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III. International Conference Research in Applied Linguistics - icral2019

Editörler

Prof. Dr. Dinçay KÖKSAL

Prof. Dr. Arif SARIÇOBAN

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FULLTEXT BOOK

Editör

Prof. Dr. Dinçay KÖKSAL

Prof. Dr. Arif SARIÇOBAN

Bu kitabın basım, yayın, satış hakları Uluslararası Eğitim Araştırmacıları Derneği'ne aittir. Anılan kuruluşun izni alınmadan kitabın tümü ya da bölümleri mekanik, elektronik, fotokopi, manyetik ya da başka yöntemlerle çoğaltılamaz, basılamaz, dağıtılamaz.

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FULLTEXT

11TH INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS ON RESEARCH IN EDUCATION

THE CONCEPTIONS OF UNDER-GRADUATE STUDENTS ON ENGLISH AS A LINGUA FRANCA WITHIN AN IDEOLOGICAL CONTEXT

Dinçay KÖKSAL

Prof. Dr., Çanakkale Onsekiz Mart University

Yusuf KASİMİ

Asst. Prof. Dr., Düzce University

Ömer Gökhan ULUM

Asst. Prof. Dr., Mersin University

Abstract

English has come out as a global language in that it has soon been criticized as bringing about language imperialism threatening the growth of various local languages. Much of our involvement in globalization has to do with the change in our linguistic and cultural preferences resulting from the basic and clear consequences of the current globalization practices. The aim of this study is to discover the ideological dimension of English as a global language within the sampling of a state university in Turkey. 20 undergraduate EFL students participated in the study. Based upon a qualitative method of data collection, an interview and a scenario technique were used in this study. With critical theory penetrating into the conjuncture, new subsequent theories such as structuralism, post-structuralism besides postmodernism forming unfamiliar discourses that were incorporated into the term of critical theory get into humanities and social sciences all over the world. Post-structuralism is appreciated for its attempts to propose a critical report of standardized terms in the classical tenet, and it exploits such approaches like phenomenology, and hermeneutics, as well as the linguistic shift which revises knowledge theories in language. So, this study is based on a phenomenological research design in that it aims at detecting the conceptions of EFL students on the cultural hegemony of English as a lingua franca.

Keywords: English as a lingua franca; cultural imperialism, ideology, hegemony

Introduction

The term 'English as a lingua franca' (ELF) has recently come up as a mean of communication in English between people with different native languages (Seidlhofer, 2005). As around only one out of every four English speakers in the world is a native English speaker (Crystal, 2003), nearly all ELF relations occur among 'non-native' English speakers. Though this does not hinder the interaction of native English speakers in ELF communication, what is extraordinary about ELF is that, nearly in all situations, it is a contact language among people who do not have a shared mother tongue or a national culture, and for whom English is the opted foreign language (Firth, 1996). In a similar vein, the lingua franca concept refers to any lingual medium of interaction among speakers of diverse native languages for whom it is a foreign or second language (Samarin, 1987). Thus, interaction through ELF refers to a contact between several diverse lingua-cultures in which English is not the native language (House, 1999). ELF seems to possess a classical Marxist notion of ideology as indicated by Cogo (2012) in that he claimed language perceptions are strictly affected by ideology and identity. ELF also includes ideologies by indicating that learners are the uninvolved static sufferers of powerful ideologies and this places ELF in a risky state by revealing the confusing practices of ideology (Pennycook, 2001). Many scholars implicitly or explicitly relate ideology with language. However, arguments on such a relationship commonly fail to confirm that language is not basically and particularly a tool for ideological practices but is formed and oriented by ideological practices. A big number of prominent reports of the ideological and political exploitation of language, just like the

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political language criticism of Chomsky, refer to ideological suggestions about how languages perform, or should perform. The position of language in such reports should be examined by political scholars rather than being considered as unproblematic (Cameron, 2006). Considering the issue from the mentioned points, this paper probes the conceptions of EFL students on the cultural hegemony of English as a lingua franca.

Methodology

The aim of this study is to examine the ideological dimension of English as a global language within the sampling of a state university in Turkey. 20 undergraduate EFL students participated in the study. Based upon a qualitative method of data collection, an interview and a scenario technique were employed in this study. To inquire the issue, the study utilized heterophenomenology which is an approach to describe an explicitly third-person by means of interpreting consciousness or experiences. In a similar vein, it is based on carrying out scientific principles with an anthropological angle, associating the third-person's self-reports with any possible evidence to perceive their cognitive state. Therefore, this qualitative approach inquires the qualitatively diverse ways in which respondents have experience of something or perceives something. For the semi-structured interview questions, inter-coder reliability was conducted. For the coding reliability of the interview, Kappa Coefficient for Inter-coder Reliability was calculated and it was found that the coding process was highly reliable ($K = .882, p < .001$).

Findings and Results

This section includes the parts of the conducted interview. The sub-headings are successively made up of *Dimension of Ownership*, *Dimension of Usage*, *Dimension of Culture*, and *Dimension of Proficiency*. They are all composed of the emerging themes, frequencies and percentages, and remarks of informants.

Dimension of Ownership

Table 1

English belongs to...

Item	f	%	Remarks
<i>the whole world</i>	18	90.00	<i>Since it is a globally employed language, English belongs to the whole world rather than specific countries such as America and England.</i>
<i>England and America</i>	2	10.00	<i>Although it is said to be a global language, English belongs to England and America.</i>
<i>Total</i>	20	100.00	

As can be observed from Table 1, majority of the informants (90.00%) state that English language belongs to the whole world. On the other hand, a small number of respondents (10.00%) suggest that English belongs to England and America.

Table 2

English as a global language...

Item	f	%	Remarks
<i>common language</i>	18	90.00	<i>English is a global language as it is commonly spoken all around the world.</i>
<i>easy to learn</i>	2	10.00	<i>English is a global language since it is very easy to learn.</i>
<i>Total</i>	20	100.00	

Table 2 simply clarifies (90.00%) that English is a global language since it is commonly utilized around the world. Further, a small number of participants (10.00%) also put forward that it is a global language since it is easily learnt.

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Table 3

The future of English...

Item	f	%	Remarks
<i>positive</i>	17	85.00	<i>As a powerful universal language, English will keep its status in the future as well.</i>
<i>negative</i>	3	15.00	<i>Other world powers such as China may end the hegemony of English in the near future.</i>
<i>Total</i>	20	100.00	

It is easily understood from the table that majority of the students (85.00%) are positive about the future of English as a global language. However, few informants (15.00%) declared a contrary point of view.

Table 4

Monopoly of English culture...

Item	f	%	Remarks
<i>no</i>	18	90.00	<i>Rather than belonging to only a particular culture, English is composed of diverse cultures since it is globally employed.</i>
<i>yes</i>	2	10.00	<i>English language belongs solely to English culture.</i>
<i>Total</i>	20	100.00	

From Table 4, it is simply understood that most of the respondents (90.00%) are in the view of multiculturalism. Yet, a small number of informants (10.00%) suppose that English language belongs to just one culture.

Table 5

Standard English...

Item	f	%	Remarks
<i>no</i>	18	90.00	<i>In such a globalized world with such a global language, there is no standard English as far as I know.</i>
<i>yes</i>	2	10.00	<i>I think British English is the standard English.</i>
<i>Total</i>	20	100.00	

One can easily understand from the table that a big number of participants (90.00%) put forward that there is no standard English since it is globally used. However, a minority of students (10.00%) declare a counter point of view.

Dimension of Usage

Table 6

Use of English while interacting with foreigners...

Item	f	%	Remarks
<i>no</i>	5	25.00	<i>I also use Arabic, which is my mother tongue, as well as German when speaking with foreigners.</i>
<i>yes</i>	15	75.00	<i>Since it is a global language, I use English when speaking with foreigners.</i>
<i>Total</i>	20	100.00	

It is clearly observed from the table that majority of the informants (75.00%) use English while communicating with foreigners. On the other hand, a small group of respondents (25.00%) express an opposite argument.

Table 7

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Interacting with expanding circle countries through English...

Item	f	%	Remarks
yes	20	100.00	Since it is a global language, Turkish people in general try to use English when interacting with people from such nations as Chinese, Japanese, and Germans.
Total	20	100.00	

It is clear from the table that Turkish people use English when interacting with foreigners. In other words, all the respondents (100.00%) declare that Turkish people utilize English when speaking with such nations as Chinese, Japanese, and Germans.

Dimension of Culture

Table 8

Knowledge of English and American cultures in order to understand English...

Item	f	%	Remarks
no	5	25.00	There is no relation between culture and language learning.
yes	15	75.00	It is necessary to know both American and British cultures in order to well understand English, because culture and language are integrated.
Total	20	100.00	

By looking at Table 8, one can clearly observe that most of the respondents (75.00%) are in the view that knowledge of English and American cultures is required in order to understand English. However, some participants (25.00%) declare that there is no relation between culture and language learning.

Table 9

The effect of English on Turkish national identity...

Item	f	%	Remarks
no	13	65.00	We are firmly tied to our national identity. Thus, English may give no harm to our national identity.
yes	7	35.00	We unconsciously lose our national identity if we are much exposed to English.
Total	20	100.00	

Table 9 clearly displays that most of the informants (65.00%) believe there is no effect of English on Turkish national identity. Yet, some informants (35.00%) suggest people unconsciously lose their national identity.

Dimension of Proficiency

Table 10

The function of English proficiency in understanding foreigners and their cultures...

Item	f	%	Remarks
functional	20	100.00	One who is proficient in English may easily understand foreigners and their cultures.
Total	20	100.00	

Table 10 refers to the function of English in understanding foreigners and their cultures. In a similar vein, all the informants (100.00%) state that English proficiency is useful in understanding foreigners.

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Table 11

The function of using native like English...

Item	f	%	Remarks
<i>unfunctional</i>	4	20.00	<i>It is not required to be native like in English as it is enough to understand foreigners.</i>
<i>functional</i>	16	80.00	<i>It is highly beneficial to be a native like speaker of English as it supplies great help in our work life.</i>
<i>Total</i>	20	100.00	

As it is clearly observed from Table 11, most of the informants (80.00%) support the idea that native like English is useful. On the other hand, a few students (20.00%) put forward that it is not practical to be a native like speaker of English.

Table 12

The mean of knowing English well...

Item	f	%	Remarks
<i>communication</i>	10	50.00	<i>To well know English means communicating properly in English.</i>
<i>proficiency</i>	5	25.00	<i>To well know English means proficiency in language skills, vocabulary, and culture.</i>
<i>native like English</i>	2	10.00	<i>To well know English means being a native like speaker of English.</i>
<i>success in life</i>	2	10.00	<i>If you know English well, it means that you are very successful in life.</i>
<i>grasping English culture</i>	1	5.00	<i>To well know English means grasping English culture and integrating it with language.</i>
<i>Total</i>	20	100.00	

From the table, it is easily understood that half of the respondents (50.00%) refer to communication when explaining the mean of knowing English well. Further, a few respondents mention proficiency when referring to the mentioned issue. On the other hand, such utterances as *native like English* (10.00%), *success in life* (10.00%), and *grasping English culture* (5.00%) were expressed by only few informants.

Discussion

In their study, Young and Walsh (2010) explored the attitudes of 'non-native English speaking' teachers about the utility and convenience of varieties such as English as an International Language (EIL) and English as a Lingua Franca (ELF), compared with native speaker varieties. Thus, they referred to the contemporary theoretical discussion regarding 'convenient' target models of English in diverse contexts worldwide. They found out that teachers might work without any apparent knowledge of 'which English' was the target. In their study, teachers also declared a pragmatic point of view on varieties of English, with a need to believe in a 'standard' form of the language, although this does not accord with the fact of Englishes which are employed worldwide. In our study, we probed the perceptions of EFL university students on English as a lingua franca and found out that majority of the informants believed that there is no standard English.

Further, in their study, Kaypak and Ortaçtepe (2014) investigated the relation between Turkish exchange students' attitudes towards learning EFL and their study in ELF contexts. They discovered that there is a bi-directional relation between students' pre- and post-beliefs about English language learning and their attitudes towards their experiences while

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studying abroad. Moreover, they found out that the respondents displayed a commitment toward native-speaker norms and they changed their interest from accuracy to intelligibility, which supported them in achieving their ultimate aim to gain excellent interaction in ELF communities. In the present study, although the informants did not study in an ELF context, they declared similar point of views.

Jenkins (2009) began with explaining her own interpretation of both WE and ELF in her study, focusing primarily on ELF though. She inquired two frequent and diametrically contrary reactions to ELF: the first one promoting monolithicity and denying pluricentricity, the second one fostering too much diversity, lacking standards. Afterwards, she examined the attitudes implicit in the second of these positions, discovering the probable impacts of these attitudes on the identities of ELF speakers from Expanding Circle countries. Besides, Jenkins (2012), in another study, explored the development of research into ELF, analyzed some of the misconceptions about it that have been uttered, and examined its future in terms of ELT pedagogy. In our study, we also inquired similar concepts on the future of ELF by asking the issue to EFL university students. In their study, Jenkins, Cogo, and Dewey (2011) initially considered how the latest phenomenon of English as a Lingua Franca (henceforth ELF) adjusts to the former notion of lingua francas as well as with older forms of ELF. Then, they examined the beginnings of ELF in its contemporary manifestation, containing the initial ELF studies. Discussing the principle domains in which ELF studies have been performed to date, they went on inquiring research into lexicogrammar, phonology and pragmatics. Additionally, they found out that although the youngsters' beliefs on ELF are easygoing, there is still some resistance towards it, which is also clear in our study.

Moreover, House (2003) argued against the extensive belief that the English language in its status as lingua franca is a big threat for national languages, as well as for multilingualism. She clarified the issue by explaining a distinction between 'languages for communication' and 'languages for identification'. She explained three research projects one focusing on the influence English has on discourse norms in prominent genres in other languages; the next one on the nature of interactions in English as a lingua franca; and the last one on international degree programmes in which English is the language of instruction. Our study also focused on the mentioned terms by examining the attitudes of EFL students on the issue.

Conclusion

As a global language which is utilized in every aspect of our daily life, English is the property of the overall world. Culture and language are inseparable since language mirrors culture. Accordingly, an integration of diverse cultures, along with British and American, makes English a universal communication tool. It seems that English will continue to be the dominating global language in the future as a result of the power of America. So, the ideology of English as a lingua franca seems to be continuing in the future as well. The hegemony of English will require EFL students to be proficient in English language and culture.

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