
English in Cuba:
From the imperial design to the imperative need

Dolores Corona and Ofelia García

The tourists complain that Cuba has not Americanized, as they were led to believe. The great mass of the population talk the Spanish language, and this is an obstacle to visitors from the United States who expected other conditions.


The importance of teaching English in all Cuban public schools must not be overlooked, because the Cuban people will never understand the people of the United States until they appreciate our institutions.


Introduction

That Cuba was meant to be a bilingual, if not an English-speaking, island according to the imperial design of the United States is reflected in the quotes that precede this article. The historical evidence for the role that English was to play in the annexationist objectives of the United States is skillfully presented in a paper by Louis A. Pérez (1982), entitled "The imperial design: Politics and pedagogy in occupied Cuba, 1899–1902".

Yet even before our birth as a nation, the Cuban sense of peoplehood was molded in opposition to what Cuba’s greatest patriotic and literary figure, José Martí, called “el coloso del Norte”, the United States. In an 1894 essay Martí speaks out against North Americans, as well as Cubans, who favor annexation to the United States, as well as against what he calls the Cuban “yanquimania”, the blind imitation of Yankees to the north. From our historical beginning, then, Cubans have been seduced by the wealth and power of the nation to the north, as well as repelled by the United States’ attitude toward Cuba, of which Martí says “mues su capacidad, insulta su virtud y desprecia su carácter” (“denies its capac-
ity, insults its virtue and scorns its character”] (Marti 1889: 171). And so English in Cuba has historically been evaluated within the dialectical tension created by the attraction and rejection of the United States.

Cuba has been Spanish-speaking since it was colonized by Spain, and English has played only a very limited role in the lives of some Cuban citizens. But Cuban society has valued English differently, mostly depending on United States - Cuba relations in diverse sociopolitical periods. As we will see, however, the hostility between Cuba and the United States since the 1959 Revolution has created the isolation necessary to break finally the ideological link between English and the United States. Since 1959 English has taken a new meaning in contemporary Cuban society, enabling it to be promoted once again, even though Cuba - United States relations have remained antagonistic.

The promotion of English in post-revolutionary Cuba will be proposed here as a counterexample to the cases presented in Phillipson (1992). English has spread in Cuba despite the absence of what Phillipson has called “linguistic imperialism”. Phillipson defines linguistic imperialism as “the dominance of English asserted and maintained by the establishment and continuous reconstitution of structural (material properties) and cultural (ideological properties) inequalities between English and other languages” (1992: 47). This Cuban case study will show that despite the little contact that exists today between Cuba and any of the core English-speaking countries, Cuba has, on its own, decided that English is important in international and scientific communication and could be useful to the nation. As we will see, neither structural nor cultural inequalities between those who speak English and those who don’t are evident in the Cuban case. In fact, we will show that in post-revolutionary Cuba none of the variables surrounding the spread of English that indicate linguistic imperialism (according to Phillipson 1992: 315) are evident today:

1. In Cuba there is no structural favoring of English in the education system that can be described as linguist. (Linguicism is defined as “ideologies, structures, and practices which are used to legitimate, effectuate, and reproduce an unequal division of power and resources between groups which are defined on the basis of language” – Phillipson 1992: 47.)

2. In Cuba English is not an instrument for economic stratification of a capitalist order.

3. In Cuba there are almost no representatives from the core English-speaking countries active in promoting proficiency in English.

4. In Cuba English instruction is not monolingual.

5. In Cuba the modern sector in which English is favored is not integrated into the Western capitalist order.

This paper will look at the historical development of the role of English in Cuba. In particular, it focuses on the presence of English in Cuba since the 1959 Cuban Revolution, offering yet another interesting example of the spread of English despite strong nationalist sentiments and a socialist political system and economy.

**English during the imperialist design phase, 1899–1959**

The year 1899 marks the first American intervention in Cuba. It was precisely in that year that J. C. Kelly, a North American engineer, was sent by the Cuban Land and Steamship Company with 160 North Americans to establish La Gloria Colony in northern Camagüey (Cirules 1973). This settlement was part of the imperial design that wanted to Americanize Cuba for annexation. It responded to doubts expressed in an 1899 editorial in The Manufacturer of Philadelphia that prompted one of Martí’s essays against “la yanquimania”:

La única esperanza que pudiéramos tener de habilitar a Cuba para la dignidad de Estado sería americanizarla por completo, cubriéndola con gente de nuestra propia raza, y aún queda por lo menos abierta la cuestión de si esta misma raza no degeneraría bajo un sol tropical y bajo las condiciones necesarias de la vida de Cuba. (¿Queremos a Cuba? 1899: 168)

[The only hope that we would have of making Cuba fit for the dignity of Statehood would be to Americanize it fully, covering it with people of our own race, and the question is still open whether that race wouldn’t degenerate under a tropical sun and the necessary conditions of life in Cuba]

It was also in 1899 that public schools started to teach English “in all grades for the purpose of its Americanizing effect” (New York Tribune 1899). William O. McDowell, the president of the Cuban-American League in New York, predicted that same year that the study of English would lead ultimately to annexation (New York Times 1899).

But soon the annexationist tune began to change. Instead of imposing, the United States started to co-opt the Cuban elite, making English a necessary condition to benefit from U.S. interests in the island. By 1900 a teacher’s manual prepared by the Superintendent of Education emphasized the importance of teaching English because “the commercial lan-
language of the future in Cuba will be English ... and by teaching ... English we will give them a better chance to understand us and do business with us” (Boston Globe 1900). The Cuban Educational Association started to send Cuban teachers to study in United States universities as early as 1900. That same year Harvard University established a summer course for 1,300 Cuban teachers (Root 1916). By 1901 the Cuban Educational Association had enrolled over 2,500 Cubans in colleges and universities in the United States (Harroun 1899).

Although Circular No. 5 of May 20, 1901 officially established English in elementary public schools in the island, in reality the implementation consisted of offering two half-hour classes a week in fourth and fifth grades and three half-hour classes a week in the sixth grade. This arrangement was changed in 1904 through Circular No. 13 of the 14th of October, which officially reduced the allotted time of English in elementary school grades to two half-hours a week. By 1914 English was discontinued in the lower grades, although it was maintained in the seventh and eighth grades (Pujol 1949).

Although the U.S. Imperial Design was losing steam, the relationship between English speaking ability and participation in the Cuban economy became firmly established during these first twenty years. This English imperialist ideology was frankly expressed by the protagonist in one of Cuba’s most important novels of Realism, Las Inmorales (1919) by Carlos Loveira: “To know English is to have a guarantee of never being without a job” (quoted in Pérez 1993).

In the 1920s numerous educational reforms were instituted by the then Secretary of Education, Dr. José B. Alemán. All of the reforms included English as a requirement in the curriculum. In 1922 English was put back in the elementary curriculum. In 1927 Alemán established the Escuelas Primarias Superiores, equivalent to junior high schools in the United States. Although a passing grade was not required in English, it was taught for forty-five minutes daily in the seventh and eighth grades. The Entrance Exam needed for secondary schools and professional schools required English. And a daily three-year or two-year English course was included in the curricula of the academic secondary schools and the vocational and commercial secondary schools respectively. Another reform instituted by Alemán included the establishment in 1929 of Special English Centers for Adults, where classes consisted of forty-five minutes to an hour of daily English instruction (Pujol 1949).

That English instruction was paramount in Cuba during this period is evidenced by the fact that between 1921 and 1936 there were fifteen English textbooks published in Cuba by Cuban authors (Bibliografía cubana 1921-1936, 1978).

In 1925 when the Schools of Engineering and Architecture were established in the University of Havana, a Department of Modern Languages was added to the two schools. For the first time in Cuban history, both Technical English and Technical French were offered at the tertiary level as requirements of the curricula of the Schools of Engineering and Architecture.

The 1930s brought further expansion of English in Cuba, especially for professionals. In 1934 the School of Science of the University of Havana made English mandatory for a degree in Diplomacy. Also at the University of Havana the School of Medicine made Technical English mandatory during the fourth year in 1939. And during the same period the School for Teachers and for Kindergarten Teachers required a two-year English course (Pujol 1949).

The 1940s and 1950s saw the greatest spread of English in Cuban society, especially among the Cuban middle class and elite. Private bilingual schools, some secular and others Catholic or Protestant, became firmly established as the Cuban middle class tried to ensure that their children would learn English. Some of these schools offered most subjects at the elementary level in English, except for Spanish Language Arts, Cuban Geography, and Cuban History. Others had a morning session in either English or Spanish and an afternoon session in the other language. At the secondary level, some offered only an all English curriculum leading to a United States High School degree, whereas others gave the option of an all Spanish curriculum leading to a Cuban Bachillerato, or an all English High School degree, or both. For example, a 1957 English language advertisement appearing in Diario de la Marina, Cuba’s largest daily at the time, gave this description of the Merici Academy: “Founded in 1941 by the American Ursuline Nuns ... The morning session is in English, the afternoon session in Spanish. The High School is accredited and affiliated with the Catholic University in Washington.”

English became fashionable among the Cuban middle class. In 1942 the Instituto Cultural Cubano-Americano was founded, and it established the Abraham Lincoln Language School for adults in Havana. It was also during this period that the Havana Business Academy expanded, offering to adults not only English language, but also English stenography, typing and bookkeeping (Hunter 1988).

It is important to realize, however, that not all these private efforts in English language instruction were in the hands of North Americans. An
The next section of this paper will focus on the critical role of English in creating social differences. As we will see, one of the first challenges faced by the Spanish Revolution was how to define the role of English in English-speaking countries. The close relationship between English and social differences was evident from the very beginning. The English language was used by the ruling class to maintain control over its colonies. This was particularly true in the Spanish-speaking world, where English was the language of commerce and diplomacy. The presence of English in Spanish-speaking countries was accompanied by a distribution of many English-language newspapers. For example, the presence of English in Cuba was reflected in the publication of the Havana Post, which was published in English since 1898.

In Cuba, the English language was used extensively for the printing of newspapers and other publications. This was due to the influence of American newspapers, which had a significant impact on Cuban society. The English language was also used in schools and universities, where the American influence was dominant. This was particularly evident in the case of the University of Havana, which was founded in 1878. The university was modeled on American universities, and its curriculum was largely based on English language and American law.

In addition, the number of English-speaking citizens in Cuba was significant. In the 19th century, Cuba was a major center of English-language literature, with writers such as José Martí and Pedro Poyatos producing works in English. This was due to the influence of American culture on Cuban society, as well as the desire of many Cubans to distance themselves from Spanish colonialism. The English language was also used in the area of business, with many Cuban businesses using English as their primary language of communication.

The English language was also used in the area of diplomacy, with the United States playing a significant role in the affairs of Cuba. The American influence was evident in the establishment of the United States Consulate in Havana in 1823, which was followed by the establishment of the United States Legation in 1849. The English language was also used in the area of education, with many American schools and universities establishing branches in Cuba.

In conclusion, the English language was a significant influence on Cuban society, with a strong presence in the areas of commerce, education, and diplomacy. The English language was also used extensively in the area of literature, with many Cuban writers using English as their primary language. The English language was a symbol of the American influence on Cuban society, and its presence in Cuba was a reflection of the close relationship between English and social differences.
English have a role in a Cuban society that was free of United States interests? Castro attacked United States involvement in Cuban education and society:

Introdujeron sus ideas en los textos escolares para tergiversar nuestra historia. Mediante el control de los medios de comunicación masiva, ridiculizaron a nuestro pueblo, impusieron los esquemas del llamado “modo de vida americano” y desataron una campaña de embrutecimiento colectivo, a través de la colonización del gusto estético. (1968: 26)

[They introduced their ideas in school texts in order to change our history. Through control of massive means of communication, they ridiculed our people, they imposed the ways of the so called “American way of life” and they promoted a campaign of collective ignorance, through the colonization of our aesthetic taste.]

The English of the United States was silenced after the exodus of North Americans, the exclusion of their businesses and interests, and the departure of much of the Cuban bilingual elite. The United States responded by instituting the embargo on Cuba that remains in place today.

The space created by the absence of United States English is perhaps best understood in the context of the film industry. From 1955 to 1959 there were a total of 2,435 films shown in Cuba. Of these, 1,454 (or sixty percent) were in English, and 1,232 (or fifty-one percent) were produced in the United States (Guía Cinematográfica, 1960). Foreign films have always been shown in Cuba with subtitles, and thus it is clear that moviegoers before the Revolution were exposed to the English language. However, of the 858 films shown in Cuba between 1961 and 1965, only 14 (or less than two percent) were in English, and 6 (or less than one percent) were from the United States (Cinemateca de Cuba 1970). English in Cuba almost disappeared during this era, and English took a step backward as it renegotiated a new role for itself in the transformed Cuban society.

The question ¿Ingles para qué? was quickly answered as Cuba took on a new world position independent of the United States where the need for foreign languages, including English, only became greater. In 1960 the Instituto Cubano de Amistad con los Pueblos was established, bringing visitors to Cuba from all over the world who were in need of translation services. Foremost among the visitors were the Russians and others from the Socialist bloc who provided technical and economic assistance. But also among the visitors there were speakers of different foreign languages who often used English to communicate among themselves and with Cubans. Included among these visitors there were also people from the Anglophone Caribbean and Anglophone Africa. As contact with the
ensured. In the context of the new society, foreign influences are very much needed. In order to know a whole profession, one has to study abroad.

Foreign teachers are not well regarded in China, which is a disadvantage for students. English teachers are also not highly regarded in China, which is a disadvantage for students.

The cultural education system in China, as well as the educational system, has been transformed. Today's education system is not merely to transmit knowledge but also to enhance students' overall abilities and values.

In 1970, many aspects of the Chinese society, including the educational system, started to change.

Today, English is the most important language in China, with the promotion of English.

For practical cooperation with other countries, English is widely used in China. It is also used as a tool to foster cooperation with other countries. The role of English in China has been recognized.

The Chinese University Press has published a book titled "The Cultural Education System in China," which discusses the changes in the educational system.

The Chinese University Press has also published a book titled "English in China," which discusses the role of English in China.

In 2010, the Chinese government has implemented a new educational policy to improve the quality of education in China.

In 2015, the Chinese government has implemented another educational policy to improve the quality of education in China.

In summary, the Chinese educational system has made significant progress in recent years.
With greater access to higher levels of education, however, came the problem of resources. And this problem became especially evident during this period in the teaching of English. Although English continued to be required at the intermediate and secondary levels, the English profession had been depleted by the absence of North Americans and much of the Cuban bilingual elite. And although the Language Institutes of the 1960s were set up precisely to address this need, these instructors, who only had an intermediate education, were no longer adequate to teach the increasingly educated Cuban population. Cuba now had to find a way of continuing to provide English language instruction to an increasingly schooled population, with a shrinking number of English teachers and restricted access to the "inner" circle of English.

Also by 1970 the new Cuban society had stripped English of its capitalistic value for individuals. And it had succeeded in translating school material into Spanish and regaining for Spanish its appropriate role in Cuban society. But at the same time, Cuba increasingly recognized the value of English, along with Russian, for the new Cuban society. (For a most informative discussion of the value of language, see Coulmas 1992.) Cuba now had to find a way of spreading English through schooling and throughout the entire population at a time when English was of little utilitarian use to individuals and almost absent societal.

Cuba was then faced with a monumental task, that of trying to teach English to more people who were better educated at a time when English had almost disappeared from Cuban society. Cuba responded to this challenge by doing three things that seemed contradictory. One, it expanded the pool of English language teachers by professionalizing the language profession. Two, it reduced the definition of English ability for the population at large to reading skills and continued restricting instruction only to secondary and tertiary level. Three, it reduced the number of people who were interested in studying English by also promoting Russian. By focusing on the increased professionalization of language specialists, Cuba was able to expand and improve its language professional pool, including that of English, while at the same time reducing the demand for English by limiting it to reading ability and making it compete with Russian and other languages that had immediate utility and were supported and subsidized by other governments.

The greater professionalization of language specialists is evidenced throughout this period in many ways. The Language Institutes of the 1960s that trained teachers with just an intermediate education were phased out during this period. Instead, Teacher Training Colleges, also known as Pedagogical Institutes and requiring a secondary education for admission, started including as part of their curriculum the education of foreign language teachers for elementary and secondary schools. The growth of these Teacher Training Colleges or Pedagogical Institutes was phenomenal. There were four in the 1960s (in Havana, Las Villas, Camagüey, and Santiago de Cuba), eight by 1976 and thirteen by 1986. All these Pedagogical Institutes train foreign language teachers, as well as teachers of other subjects. In addition, a Pedagogical Institute specializing in the training of foreign language teachers and translators was established in Havana in 1976. It also adopted the name of Pablo Lafargue, although it is better known as ISPLE (Instituto Superior Pedagógico de Lenguas Extranjeras).

Also in response to the greater professionalization of the language profession, the University of Havana established its School of Modern Languages in 1972, making it possible to educate translators and interpreters at the university level in English, French, Russian, and German.

Opportunities for graduate work in Cuba also became available during this period. And significantly, the first Masters in Engineering, established in 1972 at what was to be known as Instituto Superior Politécnico José Antonio Echeverría (ISPJAE), included as a most important aspect the teaching of English. The new masters degree was a Canadian–Cuban project involving funds from the Canadian University Service Overseas and the Canadian International Development Agency. Students had to listen to lectures, take notes, discuss, and read and write papers in English. But since the new Cuban society would not tolerate differences created by English language proficiency, an important part of the masters program included courses in English. It was during this period and for this purpose that Adrienne Hunter, a Canadian who became an important figure in the Cuban English language profession, introduced ESP courses (English for Specific Purposes) and the communicative approach to language teaching. This Canadian–Cuban project (1972–1979) is significant because it remains the only English teaching experience funded by a government of a developed English-speaking country in post-revolutionary Cuba (Hunter 1988).

In 1976 Law 1281/74 established a Ph.D. course of study for university professors and professionals. Until that time, most professionals went to Eastern Europe, and especially to the former Soviet Union, to obtain Ph.D. degrees. Proficiency in a foreign language became a requirement for the Cuban Ph.D. Degree.

Increasingly during this period Russian became a viable language in Cuban society. Through exchange programs with the now defunct
The growth of higher education in China during this period led to the establishment of Mian University. In December 1946, the Chinese University (Yamekho National College) (Mian University) announced its establishment, in accordance with the Sino-Polish Agreement. The Chinese Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Higher Education approved the establishment of Mian University.

Under the plan, English language instruction for medicine was available at this institution. It was decided to establish the English Department of Medicine at Mian University in 1946. The English Department was established under the Ministry of Higher Education of the People's Republic of China in December 1946. In 1947, a proposal for the establishment of an English Department of Medicine was submitted to the Ministry of Education of the People's Republic of China. In 1948, the Chinese University (Yamekho National College) (Mian University) announced its establishment, in accordance with the Sino-Polish Agreement, and the Chinese Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Higher Education approved the establishment of Mian University.

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the world (Fishman—Cooper—Conrad 1977). Cuban society emerged from this period acknowledging that it faced yet another task with regard to the English language. Cuba now had to determine how to promote even further the English reading ability of its scientists. But beyond reading ability for its citizenry, the English language skill promoted in Cuban intermediate, secondary, and tertiary institutions since 1959, Cuba now had to figure out how to promote English oral communicative skills despite its societal absence to improve its possibilities in the tourism industry, in the scientific world, and in the international market.

As we will see, since 1985 English in Cuba has gone beyond its traditional post-revolutionary role as the language of professionals. Beyond its role in scientific activity and technology, the increased tourism to Cuba and joint commercial ventures with other countries have demanded that English in Cuba be recognized for its role in international communication.

Promoting English as the language of international communication and scientific activity: 1985—present

With the recommendation made at the Cuban Parliament in December 1984, the promotion of English became an explicit policy of the ministries of education in Cuba. In 1986 a report submitted to the Third Congress of the Cuban Communist Party had the following negative evaluation of foreign language teaching efforts:

A pesar de que ha mejorado, todavía es insuficiente la creación de hábitos y habilidades en los estudiantes de la educación superior, cuyo dominio de las lenguas extranjeras es pobre y su desarrollo cultural integral no es satisfactorio. (quoted in Corona 1988: 2)

[Even though it has improved, the development of habits and skills in students in higher education is lacking; the students’ command of foreign languages is poor and their integral cultural development is not satisfactory.]

These efforts to improve the quality of foreign language teaching responded to the importance of foreign languages in the top-priority lines of development in the country; namely, tourism, biotechnology and the pharmaceutical industry, and joint commercial ventures. But with the crumbling of the former Soviet Union and of the Eastern European Communist world the need for Russian receded, and as we will see, today English again reigns supreme as the language of international communication, as well as science and technology.

It is perhaps the recent growth of the tourism industry that has had the most effect on the attitude of Cubans toward English in the recent past. Tourism to Cuba almost disappeared between 1960 and the 1970s. But in the mid-1980s tourism made a comeback. In 1991 424,010 tourists visited Cuba. This showed a growth of 80,000 tourists from 1990. The tourist industry is expected to grow to over one million a year by 1995 (Alvarez—Ferriol 1992). The greatest number of tourists come from Canada, and thus English has become imperative in the tourist industry. Despite the North American absence and even when tourists come from diverse countries, English is most often the language used in communicating with tourists. English reading ability is not the only English skill needed by Cubans today.

The words of the Instituto Nacional del Turismo (1990) on the importance of foreign languages in the industry are instructive in this regard:

Para los trabajadores del turismo el dominio de idiomas extranjeros es un instrumento de trabajo indispensable, un elemento indicativo de su profesionalidad y uno de los componentes importantes del buen servicio que debemos ofrecer a los turistas que nos visitan.

[For workers in the tourism industry, speaking foreign languages is an essential work tool, an element which indicates their professionalism, and an important component of the good service that we must offer tourists who visit us.]

Beyond tourism, the interest in biotechnology and the pharmaceutical industry have spurred the learning of English. In 1988 Decree 146/88 stipulated that proficiency in a foreign language, and especially English, was required for researchers. The expansion of scientific exchange programs has made English language proficiency mandatory for all Cuban scientists.

Since the crumbling of the Soviet Union, Cuba has encouraged the development of joint commercial ventures involving the Cuban government and foreign private enterprises. English has played a most important role in developing these commercial links between Cuba and enterprises in the Anglophone Caribbean, Canada, and Great Britain. To promote English language proficiency, courses in Business English have proliferated in the last three years.

Slowly English has made a comeback into Cuban social life. During the 1960s, for example, English had disappeared even from the musical scene, with the exception of those who sang out for civil rights such as Pete Seeger, Barbara Dane, and Lena Horne. By the 1980s, however, Madonna, Michael Jackson, Olivia Newton-John, and “heavy metal”
The numbers of students graduating in each of the languages at the school in English are much larger than in any other language, including Russian. For example, 19,790 of the students graduating in English are Russian, 19,770, of the students graduating in English are German, 19,700, of the students graduating in English are French, and 19,670, of the students graduating in English are Spanish.

The Pedagogical Institute also trains many Russian teachers in the field of education in English language. The Institute offers extensive programs in Russian and English, focusing on the development of language skills and pedagogical methods.

The university offers a variety of courses in English and Russian, including literature, history, and culture. The university also provides opportunities for students to study abroad, further enhancing their language skills and cultural understanding.

Table 1: Distribution of students who graduated from the university in 1999 in English and Russian

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language</th>
<th>Graduates</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Russian</td>
<td>19,790</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English</td>
<td>19,770</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>German</td>
<td>19,700</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>French</td>
<td>19,670</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2: Distribution of students in the university in 1999 in English and Russian

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language</th>
<th>Students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Russian</td>
<td>39,580</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English</td>
<td>39,560</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>German</td>
<td>39,530</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>French</td>
<td>39,520</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Incorporating English in the Russian educational system is a priority for the Ministry of Education. The Ministry is working to increase the number of English courses offered in schools, including at the secondary level. The Ministry is also promoting English language proficiency among students and teachers through various initiatives.

Table 3: Distribution of English in the university in 1999

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language</th>
<th>Students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>English</td>
<td>39,560</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Russian</td>
<td>39,580</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>German</td>
<td>39,530</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>French</td>
<td>39,520</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4: Distribution of English in the university in 1999 in English and Russian

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language</th>
<th>Students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>English</td>
<td>39,560</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Russian</td>
<td>39,580</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>German</td>
<td>39,530</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>French</td>
<td>39,520</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5: Distribution of English in the university in 1999 in English and Russian

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language</th>
<th>Students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>English</td>
<td>39,560</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Russian</td>
<td>39,580</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>German</td>
<td>39,530</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>French</td>
<td>39,520</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
in French and German has been cut approximately three times, whereas enrollment in Russian has been cut over fifteen hundred times.

That the English language is becoming very important to the Cuban economy is also shown by the rapid growth of the adult language schools in this period. By 1993 there were 91 language schools for adults. And since these schools respond mostly to the great need for English in the tourism industry, the schools are located all over the island. Only fifteen such schools are found in Havana.

By 1990, the enrollment in the English major at the School of Modern Languages in the University of Havana was almost six times that of Russian: 573 for English, 112 for Russian, 107 for French, and 120 for German (Ministerio de Educación 1993).

The strength of English in present-day Cuba is also reflected in the extension of English language majors to other universities in the island besides the University of Havana. An English major was established at the University of Oriente and the University Central de las Villas in 1989–90, and at the University of Matanzas and the Instituto Superior Técnico de Holguín in 1990–91.

Likewise the number of University majors requiring English increased rapidly during this period, while those requiring Russian disappeared, as shown in Table 3.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>English</th>
<th>Russian</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1982–1983</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>48%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1985–1986</td>
<td>62%</td>
<td>38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1986–1987</td>
<td>81%</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990–1991</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


The absence of majors requiring Russian in 1990 shown above is one result of the C Plan instituted by the Ministry of Higher Education in 1990. Besides requiring English for all majors, Plan C increased the time allotted to English in some programs and radically changed the approach used in teaching English. From a reading-only approach, an initial one-semester course taught using a communicative approach was proposed for all majors. And this semester was followed not by simple ESP courses but by a program of English Across the Curriculum.

During the mid-1980s it became obvious to Cuban English professionals that teaching approaches used elsewhere, and even in Cuba in the past, were not appropriate. The situation of Cuba was unique. It had no representatives from core English-speaking countries. Only Cuban bilinguals taught English, using Spanish readily to give meaning. Interest in English did not respond to a Capitalist order of economic stratification. In fact, it was precisely the success of post-revolutionary Cuba in dismissing English language imperialism that made it difficult to promote it again. For example, as stated previously, all university texts had been translated into Spanish or written by Cubans; thus English was no longer needed for a tertiary education. The greatest challenge during this period then became how to promote a language which was solely a requirement at the tertiary level rather than having immediate utility. The English Across the Curriculum Program that became known as the Programa Director provided the answer to this challenge.

The Programa Director appealed to the social responsibility of all university instructors by asking them to create the need for English language proficiency within their courses. Instructors were asked to assign bibliography in their respective fields in English. In addition, manuals and other materials in the technical fields were not translated into Spanish, but given to students as problems that had to be solved in teams with the assistance of English monitors (Corona 1988, 1993a).

A survey conducted by Corona in 1992 (Corona 1993a) with 3121 university students has clearly established that English proficiency is widespread among Cuban professionals. Over three-fourths of fifth-year university students feel qualified to work with English bibliography. In some majors such as Microbiology, Biochemistry, and Data Processing, all fifth-year students report being capable of reading English bibliography. The percentage of students able to use English bibliography declines as follows in the other fields: 87 percent in Biology, 86 percent in Art History, 82 percent in Pharmacy, 78 percent in Chemical Engineering, 74 percent in Veterinary Medicine, and 72 percent in Chemistry. Only Mechanical Engineering emerged as a field in which there is considerably less English language proficiency among students. Fifty-nine percent of students in Mechanical Engineering reported being able to handle English bibliography. The same survey, however, revealed that the ability of Cuban professionals to use English language bibliography is much greater than their actual need to use English language bibliography during their studies. Fifth-year students in the different fields report using English language bibliography systematically as follows: 83 percent of those in
From accumulating funds from and paying off funds to Cambodia, Cambodia's contribution to providing AI and its improving education, which are part of TESOL's internalization and its influencing regulations, which are part of TESOL's internalization and its influencing regulations, TESOL claimed that this was subject to the American Dream with TESOL's internalization and its influencing regulations. TESOL claimed that this was subject to the American Dream with TESOL's internalization and its influencing regulations. TESOL claimed that this was subject to the American Dream with TESOL's internalization and its influencing regulations. TESOL claimed that this was subject to the American Dream with TESOL's internalization and its influencing regulations.

Despite the continued United States embargo, there is evidence that classroom instruction was programmed to Chinese. Classroom instruction was programmed to Chinese. Classroom instruction was programmed to Chinese. Classroom instruction was programmed to Chinese.

The English influence only of Chinese is expanding and improving. The English influence only of Chinese is expanding and improving. The English influence only of Chinese is expanding and improving. The English influence only of Chinese is expanding and improving. English.


191. In 1992, the Group of English Language Specialists was established. The Group of English Language Specialists was established. The Group of English Language Specialists was established. The Group of English Language Specialists was established. The Group of English Language Specialists was established.

In 1999, the Group of English Language Specialists was established. The Group of English Language Specialists was established. The Group of English Language Specialists was established. The Group of English Language Specialists was established. The Group of English Language Specialists was established.

The English influence only of Chinese is expanding and improving. The English influence only of Chinese is expanding and improving. The English influence only of Chinese is expanding and improving. The English influence only of Chinese is expanding and improving. The English influence only of Chinese is expanding and improving.
Vietnam, and North Korea (as 'prohibited countries') as well as persons residing in those countries” (TESOL Matters 1993).2 The Cuban English language profession remains mostly isolated from other English specialists as a result of the United States embargo.

But the 1990s have also seen an increase in scientific and academic exchanges with the United States. For example, since 1987 City University of New York has had an academic exchange program with Cuban institutions. English, of course, has played a most important role in this academic exchange, although ours (Corona and García) is the very first collaboration we know of related to English in Cuba. This present period is characterized by the overt promotion of English among Cubans as an important economic asset of Cuban society. Cuba has joined other countries in recognizing the value of English as the language of international communication and scientific activity, despite the objections of the United States government.

Conclusion

The presence of English in post-revolutionary Cuba today attests to the growing spread of English in the world. Despite the absence of English speakers in Cuba and the promotion and subsidy of languages other than English, English has maintained its position as the most useful foreign language in Cuba. From a language spoken by the Cuban elite linked to United States interests in the island, English ability has come to be heralded as a social responsibility of all Cubans. English in Cuba is now seen as a potential national resource in maintaining a first-class scientific establishment and in communicating with the rest of the world. The challenge to the Cuban educational system will be how to continue to spread English to all Cubans and how to expand the functions of English to encompass not only reading, but also speaking, despite its societal absence. English language professionals in Cuba are assiduously working to make English a resource that is available to all, incapable of producing differences among Cuban citizens, but capable of making a difference in Cuban society.

Notes

1. The authors wish to thank the CUNY-Caribbean Exchange Program for making this collaboration possible and for making Corona's visit to New York and García's visit to Havana a reality. In particular, we want to thank Iraida López, Coordinator of the CUNY-Caribbean Exchange Program, who established the initial contact between the two of us, and who always found a person to take and bring the many pieces of paper that we exchanged during the two years that we worked on this paper. We're also grateful to Joshua A. Fishman for believing that this collaboration could take place. And to our family, and most especially to Ricardo and Roberto, our gratitude for supporting our efforts to let English bring our two Cuban voices together.

2. TESOL has now obtained permission to have affiliates in Cuba, as well as individual members. However, there are still restrictions on monetary awards. (Personal communication, Teresa O'Donnell, TESOL Central Office).

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Coulmas, Florian