

Mines Question 2

Question What are the effects of globalization on languages?

For decades the spread of English -as the tool of globalization -has affected linguistic ecosystems and aroused controversies such as :To what extent is globalization a linguistic gamechanger?

The increasing exchanges of goods and people go along with a larger use of the language used by the prevailing economy eg. the US. As a consequence the ubiquity of English in all social fields has triggered resistance and instilled fears that national languages might disappear. French in France or Canada epitomizes this entrenched opposition to English.

The ever-growing presence of English no matter how forceful- as globalized values- might scratch the surface of cultures and remain a skin-deep means of communication . Norway exemplifies this idea by the omnipresence of English in the media coexisting with the three thriving national languages.

English as a lingua franca could be compared to Latin and its evolution. Globalization -as empires -follows a natural development and hence Latin established itself in the ruling classes of local cultures then crossbred with local languages to beget new ones.

Globalization has an impact on languages through English but its influence though significant is part of the same linguistic phenomenon that started off ever since the first human languages appeared.

198 words

Texte d'opinion

Globalization has never stopped being a subject of contention . The spread of American English all around the world is a consequence of this phenomenon that has been a matter of concern as to know whether this language might supersede national languages. Two articles from the Guardian deal with the overwhelming presence of English in Dutch and French universities, pose the question of the potential threat English represents to those languages and highlight the rejective position of some non-English speaking countries toward English. It seems paramount to me to wonder if withstanding the diffusion of English is a relevant point or not.

Ever since the Neolithic Revolution when sedentary cultures sprang to life, dominant languages progressed along with invasions and empires. The economic dominance of English today is observed through its worldwide use. The articles underline the necessity to master this language so as to partake in the economic boon provided by globalization. Researchers at university or business people in the Netherlands or France must learn English not to lag behind. I am convinced that rejecting this language is a denial of reality. Japan's traditional and once withdrawn attitude toward English could illustrate this point. The Japanese are ranked low in English proficiency and thus governments have launched linguistic programmes to mitigate this lack which somehow cuts off the country from the world's culture. Having said that I still wonder if English can be regarded as threatening.

No matter how present English may be I assume it cannot be considered as a threat but rather as part of a general linguistic phenomenon that Jean Louis CALVET describes in 'la Marché Aux Langues' as lingua franca , a dominant language that co-exists with minor languages. Latin was brought to western Europe by the Roman empire but was only used , first, by the Germanic or Celtic ruling classes and then crossbred with local languages to beget new ones. A natural process that cannot be thwarted whatever the measures in the manner of the French Academy or C Hagège to control the growth of English. This dominant language is merely used in the restricted sphere of business and does not overlap the national fields of culture in which vernacular languages such as French or Dutch are still prevailing. The moot question is rather, I grant, to know whether English is not the one in jeopardy.

Globalization is the appropriation of exogenous values and goods by local populations. Languages respond to the same logic and English is no exception to this rule. Over the last decades , due to a developing tourism, English has turned into a simpler form of language whose function is basic communication between people speaking different idioms. Globalized trips are like consumer goods , social trophies . We are thus prone, I guess, to skim over the cultures of the places we visit because we do not master the local language, since we abide by tight schedules. As a consequence, our conversations with locals come down to superficial exchanges over basic information. The rise of Globish -an impoverished version of standard English- has taken the fore over the last decades . Vernacular English is spoken less than Globish and the former might be pushed into the background in the coming years and this is even more true for British English which tends to be ousted by American English, the prime medium of globalization.

There is no denying that English is an economic asset countries and people cannot overlook. It is also beyond doubt that its progress cannot be stopped . To conclude, I presume English is already on the wane as it is progressively absorbed by locals and might soon be devoid of substance.