

## Original Paper

# A Critique of Phillipson's Theory of Linguistic Imperialism

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### **Abstract**

*This study examines the imperial status of English via a critique of Phillipson's Theory of Linguistic Imperialism. The communicative potency of the English language on the international stage resonates with its label as an 'imperial language'. English is used in discrete communication situations in different regions of the world. Some of the functions of the language in such regions are assigned to it through legislation, because of the expanse of the referential/representational function of the language. For example, in former British colonies, the English language adequately fills up the vocabulary inadequacies of indigenous languages. This is crucial in contemporary times given the fact that individuals and nations try to cope with the communication constraints of globalization. In this regard, multiculturalism and intercultural communication tendencies are promoted, encouraged and demonstrated. This study is anchored by two theoretical frameworks: Afolayan (1995:1988); and the Wider and Narrower Perspectives of World Englishes. The study concludes that from different viewpoints, English is an imperial language: English nations dominate in different domains of world affairs, English is lingua franca in some countries, English is a language of wider communication; and English is used for documentation and publications across disciplines.*

### **Keywords**

*English, Phillipson's Theory of Linguistic Imperialism, critique, sociolinguistics, globalization*

### **1. Introduction**

Indeed, the imperial status of English can be construed in terms of globalization, which puts privilege countries on a position to take advantage of less privileged ones. This results in linguistic dominance as some languages either become inactive in nationhood or disappear. In terms of history, the development of the English language involves three main stages: Old English (450 to 1150), Middle English (1150 to 1500) and Modern English (1150-1500). Any regard given to English is connected to its usefulness in cross-border communication and development. The fact, that English operates as 'official language',

‘national language’, ‘*lingua franca*’ or ‘foreign language’ in different parts of the world, resonates with its global status and development-inducing potentials. This is acknowledged in non-native regions regardless of ethnic resentments. At a time like this, when the mutual dependency of nations is on the front-burner as a result of globalization, the different labels given to English are worthy of attention. One of such labels is Phillipson’s labeling of English as an ‘imperial language’. This study is an appraisal/critique of the label. Thus, the study brings to the fore, critical positions in the literature.

## **2. The Sociolinguistics of Language in Society**

The roles of the English language across the world, captures the nexus between language and society – the sociolinguistics of language. Sociolinguistics shows a person’s reasons for using language, as well as the way and places that language is put to use. Bosede Sotiloye (1992) gives an elaborate definition of sociolinguistics:

Sociolinguistics is a field of study which relates societal problems to linguistic/language problems. It answers the question: how do our social and cultural backgrounds affect our use of language? It is a branch of linguistics which tries to answer questions like who says what to whom, when, where, how and why? One of the major aims of sociolinguistics is the study of the use of language in its social and cultural contexts. It studies the norms of the society at large and examines how the individual exploits his awareness of the society’s norms in order to achieve particular effects.

According to Sofunke (1992), ‘sociolinguistics … is another major area of applied linguistics. The sociolinguistic aspect of applied linguistics is concerned with issues which indicate the interaction between language and society. Society is in general divided along class and occupational lines, these divisions being in most cases reflected in language. The elucidation of the nature and use of these socially stratified speech forms is the business of sociolinguistics.’

From a sociolinguistic perspective, language performs different functions in society:

- a.) Interactive Function: Language is used for communication among human beings. Adeniran, cited in Ayodabo (2013, p.139) notes that ‘communication is thus a social function involving more than one living organism interacting where there are certain elements of behaviors to share. We must then perceive elements of behavior as … being context (actions, information, concepts, emotions, etc.) as well as modes of sharing. This is the integrative function of language; that is, using language to achieve solidarity/mobilization.
- b.) Functions in Societal Domains: ‘Domain’ concerns entities such as participants, setting and topic. In terms of domain, language is used in government, schools, banks, journalism, etc. In schools, language is used for passing information, documentation, publications and recruitment of people into jobs.

- c.) International Diplomacy: Language is used to foster international ties.
- d.) *Lingua franca*: A *lingua franca* is used for ‘nationism’ (smooth running of a country); and nationalism (national solidarity and mobilization).
- d.) Symbol of Identity: Native speakers of a language use it as a symbol of identity.

The sociolinguistics of language concerns, language users, culture and identity. Joshua Fishman (1996, pp. 81-82) submits that ‘language and cultural identity are linked in three ways: indexically, symbolically and in a part-whole fashion. The symbolic link relates to identity, the sense of belonging to a community; the language stands for, or represents, the community of speaker.’ Adeniran, cited in Ayodabo (2013, p. 142), submits that ‘language is part of the cultural heritage that is handed down from generation. It makes life experiences cumulative and makes cultural transmission possible.’

### **3. Phillipson’s Theory of Linguistic Imperialism**

The thrust of Phillipson’s Theory of Linguistic Imperialism is that different indices account for the imperial, global or international status of English. Providing insights on the imperial status of the English language, Odebunmi (2017, p. 21) states:

In his theory of linguistic imperialism, Phillipson (1992) (re-) groups global English speakers into core English speaking countries, comprising Britain, the United States, Canada, Australia and New Zealand; and ‘periphery English-speaking countries’, where English serves as a second language (for example, Nigeria, Ghana, India and Singapore) or an international language (for example, China, Indonesia and Japan). The groups relate unequally with respect to structural and systemic power in that the Western Anglophone group wields political and socio-economic power against the former colonial communities found in the peripheries. This hegemony is further sustained by ‘English linguistic imperialism, defined as ‘the dominance of English’ ... asserted and maintained by the establishment and continuous reconstruction of structural and cultural inequalities between English and other languages.’

Within the framework of Phillipson’s Theory of Linguistic Imperialism, the entrenchment of English in nationhood resulted in the dominance of the language over indigenous languages in countries concerned. However, it is worthy of note that in this sense, English is being more and more globalized.

#### *3.1 Afolayan (1995:1988)*

Afolayan’s (1995:1988) categorization of language types in heterogeneous speech community is a suitable framework for elucidating how English operates its imperialistic tendency as a domineering foreign language amidst mother tongue/first language linguistic situation. The framework also captures not only the roles of an imperial language in a multilingual nation, but also the skills needed for effective use of the imperial language to achieve such roles from learner-end. Odebunmi (*ibid*, pp. 3-4) reports that Afolayan (1995, pp. 122-124):

identifies a number of features typifying the mother tongue, the foreign language and the second language in general. The mother tongue, by his account is: the only language spoken by a monolingual for all their communicative needs, the first sequential language of a bi/multilingual individual, the language that fully identifies with the personal or native culture of a bi/multilingual person, the language used on an everyday basis and in which a speaker is intuitively equipped, the language that instrumentalises nationalism or nationism in a country, the language that serves as the code for formal education in the speech community in which it is spoken, the language whose effectiveness compels learners to be groomed in listening, speaking reading and writing.

He highlights the following features of the foreign language:

- the second language learnt sequentially by a bilingual individual,
- the second, third, fourth or fifth language learnt by a multilingual speaker.
- the language used by a bi/multilingual person to carry out only activities that are specialised with limited linguistic competence, ... the language which has its mother tongue standard variety, particularly that standard variety recognized within the formal educational system of the donor or mother tongue metropolis as the target model of the formal educational system operative within its speech community (i.e. for those learning it as an EFL )...

Other features of the second language, according to Afolayan (1995, p.123) include:

- the language learnt in addition to one in which the speaker is more linguistically competent, to carry out the speaker's daily activities, the language within the same geographical or political unit foreign to the speech community of the speaker but found within the same political setting; for example, Yoruba adopted by the Igbo-speaking community or vice versa, the language which is foreign to the speech community and the political system and which imposes bilingualism or biculturalism on the community in which it is used. Examples include English or French in former British or American colonies, the language whose mother tongue is adjusted to suit the formal education framework of the adopting country or community, the language whose effectiveness demands that speakers are acquainted with the skills of listening, speaking reading, and writing.

### *3.2 World Englishes: The Wider and Narrower Perspectives*

Odebunmi (*ibid*, pp. 3-7) comments on the Narrower and Wider Perspectives of World Englishes:

Two perspectives are available on the concept of World Englishes, namely, wider and narrower perspectives. The wider perspective encompasses all global varieties of English, covering native and non-native dialects.

In other words, the English spoken in the Americas, Europe, Australia, New Zealand, Asia and Africa are subsumed in this class. Botton (2006) notes that alternative terms such as ‘world English’, ‘global English’ and ‘international English’ are used by a number of scholars to describe the varieties of English in this perspective. The narrower perspective bifurcates into the English tagged ‘new Englishes’ and ‘Kachruvian Approach’. The former is situated in such old British and American colonies as the Caribbean, West Africa, East Africa and Asia. Studies of these forms of English devote attention to national and regional features of language as realized by the speakers of the areas.

The Kachruvian perspective which trifurcates into the Inner (where English is the ‘primary language’), Outer (post-colonial countries marked by Anglophone experiences) and Expanding (countries where English serves as an ‘international language’) Circles ... provides a more embracing coverage for the study of Englishes ... the approach involves not merely the description of national and regional varieties, but many other related topics as well, including contact linguistics, creative writing, critical linguistics, discourse analysis, corpus linguistics, lexicography, pedagogy, pidgin and creole studies, and the sociology of language.

The Kachruvian model has been designed to show the spread type typical of English globally, the acquisition patterns associated with the language and the function-based domains English at the global level get connected to. Thus, Kachru (2005) identifies two types of spread of English in non-native settings: spread indicating that English serves as an ‘additional language’, and spread indicating that it serves as an alternative language.

The model further incorporates range and depth. Its concern with range relates to its function in several domains of use such as law, academia, government and family while its orientation to depth captures types of English use controlled by varying hierarchies of users in society, whose list encompasses all the strata of the society, for example, the elite, artisans and taxi drivers. These levels of users are also connected to the lectal rubrics of basilect (the lower level), Mesolect (the middle level) and acrolect (the upper level). Another important dimension to depth is norm orientation. The Inner (norm-providing) Circle produces the norms through grammars, for example; the Expanding (norm-dependent) Circle accepts and adopts the norms; and the norm-developing circle responds to the Inner Circle norms by adopting and adapting the norms, on the one hand, and by creating or establishing local norms, on the other. For example, in India, Philippine and Nigerian settings, several local norms have emerged, and quite a number of these have been documented by global lexicographers. The word ‘motor

park' from Nigerian English, for example, has been lexicographed as 'a West African name for car park' (dictionary.com 2012: not paginated).

Considering the fact that the World Englishes perspectives concern cross-regional domain-based functions of English, the spread of English speakers and the world-power position of English native regions, they are suitable theoretical frameworks for the thrust of this paper.

#### **4. A Critique of Phillipson's Theory of Linguistic Imperialism**

In critiquing Phillipson's Theory of Linguistic Imperialism, this study examines the roles, functions, vitality and cross-regional dominance of English in the contemporary world, where globalization gains ascendancy in governance. In this regard, factors which accentuate the imperial status of English are listed and discussed.

##### *4.1 Domain-based Dominance of English Nations*

In non-native regions where English is assigned different roles or functions, learners' communicative needs inform approaches to English teaching and learning. This implies that in different domains of nationhood, English is deployed for specific purposes, and dominates when no other language competes with it in formal situations. Within the context of English as an International Language (EIL), English studies are based on the acquisition of desired skills. It is worthy of note that English studies promote multiculturalism and non-regional proprietorship of the language. Kim Hua Tan et al. (2020, p. 23) contend that 'English is bound to reflect the world's various cultures.' Through the curriculum of formal education, learners are taught to be competent English speakers within the scope of EIL. It is quite fascinating that learners of English in non-native settings are currently more than the native speakers of the language. This is in recognition of the vitality of the language in career pursuits, international communication and globalization-driven governance. There are claims also, that native-like competence in spoken English is increasing among non-native speakers. Indeed, such competent speakers are beneficiaries of the result-oriented approaches to English studies. The course contents of English studies are usually focused towards appropriateness and efficiency. Thus, globalization and its indices impinge on the operational dynamics of English as an international language at individual and collective levels. Countries across the world are aware of the importance of globalization-related trends and the instrumentality of a global/international language in coping with such trends, particularly in the era of globalization; a period in which governments across the world are poised to develop their nations in various domains of nationhood, such as education, politics, administration, commerce, science and technology. David Crystal (2003, p. 10) comments on how globalization transforms scheme of things in different domains of nationhood:

... economic developments beginning to operate on a global scale supported by the new communication technologies – telegraph, telephone, radio – and fostering the emergence of massive multinational organizations. The growth of competitive industry and business brought an explosion of international marketing and advertising. The

power of the press reached unprecedented levels soon to be surpassed by the broadcasting media, with the ability to cross national boundaries with electromagnetic ease. Technology chiefly in the form of movies and records fuelled new mass entertainment industries which had a worldwide impact. The drive to make progress in science and technology fostered an international intellectual research environment which gave scholarship and further education a high profile.

In many countries, the dominance of English across spheres, is based on its communication-based reliability. For example, Zuliatu Rohmah (2005, p. 124) submits that 'English is the language of politics in Nigeria. It makes communication easier for our leaders. In our national assembly politicians from different ethnic groups interact in English. With the English language our President, state governors, etc. make speeches on the Independence Day, budget announcements to different ethnic groups in Nigeria at once. Our national symbols; the Coat of Arms, the National Anthem, the Nigerian Pledge, the Nigerian Flag and the currency are represented in English. The usage of one of the indigenous languages to represent them will breed conflicts because other ethnic groups whose languages are not used will feel marginalized and cheated. The peaceful role of the English language in the realm of politics is very significant.' In different fields of human endeavours including literary writing, tourism, education, commerce, religion, ICT, journalism, sports, international relations, judiciary and medicine, English finds its way in expressing a wide range of phenomena. The domain-based dominance of the language is therefore not incidental.

#### 4.2 *Lingua Franca*

English is *lingua franca* in multilingual Nigeria. Considering Nigeria's rating in Africa, its use of English as *lingua franca* promotes the imperial status of English. The geographical expanse and population of Nigeria is a plus to the global status of English. Ifeyinwa Obiegbu (2014, p. 84) asserts that 'Nigeria has a natural division, through the rivers Niger and Benue, into three major areas. These divisions correspond with the three major language groups in the country namely the Hausa in the North, the Igbo in the East and the Yoruba in the West. Despite these three major languages, Nigeria has many other indigenous languages ... In a multilingual Nigeria context, the issue of national language has been very sensitive and controversial ...' In addition, Dada (2010, p. 418) cites Brain who asserts that 'the recent 2005 Ethnologic Data listed 521 languages for Nigeria. Of these, 510 are living languages, 2 are second languages without mother tongue speakers, and 9 are extinct. Research submits that Nigerian languages are grouped as major languages, state languages and local languages based on their status as dominant languages, their territorial spread and the population that speak them.' Commenting further on the heterogeneous structure of Nigeria, Adeniran, cited in Ayodabo (ibid, p. 19) submits:

- It is a multilingual country, having about 395 languages (not dialects) already identified;
- Bilingualism involving English has been institutionalized as a factor of nationalism in the country;

- Inspite of over a century of the introduction of Western education, majority of Nigerians are illiterates, particularly in English which is the language of supralocal country-wide communication.

This study examines different factors that tint the imperial status of English. The fact that English is *lingua franca* in some countries is not incidental. It is the product of legislation. In this sense, the functions of the language in the ‘national life’ of a country are clearly stated in the Constitution. It may co-exist with other languages in a multilingual speech community, where language planning and policies are formulated for national cohesion and development. Bambose (1999, p. 111) defines language policy as ‘a programme of action on the role or status of a language in a given community. In a multilingual situation, a language policy decision necessarily involves the role or status of one language in relation to other languages. (Note 1)’

By exploring the global status of English in governance, language-based approach towards national development is experimented. Thus, English is *lingua franca* in nations because of what it is needed for. According to Obiegbu Ifeyinwa (ibid, p. 87), language is ‘a creation of man’s social needs. Like all other living creatures, we depend on the air, water and earth around us, and in the same way, society depends upon language for its very existence. For effective national development, language plays a central role, particularly in terms of such agents of development as literacy and communication. This is clearly understandable because it is through language that man has to plan ... Apart from the planning, man uses language to instruct and evaluate his programmes.’

#### *4.3 Language of Wider Communication*

A language of wider communication is dominantly used in everyday communication due to its instrumentality in broad communication. The English language picks referents from several discourse domains. The vocabulary stock of English is so wide that international organizations and associations use the language in their deliberations and proceedings. For example, the English language is the medium of communication of the Association of South-East Asian Nations, the Commonwealth, the Council of Europe, the European Union and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. Bello O. Rachael and Oni-Buraimoh O. Olawunmi’s (2017, p. 102) report concerning English is instructive:

- It is the language of a number of past colonies;
- Apart from its being one of the languages used in international organizations such as UNO and AU, English is also versatile and it enjoys a wide spread;
- It is the most studied language (Research had it that yearly, 1, 500 million people would opt to learn English; 84 million, French; 30 million, Chinese);
- It is one of the easiest languages to learn when compared with Chinese, German, French, Spanish, Arabic, Korean, and Japanese. The most difficult languages of the world to learn are Arabic, Chinese, Korean and Japanese (Arranged in order of their degree of difficulty);
- A reasonable percentage of information found in the internet is in English;

- It has a rich and in-depth history.

Ushuple Lucy M. and Iskandar I. (2019, p. 63) submit that 'as a language of wider communication (LWC), English is used for phatic communion, ceremonial purpose, an instrument of keeping records, information dissemination, self-expression and embodiment of thought among the various linguistic groups in Nigeria. The common linguistic basis that constitutes a requisite for the existence of any nation is provided by English. So with English as the common tongue to all the ethnic groups, the collective sentiment of belonging together despite the individual or ethnic differences is forged. Related to the discussion is the fact that Nigerian Nationalism or collective identity is stamped on national institutions through the medium of English.' Indeed, the expansion of the vocabulary stock of English is a continuum. The language is naturally potent in borrowings and adaptations. David Crystal (ibid, p. 146) rightly submits:

Most adaptation in new English relates to vocabulary, in the form of new words (borrowings – from several hundred language sources, in such areas as Nigeria), word-formations, word-meanings, collocations and idiomatic phrases. There are many cultural domains likely to motivate new words, as speakers find themselves adapting the language to meet fresh communicative needs. A country's biogeographical uniqueness will generate potentially large numbers of words for animals, fish, birds, insects, plants, trees, rocks, rivers and so on – as well as the issues to do with land management and interpretation which is an especially important feature of the lifestyle of many indigenous peoples. There will be words for foodstuffs, drinks, medicines, drugs, and the practices associated with eating ... The country's mythology and religion, and practices in astronomy and astrology, will bring forth new names for personalities, beliefs and rituals. The country's oral and perhaps written literature will give rise to distinctive names in sagas, poems, oratory and folktales. There will be a body of local laws and customs, with their own terminology. The culture will have its own technology with its own terms – such as for vehicles, house – buildings, weapons, clothing, ornaments and musical instruments. The whole world of leisure and the arts will have a linguistic dimension – names of dances, musical styles, games, sports – as will distinctiveness in body appearance (such as hair styles, tattoos, decoration). Virtually any aspect of social structure can generate complex naming systems – local government, family relationships, clubs and societies, and so on ... So, when a community adopts a new language, and starts to use it in relation to all areas of life, there is inevitably going to be a great deal of lexical creation.

Emenajo (2006, pp. 40-44) comments on languages of wider communication:

In terms of wider spread usage we have: languages of wider communication such as English in the world, Hausa in Northern Nigeria and West Africa, Kiswahili in East and Central Africa, and Nigerian Pidgin in a good part of Southern Nigeria. Such

languages are spoken by very large numbers of second languages, non-native speakers across very large land masses such as the states, nations, regions or continents.

#### *4.4 Documentation and Cross-disciplinary Publications*

The imperial or global status of English accounts for the translation of several literary texts into English for a wider audience; this is what the notion of ‘global literature’ means. The instrumentality of the English language in the documentation of cross-disciplinary publications is immense. Through English, research works are published and documented in the fields of literary studies, ICT, sociology, medicine, science and technology. Thus, by transmitting knowledge, English induces development at individual and group levels. The development potential of English is a major reason for teaching the language towards enhancing communication skills of learners, particularly in the era of globalization when nations look outward and embrace multicultural way of thinking. Nunberg (1990) notes that ‘people learn a language when it has economic and social advantages to them; people do not learn a language because they are forced to, nor do they cease using a language when mandated to do so.’ For decades, the English Language Teaching (ELT) scheme is popularized worldwide due to the acknowledgement of the potency of the English language in international communication. The scheme invariably fosters the global status of English and its inter-regional roles in the era of globalization. Clement Gowon Omachonu, Joseph Abuh and Habiba Oma Alhassan (2017, p. 167) posit that ‘the modern goal of English language teaching should be how to equip learners with the knowledge and critical awareness of how globalization defines and positions their use of the language. Consequently, teachers of English as a second language need to adopt methodologies that will envision English language teaching within the context of globalization.’ For career purpose, competence level in English should not only be sufficient, but should also be discrete (Note 2).

Being an international/imperial language, English is indeed, suitable for transmitting knowledge. According to Kim Hua Tan et al. (ibid, p. 22), ‘Smith (1976) proposed the notion of English as an International Auxiliary Language (EIAL) in the 1970s, defining an ‘international language’ as one ‘which is used by people of different nations to communicate with one another ...’ He made a number of assumptions regarding the relationship of an international language and culture. These include: (1) Learners do not need to internalize the cultural norms of native speakers of that language. (2) The ownership of an international language becomes ‘de-nationalized’. (3) The educational goal of learning it is to enable learners to communicate their ideas and culture to others...’

### **5. Discussion and Conclusion**

This study examines Phillipson’s notion ‘imperial language’ which is used to make reference to English. As an imperial, international or global language, English is not strictly the possession of its native speakers; the language is no longer with regional proprietorship. The speed and encompassing dimensions of globalization implies that a global language gains more prominence and imperial status on the world stage. Philippe Soubestre (1997, cover page) cited in Chukudinma Oguchi Ezuoke (2013,

p. 17) captures globalization trends by asserting that ‘the pace of change in the world seems to have accelerated sharply over the last few years – certainly since the end of the Cold War. Communications have become more rapid, working patterns are changing, markets for goods and services have become transformed and money can be moved freely and instantaneously from one country to another. Globalization is the catch-all word used nowadays to describe what is happening.’ In addition, Chukudinma O.E. (2018, p. 18) lists indices of globalization as follows:

An increased rate in the movement of persons, goods and services across national frontiers; an increase in the speed rate of cash flows; greater rate of cultural transfers (ibridization) and influences; development of easily accessible global telecommunications infrastructures; development of global financial system; increase in the presence of multinational companies across nations; increase in the role of international organizations: UNO, NATO, EU, ECOWAS, AU and their various agencies among nations as well as increased plunge into international standards – global best practices.

As an imperial language, English remains colonial heritage in some countries, and conscious efforts of such countries to promote English studies for nation-building, continually increase competent speakers and writers of the language in non-native settings. Bipin Bihari Dash (2022, p. 10) asserts that ‘as of 2020, there are 1.27 billion English speakers around the world. This makes it the most spoken language, ahead of Mandarin Chinese (1.12 billion speakers) and Hindu (637million speakers). More than 50 countries officially list English as an official language.’ One thing that is critical and fascinating about globalization is the way it links facets of life such as education, culture, tourism, international affairs, trade, the media, science and technology. Given its position as the world’s *lingua franca*, the English language operates as the nexus between facets of life in cross-regional development. With the dawn of globalization, global markets, information and networking are easily within the reach of individuals, thus enhancing entrepreneurship. The imperial status of English can be elucidated within these underpinnings. Nataliya Todorova and Anna Todorova (2018, p. 333) state that ‘... the term globalization has no precise definition, but numerous meanings and interpretations in different areas such as cultural studies, economics, environment or politics. While some students consider globalization as a social process that makes the currently existing borders irrelevant, others stress the world-unifying, homogenizing power of this process. This term generalized, globalization, (which obviously comes from the word ‘globe’) is the ‘big idea’ of 20<sup>th</sup> century, which contains the process of international integration arising from the exchange of worldwide views, products, products, ideas, and other aspects of culture and life.’ Using language to convey messages or solve problems is not exclusively the endeavour of individuals. Governments of different nations explore globally-significant languages in the era of globalization. It is simply rational to equate the world position of a language with the cross-domain feat of the region that speak the language as mother tongue (Note 3). David Crystal (ibid) submits that ‘given that the USA has come to be dominant element in so many of the domains ..., the future status of English must be

bound up to some extent with the future of that country. So much of the power which has fuelled the growth of the English language during the twentieth century has stemmed from America ... the country contains nearly four times as many mother-tongue speakers of English as any other nation. It has been more involved in international developments in twentieth-century technology than any other nation. It is in control of the new industry (that is, electronic) revolution. And it exercises a greater influence on the way English is developing worldwide than any other regional variety – often, of course, to the discomfiture of people in the UK, Australia, New Zealand, Canada and South Africa who regularly express worries in their national presses about the onslaught of ‘Americanisms’.’ Conclusively, the English language is an imperial one for arguable reasons mentioned in this study: the language plays surpassing roles in discrete facets of nationhood; it is *lingua franca* in some nations; it is a language of wider communication; it is the language of scholarship, publication and documentation.

### Notes

Note 1. Appel and Muysken (1987:46) state the goals of language policy as follows:

- (a) Choose a national language;
- (b) Develop or cultivate the chosen language;
- (c) Foster the spread of the language;
- (d) Decide on the position of the minority languages;
- (e) Decide also on the functions expected of indigenous languages, especially the minority ones.

Note 2. Adeniran cited in Ayodabo (*ibid*:82) lists discrete degrees of competence in language:

- Minimal Competence  
Speakers are characterized by a single speech habit in a single social sphere without any shifting of repertoire or code (restricted).
- Average Competence  
Speakers have a command of a set of speech habits which is neither large nor small; they use this in a limited range of different social spheres, and shift their verbal repertoire accordingly (flexible).
- Maximum Competence  
Speakers have versatile speech habits in many social spheres, and shift their verbal repertoire with ease (versatile).

Note 3. In this sense, the pride of place of the US and Great Britain resonates with how English is viewed, used and treated in different parts of the world.

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