

The Hong Kong University of Science and Technology: Division of Humanities/Center for Language Education

HUMA 1000: Cultures and Values: **Cover sheet for final essay**

Full name	
Student ID	
Writing workshop section number	
Writing workshop instructor	
Title of essay (please copy and paste from the document on Canvas)	What is your position in the following debate? Give detailed reasons to support your stance: Will the spread of English as a global language lead to the displacement of local language(s) and cultural identity(ies), or does it stimulate hybrid cultural forms and thus create cultural heterogeneity?

Declaration: The attached essay represents my own work. I have read and understood the University's policies on academic honesty and I confirm that the attached work conforms to these policies.

Please type your name:

Response to feedback: note here the comments from your instructor you have responded to (you can copy these from your feedback sheet).

Make the scope in the introduction clear

Strengthen the organization

Add the reference list

With more than 340 million people around the world speaking English as a first language in 2015 and more than 510 million people speaking it as a second language, English has already become the second most popular language in the world. The globalization of English helps build up a common language among different countries and therefore improves a lot on the communication between the people with various cultural backgrounds. The establishment of common language will also motivate people to travel around the world more frequently to exchange the characteristic of diverse cultural. In this context, 'cultural identity' means the feeling of being included in a group. One's cultural identity is not only contribute from his/her own language but also related to nationality, religion, gender, sexuality and familial identities. This essay will argue that the spread of English as a global language stimulate hybrid cultural forms and thus create cultural heterogeneity. There are three possible outcomes under the spread of English. English will combine with the local language instead of displacing it and coexist with the local language, English will displace the local language in a large extent but the local language is still survive, English will totally displace the local language. Whatever the case is, it could be demonstrated that people's local identity will not be damaged.

In most of the cases, the spread of English as a global language resulted in a mixing of different languages called code mixing, which is a kind of hybrid cultural forms, in various places rather than a displacement of local languages. Code mixing [1] is a combination of lexical items and grammatical features from two languages into a new special language. Two popular examples are Kongish in Hong Kong mixing English with Cantonese and Singlish in Singapore mixing English with a few more languages. In terms of Kongish, there are some features that are highly representing code mixing. One of the features is adding Cantonese particles into sentences. For instance, the sentence 'You finished running jor mei?' is the same as saying 'Have you finished running yet?' and the phrase 'send gor message' in Kongish is identical to 'send a message' in English. Another 'code mixing'-related feature is literal translations. For example, 'blow chicken' is translated from the colloquial for rallying people to do something together. This kind of new languages are mainly used in informal domains such as texting and Facebook among younger generation. Language mixing is definitely a badge of hybrid culture and identity. Hence, the globalization of English can coexist with the local language and stimulate the hybrid cultural form in languages and communication.

Apart from mixing with a local language to form a new special language, the spread of English is experiencing indigenization in different countries in another way. In Braj

Kachru's concentric model [2], there are three parts to distinguish the people speaking English. The inner circle refers to the people speaking English as a native language while the outer circle refers to the people speaking English as a second language and the expanding circle refers to the people learning English as a foreign language. According to Kachru and Nelson (2006) [3], with the enlarging of its range and depth in the outer and expanding circles, English becomes acculturated and transforms itself into localized varieties, to represent effectively the contextual experiences of those who use it. One of the typical examples is the so-called 'McDonaldization' of the world is now adapting to local customs and using local major languages rather than English everywhere. Although English becomes one of the official language in India, not all of the food in India's McDonald's is named in English. Instead, it is named in Hindi. For instance, the two burgers specially for India are called 'McAloo Tikki' and 'Chicken Maharaja Mac'. This shows that even if the English language keep spreading all over the world, it will continue to indigenize everywhere by merging with local characteristics in a similar way and thus create cultural heterogeneity.

Some of the people may argue that the spread of English as a global language is indeed neutralizing local languages in a number of countries such as Guam and Scandinavian and lead to replacement of cultural identities at the same time. In Guam, English has actually displaced their local indigenous language, Chamorro. It is the same case for Scandinavian. English became the dominant and official language there. English is widely used in certain domains, for example, science, technology, higher education and entertainment. However, it does not simply implies that their cultural identities will be displaced also even though their minority local languages were. It is because one's cultural identity is not merely build up by the language he or she speaking. Instead, cultural identity is also composed by one's nationality, religion, gender, sexuality and familial identities. Indigenous scholar Weaver (2001) [4] uses the term 'cultural identity' as reflected in the values, beliefs, and worldviews of indigenous people. A person who speaks English due to working or living requirements will not think that he or she is an American. People will still experience their original cultural in their surroundings, whatever in eating habits, wearing customs or various festivals. Only taking into account all of these elements will make people have the feeling of being included in a group or culture.

All in all, the spread of English as a global language will be indigenized in a lot of countries by code mixing with the local languages or transforming into localized varieties. Despite the displacement of local languages due to the spread of English as

a global language occurred in a few countries, there are only a little effects on their cultural identities. As a consequence, the cultural heterogeneity could be still reserved against the globalization of English.

Reference List:

1. HUMA1000 Lecture 4 (MAR.1), 'Language, Culture and Identity'
2. Kachru, B. B. (1997). World Englishes and English-using communities. *Annual Review of Applied Linguistics*, 17, 66-87
3. Kachru, Y. & Nelson, C. L. Nelson (2006). *World Englishes in Asian contexts*. Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press
4. Weaver, H. (2001). Indigenous identity. *American Indian Quarterly*, 25(2), 240-255