Final Interdisciplinary Project

Global English

"English is spoken as a first language by more than 300 million people throughout the world, and used as a second language by many millions more. One in five of the world's population speaks English with a good level of competence, and within the next few years the number of people speaking English as a second language will <u>exceed</u> the number of native speakers. This could have a dramatic effect on the evolution of the language…at the same time, however, a standardized 'global' English is spread by the media and the Internet."
(<u>http://www.askoxford.com/globalenglish/</u>)

Project Description: Choose one of the following topics on the conflicts in global English to research from at least two disciplinary perspectives. You have two options for completing the project, which is worth a total of 25% of your course grade. Both options require a research proposal, an annotated bibliography, and a brief outline that gives an overview of the oral or written text that you will produce.

Option One: Write an extended 4 page outline (with full sentences) that identifies and analyses the key ideas of your conflict and incorporates at least four sources from two disciplinary fields. Participate in a creative, collaborative presentation where you combine your discoveries with those of a classmate and prepare a creative, engaging, and informative 30 minute teaching session on your topic. PowerPoint slides or u-tube videos will not be permitted as part of your teaching session. If you have a creative way to use the PowerPoint software, you can talk to me about your idea. (Written outline worth 10%; creative presentation worth 15%)

> <u>Note</u>: *For approval of Option one you must have an agreement between 2-3 classmates.*

Option Two: Write a 5-7 page essay that identifies and analyses the key ideas of your conflict and incorporates at least four sources from two disciplinary fields. Participate in a roundtable discussion that is student led and focuses on the contributions your discoveries make toward the ongoing conversation of a Global English. The roundtable will be held during one of our class sessions. (Written text worth 15%; roundtable contributions and discussions worth 10%; roundtable moderator will receive 5% extra credit.)

> <u>Note</u>*: For this option to work, we need an agreement between at least five classmates.*

Project Topics:

(1) What is the impact of the <u>internet</u> on a global language? A popular thought is that creativity will be diminished and standards lost as globalization imposes sameness. Others argue that the internet actually enables dramatic expansion of range and variety of language, and in this sense, provides unprecedented opportunities for personal creativity. What are the issues involved in each view and where do you weigh in regarding the ways in which the internet shapes and is shaping English as a global language? Issues related to WSSE may be relevant in your argument as well as socio-cultural considerations.

(2) One tension of a global language is the issue of <u>linguistic elitism</u> of those who speak the global language as a mother tongue. Crystal puts forth the argument that such linguistic elitism is reduced by the potential power of bilingualism and the acquisition of the global language. In other words, if

children in cultures where English is not commonly a mother tongue, had access to English language through education and acquired it as a second language or a foreign language during their childhood, they would possess a powerful kind of linguistic competency. He argues that this kind of competency is a real and powerful bilingualism, one that is indistinguishable from that found in any speaker who has encountered the language since birth. (see Crystal, pages 16ff). What are the practical, economical, and educational issues involved in making such bilingualism accessible to children the world over? Can it be done? Will it work? Do you agree with Crystal's analysis of the issues or are there other perspectives?

(3) Who owns English? Does nobody own it anymore or does everyone who speaks it have a share in it? What happens when a language that is intertwined with the culture, history, and experiences of its people take on global significance? What happens to the "culture of English" in the global arena? What are the issues involved with linguistic identity and a global language? What might global ownership of a language look like? Consider the debate surrounding the issue of linguistic imperialism, the effects of post-colonialism, and whether a standard global English can or will emerge, one that does not reflect a particular culture or history of a language.

(4) Language attitude is a subtopic of sociolinguistics that has interested linguists over the years. Choose a specific geographical region or a country where English has a special role. By special role, consider Crystal's Chapter One where he argues that for a language to achieve genuine global status it must develop a special role that is recognized in every country. Special role may include countries where a large number of people speak English as their mother tongue, or countries that have made English an "official language," or where English has been made priority in the country's foreign-language teaching. Research the historical and contemporary attitudes toward the English language and the roles or functions of English in that country.

Research Proposal with Annotated Bibliography

Submit a three-page research proposal where you address the following information:

- A half-page discussing the key issues/tensions of your topic

- A half-page justifying an interdisciplinary approach

    o Identify and give a rationale for the disciplinary perspectives you chose to help inform your ideas;

    o Discuss your plan for integrating the disciplinary insights (where do you see common ground or a connection between these disciplines as related to your topic);

    o State why is an interdisciplinary approach valuable and relevant for exploring your topic.

- A page that annotates at least four key sources that you plan to use in your essay. (Annotation should include full bibliographic citation, a sentence summary of the article, list of disciplinary insights gleaned from the source, and evaluation of how you plan to use the source in your essay.)

- A page of a working-outline for the essay or extended outline that you will write or for the creative, collaborative teaching session that your will conduct.

You will sign up for a due date for your proposal at which time you will submit your 3 pages and give a brief overview of your work-in-progress to the class.