

LACOSTE, Yves e KANAVILILL, Rajagopalan (Orgs.). *A geopolítica do Inglês*. São Paulo: Parábola Editorial, 2005. 159p.

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INTRODUCTION

A Geopolítica do Inglês (The Geopolitics of English), edited by Yves Lacoste and Kanavilill Rajagopalan and translated by Marcos Marcionilo from the French version originally published in the journal *Hérodote: Revue de Géographie et de Geopolitique* (Géopolitique de l'anglais, n. 115, 2004) is indeed a welcome addition to the bibliography concerning the role of the English language in the world. This initiative on the part of Parábola Editorial of São Paulo is felicitous for specialists in language studies in Brazil have the opportunity to come into contact with the discipline of geopolitics and the work carried out at the *Institut Français de Geopolitique* (Paris 8 Université Vincennes-St. Denis) that edits *Hérodote*, first published in 1976 ([http:// www.geopolitique. net/ sommaire.php3](http://www.geopolitique.net/sommaire.php3)).

To discover the above information, I had to do a certain amount of spade work on the internet; unfortunately, the editors fail to inform the readers about the work of the *Institut* as well as its journal ([http:// www.herodote.org](http://www.herodote.org)). This site presents on-line abstracts of the articles published as well as complete papers for subscribers to the periodical. Those interested in consulting the journal *on-line* will no doubt be convinced that the study of geopolitics carried out in France is quite

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relevant to researchers in the fields of applied and general linguistics, sociolinguistics, language problems and language planning, educational linguistics and multilingualism in Brazil and no doubt other countries. One problem for Brazilian readers and probably other nationalities not familiar with the work of specialists in language planning and geopolitics in France is the fact that the editors provide rather sketchy information about a number of contributors to the volume. For example, Rémi Giblin the author of the paper “English through music” is identified in a footnote as a specialist in English studies, that is, an “Anglicist”; the academic affiliation and credentials of the co-editor of the Brazilian edition (as well as the editor of *Hérodote*), Yves Lacoste appear only inside the back cover. Lacoste is a geographer and also director of the Center for Research and Geopolitical Analysis.

An asterisked footnote (p. 65) with the acronym “Inalco/CEIAS” does not help readers to identify exactly the academic affiliation of Annie Montaut, author of the seminal article “English in India and the role of the elite in the national project”. Montaut is full professor of Hindi linguistics at the Institut National des Langues et Civilisations Orientales, Centre d’Études de l’Inde et de l’Asie du Sud.

There is no information about Pierre Biplan, author of “The Esperanto of business”. A preface would also have been useful to inform prospective readers about the objective of the book, the identity of the authors and the relevance of the papers to the complex and emotional issue of the politics of English in world affairs. In addition, a biodata section could easily have been presented in an appendix to the book to inform readers about the on-going research in the field of geopolitics in France and specifically at the *Institut de géopolitique*.

In some cases, a bit of editing of the Portuguese text would have been useful for readers. In the French version the editor and some of the contributors assume that their readers know that the “Glorious Thirties” (“Os Trinta Gloriosos”, p. 126) refers to the period of prosperity and peace in France for thirty years after the end of the Second World War (1945-1975). One cannot take for granted that all Brazilian readers will identify that moment in French history. In another paper (p. 56), the name of Horace Kallen who dreamed of a multilingual USA is cited (p. 56) but no information is provided to inform curious readers. A site on the internet (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/horace_kalen) informs

that Kallen (1882-1974) was a philosopher and member of the staff of the prestigious New School for Social Research in New York City. Kallen argued that racial, ethnic and religious diversity contributed to the strength of the United States. It is also claimed that Kallen coined the term “cultural plurality”.

But these problems are really minor and could be rectified if a second edition of the volume is envisioned. What really matters is that the collection of twelve papers is a timely contribution for there is unfortunately a dearth of material in Portuguese dealing specifically with the work of French scholars with respect to the growth of English in the course of the last century and at the present moment.

ORGANIZATION OF THE VOLUME

The twelve articles are not organized by the editors into specific sections. The lead article by Yves Lacoste “Towards a geopolitical approach to the diffusion of English” stands alone as an introduction to the rest of the articles that can be divided into four different groups based on the themes addressed.

The first block of papers consists of five articles that deal with the role of English in different parts of the world: (i) Delphine Papin’s paper “English and ethnic minorities in Great Britain” deals with language maintenance and freedom of speech in that country, (ii) Annie Montant’s article (title cited above) discusses the role of English as the language of the elite in India, (iii) Philippe Sébille-Lopez in his article “The British and the English language in Africa in general and in Nigeria in particular” examines the problems that the imposition of English have caused in a multilingual society; (iv) Philippe Gervais-Lambony, in an interview with editor Yves Lacoste looks at the linguistic situation in the multilingual Republic of South Africa to ask an important question: “Is the Republic of South Africa anglophone?”, (v) Rajagopalan, in the concluding piece written especially for the volume in Portuguese, entitled “The Geopolitics of the English language and its reflections in Brazil” reports on the ambivalent views with respect to English in Brazil.

Two papers, dealing with the spread of Spanish in the United States of America, form the second block of papers: (i) “The Hispanic threat: does Spanish threaten English in the United States?” is the title of the paper written by David Lopez and Vanesa Estrada, (ii) “The Hispanic nightmare of Samuel Huntington” is authored by Frederick Douzet who analyses critically the writing of Samuel Huntington who views the presence of Spanish as a threat to the identity of the USA.

The third set of papers deals with the role of English in international frameworks. The article “English: lingua franca of international agencies” by H el ene Gadriot-Renard is an interview given to *H erodote*. This author gives her impressions about the role of English and users of the language during her appointment at the Paris-based *Organization pour la Cooperation et le Developpement Economique* (OCDE), whose mission is to help its 30 member nations “... achieve sustainable economic growth and employment and to raise the standard of living” (www. oecd. org.). The second paper in this group is Pierre Biplan’s “The Esperanto of business”.

The fourth group consists of two articles, the first by R emi Giblin bearing the title “English through music” and the second written by Jean-Marie le Breton and entitled “Anglophilic reflections on the geopolitics of English”.

To get a handle on the presence of English in different regions, I would think that readers might do well to read Lacoste’s lead article first and then proceed to read the papers of the five authors before going on to the other papers.

1. Lacoste, in the course of his introductory chapter to the volume, points to the impressive growth of the English language in the world. He attributes the diffusion of English to British colonial policy from the 18th Century on that encouraged the printing of newspapers and the publication of books as well as the establishment of schools and universities. He points out that French colonial policy in Africa discouraged the flow of ideas and quite surprisingly, newspapers only appeared in African nations after the Second World War. The economic and technical development of the United States of America after the World War II led to the “presence” of the USA and the English language throughout the world in the fields of science, technology, business, motion pictures and music. But that “presence” led the USA

to view itself as the police force of the world with invasions in Iraq, Afghanistan and other countries thereby contributing to strong anti-American sentiment in many quarters. Lacoste views this situation as a “geopolitical paradox” for that spirit of anti-Americanism did not curtail minimally interest in things American in many parts of the world.

One might dispute Lacoste’s statement that computer technology and the Internet are completely “American”. To be sure, the Internet was developed in the United States both by people born there and many others born elsewhere. There are “silicon valleys” in other parts of the world and computer technology is becoming more and more globalized. English is by no means the only language of the Internet and the use of many other languages can contribute to offsetting the exclusive dependence on English. With respect to the Internet, the computer and the USA, Lacoste fails to consider the lurking fear in many parts of the world that the Internet may be controlled by the interests of US commerce, leading to “... a widening of the poverty gap, concentrating economic activity and power more narrowly in one group and further alienating large areas of the world from participating in the global economy” (Main, 2001:96).

There is no doubt that English grew in importance in the world in the aftermath of the Second World War. Lacoste is correct in his statement that the Marshall Plan (1947-1951) contributed to the reconstruction of Europe leading to the introduction of new words such as “bulldozer” (p. 10) and a large number of technical terms that also entered other European languages. It is important, however, not to forget that the presence of English in French had been in place many years before the end of World War II. An examination of the *Dictionnaire Eytologique et Historique des Anglicismes* published by Edouard Bonnaffé (Paris: Librairie Delagrave, 1920) points to an impressive number of loan words from English. In his preface, Bonnaffé (p. xx) asks if all the words found in French texts are necessary. His answer is that the words listed in the dictionary “... deal directly with the practical, everyday life of our fellow citizens and are used by the upper classes (“haute société”) as well as in the world of the workers. These loan words appear therefore to respond to a general need.” (my translation),

Lacoste also claims that the “language of rock music is English”. Rock music was first written in English, but that form of music has

been “naturalized” in many countries due to the composing of songs in different languages (and not mere translations of English songs) by Brazilians, French, Danish and Japanese musicians. Music by nature is hybrid. A style of music that grows in one culture mingles with another to form a new style.

2. I turn now to the first block of papers that deal specifically with the geopolitics of English in five different countries: The United Kingdom, India, Nigeria, South Africa and Brazil.

Papin deals with the different ethnic minorities that reside in the United Kingdom. The founding principles of the nation guarantee the freedom of speech to all who reside there. That policy has allowed fundamentalist religious groups to openly preach jihad in their sermons. Many Muslims live in their own section of the major cities and are free to maintain their language and culture. The geopolitical problem, on one hand, is to maintain the linguistic heritage of all citizens and, on the other, encourage immigrants to become citizens of the UK and identify with the country. Papin observes that it is possible in the United Kingdom to be viewed as Scots-British, Welsh-British, British-Pakistani or British-Muslim. Quite surprisingly, Papin remarks that such hyphenated identities are not possible in France. It would be indeed interesting to know what would impede this state of affairs in France today with the presence of immigrants from Africa, Asia, South America and other European nations. London and Liverpool are nowadays no different from Paris or Lyon, New York or Sidney and Toronto or São Paulo. I agree with Bell (2003, p. 217) who states that France itself has become a “kaleidoscope nation” (like many others in this globalized world) due to movement of peoples from one locale to another.

Montaut is highly qualified to examine the role of English in India for she has taught in that country and holds a doctorate from the Sorbonne on the verbal system of Hindi. To be sure, the geopolitical situation in India is complex. Knowing English bestows privileges on all those who speak and write it. With at least 18 official languages (2003), the country is divided into linguistic, religious, ethnic, cultural and socio-economic groups; the situation is exacerbated by the very presence of English as the language of an elite; paradoxically, however, according to Montaut, English is the only language in the nation that serves as

a bridge between regions and religions. While English is used by the privileged, it excludes the majority of Indians. The presence of English in the universities and in government has historically discouraged the study and use of the national languages and cultures. What is important in Montaut's paper is her point that English has created an abyss that can only be suppressed by dialogue among Indians (who live in the country) with regard to a national language policy.

While Sébille-Lopez presents a thorough history of the implementation or rather imposition of English in Nigeria by the British, one of the author's remarks with regard to the present-day role of English in the country is questionable, especially from the viewpoint of current research in sociolinguistics. For the author, the vast majority of Nigerians learn English as a second language from teachers who also learned English in the same way, to cite his words "... imperfectly, almost always far removed from the standard language". One wonders what the author means by "the standard language". Also, what is meant by the adverb *imperfectly*? According to the Nigerian linguist Ayo Banjo (1993, p. 261), in the case of that nation, a standard has developed that comes from *within* (my emphasis) the country not based on a variety from outside.

Gervais-Labony's article asks an important question. Is the Republic of South Africa really an English-speaking nation? He provides a straight answer to his query. The country is not Anglophone for English, based on the census of 2001, only 8.2% of the populace has the language as a mother tongue. 24% of South Africans speak Zulu, 17% speak Xhosa, 13% speak Afrikaans, 9% speak Pedi while English competes with Tswana for the fifth or sixth place in terms of numbers of speakers. In spite of being a minority language and not an Anglophone nation, English is spoken in all parts of the nation and is the language of political and economic power. One can conclude that as in India and Nigeria, English in South Africa marginalizes and is also marginalized. Gervais-Labony concludes that in the urban areas young Black South Africans are speaking less and less African languages are highly influenced by American youth culture and relate favorably to Afro-American culture. The case is that Black South Africans have no choice but to learn English but white South Africans are not obliged to learn an African language. Unfortunately, Gervais-Labony does not ask

if the dominance of English augurs well or not for the future of South Africa. No mention is made of the “National Language Policy and Plan” to develop “...nine of the indigenous languages, simultaneously, so that they can perform in every domain of a modern economy for ordinary and specialized function” (WRIGHT, 2002, p. 159-160). While this language policy for a new South Africa is complex, it is indeed a beginning. Quite to the point is Wright’s remark:

And no part of South Africa is, in principle, going to permit its children to be divorced from their home language and culture. Therefore high-quality Afrikaans and African language education is essential.

Essential for the construction of a harmonious society in South Africa is not only the maintenance of African languages, but the learning and use of those languages by the white and Indian citizens of the nation. In post-apartheid South Africa, one can watch television programs in the different ethnic languages, official documents are translated into a variety of languages, magazines and books are published in the different tongues.

Rajagopalan, the sole non-francophone contributor to the volume, is the only author who suggests ways to confront, to cite his words, “the advance”, “the uncontrolled expansion”, “the threat”, “the adversary”, “the omnipotence of English” and the “hegemony” of that language in the world at the present time. It would appear that for the eleven French writers the presence of English in the world is a *fait accompli* and irreversible. For the most part, they examine the consequences of the exclusionary role of English in the countries studied. None of the writers is bemoaning that fact that French no longer holds the position that it held, let us say, at the beginning of the last century.

I fully understand the irritation on the part of Rajagopalan and some of the other contributors with regard to the disastrous foreign policy of the USA with its unilateral actions, undeclared wars, economic exploitation and attempts at cultural domination. English language teachers are often viewed as agents of Anglo-American imperialism. Teachers of French, Spanish or Russian do not carry such an ideological burden. It is therefore understandable that he echoes the sentiments of

many Latin Americans in his reference on two occasions to the USA as the “Big Brother of the North”.

Somewhat more complicated, however, is his criticism of the custom on the part of people born in the USA to refer to themselves as “Americans”. He characterizes this language practice as an example of “metonymic arrogance.” Anderson (1991, p. 191) points out that in the “Declaration of Independence of the United States of America”, “... the American nation is not even mentioned”. Quite telling is the remark “Nor have We been wanting in attentions to our *British brethren*” (my emphasis). Some years later, in the year 1821, according to Anderson, José Francisco de San Martín, (1778-1850) who was born in Argentina, fought on the side of Spain in her European wars and later on against Spain for the independence of Peru. He declared that “... the aborigines shall not be called Indians or natives; they are children and citizens of Peru and shall be called *Peruvians*” (ANDERSON, p. 193). I do not think the use of the label “American” represents a conspiracy for words appear spontaneously in language and are difficult to regulate. Ferguson and Heath (1981, p. xxxv) point out that “... though the term *American* has been used for 200 years to refer to U.S. residents, natives of other areas of the Americas, have, in recent years, come increasingly to resent this exclusionist use of the term”. All the French authors in the Portuguese edition use freely the term “americano” and no doubt “americain” in French. My French translation of J.S. Salinger’s *The Catcher in the Rye* (*L’attape-coeurs*) bears the words “traduit de l’américain par Annie Saumont” (Paris: Robert Laffont, [1945], 1986).

Rajagopalan presents proposals that might be employed to confront the presence of English in Brazil and no doubt other nations. In addition, he points to the limitations or impracticability of the measures. We are told that the outright rejection of English is foolhardy. He refers to two possible ways to counterbalance the presence English in the world, but rejects both immediately. To pit French against English would amount “to the substitution one imperialism for another” and to encourage the study of Spanish would be beneficial for Brazil (and other nations), yet that country “cannot afford to turn its back on the English language” (p. 146). Rajagopalan refers to the use of Esperanto as a possible alternative to English, but quickly concludes that it is utopian to believe that an artificial language, based on European languages,

could by “some magic” be implanted in one fell swoop in the world. The statement that Esperanto has no native speakers is disputable for Corsetti, Pinto and Tolomeo (2004) claim that there are “natives”, that is, children who were taught the language from their non-native parents.

Finally, the author rejects the notion of “multilingualism”, particularly in the context of Europe, for he doubts that people in Eastern Europe would go along with the idea of having to learn French or German just to keep English from gaining more and more ground. But people have their own agendas and one would hope that French and German as well as other languages will continue to be studied. No one, I would think, wants a world with only one language.

The readers are told that 1/4 of the world’s population speaks English and the 80 to 90% percent of the scientific knowledge produced in the world is written in English. Taking these cold facts into consideration, the only way to confront the “adversary” (= the English language) for Rajagopalan is to adopt a policy of “political pragmatism” and a “realistic attitude”. Following the ideas set out by Canagarajah (1999), Rajagopalan recommends an attitude of resistance instead of one of subservience to the “ideology that it is hidden in the expansion of English”. In the case of Brazil, I believe it is only fair to point out that Busnardo and Braga, quite some time ago, argued that in their capacity as university instructors that “... *all* language pedagogy should attempt to develop in students a critical perception of both Brazilian and foreign realities (authors’ emphasis, 1987, p. 21). These authors suggest that students question what they read in English about the far from innocent or supposedly neutral policies of the two major powers- the United States and the United Kingdom. I would contend that there are many individuals, on one hand, who study English for they like it and on the other, there are some who do not like it (or even hate it for political, economic, cultural or religious reasons), but learn it very well indeed to deal with the language used by the “others” whom they view as enemies. It is well known that members of radical groups that resort to violence learn the language of the nations they intend to attack.

Rajagopalan cites the celebrated Kenyan novelist Ngugi wa Thiong’o and also the Nigerian Novelist Chinua Achebe who both had no choice but to learn English from early childhood. He himself

confesses that he was forced as a child to learn English. Not all children can cope with being forced to learn a language that is not the language of their home. Not all children are able to do mathematics, science and social studies in a language that is alien to them. This leads me to feel that *real resistance* (my emphasis) to English and other European tongues can only be achieved by strengthening the national languages as Gervais-Labony suggests in the case of South Africa. While I enjoyed the debates that Rajagopalan had with several members associated with a professional organization dealing with teaching English, I would think that professional language teaching associations as well as the members are first and foremost concerned with the role of English (or other languages), but not necessarily the indigenous languages spoken in Africa, Asia and in the Americas.

With respect to language planning and whether linguists or applied linguists can do a better job, I would contend that both general and applied linguists should listen to the citizens of countries like Malaysia, Nigeria or Kenya with regard to questions of language use (Rajagopalan himself suggests that linguists listen to laymen). In the case of African and Southeast Asian countries, it is good that nowadays, language specialists are not solely “outsiders” from Europe or North America, but there are African and Asian-born socio(applied) linguists who contribute to language planning in their own countries.

Quite interesting are Rajagopalan’s remarks about the appearance of “World English” in all parts of the world--- “in busy international airports, at sports events, and at international academic meeting, etc.” The spread of English has contributed to the language being nativized with norms developing from within and not from outside. It would appear that this hybridization of English is of some concern to Sébille-Lopez based on his discovery that Nigerian English is distant from “standard English”. The hybrid forms that Rajagopalan refers to serve the needs of their respective speakers in their specific contexts, as he contends. English is indeed globalized but the price to be paid is for World English to be localized or better still, “glocalized”. Quite apropos with regard to nativization of English is the publication some time ago of the late Sidney Greenbaum’s *Comparing English Worldwide: The International Corpus of English* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1996).

3. I want to turn now to the second group of papers that might be read together due to the fact that both deal with the growing presence of Spanish in the United States of America.

Lopez and Estrada conclude that the growing number of immigrants from Mexico and other Spanish-speaking countries is not a threat to the position of English in the USA. The authors observe that there is no evidence that immigrants living in the USA at the present time form “permanent non-English speaking enclaves”.

While Lopez and Estrada are right in stating that few native-born US citizens learn other languages, their view of the USA as being “unanimously recognized as one of the least bilingual countries in the world” is debatable. Indeed the authors are correct in their claim that the languages of the immigrants who came to the USA in the late 19th and early 20th centuries have for the most part disappeared due to the assimilation of the different nationalities. But one cannot generalize for there are even today small numbers of Polish-Americans, Italian-Americans and Lithuanian-Americans who have maintained their “heritage” languages. The presence of Spanish and particularly Asian languages as well as many native American languages would lead me to state that the USA is by no means a monolingual nation. A visit to Monterey Park, California and to Dade County, Miami, Florida will indicate the presence respectively of Chinese and Hispanic populations (DICKER, 2000, p. 56-57). Many of the large and even medium-sized cities are culturally plural. No doubt there may be (too) many monolinguals, but no one would attempt to force people to learn another language.

To be sure, the number of those students who major in a foreign language at institutions of higher learning is small compared with other academic disciplines. Yet, college and universities in the USA do prepare students in foreign languages and literature and area studies in different tongues, be it Latin, French, German or Spanish. Some of those students continue on for advanced degrees in a variety of tongues and their respective cultures.

With respect to Dauzet’s article, it is important at the outset to observe that this author holds a doctorate from the University of Paris-VIII. His dissertation deals with the geopolitics of multiculturalism in the city of Oakland, California. His credentials authorize him to discuss the very controversial statements made by Samuel

Huntington, a professor of political science at Harvard University. According to Huntington, the massive presence of Spanish-speaking immigrants is a threat to the identity of the USA as a nation founded by White Anglo-Saxon Protestants. Huntington argues that the large numbers of Hispanics live in separate enclaves and have no interest in learning English or becoming “Americans”. His views have been enthusiastically supported by many monolingual English speakers who believe that the use or maintenance of a foreign language is an act of disloyalty to the USA. Other citizens have condemned Huntington’s ideas and have labeled them as being racist. The very fact that Dauzet is a citizen of France, a bilingual European with substantial residence time in the USA as a researcher in geopolitics permits him to examine Huntington’s remarks academically. Nobody is neutral, to be sure, but as an “outsider”, Dauzet is not emotionally involved in the sensitive issue of immigration or whether or not the Hispanic presence is a threat to English and the “American way of life” (whatever that may mean).

The word “nightmare” in the title of Dauzet’s article is appropriate for the latino presence in the USA is indeed just that for Huntington. Dauzet lays bare the Harvard professor’s fears and no doubt the fears of many insecure monolingual Americans. First of all, for Huntington and many of his sympathizers the immigrants’ use of Spanish will be permanent and the result will be a “nation within a nation” or even a possible demand by the Hispanic populace for the return of California and parts of the Southwest to Mexico. Secondly, even when the Hispanics become bilingual, there arises the fear among monolingual Americans that they will be excluded from their position of power and privilege. American businesses have also been quick to perceive that the Hispanic presence represents a lucrative market for sales. Many firms advertise in Spanish and other languages and seek out bilinguals for employment. Monolinguals fear exclusion and loss of influence. In his very thorough piece of research, Dauzet uncovers the telling fact that Benjamin Franklin, one of the distinguished founding fathers of the United States feared that the massive German immigration in the country at that time would be a threat to the identity of the country and, in Franklin’s words “our language”.

Dauzet, who has carried out research on the struggle of the Afro-American against discrimination and exploitation, deconstructs

Huntington's polemical views with respect to the Hispanic residents in the USA. As in the case of the Afro-Americans, the Latinos are forced to live in ghettos with substandard housing, schools and social services. Huntington's claim that speakers of Spanish do not learn English is unfounded for by the third generation, large numbers are proficient in English. Dauzet concludes that bilingualism is a valuable resource for the country and two identities, one with the host country and the other with the country of origin in no way compromise the loyalty of the Hispanic immigrants.

Dauzet is correct in his observation that being a WASP or a white Anglo-Saxon Protestant in the USA confers power and prestige. With respect to the values of "liberty and equality" that Huntington attributes to the Protestant founding fathers, it is important to note that in the 13 original colonies, Roman Catholics and Jews were discriminated against and the Afro-Americans were enslaved in most of the colonies and not all considered citizens, even though some fought in the War of Independence. Non Anglo-Saxon immigrants who arrived in the 19th century from Poland, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Germany, Portugal, Norway and Russia contributed with their hard work, frugality and dedication to the development of the country.

In my view, Huntington fails to see the real threat to the USA and other nations of the world. Rupert (1995, p. 206) in a seminal text has this to say:

US-based multinational corporations and the wealthiest individuals in American society have continued to profit even as formerly privileged industrial workers have been squeezed out of their status as "middle class" Americans. These workers now join in increasing numbers—and still more fear that they will soon join—those groups excluded from the neoliberal accommodation: the non-unionized, those unable to find full-time year round employment, those working in the low-paying service sector, women, African-Americans and other systematically disadvantaged groups, as well as the great masses of people who reside in post-colonial societies.

Rupert might very well add to his "systematically disadvantaged groups" many member of the Hispanic community.

4. Turning now to the third set of papers, I will examine Gradiot-Renard's paper before going on to look at Biplan's article.

In her interview with Yves Lacoste, Gradiot-Renard refers to her work at the OCDE (cited above). She points out that while French and English are the official languages of that organization, the reality is that English is "hegemonic" for the delegates from English-speaking countries do not speak in French while the French personnel speak English fluently. Many people from the United Kingdom and the United States are criticized for they make no effort to learn other languages. Gradiot-Renard is right. But, not all individuals from the UK and the USA are monolingual. Taking into consideration that OCDE is a multinational organization, couldn't that body encourage its member nations to give preference to qualified bilinguals rather than monolingual English users? It would not be difficult to find qualified speakers of Spanish and French in the USA.

Gradiot-Renard claims that speakers of English, even bilingual ones, tend to use understatement or litotes when they speak English. I would imagine she means that French speakers tend not to resort (at all?) to the use of litotes and not that the recourse to understatement is linguistically impossible in French. Perhaps a minor point in the interview is her remark that Asians as well the French "venerate the purity" of their respective languages. Who decides really want is to be deemed "pure" when one is dealing with the notion of language, different languages and their many users?

Biplan's paper is the shortest one of the volume. Quite anecdotal, this author's paper is in fact that only one that laments the demise of French as a world language. He writes that "our poor national languages" are used in "off" or in breaks when people talk about cuisine, wine, movies and their families. The author is correct in his criticism of the disinterest of many speakers of English particularly from Britain and the USA in learning other languages. The case is that those speakers of English in fact exclude themselves from contact with other peoples by not learning the "languages of the others". Worse still, I would venture to say, is the selfishness of those privileged few in India, Nigeria and South Africa who maintain their social position due to their use of English. Biplan's reference to English as the "Esperanto of Business" tends to overlook the fact that multinational firms invest large sums

of money to modify and then translate advertizing and publicity into a large number of the world's languages. Instruction manuals and reports to stockholders are also translated into different languages, including Esperanto.

7. The last group of papers that might be read together is Giblin's article on music and English and Le Breton's piece who views himself as an Anglophile.

While Giblin is identified in a footnote as an Anglicist, one might conjecture that the author is a musician for his paper presents a very detailed account of the advent of rock'n roll in France. Giblin divides his paper into two chronological periods. The first part describes the appearance and growth of rock'n roll music (1950-1966) that captivated youth in many parts of the world and the second part describes the "intellectualization" of that music as an instrument of protest in different parts of the world (1967- to the present). Music is indeed geopolitical for it spreads rapidly throughout the world, but it important to note that in the case of rock'n roll, they all tend to become "naturalized" due to the appearance of French, Brazilian and Japanese rock with "native" talent and songs written the languages of those cultures.

Le Breton's view of the spread of English in the world, to my mind, is celebratory. To be fair, the author is transparent and admits to being an admirer of the English language and particularly the United Kingdom. A French diplomat with service in different countries, Le Breton served as president of the France-Great Britain Association as well as the Franco-British Council. I agree completely with the author that English is a universal language, the language of economic, technological and cultural power and that has eclipsed other European languages, particularly French and German. I find it difficult, however, to accept that English is *the* (my emphasis) language of "non-conformity" (p. 17) of "liberty" (p. 18) and of "democracy". To cite Le Breton's words (p. 25), "one of the great triumphs of the geopolitics of English is, without doubt, its evolution toward democracy". People may have democratic ideas and ideals, but languages in themselves do not. I also have difficulty in understanding what is meant by the statement that "... English is more a language of nuances than of clarity". The problem here is that the author is confusing the language with its users. To be sure, *some* of the users of the language who happen to speak English are

non-conformists, dedicated to freedom and representative government. And there are people who speak other languages who entertain similar views. The notions “Liberté, Fraternité e Equalité” can be expressed in any language. One must not forget that the expansion of English throughout the world in the 19th and early 20th centuries by Britain was won at a tremendous cost of human lives for both the conquered and the conquerors.

The same is true with respect to the “Manifest Destiny” of the United States that led to the decimation of many indigenous peoples. All conquerors are truculent and violent who enforce conformity and deny liberty to the vanquished.

Le Breton raises an important point for he states that “the fragility of English resides in the excess brought about by the immense power of the United States.” (p. 26). That “immense power” is indeed a danger for it is often wielded unilaterally contributing to anti-Americanism, dislike or downright hatred of English. As Le Breton observes, the ubiquity of English facilitates, quite ironically, the work of “terrorists” in the world. In a lucid paper on the use of “snarl words”, Bhatia (2005) examines the politics of naming and constructing others as “rebels”, “terrorists” or “bandits”. Labeling counties as “rouge nations” or characterizing the war in Iraq as a “crusade” contributes to closing dialogue.

A FOREIGN LANGUAGE POLICY FOR BRAZIL

English will continue to maintain its privileged position in Brazil and other parts of the world. No one has a crystal ball to look into the future. Bruthiaux (2002) argues that in the event of the decline in power of the United States in the course of the 21st century, English will still be an important language due to the existence of “critical mass”, that is, an impressive number of speakers and geographical spread. A sound language policy for Brazil would not ignore World Englishes or in Rajagopalan’s terms “World English”.

One real danger is that English should not be the sole foreign language offered in Brazil or in other nations. For obvious reasons, Spanish should be encouraged and it is true that enrollments are increasing. However, political agreements between governments

to introduce Spanish by fiat are not viable without the existence of qualified teachers and appropriate teaching materials.

TRANSLATION AS A GEOPOLITICAL ACT

The translation of the text under review is indeed a geopolitical act for the rendition of a specific text in another language extends the life of the original creating a “new” original in another culture. This is the message underlying the publication of *A Geopolítica do Inglês*. Contact with French (and other varieties of French), I would argue, should be an essential part of a Brazilian foreign language policy. The language is thriving in some quarters in Brazil; many teachers of French can do a better job in teaching the language than their English-teaching colleagues due to smaller enrollments and to the fact that their students identify with the language in their choice of in lieu of English.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

The *Geopolitics of English* offers a variety of articles dealing with different aspects with regard to the presence of English in the world. It could be used to advantage in upper level undergraduate and graduate courses for teachers of foreign languages due to the informative papers that touch on a gamut of disciplines: sociology, political science, education, language planning, sociology, applied and general linguistics and culture.

While my remarks have been critical of some of the viewpoints held by the contributors to the volume, I have nevertheless been rewarded for the review has enabled me to come into contact with French scholarship in the field of geopolitics and to reflect about the very complex issues with respect to the role of English in world politics. I do hope that my remarks contribute to continued debate on the subject.

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