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Global English and the Role of Translation

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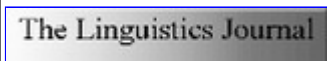
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Abstract

Language has been considerably affected by the significant trend of globalization in the last two decades. A case in point is the international status accorded to English as the largely unchallenged and most dominant language. Yet, with this undisputed internationalization of English, the question remains for the specialist, as to whether or not translation from or into English still has a role to play in this rapidly developing world given the advances in communication technology. The present study is threefold. First, it attempts to set the standards for the globalization of English as an International Language despite strong competition from other languages. The factors which determine power in language and society may be identified in the following: 1. Access to resources: economic, political, material, etc. 2. Role in the decision-making process at the international level; 3. Ability to introduce and cope with the global technical developments, including the information superhighway and communication technology, among others. It is imperative, therefore, that in a global society only powerful languages, like English, take the lead and stay on top due to their major role in disseminating and mediating information technology and resulting tools, such as e-mail service and the world-wide-web, among others. Equally important is the role of English in international politics and diplomacy, in resolving international conflicts, and in affecting the world economy.

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Second, the paper looks into the future of English amidst the fierce competition from other powerful languages, taking into account, among others, demographic and economic factors. Third, the paper sets to launch an investigation into the role of translation in this context of globalization, and to determine whether or not translation is still in demand. Given that only 60% of the entire world's technical documentation is produced in English, there remains room for other languages to contribute in the dissemination of information. Such a process may only be realized through translation from or into English. The paper draws on the educated and intelligent judgments and opinions of language experts and specialists in the field, including university professors, curriculum planners and material designers for EIL, translators, and language users. Additional information has been obtained from the literature on the subject, to verify and assess the findings of the present study.

Key words: - English as an International Language, the future of English, English as a global language,

Introduction

By definition, all living languages undergo a process of evolution whereby they continue to change over time. And although these changes are, by and large, linguistically motivated, attitudes to the languages are largely determined by non-linguistic factors, such as political influence, military power, economic prosperity, and social prestige, derived from the power of the people who speak them. Consequently, the number of speakers - both native and non-native - reflects the degree of influence a given language has on international decision-making, international diplomacy, global business, and world affairs (see Crystal, 2006; Graddol, 2006; Redmann, 2005; Ulrich, 2003; Jenkins, 2003; Mair, 2003; Wallraff, 2000; Crystal, 1997).

Since ancient times, there has been a perennial quest for such a leading and dominant language. Such a language, if any, will virtually serve as a *lingua franca*, reflecting an optimal degree of linguistic convergence and uniformity. These features are bound to usher in the emergence of a language on the road to universality, a language which has achieved global status.

By exploring the use of English worldwide and its relationship with other languages, linguists, language planners, and educational policy makers have concluded that English has now become the global language par excellence and in fact has been for the last few decades (see Graddol, 2006; Cronin, 2003; Melchers and Shaw, 2003; Jenkins, 2003; Wallraff, 2000; Crystal, 1997). The impact of this trend on EU institutions was, however, viewed differently by Phillipson (2003), Skutnabb-Kangas (2006; 2004) who argued for equal status for EU languages and their speakers (see Pennycook, 2006; 2003).

This paper investigates the status of the English language in view of a three-way relationship, namely (1) English as a global language; (2) the future of English as a global language; and (3) globalization and translation.

1. English as a global language

The rise of English as a global language was predicted by Sapir as early as 1931 (Sapir 1931: 66). Almost sixty years later, Crystal acknowledged that its use as a *lingua franca* was closely connected with its rise as a world language (Crystal, 1997, pp. 8–10; 237). According to him (1997), "A language achieves a genuinely global status when it develops a special

role that is recognized in every country" (quoted in McArthur, 2004, p. 10). With this in mind, Toolan (1997) affirms that "English is shockingly emerging as the only truly global language" (quoted in McArthur, 2004, p. 10). Similarly, Crystal (2006, p. 1) names three major trends which had an impact on the world's linguistic ecology, one of which is "the arrival of the world's first genuinely global language – English". On a similar note, Redmann (2002, p. 45) argues that "English spans the divide between people and cultures. It is not owned by Britain and America: now it belongs to everyone." And according to Chairman Lord Alan Watson, of the English Speaking Union (ESU), "English has become the working language of the global village" (Redmann, 2005, p. 45). In addition, "the widespread acceptance of English as a first or second language is the main indication of its worldwide status" (2006, Wikipedia CD Collection). Moreover despite its recent decline, English continues to be the most widely published language.

Further support for the global status of English comes from Ulrich (2003, p. 23) who believes that English is by far the most useful language for international communication today and that for multilateral contacts, especially for divergent regions, the language which functions best in most cases, or the only one functioning, is English.

Thus, the status of English as a global language has been well established and the universality of English is largely undisputed (see Brutt-Griffler, 2002; Cronin, 2003; Jenkins, 2003; Mair, 2003; Ulrich, 2003). Obviously, English would not have achieved such a global status without meeting the criteria of dominance and supremacy. The following set of facts, quoted from Wallraff (2000, p. 1) will be cited:

- i) English is the working language of the Asian Trade group ASEAN;
- ii) English is the de facto working language of 98% of German research physicists and 83% of German research chemists;
- iii) English is the official language of the European Central Bank, seated in Frankfurt.

English is predominantly used in disseminating advances in science and technology, and in trade and business communications (Brutt-Griffler, 2002; Cronin, 2003). The use of restricted forms of English by professional communities is another testimony to the supremacy of English. Wallraff (2000, p. 7), for example, cites "Seaspeak" as a restricted form of English which ships' pilots around the world have used for the past dozen years or so; this is now being supplemented by SMCP or Standard Marine Communication Phrases. Airplane pilots and air-traffic controllers use a restricted form of English called "Airspeak".

The dominant role of English has been attested to and recognized worldwide. Graddol (2006, p. 75) cites the global university rankings for the year 2005, according to Shanghai Jiao Tong University (SJT) and the QS Quacquarelli Symonds survey for the UK's *Times Higher Education Supplement*.⁽¹⁾ Further evidence of the global nature of English comes from the tremendous role played by the internet as a major source of circulating English. It is now estimated that about 80% of the materials on the internet are available in English (Wallraff 2000, p. 8).

In view of the above, the need for adopting a global language has been accelerated by the increasing demand of the

international community and the peoples of the world to grow closer together and to reach out across the linguistic and cultural barriers. This could be best achieved by designating one language that will serve as a common tongue to be shared by different speakers irrespective of their linguistic, ethnic, or social backgrounds. Only then will people be able to communicate more freely and maintain an optimal degree of cultural understanding. Furthermore, the new trends in science and technology will be shared by professional groups in a variety of domains including those of information technology, education, media, broadcasting and advertising, etc.

In this context, Arnold (2006, p. 4) notes that globalization is so influential that English will overtake all other languages and hence all other cultures because it is buttressed by the formidable panoply of the mass communications industry (Dalby as cited in Morrison, 2002, p. 26). The question remains, however, as to the degree of uniformity reflected within world English to warrant a standard core bringing together all different Englishes. Naturally, total uniformity and homogeneity is not there yet, as it has never been before. But as McArthur (2004, p. 15) puts it,

As CNN, the BBC, and even Microsoft suggest, the community of English users may have fewer problems at the world, international or global level than in past national levels. There may now indeed be more conformity than less.

1.1 Expert opinions on global English in the regional EFL context

Upon eliciting opinions on the status of English regionally from EFL experts (i.e., The Middle East and the Arab world in particular), the opinions largely confirmed the existence of a global English, which dominates the international scene and particularly that of the region. Ongoing debates among university professors, curriculum designers, school teachers and supervisors, as well as business CEOs and managers point towards similar views on how English has distinguished itself as the most needed language for science and technology, career development and job advancement, as well as socio-economic status and prestige

In Jordanian public schools, English has recently – as in the last five years - been officially introduced as a foreign language as early as grade 1. In the past, however, English was introduced only in grade 5, with only Arabic taught in the first four years of basic education. Nowadays, it is a common practice for pre-school children to be introduced to English alongside with Arabic. If anything, such strong tendencies, and a vision towards making educational policies and laws part of language planning, are indicative of the concern to enable Jordanian students to cope with the latest global developments by mastering the key and most dominant world language, namely English.

Interest in the teaching of English as a global language has been growing throughout the Arab world. The trend has become so popular that there have even been curriculum changes in some parts of the Arab world where languages other than English, particularly French, were traditionally taught in the public system. A case in point is Morocco, where teaching and learning in English has increased. To this end, the Moroccan Association of Teachers of English (MATE) has organized in the last decade two major conferences on the topic. The first was MATE's 21st Annual Conference, held in Essaouira, March 25-29, 2000, on the theme of, "The

Teaching and Assessment of English for Global Purposes." The second was The First Mediterranean ESP Conference, held in Tangiers, April 25-28, 2001, on the theme, "ESP and the Challenges of Globalization." The proceedings of the two conferences present experiences and cover varied areas of both EGP and ESP, such as curriculum development, syllabus design, discourse analysis, needs analysis, evaluation and assessment, methodology, and approaches to the teaching of culture (see Zaki and Najbi, 2001).

An offshoot of teaching English as a global language in the Arab world has been the emergence of English for Specific Purposes (ESP). The aforementioned conference is only one in a series of conferences, seminars, and workshops on the topic. Most higher education institutions in the Arab world have incorporated ESP into their undergraduate and graduate programs. Thus, new brands of courses like English for medicine, English for nursing, English for science and technology, English for business and economics, English for aviation, petroleum English, English for law, English for humanities and social sciences, etc., were featured in the academic programs of most universities. Most educational policy makers, as well as curriculum and textbook designers, were supportive of the move. They believe that students in their different areas of specialization need a different recipe of English to meet their academic and professional needs. Students should acquire the special terminology, register and jargon which are characteristic of their respective field of study. In the opinion of policy makers, the trend nowadays is heading towards applied knowledge, which boosts professional development and career advancement. To this end, Sysoyev (2001) argues that

with the spread of the student-centered approach and the continued increase of international contacts in various spheres, much attention has been paid to the design of ESP courses that can prepare students for professional communication (p.4).

Locally, in Jordan, Zughoul and Hussein (1985, p. 145-146) explored the need for English at Yarmouk University in Jordan. Their findings indicated that "knowledge of English for specific purposes ... (is) ... to train students in their particular needs from the time they join the university." The authors draw attention to a number of ESP projects in the Arab world. According to Al-Salman (2002, p. 122, p.126), ESP continues to flourish and play a major role in disseminating specialized knowledge and mediating information technology. Similarly, the interdisciplinary nature of academic and professional dialogue has given rise to more specialized research and has lent further support to ESP which is motivated by globalization (see Al-Salman, 2000, p. 29)

The same scenario is repeated in business circles, where market analysis--based on the index of world market needs-- is crucial for determining the choice of a foreign language in public and private schools, and later in the choice of a student's specialization in higher education institutes. Here, the expert opinions were strongly in favor of English as the international language of business and trade. Consequently, in the Jordanian market, most job advertisements require that candidates should demonstrate "a good command of spoken and written English." The same applies to business firms which are associated with non-English speaking European or other countries. For example, the mother company may be German,

French, Italian, Spanish, Chinese, Japanese or Korean, but the business deals with the end consumer, say the Jordanian citizen, will have to be conducted either in Arabic or in English, but not in any of the languages of the manufacturing countries stated above. The reason is that the average Jordanian normally uses English as the foreign language of global communication. The same applies to all other Arab countries except Lebanon and some North African countries like Tunisia, Algeria, and Morocco, where French is more dominant than English.

Further evidence of the dominant role of English as a global language in non-English-speaking countries comes from Spain, among many others, where a specialized conference on "Translating Science" was held at the University of Pompeu Fabra, Barcelona, 28 February – 2 March 2002. The editors of the conference proceedings reported that there were five official languages in which conference papers may be presented: Catalan, English, French, German, and Spanish. They added, "We note that most authors chose English as the language of their contribution, which comes as no surprise in the field of scientific and technical translation" (Chabas, Gaser, Ray, 2002, p. 8).

2. The future of English

Experts wonder whether or not English will continue to serve in this capacity and maintain its global status. According to Stewart and Nathan (2001),

Linguistically speaking, no one dialect or language is better, more correct, or more logical than any other...but the prestige of any speech variety is wholly dependent upon the prestige of the speakers who enjoy positions of power, wealth and education (p. 307).

For example, French is viewed as a "clearer and more logical language than English or German, but it is not as powerful as English" (ibid, p. 4). Hence, the determinants of language dominance go beyond the pure linguistic and attitudinal factors to embark on political, military, and economic power. Should these factors continue to nourish the English language, then the global status of English will be unthreatened; otherwise, the balance will be tipped in favor of another language to signal the diminishing role of the English language internationally.

The expanding role of English was received with caution in most EU countries and institutions whose national languages have been viewed as unequal to English. Consequently, this inequality between European languages and global English has rendered those languages as having second-class status. According to Phillipson (2003), English has been trespassing on the territories of some national languages like French, German, Swedish, Danish, etc., depriving them of many of their customary functions.

Apparently, the global status of English is impacting the languages of Europe and the EU language policy. In addition, the conflict between global and national interests is witnessed at the economic, political, cultural, and educational levels (see Skutnabb-Kangas, 2006; 2004; Pennycook, 2006; Phillipson, 2003).

Does this leave us with a fuzzy picture about the future of the English language, a language lacking the vigor, zest and glamour of the past? In his book *The Future of English*, David Graddol (1997) reports that "the future of English as a global

language may depend, in large measure, on how the language is taken up and used by young adults in Asian countries" (cited. in McArthur, 2004, p. 10). Graddol's predictions seem to be based on demographic, technological, and economic factors before anything else.

2.1 Demographic data

In reporting on some of Graddol's ideas, Wallraff (2000, p. 2) explains how "the world language picture may be transformed according to the new political alliances, and how the regional trading blocks in Asia, the Arab world and Latin America will be formed, in which the US and other primarily English-speaking countries will be little involved."

With the demographic factor being brought into the scene, the statistics show that there are 1,113 million native speakers of Chinese against about 372 million speakers of native English. According to Wallraff (2000, p. 3):

English is likely to cede second place within fifty years to the South-Asian linguistic group of Hindi and Urdu. In 2050, the world will hold 1,384 million native speakers of Chinese, 556 million of Hindi and Urdu, and 508 million of English. As native languages, Arabic and Spanish will be almost as common as English with 486 and 482 respectively. And among young people aged fifteen to twenty four, English is expected to be in fourth place, behind not only Chinese and Hindi-Urdu languages but Arabic, and just ahead of Spanish.

And in his article "The Decline of the Native Speaker," Graddol reports that "the proportion of native speakers in the world population can be expected to shrink over the century 1950-2050 from more than eight to less than five percent (ibid, p. 4). Thus, with the steady growth in the number of speakers of Chinese, Spanish and Arabic as the languages of the future, Graddol (2006) proposes a counter strategy for protecting English from such an imminent threat. He believes that the best defense strategy for the UK is to learn other languages. He predicts a decline in the number of foreign students in the English-speaking countries, together with a considerable decline in the number of school-age EFL learners. Graddol (2006, p. 14) also believes that English has become a basic skill and "a component of basic education". With this significant drop in the number of native speakers of English, and the increasing number of speakers of other languages, it looks as if English will lose ground on the demographic front.

Further evidence of the receding role of English exists in the mobility of international students worldwide. Graddol (2006, p. 76) reports that "the number of international students coming to English-speaking countries seemed to be ever-rising. But is the recent slowing of student numbers a temporary setback or sign of long-term change?" Graddol's concerns over the matter led him to conclude that

Forecasts for global international student numbers published by the British Council in 2004, however, suggest that The Major English-speaking Destination Countries (MESDCs) will receive a declining proportion of the world's students in the next 15 years. In 2005, 4 out of 5 UK universities reported a drop in international student numbers (ibid.).

2.2 Internet technology

Another important facet of the global status of English and its circulation around the globe is the internet. How will the new picture of English be formed in the next few decades?

According to Wallraff (2000, p. 8), "Non-English users are the fastest growing group of new Internet users ... and that Internet traffic in languages other than English will outstrip English-language traffic within the next few years." At another level,

The Microsoft engineers who designed the Windows computer-operating system spoke English, and used English in what they created, but in the latest version, Windows Millennium, the words that users see on the screen are available in twenty-eight languages (ibid, p. 12).

The global trend is not keeping pace with past trends. The drop in the rate of Internet users of English as a source language has been increasing over the years, to about 28% in 2005, compared to 80% in 1996, and to the period of the early 1990's when English was the sole Internet medium. Nowadays, about 1600 other languages are being used side-by-side with English. According to Gaddol (2006, p. 44),

It is often claimed that English dominates computers and the internet, and that those wishing to use either must first learn English. That may have been true in the early days of the technology, but lack of English is no longer the barrier it once was.

According to 2000 statistics from Global Reach, the use of English on the internet was at 51.3% against 5.4% for Chinese and 11.3 % for other languages. According to the 2005 statistics drawn from Miniwatts International Ltd., English was at 32%, against 13% for Chinese, 20% for other, and 3% for Portuguese (quoted. in Graddol, 2006, p. 44).

The declining use of English on the internet is shown in the following statistics quoted in Graddol (2006, p. 45), and based on data obtained from the Latin American NGO Funredes. The data gives the percentages of internet users working in English and the web pages in English from 1996-2005.

Table 1

Year	Users	Web pages
2005	28%	46%
2004	30%	48%
2003	40%	49%
2002	38%	50%
2001	44%	51%
2000	49%	60%
1999	60%	68%
1998	60%	75%
1997	61%	83%
1996	80%	90%

The new figures provided by the different sets of statistical data should not come as a surprise to most specialists, considering that the power endowed to a language is a function of extra-linguistic factors such as the economic

power and political influence, among other things. It is quite obvious that the world has been witnessing a state of economic restructuring and evolution which will extend over the next few decades. This, according to Graddol (2000)

will alter the relationship between the west and the rest of the world – especially Asia—and will change the economic attractiveness of the major languages... however, proficiency in English may yet be one of the mechanisms for dividing those who have access to wealth and information from those who don't (p.25).

Attitudes to the widespread use of English are not always economically motivated. English is often viewed by some nationalistic movements as a threat to local languages, and thus generates a feeling of antagonism because of its associations with colonial history (see Crystal, 1997, p. 114).

Another form of antagonism to global English comes from two additional sources: (1) people who do not have fluency in English, and (2) people who are disadvantaged and marginalized because their first language is not a global language. When this happens, attitudes to global English are usually unfavorable especially in the case of minority groups who believe that a global language poses a threat to their own language and culture (ibid, p. 115).

A different concern over the use of English as a global language comes from the standard English users themselves as a non-standard form of English is being introduced through some mixed varieties like Spanglish, Hinglish, Japlish, etc. This concern resulted in the emergence of some protectionist movements against the growth of some immigrant languages like Spanish in the US (ibid: 115). In other words, global English with its new form is posing a threat to its own self. According to Arnold (2006, p. 3), " ... globalization can also be seen as an electronic colonization, an electronic cultural imperialism. And on launching the Encarta, Bill Gates said, "One world: one dictionary," the immediate response was, should this mean "one world: one language?" (Morrison, 2002, p. 26; also quoted in Arnold, 2006, p. 4).

An equally important factor that is most likely to curb the influence of global English is economic power. According to Davis (2003), "English is by no means the only language in global business ... as it only accounts for 30% of the world Gross Domestic Product, and is likely to account for less in the future" (quoted in Graddol, 2006, p. 62). The rapidly growing economic importance of China has resulted in the growing interest in learning Madarin worldwide. In fact, the trend toward learning languages other than English has been growing, and bilingual/multilingual education is on the rise even in the USA and the UK. According to Graddol (2006, p. 113), "The US-dominated phase of globalization is fading ... and English does not enjoy a complete hegemony."

3. Globalization and the role of translation

English has unequivocally established itself as a global language for many reasons, arguments and counter arguments that have been presented thus far. With this background in mind, it is of paramount importance to assess the role of translation from and into English within the context of globalization. The idea is to provide valid arguments as to whether or not translation will continue to play a vital role in facilitating communication among peoples of the world who fail to communicate directly and first-hand through the global medium of English.

Research conducted on English/Arabic translation lends support to the thesis that the need for translation is on the rise. Al-Salman (2002, p. 99) says,

While acknowledging that the global market has given rise to the use of English as an international language, it is imperative that the need for translation from English into other languages and vice versa has become a pressing necessity.

This is actualized with the transfer of technology especially when the language of the 'sending' countries is not that of the 'receiving' ones, and when 60% of all the world's technical documentation is produced in English and 40% of it is not (Harris, 1983, pp. 5-6, see Hajjaj and Jarrah, 1998, p. 6).

Wallraff (2000) argues that "English is not managing to sweep all else before it, not even in the US. According to the US Census Bureau, ten years ago, about one in seven people in this country spoke a language other than English at home – and since then the proportion of immigrants in the population has grown" (p. 1). A case in point is the new Spanish and Chinese immigrants to the US who, quite often, do not speak English well, and some do not even bother to learn it. In fact, "from 1980-1990, the number of Spanish speakers in the US grew by 50%, and over the same decade the number of speakers of Chinese in the US grew by 98% (op cit, p. 2).

Such statistics and attitudes towards English by speakers of other languages suggest that English is not and will probably not be the only medium of communication between peoples of the world. This implicates translation as the way out. And as Wallraff (2000) put it, "We monolingual English speakers may never be able to communicate fluently with everyone everywhere...we may well need help from something other than English" (p. 2). In other words, translation seems to be the solution. A case in point is the frequent and on-going translations of original English terms and expressions into the local languages of speakers of other languages. Needless to say that coining equivalents in foreign languages has become commonplace through many translation programs on the internet like Alta Vista's Babel Fish (see Budiansky, 1998).

With the lack of clarity about the future of English as a global language, the truth remains that English is still the most-widely used language for international communication. Statistics show that English is more likely to be translated since it is still the leader in the publishing industry. Therefore, writing in English is advantageous in two ways: (1) it enables writers to reach a large audience, and (2) it gives them a better chance to be translated to other languages. In this case, global English does not impede the act of translation, but rather boosts it on two counts. First, the bulk of the published materials in English requires the transfer and dissemination of this kind of knowledge to other beneficiaries worldwide. This could be achieved either through the medium of English itself for those who master it, or else through translation into other languages. Second, although the share of English in world publishing has dropped considerably in recent years, the English-speaking world is keen to learn about the latest developments in the rest of the world. Advances in the scientific, technological, economic, and cultural fields, occur in world-leading industrial countries, some of which are of the non-English speaking hemisphere, such as China, Japan, Germany, and France, to name a few.

Regarding the effect of globalization on today's translation, Wiersema (2003) reports that....

because of the current trend of globalization, the translator no longer has the absolute need to always find a translation of a term in the target language if this could make the target-language text lose credibility. These translations contribute to a better and more correct understanding of the source culture (p. 1)

He concludes that "in our globalized world, translation is the key to understanding and learning foreign cultures... and that globalization decreases the element of foreignness in translation" (p. 6).

The role of translation in the Arab world and particularly in Jordan is well recognized. There is ample evidence that the need for translation is dramatically increasing. For example, all 20 Jordanian universities, 9 public and 11 private, offer courses leading to either a full-fledged degree in translation or else offer some compulsory courses in English-Arabic and Arabic-English translation as a component of the BA degree in English Language and Literature. In some universities, there are graduate-level programs leading to the MA degree in English-Arabic-English translation. A case in point is the University of Jordan in Amman and Yarmouk University in Irbid, which launched MA programs in translation as early as the 1980s. Job-wise, the job market is quite promising and encouraging for translators. Language experts in the Jordanian setting believe that even if English may be retreating as an international language, the effects will not be so abrupt and dramatic that the English language will lose its power once and for all. For example, all pharmaceutical leaflets of medicines and drugs include an Arabic translation of the product's scientific and commercial name, indications, side effects, precautions, dose, etc., whether the source language is English or any other foreign language. Similarly, all appliances, electronic or otherwise, include an Arabic version of the original language in the operation manuals.

At another level, the educational system in Jordan has introduced other foreign languages besides English as early as first grade. Languages such as French and German are taught in some Jordanian private schools. Furthermore, academic departments of foreign languages other than English such as French, Spanish/English, German/English, and Italian/English have been established in most Jordanian universities. This suggests that the interest in English-Arabic-English translation as well as translation from and into other vital world languages is genuine and deeply rooted. And if the role of global English language were to slacken, or to be replaced by another language, the role of translation will not diminish.

In light of the above, the relationship between globalization and translation signals harmony and compatibility. In the context of globalization and the post-modernist era, translation did not slacken. Global English and translation made it possible for peoples of the world to exchange knowledge, cope with the latest technology, and enjoy the good returns of modernity.

4. Conclusion

Three major themes have been highlighted in this piece of work, namely global English as an international language, its future prospects, and the role of translation in the context of global English. The study has brought to light that English is by far the most qualified language to lead the world languages in the realm of international communication. English has taken the lead in disseminating and mediating information technology

and resulting tools, like the e-mail service and the internet, among others. Equally important is the unprecedented role of English in dominating international politics and diplomacy, in resolving international conflicts, and in affecting the world economy.

There is ample evidence in support of the notion that English has become the global language of the world. The opinions expressed by the regional - Middle Eastern - EFL experts are consistent and in complete harmony with those depicted in the review of the literature and their relevant research findings outlined in section 1. The two teams hold similar views about the global status of English and its leading role worldwide. They strongly believe that no other language has shown the same degree of flexibility or appeal in terms of its power, attractiveness, and prestige. This is in favor of the thesis that English is flourishing and is in demand because it is a practical language and, therefore, popular all over the world.

The paper, however, questions the current status of global English and casts doubts about future prospects. And while the paper argues that it is difficult to predict the future status of English, it suggests that the rise of other languages like Chinese, Spanish, and Arabic is most likely to pose a threat to the dominance of English.

On its third theme, globalization and the role of translation, the paper points to a sound relationship of harmony and compatibility between the two. Globalization did not clash with translation, and translation did not lose ground in the post-modernist era of globalization. On the contrary, global English enabled peoples of the non-English speaking world to be abreast of the latest advances in science and technology, while at the same time providing the English-speaking world with unlimited access to other people's contributions and cultures by the transfer of knowledge through translation. The relationship between the two is therefore one of harmony without signaling any conflict. In other words, translation will continue to have a major role to play worldwide irrespective of the language which assumes the global role.

The findings of the paper are consistent with the literature on the topic which recognizes the global role of English as an international language. This role and accorded status come from the association the English language has with unlimited economic, political, and material resources; its role in the decision-making process on the international level; and its ability to cope with global technical developments. The paper, however, shares the concern of language experts and specialists in the field over the unclear future of English. There is enough evidence to suggest that the global status of English is most likely to be challenged by other languages which enjoy demographic, economic and technical growth and power

(1) According to that survey, 19 of the 20 top universities are found in English-speaking countries; 17 of them are in the US and the other two, Cambridge and Oxford, are in the UK, with Tokyo University ranked number 20.

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