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HOW THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE CONTRIBUTES TO SUSTAINING THE NEOLIBERAL AGENDA: ANOTHER TAKE ON THE STRANGE NON-DEMISE OF NEOLIBERALISM[1]

CONTEXT

By 2008 when it appeared as if the American and European markets would crash and that the world was on the verge of an economic depression, economists from both the left and right began to proclaim the end of neoliberalism, or at least of some of its basic features exemplified by, for example, the Washington Consensus. Nobel laureate, Joseph Stiglitz, in a 2008 interview with the *Berliner Zeitung* said "the philosophy of deregulation is dead". He added further that "Neoliberalism like the Washington Consensus is dead in most Western countries" (Stiglitz, 2008a and b). Under the circumstances, it was difficult for right wing pundits to continue to support the notion that the market is best left to its own devices and will always correct itself when problems arise. Deregulation to enable increasing trade openness had not worked. Ironically, the financial institutions that had in the boom times demanded that government stay away from the working of the market now found themselves in need of government bailouts to avoid collapse. The Western governments felt that the institutions were too big to fail fearing that if the banks and corporations were to collapse, they would take the whole economy down with them plunging the whole world into economic depression, with massive unemployment. Despite the knowledge that bailouts would ultimately have to be paid for by the tax payers, even tax averse factions held their noses and agreed to the bailouts and stimulus financing in some areas to keep the economy going. An economic depression was averted, at least in the developed North, but to prevent further deficits, austerity became the rule of the day. Strangely enough, although it was manifestly clear that it was financiers who had caused the problems by taking advantage of an overly deregulated market to implement reckless and questionable practices, yet, they somehow escaped censure, and often were even able to reward themselves for their practices, ending up wealthier than before. But working class people were suffering greatly: unemployment was rising, secure jobs with benefits were not returning, unions were bullied into bargaining away hard won rights and privileges for workers, and were even deemed the cause of the economic problems (Krugman, 2013). Disparity between the small number of extremely wealthy and the rest of the populace, seeing its standard of living plummeting has been growing steadily.

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It is no wonder then that there was a call for a return to regulation, a reintroduction of checks and balances and a more sober approach to economic management. And yet, five years down the road, the market and economy have not fully recovered, and the neoliberal market agenda, albeit a bit restrained seems to prevail. Economists in the US and European Union continue to express trust that the market will keep the world economy moving forward, but also push governments to impose austerity measures on the people that will see secure jobs ever harder to win, lower salaries for those with jobs, and few or no benefits. Youth in particular are struggling the hardest to find their way in these brutal, cutthroat economic times. Meanwhile the super-rich and the corporations they control continue to pull in huge profits while unemployment remains unacceptably high. Francis Fukuyama, who in "The End of History" exulted over the triumph of Western ways when Communism came to an end in Europe, now in an article entitled "The Future of History" is concerned about whether liberal democracy will prevail in a neoliberal world that is damaging the middle class. He has said: "The current form of globalized capitalism is eroding the middle class social base on which liberal democracy rests" (Fukuyama, 2012). Joseph Stiglitz, (2008b) had anticipated the problem when he observed "Today, there is a mismatch between social and private returns. Unless they are closely aligned, the market system cannot work well."

Neoliberal market fundamentalism was always a political doctrine serving certain interests. It was never supported by economic theory." Stiglitz (2013) echoes Fukuyama's concern about the faltering middle class when he notes, "there is a worldwide crisis in inequality. The problem is not only that the top income groups are getting a larger share of the economic pie, but also that those in the middle are not sharing in economic growth, while in many countries poverty is increasing. In the US, equality of opportunity has been exposed as a myth" (p. 2). This paper discusses in general the economic conditions particularly in the developing world, and how market fundamentalism despite is flaws and abject failures has managed to continue as the dominant framework. It also looks at the effect of the new world order on higher education. Finally, it suggests that language, especially the English language as the *lingua franca* of commerce has helped to cement the continuing neoliberal discourse of the primacy of the market.

GLOBALIZATION AS NEO-COLONIALISM

Globalization as seen in a benign light is associated with the breaking down of borders, the speed of communication around the world as a result of technological advances and the freeing up of markets.
As Tsui and Tollefson (2006) define it:

> [I]t is typified by time-space compression, captured in the metaphor of the *global village,* and characterized by interconnectivity (…) as well as intensity, simultaneity, and instantaneity of knowledge generation, information transmission, and interaction. (…) [It] is effected by two inseparable mediational tools, technology and English (p. 1).

There is no doubt that our world is a more homogenized and more accessible place today, and that those with the technical wherewithal benefit enormously from the speed at which communication and interchanges can be made from anywhere in the world.

The new technology has made possible the outsourcing of labour so that, for example, when a person in Canada experiences a problem with a computer from an American company but assembled in China, and seeks technical assistance by telephone, she will inevitably find herself speaking to someone in India or in the Philippines, and miraculously the problem will be solved. But although this technical miracle benefits the computer owner and contributes to rising standards of living in formerly developing countries, it also has a negative effect on workers in the West who have lost their position to cheaper labour elsewhere. In this way, the dark side of globalization as an expression of economic liberalism is revealed. Bourdieu (2001) warned of this hegemonic result of globalization when he wrote:

> "Globalization" serves as a password, a watchword while in effect, it is the legitimatory mask of a policy aiming to universalize particular interests, and the particular tradition of the economically and politically dominant powers, above all the United States, and to extend to the entire world the economic and cultural model that favours these powers most, while simultaneously presenting it as a norm, a requirement (p. 84).

Of course, it is becoming clear that the dominant powers do not necessarily represent the government of the United States but rather the power represented by transnational corporations, and by organizations such as the World Bank (WB), the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Trade Organization (WTO), organizations that have tirelessly put forward neoliberal initiatives through the Washington Consensus. Because the discourse of market fundamentalism under neoliberal globalization has taken hold, government involvement has drastically declined. Consequently privatization, deregulation and decentralization proceed apace to give free rein to the market. There is a sorry history of how this new version of *laissez-faire* economics has been imposed on struggling nations around the world, and the havoc resulting for the citizens of those countries (See Geo-JaJa & Mangum, 2003 and Abdi, 2012). The neoliberal project was imposed through European and US-controlled International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank. These agents of neoliberalism were able to exert their will on struggling countries in Latin and South America, in Africa as well as in former Communist bloc countries. More recently European Union countries in economic straits, Ireland, Greece, Spain and Cyprus have also had to accept harsh austerity plans in order to start to pay off their debt loads.

STRUCTURAL ADJUSTMENT PROGRAMS IN AFRICA

The draconian solution exacted by the IMF and the WB is best embodied in the Structural Adjustment Programs (SAPs) that have been imposed on debt-ridden

countries since the 1980s with the stated aim of righting economic woes, repaying debts and encouraging growth, but usually with disastrous results and growing impoverishment for the populace (Geo-JaJa & Mangum, 2001, Abdi, 2012) The familiar pattern of a few, connected to transnational companies, along with the companies' directors benefitting enormously, while the general populace struggles to eke out a living in appalling conditions has been the unfortunate result of SAP imposition. When one considers what structural adjustment entails; namely, privatization and deregulation, which undermines the influence of governments, and transfers power to market interests with program conditionalities such as cuts to social programs, especially in areas of education, health and housing; currency devaluation, concentration on commodities attractive for exportation to the detriment of, local food consumable goods and services, it becomes clear that the SAP plan was never intended to better the lot of developing nations, but rather to re-colonize them and ensure that economic benefits flow to the transnational or wealthy donor countries of the G8. One of the most egregious examples was the privatization of water in Bolivia where the local populace could not afford to access their own national resource and thus were unable to water crops, and produce feed for their animals, let alone provide drinking water for their families. Is it any wonder that riots and civil unrest often ensue from imposed Structural Adjustment Programs? The Structural Adjustment Programs have been severely criticized for many years causing what has been called "a race to the bottom" for poor developing nations who experience increased dependency on the richer nations while falling into ever deeper poverty. (See Global Issues, 1998/2013:http://www.globalissues.org/article/3/structural-adjustments-a-major-cause-of-poverty)

Countries that have experienced the harsh and negative effects of a SAP include Algeria, Benin, Bolivia, Ecuador, Niger, Nigeria, Russia, Sudan, Uganda and Venezuela among others (Global Issues article on Structural Adjustment, 1998/2013). The problem of policy rhetoric versus reality with regard to SAPs around the world has been well documented, particularly for Africa. (See Geo-JaJa & Mangum, 2001). Geo-JaJa & Mangum (2003) and Geo-JaJa (2004) have focused on damage to education in Nigeria as a result of SAPs related policies of decentralization and privatization of education. As Abdi (2013) has noted about the effect of SAPs on Africa,

> One can look at what SAPs have achieved for Africa in the past 30 or so years, and from any pragmatic perspective, the picture is anything but encouraging. So much so that one might not help but assume the intentions of the IFIs (International Financial Institutions) were never formulated to fulfil their rhetorical representations. Indeed, the very nature of SAPs i.e., what they are at their core, is not compatible with the basic structures and practices of African life. At their core, SAPs are one important part of globalization, but at a sub-level, they are to fulfill the requirements of the dominant neo-liberal political and economic agenda where the practices of supply side economics,

> in which in the context of non-interventionist and unregulated market driven relationships, supply creates its own demand (p. 354).

Indeed, even the WB and IMF eventually recognized problems with SAPs, and in 1999 replaced them with a program they called Poverty Reduction Growth Facility (PRGF). They also renamed the Policy Framework Papers as the Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PSRP). Unfortunately, the harmful conditionalities mandated by SAPS are still being imposed:

> [T]he PRSP process is simply delivering repackaged structural adjustment programmes (SAPs). It is not delivering poverty-focused development plans and it has failed to involve civil society and parliamentarians in economic policy discussions. *(PRSPs just PR say civil society groups, Bretton Woods Project Update #23, June/July 2001,* cited in Global Issues article on Structural Adjustment, 1998/2013).

That neo-liberal economic policy still prevails in 2013 can be seen in an item from Canada's most recent federal budget where the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), previously a semi-autonomous organization dedicated to overcoming inequality globally by providing aid to developing countries and mounting development projects in education, agriculture, water management, and the like has been taken over by the Foreign Affairs and International Trade Department. Now rather than addressing inequities in the developing world, the priority will be placed on potential economic benefits to Canada and private commercial interests through various projects. As Jill Allison, writing in the *Globe and Mail* puts it "CIDA, the agency meant to respond to global inequities, has been fully co-opted into the Harper government's agenda that puts the economic interests of the few ahead of the social interests of the many" (Allison, *Globe & Mail*, Letters to the Editor, March 25, 2013, p. A10). There have been justified concerns in the past about aid to Africa not meeting real needs of the countries or people, but this cynical move by Canada's government ensures that in future, the priority of aid projects in Africa and elsewhere will be on profit to corporations rather than to locally identified areas of need to assist in real development of nations.

IS EDUCATION PART OF THE PROBLEM OR PART OF THE SOLUTION?

Education has long been considered as a necessary element for social advancement and sustainable development. However, the kind of schooling one receives and the curriculum studied may or may not contribute to helping people reach their full potential and ready themselves for a functional role or place in society. Since formal schooling often acts to inculcate the values and culture of the dominant establishment powers, outliers are often badly served. The residential schools in Canada provide a particularly egregious example. The colonial rulers reasoned that by removing young indigenous children from their families and placing them in residential schools, they

could assimilate them to the ruling European culture and destroy their traditions and ways of knowing which the colonizers considered to be inferior and pagan, as well as ensure that they lost their native languages. Teachers in the residential schools by and large subjected the native children to brutal treatment, and the "education" they received was meant to prepare menial workers who could serve the colonial masters. Incredibly, the last residential school in Canada only closed in 1996. Many reports have detailed the havoc wrought on indigenous people of North America, including "loss of language, grade retardation, high dropout rates, rampant physical, sexual and emotional abuse, alienation and intergenerational communication breakdown" (Binda & Lall, 2013, p. 16; see also Aboriginal Healing Foundation, 2009; Canadian Council on Learning, 2007; Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, 1996; Assembly of First Nations, 1994).

Colonized peoples around the world suffered similar fates under colonial imposition of a European schooling system that was usually not at all relevant to their lives and experience, and further, was designed to train only a small percentage of the locals as elites who would carry out the bidding of the colonial masters and act as intermediaries with the local populace who would be the unskilled labourers. The practice of providing schooling in a colonial language and downplaying or ignoring local languages ensured that large numbers of students would never be able to complete schooling. It is after all, difficult if not impossible to learn concepts in a language one does not understand (See Babaci-Wilhite, Geo-JaJa & Lou 2012)

Most colonized countries in Africa gained their independence by the 1960s. And yet the school system continues largely to be modeled on the European system, the language of instruction usually a colonial one, at least in secondaryand tertiary levels. Despite years of research showing the importance of having the medium of instruction (MoI) in native, local languages (Brock-Utne, 2000, 2001), European languages still prevail as the MoI, particularly at the tertiary level, but also at the secondary and even primary levels in some cases. So firmly entrenched is the notion of the superiority of northern European education as opposed to the apparent irrelevance of local languages and cultures in a globalized world, that policy makers and parents are convinced that their children will never be able to participate and succeed in the global economy unless they have mastered its language—usually the English language. Despite failure and dropouts from the European system and clear indications that European style education is not working, oddly enough, no one seems to be suggesting alternative types of education such as Freire (1970/2000) might have championed that would focus on grassroots needs and work from the ground up rather than top down imposition. Instead, failures are blamed on the "lazy" students and poor teachers although little is done to help prepare teachers better. So people in the developing world continue to pursue an English education as recommended in our neo-liberal globalized world where the language of business, and commerce, as well as of the powerful international agencies like the World Bank is English.

Even in countries where policies were created to allow for indigenous languages or a national language other than English to be the Medium of Instruction as in South Africa and Tanzania, the results have not been promising. Local languages are used only for the first few years at the primary level after which the MoI becomes a European language, predominantly English. Tanzania had committed to making Swahili the MoI at the secondary and tertiary levels (Babaci-Wilhite, 2013) but gradually English is making inroads again as the main language of instruction under the pressure of parents and government policy makers. In South Africa, despite promising results when local languages were the MoI in the first three years of primary school, plans have not proceeded to continue the local languages in subsequent grades (Mbekwa & Nomlomo, 2013). The situation in Asia is similar. Malaysia provides an interesting example. After first doing away with the trappings of colonial education such as use of English as MoI throughout the system along with graduation requirements including Cambridge administered O- and A-level tests, and replacing them by education in the national language, Bahasa Malaysia, in 2002, the government decided to require that Mathematics and Science from primary grades onwards would be taught in English, on the grounds that subjects such as Science, Information Technology (IT) and Mathematics, important for admission and success in the global economy required competence in English. However, after years of disappointing test results, lack of qualified teachers able to instruct the subjects in English, as well as resistance from the Chinese and Tamil minority groups, the government decided to revert to the old system and end the experiment of English as MoI for Science and Mathematics in the primary and secondary levels. (See Majhanovich 2013, Babaci-Wilhite 2013). Nevertheless, English as MoI in higher education in Malaysia continues apace. Also expensive private education in English is available and draws children of affluent Malaysian parents.

The widespread imposition of SAPs and more recently the Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSP)—which were supposed to respond to the abysmal failure of the Structural Adjustment Programs—have contributed to the entrenchment of European style education programs or internationalization of education in developing countries. The SAPs required already impoverished countries to cut back on social program spending and to privatize education and other social programs wherever possible (See Geo-JaJa, 2006). Private schools have proliferated as a result following models of European schooling using European languages as the MoI. This trend works against the goals of the EFA policy, since the parents in impoverished countries cannot afford the school fees and considerable costs for uniforms, books, transportation to the school or residential fees and the like. Under SAPs governments have had to cut back funding drastically for education with the result that it is nearly impossible for public schools to function effectively. Parents want to educate their children but cannot afford the costs of private schools and so must deny some of their children, often the girls, access to school. Thus, many in the developing world find themselves caught in a situation where it is difficult if not impossible to see their children through to the end of secondary education. However, even if they succeed

in getting their children to school, one has to question whether the schooling their children receive is providing them with anything relevant to their context. The high dropout rates are not surprising in these circumstances.

The true believers in neo-liberalism policies of the WB and IMF, no doubt were convinced their plans would ultimately raise the standard of living in the developing world and would integrate these countries into the global economy. But they seem to have very little understanding of education, and so it is not a surprise that the EFA goals will not be reached under their watch. In a recent volume entitled *The World Bank and Education* edited by Klees, Samoff & Stromquist (2012), the World Bank comes in for strong criticism for its disastrous record with regard to education in the developing world. Steven Klees observes, since UNESCO, because of severe funding cuts is no longer able to be an effective leader in global education policy, the World Bank has stepped in to take its place (Klees, 2012). The ideology of the World Bank is predominantly neoliberal; that is, it views development, as economic growth which will be effected by downsizing government involvement in society, through privatization, deregulation and the liberalization of the economy (Klees, 2012, p. 51). These requirements when carried out are inimical to a sound public education system. Klees states categorically the "World Bank policy [has] been an educational disaster, harmful to children around the world" (p. 50). Nordtveit (2012) echoes this harsh criticism of World Bank policies on education noting that for the World Bank, "education as a human right is not emphasized" (p. 28), and cites the Global Campaign for Education which in response to World Bank strategies for education says "the strategy focuses too heavily on private sector and market based approaches to education and on education as an instrument to serve the job market (Global Campaign for Education, p. 2, cited by Nordveidt, p. 29); Nordveidt confirms, "the World Bank is focused on economic growth, the primacy of the market, focus on processes rather than on pedagogy" (p. 29).

The World Bank with its primarily business interests and market orientation is really ill-suited to meddle in education programs, and rarely in its policy documents even touches upon issues that would concern educationists; namely schools, teachers and teacher training, class size and curriculum issues, students with exceptionalities, and the like. Instead, it uses the market agenda as the lens through which education is viewed to "solve" educational problems. As such, education is definitely a commodity, and the private sector is an organism which should partner with governments to implement the service of education and ensure that the student "clients" receive appropriate skills to meet labour market needs (Nordtveit, 2012, p. 24). Because too much privatization of national concerns and institutions is not palatable to some countries, the ploy now is to push public private partnerships (PPPs) to make it look as if nations still have some say in the matter. In a clever riff on Crouch's book *The Strange Non-Death of Neoliberalism* (2011), Susan Robertson in the volume on the World Bank and Education lays out the problem areas from privatization of education and the facilitation of Public, Private Partnerships (Robertson, 2012; see also Davidson-Harden & Majhanovich 2004, regarding issues with PPPs).

Because so much of the business world depends on "quality" control and assessments to measure quality of production, it is not surprising that the World Bank strategies for education include reliance on standardized testing and ranking of countries in the international assessments like PIRLS (Progress in International Reading Literacy Study) and TIMMS (Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study). The World Bank believes that the disappointing results of many African countries on these assessments can be overcome by more accountability measures particularly of teachers, and more assessments provided by private interests—although there is little evidence that this approach actually does anything to solve the problem. What seems lost on the WB policy makers is the human element of education. As Mark Ginsburg (2012) has noted:

> …if one begins with a concept of teachers (or, for that matter, students) as human beings then the *process* of learning and human development becomes very relevant. From this starting point, one would be less likely to focus only on the *product* of learning, treating teachers as a material component or as commodity. If teachers were conceived of as human beings, with special attention to teachers as learners, then strategic attention by the World Bank, other international organizations, and governments would be given to how education systems and policies need to encourage and facilitate teacher learning (p. 91).

So in answer to the question "is education part of the problem or part of the solution", we have to admit that for both the developing and developed world, under the ongoing neoliberal discourse as espoused by such powerful education policy makers as the World Bank, current education practices are not contributing to solutions. Further, neo-colonialism seems to prevail, rather than liberation and a move to real democracy. The situation for education is in crisis in the developing world, but the affluent north has not remained unscathed. As Giroux (2004) has pointed out, neoliberal policies applied to education systems in the west undermine an important task of education, namely, that of preparing engaged citizens. He believes that neoliberalism has had a serious and negative impact on the language of democracy, education and the media. He urges resistance to ensure that democratic institutions be restored to their central place of importance in our society.

ENGLISH AS A HEGEMONIC LANGUAGE

Native speakers of English perhaps unconsciously claim entitlements because of their language. It often seems that it is assumed that everyone should be communicating in English. For example, in Canada, an officially bilingual French and English country, it is not uncommon when a group of Francophone and Anglophones meet, even if the Francophones outnumber the Anglophones, that the language used will be English. Francophones in Canada have accepted the necessity of speaking English to communicate with fellow Canadians outside of Quebec. Except for the province

of Quebec where French is the official language, and where a series of laws have been enacted requiring proficiency in and use of French in all walks of life, English dominates elsewhere in Canada. However, if one hopes to work in Quebec, one must demonstrate a working knowledge of French, confirmed by success on a language test administered by the Office of French Language in Quebec (l'Office québécois de la langue française). Although outside of Quebec, Canadians tend to scoff at the language laws in Quebec and complain about their rigour, the Quebec population feels threatened by the power of English in today's world and has reacted with laws to protect their language and culture. Meanwhile in the rest of Canada few have bothered to become proficient in Canada's other official language and so English tends to prevail everywhere. Of course, by law, all federal agencies in Canada must be able to offer services in both official languages and it would be unlikely for anyone to be elected Prime Minister in Canada without a working knowledge of both languages.

Perhaps surprisingly, the US has never enacted a law to designate an official language (see Kubota, 2006; De Palma & Teasley, 2013). Still it is quite clear that English is really the only language tolerated. In certain states there are edicts about language. An English-only ideology pervades education policy as reflected in the laws banning bilingual education in California (1998), Arizona (2000) and Massachusetts (2002) (See Kubota, 2006). Nevertheless, when it is perceived that national security in the US is under threat from foreign interests and that knowledge of other languages is needed in a sense of "know your enemy" interest grows in training people in various foreign languages. However, the main language of communication remains English.

The fact that the powerful international financial agencies such as the World Bank and International Monetary Fund are controlled by G8 economic, strategic and political interests dictates that their working and reports will be primarily in English. And this transfers to other agencies around the world like ASEAN (Association of South East Asian Nations) and the Asian Development Bank whose working language is English. The neoliberal underpinnings of these agencies are reflected in policies they develop. For example, when Cambodia joined ASEAN in 1999, and affirmed its intentions to become a democratic state, it included in its constitution clauses committing it to a market economy and organized its economy to facilitate integration into the world economy (Clayton, 2007, p. 97).

The European Union with its 27 states—soon to become 28 when Croatia officially becomes a member in the summer of 2013—currently recognizes 27 official languages although the daily workings of the EU parliament and its policies are in English, French and German. Still two-thirds of the policy drafts are in English and its motto "One Europe" is in English only (Phillipson, 2006. See also Phillipson, 2003). Recently a German delegate and minister of the EU parliament suggested that the working language should be English only. Crystal (2003), reports that the English language has special or official status in 75 countries. The number of countries or territories favoring the use of English is growing. There are now more people who

have learned English as a second language and speak it with some proficiency than native speakers of English (Majhanovich, 2013).

In the academic domain, English has made great inroads. More and more universities, based in the English speaking world are setting up off-shore campuses or partnering with universities abroad to offer programs usually in business, commerce, engineering and medicine. The language of instruction is inevitably English. Many universities in Europe and Asia that formerly offered programs in various disciplines in the national language, now also offer programs taught in English.

Academic journals, especially those highly ranked on the international index publish primarily in English. Even the UNESCO based journal, *The International Review of Education,* which includes abstracts of articles in English, French, German, Spanish and Russian, and presumably would accept articles in any of those languages, professes preference for articles in English.

Typically the language of communication at international conferences will be English even if papers in the local language are accepted as long as simultaneous translation into English or outlines of the paper in English are provided as handouts. One would think that the country hosting an international conference would be able to declare its native language as the main language of communication but that is usually not the case these days.

The pervasiveness of English confirms its status as the *lingua franca* of the world. The connections of neoliberal organizations to the multilateral agencies that use English as their working languages confers a certain neoliberal slant to many of the products produced as policies or academic courses and articles emanating from the off-shore universities. This element will be discussed in the next section. For non-English native speakers trying to find a place in a world that demands English as the language of communication, there are considerable challenges. Unsurprisingly, many resent the "free ride" English native speakers have when publishing in scientific journals (van Parijs, 2007). In our globalized world, academics face pressure to publish in English in highly ranked academic journals. Non-English speakers must overcome the hurdles of writing in Standard English often to cultural or methodological norms alien to their context. This challenge speaks to issues of equality (Flowerdew, 2007). It also confirms the neo-colonial, hegemonic nature of English today.

Yukio Tsuda (1997) details the negative consequences that arise as a result of the dominance of English: " (1) linguistic inequality to a great disadvantage of the speakers of languages other than English; (2) discrimination against the non-English speaking people and those who are not proficient in English; and (3) colonization of the consciousness of the non-English-speaker, causing them to develop linguistic, cultural, and psychological dependency upon, and identification with the English, its culture and people." (p. 22)

As an example of linguistic inequality he looks at international conferences where because of the gap in proficiency in language between native and non-native speakers, the English speakers tend to monopolize discussions and marginalize the others

through speed of delivery and use of idiomatic speech unfamiliar to the non-English-speaking audience. He cites Takahashi's (1991) observation that "native speakers of English in the English dominated conferences use their linguistic advantage to magnify their powers so that they can establish [an] unequal and asymmetrical relationship with non-English speakers and thus push them out of the mainstream of communication" (Takahashi , 1991, pp 188–89, translated from Japanese and cited in Tsuda, 1997).

As a native English speaker who has attended international conferences presenting papers in English, probably at a pace faster than my audience could readily grasp, I plead guilty to causing confusion, but it was not done intentionally. The requirements of presenting findings of a complicated project in 15 or 20 minutes necessitate a rapid delivery. There is a certain 'jargon' that is expected in academic communications. Still, Takahashi has a valid point and English presenters at international conferences should be more sensitive to the linguistic capabilities of their audience. The advent of power point presentations that summarize the talk along with handouts to support the address should mitigate the problem somewhat. However, the issue remains of the advantage afforded to native English speakers in such congresses and their often taken for granted assumptions that it is the responsibility of the locals to rise to the necessary level of competence in English to make sense of the presentations, not the duty of the English presenter to try to accommodate the non-English speakers.

Tsuda further laments the "colonization of consciousness" as a result of the dominance of English. This results in the devaluation of local cultures including artistic representation, traditional education practices, local literatures and languages. Africa has certainly suffered from this effect of English dominance (See Ngugi, 1981, Babaci-Wilhite, Geo-JaJa & Lou, 2012). In place of local culture, the influence of Anglo-American culture is becoming pervasive.

Lest one think that Tsuda's arguments are overstated, one only needs to look to the growth of English academic programs at the tertiary level world-wide, the numbers of academic journals published in English as well as international conferences for all disciplines with English as the medium of communication. The list continues to grow.

A particularly disturbing example of English hegemony and colonialism in the academic world can be found in Korea. In an article entitled "Neoliberalism as Language", Piller and Cho (2013) present the unfortunate case of an elite university in Korea, the Korea Advanced Institute of Science and Technology (KAIST) which, motivated by the desire to make their institution more competitive in the world market had chosen to make English the only MoI, amazingly even extending this requirement to the learning of foreign languages such as Russian or Chinese that had to be taught through the medium of English! This is but one example of academic restructuring in Asia in a rush to internationalize. The human toll has been high with a rise in suicides both among faculty members and students. The extreme difficulty of working in a foreign language in which they were not proficient and in which they were unable to attain competency led to their acts of despair.

This recalls the case of local Cantonese speaking teachers of English in Hong Kong schools and colleges who were required to pass demanding proficiency tests in English and in English pedagogy in order to retain their licences to teach. Native speakers of English, many of whom had no particular preparation to teach English as a foreign language (unlike their Hong Kong teaching peers) were exempt from the assessments (Van Deven, 2006, So, 2003)

In the case of KAIST the restructuring included English as the MoI to make it possible in the guise of internationalization to accept non-Korean students. However, as has been pointed out, English MoI rather than reflecting a move to the international that validates diverse languages and cultures, actually represents "the transfer of the US model of academic capitalism to another national context" (Kauppi & Erkkilä, 2011 cited in Piller and Cho, 2013, p. 31), and of course involves the neoliberal impetus toward marketization and corporatization of universities (Piller and Cho, 2013, p. 31). Under the new structure, KAIST blatantly adopted the neoliberal mission to focus on science and engineering with the aim of supplying superbly qualified workers to industry at low cost. Piller and Cho identify this as a transformation of higher education "from the service of the common good to a capitalist enterprise" (p. 32).

A key point of Pillar and Cho's argument is that the push for English as MoI in higher education in Korea and elsewhere is actually language policy in the service of global neocolonialism. As Heller (2010) and others have argued, language, namely the English language, is central to the neoliberal order (cited in Piller and Cho, p. 28). In the next section I turn to a discussion of how the English language supports and sustains neoliberal policy.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE AS AN ANCHOR FOR NEOLIBERALISM

At the beginning of the paper, I discussed the perseverance of neoliberal policies despite their demonstrable failures worldwide, and contribution to growing inequality between a small cadre of the very wealthy and a decline of the middle class including a growing number of the impoverished. An argument can be made that the English language has contributed to the continuation and indeed entrenchment of this faulty economic paradigm. It certainly has contributed to neo-colonialism in African former colonies where under imposed Structural Adjustment Programs, European-style education with English as the MoI has proliferated. The devaluing of indigenous languages and knowledge production has been a sorry outcome (see Babaci-Wilhite, Geo-JaJa & Lou, 2012).

As mentioned above, linguists such as Heller and others (2010) have traced the commodification of language. An examination of the discourses used in current policies for higher education institutions, for primary and secondary education and fiscal policies for nations shows language imbued with the tenets of neoliberalism. Where once educators would vigorously dispute that education is a commodity to be bought and sold on the world market, now it seems taken for granted and normal.

In the past students engaged in higher education for enlightenment and intellectual growth. Now it seems that the goals of education have narrowed. As noted by Abelmann et al (2009 cited in Piller and Cho, 2013) regarding student identity:

> The new model student is an autonomous student-consumer who is responsible for managing his or her own lifelong creative capital development…. contemporary college students are able to narrate their human capital development while obscuring the structural workings of college rank and family capital. The hubris of this new generation works against a more broadly social imagination because it acclaims individuals who do not conform to collectivist demands.

Arguments for the goal of education as a means to liberate human beings, teach them critical thinking skills and realize their human potential are giving way to more instrumental, utilitarian, and yes, neoliberal notions. Institutions of learning are now supposed to function to train workers to enter and serve global markets, to prepare students for jobs. Other more esthetic goals are highly criticized as being irrelevant in today's world. The language of the market has insinuated itself into all areas of daily discourse. We speak of the importance of developing the "brand" of our institutions; universities compete for a "target market" of student "clients" and wish to stake out their position in the "knowledge economy". This reflects the powerful influence of globalization on the internationalization of education and homogenization of language What university administration would dare to omit from its mission statement claims of provision of quality, perhaps world-class education? Everyone, even young secondary students are urged to prepare "business" plans outlining the courses they will be taking, chosen to help them develop the skills needed to participate in the global market.

It appears that economics new-speak has 'colonized' other fields so that now the language describing these domains all begins to resemble the language of the market and must reflect product and potential for profit making. Hasan (2003) as cited in Holborow (2006) has observed how the English language has been affected in the new order.

> She talks of 'glibspeak' [which] consists of turning the semantics of ordinary English upside down and globalizing new concepts which are friendly to the ideology of capitalism…she observes that political words such as *equality*, *freedom, liberalization*, and *non-discrimination* are redolent with ideological shifts. She also charts the process of 're-semantization' by drawing attention to the ideological meanings which have attached to *globalization* only recently—like 'lower costs of production', 'international expansion of companies' and appropriate take-overs' (Hasan, 2003, 437 cited in Holborow, 2006, p. 90).

The importance of the English language worldwide as a co-opted partner in the neoliberal globalization project cannot be underestimated. Of course, in the reality of internationalization, provision of English instruction has become a most lucrative

business. Teachers of English need to be aware of ethical implications of the product they offer. As has been argued by Piller and Cho (2013) among others, the primacy of English, particularly the English of neoliberals in policy can have the effect of suppressing dissent, particularly among those less proficient in the language. Tsuda is justified in his suspicions of the colonizing effects of globalization on non-English speaking nations.

Of course, one could not recommend the cessation of English language teaching to non-English speakers around the globe. That would disadvantage them even more. English IS the current *lingua franca* of the modern world particularly in the areas of business commerce, ICT, science and engineering and social policy. As I have stated before,

> Although in a globalized world it would be unwise and even patronizing of native English speakers to suggest to education policy makers in developing nations that they should not promote opportunities to learn English, on the other hand, they should reflect on the reasons behind the phenomenal spread of English, and focus on English programs that best prepare citizens for situations where English is needed. Furthermore, those who are mandating English knowledge in their populace should consider realistic expectations for mastery as well as methods and approaches that would be the most appropriate for learning English for various purposes. It is in no one's best interest simply to mandate knowledge of this international language without planning for implications in teacher training, in curriculum development, effects on the current education system and issues of equality and social justice. One has to ask whose interests are being served. (Majhanovich, 2013, p. 250).

The implications for those charged with teaching English are enormous (see Babaci-Wilhite, 2012). Kumaravadivelu (2006) sees the current situation of globalization as essentially a neo-colonialization project abetted by the English language. He observes, "whether they know it or not, and whether they like it or not, most TESOL professionals end up serving the profit motives of global corporations and the political motives of imperial powers (p. 23). His solution, like that of others concerned about this uncomfortable state of affairs, is teachers' awareness, and attention to curriculum to allow for reflection and resistance by those who have been co-opted into the globalization project. Perhaps only then can some kind of balance return and the worst excesses of neoliberalism be undone.

CONCLUSION

Neo-liberalism seems to remain the order of the day despite its many failures, and its deleterious effects on democratic society, particularly in the developing world. How has such a destructive economic policy been able to retain its stranglehold on a suffering world? It would seem that Bourdieu (2001) was correct in his judgment that neoliberalism has managed to pass itself off as the required norm which cannot

be resisted. It has been argued in this paper that the English language used in articulating the policies of neoliberalism has assisted in inculcating neoliberalism into the human psyche as the only way to act. Language is powerful and the language of neoliberalism is persuasive. And yet, doubts are arising. As long as it was only the developing world that suffered under neoliberal policies, it seemed that the problem lay not so much in the policies but rather with the countries themselves that just could not adjust to the necessary means to correct their failing economies and become profit making enterprises. The suffering masses would just have to make do and work harder. However, now that the innate problems of a neoliberal approach are affecting the developed West and North as well, and are driving down the middle class on which, as Fukuyama has stated, democracy rests, perhaps policies will change. Perhaps the situation has reached the tipping point where attention will move away from the primacy of the market to concern for the well-being of society as a whole. One can only hope.

NOTES

[1] With acknowledgement to C. Crouch (2011). *The strange non-death of neolliberalism.*

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