

The Links Between Language and Power

Throughout history, the ideas of language and power have been intertwined, for the languages that have power are the ones that are encouraged to be taken and studied, while the minority or 'undesirable' languages are seen as inferior and odd. Languages that are not dominant in the world are discouraged from being the main lingua franca of a lot of countries, especially the countries that have been colonised throughout history.

The most recent dominant language in the world is English, which is learnt by all countries over the world, is taught in schools and the main language of texts due to the advancement in science and technology of the countries whose native language is English as well as the popularity of caucasian media and art. The predecessor dominant language was French and Latin, whose effects still linger in churches as well as European countries and Canada. Indegenious languages were wiped out due to the previous spread of French and English when Europeans invaded American and Canada, thus tribal languages and cultures were destroyed. For example, native children were sent to boarding schools such as Col. Richard Pratt's Carlisle Indian Industrial School. Nowadays, America is dominated by English and in Canada, French and English rule.

The countries which have English as their native language, dominate the global sphere, America and Britain mainly. They're seen as the ideal countries and almost all countries in Kachru's second circle (India, Pakistan, try to imitate them as being so is desirable. Using English and denying native language gives a global advantage to countries as any denial of it makes the country in question seem uneducated and undeveloped. It is important in politics as English was made the lingua franca in most areas even if it is not the most common language in the world, nor the fastest growing, but only for the fact it is from the most powerful countries, thus they hold the most power, in military, finance, trade. America and Britain enforce and maintain their power through the spread of their language and hold their position in the world. And, even if Chinese (Mandarin) could be considered a modern dominant language with its large growth and spread, it is not quite there, *due* to English itself as the dominant countries have enforced a stereotype of asian languages being 'ching-chong' languages and spread xenophobia, creating resistance against it.

Moreover, the countries in Kachru's third circle (Russia, Korea, China), in contrast, resist colonisation by English countries and promote their own culture instead of Western values, and anyone who deviates is considered an outcast. Though, they can only do this to a certain extent as English is required for industry work as well as for trade and politics.

There have been various cases throughout history where speaking a native tongue has actually brought on mental or physical abuse towards the person for not speaking English. The most recent case would be in America itself, prominent since 2016 during Former President Trump's rule, enforcing racism, especially towards Mexicans, when they speak a forigen language. Insults became commonplace and the phrase, "go back to your own country!" was yelled out whenever a native heard another language. The former president almost seemed to encourage

racism by building a physical wall on the border of Mexico, detaining immigrants in camps, as well as creating a ban on muslims which reinforced the stigma against Arabic.

It is almost ironic, as Spain colonised Mexico by overthrowing the Aztech Empire and enforced Spanish being spoken by the populace, killing out various indegenious languages. Now, such languages such as Nahuatl and Yucarec Maya are only spoken by a few million versus centuries ago when they were dominant.

Of course, there are people who refuse to accept english as a common lingua franca, and these are mostly people trying to preserve minority languages as well as people in Kachru's third circle, who may use to some extent due to necessity, but other than that, majorly speak their own language and value their culture. Korea is one such example, where a lot of Koreans are not fluent in English and instead, look to spread their own language, calling it the Hallyu wave, as they gain power in the economy.

There is also conflict within single countries where some languages are dominant over others. In Pakistan, Urdu is the national language and main means of communication, even if Punjabi is the most spoken. Within the country, there is prejudice against some minority languages like Balochi, as there was one instance in a particular sociology textbook where it was mentioned that they were those "who lived in the desert and looting caravans" and the apparent meaning of Baloch in Persian was "uncivilized people who remain busy fighting and killing" which is not only prejudiced, but also the wrong translation. Anyone who spoke Baloci would be looked down upon and forced to speak Urdu. Of course, the textbook has been stopped from being published again, but the matter still remains.

The muted group theory by Kramarae supports these cases as it suggests certain minorities in society have much less power than others and as a consequence, no one wishes to listen to them. Overall, language carries great power for a country, and the attitudes of those in control and those in the minority vary as, often, minorities are forced to speak the dominant language. In doing so, there are cases where they even have to adapt to the different cultures to blend in and feel included.