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0 Introduction

The study of linguistic imperialism focuses on how and why certain languages dominate internationally (become 'world languages'), and attempts to account for such dominance in an explicit, theoretically founded way. The same type of processes can also be at work internally in a country, making some languages dominate over others.

In recent centuries the languages of European settlers and colonists have been taken to all continents, and many of them have remained there. Language is one of the most durable legacies of the age of imperial expansion. Thus in Africa the languages of the colonising powers, (France, Great Britain, Holland, Portugal), are more firmly entrenched now than they were in the colonial period; on the Indian sub-continent, English is still the language of power. Spanish and Portuguese are the dominant languages of Latin America.

Such facts about the contemporary world raise many questions that the study of linguistic imperialism can help to clarify. Has the winning of political independence led to a linguistic liberation in 'Third World', underdeveloped (Rodney 1972) countries, and if not, why not? Are the former colonial languages a useful bond with the international community and necessary for state formation and national unity internally? Or are they a bridgehead for Western interests, permitting the continuation of a global system of marginalisation and exploitation? What is the relationship between linguistic dependence (continued use of a European language in a former colony) and economic dependence (the export of raw materials and import of technology, know-how etc.)?

1. The nature of linguistic imperialism

Imperialism theory has traditionally (Hobson 1902, Lenin 1916) been primarily concerned with economic and political aspects of dominance. More recent theorists have been concerned with the whole range of activities, structures and ideologies which link powerful countries, the 'Center', with powerless countries, the 'Periphery'. As a result such dimensions as military, social, communication and cultural imperialism have been added to economic and political imperialism (e.g. Galtung 1980). All the constituents are seen as contributing to the maintenance of a structure of exploitation from which rich countries benefit, and poor countries suffer. Resources are also distributed unequally internally within each country, which has its own Center and Periphery.

Each type of imperialism interlocks with the others in mutually reinforcing ways. Linguistic imperialism therefore presupposes an over-arching structure of asymmetrical, unequal exchange, where language dominance dovetails with economic, political and other types of dominance.

Linguistic imperialism can be regarded as a sub-category of cultural imperialism. Other sub-categories are media imperialism (e.g. news agencies, the world information order), educational imperialism (e.g. the export of Western institutional norms, educational systems, teacher training, textbooks, etc.), scientific imperialism (e.g. dissemination of paradigms and methodologies from the Center, which controls knowledge about the Periphery). Linguistic imperialism may closely dovetail with media, educational or scientific imperialism. It is almost certainly the language of the dominant power which is used as the medium of communication in each of these domains of cultural imperialism, just as it is in other areas, political, economic, etc., not only in international relations but also internally. This gives the dominant language and the learning of it as a second or foreign language a crucial role in the mediation and in the reproduction of an asymmetrical relationship.

Imperialism theories attempt to link the various types of imperialism in a principled way, so as to account for the connections between one factor, for instance language, and others operating in conjunction with it, for instance military conquest (which almost invariably accompanies colonial occupation) or religion (consider the spread of Spanish and Catholicism; or analogies and contrasts between this and the spread of Arabic and Islam; or the role of missionaries in alphabetising indigenous languages in Africa, Asia and Latin America, e.g. the work of the Summer Institute of Linguistics).

2. Creation of beliefs and structures to sustain linguistic dominance

Language is frequently involved in the maintenance of relations of dominance. The maintenance of a
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hierarchical relationship usually involves a pattern of stigmatisation of dominated languages, glorification of the dominant language, and rationalisation of the relationship between the languages, always to the benefit of the dominant one. Thus the Greeks stigmatised non-Greek speakers as 'barbarians' (speakers of mumbo-jumbo, a non-language). The 'Welsh' were foreigners, people who spoke a 'strange language' that 'one does not understand' (cited in the Oxford English Dictionary, 1648). The languages of colonised people were categorised as 'primitive', mere 'patois'. 'Local languages' in France are characterized by an 'incapacity to serve beyond their limited frameworks' and their speakers have 'difficulties in adapting them to the development of ideas and techniques' (a French Government assessment, quoted in Capotorti 1979, 13).

One's own language on the other hand was glorified, as the language of God (Arabic, Dutch, Sanskrit), the language of reason, logic and human rights (French in recent centuries), the language of the superior ethno-national group (German in Nazi ideology), the language of modernity, technological progress and national unity (English in much post-colonial discourse), etc. The speakers of stigmatised languages can therefore only benefit from using the 'superior' languages. Such beliefs serve to legitimate the linguistic and social hierarchy.

But linguistic imperialism is not just a question of labels, attitudes and beliefs. It presupposes a structure regulating social and institutional power. In an imperialist structure one society or collectivity exploits another, e.g. Europeans taking their languages worldwide, to the detriment of the cultures and languages of native peoples in the Americas, Australasia, etc. 'Internal' colonisation of this kind can also be regarded as imperialist. Secondly, structural dominance is asserted through the allocation of more material resources to one language rather than another, and via regulations and practices that stipulate that one language rather than another should be used. This structure explains why, for instance, English has thrived while the other languages of the British Isles have been marginalised. In France this hierarchical and linguicidal model has been official policy since the sixteenth century. The edicts of the French Revolution were initially disseminated in the many languages spoken in France, but from the early 1790s the message of "freedom, fraternity and equality" was propagated through the exclusive medium of French. The monolingual ideal associated with the 'modern' state has been exported worldwide (See LINGUICIDE).

One difference between French and British colonial policy was that the indigenous languages were seldom used in education in the French empire, whereas they were widely used in the British empire in the initial years of schooling. However, local languages invariably had low status, and it was the colonisers' language which provided access to power and resources. The linguistic hierarchy was thus comparable in each empire. This is also borne out by what has happened since the 'independence' of countries from each empire: the former colonial languages remain as the dominant languages, to the advantage of those who can use them, while indigenous languages remain, with few exceptions, marginalised. Gilbert Ansre, the Ghanaian sociolinguist, describes linguistic imperialism as

'the phenomenon in which the minds and lives of the speakers of a language are dominated by another language to the point where they believe that they can and should use only that foreign language when it comes to transactions dealing with the more advanced aspects of life such as education, philosophy, literature, governments, the administration of justice, etc... Linguistic imperialism has a subtle way of warping the minds, attitudes and aspirations of even the most noble in a society and of preventing him from appreciating and realising the full potentialities of the indigenous languages' (1979, 12).

As a result of linguistic imperialism, the vast majority of languages in former colonies have not gone through the processes of development which most European languages have in recent centuries. Their growth and expansion has been kept in check by the presence of the former colonial languages, and the vested interests, national and international, associated with these (on African languages, see Mateene 1985, Ngugi 1986; on India, Pattanayak 1986). 'Aid' in the language and education field has contributed to impeding the elaboration of local solutions to meet local problems. When the former colonial languages have been used as the medium of education in schooling, the gap between the ruling class and ordinary people has been widened. However, there is increasingly an awareness that such aid was culturally and educationally flawed: for a Ford Foundation analysis describing the failings of their projects, see Fox 1975; on the inappropriateness of Western training in linguistics for Third World language management purposes, see Jernudd 1981; on ethnocentric, unscientific tenets in applied linguistics and English Language Teaching, see Phillipson forthcoming.

As many scholars from the 'underdeveloped' world have pointed out, the arguments used to justify the continued use of European languages in such contexts are quite false and neglect the educational, cultural and linguistic realities and needs of all except the elites (who are the ones with strong links with Center countries, having often been educated there or through the medium of the Center language). Just as the economies of countries in the Periphery have been underdeveloped through their subordination to the economies of the Center countries, their languages have also been underdeveloped. Linguistic underdevelopment occurs whenever these languages are not used for the full range of societal functions that Ansre lists, with these functions being reserved for a supposedly 'superior', Western language. This situation even still holds in countries which have made substantial efforts to promote a local language. In Tanzania there is a triglossic situation, English being 'high' vis-a-vis

Swahili, and Swahili 'high' vis-a-vis the other indigenous languages.

3. Promotion of dominant languages

Language plays a vital role in international contexts. This role has become ever more important as brute physical force (conquest, occupation) has given way to subtler types of control. Language not only mediates links (in the media, business, military, etc); it is itself an object of cultural dissemination. The 'Alliance Francaise' has been promoting knowledge of the French language outside France for over a century. Many other Western European nations run similar, state-supported operations, as does Japan. Saudi Arabia provides substantial financial aid for the teaching of Arabic in underdeveloped countries. The rise of English as the international language par excellence of the post-war period has not been left to chance. It has been declared government policy on both sides of the Atlantic to promote English worldwide, and simultaneously to curb the extension of possible competitor languages, whether the Cold War enemy's language, Russian, other Western European languages, or the languages of newly independent countries, Arabic, Hindi, etc. In the words of a director of the Center for Applied Linguistics:

'From a minor language in 1600, English has in less than four centuries come to be the leading language of international communication in the world today. This remarkable development is ultimately the result of 17th, 18th and 19th century British successes in conquest, colonization, and trade, but it was enormously accelerated by the emergence of the United States as the major military world power and technological leader in the aftermath of World War II. The process was also greatly abetted by the expenditure of large amounts of government and private foundation funds in the period 1950-1970, perhaps the most ever spent in history in support of the propagation of a language.' (Troike 1977, 2).

The expenditure has gone towards the establishment of professional infrastructure (specialist university departments, institution building, teacher training, curriculum and textbook development, etc.) in the Center and the Periphery. There have been close links between the academic world, government (or para-governmental agencies such as the British Council) and publishing houses. The role of American 'philanthropic' foundations in promoting worldwide cultural links has been well analysed (see Arnove 1982). The Center for Applied Linguistics in Washington, D.C. was established with Ford Foundation funds. Ford had language and education projects in over 30 countries in the 60's and 70's, a decisive period in the transition from colonialism to the contemporary, neocolonial phase. The British Council has a substantial number of language experts scattered over the world, many of them in advisory or catalyst, 'multiplier' roles rather than as classroom teachers. Such government-financed language activities are designed to create dependence on the dominant language in order to further its use for those purposes which the language otherwise serves, generally in a structure of linguistic imperialism.

4. Approaches to linguistic dominance

There are many academic specialisations with concerns which are close to those of linguistic imperialism: language planning, the sociology of language, sociolinguistics, applied linguistics. However, these disciplines have tended to shy away from directly confronting the issue of the power of languages internationally. Even from a country-internal perspective, little work has been done to develop a unifying theory of linguistic inequality, despite the extensive documentation of pervasive linguistic inequality worldwide (for instance studies of language attrition and death, of language revival, of post-colonial education policy). Work in the field of 'language spread' (e.g. contributions to Cooper 1982, and Fishman, Cooper & Conrad 1977) is often strong on identifying and quantifying factors involved in language spread, but tends to be relatively weak in analysing causal, structural factors. Labels such as 'a language of wider communication' convey an impression of neutrality as regards the purpose of the communication. A similar objection applies to the term 'English as an additional language', granted that there is generally functional differentiation between English and other languages.

Slavery and colonisation were imposed by physical violence and legitimated with reference to primitive biologically based racism. In the contemporary world the physical violence of the stick, associated with crude racism, has given way to psychological violence. To capture this phenomenon and account for the way language is used as a means of hierarchising, in similar ways to racism and sexism, the concept 'linguicism' has been coined (Skutnabb-Kangas, 1988). Linguicism is defined (ibid.) as 'ideologies, structures and practices which are used to legitimate, effectuate and reproduce an unequal division of power and resources (both material and non-material) between groups which are defined on the basis of language.' The concept has been used in the study of minority education (ibid.), and in a study of the spread of English as a 'world' language and the specific contribution of applied linguists and English Language Teaching 'experts' in facilitating this spread (Phillipson 1988, forthcoming).

Linguicism facilitates the control of dominated groups by means of carrots rather than sticks, ideas rather than

threats. When benefits accrue only to those who learn and use a dominant language, and when shame and guilt are inculcated in those who use a stigmatised, dominated language, the oppressive structure and linguistic ideology are likely to be internalised. It then appears to be in the interest of speakers of dominated languages to shift language. This has been the reality of most indigenous and immigrant minorities in Europe and Europeanised countries.

At present, linguistic dominance is being asserted and