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Hegemony of the Empire to the Language Hegemony: A Correlational Case of English
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ABSTRACT

Language and power have been interlinked and are noticeable in the form of presence of languages like English, French and Spanish in different countries around the world due to rules of British, French and Spanish colonies. The colonial empires made systematic attempts for linguistic and cultural colonization as well making people believe that the language of colonial rulers was superior to their local languages. The spread of English around the globe today had its roots in the colonial empire of British. Through the power, which these rulers enjoyed, they established the hegemony of their language. And in the present day, the economic and military powers of these hegemonic powers are also serving as the tools to establish their linguistic hegemony. With this background, the present paper seeks to review how hegemony of power, which Britain and America enjoyed and enjoy, is correlational with the hegemony of English language spread and use around the globe.

Keywords: *Language, Power, Colonization, Hegemony, English language*

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1. Introduction

Reading this article makes one of the 1.6 billion people in the world who speak English as either a first or a second language. It is common to hear that Arab people, for example, who speak Arabic as a mother tongue, speak English too as a second or foreign language. However, it is not common to hear that English native speakers speak Arabic as a second or foreign language. It is also common to hear that a Chinese student can read and write in English, but it is not common for English or American students to speak or write in Mandarin. The case can be true for other languages all over the world. The English language is the language that is used as a second language in most parts of the world. In Europe, for example, a large number of young learners learn English as a second language who speak one of the European languages: French; German; Italian; and Spanish. Based on these facts, the question which is raised in this context is why Chinese people speak and use English and not vice versa, though the number of Mandarin speakers is larger than English? There are some factors that explain the

spread of English and its common use around the globe. The main reasons for the hegemony of English over other world languages are the previous strong power of the British Empire and the current political, military and technological power of the United States.

The importance of this language is that it goes hand in hand with the technological progression in the 20th century. People all over the world are now seeking to learn English for many reasons such as travelling, business, learning sciences and technology, etc. In his speech about the world's language on the 17 January 2008, the Prime Minister of Britain, Gordon Brown stated that-

The English language, like football and other sports, began here and has spread to every corner of the globe. Today more than a billion people speak English. It is becoming the world's language: the language of the internet, of business, of international flight - the pathway of global communication and global access to knowledge. And it has become the vehicle for hundreds of millions of people of all countries to connect with each other, in countless ways. Indeed, English is much more than a language: it is a bridge across

borders and cultures, a source of unity in a rapidly changing world. (No 10 Downing Street)

Indeed, it is the language used in technology, policy, economics, education, media, international organizations, and companies, military, and food as well. No one can argue about the wide spread of the English language around the globe which it can be described as the world language. Thus, the purpose of this paper was to highlight the historic relation of power and language expansion “linguistic hegemony”.

This paper is divided into three sections: The first section discusses the historical background of the previous empires: Latin; Arabic; and Spanish, which took place in different parts of the world and had dominated the world across different periods of time. In the second section, we review the history of the English language during the British Empire between the 16th and 20th century in which English started spreading around the globe resulting the largest empire in history. The other factors that helped accelerate the use of English worldwide where English was recognized as the world language are also discussed. In the third section, we refer to some factors, which may contribute to the decline of English.

2. Historical Background: Empires and their Languages

The spread of many languages over history was connected with cultural, demographic and religious factors; however, the political factor of sovereignty was considered the most effective. The world’s history witnessed the emergence and decline of many empires including Greek, Roman, Islamic, Spanish, Persian, Turkish, Portuguese, English, and recently the American. The purpose of this section is to shed light on three of the most dominant Empires in history; Roman, Islamic, Spanish, and how their dominance was correlated to the dominance of their languages (i.e., Latin, Arabic, and Spanish).

2.1 Roman Empire and the Dominance of Latin (753-476 B.C.)

The Roman Empire was considered the third leading Empire that dominated the ancient world after the decline of Greek and Persian Empires. Historians actually did not agree about the specific date of the Roman Empire emergence; nevertheless, most historical resources agreed that the Romans were emerging in the ancient world in 753 B.C. (Creighton, 1986, p.7). In

approximately 200 B.C, the dominance of Roman Empire was solidified based on many factors including the victory in most Roman conquests and the emergence of Christianity.

During the time of Alexander, Emperor Trajan and afterwards Caesar, the entire ancient world, from Persia to Spain, and later from Palestine to Morocco were under the rule of Rome. The time of conquests corresponded with the dominance of Latin. Latin literature and culture were distributed in Roman colonies. Indeed, most of the Latin language and culture were influenced by Greek because of the effect of the powerful Greek civilization on the Roman Empire in many aspects such as literature, sciences, philosophy, and architecture. Roman aristocratic classes enrolled their children in Greek institutions. For example, “in the first century B.C Gaulish notables were sending their children to be educated in Greek in Massalis” (Ostler, 2005 p.252). Many philosophers, scientists and authors like Cicero, Caesar Ovid, Virgil and Horace played a significant role in flourishing and promoting Latin during the golden ages of the Roman Empire. In the 13th century, many Latin schools had been established throughout the Roman Empire; and more emphasis was placed on science, philosophy and religion.

Around 29 A.D., a struggle started between the preservatives ‘Romans who were against Christianity’ and Christians. This struggle lasted for a long period of time and ended with the decline of temples of the old Roman Gods and the dominance of Christianity (Creighton, 1986, p.95-96,112-113). With the time Romans embraced Christianity as a primary religion and they started spreading it all over the Empire. The spread of Christianity played an essential role in enhancing Latin where churches took place in teaching Latin in the regions that had no schools.

The Roman Empire declined at the end of 16th century; however, Latin did not decline at the same time. According to Ostler (2005), there had been three declining periods of Latin. The decline started in the second half of the first millennium A.D and reached its climax in 1687 after the publication of the last well-known scientific book in Latin, *Principia*, by Newton (Ostler, 2005, p.315-330). Historians searched for a long time to work out the precise causes for the decline of the Roman Empire and its primary language ‘Latin’; however, most of them agreed that civil wars, Barbarian



invasions, and the emergence of another powerful 'Islamic' Empire are the main causes of the Roman Empire's collapse (Creighton, 1986, p.117-118). Though more than three decades passed from the decline of Latin, however, its roots extended to most **Italian** and **Portuguese** languages and influenced other Indo-European languages; English, French, German, Dutch and Swedish contain many Latin words. This could be considered a clear indication of its power and hegemony.

2.2 Islamic Empire and the Dominance of Arabic (636-1492)

Arabic is considered one of the Semitic languages. Its extension went back to the fourth century B.C. At that time Arabic was a minor language; the majority of its speakers were desert Bedouins and pastoralists. The dominance of Arabic went hand in hand with the spread of the Islamic Empire around 630 A.D. Actually, most Islamic principles and instructions promoted the Arabic language. This fact was demonstrated by one of the most popular sayings of the prophet Mohamed 'peace be upon him' when he said "Love the Arabs for three reasons: because I am an Arab, because the Quran is in Arabic and because the inhabitants of paradise speak Arabic" (Ostler, 2005, p.93). The dominance of Arabic during the Islamic Empire was due to the spread of Islam and the progression of Arabian culture and science.

The spread of Islam developed in a parallel line with the spread of Arabic language: "Arabic Language was used in a unique way in the spread of this religion" (Ostler, 2005 p.94). After the prophet Mohamed 'peace upon him' left this earthly world in 632 C.E, the Islamic Empire expanded to reach China to the east, Persia and Turkey to the North, and Egypt and North Africa to the West. Some 6000 kilometers away at the other end of Islam's domains, in the Iberian Peninsula, Islam overspread as the army led by Tariq bin Ziyad crossed the Strait of Gibraltar (Jibl Tariq, the mountain of Tariq) in 711 C.E. After many victories in Portugal, Spain, Italy, Cyprus, Malta, and South Russia, the Islamic army was defeated by the French in a battle called 'Balat Al Shouhada'.

Alongside the role of Islam in distribution of Arabic language, Muslims founded solid and civilized institutions in their colonies. During the Islamic Empire, medical sciences, geometry, geography, poetry, architecture and many other sciences progressed, which was very important in

enhancing Arabic language and culture. Many figures contributed to the scientific and linguistic development during the Islamic Empire; Al Beroni who first discovered the earth was a sphere, Abn Sina, who first discovered blood circulation, Al Khoarzmi, who first sat the Al Jebra role in Maths in which he created the Arabian numbers and established some basic roles in multiplication and subtraction. Later, many resources were translated from Arabic into most of the worlds' languages; this could also be an indication of the value of Islamic civilization.

In the eighth and ninth centuries the Islamic empire went into decline; more specifically the fall of Cordoba in 1236, Seville in 1248 and Granada in 1492 marked the actual decline of Islam and Arabic. Political corruption led many Islamic districts to be divided from the ruling of head state; this made most of such districts occupied by Turkish and then allied countries. Also, the other important factor that contributed to the decline of the Islamic Empire was the division of Islam into many cults such as Sheiaah, Sonnah, Moutazallah...etc. These cults weakened the unity of Islamic Empire and contributed to its collapse. However, the influence of Arabic is still noticeable in most of the Islamic Empire's previous colonies. There are many Arabic words in Spanish, Portuguese, Turkish, Swahili, Serbian and Hebrew.

2.3 Spanish Empire and the Dominance of Spanish (1516-1714)

The fall of the Islamic Empire in Granada in 1492 marked the starting point of the foundation of the Spanish Empire which was considered the first Empire in modern history. The Spanish Empire lasted from the beginning of 15th century to the middle of 19th century. Most historians considered the Spanish Empire as the first global Empire because it was the first Empire that reached to the world's largest continents. It started in Europe, spread to Africa, to Asia and finally to South and North America. This dominance was related to many factors. The most significant ones were the growth of the Spanish Empire's power alongside the increase of its colonies and the role of Columbus' journeys in the discovery of far places of the world that became Spanish colonies and territories (Merriman, 1999, p.19-24).

After Spain was unified by Isabella I and Ferdinand V, many colonies and territories were held by the Spanish Empire

in Europe, Africa, the Canary Islands, Asia, Oceania, North America, and South America. Most Spanish conquests aimed to the spread of Christianity and expanding the empire colonies. “The Spanish approach to Christianity emphasized high-level authority as a guarantee of orthodoxy” (Ostler, 2005 p.333). The Spanish conquests reached their climax in the time of Charles III, when the Spanish army approached South Africa and moved far into Mexico, Venezuela, and most of the Caribbean islands. Alongside the spread of Spanish colonies and the foundation of many Orthodox Churches in most of those colonies, the Spanish language witnessed the highest growth at the end of 14th century. During the time of John II at the beginning of the 15th century the Catholic Church took the role and the sovereignty of Catholicism approached most Spanish colonies, nevertheless, Spanish was dramatically growing (Merriman, 1999, p.19-24).

During the period from 1492 to 1529, the role of the Spanish Empire’s expansion was held by Columbus, who was sponsored and supported by Queen Isabella and King Ferdinand. In 1493 Columbus returned to Spain with his important discovery about the “Indian” islands, Caribbean islands, and Latin America. Seven years later, Columbus was sent back with Spanish military forces and 17 ships. This voyage was crucial in the establishment and expansion of the Spanish Empire and the discovery of the new world. Essentially, Columbus opened the door for the new world discovery to be the new Spanish Empire.

It was not until 17th and 18th centuries when the Spanish Empire reached its golden age. Many Spanish legacies were distributed all over the colonies. There were strong progresses in science, industry, commerce, and agriculture. In the 18th century, many schools were opened in Spain and its colonies for promoting Spanish and the use Arabic or other languages was prohibited particularly in Spain (*Kamen, 2003, p. 493-496*). The Spanish Empire took an important part in spreading Spanish education to most colonies to extend its investments. For instance, in 1522 the Spanish took a significant part in a silver investment in Mexico and Peru. In addition, the growth of the Spanish sailing trade expanded the usage of the Spanish language all over the world.

Though the Spanish Empire did not influence the culture of its colonies, most of its colonies adopted the Spanish language. This might be due to the role of Churches

and slave trade at that time. The Spanish civil war, the growth of the British Empire and the political and social crisis that appeared in Spain in 1917 were major factors in the Spanish Empire’s decline (Balfour, 1997, p.200-214).

The expansion of new Empires such as English, French, American, Portuguese, and German played a significant role in the decline of the Spanish Empire. In addition the defeat of the Spanish army on French borders by Napoleon, and in 1898 Spanish forces led by Admiral Patricio were defeated by the U.S. Navy led by Commodore George Dewey. Also, many Spanish colonies and territories gained their independence in Portugal, Mexico, Cuba and the Philippines. The loss of most of the Spanish Empire’s colonies and territories, particularly the wealthy ones in the Caribbean islands, the Philippines and South America created a lack in the economic resources and accordingly the destruction of the economic resources in the Empire.

3. Correlation of World’s Empires with the Dominance of their Languages

As we have seen so far, most of the ancient world’s Empires had almost similar emergence and decline conditions. They were based on religious foundations. The major criterion of language distribution was colonialism and civilization. Nevertheless, great ancient Empires left back languages that have survived until our current time.

4. The New Empire and the Hegemony of English

As we discussed in previous sections about the different empires across history and interrelations in power, language, and religious sovereignty, this section will shed light on the most powerful empire which lasted from the end of the 16th century to the 20th century- ‘the British Empire’. Through this section, we would also explain the factors that made the Empire last for such a long time. The relationship of the British Empire and the spread of the English language are also discussed. In addition, the new imperialism that dominated the world today by its economic, political, technological, and military powers is highlighted. Some important factors which let the English language be spoken by a large number of people around the globe are finally explained.

4.1 The British Empire

The British Empire played an important role in the spread of the English language by forcing local people to speak the language in order to communicate with



native English speakers such as North America and Australia. It was also spread by considering English as a way to obtain economic and social aims in other areas such as Africa, Asia and Oceania (Australia). The spread of the British Empire made the English language widely spoken in different areas. Although the British Empire declined in the 20th century, the language remains spoken in its colonies such as India where a large number of people speak English and it is also the official language of the country.

At the end of the 16th century, the English language started as a first move towards globalization. At that time, it is believed that the number of English speakers worldwide was about 6 million; however, the number increased dramatically to reach about 250 million between 1588 and 1952. This increase was due to the spread of the British Empire in the world (Crystal 1997). At the time of its peak in the late 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century, the British Empire ruled about one quarter of the world's population and it covered about a quarter of the world's land. Because of this spread of the empire, it has been described as the empire on which the sun never sets. English has increased through the spread of British colonies throughout the world such as India, America, Africa, Australia, and Canada, etc. These countries still use English as either the main language, a second language, or a foreign language. The language is still used as an official language in West African countries such as Uganda, Malawi, Zambia, and Zimbabwe. It is also still used as a second language in West African countries such as Ghana, Nigeria, and Liberia. However, there are some West African countries such as Kenya and Tanzania, where English had been used as an official language, but was later replaced by Swahili, (Crystal, 1997: 43-49).

In general, the dominance of English could be clearly seen in most West African countries as a result of the British Empire. In South-east Asia and the South Pacific region the dominance of English has affected the government administration and law. Crystal (1997) stated that "English had come to be established throughout the region, (Singapore, Hong Kong, Papua New Guinea, and Malaysia) as the medium of law and administration, and was being increasingly in other contexts (p. 50)." Crystal provided an example of the dominance of English in a newspaper as he states that "A famous example was the

English-language daily newspaper, *The Straits Times*, which began publication in 1845" (p. 50). In the Asian regions, the dominance of English could be found in the language of government and the legal system as is the case in Singapore, whereas English is used as a foreign language as is the case in Malaysia. In addition to the use of English mixed with Chinese language as is the case in Hong Kong. Media is dominated by the English language in Papua New Guinea so it is common to see advertisements, listen to the radio or watch local channels in English.

The largest country where English along with Hindi was considered to be the official languages is India. Since it was occupied by the British between 1858 and 1947, the country has adopted English in most of its sectors. Crystal (1997) clarified the use of English in different sectors: "legal system, government administration, secondary and higher education, the armed forces, the media, business and tourism" (p. 43). It could be clearly seen that the British Empire reached areas from east to west of the world. After the decline of the British Empire, the United States took over the spread of the English language in the world. The spread of languages across the world would be discussed next to give more details about the major languages and their speakers.

4.2 Language Spread

It is worth discussing the spread of languages across the world in order to highlight the most spoken language compared to other languages and what are the reasons for this spread. We took an example of a graph from Fishman (1997) which indicated the number of people in millions of different existing languages around the globe. Figure (1) shows that the largest spoken language in the world is Chinese followed by English where the number exceeds 300 million. Although the largest spoken language is Chinese, English is the most dominant language in the world. Chinese is the most spoken language because the population of Chinese people is the largest in the world. However, it is still limited to Chinese people whereas English is spoken in different areas around the globe either as a first or a second language.

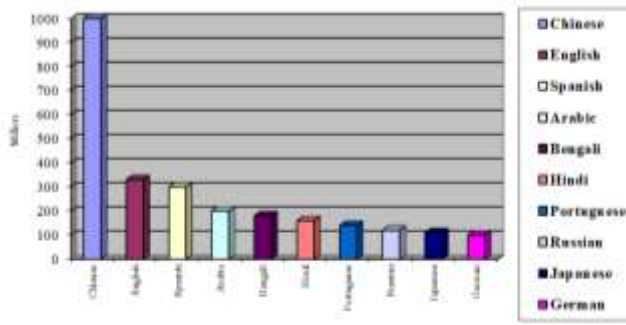


Figure 1: The major world languages with their speakers-the number of people quoted from Fishman (1997)

It is apparently demonstrated that learning English as a second language was most common in different parts of the world. It could also be clearly noticed that the number of English learners as a second language was more than the number of native speakers.

The spread of English was described by the linguist Braj Kachru mentioned in Crystal (1997) as three circles: the inner circle; the outer circle; and the expanding circle (p. 53). The inner circle represented the native speakers of English such as the case in the U.S.A, the U.K, Ireland, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand. The number of speakers was estimated to be between 320 and 380 million. The outer circle represented the speakers of English as a second language where the language plays an important role in the country such as the case in India, Singapore, and Malawi, etc. The number of speakers was estimated to be between 150 and 300 million. The expanding circle represented the users of English as a foreign language where the country recognizes the importance of English and therefore English is taught as a foreign language such as the case in Japan, Greece, Poland, Russia and China. The number of speakers was estimated to be between 100 and 1000 million. Figure (2) clearly shows the distribution of the three circles of world language speakers proposed by Crystal (1997).

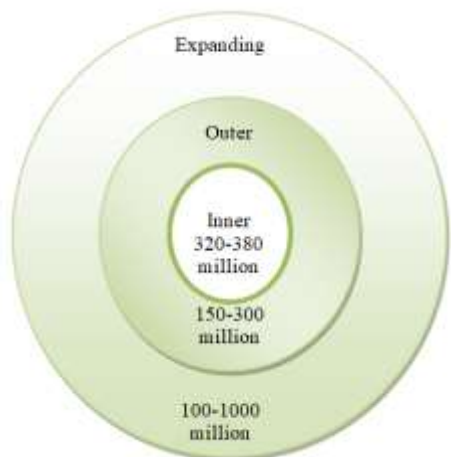


Figure 2: The three circles of world English speakers as explained in Crystal (1997: 54)

According to Ferguson (2005), "the spread and decline of a language is causally linked to the power and the fortunes of their speakers rather than to any properties of the language code" (p. 110). Accordingly the author emphasized the main factors that contributed to the spread of English language globally: The British Empire and the growing economic, military and political dominance of the United States in the late 20th century. In another definition, Cooper (1982) in Phillipson (1992) defined the spread of language as "an increase, over time, in the proportion of a communication network that adopts a given language or language variety for a given communicative function" (p. 78). Some of the factors as mentioned by Lewis (1982) in Phillipson (1992: 78) could be summarized as colonization and modernization (economic development). The latter was the case of the United States in the current time whereas the former was the case of the British Empire during the late 16th and early 17th centuries.

4.3 The Americanization of the World

The new dominance of English was slightly different from the previous one which was guided by the British Empire. The Americanization of the world is now turning to a new era where people are dominated by their desire to learn technology, watch the latest Hollywood productions, or drive the most luxurious Cadillac. The world is also dominated by the multinational companies such as McDonalds which are described by some scholars as McDonaldization of the world. We argue that the United States has dominated the world in different aspects: economically, technologically, militarily, and politically.

5. Factors behind Dominance of English over other World Languages

It is not easy to adopt one language to be used as the world language. However, it is the best way to find a solution to the translation problems which, in some cases, can cause misunderstanding between countries. One of the problems people of the world face today is how they can communicate and understand each other. Today, there might be a need to have an international means of communication that can be shared by people all over the world. This need is triggered by the over-flow of people and the dramatic increase of migration. People can now move easily to live in different countries. They can also start business with other people around the



globe by using the Internet. It is also possible now to transfer knowledge between people in an easy way via simply a mouse click. People can also participate in a group of their interest to share ideas with each other. All of these can be true if one language can be spoken by these groups. The challenge is which language can be adopted to be used by a large number of people around the globe who speak as many as 7000 languages? Graddol (1997) stated that the number of people is over 1,400 million people of countries with English being used officially according to the 2000 project of the British Council in 1995. They estimated that by the year 2000 "over one billion people will be learning English. English is the main language of books, newspapers, airports and air-traffic control, international business and academic conferences, science technology, diplomacy, sport, international competitions, pop music and advertising" (p. 2). We argue that there should be a common second language that all people around the world can speak. English is now the language which can be used as a second language due to its hegemony over the technology and other factors that will be discussed later.

5.1 The Importance of a Global Language

As we discussed earlier, the world has become a small village of people who speak different languages. Therefore, one language should be adopted in order to facilitate the communication process between these groups. Crystal (1997) stated that it is very easy to communicate with other people either around the globe or your neighborhood by using email. This is due to the advanced technology which makes the world as a village, more precisely as a global village. To live in a global village, you need to communicate with your global neighbors for many reasons. For example, you may need to establish a business company somewhere in this global village, you may need to have friends who have similar interests, you may need to sell or buy things in a global market, or you may need to warn others of a dangerous disease that is spreading around the globe. The world today has changed in a way that different organizations establish which concerns are important about some issues such as Greenpeace that is concerned about global warming and genetic engineering...etc.

5.2 Media

English was the first language to be used in televisions, radios, newspapers, and advertisements. Graddol (1997) argued that

"the BBC World Service was one of the few broadcasting institutions with worldwide reach" (p. 46). According to Crystal (1997), the BBC (British Broadcasting Company) started in 1919 followed by the KDKA in Pennsylvania in 1920 (p. 87). Technology helped the dominance of English worldwide because most of the global movies, news, documentaries, and science fictions are broadcasted in English. Although there are a large number of other languages in media today, the English language is still at the top because it is being used worldwide as a language of some local newspapers, local TV channels, and local radios. For example, in Libya where English is not highly used in the government, they have English local newspapers such as *The Tripoli Post* and *Al-Fajral-Jadeed* besides the local English radio channel. This situation may also exist in other countries around the globe which can be seen as a result of the dominance of the English language.

The wide spread of English through the media can affect other cultures as we can see, for example, in the power of advertisements and how people may get influenced by other cultures. Loutzenheiser (2005) discussed the opposite direction of media which can harm other cultures. She stated that "One society's media dominate another country's culture" (p. 126). It is now more dangerous than ever as it can be possible to broadcast a channel from any part of the world to the rest of the world. The governments now have less control to protect their cultures and therefore it is under the power of English. For example, the impact of movies, on people can be a serious threat to the culture as mentioned by German director Wim Wenders, quoted in Crystal (1997): "People increasingly believe in what they see, and they buy what they believe in...People use, drive, wear, eat, see, and buy what they see in the movies" (p. 91). Crystal then argues that "If this is true, then the fact that most movies are made in the English language must surely be significant, at least in the long term" (p. 91).

5.3 Internet

Through the spread of internet technology, the world became more sophisticated. Now the world is connected through internet technology which becomes one of the necessities that every government and individual should rely on. The power of the internet could be seen in our life-style where people are dominated by the use of internet in different aspects such as learning, shopping, making friends around the globe,

watching international and even local channels, reading the news and searching for certain information, introducing oneself to the world, and sending and receiving huge files to and from others around the globe.

In this respect, Graddol (1997) pointed out that:

90% of internet hosts are based in English-speaking countries. It is not surprising; therefore, that the majority of traffic and the majority of web sites are based in English and that those users based in other languages, find they have to communicate with others in the cyberspace community through the medium of English. (p. 61).

People cannot overlook this sort of technology; therefore, it is much recommended to learn the language which is used most on the internet. For example, the spread of some important web pages such as global universities make people eager to learn English in order to have an opportunity to study advanced degrees. Moreover, it is possible to participate in online courses from anywhere in the world. Specter (1996) in Crystal (1997) stated that "If you want to take full advantage of the internet there is only one way to do it: learn English, which has more than ever become America's greatest and most effective export" (p. 107).

According to the latest statistics by Internet World Stats (2009) of the global internet users, the English language was at the top of other world languages with 452 million users. The number of English users was larger than the Chinese. However, the Chinese language was the most spoken language in the world as mentioned earlier. An analysis of the Internet users in the world clearly showed that there were about 451,951,053 English speakers using the internet which represented about 28.6 % of the world's Internet users. It is also proved that the estimated world population of English in 2008 was about 1,247,862,351, see Table: 1.

Table: 1 An Analysis of the top 10 Languages of the Internet users in the World 2008 quoted from Internet World Stats available at <http://www.internetworldstats.com/stats7.htm>

Top Ten Languages in the Internet	Internet Users by Language	Internet Users % of Total	World Population for this Language (2008 Estimate)
English	451,951,053	28.6 %	1,247,862,351
Chinese	321,361,613	20.3 %	1,365,138,028
Spanish	129,251,474	8.2 %	408,760,807
Japanese	94,000,000	5.9 %	127,288,419
French	72,720,214	4.6 %	414,043,695
Portuguese	72,555,800	4.6 %	244,080,690
German	65,243,673	4.1 %	96,402,666
Arabic	41,396,600	2.6 %	291,073,346
Russian	38,000,000	2.4 %	140,702,094
Korean	36,794,800	2.3 %	70,944,739
Other Languages	258,296,362	16.3 %	2,303,732,235
Total	1,581,571,589	100.0 %	6,710,029,070

Internet also gave the world people an opportunity to share the same things in an easy way. For example, in the past it was common to find that some English magazines and/or newspapers were prohibited in some countries due to the contents either against the country's belief or against the government's policies. However, nowadays the case is completely different since the government hegemony on newspapers and magazines does not exist anymore. Roth and Selander (2008) argued that-

Once a standardized language and symbols were in place in the earlier stages of nation-building, people could access information from mass newspapers, and the very fact that two people on a Train could see each other reading the same paper served to reinforce a sense of belonging to the same national community; nowadays the use of Internet may have the same or similar effect of reinforcing a sense of a global community. (p. 207)

5.4 Computer Technology

The spread of computers worldwide helped the spread of the English language. In the case of programming language of computers, for example, it was not possible for other languages to be used. Hence, the only language in use was English. The programming language could be seen, for example, in JAVA (Sun Microsystems), HTML (Hyper Text Markup Language) for web pages. The use of such language was still limited to English. Recently, some efforts have been made to use different languages as interfaces of computer software products such as the use of Windows or Office. However, the use of this software was still limited. Graddol (1997) stated that-

Besides consumer applications software, such as word processors and spreadsheets, there now exist a wide range of software products designed for natural language manipulation: parsing tools, abstracting and information retrieval, speech recognition and automatic translation. The



majority of this research and development work is carried out in the U.S, Europe and Japan. At present the most advanced tools are based in English (p. 30).

Graddol gave an explanation by use of a graph, which showed the power of the English language among other languages in computer software. We used the data in the graph to create a chart, which can clarify the major languages in the world where software is used. Figure (3) shows that the English language (29%) was highly used among other languages such as French (18%), German (14%), Spanish (13%), Italian (11%), Portuguese (6%), Japanese (4%), Russian (3%) and finally Arabic (2%).

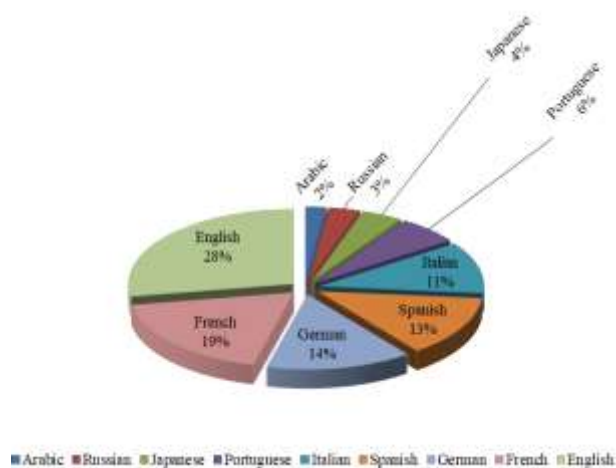


Figure: 3 The distribution of software industry among languages-data quoted from Graddol (1997, p. 30)

5.5 Education and Immigration

There is no doubt that education plays an important role in developed countries; therefore, developing countries are seeking to acquire this knowledge. It is obvious that students of the developing countries travel to the developed countries such as the U.S.A, the U.K, or somewhere else where they can learn some sciences and then transfer this knowledge to build their countries. However, not all students return home, particularly when they find better jobs and high quality of services and they lack such opportunities in their countries. In addition, the immigrants who arrived to these countries seeking better lives. In this case, the number of immigrants will rise in those countries which offer good opportunities.

It is also clear that most of the sciences which are being taught in English are either in the countries where English is used as the mother tongue or as a second language. This fact helps the language to be used widely around the globe. This will be increased in the near future because the number of learners is increasing as well. One example of the use of scientific English worldwide as

mentioned by Gibbs (1995) in Graddol (1997), described the shift of one of the scientific Mexican journals from publishing its journal in their national language into English. At the beginning, the journal shifted to publish abstracts in English, and then another shift occurred later by offering an English translation of each article. The biggest change then occurred when the journal began accepting only articles written in English followed by the change of the journal's name to an English one (p. 9). According to Graddol (1997), "Worldwide, English is the most popular language of publication" (p. 9). Graddol provided a graph of the number of annually published books in the English language as considered the most widely used language in the world at 28% followed by Chinese at 13%.

5.6 Multinational Companies

The huge increase in the number of international companies helps the English language to be more globalized. Most of the multinational companies which can be seen everywhere in the world are related to the businesses in the United States. For example, the Microsoft Company which deals in computer software has different branches around the world. This company was originally based in the U.S.A. and then spread around the globe. This company has influenced all people around the globe through its updated products of computer technology. Through this technology which attracted many people globally, the English language moved to these countries very quickly and smoothly. For example, there are many new English terms in use among people who speak different languages: software, Microsoft Word, Office, Power Point, Excel, mouse, format, etc. The power of these multinational companies makes the world live in a new era, in a global way. These multinational companies affect other small companies by their wide spread around the globe. Hence, these companies supply most of the world's products. As a result, the world will be dominated by the new products. For example, the Wal-Mart company has branches in different countries around the globe and the number of its employees is 2,055,000 people worldwide. This large number of employees, of one of the international companies, speaks English as either a first or a second language. According to *CNN Money, Fortune 500*, this company was the largest company in the world in 2008.

Humes (2008) in Peters, Britton, and Blee (2008), argued that "economic

globalization is driven by trade and commerce, by currency exchange rates, by the costs and availability of labour, above all by the aspirations of multinational companies to expand and prosper". Humes went further to say that the power of these companies "is equal to, or in some cases greater than, nation states" (p. 42).

5.7 Political Hegemony

Although there are as many as five countries that have the power of veto in the United Nation's Security Council, the United States of America has a strong power among these countries. This power was driven from its military, as well as its economical, and technological dominance of the world. This fact helped to make English the most used international language when it comes with different languages. For example, international organizations such as World Health Organization (WHO), World Trade Organization (WTO), and The World Bank, are now dominating the world. In a sample of 500 international organizations selected alphabetically, Crystal (1997) estimates that 85% of these organizations use English as the main language, 49% use French as the official language whereas fewer than 10% use Arabic, Spanish or German (p. 79).

5.8 Military Power

Crystal (1997) stated that "A language becomes an international language for one chief reason: the political power of its people –especially their military power" (p. 7). He further supported his arguments by some examples of the history of the international languages such as the Greek in the Middle East for 2,000 years ago; Latin in Europe; and Arabic in northern Africa and the Middle East. Giving these examples, Crystal emphasized the role of military power in the language spread throughout the world. However, the decline of military power will be a result of political decline; hence, global power will move to a new empire. We guess it is China. The next section discusses the circumstances that may lead to the end of current hegemony of English language as a global language.

6. The Decline of English

The way that English grows and expands has never occurred in the history as we have seen that English is not imposed by force as most other languages. Furthermore, the conditions under which English spreads have not occurred compared to the previous languages. However, new demographics, political, economic, and linguistic changes might be developed and limit the future

growth of English as a global language. In this section we are going to hypothesize the possibilities of English decline based on historical and factual grounds.

6.1 Linguistic and Educational Prospective

The huge expanse of English in conjunction with the overspread of varieties in many English speaking countries and regions threaten the standardization of English and generate many local English varieties. This according to Graddol (1997) will hinder the expansion of English as a standardized language, and accordingly will generate new independent languages that might replace English. The rise of this linguistic issue according to Graddol happens because of "the mechanisms which have helped maintain standard usage in the past may not, however, continue to serve this function in the future" (p. 56). Such mechanisms include the usage of cultural informalities and marginalizing the religious role in preserving unity of English. On the other hand, this issue extends to the pedagogic scale in which in countries where English is considered a second language such as Ghana, Nigeria, India, New Zealand, etc. there have been noticeable reforms in curricula content from the linguistic prospective; many local and informal words have come to enter their curricula in integration with English. For instance the word *spice* has been replaced by 'yagi' in the Ghanaian formal language and so on. In the U.S. alone there has been a dramatic increase in children who learn Mandarin from 5000 people in 2004 up to 50,000 in 2007 (Bart,E. C.B.N. News). This remarkable increase may have challenging concerns regarding the spread of English around the world.

6.2 Economic Prospective

We have seen so far that the collapse of many ancient Empires was due to economic crisis. The economic prospective is essential in the dominance of the Empire and its language. The international trade and the multinational companies are usually dominated by hegemonic power 'English in 21st century'; however, the growth of a new power deliberately will shift the hegemony of the previous Empire. The possibility of emergence of new empires like China would open the door to raise the competition among the world economic growth which will be crucial in determining the future dominant language. Crystal (1997) argued that in some countries such as Germany, France and Sweden economic investments have been shifted from using the English



language into using the local language. This economic national tendency is due to the strong demand among consumers for products and investments that have local favor (p. 126-127). Most of the U.S. external investments had involved educating the labor power using English. However, this is not the case. For example, there has been a noticeable decline in the Fordism notion in China, particularly when the laborers educational responsibility moved to Chinese institutions. In addition to the U.S. financial crisis, the strict laws against immigration and the lack of job opportunities in most English speaking countries, especially the U.S. and the U.K. would have its impact on the future of the English language growth in the world.

6.3 Political and Cultural Perspectives

In most former British colonies, there have been calls to return to the original languages, the basis of these calls according to Crystal (1997) was due to cosmopolitanism and the correlation between colonialism and English. Crystal supported his claim by quoting the speech of Kenyatta, the president of Kenya in 1974, when he said “The basis of any independent government is a national language, and we can no longer continue aping our former colonizers” (p. 124). Kenyatta’s speech reflects the influence of nationalism is growth in the decline of what is called colonist’s language. Similarly, Gandhi, the Indian revolutionary, addressed people in a speech against using English as an official language in India, as mentioned in Crystal (1997), he addressed that:

To give millions a knowledge of English is to enslave them...Is it not a painful thing that, if I want to go to a court of justice, I must employ the English language as a medium; that, when I became a Barrister, I may not speak my mother-tongue, and that someone else should have to translate to me from my own language? Is this not absolutely absurd? Is it not a sign of slavery? (p. 124).

Gandhi was a revolutionary against the invasion of English, and he played an important role in the decline of English in India during his time. The independence of the former British colonies and territories would have long term effects on the future of English dominance, particularly when we consider the nationalism and anti-colonialism awareness.

In addressing the English decline, we have to consider a replacement language; though Mandarin has more than one billion speakers, we do not think it can be the

language of the globe. Linguistically, the characters of Mandarin do not match the characters of most living languages, Indo-European languages, English, Arabic, etc. Nevertheless, China was unable to impose Mandarin during the Olympic Games in 2008, and the Chinese government was forced to use Chinglish (using a Chinese statement with its English equivalent) for succeeding the games. In addition, the role of using globalization in its broad sense is significant in the dominance of English; globalizing the economy, politics, education and even the financial crisis, which was finally illustrated at the G8 London Summit (2009) by Brown, the Prime Minister of the U.K. when he described the financial crisis as a global crisis that must need a global solution.

7. Conclusion

The purpose of this review was to shed light on the interrelations between language and the power of nation (empire) hegemony. We concluded that the English Empire might last as long as the economic, technological, political, and military power remains. However, this cannot be true according to the previous empires and to the current situation of the world. For example, the current economic crisis of the U.S. has affected the entire world in general, and the U.S. in particular. Such failure may weaken the economic power and hence the military, technological, and the political power. The English language; however, may last for years, but not forever, as a global language. The Mandarin language may stand side by side with English as international languages in the near future due to the hegemony of Chinese products in the international market. The growing of the number of Mandarin learners among American children in the past few years may followed by the spread of Mandarin learners worldwide. Nevertheless, more research studies need to be conducted in this prospective through which tracing the languages distribution and links them with their state dominance.

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