Teacher Representations of English as a Foreign Language: Case Study of Two Teachers in Turkey

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Abstract

In a developing nation like Turkey, the English language plays a significant role in educational and socioeconomic mobility. English is acquired and taught as a foreign language (EFL) primarily in the classrooms. However, the ways in which English language is represented in classroom instruction have been hardly examined and understood. With that, this paper aims to depict two teachers' representations of the English language as influenced by a university entrance English language test administered in 2008 in Turkey. The two teachers' representations of the English language are projected from a 12th grade classroom at an Anatolian Lycee located in the Mediterranean region of Turkey. Doyle's task framework is employed, specifically in order to map what content representations emerged out of the teachers' classroom practices. Data sources include biweekly teacher logs, biweekly interviews, and biweekly classroom observations. The paper highlights that the two teachers' classroom representations of English were entrenched with the idea of high-stakes test preparation for university admissions as they deemed test preparation as a major part of their classroom instruction. That is, representations of the English language were contracted to tested structures and items. The paper illustrates the teachers' representations of reading and grammar with the insight that division of labour, though not in the form of collaboration, made it possible for the teachers to cope with the contraction effect of test preparation.

Keywords: *Teacher content representations; English as a foreign language (EFL); test impact; content contraction*