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# English language hegemony: retrospect and prospect

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This paper explores the ascent of English as a global *lingua franca* within the context of linguistic hegemony, following Phillipson's 1992 framework. It scrutinizes English's role in the rapidly globalizing world, emphasizing its dominance across economic, governance, and scientific sectors and its impact on non-native English-speaking countries. Utilizing a socio-linguistic approach, combined with historical and interdisciplinary analysis, the study evaluates the influence of English hegemony in cultural, educational, and technological domains, with a focus on post-colonial and expanding circle nations. Additionally, the paper provides critical insights for developing language policies in these areas, considering the intricate role of English in the global linguistic landscape. It concludes by considering the prospects of English language hegemony.

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## Introduction

The dominance of English in the 21st century has exerted a profound influence on the global economic landscape, political configurations, and cultural systems of nations worldwide. The global promulgation of English, however, did not materialize abruptly; it is the culmination of a protracted process of development and evolution (Gordin, 2015). Tracing back to around the 5th century, invasions by the Saxons, Angles, and Jutes onto the British Isles initiated the linguistic amalgamation of Anglo-Saxon and Celtic tongues, giving rise to what is known as Old English. The advent of Standard English in the Elizabethan era of the 16th century owes much to the Norman Conquest's introduction of Norman French influences. The 17th century witnessed the surge of the Industrial Revolution, which augmented Britain's economic and military prowess, ushering in its era as a global hegemon and the "Empire on which the sun never sets" (Allen, 2017). Concurrent with its imperial expansion into Africa and Asia, Britain disseminated the English language across these continents. Subsequently, in the aftermath of World War II, the United States emerged with substantial economic growth and a concentration of capital and wealth. The U.S.'s rapidly ascending political, military, economic, and technological clout facilitated the widespread adoption of English, further entrenched by its pervasiveness in media, film, television, and advertising. Presently, with over 1.2 billion English speakers globally (Rao, 2019), the reach and ubiquity of the English language are evident.

Phillipson's theory of "Linguistic Imperialism" (1992) provides a critical examination of language rights, policies, the endangerment of languages, and linguistic hegemony, with a specific focus on English's role as an international *lingua franca*. This theory enhances our understanding of modern English hegemony. In today's globalized context, English is not only an essential tool for international discourse but also the premier foreign language in numerous countries, with its symbolic stature and status as the international *lingua franca* being incontrovertible. The hegemony of English has significantly shaped the language policies and political economies of many nations. Several countries in Asia and Africa, having experienced British and American colonial dominion, encountered the dual-edged sword of English hegemony—both facilitating and eroding indigenous languages, leaving an indelible imprint on their societies, economies, and cultures. Thus, acknowledging the considerable impact of English on the linguistic policies and political economies of post-colonial nations, we must also critically assess the positive dissemination of English culture alongside a reflection on the global ramifications of English linguistic hegemony.

In the current epoch of the fourth industrial revolution, which is distinguished by the convergence of digital, biological, and physical advancements, it seems likely that the dominance of the English language will not only endure but even extend its reach. English, being the primary element of worldwide communication and the predominant language used on the internet, is expected to continue being the favored means for international discussions, advancements in technology, and the sharing of information. The prominence of Silicon Valley and the prevailing influence of American and British institutions in the fields of science and technology serve to solidify the position of the English language as a leading force in the realm of innovation. Furthermore, it is anticipated that English, with its extensive datasets and linguistic resources, will become increasingly dominant as the primary language for programming and engaging with technology, as artificial intelligence and machine learning systems progress. Therefore, it is anticipated that the dominance of the English language in this emerging period would enable and maybe expedite international partnerships, therefore expanding the frontiers of invention and fostering unparalleled global interconnectedness.

The research methodology for this study on English Language Hegemony combines a sociolinguistic approach with historical and interdisciplinary analysis. Using Phillipson's (1992) framework, we examine English's historical development and current status as a global *lingua franca*. Our approach includes a thorough historical literature review and qualitative methods such as textual analysis and case studies, focusing on English's influence in sectors like the economy, governance, science, and education, particularly in post-colonial and expanding circle nations. The integration of insights from linguistics, history, sociology, and education allows for a comprehensive exploration of English hegemony's cultural, educational, and technological effects, while also addressing future language policies and the ongoing evolution of English dominance.

## Related studies

The hegemony of the English language has developed into a core research topic in the field of sociolinguistics since the end of the 20th century. Scholars such as Phillipson (Phillipson, 1997, 2004, 2008, 2009, 2018), Tsuda (2008), Ives (2009), Macedo et al. (2015), Choi (2010), and Borden (2014) have made significant contributions to the construction and development of the theoretical framework of English hegemony/linguistic imperialism studies. This research field involves the historical evolution of English in the context of globalization, its political, economic, and cultural impacts, and its effects on language diversity. It particularly focuses on issues such as linguistic power, linguistic identity, and linguistic justice, all of which constitute key areas in the struggle for ideologies and power.

The burgeoning interest in post-colonialism and new imperialism within Western social sciences since the 1980s has cast the English language into the spotlight. It was Robert Phillipson and Tove Skutnabb-Kangas who, from an ideological stance, first articulated the notion of language hierarchies. In his pivotal 1992 work "*Linguistic Imperialism*", Phillipson, a prominent linguist, addressed critical issues surrounding language rights, policies, endangerment, and hegemony, specifically in the context of English as a *lingua franca*. Scholars like Pennycook (2021), Canagarajah (1999), and Graddol (2006) have since contributed to the discourse, spotlighting the challenges of English dominance in third-world countries. Canagarajah, particularly, underscored the profound dilemma post-colonial societies face in reconciling Western culture and values with indigenous ones, a challenge compounded by the deep-rooted presence of English within their cultural and ideological frameworks (Canagarajah, 1999). The linguistic influence of colonial powers has not only bolstered the status of their languages but also inflicted detrimental effects across various spheres including economics, politics, society, culture, and education (Ricento, 2015).

Current research on English language hegemony is multi-dimensional, examining its ascent to the primary medium of global communication and the ensuing cultural and educational ramifications. Studies indicate that English's privileged status bolsters the cultural exports of English-speaking nations and may engender linguistic disparities within non-native English-speaking countries, influencing individual socio-economic prospects and societal attitudes toward language and cultural preservation (Haidar, 2019).

Scholars have conducted in-depth investigations into English dominance from various perspectives. The critical inquiry has spotlighted the adverse effects of English dominance on educational policy, language planning, and the viability of minoritized language groups, advocating for initiatives that foster linguistic diversity and parity (Davis & Phyak, 2017). Conversely,

pragmatic research investigates strategies to uphold linguistic diversity alongside the widespread use of English, such as through bilingual or multilingual educational models, or by emphasizing native languages in public domains and media (Flores & Rosa, 2015; Phillipson, 2004). These analyses suggest that, while English's global influence is likely to persist, maintaining vibrant language practices and policies remains both viable and imperative at local and regional levels.

Ongoing investigations strive to strike a balance between leveraging the economic and communicative advantages of English as a *lingua franca* and safeguarding indigenous linguistic heritages (Dewey, 2007; Grant, 2012). This has prompted interdisciplinary research that intersects sociology, education, linguistics, and policy studies, aiming to decipher how languages transform under the pressures of globalization and to craft apt strategies for intercultural communication and language pedagogy (Jackson, 2019; Modiano, 2020). Concurrently, national and local governments, educational bodies, and international entities are engaged in finding means to cherish and nurture linguistic diversity, whilst also considering the role of English as a facilitative tool rather than an instrument of cultural or economic imposition.

Contemporary academic discussions around the dominance of the English language have adopted a comprehensive perspective, examining this problem from several angles such as globalization, educational policies, and cultural impact. One notable tendency seen in scholarly literature is the comprehensive analysis of the prevailing dominance of the English language and its consequential effects on the preservation and promotion of linguistic variety. The phenomenon of 'linguistic imperialism' in the new globalization era has been examined by various studies (e.g., Lai, 2021; Mackenzie, 2022; Smith & Kim, 2015) and the researchers have provided critical analysis on the marginalization of indigenous languages and cultures resulting from the widespread use of English in academic and professional domains. These scholarly works contend that the dominance of the English language reinforces a monolingual mindset in worldwide communication, often disregarding the importance of multilingualism and diversity.

Scholars have extensively investigated the techniques of resistance and adaptation used by non-English-speaking populations in reaction to hegemonic forces. In the contemporary period characterized by the fourth industrial revolution, there has been a notable emergence of scholarly investigations that explore the convergence of technology and language. Canagarajah (2020) conducted a study examining how digital platforms provide opportunities for individuals to engage in 'translingual practises,' which include the blending of English with other languages. This phenomenon serves as a means of contesting the dominant position of the English language. Furthermore, there has been a recent emphasis in empirical research on how educational policies worldwide are responding to this dominant influence. One common approach is the promotion of bilingual education and the cultivation of English language skills alongside native languages, intending to prepare students for the demands of a globalized labor market (Wang & Zheng, 2021).

The dominance of the English language and its cultural impacts have become a focal point of interest in academic circles. This phenomenon has elicited a scholarly response that oscillates between critical analysis and pragmatic acceptance of English hegemony. A growing body of research has focused on investigating the influence of English as a worldwide *lingua franca* on cultural identities and practices. Scholars such as Melchers et al. (2019), Kirkpatrick (2023), and Smith and Nelson (2019) have directed their attention towards the notion of 'World Englishes', examining how English has been modified in many sociocultural

settings, leading to the emergence of novel English variations and subsequently, novel manifestations of cultural expression. This corpus of literature highlights an increasing acknowledgement of the dynamic and adaptable characteristics of language, suggesting that the dominance of the English language does not just exert a one-way influence on culture, but rather involves a mutual process of cultural interchange and alteration.

In brief, the existing body of literature about the English language hegemony is undergoing continuous development. Recent research encompasses a wide variety of viewpoints, spanning from a critical examination of English's prevailing position to an investigation of the flexible and oppositional approaches used in multilingual communication within the context of the digital era. There is a growing inclination to acknowledge the intricate nature of language hegemony, as it intersects with cultural identity, education, and the relentless progression of technology.

### The formation and development of English language hegemony

The ascendancy of English as a global *lingua franca* is a phenomenon intricately woven into the fabric of British colonial history. Its roots can be traced to the 16th century when British explorations and subsequent colonization laid the groundwork for the nation's maritime dominance (Kennedy, 2017). These early expeditions, exemplified by the conquest of Newfoundland, marked the beginning of Britain's imperial expansion. Over time, this expansion led to the establishment of a vast colonial empire where the sun famously never set, and with it, the dissemination of the English language.

The dissemination of the English language was not only coincidental but rather a purposeful tactic used to solidify British hegemony. The use of English language was employed as a strategy to centralize authority within colonial areas, resulting in the subordination of indigenous people and fostering a perception of inadequacy towards their languages and traditions. The enduring consequence was the establishment of English as the official language in several former colonies, a legacy that endures in contemporary times.

The post-World War II era saw a collapse in British colonial status, which in turn led to the rise of the United States as a prominent economic and political powerhouse (Kramer, 2016). As British power declined, the United States took on the responsibility of advancing the English language, establishing a strong connection between its spread and the dissemination of its own cultural, political, and economic principles. Employing educational endeavors and cultural diplomacy, the United States enhanced the prominence of the English language on a worldwide scale, assuring its association with contemporary progress and influence.

Thus, while the United Kingdom laid the early foundations of what would become linguistic imperialism, it was the United States that carried the torch into the latter half of the 20th century and beyond, ensuring that English maintained its hegemonic status. The evolution of English as a tool of imperialism is a testament to the geopolitical shifts of the past centuries, with the United States playing a crucial role in the language's continued global prevalence (Crystal, 2009).

We conducted a literature review spanning from 1992 to the present, using Google Scholar and Web of Science with the keywords "English language hegemony" and "English linguistic imperialism" on January 9, 2024. This search yielded approximately 1325 records, from which we selected around 120 key papers specifically relevant to the formation and evolution of English Language Hegemony. Table 1 presents a comprehensive timeline of key events in the rise of English hegemony, tracing its

**Table 1 The formation and development of English language hegemony.**

| Period             | Event/development          | Impact on English language hegemony  |
|--------------------|----------------------------|--|
| 16th-17th Century  | British Colonial Expansion | English began to spread globally through colonization.   |
| 18th Century       | Industrial Revolution      | England's economic power boosts the status of the English language.  |
| 19th Century       | British Empire             | The English language is institutionalized across continents.   |
| Early 20th Century | American Global Influence  | U.S. economic and cultural dominance in the post-WWI era promoted English.   |
| Mid-20th Century   | WWII and Aftermath         | The U.S. emerged as a superpower; English became the language of international politics and business.  |
| Late 20th Century  | Technological Advancements | The internet and media, primarily English-based, further disseminate the English language.   |
| 21st Century       | Globalization              | English is solidified as the <i>lingua franca</i> of business, science, aviation, and diplomacy.   |
| 21st Century       | Educational Policies       | English as a Second Language (ESL) programs proliferate, emphasizing the need to learn English for global competitiveness.                         |
| Present and Future | Technological Innovations  | Machine translation and AI may reduce the need for English hegemony or could further entrench it through dominant English-language tech platforms. |

journey from the early British colonial period to its current global prominence under the United States' influence. This table also highlights various strategic efforts to promote English and the political shifts that have contributed to its widespread adoption.

### The influence of English hegemony

The pervasive role of English as the “world language” in scientific, economic, academic, and political discourse is now widely acknowledged amidst intensifying globalization (Genç & Bada, 2010; Pennycook, 2017). The entrenchment of English hegemony has complex ramifications for the linguistic ecosystems of non-Anglophone nations, particularly those with a history of colonization. Language serves not only as a communicative tool but as a hallmark of identity, and the rise of English has deeply influenced the linguistic landscapes of countries around the globe. Phillipson (2018) introduces this dynamic, delineating a divide between core English-speaking countries—such as the United Kingdom, the United States, Canada, and Australia—and peripheral English-speaking nations, where English is official or widely spoken, such as India, the Philippines, and China.

The acquisition of English in these peripheral countries often transcends mere language learning; it becomes a conduit for social and cultural ideologies emanating from the Anglophone core (Canagarajah, 2007). This influence fosters a power imbalance where local languages may be sidelined or diminished, sometimes facing the threat of obsolescence. The post-colonial countries exemplify this trend, where English has remained a dominant force post-independence, impacting the local vernacular and cultural norms (Buschfeld & Kautzsch, 2017). Language not only expresses but also preserves culture. Hence, the erosion of linguistic diversity due to English imperialism risks the extinction of rich cultural heritages. Colonial policies that mandated English learning were not just pedagogical but also tools of ideological and cultural subjugation.

In the current era of globalization, the omnipresence of English continues to exert its influence on former colonial states and beyond. Phillipson (2017) highlighted the tendency of African university graduates to adopt Western cultural perspectives through their English proficiency, often becoming the most Westernized segment in their societies. This reflects a broader trend where cultural and ideological affiliations with English-speaking nations are reinforced through language.

While the drawbacks of English dominance are clear, its role in globalization cannot be entirely dismissed as negative. For many non-native speakers, English is a *lingua franca* facilitating communication across diverse linguistic backgrounds, catalyzing scientific advancement, and enabling access to global commerce. It's a vehicle for cultural exchange and economic opportunity. The proliferation of English has allowed previously colonized and

other non-Anglophone countries to partake in international discourse and trade.

The significance of English's dominance in the fields of science and technology cannot be exaggerated. English is widely used as the predominant language in several academic and scientific institutes worldwide. Xu (2010) points out that the distribution and extension of information are profoundly influenced by the strategic relevance of the English language. The prominence of Anglophone nations in the realms of science and technology has contributed to the elevation of English's position within these domains, facilitating the dissemination of cutting-edge information to less developed countries.

Furthermore, English serves as a crucial intermediary, enabling emerging economies to assimilate and innovate in science and technology. It is omnipresent in various media, facilitating a global understanding that transcends national borders. Consequently, proficiency in English equips non-Anglophone countries with the tools to engage with, and potentially transform, their own social and technological landscapes.

### A prospect of English language hegemony

The current worldwide dominance of the English language in discourse is anticipated to encounter substantial upheavals and difficulties shortly. The international language hierarchy may be significantly impacted by the emergence of economies in light of the dynamic global political and economic environment (Warschauer, 2000). The increasing economic power of China, coupled with its growing worldwide impact, has the potential to enhance the prominence of Mandarin, especially in Asia and elsewhere where Chinese investment is substantial. Likewise, languages such as Spanish, Arabic, and French have the potential to attain importance as a result of enhanced economic partnerships, political connections, or cultural exchanges. The anticipated multipolar linguistic shift has the potential to transform the previously dominant English-centric paradigm, leading to a global movement towards genuine multilingualism and diversity.

The potential use of technological breakthroughs, namely in the domains of artificial intelligence and machine translation, can diminish the dependence on English as a universally accepted means of facilitating communication across other languages (Crossley, 2018). The increasing prevalence of real-time translation software has facilitated the ability of non-native English speakers to participate in worldwide discourse using their original languages while understanding others. If this technology attains a satisfactory level of precision and dependability, it has the potential to reduce the urgency for acquiring English language skills, hence reducing the perceived need for it.

On the other hand, these technical advancements might unintentionally contribute to linguistic hegemony, given that the

tech sector is mostly led by English-speaking organizations. This could result in the promotion of goods and services that further strengthen the dominance of the English language on a worldwide scale. Notwithstanding these issues, globalization has the potential to solidify the position of English as the dominant language for communication, especially in domains such as academia, international business, and digital platforms (Zeng et al., 2023). The enduring need for English as a worldwide language is sustained by its prevalence in academic publications, business communication, and online content development.

Nevertheless, the increasing recognition and value placed on cultural variety may catalyze endeavors aimed at fostering and safeguarding indigenous languages and traditions. There is a growing trend in national language strategies to prioritize the preservation of linguistic variety and mitigate the excessive dominance of any one language (Lo Bianco, 2010). Educational institutions may endorse bilingual or multilingual instructional approaches, which aim to strengthen students' ties to their local languages while simultaneously introducing them to English or other globally recognized languages (Lasagabaster, 2015). The implementation of such policies has the potential to both protect cultural assets and prepare individuals for active participation in global affairs.

In the foreseeable future, we may see a shift towards a more diverse and equitable global linguistic environment, where English will be integrated into a polycentric language system rather than maintaining its position as the only global vernacular. Furthermore, the future impact of the English language will probably fluctuate following the political and economic circumstances of the countries where English is mostly spoken. The potential decrease in the soft power or worldwide prestige of the United States or the United Kingdom may have an indirect impact on the global prominence of the English language. On the other hand, the worldwide increase in English education, particularly in areas where it is associated with socio-economic progress, has the potential to sustain its global importance.

The future course of English dominance will be influenced by a variety of complex global issues, including economic, technical, political, educational, and cultural elements. The resuscitation of minority and regional languages via localization and cultural movements has the potential to rejuvenate these languages (Pennycook, 2017). However, it is anticipated that English will continue to maintain its crucial function as a means of facilitating worldwide communication. However, with the increasing number of voices from across the world, the dominance of the English language may adopt a more accommodating and inclusive form, becoming part of a multilingual global conversation rather than maintaining its position as the only means of international communication. Table 2 provides a thorough description of the future trajectory of English linguistic hegemony.

### **Implications for language policy and planning in non-English speaking countries**

The widespread diffusion of the English language has had a detrimental impact on linguistic variety at a worldwide level, resulting in the marginalisation and possible eradication of indigenous languages in regions where English is used as a secondary or non-native language. The impact of English influence is seen in the modified linguistic and cultural environments of several countries where English is not the primary language (Piekkari et al., 2015). Therefore, these nations need to take into account their distinct linguistic and cultural legacies while formulating and executing language-related strategies. These policies need to facilitate the acknowledgement and promotion of indigenous languages at an international level.

It is of utmost importance for states to uphold the ideal of linguistic equality and to resist any kind of linguistic hegemony, both domestically and on the global stage. It is imperative to undertake a collective effort aimed at fostering an atmosphere that values language parity and resolutely safeguards the linguistic and cultural diversity of every ethnic community.

National foreign language policies should prioritize the cultivation of competency in both widely spoken languages and less often taught languages. English, while acknowledged as a prominent international language in countries such as China, Japan, South Korea, and many European nations, is not the exclusive focal point within elementary and secondary school curricula (Ji et al., 2004). There exists a significant need for educational resources that may enhance the learning of less often spoken languages such as Arabic, Russian, French, and others. Consequently, there is a need to strengthen these educational resources (Piekkari et al., 2015).

When developing current language policy, it is crucial for nations where English is not the primary language to thoroughly assess the impact of foreign languages on their local tongues and the dynamics that exist between them. This evaluation is necessary to prevent a revival of English dominance. The widespread prevalence of the English language has undeniably impacted the teaching of other languages in these nations, with instructional materials and pronunciation mostly drawing from British and American origins. As a result, throughout the process of obtaining English language proficiency, students inevitably encounter Anglophone cultures, which might unintentionally foster a preference for Western civilization while neglecting their own indigenous cultures.

To tackle this issue, instructors of the English language in environments where English is not the primary language have the opportunity to include aspects of indigenous culture in their curriculum decisions. This approach allows students to effectively communicate their cultural history via the medium of English. Educators have the role of imparting well-rounded ideas and ideals.

The issue of conforming to either British or American pronunciation rules frequently gives rise to debate (Barrett et al., 2022). It is important to highlight that the primary goal of developing English language competence is to improve global communication effectiveness. When considering the historical progression of English dominance, several individuals argue that the rise of nations where English is not the primary language might provide valuable perspectives for these countries and their citizens, perhaps enhancing their ability to compete and their overall national strength.

The growing fascination among English-speaking nations that belong to the 'inner circle' with non-English-speaking cultures has increased the acquisition of languages such as Chinese and the exploration of professional opportunities in areas like China. To mitigate misinterpretations and effectively communicate non-English-speaking customs, instructors from other countries must possess a proficient command of the language spoken in the host country.

The acknowledgement of the intrinsic uniqueness of different languages and cultures requires careful interpretation to prevent misunderstandings. In the context of presenting non-English-speaking languages and cultures to a global audience, educators need to use suitable resources and exhibit a profound comprehension of the traditional civilizations they are portraying (Heininen, 2021). The strategic identification and targeting of receptive areas and nations play a pivotal role in the effective promotion of non-English-speaking cultures on a worldwide scale.

Promoting a common linguistic platform is a vital undertaking for countries where English is not the primary language.

**Table 2 A prospect of English language hegemony.**

| Factor                    | Potential development  | Potential impact on English language hegemony  |
|---------------------------|--|--|
| Economic Shifts           | Rise of non-English speaking economies (e.g., China, India, Brazil)                        | May challenge English hegemony as other languages gain prominence in business.                                     |
| Technological Advancement | Improvements in real-time translation and AI (e.g., ChatGPT)                               | This could reduce the necessity of English as a bridge language in communication.                                  |
| Demographic Changes       | Increasing populations in non-English speaking regions (e.g., India)                       | Might shift the linguistic focus from English to other dominant regional languages.                                |
| Educational Trends        | Growing emphasis on bilingual and multilingual education (e.g., Malaysia, the Philippines) | May foster a more diversified linguistic landscape, with English being one of several key languages.               |
| Cultural Dynamics         | Spread of English media vs. rise of regional content                                       | English media dominance promotes language maintenance, while regional content encourages linguistic diversity.     |
| Political Movements       | Nationalism and Language Preservation Policies   | Could either support the continued dominance of English or bolster local languages.                                |
| Global Communication      | Evolution of Internet language and digital communication                                   | English's predominance in digital space may continue, or face competition from other widely used languages online. |
| International Relations   | Geopolitical shifts and international alliances  | English may remain the diplomatic language or be joined by others depending on shifting alliances.                 |

This program has the potential to meet the linguistic needs of many countries, while also safeguarding and promoting the cultural legacies of cultures where English is not the primary language. This methodology has the potential to augment cross-cultural understanding and improve efficient communication.

The increasing fascination with other cultures among those living in the core English-speaking countries has resulted in a growing demand for bilingual education and cultural exchange initiatives. The increasing desire of people from many nations to participate in markets such as China necessitates the presence of multilingual specialists who can effectively navigate the complexities of varied language and cultural contexts. These individuals who possess fluency in two languages not only assist in the facilitation of commercial exchanges but also contribute to a more profound degree of cultural absorption and comprehension. The individuals' high level of expertise in both English and the target language allows them to accurately perceive subtle cultural nuances. This ensures that international interactions maintain both linguistic accuracy and cultural authenticity. The ability to navigate and comprehend several cultures is becoming more advantageous in professional settings that operate on a global scale since it is sometimes just as important to comprehend local customs and practices as it is to grasp financial statements.

Simultaneously, there exists a collective endeavor within nations where English is not the primary language to enhance the level of English language ability among their citizens. This strategic manoeuvre is not only focused on bolstering global competitiveness but also on assuring the proper dissemination of their cultural narratives and values on the international platform. Language learning programs are being enhanced by the inclusion of cultural competence training, which equips learners with the skills to effectively comprehend and convey complex concepts across diverse cultural contexts. Educational investments of this kind play a crucial role in cultivating a group of individuals with a global perspective, possessing both language proficiency and cultural sensitivity. These individuals are capable of not only preserving their cultural heritage but also successfully interacting with international society. The simultaneous emphasis on linguistic competence and cultural knowledge highlights the complex interplay between preserving cultural legacy and embracing global interconnectivity. This equilibrium will significantly influence the dynamics of cultural interchange throughout the period of the fourth industrial revolution.

The profound impact of English hegemony on non-English-speaking regions is twofold: while it has been a catalyst for growth

and development, it has simultaneously posed threats to indigenous languages and cultures, potentially driving them to the periphery or extinction. This dominance also results in a biased international academic community where non-English-speaking researchers may face discrimination. However, the advent of multilingual policies has begun to erode the monolithic nature of English hegemony. The emergence of distinct English varieties—such as Japanese English, Indian English, and other localized iterations—epitomizes the language's adaptability to diverse civilizational contexts.

In conclusion, the implementation of language policy in countries where English is not the primary language requires a deep understanding of the complex implications of English dominance. The prevailing worldwide influence of the English language, while facilitating global communication, poses a potential threat to the preservation and recognition of indigenous languages and cultures. Therefore, it is important to carefully navigate the strategic formulation of these policies, ensuring that they effectively promote the progress and global integration of national languages while preserving their distinct cultural identities, which are integral to their inherent worth.

To achieve this objective, it is essential to implement the promotion of national languages at the global level while considering and incorporating the prevailing linguistic and cultural frameworks in the targeted areas. The use of customized approaches that are tailored to the particular sociolinguistic contexts of the intended recipients is necessary, as opposed to relying on generic procedures. Hence, language policy needs to be firmly rooted in culturally sensitive methodologies that prioritize the safeguarding of linguistic variety, while simultaneously recognizing the pervasive existence and practicality of English as a global means of communication.

Furthermore, these policies must include the development and distribution of information in several languages, the promotion of translation and interpretation services, and the nurturing of intercultural communication skills. It is essential to promote educational systems that prioritize the significance of acquiring proficiency in several languages. This approach will effectively equip forthcoming generations with the necessary skills to effectively navigate and actively participate in an ever more linked global society. To effectively expand the influence of national languages and enhance the diversity of global linguistics, language policymakers must engage in collaborative efforts with educators, linguists, and cultural specialists, prioritizing the development of language policies that promote linguistic plurality and intercultural comprehension.

It is imperative that these policies effectively acknowledge and promote the vast array of global languages, fostering an environment that encourages active participation and genuine appreciation within the worldwide community. This recognition of linguistic variety serves as a gateway to accessing a multitude of information and views, enriching the collective understanding. Employing these collective efforts, it is conceivable to envisage a global scenario wherein English dominance coexists harmoniously with, and indeed fosters, a diverse and thriving tapestry of languages and cultures.

To effectively harness English while preserving linguistic diversity in the context of globalization, countries like China, France, Japan, and Brazil can adopt tailored strategies. China could integrate English into its education system to foster bilingualism, while France might boost its cultural exchange programs with English-speaking nations for improved language skills and cultural insights. Japan could benefit from language policy reforms enhancing English education, balancing it with Japanese cultural preservation. Brazil, with its linguistic richness, might develop media in both Portuguese and English to maintain language balance. These countries can also encourage research and publications in both English and native languages for global outreach and local relevance. Community language programs, particularly vital in linguistically diverse nations like Brazil, can aid in preserving indigenous languages. Additionally, advocating for multilingualism in international platforms can help these countries navigate the complexities of English's global dominance.

## Conclusion

In this paper, we examined Phillipson's concept of English linguistic imperialism, as well as the dynamic development of the theory and practices of English language hegemony, through a sociolinguistic perspective. It emphasizes the interconnection between the growth of English dominance and the expansion of the British Empire and the United States. It examines the role of the British imperial outreach in embedding English across Asia and Africa, where it served as a tool for colonial rule. The paper then transitions to discussing how the United States, with its significant political and economic influence, further propelled English into the status of a global *lingua franca*. The focus shifts to the paradoxical effects of English dominance, especially its role in advancing science, technology, and economics in non-English-speaking regions. Additionally, the paper considers the unifying role of English in linguistically diverse countries, while acknowledging that this serves as a temporary solution in the face of complex linguistic dynamics.

This inquiry into English hegemony's duality concludes that, although English serves as a vehicle for advancement, it also threatens the survival of local languages and cultures, thus embodying a dualistic nature. For non-English-speaking countries to leverage English beneficially, they must navigate this dichotomy with strategic cultural and linguistic preservation efforts. Examples include multilingual policies in the Philippines, Malaysia, and China, which aim to bolster indigenous languages while also mitigating English dependence in education and other sectors. A shift away from an overemphasis on British and American pronunciation norms—often misperceived as the gold standard—is advisable, reinforcing the primary objective of language acquisition: effective communication.

The fundamental shortcoming of the research is its inadequate analysis of the complexities behind the dominance of current English, highlighting the need for a more comprehensive academic investigation. The drawback of this research stems from its narrow emphasis on multilingual policies, which, while important, do not fully cover the many complexities imposed by globalization and cultural interactions. This approach fails to acknowledge the unique obstacles and circumstances faced by various nations and

areas when it comes to adjusting to the prevalence of English. To bridge these knowledge gaps, it is recommended that future research endeavors explore the intricate relationship between globalization and linguistic dynamics. Additionally, it is imperative to investigate the multifaceted function of the English language in international arenas such as diplomacy and commerce. Furthermore, a comprehensive assessment of the repercussions of English on local cultures and languages is needed. The proposed extended inquiry would provide a more thorough comprehension of the intricacies surrounding English hegemony, considering many worldwide viewpoints and ramifications. Additionally, it would offer valuable insights to guide more knowledgeable language policy and educational approaches.

As globalization advances, the role of English is expected to evolve due to technological progress and geopolitical changes. The digital age and widespread internet access have made English central to global communication and information exchange. The impending Fourth Industrial Revolution, with developments in AI and machine learning, could further amplify English's importance in global economic, scientific, and technological spheres (Skilton & Hovsepian, 2018). However, the rise of non-Western powers, especially China, may lead to a more diverse linguistic landscape. Additionally, the significance of regional economic groups like RCEP and CPTPP, alongside a focus on preserving indigenous cultures, could encourage the use of local languages along with English (Pomfret, 2021). While English is expected to maintain its global dominance, it faces increasing challenges from emerging powers and the push for linguistic diversity due to cultural and regional dynamics.

Recent scholarship has provided new insights into the complexities of English hegemony in the modern era, revealing its multifaceted impacts on global communication, cultural identity, and power structures. Scholars like Phillipson (2022) highlight the challenges to linguistic diversity posed by English's pervasive influence as a global communication tool. Meanwhile, critiques of dual language bilingual education, such as those by Freire et al. (2022), expose how neoliberal ideologies and 'white streaming' reinforce English dominance, often to the detriment of other languages. Additionally, O'Regan's (2021) work delves into how global English is intertwined with capitalist structures, shaping global power dynamics. These insights collectively underscore the cultural, economic, and educational consequences of English's global dominance and the challenges it poses for maintaining linguistic diversity.

Furthermore, the nuances of English hegemony reflect a dynamic interplay between globalization, cultural identity, and power. English has evolved from merely a language to a symbol of global connectivity, essential for economic and educational opportunities. Its role in international business, technology, and academia marks it as a crucial gateway for global participation. However, this dominance also leads to the marginalization of local languages and cultures, raising concerns about linguistic imperialism and cultural homogenization. The emergence of "World Englishes" challenges the traditional native-speaker model, advocating for the legitimacy of diverse English varieties (Kirkpatrick, 2023; Melchers et al., 2019; Schneider, 2018). This shift represents a broader perspective on English as a tool for cross-cultural communication, rather than a symbol of cultural superiority. Consequently, the hegemony of English is not just about the language itself but also its intersection with identity, power, and access in an increasingly globalised world.

## Data availability

Data sharing is not applicable to this article as no datasets were generated or analyzed during the current study.

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## Author contributions

JZ: research design, resources, conceptualization, funding acquisition, writing—review and editing. JY: review and editing.

## Competing interests

The authors declare no competing interests.



**Ethical approval**

Ethical approval was not required as the study did not involve human participants.

**Informed consent**

The article does not contain any studies with human participants performed by any of the authors.

**Additional information**

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