

Is English enough? Or are voluntarily English-monolingual dinosaurs going to be in pathological museums in 2100? Economic fairness of English language imperialism in education and elsewhere.

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Invited workshop at ECIS
ESL and Mother Tongue Language
Forum

“Many Languages, One Message,
Equal Rights to the Curriculum”

2-5 March 2005, Rome, Italy

My question:

Is learning and using
English

with "native speakers"

"a linguistic handshake"

for us who have
other mother tongues?

Esperanto – a linguistic handshake

“One Chinese Esperanto speaker described Esperanto as a linguistic handshake. When two people shake hands they both reach out halfway. When two people speak Esperanto they have both made the effort to learn a relatively easy, neutral language **instead of one person making the huge effort to learn the other person's difficult national language and the other person making no effort at all except to correct his/her interlocutor's errors.**” Sylvan Zaft:

<http://www.esperanto.net/v eb/faq-9.html>

My question:

Is learning and using
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SOME REASONS FOR LINGUISTIC HUMAN RIGHTS IN EDUCATION AND MAINTENANCE OF ALL THE WORLD'S LANGUAGES

English is not enough!

**Neither for "native speakers",
nor for those with other mother tongues.**

Voluntarily monolingual English speakers are dangerous dinosaurs.

Parents who want their children with other mother tongues to learn English well, are often subjected to false socio-educational either/or rationalisations:
English OR the mother tongue

- Many parents are being told that their children need to learn English AND this means necessarily sacrificing the mother tongue: **subtractive learning**.
- After two generations, their children may be more or less monolingual English-speakers, instead of having learned both the mother tongue and English and other languages **ADDITIVELY**.

Question: Is English enough?

For them or for (other?) "native speakers"

English is not enough 1

English OR the mother tongue

- There is no need to choose; both/and/and is perfectly possible. In additive bilingual education, competence levels reached in a dominant language (e.g. English) are as high as or often higher than in subtractive monolingual English-medium education. In addition, children learn their own language. Multilingualism is the future.

English is not enough 2

English monolingual British graduates are already at a disadvantage (recruitment, salary level).

English is not enough 2

English is not enough. We are fortunate to speak a global language but, in a smart and competitive world, exclusive reliance on English leaves the UK **VULNERABLE** and dependent on the linguistic competence and the goodwill of others ... Young people from the UK are at a **GROWING DISADVANTAGE** in the recruitment market

Nuffield Languages Enquiry, 2000

English is not enough 3: inability to speak client's language can lead to failure

- A survey undertaken for the **Community of European Management Schools**, an alliance of academia and multinational corporations, concludes that a company's inability to speak a client's language can lead to failure to win business because it indicates lack of effort.
- **The Financial Times, 3.12.2001**

English is not enough 4: "Foreign"
language skills – earn more!

Graduates with foreign language
skills earn more than those who
only know English

(reported in the British newspaper
The Independent 31.5.2001)

English is not enough 5
Monolingual reductionism

**attitudes which see
monolingualism (in English?)
as something normal,
desirable,
sufficient, and
unavoidable**

Alienated snobs?

(Tariq Rahman, Pakistan, 2002)

- "English-medium schools tend to produce snobs completely alienated from their culture and languages"

'We are mentally colonialized and alienated from our cultures if all we know is in English'

Tariq Rahman, 2002, Pakistan

English is not enough 6

Supply and demand

- 'Good' English will be like literacy yesterday or computer skills today: employers see it as self-evident and necessary **BUT NOT SUFFICIENT** for good jobs.

Supply and demand theories predict:

When many people possess what earlier was a scarce commodity (near-native English), the price goes down. The value of 'perfect' English skills as a financial incentive decreases substantially when a high proportion of a country's or a region's or the world's population know English well

Figure 1. The market diagram (Grin 2003: 26)

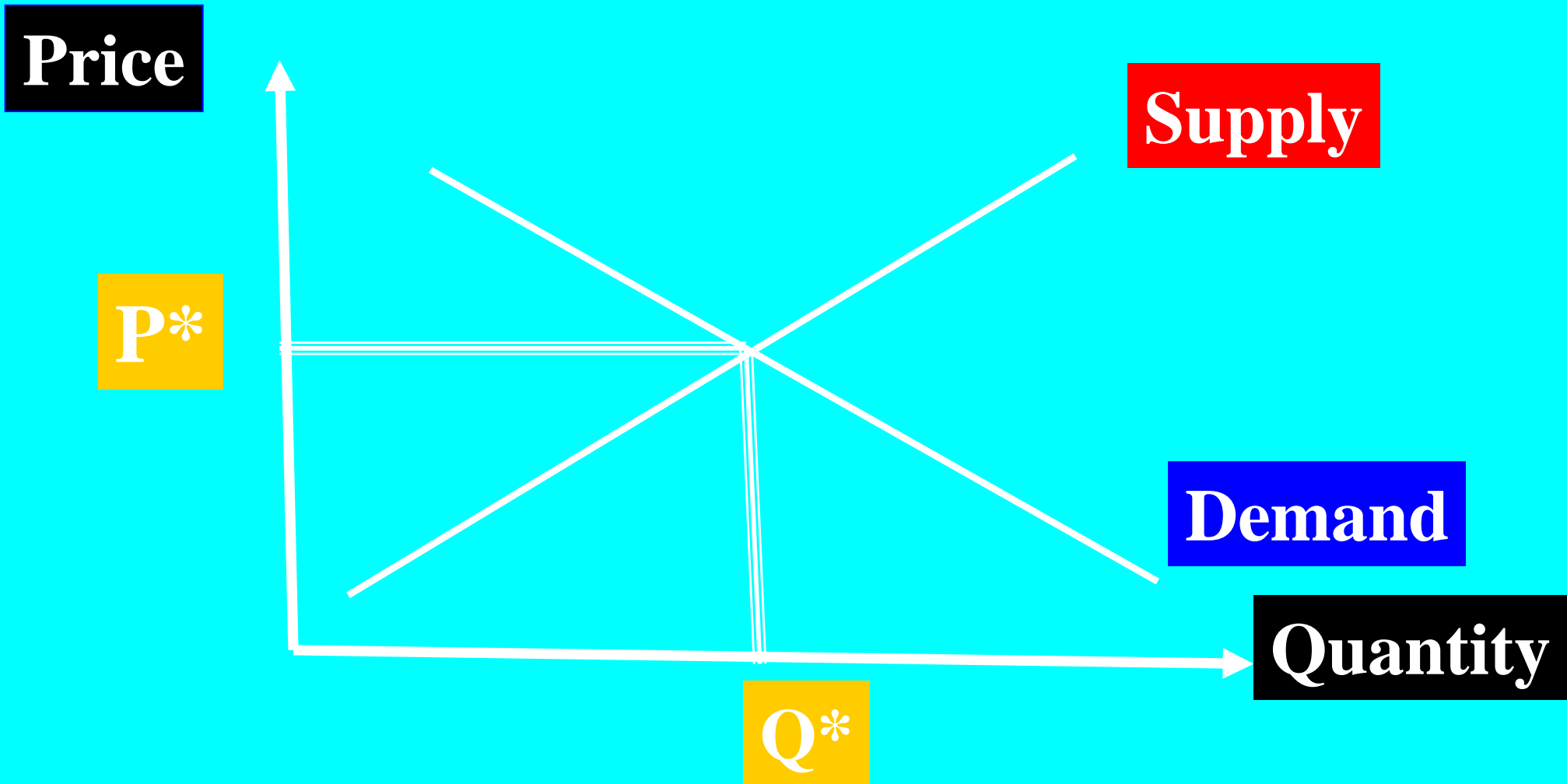
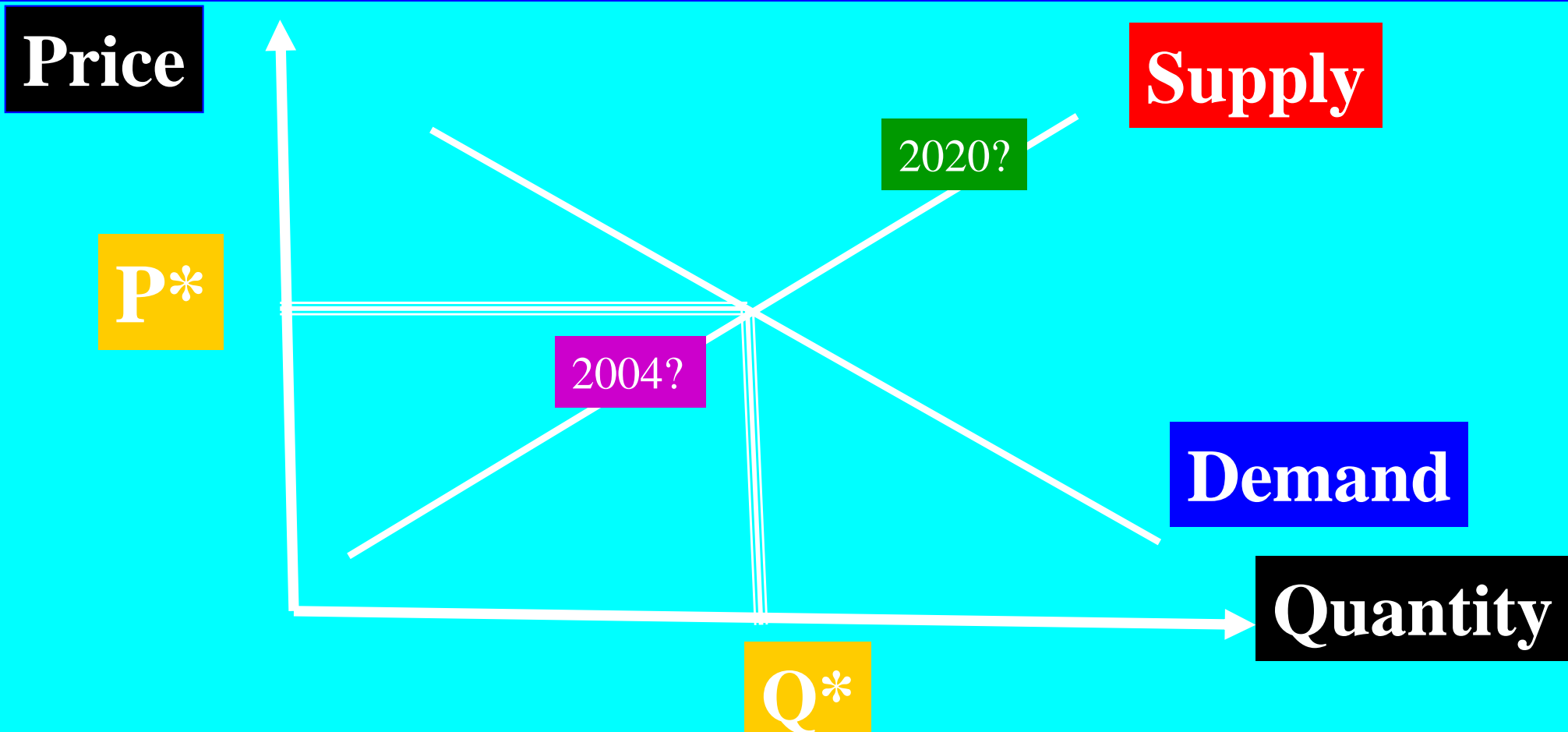


Figure 2. The market for high levels of English; what happens when supply is higher than demand? Consequences for market equilibrium



When the supply (number of people with "good" English) goes up, the price (its usefulness for individuals on the job market) goes down

Conclusion

There is no need to choose; both/and/and is perfectly possible.

'Good' English will be like literacy yesterday or computer skills today: employers see it as self-evident and necessary BUT NOT SUFFICIENT for good jobs. Multilingualism is the future.

2050: voluntarily English-monolingual dinosaurs to pathological museums?

State argument: Economics

The cost is prohibitive

"Very nice, we agree", States say

BUT

"it is impossible because

we do not have

THE MONEY"

Externalities and internalities as factors in cost-effectiveness – have they been accounted for, and for whom? Two concepts in mainstream economics

INTERNALITIES: the costs that are routinely counted in, in the price of a product

EXTERNALITIES: costs which can be seen as possible "side-effects", long-term effects (like environmental pollution and health effects, not counted in the price of cigarettes, or pollution and deaths from traffic accidents which are not counted in the price of a car). Many externalities are today not only **not** counted as costs which the consumer should pay; Often they are not mentioned or even known.

Externalities and internalities: who pays the costs?

- Costs for language learning, caused by the fact that people need common languages in order to be able to communicate, are not shared evenly.
- For instance, the teaching of English worldwide is paid for by everybody else but the native English speakers.
- Still it is **their** monolingualism and refusal to learn other languages that forces all of us others to learn their language, in a unidirectional, unsymmetrical bilingualism.
- We pay the costs while they benefit much more.

Externalities and internalities: monolingual English speakers

- Monolingual English speakers do not need to pay for our learning.
- (Monolingual and/or “native”) English speakers (or, rather, some of them) get direct cash transfers from our learning - the English teaching is a multibillion dollar business for Britain and the United States.
- For British exports, it is second only to North Sea oil (British council)

Externalities and internalities: monolingual English speakers

- Monolingual) English speakers are in a better negotiating position, being able to use their mother tongue while we others have to use a foreign or second language.
- They can concentrate more on content and less on form when using the mother tongue.
- In research, they dominate "international" journals (look at the editorial boards of a few...) and conferences; their papers are accepted into journals and conferences more often than equally scientifically solid papers by foreign-language writers of English. And so on...

Examples of externalities not internalised or shared: unsymmetrical bilingualism

Monolingual English speakers save a lot of money and curriculum time by not investing it in learning other languages.

USA savings: 19 billion/year 1

Most European countries use much curriculum time for teaching foreign languages in schools; Britain and the USA do not. The savings (as compared to Europe) because of the very limited foreign language teaching in the USA, with some 38 million pupils in elementary and secondary schools, are minimally around

19 billion dollars per year

(Grin & Sfreddo 1997, Grin 2003).

They benefit, we pay.

USA savings: 19 billion/year 2

These savings are made possible because "people in the rest of the world are willing to devote time, money and effort in learning [...] English" (Grin 2003).

USA can then invest this saved money (and time) into some other human-capital-enhancing activity that gives their students an edge. Or use it for wars...

Russian Federation, Leontiev 1995: 199

- According to the official census data from 1989, there are some 120 million Russians in the Russian Federation. Only 726,450 (0,637%) of them know another language of the former USSR. 11,802,537 Russians live in formerly autonomous Republics, now mostly called "Republics" or Soviet Socialist Republics. Only 84,427 (0,7153%!) of them fluently speak the official language of the Republic where they live.

Russian Federation, Leontiev 1995: 199

- Leontiev compares this with the percentage who spoke Russian fluently among the almost 10 million native speakers of the languages of "title nations", e.g. the Chuvash in the Chuvashian Republic: it was 79,99%.
- We might get similar figures for China, the United States, Australia, etc.

Externalities and internalities: linguistic majorities

- In relation to linguistic **majorities**, (or **dominant** groups in general), externalities are today mostly left as externalities, i.e. not counted in the costs that majorities cause.
- More specifically, the costs for the protection of **their** Linguistic Human Rights (**LHRs**), like **their** right to mother tongue medium education, are often not even mentioned, let alone counted in as costs.
- In any case, we minorities participate as tax payers in paying for their LHRs

Externalities and internalities: linguistic minorities

- On the other hand, when counting what is cost-effective in relation to **minorities** (or other **dominated** groups/peoples), externalities **are** often counted as costs, i.e. internalised.
- But they are NOT shared – we are supposed to pay them all ourselves (no “taxpayers money should be used for minorities’ “private ethnicity”, John Edwards)

Justice: internalise externalities (count them as costs) and share the costs

- Therefore, the conclusion is often drawn that the granting of (linguistic) human rights to minorities (including the maintenance and development of the languages of minorities and indigenous peoples, also through mother-tongue medium education, and proper L2 learning where teachers are bilingual) is not cost-effective - it is simply claimed to be too expensive.
- On the other hand, the cost of **mis-education** and of **not** granting LHRs are treated as externalities or not even mentioned.
- Likewise, the benefits of proper education leading to multilingualism are not drawn in, to balance the costs.

Besides...relative costs of communications

Physical communications (move things & people)

- Costs enormous
- ROI low & negative
- Effects negative for environment and for peace and equity
- Rationale non-existent

● **Mental communication (exchange ideas)**

- Costs relatively much lower
- ROI much higher
- Fewer side-effects
- Rationale positive for peace

Conclusion of economic arguments and counterarguments

- When externalities of today's mis-education are counted in, no state can afford **NOT** to organise indigenous and minority education properly.
- The debt that speakers of those big languages that we others learn as foreign languages owe to us others, should be counted in when we ask for protection of our languages for the sake of justice and equity.

Justice and fairness (the handshake argument)

Let us have fewer languages in the European Union, to make things more efficient and to save interpretation and translation costs. Let us only use three working languages, the Big Three: English, French and German...
...but on the condition that nobody is ever allowed to use their mother tongue. Everybody must use a foreign language.

Suggested by Theo van Els, former vice-chancellor of the University of Nijmegen, in the early 1990s

Justice and fairness (the handshake argument)

Guess who would be silent in the European Union?

But for most of us others, complying with this suggestion is what WE are already doing in any case, as soon as we are outside our countries.

The only difference would be that English, French and German speakers might understand what we experience every day.

I am giving this presentation in my fifth languages, in terms of order of learning...

Conclusion of **economic arguments** and
counterarguments

Today wrong economics
prevail over human rights.

Guidelines for USA foreign policy from 1948 Bretton Woods, (George Kennan) to World Bank & IMF to GATT to WTO

'We have 50% of the world's wealth, but only 6,3% of its population. In this situation, **our real job** in the coming period is to devise a pattern of relationships which permit us to **maintain this position of disparity**. To do so, we have to dispense with all sentimentality ... we should **cease thinking about human rights, the raising of living standards, and democratisation**'

Linguistic neo-imperialism

David Rothkopf, *Foreign policy*, 1997

It is in the economic and political interest of the United States to ensure that if the world is moving toward a **common language, it be English**; that if the world is moving toward common telecommunications, safety, and quality standards, they be American; and that if **common values** are being developed, they be values with which Americans are comfortable. These are not idle aspirations. English is linking the world... Americans should not deny the fact that **of all the nations in the history of the world, theirs is the most just, the most tolerant, the most willing to constantly reassess and improve itself, and the best model for the future.**

Condoleezza Rice, 2000

“The rest of the world is best served by the USA pursuing its own interests because American values are universal”.

British global English

A new career service is needed, for gentlemen teachers of English with equivalent status to 'the Civil Service, Army, Bar, or Church', an 'army of linguistic missionaries' generated by a 'training centre for post-graduate studies and research', and a 'central office in London, from which teachers radiate all over the world'. The new service must 'lay the foundations of a world-language and culture based on our own'. *R.V. Routh, 1941*

Linguistic neo-imperialism

“English should be the sole official language of the European Union”.

(Director, British Council, Germany, cited in Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung, 26 February 2002)

US global English

A CIA report in 1997 stated that the coming five years would be decisive for the establishment of English as the sole international language.

Hervé Lavenir de Buffon, founder of 'Comités pour le français, langue européenne', *RO Magazine* 34, 22 June 2002.

Senator Albert J. Beveridge of Indiana, USA, 1901

- "God has marked the American people as his chosen nation to finally lead in the regeneration of the world. This is the divine mission of America, and it holds for us all the profit, all the glory, all the happiness possible to man. We are trustees of the world's progress, guardians of its righteous peace."

George W. Bush, USA, 2000

**Our nation is
chosen by God and
commissioned by history
to be a model to the world**

Linguistic neo-imperialism

No agency, no intentions, “God”?

- **“The ascendancy of English is merely the outcome of the coincidence of accidental forces” (Robert Kaplan 2001: 19)**
- **English has become a global language because it “was in the right place at the right time” (David Crystal 1997: 8).**

Maybe it was chosen by God, just as “Our nation is chosen by God” (Bush)?

Pierre Bourdieu: **globalisation is ideological universalisation of particular models**

France, glorifying the French society as ‘the presumed incarnation of the Rights of Man’ saw ‘the inheritance of the French Revolution ... as the model for all possible revolutions’. Building on this example, Bourdieu (2001: 96-97) describes today's **globalisation**

Globalisation is

a pseudo-concept that is both descriptive and prescriptive, which has replaced “modernisation”, that was long used in the social sciences in the USA as a euphemistic way of imposing a naively ethnocentric evolutionary model by means of which different societies were classified according to their distance from the economically most advanced society, i.e. American society. [...] The word (and the model it expresses) incarnates the most accomplished form of *the imperialism of the universal*, which consists of **one society universalising its own particularity covertly as a universal model.**

Globalisation is

‘a pseudo-concept that ... incarnates the most accomplished form of

the imperialism of the universal,

which consists of

**one society (USA) universalising
its own particularity covertly
as a universal model.’**

(Pierre Bourdieu 2001)

Linguistic globalisation?

a pseudo-concept that ... incarnates the most accomplished form of

the imperialism of the universal,

which consists of

**two societies (Britain, USA)
universalising their own linguistic
particularity covertly
as a universal model.**

Is linguistic imperialism part of modern "agentless" imperialistic control?

"Most actors share the view of the spread of English as natural, neutral, and beneficial [...] Broader issues about the relationship between British or US-American business interests and the promotion of English usually remain hidden behind the smokescreen of actorless globalization. Most significantly, Kachru, Crystal and others dissociate English from the centralized power relations of national imperial states."

Hamel, Rainer Enrique (2004). Language Empires, Linguistic Imperialism and the Future of Global Languages. Manuscript.
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Where are international schools?

- Are some international schools unintentionally agents of subtractive linguistic globalisation and neo-imperialism?
- Will your students become (more or less) English-monolingual dinosaurs – or will they be able to perform just and equitable handshakes? And get jobs? Be creative? Have diverse ideas and knowledges?
- How are you supporting other languages, including every student's mother tongue(s)

Ole Henrik Magga, Ida Nicolaisen, Mililani Trask, Robert Dunbar and Tove Skutnabb-Kangas (2005). **Indigenous Children's Education and Indigenous Languages**. Expert paper written for the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues. New York: United Nations.

A legal and educational argumentation, showing that teaching indigenous children through the medium of a dominant language is a violation of their right to education.

Dunbar, Robert, Skutnabb-Kangas, Tove, Id
Balkassm, Hassan, Nicolaisen, Ida, Magga, Ole
Henrik & Trask, Mililani (forthcoming). **Education
of Indigenous children and violations of Articles
II(b) and II(e) of the uN Genocide Convention.
Expert paper for the United Nations Permanent
Forum on Indigenous Issues.** New York: United
Nations.

A legal argumentation showing that forced
dominant language medium education of
indigenous and minority children participates in
linguistic genocide according to the UN
Genocide Convention definitions.

Skutnabb-Kangas, Tove (2000). **Linguistic genocide in education - or worldwide diversity and human rights?** Mahwah, NJ & London, UK: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 818 pp.

(see www.ruc.dk/~tovesk/ for a full list of contents and some reviews).