THE SUPREMACY OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE IN COMMUNICATION AND KNOWLEDGE METAMORPHOSES AND DIMENSIONS OF MULTILINGUALISM IN THE ROMANIAN SPACE[1]

***Abstract**: English language, among other languages, is a subject with mandatory status in the Romanian education for multilingualism and multiculturalism. In the educational system and in the general reception horizon, as a tendency, English is the first foreign language in the public's options. The explanation lies in the universal prestige of the language and its global expansion today. But also in the general perception, there is an urban myth of communication that affirms the accessibility and ease of English, a myth caused by the general and daily contact with English. This myth fosters the empirical approach of English, undermining the scientific, professional and institutional learning. Consequently, the real skills in English communication are replaced by minimal or imaginary competencies. Knowledge of English requires a scientific approach, the study with the authorized support of specialists, in educational contexts. Higher education is the academic framework for the improvement of communication skills in English, in which the teaching and learning process is approached from a pragmatic perspective: specialized communication in English. In the general horizon of English language reception, a paradigm shift is needed, expressing the gnosiological and epistemological pragmatism: English must be understood not only as a communication tool, which is a narrow understanding of the language, but also as a means of access to the universe of knowledge, a way of the personal development.*

***Key words**: English, multilingualism, multiculturalism, cultural prestige, global expansion, urban myth of accessibility, empirical approach, scientific learning, specialized communication, pragmatic perspective, paradigm shift.*

Foreign Languages and Multilingualism in the Romanian Recent History

The study of foreign languages has represented a constant characteristic of the Romanian secondary and higher education since the creation of modern Romania to date.

The course of this concern for education and cultural opening was interrupted during the Soviet occupation of Romania in the '50s, the so-called "obsessive decade", when Romanian education and culture were deprived of its authentic values and shaped according to the Soviet ideology. Foreign languages of international circulation, such as English and French, were removed from the curricula, as languages of Western powers, of imperialism and capitalism, languages of systems and ideologies in total contradiction with the communist system, which was just being introduced in Romania. Together with foreign languages, Western literature was also banned and famous French and British, etc. authors were prohibited by the regime of Bolshevik origin. Western books and authors represented a danger to the new state order, to the communist ideology. The same thing happened with many Romanian writers, poets, philosophers, authors of works of metaphysic essence. Placing languages such as English and French to the disgrace of totalitarian ideology was accompanied by the supremacy of Russian language, language of an important civilization and culture, used however in this context as a means of ideological indoctrination. In the field of foreign languages, Russian has become the only language studied in Romanian higher education, being

[1] Sorin Ivan, Titu Maiorescu University, Bucharest, Director, The Education Tribune, Romania, sorivan@gmail.com.

BDD-A5908 © 2011 Universitatea din Pitești
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.217.142 (2026-11-14 22:55:04 UTC)

used as a means of access to communist ideology, to the works of the communist icons, such as Lenin and Stalin, and as a means of manipulation and brain washing. Together with Russian, Soviet literature was also promoted to express the force of the propaganda and ideology. To this end, Russian Book Publishing House was set up to publish written works of Soviet authors accepted by the totalitarian regime as they served their interests. This act of putting an end to multilingual education in the Romanian space, during the first period of Soviet communism in Romania, was an abuse to a tradition of learning foreign languages in the Romanian education and to a natural process of great educational value. At the same time, this aberrant act subordinated to ideological and political interests ran counter to the vocation of the Romanian culture and society which had been open to Western culture and civilization, especially to the one of Latin origin and Neo-Romance expression, first of all, French language and culture.

Together with the ideological breakthrough of 1964, there took place a gradual departure of the regime from the ideological terror and a relative emancipation of ideology, political life, education and culture began to distance Romania from the cultural dogmatism and values imposed by the Soviets. There took place an opening, in fact a timid but real return towards Western culture and the rest of the world. In this context, at the level of the public space and education, the predominance of Russian language came to an end, in favour of languages of wide international circulation, English and French. It was thus restored the traditional preoccupation of the Romanian secondary and higher education for the study of foreign languages. Together with this return to Western languages, there ended the regime that had imposed the exclusive study of Soviet works and culture and, again, it was allowed the access to the great cultures and civilizations of Europe, even if such access was only partial considering that the regime had its ideological constraints. The publishing houses returned to the great classical authors and, in a selective manner, to the contemporary ones, printing works that had been forbidden. At the same time, foreign languages, such as English, French, German, etc. have been introduced in the curricula, from primary education to higher education, being studied on a large scale in the Romanian educational system.

Throughout the communist period, in spite of the vicissitudes of totalitarianism, the study of foreign languages has represented an element of permanence of Romanian education, which promoted a policy of multilingualism of European origin, oriented towards the West. Such an option expresses, besides its educational value, Romania's opening, through its vocation as a Latin country, towards the Western cultural and linguistic space, the constant fascination that countries like France, England, Italy, Germany have exerted throughout the history on it, irrespective of the historical developments.

After 1990, in the context of the disappearance of the totalitarian ideology, Romanian civilization, culture and education have returned to their natural options, of pro-Western orientation. Romania's accession to the European Union in 2007 represents a symbolic return of the country to the great family of Europe, on the background of the Latin origin of the Romanians and Romanian language.

Education for Multilingualism and Multiculturalism in the European Spirit

In the European Union and in Europe overall, the learning of foreign languages is a priority. The policies of the European Commission and European Council dedicated to multilingualism promote the necessity of knowing at least two languages apart from the mother tongue. This necessity has taken shape against the background of the

BDD-A5908 © 2011 Universitatea din Pitești
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.217.142 (2026-11-14 22:55:04 UTC)

European linguistic and cultural diversity, with a view to offering the European citizens common communication instruments.

In this context, the studying of foreign languages has entered a new age in the Romanian space, under the auspices of European multilingualism and multiculturalism, against the background of the globalization process. Linguistic education represents a constant concern both at the level of primary and secondary education and higher education. The process of teaching and learning foreign languages begins in the first years of primary education and goes beyond higher education by means of the programs of lifelong learning. Knowing foreign languages has become a priority promoted by the Romanian educational policies, both at the level of system and at institutional level. From the very first years of institutionalized education, foreign languages such as English, French, German are promoted in the education offer of the education institutions. Foreign languages continue to be a constant presence in the curricula of secondary education, as mandatory subject matters. Widest in scope at the level of Romanian education system are English and French. German has begun to be studied more and more also as a response to the increasing interest of the public for this language and for the space of German civilization.

It is worth mentioning that foreign languages do not represent just a priority option of the educational policies and institutional educational programs. Knowing at least two foreign languages has represented for many decades, including the communist age, but especially nowadays, a main concern for the various categories of public. Most parents pay a special heed to the multilingual education of their children, from the first phases of their training, and this remains a constant concern during the rest of the cycles of education. It is important to note that, in order to acquire the communication competencies in foreign languages, many parents resort to private lessons, which provides them a higher degree of confidence with regard to quality and efficiency. Moreover, individual training in the field of foreign languages represents a widely spread phenomenon of the Romanian educational culture. It constitutes, both with regard to foreign languages and other subject matters of interest, an educational system parallel to the official one. Studying foreign languages increases in intensity and scope as educational cycles are graduated. The Baccalaureate examination, upon the graduation from high school, includes the assessment of the communication competencies in foreign languages.

In Romanian higher education, foreign languages have become mandatory subject matters in all curricula, in the first two Bologna cycles, Bachelor's and Master's degree. Irrespective of specialization, the study of foreign languages is part of university curricula. This proves the level of heed paid to the communication competencies in foreign languages in academic education. Generally, the most commonly studied foreign languages are English and French. An increased interest is manifest at the level of young people in German, given the prospects that a good command of this language can offer in their career. The curricula of various higher education specializations are not the only academic framework that promotes teaching and learning of foreign languages. Many universities have developed foreign languages centres dedicated to teaching and learning foreign languages, addressed to internal and external clients, academic and non-academic. These centres offer a wide range of foreign languages by their educational programs and provide courses on the levels of competence set at European level. They are university institutions of multilingual education, as an answer to the increased needs and interests of the society in the field of communication. Also, the study of foreign languages exceeds the boundaries of higher education cycles and is

BDD-A5908 © 2011 Universitatea din Pitești
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.217.142 (2026-11-14 22:55:04 UTC)

extended by the lifelong learning programs offered by universities themselves or by other specialized institutions or organizations. These programs offer upon the completion of the courses certificates of linguistic competencies recognized nationally and internationally.

At social level, the interest for foreign languages has increased significantly over the last two decades also outside the educational community. The possibility of individuals to travel in Europe and in the world, the diversification of the economic activities, the development of international cooperation, all these have led to raising the awareness, at the level of individuals and organizations, of the necessity of knowing at least one foreign language, especially English. Thus, the study and knowing foreign languages have become a concern and a necessity in the more extended and diverse framework of the Society.

In the Empire of English Language

Part of the multilingual education in Romania, in the other EU countries and in the world, English has a privileged position. As a rule, against the background of the general tendency, English is the first language in the area of individual options, a language that most people would like to master. This option is valid from the first years of primary education and remains valid to the level of the undergraduate and post graduate curricula and lifelong learning modules. Especially, in the first years of multilingual education, English is doubled, as an option, by German, which is attractive by the opportunities it opens in the future. At the same time, French is faced with a visible decline, which started a few decades ago and is perpetuated. This decline in the horizon of the options of those learning foreign languages is explained by the fact that French, besides being a language of culture, with a glorious historic and cultural prestige, tends to remain limited to the francophone areas. In the rest of the world, it too remains an instrument of international communication, used especially by those that have studied it in school and have advanced competencies in the communication in French.

English, however, has expanded throughout the world, becoming a universal language, a *lingua franca* of globalization. This phenomenon has been possible because of historical, political, administrative, economic, financial, cultural causes, etc. English has expanded to wide geographical areas together with the colonies of the British Empire, from Canada to India, from British Columbia to New Zeeland, all over the world. Thus English has become a language of the administration of the new colonies, an official language and in time the second, if not the first, language of the inhabitants of these territories. We can thus consider that English has been itself a means of colonization and expansion, of exporting the institutions, models and values of the English civilization in the most remote places of the world. English has imposed itself not only as a language of a world power, but as a language of a great culture and civilization, which opens the gates of communication and knowledge to the speakers. Thus, the arguments for the expansion of English language are complex.

The conquest of the world by the English language continued in the XXth Century, especially in its second half after World War II, together with the ascension of USA to the top position in the world from a political and economic point of view. Even if it was not a real colonization, American influence has been present in most parts of the world, at political, economic, financial, military, cultural and, of course, linguistic level. Together with the expansion of the American power, English also extended to spaces that had already been Anglophone or to new spaces. The American model of

BDD-A5908 © 2011 Universitatea din Pitești
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.217.142 (2026-11-14 22:55:04 UTC)

existence and culture has exerted a special fascination to Europe, anchored in the traditional values of the civilization, and, moreover, to the entire world. An important means of exporting the American lifestyle, with its values and options, but also with its limitations, was represented by the American film industry, based in Hollywood. Together with this model, American English was exported as a means of asserting the freedom specific to the New World, as carrier of the values of the American dream. Music, an impetuous form of cultural expression, was a powerful means of disseminating English, both American and British, in the world. Such a role was also played by written culture, especially literature, but on more limited areas, especially during the cold war, which split Europe in two, by the Berlin Wall and the Iron Curtain.

A substantial contribution to the worldwide expansion of English was made by the development of information and communication technology (ICT). Satellite and cable TV, radio were also means of global dissemination of English by the news channels, political, sport, science and knowledge programs, etc. Nowadays, a key role in the global expansion of English is played by information technology and especially by the Internet. As linguistic support of these technologies, in continuous development and expansion, English is disseminated within their scope of influence, which is practically unlimited. Having English as a prevailing means of expression and communication, the Internet is the most important means of its promotion at global level, beyond any borders, except the ideological ones (which still isolate certain countries in the world), that are growing less and less. The Internet is the modern technological means of continuing the global expansion of English, of promoting the existential and cultural values and models expressed by it, as quintessence of a great world power, from a political, economic, financial, cultural etc. point of view, the Anglo-American civilization.

Part of this impetuous global expansion, English is a universal language, language of globalization, spoken on all meridians, in a wide variety of instances and contexts. In favour of this stand not only its glorious history and biography, but also its intrinsic qualities. Thus, English is not only the language a of great civilization and culture, the language of Shakespeare, Edgar Allan Poe and many other famous authors, but also, at the level of contemporary reality, it proves its virtues of language with an extraordinary force of expression, unlimited stylistic and aesthetic possibilities and a fabulous vocabulary (over one million words) with comprehensive coverage, a language of modern and efficient communication. Against this background of great complexity, English is studied in most of the schools in the world, from the Northern countries to Africa, from South America to China and Japan etc., from the first phases of primary education to postgraduate education, it is the language of international organizations, of academic education and scientific research at international level, of political meetings, congresses, conferences, scientific symposia, the language of cross-border international and interpersonal communication. It is the new language of the Tower of Babel, which is made by the current world in its big diversity. Thus we can speak today of *the linguistic and cultural imperialism of English language* and of its *global supremacy*.

Under these circumstances of global expansion, English language has imposed itself and generalized in the Romanian space at the level of the educational system and in the public reception horizon. Even if, considering the diversity of options, there is an interest for other languages as well, such as German, Italian, Spanish or even Chinese, Japanese, Arabic, English is always present in personal multilingual education, being a mandatory element of it, in the sense of an objective necessity, assumed at subjective level. Thus, today we are in an apparently paradoxical situation where a Francophone

BDD-A5908 © 2011 Universitatea din Pitești
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.217.142 (2026-11-14 22:55:04 UTC)

country such as Romania, by its Latin origin and neo-Romance language, by its history, culture and civilization, has become, in the globalization age, an Anglophone country. The same metamorphosis happens with the Romanians, who turned, in their vast majority, into Anglophones.

Real Competencies, Imaginary Competencies of Communication in English

English is spoken today on all meridians of the world by a wide diversity of speakers and at different levels of competence. According to statistics, the number of English speakers exceeds one billion. At global level, English is the most used communication instrument by speakers from various nations, civilizations, cultures, each with their languages, values and models, an instrument that ensures a pragmatic and efficient communication, a language with a wide lexical and semantic scope.

In the Romanian space, the expansion of English has an objective and subjective basis. The objective explanation consists in the fact that English is a live language, with a wide area or coverage, promoted by all channels, by media, especially by the foreign and Romanian television channels (movies, music, entertainment, documentary films, etc.). A way of promotion with a very wide addressability is the Internet. The subjective explanation translates the way of receipting English by its speakers or potential speakers: a language associated to great powers, cultures and civilizations, a prestigious language, spoken all over the world, a successful language that offers humanity a common communication instrument, powerful, expressive and pragmatic. English is a *cool* language, a *trendy* language for most young people, but also for older generations. Its *omnipresence* and *omnipotence* are two attributes that define the reception framework of English in the Romanian space and explains its priority statute in the area of multilingualism.

With regard to English, as proper communication instrument in the Romanian space, in the context of social diversity, the communication competencies in English fall within the scope of a wide area of diversity. In this respect, there is an *institutional, scientific and professional approach* and also an *empirical, popular* one, which has to do more with urban culture. In the first case, as seen above, English is studied as mandatory discipline in the area of multilingual education, from the first years of school age to the completion of postgraduate studies and after that, and also, at the level of the programs and modules of lifelong learning. In the education system, English is studied scientifically, the teaching-learning process being ensured by a specialized teaching staff. At the level of higher education, the foreign languages courses in the various curricula aim at acquiring by the students of the communication competencies necessary to their development in the realm of training, academic education and scientific research, for their professional qualification and integration in Romania, European Union and in the World. The same objectives are pursued also by the foreign languages courses organized under the lifelong learning programs, which are conducted also with authorized staff, either within higher education, or outside it. The competencies of communication in English (or in another foreign language) are attested by a linguistic competence certificate, a linguistic passport that opens the holder the way to mobility, collaborations and scientific and professional development at international level. These approaches are under the auspices of multilingual scientific and professional education.

There is, however, also an empiric approach to English language, at the wider level of society. The extension and omnipresence of English, by all media, have imposed it to the public conscience as an active presence, a communication instrument

BDD-A5908 © 2011 Universitatea din Pitești
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.217.142 (2026-11-14 22:55:04 UTC)

that is part of the day-to-day existence, at various levels and for various purposes. Being a live and extended reality in the Romanian space, English language reaches various categories of public by means of the cable or satellite TV channels, movies and music, cinema and, especially, Internet. This generalized occurrence creates the idea of accessibility of English language, the impression that English is a language that everybody knows or, if they do not know well, at least they have some sort of command in it. As a result, the daily contact with English language, its image of a familiar linguistic and spiritual reality generate the impression of an accessible language. Such an image expresses, in fact, an illusion, or rather a projection than a real situation. Facts are, however, different. In most cases, the empirical and facile approach of English is associated with the minimal or imaginary competencies in the field of knowledge and communication.

An Urban Myth of Communication: Easy Use and Accessibility of English Language

English as a language available, accessible to all, that everybody knows and speaks, expresses a sort of *urban myth* in the area of communication. Such a myth promotes a false idea, at personal level, that of mastering linguistic competencies, which in fact are inexistent or minimal.

At social level, this myth launches the ungrounded and risky image of wide accessibility of English language by all categories. The myth of English as an easy use and accessible language disseminates not only a false image at individual and social level, but also presents a major risk at the level of attitude towards this language. In synthetic terms, the *popular, empirical approach* of English undermines the scientific approach, academic and professional learning. Against the background of the empiric and popular perception of English, characteristic to urban culture, learning English does not represent a priority or a challenge to multilingual training or to the reasons of general culture at the level of individuals. The false conscience of accessibility of English, by the daily contact with it (movies, music, Internet, games, etc.), reduces to a minimum the interest of a great part of the public for institutionalized learning. The empiric approach is also encountered at the extended level of the society, within its wide diversity, but also in the education system. In the various social groups where multilingualism does not have a priority position, in the context of this limitative perspective, which diminishes the interest for linguistic learning and progress, the communication competencies of the individual remain at minimum level. In the future, according to the scenarios of personal development, this deficiency in communication limits in various degrees the possibilities of personal and professional development of the respective individuals.

The urban myth of the accessibility of English language also works at the level of higher education in Romania. Many students of various study programs and specializations share this approach. This myth, applied in personal context, creates to many students the impression that they master the necessary communication competencies, in other words, that they “know” English. This is a trap in which many victims fall. As a result of this perception, which creates the illusion of knowing English, the respective individuals do not consider this a priority of education and formation. The evaluation tests prove, however, the real level of their communication competencies, both at the level of written and oral communication, poor abilities of logically conceiving and structuring the messages, difficulties of expression in English, in other words, substantial deficiencies in the command of English. The consequences

BDD-A5908 © 2011 Universitatea din Pitești
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.217.142 (2026-11-14 22:55:04 UTC)

of this approach are important in order of seriousness at the level of communication competencies in English and hence at the level of access to knowledge. The limited, precarious or minimum abilities of communication in English directly and substantially affect the process of education and formation of students, of their specialization and qualification, professional and personal development.

The Need for Real Competencies in English

It is true that the extended occurrence of English at the level of life and communication, its generalized extension and impact on the society creates a special familiarity of the public with this language. But this contact, even if it is constant, mainly remains an empirical one and does not necessarily lead to learning English. At the most, we can talk about a superficial learning, from the outside, not from the inside of the linguistic phenomenon, of lexical notions, words used at a general level and simple morphological structures, of verbal nature. As a result, these are minimum competencies, achieved incidentally, which allow but a rudimentary communication at the level of a few terms with universal impact that have as an associated support both para-verbal and non-verbal communication. However, an individual in the Knowledge Society should set higher objectives in the field of multilingual communication. That is why the urban myth of easy use and accessibility of English language should be combatted.

There is, in this context, an objective difficulty in knowing English, with explanations that have to do with history and system. At social level, older generations do not have the necessary language notions to ensure them the necessary communication competencies, often not even at elementary phases. This situation is explained by the fact that most people belonging to these generations either attended school during the period of ideological dogmatism, when Western foreign languages were expelled from school (see supra), or studied other languages during their education, such as French or Russian. There is still another explanation which refers to a certain inconsistency and superficiality of studying foreign languages in school. This phenomenon has to do with a certain mentality, a way of perceiving and approaching foreign languages in high school and even in higher education. There is, consequently, a break between generations at the level of communication competencies in English. If younger generations have a certain degree of familiarity of English and possess various communication skills, older generations, as a rule (with exceptions, of course), have difficulties in understanding and speaking English.

At the general level of linguistic addressability, the arguments in favour of knowing English need to refer to its position of universal communication instrument and a means of access to the universe of knowledge. For the acquisition of the communication competencies necessary to reaching these two major goals, the optimal framework of multilingual preparation and education is the scientific and professional learning under the authority of the experts in the field of English. This authorized framework is offered by the institutionalized forms of learning, the secondary and higher education systems and the lifelong learning forms. The empirical approach, superficial knowledge, rudimentary and incoherent communication do not cover the necessities of the today's individual, at personal and professional levels. These necessities are increasing in the context of the European Union and nowadays world, a context defined by the primordial role played by education, especially by higher education, in building Europe of Knowledge, according to the Europe 2020 Strategy, by

BDD-A5908 © 2011 Universitatea din Pitești
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.217.142 (2026-11-14 22:55:04 UTC)

the internalization of the economic environment and labour market, by international cooperation, social mobility, free circulation of labour force in Europe and in the world.

A Pragmatic Approach in Higher Education – Specialized Communication in English

Studying English and foreign languages in general in the higher education system in Romania, in the context of the education reform at European level, has taken a pragmatic turn. In the curricula, the study of foreign languages is conducted under the aegis of *specialized communication*, in various specializations. Thus English is studied in the framework of the discipline *Specialized Communication in English,* which has a mandatory regime. Foreign languages are mandatory disciplines in all study programs and curricula, irrespective of specialization. This presence at extended curricular and institutional scale proves the importance given to foreign languages in academic education, in the professional formation and qualification of the students and graduates.

Against the background of studying English, part of the teaching learning process, the focus is on approaching the specialized notions, at conceptual and terminological level. These notions are integrated and used in acts of communication, written and oral, in complex and diversified approaches, related to the diversity of the possible cases and scenarios in the professional and scientific development of the students. It is worth noting that focusing on the specialty domain does not rule out approaching the study of language from the classical perspective of morphology and syntax, of translations and the other types of exercises common to teaching and learning English. But this specialization of communication in English aims at familiarizing the students with the field of expertise, with facilitating the student's acquiring specific communication competencies, necessary in higher education, in their professional qualification and career development.

Education, scientific and professional formation of students can no longer be conceived today without the contribution of foreign languages. Knowing English, given the world expansion of this language, is a valuable support to any student in the process of academic education and scientific research. A good command of English opens to the students the possibility of communicating freely in various contexts related to the higher education, to develop European and international cooperation in education and research. An important benefit presented by the communication competencies in English refers to the possibilities opened to students of participating into academic mobility, in stages and modules of study or scientific research in foreign universities, into European and international projects and programs, in events such as congresses, conferences, scientific symposiums, etc. At the same time, the linguistic competencies in English offer the students, but also the teaching and research staff, access to scientific resources, information, data, bibliographies in the specialization domain and also in related domains, inter- and trans- disciplinary. English is a means of information, documentation and study, a way of access to science and knowledge of outstanding epistemological value. This is possible by the fact that most of the universal knowledge, certainly the most important part of it, from all domains of existence, is written in English, on printed or soft support.

Knowing English offers the students and graduates possibilities of continuing studies by attending Master's degrees or Doctoral studies in prestigious universities of the world, or of development in the field of international scientific research. Also, the competencies of communication in English, a language spoken in the European Union, in Europe and throughout the world, support the graduates to integrate into the labour

BDD-A5908 © 2011 Universitatea din Pitești
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.217.142 (2026-11-14 22:55:04 UTC)

market in Romania (considering the presence of multinational companies, banks, foreign companies, etc.) and abroad, to develop professionally in their careers and personally. Linguistic proficiency in English thus offers the graduates the possibility to actively access the success scenarios configured at personal level and to intelligently integrate in the desired careers.

In these terms, higher education, a space of scientific multilingual education, offers an example of a professional, specialized way in which foreign languages, in this context English, need to be studied, as against the empirical approaches, which have to do with urban myths. Also, the analysis of teaching-learning English in higher education offers a pragmatic perspective of the benefits which the linguistic competencies in English bring to education, research, qualification, specialization, integration and progress in career, in other words in scientific, professional and personal development. Knowledge Society needs real competencies of communication in English, at the highest levels.

A paradigm shift in the perception of English language

Also in the spirit of a pragmatic vision, English language should be undertaken and addressed, at individual level, as a subjective necessity, as a personal priority in order of training and becoming. A practical approach to existence and knowledge, in terms of communication and multilingualism, quickly understands the benefits of primary importance that English language brings. These benefits are both existential, but also gnosiological, through the complex nature of language as a communication instrument and knowledge means. Thus, as pointed out above, English is currently a language spoken worldwide, a universal language, a *lingua franca* of humanity. Knowing English opens the doors of communication, allows the user to communicate directly, in various contexts, with speakers from all over the world. From a pragmatic point of view, knowledge of English is an instrument of training and development through the communication skills, through the opportunities open to developing a social and professional network (in the spirit of the concept of *networking* in communication sciences), which supports progress at individual level.

The same pragmatic vision brings into focus not only the depiction of the English language as a communication tool, with planetary coverage, but also another essential quality of it: means of knowledge. It is a quality not sufficiently emphasized and valued, while priority is given to English as a communication tool. If we look at English from the perspective of knowledge, we come to understand a fundamental truth: English is the way of access to a virtually infinite universe, the ever expanding universe of knowledge. First, English is the language that expresses the knowledge produced by the science, culture, education, spirituality, art, etc. of the English and American civilizations, two of the most advanced on a global scale, but also of other nations and cultures which have English as mother tongue. Such nations have a large planetary coverage: from Canada to Australia and New Zealand etc. But the cultural authority and scientific prestige of English have made it the language of science, culture, art, technology of the entire humanity, the international language of human innovation and creativity, the language of universal knowledge. In this context, at present, bibliographies of all areas, from science to art, from religion to information technology, research results in all areas, information and scientific data bases, in a word, human knowledge resources are accessible in English, in print or in virtual form. The person possessing communication skills in English, who masters Shakespeare's and

BDD-A5908 © 2011 Universitatea din Pitești
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.217.142 (2026-11-14 22:55:04 UTC)

globalization's language, has a huge advantage in the great adventure of knowing and becoming, and, at the same time, every chance to develop personally.

English language combines in itself two fundamental qualities: communication tool and means of knowledge. Communication leads to knowledge, and knowledge needs communication to be disseminated globally. English needs to be presented and promoted in this context of high complexity, from a modern perspective, of communication and cognition pragmatism. Such an approach would correct a certain perception of it, tributary to some prejudices and urban myths, limiting it to the quality of communication tool, relatively accessible to masses of speakers. At the same time, the complexity and pragmatism perspective on the English language would lead to the awareness of its paramount importance in our existence and culture becoming. Such a paradigm shift in the reception horizon of English would lead people progressively to assume English as a necessity and priority at the individual level, as a fundamental discipline in a subjective existential curriculum that transcends the borders of academic education and expresses the priorities of the personal education, training and becoming.

Conclusions: A path of personal becoming

We live in a time of multiculturalism and multilingualism, in a globalizing world. The European Union has proposed to build an era of the New Humanism, built on the principle of unity in diversity and human values. The experience of totalitarian ideologies, which, among other radical measures, would prohibit the study of Western languages, cultures and civilizations, has become, for more than two decades, a dark chapter of modern history. The Romanian civilization area broke away, like other former communist countries, of this obscure remembrance and opened, even before the fall of communism, to the multicultural knowledge and to multilingualism.

In the context of contemporary developments and changes, English has become the universal language of humanity, the language of the globalized world. In the Romanian space, English enjoys a privileged place in the public reception and in the education system. English is ubiquitous in the Romanian existential and educational space, in a wide range of forms and manifestations, from communication tool to a means of knowledge. As a means of universal expression, English is promoted through the media, i.e. channels and programs of television and radio, printed and online publications (books, magazines), through games and music, via the internet, specifically through search engines like Google, through information sites like Wikipedia, by social networks like Facebook, through blogs, email, chat, etc. By the contribution of the information technology, English has a wide coverage area. In the Romanian educational system, from early education to post-graduate education and lifelong learning, English is studied as a compulsory subject, as a continuous process, for students to acquire communication skills necessary in the multilingual European and international space.

In terms of receiving and approaching English language in the social horizon some changes are required. First, at the level of individual and collective mentality, with a fairly extensive area of action, there exists the idea that English is a language accessible to all, even without studying it at institutional level. This urban myth is based on the impression that the omnipresence of English in the existence areas and the extended contact with it automatically leads to the achievement of the necessary linguistic skills for communication in English. Such a belief, which expresses an illusion, must be fought against with a solution necessary to multilingual education: the need that English should be studied at scientific and professional level on a large scale. Promoting English language from this perspective will lead progressively to a change of

BDD-A5908 © 2011 Universitatea din Pitești
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.217.142 (2026-11-14 22:55:04 UTC)

mentality in the reception horizon. In the areas of professional specialization, there is also a need for specialized communication skills in English. Therefore, a process that must be developed, essentially pragmatic, is the specialization of the communication skills through specialized communication in English at the university level. It is an approach that exists, but it must be emphasized and developed within a stronger and more coherent relationship with the labor market. At the overall level of promotion and study of English, a fundamental necessity refers to a paradigm shift in the reception horizon of English. According to this view, which refers to the gnosiological and epistemological pragmatism, English language should not be understood in a restrictive manner, only as a communication tool, but also must be received and dealt with as a means of knowledge, as a way to access the unlimited universe of knowledge. Regarded and valued this way, in the metamorphosis created by the new paradigm of reception, English, more than an instrument of communication, becomes a means of education, training, accumulation of knowledge, a path of personal becoming.

Bibliography

Ammon, Ulrich (ed.) (2001). *The Dominance of English as a Language of Science. Effects on the Non-English Languages and Language Communities*. Berlin/ New York, Mouton de Gruyter.

Bartels, N. (Ed.) (2004). *Applied linguistics and language teacher education*. New York: Springer.

Burns, A. and C. Coffin (eds.) (2001), *Analysing English in a Global Context: A Reader*. London:Routledge

Cheshire, J. (ed.) (1991), *English Around the World: Sociolinguistic Perspectives.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

Corbett, J. (2003). *An intercultural approach to English language teaching*. Languages for intercultural communication and education, 7. Clevedon, England: Multilingual Matters.

Crystal, D. (2001), *Language and the Internet,* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

Crystal, D. (2003), *English as a Global Language* (2nd ed.)*. Cambridge*: Cambridge University Press

Crystal, David (2003). *The Cambridge encyclopedia of the English language* (2nd ed.), Cambridge University Press.

Jenkins, Jennifer (2007), *English as a Lingua Franca: Attitude and Identity*. Oxford: Oxford University Press

Kelly, M. et al. (2004). *European Profile for Language Teacher Education. A Frame of Reference*. University of Southampton & EC DG Education & Culture.

Kelly, M. et al. (2002). *The Training of Teachers of a Foreign Language: Developments in Europe*. A Report to the European Commission. Directorate General for Education and Culture.

Malchers, G. and P. Swan (2003), *World Englishes*. London: Arnold

Mair, C. (ed.) (2003), *The Politics of English as a World Language*. Amsterdam: Rodopi

McArthur, T. (2002), *The Oxford Guide to World English*. Oxford: Oxford University Press

McKay, S. (2002), *Teaching English as an International Language*. Oxford: Oxford University Press

Phan, L. H. (2008). *Teaching English as an international language: Identity, resistance and negotiation*. Clevedon, UK: Multilingual Matters.

Schneider, Edgar (2007), *Postcolonial English: varieties around the world*. Cambridge University Press.

BDD-A5908 © 2011 Universitatea din Pitești
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.217.142 (2026-11-14 22:55:04 UTC)