The Dialectic of a Global Language

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> *"For a man to speak one language rather than another is a ritual act, it is a statement about one's personal status, to speak the same language as one's neighbours expresses solidarity with those neighbours, to speak a different language from one's neighbours expresses social distance or even hostility"*

Edmund Leach, an anthropologist, discussing political and cultural units in highland Burma (in Cohn, 2000, 40)

Abstract

This essay attempts to answer some of the basic assumptions made about English as a global language. It is argued that such assumptions, especially those concerning political and economic power, are not sufficient in themselves to explain why English has acquired such global importance. Rather, what has greatly contributed to the possibility for any language to become global has been a change in the nature of language itself, a change which made language more standardized and uniform than it had ever been before. Also this relates to how this process of standardization led to changes in how text was produced, and as a result changes in how reading would take place. Such changes pre-empted and made possible the later invention of the printing press. How language from then on became organized and stored meant that it would be easier to teach and learn, and as a consequence reproduced in a more standardized and uniform way. This essay, in turn, concludes by pointing out that because of this process of standardization, any language in the world can be a global one, not just English. However the case does not

end there. In what is a post-script to this essay, it is argued how political and economic class based factors rather than encouraging the spread of English in countries not of its origin, actually restrict it. Hence this undermines the efficacy of any pedagogical method which has been greatly enhanced by the growing standarization and uniformity of languages in the modern world.

Resumen

En este ensayo se pretende dar respuesta a algunas creencias relacionadas con el inglés visto como una lengua global. Se argumenta que tales creencias, en particular las relacionadas con el poder económico y político, no son suficientes para dar cuenta del porqué el inglés ha adquirido tal importancia a nivel global. Al contrario de lo que se cree, lo que realmente ha contribuido al hecho de que una lengua se vuelva global es el cambio en su naturaleza. Un cambio que hizo que la lengua se volviera más estandarizada y uniforme de lo que antes pudo ser, también como este proceso de estandarización trajo cambios en la forma como los textos se producen, y como consecuencia, cambios en la forma en que se leen. Dichos cambios fueron supeditados y dieron pie a la posterior invención de la imprenta. Esto permitió que la lengua se volviera organizada y susceptible de que se conservaran registros de ésta, lo que a su vez facilitó su aprendizaje, enseñanza y la difusión en una forma más uniforme y estandarizada. Así, en este ensayo se concluye que a causa del proceso de estandarización, cualquier lengua del planeta puede constituirse en global, no solamente el inglés. Sin embargo, el argumento no se limita a esto. En una adición posterior a este ensayo, se debate cómo los factores de tipo político y económico, antes que fomentar la difusión del inglés en países donde éste no es una lengua madre, en realidad la restringen, restando así eficacia a cualquier método pedagógico que haya sido impulsado por la creciente estandarización y uniformidad de las lenguas del mundo moderno.

Key Words: standardization, uniformity, global language, power, linguistic-imperialism, spaces between words, scriptura continua.

Palabras Clave: estandarización, uniformidad, lengua global, poder, imperialismo lingüístico, espacios entre palabras, scriptura continua.

Rephrasing a question is often a good way to pursue a problem which no longer bears fruit. Such would be the case concerning the question, "Why is English the contemporary global language?" This question has arguably grown stale on account of the omnipresence of the United States and the familiar history of the past British Empire. In other words, the answer to the question has become one which tends to state the obvious. According to Crystal (2000,7-8), the reason English is today's international language lies in the fact that, "A language becomes an international language for one chief reason; the political power of its people-especially their military power". He argues that this has been the case throughout history. Greek, Latin, Arabic, and of course eventually English, all acquired their global scale on account of their speakers´military successes and consequent domination.   He

adds though that military strength in itself is insufficient. There must also be economic power to maintain and drive it forward. This is more relevant in the 20ᵗʰ Century due to the influential role of new communication technologies which have made language more accessible and widespread than before.

Such an answer though, besides appealing to those who may in turn feel justified "resisting" the domination of this "global language" does tend to sound a slight bit tautological, especially in a world dominated by one superpower which happens to speak English. The answer to the question then is simply reduced to that of "Power." Power" is an explanation which threatens to ontologize the problem concerning the existence of a global language. Ontologies tend to be persuasive because they make the past and the present appear to be the same. In other words, there is nothing historically specific or unique concerning the nature of a global language. It is assumed instead that as any "power" expands, so will the language spoken by that "power". Power attracts or repels subjects from itself; hence the more power a language acquires, the more it attracts; and the more it repels, the weaker the alternatives become. Furthermore, there is also the presumption that there has been no change in the language itself, the qualities of its being. The Latin of antiquity could well be the global language of today, if there had been sufficient power to make it so. The point here is that "power" fails to answer the question satisfactorily. It is related, but in itself is insufficient and does not problematize sufficiently its case.

The second and related cause, economic power, and the consequences of new communication technologies, also seems to fail to provide a satisfactory answer. Here the answer tends to gain force by resorting to the fetish of technological determinism. The printing press, radio, TV, computers, the internet and how they provide a vehicle for the expansion of English. This, of course, means having to take into account the greater productivity required to fill these media and spread them globally. It is otherwise referred to as mass production for mass consumption. Here one may insert the Marxist term, the "commodification" of language. This side of the answer is much more relevant because it allows one to consider the historical specificity of there being a global language, unlike any before in history. However it does tend to reduce the answer to that of "quantity". In very much the same way as does the answer of political power. It is all a matter of how much power is necessary, and how much language can be produced, for a language to become "global."

More important though is how the combination of the idea of "political" and "economic" power as being the answer to why English is the global language has turned out to be a most robust and convincing one. One way in which it convinces is by how it fosters a strain of pedagogy which has grown sensitive to the variety of "learning cultures" in which English is being disseminated. This is a case of pedagogy responding to the needs of its learners in such a way that the political and economic power of the language will not burden, interfere or damage their education of it. Rather it will help preserve their "culture". For example it is seen in McKay (in Lotherington) when discussing the "communicative approach to language teaching" tackles its assumed superiority. It is argued that CLT carries with it "cultural assumptions that may not fit well in certain countries." Moreover in the book's conclusion, the author "appeals for cultural sensitivity in the teaching of English as an international language," stressing that pedagogical particularization is needed to effect culturally reflective teaching and learning."

Similar to this is the strong criticism of the book, "World English: A Study of its Development (Brutt-Griffler). The review (Young Hee Park, 2004,_87-9) rejects the author's claim that World English cannot be attributed to linguistic imperialism, as it in turn fostered a consequent anti-colonial struggle against it. Instead the reviewer claims, "we cannot deny that it was political imperialism which gave impetus to (English)" and the author goes on to assert that "the current native speaker dominance of World English would seem to be based more on political force than anything else",(89). The point here is how a conscious kind of cultural sensitivity finds a great deal of its justification by drawing on the thesis that the spread of the English language has been contingent on the power behind it. Hence there exists a certain feeling of ethical responsibility when teaching it so as to lessen the greater imposition of the language upon those studying it. In other words in trying to subvert that power, new pedagogies have been created to teach it showing, therefore, how the thesis of power convinces and asserts itself as a justification for the inquiry into and production of new teaching methodologies by creating an illusion of their ability to liberate the subject from that power.

Clearly the acceptance of the thesis of Power has resulted in a more tolerant and appealing form of pedagogy which tries to reduce the force of the entrance of English into other cultures. This, of course, reflects the growing consciousness of what is referred to as "cultural imperialism" and attempts made to counter it. However as appealing as the Power thesis may be for those on either side of its equation, this

essay will argue that any such thesis is not sufficient in itself. Another contingency exists, the absence of which would severely restrict, if not make impossible, the possibility for English to exist as a global language. Moreover, and on account of this contingency, it may well be that the "culturally sensitive" pedagogues are not that sensitive at all.

The question therefore is NOT why English is the global language, but more provocatively, why any language can be a global language? Or more to the point: what characterizes a global language in such a way that it deprives the thesis of power of its ontological force and in instead poses the possibility of a global language as requiring a quality not shared amongst those that have been presumed to be global in the past. And precisely because this is a characteristic or is becoming a characteristic of languages, one may say that languages which acquire it are by definition "global".

To make this point one does not have to resort to giving examples of languages on a global scale. After all, what does global mean? It is merely a spatial metaphor. If any language can exist at a sub-continental level, or be spoken by more than a billion people, then obviously it also is "global." The question is not so much one concerning either space or quantity, but rather the quality of the language itself. Let a question illustrate this point. Why has English in the United States not only become the language of its citizens, but more importantly, why has the language itself, amidst so much human and geographical diversity, and not to mention size, continued to be spoken more and more uniformly? Why have true dialects of English not appeared? And more to the point, this has occurred amongst a population with a large and diverse immigrant base.

The same may be said of English between the U.K, Australia, India and South Africa, but of course on a more complicated level. What they all share, is not so much an English root, say as Romance languages share a Latin root, but rather they have acquired greater uniformity over time. In other words time and distance have not produced diversity. Instead uniformity has been the rule. But this is not a condition one can assume to be natural. In contrast to this one may take a note from the observation made by Diakonoff (1999, 319) towards Arabic. He points out that the vernacular languages of the Arabs of the Maghrib, Egypt, Sudan, Syria etc are nearly as different from each other as Rumanian, Italian and Spanish are from each other. Only the educated Arab is taught classical Arabic at school. Consequently the Arabic language does not provide a true source of identity on which to forge a sense

of Arab nationalism. Despite the fact that Arabic does not lack sources of either political or economic power. Another case to consider is the language of the Boers, Afrikaans, a variant of Dutch or as what Iliffe (1995, 180) refers to as,"a congeries of local dialects spoken by poor Afrikaans (Boers) and Colored people". The Boers, just like the Arabs, had political and economic power over their domain, but the Dutch component of their language, varied sufficiently enough for Afrikaans to be understood as its own language. This has not happened in the English speaking world.

The tendency towards the uniformity of language is obviously not isolated to English. A more explicit example is that of Indonesia. In 1950, just after independence, almost no Indonesian spoke what is today the national language, Bahasa Indonesia, as his or her mother tongue. Almost everyone had their own ethnic language. 30 years later there were perhaps millions of young Indonesians from dozens of ethnolinguistic backgrounds who spoke Bahasa as their mother tongue (Anderson, 1991, 134). Hence it is important to note the speed of how a new, almost invented language, came to be spoken uniformly amongst such diverse origins in such a short length of time. In this respect it is important to note an observation made by Daniel Boorstein (in Deas,1993, 27-8) in respect to education in the early United States, "The first settlers of New England, belonging to an educated middle class, champions of the common school, had much to do with giving uniformity in the first place." Then quoting Noah Webster, the same point is reinforced, "Nothing except the establishment of schools and some uniformity in the use of books can finish with differences in speech and preserve the purity of the language of the United States". It is not surprising then that Webster went about the work of preparing a dictionary for his nation.

Similar excursions in the pursuance of preserving the uniformity of one's language were also underway in Colombia in the late 19th century. It was formally recognized by the Assembly of Cundinamarca that the dictionary compiled by Rufino Cuervo was of "high scientific value" and that it was necessary to procure 50 copies of it (43).The objective of Cuervo's dictionary was described in his "Apuntaciones criticas sobre el lenguage bogotano." It stated that, "Cuando varios pueblos gozan del beneficio de un idioma comun, propender a la uniformidad de este es avigorar sus simpatias y relaciones, hacerlos uno solo...que tienden a conservar la pureza de su idioma, destruyendo las barreras que las diferencias dialecticas crean" (38). Miguel Antonio Caro believed that such a dictionary was absolutely necessary and

would contrast radically with "the false principles which dominated in the 18th century, when it was believed that language was a capricious thing" and as such impossible to conceive of anything like the dictionary compiled by Cuervo (44).

For the above reasons no doubt, and for many others did C.A. Bayly (2004, 17-8) in his "The Birth of the Modern World" draw the conclusion that by 1900, "…human languages were also coming to resemble each other." According to Bayly, Western administrators, missionaries, educators, and even indigenous statesmen wanted the being of their languages reduced to easy transparent rules. Some in fact preferred to conform to those of the English language, as would be the case for Hindi and Urdu in India. This meant that "political speech and sermon took on common forms from Philadelphia and Rome to Kyoto and Fiji". It is hardly a coincidence then that the first translation of the Quran from Arabic into Urdu took place in the 1840s (358). Nor is it a coincidence that Afrikaans was developed as a written language only after 1875 by nationalist intellectuals (Iliffe, 1995,180). This tendency towards uniformity was also observed by Michel Foucault. He mentions (1973, 296) how from the 19th century onwards, language acquired the quality of being an 'object,' something which could be studied, seen to have laws of its own, an object which one could gain knowledge of. This is quite distinct to how it had been perceived in the 18th century, as Caro also had the wit to note. What Foucault's observation tells us is that the perception of language as an object meant that it could now be manipulated, controlled, organized, standardized and made to measure in structure.

Without a doubt the conscious effort in modern history to make languages uniform and standardized is what sets them apart from languages in the past. And this is why a "global language" can only exist in modernity but could not in antiquity. Here then is found the characteristic which prevents the thesis of power from ontologizing the concept of global language, and in turn problematizes it further. What can be noted here is how the intention to make language uniform did not stem from any concern related to either political or economic power. The possibility to conceive of language as being uniform was strictly an unintentional consequence stemming from a concern of medieval scholars to access and preserve the supposed intellectual heritage of the ancient Western world. Hence to describe this process will further offset the tendency to embrace the dominant thesis concerning the nature of global language.

This process can be best illustrated by focusing on the nature of printed texts and reading in Antiquity and how that contrasts with printed texts and reading at the end of the Middle Ages. Today it is taken for granted that things like punctuation, capital letters, paragraphs, sentences, and if not these, then at least spaces between words, if not the word itself have always existed. As the work of Paul Saenger proves, this is precisely not the case. Latin, which some may like to refer to as the first global language, existed in its written form in a way which bears no similarity to that of the present. Above all reading was an oral experience, not a visual one. Words were read out loud, not in silence. In fact according to Saenger (1997, 11) "oralization of the text was savored aesthetically by the ancients." As a consequence texts were written in 'scriptura continua.' That basically means that there were no spaces between words, no punctuation and or any other signs related to reading a text visually. Moreover readers of antiquity "did not possess the desire to make reading easier and swifter." There was no sense of cross-referencing or retrieving information quickly for reference or consultation. Arguably such devices were unnecessary considering that "reading habits were focused on a limited and intensely scrutinized canon of literature" (11). Unlike reading and writing in the modern age, which is done by individuals in silence, these actions were instead delegated to intellectually skilled slaves, of whom there was an abundance, to act as readers and scribes for the civilization of antiquity. As a result gaining access to the meaning of the unseparated word was a real chore. It was however offset by the ability of some to acquire the long term memory of texts frequently read out aloud, very much the same way as the Quran is memorized word for word and chanted by young students of Islam. Finally, Saenger points out how literacy was the domain of a restricted elite, to whom the notion of any form of mass literacy was entirely foreign (11).

Oddly enough it was the efforts of scholars of the early Middle Ages who wanted to save and access the lost wisdom of the ancients, which led to the process of creating a system of reference and order which in turn would provide the means to both imagine and construct uniformity of language. The desire to open up the lost knowledge of the past meant that it first had to be organized. Ancient texts existed as just undifferentiated masses of paper: chapters, titles, folios, and the idea of quotes all had to be invented in an effort to make an inventory, so to speak, of the works of antiquity, including sacred texts such as the Bible and the Quran. In the case of the Quran one may note that it is not organized according to any idea of narrative, subject, nor even the chronological order in which it may be supposed that the

prophet Muhammed received and copied the words of Allah. Instead the "Suras" or "chapters" when organized into the form of a book, the Quran, were done so in diminishing order of length (Rodinson, 2002, 82). However it was not just works of antiquity that were compiled in such apparent disorder. Consider for example the 13th Century work, The Travels of Marco Polo. It was a manuscript written in a French-Italian dialect that was difficult to translate and did not exist in the form of a definitive text. Instead there were over 100 different manuscripts in circulation (Bergreen, 2004, 80). Thus the task of putting such texts in order and distinguishing one from the other led the scholars of the age to invent things we today take for granted when reading. On the way they replaced the clumsy Roman numerals with Arabic numerals.

Finally, and after generations of work the scholars finally invented that first principle of rapid reference and consultation of printed texts; alphabetization. This allowed them to produce actual "guides" to the mass of literature they need to access. This of course led to the system of the "index." Indexes, alphabetization, chapters, Arabic numerals were all things absent in antiquity, and thus were precisely the decisive, and necessary contributions which would revolutionize both writing and reading (Crosby, 1998, 60-1). The most important of all contributions though, was the gradual yet final replacing of the scriptura continua with that of a text in which words were separated by space. This in turn was complemented by the need to further differentiate one word from another, leading to the creation of the 'sentence,' punctuation and capital letters; the visual paraphernalia which graces the page of any present day book. This was a breakthrough of most profound importance, as it meant texts could now be read in silence with the eyes alone. More importantly though, as Saenger makes clear, unlike in the past, "even readers of modest intellectual capacity could read more swiftly, and they could understand an increasing number of inherently more difficult texts (13).

Simply stated, reading comprehension was revolutionized as more people could now, independently read. The combination of all this also led to the transformation of Latin itself, which was basically simplified. A concept as basic as that of the 'word' came into being for the first time. This led to a further refining and standardizing of the language. The recognition of nouns, adjectives, regulating syntax transformed Latin into an 'analytical language' in which the goal of writing and reading unambiguosly had become paramount (Saenger, 1997, 253-54). This however was an unconcluded process until

around 1300 A.D. One could ask then if the problem of stopping the breakdown of Latin into diverse dialects and finally into the vernacular forms of the Romance languages lay not in it being contingent upon the imposition of Latin itself, but on the absence of the means with which to do it.

Thus, by the late medieval period, the concept of language had undergone a change which now allowed for the possibility of imagining a standard, uniform language. This of course became a reality when taken to its logical-mechanical conclusion in the invention of the printing press. Thus the printing press did not represent any sudden irruption in thinking, or any kind of technological imposition. It was simply the culmination of a growing tendency, a culmination through which the book was transformed into a commodity as it became an object of mass production (Anderson, 1991, 34). The acceptance of the norm which led to the growing standardization of written language existed prior to that of its being manufactured as a commodity. It would be precisely this growing tendency towards the standardization and uniformity of language, infinitely facilitated by the printing press, which would affect the nature of languages in countries like India once they became colonized by Europe. For what had come into existence was the possibility to conceive not only of standardized languages, but also that of a global language.

Strangely enough one finds some evidence of this when discussed in the negative by Descartes. Upon having received a publication "boasting a system of six propositions for a universal language" Descartes began to discredit it. He argues that the author would be unable to avoid the problem of how sounds of an alien language are "unpleasant and intolerable to the ear … for what is easy and pleasant in our language is coarse and intolerable to Germans, and so on." However he mentions this in the context of a criticism against "making (the author's) grammar universal among nations." Although he believes that learning such a language would be "too burdensome," it could prevail as a means of communication "through writing." When he describes this possibility he imagines a "big dictionary printed of all the languages in which (one) wanted to be understood and put for each word a symbol corresponding to the meaning …. Then those who had the dictionary and knew (the author's) grammar could translate what was written in their own language by looking up each symbol in turn." The problem he sees though is that "nobody who had anything better to do would take the trouble to look up all those words in a dictionary" (in Derrida, 1976, 76-7). The point here

though is how Descartes conceives of this possible global language. It is conceived upon a combination of elements based upon the standardization and uniformity of a language, which in turn facilitates rapid reference to the unambiguous meaning of another language so it may be understood at least in its written form. The key factors he mentions being a "universal grammar," a plural-lingual dictionary, and standardized symbols giving the meaning of each word in it. Despite the fact that he believed people would not be motivated enough to employ such means to learn a "universal language" does not mean that such a concept would otherwise be worthless. For as surprising as it may seem, it was precisely the use of such means which would not lead as much to the globalization of any one language such as English, as it would for the possible globalization of all vernaculars. This would be the case for Hindi in India.

What it meant to introduce into India the concept and means with which to give a vernacular form by standardizing and making it uniform is well illustrated in the accounts of John Gilchrist. Gilchrist was responsible for recognizing the virtues of Hindi as a vernacular. Hence he went about compiling a Hindustani dictionary and grammar. No such dictionary existed prior to his work, so he had to extract from his pundits 'viva voce' every known word in their langauge. Working with the Hindu scholars he was confronted with a most confusing and complicated corpus of language that he had to avoid using theirs and employ that of Johnson's English Dictionary. Words his 'pundits' offered tended also to be the most esoteric and far-fetched rather than "the most easy, familiar and common words". Furthermore he had to insist that there had to be a written grammar. In turn his pundits asked him what must have been a most surprising yet illuminating question in terms of distinguishing between how either one perceived language. The question was the curious one of "if it was ever yet known in any country that men had to consult vocabularies and rudiments of their own vernacular speech". Gilchrist interpreted this as being the failure of his associates to take seriously their own vernacular speech (in Cohn, 1997, 35).

This essay would argue that it was rather the absence of any concept related towards the organization and standardization of language as was apparent among the literate of antiquity. Gilchrest and his pundits were thus separated by a conceptual abyss. Instead the conclusion drawn by Gilchrest was that they were trying to hide the truth from him. By 1800 though Gilchrest was employing a staff of Indian scholars in a host of literary and pedagogical activities directed toward making

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available to British students at the College of Fort William a corpus of works form which they could read, write and speak Hindustani (38). Such scholarly effort is reminiscent of that made by those in the Middle Ages, except Gilchrist had at hand the tools with which to make his task much easier and quicker, tools his medieval counterparts lacked, tools including how the British established their educational institutions. Before the institutionalization of language learning, British officers would learn Indian languages individually with their own pundits, just the same as education was conducted anywhere in India by Indians. Education was a more private, isolated and diverse experience sharing none of the standardizing norms which the British were to introduce. Institutionalization then would include the partitioning off of rooms, the demarcation between students and teachers, classes and the entire teaching staff, and the need for exams, prizes, certificates that attested to the student's command of a specifiable body of knowledge. Bernand Cohn in his essay "The Command of Language and the Language of Command" perceived this as a "British metalogic of regularity and uniformity…that could not help but participate in the erosion and transformation of…Hindu and Muslim learning" (48). This did not mean however that the Indians themselves were unable to adapt to this new system and exploit it to their own ends. They did, and thus became active participants in the transformation of their own traditions and ways of thinking (56). Evidence of this was the success of 'A Dictionary in Hindee and English compiled from approved authorities" in 1846 by an Englishman. It was sold and distributed all over India. Most importantly it marked out Hindi as a formal and independent language in its own right (Bayly, 1999, 296). This conclusively proved Descartes wrong, precisely because the process described above made Hindi easier to learn, not more burdensome.

At this stage the entire thesis concerning the role of both political and economic power in the dissemination of English as the global language is put into further doubt. By having rephrased the initial question to being, why can any language be the global one, the emphasis shifted away from plotting the rise of English towards plotting how other languages were able to expand on a comparable scale of both time and space. Emphasis was put not on identifying the source of power, but rather on how a language could acquire the characteristics and means which would allow it to expand its frontiers. Those are the concepts of standardization and uniformity of language and the acquiring and use of the means to put them into practice; recognition of grammars, organization of texts, the need to make texts 'visual' and pliable as sources of quick reference and consultation, dictionaries, text books and the ability to accumulate a corpus of any language.

Hence one must point to the unintended irony of Bernard Cohn's essay. The argument of his essay is that the production of grammars, dictionaries, treatises, class books and translations about and from the languages of India created a discourse and had the effect of converting Indian forms of knowing into European objects. He argues this is all an attempt to represent Indian languages in European terms so that the British could acquire them and use them as tools to rule their colony (Cohn,1997, 21). His is the classic thesis of power in the form of linguistic-imperialism. The irony is that, in the process, a national vernacular was constructed which was able to compete with English, and thus give India one of its own universal indigenous languages.

In conclusion, what this essay contests to how the thesis of linguistic-imperialism, as perceived by Crystal, eludes the more subtle, yet profound manner in which "power" is able to affect, if not transform language. The point, as Cohn really makes clear, is not the fact that one is speaking a language which is not one's vernacular, but rather how the nature of one's vernacular had to change so one could learn to speak and write it. Furthermore in a world which is becoming ever less diverse in the variety of languages spoken, the only way to preserve them is by transforming their very nature. The preservation of Pintupi amongst aboriginals in remote Western Australia, whose society and culture has forever been a non-literate one, has been achieved through precisely the same means as Hindi was. Pintupi has been turned into a standardised and printed text, its vocabulary organized into a dictionary which in turn allows for what were once Pintupi oral folk-tales to be reproduced either mechanically or electronically and to be translated into English. In turn these means were employed to introduce Pintupi students to written texts in what was assumed to be a "culturally sensitive" pedagogical method. Once having learned to read and write in "their own language," they could easily learn that of English. Or conversely anyone can now learn their language with better facility. The point here is that there is no way to escape the fact that such an act is nothing short of linguistic-imperialism in terms of how it absolutely transforms the nature of not only their own but any vernacular under the direction and supervision of a greater, complicit power.

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It is ironic then that those who suppose they are the most "culturally sensitive" are in fact the most complicit in affecting cultural change on such a significant scale. The fact though, as Foucault made clear more than two decades ago, is that Power, far from being repressive and restrictive, can only be Power in terms of how it liberates and produces. Hence one's attention should be drawn to the acute insight

made by Benedict Anderson (1991, 134) when discussing whether or not "imperial languages," such as English, should be considered the national languages of newly independent nations. He remarks that, "Language is not an instrument of exclusion: in principle anyone can learn any language. On the contrary, it is fundamentally inclusive…" It is decisively important then to invest languages with the processes of standardization and uniformity so that they may be empowered by becoming easier to learn, and thus offer the possibility for any language to be a global one. It is such optimism and faith which stimulates interest into the research for, and application of, the most efficacious pedagogical method. However there is room for doubt when one begins to recognize how political and economic factors, rather than helping in the spreading of a "global" language, may very well work against it.

If then any language can be a global one, and agreeing with Anderson that languages are fundamentally inclusive according to the principle that anyone can learn any language, what is it really that sets English apart from other languages on an international scale? The answer to that question lies in the fact that the use of English, rather than fostering some kind of linguistic-imperialism as is too often assumed, in fact aims at achieving precisely the opposite. In many countries, including India, the value of English lies in how it has become an instrument of social exclusion. According to Pavan K. Varma (1998, 61), "The ability to speak English with the right accent and fluency and pronunciation was the touchstone for entry into the charmed circle of the ruling elite." Moreover as this "elite", those belonging to India's upper middle class find themselves engaging ever more frequently in a "globalized economy" in which English has become "the single most important yardstick of a person's eligibility for negotiating the opportunity structure that can be availed of in a modern economy" (Varma,1998, 63). This is not surprising when one understands that such limited access to English is precisely what contributes most to its importance, as those who can speak it find their opportunities being enhanced by their "scarcity value." What is argued here is how upper class Indians, which literally inherited this language, conspired against it from ever becoming more accessible to those who never inherited it. According to Varma (62) the tragedy was that despite the flourishing of English-medium schools, "a real opportunity to give English its appropriate role as the most easily accessible foreign language in the overall structure of the educational curriculum was lost." Hence, despite the fact that India was a British colony for over 100 years, and its greatest statesmen spoke English as their mother

tongue, and it has the recognition of being an extremely important language to know, only 3 percent of the population has even a basic understanding of it (Tully, 1992, 8).

At this stage the notion of English as a global language is put into doubt. Precisely because the ruling class employs it for their own self-benefit, they choose to preserve it as an "instrument of exclusion." The same may be said of the use of Greek and Latin throughout the Ancient world, as according to Ste. Croix (1981, 16) "those who did not speak Greek or Latin would certainly have little or no part in Graeco-Roman civilization." Thus despite the fact that in the past 150 years languages have acquired standardized and uniform norms, and thus have become both easy to teach and learn, there remains a political-economic barrier which works against those norms from achieving the goal which in principle they would otherwise be able to achieve. English is just one example of many, but it is a critical one as its position as "the" global language cultivates in the popular imagination the belief that it is a language accessible to all and sundry, which in fact it is not. Until the political-economic barrier is overcome then, the efficacy of any pedagogical method will remain in perpetual doubt simply because for what may appear to be a "global language", may just instead be a language for the "global elite."

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