

## **Current and Future Faces of English: Examining Language Awareness of Thai and Turkish Student-teachers**

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### **Abstract**

This study examines student-teachers' opinions about the spread of the English in general, and the ramifications of its spread as to its co-existence with other languages, speaker profiles, and probable extensions in form and function in two geographically different but English language policy-wise identical Expanding circle countries, i.e., Turkey and Thailand. The descriptive and qualitative analysis of the data collected through close-ended questionnaires and follow-up interviews demonstrated that most student-teachers believed in the possibility of co-existence of English with other languages in harmony, yet some students considered the future of English to be more complex and unpredictable due to the challenges posed by other dominant languages. Additionally, most students believed that the increasing number of non-native English speakers would impact the way English is used by speakers in non-Anglophone contexts in terms of forms and functions. The findings offer some implications as to the factors that contribute to student-teachers' awareness about the critical issues around its spread and its impacts on various domains, particularly the domain of education, and how student-teachers may be helped to increase their awareness in teacher education programs through some courses on sociolinguistics and globalization of English.

**Keywords:** spread of English, English language teaching, language awareness, language contact, globalization, and internationalization

### **Introduction**

When compared with other languages in the world, English is perceived as significantly dominant and a symbol of modernity as it is widely employed in academic, education, international communication, tourism, finance, and commerce (Baker, 2012; Kirkpatrick, 2010). Nonetheless, the future is uncertain, and English might not continue to dominate the world. One of the influencing factors that is worth monitoring is the influence of other languages, such as Mandarin Chinese and Spanish. It is well recognized that both languages substantially have more numbers of first-language users than that of English. For instance, the population of China is over 1.4 billion, and this figure alone makes Mandarin Chinese the world's most spoken language (British Council, 2019). Based on this statistic, it is apparent that only the quantity of Mandarin Chinese speakers from China already outnumbers the collective number of English speakers from all Inner Circle countries (Kirkpatrick, 2007). Similarly, Spanish is spoken as a primary language in at least 28 nations across the earth, with the total speakers roughly being 500 million. As a result, Spanish is known to be the most spoken second language in international communication, and over half of its users reside in the Western Hemisphere. Moreover, Chinese and Spanish are globally the top enrolled language learning subjects, and the numbers of global language learners of both languages tend to increase every year (British Council, 2019). If this status quo continues to

remain, it is possible that the status of English as a global primary language would be challenged and shaken, resulting in inevitable phenomenal changes.

Presently, the sociolinguistic landscapes of English are already experiencing an ongoing shift, i.e., more English speakers support that English is a language with diversity, and its users should not be obligated to commit to any specific English variety spoken by any ethnic group such as British or American. Modern English is a language with global ownership as it is employed by speakers from multi lingua-cultural backgrounds around the world (Jenkins, 2015; Galloway & Rose, 2015, 2018). This sociolinguistic phenomenon is another interesting issue, as it also plays a vital role in determining the global status of English in the modern era. Now diverse in nature, modern English users and learners realize that, in addition to the mainstream Inner Circle English varieties such as British and American, many more are widely accepted and utilized despite dissimilarities, e.g., phonological and lexicogrammatical features (Galloway & Rose, 2015, 2018; Sewell, 2013).

The emerging rival languages and the extensive use of various English varieties give way to crucial questions about the future of English concerning how it will be used, learned and taught, and co-exist with other major languages and the factors that may shape the future diffusion of English. Such questions need to be posed to the stakeholders who will be directly influenced by the global spread of English in their linguistic practices, particularly to those involved in teaching to raise their awareness about the spread of English and its consequences. It is for this reason, as Krajka (2019, p. 28) asserts, that “In the rapidly changing world of today, the role of English as a global language is not to be left unnoticed [by student-teachers] in pre-service teacher training.”

The existing research into the global spread of English has very much remained constrained to explorations of the ELT stakeholders’ views from educational points of view, e.g., ELF awareness among EFL students (e.g., Wang, 2015), student-teachers (e.g., Kemaloğlu-Er & Bayyurt, 2019), and in-service teachers (e.g., Bayyurt & Sifakis, 2015). However, there seems to be a scarcity of research in the literature on the extent to which the stakeholders, especially student-teachers, are cognizant of the current and future face of English from a broader perspective. Furthermore, the study of student-teachers’ views is relatively pivotal in that they are relatively more motivated than in-service teachers as to questioning their assumptions about English and reflecting on the pedagogical, cultural, political, ethical and economic implications of the global spread of English. Previous studies with both student-teachers and in-service teachers pointed to the failure of pre-service teacher education with respect to raising student-teachers’ sociolinguistic awareness and engagement in critical reflection of theory and adoption of a transformative approach (Blair, 2015). Thus, the involvement of student-teachers in language awareness research may help them become more insightful about their beliefs and assumptions, and question the grounds of such assumptions in relation to different aspects of the current and future status of English. It is very probable that student-teachers taking part in such studies will be more open to transformation and act as the agents of change in their classroom practices, adopting a pluricentric approach towards teaching and using English upon becoming in-service teachers. Such awareness can, without doubt, affect the ways in which student-teachers will perceive English and accordingly teach English and the ways in which their students will perceive and approach towards issues around English itself and learning English most importantly. As most previous studies reported, younger teachers have a tendency to have more flexible attitudes towards changes and adopting such changes compared to those who are already in the profession and resistant to changes, new ideas and innovations (e.g., Kalocsai, 2009). Thus, bearing in mind the significance of the research on student-teachers and the research gap identified, this study seeks to 1) identify Thai and Turkish student-teachers’ awareness of

the current sociolinguistic reality of English and 2) survey their views on the spread and future of English and its new roles.

### **The Global Spread of English and its Ramifications**

Historically, the spread of English was promoted through two core factors (Crystal, 2003). Firstly, it was the British Empire's political expansion in the 17<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup> century. During the period, the British Empire colonized various sovereign territories across the earth and declared English as a central language for local politics, public administration, commerce, and education. Secondly, it was due to the economic expansion driven by the United States of America during the post-imperial era. This rapid development stimulated trade and investment activities as well as expedited technological advancements. As a result, the expansions of these two powers helped to position English as a significant language in today's global community. Consequently, many scholars have attempted to theorize models to explain the global spread of English. One of the most widely influential and accepted concepts is Kachru's Three-circle model, i.e., Inner, Outer, and Expanding Circles, which "represent the types of spread, the pattern of acquisition, and the functional allocation of English in diverse cultural contexts" (Kachru, 1992, p. 356). English employed in the Inner Circle was originally codified as a linguistic base, and English is a native language to Inner Circle speakers (e.g., the United States, the United Kingdom, New Zealand, Australia, and Canada). Moving to the Outer Circle, this group of countries (e.g., Malaysia, India, Pakistan, Singapore, and the Philippines) has been colonized either by the British Empire or by the United States (Kirkpatrick, 2007; Strevens, 1992). In these countries, English is spoken as a second language, in conjunction with a national mother tongue, in formal communication and institutional functions (Kirkpatrick, 2007). Lastly, the Expanding Circle is a group of countries that were not colonized by the Inner Circle empires (e.g., Japan, Turkey, and Thailand). In these countries, English does not have an official role in domestic institutional functions (Jenkins, 2015). From Kachru's classification, the global spread of English has culminated in linguistic pluricentricity and diversification.

Crystal (1997) stated that English has achieved its current global recognition because it became a multipurpose language, which the global community endorses for various purposes. Seeing the worldwide recognition of English, both the formerly colonized and non-colonized countries have been investing more and more in English language teaching (ELT) to ensure that their citizens can communicate with others for educational, business, and tourism purposes; exchange data; and access crucial knowledge for national development. This is because English provides enormous advantages to individuals as linguistic, cultural, and economic capital in several domains. Take, for instance, the growth of English use in the world. As noted by McArthur (2002, p. 3), 'English is now an official or co-official language in one-third of the world's countries.' The same case is also true for the domain of business where more than 70% of the English communication in European multinational companies is characterized as English being used as a business lingua franca (Kankaanranta & Planken, 2010). The commonly held assumption about the role of English in the workplace is that it 'brings high status to the individual socially, as well as extending job opportunities' (Konig, 1990, p. 4) and 'acts as a gatekeeper for advancement in prestigious jobs' (Doğançay-Aktuna, 1998, p. 34).

The far-reaching spread of English has also seen an increased efficiency in international communication, which is heavily dictated in English now. In the words of Ammon (2003), 'English is by far the most useful language for international communication today,' acting as a lingua franca (Jenkins, 2015; Seidlhofer, 2011). This is also notably the case with computer-generated communication (e.g., social media) in that 'English continues to be the chief lingua franca of the Internet' (Crystal, 2003, p. 117). Related to this, the

dominance of English in scientific research and communication is self-evident given that “[m]ost of the scientific, technological and academic information in the world is expressed in English and over 80 % of all the information stored in electronic retrieval systems is in English” (Crystal, 1997, p. 106). Another evidence for this is the increasing number of journals and conferences in non-English dominant contexts that opt for English as the working language in their acts (Jenkins, 2011).

Perhaps, the most notable advantage of the spread of English was observed in the field of education. For instance, in almost any country, English is the most widely studied foreign language in school curricula. Additionally, in addition to being studied as a school subject, English has recently become the working language of most universities across the world. In Europe only, there was 340% growth in English-medium instruction programs/courses in just five years, and a 1,000% growth in the past ten years (Brenn-White & van Rest, 2012). This trend has been similarly reinforced in other continents, particularly East and South-Asian countries, enabling both local and non-local students to study their content-courses through English at home or abroad depending on their own choice of study location.

Nonetheless, the spread of English has not always been welcomed favorably and seen as a linguistic and cultural capital. Some scholars claimed that the global spread of English comes with disadvantages for individuals and other languages. For instance, from a critical perspective, various metaphors, such as killer language (Skuttnab-Kangas, 2003), as Tyrannosaurus Rex (the predator, Swales, 1997), as a tool for linguistic imperialism and the death of indigenous languages (Phillipson, 2009), which all draw on the assumption that English is a threat to national languages, ethnic (minority) languages (domain loss) and bi/multilingualism, were used to portray English as a language that benefits from the loss of others in discourses on the spread of English and language endangerment. Some critics even go as far as to assert that English has even invaded shop windows and store signs. Observing this unplanned spread of English in non-English dominant settings, several scholars, like Rohde (1995), argue that ‘English is taking more than it is giving.’ However, it needs to be noted that most of the foregoing strong claims against the spread of English still lack scientific foundation as such claims are not largely based on empirical studies but personal convictions.

## **Methodology**

### **Research Design**

A multiple cross-sectional descriptive research design was adopted in this study so that Thai and Turkish student-teachers’ linguistic awareness about the current and future reality of English could be explored by describing these two groups. Data from each sample were obtained only once yet at different times, and the description of the information obtained from the respondents was confined to the aggregate level rather than the individual respondent level.

### **Participants and Research Context**

395 student-teachers participated in the study (124 Turkish and 271 Thai). All student-teachers were enrolled in a four-year teacher education program in their countries and studying in different grades at the time of data collection. The gender breakdown showed that the vast majority of participants were female (72%). Their age range was between 19 to 30 years of age. The sampling was convenient in that the researchers approached student-teachers studying in their institutions. The reason to choose Thai and Turkish student-

teachers for this study was twofold, one being practical and the other contextual. Since both researchers have obtained their doctoral degrees from the same university, they are already acquainted and involved in some projects in which their students have fulfilled some collaborative tasks through online tools.

From a contextual perspective, both Thai and Turkish contexts are not relics of British Empire or the USA; therefore, English does not hold an official status in either country, yet is offered as the most widely studied (compulsory) foreign language in the school curricula (Büyükkantarcıoğlu, 2004; Wongsothorn, Hiranburana & Chinnawongs, 2003). Thus, these groups of student-teachers might be considered to represent a small fraction of the Expanding circle countries geographically far from each other, yet sharing similarities in their English language education and language teacher education policies. More specifically, English is mostly needed in both countries for purposes of education, tourism, academic growth, financial benefits, and technological advancement (Karakaş, 2013a; Office of Education Council, 2006). The age of starting learning English in both countries is parallel in that students begin to receive instruction in English in primary schools, and the instruction is extended to higher education level. There is a strong governmental support in these countries to better the quality of teaching English as a foreign language (EFL), especially considering the rising demands of globalization and internationalization in terms of developing the qualified human resources (Karakaş, 2013a; Ministry of National Education [MoNE], 2018; Nakhon, 2013). There are also duplicate policies in curricular documents relating to theoretical principles and pedagogical approaches and methods of western origin and communicative competence to be followed by teachers when teaching English in their classes (Boriboon, 2011; Karakaş, 2013b). Finally, yet importantly, Turkey and Thailand still base their EFL pedagogy on traditional ways in which native English speaker competence is the ultimate goal in linguistic acts (e.g., pronunciation, accent, grammatical accuracy).

However, differences between the EFL policies of these countries exist, too, but are not so notable. For instance, the interest in English and the origins of teaching English in Thailand date back to the early 1920s (Wongsothorn, et al., 2003) whereas the wider interest in English in modern-day Turkey revived only after World War II (Büyükkantarcıoğlu, 2004). Similarly, there are differences as regards the materials used and imported, teacher hiring practices, class hours devoted to English at different levels of education (e.g., primary, secondary, high school). Considering the wider picture of EFL policies and practices under the light of similarities and differences, one can see that these two countries attach prime importance to the teaching of English and follow similar steps in practices and specify similar long-term goals for the learners under the influence of traditional pedagogy of EFL, which is definitely at odds with the current reality of English and its sociolinguistic profile across the world.

Equally, these two countries share similar policies with their pre-service teacher training programs. The program in Turkey lasts four years and is offered by the faculties of education, while in Thailand, it takes around five years, and teacher training colleges and faculties of education can conduct it. Both countries devote attention to the teaching of theoretical knowledge and teaching practicum (learning to teach), cover courses on pedagogy, general education, subject knowledge and methods, and offer both compulsory and elective courses to student-teachers. The content of the teacher education programs is also similar, and almost no courses on contemporary issues in EFL education exist in their language teacher training programs due likely to the traditional orientation to how English should be taught and learned in classes as discussed above.

On the grounds of the linguistic changes, English has gone through in recent years, collecting data from the student-teachers based in these two countries can result in gaining better insights into the overall picture of the spread of English and how it is viewed and

perceived by one of the key stakeholders of the ELT profession, namely student-teachers (future English language teachers) who will shape the teaching practices and perceptual attitudes towards English and the teaching and learning of it. This scrutiny will also provide an opportunity for teacher educators to see the extent to which the language teacher education programs in Thailand and Turkey succeed in preparing EFL teachers for the teaching of a global language in a constantly changing world.

### Data Collection and Analysis

A questionnaire was developed by the researchers via deriving some questions from the previous studies that discuss the present status and future prospects of English in relation to its speakers and diverse languages in contact with English. Checked by two experts for its content validity, the questionnaire took its final shape with 22 five-point Likert-type items. As a follow-up, semi-structured interviews were used so that participants' responses to the questionnaire items could be explored more elaborately. In this respect, 12 Turkish and 15 Thai student-teachers were involved in the interviews.

The quantitative data were subject to descriptive analysis (i.e., frequency and percentages). Only the mean scores were presented while presenting the descriptive statistics related to the questionnaire items since a descriptive presentation of the data typically relies on the responses of the majority for purposes of generalization. Therefore, we omitted a detailed display of responses according to each Likert item in the questionnaire. Since focusing on the mean scores which represent the majority in the findings ignores the voices of the minority who might also raise important issues about the research topic, as a follow-up, interviews were held with voluntary student-teachers, some of whom had different perceptions about the items compared to the majority. The qualitative data from the interviews were analyzed through thematic content analysis in which the first categories were created from the responses given by the participants, and then repeating themes were identified within the data by the help of the loose categories (Braun & Clarke, 2006). After thorough readings, the themes were modified and refined jointly by the authors.

### Findings and Discussion

The questionnaire items were broadly classified into four main themes in terms of their content and issues of interest. The themes that emerged from the interviews also corresponded to these major themes, probably because of the fact that the participants elaborated on their answers to the questionnaires in a similar order. At some points, clear demarcation among the themes, however, is not inescapably possible since some items are interrelated to a certain extent, a few being more closely connected and belonging to a single theme and some being placed in more than one category. The following table summarizes the major themes and issues discussed under each theme.

**Table 1. Major themes and subcategories from the questionnaire data**

Themes	Major issues discussed under the themes
The current/future role of English in education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The dominance of English in curricula</li> <li>• Using English as a medium of instruction</li> <li>• The emergence of rival languages against English</li> <li>• Questioning and reinforcing the authority of NSE</li> </ul>
Pluricentricity, bi/multilingualism, and glocalism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The emergence of regional lingua francs</li> <li>• The changing make-up of communication in English</li> <li>• The decline in the popularity of English</li> <li>• Linguistic rights and equity</li> </ul>

Projections on the widespread use of English	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• English as a foe to other languages: Domain loss</li> <li>• Drivers of decline and rise of English</li> <li>• Linguistic supremacy of English</li> <li>• The supremacy of bi/multilingualism and intercultural competence</li> <li>• Economic advantages to ENL countries</li> <li>• Politics of English: the role of the USA in the diffusion of English</li> </ul>
Projections on the future use of English	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Technology as the main driver of the spread</li> <li>• Increasing English use for intra-national communication</li> <li>• Extensions in the forms and functions of English grammar and words</li> <li>• Perceptions of language as a dynamic and fluid entity</li> <li>• Ethical issues: language death, identity chaos, cultural erosion</li> </ul>

Bearing these categories in mind, the responses to each question will be inspected more closely in the following section, also incorporating the results of the interviews wherever relevant.

### The Current Role/Future of English in Education

It appeared that both Thai and Turkish student-teachers hold a high state of linguistic awareness about the role of English in school curricula, the target speaker model for learners, and diversity of speakers as future interlocutors. Marking the existence of such consciousness among the student-teachers, the majority (87.05%) forecast a more and more adoption of English as the medium of instruction (EMI) by institutions in the coming years in pursuit of actualizing internationalization goals. While discussing their argument in favor of an increase in the number of EMI universities and programs, most students drew attention to the perceived association between EMI and ideology of prestige among students. They seemed to build a heightened awareness of English being the working language of several domains, ranging from business, aviation to education, as illustrated below:

**Turk.S3:** Because the use of the language will also accelerate and spread into other domains – it will be more prestigious to study in English-medium.

As for the curricular issues, while a vast majority (81.48%) consider English to preserve its position as the most widely studied foreign language in school curricula, around 74% also see some major languages, such as Spanish and Chinese, as new rivals for English in school curricula for the present and particularly future. It appeared that the interview participants approached the curricular issues from two different camps, one displaying an awareness of the rise of other languages in the educational domain:

**Turk.S1:** ... even in our daily life, some countries stopped teaching English majorly, and they started to focus on multiple languages rather than just English.

**Thai.11:** Now, in Thailand, many educational institutions offer various foreign language courses other than English. These include Chinese, Japanese, Korean, French, German, and Spanish... because the languages are fundamental and in high demand in markets.

Furthermore, the other group based their argument on witnessing the strong grip of English in school curricula due mostly to its widespread use around the world for communicative purposes as is detailed in the following extracts:

**Turk.S10:** Yes, it will preserve [its status] for years because English is [an] international communication language.

**Thai.S15:** In many Asian countries, including Thailand, English is still an educationally and professionally important language.

Based on the above findings, it may be concluded that prestige planning (Kaplan & Baldauf, 2003), i.e., the effort to raise the prestige of a particular language in a specific domain, seems to have influenced most participants' way of thinking about the role of English in particular domains, primarily education. On the other hand, some student-teachers were seen to have increased their awareness of the emergence of other languages as a rival against English through direct experiences with the speakers of other major languages and through the display of such languages in the linguistic landscape of their territory. It seems possible that the linguistic landscape, namely '*the visibility and salience of languages on public and commercial signs in a given territory or region*' (Landry & Bourhis, 1997, p. 23), has naturally heightened their awareness of the importance of other major languages in the domain of education. For instance, two participants commented on these points as follows:

**Turk.S9:** Chinese and Spanish will be important language[s] in business. Here there are many Chinese people working in the marble industry. Thus, there are several Chinese restaurants, and their windows are full of Chinese signs.

**Thai.S1:** Other languages such as Chinese or Spanish are also popular, and the number of global learners being interested in learning them increases every year.

Likewise, when it comes to language contact, slightly more than three fourths (78.03%) were found to judge that learners would be more in contact with native and non-native varieties of English, thereby would gain a higher level of familiarity with a wide range of Englishes. However, the lowest linguistic awareness among student-teachers appeared to be related to NSE' being the authoritative source of ideal language use in that only 53.67% of the student-teachers were seen to regard NSE to be no longer the authoritative models for language users while the rest have still thought on NSE and their culture as the perfect models of language use and cultural competence. Those supporting NSE models mainly brought the issue of ownership to the fore and the argument that NSE use English more intelligibly, acting under the influence of native-speakerism and the ideology of ownership (Holliday, 2005), as seen in the following account.

**Turk.S4:** It's their native language, and they can talk more fluently and [in an] understandable [manner].

In contrast, the participants resisting the idea that NSE are the role models for learners noted that real-world communication more often takes place among NNSE and technological advances, such as virtual reality, create conditions for learners to practice their English within their comfort zone.

**Turk.S7:** Technology is developing, and maybe in a few years, the native teachers will not be needed for teaching.

Additionally, some participants questioned the taken for granted assumptions about NSE' being better language teachers than NNSE, going against the criterion of nationality in determining what makes someone an effective language teacher, as seen below:

**Turk.S3:** NES teachers don't know their native language, students couldn't feel comfortable, so their communication will break as a result of this, [NSE] teachers authority will go bad.

**Thai.S7:** Just because you are native to the English language, it does not mean you can teach it well. In my experience, there are many English language teachers who are bad at English language teaching and fail to understand the learner's cultures. I believe that good teaching has something to do with how you teach and how much you understand your learners.

### **Pluricentricity, Bi/Multilingualism, and Glocalism**

Currently, the majority of language speakers are bilingual or multilingual, and it is likely that bilingualism and multilingualism will be taken as essential competencies for those engaged in multinational situations such as those of commerce and higher education. This reality appears to be grasped by a vast majority of the student-teachers (84.81%) who believe that monolingualism may be regarded as a linguistic and even economic liability for speakers, especially in the future. To most (74.48%), the increase in economic activities within a particular region or country, together with the rise in intra-regional trade, especially in countries linguistically abounding, may perform a crucial role in the emergence of regional lingua francas rivaling the privileged position of English. In the face of such major linguistic shifts, many participants (72.78%) deemed it essential to establish local understandings of changing role(s) of English within their countries. It is likely that their views are influenced by the ideologies of language panic and language pride (Velázquez, 2013) according to the former ideology, regional languages are looked down upon as inferior to English whereas, according to the latter, participants view regional and national languages as viable and valuable tool of expressing their identities, beliefs, and feelings. While discussing these points in the interviews, some student-teachers agreed on the need for other languages besides English and acknowledged the echoes of regionalization on linguistic practices, predicting a decline in the popularity of English while others highlighted the linguistic right of one's embracing and promoting their native language to others.

**Thai.S15:** Foreigners from Asia and Europe who visit Thailand increase every year. If you want to benefit from this opportunity, only speaking or knowing a language may no longer be enough because we also need to communicate with other groups with many cultural and ethnic backgrounds.

**Turk.S5:** I guess the people in the world will think like why I can't use my language as a major language. My country is a strong country, so I can do it too ... English will lose its majority, and people will think like "oh, so in order to communicate, I should know this major language too."

However, the student-teachers were indecisive about the issues of English-related inequality and fairness with regards to other languages, especially in multilingual contexts.

60.23% considered the global use of English to be a threat to other languages due to their conviction that English encroaches into various domains in which local or domestic languages were in use once. Put differently, they put the blame on the widespread use of English for the domain loss, namely a status loss of the domestic language(s) against English. Thus, it would not be wrong to aver that these student-teachers shared Phillipson's (2009) concern about English being a means of linguistic imperialism to some extent. Nonetheless, the rest was either neutral or disagreed that it is not English that perpetuates or structures inequality, yet people's instrumental approach to and preference for English over their own and other languages, as detailed in some of the typical responses below:

**Thai.S4:** Although English might no longer be a global language in the future, I still believe that language is somewhat crucial in our daily lives.

**Turk.S8:** People didn't want to learn a foreign language in their own country but nowadays that understanding is changing, so they want to learn English to study by using in universities in their countries, English is gaining importance.

### **Projections on the Widespread Use of English**

The survey and interview analysis revealed that the student-teachers are aware of the economic and political causes as the key determiners of the decline and widespread use of a language. Additionally, most student-teachers appreciated the big and vital part played by technological tools (86.26%), the Internet (85.28%) and globalization (71.83%) in spreading English to individuals from all walks of life around the world, according to English a privileged status to the disadvantage of other rival languages (e.g., Spanish and Chinese) and acting as the major catalyst of English diffusion into several domains. It is probably for these reasons that a great number of them (86.08%) perceive English to remain as the world's leading language in the years to come by even strengthening its present position as the global lingua franca. From this, we can conclude that Englishization has become synonymous with internationalization and globalization in the views of these participants (Kirkpatrick, 2011). Submitting themselves to the ideology of the superiority of English over all other languages, a few participants elucidated their views on these points during the interviews by highlighting the linguistic supremacy of English in several domains and the way in which Englishization of the world is made possible through globalization.

**Turk.S1:** Even in the 21st century, we can see this some of the European and non-European country's language is not important if we compare with the English.

**Turk.S3:** Because the usage areas of other languages will decrease.

**Turk. S7:** Globalization will help English for keeping English's importance.

However, unlike those seeing English as a superior language, some participants were seen to realize 'that true superiority lies in speaking many languages as well as developing an understanding of the cultures they come from' (Kleyn, 2011, p. 129). With this realization, they became skeptical about the future of English, presuming that the interest in English may fade away due to internationalization which in turn can lead people to use different languages to satisfy their communicative needs, as seen in the following remarks:

**Thai.S3:** Compared to the past, today's ways of life seem more consistent with internationalization. People conveniently connect and communicate with one another

in a fingertip. There is a chance that English would lose its importance as people would turn to learn more about other languages and cultures to satisfy the growing variety of communication needs.

By virtue of such rapid and inescapable diffusion of the English language, justifiably, slightly over 80% of the student-teachers believe that English will continue to grant special economic advantages to native-English speaking countries (e.g., the UK and the USA). It emerged from the interviews that what fuels the participants' such beliefs are the ideologies of prestige, ownership, and authenticity all being ascribed to NSE (Norton, 1997; Widdowson, 1994), as detailed in the following excerpts:

**Turk.S3:** because people always go there for learning real English.

**Turk.S4:** Because it's their language and no matter how we speak it fluently or perfect, we can't be as good as the native speakers.

**Thai.S6:** If financially affordable, most Thai people would like to send their children to study English abroad, especially in the developed countries like the UK and the USA, because doing so seems classy and good for the family's public image.

While explaining what has shaped their way of thinking about NSE as the owners of English, a few participants alluded to the role of language teachers and media in their own educational and social context in forming their normative beliefs about NSE. Regarding this, one participant noted:

**Thai.S14:** most Thai people still believe that the British and American people own it because we have been taught so. We have been consistently told so by the teachers and media...

In connection with this, almost 60% speculate that any decline in the influence of the US may result in troubling the status quo the English language maintains today. Even some participants touched on the issues of political power held by the USA, maintaining "because the United States is a global power, English is the most preferred language" (Turk.S9), and "The US is dominant and active in English" (Turk.S12).

### **Projections on the Future Use of English**

Survey results showed that an overwhelming majority (83.93%) hold the technology accountable as the major driver for the future patterns of English use, with a high estimation (74.23%) that English will be increasingly used for intra-national communication in the years to come, too. It is evident that these student-teachers recognize the two-way relation between technology and English. Each shares a crucial part in terms of spreading each other, especially with the rise of the Internet (Crystal, 2003). The qualitative data pointed to the fact that more and more people will resort to English for utilitarian purposes within their nation through means of technology:

**Turk.S6:** People want to develop their English style, and it affects internal communication. There are several radio programs and TV channels in English. Even young children watch English cartoons.

**Turk.S10:** Because English is increasing in all areas of life in every country, especially in education.

Moreover, there was a general, if not unanimous, agreement on the idea among the participants (80.41%) that the distant and foreseeable future of English will be determined more by those speaking it as an additional language than NSE, which will then, according to most student-teachers (75.01%), culminate in extensions of English in form (e.g., vocabulary, grammar) and function. Talking about these points, a few student-teachers involved in the interviews referred to the current demographics of English by arguing that it is also their right to use and teach English on their own terms.

**Turk.S4:** We learn English, and we will teach English in this reason in our own terms.

**Turk.S7:** It is because second or foreign language learners are more than native speakers.

Some stressed the nature of language's being dynamic, unstable, and creative, thereby seeing the extensions of not only English but also their own mother tongues in form and function as something very usual. Evidence from these remarks is that student-teachers already recognize how English is gaining a fluid, contingent, and dynamic dimension as a result of its linguistically diverse users and getting in contact with other languages (Cogo, 2012). These issues were voiced by some as follows:

**Thai.S9:** Languages evolve constantly, and this applies to Thai, my mother tongue, and English. I believe that new vocabularies are invented every day.

**Turk.S12:** It will [experience] extension about vocabulary and grammar due to non-standard English use.

Against the backdrop of the foregoing argued conjecture about the future of English in respect of its use and users, as one would expect, most student-teachers (69.9%) had the opinion that the global use of English would require consideration of ethical issues regarding the linguistic human rights. In this respect, several student-teachers seemed to be concerned about the issue of language death and the ignorance of local culture and identity at the expense of the target culture and identity, as is evident in some of their answers below:

**Turk.S11:** I think it's not appropriate [fair] for the other languages and their linguistics because most of the languages are forgotten because of the influence of English in our lives.

**Thai.S7:** If we are allowed to learn a language but not allowed to use the language to express our identities or cultures, I think it would be too bad.

From these accounts, it becomes clear that the hegemony of English is perceived by some student-teachers negatively, and their views echo the pejorative perceptions of English as a killer language (Skuttnab-Kangas, 2003) and Tyrannosaurus Rex (Swales, 1997).

## Conclusions

This study investigates the linguistic awareness of Thai and Turkish student-teachers from a broader perspective and sheds light on what actually shape(s) their thinking towards the current and future position of English across the world. Relating to the domain of education, on the one hand, it seems that most participants now notice that English alone will not suffice to fulfill individuals' communicative purposes owing to the bilingual and multilingual nature of typical communication and the rise of other major languages. Besides, they seem to be aware of the surge of EMI programs and courses and the strong place of English in school curricula. On the other hand, when it comes to teaching practices, most student-teachers associate real English and good English speakers with NSE by being subject to some dominant language ideologies and establishing native-speakerism and ownership in their discourse. There were some participants who were found contesting, challenging these ideologies due to their first-hand familiarity with different speakers and languages in their own locality.

The inspection of student-teachers' views on the widespread use and future of English showed that the overwhelming majority believe in the possibility of co-existence of English with other languages and its various varieties in harmony, yet most students consider the future of English to be more complex and unpredictable due to the challenges that can be posed by other dominant languages (e.g., Spanish and Chinese). Additionally, many students were seen to consider that the increasing number of non-native English speakers would impact the way English is used and taught by speakers in non-Anglophone contexts in terms of its forms and functions. The finding that many student-teachers do not associate English with linguistic imperialism demonstrates that they do not see English as a threat to bi/multilingualism, and minority and local languages. This group of student-teachers also recognizes the political groups (hegemonic powers like the USA and the UK) promoting English spread.

Taken together, these findings offer strong evidence that students have developed an awareness of the current face of the language they will teach, its speaker profiles, its contact with other languages, and the likely ramifications of such contacts. This awareness may positively influence their classroom practices in preparing their students for real-world English use. It has been evident from these findings that most student-teachers increased their awareness about the current and future face of English through non-formal ways (e.g., linguistic landscaping, more contact with diverse speakers from different languages and cultures), yet none referred to being informed about these points in their degree programs.

Therefore, one practical implication of the findings is that some courses, such as critical sociolinguistics, globalization, and Englishization, should be incorporated into language teacher education programs in both countries. Another interesting implication related to the broader context of ELT, particularly in the expanding circle countries, is that being aware of the current and future faces of English plays a significant part in determining student-teachers' educational and practical orientations. The more intensely student-teachers are aware of the issues around changing nature of English in terms of its speaker profile, uses, and functions as well as its contact with other dominant and less powerful languages, the better they can set realistic goals for their teaching practices, own language use and understand the dynamics of intersections between English and the other languages with a more insightful reflection on the language they are bound to teach very soon.

Additionally, one can also consider additional implications for teacher educators as they are considered the chief agents of change even if their programs are built on the traditional pedagogy of EFL. Teacher trainers are supposed to engage their student-teachers in critical reflection and practice on English not only from a pedagogical perspective (e.g., how to teach and assess English, whom to take as a role model, which materials to use) but

also from the perspectives of politics, society, nation, state, and culture, with a more appraisal of the role of English in the broader social world. It is only through this way that student-teachers can exit their teacher education programs with a heightened awareness about the language they will be tasked with teaching.

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