



LANGUAGE, CULTURE AND GLOBALIZATION: DETERMINANTS OF THE IDEOLOGY OF HYBRIDITY

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ABSTRACT

Globalisation has been defined to understand by both empirical and non-empirical processes. Though globalisation is adhered to the economic aspects its trajectories have grown and outreached beyond the empirical constraints of language and culture. In globalisation, the interactive nature of language and culture is hard to measure because of their interconnectedness. However, the interconnectedness is apparent to reach with empirical attempts to understand. Cultural anthropologists and sociolinguists by their methodological researches have explored globalisation to define apart from economic aspects. As per their observations and opinions culture and language found, under globalisation, established a strong and complementary interconnectivity into paradigms. The paradigms in the globalisation context are generally understood as cultural differentiation, in which separating the world into civilization units in conflict with each other. One among such paradigms under globalisation is identified in the theory of McDonaldization. The theory refers to the homogenisation of culture and paradigm of hybridity or 'global melange', which is a movement towards simplicity. In this cultural differentiation, the world gets separated into different cultural units conflicting with each other. Nevertheless, the conflicts are found to be fading with the homogenisation of culture and into the paradigms of hybridity. In another phrase it is the 'global melange' which has become a shift towards simplicity. This

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shift of paradigms either into homogenisation or simplicity is certainly been intermediated between language and culture to form and influence as an ideology without which the paradigm shift is not possible. Under this hypothesis of the intermediation between language and culture in globalisation the present paper attempts to examine how globalisation influences on language and culture in the establishment of an ideology and specifically an ideology of hybridity.

INTRODUCTION

At first, the consideration of language here is from the sociolinguistic rather than from the linguistics point of view. However, in linguistics a structure is provided in defining language. The socio-linguistic definition, according to Wardhaugh, is “a knowledge of ruler and principles and of the ways of saying and doing things with sounds, words and sentences rather than just knowledge of specific sounds, word and sentences”(P2). The definition Wardhaugh provides here is with the consideration of context. The context is nothing but the culture at large, which implies that language does not exist apart from culture. Language, indeed, is acquired from the socially inherited assemblage of practices and beliefs leading to the determination of the ideology of life. In a sense, it is a cultural part of a society and even a guide to ‘social reality’. Thus to be understood, that a strong relationship exists between language and culture. A much of this relationship is found elaborately discussed even by Ngugi Wa Thiango in his essay “The Language of African Literature”.

Ngugi in his theoretical argument based on the postcolonial African setting writes that there is a relationship of language to human experience, human culture and the perception of reality. On this basis, he divides language into dual character as both a means of communication and a carrier of culture. Language focusing the basis and process of evolving culture ‘is the collective memory bank of a people’s experience in history’ (Ngugi 29). Similarly, culture is almost indistinguishable from the language and it mediates through language in its spoken and written aspects. Ngugi’s critique is in the context of imperialistic imposition of foreign language on children. However, the logical fervour behind the theoretical argument of Ngugi is for both language and culture concern at whole.

On the similar par of Ngugi’s observation on language and culture, observations on globalization with a focus on how language and cultures are affected is understood by the inflow and outflow of people, images, ideas and technology says Appadurai as globalization. Under these flows, linguistic variations and language shifts have taken place in a substantial scale and speed illustrating global trends in language. Further, assisted and aligned with the technology and media, language and culture are adequately complementing each other to examine the cultural and linguistic aspects of globalization.



On the second, culture when considered in terms of the participatory responsibilities of its members, Goodenough states that ‘a society’s culture is made up of whatever it has to know or believe in order to operate in a manner acceptable to its members, and to do so in any that they accept for any one of themselves’ (1957, 167). On the other hand, Malinowski in “The Problem of Meaning in Primitive Languages” views culture as an interactive design, stating that it is a response to need, and believes that what constitutes a culture is its response to these sets of needs: the basic needs of the individual, the instrumental needs of the society and the symbolic and integrative needs of both the individual and the society. Accordingly, language, being one of the basic needs of society, in the era of globalization of culture, caters to the integrative needs of both the individual and the society and thus the various needs of culture must keep in balance through language. Consequentially, the members of a culture operate, both individually and as a group, in a balanced condition establishing a relationship between language and culture.

From the globalization per-se when examined language and culture, language is under the linguistic imperialism i.e. the spread of global English with the concomitant loss of indigenous languages and cultures. Indeed this loss is a right measure of globalization. Understanding measuring globalization has become imperative as well as apparent at present; because the new frontiers for the spread of language is not the geographical or national boundary but of the cyberspace. Globalization, being the flows of technology also, at the speed of light, has made a paradigm shift in looking at the ethnography as the study of illustration of global trends in language. When examined the global trends in language, language and culture as interdependent the utilisation and execution for the need of both, the individual and the society, is a balanced form of structure made possible by a ‘neutral claim’. This neutral claim is the condition to be theoretically understood a ‘Hybridity’ forming a convenient establishment of relationship between language and culture.

Hybridity is “a theoretical meta construction of social order” (Werbner, P-1). However when understood from the linguistic view of Bhaktin there are two forms of linguistic hybridization: unconscious/organic hybridity and conscious/intentional hybridity. In the organic hybridity new images, words objects are integrated into language or culture unconsciously. Accordingly, organic hybridity creates the historical foundations for the fusions of unlike social languages and images. Globalization, laying a historical foundation for such fusions through transnational capitalism, global telecommunications and the explosions of consumption, has theorised the hybridity and creolisation. To use Bhaktin’s metaphor: ‘in a globalising world, monological languages cannot escape the sense of being surrounded by ocean of heteroglossia.’

As hybridity, rather than a cultural aspect, interrupted from the psychoanalytical terminology – ‘unconscious’, it demands further debate. The Lacanian relationship between



language and unconscious, the dictum: ‘unconscious is structured like a language’ connects to the psycholinguistics aspect of language mentioned at the beginning. However, not considering further in this per-se because of complexification of the relationship between language and unconscious it is ceased to continue with the idea of globalization. Globalization, apart from its understandings as earlier mentioned, has exalted a dramatic legacy of modernity. This modernity has become the need and duty to exist as individuals. The modern individuals are undoubtedly in a condition of understanding themselves as subjects of purposeful and meaningful behaviour to coordinate in a network of communality and communication. Thus in establishing oneself under the modernity of globalization, the communication network is obvious and inevitable. The communication network is similar, as said earlier, to sociolinguistic. It has connection with culture directly. As the culture under globalization has been hybridised, naturally the language must also be hybridised. Formulating interdependency and interconnectivity among the culture, language and globalization hybridity emerges to work as Homi K Bhabha says

Hybridity works with, and within, the cultural design of the present to reshape our understanding of the interstices- social and psychic- that link signs of cultural similitude with emergent signifiers of alterity” (Bhabha, Foreword P-ix)

The alterity which hybridity insists is, rather than inevitable, comfortable and concomitantly established with the practices of culture hybridised by globalization and similarly language by culture. In the severity of globalization humans, becoming subjects, negotiate a mode of authority on themselves which is neither multiple or unitary.

The subject of hybridity is primarily constituted by the ‘difference’ which is experienced. The differences experienced are at political, social or economic and linguistic aspects. For any attempt of managing the difference, at first, is in and through language. Hence, the primary projection of hybridity is at the sociolinguistic arena, which is always comfortable, convenient and possible. The language, which does not require an institutional order or permission, is subjected primarily and easily for any hybridisation. Then at the cultural level with the institutional and ideological permissions which are also influenced by sociolinguistics. Thus, the hybridity once emerged in language and into culture becomes large-scale hybridity which replicates the logic of cohesion on a larger scale to the extent of nation and further recruiting into the formation of global homogeneity.

As an individual, the logic of identity and identification is made through the global culture and their culture mediated language, which all together found in hybridity. Hence, an ideology through globalisation in relation with language and culture establishes in the consolidated form of hybridity. Hybridity being at the unconscious level in the execution of language and culture is definitely been in the form of ideology. The ideology of hybridity has

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extended in the formation of hybrid identities. Consequentially Hybridity by establishing an ideology establishes the practice of attributing meaning. Thus, language and culture in the context of globalisation have been determinants of the ideology of hybridity.

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