



Teaching English as an international language and its reflections in Turkey

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Abstract

In the field of English language teaching interest is growing in issues related to teaching English as an international language due to the rapidly changing status of English worldwide. This article identifies key theoretical issues, such as the spread of English, ownership of English, linguistic variation and intelligibility, and also discusses which variety of English to teach and the appropriateness of communicative language teaching methodology for teaching English as an international language. The main aim is to identify and discuss the issues related to teaching English as an international language in general, as well as highlighting the applications of these issues in the Turkish context

Keywords English language teaching; English as an international language; spread of English

Introduction

English is defined as an international language (Alptekin, 2002; Brutt-Griffler, 2002; Crystal, 2003; Jenkins, 1998; Kachru, 1992; McKay, 2002; Pakir, 1999; Pennycook, 1994; Philipson 1992 ; Strevens. 1992; Widdowson, 1994) which is used by 1.5 billion people around the world. Among these, 329 million are native speakers of English, and 1.2 billion are nonnative speakers with reasonable competence (Crystal, 2003). However, it is argued that English is considered an international language not due to the number of English users but to its special status either as a second or a foreign language in almost every country around the world (Crystal, 2003).

Although there seems to be agreement on the international status of English, scholars approach the issue from different perspectives, including critical (Philipson, 1992; Pennycook, 1994), cross-cultural (Kachru, 1992; Strevens, 1992; Smith, 1992), historical (Brutt-Griffler, 2002), and “objective” (Crystal, 2003). However, the main theoretical issues in regards the notion of English as an International Language (EIL) can be summarized under the following subdivisions: (1) the

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spread of English, (2) ownership of English (native and nonnative speakers of the language), and (3) linguistic variation, and intelligibility.

This article first discusses these theoretical issues raised by EIL scholars, then explains the pedagogical implications of Teaching English as an International Language (TEIL) making reference to English language teaching in Turkish context.

The Spread of English

Many authors described the spread of English from Britain to America, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand as a first language, and to Africa, and south Asia as a second language. However, they emphasized the different aspects when it comes to explain the spread of English and its' current international status. While some scholars observe the spread of English as a neutral process (Crystal, 2003; Strevens, 1992; Kachru, 1992), some others (Philipson, 1992; Pennycook, 1994) view it as a political and economic act and examine this act within its broader context.

Kachru (1992) explains the spread of English in terms of three circles: Inner circle, outer circle (or extended circle) and expanding circle. According to Kachru (1992), "these circles represent the types of spread, the patterns of acquisition, and the functional allocation of English in diverse cultural context" (p.356). Kachru considers USA, UK, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand as inner circle countries since English is the mother tongue of the speakers in these countries. In outer circle countries such as India, Kenya, Malaysia, Singapore, and Zambia, English is used as an institutionalized second language as a result of colonialism. Finally, the expanding circle contains the countries where English is taught as a foreign language. The countries of expanding circle are not the former colonies of the inner circle and English is not used for intranational purposes. Some of the expanding circle countries are: Japan, China, Turkey, and Korea.

Strevens (1992) explains the spread of English through "an element of historical luck" (p.29). According to Strevens English speaking people were lucky enough to establish trading posts and colonies, and to have industrial revolution; thus dominate the most of the world. Similarly Crystal (2003) explains it as a result of the economic and military power of Britain at the beginning of the nineteenth century and the maintenance of that power by the U.S.A. during the twentieth century.

According to Brutt-Griffler (2002) English spread to America, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand through native speaker migration and this process created monolingual English speaking communities. On the other hand, macroacquisition which is "the acquisition of second language by a speech community" (Brutt-Griffler, 2002, p.138) results in bilingual communities. She defines two types of macroacquisition. While type A macroacquisition takes place "when speakers of different mother tongues simultaneously take part in the acquisition of a common second language, as in the

case of the spread of English within second language settings in Africa and Asia” (Brutt-Griffler, 2002, p.138); type B macroacquisition takes place “in a formerly predominantly monolingual setting” (Brutt-Griffler, 2002, p.139). She presents Japan, Mexico, and Jordan as example settings of type B macroacquisition.

On the other hand, Pennycook (1994) and Phillipson (1992) approach the spread of English from a social, cultural, economic, and political perspective. Pennycook (1994) examines the spread of English within a context which he calls “worldliness of English”. According to Pennycook (1994), English is a worldly in a sense that it is expanding globally, that it has been changing due to its place in the world, and that “it is part of the world; to use English is to engage in social action which produces and reproduces social and cultural relations” (p.34).

Pennycook (1994) criticizes what he calls “the discourse of English as an International Language” for looking at the issue from a narrow perspective without considering complex social, cultural, economic, and political aspects of it. Moreover, he argues that since the discourse of EIL does not see the issue from a wider perspective, this discourse considers the spread of English as natural, neutral, and beneficial to the world assuming that the rest of the world has freely chosen English as an international language. Pennycook (1994) further explains that English “is considered natural because, although there may be some critical reference to the colonial imposition of English, its subsequent expansion is seen as a result of inevitable global forces” (p.9). He also criticizes the view that considers English beneficial by stating that “a rather blandly optimistic view of international communication assumes that this [communication in English] occurs on a cooperative and equitable footing” (p.9).

Pennycook (1994) explains the spread of English in terms of Anglicism replacing Orientalism. Pennycook (1994) defines Anglicism as “policies in favor of education in English”, and Orientalism as “policies in favor of education in local languages for both the colonized and colonizers” (p.73). However, he also indicates the danger of focusing only on ‘expansion policies’ by overlooking ‘the denial of a language policy’. Pennycook (1994) explains that “the denial of access to English”, and the people’s “demand access to English” are part of the spread of English as well as “colonialism as the insistence on English” (p.74).

Phillipson (1992) explains the spread of English within the framework of linguistic imperialism in terms of linguistic, cultural and linguistic hegemony. According to Phillipson (1992) English linguistic imperialism happens when “the dominance of English is asserted and maintained by the establishment and continuous reconstitution of structural and cultural inequalities between English and other languages” (p.47). On the other hand, linguistic “involves representation of the dominant language, to which desirable characteristics are attributed, for purposes of inclusion, and

the opposite for dominated languages, for purpose of exclusion” (p.55). Phillipson (1992) argues that the use of the terms “vernacular” or “dialect” to describe the languages of African nations, while the term “language” is used to identify English is the result of linguisticism. Since African languages are not considered equal to English language, different terms are used to exclude them. Phillipson (1992) considers linguistic imperialism as a “sub-type” of linguisticism. He further argues that for linguisticism to involve linguistic imperialism, an imperialist structure should be behind the linguisticism.

Phillipson (1992) claims that the spread of English is not accidental or neutral as it is suggested but it has been a deliberate act of English speaking countries. He argues that English speaking countries have been promoting the use of English throughout the world for economic and political purposes. Phillipson (1992) states that the British Council is established to promote teaching English all over the world and “[t]he organization is at the centre of the promotion of English, with government, academic, and commercial interests radiating to and from it” (p.136).

The spread of English from Britain to other inner circle countries, and outer circle countries are explained as a result of colonialism (Brutt-Griffler, 2002; Crystal,2003; Kachru, 1992; Pennycook, 1994; Philipson (1992). However, while Philipson (1992) views this spread as a result of Britain’s deliberate act of imposing English to colonies, Pennycook (1994) and Brutt-Griffler (2002) view it as a result of combination of Britain’s partial promotion of English, and colonized people’s demand of learning English to gain some power. On the other hand, Crystal (2003) illustrates the spread of English as a natural result of historical events. Although Kachru (1992) views the spread of English as a result of colonization, he seems to focus more on present position of English rather than discussing its colonial roots.

The Turks’ first encounter with the English language was through trade between Great Britain and the Ottoman Empire, around 1530 (Dogancay-Aktuna, 1998). However, the Turks did not start to learn the language until the eighteenth century, after a trade agreement between the Americans and the Ottoman Empire in 1830, and the establishment of Robert College by American missionaries in 1863. Although English was taught in private and public schools, first during the Ottoman Empire and later in the Republican period, “the actual spread of English in Turkey seems to have started in 1950s due to the increasing impact of American economic and military power...The developing Turkey felt pressure to gain better access to English in order to improve trade relations and make progress in technology” (Dogancay-Aktuna, 1998, p.27). Currently, English language seemed to have gained precedence over other foreign languages and be the preferred foreign language in every level of the education system (Bayyurt, 2006). Moreover, “[E]ducationally ambitious parents who wanted the best education for their children would send them to the best English-medium schools in the country.” (Bayyurt, 2012). It appears that English began to spread in Turkey due to mainly economic reasons. Crystal’s view of the spread of English in general seems to explain its growth in Turkey. Crystal (2003) maintains that English spread to the world first as a result of the economic and military power of Britain at the beginning of the nineteenth century, after which this power was taken over the by the U.S.A. during the twentieth century.

Ownership of English

When English is defined as an international language rather than second or foreign language, ownership of English has become an issue, which is closely related to the notion of standard English, and native and nonnative speakers of the language. The issue of ownership of English as an international language is of importance in terms of defining who has the right to control the forms and norms of English globally and who will have power over the theory of teaching and researching English. (Nayar, 1994, cited in Brutt-Griffler, & Samimy, 1999).

Widdowson (1994) defines standard English as a written variety of the language which is intended for institutional purposes such as education and business. He further asserts that the proponents of standard English emphasize grammatical correctness and function as gatekeepers to keep the nonstandard ways on the periphery. Widdowson (1994) identifies these proponents as “the custodians of standard English”, who “are self-elected members of a rather exclusive club” (p.379) and criticizes their authority. Moreover, Widdowson (1994) argues that “the very fact that English is an international language means that no nation can have custody over it” (p.385). Native speakers of English should not interfere with the development of English in the world, and need to understand that English is international only to the degree that they do not possess it. Language users need to adopt it, change it and make it their own by expressing their perception of reality through English in order for them to truly own English.

Widdowson (1994) states that an international language should be diverse and independent since it needs to serve the communication needs of various communities. However, he does not accept the notion that diversity will lead to mutually unintelligible varieties of English. Rather, he argues that the international language will be standardized naturally to meet the needs of international community. One of the important points that Widdowson (1994) raises is that “standard English, like other varieties of language, develops endo-normatively, by a continuing process of self-regulation, as appropriate to different conditions of use. It is not fixed by exo-normative fiat from outside: not fixed, therefore, by native speakers” (p.386).

Norton (1997) examines the notion of ownership of English internationally by addressing whether English belongs to white native speakers of standard English, or everybody who speaks it. She illustrates through current studies on people’s perception of native speaker and standard English that race and ethnicity play role in defining native speaker who is considered the owner of English. It is indicated that in identification of the idealized English speaker, ethnic and linguistic minorities are excluded, and English speaking community is illustrated as one homogeneous community with one language and one culture. Thus, white monolingual English speakers who use the standard language are considered the owner of English. However, Norton (1997) examines that since

English has become an international language, it belongs to all the people who speak English regardless of their race, ethnicity, their being native or nonnative speakers of the language.

The ownership of English is closely related to being the native or nonnative speaker of the language. As Norton (1997) points out there is a conception that native speakers of the language are the real owners of English. However, Brutt-Griffler and Samimy (2001) showed that native speaker and nonnative speaker identities are socially constructed rather than linguistically constructed. According to Brutt-Griffler and Samimy's (2001) case studies, Laura who was born in Philippines, learned English as a first language, got all her education in English, and used only English at home is considered nonnative speaker of English regardless of her language proficiency. Brutt-Griffler and Samimy (2001) argue that being a bilingual is seen as a marker of being nonnative speaker. "It is as though knowing another language excludes the possibility of being an 'authentic native speaker'" (Brutt-Griffler and Samimy, 2001, p.102). Thus, they raise the issue that how international English users be judged in relation to the social norms that people have regarding how the native and nonnative speakers of English should be. Brutt-Griffler and Samimy (2001) state that the current social norms seem to imply that English belongs to the nations where English is the native language despite the international status of the language.

In the Turkish context, since English is taught at schools as a foreign language and has no official status in the country, it appears that users in Turkey do not claim ownership over English, but rather teach and use both British and American standard varieties (Bektas-Cetinkaya, 2009).

Linguistic Variation and Intelligibility

Due to the spread of English, different varieties of English emerged around the world. Crystal (2003) identifies the different varieties of English in the inner circle as: British English, American English, Australian English, New Zealand English, Canadian English, South African English, Caribbean English, and Irish, Scots, and Welsh English, while he identifies the outer circle varieties as South Asian English (India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, and Sri Lanka), English used by a group of British colonies in West Africa, and another group in East Africa, emerging varieties in the Caribbean, and in parts of south-east Asia (e.g. Singapore). The main issues regarding the varieties of English are: whether these varieties are equal or some of them are interlanguage, and whether these varieties will lead to unintelligibility in international communications.

Kachru (1992) examines the varieties of English as standard native varieties and standard non-native varieties. He classifies these varieties in terms of acquisition (first language, second language, and foreign language), socioculture (transplanted, and non-transplanted), motivation (integrative, and instrumental), and function (national "link" language, and international language). Kachru (1992) examines the non-native varieties in two broad categories. The first category, performance

varieties are used as foreign languages in countries like Turkey, Japan, and Iran. These varieties do not have institutionalized status and are used in specific contexts such as tourism, and commerce. On the other hand, Institutionalized non-native varieties of English “have an extended range of uses in a sociolinguistic context of a nation” and “have an extended register and style range” (Kachru, 1992, p.55). According to Kachru (1992) institutionalized non-native varieties of English go through a “nativization” process, which involves the development of new phonological, morphological, syntactic, semantic, and stylistic features in the contextual of the country. Thus, these varieties are used by the people of the country as if it is their native language. According to these criteria, Indian English may be considered institutionalized non-native variety.

In order for these institutionalized non-native varieties of English to be considered “standard”, they have to be recognized and accepted (Kachru, 1992). According to Davies (1989) “adequacy” and the “prestige” of the variety determines whether that variety will be accepted and recognized as “standard”. While adequacy is related to the linguistic features of the language, and whether it meets the needs of speech community, according to Davies (1989) prestige is mainly related to whether that speech community “have in mind a norm of written and spoken English” (p.459) that they would consider as standard.

Research investigating the nativization process indicated that nativization strategies such as overgeneralization, omission, reduction, and restructuring are similar to language acquisition strategies. These similarities lead to argument that non-native varieties of English are fossilized interlanguages (Selinker, 1972 cited in Lowenberg, 1986). However, further studies on overgeneralization, and transfer illustrated that “many nativized features result not from such erroneous overgeneralization, but from the extension of processes that are also extremely productive in the established varieties of English” (Lowenberg, 1986, p.5). Similarly, studies on transfer further indicated that transfer of features from native languages of these speakers do not occur due to interference or fossilization but from social and cultural influences. (see Lowenberg, 1986 for further discussion).

Another important issue in relation to language variation is the intelligibility of the speakers who use different varieties of English (Davies, 1989; Kachru, 1992; Smith, 1992). Smith (1992) asserts that “the greater the familiarity a speaker (native or non-native) has with a variety of English, the more likely it is that s/he will understand, and be understood by, members of that speech community” (p. 76). Furthermore, he explains that understanding happens at three stages: (1) intelligibility, (2) comprehensibility, and (3) interpretability. According to Smith (1992 in order for people who use different varieties of English to understand each other, first they need to recognize the words and utterances (intelligibility), then, they need to comprehend the meaning of those

words and utterances (comprehensibility), and finally they need to interpret the meaning behind those words and utterances (interpretability).

Smith (1992) conducted a study with both native and non-native speakers of English to examine the effects of listeners' familiarity of topic, and national variety; and their language proficiency on the intelligibility, comprehensibility, and interpretability of different varieties of English. He used both native and non-native speaker graduate students to record conversations in English. Then, three groups of students (native speaker group, nonnative speaker group, and mixed group) listened these tapes and answered cloze test questions for intelligibility, responded multiple-choice questions for comprehensibility, and paraphrased the part of conversation for interpretability purposes. Results indicated that all groups did best on intelligibility test compared to other tests. The average of their comprehensibility scores was low; however, native speaker group and mixed group did better than non-native speaker group. The mixed group did much better than native speaker and nonnative speaker group in the interpretability test. The results suggest that the intelligibility of different English varieties is related to both listeners' familiarity with these varieties and their language proficiency.

Currently English has many native (e.g. Canadian) and non-native (e.g. Indian) standard varieties. Although these varieties are considered equal within sociolinguistic framework, each of these varieties differs in terms of how prestigious they are and how much they are accepted as standard English around the world.

It appears that American and British English have more prestige and are accepted widely in the outer and expanding circles, compared to other native and non-native standard varieties. In this sense, the Turkish context is no exception, and language learners seemed to be mainly aware of these two prestigious varieties. A study conducted with university students indicated that although the participants perceived English as an international language, they were aware of only the British and American native varieties, and not of other native or nonnative varieties, such Indian English, or SingEnglish. (Bektas-Cetinkaya, 2009).

Pedagogical Issues

When English is defined as an international language with both native and non-native standard varieties, the basic issues that we need to handle in the field of English Language Teaching (ELT) are: (a) which standard or standards we will teach in the inner, outer, and expanding circle, and (b) whether the current, dominant method of teaching English, Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), is an appropriate method to teach EIL.

Which Variety to Teach

Kachru (1992) argues the legitimacy of teaching local varieties of English in the classrooms. He states that the goal of learning English is not to adopt the native models of English since local varieties of English is institutionalized in most ESL countries and used as 'educated models' in different context. Furthermore, in the outer and expanding circles English is learned not only to interact with native speakers but mostly to interact with other non-native speakers. Thus, in these contexts, native speaker norms are not only irrelevant but also inappropriate.

Furthermore, Kachru (1992) proposes to have a paradigm shift (attitudinally and methodologically) and teach 'World Englishes' to advanced students and training professionals. He maintains that English is an international language in a sense that it does not represent one or two life style but it represents multiple perspectives. Therefore, he suggests to use the word 'Englishes', since the term 'English' does not capture the reality. Then, Kachru (1992) provides a guideline to teach 'World Englishes' to mainly advanced students and training professionals. According to the guideline, teachers need to: (a) give the sociolinguistic profile of English in the world, (b) expose students to different varieties of English, (c) emphasize functional validity of varieties of English, while teaching one variety, (d) demonstrate functional appropriateness of range of uses within a specific variety, and (e) expose students to contrastive pragmatics within and between varieties.

According to Strevens (1992), regardless of which variety (native, or non-native variety) is taught and where (ESL or EFL setting), there are "two components of English are taught and learned without variation: these are its *grammar*, and its core *vocabulary*" (p.39). Strevens (1992) argues that as long as teachers teach the grammar and core vocabulary of "educated/educational English" there will not be any problem in terms of the unity of standard varieties of English. Moreover, he suggests that teachers should teach the variety that they use, and students should learn the "educated/educational English". Strevens (1992) further suggests that if students have a choice of American or British English, they need to choose depending on their needs since both are equal and appropriate. Finally, he mentions that sometimes the local variety of English is the most appropriate for the learners depending on their needs.

However, Widdowson (1994) argues that standard lexis does not exist since people are constantly inventing new vocabulary to express new ideas and attitudes. Furthermore, different groups of English users like scientists, and businessmen "develop specialist vocabularies, suited to their needs but incomprehensible to others" (Widdowson, 1994, p.382). Moreover, Widdowson (1994) raises another related issue by stating the difficulty of defining 'standard': "The very idea of standard implies stability, and this can only be fixed in reference to the past. But language is of its nature

unstable. It is essentially protean in nature, adapting its shape to suit changing circumstances” (p.384).

The discussions on the varieties of English seem to suggest a need to teach different varieties of English in the inner, outer, and expanding circles. While each inner circle country is likely to teach their own native variety to immigrants or those of other nationalities visiting that country for the purpose of learning English,, outer circle countries such as India and Singapore will most likely teach their own nonnative varieties, which have equal status with native varieties in linguistic terms. In the context of Turkey, considered a part of expanding circle, British and American native varieties of English have both been considered as norms in teaching (e.g. Cekic, 2009). Course books produced by either British or American publishers are frequently used, especially in private schools. One example, *New Headway*, which has both American and British versions, has been very popular in Turkey (Arikan, 2005). However, recently Teaching English as an International Language (TEIL) has been proposed to be the best practice in Turkish context (Bayyurt, 2012). It is necessary to take the international status of English and its all native and nonnative varieties into account in Turkey, even while teaching specifically American and British varieties in schools. It is crucial to raise awareness of the language learners by exposing them to both native and nonnative varieties, since a considerable number of people use South Asian varieties, such as Indian English, and also other native varieties, such as Canadian English.

Although the varieties of English in the inner circle are accepted without considering that this will cause incomprehensibility, varieties of English in the outer circle are considered a threat (McKay, 2002). It is argued that different varieties of English especially the non-native varieties will lead to a lack of intelligibility in international interactions (Quirk cited in McKay, 2002). Thus, ‘accent reduction’ is considered as a solution to this problem. However, Pakir (1999) points out the interrelated nature of one’s pronunciation and her identity and proposes to approach the issue from ‘accent addition’ perspective rather than ‘accent reduction’ perspective. Furthermore, she states the necessity of reexamining the intelligibility in relation to identity within English-knowing bilinguals’ perspective.

The noticeable differences between native and non-native varieties of English pronunciation occur in stress and intonation patterns due to the ‘stress-timed’ nature of native varieties and ‘syllable-timed’ nature of non-native varieties (Jenkins, 1998; Lowenberg, 1986). In ‘stress-timed’ varieties “primary stress in a sentence is placed on particular words in order to give them emphasis” (Lowenberg, 1986, p.8). On the other hand, in ‘syllable-timed’ varieties each syllable receives approximately equal time while stress does not play a significant role (Lowenberg, 1986).

Jenkins (1998) offers an approach to teaching pronunciation to promote the intelligibility of different varieties of English, while allowing speakers the freedom of expressing themselves in their pronunciation norms. She proposes to focus on core segmentals (consonants and vowels), and nuclear stress that have greatest effect on intelligibility in teaching pronunciation. Jenkins (1998) identifies those core segmentals as “most consonant sounds and to the distinction between long and short vowel sounds” (p.122). She argues that speakers of non-native varieties of English need to master the sounds of native varieties in order not to deviate far from each other. Then, Jenkins (1998) identifies ‘nuclear stress’ especially contrastive stress as an essential component of EIL for intelligibility. She proposes that British and American English should not be taken as a norm that requires 100 per cent accomplishment, but as a model for guidance.

Smith’s (1992) study on intelligibility suggests that being familiar with the different varieties of English makes it easier for listener to comprehend the speaker. Thus, language teachers may expose learners to different varieties of English to raise their awareness. Moreover, Smith (1992) maintains that “understanding is not speaker-or listener-centered but is interactional between speaker and listener” (p.76). Thus, understanding (intelligibility, comprehensibility, and interpretability) may not only be related to pronunciation. Since interaction is a complex process, we may need to take other dimensions of communication (culture, world view, and attitudes of interlocutors) in international interactions other than accents of English users. Therefore, language teachers who teach English as an International Language may need to take into consideration the different varieties of English, as well as multicultural aspect of international communications.

In a listening comprehension study in Turkey, Cekic (2009) found that Turkish EFL students were better at comprehending American English compared to British English, despite studying British textbooks. This might be explained by these participants’ exposure to American English through familiarity with Hollywood movies, and also television channels that broadcast American programs in English, both of which are popular in Turkey.

Appropriateness of Communicative Language Teaching Method

Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) method, which is currently the dominant way of teaching English has been questioned in terms of validity of its assumptions, its cultural appropriateness in different contexts, and the appropriateness of the its native speaker norms to teach English as an international language throughout the world (Alptekin, 1993, 2002; Canagarajah, 1999; Ellis, 1996; McKay, 2002; Pierce, 1997; Widdowson, 1994).

While Ellis (1996) questions the cultural appropriateness of CLT in Asian context, Widdowson (1994) questions the ‘authentic language use’ dimension of CLT. Ellis (1996) explains that Western language teaching approaches do not compatible with Eastern teaching philosophy. Therefore,

language teachers need to appropriate the language teaching methods according to their local cultural norms. Widdowson (1994) states that according to the notion of ‘authenticity’, in the classrooms we should present the “language naturally occurring as communication in native-speaker contexts of use, or rather those selected contexts where standard English is the norm: real newspaper reports, for example, real magazine articles, real advertisement, cooking recipes, [and] horoscopes” (p.386). Since this naturally occurring language is culturally loaded, language learners who are not aware of all these cultural information will be positioned as outsiders. Thus, these learners will not be engaged with the English and English language will remain them foreign, outside of their reality. Furthermore, Widdowson (1994) argues that this CLT notion of ‘authenticity’ contradicts with the other CLT notion ‘learner autonomy’ and that language learners can not be autonomous in a learning environment where another culture and its language are imposed on them. Widdowson (1994) proposes to “shift the emphasis away from context of use to context of learning, and consider how the language is to be specially designed to engage the student’s reality and activate the learning process” (p.387).

Moreover, Arıkan (2005) illustrates the problems regarding the representation of age, gender and social class in popular foreign textbooks in Turkey, and discusses the effect of these textbooks on language learners’ cognitive and affective development. Furthermore, he draws attention to the ways in which certain values with the potential to lead to stereotypical thinking and intolerance were transmitted to language learners through such textbooks.

Alptekin (2002) questions the pedagogic model of communicative language teaching which is based on “the native speaker-based notion of communicative competence” and argues that the notion of communicative competence which takes native speaker as a norm is utopian, unrealistic, and constraining. It is utopian in the sense that idealized native speaker is a nonexistent abstraction. Besides, English as other languages have varieties and it cannot be claimed that there is only one appropriate variety and everybody should use that particular variety. Therefore, the notion of native speaker is a myth and the notion of communicative competence involving native speaker norms is utopian.

He also argues that the notion of communicative competence is unrealistic because it does not reflect the lingua franca status of English, which is used for instrumental reasons throughout the world. Also, in nonnative speaker-nonnative speaker interactions using British or American cultural norms are not realistic. Furthermore, Alptekin (2002) discusses the constraining feature of communicative competence. Standardized native speaker norms and the notion of authenticity which makes both language teacher and learner dependent to authority of native speaker, thus, restrain the learner and teacher autonomy. Therefore, Alptekin (2002) proposes a new notion,

intercultural communicative competence, which identifies English as an international language, and takes successful bilinguals as pedagogic models.

Conclusion

Worldwide, English language functions as an international language used by many people from different countries to communicate in all fields. Parallel to this dominant status in the world, in Turkey English is taught at public and private schools as the primary foreign language, to enable the country to take its place in the international market and follow technological advances. International communication requires an awareness and appreciation of cultural and linguistic diversity. Therefore, English language users in Turkey need to increase their familiarity with and awareness of the different varieties of English used around the world. To serve this purpose, both the pedagogy and instructional materials need to be adapted accordingly. As an example, in EFL contexts such as Turkey, Alptekin (2002) has suggested teaching methodologies could take successful bilinguals as the norm, rather than monolingual native speakers.

Similarly, it may be desirable for teaching materials to represent the culture of the home country, Turkey, the target culture, and also the diverse world culture, rather than focusing only on the inner circle culture. More importantly, the inner circle should focus on sharing power and decision making with international language professionals, rather than dictating how to teach English in the world. When choosing materials and teaching methodology, as well as the international status of English, English language professionals in Turkey should take into account their students' needs, including how they may use English in the world, and for what purposes.

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