Socio-Cultural Acquisition Through Idiomatic Representation

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Abstract: The problem of multiculturalism presents the cutting edge of modern cultural divide. In this article I suggest a method of analyzing multiculturalism and multilingualism through idiomatic component with the help of on-line electronic linguistic corpuses BNC (British National Corpus [1]), COCA (Corpus of Contemporary American English [2]) and GloWbE (The Corpus of Global Web-Based English [3]). I calculate frequency indexes, which are suggestive of prevalent culture stereotypes in modern English speaking communities. The central idea under discussion is that verbally many things are accepted faster and better by global communities, than certain phenomena at a cultural level. The acceptance of certain ideas through the language is a path to eradicating social injustices and inequities.

Key words: Multiculturalism • Diversity • Culture • Social psychology • Stereotype • Multilingualism • Idiom • Phraseology • Corpus linguistics • Global English • North America • Great Britain

INTRODUCTION

Multiculturalism is observed at different levels in the workplace. ‘The findings show that identity capital is deployed in social situations with clients, colleagues and supervisor in the workplace. Moreover, the deployment of identity capital occurs through greetings, body language, finding connecting pieces and methods of communication. Finally, the deployment of identity capital is strategic. The paper concludes that identity capital is a useful concept to explain the varied resources individuals have available to negotiate changing workplace environments’ [4].

Language differences are of prior importance, when we discuss modern failures of multiculturalism in present-day Europe. ‘Language difference has become a public focus of debates around the alleged failure of European policies on multiculturalism. Integration into the dominant host language of the community is seen as the only desirable outcome for national language policies. This article argues for a wholly different approach to language alterity, drawing on understandings provided by translation, the relationship between time and place and a social ontology of conflict where language features as an important actor. Underlining the necessity of the ontological dimension of conflict for the emergence of identity in the case of language, plurality involves accepting that there is no final, definitive reconciliation of opposites but that any arrangement is a provisional, unstable equilibrium which does not rule out further conflict in the future. This understanding of language conflict provides a way of thinking about contemporary multilingual and multicultural societies in a manner that moves beyond revealed universalism and schismatic relativism’ [5].

Prominent scholars of today suggest that even in cases where language differences are not so sharp, the policy should be focuses on the language of values, rather than prescriptive practices. ‘Attacks on multiculturalism from across the political spectrum reduce the complex history of settlement and interaction in the UK to a simple narrative of excessive British tolerance and increasingly disruptive immigrant communities. The liberal version of this 'integrationist' discourse emphasizes the Enlightenment values associated with secularism, individualism, gender equality, sexual freedom and freedom of expression as markers of civilization superiority. Various efforts are made to 'civilize' Muslims in particular into adopting these values. What emerges is, in effect, a liberal form of anti-Muslim racism which, paradoxically, takes liberalism into an illiberal embrace of conservative themes. With the
racialization of 'Muslimness', the conservative cultural racism that was dominant in the 1980s has been revamped and reshaped and the language of 'values' rather than ethnicity has become central' [6].

Much prominence is given to language policies in modern system of education. ‘The formulation of a languages-in-education policy (LEP) in Ireland illustrates some challenges at the macro-and micro-levels. A clamour for policy has reverberated through language education institutions in Ireland within the last decade. This paper explores and discusses: (1) the trajectory of an LEP in Ireland from initial formulation to efforts at implementation which have been influenced by the changing sociolinguistic map and language situation in Ireland (i.e. Ireland’s new-found multiculturality and the management of diversification); and (2) the intersection of policies to extend bilingualism (Irish as the national but a minority language - Irish is considered as a minority language here only in terms of number of speakers. It is the national and first official language of the Irish state, but, nonetheless, spoken as a first language by only between 3% and 5% of the Irish population) and support multilingualism (immigrant languages). The questions and issues raised in this paper point to the need for a new understanding of the policy process because they epitomise the kinds of local contexts and specific circumstances that implementers confront not only in Ireland but also in regions and areas where societal bilingualism is beginning to change into or compete with multilingualism in an LEP’ [7].

Language practices in education are given much attention within country policies domain. ‘…a current topic-the relationship between study language and educational achievement. Estonia is used as an example with its multifarious formal language education (e.g. Estonian - and Russian - medium schools, etc.). The quantitative data on pupils’ achievements (upper secondary school examination results) are analyzed. The main research question is how the advancement in schools could be characterized by the study language, or by other individuals - (e.g. the order of languages learned) or school-level indicators (stress on the humanities, etc.). The initial results show that pupils learning at the secondary level of education in minority language schools have to some degree lower examination results compared to those learning in the majority language. Nevertheless, school-level variables, such as the number of foreign languages learned, turned out to be more essential differentiating factors when compared to the study language. The paper suggests that learning in the minority language (sometimes including subjects learned in a second language) does not necessarily deteriorate the results in subject knowledge, but only in cases where the curriculum is systematically balanced (e.g. combining second language learning and multiculturalism)’ [8].

DISCUSSION

Our research is concentrated on minor traces of lingual globalization within multicultural situation. We proceed from the assumption that global English trends are observed in modern communication and they testify to the fact that common values are faster and better accepted verbally, which later may result in a significant shift in people’s outlook.

From the point of view of social psychology idioms are viewed as emotional units, analyzed by left and right hemispheres in a pattern, similar to all nations. “Emotional words trigger activation in other areas of the LH, such as the amygdala, orbitofrontal cortex and posterior cingulate gyrus, as well. These regions have been claimed to be part of the limbic system (Fig. 1), which plays a key role in emotion processing” [9]. “The data from a large body of research based on behavioral, electrophysiological and neuroimaging methodologies appear to converge in indicating that both hemispheres are involved in the processing of words with emotional meaning, albeit in different and probably complementary, ways.” [10].

With the help of BNC and COCA I’ve managed to complete a list of frequent idioms in British and American variants of English [11-15]. The results are as follows.

The next stage of my research is centered around the data, provided by GloWbE. ‘The Corpus of Global Web-Based English (GloWbE) is composed of 1.9 billion words from 1.8 million web pages in 20 different English-speaking countries. The corpus was created by Mark Davies of Brigham Young University and it was released in April 2013. GloWbE (pronounced like “globe”) is related to other large corpora that we have created, including the 450 million word Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA) and the 400 million word Corpus of Historical American English (COHA). Together, these three corpora allow researchers to examine variation in English -- by dialect, genre and over time -- in ways that are not possible with any other large corpora of English. SIZE: At the most basic level, GloWbE allows you to search through a corpus that is more than four times as large as COCA (and nearly twenty times as large as the British National Corpus). This means that where you might only have 10-12 tokens in the BNC and 50-60 in COCA, you might have 250-300 in GloWbE. (More...) DIALECTS: The real power of GloWbE, though, is the ability to see the frequency of any word, phrase, or grammatical construction in each of the 20 different countries. You can also compare any features in two sets of dialects, such as British and American English (in more than 775 million words of text for just these two dialects). Or you could just limit your search to one or two countries (e.g. Australia (148 million words), South Africa (45 million), or Singapore (43 million)) and you'll still be searching the largest online corpus for most of these twenty countries. (More...) In terms of searches, with GloWbE you can study an extremely wide range of phenomena (the same as with all of the other corpora from corpus.byu.edu): words, phrases, grammatical constructions, synonyms, customized lists and collocates (nearby words, which provide insight into meaning and usage). In addition, for many of these searches, they are 5-6 times as fast as with other corpus architectures like Sketch Engine / CQPWeb’ [3].

My task is to see whether American-British frequent idioms are also relatively frequent in other English-speaking communities, even in such where local populations follow different religions and claim complete independence from Anglo-Saxon cultural influence. I’ve compared frequent idioms, identified with COCA and BNC, with their frequencies in GloWbE. So, the list of compared vernaculars of English include the following members: US - USA, CA - Canada, GB - Great Britain, IE - Ireland, AU - Australia, NZ - New Zealand, IN - India, LK - Sri Lanka, PK - Pakistan, BD - Bangladesh, SG - Singapore, MY - Malaysia, PH - Philippines, HK - Hong Kong, ZA - Zambia, NG - Nigeria, GH - Ghana, KE - Kenya, TZ - Tanzania, JM - Jamaica.

The numbers, written beneath one another should be read in a linear pattern. For example, 4 should be read as ‘4512’. 5 1 2

Though we have the results with low frequencies in other than Anglo-Saxon areas (for example, the idioms white as sheet, black as night), the common trend is that the identified idioms are rather frequent in all English-speaking communities.
To make way for

In many ways

By the way

White as a sheet

Black as night

True blue

Red tape

Black market

Top dog

Dark horse

Student body

To be at pains

Middle age

Side-by-side

At the head

**CONCLUSION**

The study has proved that at the level of language English non-native speakers or native speakers from other that Anglo-Saxon areas are embracing quite a few ideas, expressed in Anglo-Saxon idioms. In the long run we suggest that language acquisition may result in concept acquisition, which makes culture differences less rigid. We got the result, which proves that cognitive patterns of perceiving reality as a Way, or body idioms are easily adopted by different cultures from English.
REFERENCES

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