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ANGLICIDE: A THREAT OF GLOBALISATION

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Abstract

Globalization has contributed to the growth and expansion of knowledge across the countries of the world. In respect to the English language, it has spread worldwide in monstrous proportions. Paradoxically, excessive growth leads to degeneration in any aspect of human activity. English has occupied the social consciousness of every country and every community in the present day world. English has an official or special status in at least seventy five countries with a total population of reaching two billion. English is spoken as the first language by around 375 million and as a second language by around 375 million speakers in the world. English is spoken as a foreign language by about 750 million people. Speakers of English as a second language probably outnumber those who speak it as a first language. The countries like Russia, China and Japan that rejected the entry of English into their fields of education, science, medicine, technology and social life, have today welcomed it as they have rightly recognized the importance of it. As it has grown into such an unimaginable measure, it has, on the contrary, faced a lot of deviation in vocabulary, syntax, spelling and pronunciation from region to region. As such, some of the non-native English speaking countries or where English is being spoken as second language, the changes in the language are in such an extremity that English of one country is altogether different from that of the other country. As a result, today the linguists are concerned about the status of transforming English into English to the extent that the English of one country is totally unintelligible to the English of its neighbouring country. As this degradation of the form of the language intensifies, there is every possibility of the disappearance of the original form of English, which we teach, learn and use in day to day life situations. This situation has become a threat to the existence of the English language and therefore has turned out to be a matter of serious concern for the English enthusiast and linguists today. This trend has led to the birth of the term 'anglicide'.

Key Words: Anglicide, Globalization, linguicide, Endangered languages, Textese…

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Anglicide is the death or disappearance of English. It can also be change of the original form of the language. It is estimated from the existing trend that about half of the world's 7000 languages will disappear in the next 100 years. Australia has set a record for 'linguicide', with 92 per cent of Indigenous languages fading or dead, according to one linguist who has proposed a Harmony Day in recognition of the role a language plays in community and culture. Speaking about the language situation in Australia, Professor Ghil'ad Zuckermann, a linguist, says that language plays a main role in people's identity, cultural autonomy, and even their well being and mental health, and therefore it should be seen as something that brings Australians together. This scenario of the relevance of language in the social context is true of any country in the world. , Professor Zuckermann says ,""While it's very easy for people to believe we should all be speaking English in the 21st century, the reality is there are dozens of languages spoken in Australia today by people from fascinating and multifaceted backgrounds

If we take up the statistics of the top ten spoken languages against the percentage of speaking people among the world population, a clear concept can be formed. 1. Mandarin - 14.1 percent, 2. Spanish - 5.85 percent, 3. English - 5.52 percent, 4. Hindi - 4.46 percent, 5. Arabic -4.23 percent, 6. Portuguese - 3.08 percent, 7. Bengali - 3.05 percent, 8. Russian - 2.42 percent, 9. Japanese - 1.92 percent, 10. Punjabi - 1.44 percent (Source:http://www.sil.org)

Speaking of endangered languages, UNESCO shows the figures (as of 2010) that there are about 19 languages that have only one speaker, many of which originate from South America: Apiaká, Biky, Bishuo, Chaná, Dampelas, Diahói, Kaixána, Lae, Laua, Patwin, Pazeh, Pémono, Taushiro, Tinigua, Tolowa, Volow, Wintu-Nomlaki and Yahgan and Yarawi

As we study the situation of English, a certain trend of complex changes with regional differences is very much obvious. Sir Ernest Gowers feels that jargon may be one of the reasons for English to be gradually losing its grandness. He wrote a book, *An ABC of Plain Words*, which was a big success. As far as he was concerned, language was a living thing that was constantly changing—and this was just as it should be. According to him, rules were essentially there to be broken. "One can no more write good English than one can compose good music by merely keeping to the rules," he wrote. What he hated above all was jargon—partly because it was impossible to understand, and partly because it demeaned people by making them feel stupid. He suggested three golden rules that everyone in government and business should abide by: "Be short, be simple and be human."

When we study the reasons for English being seemingly on the edge, we can say that different speech and writing styles can be as really responsible. As American president Theodore Roosevelt found, paring down language can go too far. In 1906 Roosevelt founded something called The Simplified Spelling Board, which suggested—among other things—changing "bureau" to "buro," "enough" to "enuf," and "though" to "tho." So taken was Roosevelt with their recommendations that he ordered the Government Posting Office to use the new spellings. However, the reaction—and the ridicule—was so extreme that he soon backed down.

He had an unlikely ally in the shape of Sir Winston Churchill. "Broadly speaking, the short words are the best," Churchill said, "and the old ones when short are the best of all."

Textese may be a reason for the death of English. The most hotly discussed issue sparked by the text-messaging phenomenon of the past eight years is over truant letters. "Textese," a new-born dialect of English that minimizes letters and numbers to produce ultra-concise words and sentiments, is horrifying language lovers. Their fears are stoked by some staggering numbers: year after year the world is on track to produce trillions of messages—with a nearly 20 percent increase from year to year. The accompanying revenue for telephone companies is growing nearly as fast—to an estimated $60 billion this year. In the English-speaking world, Britain alone generates well over 6 billion

messages every month. People are communicating more and faster than ever, but some worry that, as textese drops consonants, vowels and punctuation and makes no distinction between letters and numbers, people will no longer know how we're really supposed to communicate. Will text messaging produce generations of illiterates? Could this be the death of the English language?

Those raising the alarm aren't linguists. They're teachers who have had to red-pen some ridiculous practices in high-school papers and concerned citizens who believe it their moral duty to write grammar books. The latter can be quite prominent like John Humphrys, a television broadcaster and household name in Britain, for whom texting is "vandalism." Lynne Truss, author of "Eats, Shoots and Leaves," who actually enjoys texting so much she never abbreviates. Britain, one of the first countries where texting became a national habit, has also produced some of the bitterest anti-texting vitriol; "textese," wrote John Sutherland in The Guardian, "masks dyslexia." But linguists, if anyone is paying attention, have kept quiet on this score—until now. In a new book, Britain's most prolific linguist finally sets a few things straight.

David Crystal's "Txtng: the Gr8 Db8" (*Oxford*) makes two general points: that the language of texting is hardly as deviant as people think, and that texting actually makes young people better communicators, not worse. Crystal spells out the first point by marshalling real linguistic evidence. He breaks down the distinctive elements of texting language—pictograms; initialisms, or acronyms; contractions, and others—and points out similar examples in linguistic practice from the ancient Egyptians to 20th-century broadcasting.

Shakespeare freely used elisions, novel syntax and several thousand made-up words (his own name was signed in six different ways). Even some common conventions are relatively new angled rules for using the oft-abused apostrophe was set only in the middle of the 19th century. The point is that tailored text predates the text message, so we might as well accept that ours is a language of vandals.

Of courses some have a negative feeling towards this trend, but Crystal sees growth. He believes in the same theory of evolution for language as some evolutionary biologists do for life: change isn't gradual. Monumental developments interrupt periods of stasis, always as a result of crucial external developments. The American Revolution had much greater consequences for the English language than texting has had thus far. The resulting differences between American and British English, Crystal says, are more pronounced than the differences between, say, the language of newspapers and text messages.

As soon as linguists began to look into the noise over texting, researchers examined the effects of texting experimentally. The results disproved conventional wisdom: in one British experiment last year, children who texted—and who wielded plenty of abbreviations—scored higher on reading and vocabulary tests. In fact, the more adept they were at abbreviating, the better they did in spelling and writing. Far from being a means to getting around literacy, texting seems to give literacy a boost. The effect is similar to what happens when parents yak away to infants or read to toddlers: the more exposure children get to language, by whatever means, the more verbally skilled they become. "Before you can write abbreviated forms effectively and play with them, you need to have a sense of how the sounds of your language relate to the letters," says Crystal. The same study also found the children with the highest scores to be the first to have gotten their own cell phones.

Even if electronic communication engenders its own kind of carelessness, it's no worse than the carelessness of academic jargon or journalistic shorthand. It certainly doesn't engender stupidity. One look at the winners of text-poetry contests in Britain proves that the force behind texting is a penchant for innovation, not linguistic laziness. Electronic communication, Crystal says, "has introduced that kind of creative spirit into spelling once again."

The English taught to foreign learners is generally British or American English in their standard varieties. Except for pronunciation the differences between the two are

relatively minor, as indeed they are between the standard varieties in any of the countries where English is the majority first language.

The situation in countries where English is primarily a second language is fluid and varies. Till the recent past, countries have looked to British or American English for language norms. But there are indications that in some countries like India, Nigeria and Singapore, local models of English are being sought that are based on their educated varieties. This nativisation of English augurs well for the continued use of internal functions in the respective countries. As a result, there is a danger of English losing its original form and an emergence of a new form of English which may not be looking like English. Therefore one can feel that there is a gradual downfall of the English language across the nations of the world, may be due to unnatural way of learning it and also over adherence to the language social, political, economic and cultural needs.

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