**Level:** B1 (high) - B2

**Lesson Topic:** The English-speaking Mania

**Text Source:** <https://www.ted.com/talks/jay_walker_on_the_world_s_english_mania/transcript>

(By Jay Walker)

**Warm Up**

* What is a mania?
* Do you have any?
* Do you know anyone having a certain mania?

**1. Vocabulary: Before you listen!**

* pandemonium (n.): wild and noisy disorder or confusion.

E.g.: *Let's talk about manias (…) Hysterical teenagers, crying, screaming, pandemonium.*

[Spanish: *pandemonio*]

* deafening /dɪ-ˈfii-nɪn/ (adj.): so loud as to make it impossible to hear anything else

E.g.: *Sports mania: deafening crowds, all for one idea: get the ball in the net.*

[Spanish: *ensordecedor*]

* rapture /ˈrap-chor/ (n.): a feeling of intense pleasure or joy. (Synonym: ecstasy)
* weeping /ˈwii-pɪn/ (n.): shedding tears.

E.g.: *Okay, religious mania: there's rapture, there's weeping, there's visions.*

[Spanish: llanto]

* let (somebody) down: fail to support or help someone as they had hoped or expected.

E.g.: *I don't want to let my parents down!*

[Spanish: decepcionar]

* grueling /ˈgruu-lɪn/ (adj.): extremely tiring and demanding.

E.g.: *80 million high school Chinese students have already taken this grueling test.*

[Spanish: agotador(a)]

**2. Text Comprehension**

Watch the lesson video and answer the questions below:

**2.1. General Comprehension**

**What does the author mainly do throughout the test?**

**A.** criticize people’s obsession with learning English.

**B.** inform about English teachingmethods in China.

**C.** explain the possible reasons for a worldwide English-learning desire

**2.2. Specific Comprehension**

**Watch the video again and answer the following specific questions:**

a) How does the author call the world’s increasing interest to learn English? What other “manias” does he make reference to?

b) Which country does he think will be the world’s largest English-speaking country that year?

c) How soon do Chinese children start learning English?

d) In the video, the author talks about an English test called *gaokao*. What is it about? How do Chinese students get ready for it?

e) What word does the author use to summarize the reason why people strive to learn English worldwide?

f) What does the author mean when he states that “*English is becoming the language of problem-solving*”?

**3. Pronunciation Practice: Shadowing**

**Directions:** Under your teacher’s supervision, read the following excerpt out loud for pronunciation assessment.

a) Sports mania: deafening crowds, all for one idea: get the ball in the net. (…) Okay, religious mania: there's rapture, there's weeping, there's visions. Manias can be good. Manias can be alarming. Or manias can be deadly.

b) The world has a new mania. A mania for learning English. (…) How many people are trying to learn English worldwide? Two billion of them.

c) In Latin America, in India, in Southeast Asia, and most of all, in China. If you're a Chinese student, you start learning English in the third grade, by law. That's why this year, China will become the world's largest English-speaking country.

d) Why English? In a single word: opportunity. Opportunity for a better life, a job, to be able to pay for school, or put better food on the table. Imagine a student taking a giant test for three full days. Her score on this one test literally determines her future. She studies 12 hours a day for three years to prepare. Twenty-five percent of her grade is based on English. It's called the *gaokao*, and 80 million high school Chinese students have already taken this grueling test. The intensity to learn English is almost unimaginable, unless you witness it.

e) So, is English mania good or bad? Is English a tsunami, washing away other languages? Not likely. English is the world's second language. Your native language is your life. But with English, you can become part of a wider conversation -- a global conversation about global problems, like climate change or poverty, or hunger or disease. The world has other universal languages. Mathematics is the language of science. Music is the language of emotions. And now English is becoming the language of problem-solving. Not because America is pushing it, but because the world is pulling it. So English mania is a turning point.

f) Like the harnessing of electricity in our cities, or the fall of the Berlin Wall, English represents hope for a better future: a future where the world has a common language to solve its common problems.

**4. Vocabulary**

**4.1. Word Families**

**Directions:** Complete the chart with word families from the given units.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **NOUN** | **VERB** | **ADJECTIVE** |
| **idea** | *idealize* | *ideal* |
|  | cry |  |
|  | scream |  |
| crow |  |  |
| vision |  |  |
|  |  | deadly |
|  | determine |  |
| intensity |  |  |
|  |  | unimaginable |
|  |  | turning |
|  |  | global |

**4.2. Meaning in Context**

**Directions:** What does the author mean by the underlined words and phrases in their context?

a) Let's talk about manias. Let's start with Beatlemania.

b) Why English? In a single word: opportunity. Opportunity for a better life, a job, to be able to pay for school, or put better food on the table.

c) Imagine a student taking a giant test for three full days. Her score on this one test literally determines her future.

d) So, is English mania good or bad? Is English a tsunami, washing away other languages? Not likely. English is the world's second language. Your native language is your life.

e) But with English, you can become part of a wider conversation -- a global conversation about global problems, like climate change or poverty, or hunger or disease. The world has other universal languages. Mathematics is the language of science. Music is the language of emotions.

f) And now English is becoming the language of problem-solving. Not because America is pushing it, but because the world is pulling it. So English mania is a turning point.

**5. Speaking**

**5.1.** **Re-telling:** Summarizing Information

Watch the video one more time and summarize the main points presented by Jay Walker. If necessary, take notes as you listen.

**5.2. Monologue:** My kind of “English-learning Mania”

Answer the following questions in the form of a brief monologue. Feel free to add any information you consider relevant to your presentation.

**a)** When did you start learning English? What motivated you to do so?

**b)** How was your English when you arrived in the United States for the first time? Have you noticed any change in terms of comprehension, fluency and/or vocabulary to this day?

**c)** Do you have any English-speaking friends; in other words, friends who does not speak your native language? What’s communication like with them? Tell us about it!

**d)** Have you ever prepared for a life-changing English exam (such as IELTS, TOEFL, SAT/ACT, etc.)? If so, what was your experience like?

**e)** In general, how has English changed your life? What do you think would have been different if you hadn’t learned any English in the past?

**Annex 1: Video Transcript**

**“The English-speaking Mania”**

By Jay Walker

Let's talk about manias. Let's start with Beatlemania.

(Recording of crowd roaring)

Hysterical teenagers, crying, screaming, pandemonium.

(Recording of crowd roaring)

Sports mania: deafening crowds, all for one idea -- get the ball in the net. (Recording) Goal! Okay, religious mania: there's rapture, there's weeping, there's visions. Manias can be good. Manias can be alarming. Or manias can be deadly.

(Recording of crowd cheering)

The world has a new mania. A mania for learning English. Listen as Chinese students practice their English, by screaming it:

Teacher: ... change my life!

Students: I want to change my life!

T: I don't want to let my parents down!

S: I don't want to let my parents down!

T: I don't ever want to let my country down!

S: I don't ever want to let my country down!

T: Most importantly... S: Most importantly...

T: I don't want to let myself down!

S: I don't want to let myself down!

How many people are trying to learn English worldwide? Two billion of them.

Students: A t-shirt. A dress.

Jay Walker: In Latin America, in India, in Southeast Asia, and most of all, in China. If you're a Chinese student, you start learning English in the third grade, by law. That's why this year, China will become the world's largest English-speaking country.

(Laughter)

Why English? In a single word: opportunity. Opportunity for a better life, a job, to be able to pay for school, or put better food on the table. Imagine a student taking a giant test for three full days. Her score on this one test literally determines her future. She studies 12 hours a day for three years to prepare. Twenty-five percent of her grade is based on English. It's called the *gaokao*, and 80 million high school Chinese students have already taken this grueling test. The intensity to learn English is almost unimaginable, unless you witness it.

Teacher: Perfect! Students: Perfect!

T: Perfect! S: Perfect!

T: I want to speak perfect English!

S: I want to speak perfect English!

T: I want to speak ... S: I want to speak ...

T: ... perfect English! S: ... perfect English!

T (yelling more loudly): I want to change my life!

S (yelling more loudly): I want to change my life!

JW: So, is English mania good or bad? Is English a tsunami, washing away other languages? Not likely. English is the world's second language. Your native language is your life. But with English, you can become part of a wider conversation -- a global conversation about global problems, like climate change or poverty, or hunger or disease. The world has other universal languages. Mathematics is the language of science. Music is the language of emotions. And now English is becoming the language of problem-solving. Not because America is pushing it, but because the world is pulling it. So English mania is a turning point.

Like the harnessing of electricity in our cities, or the fall of the Berlin Wall, English represents hope for a better future -- a future where the world has a common language to solve its common problems.

Thank you very much.

(Applause)