

## POPULARNOŚĆ I ZNACZENIE JĘZYKA ANGIELSKIEGO

### *THE POPULARITY AND IMPORTANCE OF THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE*

**Julia Prokop kl. III**

#### **ABSTRACT**

The English language has held a leading position in the world of science, technology, business, and pop culture for years. It has become an international means of communication and a fundamental tool in many areas of life. It's hard to imagine the modern world without English – we use it in daily interactions while traveling, working or studying, and even in entertainment. Why has English gained such popularity? How many people around the world speak it? What are its uses, and how does it influence young people? Is its knowledge truly indispensable today? In this article, we will explore the history and significance of the English language and its role in shaping modern society.

**Słowa kluczowe:** język angielski międzynarodowym środkiem komunikacji, historia języka angielskiego, rola języka w kształtowaniu społeczeństw

**Keywords:** *English as an international means of communication, history of the English language, role of language in shaping modern society*

e-mail: juliaprokop2007@gmail.com

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#### **HISTORY**

The English language is a West Germanic language originated in England but has been influenced by other languages such as Old Norse, Latin, French and Dutch.

We can divide the development of the English language into three stages: The Old English stage (5th – 11th centuries), the Middle English stage (11th – 15th centuries) and the Modern English stage (16th century to present times).

Old English was a Germanic language, it was very different from Celtic languages. It also differed significantly from the modern English used today. Old English grammar had a complex system, with five main cases, three genders and two numbers. Vocabulary was also quite different. A lot of words were borrowed from Latin, French and Old Norse. One of the most famous examples of Old English literature is the epic poem *Beowulf*, written between 8th and 11th centuries.

The Old English period came to an end in 1066 with the Norman conquest. Normans were originally Viking settlers from Scandinavia who had settled in France in the 10th century. Thus, the Norman conquest marked the beginnings of the phase known as the Middle English period lasting from the 12th to the 15th century. It was then that French became the language of the ruling class while English was spoken by the lower classes. This led to a number of changes in the English language, including a reduction of the number of inflections and grammar rules. The Normans brought many French words that began to replace their Old English equivalents.

One of the most famous examples of Middle English literature is *The Canterbury Tales* by Geoffrey Chaucer, which was written in the late 14th century.

After the evolution of the Old and Middle English, the third stage, known as Modern English, began in the 16th century and has been continued to the present day.

The rise of the British Empire (16th–20th centuries) also had a significant impact on the English language. English became the language of commerce, science, and politics, and was spread around the world by British colonists. This led to the development of many different varieties of English, known as dialects.

One of the most famous examples of Early Modern English literature is William Shakespeare’s play „Romeo and Juliet”, which was first performed in 1597. To this day, William Shakespeare is considered the greatest writer in the English language.

The most significant change occurred in the 20th century, with the introduction of mass media and technology. For example, new words have been created to keep up with the changing technology, and old words have fallen out of use. However, the core grammar and vocabulary of the language have remained relatively stable.

## THE POPULARITY OF THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE WORLDWIDE

English is the most commonly used language globally when it comes to international communication. Approximately 1.5 billion people use it to varying degrees - over 400 million as their native language and the rest as a foreign or second language in daily use. It is the official language in more than 50 countries and serves as the primary language in international organizations such as the United Nations, NATO, and the European Union.

Its dominance mainly stems from historical factors. In the 18th and 19th centuries, the British Empire

colonized vast areas of the world, spreading English across many regions, from North America to Australia, India, and Africa. In the 20th century, with the growing economic and military power of the United States, English became the dominant tool for international communication.

## ENGLISH IN SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

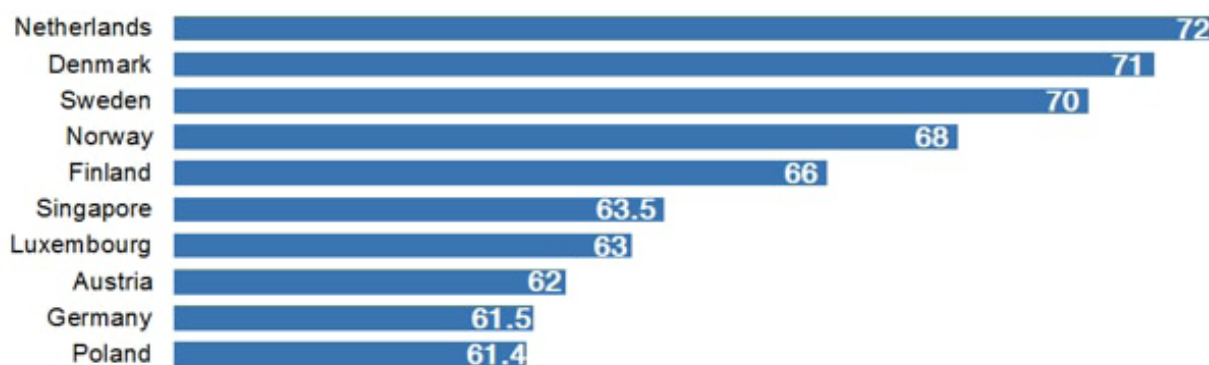
English is the undisputed leader in the world of science. An impressive 98% of scientific articles published in prestigious journals like „Nature” or „Science” are written in English. Universities worldwide offer study programs in this language, making English essential for scientists and students to expand their knowledge and participate in international conferences.

Not only science but also technology relies on English. The majority of modern software, applications, user manuals, and technical documentation are created in English. Technology companies like Microsoft, Apple, and Google use English as their primary language of communication. Programmers, engineers, and IT specialists must know the language to develop their skills and work in an international environment.

Moreover, English is the dominant language in medicine. Modern medical research, reports from the World Health Organization (WHO), and training materials for doctors and nurses are mainly published in English. This enables healthcare professionals from different countries to share knowledge and ex-

## Countries best at English as a second language

The English Proficiency Index 2016



Today, English functions as a „lingua franca” – a common language spoken by people of different nationalities. Whether in Europe, Asia, Africa, or South America, knowledge of English allows communication in almost any situation.

periences, contributing to the global advancement of medicine.

## **ENGLISH IN CULTURE AND ENTERTAINMENT**

The English language has a huge impact on popular culture. Hollywood, the world's largest film industry, produces movies and series watched by millions globally. Many people learn English through films, music, and video games. Hit songs recorded by British and American artists like Taylor Swift, Ed Sheeran, and Billie Eilish top global charts and inspire young people to learn the language.

The internet also promotes the popularity of English. Most online content – articles, YouTube videos, social media posts – is published in English. It has become the primary tool for online communication, allowing people from different countries to exchange information, opinions, and experiences.

## **ENGLISH IN BUSINESS**

English offers numerous advantages in business, particularly in today's globalized world. It serves as a universal language, allowing for effective communication across borders and enabling businesses to connect with a diverse range of international clients, partners, and teams. With a significant amount of global business content, including reports, research, and market trends, being published in English, it becomes essential for accessing valuable information and staying competitive.

Moreover, English is the working language for many multinational companies, making it crucial for professionals involved in international trade and cross-border collaborations. Proficiency in English also broadens career opportunities, providing access to global job markets and enhancing professional networking. Additionally, English proficiency can increase a company's credibility, showing its ability to engage effectively on the global stage.

In summary, English plays a vital role in fostering communication, expanding business opportunities, and improving access to resources in the interconnected world of modern business.

## **INTERNET**

English has become the dominant language of the Internet. From social media and online forums to news websites and streaming platforms, a large portion of web content is written in English. This dominance is

rooted in the early development of the Internet, which was largely shaped by English-speaking countries, particularly the United States. As today English functions as a global lingua franca online, people from different countries often use English to communicate when they don't share a native language. This has made English not only a practical tool but also a gateway to global communication. Many of the most popular websites – like Google, YouTube, Wikipedia, and Facebook – offer content primarily in English or prioritize English in their algorithms. This widespread usage has also influenced online slang, memes, and pop culture, much of which originates in English-speaking communities and then spreads worldwide.

It is true that, the Internet is becoming more multilingual over time. Other languages like Chinese, Spanish, Arabic, and Hindi are growing in online presence, reflecting the increasing global connectivity. Still, English continues to hold a central role, especially in areas like technology, science, and international collaboration.

## **ENGLISH AMONG YOUNG PEOPLE**

Young people around the world are increasingly using English in their daily lives. They not only learn it in schools but also use it on the internet, in video games, and on social media. Knowing English allows young people to make connections with peers from other countries, participate in international educational projects, and develop their interests.

English has also become the language of youth fashion and trends. Many popular words and phrases come from English and are used in everyday conversations – in Poland and other countries alike. Young people eagerly use English abbreviations like “LOL” (laugh out loud), “OMG” (oh my God), and “BTW” (by the way), showing how deeply the language has permeated their lives.

## **IS IT WORTH LEARNING ENGLISH?**

The answer to this question seems obvious – yes! Knowing English opens doors to better education, more interesting jobs, and greater career opportunities. People who know English can study abroad, work in international companies, and travel without language barriers.

English also allows for better use of the internet, gaining knowledge from various fields, and developing personal passions. The modern world is becoming increasingly global, and English is the key to success in many areas of life.

The English language is not just a means of communication but also a foundation of modern science, technology, and culture. Its popularity results from historical factors as well as the dynamic development of globalization and the internet. Today, it's hard to imagine the world without English – it's a language that connects people, facilitates knowledge acquisition, and opens doors to new opportunities.

Therefore, it's worth knowing and continuously improving one's language skills to better navigate the modern, international society. Who knows? Perhaps knowing English will open the door to your dream career or an unforgettable journey!

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#### **STRESZCZENIE**

Od wielu lat język angielski zajmuje czołową pozycję w świecie nauki, technologii, biznesu i pop kultury. Stał się międzynarodowym środkiem komunikacji i fundamentalnym narzędziem w wielu aspektach życia. Trudno wyobrazić sobie dzisiejszy świat bez języka angielskiego, którym posługujemy się w codziennych interakcjach

Jaka jest historia języka angielskiego, dlaczego stał się tak popularny, ilu ludzi na świecie nim włada, jak wpływa na młodych ludzi i czy rzeczywiście jego znajomość jest nieodzowna w dzisiejszych czasach? Poniższy artykuł spróbuje odpowiedzieć na te pytania oraz prześledzić jego historię, znaczenie i rolę w kształtowaniu obecnych społeczeństw.