Centre for English Language Studies

Postgraduate Programmes, Open Distance Learning

ESSAY COVER SHEET AND DECLARATION

Student ID number	971792
Module Number (1-6)	2
Title of Degree Programme:	MA Applied Linguistics, Open Distance Learning
Title of Module:	Sociolinguistics and Lexis
Assessment Task No.	SO/06/05
Submission	First Submission
Date Submitted	November 30, 2008
Name of tutor	Douglas Jarrell
Word Count	4498

Ignoring the Coins of Metaphor: Language as Action

An Examination of the Role of English as an International Language

11/30/2008

Table of Contents

Alas, what decides is not the right of human beings to speak whatever language they wish,
but the freedom of everybody else to ignore what they say in the language of their choice.

Abram De Swaan (2001:52)

1.0 Introduction

De Swaan's observation of language today is prescient since nearly every person in every nation speaking every conceivable language—majority or minority—has the same worry: ignorance. This term, implying both intentional action and simple lack of awareness is one which binds language to action in multifarious ways. One may simply act as if he or she lacks knowledge of a thing. One may also illuminate or dissimulate using descriptive terms such as metaphor. Metaphor is a kind of language performing an efficiently persuasive task in English: it ties two ideas together such that their cohesion expresses a type of truth. "Truth is," Nietzsche writes,

> a movable host of metaphors, metonymies, and anthropomorphisms: in short, a sum of human relations which have been rhetorically intensified, transferred, and embellished, and which, after long usage, seem to a people to be fixed, canonical, and binding.   Truths are illusions which we have forgotten are illusions; they are metaphors that have become worn out and have been drained of sensuous force, coins which have lost their embossing and are now considered as metal and no longer as coins…to be truthful means to employ the usual metaphors.

(Nietzsche: 1873)

Over the past few decades of sociological research, a series of metaphorical truths have been collected, refined and supported by various sociolinguists seeking to make their case for and against English as an international language (EIL). However, in each case, the descriptions fail on two levels. The first due to the fact that they each rely on a descriptive metaphor to present a mode of reality as it pertains to the English language. The second, related to the first, is due to the fact that a definition of language has been elusive and those posited work in favor of the metaphors' functioning.

In this paper, we shall discuss the Role of English as an international language (EIL) in the development and maintaining of society and culture. To aid in our discussion of the role of EIL, we will proceed with sociolinguistic definitions of language, society, culture, and maintenance. Then we will consider Austin and Searle's speech act theory as it pertains to what speakers do with language. Later, we will consider three compass-points of EIL, namely the metaphors of English Imperialism, English neutrality and English democracy posited by Phillipson, Crystal and Wardhaugh respectively, considering other researchers' viewpoints on each of the same. Then we shall posit a fourth compass-point of the role of EIL, language as action, and discuss its implications.

1.1 Definitions

In the sociolinguistic literature, several linguists have posited definitions of language. Coulmas (1999; in Wardhaugh, 2006: 27) states that "language and ethnicity are virtually synonymous", recognizing a cohesive link between language and society. This view becomes evident in such linguistic

forms as phrasal verbs and idiom where aspects of culture in the form of historical background and etymologies are required to some degree for understanding. Haugen, (1966; ibid, 28) identifies that language and dialect are ambiguous terms, showing that, as well as our general inability to definitively state what a language can consist of, the boundaries between what constitutes a language versus a dialect are likewise unknown. Wardhaugh (ibid: 1) states that a language is "what the members of a particular society speak." With this definition, Wardhaugh identifies that a society must first exist before a language can be recognized.

Later, Wardhaugh goes further than either Coulmas or Haugen, by identifying the power relationship between a language and a dialect—while the boundary separating the two are ambiguous, a language is more powerful than a dialect (2006: 30). Pinker (1994: 427) places language and dialect within the realm of action and within the cognitive sphere, realizing a language and a dialect as a "process" for communities to accept a similar "mental grammar." For Pinker, as for Wardhaugh, the society precedes the language, but the language informs what the societies do with their collective minds. Holmes (2001: 130), defines language in terms of social function and individual choice: "language can be thought of as a collection of dialects that are linguistically similar, used by different social groups who *choose* to say that they are speakers of one language which functions to unite and represent them to other groups" (emphasis, Holmes). Holmes' definition is useful for ensuring that individuals are entitled to have their own say not in terms of what their language *is*, but in what group of language speakers they belong to. For Holmes, the hierarchy between a dialect and a language is clear—as Wardhaugh, a language is more powerful—as well as an individual's relationship to it.

Wardhaugh's (2006: 1) definition of *society*, "any group of people who are drawn together for a certain purpose or purposes" (1927: 7) is similar to Keller and Sumner's definition, but the latter relies on success of two kinds:"cooperative effort to win subsistence and to perpetuate the species" (ibid). Keller and Sumner's Darwinian concept may be more enlightening, for they give a clearer indication of the kinds of motivations a society might need for survival, and an implication of the results of failure. *Culture*, ostensibly connected to an identity of any particular society, is defined by Pinker (1994: 427) as "the process whereby particular kinds of learning contagiously spread from person to person in a community and minds become coordinated into shared patterns." Pinker's definition is parallel to his language definition and he appears to imply that the two are inextricably linked through mental grammars and coordinated patterns. Certainly, for Pinker, culture is spread via language. For Goodenough (1957: 167; in Wardhaugh, 1998: 221), culture is "whatever it is one has to know or believe in order to operate in a manner acceptable to its members, and to do so in any role that they accept for any one of themselves." Goodenough's view of culture, like Pinker's, relates cognition to action in an informative process.

1.2 Development and Maintenance of Culture and Society

In the Lockean view, knowledge is acquired through experience; *development* is the acquisition and later application of knowledge gained through experience. As development applies to language, Carter (1998: 191) notes an important feature of language development is for learners to discover "what parts of the space [a word] does and does not apply…the first-language learner acquires this knowledge

by experimenting with words in a large range of contexts…to know a word is also to know it in context." Language development provides the vehicle for cultural and societal development. As a society finds new ways to describe its own experience of the world, new norms and ways of doing things are invented and codified, developing culture and providing more cohesive links between a society's people. *Maintenance*, as it applies to society and culture, may be considered as those actions which preserve ways of doing things to preserve societal cohesion. Language standardization, according to Wardhaugh (2006: 33), "is the process by which a language has been codified in some way. That process usually involves the development of such things as grammars, spelling books, and dictionaries, and possibly a literature." Language standardization is one method whereby a society may maintain and preserve its culture, and, in so doing, attempt to maintain the cohesive links between its members.

2.0 Literature Review

In the quest to define EIL, three distinctive positions have been mapped out. The first, English Imperialism, discusses the power structure that English has created first through British colonialism and then by way of technological and institutional expansion. The second, English neutrality, suggests that English doesn't force change upon other nations either in values or customs. The third position, English is democratic, underscores the idea that English both acts as a medium of exchange between different linguistic groups, functioning as a lingua franca, and is itself acted upon by those outside, in Kachru's (1987) terms, the "inner circle" to form new Englishes.

2.1 English Imperialism

For English to be considered imperialist, it must, in some way, act in a manner which subjugates or relegates to inferiority another language or people based upon their language use. It has been observed that English does just this. The language enjoys the topmost position among languages in terms of growth and vitality. Graddol indicates the unlikelihood of English being overtaken within the next decade (in Burns, 31). While English stands as the top language in the Engco Model of global language influence (100 on a 100 point scale) far ahead of even its closest competitors (German, 42 and French, 33), some linguists argue that the position of English is due to its inherent imperialism, with roots in British colonial policies, among them, a key British colonial education policy, the 1854 Despatch, that would forego the language, culture and social norms to transform Indian natives, and, Pennycook believes, other colonized nations' inhabitants, into consumers and producers of British goods (Ricento, 55). The 1854 Despatch, outlines Bureau of Education policy which

> will teach the natives of India the marvellous results of the employment of labor and capital, rouse them to emulate us in the development of the vast resources of their country, guide them in their efforts and gradually, but certainly, confer upon them all the advantages which accompany the healthy increase of wealth and commerce; and, at the same time, secure to us a larger and more certain supply of many articles necessary for our manufactures and extensively consumed by all classes of our population, as well as an almost inexhaustible demand for the produce of British labor.

> (Bureau of Education 1922: 365; ibid)

Such a policy would instruct Indians in British culture not merely as a course of interest but as if British culture was *the* civilization to emulate—a replacement for the people's own customs and language. Pennycook, like Robertson, dispels any notion that English is guiltless in its actions against other languages. English language dominance is "asserted and maintained by the establishment and reconstitution of structural and cultural inequalities between English and other languages" (1992: 47; in Ricento, 113). The legacy of English imperialism against other languages and cultures continues today, recently with the importation of ESL students through the 18 June 1999 "Blair Initiative" which aimed to increase "Britain's share of the global market in foreign students" (Ricento, 93). As tomorrow's leaders, they are

> successors of Gandhi, Nehru, Kenyatta and Nkrumah, colonial subjects who had their academic training in Britain and the USA. Universities must produce the post-colonial, post-national global citizens who will work for transnational corporations, finance houses, and supra-national bureaucracies.
>
> (ibid)

For those unable to make the journey to Britain or other English-speaking nations, Phillipson reports English continues to affect their native languages at home. For instance, Phillipson (in Bisong, 124), sees English leading in the domination of African languages "undervalued and marginalized" by English. Phillipson (ibid: 127) argues that "what is at stake when English spreads is not merely the substitution of one language for another but the imposition of new "mental structures" through English…this cultural imperialism is helped along by schools in Africa which are busy 'stifling local languages and imposing alien tongues and values.'"

Kaplan observes a more recent phenomenon linking English to the imperialism of English in global information systems. Following World War II, North America was in the position to apply substantial resources to research and development, notably in science and information technology. Currently,

> English speakers are participants in an international information cartel far more powerful and influential than OPEC could ever be—if for no other reason, on the grounds that fossil fuels are a diminishing resource while information is an endless, ever-increasing resource that grows in scope and volume as it is consumed.
>
> (Kaplan, 1987:139)

Pennycook reminds us of the argument put forth by Phillipson and Skutnabb-Kangas that "as English is the dominant language of the U.S., the UN, the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, many other world policy organizations, and most of the world's big businesses and elites in many countries worldwide, it is the language in which the fate of most of the world's citizens is decided, directly or indirectly" (Ricento, 115).

2.2 English is Neutral

To be neutral, English must neither require nor force changes or structures of dominance upon another language or its users; furthermore, it may accept changes its users apply to it by way of added vocabulary or modifications in grammar structures. Citing Schneider (2003), Wardhaugh notes that "in

its spread, English has differentiated; there are New Englishes, and English is not just a single language anymore. It also lacks a dominant center; English is pluricentric and is used to express various national identities" (2006: 380). Holborow (1992:360; in Bisong, 1987: 126) identifies that "linguistic rights are essentially about choice, free of discrimination, to speak the languages actually spoken." While Phillipson shows those within the "periphery" as outlined by Kachru (1987), are forced into the position of accepting English, Bisong dissents. The reason, Bisong writes, a Nigerian parent chooses to have her child learn English is

> precisely because she wants her child to grow up multilingual. She is also not unmindful of the advantages that might accrue from the acquisition of competence in English. She is also not unmindful o the advantages that might accrue from the acquisition of competence in English. Why settle for monolingualism in a society that is constantly in a state of flux, when you can be multilingual and more at ease with a richer linguistic repertoire and an expanding consciousness? To interpret such actions as emanating from people who are victims of Centre linguistic imperialism is to bend sociolinguistic evidence to suite a preconceived thesis.

> (ibid, 125)

Bisong, here, recognizes the power of English, yet reflects Holborow's recognition of an individual's right to linguistic preference, and while this appears a case for linguistic democracy, the distinction lies in the number of other available alternatives.   In a region of intense linguistic competition, English appears the better of many other linguistic choices. English is a product among others that an individual, rather than popular vote, decides upon; Bisong identifies for us that in a multilingual society, monolingualism is limiting, and while apparently more powerful, selecting English brings benefits—selecting another brings other benefits. Phillipson,

2.3 English is Democratic

> Huntington notes that while English is foreign to 92% of the world's people, it is

> the world's way of communicating interculturally just as the Christian calendar is the world's way of tracking time, Arabic numbers are the world's way of counting, and the metric system is, for the most part, the world's way of measuring. The use of English in this way, however, is intercultural communication: it presupposes the existence of separate cultures.

> (1997: 61)

While the English language is spoken by millions of native speakers in a few countries worldwide, in countries where individuals of different linguistic backgrounds need to communicate, English is the typical lingua franca. A lingua franca, Huntington states, "is a way of coping with linguistic differences, not a way of eliminating them. It is a tool for communication not a source of identity and community." (61).   Lingua francas are typically non-standardized varieties of a language. They are owned by no one in particular. English, however, is a different case, accepting usage in a variety of ways: English "is well recognized for the range of its varieties and for its readiness to take in new words from languages with which it comes into contact. The true life of any language is found in the breadth of its variation and its

readiness to change, to adapt itself to new circumstances" (Crystal, 2002: 128). In a country as linguistically diverse as Africa, "where there are large populations speaking hundreds of different vernaculars, a national language is not only a useful lingua franca and official language, it also serves a symbolic unifying function for these nations" (Holmes: 101). In contrast to Phillipson, Bisong (1995) notes the usefulness of English for both intercultural communication for practical means of success and artistic representation.

2.4 Language as Action: Speech Act Theory

A section on speech act theory might seem strange in a discussion on the role of EIL, yet the implications for Austin's theory, and particularly Searle's elaboration will become clear in our analysis, with implications for pedagogy. Earlier, we noted Pinker's view of language as a process for societies to accept a "mental grammar." Here, we shall consider language in terms of Austin's speech act theory and attempt an alternative view of language itself. This view will later assist in our analysis of the role of EIL. John Austin and John Searle are two key figures in the area of the performative nature of language. Austin's speech act theory observes the impossibility of "determining the truth value of many utterances," (Holtgraves, 10) leading him to propose his viewpoint on utterances which are "performative", and those which are "constantive." The truth of the latter may be ascertained by direct verification, whereas the former perform an action and do not conform to a truth-condition analysis (ibid, 11). Austin's three sets of conditions for the "felicitous performance of performatives" clearly describe the conditions under which language "performances" may be undertaken with the correct individual in the right context correctly performing with the right feelings. Searle, continuing with Austin's ideas, extended speech act theory with illocutionary (intentional) force, a taxonomy of speech acts, and the concept of indirect speech acts (ibid, 12). While these will not be discussed in detail, the fundamental concept to retain for the purpose of our discussion is that of intention. Wardhaugh (2006, 28) explains that looking at what utterances do, it is "possible to see every action as a speech act of one kind or other, that is, as having some functional value which might be quite independent of the actual words used and their grammatical arrangement." Intention will be critical to our analysis of English as an international language. Intention is best described as "speakers performing an illocutionary act, are *trying* to do things with their words…intentions are crucial" (ibid, 12; emphasis in original). Claude Levi-Strauss noted that "words are instruments that people are free to adapt to any use, provided they make clear their intentions" (in Reksulak, 2005).

2.5 EIL

The use of EIL presents many worries for linguists like Skutnabb-Kangas who notes that "common observation" might kill one's motivations to learn languages beyond their own "global" one. She suggests this is a kind of "linguistic complacency" already prevalent in English language users from native English-speaking countries (Phillipson and Skutnabb-Kangas: 17), and that such an attitude on a global scale could serve a crippling reduction of world languages. When a language dies, so much of its culture dies with it and is irretrievable (ibid: 20). UNESCO (in Wardhaugh, 2006: 59) in 1953 gave the term "international language" as one of four descriptive categories of a lingua franca. English, according to UNESCO, has been serving as an international language since then, and its role in the world has grown

immensely. Kaplan's (1987) post-WWII mini-history of English positions it within a language of science and business, and places its users at the controls, directing its course in concert with a host of prestige institutions.   Crystal, noting the global presence of English recognizes that it cannot be owned by anyone (2002: 129): "Although there was a time when the British 'owned' it, through its historical connection, English is now used in so many places by so many people that it no longer has a single centre of influence." He notes that the future of English is unstable, changing due to contributions from its various pidgins, creoles and other varieties (ibid: 22).

Crystal (ibid: 20) suggests that over half of the world's 6-7,000 languages will die out by the middle of the next century. Given its ability to absorb aspects of language, English is a compendium of languages from Anglo-Saxon and French to Asian and indigenous languages. Crystal relates a number of intercultural viewpoints of language learning:

> The view that languages other than our own provide us with a means of personal growth, as human beings, is a recurrent theme in literature, at various levels of intellectual profundity. Several proverbial expressions have captured the essential insight. From Slovakia: 'With each newly learned language you acquire a new soul.' From France: 'A man who knows two languages is worth two men.' Emerson takes up this theme: As many languages as he has, as many friends, as many arts and trades, so many times is he a man. The message is clearly that there is much to be learned and enjoyed in experiencing other languages. And the corollary is that we miss out on this experience if we do not avail ourselves of the opportunity to encounter at least one other language.
>
> (Crystal: 56)

Crystal (57) goes on: without the French incursion into England in 1066, Old English would not have been displaced and there would be no Chaucer, no Shakespeare, no Wordsworth and no Dickens now. While a lingua franca, English is also a historical repository. Without the aforementioned English literary figures, English may not necessarily be worse—it would be different. Similarly, without English as an international language, or as the international language, it would be another language instead—perhaps Mandarin Chinese. It is arguable the state of linguistic world affairs would be any better or worse off.

3.0 Argument

Having considered literature on differing positions of English, we shall now undertake an analysis of each. Following this analysis, will be a consideration of language as action and a brief discussion of the role of EIL.

3.1 Refuting English Imperialism

English is imperialistic, Phillipson's claim, is arguably the more easy to defend from attackers. The history of the language is rife with events of which one cannot be proud—the British subjugation of African natives, the intentional attempts and success of the Canadian government to repress native languages in favor of English (or French), the slavery and racism in America. Pennycook, while supportive of the ideological approach to studying the effects of English on other languages, is cautious about English imperialism, stating that "we would do well to be wary of an ideological stance that sees support for minority languages and opposition to majority languages as inherently good" (Ricento, 50).

7

Fishman (Skutnabb-Kangas, 101), sees English as "reconceptualized, from being an imperialist tool to being a multinational tool."   Bisong (1995: 123) might agree with this concept in form, but in application he would consider English a tool for bringing people, namely his native Nigerians, together.   A country of over ninety-million people using somewhere near 450 different languages, it is practically impossible for trade and prosperity to occur between different language groups without some form of inter-language communication.   While he agrees that English plays a key role in countries like Nigeria, fundamentally, Bisong disagrees with Phillipson's arguments in terms of Nigeria, considering Phillipson's view somewhat narrow.   If, Bisong notes,

> English did not fulfill an important function it would not have acquired such prominence. Those in the Periphery who opt for education in English do so for pragmatic reasons to do with maximizing their chances of success in a multilingual society.
>
> <div align="right">(ibid)</div>

Given that Bisong's viewpoint is successfully applicable to Nigeria, there is no reason why the same may not be generalized to the wider linguistic world.

In his account of the effects of English imperialism, Phillipson who, according to Bisong, examines situations in the periphery-English countries generalizes inappropriately to other situations. To counter Phillipson's claims, Bisong first cites Holborow's view that "oppression is not uniform in all the countries in the Periphery "(1992; ibid), and second, identifies that "most periphery-English countries now have policies designed to develop and preserve indigenous languages and cultures, and they are very keenly aware of what is in their interest" (Bisong, 127).   Additionally, Bisong notes that while Phillipson's historical account exposes the "shabby motives of the principle actors, be they individuals or governments", as a concept for the present, in terms of the "continuation of the [colonial] policies of the past…the picture now looks very different."

While English imperialism takes a particularly negative view of English, Economists like Adam Smith see language in the process of trade differently. Reksulak summarizes some of these viewpoints:

> Smith offered a rational choice account of changes provoked by speakers of different tongues attempting to communicate with one another. Smith's account clearly predicts what is known to modern linguists as pidgin (Levy 1997). Marschak (1965) pioneered the modern economics literature on language, conceiving of it as a currency whose use reduces trading costs. That analogy has been criticized by Grin (1996, p. 28), who nevertheless recognizes the positive contributions of economics to the study of language. One aspect of the economics literature, summarized cogently by Lazear (1999). (sic) addresses the incentives of the speakers of one tongue to learn another (many of the relevant papers are collected in Lamberton 2002). Lazear models the benefits of language acquisition in terms of the size of the pool of trading partners to which fluency yields access. It follows that "the value of [linguistic] assimilation is larger to an individual from a small minority than to one from a large minority group" (Lazear 1999, p. S95). And, indeed, the empirical evidence (e.g., Chiswick 1978; McManus, Gould, and Welch 1983; Dustmann and Fabbri 2003) suggests that the ability to speak the majority language increases earnings. Relatedly, Choi (2002) presents a two-country model in which free trade encourages workers in the low-wage country to learn the language of the high-wage country. Absent a reversal in relative wages, the language of the high-wage country is universally adopted in the long run. This seems to be a special case of Lazear's more general model.

These viewpoints are not to diminish the evidence an imperialist agenda has had. Instead, a contrary viewpoint shows that as many languages have been changed or diminished, evidence shows that English itself has changed as greatly. Reksulak notes that language changes with the direction of products; export has a positive effect on language growth (increases the lexicon) whereas import has a negative effect.   Much of the growth of the English language occurred between the 13th and the 18th centuries— "Some 36,589 words (15.9% of the total) pre-date the invention of the movable-type printing press by Johan Gutenberg (ca. 1455), and 136,447 (59.1%) of them were in use before Samuel Johnson completed his monumental Dictionary of the English Language, the first modern lexicon, published in 1755, containing 43,500 headwords and 118,000 illustrative quotations" (Winchester 1998, p. 96; ibid). This occurred alongside a growth in customs revenues, most notably in the growth of Elizabethan foreign trade.

> England's foreign trade sector grew spectacularly during the reigns of the last monarch of the Tudor lineage, Queen Elizabeth, and the first of the Stuarts, James I. Customs receipts amounted to a modest 50,000 [pounds sterling] in 1590; they were 148,000 [pounds sterling] in 1613 and 323,000 [pounds sterling] in 1623 (Pipes 1999, p. 140), a year in which more than 1100 words were added to the language. William Shakespeare (1564-1616), perhaps the single most prolific coiner of English words and the authority most often quoted in the OED, was at the height of his powers during the same period. (22)

(ibid)

This contrasts with Pennycook's observation of the reality implied by the 1854 Despatch: English takes on linguistic properties of other languages considered "inferior" by imperialist rulers.

Phillipson's argument about the effects of English "imposition of new mental structures" in support of his concept of English imperialism may be oversimplified. First, it is unclear what is meant by "mental structures", whether, vocabulary, grammar, or logical processing. Second, while Phillipson infers negative cognitive effects, given his choice of phrasing, there is no way to indicate from such whether in-process learners or end state learners are the target of his statement.   Jarvis (Cook, 2003: 81) studying the effects of English on Finnish L1 suggests that, for Finnish and English, "tenable claims about a learner's end state cannot be made until the learner has been shown to have reached a permanent halt in the restructuring of his or her knowledge of both the L2(s) and the L1." Cummins' (1976) "threshold hypothesis," stated as "the level of L1 and L2 competence of a student determines if he or she will experience cognitive deficits from schooling in the second language," and researched in the context of French L2 immersion in several studies reported by Bournot-Trites and Tallowitz (2002, 80) suggest the reverse of Phillipson's viewpoint. In fact, given that L2 immersion learners were well-grounded in their first language (at least school age) and lived in their L1 environment they showed no deficits in their first language.   The L2 was found to boost their L1 capacities in reading, writing and speaking as they were constantly making comparisons between their two languages, English and French. Even if there is evidence to conclusively link L1 language loss to L2 gain, presumably the same result can be generalized to any other pair of languages. Phillipson's criticism of English in such a circumstance is unwarranted.

Finally, Wardhaugh (2006: 50) indicates that as much as English moving into areas inhabited by other languages, "migration both in and out of cities, is also usually a potent linguistic factor. Cities also spread their influence far beyond their limits and their importance should never be underestimated in

considering such matters as the standardization and diffusion of languages." People make practical decisions about where to go as well as social and cultural influenced decisions and these practical considerations may also have a strong influence on language change, and as a lingua franca, English is highly useful in these situations.

3.2 Refuting English Neutrality

While we may consider a character of neutrality a positive one for a language with a history such as English, it is important to question the definition of such a term. Wardhaugh notes that

> since no cultural requirements are tied to the learning of English, you can learn it and use it without having to subscribe to another set of values…English is the least localized of all the languages in the world today. Spoken almost everywhere in the world to some degree, and tied to no particular social, political, economic or religious system, or to a specific racial or cultural group, English belongs to everyone or no one, or it at least is quite often regarded as having this property.

(1987)

Certainly, Wardhaugh's opinion is well considered, yet, in a global sense, there are some domains for which English is a primary language and there can be no complete neutrality. Ammon, notes that English is a worldwide language of communication for scientific research, and research-related communication such as data collection, publishing, and correspondence. (Truchot, 1990; Ammon, 1991:212-281, in Skutnabb-Kangas, 112). Yet, as Ammon observes, the native English speaker holds a capacity for thinking and speaking in English unmatched by a second-language speaker. This may present itself, Ammon suggests, as a lack of balance in the acceptance of research papers for publication due to an inherent bias for native speaker communications. This is such a problem, that Vanderibroucke (1989, 1461; ibid 114) reports that native speakers, regardless of their content, are valued more highly. Doing away with standards would not be a viable option, since peer review of experimental results is in a major way relies upon the clarity of writing. Simplifying the writing conventions may be one alternative, though it would likely not remove the English-writer bias.

Simplifying English, however, as in the case of "global English" is a dangerous proposition for other languages since a simplified majority language may induce a shift in language learners from one variety to English (Maurais Maurais; 2003: 25). No matter how English changes, or simplifies, it may never achieve a title of neutrality.

3.3 Refuting English Democracy

While the development of World Englishes signals the willingness of native English speakers to allow non-native speakers to participate in their own way in the use of the language, there may be a sense of illegitimacy to the a world English in relation to the standard variety. Standard English has achieved a measure of supremacy in the order of world affairs. As the language of the UN, the IMF, the World Bank, and the language of science and commerce, there is much at stake for English language speakers. Billions of dollars have gone into producing texts of all types. On some level, it may be hoped that each global variety will, with pressure, eventually reach the level of the standard variety. There may be good reasons for some nations to take on global English as a second language: to play a wider role in international policy making and to encourage international trade relations. Some countries which do not have English as a second language may be in a viable economic position, yet others are not

in such a position. Breton provides a window into this situation when he notes that "the first imperative constraint has been that any language planning policy requires a budget – for teaching, publishing, training, etc. – and that, in Africa, the priority sectors for development are believed to lie elsewhere, firstly in economics" (Roland J.-L. Breton: ibid: 209). The situation in Africa or similarly positioned nations cannot appear any better against the backdrop of the English global community. Maurais summarizes this, noting that

> Lockwood(1998) acknowledges the importance of English as a global language (a community of around 1.5 billion people) in areas such as book publishing (more than a quarter of all output), scientific, periodical, corporate, technical and business publications and, most significantly, trade. She believes that English will continue to be either a lingua franca or a pivotal language for international communication and that the other widely spoken language, namely French, will be replaced by Chinese, Hindi/Urdu, Spanish and Arabic by 2050. Graddol et al. (1999) provide some evidence of the impact of English on one of these areas, i.e. on popular (hip) culture, indicating this may also be an important factor that may impact on English usage. In Southeast Asia the mixed use of English in music and advertising, and the subtitling of English language films and CDs in other languages provides wide exposure to English, but in an Asian context.

(Maurais, 2003: 238)

English may be considered to be a democratic language internally, but externally, the relationship that it has to the remainder of the world may suggest otherwise. The global popular vote—the vote of those who fund English activities such as film making, publishing and other cultural and artistic endeavors as well as other economic policy setting and the making of trade agreement—is a relatively small minority of the whole global linguistic population.

3.4 Installing Language as Action: Speech Act Theory

In our introduction we reviewed definitions of language, society, and culture posited by various researchers. We found that the definition for these terms is subject to a certain measure of fuzziness brought about by the limitations of lexicon and lexical choices. Here we shall consider the definition of language. For some, *language* is a collection of dialects though the distinction between a dialect and a language was unresolved. For others it was a process of organizing mental grammars, though what these mental grammars are is unknown. Soyinka comes close to a useful definition of language when he states that "language is a lived phenomenon, acted upon by human beings and acting in turn upon human beings" (1988: 136; in Bisong, 1995: 125). In his definition, language is intimately enmeshed with action—acting and acting upon. We shall take one step further with this definition and, in keeping with Searle's concept of the intentional aspect of language, define language as a kind of intentional action—it is what we do motivated by our concepts, ideologies, desires and needs. The English language has been defined within the past two decades as imperialism, neutrality and democracy. However, these categories—imperialism, neutrality and democracy—are modes of acting. The sociolinguists who make these distinctions are very clear in their texts that English is the language spoken by people who perform or have performed according to the particular ideologies espoused—the language in each example is divisible from the ideology. Yet, a correlative error happens when it is assumed the language spoken by one who acts in an imperialist way is imperialist also. Imperialism, neutrality and democracy appeal to intention, and language is action of a kind performed *with* intention. One may speak in an imperialist manner, but the words, the language itself does not *infer* imperialism. Pennycook makes a strong case in point in describing the thoughts of Steiner on the status of the German language following

the Holocaust. 'The German language,' Steiner (1984, p. 210) suggests, 'was not innocent of the horrors of Nazism', since it was in German that many of the savageries of Nazism found expression. A particular feature of this era, Steiner argues, was the immense amount of documentation of Nazi atrocities:

> It was one of the peculiar horrors of the Nazi era that all that hap-pened was recorded, catalogued, chronicled, set down; that words were committed to saying things that no human mouth should ever have said and no paper made by man should ever have been inscribed with…. Use a language to conceive, organize, and justify Belsen; use it to make out specifications for gas ovens; use it to dehumanize man during twelve years of calculated bestiality. Something will happen to it…. Something will happen to the words. Something of the lies and sadism will settle in the marrow of the language.

> (Pennycook, 1998: 3)

Pennycook (ibid) identifies Steiner's argument is "uncomfortable", carrying assumptions that are "questionable" and goes further: "To call a language dead, to justify this statement—as Steiner does—in terms of the supposed paucity of 'good literature' in German, to assume that certain uses of German have rendered all its uses corrupt, all these seem problematic. And what, we might want to ask, does it actually mean to say that 'something of the lies and sadism will *settle in the marrow of the language*'?" (Emphasis, Pennycook). Steiner, describing the German language as he does for its use, like describing English as either imperialist, neutral or democratic is to miss the point: language lies aside from intention—it is action. It is to say that since the German language was used to describe and order dehumanizing acts is to make German a dehumanizing language, and furthermore to make the users of the same also dehumanizing. This view of language could not be further from the truth.

3.5 The Current Role of EIL

As an International language, English is a particular way of acting in the world with a specific culture-bound set of intentions; the primary difference between EIL and other languages such as Korean, French or Mandarin Chinese is the fact that English Language actions have been accepted into societies farther afield and are used in more domains and contexts than the aforementioned languages. There is a danger that such a wide dispersion could constitute the replacement of other language acts with "superior", more clear acts, yet one act is as good as another: the arbitrary *perception* of superiority is likely enough for penetration. When the English culture was focused upon the act of trade, reciprocal acts of accepting lexical items made trade more efficient (see Reksulak, above). Currently, however, English is in a time when native speakers hold a virtual monopoly on critical information systems of varying kinds, whereas L2 users are facilitators of the language, helping it spread further afield, and non-English speakers are the uninitiated passive receivers looking on in envy. Such a situation easily sows seeds of discontent, destabilizing social and cultural structures.

4.0 Pedagogical Implications

Having considered discussed the three compass-points of the English language—imperialist, neutral, democratic—and having briefly considered language as action and the role of EIL, we shall consider what these ideas may mean for ESL professionals and students. In the current situation, to move closer to the center of the action in order to gain some benefit, non-speakers must become initiated as L2 users and facilitate a further dissemination of English. Critically, however, when a set of

individuals "perceives" a better, more efficient way of doing a thing, the old way is relegated to the past, forgotten, and a piece of one's performance identity is lost. As a global culture, our performance, and hence linguistic cultural history should be a thing we hold on to, otherwise we become a world of people who simply do things more efficiently, without consideration of why this should be so. English training, then, should attempt to encourage L2 and new learners to find meaningful ways to create their own English community, facilitating the development of new World Englishes. New users should be instructed in not only the current artifacts of English, but in how to integrate their own culture into their newly acquired English form. Giving over any language to death should be discouraged at all costs as losing any language is a tragedy.

5.0 Conclusion

Knowing that language is action should never free a user from the history his or her language has undergone. However it should never bind his or her hands simply because a user participates in a class of language action. The metaphors of English imperialism, neutrality and democracy are dissimulations in Nietzschean terms delineating the set of actions which the English language is suited for, is conducive to or perpetrates or has perpetrated. These metaphors describe not merely the past but also the present and the future users, disallowing the opportunity to choose their own descriptive models. These metaphors also indicate the boundaries of membership into a language circle (in Kaplan's sense). Those locked out are relegated to ignorance—unable to perform in the language of their choice whilst other dominant language users create new metaphors of exclusion. Noting its current position, for English to maintain its current position worldwide, and to survive in the future, it must evolve, taking in new forms of performance to maintain vitality.

References Cited

Bisong, J. (1995) Language choice and cultural imperialism: A Nigerian perspective. ELT Journal 49(2), 122– 32.

Burns, A. and Coffin, C. (eds.) (2001) *Analyzing English in a Global Context*. London. 2001.

Carter, R. (1998) *Vocabulary: Applied Linguistic Perspectives.* (2nd edn.) London.1998.

Crystal, D. (2003) *English as a Global Language*. Cambridge University Press. Cambridge, England. 2003.

Crystal, D. (2002) *Language Death.* West Nyack, NY, USA: Cambridge University Press, 2002.

De Swaan, A. (2001) *Words of the World*. Polity. Cambridge. 2001.

Holmes, J. (2001) *An Introduction to Sociolinguistics*. Longman.2001

Holtgraves, T. (2002) Social Psychology and Language Use." Erlbaum, Mahwah, NJ. Publication Year: 2002

Huntington, S.P. (1996) *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of the World Order*. New York: Touchstone.

Kachru, B. (1994) 'Englishization and contact linguistics.' *World Englishes 13/2: 135-154.*

Kaplan, R. (1987) 'English in the language policy of the Pacific Rim'. *World Englishes* 6/2: 137–48.

Maurais, J. Ed. (2003) *Languages in a Globalising World.*West Nyack, NY, USA: Cambridge University Press, 2003.

Nietzsche, F. (1873) "On Truth and Lies in a Nonmoral Sense" in *Philosophy and Truth: Selections from Nietzsche's Notebooks of the early 1870's* (pp. 79-93). New Jersey: Humanities Press International. 1979.

Pennycook, A. (1998) *English and the Discourses of Colonialism*. Routledge. London. 1998.

Phillipson, R. (1992) *Linguistic Imperialism*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Pinker, S. (1994) *The Language Instinct: How the Mind Creates Language.* New York: Harper.1994.

Reksulak, Michael et al. (2004) *Economics and English: Language Growth in Economic Perspective,* Southern Economic Journal. 71:2. 2004.

Skutnabb-Kangas, T. (2000) *Rights to Language: Equity, Power, and Education Celebrating the 60th Birthday of Tove Skutnabb-Kangas.* Lawrence Erlbaum Associates. Mahwah, NJ. 2000.

Wardhaugh, R. (2006) *An Introduction to Sociolinguistics*. (5th ed.) Blackwell.2006.