoP approach, the CIs will create networks that will be in place well beyond the end of the project.

Activities

The project has two strands. The first strand tracks key trends in ESS in BE through a longitudinal set of surveys to span five years, completed by partners in 40 countries. The project also examines how trends identified in other published research behave over the same period and will highlight new and emerging trends. This key information about ESS in 40 countries will be reported through country-level profiles.

The second strand responds to a need identified in recent research into ESS in BE to identify the characteristics of ESS in BE based on analyses and critical evaluation of curriculum/syllabus documents, coursebooks and interviews/observations with teachers in 20 ODA countries. It will establish realistic core curricula at micro (country) meso (regional) and macro (global) levels of language systems and skills (content) and classroom activities (pedagogy) for Years 1–7.

Contribution to the field

The substantial, multiple findings from the project will be valuable for policymakers and influencers, educational planners, researchers, teacher educators and teachers, particularly those in ODA countries.

Appendix 5: Speakers of English globally

Country or Territory	Pop (2017e)	Total English speakers (L1+EAL)	Percentage
Afghanistan	34,365,000	3,436,000	10%
Akrotiri & Dhekelia	15,700	15,700	100%
Albania	2,891,000	290,000	10%
Algeria	41,073,000	2,875,000	7%
American Samoa	57,000	57,000	100%
Andorra	72,000	21,600	30%
Angola	26,541,000	1,327,000	5%
Anguilla	15,000	15,000	100%
Antigua and Barbuda	93,000	93,000	100%
Argentina	44,248,000	9,292,000	21%
Armenia	3,037,000	1,215,000	40%
Aruba	105,000	86,000	82%
Australia	24,700,000	24,000,000	97%
Austria	8,602,000	6,280,000	73%
Azerbaijan	10,008,000	1,500,000	15%
Bahamas	399,000	383,000	96%
Bahrain	1,426,000	1,070,000	75%
Bangladesh	165,000,000	8,000,000	5%
Barbados	286,000	286,000	100%
Belarus	9,500,000	950,000	10%
Belgium	11,438,000	5,950,000	52%
Belize	374,000	360,000	96%
Benin	11,420,000	571,000	5%
Bermuda	63,000	63,000	100%
Bhutan	796,000	750,000	94%
Bolivia	11,034,000	552,000	5%
Bosnia and Herzegovina	3,802,000	1,521,000	40%
Botswana	2,346,000	950,000	40%
Brazil	211,373,000	12,682,000	6%
British Virgin Is	31,000	30,500	98%
Brunei Darussalam	435,000	360,000	83%
Bulgaria	7,058,000	1,765,000	25%
Burkina Faso	19,084,000	954,000	5%
Burundi	11,872,000	251,000	2%
Cambodia	16,042,000	3,208,000	20%
Cameroon	24,400,000	4,200,000	17%
Canada	36,600,000	35,000,000	96%
Cape Verde	532,000	53,200	10%
Cayman Is	63,000	63,000	100%
Central African Republic	5,075,000	254,000	5%

Country or Territory	Pop (2017e)	Total English speakers (L1+EAL)	Percentage
Chad	14,891,000	745,000	5%
Chile	18,302,000	1,830,000	10%
China	1,384,929,000	400,000,000	29%
Colombia	49,113,000	2,455,000	5%
Comoros	824,000	16,500	2%
Congo	4,837,000	242,000	5%
Congo, Democratic Republic	81,763,000	4,088,000	5%
Cook Is	19,000	18,500	97%
Costa Rica	4,909,000	640,000	13%
Côte d'Ivoire	23,698,000	1,185,000	5%
Croatia	4,213,000	2,100,000	50%
Cuba	11,423,000	1,142,000	10%
Curaçao	151,000	144,500	96%
Cyprus	1,189,000	904,000	76%
Czech Republic	10,560,000	2,851,000	27%
Denmark	5,714,000	4,914,000	86%
Djibouti	910,000	45,500	5%
Dominica	73,000	72,000	99%
Dominican Republic	10,770,000	538,000	5%
Ecuador	16,609,000	830,000	5%
Egypt	95,196,000	33,319,000	35%
El Salvador	6,159,000	616,000	10%
Equatorial Guinea	891,000	17,800	2%
Eritrea	5,433,000	2,000,000	37%
Estonia	1,303,000	652,000	50%
Ethiopia	104,000,000	10,002,000	10%
Faroe Islands	49,000	39,200	80%
Fiji	905,000	896,000	99%
Finland	5,556,000	3,889,000	70%
France	64,934,000	25,324,000	39%
French Guiana (c)	283,000	84,900	30%
French Polynesia	288,000	28,800	10%
Gabon	1,797,000	179,700	10%
Gambia	2,100,000	1,501,000	71%
Georgia	3,904,000	195,200	5%
Germany	81,317,000	45,538,000	56%
Ghana	29,000,000	19,001,000	66%
Gibraltar	32,000	31,000	97%
Greece	10,875,000	5,546,000	51%
Greenland	56,000	5,600	10%

Country or Territory	Pop (2017e)	Total English speakers (L1+EAL)	Percentage
Grenada	108,000	108,000	100%
Guadeloupe	473,000	23,600	5%
Guam	174,000	172,000	99%
Guatemala	16,969,000	1,697,000	10%
Guinea	13,236,000	662,000	5%
Guinea-Bissau	1,926,000	96,300	5%
Guyana	772,000	752,000	97%
Haiti	10,984,000	2,197,000	20%
Honduras	8,294,000	829,000	10%
Hong Kong	7,400,000	6,260,000	85%
Hungary	9,798,000	1,960,000	20%
Iceland	334,000	300,000	90%
India	1,342,000,000	400,400,000	30%
Indonesia	263,683,000	52,737,000	20%
Iran	80,961,000	32,384,000	40%
Iraq	38,649,000	13,527,000	35%
Ireland	4,700,000	4,600,000	98%
Israel	8,314,000	7,150,000	86%
Italy	59,892,000	20,363,000	34%
Jamaica	2,813,000	2,800,000	100%
Japan	126,335,000	18,950,000	15%
Jordan	8,047,000	3,621,000	45%
Kazakhstan	18,135,000	907,000	5%
Kenya	48,300,000	4,000,000	8%
Kiribati	116,000	50,000	43%
Korea, North	25,401,000	508,000	2%
Korea, South	50,752,000	22,838,000	45%
Kosovo	1,807,000	723,000	40%
Kuwait	4,259,000	3,194,000	75%
Kyrgyzstan	6,123,000	429,000	7%
Laos	7,008,000	701,000	10%
Latvia	1,926,000	886,000	46%
Lebanon	6,546,000	2,618,000	40%
Lesotho	2,200,000	550,000	25%
Liberia	4,700,000	4,560,000	97%
Libya	6,275,000	1,255,000	20%
Liechtenstein	38,000	28,500	75%
Lithuania	2,788,000	1,059,000	38%
Luxembourg	591,000	236,000	40%
Macau	609,000	152,000	25%
Macedonia	2,085,000	521,000	25%
Madagascar	25,476,000	3,821,000	15%
Malawi	18,200,000	900,000	5%

Country or Territory	Pop (2017e)	Total English speakers (L1+EAL)	Percentage
Malaysia	31,200,000	10,400,000	33%
Maldives	376,000	338,000	90%
Mali	18,560,000	928,000	5%
Malta	421,000	400,000	95%
Marshall Is	55,400	50,000	90%
Martinique	397,000	19,800	5%
Mauritania	4,254,000	425,000	10%
Mauritius	1,283,000	902,000	70%
Mayotte	252,000	25,000	10%
Mexico	130,252,000	32,563,000	25%
Micronesia, FS	105,000	53,000	50%
Moldova	4,063,000	406,000	10%
Monaco	38,000	19,000	50%
Mongolia	3,054,000	916,000	30%
Montenegro	627,000	62,700	10%
Montserrat	5,200	5,200	100%
Morocco	35,244,000	4,934,000	14%
Mozambique	29,419,000	1,471,000	5%
Myanmar	54,696,000	8,204,000	15%
N Marianas	50,000	45,500	91%
Namibia	2,561,000	415,000	16%
Nauru	10,300	6,800	66%
Nepal	29,130,000	14,565,000	50%
Netherlands	17,034,000	15,331,000	90%
New Caledonia	270,000	13,500	5%
New Zealand	4,588,000	4,580,000	100%
Nicaragua (c)	6,213,000	311,000	5%
Niger	21,351,000	427,000	2%
Nigeria	191,133,000	115,000,000	60%
Norway	5,333,000	4,800,000	90%
Oman	5,241,000	3,931,000	75%
Other dependencies	52,000	51,000	98%
Pakistan	196,223,000	23,000,000	12%
Palau (Belau)	21,400	21,000	98%
Palestinian Authority	4,904,000	3,678,000	75%
Panama	4,048,000	405,000	10%
Papua New Guinea	7,920,000	3,368,000	43%
Paraguay	6,803,000	340,000	5%
Peru	32,140,000	1,607,000	5%
Philippines	103,622,000	95,037,000	92%
Poland	38,633,000	13,135,000	34%
Portugal	10,268,000	2,772,000	27%
Puerto Rico	3,673,000	1,840,000	50%

Country or Territory	Pop (2017e)	Total English speakers (L1+EAL)	Percentage
Qatar	2,450,000	1,838,000	75%
Réunion	873,000	44,000	5%
Romania	19,221,000	5,959,000	31%
Russia	146,410,000	43,923,000	30%
Rwanda	12,124,000	1,800,000	15%
Samoa	196,000	186,000	95%
San Marino	32,000	19,200	60%
São Tomé and Príncipe	198,000	9,900	5%
Saudi Arabia	32,915,000	3,291,000	10%
Senegal	15,991,000	800,000	5%
Serbia	8,776,000	4,388,000	50%
Seychelles	98,000	39,000	40%
Sierra Leone	6,717,000	6,700,000	100%
Singapore	5,811,000	5,400,000	93%
Sint Maarten	40,900	27,600	67%
Slovakia	5,434,000	1,413,000	26%
Slovenia	2,074,000	1,224,000	59%
Solomon Is	606,000	212,000	35%
Somalia	11,246,000	900,000	8%
South Africa	55,600,000	35,340,000	64%
South Sudan	13,299,000	5,000,000	38%
Spain	45,968,000	10,113,000	22%
Sri Lanka	20,909,000	2,010,000	10%
St Kitts & Nevis	56,000	56,000	100%
St Lucia	188,000	178,000	95%
St Pierre and Miquelon	6,000	3,000	50%
St Vincent and the Grenadines	109,000	109,000	100%
Sudan	41,814,000	16,000,000	38%
Suriname	552,000	510,000	92%
Swaziland	1,323,000	900,000	68%
Sweden	9,930,000	8,540,000	86%
Switzerland	8,442,000	5,487,000	65%
Syria	18,906,000	3,781,000	20%
Taiwan	23,546,000	1,177,000	5%
Tajikistan	8,832,000	442,000	5%
Tanzania	56,568,000	5,000,000	9%
Thailand	68,440,000	6,844,000	10%
Timor-Leste	1,234,000	432,000	35%
Togo	7,664,000	383,000	5%
Tonga	107,000	91,000	85%
Trinidad & Tobago	1,372,000	1,370,000	100%
Tunisia	11,486,000	1,608,000	14%
Turkey	81,185,000	12,178,000	15%

Country or Territory	Pop (2017e)	Total English speakers (L1+EAL)	Percentage
Turkmenistan	5,500,000	275,000	5%
Tuvalu	10,000	9,000	90%
Uganda	41,365,000	20,000,000	48%
UK Islands	254,000	253,000	100%
Ukraine	42,410,000	2,120,000	5%
United Arab Emirates	9,528,000	8,575,000	90%
United Kingdom	65,470,000	65,400,000	100%
United States	326,250,000	308,000,000	94%
Uruguay	3,452,000	345,000	10%
US Virgin Is	106,000	96,000	91%
Uzbekistan	30,723,000	1,536,000	5%
Vanuatu	276,000	255,000	92%
Venezuela	31,920,000	1,596,000	5%
Vietnam	95,375,000	4,769,000	5%
Wallis and Futuna Is	13,000	300	2%
Western Sahara	597,000	11,900	2%
Yemen	28,115,000	2,530,000	9%
Zambia	17,114,000	5,400,000	32%
Zimbabwe	16,223,000	8,320,000	51%
Total	7,513,416,900	2,317,901,000	31%

Source: Based on Crystal (2018).

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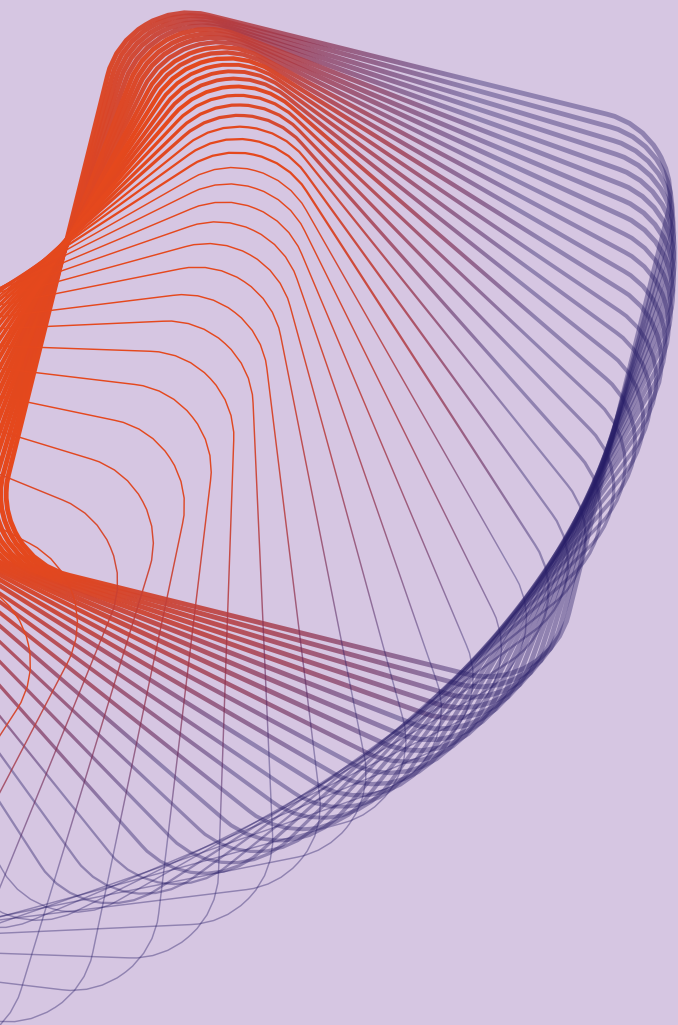
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To mark the 15th anniversary of David Graddol's *English Next*, the British Council launched an ambitious project to revisit the topic of the future role of the English language. This book reports on the early phases of this long-term project, presenting a series of findings in a series of questions. These questions are intended to mark a starting point for ongoing discussion and research into this fascinating area.

Professor Barry O'Sullivan and Professor Yan Jin

There's never been a book like this one, in the scale of its insightful, realistic and representative coverage of the complex issues currently influencing the development of world English. It will be essential reading for anyone engaged in English language education, whether as policy makers, researchers or practitioners.

Professor David Crystal

Written in an accessible way and filled with information about teaching and learning, this will be a valuable companion to all those working in the field. As major changes are taking place within the field of English language teaching, a book such as this is extremely helpful for the everyday teacher. It contains a wealth of information and can provide us with knowledge about the various elements affecting the future of English, how it is perceived by the global community, its importance to learners, and what trends we will most likely need to consider as we continue to work in an evolving world.

Marjorie Rosenberg Past IATEFL President