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LANGUAGE EDUCATION AND GLOBALIZATION

INTRODUCTION: GLOBALIZATION

In his oft-cited book on globalization and modernity, Anthony Giddens defines globalization as:

> the intensification of worldwide social relations which link distant localities in such a way that local happenings are shaped by events occurring many miles away and vice versa. (Giddens, 1990, p. 64)

A more elaborate definition, taken from Held, McGrew, Goldblatt and Perraton (1999, p. 15), is as follows:

> Globalization can be located on a continuum with the local, national and regional. At the one end of the continuum lie social and economic relations and networks which are organized on a local and/or national basis; at the other end lie social and economic relations and networks which crystallize on the wider scale of regional and global interactions. Globalization can be taken to refer to those spatio-temporal processes of change which underpin a transformation in the organization of human affairs by linking together and expanding human activity across regions and continents.

In these two definitions, globalization is framed as the ongoing process of the increasing and intensifying interconnectedness of communications, events, activities and relationships taking place at the local, national or international level. However, while globalization theorists tend to agree on the general parameters of globalization, there are differing views about when it actually started. Robertson (1995) and Held et al. (1999) acknowledge that globalization is perhaps a premodern phenomenon with beginnings in the fifteenth century. According to these authors, it was at this time that the nation-state in Europe was born, and with it the beginnings of international economics and politics. In addition, at this time, the Catholic Church began to spread worldwide and thus became the first global religion. Finally, the fifteenth century was when the European superpowers, such as Portugal, Spain and England, began to spread outwards and colonize the world.

However, other globalization theorists (e.g. Cox, 1996) take a more here-and-now position, situating the beginnings of globalization at the

time of the first major fuel crisis of 1973, the decline of traditional modes of industrial production and the subsequent move towards a demand-led economy. It was at this time that the developed capitalist states began to abandon 'Fordism', the post-World War 2 economic model of rationalized mass production, stabilized work routines, organized labour, wage-driven demand for more products and the welfare state. In its place came what eventually was called the Washington Consensus, which was about the dismantling of Fordism, especially unionized labour and the welfare state.

In the globalization literature, there is also a question of whether globalization is the continued global spread of capitalism, albeit by more sophisticated and technologically advanced means, or if it is indeed something the likes of which humanity has never experienced. For the proponents of the former view (e.g. Smith, 1997; Wallerstein, 2004), we are still at a stage in history that is imminently modern, in which, for example, international capitalism, the nation-state and the national cultures are still very much intact. However, other theorists (e.g. Bauman, 1998) argue that modernity has been left behind and in its wake we live in world in which the nation-state is progressively more and more superfluous as regards its impact on people's lives, and culture is more an ongoing contested process than a solid social structure that withstands pressures from without.

Another issue arising in discussions of globalization is whether or not globalization is hegemonically Western, and above all an extension of American imperialism. For example, Latouche (1996) writes about the 'Westernization of the world' and the progressive 'worldwide standardization of lifestyles'. He and other authors (e.g. Ritzer, 1998) lament how Western ideology and culture, best exemplified in the USA, are becoming the norm around the world. Ritzer in particular argues convincingly that in recent years, there has been a convergence in all aspects of people's lives: how they dress, how they eat, their entertainment preferences, their work habits and so on.

However, other scholars would disagree with the view that globalization is merely US imperialism by other means. Writing in the early 1990s, Giddens acknowledges that '[t]he first phase of globalization was plainly governed, primarily, by the expansion of the West, and institutions which originated in the West' (Giddens, 1994, p. 96). However, he goes on to state:

> Although still dominated by Western power, globalization today can no longer be spoken of only as a matter of one-way imperialism … now, increasingly, … there is no obvious 'direction' to globalization at all, as its ramifications are ever-present . . . . (Giddens, 1994, p. 96)

To capture the great number of potential angles on globalization, some theorists have proposed frameworks that are meant to encapsulate the totality of the phenomenon.

For Held and his colleagues (Held et al., 1999), globalization can be examined from at least eight different angles: global politics and the nation-state; organized violence and military globalization; global trade and markets; global finance; multinational corporations and production networks; globalization and migration; cultural globalization; and globalization and the environment. Held et al.'s attempt to construct a comprehensive model has echoes of an earlier more modest framework developed by Arjun Appadurai (1990). For Appadurai, globalization is a 'complex, overlapping and disjunctive order' made up of five dimensions of cultural flows called 'scapes'. These scapes are listed, defined and exemplified in Table 1.

EARLY DEVELOPMENTS

The globalization themes discussed earlier are inextricably linked to questions of language, and more specifically to questions of language education. This was realised from the 1950s onwards by the authors of reports produced by international organisations such as UNESCO. For example, in an early publication about vernacular and national languages in these former European colonies, UNESCO (1963) addressed the tension between a desire to strengthen national identity in former

Table 1 Appadurai's (1990) scapes

Scape	Gloss	Examples
Ethnoscapes	Flows of people	Migrants, asylum seekers, exiles, tourists
Technoscapes	Flows of technology	Hardware components, technical know-how
Financescapes	Flows of money	National stock exchanges, commodity speculations
Mediascapes	Flows of information	Newspapers, magazines, satellite television channels, websites and the images and symbols they create and provide
Ideoscapes	Flows of ideas	Human rights, environmentalism, free trade movements, fear of terrorism

colonies and the continued technical, financial, mediatic and ideological power of former colonisers, in part via the continued predominance of languages such as English and French in education. The link between the global and the local has also been a constant in the work of African scholars such as Ali Mazrui. In his classic book, *The Political Sociology of the English Language*, Mazrui examines the predominance of English in the political, religious and educational spheres of post-colonial African societies, as well as the ambivalent feelings of individuals educated in English who then contest continued post-colonial imperialism (see also, the work of authors such as Chinua Achebe, 1975, and Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o, 1993). Elsewhere, in collections such as Fishman, Cooper and Conrad (1977) and Kachru (1983), sociolinguists have explored in detail issues such as the spread of English across nation-state and cultural borders.

   This is but a small sample of what might be considered early work on language education in globalization. These authors, and others not mentioned here for lack of space (see Pennycook, 1994, and Phillipson, 1992, for more thorough coverage), were focussing on some of the global phenomena identified in the introduction to this chapter, such as flows of people, money, technology and ideas; tensions between the global and the local; and questions of cultural imperialism. However, these discussions of global issues were not carried out according to the models of globalization outlined in the introduction for the simple reason that the latter were not common currency in the social sciences when most of this work was being carried out. For a more direct link between the discussion of globalization in the introduction and language education, one needs to examine research that is more recent. In the next section, I examine what I consider to be three key areas of inquiry.

WORK IN PROGRESS AND PROBLEMS AND DIFFICULTIES

The Commodification of Language

One could argue that disputes in different parts of the world over which of two or more languages are to dominate in different spheres of society have always been fundamentally about economics. Nevertheless, it has traditionally been national and cultural identity, and appeals to the authentic spirit and character of a people, to which language policy makers have appealed when supporting one language over another. This certainly has been the case for well-known minority language contexts around the world, such as French in Canada and Catalan in Spain. It has also been the case for nation-states around the world, which have identified nationhood with official national languages.

Examples include Bahasa in Indonesia and Swahili in Tanzania. However, with the rise of deregulated and hyper-competitive post-industrial economies and the global spread of the new work order—the conditions under which individuals work in these economies (Gee, Hull and Lankshear, 1996)—new ways of framing languages have arisen. Now languages not only are signs of authentic national identities, they are also seen as commodities, the possession of which is a valued skill in the job market.

Two consequences flow from this commodification of language. On the one hand, it changes the rationale for conserving and promoting a language: now it is not only about saving a nation or a people; it makes good economic sense. The second consequence flows from the first: as a commodity, a language comes to be seen 'as measurable skill, as opposed to a talent, or an inalienable characteristic of group members' (Heller, 2003, p. 474). In her research over the past decade, Monica Heller (2002, 2003) has explored the shift from 'an ideology of an authentic nation to an ideology of commodification' (Heller, 2002, p. 47), which has taken place in Canada with regard to French. Much of this shift is due to changes in the economy in Québec and Canada in general over the past 40 years. When Québécois nationalism began to gather strength in the 1960s, the majority of French speakers were gathered in agriculture, mining, fishing and manufacturing, where their French language skills were not valued and they were economically marginalized. However, since this time, the Canadian and Québec economies have evolved into globalized, post-industrial, services-based markets in which language is a key element and the command of more than one language or language variety is highly valued (see also Burnaby, Language Policy and Education in Canada, Volume 1).

In this pro-bilingual climate, Heller's research has focussed on both public and private sectors in which commodified bilingualism is flourishing. Thus, those working in education, health and welfare, as well as those working in the private sector (e.g. call centres, the tourist trade) must conform to the model of 'perfect' bilinguals in both French and English, that is, they are expected to have a command of what are considered standard varieties of both languages. The consequences for education are immense and, as Heller explains, they emerge in 'debates over when and if to introduce English teaching into French-language schools; over the relative importance of French versus other languages (Japanese or Spanish, for example) in language education in English-language schools; over the value of the vernacular versus standard French; over the very nature of standard French; and over how best to be bilingual; to name just a few of the debates current in Canadian society'(Heller, 2002, p. 62).

A large part of this commodification process is about framing language as a communication skill that can be taught, a topic that Deborah Cameron (2000, 2002) has researched in detail. Whereas in the past, it was assumed that human beings acquired the ability to communicate with one another through practice and experience, today the view is increasing that formal instruction provided by communication specialists is required. This communication skills revolution has taken place at three general levels. First, in an ever-increasing number of workplaces, communication skills training has become an integral part of staff development and, indeed, communication skills are seen as an essential qualification for many jobs. Second, outside the workplace, advice on the development and the enhancement of communication skills has become a basic element in the ever-growing self-help and self-improvement market. Third and finally, educational authorities in many parts of the world, no doubt with their eyes on what is happening in the job market, have made communication skills training a part of their national curricula.

The Spread of English as an International Language

The commodification process of languages is one thing; quite another is the choice of which language is to be adopted as a country's official language of education or which languages are to be taught as foreign languages in secondary schools. The one language that is the focus of debates at both levels in recent years is English. Indeed, the English language is for many people in the world today, the medium that makes possible what Giddens (op. cit.) refers to as 'the intensification of worldwide social relations'. It seems that there is no part of the world where there has not been at least some contact with English, although, paralleling globalization, the incidence and significance of English is unequal in different parts of the world. About such issues, there seems to be little disagreement.

By contrast, there is disagreement about whether or not the spread of English is a good thing, and in recent years the issues brought to the fore by scholars such as Mazrui (op. cit.) have resurfaced, but this time framed more deliberately within discourses of globalization. Thus, in recent years, Robert Phillipson (1992) has developed the concept of 'linguistic imperialism' to explain how the English language grows continually stronger around the world, at the expense of local languages. For Phillipson, there are economic and cultural powers in the world that prime English over other languages. For example, the business world, headed by English-speaking North America, has propagated the idea that English is the international language of business. In the cultural sphere, English language culture (e.g. Hollywood,

pop music, fast food) is one thing that most inhabitants of the world have in common. Elsewhere, Tove Skutnabb-Kangas has introduced the terms 'linguicide' and 'linguistic genocide' (Skutnabb-Kangas, 2000; see also Skutnabb-Kangas, Human Rights and Language Policy in Education, Volume 1) to describe how English has effectively become a 'killer' of less powerful language around the world. The work of Phillipson, Skutnabb-Kangas and other scholars concerned about the spread of English and the death of smaller languages has led to general area of inquiry which May (2003, 2005) terms 'language rights'.

Over the past decade, the issue of English and minority language rights has generated much debate (e.g. Hall and Eggington, 2000; Tollefson, 1995, 2002; special issues of *Journal of Sociolinguistics* in 2003 and 2005), some of which has been quite confrontational. For example, Janina Brutt-Griffler (2002) takes issue with the concept of linguistic imperialism, in particular the suggestion that English was imposed on the colonized peoples of the British Empire. Brutt-Griffler (2002, p. 31) argues that 'the spread of English involved a contested terrain in which English was not unilaterally imposed on passive subjects, but wrested from an unwilling imperial authority as part of the struggle by them against colonialism'. Echoing Bisong's (1995) view of English as a valued language in Nigeria for its communication potential, she also argues that the protection of endangered languages, as proposed by Skutnabb-Kangas in her publications over the years, goes against the wishes of many parents in African and Asian countries, who would like their children to have the opportunity to learn English.

Brutt-Griffler's criticisms have spawned a series of rebuttals and counter rebuttals (see the special issues of the *Journal of Sociolinguistics*, 7/4, 2003 and the *Journal of Language Identity and Education*, 1/3, 2002, as well as the forum section of *JLIE*, 3/2, 2004). They also contrast with the views of other scholars who have framed the debate in different ways. Steering a course between those in favour of Phillipson and Skutnabb-Kangas's theses and those against, Marnie Holborow (1999) makes a clear distinction between what Pennycook (1994) calls 'discourses of colonialism' and what she sees as the material practices of colonialism. For Holborow, one cannot contest discourses, while one can engage with material reality. Adopting a Marxist stance, Holborow is far more attracted to the Phillpson and Sktunabb-Kangas view of the world, although here too she does have her criticisms. For example, she sees the broad contrast between the north and the south and the centre and periphery as over-simplistic, ignoring as it does the roles of ruling local elites, who are complicit in global capitalism. Similarly, she is wary of fostering local nationalism as a defence against imperialism: very often, it is conservative ruling local elites leading the defence of the local against imposition from without.

In addition to steering a course between and among different camps, May (2003, 2005) notes how the framing of language rights strictly in terms of economic prospects, as authors such as Brutt-Griffler (2002) and John Edwards (1985) have done, ignores the way that people often value their affective ties and affiliations to a particular language over the relative 'usefulness' of that language in terms of gaining access to key social and economic resources. Indeed, if abandonment of the minority language and the embracing of English were so obviously the only rational way forward for ethnolinguistic minority groups in established nation-states, then Latinos in the USA would not continue using Spanish; the Québécois, as citizens of Canada, would not have spent as much time and money as they have over the past several decades on the preservation and promotion of French; and the citizens of African countries would have abandoned local languages and vernaculars long ago.

Elsewhere, Pennycook (1994, 1998; Pennycook, Critical Applied Linguistics and Language Education, Volume 1) and Canagarajah (1999, 2005a; Canagarajah, The Politics of English Language Teaching, Volume 1) take a post-modern view of the world informed by critical theory, framing the spread of English as altogether too complicated to be considered as oppressive and dehumanising as Phillipson and others suggest. Both scholars allow for the capacity of L2 English users around the world to resist (that is, to combat rationally and reflectively) linguistic imperialism (Canagarajah, 1999). This may be done by engaging in what Pennycook (1994), following authors such as Achebe (1975), terms 'writing back', the process by which users of English around the world appropriate English and make it work for their various personal, professional and political purposes. This appropriation may work at the more literary and academic levels in the form of published articles and books for national and international consumption. However, it might also work at the local level, be it the nation-state, community or even neighbourhood.

For example, in the context of post-colonial Tanzania, where Swahili was promoted as the national language from the mid-1960s, Blommaert (2005) notes that English remains an important and extended medium of communication at all levels of society. However, rather than seeing uses of English, such as in business signage, as evidence of 'an invasion of an imperialist or killer language' (p. 404), Blommaert finds it more useful to situate them in a global hierarchy in which small business operators in Tanzania connect with their potential clientele, using English to index their sophistication in taste (e.g. making reference to European norms of consumption), their business knowledge (English sounds business-like) or their connections to international business (English is the international language). For Blommaert, over-simplified essentialist associations of one language or one identity do not survive

the scrutiny of ethnographic research. Neither do de-essentialised approaches that in effect amount to rational choice theory, whereby individuals make interested choices about language affiliations based solely on factors such as economic gain or prestige (for further discussion and critique of this, see May, 2003, 2005). What is needed is an approach to English as an international phenomenon that escapes essentialism but recognises social structures, in particular the unequal access to all semiotic resources, including language, that reigns in the world today.

The Effects of Globalization on the Language Teaching Practices

As Pennycook (1994) and Phillipson (1992) note, inextricably intertwined with the spread of English as an international language is the spread of teaching methodologies that originate in countries like the USA and Britain. From the 1970s onwards, what is known as Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) has been at the forefront of debate about language teaching methodology in different parts of the world. From its beginnings in the Council of Europe (Van Ek, 1975), CLT has become the first truly global method. Thus, while it is not written into every national curriculum in the world today, it is a point of reference in discussions about language teaching around the world. In succinct form, CLT is an approach to language teaching which views language as being about communicative competence (Hymes, 1971), that is, the ability to use the linguistic system appropriately, and language learning as emergent from the use of the target language in interaction as opposed to an explicit focus on grammar (Richards and Rodgers, 2001). A key feature of CLT is the attempt to replicate, in the classroom, the experiences of regular users of the target language. Thus, there is an emphasis on classroom activities that mimic activities in the 'real' world (or in any case, what many language educators and materials writers imagine the world outside the classroom to be like). For its proponents, it represents a positive step forward in the history of language teaching, from more old-fashioned approaches to teaching, which are text-based (grammar translation) or based on generally discredited learning theories (e.g. Audiolingualism and behaviourist psychology).

In Appadurai's (op. cit.) terms, CLT is an example of a pedagogical *ideoscape*, a global flow of ideas about teaching. However, this flow has been neither one-way nor unproblematic, as more and more applied linguists have come to question the spread of CLT in recent years. In sections of their respective books dealing with language teaching methodology and social context, Holliday (1994), Pennycook (1994), and Phillipson (1992) discuss the gap between imported pedagogical principles and local teaching contexts. For example, Pennycook

questions the assumption that learners of English must participate in information gap activities if they are to learn the target language in contexts such as Malaysia. This global exhortation to chat runs up against intercultural walls (Pennycook points out that silence is an integral part of communication in Malay), as well as intracultural walls (the different conversation roles according to gender which exist in some cultures). Following a similar line, Ellis (1996) writes specifically about CLT in East Asian countries such as China and Vietnam, making the point that the focus on process inherent in this approach to language teaching does not sit well in societies in which content is considered important. Kramsch and Sullivan (1996), referring to Vietnam as well, point out that the concept of group might better refer to the entire class as one unit, as opposed to collections of three or four students separated from their classmates.

Other authors have explored the extent to which teachers teach according to the basic tenets of CLT. Mitchell and Lee (2003) compared the teaching of French as a foreign language in a classroom in the UK with the teaching of EFL in a South Korean classroom. They found that in these two classrooms, CLT was not alive and well, as lessons were teacher-centred and there was not much in the way of pair- and group-speaking activities. Elsewhere, Sakui (2004) examined how 30 Japanese teachers defined and implemented CLT, the official methodology of the Japanese Ministry of Education since 1989. She found that while teachers were knowledgeable about pedagogical options, they tended to adopt something akin to grammar translation as their dominant methodology, because this was deemed to be the best way to prepare students for their university entrance exams, which were still grammar-based. Sakui documents a situation in which ministerial methodological dictates have changed while examination structures have not.

The resolution of conflicts arising when the global spread of method collides with local educational cultures has been discussed by many authors over the years (Bax, 2003; Canagarajah, 1999; Holliday, 1994; Kumaravadivelu, 1994; McKay, 2002). While the proposals of these authors vary considerably, they all involve a call for local teachers to work out their own solutions, appropriating what they deem suitable from without, while relying on home-grown strategies that have ecological validity. For example, Holliday (1994) discusses 'appropriate methodology' as a means of breaking away from pedagogical recommendations from without and moving towards approaches that start with the teacher's understanding of classroom activity, which in turn inform future classroom teaching. Starting with teachers' understandings in local context, of course, would mean moving away from the importation of teaching technology from abroad as part of the

global network. Elsewhere, Kumaravadivelu (1994, 2003) discusses the 'post-method' condition, in which the adoption of a particular method has ceased to be regarded as the solution to all problems, and there is no longer a one-way flow of expertise from centre to periphery. As Canagarajah (2002) notes, this state of affairs opens up new opportunities for the knowledge and expertise of local teachers in periphery contexts to be recognized and valued.

FUTURE DIRECTIONS

The three areas of inquiry discussed earlier all show great potential and promise as regards research and debate in the future. Thus far, research into the commodification and skilling of language has focussed primarily on events in a few select locations. However, as applied linguists adopt a more global agenda, research begins to catch up with other instances of these phenomena around the world. There is a need, for example, for studies of the ways that languages around the world have been commodified. In addition, Cameron's (2000, 2002) research into communication skilling, originally based in the UK, should be extended to other parts of the world.

As regards the spread of English around the world, and concepts such as linguistic imperialism and linguicide, there is little doubt that Phillipson and Skutnabb-Kangas have initiated and helped to maintain on the applied linguistics agenda the issue of the spread of English and English language teaching around the world. And, with authors such as Brutt-Griffler questioning some of the foundational concepts and extensions of their arguments, English as a globalized language will no doubt continue to generate debate and research. However, following authors such as Blommaert, Canagarajah, May and Pennycook, this debate is becoming increasingly nuanced as relatively simple models and frameworks are replaced by even more complex ones.

Finally, the ongoing global–local tension emerging from the spread of CLT as something akin to a global language teaching methodology seems set to continue. Future research needs to be along the lines of the contributions to Canagarajah (2005b) and discussions such as Holliday (2005); while the former explores teacher-generated practices in a variety of local contexts, the latter looks at the difficulties facing native and non-native speakers of English as they reconcile global and local forces in the teaching of English as an international language.

See Also: *Alastair Pennycook: Critical Applied Linguistics and Language Education (Volume 1); Tove Skutnabb-Kangas: Human Rights and Language Policy in Education (Volume 1); Suresh Canagarajah: The Politics of English Language Teaching (Volume 1); Joan Kelly*

Hall: Language Education and Culture (Volume 1); Stephen May: Language Education, Pluralism and Citizenship (Volume 1); Mary Kalantzis and Bill Cope: Language Education and Multiliteracies (Volume 1)

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