

SUSTAINABILITY AND INEQUALITY IN OUR GLOBAL VILLAGE

Preserving Lesser-Used Languages

The sustainability of any language depends on the political and military strength of its speakers. The Celtic languages declined because the Celts lost most of the territory they once controlled to speakers of other languages. Most remaining Celtic speakers also know the language of their English or French conquerors.

In 1982, the European Union established the European Bureau for Lesser Used Languages (EBLUL), based in Dublin, Ireland, to provide financial support for the preservation of several dozen indigenous, regional, and minority languages spoken by 46 million Europeans. The Celtic languages received a lot of attention from EBLUL; for example, in 2002, EBLUL granted Cornish official status within the European Union (Figure 5-40).



▲ FIGURE 5-40 CORNISH Sign for the town is in English and Cornish. The literal English translation of the Cornish version is "Cornwall welcomes you."

The European Union cut off funding for EBLUL in 2010, and the office was closed. Local individually based organizations such as *Cymdeithas yr*

Iaith Gymraeg are expected to carry the responsibility of preserving lesser-used languages.

pronunciation to Occitan. Numerous dialects of Occitan are spoken, including Auvergnat, Gascon, and Provençal

French dialects of northern France are sometimes known by the French phrases *langue d'oïl* and the southern as *langue d'òc*. It is worth exploring these terms, for they provide insight into how languages evolve. These names derive from different ways in which the word for "yes" was said. One Roman term for "yes" was *hoc illud est*, meaning "that is so." In the south, the phrase was shortened to *hoc*, or *òc*, because the /h/ sound was generally dropped, just as we drop it on the word honor today. Northerners shortened the phrase to *o-il* after the first sound in the first two words of the phrase, again with the initial /h/ suppressed. If the two syllables of *o-il* are spoken very rapidly, they are combined into a sound like the English word *wheel*. Eventually, the final consonant was eliminated, as in many French words, giving a sound for "yes" like the English *we*, spelled in French *oui*.

The French government has established bilingual elementary and high schools called *calandretas* in the Occitan region. These schools teach both French and Occitan, according to a

curriculum established by the national ministry of education. Still, many people living in southern France want to see more efforts by the government of France to encourage the use of Occitan (Figure 5-41).



▲ FIGURE 5-41 PROVENÇAL People demonstrate in Beaucaire, France, for the preservation of the Provençal language *langue d'òc*.

Global Dominance of English

Learning Outcome 5.4.4

Understand the concept of a lingua franca.

One of the most fundamental needs in a global society is a common language for communication. Increasingly in the modern world, the language of international communication is English. A Polish airline pilot who flies over Spain speaks to the traffic controller on the ground in English. Swiss bankers speak a dialect of German among themselves, but with German bankers they prefer to speak English rather than German. English is the official language at an aircraft factory in France and an appliance company in Italy.

The dominance of English as an international language has facilitated the diffusion of popular culture and science and the growth of international trade. However, people who forsake their native language must weigh the benefits of using English against the cost of losing a fundamental element of local cultural identity.

English is the first language of 328 million people and is spoken fluently by another estimated $\frac{1}{2}$ to 1 billion people (Figure 5-42). English is an official language in 57 countries, more than any other language, and is the predominant language in 2 more (Australia and the United States). Two billion people—one-third of the world—live in a country where English is an official language, even if they cannot speak it (Figure 5-43).

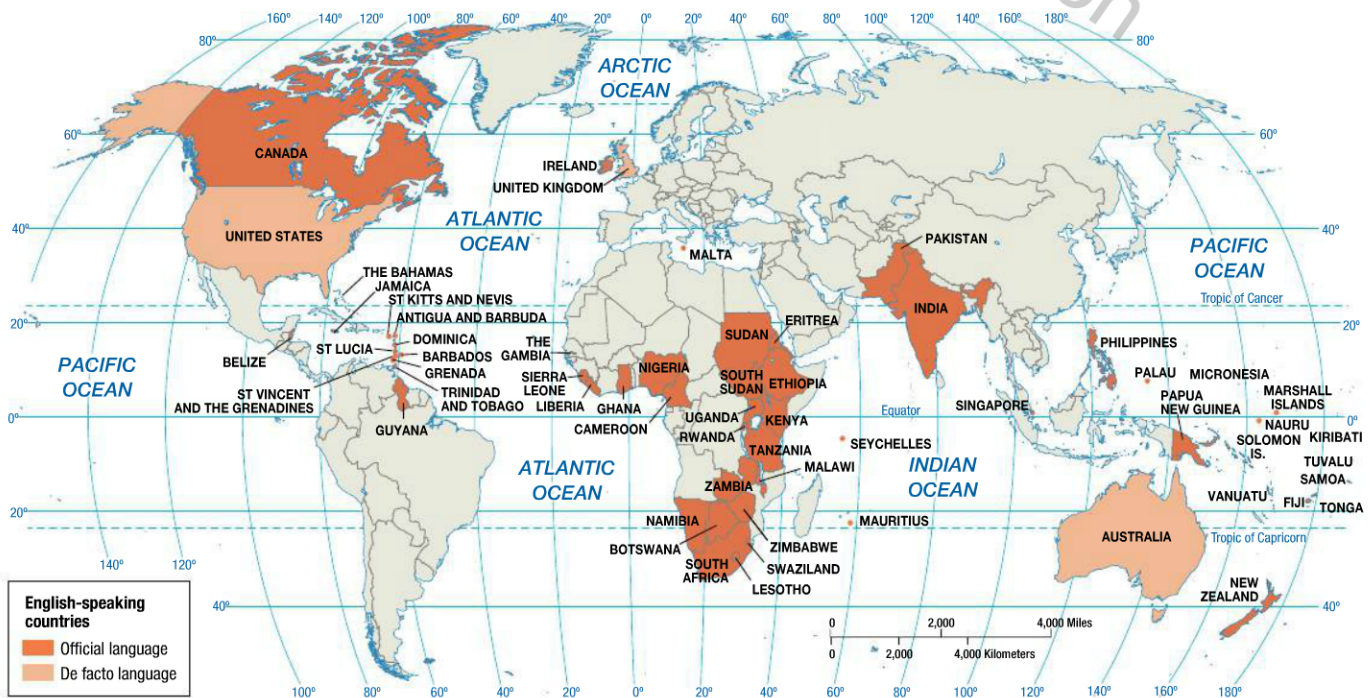
ENGLISH: AN EXAMPLE OF A LINGUA FRANCA

A language of international communication, such as English, is known as a *lingua franca*. To facilitate trade, speakers of two different languages create a lingua franca by mixing elements of the two languages into a simple common language. The term, which means *language of the Franks*, was originally applied by Arab traders during the Middle Ages to describe the language they used to communicate with Europeans, whom they called Franks.

People in smaller countries need to learn English to participate more fully in the global economy and culture. All children learn English in the schools of countries such as the Netherlands and Sweden to facilitate international communication. This may seem culturally unfair, but obviously it is more likely that several million Dutch people will learn English than that a half-billion English speakers around the world will learn Dutch.

The rapid growth in importance of English is reflected in the percentage of students learning English as a second language in school. More than 90 percent of students in the European Union learn English in middle or high school, not just in smaller countries such as Denmark and the Netherlands but also in populous countries such as France, Germany, and Spain. The Japanese government, having determined that fluency in English is mandatory in a global economy, has even considered adding English as a second official language.

Foreign students increasingly seek admission to universities in countries that teach in English rather than in



▲ **FIGURE 5-42 ENGLISH-SPEAKING COUNTRIES** English is an official language in 56 countries. English is also the predominant language in the United Kingdom, United States, and Australia, although these countries have declared it to be the official language.



▲ **FIGURE 5-43 TEACHING ENGLISH** English is widely taught around the world, including this school in China.

German, French, or Russian. Students around the world want to learn in English because they believe it is the most effective way to work in the global economy and participate in the global culture.

A group that learns English or another lingua franca may learn a simplified form, called a **pidgin language**. To communicate with speakers of another language, two groups construct a pidgin language by learning a few of the grammar rules and words of a lingua franca, mixing in

some elements of their own languages. A pidgin language has no native speakers; it is always spoken in addition to one's native language.

Other than English, modern lingua franca languages include Swahili in East Africa, Hindi in South Asia, Indonesian in Southeast Asia, and Russian in the former Soviet Union. A number of African and Asian countries that became independent in the twentieth century adopted English or Swahili as an official language for government business, as well as for commerce, even if the majority of the people couldn't speak it.

In view of the global dominance of English, many U.S. citizens do not recognize the importance of learning other languages. One of the best ways to learn about the beliefs, traits, and values of people living in other regions is to learn their language. The lack of effort by Americans to learn other languages is a source of resentment among people elsewhere in the world, especially when Americans visit or work in other countries. The inability to speak other languages is also a handicap for Americans who try to conduct international business. Successful entry into new overseas markets requires knowledge of local culture, and officials who can speak the local language are better able to obtain important information. Japanese businesses that wish to expand in the United States send English-speaking officials, but American businesses that wish to sell products to the Japanese are rarely able to send a Japanese-speaking employee.

CONTEMPORARY GEOGRAPHIC TOOLS

The Death of English as a Lingua Franca?

English will disappear as a lingua franca, claims Nicholas Ostler, who heads the United Kingdom's Foundation for Endangered Languages, and no other language will replace it. Advances in technology enable people to continue speaking their native language while using the computer and speech recognition devices to translate between it and English.

Figure 5-44 is an excerpt from the Welsh language version of the 2011 UK census form. What are questions 18 and 19 asking? Use an online translation service, such as Google translator, at <http://translate.google.com>. Set the left box for Welsh and the right box for English, and type the Welsh from the census form into the left box.

18 Beth yw eich profir iaith?
 Cymraeg neu Saesneg → Ewch i 20
 Arall, nodwch (gan gynnwys iaith Arwyddion Prydain)

19 Pa mor dda allwch chi siarad Saesneg?
 Da iawn
 Da
 Ddim yn dda
 Dim o gwbl

20 Beth yw eich crefydd?
 Mae'r cwestiwn hwn yn wirfoddol

▲ **FIGURE 5-44 UK CENSUS FORM IN WELSH** What is being asked in questions 18 and 19?

EXPANSION DIFFUSION OF ENGLISH

Learning Outcome 5.4.5

Understand how English has diffused to other languages.

In the past, a lingua franca achieved widespread distribution through migration and conquest. Two thousand years ago, use of Latin spread through Europe along with the Roman Empire. In recent centuries, use of English spread around the world primarily through the British Empire.

In contrast, the recent growth in the use of English is an example of expansion diffusion, the spread of a trait through the snowballing effect of an idea rather than through the relocation of people. Expansion diffusion has occurred in two ways with English:

1. English is changing through diffusion of new vocabulary, spelling, and pronunciation.
2. English words are fusing with other languages.

For a language to remain vibrant, new words and usage must be coined to deal with new situations. Unlike most examples of expansion diffusion, recent changes in English have percolated up from common usage and ethnic dialects rather than being directed down to the masses by elite people. Examples include dialects spoken by African Americans and residents of Appalachia.

AFRICAN AMERICAN ENGLISH. Some African Americans speak a dialect of English heavily influenced by the group's distinctive heritage of forced migration from Africa during the eighteenth century to be slaves in the southern colonies. African American slaves preserved a distinctive dialect in part to communicate in a code not understood by their white masters. Black dialect words such as *gumbo* and *jazz* have long since diffused into the standard English language.

In the twentieth century, many African Americans migrated from the South to the large cities in the Northeast and Midwest (see Chapter 7). Living in racially segregated neighborhoods within northern cities and attending segregated schools, many African Americans preserved their distinctive dialect. That dialect has been termed African American Vernacular English (AAVE). Since 1996, the term **Ebonics**, a combination of *ebony* and *phonics*, has sometimes been used as a synonym for AAVE.

The American Speech, Language and Hearing Association classifies AAVE as a distinct dialect, with a recognized vocabulary, grammar, and word meaning. Among the distinctive elements of Ebonics are the use of double negatives, such as "I ain't going there no more," and such sentences as "She be at home" instead of "She is usually at home."

Use of AAVE is controversial within the African American community. On one hand, some regard it as substandard, a measure of poor education, and an obstacle to success in the United States. Others see AAVE as a means for preserving a distinctive element of African American culture and

an effective way to teach African Americans who otherwise perform poorly in school.

Pause and Reflect 5.4.5

Should AAVE be taught in schools? Why or why not?

APPALACHIAN ENGLISH. Natives of Appalachian communities, such as in rural West Virginia, also have a distinctive dialect, pronouncing *hollow* as "holler" and *creek* as "crick." Distinctive grammatical practices include the use of the double negative as in Ebonics and adding "a" in front of verbs ending in "ing," such as *a-sitting*.

As with Ebonics, speaking an Appalachian dialect produces both pride and problems. An Appalachian dialect is a source of regional identity but has long been regarded by other Americans as a sign of poor education and an obstacle to obtaining employment in other regions of the United States. Some Appalachian residents are "bidialectic": They speak "standard" English outside Appalachia and slip back into their regional dialect at home.

DIFFUSION TO OTHER LANGUAGES

English words have become increasingly integrated into other languages. Many French speakers regard the invasion of English words with alarm, but Spanish speakers may find the mixing of the two languages stimulating.

FRANGLAIS. Traditionally, language has been an especially important source of national pride and identity in France. The French are particularly upset with the increasing worldwide domination of English, especially the invasion of their language by English words and the substitution of English for French as the most important language of international communications.

French is an official language in 29 countries and for hundreds of years served as the lingua franca for international diplomats. Many French are upset that English words such as *cowboy*, *hamburger*, *jeans*, and *T-shirt* were allowed to diffuse into the French language and destroy the language's purity. The widespread use of English in the French language is called **Français**, a combination of *français* and *anglais*, the French words for *French* and *English*. (Figure 5-45)

Since 1635, the French Academy has been the supreme arbiter of the French language. In modern times, it has promoted the use of French terms in France, such as *stationnement* rather than *parking*, *fin de semaine* rather than *le weekend*, *logiciel* rather than *software*, and *arrosage* rather than *spam*. France's highest court, however, ruled in 1994 that most of the country's laws banning Français were illegal.

SPANGLISH. English is diffusing into the Spanish language spoken by 34 million Hispanics in the United States to create **Spanglish**, a combination of Spanish and English (Figure 5-46). In Miami's large Cuban American community, Spanglish is sometimes called Cubonics, a combination of Cuban and phonetics.



▲ **FIGURE 5-45 FRANGLAIS** A restaurant awning mixes French (*dejeuner*, *salades*, and *pâtes*), English (*burgers* and *bagels*), and Franglais (*club sandwiches*).

As with Franglais, Spanglish involves converting English words to Spanish forms. Some of the changes modify the spelling of English words to conform to Spanish preferences and pronunciations, such as dropping final consonants and replacing *v* with *b*. For example, *shorts* (pants) becomes *choses*, and *vacuum cleaner* becomes *bacuncliner*. In other cases, awkward Spanish words or phrases are dropped in favor of English words. For example, *parquin* is used rather than *estacionamiento* for “parking,” and *taipear* is used instead of *escribir a máquina* for “to type.”

Spanglish is a richer integration of English with Spanish than the mere borrowing of English words. New words have been invented in Spanglish that do not exist in English but would be useful if they did. For example, *textear* is a verb

▼ **FIGURE 5-46 SPANGLISH** A restaurant in Santa Ana, California, mixes Spanish and English.



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derived from the English text, and is less awkward than the Spanish *mandar un mensajito*; *i-meiliar* is a verb that means “to e-mail someone.” Spanglish also mixes English and Spanish words in the same phrase. For example, a magazine article is titled “When he says *me voy* . . . what does he really mean?” (*me voy* means “I’m leaving”).

Spanglish has become especially widespread in popular culture, such as song lyrics, television, and magazines aimed at young Hispanic women, but it has also been adopted by writers of serious literature. Inevitably, critics charge that Spanglish is a substitute for rigorously learning the rules of standard English and Spanish. And Spanglish has not been promoted for use in schools, as has Ebonics. Rather than a threat to existing languages, Spanglish is generally regarded as enriching both English and Spanish by adopting the best elements of each—English’s ability to invent new words and Spanish’s ability to convey nuances of emotion. Many Hispanic Americans like being able to say *Hablo un mix de los dos languages*.

DENGLISH. The diffusion of English words into German is called **Denglish**, with the “D” for *Deutsch*, the German word for *German* (Figure 5-47). In Germany, airlines, car dealers, and telephone companies use English slogans in advertising. For many Germans, wishing someone “happy birthday” sounds more melodic than the German *Herzlichen Glückwunsch zum Geburtstag*.

The German telephone company Deutsche Telekom uses the German word *Deutschlandverbindungen* for “long distance” and the Denglish word *Cityverbindungen* for “local” (rather than the German word *Ortsverbindungen*). The telephone company originally wanted to use the English “German calls” and “city calls” to describe its long-distance and local services, but the Institute for the German Language, which defines rules for the use of German, protested, so Deutsche Telekom compromised with one German word and one Denglish word.

English has diffused into other languages as well. The Japanese, for example, refer to *beisboru* (“baseball”), *naifu* (“knife”), and *sutoroberi keki* (“strawberry cake”).

▼ **FIGURE 5-47 DENGLISH** An ad for a radio station in Berlin, Germany, mixes German and English.



SPANISH AND FRENCH IN THE UNITED STATES AND CANADA

Learning Outcome 5.4.6

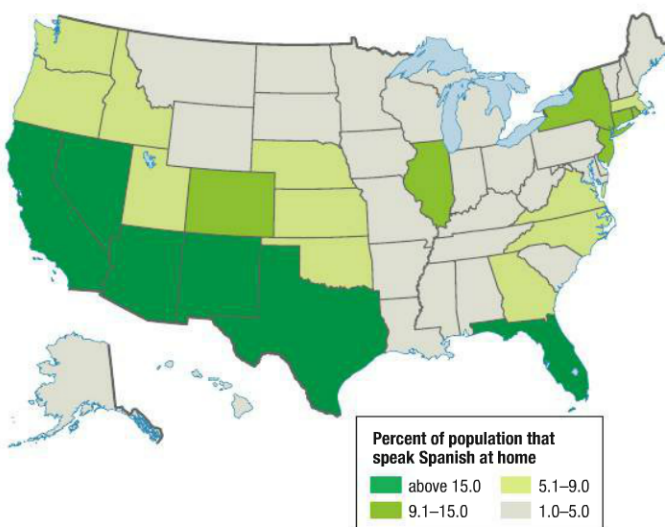
Understand the role of Spanish and French in North America.

North America is dominated by English speakers. However, other languages, especially French in Canada and Spanish in the United States, are becoming increasingly prominent.

SPANISH-SPEAKING UNITED STATES. Linguistic unity is an apparent feature of the United States, a nation of immigrants who learn English to become Americans. However, the diversity of languages in the United States is greater than it first appears. In 2008, a language other than English was spoken at home by 56 million Americans over age 5, 20 percent of the population. Spanish was spoken at home by 35 million people in the United States. More than 2 million spoke Chinese; at least 1 million each spoke French, German, Korean, Tagalog, and Vietnamese.

Spanish has become an increasingly important language in recent years because of large-scale immigration from Latin America. In some communities, public notices, government documents, and advertisements are printed in Spanish. Several hundred Spanish-language newspapers and radio and television stations operate in the United States, especially in southern Florida, the Southwest, and large northern cities, where most of the 35 million Spanish-speaking people live (Figure 5-48).

Promoting the use of English symbolizes that language is the chief cultural bond in the United States in an otherwise heterogeneous society. With the growing dominance of the English language in the global economy and culture, knowledge of English is important for people around the world, not just inside the United States. At the same



▲ **FIGURE 5-48 SPANISH SPEAKERS IN THE UNITED STATES** The largest percentages of Spanish speakers are in the Southwest and in Florida.

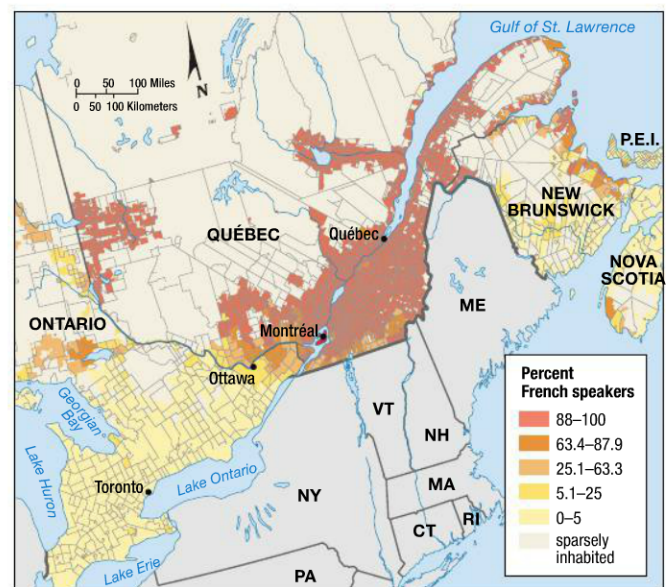
time, the increasing use of other languages in the United States is a reminder of the importance that groups place on preserving cultural identity and the central role that language plays in maintaining that identity.

In reaction against the increasing use of Spanish in the United States, 30 states and a number of localities have laws making English the official language. (Hawaii has two official languages, English and Hawaiian, which is in the Austronesian language family.) Some courts have judged these laws to be unconstitutional restrictions on free speech. The U.S. Congress has debated enacting similar legislation. For a state such as Montana, the law is symbolic, because it has few non-English speakers. But for states such as California and Florida, with large Hispanic populations, the debate affects access to jobs, education, and social services.

FRENCH-SPEAKING CANADA. French is one of Canada's two official languages, along with English. French speakers comprise one-fourth of the country's population. Most French-speaking Canadians are clustered in Québec, where they account for more than three-fourths of the province's speakers (Figure 5-49). Colonized by the French in the seventeenth century, Québec was captured by the British in 1763, and in 1867 it became one of the provinces in the Confederation of Canada.

Until recently, Québec was one of Canada's poorest and least-developed provinces. Its economic and political activities were dominated by an English-speaking minority, and the province suffered from cultural isolation and lack of French-speaking leaders.

When French President Charles de Gaulle visited Québec in 1967, he encouraged the development of an independent Québec by shouting in his speech, "*Vive le Québec libre!*" ("Long live free Québec!") Voters in Québec have thus far rejected separation from Canada, but by a slim majority.



▲ **FIGURE 5-49 CANADA'S FRENCH-ENGLISH LANGUAGE BOUNDARY** French is the first language of 81 percent living in the province of Québec and 8 percent of Canadians living elsewhere in the country.

The Québec government has made the use of French mandatory in many daily activities. Québec's Commission de Toponymie has renamed towns, rivers, and mountains that have names with English-language origins. French must be the predominant language on all commercial signs, and the legislature passed a law banning non-French outdoor signs altogether. (However, the Canadian Supreme Court ruled this legislation unconstitutional.)

Confrontation during the 1970s and 1980s has been replaced in Québec by increased cooperation between French and English speakers. The neighborhoods of Montréal, Québec's largest city, were once highly segregated between French-speaking residents on the east and English-speaking residents on the west, but in recent years they have become more linguistically mixed. One-third of Québec's native English speakers have married French speakers in recent years. Children of English speakers are increasingly likely to be bilingual.

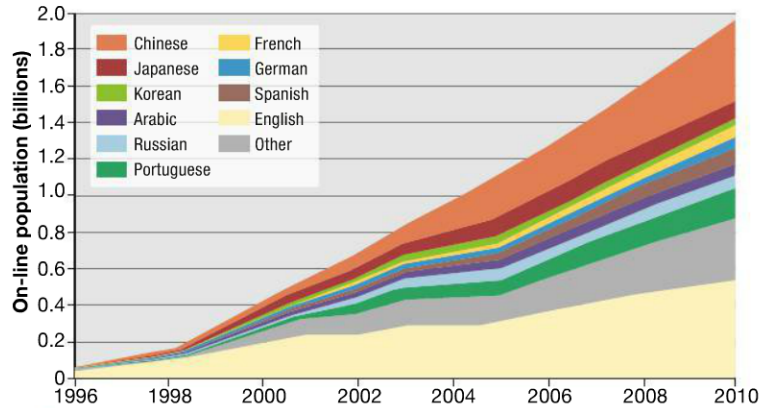
Although French dominates over English, Québec faces a fresh challenge of integrating a large number of immigrants from Europe, Asia, and Latin America who don't speak French. Many immigrants would prefer to use English rather than French as their lingua franca but are prohibited from doing so by the Québec government. Even immigrants who learn to speak French charge that they face discrimination because of their accents.

ENGLISH ON THE INTERNET

The emergence of the Internet as an important means of communication has further strengthened the dominance of English. Because a majority of the material on the Internet is in English, knowledge of English is essential for Internet users around the world. English was the dominant language of the Internet during the 1990s. In 1998, 71 percent of people online were using English (Figure 5-50). The early dominance of English on the Internet was partly a reflection of the fact that the most populous English-speaking country, the United States, had a head start on the rest of the world in making the Internet available to most of its citizens (refer to Figure 4-32).

English continued as the leading Internet language in the first years of the twenty-first century, but it was far less dominant. The percentage of English-language online users declined from 46 percent in 2000 to 27 percent in 2010. Chinese (Mandarin) language online users increased from 2 percent of the world total in 1998 to 22 percent in 2010, and Mandarin will probably replace English as the most-frequently used online language before 2020.

English may be less dominant as the language of the Internet in the twenty-first century. But the United States—and with it the English language—remains the Internet leader in key respects. The United States created the English-language nomenclature for the Internet that the rest of the world has followed. The designation “www,” which English speakers recognize as an abbreviation of “World Wide Web,” is awkward in other languages, most of which do not have an equivalent sound to the English w. In French, for example, w is pronounced “doo-blah-vay.”



▲ FIGURE 5-50 LANGUAGES OF ONLINE SPEAKERS English remains the most widely used language on the Internet, but Chinese is growing more rapidly.

The U.S.-based Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN) has been responsible for assigning domain names and for the suffixes following the dot, such as “com” and “edu.” Domain names in the rest of the world include a two-letter suffix for the country, such as “fr” for France and “jp” for Japan, whereas U.S.-based domain names don't need the suffix. Reflecting the globalization of the languages of the Internet, ICANN agreed in 2009 to permit domain names in characters other than Latin. Arabic, Chinese, and other characters may now be used.

U.S.-based companies provide the principal search engines for Internet users everywhere. U.S.-based Google was used for 83 percent of all searches worldwide in 2011. Google, which offers search engines in languages other than English, was heavily criticized when its Mandarin-language Google.cn was designed to block web sites that China's government deemed unsuitable. A distant second was another U.S.-based company, Yahoo!, with 6 percent. A Chinese-language service Baidu was in third place in 2011, at 5 percent worldwide.

Pause and Reflect 5.4.4

Go to the home page of Google in a language other than English. How similar or different does it appear from the familiar English version?

CHECK-IN: KEY ISSUE 4

Why Do People Preserve Local Languages?

- ✓ Some countries peacefully embrace multiple languages.
- ✓ Some languages survive in isolation from others, while some languages become extinct.
- ✓ Some endangered languages are being preserved.
- ✓ English has increasingly become the world's most important lingua franca, but Mandarin is catching up.