



# Globish: How the English Language Became the World's Language

By Robert McCrum

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**How English conquered the world: a *Guns, Germs, and Steel* argument based on the power of the word.**

It seems impossible: a small island in the North Atlantic, colonized by Rome, then pillaged for hundreds of years by marauding neighbors, becomes the dominant world power in the nineteenth century. Equally unlikely, a colony of that island nation, across the Atlantic, grows into the military and cultural colossus of the twentieth century. How? By the sword, of course; by trade and industrial ingenuity; but principally, and most surprisingly, by the power of their common language.

In this provocative and compelling new look at the course of empire, Robert McCrum, coauthor of the best-selling book and television series *The Story of English*, shows how the language of the Anglo-American imperium has become the world's lingua franca. In fascinating detail he describes the ever-accelerating changes wrought on the language by the far-flung cultures claiming citizenship in the new hegemony. In the twenty-first century, writes the author, English + Microsoft = Globish.

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### Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

Britannia may not rule, but it still presides over the world's discourse, according to this sketchy, triumphalist chronicle of the English language. McCrum (*The Story of English*), associate editor of Britain's *Observer*, surveys the latter-day apotheosis of English as the international language, observing Chinese English-language boot camps, Bangalore call centers, and the takeover of Britain's Man Booker prize by non-British novelists. But most of the book is a historical pageant of the English-speaking peoples as they assimilated, conquered, or enslaved foreigners and expropriated words and dialects under the leadership of statesmen/wordsmiths from King Alfred to Churchill and literary geniuses like Shakespeare and Twain. McCrum makes a pragmatic, happenstance case for the international popularity of English: the British Empire and American hegemony spread it around the planet, making it the obvious choice for a globalizing world's lingua franca. But he also advances a grander and less coherent brief for English as the language of individual freedom, democracy, and capitalism, contrasting its contagious, adaptable, populist and subversive spirit with the snobby elitism of French. That's a bit of language chauvinism that no linguistic analysis, especially one as cursory as McCrum's, can sustain. (May)  
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From [Bookmarks Magazine](#)

Reviewers were charmed by *Globish* in much the same manner as McCrum is charmed by English. They found his book expansive yet incisive, erudite yet accessible, powerful yet disarmingly cheerful, if somewhat uneven when charting the history of English through the centuries. But few critics actually accepted the book's putative argument: that English is becoming Globish and that Globish will be the language of the world. Many reviewers noted that McCrum's definition of "Globish" is flexible at best, and a few seemed exasperated by McCrum's failure to examine critically the consequences of a dominant global tongue. Read *Globish* for its ruminations, facts, and anecdotes--but not for its conclusions.

From [Booklist](#)

"Globish" is a flattened English that enables people to communicate across the planet. Although McCrum (*The Story of English*, 1986) didn't invent the term (that honor goes to a French-speaking former IBM executive), he puts it to good use here. His story of the evolution of English, with its "contagious adaptability, catchy populism, and innate subversiveness" starts where such books generally do, tracing the influence of events like the Norman Conquest and the creation of Johnson's Dictionary. But then he follows a different tack (What? No OED?), describing how forces such as the American Revolution, British imperialism, the eloquence of a Churchill, the fall of the Berlin Wall, and the rise of the Internet have shaped "the worldwide dialect of the third millennium." As power shifts, Globish has broken free from its roots in Anglo-American hegemony and is now part of the engine driving China and India. Whether or not they agree with McCrum on every point, readers interested in language, as well as in current culture, will find the book fascinating and fun. --Mary Ellen Quinn

### Users Review

From reader reviews:

**William Murphy:**

The feeling that you get from Globish: How the English Language Became the World's Language may be the more deep you excavating the information that hide within the words the more you get thinking about reading it. It does not mean that this book is hard to recognise but Globish: How the English Language Became the World's Language giving you buzz feeling of reading. The article writer conveys their point in specific way that can be understood by means of anyone who read that because the author of this publication is well-known enough. This book also makes your vocabulary increase well. So it is easy to understand then can go together with you, both in printed or e-book style are available. We highly recommend you for having this kind of Globish: How the English Language Became the World's Language instantly.

**Jeffrey Richard:**

Spent a free time and energy to be fun activity to do! A lot of people spent their leisure time with their family, or their very own friends. Usually they accomplishing activity like watching television, gonna beach, or picnic in the park. They actually doing ditto every week. Do you feel it? Do you wish to something different to fill your personal free time/ holiday? Might be reading a book might be option to fill your cost-free time/ holiday. The first thing that you ask may be what kinds of publication that you should read. If you want to attempt look for book, may be the reserve untitled Globish: How the English Language Became the World's Language can be good book to read. May be it might be best activity to you.

**Kurt Hooper:**

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**Ella Norman:**

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