

English: A bridge over troubled (linguistic) waters¹

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This paper is a discussion of the role of the English language as a possible unifying factor across nations, peoples and cultures. Owing to their spread, brought about by colonization first and by economic, scientific, political, military, cultural power in more recent years, ‘Englishes’ have become a wide ‘linguistic umbrella’ whose intrinsic characteristics have favoured their use all over the world. English is now at the crossroads of many communicative needs in a variety of social contexts, often bridging complex ethnic realities, while being a means of modernization and internationalization.

Key words: *Englishes, empowerment, varieties*

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