Ok, is everyone here? Good. Today I want to discuss some aspects of the English language that make it an international language. I think everyone will agree that English is the dominant world language right now. So why is that? Now there are historical reasons. Great Britain developed a large empire, for example. We can talk about that later. What I want to talk about today are aspects of the language itself. That make it suitable to be a world language. Basically, English is flexible. Mainly because it adopts words from other languages. This makes it easier, even comfortable to use.

English has always been a mix of different languages. In fact, in English, unlike in many languages, we have a word for an animal and a different word for the meat from that animal. And this is because English absorbed both the German and the French words for animals. Then they came to be used differently. So cow is from German and beef is from the French word, boeuf. Chicken is also from German, but poultry is from the French word, poulet.

You see, people find English easy to learn because the language absorbs many of their native words for things. Does everyone know what a shaman is? A type of traditional healer and priest. Now shaman is a word from a Siberian language. But English didn’t have a word for this type of person. And now we adopted the native word.

Now compare this to languages which for example use their own word, instead of using a new word, an international word like email. In French they call it electronic courier. I’m not saying that this is right or wrong. But it does make it harder for people to adopt a new language if they can’t carry anything new into it. Or have to learn entirely new words. Some people complain that their language is full of English words like computer and email. However they have to remember that English is full of words from other languages too.

Besides that, English grammar is also flexible. So once English had a subjunctive. Does anyone know what a subjunctive is? It’s a form of a verb when it is used to describe wants or desires or dreams. We have some of it in English. So we say, ‘Were I rich, I would buy a car.’ But it’s more common now to say, “If I was rich.” And that’s because the subjunctive wasn’t very popular and people stopped using it. What this means is that parts of English that are difficult. Or grammar that doesn’t make sense. It will get eliminated or replaced by something else. This doesn’t mean English is getting easier. It just means that the language evolves. It depends on who is speaking.

The most interesting part of this is this. That as more and more people learn English and use it, the language can change. So in a hundred years maybe English will have many Chinese words in it. Who knows? However it’s sure that there will still be an English language in a thousand years.

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