

English Hegemony and English Divide

Yukio Tsuda

University of Tsukuba, Japan

Abstract: This paper first categorizes the linguistic studies of the global spread of English into three different positions according to the perspectives taken with regard to the dominance of English. They are : 'Pro-hegemonic', 'Functional/Ideological' and 'Critical/Transformative'. The paper then explicates some of the problems caused by English Hegemony and English Divide such as 'Linguicide', or the killing of smaller languages and 'Linguicism', or the discrimination based on languages and 'Americanization of culture', or the global dominance of American media and materialistic culture which disrupts local cultures across the world. Finally, the study provides a brief account of different approaches to building a more equal international communication free from English Hegemony and English Divide. They are 'Monolingual Approach', 'Multilingual Approach' and 'Global Scheme Approach'. [China Media Research. 2008; 4(1): 47-55]

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Introduction

To many people, English is a language that brings some benefits, especially if they live in an English-speaking country such as the United States. Very few people realize that English will bring social inequalities and injustices. But actually, it does. And that is what I mean by 'English Hegemony and English Divide'. English, because it is a dominant language today, creates divisions and inequalities between those who speak it and those who don't and cannot.

English Hegemony refers to the situation where English dominates other languages in communication, and causes the English Divide, or the inequalities between the English-speaking people and the non-English-speaking people. In other words, the English Hegemony threatens other languages and discriminates against the non-English-speaking people and causes the English Divide where the English speakers have more power and resources while the non-English speaking people are disadvantaged in many ways.

In order to understand what is English Hegemony and English Divide, I shall discuss the following topics in this paper. First, I shall discuss the three main positions to English Hegemony and Divide by reviewing some of the works of linguists who have been examining the global spread of English. Then in particular, I shall spend most of the time talking about the problems caused by English Hegemony and Divide including 'Linguicide', 'Linguicism', and 'Americanization of Culture'. Finally, I shall also briefly discuss some of the approaches to dealing with English Hegemony and English Divide in order to have a more equal international communication.

Three Positions to English Hegemony and English Divide

There are some linguists and academics who have been examining the global spread of English. I have reviewed some of the major works, and determined that they will be categorized into three different positions according to the positions they take toward the globalization of English. Their names are:

- (1) Pro-Hegemonic
- (2) Functional/Ideological
- (3) Critical/Transformative

Let me start with the first position, Pro-Hegemonic. As its name indicates, the Pro-Hegemonic Position basically welcomes and celebrates the global spread of English. The advocates of the Pro-Hegemonic position often perceives the spread of English as the inevitable result of history and does not perceive it as a problem. They even support the global spread of English.

The most representative linguist that advocates the Pro-Hegemonic position is David Crystal, a British linguist, who published a book titled *English as a Global Language* in 1997. He exhibits a typically Pro-Hegemonic discourse in his book as he emphasizes the 'inevitability' of the global dominance of English. He says:

"No other language has spread around the world so extensively, but...what is impressive is not so much the grand total but the spread with which expansion has taken place since the 1950s. In 1950, the case for English as a world language would have been no more than plausible. Fifty years on, and the case is virtually unassailable (Crystal, 1997:61-62).

He even says that "It proves impossible for any single group or alliance to stop its growth, or even influence its future."

Crystal's discourse serves the reinforcement of English Hegemony and English Divide in that he speaks

as if there were no alternatives but to accept the dominance of English. I suspect that Crystal even wants to reinforce and promote English Hegemony and English Divide as he has written his book for the benefit of 'U.S. English' movement, an organization which aims to adopt English as the only official language of the United States.

The second position I have decided to name 'Functional/Ideological, because the linguists in this position focus on and emphasize the neutral function of English. And because of their emphasis on neutral functionality of English as a lingua franca, they produce an ideology that supports and reproduces English Hegemony and Divide. This position is not critical of English Hegemony. Rather, it presupposes the use of English. What is characteristic about this position is that it attempts to establish equality between the standard English and non-standard Englishes such as Indian English, Singaporean English, etc. They call these non-standard varieties of English as World Englishes.

One of the proponents of 'World Englishes' is Braj B. Kachru, a sociolinguist who has established an academic journal called '*World Englishes: Journal of English as an International and Intranational Language*' in 1985. By using the plural form, Englishes, Kachru points out the fact that different varieties of English are used all around the world. In the Editorial of the first edition of *World Englishes*, Kachru emphasizes this. He says:

"The term 'Englishes' is significant in many ways. 'Englishes' symbolizes the functional and formal variation in the language, and its international acculturation, for example, in West Africa, in Southern Africa, in East Africa, in South Asia, in Southeast Asia, in the West Indies, in the Philippines, and in the Traditional English-using countries: the USA, the UK, Australia, Canada, and New Zealand. The language now belongs to those who use it as their first language, and to those who use it as an additional language, whether in its standard form or in its localized forms. The recognition of this functional diversity is so important('Editorial', 1985:210).

The proponents of World Englishes should be highly appraised in that they have pointed out the 'functional diversity' of English and attempted to establish the equal status between the Standard English and non-standard varieties of English. However, I have named this position 'Ideological' because this position simply affirms the global spread of English without examining the impact of the dominance of English. It is not articulately promoting the global use of English, but its positive affirmation of the functional diversity of English is actually supporting the global domination of English. Also, their descriptive and objective method prevalent in sociolinguistics has permitted them to

overlook the power structure that lies beneath the global spread of English.

In this sense, the Functional/Ideological position is similar to the Pro-Hegemonic position, because both accept the global spread of English and presuppose the use of English in international communication.

Critical/Transformative Position to English

The last and the most important and critical position with regard to the global spread of English is named 'Critical/Transformative'. The Critical/Transformative position perceives the global spread of English as a serious problem causing injustices, inequalities, and discriminations. They critically examine the problems caused by the global dominance of English, and attempt to expose the ideology and the power structure that produces and reproduces these problems for the purpose of transforming the powerrelationships into a better one that is free from hegemony or excessive domination.

The Critical/Transformative linguists have started appearing across the world since the late 1980s.

Robert Phillipson, the author of 'Linguistic Imperialism' published in 1992, is the main proponent of this position and he provides a definition of 'English Linguistic Imperialism' as follows:

"the dominance of English is asserted and maintained by the establishment and continuous reconstitution of structural and cultural inequalities between English and other languages"(Phillipson, 1992:47).

Phillipson argues that the dominance of English has placed it at the Center while pushing other languages aside to the Periphery position, creating the unequal power structure between English and other languages.

Moreover, Alastair Pennycook, a critical linguist and the author of 'Cultural Politics of English as an International Language', points out the interrelationship between English Hegemony and English Divide. He says:

"Widespread use (of English) threatens other languages; it has become the language of power and prestige in many countries, thus acting as a crucial gatekeeper to social and economic progress; its use in particular domains, especially professional, may exacerbate different power relationships and may render these domains more inaccessible to many people; its position in the world gives it a role also as an international gatekeeper, regulating the international flow of people; it is closely linked to a national and increasingly non-national forms of culture and knowledge that are dominant in the world; and it is also bound up with aspects of global relations, such as spread of capitalism, development aid and the dominance particularly of North American media(Pennycook, 1994:13).

Phillipson and Pennycook are right in pointing out that we live in the world where English dominates and threatens other languages, functions as a domestic and international gatekeeper to create and reproduce the structure of inequalities between the English-speaking people and the non-English-speaking people. English Hegemony causes English Divide, affecting almost all the domains of our life including economy, politics, social classes, education, science, media, and so on. The problems of English Hegemony and English Divide do not remain within the domain of language and communication, but it goes beyond that and affect all aspects of our life all around the world.

Linguicide

Since the late 1980s, the critique of English Hegemony and English Divide has been made by the Critical/Transformative linguists.

There are so many problems caused by English Hegemony and English Divide. But in this paper I will focus on the three major problems. The first problem I shall discuss is 'Linguicide'.

There is a prediction among some linguists that in several hundred years from today, only one prestigious global language will prevail in the world. It will be English. But I believe the disappearance of other languages will take place much faster than predicted today.

Why do I think so? Because English Hegemony causes 'Linguicide', the killing of languages, especially weaker and smaller ones. The term 'Linguicide' has been coined from the word, 'Genocide', or the killing of a people. Daniel Nettle and Susanne Romaine, British linguists, have provided a detailed account of 'Linguicide' in their book called *Vanishing Voices* (Nettle & Romaine, 2000). They attribute 'Linguicide' to the global spread of Western modernization which has destroyed the social environments of non-Western countries since the 16th century. Western modernization has transformed traditional societies into the so-called modern societies across the world that encourage the use of Western languages and degrade the indigenous languages. The creation of the modern societies have led to the establishment of societies that are centered around Western languages and indigenous languages have been marginalized. Nettle and Romaine report that there are only 6,000-7,000 languages in the world today. The number has come down to a half over the past five centuries, and the speed at which languages disappear is getting faster these days, with about one language disappearing every two weeks.

There have been a lot of voices raised and warnings given to the crisis of ecology, especially, in reference to the problems of 'Endangered Species', or the disappearance of animals and plants. Linguistic Ecology is in crisis too. This planet is filled with 'Endangered

Languages' which are about to disappear at any moment. For the past five hundred years, we have lost more than 6,000 languages across the world. Along with the disappearance of these languages, their cultures, their values, their knowledge, their philosophy, their poetry, their songs, their memories, and their souls have all disappeared. And in a few hundred years from today, there will be only one language left on earth. English!

Living in the United States, many people often feel threatened by the rise of Spanish in this country. It has brought about a linguistic movement called 'Official English movement' since the 1980's, trying to officially adopt English as the national language of the United States. English is not an officially national language by law in the United States.

However, this movement underestimates the enormous power and influence of English, especially in the international and global context. Many people of the world feel threatened by English, as it dominates as a global language for business, science, media, tourism, politics, diplomacy, education and so on. In France and Brazil, the governments have passed the law that restricts the use of English in their countries, because they feel threatened by English Hegemony. English dominates all the spheres of human life in many countries in the world. The majority of international organizations adopts English as their sole or one of the official languages. As global economy spreads in the world, there will be no choice for most people of the world but to learn and use English. It is true that English is a lingua franca today, but because of that it threatens other languages. It deprives us of the opportunity to use other languages.

I suspect that English hegemony is one of many factors causing 'Global Language Shift', which reinforces English Hegemony and English Divide. Language Shift is a phenomenon in which a person changes his/her primary language from one language to another. This happens to most immigrants. They gain a language of the host country, and they tend to lose their own in order to survive. So Language Shift is accompanied by Language Loss. Economically and politically strong languages often replace the weaker languages.

Some people argue that English Hegemony is not responsible for Global Linguicide by pointing out that it is the dominant languages in each country that cause the weaker languages to disappear. This is partially true. But the thing is that we are living in the age of globalization in which we are greatly influenced not by the forces in each country, but the global forces that come across the national borders. It is very difficult for any language to escape the enormous influence of English which dominates as the global standard language. For example, the dominant languages such as French, Spanish and Arabic have been losing power in

international communication in the face of English Hegemony. The percentage of speeches made in the United Nations in English during 1992-1999 increased from 45% to 50%, while the percentages of speeches made in French, Spanish, and Arabic all decreased: 19% to 13.8% for French, 12% to 10% for Spanish, and 10% to 9.5% for Arabic (Calvet, 1998). Even the very strong languages are under the influence of English Hegemony.

English, being the language of globalization and the greatest economic and political power, makes people gravitate and shift to it and lose their own languages. Louis-Jean Calvet, a French linguist, names English 'hypercentral language' that makes many people around the world gravitate toward it. Calvet provides what he calls the gravitation model of linguistic hierarchy in which most people gravitate toward English, the hypercentral language, causing many people to shift to English (Calvet, 1998).

Indeed, many people all around the world are now living in a social environment that centers around English. In China, more than 500 million people are learning English. In Korea, unless you have good scores in the test of English, you cannot have a job interview. In Japan, billions of money are spent every year for the learning of English. And the teaching of English for small children is becoming a big industry. It is possible that in these countries many people will shift to English in the future.

Not only in Asia, but throughout the world, the 'Englishmania' or obsession with English is taking place. Why? It is because the whole world has been organized in such a way that leaves no other choices but to choose English. Many people believe they have chosen English on their own wills, but actually they are made to choose English and not allowed to choose other languages. We are now living in an age of 'Speak English, or Perish'. This may result, sooner or later, in a 'Global Language Shift' in which people throw away their own languages and shift to English. When Global Language Shift takes place, it will lead to 'Global Language Loss', that is, 'Global Linguicide'.

Linguicism

'Linguicism' is another serious problem caused by English Hegemony and English Divide. What is 'Linguicism'? The word has been coined by Tove Skutnabb-Kangas, a Finnish linguist, following 'Racism' and 'Sexism'. Linguicism is defined as follows:

"Linguicism refers to ideologies and structures where language is the means for effecting or maintaining an unequal allocation of power and resources." (Phillipson, 1992:55).

Looking back in history, we discover a great number of cases of 'Linguicism'. Speakers of dialects were discriminated against because of the linguistic

variety they spoke. In the process of building a modern state, the government established a standard language which served as a linguistic norm and became a basis of discriminating against the speakers of the non-standard languages.

English functions and is widely recognized as a global standard language today. And that very fact serves as an enormous power and becomes as a basis of discrimination, because it gives the speakers of English an enormous power and control in communication. The very fact that the use of English is taken for granted also gives an additional power to the English-speaking countries and people.

Therefore, the rest of the world, the non-English-speaking people are forced to learn and use English. However, the English spoken by the non-English-speaking people is often labeled 'Broken English', which is rather an unkind label to degrade the non-English-speakers. In addition, a new label has been created and used recently, according to Ulrich Ammon, a German linguist and an editor of a book called *The Dominance of English as a Language of Science* (Ammon, 2001). The new label is BSE (Ammon, 2003). It refers to 'Bad, Simple English' spoken by non-native speakers of English in order to make fun of them. Thus, the non-standard-English becomes the target of discrimination.

In international scientific journals, Linguicism seems to be prevalent as scholars of the non-English-speaking countries have difficulty getting their papers accepted not necessarily because of the quality of their researches per se, but because of the quality of their English. In today's international academic community, the system is already organized in such a way that benefits the scholars who are native speakers of English, because English is now the language of sciences, and the ideas and voices of the non-English-speaking scholars are often ignored unless they are very proficient in English.

Donald Macedo, a critical sociolinguist at the University of Massachusetts, talks about a very interesting case of Linguicism, which happened some years ago in the prestigious Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

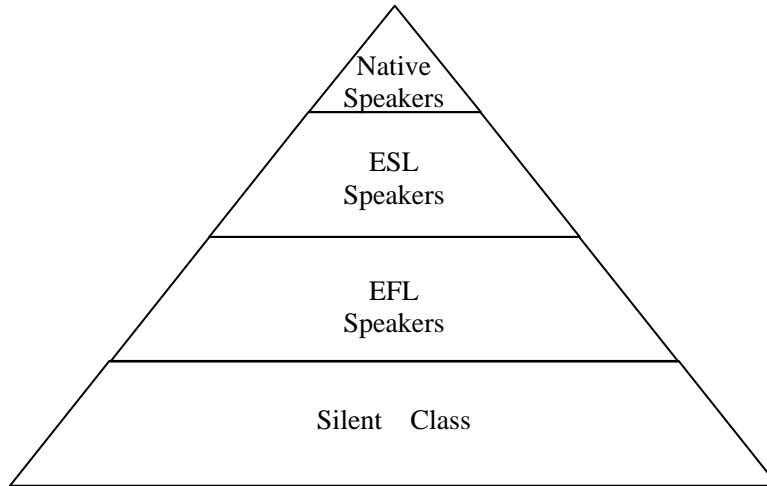
He describes it as follows:

"A group of students petitioned the administration not to hire professors who spoke English with a foreign accent, under the pretext that they had difficulty understanding their lectures. By barring professors who spoke English with a foreign accent, these students would have kept Albert Einstein from teaching in U.S. universities." (Macedo, 2003:12)

As these examples show, English Divide exists not only between the English-speaking people and the non-English-speaking people, but also among different kinds

of Englishes spoken by people of different nationalities. There is indeed a hierarchy along different kinds of Englishes. Actually, I would like to argue that once English becomes a global standard language, there will

be a global class structure based on the different levels of proficiency in English which I call '**English-based Class System**'.



ESL=English as a Second Language
EFL=English as a Foreign Language

Figure 1:English-based Class System

In this Figure which represents a pyramid, native speakers are placed at the top, indicating their 'native speaker English' as the most prestigious and advantageous position in communication. In English Hegemony, their control and domination are very strong. The Speakers of English as a Second Language population constitutes the next highest class representing their relatively higher status and advantages in English-centered global society. The users of English in former British colonies and in most Western European countries belong to this class. The population of these two highest classes across the world is estimated to be about 1 billion at most, which is only 16% of the total world population.

The next class is what I call the working class of the English-based Class System, because speakers of English as a Foreign Language, like myself, have to spend the lifetime learning English. Learning English becomes a lifetime labor for these people and their status and prestige in this hierarchy is relatively low. English as a Foreign language speakers learn English as a school subject but seldom use it in daily communication. So the level of proficiency is usually low and that is why they are placed lower in this class system. At the bottom of the Pyramid exists the Silent Class which has no contact with English. They are made to be silent in the English-centered communication. But

they are increasingly becoming EFL speakers as English Hegemony spreads globally and they are attracted toward English. These two lower classes usually gravitate toward the two higher classes and reinforce the class system. These two lower classes compose a population of about 5 billion, or 84% of the world population. Please note that for the absolute majority of the people of the world, English is foreign and not familiar.

What I would like to emphasize through the English-based Class System is that there is a hierarchical structure regulating the relationships not only between the speakers of English and the non-English speakers, but also among the different kinds of users of English. Especially there is a great gap between the two highest classes and the two lowest classes in terms of how they look at English Hegemony. The two highest classes do not perceive it as a problem, while there is a division among the two lowest classes: most people gravitate toward English while there are only a few who see English Hegemony as a problem.

Americanization of Culture

The impact of English hegemony upon culture is another serious problem. You may have already heard the words and concepts such as 'Coca-colonization' and 'MacDonaldization' of culture, both referring to an enormous influence of American consumer culture upon

the local cultures of almost all parts of the world. The global spread of American products influences the people's mind, values, and ways of life. And in this influence, English plays an important role. The spread of American products goes hand in hand with the spread of English, thus buying and using American products facilitates the spread of English which in turn facilitates the global spread of American products, creating the cycle of reinforcing the hegemony of English and American materialistic culture.

Some people say that although Americanization of culture is happening, it is changing only the surface of the local cultures across the world. But I suspect that its effects are larger than we imagine. The impact of Americanization of culture penetrates the depth of human imagination and lifestyles. It has changed the value-systems and belief-systems of many cultures into American ones. The invasion of English and American culture is causing not only the replacement of languages, but also the replacement of mental structures.

I can give you two typical examples to illustrate this point. One is from China, And the other is from the Ladakh, a minority tribe living in the Himalayan mountains.

First, as you all know, China is now at the height of growing capitalism which promotes Americanization of its culture. As early as 1997, Asiaweek, a weekly magazine, featured an article on a rapid Americanization of China(Asiaweek, 1997). The article introduced the comments by some specialists on China.

One commentator says: "The Chinese want the American lifestyle, a modern lifestyle, the way they think Americans live." Another comment is as follows: "America represents an ideal for the Chinese. Its lifestyle that they aspire to, the spirit of America."

The article also reports that today Michael Jordan is now more popular than Mao Zedong, the late charismatic leader of China.

Another example that vividly illustrates the Americanization of culture has been provided by Helena Norberg-Hodge, a Swedish ecologist. She reports that the impact of American culture penetrates even the small ethnic tribal people living in the high mountains of the Himalayas. They are called Ladakh. She deplors the Westernization of Ladakh as follows:

"The sudden influx of Western influence has caused some Ladakhis---the young men in particular---to develop feelings of inferiority complex. They reject their own culture wholesale, and at the same time eagerly embrace the new one. They rush after the symbols of modernity: sunglasses, Walkmans, and blue jeans several sizes too small---not because they find these jeans more attractive or comfortable, but because they are symbols of modern life(Norberg-Hodge, 1991:98) It is very sad to see that the young Ladakhis have

lost confidence in their own culture and develop inferiority complex toward the Western culture. It will be very difficult for the Ladakh culture to be transmitted to the next and the following generations. Also, I notice that Norberg-Hodge referred to the Japanese product, Walkman as a Western influence, which indicates that Japan has been that much Westernized.

Helena Norberg-Hodge further argues that due to the influence of violent Hollywood movies, the young Ladakhis show the tendency toward violent and emotionally unstable behaviors. She regrets to say that traditionally calm and considerate Ladakhis have transformed into a more aggressive people.

These two examples clearly demonstrate that the impact of Western culture, especially the American material and media culture is not superficial, but profound to the extent that is affecting the very nature of each local culture across the world. And English hegemony plays an important role in its effects.

There is no doubt that English is the language of globalization and global economy. If any country wants to have some share of benefits of globalization, they have to incorporate English into the society. Rather, they are forced to choose English. However, doing so may jeopardize the independence and uniqueness of their own cultures just as I have pointed out by talking about China and the Ladakh in the Himalayas. The dominance of one language is now affecting the cultures and ways of life all over the world and homogenizing them into a Western and particularly American pattern of life. Indeed, Coca-colonization, MacDonalidization, and Hollywoodization of the world is taking place.

Approaches to English Hegemony and English Divide

Now that we have seen what are some of the problems of English Hegemony and English Divide, we have to come up with some ways of dealing with them, so that we will be able to have a more equal international communication.

I have determined that there are at least three approaches to dealing with the global spread of English in order to create a more equal communication. I have named them as follows:

- (1) Monolingual Approach
- (2) Multilingual Approach
- (3) Global Scheme Approach

Let me briefly discuss each one of them.

(1) Monolingual Approach

Monolingual Approach refers to the position that a common language for international communication should be adopted. If we decide to take a monolingual approach, we should then decide which language should be adopted as an international common language. For the moment, English is used as the de facto international

common language without really having any discussions. We should have an international debate as to whether English is really the most appropriate language for our common international medium. However, in deciding which language is to become an international common language, we should realize that in principle, all the natural languages in the whole world are candidates for the international common language. There is actually an idea that some unknown language of the smallest number of speakers should become the international common language, because it will be able to serve as the politically neutral common language. Political and cultural neutrality of the international common language is very important and that is what is lacking in English.

In addition to the natural language approach, there is an artificial language approach in which we will create a new common language for international communication. Esperanto which was created by Zamenhof, a Polish doctor in the late 19th century, is the most famous example. I believe Esperanto is a better candidate than English for various reasons.

First, Esperanto is a special language that has been made for the purpose of equal communication. Its motive is to create peace. So the Esperanto movement is peace movement. Does English have such a philosophy?

Second, the grammar and vocabulary of Esperanto are very logical because of the fact that it is artificially made. It does not have irregularities and exceptions that often abound in natural languages. Therefore, it is easier to learn an artificial language.

Third, Zamenhof, the creator of Esperanto, emphasized that Esperanto should be used as a supplementary language so that it would not dominate national and less privileged languages. We should recognize Zamenhof's consideration of equality among languages.

Artificial language approach is worthwhile to consider because it provides us with very important implications for the corpus and status planning of a common international language. When we have a common international language, we should take enough care so that the grammar and vocabulary of the language are easy to learn and logical enough and its status should be carefully determined to ensure equality between the common language and other languages.

(2) Multilingual Approach

The second approach I want to discuss is Multilingual Approach. Multilingual Approach is an approach that does not choose a certain language as a common language, but practices the use of all the languages concerned. The typical example of the multilingual approach is the multilingual policy of the European Union which adopts almost all the languages of the member countries as official languages of the

Union.

Multilingual Approach is very much concerned about the establishment of equal status among different languages, because it believes that having equal status among different languages will lead to the equality in communication and the equality among people. That is why they do not give a special privilege to any particular language.

Multilingual Approach recognizes language as an important component of one's identity, pride and dignity, not just an instrument. Multilingual approach perceives the linguistic issue as a human rights issue so that it is important to ensure the right to use one's own language.

Tove Skutnabb-Kangas is one of the proponents of promoting linguistic human rights, especially the linguistic rights of minorities and indigenous people across the world.

Since the 1990s, I have proposed **the Ecology of Language Paradigm** as an alternative to the Hegemony of English Paradigm (Tsuda, 1994 & 1999). The Ecology of Language Paradigm perceives the linguistic issue not only as human rights issue but also as environmental issue because the global ecology of language has been disrupted as we have seen in the case of Linguicide. It is important to note that multilingual approach is based on the perception that language is an essential part of human existence and should be fully respected in any circumstances. In other words, Multilingual Approach shares so much with the philosophy of linguistic and cultural pluralism which respects cultural diversity and equality.

Multilingual Approach necessarily promotes foreign language education that will enable more people to respect foreign cultures and people. Too much emphasis upon the learning of English only creates the sense of indifference to other languages and cultures, which is quite prevalent in the United States.

In addition, Multilingual Approach requires and encourages the scientific development of translation machines that will overcome the linguistic barriers resulting from multilingual communication.

(3) Global Scheme Approach

The third and final approach I shall talk about is what I call Global Scheme Approach. Global Scheme Approach is any type of international endeavor to deal with English Hegemony and English Divide.

One such endeavor is the signing of international law and agreement upon linguistic equality. In 1996, the Universal Declaration of Linguistic Rights was adopted by the members of non-governmental organizations who gathered to meet in Barcelona in Spain. The Declaration was made in order to establish the language rights of the indigenous people and minorities. But despite these efforts, language rights has not yet been treated as an

official agenda in UNESCO, or United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization.

In the article 2 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights which was adopted in the United Nations in 1948, it is stated very clearly that everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms regardless of various kinds of differences including language. The Declaration has not been very much observed internationally.

However, there have been some developments in terms of promoting cultural diversity. In UNESCO, for example, the Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity was adopted in 2001. Also, very recently, the Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions was adopted in UNESCO in 2005 by the overwhelming majority of the delegates. Only the United States and Israel opposed this agreement.

There should be more internationally aligned effort to make international legal instruments that will promote linguistic equality and diversity. Especially, there should be an international agreement that obligates the use of foreign languages when one travels abroad. If using a foreign language has become an international standard, it would promote linguistic diversity and equality.

Another example of Global Scheme Approach is the creation of a global system of redistribution of power and resources. The United Nations Development Planning has already made a proposal of imposing various kinds of 'Global Tax' in order to solve the gap between the rich and the poor in the world. For example, they have proposed 'Internet Tax' which collects money from the Internet users. Through this system of taxation and redistribution, they believe that it might be able to deal with 'Digital Divide'. The Internet population is heavily concentrated in North America.

Also, James Tobin, an American economist and Nobel-prize winner, has proposed 'Tobin Tax' which imposes tax on international 'speculative' financial transactions. The 'Tobin Tax' is another example of global system of redistribution of wealth.

Then, I think it is possible to propose 'English Tax' which imposes tax on the English used in international communication. Internationally speaking, English is the language of the rich and the powerful. So it is reasonable to impose tax on the English and redistribute the money collected to the poor and the less powerful. It would create a social and economic environment that will control of the excessive use of English.

Whichever approach we may take, it is urgently necessary to have an international debate on how to deal with English Hegemony and English Divide and how to establish and maintain more linguistic and cultural diversity.

Conclusion

In closing, I would like to conclude by way of asking a very important question : "Should English be the global standard language ?"

This is a very important question. A very important question especially the people in the two highest classes in the English-based Class System should ask themselves. But it is rarely asked, because the use of English is taken for granted. The English-speaking people tend to think it is natural that the whole world should speak English. But if they think that way and speak English even outside of their countries, they might be faced with serious consequences.

Ardent and faithful believers in the English Hegemony always argue against my ideas by pointing out that the English Hegemony is the result of free choice. Many people now have chosen to use English, so there is nothing wrong with English Hegemony, they insist.

They are completely wrong. We have not chosen to use English. We are made to learn and use English. That is not free choice at all. English is imposed. When we attend an international conference, we have no choice but to use English. How can such a situation be called the result of a free choice? English is forced upon the majority of the people of the world. For more than 86% of the people of the world, English is a foreign language.

In addition, if there is freedom to choose English, there should be freedom not to choose it. But is there such freedom granted to us today?

Whenever we talk about language, we treat it simply as a tool. But language is more than just a tool. It has a direct bearing on who we are and what we are. We are what we speak. Language is a source of our human pride and dignity. Especially our mother tongue is. Language is our basic human right as well as our precious environment.

So let us not let any one language dominate the world.

Correspondence to:

Yukio Tsuda
Doctoral Program in Modern Cultures and Public Policies
Graduate School of Humanities and Social Sciences
University of Tsukuba
Tennoudai 1-1-1 Tsukuba,
Ibaraki 305-8571, Japan
E-mail: tsudavy@gmail.com

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