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COLONIAL LINGUISTIC DOMINANCE AND THE EMERGENCE OF WORLD ENGLISHES: A CRITICAL SYNTHESIS OF POWER, IDENTITY AND LANGUAGE POLICY

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ABSTRACT

There are between 6000 to 7000 living languages in the world. A language becomes influential, through the combined weight of native and secondary speakers, the demographic and economic power of the countries that use it, its role in science and diplomacy, and its socio-literary prestige. English has emerged as a preeminent global lingua franca, giving rise to the field of *World Englishes.* This paper offers a critical synthesis of the historical and sociolinguistic literature on the colonial roots of English dominance. Drawing on Kachru's concentric circle model and Foucault's power-identity framework. It examines how colonial language policies produce both structural linguicide and creative linguistic resistance. By organizing existing scholarship around three intersecting themes: power and identity, the differential impact of colonial languages on indigenous communication, and the dialectic of resistance and acceptance, the paper clarifies a coherent research agenda for future empirical work on postcolonial language policy. The discussion draws on illustrative cases from Ireland, Singapore, Kenya, Papua New Guinea, and the Indo-Pakistan Subcontinent to demonstrate the global reach of these processes.

Keywords: Colonialism, language policy, linguistic imperialism, power-identity, World Englishes.

INTRODUCTION

Language is a vessel for culture, encapsulating the beliefs, values, thoughts, and oral traditions of societies. The way a culture interprets the world and its core values are imprinted into its language through literature, myths, customs, and historical narratives. Consequently, culture and language are intrinsically intertwined, each molding the other, and both are so closely interwoven with the notion of identity that dissecting them individually becomes a formidable task.

This research draws its significance from the fact that through the medium of language, culture, and identity, we shape our self-perception and our roles within the globe. These roles have been more important and have had a more profound impact during the colonial era. The powerful connection between language and identity is also why colonizers frequently impose their languages upon subjugated peoples (Bucholtz & Hall, 2004). By influencing indigenous languages, colonizers set their sights on indigenous and non-Western identities, intending to exert control over the psyche, thoughts, and values of the colonized population. Language functions as an invisible yet highly effective tool to transmit these values and beliefs. This linguistic strategy allows colonizers to perpetuate their colonization efforts and solidify their foothold in occupied territories (Migge & Léglise, 2007). Consequently, colonizers come to dominate indigenous communities, causing them to gradually acknowledge the authority of the colonizers and perceive the values of the colonizers as superior to their own.

In essence, this research posits that language itself serves as a potent instrument of colonization, with objectives extending far beyond mere linguistic dominance. A wide range of aspects of the English language have been influenced by colonialism, spanning from classroom methods to the perception of the cultural makeup of non-Western students. Colonization is often coupled with economic and linguistic imperialism. The identity of the colonized population becomes intrinsically linked with their proficiency in the colonizer's language, establishing a symbiotic relationship between language mastery and self-identity.

This paper aims to examine the intricate connection between language, identity, power, and colonialism. Further, it also explores how colonial languages tend to dominate and sometimes eradicate (linguicide) domestic/native languages. The objectives are deliberately focused on three interlocking questions that can guide both the present synthesis and future empirical research:

a. How do power and identity interrelate in the maintenance of linguistic dominance in colonial settings, and what are the consequences for the dominated languages?
b. What differential impact have dominant colonial languages exerted on marginalized languages, ranging from structural assimilation (language suicide) to outright suppression and language extinction (linguicide)?
c. How have colonized communities negotiated the continuum of resistance and acceptance and what forms of creative disobedience have emerged as counter discourses?

Within this discussion, the next section outlines the methodology followed in this paper by the conceptual/theoretical framework. The analysis and discussion section is organized thematically according to the three objectives mentioned above, before the paper is concluded.

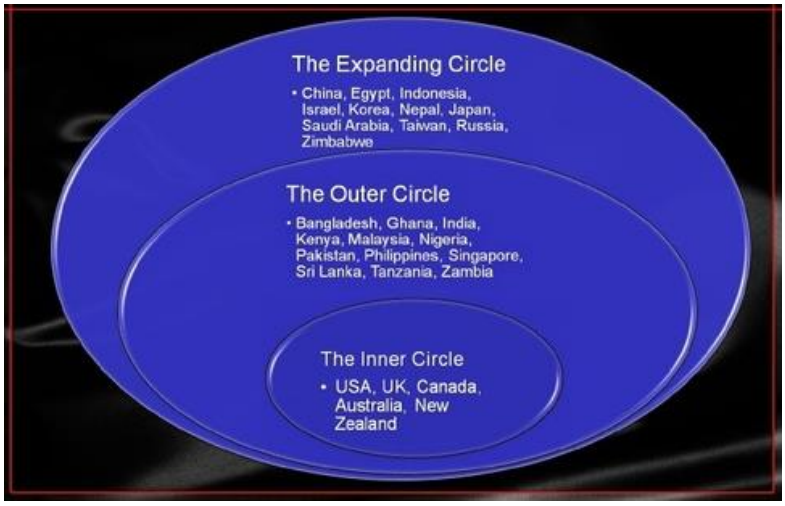
LITERATURE REVIEW

Numerous endeavors have been made to construct models that elucidate the propagation and dissemination of English as a global language, especially during the colonial era. These efforts have drawn upon diverse perspectives, with notable contributions from scholars such as Kachru (1987), Görlach (1991), McArthur (1987), and Crystal (2003), among others. Among these, Kachru's concentric circle model stands out for its comprehensive portrayal of the historical, sociolinguistic, acquisition, and literary dimensions underpinning the diffusion of English.

Within Kachru's model, the innermost circle designates the traditional heartlands of English, where it serves as the native tongue for a substantial population, estimated at approximately 320 to 380 million speakers (Crystal, 1985). These regions form the core where English holds the status of a primary language.

Figure 1

Kachru's Concentric Circles Model



Note. Adapted from "World Englishes: Agony and Ecstasy," by B. B. Kachru, 1996, *Journal of Aesthetic Education*,*30*(2), p. 137. Copyright 1996 by the University of Illinois Press.

Kachru's concentric circle model goes beyond the inner circle to encompass the outer circle and the expanding circle, each revealing a different facet of English's global reach. The outer circle delineates the diffusion of English in nonnative contexts. In these regions, English has been firmly established as a second language, embraced for various institutional, educational, and professional purposes. Approximately 150 to 300 million individuals are estimated to be proficient in English within these settings.

Extending even further is the expanding circle, a dynamic domain marked by a constant surge in the number of English speakers and its application across a wide array of functional domains. In these nations, English predominantly functions as a foreign language, catering to a vast spectrum of communicative needs. The number of English speakers in this circle is estimated to range from 100 to 1000 million, highlighting its extensive global presence. It's important to note that the impact and extent of English's diffusion cannot be precisely quantified. This is due to the multiplicity of English varieties, each adapted to serve both inter- and intranational functions. The role and influence of English are further complexified by the existence of numerous forms and dialects. Crystal (1985) provides a list of countries where English is considered an "official" language, although the definition of "official" language can be quite flexible in practice. This diverse set of nations underscores the worldwide significance and adaptability of English as a means of communication.

As mentioned above, this paper does not undertake a structural linguistic analysis of specific native varieties, for example Indian English, Nigerian English or Singapore English. However, Kachru's model remains indispensable as a sociolinguistic map of the colonial and post-colonial distribution of English; it supplies the historical and spatial scaffolding against which the questions of power, identity, and language endangerment can be examined. The model's putter circle in particular corresponds closely to the territories that experienced sustained British colonial administration. It is within this domain that English also developed institutional roles along with or in direct competition with the indigenous languages.

Power-identity theory offers by Foucault (1990) is a valuable framework for understanding the dynamics of linguistic dominance through colonialism. When applied to this context, it provides insights into the ways power structures and identities are constructed and maintained through language. Foucault's theory emphasizes the role of discourse in shaping power relations. In the context of colonialism, the colonial

powers often used language as a tool of domination. They imposed their languages as the language of administration, education, and authority. This discursive formation served to establish their dominance over indigenous populations.

Foucault's notion of "power-knowledge" is relevant here. Colonial powers not only imposed their languages but also controlled the knowledge systems. They framed indigenous languages and cultures as inferior, less civilized, or even barbaric. This knowledge construction was a crucial element in justifying linguistic dominance. Foucault's concept of "technologies of power" can be seen in the mechanisms employed by colonial authorities to enforce linguistic dominance. This includes the establishment of schools where colonial languages were taught, the production of textbooks and literature in colonial languages, and the suppression of indigenous languages and oral traditions. Similarly, Foucault's idea of "discursive regimes" pertains to the rules and norms that govern language use. In colonial contexts, these regimes were designed to privilege the colonial language and marginalize indigenous languages. This had a profound impact on the construction of identities, as people who spoke the colonial language were often granted higher social status.

Foucault's theory also underscores how power relations shape subjectivity. In colonial settings, speaking the colonial language often became a marker of privilege and social mobility. Indigenous populations who adopted the colonial language were sometimes granted certain privileges, contributing to the formation of new identities as "colonized subjects." The theory further highlights the potential for resistance and counter-discourses. In the context of linguistic dominance, indigenous communities often engaged in acts of linguistic and cultural resistance. They preserved their languages and cultural practices as a form of resistance against colonial power.

In conclusion, applying Foucault's power-identity theory to the study of linguistic dominance through colonialism allows for a nuanced examination of how language was used as a tool of power, how knowledge systems were constructed to justify dominance, and how these power structures persist in post-colonial contexts. This theoretical framework provides a valuable lens for understanding the complex interplay between language, power, and identity in the colonial and post-colonial world.

METHODOLOGY

This methodology provides a framework for conducting an exploratory, descriptive study design grounded exclusively in secondary resources. Conducting research on the impact of language dominance through colonialism is a complex and multifaceted endeavor. The research process consists of three sequential stages designed to ensure systematic coverage and analytical coherence.

In stage-1 scholarly database will include JSTOR, Scopus, and Google Scholar, and key monographs were searched using combinations of the terms linguistic imperialism, world Englishes, linguicide, colonial language policy, post-colonial identity, and related descriptors. Preference was given to peer-reviewed work published between 1985 and 2023 that explicitly engages with the theoretical contributions of Kachru, Foucault, Phillipson, Fanon, Said, and Spivak, as well as historical and sociolinguistic studies, language endangerment and revitalization.

In stage-II, five illustrative cases were selected according to three distinct criteria. (i) historical experience of sustained British and closely related Europeans' colonial administration; (ii) documented presence of both language shift and language maintenance dynamics; (iii) availability of secondary relationships that permit meaningful comparison across regions. The cases are: Ireland (Celtic- English contact and ongoing revitalization), Singapore (multilingual context/variety formation), Kenya (African English and indigenous

language endangerment), Papua New Guinea (*Tok Pisin* and processes of language suicide), and the Indo-Pakistan Subcontinent (English as an official language alongside massive indigenous language diversity). These nations represent various regions of the globe, showcasing the universal applicability and resonance of the phenomenon under this inquiry.

In stage III, rather than presenting each case in isolation or following a purely chronological survey, the literature is organized under three analytical themes that map directly onto the research objectives stated above: (i) power identity mechanisms of dominance, (ii) differential outcomes for indigenous languages (language suicide vs language murder); and (iii) resistance, creative reappropriation, and the dialectic of acceptance. This thematic organization replaces the earlier unstructured chronological surveys and supplies a clearer analytical structure spine for the discussion that follows.

No primary data was collected; the contribution of this paper therefore lies in the reorganization and critical synthesis of existing scholarship rather than in new empirical findings. The specific details of analysis within each theme are tailored to the unique characteristics of the region and languages under study. Limitations arising from exclusive reliance on secondary sources are acknowledged in the conclusion.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The study of linguistic imperialism delves into the mechanisms and rationales behind the global dominance of specific languages. It aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of this linguistic supremacy by employing theoretical frameworks (Kroskrity, 2021). The following discussion is organized thematically rather than chronologically, thereby addressing the concern that an unstructured survey of historical literature fails to produce a coherent argument.

Power, Identity and the Mechanisms of Linguistic Dominance

Several critical aspects are explored, including the historical role of language policies in various empires such as the British, French, and Japanese. This examination encompasses the establishment of European languages in different parts of the world, often at the expense of indigenous languages. Additionally, researchers investigate whether the languages introduced during colonialism continue to serve as a valuable means of communication within nations and foster international connectivity. Alternatively, these languages might be perceived as instruments that perpetuate Western interests, thereby allowing for the marginalization and exploitation of non-Western societies.

Furthermore, one can analyze cases where languages, like Kurdish in Turkey or Tibetan and Uyghur in China, are actively suppressed (Shichor, 2009). This suppression raises the question of whether it qualifies as a form of linguistic imperialism. With China's increasing global influence, there is also the possibility that the aggressive promotion of Chinese internationally may represent a unique manifestation of linguistic imperialism.

Kumar (2021) argues that the term "imperialism" finds its roots in the Latin word "imperium," which conveys the idea of military and political control exercised by a dominant power over subjugated territories and peoples. A comprehensive examination of language empires throughout history reveals a wide range of roles played by languages within imperial contexts. During the era of global European dominance, a combination of military might, commercial interests, and Christian missionary endeavors facilitated the spread of Western cultural and educational norms and languages. However, it's essential to recognize that the term "imperialism" is often a subject of contention. Labeling something as imperial or colonial in

today's context often implies a negative view, considering it inherently immoral or illegitimate. Still, those in dominant positions typically have no illusions about the workings of empire.

When French emerged as a lingua franca for secular purposes in Europe, it was commonly believed that the language possessed intrinsic superiority (Bell, 1995). The Berlin Academy, in 1782, organized a competition that explored the idea of why French was a "universal language." One winning essay argued that languages not adhering to French syntax were illogical and insufficient. The maintenance of a linguistic hierarchy often involves the stigmatization of dominated languages. Throughout history, we see instances of dominant languages projected as superior. For example, as the divine language (like Sanskrit, Arabic, and Hebrew), the language of reason, logic, and human rights (like French), the language of the superior ethnonational group (as with German in Nazi ideology), and the language of progress, modernity, and national unity (as exemplified by English in postcolonial discourse). Other languages are, whether explicitly or implicitly, deprived of these functions and qualities.

The global expansion of the English language, originally rooted in England, began with its imposition on the British Isles. For instance, the 1536 Act of Union with Wales made the people of Wales subordinate to the "rights, laws, customs, and speech of England (Franklin, 2023). This period saw the propagation of a monolingual ideology throughout the British Isles, which had devastating consequences, although some Celtic languages have managed to survive and are currently experiencing revitalization efforts. This linguistic imperialism is still evident today, as the continued marginalization of Irish Sign Language demonstrates.

The history of Native American languages is marked by the initial use of these languages in missionary work and education. However, as competition for territory and resources grew, conflicts between settlers and indigenous peoples intensified. This led to the establishment of an educational principle that sought to make Native American children "English in language, civilized in manners, Christian in religion." Consequently, very few of the original languages in the USA, Canada, and Australia have survived (Edwards, 2004). The remarkable transformation of tribal languages into Standard English during the nineteenth century has been extensively documented, shedding light on a phenomenon often described as the most astonishing instance of "language expansion" in modern history. Its scope arguably surpasses even the famous spread of Latin during the Roman Empire (Janson, 2004).

Language is intricately linked to the construction of identity, and the preservation of cultural sovereignty is of paramount importance (Kaul, 2013). In the context of colonization, colonizers often sought to transmit their culture through various means. However, under the older model of colonialism, the imposition of languages and cultures by colonizers primarily involved coercing non-Western populations to adopt a different language. This process had profound consequences, vividly illustrated by the loss of African and American indigenous languages. Colonizers actively discouraged and suppressed the diverse linguistic traditions and extensive knowledge that had evolved over millennia within indigenous communities through policies of forced assimilation and integration.

The legacy of colonialism continues to shape the cultural and linguistic landscapes of many regions worldwide. Efforts to revitalize indigenous languages and cultures are ongoing, as communities work diligently to recover what was lost and ensure that their traditions and identities endure for future generations. Reclaiming language and culture are crucial steps towards cultural sovereignty, allowing communities to assert their own narratives and counteract the impositions of the colonial past.

Regardless of the specific model of colonialism, colonizers consistently fond ways to gradually infuse their thoughts and values into their languages. According to Fanon (1967), language is a crucial aspect of an individual's existence, as speaking a language provides a means for expressing an independent identity.

This independence can potentially lead to questioning or resisting colonial sovereignty. Conversely, if colonized individuals accept the sovereignty of the colonizers, they may adopt and embrace the cultural characteristics of the colonizer.

As a consequence of this domination, subjugated nations often face the erosion of their identities, while colonizers create lucrative markets for their cultural and industrial products. For instance, the British Council's annual report underscores the increasing benefits that the UK gains through worldwide English teaching, publications, and examinations like IELTS. ELT serves as a significant source of economic gain for both the British and American economies, systematically promoting English as a symbol of high civilization. Language, in this context, serves as a tool of "spiritual subjugation" by colonizers (Sayedayn & Society, 2021). The primary goal of colonialism and imperialism is to expand economic, political, and cultural power while establishing their own superiority. This is often achieved by weakening the languages and identities of indigenous peoples. However, language also has a dual nature and can function as a defensive or offensive tool. The choice depends on a nation's determination to preserve its languages and identities.

Language plays a pivotal role in the discourse of postcolonial studies. Historically, during the period of colonization, the colonizers often imposed their language upon the indigenous populations they ruled over, frequently prohibiting the use of native languages. The imposition of colonial languages often involved severe penalties, including demotion, humiliation, and even physical punishment for those who dared to speak their mother tongues, especially in colonial schools (Bamgboṣe, 2000).

Fanon (1967) also underscores the profound power of language in shaping culture during the colonialism process. He articulates the notion that "speaking means to exist absolutely for others," highlighting the idea that language is not just a tool of communication but a means of asserting one's existence in society. Fanon also critiques the treatment of Creole languages, often viewed as less civilized in comparison to French. He points out that the colonialists' contempt for local languages is key to understanding their inhumane processes. His insights revolve around the acceptance of the "other" language, which signifies an acknowledgment of its existence. Colonialists often sought to alter linguistic identity because language is intricately tied to one's independent identity. An independent identity, rooted in one's language, challenges the aspects of colonialist sovereignty. However, when subjugated nations accept the sovereignty of colonialists, they often embrace the cultural aspects, including language and thought, promoted by the colonizers. They may do this to secure their own positions or benefits, leading to a loss of cultural identity.

Ultimately, the loss of language as a meaning giver and cultural bearer results in the acceptance of another language, culture, and identity. Spivak (1999) critiques those who disregard the "cultural others," emphasizing the need to move beyond Western-centric perspectives and explore alternatives offered by post-colonialism. These alternatives encourage self-criticism of Western methods and the reevaluation of Western ideals, fostering a more inclusive and equitable understanding of diverse cultures and languages.

Colonialism, whether in its historical or modern form, seeks to present various aspects of its culture as modern and alluring, using different and superior language, thereby framing the indigenous culture as humble, outdated, and culturally deficient. Subjugated nations are thus portrayed as needing the guidance and civilization offered by the colonial power. The emphasis on cultural and linguistic identity and the reevaluation of the relationship between dominant and subjugated nations represent a fresh interpretation of the fragmented global texts and societies. Through the lenses of prominent postcolonial thinkers like Said (1977), Bhabha (2012), and Spivak (1999), we discern the basic skepticism underlying their ideas, centering around the core notion of "otherness." These postcolonial thinkers are not proposing a retrogressive view; instead, they are challenging the clarity of progress, the universality of culture, and the

preservation of historical memory. The focus on "insider identity" and viewing the world from their perspective underscores a notion of future-oriented change.

While these thinkers are cautious of the damages inflicted by cultural shifts and linguistic invasions, they are not arguing against change itself. Their apprehension is more about the potential loss of clarity and the emphasis on indigenous identity and language (Neelu, 2016). Language is often considered the primary factor in identity preservation. Racial changes resulting from contact with subjugated nations and the subsequent effects on language can lead to changes in identity. Colonialists seek to change the true identity of subjugated nations through language. They expedite the disappearance of native identities and gradually establish their own linguistic sovereignty, which can ultimately translate into political and social sovereignty. That is what happened in the case of English in Indo-Pakistan subcontinent.

Differential Impacts: Language Suicide, Language Murder and the Formation of World Englishes

The global proliferation of English is frequently analyzed within the framework of two major diasporas. In the first diaspora, English was carried across the world by native speakers. In the second diaspora, it was introduced as an official language alongside existing national language (Knowles, 2014). The initial expansion toward Wales in 1535, Scotland in 1603, and certain parts of Ireland in 1707 marked the inception of the first diaspora, culminating in English-speaking communities being established in North America, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand. These nations adopted English as their primary language, elevating it to the status of a major global language, although it had not yet reached the current levels of worldwide prominence, neither numerically nor functionally.

The solidification of English's global stature occurred during its second diaspora, which ushered the language into "un-English" sociocultural contexts in South Asia, Africa, and Latin America. This expansion led to a substantial shift in English's sociolinguistic profile. During this second diaspora, English encountered languages that were genetically and culturally unrelated, such as Indo-Aryan and Dravidian languages in Asia, Niger-Congo family languages in Africa, and Altaic languages in Southeast Asia. These encounters resulted in the emergence of regional-contact varieties of English, like Indian English, Malaysian English, Singaporean English, Philippine English, Nigerian English, and Ghanaian English (Bamgboşe, 1992; Bautista, 1997; Foley, 1988; Kachru, 1965; Lowenberg, 1986; Schneider, 2016).

The third phase of English expansion, often referred to as the second diaspora, has stirred recent controversies regarding the processes and implications of introducing English into settings that were evidently non-English in nature. The rapid proliferation of English during this phase can be understood from two distinct yet not mutually exclusive perspectives. As the English language extended its influence, driven by both linguistic imperialism and linguistic pragmatism, it infiltrated non-native environments and engaged in prolonged interactions with genetically and culturally distinct languages. Kachru (1992) posits that during this phase, English underwent a process of linguistic experimentation and adaptation, as it was adopted for various purposes, including education, administration, and high society, among others.

Non-native English speakers in these regions introduced significant changes and manipulations to the structure and functions of English to align it with local cultural norms and social contexts. This process of adaptation resulted in the creation of new meanings and expressions that were culturally sensitive and contextually relevant. This adaptation showcased the linguistic creativity of bilingual individuals who were essentially molding the English language to suit their specific needs.

While this paper does not offer a detailed structural description of these native varieties, their very existence shows that colonial imposition was never a one-way process of erasure; it also generated new

hybrid linguistics system that later became sites of identity negotiation. This is the core insight of world Englishes scholarship that this synthesis focuses on.

More than twenty percent of the global population speaks English, and it's the first language for approximately 360 million individuals (Rao, 2019). The growth of English has raised questions about whether it can be considered to commit linguicide against other languages. particularly in relation to the decline of indigenous and non-Western languages. To address this question, we need to examine the concept of language death.

Wurm (1991) argues that language death is influenced by various social factors, and two categories are identified: "language suicide" and "language murder or linguicide". In the case of language suicide, an indigenous language is assimilated into the colonizer's language to the extent that the two languages become nearly indistinguishable. An example of language suicide is found in the history of Papua New Guinea, where indigenous languages declined due to British colonization (see, for example, Aikhenvald, 2004; Gilliam, 1984; Romaine, 1992). Tok Pisin, a Creole language, emerged as a result of contact between indigenous communities and colonizers. Over time, English was introduced as the language of education, causing parents and schools to discontinue teaching indigenous languages. Consequently, successive generations gradually adopted the new languages, leading to the decline of indigenous languages.

Conversely, language murder occurs when the colonizer's language is imposed in schools, and children are officially discouraged from learning their native language. In such cases, the colonizer's language completely displaces indigenous languages. Instances like English in the Indian subcontinent and Portuguese in Brazil can be considered examples of linguicide. In these scenarios, the new language becomes a symbol of "modernity" and "democracy," associated with power and access to authority. Subjugated populations may become bilingual to access new opportunities, and over time, the indigenous language is generational replaced by the dominant language. The impact of English on indigenous languages varies depending on the specific historical and social contexts. While English can contribute to the decline of indigenous languages in certain situations, it is also essential to consider the nuanced dynamics and the role of other factors influencing language death.

In the modern era, English has assumed a position of paramount importance, becoming the language of technology, science, commerce, and international communication. This utilitarian trend, intensified by globalization, has fostered the notion that English is the singular language requisite for global interactions. The scope of English's conquest isn't confined to countries with less robust political systems; it has also had a significant impact on nations with strong linguistic policies and well-established written languages. Even in these contexts, where native languages persist, the influence of English is undeniable. Notably, many Western countries, including Ireland, Malta, the USA, and Canada, as well as non-Western nations like the Philippines, Singapore, and South Africa, have witnessed a shift towards English as their primary language. As a consequence, large populations in these regions now use English as their vernacular language.

This global linguistic transformation is leading to the gradual decline of native languages worldwide (Mufwene, 2002). To counteract this trend, there's a call for resistance. Examples abound, such as the resistance of German speakers to English or the longstanding resistance of Persian speakers against languages like English, French, Russian, Mongolian, and Arabic. These cases demonstrate that resistance, whether through policy or the collective will of a people, remains a viable and crucial means of preserving linguistic diversity.

In certain developing countries like India and Pakistan, English holds the status of an official language, but many local residents are not proficient in it. While English is taught in schools, it often remains

accessible primarily to the elite, creating a division in society between those who can use the language and those who cannot. This dichotomy perpetuates the idea that English proficiency is essential for achieving prosperity in life, reinforcing a belief in linguistic imperialism. Linguistic imperialism, as defined by Phillipson (1992), revolves around the notion that certain languages dominate internationally over others. This domination, in turn, leads to discrimination in terms of communicative rights and resource allocation.

Interestingly, the colonial system was designed to prevent native languages from directly disappearing due to the dominance of Western languages. However, colonizers effectively control economic, political, cultural, and linguistic practices indirectly, which contributes to the erosion of native languages and challenges related to identity.

Resistance, Creative Disobedience and the Dialectic of Acceptance

In response to the systematic imposition of colonial languages, postcolonial writers and activists have articulated diverse perspectives. Some advocate for a complete return to the use of indigenous languages as a means of reclaiming cultural identity. On the other hand, some see the language imposed by the colonizer, such as English or Arabic, as a more practical choice. They use the colonial language for international communication and to subvert a colonial past by reshaping it into new literary forms, effectively deforming the "standard" language and reconstructing it in ways that reflect local cultures and identities.

This process has often been driven by powerful governments. They have invested significant resources in promoting and expanding the use of their preferred language, leading to a flourishing of that language and its associated domains. Simultaneously, they have harnessed this linguistic empowerment as a means of strengthening their political influence and asserting control over linguistic minority groups. This approach can be seen as a strategic method for cultural sovereignty, a way to transform the identity and language of minority nations.

Phillipson (2009) argues that governments, in their quest for cultural sovereignty, utilize "prestigious languages," which encompass the collective beliefs, culture, myths, history, and symbols of dominant societies. Through the promotion of these languages, they attempt to disseminate their thoughts and cultures. However, they also employ these methods to erode the culture and language of minority nations, aiming to diminish their cultural and linguistic identity. This is accomplished through a gradual process of cultural assimilation and language erosion. Recognizing the importance of cultural and linguistic sovereignty, these powerful governments aim to convey their own culture, beliefs, and customs through language, just as they expand their military and political authority by conquering nations and exploiting their natural resources. This often leads to the depletion of cultural heritage, alongside the plundering of natural resources.

In the modern era, they seek to create markets for their cultural expressions, in addition to markets for their products and industrial goods. Consequently, they sometimes engage in inhumane practices when confronted with opposing cultures and languages, perpetuating a cycle of dominance and subjugation. In this context, it is essential to acknowledge the critical role that language and culture play in the dynamics of power and influence between colonizers and colonized nations.

As previously discussed, colonialists employ dominant discourses to establish spheres of knowledge that reinforce power dynamics. They endeavor to depict the dominant pole (own language) as positive, wise, and ideal, while characterizing the weaker pole (native/local languages) as sentimental, unwise, and foolish. To perpetuate this portrayal, various educational institutions and media outlets, such as film, art, architecture, literature, and more, are utilized to construct a distorted and ambiguous image of subjugated

nations and their cultures and languages. The responses by the colonized, particularly concerning language, culture, and identity, are the key to the continued existence of linguistic heritage.

When examining the textual records in national literature and culture, it becomes evident that the resilience of these subjugated nations and the preservation of their linguistic and cultural legacies stem from their resistance to linguistic domination (Iseke-Barnes, 2004). These subjugated languages can be divided into two main categories: 1) Languages that are overwhelmed and, in a sense, captivated by the dominant language (English in case of local Indian languages). These languages often adopt a more passive approach in opposition to the invader language. In doing so, they may change their vocabulary or even completely forsake their original linguistic identity over time. These cultures tend to forget their true roots as they become more engrossed in the dominant culture. 2) Languages that, despite their subjugation, remain alive, vibrant, and dynamic. They are open to the influences of the dominant language but respond with a creative approach. These languages continuously produce what can be described as "cultural antidotes" and linguistic creations to ensure their continued existence (Saraceni & Jacob, 2019). They create a complex web of intellectual and cultural products that actively engage with the discourse of the dominant language. In many cases, this approach proves more effective than military resistance. The reciprocity and reaction to the invasion, whether in the realms of language and culture or in military confrontations, shape the destinies of these societies. They can lead to the creation of modern thought and new discourses or result in the perpetuation of subjugated languages, identities, and territories.

Similarly, the "American dark-skinned Artistic Movement," a branch of the broader political movement known as Black Power in the 1960s, represents a case where subjugated communities, like the Iranian example mentioned earlier, utilized both military resistance and linguistic and textual reciprocity. These approaches allowed them to address identity-related inferiority complexes and reclaim their language and culture. This strategy is common among subjugated nations and, by challenging sovereignty in both political and cultural domains, they reaffirm their aspirations and place their faith in their indigenous culture.

"Creative disobedience" becomes a powerful form of resistance. It involves rejecting the dominant language and embracing an indigenous one. Subjugated nations use this linguistic act to create a plethora of literary and intellectual works. Literature and culture become powerful tools in the fight for political independence, just as Fanon, a fierce critic of colonialism, believed (Fanon, 1963, p. 72). Colonialist self-confidence is challenged when subjugated nations assert their identity through language and creative texts. The impact of literature in a colonialist's own language on their thoughts and identity cannot be underestimated. By utilizing their language, subjugated nations appear as claimants of a unique identity, and this artistic and literary struggle resonates with colonialist identities, leaving a lasting impression on their self-confidence.

In the realm of postcolonial studies, there have been critiques of portrayal of a homogeneous binary division between the Occident and Orient by scholars such as Said (1977). Literature has argued that there are multiple variations of Orientalism within the Western world, each serving distinct purposes. Said proposed that Europe employed Orientalism as a homogeneous "other" to forge a more cohesive European identity. Western studies of the Orient exemplify this approach, traditionally serving two primary goals:

a. Granting legitimacy to Western expansionism and imperialism in the eyes of Western nations and their decision-makers.
b. Persuading natives to embrace Western culture as the harbinger of universal culture, a beneficial path to escape backwardness and superstition, and to participate in the world's most advanced civilization.

In brief, postcolonialism doesn't advocate for cultural stasis; rather, it calls for recognition and critical reflection on the complexity of colonial relationships. It signifies the emergence of "unanimous" approaches that seek to navigate the convoluted path of change while valuing and preserving indigenous identity and culture, primarily facilitated through language. Most postcolonial thinkers recognize the significance and vitality of language (Wolff, 2017). They view it as more than just a tool for erasing identity; it is an essential element in shaping identity. Language is seen as equipped with the power to influence both thought and memory.

Colonialists, by manipulating language, attempt to make subjugated nations alien to themselves. Language serves as the vehicle to detach them from their heritage and culture. Passive subjugated nations accept the dominant language, even if only for basic communication, and this linguistic dependence becomes part of their collective memory. As they gradually replace their mother tongue, they detach from their indigenous culture and language, which results in an abandonment of their rich heritage. Postcolonial critics resist the domination of their language by colonialists and, by representing these critiques through their writings, engage in a battle against colonialist linguistic assault. They engage in a linguistic struggle, both within and outside the colonialist framework.

The dialectic of resistance and acceptance is therefore not a binary (yes/no, on/off) but a continuum. Many communities simultaneously adopt English for international communication while investing in the documentation, teaching, and litrary civilization of the indigenous languages. This dual strategy is itself a form of creative disobedience that reclaims agency within the constraints of global linguistic hierarchy. Examples include the ongoing revitalization of Irish and other Celtic languages, the persistent maintenance of Persian against successive waves of Arabic, Mongolian, Russian, French, and English influence, and the literary and pedagogical work of post-colonial writers who have appropriated and transformed the colonial language itself.

CONCLUSION

Recognizing the critical importance of preserving linguistic diversity in the face of colonial dominance of a particular language (English, in this case), there is a growing consensus on the need for language policies that safeguard the multifaceted aspects of languages worldwide. These policies aim to prevent languages from fading into oblivion and strive to invigorate their ongoing vitality. They emerge as pivotal agents in upholding linguistic diversity and preserving cultural heritage, often wielding greater influence than politicians in various contexts.

Some postcolonial scholars recognize that during the reciprocity process between the subjugated and the superior, language plays a central role. Both the superior and the subjugated parties harness the potential power of language for cultural exchange. On one hand, colonialists present their culture, art, and thoughts to the subjugated group, while, on the other hand, the language and energy of the subjugated group are influenced by the culture, language, and customs of the colonialists. Language, in this sense, can act as a form of colonialism, often imposed upon the conquered nation more than anything else. It sets the stage and motivation for many unintended problems and disputes, while also serving as a defensive tool for the subjugated nations to assert their identity. Colonialists strive to incline subjugated nations toward adopting their culture's language, imposing it for imitation. This imitation encompasses everyday matters, personal interactions, and the use of language and the formation of identity. However, as we know, imitation is always an approximation of the original, a simulacrum that is similar but not identical. Colonialists fear this alteration of cultural and linguistic appearances but must, to some extent, accept it.

This paper offers a critical synthesis of the scholarship on colonial linguistic dominance and the rise of world Englishes by reorganizing its existing literature under three thematic headings that map onto explicit research objectives. It clarifies the mechanisms through which colonial powers use language as an instrument of psychological and cultural control, the differential outcomes- language suicide vs. language murder for indigenous languages- and the forms of creative resistance that have emerged. From a strictly linguistic standpoint no language is inherently superior to another. Each language constitutes a unique expression of a community's identity and heritage. Languages provide a sense of unity and individuality in a community. Their dynamics naturally evolve over time, and some may eventually disappear due to various social, cultural, and economic factors.

Language is indeed a powerful tool. It not only facilitates communication but also plays a crucial role in shaping beliefs, values, and individual and collective identities. It is through language that people express their cultural distinctiveness, share their stories, and transmit their knowledge from one generation to the next. Colonialism has often involved linguistic domination as a means to exert control over indigenous populations and exploit their lands and resources. The colonizers' imposition of their language is a strategy to further their interests, and it reflects the power imbalances inherent in colonial relationships.

Given the importance of linguistic diversity, there is a growing recognition of the need for language policies that support and preserve the world's rich tapestry of languages. These policies aim to protect languages from extinction and promote their continued vitality. Linguists play a crucial role in this endeavor by studying, documenting, and working to revitalize endangered languages. In this view, linguists are seen as vital agents in safeguarding linguistic diversity and cultural heritage, arguably with greater significance than politicians in many contexts.

To clarify the author's positionality, the principal limitation of this study is its exclusive reliance on secondary sources and the absence of original empirical data or systematic comparative analysis of the five selected cases. Further research should therefore move beyond synthesis to focus on multi-sited investigations of contemporary language policy outcomes in specific postcolonial settings, employing both quantitative measures of language shift and qualitative accounts of speaker agency. Such work would help translate the theoretical insight synthesized here into actionable knowledge for language planners, educators, and communities seeking to maintain linguistic diversity in an English dominant global order.

In conclusion, language is a key factor in both shaping and dismantling identity, serving as a tool of both attack and defense for dominant and subordinate nations and their language. Previous studies illustrate that both sides in this conflict recognize the potency of language and craft their specific policies accordingly. This process is ongoing and eternal because language is a generative and enduring force. This perspective emphasizes the intrinsic value and equality of all languages.

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