

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 **Franglais**, 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 du 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 Franglais 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 sandwichs*).

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 *chores*, 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 lenguajes*.

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 English 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

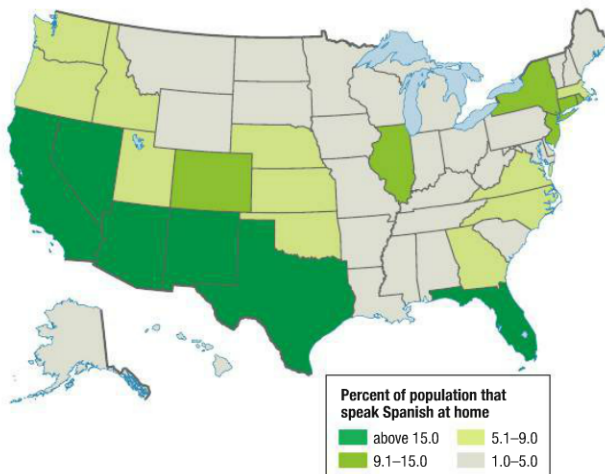
Understand the role of Spanish and French in North America.

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.

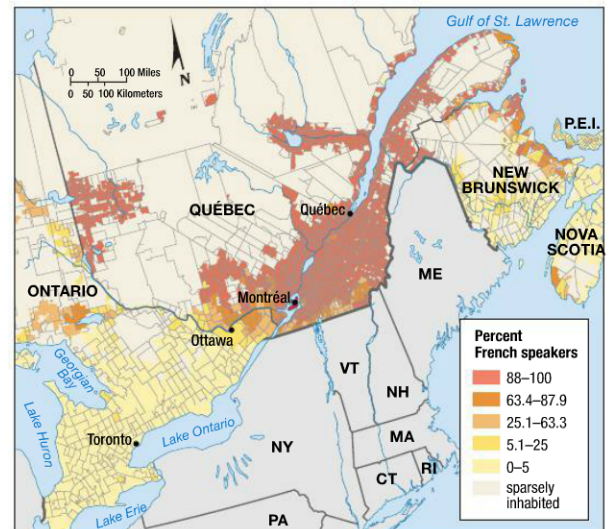
time, the increasing use of other languages in the United States is a reminder of the importance that groups place on preserving cultural identity and the central role that language plays in maintaining that identity.

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.

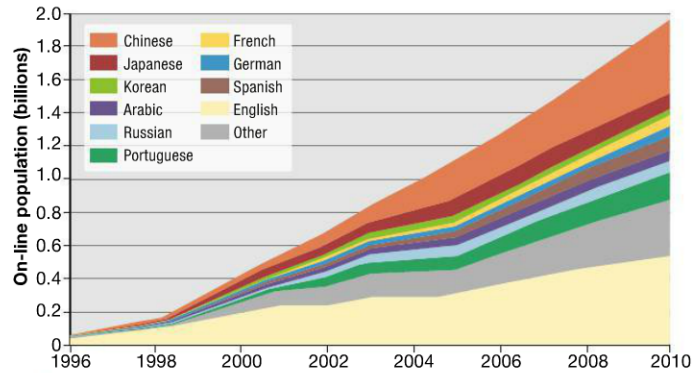
Although French dominates over English, Québec faces a fresh challenge of integrating a large number of immigrants from Europe, Asia, and Latin America who don't speak French. Many immigrants would prefer to use English rather than French as their lingua franca but are prohibited from doing so by the 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, it is pronounced “doo-bleh-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.

Summary and Review

KEY ISSUE 1

Where Are Languages Distributed?

Languages can be classified as belonging to particular families. Some families are divided into branches and groups.

LEARNING OUTCOME 5.1.1 Name the largest language families.

- The two largest language families are Indo-European and Sino-Tibetan.

LEARNING OUTCOME 5.1.2: Identify the names and distribution of the two largest language families.

- Indo-European is the predominant language family of Europe, Latin America, North America, South Asia, and South Pacific. Sino-Tibetan is the predominant language family of East Asia.

LEARNING OUTCOME 5.1.3: Identify the names and distribution of the largest language families in addition to Indo-European and Sino-Tibetan.

- In addition to Indo-European and Sino-Tibetan, most of the world's remaining major language families are centered in Asia.

THINKING GEOGRAPHICALLY 5.1: What features of the Sino-Tibetan family make it especially difficult to learn to speak and to write the languages?

GOOGLE EARTH 5.1: Asakusa Shin-Nakamise is a shopping area in Tokyo. What are examples of English-language signs in the area?



Key Terms

Creole, or creolized language (p. 163) A language that results from the mixing of a colonizer's language with the indigenous language of the people being dominated.

Denglish (p. 175) A combination of German and English.

Dialect (p. 158) A regional variety of a language distinguished by vocabulary, spelling, and pronunciation.

Ebonics (p. 174) A dialect spoken by some African Americans.

Extinct language (p. 166) A language that was once used by people in daily activities but is no longer used.

Franglais (p. 174) A term used by the French for English words that have entered the French language; a combination of *français* and *anglais*, the French words for *French* and *English*, respectively.

Isogloss (p. 158) A boundary that separates regions in which different language usages predominate.

Isolated language (p. 166) A language that is unrelated to any other languages and therefore not attached to any language family.

Language (p. 143) A system of communication through the use of speech, a collection of sounds understood by a group of people to have the same meaning.

KEY ISSUE 2

Why Is English Related To Other Languages?

English is in the Germanic branch of the Indo-European language family. Nearly one-half of humans currently speak a language in the Indo-European family. All Indo-European languages can be traced to a common ancestor.

LEARNING OUTCOME 5.2.1: Learn the distribution of the Germanic and Indo-Iranian branches of Indo-European.

- The four largest branches of Indo-European are Indo-Iranian, Romance, Germanic, and Balto-Slavic.

LEARNING OUTCOME 5.2.2: Learn the distribution of the Balto-Slavic and Romance branches of Indo-European.

- Balto-Slavic predominates in Eastern Europe, Romance in Southern Europe and Latin America, Germanic in Northern Europe and North America, and Indo-Iranian in South Asia and Central Asia.

LEARNING OUTCOME 5.2.3: Understand the origin and diffusion of English.

- English is a Germanic branch language because German-speaking tribes invaded England more than 1,500 years ago. Romance branch words entered English after French-speaking Normans invaded England nearly 1,000 years ago.

LEARNING OUTCOME 5.2.4: Understand the two theories of the origin and diffusion of Indo-European.

- Indo-European originated before recorded history; two competing theories disagree on whether origin and diffusion occurred primarily because of conquest or agriculture.

THINKING GEOGRAPHICALLY 5.2: Should the United States make English the official language? Why or why not? Should more than one language be made official? If so, which ones?

GOOGLE EARTH 5.2: Fly to Kutuluk, Russia, near the northern shore of the Caspian Sea and switch to ground-level view. Does the ancient homeland of the Kurgan warriors appear flat or mountainous? Grasslands or forests?



Language branch (p. 143) A collection of languages related through a common ancestor that existed several thousand years ago. Differences are not as extensive or as old as with language families, and archaeological evidence can confirm that the branches derived from the same family.

Language family (p. 143) A collection of languages related to each other through a common ancestor long before recorded history.

Language group (p. 143) A collection of languages within a branch that share a common origin in the relatively recent past and display relatively few differences in grammar and vocabulary.

Lingua franca (p. 172) A language mutually understood and commonly used in trade by people who have different native languages.

Literary tradition (p. 143) A language that is written as well as spoken.

Logogram (p. 146) A symbol that represents a word rather than a sound.

KEY ISSUE 3

Why Do Individual Languages Vary Among Places?

A dialect is a regional variation of a language.

LEARNING OUTCOME 5.3.1: Describe the main dialects in the United States.

- U.S. English is divided into four main dialects. Differences can be traced to patterns of migration to the American colonies from various parts of England.

LEARNING OUTCOME 5.3.2: Understand the main ways that British and U.S. English dialects vary

- British and American dialects vary by vocabulary, spelling, and pronunciation.

LEARNING OUTCOME 5.3.3: Understand why it is sometimes difficult to distinguish between a language and a dialect.

- The distinction is often based on political decisions rather than the actual characteristics of the languages or dialects.

THINKING GEOGRAPHICALLY 5.3: Based on a comparison of Figure 5-23 center and right, which dialects are forecast to expand, and which are expected to contract by 2030? What geographic factor would account for this changing distribution?

GOOGLE EARTH 5.3: *Circus*, such as Piccadilly Circus in London, is an example of a British word that differs from American usage. The name *Piccadilly* can be traced to a house by that name built around 1612 by Robert Baker, a tailor who had a shop that sold stiff collars known as *piccadills*. Based on the feature visible here in the middle of Piccadilly Circus what would be the American equivalent of a *circus*?



Official language (p. 143) The language adopted for use by the government for the conduct of business and publication of documents.

Pidgin language (p. 173) A form of speech that adopts a simplified grammar and limited vocabulary of a lingua franca; used for communications among speakers of two different languages.

Received Pronunciation (RP) (p. 160) The dialect of English associated with upper-class Britons living in London and now considered standard in the United Kingdom.

Spanglish (p. 174) A combination of Spanish and English spoken by Hispanic Americans.

Standard language (p. 160) The form of a language used for official government business, education, and mass communications.

Vulgar Latin (p. 155) A form of Latin used in daily conversation by ancient Romans, as opposed to the standard dialect, which was used for official documents.

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KEY ISSUE 4

Why Do People Preserve Local Languages?

English has become the most important language for international communication in culture and business.

LEARNING OUTCOME 5.4.1: Understand how several countries peacefully embrace more than one language.

- Switzerland, Belgium, and Nigeria have varying approaches to multilingual societies.

LEARNING OUTCOME 5.4.2: Understand what is meant by an isolated language and an extinct language.

- Thousands of languages once in use are now extinct. Some isolated languages survive that are unrelated to any other.

LEARNING OUTCOME 5.4.3: Understand why the number of Celtic speakers has declined and how the languages are being preserved.

- Celtic languages are being preserved through the efforts of advocacy groups and government agencies.

LEARNING OUTCOME 5.4.4: Understand the concept of a lingua franca.

- A lingua franca is a language of international communication.
- English is currently the world's most widely used lingua franca.

LEARNING OUTCOME 5.4.5: Understand how English has diffused to other languages.

- English is being combined with other languages, such as French and Spanish.

LEARNING OUTCOME 5.4.6: Understand the role of Spanish and French in North America.

- French is widely used in Canada, especially in Québec. Spanish is widely used in the United States.

THINKING GEOGRAPHICALLY 5.4: Because of Québec's French language and culture, some in the province have advocated Québec's separating from Canada and becoming an independent nation. Is a monolingual nation preferable to a bilingual one? State your argument for or against Québec's independence.

GOOGLE EARTH 5.4: Fly to 47 Mostyn St, Llandudno, Wales. In what language are most of the shop signs? In what language are most of the street signs and the sign in front of the church?



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