

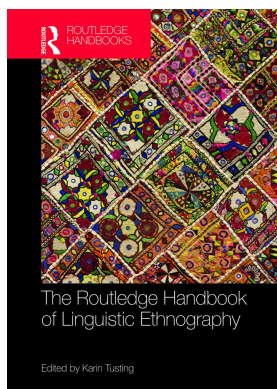
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Sociolinguistic ethnographies of globalisation

Alexandra Grey and Ingrid Piller

Introduction and definitions

A dictionary definition of globalisation describes it as “the integration of national economies through trade, investment, capital flow, labour migration, and technology” (‘Globalization’, 2018). This economic understanding of globalisation is typical, but narrow; global integration obviously also has social, cultural and political dimensions. Our aim in this chapter is to draw out the linguistic nature of globalisation and then to identify the value of an ethnographic approach in research about language and globalisation. This chapter will show that there are important linguistic elements in social, cultural, political and even economic globalisation, particularly in the globalisation of ‘language work’. The linguistic aspects of globalisation are numerous because language is fundamental to any social phenomenon, and the fundamental interrelation is often emphasised by hyphenating ‘language-and-globalisation’ as one, indivisible research topic (as in this chapter). This view of globalisation is intersectional: the different dimensions influence and are influenced by each other; changes do not happen in isolation. Therefore, globalisation can be theorised as a series of intersecting flows, following Appadurai’s (1990, p. 296) influential analysis of globalisation as intersecting flows of people, media, technologies, finance and ideas.

The fundamental question for language-and-globalisation research is what it means to communicate beyond the local level. How is global communication achieved, what forms does it take, in which contexts is it embedded and what are its consequences for social life? What it means to communicate beyond the local level remains fundamental because the multiplicity of languages is a basic fact of life. The focus on the present that characterises most language-and-globalisation research results in an ineluctable emphasis on English, and so the spread of English sometimes seems to be the basic research problem in the language-and-globalisation. However, how to communicate with people who do not share a mutually intelligible language is a timeless concern, and is the central theme shared by many language-and-globalisation studies.

The spread of a language beyond a local group is often driven by imperial political and economic expansion. Where such expansion succeeds, it usually gives rise to languages of wider communication that people learn alongside the language of their immediate

community. A language of wider communication, or *lingua franca*, is one that has more additional language speakers than mother tongue speakers. In today's world, English is the paragon of such a language after centuries of expansion. Language spread is closely tied to imperial expansion, and globalisation extends the reach of certain political and economic actors, such as imperial states, supranational organisations and multinational corporations. As such, the socio-political dimensions of linguistic phenomena are integral to the study of language-and-globalisation.

This idea is developed further in the following section, entitled *Historical perspectives*, which sketches the relationship between imperial expansion and the emergence of *lingua francas*, and the erasure of linguistic diversity. Next, *Critical issues and debates* is about the social construction of linguistic hierarchies and of 'globalisation' itself, through discourse. Third, under *Current contributions*, this chapter canvasses research on global interconnectedness as it relates to language work, language commodification and digitally encoded linguistic practices. The chapter closes with three *Future directions* for language-and-globalisation research – taking emic approaches, questioning the universalism of research and working across disciplines – and some recommended further reading.

The overall design of this chapter is to exemplify each point about ethnographic language-and-globalisation research with a specific case study. This shows ethnographic research 'in action' relative to each issue. To unify our examples, and to contribute to the literature by shifting the spotlight away from the global north, we have focussed on Chinese and other Asian case studies. A leading sinologist and geographer, Carolyn Cartier (2015), describes China today as "urban, mobile and global"; within the rise of Asian regionalism, China is emerging now as a pole in the global geopolitical, economic and cultural order, and the interplay between the established global language – English – and an emerging global language – Mandarin Chinese – provides for illuminating research on the heterogeneity of globalisation experiences.

Historical perspectives

This section sketches the relationship between imperial expansion and the emergence of *lingua francas*, a relationship which is important in studying current globalisation but which is not unique to today. The globalised flows of people, money or technology may be clearly apparent to us in our contemporary world, but globalisation itself "isn't an altogether new phenomenon" (Coupland, 2010, p. 1). Rather, globalising processes have operated throughout history as empires have sought to expand their influence, territory and trading networks, as people have migrated *en masse*, and as people have striven to communicate beyond their local, shared language communities. Linguistic diversity, too, is age-old, and communicating beyond the local shared language group has often been for the purpose of political and economic expansion; linguistic globalisation is a terrain of power struggle. Just as crossing language barriers of non-intelligibility is not a new feature of globalisation, controversy over the emergence of languages of wider communication is not, either.

In the modern era, a global linguistic order has formed which hierarchically values certain languages as global languages. Colonial discourses of knowledge have been important in constructing this linguistic order, particularly in subordinating languages of colonised peoples to colonisers' languages. Discourses of language standardisation have also been very influential in shaping which varieties of which languages are valued. Finally, the growing prominence of policy discourses about minority rights in the modern era has constructed certain languages as worthy of official enumeration (particularly if they are standardised and

have, or have been provided, scripts), and has placed a value on linguistic diversity (albeit hierarchically arranged).

While discourses to identify, name and number languages fuel a multiplication of diversity, another globalisation development has been the erasure of diversity, particularly in the rise of nationalism. There has also been a tendency, especially in the modern nation-state, to seek communicative efficiencies for governing and trade, and to develop national security by developing people's affiliation to one national identity, by promoting monolingualism in a national standard language and in meta-linguistic discourses about the (favourable) indexicality of the standard language variety. Indeed, the 'one-nation one-language' ideology is a feature of the modern nation-state; it is central to what one leading political theorist of modern nationalism, James C. Scott (1998), calls "seeing like a state". The rise of nation-state nationalism in the early modern period is, therefore, especially important in the history of globalisation because processes of nation-forming often erased the preceding history of linguistic diversity.

It is against the backdrop of normative monolingualism in many parts of the world that multilingualism today can seem like a new, anomalous and complex feature of globalisation. As Piller (2013) has previously argued, however, "[a] research agenda that takes linguistic diversity as the basis of sociolinguistic inquiry must also include the hidden histories of linguistic diversity and modernity's attempts to erase diversity". Academic (and popular) discourses which construct social and linguistic diversity in the contemporary global north as abnormal run the risk of continuing discourses of 19th- and 20th-century Orientalism by fetishising and othering multilingualism.

The People's Republic of China (PRC) provides a good illustration. Mullaney (2011) offers a detailed case study of the integral role of linguistics and language speaker classifications in the nationalist project of reorganising the imperial Chinese society into a nation-state, to establish the PRC in the mid-20th century. The state's recognition of linguistic diversity through the formal inclusion of minority groups, usually defined as groups by shared language, was essential to achieving legitimacy amongst peoples who were formerly marginalised or othered in the imperial system. The PRC's early (and continuing) constitutional language and cultural freedoms for minorities form part of global rights discourses that emerged in the 20th century: not necessarily the human rights discourse which became fundamental in the establishment of the UN around the same time, but more particularly the transnational communist discourses of minority rights (Grey, 2017). Mullaney (2011) explains that training bilingual cadres was also an essential part of actually being able to communicate with, and thus govern, the very large and disparate peoples of the 'new' China in the mid-20th century. However, right from the start, this new nation, the PRC, also prioritised the development of a standard variety of Mandarin to serve as the national language, namely Putonghua. Today, this variety has come to dominate not only everyday linguistic functions across China but has also become virtually synonymous with Chinese national identity while minority languages are once again marginalised and even associated with civic disloyalty and secession: the one-nation one-language ideology is ascendant.

Critical issues and debates

Global linguistic hierarchies

In any phase of globalisation, global linguistic hierarchies will emerge, and the dominance of some languages over others will cause controversy. This section explains debate over

the dialectic forces which produce global languages, and offers two models for conceptualising global linguistic hierarchies and the inequalities with which linguistic globalisation intersects. Nowadays, English is the global language *par excellence*, both as a language spoken by people around the globe and as a language associated with global identity. The spread of English around the globe is the subject of impassioned debate because it is a common adaption to globalisation for English to become highly valued relative to other languages already spoken in a society, which in the process come to lose value.

There is ongoing debate over whether English's globalisation is the result of linguistic imperialism – i.e. the active imposition of English by UK and US institutions – or whether it derives from a grass-roots change where people around the world want English because they recognise it as a way towards a brighter future. Phillipson (2009) and Crystal (2004) are well-known proponents of each side, respectively. Although seeming opposites, it is ultimately the top-down and bottom-up positions in tandem that give us the best explanation for the global spread of English. Language learning desires and decisions do not arise in a vacuum but in response to existing structures of opportunity. In other words, the structural imposition of language policies by state institutions on the one hand and individual language choices on the other are dialectically related, and importantly they also interact with commercial actors and their language policies, practices and ideologies. This interrelation can mean that even where English is desired, existing inequalities can be enforced rather than eroded by its global spread.

Contributing to studies on the global spread of English and other international languages are de Swaan's (2001) and Kachru's (1985) models of linguistic hierarchy. The position of English in the two models illustrates how the linguistic and social orders are affected differently by globalisation at different scales. In de Swaan's model, English is the world's "hyper-central" (de Swaan, 2001) language, i.e. most valuable on the global scale, which the model conceptualises by placing English at the top of a language pyramid, while the vast majority of languages cluster at the bottom. De Swaan (2001) refers to these languages, which account for an estimated 98% of all the 5,000 to 6,000 languages in the world, as "peripheral languages", the languages of local communication. Each has relatively few speakers and usually lacks a written form. Above the huge layer of peripheral languages sits a thin layer of around 100 "central languages" which are typically the official languages of nation-states. They are used in schools, media and national politics and bureaucracies. The next layer is occupied by about a dozen "super-central languages", which serve in international and long-distance communication, and English sits atop the pyramid. Conceptualising the global language system as a pyramid is intended to demonstrate that greater communicative reach means greater value. While speakers of a peripheral language need to become multilingual in order to extend their opportunities beyond their narrow local group, a native speaker of English has the advantage that this one language is likely to fulfil all their communicative needs on a local, national, international and global scale. These super-central and hyper-central languages can be considered "default languages of ... global capitalism" (Chen, 2016, p. 531).

However, at other scale levels it is highly socially relevant to distinguish between varieties of English, and to construct a hierarchic order between them. Kachru (1985) posits that this order usually ascribes prestige to linguistic features associated with native speakers of English from the UK and its settlement countries, modelling "inner circle" English inside concentric orbits of less and less central Englishes. "Outer circle" English is used in countries such as Ghana, India or the Philippines, many of which are former colonies of the UK or USA, where English is learned as an additional language and plays an official role in the education and legal system, the political arena and the media. The outermost "expanding circle"

basically comprises the rest of the world, where English is widely learned as an additional language but does not play an official role.

Each model offers useful ways of thinking about language and globalisation and emphasises that global linguistic diversity is hierarchically ordered (for an in-depth exploration see Piller, 2016). However, all models gloss over a large array of diversity, heterogeneity, local specificity and even local hierarchies which invert the global centre-periphery hierarchy, which is why situated studies of globalisation from a wide variety of places and people are important. For such studies, many scholars employ ethnographic methods.

Although globalisation changes social, geopolitical and linguistic orders by integrating the local into the global, the order – the hierarchy – adapts rather than disappearing altogether. That is, the hierarchy intersects with marginality and disadvantage. Intersectionality is inherent in globalisation, meaning that linguistic phenomena may be proxies for other inequalities and social tensions. This raises the importance of scale when understanding globalisation (see Slembrouck and Vandenbroucke, this volume). At different scales, the increased access to people, products and markets around the globe differentially changes the value of people and products on the local scale. Thus, the experience of linguistic globalisation is different on the margins. To illustrate, let us look at Hu and Alsagoff's (2010, 2012) study of the impacts of the widespread teaching of English in China's schools over recent decades, which was pushed by the government in an attempt to integrate China into the global community. As a result the private education market in China has furthered such a frenzy for English language learning that it has come to be known as 'English fever'. Examining the national scope of public English language education, Hu and Alsagoff (2010) conclude that English education in China has benefited only a relatively small number of students in well-resourced urban schools, at the expense of most students. Compulsory English has thus benefited Chinese elites while disadvantaging everyone else: "the English medium instruction initiative has not only perpetuated the unequal distribution of power and access but is also creating new forms of inequality" (Hu & Alsagoff, 2010, p. 375). That study highlights a linguistic/educational inequality intersecting not only with ethnic minorities/Han group inequality but also with socio-economic class inequality, i.e. between the elite and the majority of the Chinese population, who may be from the Han or minority ethnicities. After all, the Han comprise some 92% of the population; they are not coextensive with the elite.

The intersectionality of linguistic hierarchies and other forms of marginality is further exemplified by looking specifically at one Chinese ethnic minority group, the Zhuang minority, who are the largest official minority. Zhuang is experiencing changes to its social, cultural, educational and economic value as China globalises (Grey, 2017). For Zhuang-speaking families in China, that language is not made valuable in their children's education or employment; rather, Mandarin and English are, because they are associated with upward socio-economic mobility and increased geographic mobility. Zhou and Ross (2004, p. 16) argue that "coupled with globalisation and the forces of market economy, China's modernisation drive appears to favour only two dominant languages, Chinese as the national commonly-used language and English as the world language". While Zhuang could still serve as a language of local communication, it is increasingly not even taught at home to younger generations because of a "zero-sum" belief that learning Zhuang reduces the time and effort available for learning Mandarin and English (Grey, 2017). By contrast, learning English is seen as enabling these children to move and participate on a global scale, and learning Mandarin is vital for mobility and participation on the national scale, and, as China interconnects with the world, globally, too. Moreover, while the global centrality of English is seen by some Chinese scholars as causing English to clash with the centrality of Mandarin,

and thus to upset national and identity politics, for speakers of the Zhuang minority language, Grey (2017) reveals that it is the complementarity of English and Mandarin that means they, together, dominate Zhuang language and relegate it to a language which indexes immobility. This is heightened by the use of Zhuang in public texts to symbolise the unchanging, emplaced past and thus create an emplaced sense of an historic Zhuang homeland.

Because of the hierarchical nature of global linguistic orders, and the intersection between global and local hierarchies, language use can become a key site of contestation both in popular debate and in academia, a highly globalised space where English predominates. That is, opposed discourses make different meaning of certain language practices and the identities, places or lifestyles they index. This discursive constructive of globalisation is the focus of the following section.

Globalisation as a discursive construction

'Globalisation' is a discursive construction. This means that language is not only *affected* by globalisation, but also *effects* globalisation. Language effects globalisation especially by articulating and circulating collective imagining of what it means to be a person in a globalised world; it makes globalisation 'real' by providing dominant discursive constructions and disseminating ideas of what it means to be a global person. Such collective imaginings cannot exist without mediation through language; language is necessary to bring imagination into being. Another way of describing this discursive construction is that language puts globalisation into effect by raising global consciousness. Raised awareness of being part of a global group, or network, or society, is a key part of globalisation: one early and influential definition of globalisation was "the compression of the world and the intensification of the consciousness of the world as a whole" (Robertson, 1992, p. 8). Thus, Appadurai (1990, p. 300) notes particular roles for language in the media and idea flows of globalisation, and scholars since have examined, in particular, language in commercial media and particularly advertising as part of the processes constructing globalisation (Piller, 2003; Thurlow & Jaworski, 2003).

Studying discourses of globalisation are important because "[g]lobal imaginations reconfigure what is possible, turning globalisation from an inexorable force into a resource that opens up new vistas" (Burawoy, 2000, p. 32). This line of analysis is indebted to Benedict Anderson's (1991) influential theory of "the imagined community," i.e. in order to create our identities, we imagine a shared identity with which we align (or, in opposition to which our identity is formed). To Anderson, an integral part of creating nations in the modern era has been to create imagined national communities within which people understand themselves as belonging; similarly, imagined global communities are instrumental in creating a globalised world. This creation is achieved, disseminated and mediated through language, not only in the denotation/primary discourse of the words chosen but in the ideological and/or secondary discourse elements of texts. Language in media (including news media, social media and advertising) is a prominent choice for those studying the construction of global identities and global communities.

Moreover, the spread of English and other languages' globalisation impact on global discourses about language practices and what it means to be global. This impacts people's construction of their (and others') identities. Language use becomes a key site of contestation where the use of global languages, particularly English, has come to be associated with submission to globalisation, and so the use of small languages is oftentimes framed as an act of resistance to globalisation and a celebration of the local. Language practices are lightning

rods in dilemmas of political/cultural identity; thus, the ‘Hanification’, or ‘Americanisation’, or globalisation, of language is likely to be particularly noticed and debated, for instance outcry over the introduction of ‘foreign’ words. Global-local tensions over language practices and the identities they supposedly signal are very apparent in the domain of education and researchers are exploring the way discourses of globalisation are reshaping language teaching and mediums of instruction in educational contexts.

Furthermore, certain language genres are oriented to global norms. Features of language associated with these genres or norms can thus serve as identity resources to enact belonging on a global rather than local scale. Many discourses and linguistic phenomena that orient to global norms and reproduce globalisation have been drawn to scholarly attention, for example by Thurlow and Jaworski (2003; 2006) in their analyses of the construction of elite mobility through the text and imagery of in-flight magazines, and in those authors’ analyses of global tourism advertising (Jaworski, 2010; Jaworski & Thurlow, 2010b; Thurlow & Jaworski, 2010) and commercial texts in semiotic landscapes (Jaworski & Thurlow, 2010a). Extending this literature, Song (2018) analyses consumer design and marketing semiotics of a Chinese photo studio brand, Naive Blue (天真藍); the study highlights that it is not necessarily the use of one local language, or one global language, that is used symbolically to create affiliation between potential customers and an advertiser. Rather, translingual strategies now have a global indexicality which is valuable in creating brand affiliation and sales; here, the affiliation is with China’s rich urban young adults. These customers’

expected bi-/multi-lingual competence goes beyond recognising basic language types or the emblematic social prestige of English and French [i.e. languages previously shown to often index globality in advertising] ... The target consumers need to be able to understand the translingual logic of the multilayered, trans-spatial semiotic chain across the [company’s] online and offline [linguistic landscape].

(Song, 2018, p. 22)

In another domain, the discourses authored by international organisations also orient towards a global norm (that of linguistic egalitarianism), despite the trenchant reality of global linguistic hierarchies. Thus, multilingualism (at least at the organisational level) can be a valuable symbolic resource for creating a global identity for institutions: think of the careful, formal, visible multilingualism of the UN or the EU. Conspicuous multilingualism is one means of securing these organisations’ global interests by increasing legitimacy across diverse groups of people affiliating and/or identifying with one of the included languages. The language choices of these discourses, more than the content of the discourses, reproduce an imagination of the global community as linguistically diverse, inclusive and equal.

Many studies of global identity focus on how global discourses challenge the identities and communities that nation-states and other powerful social actors construct. This is part of a broader inquiry into which spaces for action and participation global discourses open or close. A broad answer to these questions is provided by Fairclough (2006), who has pioneered the approach called Critical Discourse Analysis for studying the discursive construction of key ideas, like globalisation. He highlights the role of ideology and inequality in discursive construction. Imagined global communities based on global identities are not neutral but hierarchically ordered. Thus, while global identities based on ideas such as cosmopolitanism, hybridity and liquidity feel liberating to some, they seem like yet another reincarnation of Western oppression to others.

This is illustrated in Chen's (2016) study on the representation of China, and Chinese language, within *China Daily* (CD) newspaper travelogues. Chen (2016, p. 530) presents travelogue discourse as a "'contact zone,' [in which] we see CD's negotiation between promoting China's national/ethnic culture and packaging it for sale in English-language tourism markets". She finds that the result of this negotiation is almost always that the travelogues "constitute part of the repertoire of the dominant tourism discourses rather than a challenge or resistance against them" (p. 530). For example, the travelogues construct a "simple and exotic linguascape" (p. 529) in which minority language diversity is reduced and only emblematic use is made of certain features of certain minority languages to add "authenticity" (p. 531) to the experience tourist writers present and which tourists will imagine and consume.

Current contributions and research areas

Language work

Where language becomes the terrain of economic activity, it inevitably becomes commodified to be traded between workers, employers, customers and clients. In fact, even the speakers of language can become commodified, too. Thus, globalisation's effect on opportunity and remuneration for language work is emerging as a strong contributing stream in language-and-globalisation studies. The value of the language skills of workers may change as global markets integrate without the workers themselves moving, but the movement of people, and language, can also often result from the globalisation of the economy. This section will deal with both mobile languages and mobile workers, in turn (noting, of course, that this is not a categorical either/or). Overall, language work research is indebted to Heller's (2002, 2003, 2010) theorising of language as resources in uneven distribution and which are able, as resources, to be commodified into market value. This section will discuss language resources for such market-valued activities as performing localism for tourists, serving customers over the phone and meeting promotional criteria.

The expansion of service and knowledge industries (known as the tertiary sector) is a key focus of language work research because language work is much more visible in the tertiary industries than it is in economies dominated by the primary sector (agriculture and extraction) or the secondary sector (manufacturing and production). A large part of the work performed by any service or knowledge worker is, in effect, language work: think of tourism, teaching and caregiving work. By contrast, many jobs in the primary and secondary sectors can be performed without much communication and so these workplaces have not been many language researchers' focus.

Nevertheless, there can be fruitful studies on language-and-globalisation in primary and secondary industries: for instance, it is precisely the fact that the Tagalog language skills of immigrant, Filipino abattoir workers are treated by management as irrelevant to their ability to perform their work in Australia, but may be relevant in other ways, that gives rise to the research problem investigated in Piller and Lising (2014). In the tertiary sector, by contrast, linguistic performance takes centre stage.

The tertiary sector has come to dominate many national economies of the global north, but its supply chains are globalised and have become a particular focus in recent sociolinguistic work. Specific agents of economic globalisation, such as multinational corporations supplying tertiary sector labour forces or products, adapt their language policies and language management efforts to their global business needs in order to maximise profit. The prototypical service worker in a globalised industry is a call centre employee. Their economic value rests precisely in their language skills, and so Kumaravadivelu (2008) argues that call centre

work is emblematic of the intersection between globalisation and language. Mirchandani (2004) and O'Neill (2012), for example, shed light on this particular service industry in India and Guatemala. Tourism is another tertiary industry of prominence in language-and-globalisation research, not only as an industry demanding linguistic skills, both to perform 'the local' and to interact with travellers from outside the local language group, but also as a site of cultural globalisation as tourism language practices orient towards global norms. Duchêne's (2009) study of tourism call centres provides an exemplar hybrid of tertiary sector language work, and argues that it is not merely knowing one global language, but having a multilingual repertoire, that makes workers especially employable in this industry.

These service and knowledge jobs are often performed in a global language in order to serve international markets. However, there is also a market for local language work, particularly as a resource employed to distinguish a place or experience as unique. Yang (2012), for example, shows that displaying, performing the writing of and selling the Naxi minority language is a valuable part of making China's Lijiang World Heritage area a profitable tourism experience. But even having a strong local tourism market will not necessarily benefit local languages. Gao (2012) examines this in her study of a popular tourism site in South China, Yangshuo. Her study argues that local languages such as Zhuang, Yao and Dong are erased from Yangshuo's linguistic landscape, promotional materials and actual tourism work. These all emphasise English instead: as the Yangshuo Tourism Bureau says, "Even old grannies in their 70s or teenage kids can chat [Chinese original: 拉呱 *lā guǎ*] with 'laowai' [foreigners] in English. Many western travellers say they just feel no foreignness here." English in tourism is consistent with tourism's orientation towards global language norms and scripts, and is a resource both for communicating with visitors and for constructing Yangshuo as an international tourism destination; as Gao argues, it is the place which is commodified, not its language(s).

So far, this section has focused on language work where 'outside' languages come to be useful in local employment, for example in global south call centres, where that employment is an 'off-shored' part of a global supply chain, or in an internationally popular tourist town. However, people also use languages for their mobility capital, to move away from their local area for 'outside' work – often in urban areas – as markets expand and interconnect, and to move upwards across socio-economic barriers. Of course, working in a call centre or the tourism industry may also involve the workers having moved; this section's shift in focus is to emphasise the social construction of language resources as mobility resources vested in people.

Achieving mobility through language is often seen as especially valuable now, as members of the labour force are themselves called upon to be increasingly mobile in order to get jobs. This means that people will make education decisions in order to increase competency in languages which are used in global 'centres' in order to then be able to move geographically and socio-economically to better jobs. Often, this language is English. In the discussion of zero-sum language ideology, above, both English and Mandarin were seen by families as mobile languages, and therefore prioritised in education over Zhuang, which may be useful locally but is seen as 'immobile'. In a case study of South Korea, Cho (2017) emphasises that having English competencies is a mobility tool because English testing is a common employment and promotion gateway. At the same time, the promise of using English at work does not always materialise within the competitive system. That is, English qualifications and exam-oriented English are the particular competencies which have mobility capital, rather than English/intercultural communication competencies. English also serves a mobility resource

for the international education corporations (usually based in the global north), and their teaching staff, who have found an extremely lucrative market in South Korea (Cho, 2013; Piller & Cho, 2013).

Language commodification and consumption

Certain languages have especially high value on global markets. This value derives from the commodification of languages into consumables (including consumable cultural experiences), wearables (including language printed on clothing) and branding (including advertisements and trademarks). This is because certain language features serve as symbols, or markers, of global identities and high-prestige global practices, with this semiotic being supported by the discourses of globalisation explored above. This section focusses further on the commodification, or marketisation, of discourses of globalisation.

Commodified language is globally mobile on everyday texts such as packaging and clothing, and many studies in this area look at these everyday texts as enacting globalisation. As such, these ‘mundane’ texts can be considered discourses of ‘banal cosmopolitanism’. The concept of banal cosmopolitanism is based on the better-known concept of ‘banal nationalism’, which was first introduced by Billig (1995) and refers to the mundane discourses – flags, maps, national references, etc. – that enact national belonging in everyday life. For a detailed discussion of banal nationalism in intercultural communication, see Piller (2017). Similarly, banal cosmopolitanism refers to mundane discourses that enact globalisation or transnational belonging in everyday life. Banal cosmopolitanism is apparent in the “mediatisation and consumption of spatially distant places, signifiers of cultural diversity, and opening up of lifestyles to new experiential spaces and horizons” (Jaworski, 2015, p. 220). To illustrate, one linguistic form that banal cosmopolitanism may take is the abundant use in publicly displayed texts of new letterforms, punctuation marks and diacritics, which Jaworski (2015) examines as an emerging, highly uniform, semiotic code that he calls “Globalese”.

To look more closely at how texts other than advertising texts orient to these global, marketised language norms and enact globalisation every day, this chapter will turn to a study currently under way which examines how distant places and cultures are transformed into graphics, printed onto textiles, then bought and worn in China (Grey, 2018). This study frames language worn on clothing as a visible type of banal cosmopolitanism which is increasing due both to globalisation of textile production and globalisation of culture, as wearing language is a personal embodiment of cosmopolitanism. Grey (2018) finds that English predominates on garments in brand names (both foreign and Chinese) and trademarked slogans; stand-alone messages that are not readily connected to any one brand; and decorative use of writing without forming words. English is a valuable commodity in the Chinese market. The local symbolic power of foreign languages affects the conventions about which clothes are appropriate for bearing text, such that English becomes desirable enough as a mark of distinction to break into new micro-spaces, like sentence-bearing shoes. Wearing English is an archetypal example of the “consumption of spatially distant places, [and] signifiers of cultural diversity”, recalling Jaworski’s (2015, p. 220) description of banal cosmopolitanism.

English underpins Globalese and these wearable texts: in particular, English’s Latin script has become a visual-linguistic, global norm. Piller (2017) emphasises that this English-centric norm is part of economic globalisation, namely advertising, which is a major form of global economic activity. Global brand names constitute a corporate-controlled and “reasonably

consistent register that is formulaic, recognisable, and accessible to as many onlookers-consumers as possible” (Jaworski, 2015, p. 232), and other (non-global) brand names therefore orient to the norms of Globalese.

However, because global advertising discourses are dominant and rather homogenous in their commodification of language, global corporations are also increasingly keen to use language resources to distinguish their products. Piller (2017, p. 154) explains that one prominent way of doing so is to move away from the exclusive use of English, giving rise to the commodification of other languages. McDonald’s, for instance, ran an advertising campaign in Australia that featured a commercial set in Italy, with the characters using a few Italian words and having a heavy Italian accent in their English (see also Piller, 2003). Similarly, McDonald’s in PRC Hong Kong has registered trademarks that comprise the classical characters still used in Hong Kong, including for the company’s name *Mai Dang Lao* (麥當勞: McDonald’s, 2018a), while on the PRC mainland, their trademarked name is in the official simplified characters (麦当劳: McDonald’s, 2018b), with the English slogan ‘i’m lovin’ it!’ also a registered mark used in advertising in both jurisdictions. The Taiwanese McDonald’s homepage (at the time of writing) features the phrase ‘我♥台灣’ (‘I love Taiwan’) using the Globalese heart emoji and Chinese classical characters (McDonald’s, 2018c). Meanwhile, Coca-Cola invested in designing a Mandarin name for the Chinese market with a brand-aligned meaning, roughly, ‘Tasty Joy’, rather than simply transliterating the brand’s English name: ‘Coca-Cola’ and the Mandarin brand name ‘可口可乐’ are shown together in Chinese linguistic landscapes, as shown in Figure 5.1. A similar marketing drive underpinning language choices leads to using language to create international-but-local experiences for tourists to consume. Pietikäinen et al. (2016) look further at the performativity inherent in commodified linguistic experiences, as opposed to commodified linguistic objects. They theorise that tourists and guides/vendors use features associated with both local and international languages in tourism interactions, arguing that the transactional co-construction of market-recognised authenticity is part of the commodification of language, culture and place for tourists. What counts as authentic is (in part) constructed before travel by discourses which represent the destination, including travelogues such as those examined in Chen (2016) which this chapter discussed above.

Of course, one of the key forces behind the global reach of the English alphabet in branding and other global, marketised discourses is the internet. The internet was originally entirely dominated by alphabetic text entry and display technologies, and is still very much associated with them. This chapter will now examine the internet and other globalised, digital communication networks.



Figure 5.1 Downtown Nanning, Guangxi Zhuangzu Autonomous Region, China: 2014 (from Grey, 2017)

Digital communication

Writing as a technology of wider communication has today been complemented with digital communication technologies which now play a vital role in global communication. Communicative globalisation through digital media must therefore be considered a globalisation phenomenon in its own right which has enabled novel linguistic practices and challenged existing language ideologies. New media foster both specific forms of language use and specific discourses about language. By specific forms of language use we mean that online communication networks create communities who use dialogue and interaction in the medium of a particular language variety to build community affiliation and to police community boundaries.

There is abundant research on digitally enabled global communication networks and the language practices people online and/or in new media use to extend beyond their geographic place or their local social group. The language chosen on global communication networks is oftentimes English. However, the medium of globalisation does not necessarily imply a message of globalisation: English, the language of globalisation par excellence, may well empower communities of resistance against globalisation (Adejunmobi, 2004).

The tensions between language choice and identity construction in the media can be further explored, for example in Leibold's (2015) study of online identities in the Sinosphere through the lens of Castell's (2004) identities within networked society. This study argues that "in the eyes of the Party-state, there are no ethnic hyphens or hybrid identities in China" (Leibold, 2015, p. 274). Yet, online, all sorts of hybrid identities are constructed and performed, and in flux, "taking 'minzu' [i.e. official ethnic minority group] form one minute only to morph into a myriad of other ethnocultural identities before returning to state categories" (Leibold, 2015, p. 275). Moreover, "each of these identities is deeply embedded in Chinese culture and language" (Leibold, 2015, p. 288). The online activity included in this study was all written in "[Mandarin] Chinese" (Leibold does not evaluate whether it is Putonghua) and usually in the PRC's official simplified character script (Leibold, 2015, p. 276), even where the topic of discussion was, for example, lamenting the Manchu's inter-related loss of language and identity (Leibold, 2015, p. 279). Indeed, Mandarin's wide reach can be an explicit part of constructing an inclusive identity, as in the case of an online community who aim "to gather together the strength of China's Muslim youth in order to carry forward Islam's spirit of universal love; promote harmony, exchange and cooperation among different minzu groups; and create the largest Chinese language social platform in the world" (Chinese Muslim Youth Net, quoted in Leibold, 2015, p. 280). However, these online discourses are in dialectic with offline discourses: Leibold (2015, p. 288) concludes that "these assemblages simultaneously reinforce, mediate and at times re-interpret minzu-related ... discourses" and that the freedom of online subjectivity is "largely inconsequential" because of the entrenched, internalised, state-backed discourses circumscribing the 56 recognised ethnic groups and 'Chinese-ness'.

Future directions

Despite the breadth of language and globalisation research there are a number of gaps which provide opportunities for future research for which ethnography is particularly suitable. These include 'emic' approaches to globalisation in linguistic research, questioning universalism and reflexivity with regard to English as the medium through which most language and globalisation research is conducted, and the continued need for interdisciplinarity.

Emic approaches consider language and globalisation from within social groups, the strength of which is to bring into the literature more of the varied forms of, and views about, globalisation's effects on language practices and on sociolinguistic conditions. A focus on emic research will increase the coherence of the vast body of language-and-globalisation research. The vastness itself will be a perennial condition of the field, which presents challenges but also allows for a rich diversity of research. One way forward might be a unifying research problem that eschews *a priori* definitions of globalisation and asks how the local and the global are made relevant by whom in which context for which purposes. Ethnographic approaches have particular strength in investigating what is made socially relevant and in whose interests, and in bringing forth a diversity of experiences of globalisation.

Second, although globalisation means many things to many people, those globalisation phenomena that are most clearly apparent to the researchers shaping the field seem to predominate as research topics. Typically, the most influential scholars are based in institutions of the global north and, consequently, that is where most globalisation phenomena appearing in the literature are located. There is a need to systematically address existing biases in language-and-globalisation research. For instance, a focus on south-south globalisation constitutes a striking absence in much existing research. There is also much to be studied regarding large-scale changes in recent decades in the world's geopolitical poles, or 'centres' (namely the dissolution of the USSR, the rise of the PRC and the re-assertion of Russia), and their implications for the globalisation of language. Furthermore, it is important to create space within academic publication for the voices of 'outer circle' or 'emerging nation' or otherwise marginalised participants and scholars. Ethnographic approaches lend themselves to not only hearing such voices, but to working with 'insiders' who become authors and social actors with agency in research projects. On this point, it is also worth emphasising the importance of reflecting on Standard-English-centric ways of seeing in our field. These ways of seeing language and globalisation entail a peculiar perspective, which sometimes "disguises its peculiarity as general and universalistic" (Piller, 2016, p. 28). Ethnography is not only about collecting socially situated data about others but also about acknowledging the socially situated positionality of the researcher. The reflexivity that is integral to ethnography also includes critical reflection on the extent to which research is Standard-English-centric and global north-centric.

Finally, further interdisciplinary research will nourish the field. Dell Hymes pointed out more than half a century ago that "linguistics needs the sociologist" (Hymes, 1967) and his call remains relevant for language-and-globalisation studies. In fact, linguistics needs not only sociology but also history, political science, philosophy, law, economics, information technology and others: "relevance commonly leads across disciplinary boundaries" (Hymes, 1972, p. 44). While it can be difficult to transform interdisciplinary research from a wish to a reality, the fact that ethnographic methods are already shared across many academic disciplines provides a useful platform for collaboration.

Further reading

- Piller, I. (2016). *Linguistic diversity and social justice: an introduction to applied sociolinguistics*. Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press. (This book examines how language is implicated in the production and reproduction of social inequality on a variety of local-to-global scales.)
- Piller, I., & Grey, A., (Eds.) (2019). *Language and globalization*. London: Routledge. (This is a comprehensive collection of key readings in the field.)
- Adejumobi, M. (2004). *Vernacular palaver: Imaginations of the local and non-native languages in West Africa*. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters. (This book offers a non-Western perspective on how 'global' and 'local' languages are made relevant in specific social case studies.)

Cho, J. (2017). *Interpreting English language ideologies in Korea: Dreams vs. realities*. Amsterdam: Springer. (This book offers a South Korean case study relevant to the global spread of English and language work, and its focus on Translation and Interpreting work extends our discussion of language work in this chapter.)

Mowbray, J. (2012). *Linguistic justice: International law and language policy*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. (This is a thorough account of contemporary international institutions and treaties' efforts to globally govern language use and linguistic diversity.)

Related topics

Scale; Language diversity in classroom settings; Faith communities; Policy; Youth language; Reflexivity.

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