



ICOPROMO

Intercultural competence for professional mobility
*Compétence interculturelle pour le développement
de la mobilité professionnelle*



I speak English, I am literate

Sense-making

Rationale

The term ‘global language’ has triggered heated debates. The activity encourages participants to explore the need and role of a global language. Nowadays, many people, especially in the world of business, technology, and even academia accept English as the global language. However, they fail to critically examine the implications of this development regarding the amount of power exerted on native speakers of other languages.

Learning Outcome

Participants should be able to define the term ‘global language’ and realise the amount of power that is automatically conferred to native / near native speakers of a global language.

Competences:

Raising awareness about the role of a global language, particularly English, in intercultural and international communication.
Identifying and understanding prevalent values, beliefs and norms

Time

- 50 minutes:
- Warm-up: 5 minutes.
 - Theoretical introduction and reading of quotations: 5 minutes.
 - Table completion and discussion of issues: 30 minutes.
- Final group discussion: 10 minutes.

Participants

Up to 25

Materials required

Handout with the theoretical introduction and tables included in the worksheet below.
Blackboard or flipchart.



Procedure

1. Introduce this activity by writing 'The status of English as a global language' on the blackboard or flipchart.
2. Participants receive the handout and read the quotations.
3. In groups of 4, they discuss their ideas related to a global language based on the questions on the worksheet. They are invited to summarise their arguments by jotting down keywords of the issues discussed. The facilitator monitors the discussion by spending a few minutes with each group.
4. In groups of 4 participants raise the issue of English as a global language and fill in the second table on the advantages and disadvantages of English as a global language. The facilitator listens in on the discussions and helps the groups move along by picking up or throwing cues.
5. Discuss interesting findings with the whole class.

References

- Breidbach, S. 2003. *Plurilingualism, Democratic Citizenship in Europe and the Role of English*. Strasbourg: Council of Europe. Retrieved from: <http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/linguistic/Source/BreidbachEN.pdf>
- Corbett, J. 2003. *An Intercultural Approach to English Language Teaching*. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters.
- Crystal, D. 1997. *English as a Global Language*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Phillipson, R. 1992. *Linguistic Imperialism*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.



Handout

I SPEAK ENGLISH, I AM LITERATE

Reflect upon the status of English as an international language. The quotations below can give you some food for thought.

A language becomes an international language for one chief reason: the political power of its people (Crystal, 1997)

The near monopoly English enjoys in the world's information-driven economy disenfranchises at least as many as it empowers (Corbett, 2003)

The significance of English today is comparable to that of reading and writing in the age of industrialization (Breidbach, 2003)

The dominance of English is asserted and maintained by the establishment and continuous reconstitution of structural and cultural inequalities between English and other languages (Definition of "Linguistic Imperialism", Phillipson, 1992)

Discuss the following aspects and summarise your arguments in the table below by jotting down keywords in connection with each issue:

- Is there a need for a global language today? Which languages would lend themselves to becoming a global language?
- Which developments have contributed to an increased need for a global language?
- English is referred to as the 'lingua franca' of the twenty-first century; however, it is reported that two thirds of the world's population are not able to speak English. Which consequences may this have on the status of individuals, cultures, and regions of the world?
- Would you consider that native speakers of a global language are in a more powerful position than others? How might this affect communication between cultures?



FEUILLE DE TRAVAIL

JE PARLE ANGLAIS, JE SUIS CAPABLE DE LIRE ET D'ECRIRE

Réfléchissez au statut de l'anglais en tant que langue internationale. Les citations (traduction par les auteurs de cette activité) ci-dessous pourront nourrir votre réflexion.

Il y a une seule raison vraie pour laquelle une langue devient une langue internationale : le pouvoir politique du peuple. (Crystal, 1997)

Dans une économie mondiale dirigée par l'information, le presque monopole de l'anglais donne autant de pouvoir qu'il en retire. (Corbett, 2003)

L'importance de l'anglais aujourd'hui est comparable à la capacité de lire et d'écrire à l'âge de l'industrialisation. (Breidbach, 2003)

La domination de l'anglais est soutenue et assurée par l'instauration et la reconstitution continue d'inégalités structurelles et culturelles entre l'anglais et d'autres langues. (Définition de « L'Impérialisme linguistique » (Phillipson, 1992)

Discutez des aspects suivants et résumez vos arguments dans le tableau ci-dessous en notant les mots clés en relation avec chaque sujet.

- a) Une langue globale est-elle nécessaire dans le monde d'aujourd'hui ? Quelles langues pourriez-vous imaginer devenir des langues globales?
- b) Quels développements ont contribué à ce besoin croissant d'une langue globale?
- c) L'anglais est regardé comme la « lingua franca » du vingt-et-unième siècle ; toutefois, on dit que les deux-tiers de la population mondiale ne sait pas parler anglais. Quelles sont les conséquences possibles de cette situation sur le statut des individus, de la culture et des régions du monde?
- d) Considérez-vous que les locuteurs natifs d'une langue globale sont dans une position plus puissante que les locuteurs des autres langues ? Comment pensez-vous que cette situation peut affecter la communication entre les cultures?

