

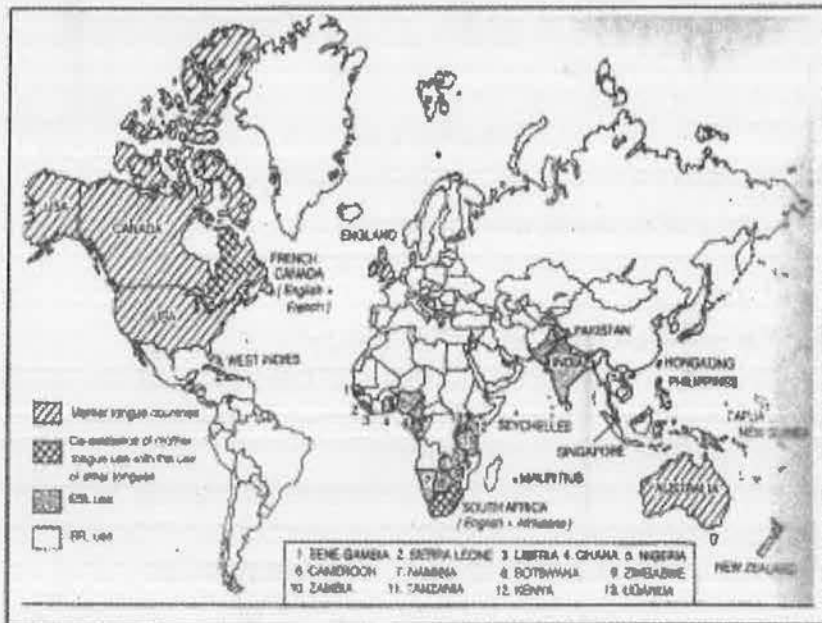
Chapter 6

English as a World Language

The most widely used language in the world today is English. This does not mean that it has the largest number of native speakers; Chinese enjoys this privilege. But English is spoken over a much larger area of the world than Chinese. Indeed, there is hardly any country in the world which does not use English as one of these forms:

- mother tongue or first language (L_1)
- second language (L_2)
- foreign language (FL)

English is used as a mother tongue or first language in the UK, USA, Ireland, Canada, Australia, New Zealand and South Africa. These countries are generally called the mother tongue countries. English is also used as an L_1 by the Anglo-Indian community of India.



The Spread of English in the world

English is used as a second language in many Asian and African countries such as India, Singapore, Malaysia, Nigeria, Namibia, Botswana, etc. In these countries, English is recognised as the second official language.

Again, English is widely used and studied as a foreign language in many non-English countries such as China, Japan, UAE, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Iraq, Eritrea, France, Germany, Switzerland, Mexico, Brazil etc. The extent of the geographical spread of English is shown in the map.

English is a language that belongs to the whole world. It has a great literature. It is the language of science and technology, and it is used all over the world as a language of learning and communication. Many other languages are as effective as English in one or more of these fields. However, as a means of expression and communication, English is used in many more fields than most other ancient and modern languages. Today English is recognised the world over as the language of

- International trade and commerce;
- Academic and scientific writing;
- Airports; and traffic control;
- Diplomacy;
- International Sports Meets.

Indeed, as has often been suggested, English is 'a window to the world'.

Exercises

1. Complete the statements given below:

- a) is spoken over a much larger area of the world than
- b) is a 'window to the world'.
- c) English is used in China as
- d) The language of international trade and commerce is

2. Answer these questions very briefly:

1. Name four countries where English is used as mother tongue.
2. Name four countries where English is used as a second language.
3. Name four areas where English is used extensively.

