Chapter V

RUSSIA, JAPAN & CHINA:
The Countries that Have Tilted the Language Balance
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Globalization has accelerated the growth of global English. The specific factors behind the dominance of English were also examined in Chapter III. But, what is striking above all is the amazing speed with which English is evolving as a global language. According to the estimate study of the British Council, the number of peoples learning English in the year 2000 was approximately a billion, and by the end of 2010 the number was expected to reach two billion. There is neither a linguistic logic nor a historical precedence that can explain this phenomenal growth.

We can identify three countries, whose interest in English learning has made a positive and convincing tilt in the language balance: they are Russia, China and Japan. Considering the huge Chinese population which is nearing 1.4 billion, even a small percentage of Chinese learners of English can make a big difference to the total of the global speakers of English; and in reality, it is not a small percentage of Chinese, who are learning English now, but a sizable population of China is already at it. Japan has been a role model for many developing and developed nations. The Japanese have also turned to the English
language now in accordance with the trend of the time; in this way, they have indirectly influenced other nations to follow suit. Similarly, Russia, after the break-up, has become a centre for English learning. Countries, loyal to Russia, have also shifted their loyalty to English, consequently. Obviously, these three countries have directly contributed to the sudden increase in the number of English learners.

**English in China**

The ancient history of India is much indebted to the Chinese scholars and travelers like Fahien, Hieun-Tsang and Itsuring, for their contact with India, which made them learn Sanskrit along with the culture of India and record them as history for the benefit of future generations. The present day Chinese in their effort to establish trade and diplomatic contacts with the rest of the world, are doing the same through the medium of global English.

In this regard, the Chinese have identified English as the right medium to achieve progress and prosperity. More than any other people they have understood the power and worth of English, viz. that the doors of opportunity are opened with a single master key – English. This explains, why China is all out as a nation, to master the Anglophone.
No doubt, India has influenced China, to a considerable extent to learn English. How? The Indian youth have been in the limelight for some time, on account of their ability to avail themselves of the opportunities outsourced from abroad, chiefly from the Anglophone countries. The Chinese realized that it was the knowledge of English that gave India a competitive edge; once the Chinese realized this fact, they were quick to implement the study of English at all levels of education. At present there are more number of persons learning English in China than in any other country, including India. The following line from *English Next* confirms this:

India has demonstrated the huge economic benefits of speaking English, but it is China which is now setting the pace of change in the region. In 2001, China decided to make English compulsory in primary schools from Grade 3. In practice, rural areas may not meet that target, whilst, big cities, such as Beijing and Shanghai, have already introduced English at Grade 1. More people are now learning English in China than in any other country. Within the formal education sector an estimated 176.7 million Chinese were studying English in 2005" (Graddol, *English Next* 95).

Apart from the learners of English, there are those who have already learnt and are using it in various fields. According to Kachru there were roughly 200 million users of English in China, even in 1995. The present policy of the
Government (making English compulsory at the primary level), will produce an average of 20 million English users, annually. Considering all these facts, "it seems possible that within a few years there would be more English speakers in China than in India" (Graddol, *English Next*, 95).

This enthusiasm for English in China is not altogether new. As stated already, even in 1995 there were 200 million English users in China. Suha Jiang, for instance, recalls her English learning experience as a middle school girl of 1970's, particularly, she recalls an English poem that was recited by every Chinese middle school student, in those days (Jiang 59):

"Long live Chairman Mao!
Long live the Communist part ..........
We are the Red Guards of Chairman Mao..
We are Commune members.
We love Chairman Mao
Down with Lin Biao
Down with Imperialism!"

She also remembers that in those days they had two hours of English classes every week, and learning English meant learning grammar; the students were not directly exposed to English as spoken in England, and they had no idea about the cultural background of this language. Now, as a teacher of English in the
Shenzhen University, she feels that interaction with the native speakers of English is a must to learn English effectively. And this may explain why there are a number of native speakers of English employed as teachers in China, today.

“The ePALS Global Community” is another project that meets this requirement – contact with the native speakers of English. It is the world’s largest and fastest growing online classroom network, connecting over 10600 schools and classrooms, 6.5 million students and educators in 191 countries. This project facilitates ‘classroom to class room’ project sharing language practice and cross cultural learning.

**Chinese-English Project**

This project is part of ePALS Global Community. Through the Chinese-English project, the students in China will be connected to 55,000 native English speaking schools from U.S., Canada, Australia, New Zealand, UK, and Ireland. This is a wonderful opportunity for the Chinese students to know more about the language, culture and any other particulars of interest. More and more Chinese students are benefiting from this project (“Chinese-English Project”).

Although the Chinese would prefer direct contact with native speakers to learn English more effectively, it is often difficult to make arrangements for this, considering the huge population, distance. In her article “Teaching English in Asia”, Susan Griffith speaks of the number of employment opportunities for
native English speakers, in China. The numbers of jobs available are far more than the number of available native speaking English teachers:

The Chinese nation is huge and hungry for the English language. For two decades there has been a flow of native speakers from the West to teach at schools.... But the past few years have seen a remarkable explosion in the private language institutes and companies, something that would have been unthinkable just a few years ago.” (Griffith 1).

According to the information provided by ‘asiatefl-site’, the position of learning/teaching English in China is just the same as reported by Griffith. According to ‘asiatefl’, the demand in China for TEFL teachers is huge. There seems to be far more jobs than teachers and the need for teachers is there in every part of the country, from Beijing to Hong Kong and from Hong Kong to Mongolia. Any qualified teacher should be able to pick and choose from a wide variety of opportunities throughout the country, in both State and private sectors.

In China, there is a ‘frenzy’ for learning English, and this is popularly known as ‘the English learning frenzy’. There are both positive as well as negative reactions from the people of China to the English language frenzy, which is taking a toll on the language and culture of China. How do the students assess the situation? As a sample we can consider the views of Mike Lee, a High School student.
According to Mike Lee, “English language training was declared to be the second most profitable business in China at the end of 2005.” And he feels that there will not be any change in the situation in 2006 also. At the same time “most Chinese students find English exceptionally difficult, and fear of English tests as much as judgement day” (Lee.1). And therefore, extra lessons are arranged at school and the anxious parents send their children to private coaching centres, Lee also says that if the schools do their work properly, there won’t be as much business for separate English language schools.

Today the importance of English is stressed to such an extent in China, that some Chinese fear that English is invading Chinese culture. Such fears and views are expressed by many writers in journals and newspapers. Chinese children have started to learn English from the third grade in Primary school, the time when they still know very little about their mother tongue. From primary school to graduate school, English is always the ‘must-be-tested subject. After graduation English will also be required for employment, promotion and professional evaluations. All these indicate, according to some Chinese, too much time spent on English.

The Yale Global Online reports the following, regarding the English language learning in China, under the title, “Is English Invading Chinese Culture?”
Xiao Zhong, a postgraduate student said that he had read nothing but English during his free time. In spite of this effort he is not satisfied with his performance in listening comprehension and Oral English.

A girl had to repeat the graduate school entrance exam five times because she had failed in English in the earlier appearances, though she had performed extremely well in her major subjects. In her words, “I had spent 80 per cent of my time in studying English.”

On the one hand English is compulsory in School, on the other hand, there is no language environment in the society.

An investigation shows, over 95 percent of Chinese college students will not use oral English in their whole lifetime nor will they read any English materials... as the number of English-Chinese experts required nationwide is after all limited (“Is English Invading Chinese Culture?”).

However, there is no indication that the Government would change its policies regarding English learning in China at least in the near future. As it is, English learning is gaining more and more prominence inspite of the difficulties experienced by both learners and teachers.
There are also Chinese critics who feel that placing increasing emphasis on learning English is to the detriment of Chinese language curriculum. Goh Sui Noi presents some of these critical views, through his article, ‘English Craze Hits Chinese language Standards’.

- The standard of spoken and written Chinese has taken a hit among students who have embraced English learning as a ticket to a better future. It is a problem that is noticed by language teachers and students.
- The marketing representative from Shanghai, who as a school student won a prize for Chinese essay writing, thinks his Chinese language ability is weaker after concentrating on English. While he regrets that he cannot speak or write Chinese as well as he once did, he is resigned to it, saying: ‘It cannot be helped.’ What was important was that his proficiency in English secured for him a job in a foreign company.
- ‘In some places, English learning is over-emphasised and some teachers are now asking if this will be a threat to the Chinese language,’ observed Beijing Normal University Professor of modern Chinese Zhou Yiming. Part of the debate was whether there was a need to learn so much English, as it was not useful locally in some instances, he said. ‘It is useful to know some English but the Chinese language should come first,’ he said (Noi 1-3).
The Chinese students start learning English, formally, from the third year in primary school. This has been the practice since 1990’s. But now some schools are introducing English from Kindergarten level, against the guidelines of the Education commission. All these are instances of over enthusiasm for English learning, as seen in China these days.

Another factor that is likely to add to the frenzy of English learning enthusiasm is the forthcoming Olympic Games. As China is getting ready to host the 2008 Olympics, preparations are being made keeping in mind the linguistic requirement of the visiting foreign athletes, officials and spectators. Committees are already set up to assign proper English names for road signs and look into other areas like museums, memorials, ancient places and all other places of tourist attraction, where English would be necessary for communication.

All this drafting work is headed by an organizer and the whole programme is known as ‘Beijing speaks Foreign Languages Programme.’ According to the organizer, “ – the move aims to offer a better language environment for foreign visitors during the 2008 Beijing Olympic and make a good international image of the city as well.” The Beijing Morning Post reported the progress made so far by the drafting committee and also invited suggestions from others (Xinhua).

The other preparations going on as part of the ground work for the 2008 Olympics are English training programmes for the bus conductors and drivers and
for the police force in China. Municipal Commission of Education is issuing certificates to those who have successfully completed their spoken English course. The Tourism Bureau of China is taking care of the training programme for Hotel staff and the like. 500 such training classes have already been organized for the hotel staff. China is not just worried about the standard of the English of the officials and departmental staff only; Beijing is also campaigning to improve citizen’s English level before the 2008 Olympics (“English Lessons”).

Graddol also speaks of the police training programme in China, as a preparation for 2008 Olympics:

Beijing is preparing for the 2008 Olympics by setting targets for each category of citizen and providing opportunities for learning. For example, 80% of police officers under 40-years-old should pass an oral English test at basic level; 6,000 police officers at intermediate level; and 300 top officers at advanced level. Shanghai, meanwhile, is looking to the World Expo in 2010 as its deadline for improving its citizen’s English language skills” (Graddol, *English Next* 95).

**The impact and implications of the English learning in China**

The extra-ordinary interest shown by the Chinese in learning English is contagious, and fast spreading to neighbouring nations. In places like Hong Kong,
Taiwan and Macao, where English already has a stronghold, the Chinese are learning English with a renewed vigour. In an article investigating the impact of English as a global language on education policies and practices in the Asia, Pacific Rim countries Nunan reports findings such as, “compulsory English lowered from Grade 5 to Grade 1 (in Taiwan), compulsory English lowered from age 13 to 9 (in Korea), English becoming increasingly significant as university entry requirement (in China) and overwhelming concern in government business sectors that Hong Kong will lose economic advantage if English language skills are not enhanced” (Nunan 594).

The Chinese living in Malaysia are also caught in the ‘English learning frenzy.’ Malaysia has introduced bilingual teaching of Mathematics and Science, in primary schools from the year 2003, i.e. these two subjects are taught both in Chinese and English while the Tamil schools in Malaysia teach these two subjects in English only. In spite of protests from parents, the Chinese schools continue this bilingual teaching.

Graddol also observes that China’s decision to make English a key part of its strategy for economic development has had a galvanizing impact on neighbouring states and regions, where the enthusiasm for English was dying:

By the end of 2005, Thailand, the Philippines, Japan, and Taiwan were all expressing grave anxiety about their national proficiency in English and had announced new educational initiatives. Thailand
announced a new teacher training programme and a switch to communicative methodology because its 1996 policy to start English at Grade 1 was failing. The Philippines are debating whether to make English the medium of education at all levels” (Graddol, *English Next* 95).

At the launch of the ‘Speak Good English Movement’, Singapore, the Minister of State for Education exhorted his countrymen to speak internationally intelligible English, and he drew their attention to what is happening in China today: “The Chinese in PRC are learning English in droves and a percentage of them are highly proficient users of the language” (Yew 1).

**A pro-English China promotes English publications**

Increase in the sale of books and other publications in English are another impact of global English. In China, in particular, book publishers seem to be running a soaring business. A lot of books are also being translated into English. The 13th Beijing International Book Fair (BIBF), was a big success according to many reports. Beijing is now acknowledged as the fourth most important book fair, behind Frankfurt, London and Book Expo America.

“More people are learning English in China than in any other country in the world. We see wonderful opportunities for English language children’s books to be used perhaps as a supplement to teaching in classrooms- full colour-large-format story books” (Watts 8).
In this regard, a look at the leading English Newspapers from China will give us another clue to the position of English in China ("Newspapers of China").

**Newspapers in English, from China:**

1. **China Daily** (English)
   
   http://www.chinadaily.net/
   
   China—Beijing Shi—Beijing; Daily
   

2. **China News Digest** (English)
   
   http://www.cnd.org/
   
   China;
   
   Features: News – National, News - International

3. **Chinese Wall Street Journal** (English)
   
   
   China—Xianggang – Hong Kong; Daily
   
   Features: Business.

4. **Inside China Today** (English)
   
   http://www.einnews.com/china
   
   China; Daily
   
   Features: Travel, Classified, Politics, News – National, Business
5. *People’s Daily* (English, Chinese, Spanish, French, Japanese)
   http://www.people.com.cn/
   China—Beijing Shi—Beijing; Daily

6. *Shanghai Daily* (English)
   http://english.eastday.com/
   China—Shanghai Shi—Shanghai; Daily
   Features: Business, News – Local.

7. *South China Morning Post* (English)
   http://www.scmp.com/
   China—China—Xianggang – Hong Kong; Daily
   Features: Features/Lifestyles, Classifieds, News – National,
   News – Local.

8. *The Standard – China’s Business Newspaper* (English)
   http://www.thestandard.com.hk/
   China; Daily
   Features: Features/Lifestyles, Entertainment, Editorial, Sports,

9. *Xinhua* (Arabic, English, Spanish, French, Russian, Japanese)
   http://www.xinhuanet.com/
   China—Beijing Shi – Beijing; Daily
   Features: Arts, Editorial, Sports, Science/Technology,
   Entertainment, Features/Lifestyles, Politics, News – National,
The place of English in Japan

Japan is making many efforts today to extend to the people of Japan the advantages of learning English. Many seminars and conferences are organized in Japan both at national and international level, in order to expose the Japanese to the global English. Of course, we may not come across millions of Japanese learning English en mass, as in the case of China, for various reasons.

For instance, we cannot assess the position of English in Japan comparing it with the situation in India. India was under the British rule for three centuries, English has got into our language, and influenced even our culture, to a very great extent. An average villager in Tamil Nadu, who had no formal education, may use quite a few English words in his usual conversation. He may not be aware of the facts that some of the frequently used words like ‘bus-stand’, ‘light’, ‘current’, ‘school’ or ‘road’ are not Tamil words but English words. This is because of our socio-political background. The background of the Japanese is different, and as such we can expect the level of the presence of Global English in Japan to be different accordingly.

Another reason for the delay and dilemma of the Japanese in introducing English at a national level could be their own earlier language policy; Japan hoped to progress through the medium of the mother tongue, rather than through English or any other foreign language. Japan was in fact, hailed by many observers, as a
country that succeeded in fostering growth and development through mother tongue. However, a cautious and calculative Japan is reconsidering its earlier stand on language policy, taking into account the impact of globalization that has necessitated the learning of English.

Being fully aware of the importance of English today, the educated and enlightened Japanese are sending their children to Standard English schools in Japan, America or England. The number of people exposed to English learning may be small in comparison to the situation in China, but the few who learn, learn it well and are quite proficient in the language. Many critics in India who oppose English medium education and propagate education in mother tongue, especially, basic education, often quote the example of Japan. As a reply to these critics, journalist George Paul has the following to say:

It is again wrong to assume that Japan, China and other countries have developed only because they used their mother tongue. In a protected socio-political environment of the last century it was not necessary to have a global reach for development. In the altered scenario of the last few decades more and more Japanese are striving to learn English. The same is true of the Chinese, Koreans and East Europeans (Paul 7).
Lessons learnt at Hiroshima Peace Memorial Park

A tourist spot that would invariably leave a lasting impression in the mind of every visitor to Japan is the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Centre. The tragedy that struck Hiroshima and Nagasaki on August 6 & 9, 1945, and the aftermath is familiar to every school student (as a part of history). The elegant memorial and the endearing inscriptions have a lasting message for the world: Peace! Peace! For God’s sake, Peace! (“Hiroshima Peace Memorial Park”)

The Epitaph

“Let all the souls here rest in peace; For we shall not repeat the evil.”

The children’s Peace Monument stands in memory of all the children who died as a result of the atomic bombing of Hiroshima (approximately, 7200). The inscription on the stone block under the monument reads: “This is our cry. This is our prayer. For building peace in this world”.

The Peace Memorial Museum contains many personal belongings of the Hiroshima victims, in distorted forms, and each piece has its own tale of sorrow to tell. The entire Peace Memorial Park is a painful reminder of the evils of war and violence, and the appeal for peace is the central theme.
A point that is particularly striking at the Peace Memorial Park is that the inscriptions are written only in English, other than Japanese. Those who read between the lines cannot miss the following points;

1. English is the language to be used while communicating with the outside world (English is the lingua franca of the world).

2. The Japanese have forgiven all those who have hurt them and caused destruction in Japan. They are willing to initiate a peace process, forgetting the past and focusing on the future, in order to establish an integrated world. (The very fact that English is used for global communication at the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Park, by itself testifies that the Japanese bear no grudge against the Americans).

Hence, the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Park is of some significance, as far as this research is concerned – it strongly substantiates the statement: **English is the most suited language for international integration and global communication.**

The history of English language learning in Japan, can be traced back to Toru Matsamoto who received formal training in the pedagogy of teaching English from the American experts, right after World War II; after his training he started teaching English to Japanese on the radio. His influence on the growth of English cannot be underestimated. Adults and children were greatly influenced by his words (McMillan 1-2).
Next, as English became the centerpiece of commerce in the expanding global economy, pressure to learn English increased – even at the grade school level. Many street signs in Japan are also written in English. Young people have grown up, influenced by English songs, English films etc. Japan is one of the very few countries that prefer to employ native speakers of English to teach them English. People who can afford send their children abroad or to language schools in Japan, staffed by native English speakers, not counting the high cost involved.

Japan has many such centres of languages learning today. Smith’s school of English is one of Japan’s premiere English teaching franchise systems, started by Mark Smith in 1996 (Smith’s School 1). The three largest schools in Japan, with branches in leading towns, are AEON (www.aeonet), GEOS (www.teaching-english-in-japan.com), and NOVA (www.teachinjapan.com).

There are many other English language schools in Japan, under the control of the government as well as private centers. ‘Job Seek Japan-online’ helps the job seekers to find the nature of English teaching jobs in Japan, the place of work and facilities provided etc. ‘Kevin’s English Schools’ is a chain of schools owned by Canadians, in the Southern Kanagawa area of Japan. ‘One World English School’ is another important school that takes care of a large number of students.
Conversation Schools

“Eikaiwa” or English Conversation schools of Japan, offers Japanese people of all age groups the opportunity to practice their English communication skills with native speakers in small classes or private lessons. Nova, Geos, Aeon and ECC are the leading conversation schools, each operating more than 200 schools across Japan. In addition, there are countless mid sized and small language schools.

JET programme

JET stand for “Japan Exchange and Teaching”, and is a government operated program that recruits non Japanese people for foreign language teaching and counseling positions at schools and companies in Japan. Most JET participants work as Assistant Language Teachers (ALT) at high schools and junior high schools in Japan.

The language schools and the language programmes mentioned here form just the tip of the language learning/teaching ‘iceberg’ that is growing larger and larger day by day. Language learning is an expensive affair in Japan, but the people are willing to meet it, as the awareness about the importance of English language learning is increasing.

Kenji Kitao of Doshisha University, Japan, examines the need and importance of learning English in the Globalized context. His article, ’Why Do We Teach English’ is insightful and informative. According to Kenji Kitao,
The importance of English is not just in how many people speak it but in what it is used for. English is the major language of news and information in the world. It is the language of business and government even in some countries where it is a minority language. It is the language of maritime communication and international air traffic control, and it is used even for internal air traffic control where it is not a native language (Kitao).

Kenji Kitao also speaks about the ten million and more Japanese who visit foreign countries, as tourists or on business and other purposes, who would require a sound knowledge of English: wherever they go, they can manage with English but not with Japanese.

Periodically commissions are set up and their recommendations are published in Newspapers and journals. Japan Times often contains write ups about English language position in Japan.

The advisory panel convened in 2001, under the direction of Hirofunmi Nakasone (Education Minister), made the following recommendations:

- Learning English is essential in the age of the internet because much of the information is in that language.
- Though a lot of time is spent on teaching English in Japan, the results are not satisfactorily.
- Elementary schools will also be able to teach English, as part of Comprehensive studies.
- Gregory Clark, a panel member, and President of Tama University, pointed out that 3 hours a week in schools were not sufficient to learn and understand English properly (Nakasone).

There are language schools that specialize in conversation more than grammar. More and more students are attending conversation schools these days in Japan. There is also an increase in the number of students attending language schools: “Often there is considerable pressure from parents, who may also supplement with private lessons. In Japan, Benesse (the Japanese company who own Berlitz language schools), reported that in 2005, 21% of 5-year olds in Japan attended English conversation classes – up from 6% in 2000” (Gaddol, English Next 89).

And now, let’s have a look at the leading publications in English from Japan (“Japanese Newspapers and Japan News”):

1. Japan Times
   Japan’s leading English-language daily newspaper

2. Sankei Web
   Home of major Japanese business daily Sankei Shimbun. The Op-Ed column, Sankei Seiron, is the only proton of newspaper available in English.
3. **Tokyo Journal**

Tokyo’s oldest English language lifestyle monthly with news, entertainment, shopping, fashion, and classifieds.

4. **Tokyo Weekender**

Tokyo’s English newspaper for the international community.

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**English in Russia**

The present Russia comprises of 75% of the land area and 50% of the population of former Soviet Union. Russia represents the former Soviet union in all international forums.

Prior to 1990 very little of what happened behind the iron curtain was known to the rest of the world. The cold war that existed between U.S.A. and U.S.S.R. divided not only Europe but also the entire world, in general, and the prospect of peace and integration was much more far fetched, than what it is today. English was hardly heard in the Soviet ‘empire’ and in the surrounding countries that were under the influence of Soviet Union, particularly in Central and Eastern Europe. Russian was the unchallenged lingua franca of Soviet Union and the Communist allies.

In 1991, there was a sudden change in the political scene. The collapse of communism and the break up of Soviet Union into the Russian Federation and the other independent countries was the beginning of a new political era. The end of the cold war brought Russia and its allies to the mainstream of globalization and
the process of international integration. The change of scene also saw the decline of Russian as a lingua franca of Central and Eastern Europe. For instance “English has replaced Russian as the first foreign language in Estonia (Graddol, English Next 92). Like everyone else in the rest of the world, the people of Russia and the neighbouring regions also have realized that learning English is the surer way to progress and prosperity.

Today English has become a medium of necessity not only for communication within Russia, but also for international communication among the former 15 States and with the rest of the world. Right from 1991 there was a great demand for English teachers in Russia and in the other former States of USSR. Many native speakers from America and England were employed as language teachers in Russia. When the demand for English learning far exceeded the number of available native language teachers, there was a flow of English teachers from India and form among other non-native speakers of English.

The demand for English teachers still persists; this is more felt in the less developed parts of Eastern and Central Europe especially in the Baltic States and other former satellite republics of Russia. Although people who are economically backward are eager to learn English, they can’t afford it for the very same economic reasons. Susan Griffith provides the required information to volunteers and paid teachers, through website. Most of the information can be had from the website, www.englishfirst.com/teacherinfo/recruitment/default.asp
“In the mid-1990’s, the Soros Foundation moved into the region, recruiting a number of ELT professionals to introduce modern methodology in English teaching to local schools” (Griffith, “Jobs Teaching English in Central and Eastern Europe”). The development of the oil industry in the Caspian Sea has resulted in an unexpected economic boom (and therefore a TEFL boom) in the former Soviet republics of Kazakhstan, Azerbaijan, Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan. Russian is being replaced by American English as the language of Commerce, in this region.

There are many language schools and centres controlled and coordinated by U.S and Britain in Russia and the other independent States. The American Professional Partnership for Lithuanian Education (APPLE) is one such. The APPLE project (www.applequest.org), places English teachers from the US in Lithuanian High Schools. In many parts of Russia and neighbouring regions there are adult education centres where English is learnt / taught.

**American Academy of Foreign Languages, Mosco** (www.aafe.ru) has a regular staff of 20 native speakers of English and Benedict School (benedict@peterlink.ru) recruits more than 50 teachers while **Language Link Russia** (www.jobs.languagelink.ru) recruits 200 native speaking English teachers to be placed in various parts of Russia. In the Ukraine region many native speakers of English are engaged in English teaching. However, there is always demand for more and more of English teachers in this region.
English as Russia’s second language

English comes second after Russian as spoken language in Russia, the country’s latest population census shows, the Minister for National Policies Vladimir Zorin told reporters on Thursday. 98.2 per cent of permanent Russian residents have a fluent command of Russian. English comes next, with 4.8 per cent. Then comes Tatar, 3.7%; German 2%; Ukrainian, 1.2%; and Bashkir, 1%. There are close on 5% more people with a command of other languages spoken in Russia, besides Russian, than the previous census registered in 1989. The figure reflects progress of multilingualism and of ethnic languages. Put another way, studies of Russian as the nation’s official language are not pushing other ethnic languages into the margins, said the minister (Zorin 2).

Energy Ministry Launches English -language website

Russia’s Ministry for Industry and Energy has opened an English version of its official website www.minprom.gov.ru/eng. “The English language version of the Ministry for Industry and Energy’s official web site was opened as an information and analytical resource for Russia’s industrial policy oriented to foreign audiences,” a ministry news release said. In view of increasing foreign business interest in the energy section of Russia, which is seeking to become a global energy supplier, the site is designed to provide information for foreign Internet users about the ministry’s activity, and Russia’s industry and energy.
According to Joshua Hartshorne, “In Russia it is not only easy to find a job teaching English, it’s almost impossible not to” (Hartshorne 15). There are many, many job offers on the internet for teaching English. Once you are in Russia you are likely to be swamped with offers. Besides universities, any respectable town has at least a few private language schools. Hartshorne confirms from his experience in Russia, that the moment a native speaker of English announces his willingness to teach English, he will be employed on the spot.

Robert Leitch has been living and working in St. Petersburg, Russia, since 2001. According to Leitch, demand for teachers far exceeds supply. Here is an extract from his account of the present position of English in Russia.

For a growing number of young Russians, English is the key to a better job and a ticket to a new life abroad, hence the EFL boom. Oil, tourism, and services outsourcing are among the major industries where good English is essential. Private English schools abound, capitalizing on the inadequacies of the state education system. Most of the schools employ a mix of local and native-speaker teachers. Demand for the latter is so high that even mediocre teachers are often overloaded with work (Leitch 16).

Cade White is another English teacher who has worked in Russia. He was employed by the British Company, ‘Language Link’ (www.jobs.languagelink.ru), which has schools throughout European Russia and a few in Siberia. “My students
ranged in age from 15 to 50. They were extremely bright and I enjoyed their great sense of humour” (White 28).

A general interest in learning English is seen in all the present independent states of the former Soviet Union. However, some states in their effort to outshine other states in their English proficiency enforce many measures, some of which sound a little amusing. President Saparmurat of Turkmenistan, for instance, has made it clear that all his ministers should be proficient in English, in order to hold trade talks with foreign companies and governments. He passed the following decree, in this connection:

I don’t care whether you pay for a teacher or learn it on your own, but you have to talk English in six months without the help of an interpreter. Anyone not fulfilling my decree will be sacked” (“Turkmenistan: Pink-slipped over more English”).

Putting together the magnitude of English learning taking place in China, Japan and Russia, we are able to see, how these three countries together have caused a definite tilt in the language balance. A fear that is felt in the Anglophone countries is whether English will be replaced by Chinese or Hindi as and when China and India attain superpower status (as predicted by most economist these days).

Another possibility that is being predicted is the political alliance between China and Japan or China and India or among Russia, China and India. Can such
an alliance formed in this age of globalization, replace global English with Hindi, Chinese, Japanese or Russian? In any case English is not likely to be replaced by any other lingua franca, at least in the foreseeable future. Indians, Japanese, and Russians are not likely to learn Chinese or vice versa, for obvious reasons. What is more practical and probable is that English will be adopted as the lingua franca, as each of these countries has already invested hugely in English, and would any day feel more at home with English, as a lingua franca, than any other language.

The reopening of the ‘Himalayan Pass’ between China and India in July 2006, has ushered in a new era in Sino-Indian ties (after a gap of 44 years). As Dr. A. P. J. Abdul Kalam, President of India, has rightly remarked, “With a population of one third of humanity that is constantly moving forward, what happens in India and China concerns the whole world.” As we can see, and as predicted by many linguists like Graddol, the future of world politics, and the future of global English lie in the hands of India and China; the probable alliance and co-operation among nations like India, China, Japan and Russia will only strengthen the position of global English, and establish its status as lingua franca more firmly.