

**Remarks on the occasion of the October International at Home.
The English Speaking Union in Partnership with the British-Mexican Society**

Susan Bull, Chairman of the English-Speaking Union Promotions Committee,

Your former Director General Mike Lake

Ladies and Gentlemen,

After the scattering of the people upon the face of the earth and the confusion of languages / as divine punishment for their arrogance in building the Tower of Babel / there has been a secret longing for a common tongue, that will join us again.

Along the past century there have been some attempts / Esperanto, Volapuk and Interlingua / that failed to reach their goal despite their brave efforts. So the Twenty First Century dawns with English flooding throughout the planet getting close to reach that goal.

British culture is a very fortunate blend of two of the great traditions in modern Europe. / The Latin and the Germanic. / One could say that is in these islands, where the great knot of Western civilization was tied. The discipline and elegance of the Mediterranean heritage / with the energy and resilience of the North.

It is in that early Anglo-Saxon that the great epic poem Beowulf was drafted with words that carried meaning and history/ but also paved the road where the adventure of English took place enriched by the Norman invasion, the Danish rule that brought new words that took root / and later on flourished with Shakespeare and Donne and crossed the seas to America and Australia with Sir Walter Raleigh and Captain Cook.

Notwithstanding the beautiful language of Cervantes, García Márquez, Rulfo, Benedetti and Vargas Llosa. Today the language of Dickens, Orwell,

Tolkien and McEwan, the language of TS Elliot and also today's trovadours Bob Dylan and Lenard Cohen, is the language of books, newspapers, technology, advertising, films and science. In fact two thirds of the world scientists read in English and a staggering 85% of the world's electronically stored information is in English.

Long gone is the famous telegram "Fog in the Channel. The Continent isolated". Now the tide has turned / and at any given time there are about 130,000 students learning English in the British Council Centres worldwide (I was one of them) and British Universities open their doors to hundreds of thousands every year. Britain is the second largest destination for Mexican Postgraduate Students abroad today.

The flourishing trade with Canada and the US after the signing of Nafta, the great number of Mexicans living and working in the united States, 31 million of Mexican heritage and identity 14 m of which were born in Mexico, the growing number of students and scholars in American and British Universities / have made Mexico well aware of the importance to tackle the competitive world of trade and finance carrying English as a powerful skill for Mexican businessmen, and scholars.

The role of English is of vital importance for any country in the world today. It is also the case in Mexico toward the advancement of the country as one of the world's largest economies. The teaching of English is one of the most important challenges in the transformation of the Mexican Educational System, so the Ministry of Education has an extended program to the teaching of English / and now children start learning it since the first years of primary education has launched an ambitious scheme to hire and train teachers on a national level.

Already 21 States have already in place English teaching in primary schools and more and more Universities have courses of English as a second language.

Ladies and gentlemen:

In the high noon of post modernity education seems to be the driving force of human enterprise, communication plays a definite and influential role in creating confidence in human progress and English is an exceptional tool to the better understanding among ourselves.

Thank you very much.