

Lingua Franca Versus Local Languages? E-learning in Multi-lingual Communicative Spaces

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Abstract

Thanks to advanced applications of information and communication technologies (ICT) for new social media; like the Facebook or Twitter, socio-economic activities at a global scale seem more and more borderless and just-in-time, allowing most forms of communication: one-to-one, one-to-many, many-to-one and many-to-many. They open up of new ways and modes of "personalized" communication as far as interactivity, timeliness, active participation, and the cross-border/cultural encounters are concerned, both in virtual and real social communities. More importantly, cross (or multi-) cultural communication in both cyberspace and the real world, quests for both linguistic (text, semantic and phonetic) and visual revolution; all challenge our linguistic skills, not least to acquire the basics of foreign languages as the core part of our new cross-cultural encounters in a globalizing world. Cross-cultural exchanges are mediated by *Lingua Franca*. In 21st Century information age, ICT-driven linguistic world transformations are more than obvious with inter-and-cross-linguistic mainstreaming. Juxtaposing the dominance of English as *Lingua Franca* (over 50% of the world webpage), in/ beyond cyberspace; there is yet strong a rejuvenation and revitalization of local (new and highly differentiated cyber-) languages. Cross-cultural and multi-lingual communication has been instrumental to further stimulating social innovations for progressive inter-cultural exchanges, benefiting people at large. This paper examines the new epoch of (e-)learning for new languages; as cyber-linkages are revolutionary in changing the mode of socio-economic interactions, global-locally, behavioural repertoires among people in different geographical regions and time zones: perhaps the most important aspect is the enabling of multilingual, cross-and-inter-cultural communication – hence learning from, with a discovery of, new experience. New social media have been shaping progressive forces for new linguistic development, this paper critically examines issues and policy on (new) language e-learning, multilingualism and cross-cultural communication in/beyond cyberspace: (1) global / transnational situation of cyber-dynamics and new communication, (2) the socio-evolutionary multilingualism in cross-border/cultural communication in Asia-Pacific, contrasting the European case, with special reference to the nation state's e-government and e-learning government initiatives, (3) the new form(s) and (re-) presentations of multilingualism in/beyond the cyberspace, and (4) the future of multilingualism, *Lingua Franca* vis-a-vis indigenous languages, in a globalizing world.