

I've come here to the British Council who work hard to build cultural relations between Britain and the rest of the world, and the English language is a big part of that. Let's find out more.

The British Council provides resources for people learning English, and also teachers of English. Martin Peacock is the Director of Global English Product Development.

Richard: Martin, tell me about English as a global language.

Martin: OK, well many people talk about English as being a global language. And the reasons for that are the widespread use of English. It's used in education, it's used in science and technology and, importantly, English is also used in business.

Richard: Are there many global languages?

Martin: Well, no, not really. I mean there's 'the' global language which is English in the sense that English is used in these many different contexts; there's only one. There are other languages which are used very widely and spoken by many people in many different places: Cantonese, for example, a variant of Chinese, is spoken in many different places so it's global in a geographic sense and it can be global in the numbers, but in terms of the use in different areas of education, science, research, English is the only global language.

Richard: Are there different types of English?

Martin: Well, yes, there are lots of different types. There's different accents of English. I come from the North of England, where I have a particular accent. So within England itself, within the UK, there are many variations in English pronunciation and that extends globally, so you see English in America and used in Australia, which is

different in accent and also in usage as well.

Richard: And what about the impact of technology on a language?

Martin: In the past, new words were coined by people - it might have been in a speech or a newspaper article or in a book - they were written down and then other people adapted them and used them and that could be quite a slow process and new words might come into a language over a long period: 10, 20 years. So technology allows languages to evolve much more quickly.

Richard: So technology can change the language, but in what way does it help people to learn the language?

Martin: Well, it helps in many ways. In the past, students in locations in other countries didn't have access to much genuine English; they may have a book or an odd newspaper, but what the internet allows them is to read and often to read and translate languages like English on a massive scale.

People learn English for different reasons and knowledge of the language is often important in fields like medicine, business and computing. English is becoming more and more important in order to communicate in the international world.

English opens doors to employment, education and mobility. And it helps teachers and learners engage across the globe. One of the best ways to learn English is to study in Britain. But what is it actually like to learn English here?

Clare: My name is Clare, I am 26 and I come from Italy. My course at the North

West Academy was very good. I studied grammar, conversation and also words linked with my work placement. The teacher was very good. She has always been available for problems during the lessons and outside the lessons.

Over 600,000 learners a year come to Britain to help achieve their ambition, to experience modern UK life.

Maximiliano: My name is Maximiliano. I'm 23 years old and I'm from Venezuela. Everyone here is very friendly. When you tell them that you're a foreigner, everyone is very welcoming, like everyone tries to speak with you, everyone, like, tries to just stay close to you and ask you about your experience, how your life is in your own country. And that actually helps you a lot, like, when you're not a native speaker.

Alexander: My name is Alexander. My surname Igurov. I'm 24 years old. I'm come to the UK from Russia, from Moscow. I'm studying here business English. Sometimes we have general lessons about social English. I'm engineer in the building company. I will use English in my job. I think it will help me to improve my career.

Anthony: My name's Anthony, and I just turned 24 last February and I'm from Malaysia. The people here are very nice. The place is amazing and learning here is a really different experience, so just come over and check it out.

Well, they seem to be enjoying learning English. And what I've learned is, is that the English language is more exciting than I'd first realized. And maybe, just maybe, in the future, I won't have to worry quite as much about my grammar and spelling.