

Songs with non-English lyrics are becoming more popular

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Photo - BreakingNewsEnglish

Since the advent of rock 'n' roll in the 1950s, music from the USA and UK has dominated global music charts. Both countries have benefited considerably from the "soft power" of hit songs with English lyrics. However, the English-language dominance of the

music industry is under threat from songs from non-English-speaking countries. This is according to the music streaming giant Spotify. The company said English-language music was losing its long-time stranglehold. There has been a surge in demand for songs sung in Spanish, Korean, Arabic, and other languages. Spotify said the number of non-English songs in the charts more than doubled between 2020 and 2025.

A prime example of how English is losing its hegemony is the worldwide popularity of the Puerto Rican singer Bad Bunny. He sings exclusively in Spanish and was Spotify's most streamed artist globally in 2025. Meanwhile, Spanish artist Rosalia astounded the music world with her award-winning album "Lux," on which she sings in 13 different languages. Spotify said three music genres have seen their chart presence rise by 30 per cent or more in the past five years. These are Brazilian Funk, K-pop, and Trap Latino. Their streams increased by 36 per cent, 31 per cent, and 30 per cent respectively. The music website NME said: "The trend is likely to continue growing further into 2026."

Sources: [musicweek.com](https://www.musicweek.com) / [nme.com](https://www.nme.com) / [bbc.com](https://www.bbc.com)

Writing

The lyrics are the most important part of a song. Discuss.

Chat

Talk about these words from the article.

rock 'n' roll / music / music charts / soft power / threat / streaming / songs in Spanish / hegemony / worldwide / popularity / artists / albums / different languages / website

True / False

- 1) The article says rock 'n' roll started in the 1940s. T / F
- 2) The article says hit songs with English lyrics gave the UK "hard power". T / F
- 3) The article says a streaming service has led to fewer songs in English. T / F
- 4) The article says there has been a rise in demand for songs in Spanish. T / F
- 5) The lyrics of Bad Bunny's songs are all Spanish. T / F
- 6) A Spanish singer recorded an album using 13 different languages. T / F
- 7) Streams for the K-pop music genre increased by 31% in 2025. T / F
- 8) A music website said the trend for non-English songs will soon reverse. T / F

Synonym Match

(The words in **bold** are from the news article.)

- | | |
|------------------------|----------------------|
| 1. advent | a. amazed |
| 2. considerably | b. supremacy |
| 3. dominance | c. classic |
| 4. surge | d. a lot |
| 5. doubled | e. carry on |
| 6. prime | f. increased twofold |
| 7. exclusively | g. existence |
| 8. astounded | h. arrival |
| 9. presence | i. only |
| 10. continue | j. rise |

Discussion – Student A

- a) What do you think about what you read?
- b) Which is more important, a song's lyrics or a good guitar solo?
- c) Have you ever used songs to learn English?
- d) What is your least-liked music genre?
- e) What do you think of Brazilian Funk, K-pop, and Trap Latino?
- f) What will music be like in the future?
- g) Is streaming the best way to listen to music?
- h) What questions would you like to ask your favourite singer?

Phrase Match

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|------------------------------|
| 1. Since the advent of rock 'n' roll | a. for songs sung in Spanish |
| 2. Both countries have benefited | b. to continue |
| 3. the English-language dominance | c. of the music industry |
| 4. There has been a surge in demand | d. in the 1950s |
| 5. songs in the charts more than | e. in Spanish |
| 6. A prime example of how English is | f. chart presence rise |
| 7. He sings exclusively | g. doubled |
| 8. Spanish artist Rosalia astounded | h. losing its hegemony |
| 9. three music genres have seen their | i. the music world |
| 10. The trend is likely | j. considerably |

Discussion – Student B

- What do you think of rock 'n' roll?
- What is your favourite music genre?
- What do you think of songs in English?
- Do you think songs in your language are the best in the world?
- What songs in English do you really like?
- What do you think of streaming?
- Do you like listening to songs in different languages?
- What song lyrics do you like?

Spelling

- Since the neadv of rock 'n' roll
- Both countries have benefited ondcesylriba
- the English-language mnidcneao
- gdrancioc to the music streaming giant
- losing its long-time gnsadhrtlloe
- There has been a ersug in demand
- English is losing its eehnyomg
- He sings elsyelvicxu in Spanish
- Rosalia edotnauds the music world
- three music rnsgee
- seen their chart psenreec rise
- 31 per cent and 30 per cent vtpceylesrei

Answers – Synonym Match

1. h	2. d	3. b	4. j	5. f
6. c	7. i	8. a	9. g	10. e

Comprehension Questions

Listen to / read the news article. Answer these questions. (Answers are on p. 27 of the 27-page PDF.)

1.	When does the article say rock 'n' roll started?
2.	What have hit songs with English lyrics given the USA and UK?
3.	What is threatening the English-language dominance of music?
4.	What three languages does the article say are in greater demand?
5.	When did the number of non-English songs in the charts double?
6.	Who was the most streamed artist on Spotify in 2025?
7.	How many languages did the singer Rosalia sing in on her album?
8.	How many genres saw their streams rise by 30% or more in 2025?
9.	By how much did Trap Latino streams rise by in 2025?
10.	What did the NME site say about the non-English-language song trend?

Speaking – Music Genres

Rank these with your partner. Put the best at the top. Change partners often and share your rankings.

- | | |
|------------------|-----------|
| • Rock 'n' roll | • Hip-hop |
| • K-pop | • Reggae |
| • Brazilian Funk | • EDM |
| • Trap Latino | • R&B |

Answers – True False

1	F	2	F	3	F	4	T	5	T	6	T	7	T	8	F
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Answers to Phrase Match and Spelling are in the text.