

English and Cultures: Crossroad or frontier?

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The international role of English has become a controversial issue and offers limited opportunities to explore in a moderate tone the positive aspects of an international and democratically widespread language.

The outcome of this language, often referred to as *American* to confirm its political and hegemonic character, is supposed to stem from the success of a military and economic empire emerging at the expense of the world cultures exhausted by comparison.

In such an environment, it might be useful to recall that the concept referred to as **multiculturalism** with its derivatives (**pluriculturalism**, **plurilingualism**, **multilingualism**, **interculturality**) emerged in countries where English held an official or national, *de facto* or *de jure* status (Canada, USA and Australia in particular).

It seems also timely to explore the potential appropriation of English by the cultures for which it has become *the other tongue*.

What is, thus, the connection between English and cultures on its "natural" territory and at the "international" level? What are these endangered cultures? What other menace - apart from a lack in foreign languages education in the USA - should one fear for the world cultures regarding this stronghold of English as the international language of communication? Are the Tools of International Communication a factor contributing to this linguistic expansion and its cultural consequences or not? Is English at the crossroads of cultures or is it a frontier?

Using countries from which the reality of multiculturalism stems out as a starting point, we will question the magnitude and extent of this opposition between a language and a concept that includes and goes beyond it.

We will also study the evolution of this debate in developing countries through an Algerian case study.

Indeed, the underpinning of a confrontation between English and culture seems to be deeply rooted in ideologies and trends related to the hope that "*another world is possible*".