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It's a Big World After All

In the past 100 years, the world has slowly integrated from a stance of existing as separate countries in a vast yet isolated cluster of societies to a ball of steel wool as far as globalization is concerned. There were likely very few who could have fathomed such astronomical growth economically and industrially within such a short amount of time for history. But where does that leave the individual when it comes to this unprecedented amount of exposure to various cultures, perspectives and upbringing? Is there a limit to how connected the world will become, or will more and more of our past differences disseminate into an extreme lack of that which made every country what it is? Although the innovation of various technologies has jumpstarted an exponential increased connectedness in what is called globalization, the language, culture, and media one is surrounded by creates a unique and distant connotation to the term for each individual.

A prevalent symptom of such change is the discussion of language and the ability to directly communicate with others. Unfortunately, the stereotypical discussion of languages around the world regarding globalization revolve around the notion of whether globalization itself is what is causing a discrepancy in the use of endangered languages, often failing to see the root of the issue. Nicholas Ostler, author of *Empires of the World: A Language History of the World* and large influence in the Foundation for Endangered Languages, aspired to sift the truth

from the lies, claiming it is “misleading, to cast Globalization as a direct cause of language endangerment... what has led to the endangerment of languages is imperialism, nationalism, and centralizing economic development” (594). It is not that globalization and something such as nationalism are complete opposites; however, as the industry grows and economic trade provokes more and more interaction with other countries, there are social aspects that are not taken into account. There has always been a certain barrier that differing languages has caused in terms of communication with the outside world. With new technologies that have been developed, those barriers and restrictions has been completely broken and surpassed, causing a sensory overload for many individuals. Both differing languages and location seem to have nearly no affect anymore. André Coutinho Storto, Masters in Applied Linguistics, and Fabiana Poças Biondo, Doctor of Applied Linguistics, commented that recent technology “reduces the geographical spaces and temporal gaps to an almost unbearable “perpetual present” ... in which events that happen on one side of the planet can instantly affect the lives of people living thousands of miles away” (4). It is not that globalization is directly endangering languages, but the issue, rather, is that the need for such a unique variety of languages and the natural barriers that used to be caused by them have become null and void. With this ease of mobility comes a sensory overload of information and social interaction for many, and in the end, causes a social stagnation and paralysis. It is as if taking globalization to the extreme has backfired in a social standpoint.

This stagnation pushes many to either give in to the culture of those they have immersed themselves into or jump back into their native culture and isolate themselves. Despite the amount of time and money spent into connecting with the rest of the world, countries exhaust themselves by spending time attempting to preserve culture and withhold from giving up traditions and

aspects of their society that give them individuality. As compensation for the extreme openness that globalization has created, there is a trend of pushing to fight the lack of patriotism in upcoming generations, namely millennials. In an article written by the Lebanon Daily News on a controversial Coca-Cola commercial that presented the same sentence in multiple languages, causing a bit of a stir in cultural controversy, it was noted that “[globalization] does not mean that we are forced to unlearn those things that defined us before we came to be... We can be just as patriotic, and we can act just as freely” (572). This statement, although respectable, contains several flaws concerning modern day globalization. The statement attempts to devalue the controversy between traditionalism and losing the old to assimilate into the new, when the entire reason the commercial created such a commotion was due to the social turmoil that mixing so many strongly opinionated voices and perspectives wishing to be either free of the over-nationalized thoughts or wishing to scrutinize those who refuse to be content with the patriotism. There is always a time and place for discussing and intermixing of cultures, and globalization has opened almost every aspect of one’s life to cross-examination from other cultures.

If this worldwide discussion of diverging opinions in a universal manner was not bad enough, every form of media for each country around the world constantly catering to the specific lingo, political perspectives, and cultural filters of a society creates an isolated and pressured cooked viewpoint of every large topic, causing an even larger displacement between countries. The show *Glee*, which is known for its large statements on social issues, airs in many Latin countries and is not only translated but manipulated constantly in ways that fit the interests of the specific audience. Laurena Bernabo, a journalist interested in globalization, was able to interview Nicolas Frias, an Argentine director and overseer of translation and dubbing of *Glee* for the purpose of airing for some Latin audiences. When speaking with Frias, it was very

evident that “Norms and constraints can and do evolve, but they are regularly rooted in the political economy of global media flows and the translation industry” when it comes to dubbing over scripts for TV shows, music, and other culturally diverse methods of mass communication (4). If you are aware of this displacement of meaning of the same show from country to country, the significance is not terribly high; however, when a group becomes unaware of this, there is a false sense of understanding. In the Latin Americas, namely “In Brazil, the sharp increase in the number of bilingual Portuguese/English schools in the last fifteen years has raised educational and pedagogical issues...The lack of specific regulation and periodical monitoring by educational authorities... often leads schools to adopt imported models of bilingual education that frequently do not respond to the needs and specificities of local educational and classroom contexts and that are often disconnected from the “global traffic of meaning”...”, implying that there are entire countries that spend years of education under the impression they are keeping up with other cultures (Storto, Biondo, 9). The truth is they are keeping up with their own skewed perception of another’s culture because the media misguides ideas across countries.

It is true that in the end the notion that everyone has the right to choose who and what they want to be, as simple as it sounds, becomes more diluted. The world has changed in a manner and speed that the rule makers could not keep up with, and the ones that make the rules constantly change. It is important to remember as one moves and acts in a world consisting of so much noise that everything has a limit, including the extent that globalization will have positive effects on society. To understand it as a powerful tool to promote one aspect of a group is to endanger another; there must always be a sense of humility towards another’s existence, even more so as the world continues to grow and evolve.

Works Cited

- Bernabo, Laurena. "Progressive Television, Translation, and Globalization: The Case of Glee in Latin America." *Velvet Light Trap*, vol. 80, 2017, pp. 66-79. EBSCOhost, ezproxy.latech.edu:2048/login?url=https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=mzh&AN=2017442934&site=eds-live&scope=site.
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- Ostler, Nicholas. "Is It Globalization That Endangers Languages." 2008, p. 594.
- Storto, André Coutinho and Biondo Fabiana Poças. "The Mobility between Languages and the Fluxes of Globalization: Reviewing Paradigms, Transcending Paradoxes." *Revista Da Anpoll*, Vol 1, Iss 40, Pp 77-89 (2016), no. 40, 2016, p. 77. EBSCOhost, doi:10.18309/anp.v1i40.1018.

Annotated Bibliography

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This article was made by a journalist who interviewed several Argentinian translators and directors of the show Glee in parts of Latin America. I learned quite a bit about the filter that media often has to go through in order to align with the local belief and culture. I got to learn about the ethics of disconnecting the original meaning from things like a TV show when switching from country to country.

"Coca-Cola's Multilingual 'America' Ad Didn't Hit Any Wrong Notes." *Lebanon Daily News*, 3 Feb. 2014, pp. 570–572.

This article had a good bit to say about the commercial during a football game ad run. The article discussed the amount of culture and controversy surrounding not only this specific commercial, but the arguments arising from them in general. There was discussion of language on the surface level, but I find that there were several levels of discussion to be had about it.

Ostler, Nicholas. "Is It Globalization That Endangers Languages." 2008, p. 594.

I liked this article because it plays a huge part in cross examining globalization vs. language. The truth is that in my opinion globalization is simply a phenomenon used to describe several other things that are causing a hinderance to things such as language and fusing and clashing of cultures all over the world. I used this article to help support my claim that the two things have their own place in discussion and as much as they are both pertinent in the paper, they are not directly correlated.

Storto, André Coutinho and Biondo Fabiana Poças. "The Mobility between Languages and the Fluxes of Globalization: Reviewing Paradigms, Transcending Paradoxes." *Revista Da Anpoll*, Vol 1, Iss 40, Pp 77-89 (2016), no. 40, 2016, p. 77. EBSCOhost, doi:10.18309/anp.v1i40.1018

I would say I gained the most information and context for the paper from this article. This article, based on two researches of linguistics specifically, discussed the connection between globalization and language in a way that made sense and included the social-related changes it is making that I wanted to focus on. One of them especially was the sensory overload of communication causing a paralysis and stagnation overall.

Essay Outline

Thesis: Although the innovation of various technologies has jumpstarted an exponential increased connectedness in what is called globalization, the language, culture, and media one is surrounded by creates a unique and distant connotation to the term for each individual.

I. Language and globalization:

- a. social over connectedness causing impersonal disconnectedness
- b. Quote from Storto & Biondo (Storto, Biondo, pg.#)
- c. Quote from Nicholas Ostler pg. 594
- d. Globalization may not be the primary cause; however, it has fueled the aspects of the industry that do endanger language

II. Cultures

- a. There is a reason that nations must spend much of their time pushing for nationalistic viewpoints and preservation of the native culture
- b. Quote from Lebanon Daily News (572)
- c. Globalization has thrown the idea of patriotism for a loop, especially with millennials.

III. media

- a. Seemingly connected with same shows, but different messages
- b. Quote from Bernado

c. Quote from Storto and Biondo

d. It has become very difficult to discern and sift objective information due to the abundance that has been able to manifest

Conclusion:

It is true that in the end the notion that everyone has the right to choose who and what they want to be, as simple as it sounds, becomes more diluted. The world has changed in a manner and speed that the rule makers could not keep up with, and the ones that make the rules constantly change. It is important to remember as one moves and acts in a world consisting of so much noise that everything has a limit, including the extent that globalization will have positive effects on society. To understand it as a powerful tool to promote one aspect of a group is to endanger another; there must always be a sense of humility towards another's existence, even more so as the world continues to grow and evolve.