The Rise of English and the Space for Modern Languages

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Abstract

This article examines the space for modern languages in Inner Circle English countries including Australia, UK, and USA against the continued rise of English as a global lingua franca. It is reasonable to surmise that the global popularity of English – demanded by the Outer and Expanding Circle and mainly supplied by the Inner Circle countries will leave limited instrumental value for learning other languages. As reported in this article, the global linguistic market is dominated by English which has also attracted new market players alongside the old, Anglophone market leaders. Indeed, the "English is enough" ideology is dominant in the Inner Circles of English, affecting the quantity and quality of the study of other languages in these societies. Despite all sociolinguistic, attitudinal, and instrumental factors in favor of an English-only monolingual social psyche, the article concludes that the space of other languages has not fully dried out. There are still many reasons from multiple perspectives that point to the value of other languages in a global regime of English.

Keywords: English and modern languages, global linguistic market, rise of English, language and instrumental ideology, language and identity and humanity

Introduction

In an article entitled "Spread the Word: English is Unstoppable" in the Canadian paper *Globe and Mail*, Neil Reynolds (2006) provides an apt characterization of English, the global lingua franca of our time. He said: "English is to language as capitalism is to economics. It is the language of laissez-faire, of enterprise – and, beyond all argument, of hope" (n.p.). Indeed, the history of English in the past few centuries – from an unknown tongue of a small island nation to the language of the globe and globalization (Hamid, 2016; Northrup, 2013) – substantiates the language as a prime example of a capitalist enterprise. If English was marketed in the colonies as an intangible commodity ("hidden curriculum," see Hamid, 2021), unlike such tangibles as cotton or spices, the commodification of English is open and clear now in the era of global capitalism and neoliberalism (Cameron, 2012; Gray, 2010). It is the language of "hope" for both sellers and

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buyers of English: if English has remained the only high-demand trade item of an erstwhile capitalist empire, the global demand for English has been sustained largely by a massive social desire for English substantiating popular faith in what the language can offer (Brutt-Griffler, 2002).

Nevertheless, although the language has spread globally, reinforcing the message that it cannot be "stopped" at the current height of its marketization in late capitalism, English should not be taken for granted. This may be despite the prediction that the current dominance of English is likely to continue at least in the near future and that a potential challenger to English is not yet seen in the linguistic horizon (Ammon, 2010; Bruthiaux, 2003). The rise of Chinese with China's rise as a superpower from the Global South can be mentioned (Gil, 2021), but even China cannot spread Chinese without the help of English. English works as a medium for teaching and learning Chinese (Hamid & Alkhalaf, 2024). Despite this, English cannot be taken as a given, not because it will fail to meet our needs or we will lose faith in its power, but because of our sense of fear and uncertainty about what we need and how we can be equipped to face the multifarious demands of uncertain times that lie ahead of us. In this article, I explore the potential of other modern languages *vis-à-vis* the rise of English in this uncertain world. Although my discussion has a wider relevance, I am particularly interested in the English-speaking nations including Australia, UK, and the US. I seek to illustrate how, despite the rise of English, its perceived adequacy as a global language and the significant economic stakes of English for these countries, there is still value in modern languages of European and Asian provenance.

The Rise of English

A key point of departure is to take an overview of the global dominance of English in terms of critical indicators. Ammon (2010) considers four such broad criteria including a) the number of non-native and native speakers; b) economic strength; c) official status; and d) the use of language in the terrains of economy and science to ascertain the rank order of world languages. Of all the competing world languages, English rightly deserves the top rank in view of the above criteria. As Ammon (2010) observes:

> There is virtually no descriptive parameter or indicator for the international or global rank of a language which, if applied to today's languages worldwide, does not place English at the top. (pp. 116-117)

Details on these indicators can be cited from Reynolds (2006), who referred to the authority of the British Council:

> The British Council, an independent charitable organization, says the

> English language now has special status of one kind or another in 75 countries. That one-third of the world's books are published in English. That two-thirds of all scientists read English. That three-quarters of the world's mail is written in English. That four-fifths of all electronic communications are in English. That people who spend time in Britain simply to learn English spend $2-billion a year doing it. (n.p.)

Although the extract provides a clear indication of the dominance of English in certain key domains, there is no mention here of the number of speakers of English, either native or non-native. The size of the population speaking a particular language is important for its ranking. However, this is not necessarily the number of native speakers (see Bruthiaux, 2003). Chinese has a much higher number of native speakers than English, but what distinguishes English from Chinese as a world language is the global spread of English, the number of its non-native speakers and the key terrains where the language has established its dominance. Of these, the number of non-native speakers is critical because this indexes the global spread and functions of English. Although defining English proficiency or categorizing people as users of English and counting the number of these speakers is fraught with conceptual and methodological issues (Bolton & Bacon-Shone, 2020), various estimates have suggested the number of non-native speakers of English to be around 1 billion (see Ammon, 2010; Graddol, 2006). This size of the English learning/using population may not be huge since it constitutes less than 20% of the total population of the world. Similarly, it can be argued that the spread, function, and utility of English may have been overblown on material and ideological grounds (Hamid, 2016). However, even a more realistic and conservative assessment cannot undermine the global reach of English. Despite the declining share of the use of English on the Internet and the potential of Chinese as a competitor for global status, the dominance of English appears to be secure, at least in the near future. As Ammon (2010) argues:

> it seems […] unlikely that any other language can "dethrone" English as the clearly predominant world language, and as especially the world lingua franca, in the foreseeable future. (p. 119)

Some years before Ammon (2010), Bruthiaux (2003) reached the same conclusion – "that it would take a geopolitical realignment on a catastrophic scale for English to be supplanted as the dominant language of global communication in the reminder of the twenty-first century" (p. 22). The starting point for his analysis was de Swaan's (2001) theory of world languages system conceptualized as a linguistic galaxy. English as a "hypercentral" language constitutes the hub of the global language system that connects "super-central," "central," and

"peripheral" languages located in different spaces. Bruthiaux examined each of the "hypothetical competitors" of English including Arabic, Chinese, German, Japanese, Russian, and Spanish on the basis of a set of criteria that included the robustness of the language to adapt to regional and local variations and its potential as a tool for modernization. These elements constituted what he called the "critical mass" of English. Although he does not deny some potential of Chinese, he argues that these challengers were in no way near to providing alternatives to what English has already provided to humanity. As he argued, "the effect of critical mass rules out any thought that a serious competitor to English as a global language may even exist" (p. 12). These predictions have clear implications for teaching, learning, and using languages other than English for both native speakers of English and of other languages. As he elaborates:

> As a result, potential participants in global communication have less and less incentive to make the effort to learn a language other than English. This is equally true of both speakers of English as a first language, who increasingly come to rely on others to do their language learning for them, and of speakers of English as a second language, who often take an instrumental, non-emotional view of a language they regard as serving their interests quite adequately and see no purpose in promoting another language of global communication…. (p. 12)

I will discuss the impact of the "English is enough" view on the learning of other languages in Australia, the UK, and the US later in the article. Although I do not think that the centrality of English in a globalized world has drained out the potential of other languages, the veracity of Bruthiaux's observations can be evidenced by the global market of English to which I now turn.

The Global Market of English

The unique status of English as a global lingua franca, its dominance in the key domains of knowledge, science, economy, and technology, and the absence of a potential competitor for English have attracted investment in the teaching and learning of English on a global scale. The global market of English is one of the largest global industries. The 2014 Ambient Insight report on the 2013-2018 digital English language learning market ascertained the value of the global market of English and other languages (Adkins, 2014). As of 2013, this market was worth $56.3 billion in which the share of English was $35.5 billion or 63% of the total language learning market. The focus of the report is mainly the digital market of languages in general and English in particular which was worth $1.8 billion in 2013, and which was predicted to surge to $3.1 billion by 2018. The report predicted the growth rates of the market in seven regions of the world covering 98 countries. Africa was predicted to mark the highest growth

in the 2013-2018 period, while China, the US, South Korea, Brazil, and Japan were predicted to be the top five digital English language buying countries. The report identified five major catalysts behind the growth of the digital market of English including large-scale digitization initiatives in academia, government educational policies designed to increase English proficiency, consumer demand for digital language learning products, the proliferation of mobile learning value added services, and a strong demand for specialized forms of English such as business or aviation English.

Although the market of English, from a capitalist point of view, can be attributed to the growth of the language and its global demand, a unidirectional (i.e., demand leading to supply) explanation of the global dominance of English may be too simplistic. While the theory of linguistic imperialism and neo-imperialism (Phillipson, 1992, 2011) in the global spread of English may not be fully supported by evidence (Brutt-Griffler, 2002; Fishman, Conrad & Rubal-Lopez, 1996), it cannot be denied that the policy and marketization efforts of supplier nations and institutions as well as the discourses of English that are constructed and disseminated by various authorities have had a significant contribution to the global demand for English (Pennycook, 2000, 2007).

The British Council is a key organization that has explored the global market of English in order to develop strategies to maximize the British share of the English language market (see Phillipson, 1992). It commissions market studies on a regular basis (e.g., Coleman, 2010, 2013; Graddol, 1997, 2006) to have up-to-date information on the nature of the market which is growing, changing, volatile, and challenging (British Council, 2006). The *JWT Education* review of the global market of English language courses, which was produced for the British Council with funding from the (British) Prime Minister's Initiative for Education, provides a summary of the key features of the global market with particular reference to the size and the value of the UK and competitor countries' market shares. The competitors include Australia, New Zeeland, the US, Ireland, Canada, and Malta. The ultimate objective of these market studies is "to identify market opportunities to enable the UK EL [English language] industry to capitalise on them" (British Council 2006, p. 5). As the report noted:

> These potential risks notwithstanding, the future for international English Language education appears to be bright although likely to be characterised by a high level of competition for demand, which may mean further change in the future global English Language landscape. (p. 4)

In looking for potential niche markets for English, these studies identify not only the sources of the demand of English; emphasis is also placed on factors that may restrict opportunities for suppliers such as the British Council or other members of the British English language industry. For example, it is noted that national education systems that are relatively successful in developing English language proficiency among their student population, as in some of the countries in Europe including Finland, Sweden, and Switzerland, do not provide market opportunities for external or private suppliers. A more strategic approach is called for in these saturated markets with specialist language products such as business English or English in the workplace.

Unlike the UK English language industry, which has dominated the market of English both locally (e.g., visitors coming to UK for English language services) and globally (e.g., selling English language products and services overseas through the British Council), the Australian English language industry which is overseen by English Australia (EA) has more of a local focus. With financial support from the Australian Government, EA also commissions surveys and reports to develop an understanding of visitors coming to Australia for English language studies and the performance and earning of the sector in the country. The 2013 survey (English Australia, 2014) shows that after four years of decline in the number of enrolments, 2013 marked a strong return to growth, with 147,828 students, a 19% increase from 2012. The sector generated $1.845 billion in 2013 which was 26% higher than the $1.462 billion generated in 2012.

The value of the global market of English and the market shares of English-speaking countries need to be emphasized because for these countries English is often the most critical commodity that earns a very large amount of national revenue. Therefore, these countries may be reluctant to adopt language or education policies that may potentially harm this lucrative market.

Investment in English by Non-dominant English-Using Countries

The global market of English and market opportunities for supplier nations are contingent on the demand for English, regardless of how this demand is created. Despite the growing privatization of education and the growth in the private sectors, the largest market of English in the English-seeking world lies in the public sectors (see Hamid & Baldauf, 2014). Therefore, the major source of the demand for English can be located in national education policies.

It is hard to identify a single country in the world where English is not taught as part of the national curriculum. The growing demand of English can be understood from the various forms of increased English language access policy. Many countries have introduced English as a compulsory subject for all students.

This "English for all" policy (Hamid, 2010; Wedell, 2008) is informed by the liberal ideals of equality of opportunity: if English is a significant factor in the life of individuals, every citizen should be given access to it through compulsory education (Hamid, 2011). Moreover, over the years the total instruction time for English has increased in many countries (see Baldauf & Nguyen, 2012). This has been implemented by introducing English much earlier in the curriculum, typically at Grade 1 or Grade 3 (see Kirkpatrick, 2011). Furthermore, in some school systems, English has been introduced as a medium of instruction, either for the entire curriculum (e.g., Singapore and Philippines) or selected subjects such as science and mathematics. The Malaysian government experimented with English for primary school science and mathematics for nearly a decade (Ali, Hamid, & Moni, 2011) before revoking the policy in 2012 in the face of social, academic, and political pressures. Education systems in Singapore, Hong Kong, and the Philippines have introduced EMI for school education either fully or partially. While English-medium education has a strong footing in the private sector in the South Asian nations of India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh, the Government of Bangladesh has recently allowed mainstream education (the public sector) to offer an English version of the national language-based national curriculum provided there is demand from the community and that schools have adequate resources and competent teaching staff (Roshid & Phan, 2024). This is comparable to the "fine-tuning" policy in Hong Kong (Poon, 2013), which introduced restrictions on the large-scale provision of English-medium instruction. While the reduced access to English education reflects the political reality in Hong Kong since its handover to China, the policy does not reflect the popular demand for English and education in the polity (see Tollefson, 2015).

At the tertiary level, the provision of English has also taken several forms. Introducing general English for students pursuing non-English majors is common in the countries of Bangladesh, China, and Vietnam (e.g., Hamid, 2006). Some countries provide specialist English language courses linking the content to students' academic (English for academic purposes) or future professional needs (English for business communication) (see Kusnawati, 2015). More importantly, switching to English-medium instruction has been a common trend across countries in Asia (Hamid, Nguyen, & Baldauf, 2014), Europe (Doiz, Lasgabaster. & Sierra, 2013) and Africa (Hamid, Kamwangamlu, & Nguyen, 2014).

Globalization and the emergence of English as a global lingua franca are behind this increased investment in English in different parts of the world. English is believed to be a key catalyst in nations' participation in a globalized economy. English is taken as a means to internationalization of higher education, which may

enable nations to claim share of the growing market of international students. Countries such as Singapore, Malaysia, and Japan have already presented themselves as alternative markets for international higher education (Bolton et al., 2024). Other countries including India and the Philippines have been major destinations of outsourcing that are reaping the benefits of globalization by setting up call centers. Strategic investment in English and developing higher levels of English proficiency have enabled these countries to establish dominance in this outsourcing market, which is mediated by English (Sonntag, 2009). English has also contributed to the staggering amount of remittance for the Philippines which has exported female homeworkers to different countries in Asia. Wider use of English in the society and a high percentage of the population with English proficiency have enabled Philippines to be ahead of other competitors including Indonesia (Lorente, 2012). Finally, English proficiency has also facilitated people with skills and professional qualifications to seek employment opportunities and migration to western societies including the UK, USA, Australia, Canada, and New Zealand (Rassool, 2012).

Both English-speaking and English-seeking nations are significantly engaged in English and the English language industry in the wake of the rise of the language and its new status in late capitalism. While the former as suppliers of English look for market opportunities to sell the valued product, the latter are investing in English, taking the language as a resource for human capital development for participation in a globalized economy. In investing in English and developing citizens' English proficiency, some of the latter countries are also emerging as suppliers of English, which are attracting international students to their higher education. In addition, countries such as Singapore and the Philippines have emerged as affordable destinations for English language learners from Asia (see Kobayashi, 2011). Thus, newly emerging English-speaking societies are also coming forward to claim the share of the global English language market, blurring the divide between English-selling and English-buying nations.

Modern Languages *vis-à-vis* the Rise of English

Against the background of the extraordinary rise of English and the strategic investment in English by traditional and newly emerging English-speaking societies, I would like to explore the potential value of other languages. I direct my analysis to the tentative conclusion that the space of modern languages in the English-speaking countries constitutes an uncertain and shifting territory, constructed by ambiguous and changing policy discourses and mixed attitudes towards these languages, their speakers, and their economic and socio-cultural values. I argue that this lack of certainty of the status of these languages does not make them unsuitable for educational provision as part of the curriculum,

but it implies that the provision of languages other than English will be the outcome of strategic investment by forward-looking institutions, which aim to construct distinct institutional identities for themselves and a niche market for their academic products.

Despite the presence of a multitude of languages spoken by indigenous and migrant communities, countries such as the UK, US, and Australia have represented themselves as English-speaking monolingual societies, taking an ideological perspective (Reagan, 2003). These nations (and many others in Europe and Asia) are still guided by one-nation, one-language ideologies. The English language – specifically a particular variety of English informed by the foundationalist view of languages (see Petrovic, 2015) – is seen as a critical bastion of nationalism and national integration and unity. English has been given unquestionable status in all three countries, although variations in their positions are to be noted. While UK, the home of the English tongue, has not needed official protection of English through explicit status planning given that it is the *de facto* national and official language, Australia has provided English the status of a national language. The US has pursued de facto English only policies since its independence from the British in the 18th century (Kaplan, 2015; Macías, 2014), denying all other languages. Although institutionalizing English as an official language may not make the language any different from what it currently is, the ethnolinguistic vitality of Spanish spoken by over 20 million people and the bilingual education movement have led many states to give official status to English in order to restrict minority communities' linguistic choices and force them to assimilate into the mainstream.

These political and ideological reasons plus the economic interest of these nations in the global market of English have constrained the space for other languages. This has happened to such an extent that those who are concerned see a "national crisis" in foreign language education in these societies (see Bartram, 2010). Regardless of the value of modern languages, certain discourses present these languages as not belonging to these countries. These *other* languages of *other* people are often the object of suspicion because their public presence is believed to undermine the American language (English) and American way of life given the dominant ideology that "[o]ne becomes American by merging with the norm, and one of the widely acknowledged defining characteristics of Americanness is speaking English" (Tonkin, 2003, p. 149). Therefore, association with other languages can mean lack of patriotism and disloyalty. As Reagan (2003) explained:

> Bilingualism and multilingualism, especially for native speakers of English, have increasingly come to be seen as not only un-American,

but also as evidence of social schizophrenia – and, in the post 9/11 climate, public use of languages other than English has come to be seen as downright unpatriotic. (p. 136)

There have been recurrent debates on the use of immigrants' languages in public spaces in migrant-receiving societies (`Schmidt, 2014). While it has been reported that the locals "feel 'alienated' in their own country by large numbers of immigrants speaking another language" (Schmidt, 2014), the public use of the *othered* languages is also linked to intentions of secrecy. As Tonkin (2003) explains:

> If you've done nothing wrong, you have nothing to hide. Since people who speak foreign languages are clearly hiding something from us, they must have done something wrong. So, in our society language use is related to loyalty to our sense of selves, and opposition to foreign language is related to opposition to the encroachment of foreigners on our society …. (p. 149)

Interpretations such as these of foreign language use in public spaces apply to local citizens as well, but in their case, it becomes a question of disloyalty rather than secrecy. The use of languages other than English has consequences, particularly for public figures such as political leaders (Tonkin, 2003). For example, Lo Bianco (2014) analyzed the media coverage of the refusal of John Kerry, the then US Secretary of State, to speak French at a press briefing and of the use of Mandarin by former Australian Prime Minister, Kevin Rudd, to welcome a Chinese delegate to Australia in 2007. He argued that the English-only linguistic and psychic landscapes of Australia and the US may not support the use of foreign languages in public domains. John Kerry might have refused to speak French from his experience of the 2004 election campaign in which it was clear that his fluency in French and Spanish "proved to be a distinct liability rather than an asset from the perspective of a majority of the electorate" (Harris, 2006, p. 152).

The intolerance of other languages in public spaces was demonstrated in a New York school (BBC, 2015). An Arabic speaking student at Pine Bush High School read the US Pledge of Allegiance in Arabic. The school's foreign language department organized the reading of the pledge in a different language each day for a week as part of the celebration of the Foreign Language Week. However, there were complaints about the use of Arabic from the community. The school then sought apologies from anyone who might have felt it was disrespectful to use Arabic in this way and assured the community that no other language would be used for reading the pledge in the future.

If the use of foreign languages is not permitted in public, how can we explain the long presence of foreign languages such as French, German, or Spanish in the US, UK, and Australian education systems? In the US, foreign languages have not only been taught in universities, proficiency in foreign languages has also been a requirement for graduate studies in arts and social sciences. Up until the 1960s, many Australian universities required a foreign language for matriculation and the study of a language for at least one year as necessary to the award of Arts degrees. However, as Reagan (2003) explains, although foreign languages have been part of education, a clear distinction has been maintained between *studying foreign languages* and *being able to use these languages*. This means that the ability to use foreign languages is neither required nor is to be displayed publicly, as evidenced by the cases of John Kerry and Kevin Rudd. As well, most language teaching, in Australia for example, up until the 1960s, gave greater emphasis to reading and writing than speaking a foreign language.

Across the English-speaking countries such as the UK, US, and Australia, there are widespread negative attitudes towards modern foreign languages which are often reciprocated by policymakers and the media (Bartram, 2010). Underlying such attitudes are, although somewhat controversial, a "national indisposition" to language learning and a collective inability to learn languages. As Bartram (2010) explained:

> There still appears to be very widespread perception that English speakers are poor linguists, in terms of their attitudes, their motivation to learn and their levels of achieved competence. (p. 1)

In the US, advocacy groups for English Only are dominant (see Kaplan, 2015). Similarly, mainstream views in Australia are not necessarily in favor of teaching and learning of other languages. For instance, Australia's attitudes towards Asia and Asian languages over the decades have been ambivalent (Hill, 2016). For instance, Bahasa Indonesia, the language of Australia's neighbor in the north, has been seen through the prism of politics and prejudice (Firdaus, 2013; Hill, 2016; Kohler, 2014). It is not rare to find endorsement for mutual ignorance, downgrading the value of languages and cultures in maintaining relations between the two neighbors.

Negative attitudes towards other languages have been largely influenced by what is called the "English is enough" mentality (Bartram, 2010; Coleman, 2009; Oakes, 2013). As the British Council report *Languages for the Future* acknowledged:

> It is a widely held – if not undisputed – view that the UK is lacking in the necessary language skills for the future partly because of the status

of English as the language of international communications. (British Council, 2013, p. 3)

This mentality is probably understandable in a globalizing world where the use of English dominates as a global lingua franca. Native speakers of English may learn other languages to be able to communicate with their speakers when they travel to non-mother tongue English-speaking countries. However, they may find it dispiriting when their interlocutors in those countries are keener on speaking English and thus giving them little opportunity to practise the hard-learned foreign language skills. While this pattern of language use cannot be generalized, this may contribute to a feeling of redundancy of other languages.

Modern languages may also have limited appeal to English-speaking people because of the prevailing status of those languages and their speakers. As Acheson (2004, cited in Bartram, 2010) explained: "Just as their society has taught them to view culturally different people in a negative light, it has taught them to depreciate the foreign languages they are studying" (p. 30). The past few decades of foreign language teaching and learning suggest that motivation for learning languages is significantly influenced by speakers of these languages and their status in the global context. This has led to proposing the notion of "ideal L2 self" in recent motivational theories (Dörnyei, 2009; Oakes, 2013) that explains the kind of persona one imagines for oneself as a future speaker of a particular language. While some people may be motivated by the instrumental prospects of some of the Asian languages including Chinese and Japanese and construct L2 selves as speakers of these languages, for others, accommodating an Asian language into their existing identity package may be seen as condescending.

Given the relevance of motivational self-theory, some languages may be subject to popular prejudices mainly due to their speakers. For instance, despite the potential of Spanish in the US (Callahan & Gandara, 2014) and its demographic strength, some constituencies of Anglo-Americans may consider this language as belonging to the Latino communities with their poor social status. They may wonder how this language could enrich their sense of self and their status. Similarly, there is a strong sense of rejection of Bahasa Indonesia and their speakers in Australia informed by ambivalent relationships between these neighbors (Hill, 2016). While Australia needs to engage with Indonesia for economic, political, and strategic reasons, which also requires the teaching and learning of the Indonesian language, its sense of superiority as an outpost of Western civilization occasionally overrides positive and constructive engagement with Indonesia and its national language. The sense of superiority from the economic, cultural, and civilizational point of view and the perceived sufficiency of English may have sedimented into English-speakers' deep-seated attitudes towards languages of the South.

Space of Modern Languages in English-speaking Societies

The hostile social and psychological landscape sustained by the "English is enough" mentality can be seen as severely restricting the space of modern languages in English-speaking societies. At the same time, given the role of English in national politics and the return of investment in English, it may be difficult to gauge the actual positions of English-speaking countries on other languages. It can be observed that their positions on modern languages are complex, equivocal, or even contradictory at times. Nevertheless, it may be possible to make a case for languages other than English and visualize fertile spaces for their cultivation in these societies.

English-speaking countries such as the US, UK, and Australia have committed to extremely utilitarian and national interest-serving agenda through modern languages. The US is a classic case of this, where "the major motivation for language education promulgation at the federal level has been national security" (Brecht & Rivers, 2012, p. 263). These authors provide an overview of the past, present, and future of this security-motivated language initiative in constructing a language policy framework for "defence and attack." The link between national security and foreign languages can be traced back to the First World War, at the end of which foreign language teaching was prohibited. The link has been strengthened with significant investment in the teaching of "critical languages" including Arabic, Chinese, Russian, and Persian since 9/11 in view of the growing security threats and the increased military presence of the US in different parts of the troubled world. During the period between the First World War and 9/11, there were several key security events that led to the growing awareness of the need of languages for military and security purposes such as the Second World War, the Cold War, and the launching of Sputnik by the former Soviet Union (see Brecht & Rivers, 2012). This military connection gave a significant boost to the field of foreign language teaching and testing in the world.

The Australian government has invested in the teaching and learning of four Asian languages including Chinese, Japanese, Indonesian, and Korean for economic and strategic reasons including national security. Hindi is also under consideration given the rise of India as an Asian giant. This foreign language policy has been a result of the redefinition of Australia's place in the world and its relationship with Asian countries, as outlined in a white paper (Commonwealth of Australia, 2012). Developing proficiency in the Asian languages is part of what is called "Asia Literacy," which is seen as an important aspect of human capital for Australians in an Asian century. Although the coalition government replacing the Labour Government which had initiated the policy binned the White Paper, there is bipartisan support for increasing the number of Australian

students studying in Asia and studying Asian languages but with little impact (Hill, 2016).

Similarly, in the UK, there has been significant thinking towards the linking of modern languages for national security and economic interests. The British Academy (2013) conducted an inquiry into the government's language capacity in diplomacy, international relations and national security. The report identified and analyzed challenges to building essential language capacity in these critical domains and suggested recommendations. In 2013, the British Council also commissioned a survey on *Languages for the Future* (British Council, 2013), which identified ten languages including Spanish, Arabic, French, Mandarin Chinese, German, Portuguese, Italian, Russian, Turkish, and Japanese in order of importance (see also Codrea-Rado, 2013). The languages were ranked in this order based on their scores against ten indicators: current export trade, language needs of business, government trade priorities, emerging high growth markets, diplomatic and security priorities, the public's language interests, outward visitor destinations, government's international education strategy priorities, levels of English proficiency in other countries, and the prevalence of different languages on the Internet. Although cultural and educational issues are not excluded from these indicators, these clearly show how languages are subjected to national economic and security priorities.

Another development is the launching of a manifesto in the UK by the All Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) on Modern Languages on 14 July 2014. Supported by over fifty UK businesses, organizations, and institutions, the manifesto sought the following policies:

- A commitment to transform the reputation of UK citizens as poor linguists
- High quality language learning for all children throughout the UK from age 7
- A goal for every child to have a high quality language qualification by the end of secondary education
- Active encouragement for business and employers to get involved in tackling the crisis through a tax break for companies investing in language training
- A commitment to maintaining and developing UK expertise in modern languages and cultures in university language departments. (APPG, 2014, n. p.)

Although the discourses of the sufficiency of English often point to English usurping instrumental value of languages (Oaks, 2013), it is actually on the

instrumental grounds that arguments for teaching and learning of modern languages are now being made and circulated in English-speaking societies. As jobs and businesses increasingly take on global dimensions in the globalized economy, work and business environments are changing rapidly which require communication across borders, cultures, and languages. While English as a global lingua franca may bring advantage for English-speaking countries, it may still be inadequate because 75% of the world's population does not speak English and many of those who do may have their own Englishes which are not indistinguishable from those native varieties of English (Coleman, 2009). As Lanvers (2011) cited from the UK Centre for Information on Language Teaching and Research (CILT, 2005):

> The fact is, more and more businesses are looking for employees with language skills, and these career opportunities have to be highlighted for young people. As the complicated process we now call "globalisation" accelerates, the ability to communicate internationally becomes a pre-requisite for success on so many different levels. That hoary old adage, "Everyone speaks English," thereby absolving us of the need to learn other languages, will consign the UK to the slow lane of global culture, politics and business. (p. 73)

Lanvers also points to economic losses for the UK in trade, business, and export which is attributed to its lower investment in language skills and language complacency. As the Chair of the APPG, Baroness Coussins, observed:

> The next government will need to take clear, urgent and coherent action to upgrade the UK's foreign language skills. The UK economy is already losing around £50 billion a year in lost contracts because of lack of language skills in the workforce. And we aren't just talking about high flyers: in 2011 over 27 per cent of admin and clerical jobs went unfilled because of the languages deficit. (APPG, 2014, n. p.)

As English language skills become saturated and job seekers from traditional and newly emerging English-speaking countries compete for globalized jobs, it is bilingual ability that is expected to bring an advantage to job searchers. Despite the mixed nature of many of the findings, the contributors to the volume on bilingual advantage in the US labor market (Callahan & Gándara, 2014) point to the desirability of bilingual trait in this domain. Reporting on the closure of modern language courses and programs in British higher education sector, Bawden (2007) also emphasized material benefits of foreign languages:

> And speaking a foreign language should be appealing. It enables people to travel abroad more easily and appreciate other cultures, as well as improving job prospects. Research shows that people with language skills can earn £3,000 a year more than those without. (n.p.)

Although the significant push towards developing foreign language capacity of English-speaking countries is driven by coalitions of businesses, government, and independent agencies, how these initiatives will result in policies and how policies will be translated into coordinated action to produce proficient users of languages is a matter of time and investigation. Without undermining the greater awareness of and policy thinking on the value of languages, albeit for instrumental reasons, one could also be sceptical about desired outcomes. While policymakers often support foreign language initiatives, public policies in this area are often rather rhetorical, which reveals the gap between what is said and what is done, or between what should be done and what is actually done (Tickle, 2013). As Tickle (2013) argues, when only 9% of students studying foreign languages in England reached the level of independent user of language compared with 82% in Sweden as reported in a European Commission report, what UK needs to do becomes obvious. However, the point that Tickle drives home with reference to different aspects of teaching and learning of languages is the much needed action which is rarely undertaken. Similar cases of foreign language teaching outcomes have been reported for Australia and the USA, substantiating the dominance of rhetoric in this field of policymaking (see Reagan, 2003; Tonkin, 2003 for the US; Lo Bianco, 2014 for Australia).

Modern Languages in the Curriculum

Beyond this domain of strategic thinking on developing national capacity to address security needs and secure economic and geopolitical interests, the practical field of foreign language teaching and learning is yet to experience significant overhauling of language education programs. As Brecht and Reivers (2012) noted with reference to the US:

> While federal support for languages in the US military continues to grow, the Department of Education for its part has not significantly increased investments in school, college and university language programs, continuing the tradition of having foreign language education in the US essentially a national security concern. (p. 264)

Although foreign languages are taught as part of the curriculum in secondary, and in some cases, primary, schools in the UK and Australia, language learning outcomes have been a matter of concern (Coleman, 2009; Kohler, 2014; Scrimgeur, 2014). Foreign languages are available at the tertiary level in all three countries. However, many of these languages and programs are struggling to survive (see Bawden, 2007; Hill, 2016).

While the society-wide picture of foreign language education looks bleak in these countries, there are small-scale initiatives which look promising. For

instance, although bilingual education has been severely axed in the US, the Seal of Biliteracy was initiated in California in 2012 and has been approved in seven other states, namely, Texas, New Mexico, Louisiana, Illinois, New York, Minnesota, and Washington. The Seal recognizes high school graduates who have attained a high level of proficiency in one or more languages in addition to English at the time of school graduation. In 2014, 24,513 students were awarded this Seal in California showing significant increase from the figures from 2013 (19,000) and 2012 (10,000). Similarly, foreign language immersion programs initiated at the local level have received positive responses from communities (Dorner, 2015; Wesely & Baig, 2012). From only three such programs, as documented by the Center for Applied Linguistics, in 1971, the number rose to 119 in 1991 and 448 in 2011 (Dorner, 2015). Rumbelow (2013) noted that the number of immersion programs could be over 1000 across the US.

The immersion model appears to mark the new trend of foreign language education in the future, as it is increasingly being experimented in other parts of the world. It is becoming popular in continental Europe, where it has been given the label Content and Language Integrated Learning or CLIL, to deliberately distinguish it from its Canadian origin (see Turner, 2012). Foreign language immersion or CLIL programs are likely to have substantial growth in the UK (Rumbelow, 2013) and Australia (Smala, 2014).

Modern Languages and Complementary Schooling

An important way of cultivating or maintaining languages other than English in English-speaking societies has been through complementary schooling, labelled differently in Australia, the UK, and the US (e.g., community languages or heritage languages). Although these schools may receive some support from government authorities, they are mainly managed by communities at the local level. Migrant communities have brought their first languages to English-speaking societies, which has added to the linguistic geography in the metropolises. Despite the official status of English, hundreds of languages other than English are used by permanent and temporary residents in many of the cities, turning them into the global centers of languages. These linguistic resources generally remain under-utilized under a laissez-faire policy frame. Community efforts have led to the teaching and learning of these languages to children of migrant communities in the form of complementary schooling. These weekend schools mark the agency of local communities seeking to maintain ethnolinguistic vitality and a rich tapestry of languages in the community. *Heritage Language Journal* (http://www. heritagelanguages.org/) published since 2002 online by the National Heritage Language Resource Center at UCLA serves as a forum for disseminating knowledge and research on heritage and community languages (see Lynch, 2014 for an overview of the research).

Although the presence of languages in the community can be a good basis for choosing languages for teaching in the formal setting (Clyne & Kipp, 2006), usually there are divergences between languages taught at schools and those that are taught at weekend schools. For instance, major community languages in the London region include Bengali, Urdu, and Somali, but language subjects in schools have been dominated by French (Lanvers, 2011). Similarly, the ten key languages identified by the British Council for the UK do not include these community languages. This points to the underlying motivation for selecting school languages, which refers to the perceived value of languages and its appeal to student and parent populations.

Humanizing Language Education in a Multilingual World

As I have highlighted in the foregoing discussion, modern languages in the English-speaking countries of the UK, US, and Australia have found themselves in a complex politics and political economy of English and a hostile social and psychic environment for other languages. While the nationalist politics and economic stakes in English have prevented a whole-hearted policy support for foreign languages, national security and potential economic benefits have led to committing to the teaching and learning of these languages. This half-hearted commitment has hidden behind the strategy of policy rhetoric. At the same time, I have pointed out two discernible trends: a) emphasizing instrumental value of languages; and/or b) leaving the teaching and learning of languages with local institutions and communities following a laissez-faire approach. Both approaches fall in line with the neoliberal agenda underpinning contemporary globalization.

Instrumentalist ideologies currently dominating foreign language policies have taken reductionist views of languages and their potential. For instance, teaching languages only for their instrumental value based on economic rationale undermines the full potential of what languages can do for humans. Similarly, emphasizing languages only for identity maintenance underestimates their pragmatic possibilities. Instead of reductionist views, what is needed is a holistic, comprehensive view that will take into account languages and their purposes in their entirety. At the same time, there is a need to (re)construct the linguistic ecology of the national space, where these languages are to be introduced, being informed by the sociolinguistic reality of the local and the global context. I address both these issues in this final section of the article.

It has to be acknowledged by policymakers that the linguistic world is essentially multilingual. Multilingualism is the norm and that it is monolingualism, whether empirical or ideological, which is the exception. It also needs to be appreciated that it is multilingualism that is compatible with a globalized world that we

currently experience, which is expected to be more globalized in the future. It is impractical for policy directions to stick to monolingual ideals at this moment in history. Despite the de facto dominance of English as a global lingua franca, it is hard to imagine an English-only world. No other language may reach the height of English to dethrone it. But it is a misguided view to assert that only global languages of the present or future should be taught and learned.

Although nation-states continue to promote discourses of monolingualism and linguistic homogeneity, these discourses are facing increasing challenges as a consequence of globalization and multidirectional global flows. While there are grave predictions about the loss of a significant number of languages in the course of the current century, significant attempts are also underway to prevent language loss, revitalize languages, and assert language-identity links for minority language communities. Although a large number of children in the world are deprived of the right/opportunity to receive education through their mother tongue, there is also greater awareness of the importance of education through mother tongues, thanks to the advocacy of some key scholars in the field and the consequent recognition by international agencies such as UNESCO (Walter & Benson, 2012). Instead of focusing on languages in isolation for language planning, scholars have suggested taking into account the whole linguistic ecology in a polity (Kaplan & Baldauf, 1997). This means that language planning is to be guided by multilingual, rather than monolingual perspectives. Aronin and Singleton (2012) have proposed a more considerate version of linguistic ecology, which is labeled Dominant Language Constellation (DLC). DLC refers to a set of important languages for individuals or communities in a multilingual environment, which is required to meet their needs in relation to communication, interaction, and identity marking. Instead of a single language, which is the case from a monolingual focus, DLC considers a group of languages (usually three) as a unit. They explain the rationale for their approach in the following way:

> recent global transformations have resulted in a situation where not a single language, but rather a set of languages, may frequently be the prerequisite for the functioning of an individual or a society. (Aronin & Singleton, 2012, p. 59)

Multilingualism has been the basis for language policies in the European Union where European citizens are advised to learn two European languages in addition to their L1. Multilingualism and multilingual education are increasingly being recognized in many parts of the world including Canada, South Africa, Ireland, and New Zealand. In English-speaking countries as well, while bilingual education has been axed, it is returning to school in the guise of

CLIL, as previously pointed out. The policy and planning of modern languages in English-speaking societies should have as its starting point the recognition beyond the ideological domain that society is inherently plurilingual which is part of a multilingual world.

Within this multilingual space, teaching and learning of foreign languages needs to be promoted taking a holistic view, not just looking for economic and geopolitical rationales. These languages in the curriculum in the first instance should be seen as part of education in the areas of humanities and social studies, going beyond mere instrumentalism. Reagan (2003) presents this case poignantly:

> Perhaps the most powerful argument for the need for students to study languages other than their own is that the point of "education" is to introduce and initiate the individual into our common human social and cultural heritage, and that this cannot be done adequately without some exposure to the different ways in which human beings in various times and places, have constructed an amazingly wide variation of languages to meet their needs. If becoming educated is, as many scholars have suggested, the process by which one learns to join in the "human conversation," then language skills will inevitably be required if one wishes to join the conversation at anything more than the most trivial level. (p. 142)

This knowing of others and other linguistic and semiotic ways of doing things have been emphasized by the notion of intercultural competence, which is also presented as the key aim of foreign language studies. In a globalized world, where global mobility has reached an unprecedented height, the necessity of knowing other languages and cultures can be rightly argued to be a requirement of what is called "intercultural citizenship" (Byram, 2021). Tertiary-level English students learning French or Spanish, as reported by Oakes (2013), and English-speaking Australian students studying German, as reported by (Schmidt, 2014), were guided by, among other factors, these intercultural goals.

At the same time, it needs to be emphasized that learning foreign languages means knowing oneself better, taking a different perspective, the perspective of others. As Tonkin (2003) argues, foreign language skills enable us to see the world in a different way, to be a different being, which ultimately leads to knowing oneself:

> We need to learn languages in schools because they offer us alternative ways of being ourselves – and such is the very essence of freedom. Indeed, foreign languages are a crucially important part of our cognitive development. (Tonkin, 2003, pp. 154-155)

This learning of self and other, by adopting the self and other perspectives, is possible because every language is a unique epistemic code that shapes the way of knowing for its speakers (Petrovic, 2015). Similarly, as Wierzbicka (2013) argues, learning another language is needed to set oneself free from monolingual imprisonment and cognitive tunnel-vision. Implicitly, she urges monolingual English speakers not to be imprisoned in English and seek freedom by learning additional languages.

Languages are the best form of humanistic education because language study tells us what we share with other human beings, in the ways of being in the world, and in what ways we differ from others – in other words, what makes us human (Reagan, 2003). This educational focus is needed particularly in our time when human values are being replaced by market values and ideals of self-aggrandizement and consumerism and when there are growing tensions and misunderstandings between societies and cultures. It is important to note that the study of a foreign language has the potential to develop informed, more positive and less prejudiced views about the speakers of the language and the society. By analyzing data of an Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) news poll survey, Hill (2016) argues that the experience of the study of Indonesia has positive effects on the perceptions of this neighboring country.

This may happen because the study of foreign languages helps us to know more about the society and its people and to get rid of our ignorance and prejudices promoted by interested groups. Indeed, it is a pity that when the crowded curriculum is forced to accommodate issues of physical health and safety issues, advocacy for language education for knowing us and others as humans falls onto deaf ears.

This emphasis on the educational, intercultural, and humanistic goals of foreign languages does not undermine instrumental potential of languages. However, an emphasis on the latter, as we can see currently happening, may not recognize the higher values of foreign language education. The dissecting of the goals of foreign language teaching – instrumental and integrative – is observed only at the policy level; for language learners, all sorts of goals, both instrumental, integrative, and humanistic, come together, as has been reported by language students in Oaks' (2013) and Schmidt's (2014) studies. Many of the students in the latter study were motivated by who they were and who they would like to be, where both instrumental and integrative goals were harmonized. Oaks' (2013) study is particularly interesting because it emphasized that being monolingual English-speakers and having been born in the UK provided the primary motivation for learning another language. Despite the dominance of the "English is enough"

discourse, there is awareness among these people that English is clearly not enough and therefore their communicative repertoire needs to be enriched by adding resources of another language. Thus, they were seeking freedom from the monolingual imprisonment in English.

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