

1.6. The domination of the world by American pop culture

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US culture is spreading to every corner of the world. This all-pervasive American influence is called ironically McDomination, since McDonald's, the largest fast food chain and the symbol of American power, can be found in almost every city around the globe. However, it isn't only Big Macs which are consumed worldwide. America continues to export its culture on an unprecedented scale. The process of Americanisation can be observed in the media, music, films, entertainment, language, literature and sport. We find Coca-Cola in every bar, listen to CNN in every hotel room and watch American films made in Hollywood in every cinema. American movie stars and sports idols are regarded as international heroes, children everywhere want to listen to the latest American hits, wear jeans and T-shirts, eat hamburgers, hot-dogs and popcorn and adopt the American lifestyle. American culture is ubiquitous and reigns supreme. In fact, it has become the world culture.

Many people express concerns about this growing American influence. Their fears seem to be well-founded. As the unrivalled superpower, America has become the engine of contemporary cultural globalisation. In Europe, two out of three films shown are American. Television is saturated with American sitcoms, movies and light entertainment. American English is the language of choice for pop stars all over the world. You have to know English if you want to use the Internet since the vast majority of World Wide Web sites, most software and search engines are in English. The giant American information corporations broadcast the news to millions of people around the planet and monopolise the view they get of the world. As a result, contemporary perspectives and lifestyles are changing.

However, aren't fears of McDomination exaggerated? On the one hand, native cultures have always been enriched by foreign influences and Americans can be praised for transmitting such ideals as freedom of speech and of the press, individuals' rights and democracy. On the other hand, American expansion is so aggressive that local traditions and industries are hard to protect. Still, it seems that US pop culture is not able to supplant local culture where that culture has a strong identity and is deeply rooted in tradition and values. After all, the Germans still prefer their beer to whisky, the British keep having their cup of tea ('cuppa') in the afternoons and the Italians still consume more pasta than they do hamburgers!

SPEAKING

1. How would you define "McDomination"?
2. In which areas can the process of Americanisation be observed?
3. Is the growing American influence a positive or a negative phenomenon?

VOCABULARY A

to spread to every corner of the world

- rozprzestrzeniać się do każdego zakątka świata

all-pervasive American influence

- wszechobecny amerykański wpływ

the largest fast food chain

- największa sieć fast foodów

unprecedented scale - niespotykana skala

movie stars - gwiazdy filmowe

sports idols - sportowi idole

international heroes

- międzynarodowi bohaterowie

to adopt the American lifestyle

- przyjąć amerykański styl życia

ubiquitous - wszechobecny

to reign supreme - rządzić niepodzielnie

to express concerns - wyrażać obawy

well-founded - uzasadniony

unrivalled superpower

- nieościgniona potęga

to be the engine of contemporary cultural

- globalisation - być motorem współczesnej globalizacji kulturowej

to be saturated with - być nasyconym

sitcom - sitcom, serial komediowy

light entertainment - lekka rozrywka

software - oprogramowanie

search engine - wyszukiwarka internetowa

to broadcast the news - nadawać wiadomości

perspective - punkt widzenia, perspektywa

exaggerated - przesadzony

native culture - rodzima kultura

to be enriched - być wzbogaconym

to be praised - być chwalonym

to transmit - przekazywać

freedom of speech - wolność słowa

to supplant - zająć miejsce

strong identity - silna tożsamość

to be deeply rooted in tradition

- być głęboko zakorzenionym w tradycji

pasta - makaron

VOCABULARY B

mass consumption - masowa konsumpcja

mass production - masowa produkcja

movie industry - przemysł filmowy

aggressive cultural policy

- agresywna polityka kulturowa

cultural imperialism - kulturowy imperializm

conquest of the world markets

- podbój rynków światowych

to impose domination - narzucić dominację

pop culture icons - ikony pop kultury

almighty dollar

- potężny (wszechmocny) dolar

kitsch - kicz



1. ZADANIA

Zadanie 1

1. Do you like reading books? Why (not)?
2. Do you prefer watching films or reading books? Why?
3. What kinds of music do you like? Why?
4. Do you prefer sightseeing or visiting museums? Why?
5. What cultural activities are popular with young people today?
6. Who is your favourite writer? Why?
7. What kinds of books do you like?
8. What are the advantages of television?
9. What do you think about the domination of American pop culture in the world?
10. Would you like to be a famous pop star? Why (not)?
11. Do you agree with the statement that culture enriches our life? Justify.
12. What, in your opinion, are the most attractive cultural events?

Zadanie 2

A. Twój angielski kolega jest ciekawy, jaki film oglądałeś/aś ostatnio w kinie. Uwzględnij cztery kwestie, które musisz omówić w rozmowie.

Typ filmu

Fabula

Gra aktorów

Ogólna ocena filmu

B. Podczas pobytu w Londynie wybrałeś/aś się do muzeum. Twój współlokator chciałby dowiedzieć się więcej szczegółów. Poniżej podane są cztery kwestie, które musisz omówić w rozmowie.

Rodzaj muzeum

Ekspozycje

Cena biletu

Wrażenia z wizyty

Zadanie 3

Describe the picture.



1. What situation is shown in the photograph?
2. What forms of popular culture do you like?

Zadanie 4

Zapraszacie do szkoły znanego reżysera, by zachęcić kolegów i koleżanki do porozmawiania o historii filmu. Ty masz za zadanie przygotować plakat informacyjny o tym wydarzeniu. Którą z fotografii wybierzesz na plakat? Uzasadnij swój wybór. Wyjaśnij, dlaczego odrzuciłeś/aś drugą fotografię.

