
Globalization and Language^(*)

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Abstract

Recently, due to globalization and its impact on other fields and all aspects of life, more focus and attention are given to this phenomenon . It seems it is attributed to the definition that globalization is ((the actual universalization and commodification of knowledge, technology, communication, culture, health care, heritage, genetic code and natural sources such as land forests, air and water)) Barlow and Clark (2002:23) and Smith(2000:13). As a result, all researchers and specialists rushed to investigate this phenomenon. Like other people, linguists are very curious to predict the shape of their languages during the globalization age. See ((Arnold: 2006, Demont-Heinrich: 2005, and Crystal: 1997)).

This paper tries to address some issues; the influence of globalization on language, the features of the global language and efforts done to find solutions for problems resulted from globalization in linguistic societies. It is hypothesized that the impact of globalization on language is influential and apparent as

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people tend to learn and speak more than one language. Some languages will dominate and take over global communities; others will be marginal or locally used. These issues are hoped to be of value to globalists, sociolinguists, and curriculum designers. It is believed that linguistic communities will meet challenges to keep their languages used or alive. According to what we dealt with in this study, it was pointed out that the geographical roots of globalization led to the technological ones due to the policies practised by the colonizers . Culture, type of society and government system play a distinctive and vital role in the shape of language and educational policies and strategies under globalization era. Parents and teachers can help immigrants children to enhance their native language when they live in a bilingual or multilingual country their native language is not officially or institutionally used. Many challenges will appear and more problems will spring from the fact that globalization is influential since it will keep curriculum designers busy with two issues ((what to teach and how to teach)). Multiculturalism and multilingualism are two challenges for all governments so that linguistic and ethnic problems are expected. If issues and problems are not taken into account, the future of societies and state power would be deplorable.

1- Globalization: History and Policies

It is important to trace back the background of globalization. The beginning of this phenomenon was in the 16th century when many European countries moved across the world to inaugurate the age of colonialism. To do so, these colonizers tried to impose their language and culture upon the colonized countries. Compared with the other colonizers' languages, English was the highly valued by their native speakers especially Britain, as British people attempted

to practise this policy. Arnold (2006:2) states that the culture and the language of the colonized countries were completely ignored and de-valued so the impact of the cultural imperialism upon the colonized culture including language was strongly negative. This is clear when we look at areas like India and Arab countries in North Africa colonized by Britain and France respectively, where French till today is used in their everyday communication and interaction. The same can be said about the use of English in Asia, Africa...etc. Accordingly, people in these countries have to develop language skills not in many languages, but in one. Goswami (2003:1) identifies this one language as he refers to the colonization age when English served the colonial British Empire and now is widely used as the language of knowledge, economy and the internet.

Basiga (2004:2) tells that the roots of globalization descended from the Enlightenment era in the 18th century when this vision dominated in the United States of America which uphold the rational theory, as it confirms the idea that scientific knowledge is non-territorial and objective truth is valid for anyone, anywhere, and anytime, certain products and technologies, regulations and the like can be adopted across the globe. Scholte (2000:95) believes in the same when he states that the Enlightenment mindset opposes territorial divisions and country borders. The 20th century witnessed dramatic changes so that globalization is identified and its impact became visible. Laponce (2004:1-2) explains this situation. According to the ethnological reports from Asia and Africa, languages are dying much more frequently than new languages are born, in spite of the positive birth rate of major languages that happened in the first half of the 20th century. There is a similarity between languages and other species like animals and plants but the difference is that languages in contact cannot ignore one another. In brief, the geographical globalization through colonization in the 16th

century paved the way to technological globalization in the 21st century through communication and internet.

Basiga (2004:3) states that a society has not been affected by globalization is difficult to find, yet its effects are still unknown to many people especially with respect to the economic sphere in which internationalization of economic promises to bring prosperity and welfare to underdeveloped countries that need it most, it also causes poverty and enhances the disparity between the rich and the poor.

2- Globalization and Challenges

It seems that people are divided into two groups; some feared that globalization should be embraced or they would be left out of the modern world, others feel that globalization would destroy identities of societies, so it should be approached with great attention and caution. These views and visions spring from the fact that globalization is not well identified and shaped, so people deal with this phenomenon attentively and cautiously. These ideas are shared by politicians and educators. Cumminus (2001:1-2) refers to the strong positive and negative feelings towards this term and how educators have to react in a society where population mobility is facilitated by fast travel all over the world and how educators have to address linguistic and cultural needs. Also, politicians consider global multinational companies as threat for societies in their culture and norms. For this reason, a world culture is made and it dominates and minimizes or marginalizes the specific character. Not only do people in these fields refer to worries result from globalization and its impact, but people in other fields share the same. Bering (1999:6) confirms that the clashes of civilizations will be the battle lines of the future due to globalization. He adds that differences among civilizations are not only real; they are basic.

Civilizations are different from each other by history, culture, language, traditions and, most important, religion. He indicates that globalization should take these differences into account. Walters (1999:6) talks about the information era and the fate of literature in this era when physical and geographical barriers are eliminated at the expense of history when he says "the new age of the internet, video, satellite, cell phones, unprecedented consumption and globalization at the expense of traditional values public and private, have many people worried". Although he mentioned these words, but he does not share all other people's worries and fears. He believes that in spite of the dangers of the future, it looks brighter than that life in the first half of the 20th century.

Regarding globalization and its impact on culture, it is governed by the way culture works in its community. Debate over how to cope with rapid developments in information technology that are putting Muslims in increasing contact with the west was argued. As Islam enters the 21st century, Muslim leaders try to show how Islam should deal with advancing technology. Engel (1998:1-3) refers to the Muslim attempts to adapt with modernization (globalization) which is one of the world's largest faith. Many Muslims find it objectionable. Unlike those who are in the east, Muslims in the west see it as a chance to do so. The first step to solve the problem is to make major reforms in Islamic education with an increased focus on the sciences, but Arab people are seen resistant to any changes.

As a very conservative society, Arab and Muslim people in the east reject any change and reform. The conservatism of the future in the west is being shaped, debated, and tested in different political and social circles. O'Sullivan (1999:20-23) adds that conservatism functions and emerges from its cave to the battle because of the political storms rage and radical attacks are launched

against fundamental institutions of society. Muslim supporters for reform adopt the idea that Muslim doctors, for example, who know both their work and religion can go to non-Muslim societies to give the right idea about Islam. Thus, it is believed that Muslims in the United States of America have a unique chance to carry Islam into the next century, 21st century due to freedom in USA, so they succeed in the professional world without abandoning their faith. On contrary, the idea of those who reject adaptation of Islam is that the Quran, the Holy book of Islam that Muslims believe contains the exact words of Allah, is perfect and an ideal guide for Muslims. Also, it contains eventually everything Muslims need to develop so there is no need for secularism.

The type of society (i.e. open and closed) plays an important role in the impact of globalization. The impact of globalization on the culture or the language of a society depends to a great extent on whether that society is open or closed. It is understood an open social system means that individuals can move freely across the whole territory of the state, settle where they want and language is transported across the state as they use different languages. A society, like this, tends to be at least bilingual where the majority, if not all people, use more than one language that used by all people even minorities in the same state. In a case like this, some objectives might be achieved: preserving their rights is one, keeping their culture unchanged, and no challenges are met by the citizens as they share common values and traditions.

By contrast, closed society is the society where you move freely, but your language is not transported across linguistic borders. Society, like this, from a linguistic point of view, tends to be monolingual where one language is used in internal linguistic borders. Laponce (2004:1) raises this idea and gives this terminology. If a society where more than one language is spoken,

your native language does not move freely with you. The linguistic borders should be taken into account even if you move across the whole territory of the state freely. It was made clear when the fierce debate by Muslim leaders over that was presented in the last paragraphs. Each of these two types ensures something for its citizen. However; they have to sacrifice a part of their rights, either chances or values.

If we want to discuss another reason behind the fact why people tend to use or speak more than one language, or why man tends to be bilingual because of the influence of globalization or the technology age. Immigration is another reason especially nowadays it is seen as one of the features of globalization, as Cummins (2001:1) states. The movement of people from one area to another had dramatically increased especially during the last fifty years. The justification for this movement is caused by many factors: desire for better economic conditions, looking for a job, flow of refugees from conflicts between groups within certain areas, oppression of one group by another or ecological disasters. In many societies immigration is due to economic reasons. When globalization is party to economic depression or a quest for progress, these two elements increase the movement of significant groups of people from one linguistic community to another. Here, immigration can cause the abandonment and loss of a significant degree of linguistic diversity in cases where the vast majority of its members leave the historical territory and integrate themselves individually into other societies. But, they have few possibilities of continuing to use their original code, language.

In case these individuals or groups are not integrated, especially when they move in open society, it is important to know that these groups will strive to either form a linguistic entity or speak the language of the receiving country. Open society, like this,

will move in the direction of multilingualism freely, (Laponce ,2004:1). We believe that this problem is encountered by the first generation, immigrant children will overcome that and pick up conversational skills marvelously, so they can be assimilated or absorbed easily in that society especially in the early years at school. Families can play a role in this process when we imagine how rapid and quick children can loose the ability to use their native language. It depends on the concentration of families from a particular linguistic group and neighbourhood because this ability will vary. Even the policy adopted by parents can affect this ability when they reduce the extent of language loss by establishing a strong home language policy and giving ample chances for children to expand the function for which they use their native language and the context in which they can use. Similarly, another role, in this context, can be achieved by teachers when they help children retain and develop their mother language by telling how valuable to know additional languages and the fact that bilingualism is an important linguistic and intellectual accomplishment. By contrast, rejecting a child's language in the school means rejecting the child himself.

Thus, their performance and participation will be much less likely when they feel this rejection. The message, leave your language and culture at the schoolhouse door means children leaves their personality and identity. Not only should teachers passively accept children's linguistic and cultural diversity in school, but also the initiative to affirm children's linguistic identity is taken by teachers. Children should be encouraged to write in their native languages as well as the majority school languages. Cumminus (2000:10-11) and Baker (2000:30) confirm that in the age of globalization, a society that has access to multilingual and multicultural resources is advantaged in the ability to play an important social and economic role on the world stage. Apparently,

in such society the identities of ethnic groups have never been static, but they are evolving. Eventually, a challenge is to shape the evolution of national identity in such a way that the rights of all citizens are respected and cultural, linguistic, and economic resources maximized.

3- Globalization, Government and Language

In this section, the shape of governments under globalization age will be explored . It seems that dramatic and big changes have taken place; these changes will cover aspect of life even in government systems and frameworks. O'Sullivan (1999:20) explains this issue. It is believed that nation-state will be eroded and socialism will be impossible because of globalization. The new trends are likely to encourage the rise of international versions of regulations and governments. Unlike capitalism, social system tends to be closed ones. From linguistic and communication points of view, such system supposes to move in the direction of unilingualism, while a language system fragmented into isolated communities will move toward multilingualism. This tells us that the change in the types of society system leads to a global one. Muossalli (2003) says:

"Globalization consists of social, economic, and political adjustments that people may embrace to epitomize their culture and incorporate it with the world. It is a concept that has its economic, social, and political roots and consequences. To a large extent, globalization promotes integration of the world and calls for the removal of all cultural barriers.... Critics of globalization argue that this cultural invasion will lead to the distinction of identity and the spirit of culture".

Marcus (2000:23) confirms this fact when he explains that this global system spreads internationally where the importance of state action to enable the capitalist system of the industrialized world to function is increased, not decreased. The future of states lacks the ability to control the movement of capital or of goods, it is not because they are unable to do so but they will not, it is an abduction of state power not a lack of that power.

If we look at changes around us in the government bodies and institutions, they are either a response to global changes or power. People strive to keep their national and cultural identities. However, if it happens in the contemporary period of globalization, the construction of such identities is increasingly happening amidst trans-border circulation of cultural and discursive materials that embed forms of belonging and subject-making beyond the nation. Recently, the concept of culture, which is the core of connection among people of a nation, is problematic to take into account the destabilized relationships of language, space, and culture, as Lam (2004:45) explains. When we discussed the place and role of governments in the globalization age in this paragraph, , it is an attempt to portray an image and give an idea about the size of influence or policy will be practiced by the government to shape and keep the national identity, especially language.

Let us take Switzerland as an example when changes happened in the concept of the national language in its constitution. Also, it is to see how language functions in a multilingual country and the impact of globalization on it. We have to start with a short history of Switzerland and the features of it in the constitution. Demount-Heinrich (2005:67-72) describes the situation as follows: constitutionally, it is multilingual, a state which is viewed by Swiss and non-Swiss as central in its national identity, English is not one of its four national languages (German, French, Italian, and

Romansch). Although English in Switzerland is the question of increasingly heated internal debate, neither was it colonized by Britain nor by USA, but English spread in this country that it problematizes views of the spread of English as essentially benign. The type of state is federal consists of 26 cantons. Switzerland's 700-year existence as first an extremely loose confederation and, after 1848, as an officially and legally codified modern nation state can largely be explained by way of crucial intracantonal differences and intercantonal commonalities, historical protection of multilingualism, a historical commitment to political accommodation and power sharing, its specialized economy (like banking and watches), its geography and topography, its neutrality as the instrumental interest that outside countries like Germany and France had, uniqueness in its military service system and conscription for all Swiss citizens, and its relatively small size, all these are the crucial factors in the coalescences of Swiss nation. In spite of the tension happens in the history of Switzerland around the questions of language and the commitment to linguistic diversity, this tension is not intense enough to tear the nation state apart. The balancing act plays a central role in the contemporary Swiss sense of national identity, as this identity is reflected by language. Because of the spread of English in Switzerland; it is thought this spread strikes at the heart of Swiss national identity. If these languages cause debate over which one should dominate and be widely used, then what if English is seen all over this nation to be used and codified as another language of the government, as well the other local languages, in 2002.

After giving this historical and linguistic background about Switzerland, the impact of globalization can be tackled and how English penetrated into multiple spheres of social life. Crystal (1997:60-77) emphasizes the fact that English issued in this way

and by such societies is because English has become deeply caught up in particular notions of progress and modernization when efficiency, standardization, effective common, and the exchange and facilitation of knowledge. The rise of English in this country is understood in terms of imperialism and linguistic domination. The global domination of English comes from the historical and ongoing result of linguistic imperialism. The historical military operations by English speaking countries like the United States of America and the United Kingdom continues today by way of global economic, technological, political and cultural domination which is expanded by way of a deliberate or organized global English education project. For more emphasis, see Sultan (2006:20-25) who deals with the attitudes of learners towards the English language. Calimag (2005:1) tells that English facilitates the process of learning because most of literature and technical terms are in English especially where English is spoken as a foreign or second language. It is no longer to be considered as foreign language in many countries as it is seen as the language of business.

The steps taken by Swiss government to use English in the way mentioned above are Swiss banking and business centres, advertising, music, films, and the mass media, places where English is the official language. Regarding the academic life, 63% of project grant proposals to the Swiss National Science Foundation in 1995 were written in English language, and 90% of required graduate course literature in the natural sciences at the University of Bern was in English. Additionally, English was made the fourth language printed on its citizens' passports in 1986. Here, it is important to ask this question; how is full citizenship is judged when the majority of people in a country like Switzerland will speak English? It is believed that the world language system classifies "majority languages" are languages have the official backing of a nation state

and are ideologically associated with full citizenship in a nation state. This is problematic because it is difficult to give a decisive difference between the original nationality and the global ones.

4- Future Challenges

The future challenges the governments encounter under globalization era are countless. Language, culture, history, and religion are the areas where educators will debate over to keep their national language and identity and designing curriculum that covers national vs. global syllabus. Public education is problematic as its policies and syllabus are led by the national governments all over the world. Taking immigration into account, as globalization supposes free move over the globe, due to that, linguistic, cultural, and religious diversity in a society should be ensured and guaranteed by the government of the host or receiving countries. It is believed the presence of diversity in a society threatens the identity of that society. Bilingualism is another challenge in these societies, which language dominates and how cultural and national aspects are included. Hence, linguists have to attempt new trends and horizons to shape the national language and educators and pedagogical figures will be kept busy with curriculum revisions from time to time to adjust and gauge whether it is suitable for that period of time or not. Moreover, strategies and methods of teaching language should respond to that since teachers will ask themselves "what and how to teach". The role of teacher enhances the atmosphere and the requirements for a successful classroom and enhances true learning in global education. In brief, the challenge is characterized by the conflict and debate over national vs. global.

5- Conclusions

After this review of globalization and its impact on language, it is necessary to come up with some points that reflect this relation between them:

- 1- According to its history and roots, globalization started after the Middle Ages as geographical invasion by armies and forces when countries in Asia, Africa, and Latin America were colonized, and ends in the 21st century as cultural and economic one via internet, communication, and information age.
- 2- The policies practised by colonized countries paved the way to the new age of globalization when technology calls for the removal of territorial barriers and culture, language, and history are disregarded at the expense of history.
- 3- As it is seen as threat for societies and their culture and history, people all over the world are divided into two groups; either to embrace or reject globalization. It is believed it should be dealt with it attentively. So, strong positive and negative feelings towards globalization are shown.
- 4- The clashes of civilizations will be the battle lines of the future because globalization does not take into consideration these differences represented by history, culture, language, traditions and norms, and, most important, religion. The differences and not only real, but basic.
- 5- Conservatism is a factor that affects the movement and interaction of globalization with people in different communities. The more conservative a community is the more rejectionable it is. Unless changes and reforms are made by these communities in their mentality, it will not be accepted, or at least it will be difficult to embrace.

- 6- As languages are not transportable in closed society, open societies tend to be multilingual when people can move freely across the state, settle wherever, and use their native language.
- 7- Regardless of the reasons behind the dramatic movement of individuals, immigration can cause the abandonment and loss of a significant degree of linguistic diversity in cases where the vast majority of its members leave the historical territory and integrate themselves individually into other societies. It is believed this problem is encountered by the first generation, immigrant children will overcome that and pick up conversational skills marvelously, so they can be assimilated or absorbed easily in that society especially in the early years at school.
- 8- The situation of the national and native language is deplorable under globalization which tends to shape a new government system according to which the future of states lacks the ability to control issues within their obligations and authority, it is not because they are unable to do so but they will not, it is an abduction of state power not a lack of that power.
- 9- The linguistic, cultural and national identity is threatened by globalization especially when multilingualism and multicultural are recognized in the constitutions that ensure linguistic rights for minorities and immigrants. Thus, curriculum designer will be busy with the process of revision for textbooks from time to time.
- 10- Bilingualism is another challenge in bilingual societies; which language dominates and how cultural and national aspects are included, as people strive to preserve their linguistic identity.
- 11- New strategies for teaching languages should be adopted by educators under globalization since conflict and debate over national vs. global issues are expected.

- 12- Regarding immigrant children, parents and teachers can play an important role in enhancing the students' ability to use their native language and to reduce the extent of language loss and the context in which they can use. Immigrant children will overcome the linguistic and cultural problems they encounter and pick up conversational skills marvelously, so they can be assimilated or absorbed easily in that society especially in the early years at school.

6- Future Studies

It was recommended by some specialists and colleagues to suggest future studies if possible although it is not a thesis. This study leaves the door open for future studies in different fields related to language and the process of teaching.

- 1- In linguistics, a study can be conducted to investigate multilingualism and the national identity in Iraq after the constitution of 2005, as it was a debatable issue among the factions of the country when the constitution was drafted.
- 2- Technology and economy play an influential impact on all aspects of life including the social one; it seems that literature will not be away from this. The theme and symbolism in literature are rich areas where globalization can influence. It is supposed that global and regional writers will share some elements in their literary works, especially that related to science-fiction ones because of technology and economy and their effects on life. Even the techniques used in theatre are probably used by all writers across the globe.
- 3- Curriculum designing is another field where problems and debate are made. In countries or societies affected by globalization or information age, strategies of teaching have to be reviewed. The big challenge is which language is used in

writing and teaching; what and how to teach. National vs. global policies are in conflict especially in multilingual or host immigration societies. Technology will be widely used in teaching and learning.

These are topics suggested to be investigated taking the role of language and the globalization into account. Additionally, these are hints due to the limited literature available, more topics or fields and their impact on language during the era of globalization can be investigated.

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