Language Empires, Linguistic Imperialism, and the Future of Global Languages

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Content

1. Introduction: Language Empires

To assume the existence of language empires presupposes both the existence of empires as such, and the hypothesis that the dynamics of the languages related to a given empire bear some relationship to other aspects of imperial development and behaviour. A third theoretically conceivable hypothesis related to language empires could assume the existence of entities that are imperial solely in the realm of language. The question of whether empires – and imperialism – constitute valid concepts in a so-called "post-capitalist, post-modern, and post-imperial" era has created considerable debate and led to an extensive literature over the past twenty years. Globalisation has taken over the field, the concepts, and our minds and has replaced previous terms such as imperialism, dependency or modernisation, among others. Unlike imperialism, globalisation seems to have no clearly identifiable actor – rather, its discursive shaping places it in the neighbourhood of natural events such as earthquakes and hurricanes that occur without human intervention. Similarly, Hardt and Negri's "Empire" (2000), probably the most read oeuvre on the topic in recent years, proposes to reframe the concept of empire as largely independent from any specific nation-state.

As we shall see, the debate on renewed imperialism versus actor-less globalisation has acquired considerable weight in the analysis of the modern spread of English. It is related to our second issue, the relationship between linguistic and other aspects of imperial conduct, which in turn reframes basic questions about the *socio* and the *linguistic* in the sciences of language and society (section 2). A quick review of the history of the Roman (3), Spanish (4) and British Empires (5) will shed light on the theoretical questions emerging from this debate. Next, I will analyse the evolution of English from its status as the language of one empire among others to its current position as the only fully globalised language (6). The threat posed by the spread of English to the position of other international languages and global language ecology as a whole, has led to the emergence of influential positions opposed to total English domination. Of these I will outline two (7): one that accuses English of being the "killer language" (Skutnabb-Kangas) and postulates the unrestricted defence of all minority languages based on a close relationship between linguistic and biological ecology (Terralingua, Skutnabb-Kangas, Maffi, et alii); and a second sustained mainly by European scholars (Calvet, Ammon, Ehlich, et alii) that I will frame as the "strong national language" position. Finally, I will return to the initial question about the nature of language empires and sketch some research perspectives and desiderata for future inquiry and debate (8). I will argue that the existence of linguistic empire or imperialism cannot be evaluated from a reduced perspective of language spread as some critiques of the concepts sustain: if massive language spread occurs, linguistic imperialism obtains; if not, we are not supposed to consider a given polity as representing linguistic imperialism. My argument is that linguistic imperialism and, for that matter, language empire(s), establish a clear hierarchy between the languages involved, where the language of the dominant class, group or ethnia will be in a position of control. Whether massive language spread of the dominant language occurs or not depends on a number of historical and circumstantial

factors. Sometimes, such as in colonial systems based on segregation, control operates much more effectively without sharing the dominant language with subordinate peoples and groups. The political argument implicit in many of those who oppose the linguistic imperialism hypothesis is to deny the existence of imperialism as such in our days, and to opt for very general "globalisation" hypotheses where not concrete actors can be identified.

2. Empire, Imperialism, Linguistic Empires, and Globalization

I will explore language empires from two perspectives: in what way do linguistic factors – language spread, shift, dominance, linguicism – contribute to the building of empires, that is, to their stability, reign, and governance over linguistically diverse, multicultural populations? And, in what ways do empires create imperial languages or, to put it conversely, to what extent do linguistic constellations develop with a certain autonomy from the economic, political and cultural processes that might have brought them about in the first place? From the perspective of a political sociology of language de Swaan (1993, 221) asks himself

> "whether the processes of language spread and language decline reveal a dynamics of their own, or rather are completely determined by other processes, such as military conquest, religious, {…} commercial expansion. In the latter case the language system is an epiphenomenon, of descriptive interest certainly, but devoid of explanatory potential."

Since we do not have any independent sociolinguistic theory of empire, we need to revise past and present concepts of empire, imperialism and globalization, as well as language spread and language globalisation, from the perspective of the reciprocal relationship between the linguistic and the social. A first workable definition of empire may be drawn from the prior treatment of the topic by Achard (1988) who departs from a definition of polities as those social groups that totalize themselves as global societies. Achard (1988, 1541) defines empire as:

> "The exercise of power from a given political unit over social formations which this political unit considers both as 'foreign' {…} and as globally submitted to the rule of the first society's power."

Such a basic definition covers the development of empires from Rome to modern imperialism, from the perspective of the power that one polity exercises over another group or polity that differs in both culture and language. As we shall see, however, it will turn out to be too narrow to cover the whole range of imperial language relations. The conceptual transition from empire to imperialism involved a shift in value and perspective. Theories of empire and imperialism developed over the 19th and 20th century largely within and in opposition to Marxist theory. Within a Marxist framework, imperialism was defined as the natural next stage that evolved out of colonialism. The development of capitalism required an expansion of trade and production; thus imperialism represented the monopoly stage of capitalism (Lenin 1916/1973). "Dependence theory", a joint North and South American offspring of Marxist theory in the 1960s and 1970s (Frank, Dos Santos), showed to what extent capitalist development in the metropolis determined the economic development and socio-political structuring of colonial societies right from the beginning of colonization,

reproducing third world dependency until today: the extraction of minerals (gold and silver) in Latin America gave way to extensive farming (wheat, meat, potatoes) when the European wars caused generalized food shortage and famine, and the export of industrial production sites to profit from cheap labour induced a fairly distorted process of industrialisation long after formal independence. Indeed, the modern concept of imperialism, combining economic, political, and cultural mechanisms of control, was applied to both politically dependent colonies, mainly in Africa and Asia, and independent states in Latin America. In sum, theories of empire and imperialism focussed on the development of a world economic system (Wallerstein 1989) which reproduced the accumulation in the industrialized metropolis as competing empires and their multilevel control over most other countries. It is mainly within the ensemble of mechanisms of external control that cultural, ideological and linguistic features are supposed to play an increasing role.

Although these mechanisms of external control have deepened the gulf between rich and poor states since the 1970s - and between the rich and the poor inside practically every country - the term imperialism has almost disappeared from political and scientific debate. "Globalisation," a concept with multiple meanings, has replaced it. In very general terms, it stands for increasing inter-connectivity on all levels. Its most relevant and systematic component is a radical restructuring of the world economic system known as "neoliberalism", whereby financial capital is taking the lead over productive capital; nation states, especially third world countries, are forced to open their markets, reduce state expenditure and services such as healthcare, social security, pensions, and education, and privatise them, together with public enterprises and natural resources (oil, gas, water, minerals), mainly for the benefit of international corporations. At the same time, electronic technologies facilitate national and international communication in ways impossible to imagine only a few decades ago. Beyond primary (Gemeinschaft) and secondary (Gesellschaft) social relationships, new impersonalised tertiary bonds mediated by technologies and corporations increasingly determine our lives (Calhoun 1992). New de-territorialized "third cultures", such as fashion or the new international management culture, are emerging with their own discourses and language usages. Globalization, however, does not only imply homogenization of markets and cultures, but also the growth of diversity, socio-cultural variety and wealth of local discourses, codes and practices that resist and play back against the homogenizing order. With globalization, the old opposition between the global and the local does not hold any more – the question is not whether local identities should be globalised *or* defended (García Canclini 1999); rather, we have to understand the new articulations between levels of intersecting dynamics in which language and communication play a central role.

Hardt and Neri's (2000) "Empire" has encountered a surprisingly massive reception, perhaps precisely because it attempts to detach global dominance from the national state. Economics and other processes of globalisation, they argue, have not only transgressed state borders, thus severely reducing the national sovereignty of most states – but power has also largely shifted from governments to international corporations that are seemingly not anchored in any specific harbour. The present context is characterised by "governance without government" (Hardt/Negri 2000, 14); imperialism has mutated to a new empire – the new paradigm is a "process of the imperial constitutionalisation of world order", a new

entity that appears as supra-national, worldly, and total. Moreover, like the ancient Roman Empire, the new "Empire is formed not on the basis of force itself but on the basis of the capacity to present force as being in the service of right and peace" (ibid., 15). Most important, the classical nation-state is declining and will disappear as a result of "a structural and irreversible process" (ibid., 336), thus giving way to the political regulation of the global market by the large transnational corporations that have defeated the nation-states. Sovereignty is passing from individual nation-states to empire which is neither American nor European, but simply capitalist.

Communication plays a mayor role in this process; while it is a fundamental medium of imperial control, it dissolves and subordinates territorial sovereignty.

> "It attacks the very possibility of linking an order to a space. {…} Deterritorialisation is the primary force and circulation, the form through which social communication is manifesting itself. In this way and in this ether, languages become functional to circulation and dissolve every sovereign relationship." (ibid., 347)

In sum, Hardt and Neri synthesize the impressions of many puzzled observers who note the increasing dominance, restrictions and global control over a growing number of domains in our lives, while at the same time the actors or sources behind the scene appear more and more diluted: "David doesn't find Goliath any more", to use García Canclini's (1999, 26) poignant metaphor.

No wonder such a radical view of globalisation and the concentration of power in some lofty realm beyond nations has encountered equally severe critique from several corners. Opponents argue that instead of being diluted, corporate power is actually concentrated in only seven nations, and the national governments of industrialised states intervene in a stronghanded way to support their respective countries' industries (Chomsky 1994). Globalisation strengthens rather than weakens the imperialist domination of a few central nation states (Borón 2002, 13). Last but not least, war is back as an extension of politics through other means. The US-British invasion of Iraq in 2003 reopened in the eyes of many critiques our views on the *Handlungslogik* of empire states and imperialism in our days. It is difficult to believe that empire states no longer exist or hold power in the face of the world's most powerful nation state establishing an explicit doctrine of preventive and pre-emptive war as the basis of its international relations (Chomsky 2003). Most critical views of the actor-less conception of globalization or Empire would agree that in fact most nation-states are in a process of losing sovereignty and are forced to open their markets to "free" trade – except for the richest and most powerful. As a matter of fact, the USA is enjoying greater, less restricted sovereignty at the beginning of the 21st century than probably ever before in its history, and is thus reinforcing imperialism.

The thesis of imperialism in its classical meaning underlies the most influential book along this line of thinking in recent years in the field of language policy, Robert Phillipson's (1992) "Linguistic Imperialism". It analyses the role of British and US state support for the spread of English as a global language. Phillipson arrives at the conclusion that English achieved its dominant position as the principal world language because it has been actively

promoted "as an instrument of foreign policy of the major English-speaking states" (Phillipson 1992: 1). The language policies that third world countries reproduce as a result of colonisation serve first and foremost the interests of Western powers and contribute to preserve existing inequalities in the world system.

English linguistic imperialism, as a specific case of linguicism,

> "is a theoretical construct, devised to account for linguistic hierarchisation, to address issues of why some languages come to be used more and others less, what structures and ideologies facilitate such processes, and the role of language professionals." (Phillipson 1997, 238).

The legitimation of linguistic superiority occurs in political discourse and language pedagogy. Existing unequal power relations may compel communities who may chose between their own language and e. g. English for literacy teaching and administration, to reject mother-tongue schooling and opt instead for English since this language promises access to a much wider knowledge base and socio-economic relations. The linguistic imperialism hypothesis argues that English – like other colonial languages –was imposed by force on native populations, albeit selectively, as part of an array of other imperial measures for maintaining and reproducing control, or at least cultural and linguistic hegemony (Phillipson 1992, 1997, see Pennycook 1994, 1998, Schiffman 1996).

The opposite position sustains that the characteristics of an international language imply that learning and using the language bears no relationship to cultural assimilation; such a language becomes denationalized and is no longer the property of its mother tongue speakers (Smith 1987). For Chew, English is the courier of many cultures and values. Both in Singapore and in the ASEAN where English is the official language, the dictum is "yes to English" and "no to Western values" (Chew 1999, 42). Here we discover a significant parallelism with Hardt and Neri's (2000) dissociation of global empire from imperialist nation states. Furthermore, "English owes its existence as a world language in large part to the struggle against imperialism, and not to imperialism alone" (Brutt-Griffler 2002, IX). According to this position, rather than acting passively as objects of colonial oppression, colonised peoples have played an active role in appropriating English as non-mother tongue speakers, thus emphasizing their agency in the construction of English as a world language.

We shall return to this debate when we discuss the English Language Empire (section 6). For purposes of our more general debate, let us retain for the moment that different views persist about the nature of modern domination – imperialist states versus state-less empire, or even a loftier globalisation. In the field of language policy, there is disagreement about the role of imperial languages, both in the construction and maintenance of power relations, and in the more linguistic and sociolinguistic concerns of language spread, globalization and the development of world languages. We shall review the emergence of previous language empires from the point of view of these debates: whether or not empires spread their dominant languages, whether this spread can be interpreted as both an instrument and outcome of imperial policy or as the appropriation by the oppressed peoples, of a valuable tool to fight hegemony. More generally, we shall return to the question of the relative autonomy of linguistic processes and their possible contribution to the development of

empires. Certainly the question of power relations mediated by language dichotomies, rather than the spread itself, will turn out to be essential to explain how language empires work.

3. The Roman Empire: Centralised Government without Massive Language Spread

At first sight the Roman Empire, the polity that coined the concept until our days, might seem to fulfill the prototypical characteristics of a full-fledged cultural and linguistic empire: a world-embracing polity that extended its realm to the four corners of earth – not only by military force, but also through its superior state organization including the domains of law, politics, culture and language. Thus, one of the largest enduring language family dynasties –the Romance languages –emerged and maintained a significant unity until today, based on the common Christian religion and Latin as intellectual language until the wake of modernity. Unlike later empires whose capitals were fairly monolingual centers of linguistic irradiation, Rome was bilingual right from the beginning, and in a very peculiar way. For six centuries, between the 3rd century BC and the 3rd century AD, "the educated Roman was bilingual" (Kahane and Kahane 1979, 183). Apart from nascent Latin, Greek occupied the space of both the dominant cultural and scientific language, and that of the slaves, many other lower class segments and immigrants from the East. The world of Greek, whose territory was never unified, could look down on its Roman conquerors with condescendence because they represented the language of prestige, philosophy, and higher education. Latin, on the other hand, evolved not only of law and of the legion but also, significantly, as the language of the polity, for the Senate never accepted Greek, not even when used by foreign representatives. (Achard 1988, 1543). The empire was backed by a military force that functioned entirely in Latin. During its heyday, Rome ruled over five to six million citizens and some fifty to sixty million subjects, without imposing its language on the conquered nations. Similar to the Aztecs in Mesoamerica and the British in India, the Romans governed at the lowest possible cost and limited their intervention to tax collection and the prevention of revolts.

When the Roman Empire divided into East and West, the East never assimilated Latin on a massive basis. The attempt to Latinize at least the Eastern Empire's administration through the foundation of Constantinople as Nova Roma in 330 lasted two and a half centuries. Latin declined in the 5th century and was a dead language by the 7th (Kahane and Kahane 1979). In the West, although Greek was present both as the language of the nascent Christian religion and in the literature of Gaul, Latin soon took over since the Christian Church shifted to Latin by the 5th century as an expression of its monastic orientation and in order to maintain ideological control over Greek-oriented paganism. The Germanic invasions were the final blow to Greek. Latin became the general language of the Western empire, clearly as a means of access to Roman citizenship, and in its written form which diverged increasingly from oral Vulgar Latin. The language of Rome consolidated its linguistic realm long after the downfall of the Roman Empire, through the nascent neo-Latin languages as low varieties, and Latin revived during the Carolingian Empire as the language of administration, religion, education and science in the vast territory of the Sacred Roman Empire of the German Nation (Auerbach 1958).

In sum, the Roman Empire undoubtedly extended Latin as the language of administration and citizenship, of military and legal rule. The image of a linguistic empire in which the extension of political power correlates on a one-to-one basis with the spread if its language, should be differentiated on several grounds. First, as its very centre, Rome was bilingual throughout most of the empire's splendor. Second, the Roman Empire did not foster a policy of massive language spread; instead, the emergence of Romance languages and the revival of Latin as a language of power occurred long after the downfall of the Roman Empire, ironically as the result of the new anti-Roman religion of Christianity and in the heart of a Germanic empire. In short, the Roman Empire does not represent the typical case of a central state which extended and imposed its language on conquered nations.

4. The Realm of Spanish: From Colonial Empire to a Second Tier World Language

The Spanish Empire, on the other hand, may be seen as the one colonial regime where the expansion of domination and the spread of its state language coincided to a large extent, probably more than in any other empire before or since. Today, Spanish is spoken as the official language both on the mainland peninsula and in practically all long-lasting former colonies, i.e. in 20 sovereign states. Unlike other empires, it is the majority language (first or second language) in almost all of them, and represents an average of 94.6 % of its population. How did Spanish achieve such a solid and massive spread, considering the fact that Spain never reached a level of economic development comparable to other contemporary colonial powers such as Britain and France?

Three important milestones paved the way for Spain's linguistic empire in the year of 1492: Columbus reached the Americas and launched the Conquest – without ever knowing throughout his lifetime that he had "discovered" a new continent; the fall of Granada, the last Arab stronghold in Europe, was celebrated as the final triumph, after 800 years of *Reconquista* and the consolidation of the Hispanic Kingdom initiated by Castilla and Aragón on the Iberian Peninsula; and finally, Nebrija published the first grammar of the Spanish language, making the famous and visionary prediction that the Spanish language was and would be the loyal companion of the empire. (Quilis quoted in Cifuentes 1998, 117, note 43). Here, on the brink of modernity, we find the first formulation of the modern hypothesis which forcefully links the growth of an empire to the standardization and spread of its imperial language.

In which language(s) should public administration, military rule, and religious conversion proceed in the American colonies to grant optimal conditions for government, exploitation, and the saving of souls? Although both the clergy and the Crown argued that the language question was subordinate to that of rule and Christianisation, the spread of Spanish meant a great deal to a kingdom that had only recently achieved unification of its own state, based on a common religion and the imposition of a national language.

The 16th century is the most interesting period of colonization in terms of language policy controversies. On the one hand, the conquest was marked by brutal military repression; the indigenous population was decimated by war and devastating diseases. On what is today Mexican territory, the population shrank from an estimated 25 million to 2.5 million, and about 100 languages disappeared (Heath 1972, Suárez 1983, Cifuentes 1998). On the other hand, the clergy studied and learned dozens of indigenous languages as never since, and wrote hundreds of vocabularies and grammars based on the structure of Latin. Once the question whether the Indians possessed a soul was positively resolved by Pope Paul III in 1537, Christianisation and racial *mestizaje* moved into the foreground as instruments of colonization. Here a pattern of colonization emerges which differs considerably from that

of the British and French colonization in both the Americas and elsewhere. Mexico and Peru, the first Viceroyalties of the Spanish Crown, quickly developed a Mestizo population which became the demographic majority in most parts during the 19th century.

After a first impulse to impose Spanish rapidly on the new colonies, King Carlos V reconsidered his linguistic policy, hence acknowledging that it represented an impossible task. In his 1550 edict he concedes the use of vernacular languages, especially the general languages of the former empires: Nahuatl for Mexico, Quechua for the Andean region and Tupi-Guarani for the central South American area which today is Paraguay. Their use should however be strictly transitional, since the King distrusted the structural capacity of indigenous languages to convey the complexity of the Christian religion and Western culture (Heath 1972, Cifuentes 1998). In 1580 his successor Philip II established academic chairs in Lima and Mexico to teach the general languages and ruled that all indigenous priests should have a command of them. This language policy practised restricted multilingualism; it favoured some majority languages and attempted to introduce and stabilize them as general languages, whereas the languages of smaller groups with less prestige and extension were not to be considered. Tupi-Guarani in central South America reflects the most successful case of a *lengua general*, perhaps precisely *because* it did not represent a former Indian empire like Aztec Nahuatl and Inka Quechua and a new vice royal capital. However, the main reason for the surprising vitality of Tupi-Guarani in high prestige functions is to be found in Jesuit influence. To a certain degree, the area of today's Paraguay was born from a Jesuit state, with Guarani as the *lingua franca* of the mission, literacy and government (Barros 1993). Up until the expulsion of the Jesuit Company from all colonies in 1767 by papal edict, the Jesuit-indigenous community developed a feverish activity of oral usage and literacy development, as well as editing and publishing in Guarani (Melià 1969, 1995). The historical roots of Guarani themselves explain its stability and singular extension in Paraguay, the only massively bilingual country in the Americas where an urbanized, formerly indigenous language is spoken more than Spanish by citizens from all social classes.

Throughout the three centuries of Spanish colonial dominion in the Americas the overall objective of language policy was undoubtedly the spread of Spanish at the expense of indigenous languages, and there was pressure from the beginning of colonization to substitute the indigenous languages for political, religious and linguistic reasons (Cerrón-Palomino 1989). This process, however, developed at a different speed and full of contradictions. As a matter of fact, it was only during the 18th century that Spanish made significant gains, both in its functional extension in government and religion, and as a first or second language for the citizens. At the same time that King Carlos III decreed the use of Spanish for administration and education in Spain, pressure increased in the colonies to proceed in the same direction. This process was propelled by a language ideology which deepened the gulf between Spanish as the dominant language and the indigenous as the dominated ones, with the aim of replacing the existing world view with a different one. Modern ideas influenced by French Enlightenment gained ground among the local *criollo* elites and built up momentum against the Spanish colonial regime which finally led to the wars of independence at the beginning of the 19th century. And the new universalist and monolingual ideologies considered that linguistic diversity became more and more incompatible with the vision of legal equality among citizens within a nation.

Undoubtedly, the project of building homogeneous, monolingual and monocultural *nation states* molded in the European model was the single most important political process throughout Latin America in the 19th century. After the wars of Independence, the new national bourgeoisies had to overcome the heritage of a disastrous colonial administration, violent internal rivalry among power groups, and the weak constitution of national identities. Despite early attempts by Bolivar, San Martín and other *libertadores* to construct some kind of Hispanic American federation or common state, the immense Spanish colonial empire was destined to split up into more than a dozen independent nation states which organized slowly around local and regional power elites. After independence, most Latin American constitutions based on a liberal and positivist philosophy extended the general principles of freedom and equality to all citizens including the Indians. As free citizens, the Indians lost the protection of their community organization and land ownership, which had been sheltered by the Church and the *encomienda* rural production system throughout colonial times. Again, a period of devastating community dissolution, loss of territory through violent expulsion, and military campaigns of genocide decimated the indigenous population (the latter mainly in Argentina, Chile and Uruguay), helped by vigorous processes of mass immigration, industrialization and urbanization in many Latin American states. Whereas at the beginning of the 19th century the indigenous population formed a majority in most states (64 % in Mexico, Cifuentes/Ros 1993), one hundred years later it had been reduced to tiny minorities in the countries of the southern cone and to less than 20 per cent in Mexico; only in Bolivia, Peru, and Guatemala were Indian peoples still the majority. Given that, in Latin America, membership of an Indian people is tied to speaking the indigenous language, the 19th century turned out to be a decisive historical period in which Spanish became the language of the sociological majorities who no longer considered themselves indigenous. The 20th century consolidated this tendency to stabilize Spanish and Portuguese in Latin America, transforming both into international languages (Hamel 2003a, Hamel/Martín Butragueño 2005); at the same time indigenous languages became more and more threatened throughout the continent, so much so that over 80 per cent are now considered at risk (Maffi 2001).

Although legal and military action, as well as economic development, ended up being key factors for the spread of the Spanish language, the overall aim of constructing homogeneous nation states was propelled by two basic strategies of language policy (cf. Albó 1988, 2002, Plaza/Albó 1989) and education for the indigenous peoples (cf. López/Moya 1990, Hamel 1994a, b, 2000). The first and generally dominant strategy considered the assimilation (i.e. dissolution) of indigenous peoples and the suppression of their languages to be a prerequisite for building a unified nation state. A second position favoured the preservation of indigenous languages and cultures in this process, without giving up the ultimate aim of uniting nation and state. The first strategy imposed direct Hispanicization (castellanización) through submersion programs: the national language was considered to be the only target and medium of instruction. Transitional programs reflecting the second strategy applied diverse bilingual methods, in which the indigenous languages played a subordinate, instrumental role as the languages of instruction and initial alphabetization. Only since the 1980s have new language policies and programmes of intercultural bilingual education aimed at preserving indigenous cultures and languages emerged as a result of strong indigenous movements, such as the national coalition of

indigenous peoples in Ecuador or the Zapatista Army in Mexico. The main challenges most Latin American countries confront in the field of language and cultural policy, is to overcome their traditional vision of homogenous nation states, and to transform themselves into genuinely pluricultural states that recognize their indigenous population as a constitutive component of their nationhood (Hamel 1994b, 1999, López 1997, Mar-Molinero 2000).

In the course of the 19th century, Spanish became the national language in Hispanic America and gained independence from the Castilian norm. One country after another set up a Language Academy and arrived at the conclusion that its own variety of Spanish should become the national norm (Cifuentes/Ros 1993). This process was consolidated during the 20th century. Although to date, American Spanish has not achieve a linguistic autonomy as solidly grounded in language attitudes as Brazilian Portuguese, which Brazilian speakers consider superior to the standard spoken in Portugal (Pinto 1992), the Spanish American countries have reached a kind of asymmetric pluricentrism, where each country consolidated its own national standard, while the Castilian norm still maintains certain traits of a Pan-Hispanic supra-norm (Lebsanft 1998).

In sum, the development of Spanish language spread – whether within nation states or internationally – reveals a complex pattern in relation to the political development of Spanish-speaking polities. During the vigorous rise and expansion of an empire where the sun never set, Spanish did not become consolidated in Spain and made only weak inroads into the newly conquered territories in the Americas. There, Spain's language policy oscillated for two centuries between the imposition of Spanish and a tolerance of the indigenous languages. Paradoxically, Spanish really started to spread massively in the 18th century, when the empire had lost momentum and started to fade away. Spanish only became the majority language in most Hispanic American countries during the 19th century, *after* independence from Spain. At that time, Spain had lost its economic and political influence in the former colonies. Britain first and the USA later, extended their economic and political power in the region under the banner of modern imperialism, which promoted unilateral free trade, political and sometimes military intervention, and simultaneously maintained regimes of formal political independence. The Hispanic American elites kept their cultural orientation towards France and some other European countries even while, simultaneously, they firmly deployed Spanish as the language of national unification (Del Valle/Gabriel-Stheeman 2001). English made no significant inroads whatsoever during this time; even as a foreign language it ranked behind French until the second half of the 20th century in most countries (Hamel 2003a). Here, the decisive force to spread and anchor Spanish as the national and majority language turned out to be the development of a nationalist ideology and the building of homogeneous nation states as the most important political endeavour of the national bourgeoisies since independence. A loose ensemble of nation states, rather than an empire in its old and new sense, made Spanish the most solidly rooted ex-colonial language in any part of the third world, comparable only to the first circle of early colonization in the British (USA, Canada, Australia, New Zealand) and French (Quebec) Empires (Mar-Molinero 2000, Walter 1994). The appropriation of the colonizer's language, which constitutes a contemporary issue in language policy debates in Africa and Asia, already had had a precedent 150 years earlier, at the end of the Latin American independence movements.

5. The British Empire and the Rise of English

English has been the most expansive language during the past 500 years. "Between the end of the reign of Elisabeth I (1588) and the beginning of the reign of Elisabeth II (1952)" (Crystal 1997, 25), the number of English speakers increased from five to seven million, most of whom lived in the British Isles, to approximately 250 million, the vast majority residing outside the British Isles (see figures in Crystal 1997, Graddol 1997, Pennycook 1994). For a long time, English language spread developed alongside the expansion of other imperial languages such as Spanish, French and Portuguese. After a certain period, however, English achieved unique conditions of development allowing it to overtake all other international competitors during the 20th century.

The British Empire – similar to the French – developed in three distinct periods with different results. During a first period throughout the Middle Ages, English spread over the British Isles, setting the stage for becoming the language of the British Empire. The next period began at the end of the 16th century with settlements in North America and, later on, in Australia and New Zealand. The third period came towards the end of the 18th century with the building of a vast colonial empire, mainly in Africa and Asia. Whereas the first period allowed English to emerge from a subordinate position in a Norman French vs. English diglossia to become the national language of one of the most powerful European empires (Kahane and Kahane 1979), the second period laid the ground for English world rule through the conquest, massive settlement, and future industrial development of North America. These two periods consolidated English in the seven countries of the inner circle (Kachru 1986), where English became the majority language. The first period represents a combination of nation building and internal colonialism in the periphery (Wales, Scotland and Ireland). Like other language empires, Britain never achieved total linguistic unification in its homeland. The second period involved the most significant phase and area of language spread, but would not easily fall under the narrow definition of *Language Empire* as the imposition of the dominant language on populations with different cultures and languages (cf. Achard 1988, 1541). The population in the occupied territories was rapidly exterminated by the settlers and their armies, a process that continued after independence in a very similar way as it happened in many Latin American countries. Only the third period follows the classical scheme of empire building whereby colonial rule was imposed on huge numbers of non-European peoples, but no massive settlement took place, except for South Africa and Rhodesia. This period started when Britain – again parallel to France – had already lost political dominion over its most important colony in North America.

During the third phase British colonial administration was based on the principle of indirect rule: basically, each people should govern itself according to its own principles and

traditions, as long as exploitation and British supremacy remained unchallenged. Unlike the Roman or French Empires, instead of setting individual citizenship in the empire linking the local elites to colonial government as their highest goal, a concept of local communities that collectively formed a federation in the Empire prevailed. Consequently, indirect rule meant the preservation of traditional forms of government, customary law, language and culture, and its study gave rise to modern anthropology as a discipline of colonialism. Orientalism became a key concept of the British and French handling of the East. Starting in the late 18th century, it simultaneously expressed a world view that shaped, reinvented and mystified the colonised East from the perspective of a great divide between the East and the West; and a

> "corporate institution for dealing with the Orient - dealing with it by making statements about it, {…} describing it, by teaching it, settling it, ruling over it: In short, Orientalism as a Western style for dominating, restructuring, and having authority over the Orient" (Said 1978, 3).

According to this view, European colonialism construed a vast array of cultural components including literature (Said 1993) and language into an overall hegemony that constantly reproduced Western superiority as cultural imperialism. Thus Orientalism fulfilled a purpose similar to that of the concept of *indigenismo* in Latin America which represents both a state institution and "the ensemble of ideas about the Indians in the heads of non-Indians", to use the Mexican philosopher Luis Villoro's (1950) definition. Indigenismo, however, was developed by the national bourgeoisies in Latin America who understood themselves as part of Western culture.

As a case in point British language policy in India has been the object of detailed studies and controversial debates within this global context. Similar to Spanish colonial policy in Latin America, two positions concerning the languages and directions of education competed with each other in the early 19th century: Orientalism versus Anglicism. The first advocated teaching in the local languages, whereas the second proposed English for secondary education. The acceptance by the governor of the now famous Macaulay Doctrine, a minute formulated by a civil servant in 1835, concluded a long-standing debate in favour of English (Phillipson 1992, 110) and is recognized as a turning-point in educational policy (Crystal 1997, 42):

> "It is impossible for us with our limited means to attempt to educate the body of the people. We must at present do our best to form a class who may be interpreters between us and the millions whom we govern – a class of persons Indian in blood and colour, but English in tastes, in opinions, in morals and in intellect." (Macaulay, 1835, 249, quoted in Pennycook 1994, 78).

Most recent analysts (Pennycook 1994, Schiffman 1996, Brutt-Griffler 2002) agree, however, that the existing controversy raging behind the scenes between Anglicists and Orientalists did not imply that education was to be conducted either in native languages or English for the entire school population. The main purpose behind language policy issues consisted of the British attempt to reduce the costs of government in all her colonies by employing local civil servants for lower posts in administration. As a result, a small portion

of civil servants had to be educated in English, mostly at the secondary level. "Anglicism never really replaced Orientalism, but rather operated alongside it" (Pennycook 1994, 77). More important from the point of view of the ideological debate was the fact that Macaulay's orientation implied a total disregard and disdain for Indian "dialects" which he considered absolutely improper to convey scientific knowledge or literary quality: "A single shelf of a good European library was worth the whole native literature of India and Arabia" (Macaulay op. cit., quoted in Pennycook op. cit., 79). Not surprising, the English colonial government did not foster massive education in English; rather, the Bengali bourgeoisie and other local elites were interested in English language education as a means of access to social and political power. As a matter of fact, English did not spread massively, either during colonial rule or after Independence in 1947. Nevertheless, English maintains the complex status of associate official language and is part of the "three language formula" introduced in 1960 after the failure to establish Hindi as the sole official language based on the Soviet model of language policy (Schiffman 1996). As the principal alternative to state languages, English is the *de facto* language of federal administration, most higher education, science, and international relations, although only four to five percent of the population exhibit some mastery of the language (Crystal 1997). According to some, domestically, this selective English language policy served to cut off the elite from the mass of the population, and to incorporate the elites externally into a western-dominated global culture (Phillipson 1992, 1997). Another position sustains that native appropriation of English triggered a process of macro-acquisition as a means of fighting colonialism (Brutt-Griffler 2003).

The British language education policy in the colonies contrasts significantly with the same policy developed by its eternal rival, the French Empire. Whereas British colonial rule apparently never fostered massive education in English but preferred vernacular language or bilingual education, the French Empire deployed a policy of imposing its language massively (Calvet 1987, 1994). It pushed a monolingual language policy harder than any other modern empire, both inside and outside France, and achieved a greater degree of linguistic unification in its mainland than any of the others, except Portugal. To this day, the same syllabi are taught in all French schools around the world, and students sit in the same exams exactly at the same time. This policy aimed at some kind of universalistic monolingualism and was based on the conviction, operating since the Enlightenment, that French was the natural language of Reason (Achard 1988, 1545). Different from the British indirect rule, administration in the colonies operated in French, and a French-only policy governed the schools, irrespective of different mother tongues or grade levels. The ultimate aim of colonial policy was full integration as individual citizens, based on the French language and culture. Brutt-Griffler (2002, 57) quotes a high French official stating in 1933:

> "We bring French culture to the Africans and they must learn French, and will become Frenchmen. We believe in French evolution and not in the evolution of the African."

Since this objective seemed to be utopian anyway, the French colonial administration did not push education very much, and even today French post-colonial language policy in Africa operating under the shelter of the *Francophonie,* exhibits extremely poor results in

literacy teaching and other content matters in most schools where pupils simply do not speak French.

In the 1920s, the work of the League of Nations Mandates Commission witnessed a severe clash between the opposing language and education policies of the two main colonial powers, the British and the French. Whereas the British insisted on their philosophy of "vernacular education at the base and English at the top" in the colonies (Brutt-Griffler 2002, 99) in order to achieve a pragmatic education for labour, the French and Belgians vindicated their own philosophy based on the arguments expressed earlier that it was impossible to install vernacular language education with hundreds of local languages lacking appropriate *Sprachausbau* (Calvet 1999, 2002).

From the analysis of the English language empire we can draw some provisional conclusions that will be taken up in sections 6 to 8 below. Certainly, the British spread their language. This movement worked very clearly in the first phase on the British Isles, where English became the national language and with the exception of Welsh, erased other languages almost completely. The second phase in North America, Australia and New Zealand followed the same pattern observed in the South American countries with scarce and not highly developed indigenous populations. Military conquest, combined with massive immigrant settlement, decimated the native populations and made English the national language. The classical colonial empire building in Africa and Asia from the late 18th to the 20th century, however, shows a more differentiated picture. As a result of indirect rule without significant settlement, English did not spread massively in most British colonies.

6. English: From Colonial Empire to the Global Language

The rise of English has triggered one of the most exciting debates on language policy of our days. The questions are basically: Why English? How did English develop externally and internally to become the leading world language? Who, if anyone, controls or "owns" English? Will English continue to hold its position, and how does its role relate to the fate of the other languages of the world? How did English jump from being one of the few powerful international, colonial language, to the status of *the* hegemonic world language? Most of the debate on these topics occurs within the Anglo-Saxon world itself, with a salient participation of British (Crystal 1997, Graddol 1997, Phillipson 1992) and British colonial authors (Kachru 1986, Pattanayak 1991, Khubchandani 1997). Even prominent academics from outside the Anglo-Saxon language realm are usually not taken into account, especially if they dare to write in languages other than English. Those who do not belong to the native circle are cited only with their production in English (Coulmas 1991, Mühlhäusler 1996, Skutnabb-Kangas 2000, 2003)... Thus, it may be taken as a symptom of English scientific imperialism in itself that with the exception of Phillipson, Schiffman and a few others, most authors from English speaking countries and their former colonies who write about the world as a whole do so without quoting a single non-English language text in their vast bibliographies.

How did English jump from its role as one of a few powerful international, colonial languages to the status of *the* hegemonic world language? Around 1900, French still held a mildly leading position as the language of international diplomacy, culture and literature and, consequently, as the first foreign language in many parts of the world. In science three powerful European languages, English, French, and German, maintained a tripartite equilibrium, each of them salient in some scientific domains (Ammon 1991). No research available at that time foresaw that English would rapidly bypass its rivals in the course of the 20th century. In his very influential book on "English as a global language", David Crystal (1997) argues that in 1950, world English was still not an issue.

In retrospect, however, it becomes clear that the future of English was deeply rooted in the British pattern of migration-intensive colonisation of North America, its process of early industrialisation, and the building of its colonial empire in Africa and Asia. When economic and political leadership passed from Britain to the USA in the early 20th century, English, together with other components of shared culture, was the common bridge between the old and the new empire that set the rules of the game and gave English the decisive lead over its competitors. Crystal concludes that English is "a language which has repeatedly found itself in the right place at the right time" (1997, 110). While hardly anyone would question the historical accounts and the hegemonic role of English today, controversy persists about the reasons, particularly the kind of agency that has brought about this hegemony. Crystal's rather "naturalistic" interpretation, which converges with those who posit the existence of many Englishes belonging to no one today, is criticised by

Phillipson and others who insist on the decisive role of imperialist action in language policy, particularly in the field of education in the colonies and the active spread of English via English Language Teaching (ELT, TESL) promoted by Britain and the USA in the 20th century.

The development of English from a colonial language to globalization has been framed by Kachru (1982, 1986), both in its external spread and its internal variation as "World Englishes". His model of three concentric circles is widely quoted: the *Inner Circle* comprises the six countries where an old variety of English is used and English has become the majority language through massive migration to the overseas colonies: Britain, Ireland, the USA, Canada, Australia and New Zealand. The *Outer Circle* contains more than 70 states that correspond to the second diaspora (Kachru 1992, Kachru/Nelson 1996), when English was transported without significant migration to the vast territories of Britain's colonial empire, mainly in Africa and Asia. In those countries English has played a major role up to the present as a second and official language in many key institutions of governance and education (Kachru/Nelson 1996). India, Pakistan, Singapore and Nigeria are considered typical countries of the Outer Circle where new varieties of English arose over time through contact with native languages. The *Expanding Circle* includes countries where English plays a variety of roles and is widely studied as a foreign language; these countries were not colonized by any country of the Inner Circle, and English has no official status. This circle, less well defined than the others, comprises countries like China, where more than 200 million children were learning English in 2003 according to Yajun (2003), Japan, Korea, and certainly most if not all European and Latin American countries. Its radius is in fact so large that it coincides with Crystal's (1997) definition of a global language as one that plays a significant role in most countries of the world.

Around 2000, estimates put the number of English language speakers for the combined first and second circle at some 680 million, whereas foreign language users may have exceeded 1.5 billion. Most important, the Expanding Circle is growing fast and has already outnumbered the speakers in the two other circles. The relevance of a global language can be measured by its Outer and Expanding Circles, which indicate its role in international relations, commerce, science and technology. Conversely, the reduction of the third circle denotes the shrinking influence of a given international language. Thus, it could be said that Russian and, to a lesser degree, French are surrounded by "imploding" second and third circles, whereas Spanish is entering a period of expansion of its third circle given its increasing spread as a foreign language in several continents. The Anglo-centricity of the model does not only reveal itself through labels such as "expanding circle" which limits its application to other cases, but also, and quite contradictorily, through the author's imperial statement that

> "what applies to global English is most often found to apply to other language situations involving languages of wider communication {…} Language teachers {of other languages, comment by REH} can readily generalize from research in and hypothesis about TESL". (Kachru/Nelson 1996, 71).

No need, then, to overcome Anglo-Saxon scientific monolingualism and study situations in other language contexts. Pennycook (1998) complains that the scope of the debate within

the Anglo-Saxon world has been reduced to the question of standards and varieties of English; Kachru (e.g. 1982) represents a liberal pluralistic position fostering "many Englishes", whereas Quirk (1990) defends a more conservative view, stressing the need for common standards that grant intelligibility. Most actors, however, share the view of the spread of English as natural, neutral, and beneficial which is considered to be central to the discourse of English as an international language, especially among the English language teaching profession (Pennycook 1998). Broader issues about the relationship between British or US-American business interests and the promotion of English usually remain hidden behind the smokescreen of actor-less globalization. Most significantly, Kachru, Crystal and others dissociate English from the centralized power relations of national imperial states. For Kachru, Asian varieties of English are considered not as a colonial transplant, but part of a local pluralistic linguistic heritage, involving a redefinition of the concept of "nativeness" in terms of functional versus genetic nativeness. As we have seen, Brutt-Griffler's (2003) central contention against Phillipson's thesis on linguistic imperialism is that English was not imposed upon a native population; rather, it was those peoples' active appropriation of English in their struggle *against* imperialism that transformed English into a world language.

English language teaching (ELT, TESL) has come to the fore in this debate on agency. Phillipson (1992) gives a detailed account from inside the "Company" on the British Council's strategies and activities which, according to his analysis, constitute an imperialist strategy. Since the 1950's, the British government assigned a key priority to the teaching of English abroad to support its foreign policy, to strengthen the Commonwealth, and to promote trade relations. At the same time, as part of development aid, the USA also began to involve an increasing number of government agencies, such as the United States Information Agency and the Agency for International Development in educational planning and ELT in the Third World. Evidence shows quite clearly how both countries integrated their general economic, political and military interests and language spread policies to maintain and advance imperial control in vast areas of the world. Although these policies were always disguised as "aid" for development, as a matter of fact, terms of unequal exchange and dependency have increased into the 21st century alongside the growing dominance of English.

While controversy persists about the weight of each component in shaping ELT methodology, there seems to be agreement that the language teaching centres have intended to control ELT, Britain's second largest export business, based on a number of tenets that establish a hierarchy of programmes favouring native speakers of English and their countries: English is best taught monolingually, with the same methodology and textbooks worldwide, preferably by native speakers and as early as possible; the teaching of other second languages obstructs the acquisition of English (Pennycook 1994, Phillipson 2003). Many of these tenets have proven to be fallacies, conflicting with research findings on second language acquisition and bilingual education (Cummins 2000, Skutnabb-Kangas 2000). Similar to the way anthropology was born in the 19th century as a colonialist science to help rule the natives, the construction of Applied Linguistics during the second half of the 20th century as a means of spreading English and other international languages has come under attack for not being as neutral, technical and beneficial as it would like to present itself. While neither the early role of the Empire as "testing site for the development

of ELT" (Pennycook 1998, 131) nor "the agency of the non native speaking teacher" (Brutt-Griffler 2003, 185) as the concrete subject of English language spread policy should be underestimated, most authors agree that the imperial mother-tongue countries seek to maintain control over ELT technology, a unified approach of classroom instruction, teaching materials, centralised examinations, and research. Brutt-Griffler (2002) criticises that current conceptual frameworks of second language acquisition and ELT are inadequate to cope with the extremely varied cultural contexts and conditions of acquiring such a diverse world language as English.

Fundamental to these centripetal power relations are the assumptions about the central role of the native language model and the native speaker as the ideal teacher that aim at maintaining monopolistic control over the native language, the ultimate "raw material" of language teaching. They try to subordinate both any attempt at independent, locally appropriate programme modelling, and the non native language teachers themselves, to the interests of the imperial centres.

In sum, the leap of English from being one colonial language among others, to become *the* hegemonic world language implies a number of complex processes. To affirm that "English was in the right place at the right time" (Crystal 1997, 110) is certainly too simple to explain this phenomenon. From the point of view of empire building, agency seems to be the most significant, and at the same time, controversial aspect to answer de Swaan's (1993) fundamental question concerning to what extent linguistic constellations develop with some independence from the economic, political and cultural processes that might have brought them about.

7. Resistance against English Hegemony: English Only or Language Pluralism?

The dynamics of the world language system and the increasing hegemony of English have been discussed from a number of different perspectives beyond the rather ethnocentric Anglo-Saxon debate reported above. Not surprisingly, outside the English language empire, the unprecedented power accumulated by the global language is increasingly perceived as a menace. For many, English and its armies have been in the past - and still are very much today - in the wrong place at the wrong time. English language globalisation, whether identified as linguistic imperialism or not, is perceived as a threat to the survival and the historical spaces of other languages. Many scholars interested in discovering some underlying rules of power and hierarchy attached to language dynamics that could explain their status and future role, are involved in exploring the possibilities of counteracting English dominance.

Only very few activists and scholars from the Expanding Circle of English have voiced their fear that the observable spread of English vocabulary and expressions incorporated as loan words in many if not most national languages in the world might grow steadily until national languages are displaced and "killed" altogether. Groups that emerged to defend their national languages against the English invasion in linguistically fairly robust countries like Brazil (see Faraco 2001), Germany (Dieter/Gawlita/Meißner/Vilmar 2001) or Mexico (see Lara 1993) exhibit a fairly simplistic understanding of language shift processes and are politically irrelevant. The inroads of English into specific discourse spheres in national and international fields, however, are being taken more seriously. Although welcomed by many supporters of globalization, many others perceive the advancement of English in trade, international relations, the media, cinematography, popular music, military, education and science as a threat. Studies and complaints about the increasing hegemony of English in international organisations (Born/Schütte 1995, Labrie 1993), protests by Francophone countries (Calvet 2002), the devastating effects of unequal free trade for national cultural industries like motion pictures in France and Quebec or Latin American popular music controlled increasingly by US companies – all these processes express the inextricable relations between culture, identity, language and power. In science, the shift to English and the new functional reduction of other once powerful languages is being monitored through careful studies (Ammon 1991, 1998, Ammon/McConnell 2002). Serious critique warns that scientific monolingualism might not only deepen the existing inequalities in the access and diffusion of scientific findings, but also threaten scientific creativity and conceptual diversity itself as a basis for scientific development as such (Durand 2001, Hamel 2003b).

In all these cases, English is neither imposed on nor acquired by vast populations as a language for everyday communication, but as a functionally defined language for specific purposes that increases control of English - and of those who control English – in strategic domains of a globalised world. Opposition is voiced in many cases, not so much against the

leading role of English, but against the threat of an imminent passage from a strong hegemony to a monopoly, from a plurilingual paradigm of diversity that admits language conflict to a monolingual paradigm of English only.

Let me select two positions – quite different in nature and social representation – from a number of diverse voices that oppose the dominance of English. Both share the view that English is a menace to the languages their spokespersons claim to defend. They differ, however, in their analysis of remedy and strategies for action.

The first position is identified with the international NGO *Terralingua*, devoted to the preservation of the world's linguistic diversity (Harmon 1996, Maffi 2001, Skutnabb-Kangas 2000, 2003), see also Hagège (2000). In line with the warning launched by Hale (1992), Krauss (1992) and others regarding the possible death of ninety per cent of the languages of the world by the end of the XXI century as a result of linguistic globalization, they are champions of an unlimited defence of all languages of the world, arguing that the disappearance of any single language constitutes an irreparable loss of global linguistic treasures. Given the high correlation between many countries' biological and linguistic mega-diversity, biological and linguistic diversity are seen as interrelated in multiple ways and constitute a unified principle of ecological diversity that needs to be preserved (Maffi 2001). Threatened or endangered minority languages store indigenous knowledge about how to maintain vulnerable biological environments and to produce food in sustainable ways. To help maintain minority languages, the fundamental linguistic rights of all citizens of the world to be educated and to have access to other public services in their own language need to be defended. To achieve this goal, writing systems and literacy should be developed in every language (Skutnabb-Kangas and Phillipson 1994, Skutnabb-Kangas 2000). Multilingualism is not only considered to be an ecological necessity, but also an individual and collective asset for professional development. Monolinguals, even in English, have grim prospects for jobs, and even bilinguals in the common international languages (e.g. English-Spanish) will find it difficult to compete, since their number is rapidly increasing. In Skutnabb-Kangas' (2002) view, all official languages are "killer languages" when they are taught subtractively, i. e. replacing the mother tongues and not in addition to them. They are largely responsible for the extinction of a great number of minority languages, and English is the biggest "killer language" of all. Skutnabb-Kangas (2000, 2003) shares the linguistic imperialism hypothesis: English, among other internationally dominant languages, is spread by imperial forces in order to increase the control of big international companies and the Anglophone imperialist nation-states. As a counter strategy *Terralingua* suggests intensive survival, preservation, revitalisation and literacy programmes for endangered languages.

Quite a different perspective which might be framed as the "strong national language position" stems from representatives of those international languages that have been most affected by English, the club of the super-central languages (de Swaan 1993, Calvet 1999). The *Francophonie* embodies one of the most systematic and explicit language policies developed over many decades on an international level. It stands for an association of 51 states and governments that belong mainly to the first and second circle of French, although its members also include some other countries such as Bulgaria and Rumania where French has no official status. For a long time, the organisation functioned as a clear extension of

French colonial language policy that aimed at the preservation and expansion of French around the world, considering its former colonies as a strategic reservoir. Québec, with its own active policy of defence, consolidation and extension of French in Canada, became a second pillar after France. As the first language of international relations and of second language teaching in most countries until the 20th century, the status of French has been and remains to be the most affected by English globalisation. Thus the Francophonie language policy extended its strategies from a neo-colonial policy of French language preservation in the government and education of its former colonies, to an inter-imperial defence of French against English hegemony.

Needless to say, French is losing territory against English on most fronts. The Francophonie represents, however, the most consistent and explicit resistance and barrier against English dominance, a leading force in the European Union and all international organisations, and one which has in some cases managed to align other language groups in a common front. After a long tradition of fostering monolingualism and linguistic homogeneity, the Francophonie discovered the concept of linguistic and cultural *diversity*, a term which is very much *à la mode* across languages and cultures. Within the Francophone realm it means first and foremost "not only English". Whether it be the European or Latin American policies of foreign language teaching or any international organisations, the Francophonie will always defend the position that there should be more than one language present, meaning of course that this second language besides English should naturally be French. This political discourse makes reference to the "small" languages in the Third World when it invokes plurilingualism against English but means the defence of French; it does not explain, however, in which way the defence of French could contribute to world plurilingualism. Certainly, like any other empire, the Francophonie applies a different policy at home and abroad, both in territories controlled by the centre and in others which are contested. Thus their policy of monolingual French education in most of its former colonies remains unchanged, whether their populations speak French or not.

From the perspective of the Francophone debate the French sociolinguist Louis-Jean Calvet (1999, 2002) argues that the main contradiction is not between English and threatened minority languages, but between English and all other international languages. He points to the risks involved in strengthening local languages to the detriment of national and supranational languages. Calvet adopts central elements from de Swaan's (1993) galaxy model of the world language system which establishes a hierarchy of four language types and three linguistic functions to which all people ought to be entitled. In Calvet's (1999) version English is the *hyper central* language in this model, followed by a limited number of *super central* languages (e.g. French as the official language of Francophone Africa), others which he calls *central,* such as national languages and regional *linguas francas*; finally, the fourth group is composed of *peripheral* languages (first or vernacular languages). The relationship is gravitational because all the languages of a lower level gravitate around a language on the higher level. The three designated functions (official, vehicular and first), which correspond to linguistic rights, may materialize for individuals in the form of one, two or three languages, according to each case (Calvet/Varela 2000). Calvet (2002) criticises some general tenets sustained by a "politically correct language discourse" which has emerged since the 1953 UNESCO Conference on Vernacular Language Teaching and has been continued by the Summer Institute of Linguistics and

present day minority language defenders: All languages are equal and could express equally well the totality of human knowledge (given necessary *Sprachausbau*); all languages should be written, officially recognised, and used for mother tongue education; all threatened languages, like the whales and the baby seals, should be protected as part of the word's patrimony or as menaced species. Calvet accuses this discourse of establishing taboos which impede an open discussion as to whether all languages are equal in the real world and whether mother tongue literacy and education is beneficial for all. For Calvet, not everybody should be entitled to be educated in their first language, nor is it necessarily an advantage for every person, since the introduction of literacy in illiterate cultures often upsets the pre-existing ecological balance. The "reduction" of a vernacular language to writing may accelerate its displacement and shift (see Melià 1995 and Mühlhäusler 1996 on this issue). Very often, mother tongue literacy is pushed by external experts influenced by the politically correct discourse and not by the vernacular language speakers themselves. Here Calvet, like many others who use these arguments, ignores in my view the force of colonial ideological domination which he had clearly identified and criticised in his previous work (e. g. Calvet 1974, 1987).

Calvet's main argument is that the spread of English imperialism can not only co-exist with lesser used languages, but can actually benefit from the process of minority language revitalization, since the strengthening of local languages weakens national and super central languages, which are often an obstacle for the spread of English. In the case of Europe, the emergence of national languages such as Catalan, Basque and Galician in Spain is seen as a contributing factor to the weakening of Spanish. The transformation of the European Union, from its present status as a community of national states into a federation of regional nationalities, would mean that English inevitably became the only language of communication among them, thus destroying the principle of present-day multilingual communication in its official bodies. From the perspective of de Swaan's and Calvet's gravitational model, then, the gravitation of vertical bilingualism is so strong that most speakers opt for a higher ranking language as a second language and abandon the option of horizontal bilingualism. Many speakers of vernacular or central languages even decide to skip the next step and go straight to English, the hyper central language (Leáñez Aristimuño 2002), as can be observed among Swiss Germans and French, who increasingly prefer to learn and communicate among each other in English instead of learning the other official language of their country. According to this analysis shared by many national language defenders in Europe and elsewhere, language globalisation today means above all the attempt to reduce the *super central* languages such as French, Spanish, Portuguese, Chinese, and others to *central languages* in order to stop them from competing with English in the strategic arenas of international relations, trade, science and the technologies of the future.

Only strong languages and language groups could resist the globalising attack. Candidates for significant barriers against a total English monopoly are the "big" international languages or regional blocs that can exist without English or where other strong languages counterbalance its influence (see Hamel 2003a for the development of this argument). Certainly one of the most important barriers today is or could be the European Union. Its traditional policy of plurilingualism is at risk, however, given its extension from 15 to 25 member states in 2004 (Phillipson 2003, Skutnabb-Kangas/Phillipson 2003). Another

candidate, although representing much less centrality and power, is Mercosur, the Common Market of the Southern Cone established in 1991 among Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay and Uruguay and which is about to include other countries in the area. There, South America's leaders and historical rivals, Argentina and Brazil, which at the same time represent two vital super central world languages, Spanish and Portuguese, have given up their traditional linguistic antagonism and have started a process of regional integration based on these two languages, leaving English out (Hamel 2003a).

How do these debates relate to language empires? No doubt central questions about the relation between empire and language spread, agency, resistance and appropriation are at stake. The dispute between divergent strategies to resist the increasing hegemony of English reveals different concepts of plurilingualism and different priorities to be defended. Certainly Skutnabb-Kangas' (2000) claim that English is the "killer language" of threatened languages worldwide seems difficult to sustain outside Anglophone countries of the inner and outer circle, where at risk languages confront the dominance of the local national or regional languages. On the contrary, as Calvet (2002) would argue along with Crystal (1997), the pressure of English against national languages has opened and increased the spaces for minority languages to survive and grow. On the other hand, many may disagree with Calvet's (2002) claim that vernacular languages should be subordinate to the strategic interests of strong national – central and super central – languages and not be extended to prestige domains like education. This view is expressed in Calvet's militant opposition to bilingual education in Corsica, because Corsican education is supposedly not wanted by the majority of islanders and could weaken French. Both positions reveal theoretical and empirical flaws such as a fairly "militarist" view of language policy and, in the latter case, a subtractive perspective of bilingualism. The debates about the strategies to counter linguistic globalisation (or rather US-Americanisation), which in part line up with the international anti-globalisation movement, seem to indicate that language spread *per se* may not be most relevant for either empire or imperialist agency, but rather language hierarchisation and English superiority established through both usage and language ideologies in strategic areas of national and international conflict. We will pursue this debate in the next section.

8. Perspectives on Language Empires

The world language system (de Swaan 1993, 2001) and the future of threatened languages (Maffi 2001), English as a global language (Crystal 1997), geolinguistic dynamics (Maurais 2003), the fate of languages (Mackey 2003), an ecology of the languages of the world (Calvet 1999), the linguistic market and the linguistic effects of "mondialisation" (Calvet 2002) are but a few of the most common concepts and metaphors used to describe the recent processes of language spread and shift, and of the changing power relations between ethno-linguistic groups and their communicative practices. Only a few scholars refer explicitly to *language empire* or *imperialism*. Some use the terms in a taken-for-granted, non technical manner, and very few develop a clearly defined framework. As stated in the introduction, imperialism as a central concept of Marxist theory has been expelled from the politically correct discourse in the social sciences. Many of those involved in exploring the possibilities of counteracting language domination would agree with the facts used by Mühlhäusler, i. e. "the expansion of a small number of languages at the cost of a large number of others" to define linguistic imperialism (1994, 122), but would rather adhere to more popular terms like globalisation. Traditional, more narrowly defined terms of sociolinguistics are preferred: Language maintenance, shelter, preservation, revitalisation and revival have become central concerns both within sociolinguistic research and political activity. Many either establish checklists of criteria for powerful languages such as numbers of speakers, degree of official use, their relation to religion, writing systems, science and technology, the health and growth of their outer and expanding circles, or they combine different rankings.

The question arises, then, whether *Language Empire* or *Imperialism* could be considered to be useful scientific concepts, and to what extent they contribute to explain the broader sociolinguistic questions about the relationship between the linguistic and the social, the degree of determination or autonomy of linguistic processes, and the explanatory potential that could be derived from them. I will take up these questions in the light of our initial hypotheses and the exploration of various language empires throughout this text: how empires are linked to language spread, to imperialism, to power relations and to agency, and, more generally, if and to what extent linguistic processes contribute to the development of empires.

The Roman Empire created the concept itself, but it was never a monolingual centre and did not develop a policy of massive spread of Latin. Its linguistic legacy, however, was perpetuated in two ways. First, the real language spoken by the colonisers, Vulgar Latin, did spread and lay the groundwork for one of the most consistent and vital language heritage empires known in history, the empire of the Romance languages (Bochmann 1993). Second, the spiritual projection through literature, religion, and the most efficient writing system ever developed in history, revived Latin as the unifying language of the European Middle Ages and made it survive as the language of prestige in religion and

science, until long after the Middle Ages had given way to modernity. Therefore, the ideological power of the Roman Empire, expressed equally through other fields of knowledge, like medicine and law, whose conceptual frameworks maintain their relevance until our present times, certainly did have a tremendous linguistic impact if we overcome a narrow view of language as linguistic structure and extend our exploration to the realm of discourse and ideology.

The Spanish Empire may be seen as the one that fits most clearly the narrow definition that any central power will tend to impose its own language. The massive spread of Spanish did take place, but only in the 18th and 19th century, when Spain was already declining as an empire. It grew more vigorously with the rise of the new national states in Latin America, since the emergent bourgeoisies adopted the Spanish language as one of their key instruments of national unification. Hence, the real language empire expanded based on the policy of a contiguous ensemble of national states, rather than a colonial empire. The strategic weakness of Spanish as a potential world language today is rooted in its colonial past. Given its internal political and economic structure, Spain was unable to invest the immense flow of capital drawn from its colonies in the homeland. Instead it transferred this wealth to the more developed regions of Europe-- in the Netherlands, France, England and Germany--in exchange for manufactured commodities and consumer goods. Unlike the British and the French, the Spanish and the Portuguese empires never achieved the economic development and industrialization they could have attained given the enormous concentration of capital from their respective colonies. Looking at the sheer linguistic figures, Spanish has it all to be a world language and even a rival for English, according to Leáñez Aristimuño (2002): it is spoken as a first language by roughly the same amount of people as English, both sharing a second place only after Chinese, but is growing faster than English; it represents 50% of the speakers of Romance languages and is the official language in 21 countries; Contrary to English and French, however, it is spoken by 94.6% of the people in these countries, whereas the average for English is 27.2%. Furthermore, Spanish is solidly grounded with 10% of the population in each of the two main poles of world development, the USA and the European Union (this latter before its expansion to 25 member states). It is an official language in many international organisations and has a world class literature. Its idiomatic unity, its phonological and orthographical simplicity are unrivalled by any other world language. And yet, it has no chance to challenge English as the Number One. The fact that none of the Spanish speaking countries has managed to enter the first circle of industrialised countries is the main weakness of Spanish as an international language. This is evident in its frail position in industry, science and technology, where it ranks far behind French, German and Japanese. At the end of the 20th century, only 0.5 % of the articles in natural sciences and 3.5 % in the social sciences and humanities in international scientific journals were published in Spanish (Hamel 2003b). Here we find some strategic components to define the nature of an imperial language of our times.

The development of the Anglo-Saxon empire exhibits a policy of massive language spread in its first and second phases – in the British Isles and the rest of the Inner Circle - but not in phase three. When the British colonial empire reached its peak between the 18th and 20th centuries, language spread policy operated rather selectively in education, or was simply inefficient. Both the English language spread policy propelled by the leading Anglo-Saxon

countries and the macro-acquisition in Africa and Asia contributed to making English the leading hegemonic language. In phase four, with the USA taking over from Britain, language spread really operated in its expanding circle, which does not include the massive spread of English as a general language, but as a language for specific purposes in strategic and clearly hierarchically structured areas of language use, discourse and ideology.

Again we learn that language imperialism is not about mechanical language spread. French was limited to the small elite of the ruling aristocracy in most European countries before it spread to the rising bourgeoisie in the 19th century. Nevertheless, considerable power was exercised through the use of and reference to French precisely because access was restricted. The decisive process implies power relations that establish language hierarchies and a qualitative spread of a dominant language, combined with the construction of specific hegemonic discourses such as *Orientalism* that contribute to describe, shape, restructure and have authority over the colonies or dominated countries. Macaulay's Doctrine in 19th century India is extensively quoted in the literature not so much because of *what* it proposed, but because of *how* it was worded, i.e. its explicit ideological formulations. As a matter of fact, the Doctrine turned out to be much more efficient as a piece of colonialist language policy with ethnicist implications which denied the native languages any capacity of expressing science and literature, than because of the admittedly limited result on turning education over to English. The effectiveness of such a colonialist and imperialist policy can be measured precisely by the reaction of the local elites who pushed for English education, which has been too easily interpreted as agency fostering the appropriation of English as a tool of resistance (Brutt-Griffler 2002), as if all this had happened outside the imperialist field of gravitation. For English language imperialism to function in India what was relevant was not so much that only four or five per cent of its population spoke English as a second language, certainly a lower percentage than in Scandinavia, Germany or Argentina; rather, it was that the interplay of agency from the colonial and later imperialist powers and that of the Indian elite perpetuated an imperialist hierarchisation of all languages spoken in the country, making English the only indispensable language after the Hindi language policy experiment had failed (see Khubchandani 1997 and Pattanayak 1991 for this debate). Furthermore, it carved the Indian elite (as well as others in Africa) as an English-only intelligentsia who had to operate monolingually in the international arena – albeit with a number of exceptions. As a matter of fact, it made these elites and many others prisoners of English, dependent on its culture, ideology, and knowledge as the only known and accessible reference within the Western world. In so doing, it cut them off both from learning other international languages like French, German or Spanish, and from having access to their cultures, ideologies, literatures, political science and technologies as alternative orientations during much of the 19th and 20th century. The same, of course, happened and is still happening with the French Empire and today's Francophonie (Chaudenson 1991): their neo-colonial elites have been trained to become French-only professionals or intellectuals, and the increasing rebellion in the Francophonie against such a monolingual and monocultural policy which reproduces dependency from the one imperial centre, only serves to confirm its existence.

Agency seems to occupy a central space in the debates about geolinguistic dynamics and linguistic imperialism. Most analysts converge in recognising two types of agency, i. e. forces that induce the functional diffusion of the language: 1. language spread policies

propelled by empires to impose their language on other populations, sustained by ideological constructs that establish the superiority of their own model based on religion, political regime, the language and culture, the writing system, science and technology among other components; and 2. the dynamics, initiatives or demands expressed and developed by groups and peoples in the subordinate territories who wish to gain access to citizenship, power, elite status, professional advancement or other commodities, through the acquisition of the imperial language. Some authors observe an evolution from imperialist action in the past to the agency of appropriation in our times to underpin the supposedly *post*-imperial character of English language spread today (Fishman, Conrad & Rubal-Lopez 1996). According to most authors, then, imperialism covers the first case of agency but not the second.

In sum, it seems that no ideal language empire ever existed that would fit a narrow definition as a polity with a monolingual centre and a homogenous, systematic and permanent language spread policy, where the dominant language is imposed on some domains of the subordinate civil society without political integration. Should we therefore dismiss the hypothesis of language empires and imperialism as an explanatory concept altogether? Certainly not. Rather, many other language dynamics beyond spread (macro-acquisition, functional and political dominance) also act as mechanisms of imperial control over subaltern populations or countries. Our previous analysis indicates that language empires and imperialism exist but function in much more sophisticated ways than through mechanical language spread. Brutt-Griffler's (2002) extensive critique of Phillipson's language imperialism thesis claims that to be acknowledged as imperialism, the British colonial policy would have had to be based on a homogeneous model of sustained language spread, applied everywhere in the empire in the same manner. In my view, this critique misses the central point of what language imperialism is about. It was exactly the policy of restricted access to English through vernacular language teaching at the bottom and elite English education at the top which constituted part and parcel of a colonialist and imperialist language policy. Thus, both the French imperial policy of radically imposing their language until today and the British policy of hierarchically defined native language education constitute different ways of reproducing dominant power relations via language policy. That is precisely what is meant by Phillipson's definition of linguistic imperialism as the imposition of power relations mediated by language dichotomies that create a hierarchisation of languages (1997: 238). Tentatively, we could sketch this process as *qualitative* language spread which establishes a hierarchy of discourse, functions, and ideologies with the imperial language at the top.

From Gramsci's concept of hegemony to the neo-Gramscian Italian debate on subalternity or Hard and Neri's Empire, modern theories of empire and imperialism extend their analysis of the active forces sustaining and perpetuating unequal international power relations far beyond overt institutional policies or visible agency. Already in the early 1980s language policy theorists (Gessinger 1981, Glück 1981, Januschek/Maas 1981, see Hamel 1993 for a discussion) argued that very often the most important and effective language policies occur behind the backs of those affected by them. Or, to evoke a convergent perspective that goes even further, Bourdieu (1980) upheld the argument that we have to acknowledge the existence of "strategies without strategic calculus" (Encrevé/de Fornel 1983) in the observable social action in order to explain causal

relationships without having to resort to theories of conspiracy and big brother's permanent control. A second argument is that the dominated classes participate actively in the reproduction of domination (Bourdieu 1979, 1980). Therefore, it makes much sense to understand empire and imperialism as part and parcel, as source and outcome of both active imperial language policy *and* equally active macro or not so macro acquisition deployed by local elites to gain access to some valued commodity. Already in the 19th century Marx had identified very clearly the role of the "Kompradoren-Bourgeoisie" in the colonies and dependent countries, the local bourgeois elites that were bought off by colonial power and facilitated the development of colonialism and imperialism. With neoliberal globalisation, these elites play an even more active role in dissolving sovereignty and their nation states than ever before.

Certainly, the role of local elites using the colonial languages in the process of decolonisation and liberation could not and should not be denied, from Mahatma Ghandi and Franz Fanon to more recent processes. In the same vein, indigenous movements in most Latin American countries have to use Spanish or Portuguese in Brazil for their inter-ethnic and external relations because, similar to most former colonies in Africa and India, they do not share any indigenous language as a commonly accepted *lingua franca*. How might we acknowledge these processes and distinguish among divergent types of agency?

Bonfil's (1988) well-known anthropological theory of cultural control might help to clarify these processes. In his detailed analysis of Spanish colonisation in Latin America Bonfil identifies key components of the political, cultural and religious organization imposed on the indigenous peoples right at the beginning of colonization during the 16th century. The latter incorporated them into their culture to a degree that today they constitute core values of internal and external identification as ethnic communities, whereas other non-indigenous peasant communities have abandoned these cultural practices already. Bonfil criticises purist and historicist positions within the anthropological debate that are not prepared to recognise components of indigenous culture as authentically indigenous if they were "imported" from outside. He argues that the relevant question is not origin, but control, incorporation and identification, given that, in modern social theory, a culture is understood as a changing relationship rather than a static and essentialist collection of fixed features. Thus, indigenous peoples in the Americas, from the Apaches in the north to the Mapuches in the south, appropriated the European horse and incorporated it into their culture to the extent that the new component acquired central relevance in their lives and triggered fundamental changes in their economic, military and cultural organisation. Conversely, the New World potato found its way into several European nations and gained such a fundamental role in their nutritional culture that they – e.g. the Germans, Dutch or Irish – depended almost entirely on it for their survival in past centuries, and are identified as "Kartoffelfresser" (potato eaters) by their neighbours to this day. Cultural components fall into one of four categories: of internal origin and internal control (their own language, hopefully, and its knowledge base; certain rituals of their own religion); of internal origin and external control (folklorised and commoditised indigenous artefacts produced and sold as souvenirs, and practices like dances performed for tourists); of external origin but internally controlled (the horse; in rare cases, the writing systems of their own languages; in principle, the appropriated dominant language); of external origin and externally controlled

(most school systems for indigenous populations). Again, the central category to define the role of a cultural component for ethnic identity and power is control, not origin.

To what extent could languages be analysed and characterised based on such a conceptual framework? Certainly, the most important aspect in the case of languages is also control, not origin. As we have seen along our explorations, a strong choir of voices, sounding mainly from the centres of English imperial power, sustains that English has given up its role as an imperialist tool and is now increasingly controlled by those who have appropriated and adopted the language from its original owners, or is no longer controlled by anyone. Many Englishes have sprung up like mushrooms that belong to no one and therefore to everyone. More and more people, groups, companies and states become involved in the globalised world economy and "choose" to do business in English. And no doubt the intervention of non-native speakers in the shaping and development of the corpus and structure of a shared language, e. g. in politics, science or business, has never been as far-reaching as with English today since the common use of Latin in the Middle Ages. But then Latin was a dead language – nobody's mother tongue.

The debate between those who foster the diversity of many Englishes and those who insist on the need for common norms – a debate that Pennycook (1994; 1998) considers limited to almost technical details – might be re-analysed in the light of a struggle about control of the language. The main Anglo-Saxon actors in this debate share the view that English should continue to rule the waves – electronic and others -, and only a few from the inner circle defend a plurilingual model and the necessity of preventing world wide monolingualism in international communication (e.g. Phillipson 2003).

Despite a range of variation, English continues to be one common language which meets its functional limits when communication is at risk. Had English reached the stage of Arabic diversification it would no longer be useful in its main international role. The same certainly applies to other international languages such as French or Spanish, and polycentric normalisation raises no obstacle for the empire or imperialism to function. In its written form, English continues to maintain its norms, and all oral language use for international communication remains subject to centripetal dynamics of norm-keeping to build up the World Standard Spoken English that Crystal (1997) envisages. Therefore, processes related to the establishment, preservation and control over norms should be analysed from the perspective of the agency that maintains control. At least two kinds of interlocking mechanisms can be identified as the guardians of normative control: the language teaching industries, including research and teacher training; and international organisations, institutions, scientific bodies, business corporations of all kinds, broadcasting and cultural industries, in which Anglo-Saxon countries and their representatives play a leading role. The first set of guardians controls the norms explicitly and reinforces the orientation towards native speaker standards and monolingual teaching because they are good both for business and for those who control the norms. All English language teaching editors in Latin America and Western Europe that I know of observe and teach British or US standards, or both, quite rigorously; in the market, no English textbook could compete that dared to diverge overtly from any of those norms, or whose texts showed either the slightest flaw in authenticity and correctness or interference from other languages. The second set of guardians working more implicitly is certainly more powerful; their top

executives represent a permanent model of prestige varieties of English, especially of the international discourse of power. Therefore, we can identify a number of overt and covert actors and the power of combined agency behind the dynamics of vertical bilingualism: the gravitational forces working in favour of English as the hyper central language; the attraction of the US economy, technology, and the American way of life as an overall hegemony which constantly reproduces Western superiority as cultural imperialism (Said 1993).

Here we find some key components of strategic relevance to define the nature of an imperial language. Neither the number of speakers, nor the number of countries, nor the density of its population makes the difference. Rather, we have to consider economic power, military strength, the ranking in scientific and technological development, the role in international organizations and the cultural industries of those countries and international corporations that back a given language and are determined to operate through it in order to establish the real power and ranking of a language as international, worldly (Pennycook 1994), global (Crystal 1997) or imperialist (Phillipson 1992). Certainly agency is relevant, but we will have to extend our view of agency in two interlocked ways: first, we have to include all activities propelled by a given habitus, in Bourdieu's sense, not only planned and conscious action. And second, we need to consider the agency of all those who, from subaltern positions and a second language status, help to strengthen the dominant role of a language which in turn contributes to maintain and increase imperial and imperialist power relations. For Hardt and Neri's (2000, 347) conception of empire, communication and languages play a central role for imperial control, while at the same time "languages become functional to circulation and dissolve every sovereign relationship." However, as we have seen along the lines of our debate on modern power relations mediated by languages, the forces that maintain control over English are clearly rooted in specific territories of a small number of sovereign states some of which could be identified as imperialist states, provided we refine our definitions of imperialism. There is enough evidence that the main difference between an imperialist language and other languages or dialects still is that the first is backed by a powerful army, controlled by a specific nation state, whereas the others are not.

In a highly political and ideological field like this actors typically adopt certain positions of faith and arrange their research orientations and findings to fit their position of principle. Hypotheses must be falsifiable or, to put it in a more qualitative formula, they must be able to develop in different, not previously determined directions. In my view, we need to refine much more most of the concepts we use, and develop a research agenda of specific investigations solidly grounded in empirical data. The relationship between empire and *language spread* as a descriptive concept in the sociology of language is such a case in point that needs further research. As we have seen, no relevant historical case fits a narrow definition of language empire as a polity that will necessarily impose its language on others. We will have to investigate in concrete historical cases how language hierarchisation came about and how it relates to a kind of qualitative language spread depicted before. Certainly, many of our traditional tools in the field of language and society need upholstering. In language policy and planning, for instance, we need to overcome a kind of "militarist" and somehow subtractive view and vocabulary of multilingualism, where the languages of one power advance and defeat the other, where territories are

conquered or battles are lost. The analysis of modern sociolinguistic processes suggests that we need to conceive of space not only in a simple territorial way, but as discursive spaces in a more additive perspective, where different discourse formations could coexist without excluding conflict and asymmetric power relations. Agency is another category that needs further refinement and research on the systematic relationship between agency and sociolinguistic change that may or may not be characterised as imperialistic. This could help us to overcome some of our cherished naturalist metaphors about languages that die, or are in contact or conflict with each other, about language spread or shift.

Many questions remain open to further analysis and debate, but certainly not all the topics related to the future of the world language system can be dealt with under the concepts of language empires and language imperialism. In my view, there is enough evidence and historical accumulation of research findings that suggest preserving the concepts in question and not replacing them by notions like globalisation that may sound more fashionable but blur the key role of agency which in turn plays a central role in modern sociolinguistics, pragmatics and discourse analysis.

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