

Document 1 – Adapted from Andrés Martinez, www.zocalopublicsquare.org, 2014

Mark Zuckerberg recently score points during his visit to Beijing when he made some remarks in Mandarin. The news sparked¹ talk about whether China's economic rise means Mandarin could someday rival English as a global language. Don't count on it. Fluency in Mandarin will always be helpful for foreigners doing business in China, much like mastery of Portuguese will give you a leg up ²in Brazil. But Mandarin poses no threat to English as the world's bridge language [...].

The odds³ against a Chinese dialect ever gaining traction as an international language are formidable, for linguistic, economic, cultural and political reasons. For starters, the language is just too hard for outsiders to attain fluency. Then there is the inconvenient fact that Mandarin doesn't hold sway⁴ throughout all of China.

Indeed, resistance to any claim the Chinese language may have for global status may be strongest in the country's own neighbourhood, where nations are nervous about China's intentions. [They] are far more comfortable with America than with China as regional superpower.

Document 2 – www.theconversation.com, November 2015

One way of predicting the future is to look back at the past. The global role English plays today [...] has parallels in the Latin of pre-modern Europe.

[...]Classical Latin was kept alive as a standard written medium throughout Europe long after the fall of Rome. But the Vulgar Latin used in speech continued to change, forming new dialects which in time gave rise to modern Romance languages: French, Spanish, Portuguese, Romanian, Italian.

Similar developments may be traced today in the use of English around the globe, especially in countries where it functions as a second language. [...] Despite the Singaporean government's attempts to promote the use of Standard British English [...] the mixed language known as "Singlish" remains the variety spoken on the street and in the home. [...] So the future of English is one of multiple Englishes.

[...] Today the largest concentration of native speakers is in the US and the influence of US English can be heard throughout the world [...]. In the future, to speak English will be to speak US English. US spellings such as *disk* and *program* are already preferred to British equivalents *disc* and *programme* in computing.

[...] In the online world, attitude to consistency and correctness are considerably more relaxed: variant spellings are accepted and punctuation marks omitted. [...] The fast-changing world of social media is also responsible for the coining and spreading of neologisms or "new words". [...]

Clipped forms, acronyms, blends and abbreviations have long been productive methods of word formation in English [...] but the huge increase in such coinages means that they will be far more prominent in the English of 2115.

¹ Lead to

² help

³ probability

⁴ influence

Document 1

1. What aspects of China make people say that Mandarin could be the next global language?
2. Quote one sentence that shows that Mandarin has no chance to be a global language.
3. In your own words, list the 3 reasons why Mandarin is not a threat to English.
4. TRUE or FALSE. Answer and quote.
 - a. Brazil is worried about Mandarin as a global language.
 - b. China's neighbours want America as the main power in the world.
5. In your own words, explain why Mandarin could be helpful.

Document 2

6. What are the two kinds of Latin? What are the differences between them?
7. What is Singlish?
8. TRUE or FALSE. Answer and quote.
 - a. The government of Singapore wants to make Singlish one of its official languages.
 - b. A majority of people around the world today use American English instead of British English.
 - c. Facebook, WhatsApp or Twitter, for example, are responsible for the creation of new words.
9. What are the differences between American English and British English?
10. In your own words, give 3 influences of the internet on English.
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