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## ABSTRACT

The principal mechanisms and rationalisations for linguistic imperialism are exemplified within Europe and in the entrenchment of European languages globally. This entailed dispossessing Indigenous peoples of their territory, culture and languages, three indivisible constituents. UN declarations on Indigenous rights recognize current injustices and challenge political realities in Europeanised lands. Educational policies commit linguistic genocide. Linguicism in imperialist policies cause this, though some scholars deny the many negative aspects of the expansion of English, for the environment, culture, and languages. Policies for maintaining linguistic diversity through mother-tongue based multilingual education ensure a healthy balance between local languages and a dominant language.

## INTRODUCTION

The study of linguistic imperialism focuses on how and why certain languages dominate internationally, and attempts to account for such dominance in a theoretically informed way. Many issues can be clarified: the role of language policy in empires (British, French, Japanese, Spanish, etc.); how languages from Europe were established on other continents, generally at the expense of local languages; whether the languages that colonialism took to Africa and Asia now form a useful bond with the international community, and are necessary for national unity internally - or are they a bridgehead for Western interests, permitting the continuation of marginalization and exploitation? In a globalizing world, has English shifted from serving Anglo-American interests into a more equitable instrument of communication for diverse users? Or do US corporate and military dominance worldwide and the neoliberal economy constitute a new form of empire that consolidates a single imperial language? Can the active suppression of languages such as Kurdish in Turkey or of Tibetan and Uyghur in China be seen as linguistic imperialism? With the increasing importance of China globally, will the vigorous promotion of Chinese internationally convert into a novel form of linguistic imperialism?

And what are the consequences for language ecology? We endorse Wendel's definition of language ecology (2005: 51) : 'The ecological approach to language considers the complex web of relationships that exist between the environment, languages, and their speakers'. We understand 'environment' here as not only the social (including linguistic) environment but also the physical and biological environments. There has been a tendency of many sociolinguists to pay only lip-service to the last two, and to focus only on social concerns. They see the eco- in ecolinguistics/language ecology as a relationship within and between various languages, speakers of these languages, and their sociocultural and economic contexts.

Linguistic imperialism entails the following (Phillipson 1992, 2009):

- linguistic imperialism interlocks with *a structure of imperialism* in culture, education, the media, communication, the economy, politics, and military activities

- it is a form of *linguicism*<sup>1</sup>, a favouring of one language over others in ways that parallel societal structuring through racism, sexism, and class: linguicism serves to privilege users of the standard forms of the dominant language, which represent convertible linguistic capital
- in essence it is about *exploitation*, injustice, inequality, and hierarchy that privileges those able to use the dominant languages
- it is *structural*: more material resources and infrastructure are accorded to the dominant languages (and their speakers) than to others
- it is *ideological*: beliefs, attitudes, and imagery glorify the dominant languages, stigmatize others, and rationalize the linguistic hierarchy as beneficial for speakers of other languages
- the dominance is *hegemonic*, it is internalised and naturalised as being ‘normal’
- this entails *unequal rights* for speakers of different languages
- learning the dominant language(s) is often *subtractive*, proficiency in the imperial language and in learning it in education involving its consolidation at the expense of other languages
- linguistic imperialism is invariably *contested and resisted*.

### **CRITICAL ISSUES AND TOPICS IN A HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE**

The term imperialism derives from the Latin *imperium*, covering military and political control by a dominant power over subordinated peoples and territories. Using terms like imperialism is contentious, because ‘Defining something as imperial or colonial today almost always implies hostility to it, viewing it as inherently immoral or illegitimate’ (Howe 2002, p. 9). Whether linguistic imperialism is in place in any given context is an empirical question that analysis of the variables listed above can clarify. Many of the variables are alluded to in the description of how the British responded to conquest by the Romans 2000 years ago:

in place of distaste for the Latin language came a passion to command it. In the same way, our national dress came into favour and the toga was everywhere to be seen. And so the Britons were gradually led on to the amenities that make vice agreeable – arcades, baths and sumptuous banquets. They spoke of such novelties as ‘civilization’ when really they were only a feature of enslavement. (Tacitus 1948, 72)

The global Europeanisation process dates back to the policies of the Spaniards and Portuguese six centuries ago, the Christianising mission with a Papal blessing, and the quest for gold and territory, after the expulsion of Islam from the Iberian peninsula<sup>2</sup>. The significance of language for the colonial adventure was appreciated from its inception. In 1492 Queen Isabella of Spain was presented with a plan for establishing Castilian ‘as a tool for conquest abroad and a weapon to suppress untutored speech at home’; for its author, Antonio de Nebrija, ‘Language has always been the consort of empire, and forever shall remain its mate’<sup>3</sup>. The language was to be fashioned as a standard in the domestic education system, as a means of social control, and harnessed to the colonial mission elsewhere. Europeans have violently taken over the territories of other peoples on all continents and much of the functional space occupied by other languages in the local linguistic ecology. To a large extent Europeanisation, through the expansion of Spanish, French, English, Russian, and other imperial languages has eliminated their cultures and languages. This has had

devastating consequences for the languages of the Indigenous peoples throughout the Americas and Australasia.

In Spain, linguistic measures were in place during the fascist dictatorship of Franco, with grave consequences for Catalan, Basque, and other languages, which were not permitted in formal education or in personal names. In Mexico 'The locals who could not understand Spanish were considered subhuman, and so could be subjugated forthwith... reaching far beyond anything Nebrija imagined when he commented on language and empire going together' (Errington 2008, 25-26).

When French became established as an 'international language' among elites in many parts of Europe, there was widespread belief in the intrinsic superiority of the language. The Academy of Berlin held a competition in 1782 on the theme of why French was a 'universal language'. A winning essay argued that languages that do not follow the syntax of French are illogical and inadequate.

Maintenance of a linguistic hierarchy typically involves a pattern of *stigmatisation* of dominated languages (mere 'dialects, 'vernaculars'), *glorification* of the dominant language (its superior clarity, richer vocabulary), and *rationalisation* of the relationship between the languages, always to the benefit of the dominant one (access to the superior culture and 'progress'). A dominant language is projected as the language of God (Sanskrit, Arabic in the Islamic world, Dutch in South Africa), the language of reason, logic and human rights (French both before and after the French Revolution), the language of the superior ethno-national group (German in Nazi ideology), the language of progress, modernity, and national unity (English in much postcolonial discourse). Other languages are explicitly or implicitly deprived of such functions and qualities. The ancient Greeks stigmatised non-Greek speakers as *barbarian*, meaning speakers of a non-language. The term *Welsh* was used by speakers of English to refer to people who call themselves *Cymry*. 'Welsh' in Old English means foreigners or strangers, a stigmatising categorisation from the perspective of the dominant group and in their language. Negative 'othering' has deep roots.

The expansion of English from its territorial base in England began with its imposition throughout the British Isles. The 1536 Act of Union with Wales entailed subordination to the 'rights, laws, customs and speech of England' (cited Jenkins 2007, 132). Throughout the British Isles a monolingual ideology was propagated, with devastating effects, even if some Celtic languages have survived and are currently being revitalised. A monolingual ideology was exported to settler colonies in North America and Australasia. President Theodore Roosevelt wrote in 1919: 'We have room for but one language here, and that is the English language'. More differentiated policies were needed in exploitation colonies (where the climate precluded settlement by Europeans) such as the Indian subcontinent and most African colonies.

### **LEGITIMATION OF COLONIALITY AND LINGUISTIC IMPERIALISM**

The present-day strength of English, French, Spanish and Portuguese in the Americas, in Africa, in Asia, Australasia and the Pacific is a direct consequence of successive waves of colonisation and of the outcome of military conflict between rival European powers. Between 1815 and 1914 over 21 million British and Irish people emigrated, the greatest number to the United States, and increasing numbers to Canada, Australia, Aotearoa/New Zealand and to a lesser extent South Africa. This demographic movement, also undertaken by the Dutch, French, German, Portuguese and Spaniards, assumed a right to occupy territory as though it was unoccupied: the

myth of *terra nullius* which assumed that aboriginals had no right of ownership of the land.<sup>4</sup> Europeans have rationalised this dispossession by convincing themselves that a Christian God has endorsed this mission. The British philosopher John Locke fraudulently justified *terra nullius* in 1690<sup>5</sup>.

This *Doctrine of Discovery* through which territory was seized illegally from other peoples is still the ideological legitimation used by imperial states. These cling to the principle of their *own* states' 'territorial integrity and political unity', which they have incorporated in their constitutions and in international conventions and that no other state or group has the right to violate. Walker Connor (1972) 'rightly suggested that the development of modern States has been more of a process of "nation-destroying" rather than of "nation-building", because in the name of the modern nation-State numerous non-state peoples have in fact been destroyed or eliminated' (Stavenhagen 1995: 71). These imperial states continue to constantly violate the 'territorial integrity' of the nations whose lands they have occupied. The occupation of Iraq, Afghanistan, the Crimea, Tibet, etc, are recent and different variants of the principle of violating territorial integrity.

This injustice is seen clearly in relation to Indigenous peoples. The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP, [http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unpfii/documents/DRIPS\\_en.pdf](http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unpfii/documents/DRIPS_en.pdf)) states in its Article 46(1): 'Nothing in this Declaration may be interpreted as implying for any State, people, group or person any right to engage in any activity or to perform any act ... construed as authorizing or encouraging any action which would dismember or impair, totally or in part, the territorial integrity or political unity of sovereign and independent States'. This confirms the historical dispossession of the territories of Indigenous Peoples (IPs): the territories are now seen as integral parts of the colonising states. Indigenous peoples (IPs) are challenging this by reminding colonial states that 'IPs have their own territorial integrity, as part of their rights to self-determination and to maintain their nationalities as defined in articles 3 to 6 [of the UNDRIP]' (*Docip Update* June 2015, No 109, p. 14). IPs continue: 'Article 46 may not be used to deny IP's right to self-determination affirmed in article 3 of the Declaration, as well as the UN Charter and Article 1 of the International Human Rights Covenants<sup>6</sup>. In addition]...the preambular language of the Declaration [UNDRIP] states that "nothing in this Declaration may be used to deny any peoples their right to self-determination, exercised in conformity with international law"' (ibid, p. 14).

The Mabo court case in Australia 1971 can be seen as confirming that *terra nullius* has been a convenient myth for the colonisers. The UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues attempts in its *Study on the impacts of the Doctrine of Discovery on IPs, including mechanisms, processes and instruments of redress* (E/C.19/2014/3) to 'pursue dialogue on the historical ramifications of this doctrine, to understand its current impacts and to determine ways in which it could be fully addressed and redressed' (*Docip Update* June 2015, No 109, p. 5). Obviously even minimal redress, along with the right to self-determination of Indigenous peoples, as stated in several international agreements, might threaten the territorial integrity of many of the present states that are based on the theft of Indigenous lands. Thus, even with the inclusion of UNDRIP's Art. 46(1), it is no surprise that the four countries that initially did not accept UNDRIP were Australia, Aotearoa/New Zealand, Canada and the USA.

Likewise, Turkey has succeeded in labelling the whole Kurdish liberation struggle a 'terrorist movement', when what the Kurds have demanded for over a century is self-determination for the Kurdish areas, linguistically, culturally, and economically –

all in agreement with international human rights Covenants on the right of a 'people' to this. But if Indigenous peoples and minorities are not granted the internal self-determination that most of them are demanding, this may in time lead to demands for external self-determination, i.e. secession, meaning exactly what many states fear (see Stavenhagen 1996).

In all of this Indigenous and minority struggle against neoimperialism/coloniality, language and linguistic rights play a central role. Likewise, ecological concerns are at the heart of the demands of self-determination and land rights. Without proper self-determination it is impossible to prevent the 'failure of states to protect IP's rights against environmental harms caused by industrial activities that affect the global environment, such as greenhouse gas emissions causing climate change... pesticides and other toxic chemicals, and extractive activities... water policies that affect the rights of IP's, the health of their communities, ecosystems, and future generations, as water is crucial for bio-cultural diversity and for sustaining IP's self-determination (*Docip Update* 2015, p. 12).

The connection between language, culture and Mother Earth has been beautifully expressed by Manu Metekingi, from Whanganui iwi, Aotearoa/New Zealand<sup>7</sup>:

As long as we have the language,  
we have the culture.  
As long as we have the culture,  
we can hold on to the land.

Jeannette Armstrong from British Columbia, Canada, analyses the connection between language and the whole ecosystem further:

The Okanagan word for "our place on the land" and "our language" is the same. We think of our language as the language of the land. This means that the land has taught us our language<sup>8</sup>. The way we survived is to speak the language that the land offered us as its teachings. To know all the plants, animals, seasons, and geography is to construct language for them.

We also refer to the land and our bodies with the same root syllable. This means that the flesh that is our body is pieces of the land that came to us through the things that this land is<sup>9</sup>. The soil, the water, the air, and all the other life forms contributed parts to be our flesh. We are our land/place. Not to know and to celebrate this is to be without language and without land. It is to be dis-placed ... I know what it feels like to be an endangered species on my land, to see the land dying with us. It is my body that is being torn, deforested, and poisoned by 'development'. Every fish, plant, insect, bird, and animal that disappears is part of me dying. I know all their names, and I touch them with my spirit (Armstrong 1996: 465-466, 470).

Such cosmologies differ radically from the universe of the European languages and cultures that have been imposed on other continents (Skutnabb-Kangas 2015).

## LINGUICISM AND LINGUISTIC GENOCIDE IN EDUCATION

Indigenous languages were initially used in missionary work and education, in the Americas, in the Saami country (in Norway<sup>10</sup>, Finland, Sweden) and elsewhere, but

when competition for territory and resources intensified, conflict between the settlers and indigenous peoples increased. Education was then established on the principle ‘that the only prospect of success was in taking the children in boarding schools, and making them “English in language, civilized in manners, Christian in religion” ’ (Spring 1996, p. 152). As a direct result of such policies, very few of the languages originally present in the USA, Canada, and Australia have survived, whereas some Saami languages are alive and even revitalising (e.g. Olthuis et al. 2010 on Aanaar Saami, with some 350 speakers).

The linguistic imperialism vis-à-vis Indigenous languages within a polity is comparable to the way both Indigenous and minority languages of the peoples of the Soviet Union were treated by Stalin: ‘bilingual education’ meant transition to monolingualism in Russian. ‘Under the pressure of the imperial ideology they were forced to sacrifice linguistic rights for an ideal that was clearly an attempt at linguistic genocide’ (Rannut 1994, 179).

Education in US colonies functioned along similar lines. In the Philippines, there was an insistence on an exclusive use of English in education from 1898 to 1940: ‘... public education, specifically language and literature education during the American colonial period, was designed to directly support American colonialism. The combined power of the canon, curriculum, and pedagogy constituted the ideological strategies resulting in rationalising, naturalizing, and legitimizing myths about colonial relationships and realities.’ (Martin 2002, p. 210).

Despite differences in the articulation of policies in the French and British empires, what they had in common was the low status accorded to dominated languages: these were either ignored or only used in the early years of education. Policies were worked out *ad hoc* in a wide variety of situations. A very small proportion of the population was in formal, Western education, especially after the lower grades. Local traditions and educational practice were ignored. Unsuitable education was provided: an explicit policy of ‘civilizing the natives’. The master language was attributed civilizing properties (Phillipson 1992, 127-8). In the British empire, ‘English was the official vehicle and the magic formula to colonial élitedom’ (Ngũgĩ 1985, 115). In French colonies, the goal of producing a black elite entailed using French exclusively and the educational content and methods of metropolitan France.

Colonising governments thus implemented linguistic policies that discriminated in favour of European languages. Linguistic hierarchisation figured prominently, alongside racism, in the legitimation of the colonial venture. An analysis of the links between linguistics and the furtherance of the French colonial cause documents how French ‘consumed’ other languages by processes of linguistic cannibalism, *glottophagie* (Calvet 1974).

*Linguistic genocide*, as defined in the final draft (not accepted by the General Assembly) of what became the United Nations Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide (<http://www1.umn.edu/humanrts/instree/x1cpcpg.htm>), is in fact still practised widely in the modern world when groups are forcibly assimilated to the dominant culture and its language. Most educational policies regarding Indigenous peoples and even many minorities violate children’s educational rights and can be seen as *genocide* psychologically, educationally, sociologically and economically, according to the definitions of genocide in Articles IIb and IIc in the present Convention (Skutnabb-Kangas 2000); much recent legal scholarship strengthens the claim that it is genocide even legally. Such policies can also be seen as a crime against humanity (Skutnabb-Kangas and Dunbar 2010).

The World Bank has played a decisive role in funding education in ‘developing’ countries. Its policies have continued the linguistic imperialism of the colonial and early postcolonial periods:

The World Bank’s real position ... encourages the consolidation of the imperial languages in Africa. ... the World Bank does not seem to regard the linguistic Africanisation of the whole of primary education as an effort that is worth its consideration. Its publication on strategies for stabilising and revitalising universities, for example makes absolutely no mention of the place of language at this tertiary level of African education (Mazrui 1997, 39).

The USA and the UK coordinated efforts to promote English as a ‘global’ language from the 1950s. English language education as propagated by the British and Americans builds on five tenets, each of which is false: English is best taught and examined monolingually (the monolingual fallacy); the ideal teacher of English is a native speaker (the native speaker fallacy); the earlier English is taught, the better the results (the early start fallacy); the more English is taught, the better the results (the maximum exposure fallacy); if other languages are used much, standards of English will drop (the subtractive fallacy) (Phillipson 1992, 183-218). These underpin the profitable global English teaching business.

*Post-imperial English. Status change in former British and American colonies, 1940-1990* (Fishman, Conrad and Rubal-Lopez 1996), has a wealth of empirical description of the functions of English in many contexts. The 29 contributors to the volume were specifically asked to assess whether linguistic imperialism was in force in the country studies they were responsible for. They all address the issue, one editor challenges the validity of the concept, but no contributors assess whether there might be more powerful or precise ways of coming to grips with theorising the dominance of English. Fishman speculates on English being ‘reconceptualised, from being an imperialist tool to being a multinational tool ... English may need to be re-examined precisely from the point of view of being post-imperial (... in the sense of not directly serving purely Anglo-American territorial, economic, or cultural expansion) without being post-capitalist in any way’ (ibid., 8). Corporate activities and regional economic blocs have made the locus of power more diffuse than in earlier, nation-state imperialism. Kirkpatrick (2007) also accepts Fishman’s conclusion (1996, p. 640) that the strength of English in former British and American colonies is more due to such countries’ engagement in the modern world economy rather than ‘to any efforts derived from their colonial masters’.

This analysis seems to ignore the fact that this ‘engagement’ presupposes a western-dominated globalization agenda set by transnational corporations and banks (major Western banks, the World Bank, and the IMF), and the U.S. military intervening whenever what it sees as its ‘vital interests’ are at risk. The financial and economic crises of 2008 exposed instability in this neoliberal system. Military intervention in Arab countries and Afghanistan has had catastrophic consequences. English has thus far served to consolidate the interests of the powerful globally and locally and to maintain an exploitative world order that can disenfranchise speakers of other languages.

The Congolese-American scholar, Salikoko Mufwene, who has written insightfully about the ecology of language and linguistic species generation, states categorically that ‘small’ languages are not threatened by English but only by bigger local languages: ‘English is no more dangerous to the indigenous languages than

McDonald's eateries are to their traditional cuisines. There are certainly endangered languages in the 'Outer' and 'Expanding' circles, but (the spread of) English has nothing to do with their condition' (Mufwene 2010, 50). While it is correct that demographically small languages are at great risk from a switch into more widely used local languages, Mufwene's argument ignores the significant role of ex-colonial languages in education, their major importance in maintaining the position and privileges of dominant elites, and the corporate profits of British and American publishers - and the devastating harm that English-medium education, with poorly trained teachers causes to the vast majority of African and Asian children, keeping them in poverty (e.g. Alexander 2006, Misra & Mohanty 2000, Mohanty & Skutnabb-Kangas 2013). Mufwene also pours scorn on efforts to use the human rights system so as to strengthen and maintain a vibrant language ecology:

... the ideal world in which (rich) linguistic diversity can be sustained is far from being ours. There are really no language rights. Many people who are struggling to improve their living conditions in the current ever-changing socioeconomic ecologies are not concerned with maintaining languages and heritages, which are more properly archived in libraries and museums. The archiving is (to be) done by experts or some nonprofessional 'glossophiles' (if I may suggest the term). (Mufwene 2011, 927)

Rodolfo Stavenhagen (1995, 77), counteracts this forcefully, and echoes Indigenous peoples:

Too often, policies of national integration, of national cultural development, actually imply a policy of ethnocide, that is, the wilful destruction of cultural groups. The cultural development of peoples, whether minorities or majorities, must be considered within the framework of the right of peoples to self-determination, which by accepted international standards is the fundamental human right, in the absence of which all other human rights cannot really be enjoyed. Governments fear that if minority peoples hold the right to self-determination in the sense of a right to full political independence, then existing States might break up. State interests thus are still more powerful at the present time than the human rights of peoples.

## **ONGOING TENSIONS BETWEEN LINGUISTIC IMPERIALISM AND RESISTANCE, AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS**

Scholars in Western countries are often reluctant to analyse the continued expansion of English in terms of linguistic imperialism, whereas scholars in former colonies, at the receiving end of it, are more likely to.

The strong position of English in former colonies represents a continuation of the policies of colonial times. It has strengthened an elite class, with the effect that in India 'Over the post-Independence years, English has become the single most important predictor of socio-economic mobility. ... With the globalized economy, English education widens the discrepancy between the social classes (Mohanty 2006, 268-9).



Rainer Enrique Hamel from Mexico (2004: xx) sees those researchers who deny the existence of linguistic imperialism as disconnecting the expansion of English from contextual causal factors:

Most actors share the view of the spread of English as natural, neutral, and beneficial [...] Broader issues about the relationship between British or US-American business interests and the promotion of English usually remain hidden behind the smokescreen of actorless globalization. Most significantly, Kachru, Crystal and others dissociate English from the centralized power relations of national imperial states.

One development that strengthens global elite formation is the rapid increase in the number of English-medium international schools around the world, from around 1,700 in 2001 to 5,270 in 2009. The sector is 'now worth \$18bn worldwide and set to double in value by 2020' with expansion mainly in India, the Middle East, and Asia (Hoare 2009). Presumably many graduates go on to study at universities in 'English-speaking' countries. It is likely that their linguistic roots in their cultures of origin will be weaker than their identification with the global economy and international mobility.

Currently there is a significant move in many African countries, in India, Nepal, and other Asian countries, into English-only education. This intensifies the marginalization of local languages and is definitely a threat to the local language ecology. There are, though, also increasing attempts at arguing for and organising mother-tongue-based multilingual education, and research support for this kind of education is strong. There is a very strong movement towards mother-tongue-based multilingual education, especially in many Asian countries (see, e.g. Benson & Kosonen 2011, 2012).

By contrast to many Asian and African countries, the governments of the Nordic countries are determined that increased proficiency in English should in no way reduce the role of national languages. This principle is enshrined in a Declaration on a Nordic Language Policy, available in eight Nordic languages and English ([www.norden.org](http://www.norden.org)). Many universities in Finland and Sweden have thus formulated language policies that aim at ensuring that their graduates and staff are in effect bilingual: universities have a responsibility as publicly funded institutions to promote national languages, and as participants in an international community of practice they also need to function in English and other international languages. This exemplifies governments being aware of the risk of the negative impact of linguistic imperialism and taking measures to counteract it.

The European Union advocates policies to promote multilingualism and the goal of all schoolchildren becoming trilingual, so as to strengthen all EU languages. However the management of multilingualism in EU institutions is exceptionally complicated, and market forces are strengthening the position of English nationally as well as in the EU system (Phillipson 2011). There is therefore a risk of other languages being displaced and dispossessed of their linguistic capital.

Scholars who are sceptical about linguistic imperialism as an explanatory model for the way English has been consolidated worldwide tend to analyse matters as though active US-UK promotion of English, supported by linguistic policies that favour it over other languages, and is a separate issue from colonised people and others actively wishing to learn English because of the doors, economic, social, political, and cultural, that proficiency in the language can open. Matters are summed

up as though there is a 'free' choice (e.g. Kirkpatrick 2007, 35-7), with no imposition involved. In reality the pull-factor, people wanting to learn English, is partially caused by the push-factor, the way English is sold, glorified, and marketed falsely as a panacea. Push and pull factors both contribute to linguistic hegemony and hierarchy.

The other false dichotomy involves presenting maintaining and developing Indigenous, minority and minoritised languages on the one hand, and learning English on the other hand, as excluding each other. It is logical that people in many countries wish to develop competence in English, but in many postcolonial countries the way education is organised entails subtractive learning. For instance, a consequence of education in Singapore being exclusively through the medium of English is that more than half the population now use English as the home language. English-medium schooling that neglects mother tongues can have this effect. In contrast, results of well-conducted mother-tongue-based multilingual education show that children can learn both their own languages and several dominant languages (e.g. a locally dominant language *and* English) really well, in addition to understanding what is taught in the various subjects and thus having a chance of academic and cognitive development.

What the increased influence of China and a worldwide increase in the learning of Chinese will lead to is unpredictable. Current policies in China definitely restrict the use of languages other than Mandarin Chinese, with negative effects on the local language ecology. An extreme case is the oppression that linguistic minorities are exposed to in China. There has been a very strong migration of Han Chinese to both Tibet and the Uyghur areas over recent decades so that the Tibetans and the Uyghurs are or will soon be a minority in their own territories. A 2010 education plan for the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region is designed to assimilate Uyghurs to the dominant Han Chinese language totally and rapidly, this policy dovetailing with measures to crush their traditional economic, cultural and religious practices.

The conceptual framework elaborated above can serve to explore the questions raised initially in this article in more depth. Even if the volume of academic work in the area of macro-sociolinguistics and language policy has increased dramatically over the past 20 years, much of it does not engage directly with issues of inequality, social justice, and the way a neoimperial linguistic world order is being reconstituted. Critiques of a linguistic imperialist approach for ignoring agency, being excessively structuralist, or implying that education systems should not produce competent users of English are invalid (Phillipson 2009, 15-18). The study of linguistic imperialism does not argue for or against particular languages. It analyses how linguistic imperialism functions in specific contexts in order to identify injustice or discrimination so as to provide a basis for remedying them.

As stressed initially, linguistic imperialism is one aspect of wider ongoing societal processes, which have massive consequences for the ecology of languages. Recent decades of 'globalisation' are insightfully analysed by Pierre Bourdieu (2001: 96-97) who describes today's globalisation as

a pseudo-concept that is both descriptive and prescriptive, which has replaced "modernisation", that was long used in the social sciences in the USA as a euphemistic way of imposing a naively ethnocentric evolutionary model by means of which different societies were classified according to their distance from the economically most advanced society, i.e. American society. The word (and the model it expresses) incarnates the most accomplished form of *the imperialism of*

*the universal*, which consists of one society universalising its own particularity covertly as a universal model.

In view of the massive changes occurring in today's globalisation, people need adaptability and fitness, which requires creativity. The challenges for maintaining our multiple, interlocking diversities are astutely brought together by Colin Baker in his review of Skutnabb-Kangas 2000:

Ecological diversity is essential for long-term planetary survival. All living organisms, plants, animals, bacteria and humans survive and prosper through a network of complex and delicate relationships. Damaging one of the elements in the ecosystem will result in unforeseen consequences for the whole of the system. Evolution has been aided by genetic diversity, with species genetically adapting in order to survive in different environments. Diversity contains the potential for adaptation. Uniformity can endanger a species by providing inflexibility and unadaptability. Linguistic diversity and biological diversity are ... inseparable. The range of cross fertilisation becomes less as languages and cultures die and the testimony of human intellectual achievement is lessened.

In the language of ecology, the strongest ecosystems are those that are the most diverse. That is, diversity is directly related to stability; variety is important for long-term survival. Our success on this planet has been due to an ability to adapt to different kinds of environment over thousands of years (atmospheric as well as cultural). Such ability is born out of diversity. Thus language and cultural diversity maximises chances of human success and adaptability" (Baker 2001: 281).

If we during the next 100 years murder 50-90% of the linguistic (and thereby mostly also the cultural) diversity which is our treasury of historically developed knowledge, and includes knowledge about how to maintain and use sustainably some of the most vulnerable and most biologically diverse environments in the world, we are also seriously undermining our chances of life on earth.

Monocultures are vulnerable, in agriculture, horticulture, and animal husbandry, as we see in increasingly more dramatic ways, when animals, bacteria and crops which are more and more resistant (to antibiotics, to Roundups, etc), are starting to spread - and we have just seen the tip of the iceberg. With genetic manipulations the problems are mounting rapidly.

In terms of the new ways of coping that we are going to need, the potential for the new lateral thinking that might save us from ourselves in time lies in having as many and as diverse languages and cultures as possible. We do not know which ones have the right medicine. For maintaining all of them, multilingualism is necessary. Multilingualism should of course be one of the most important goals in education. But is it?

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<sup>1</sup> Linguicism: 'ideologies, structures and practices which are used to legitimate, effectuate, regulate and reproduce an unequal division of power and resources (both material and immaterial) between groups which are defined on the basis of language' (Skutnabb-Kangas 1988: 13). Most education systems worldwide for Indigenous/tribal peoples and minorities reflect linguicism (Skutnabb-Kangas 2000, Skutnabb-Kangas & Dunbar 2010).

<sup>2</sup> The European occupiers of Mexico in 1519 destroyed heathen idols (Diaz 1963) with the same barbarity as the Taleban and IS destroy artefacts in Afghanistan and the Middle East. The US and its willing partners have perpetrated well-documented crimes of cultural genocide and cultural cleansing in Iraq, with massive consequences for local languages (Abdul Haq al-Ani and Tariq al-Ani 2015).

<sup>3</sup> 'Siempre la lengua fue compañera del imperio'. In *Prólogo a la Gramática de la lengua castellana* en <http://www.antoniodenebrija.org/prologo.html>. All translations are ours.

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<sup>4</sup> The aim was to establish replicas of the ‘home country’ in New Amsterdam (later New York), New England, New Zealand, Nova Scotia, Hispania, etc

<sup>5</sup> In *Two treatises of government*, Locke argues: ‘God, by commanding to subdue, gave Authority so far to *appropriate*’, this inequality being ‘tacitly but voluntarily’ agreed on by society (1988, 292, 302).

<sup>6</sup> International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, <http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/ProfessionalInterest/cescr.pdf>, and International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, [https://treaties.un.org/doc/Publication/UNTS/Volume 999/volume-999-I-14668-English.pdf](https://treaties.un.org/doc/Publication/UNTS/Volume%20999/volume-999-I-14668-English.pdf)

<sup>7</sup> Manu Metekingi, a Māori man from the Whanganui iwi (tribe), said this in a film shown at the Whanganui Iwi Exhibition, at Te Papa Tongarewa Museum of New Zealand, Wellington, 29 November 2003 - May 2006. The Exhibition told about ‘our heartland, the Whanganui River, and our place within it’. The Whanganui iwi write: ‘The well-being of our river is intertwined with its people's well-being’ (from the brochure describing the exhibition, with the theme: ‘Ko au te awa, ko te awa ko au. I am the river, the river is me’).

<sup>8</sup> The relationship between language and land is seen as sacred. Most non-indigenous people need a lot of guidance to even start understanding the primacy of land in it. One example from Australia. None of the Aboriginal people participating in the reclaiming of the Awabakal language were descendants of the Awabakal (the last speakers died before 1900) but came from other areas and peoples. Still, they speak about ‘our language’ and ‘our identity’ in connection with Awabakal. In Rob Amery's words (1998: 94 – this is from the manuscript that became Amery 2000) ‘the revival of Awabakal seems to be based primarily on the association of the language with the land, the language of the place in which a group of Aboriginal people of diverse origins now live’.

<sup>9</sup> This can also be understood completely literally: all our food that builds our body comes from the earth.

<sup>10</sup> See Svein Lund et al.’s 6 edited volumes on Saami school history.