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English Language Education in Türkiye: Is It Enough to Survive in Globalization?

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Abstract

Globalization influences technology, economy, identity, culture, and language. While some communities adapt to globalization and its language, English, other communities struggle to keep their locality in globalization and consider the language of globalization as a threat to local cultures and languages. However, the goal of many communities in the global world is to learn and teach English as an international language to survive globalization. Based on the theories of globalization and Bourdieu's forms of capital, this study employs interviews to investigate the perspectives of ten English as a foreign language (EFL) teachers on the role of English in the global world and the English language education curriculum used in K-12 education in Türkiye. Results of the content analysis revealed that the participants consider English to be the language of globalization and a tool necessary to access resources in the global world. However, participants do not find the curriculum in Türkiye goal-oriented to present English as an international language and a linguistic tool providing access to different forms of capital available in globalization.

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English Language Education in Türkiye

Communities use English language education to integrate students and teachers into globalization and what their suggestions are for English as a foreign and second language (EFL) education (Council of Europe, 2020). In Türkiye, English is the first foreign language taught at the K-12 level and is compulsory in the second grade of primary school. The country's EFL curriculum is based on a communicative approach and student-centered learning (Kirkgoz, 2020; MEB, 2018; Yalcin & Demir, 2023). Since 2018, the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) has been adopted in EFL education, which is grounded in an action-oriented approach, learner autonomy, self-assessment, and cultural diversity by bringing real-world tasks in teaching languages (Council of Europe, 2020: MEB, 2018). Based on the CEFR, the EFL curriculum in Türkiye aims to bring authentic materials related to students' daily lives into EFL classrooms to create meaningful learning contexts and by not only focusing on grammatical structures and linguistic functions of the language (Güneş & Taş, 2023; MEB, 2018).

However, because of discrepancies between education policies and pedagogy, short-term foreign language education policies, course materials, limited in-service teacher training, and crowded classrooms, EFL teachers often have to use grammar-translation method in teaching English to K-12 students (Aksoy, 2020; Güneş & Taş, 2023; Yalcin & Demir, 2023). Therefore, when graduating, K-12 students in the country often cannot communicate in English; thus, they cannot access various forms of capital available in globalization (Bourdieu, 1991; Bildik & Altun, 2022).

In addition, in Türkiye, the English language education curriculum does not explicitly define English as a global language and a tool to access globalization. The country's research studies also reveal contradictions between the ultimate goals of the EFL curriculum in Türkiye and its application at the K-12 level (Kirkgöz, 2020). Moreover, there is a shortage of research to explore to what extent the EFL curriculum in Türkiye presents English as the language of globalization, guides EFL teachers in the country in teaching English as a linguistic tool to access resources available in the global world and helps EFL learners be global citizens. Thus, based on the theories of globalization and Bourdieu's forms of capital, this study explores:

- What are K-12 EFL teachers' perspectives on linguistic globalization and the role of English as a global language?

- To what extent does the EFL curriculum in Türkiye allow K-12 EFL teachers to teach English as a global language?
- What are K-12 EFL teachers' suggestions for teaching English as a tool to access different forms of capital available in the global world?

Understanding Globalization to Shape English Language Education

Globalization is a process that (which) influences technology, economy, identity, culture, and language (Beck, 2018). Researchers define globalization as either a power to develop or a threat to local communities, cultures, and languages (Blommaert, 2010). For example, while some researchers define globalization as “the core of modern culture” (Chirimbu, 2011, p.657), other researchers emphasize that globalization is a kind of “Americanization” (Kubota, 2002, p.13).

Globalization affects communities differently because each community has its culture, identity, and language (Babaci-Wilhite, 2015). Some communities can adapt to globalization. However, communities often need help to keep their locality in globalization. The effort to stay local is not only for culture and identity but also for language. Communities are often eager to learn the current language of globalization, English (Özerk, 2013). However, some communities consider the language of globalization to threaten their local cultures and languages (Skutnabb-Kangas, 2012). However, whatever the perceptions and expectations of communities on the language of globalization are, many communities aim to learn and teach English as the language of globalization to survive in globalization itself.

In the global world, an interaction across cultures, economy, politics, and languages between international and local communities is inevitable (Coupland, 2013). Since globalization is a broad area with all its dimensions as “a significant dimension of globalization” (Sonntag, 2003, p.121), this paper focuses on linguistic globalization, which is defined as English as a global language (Blommaert, 2010). Linguistic globalization is defined as “a reality” and “a possibility” (Sonntag, 2003) to use English as a global language as a “linguistic gate” (Shahed, 2013) to access different forms of capital available in the world. That is, English as a global language is a linguistic capital (i.e., ability to use a language in a particular context) to help individuals access the source of cultural capital (i.e., forms of knowledge, education, skills), social capital (i.e., being recognized and valued in a

society), economic capital (i.e., having a job in the international market), and symbolic capital (i.e., status or prestige) (Bourdieu, 1991; Shohamy, 2012).

Perspectives on English as a Global Language

The demand to be able to communicate in the global world makes English a tool to be used in globalization, which makes English an international language (Ryan, 2006). In the global world, English is used to access the products of globalization, such as information, knowledge, technology, economy, and communication. Thus, it is not surprising that the number of English speakers or learners as a second or foreign language is greater than the number of native English speakers around the world (Sinagatullin, 2009).

Considering English's prominence in globalization, it is inevitable for communities from different cultural backgrounds to have varied perceptions of English as a global language. On the one hand, some countries criticize English as a global language and its adverse effects on local languages, cultures, ideologies, and cultural identities (Ashraf et al., 2013; Gao, 2014; Yeh, 2013). On the other hand, some countries (e.g., Australia, India, and Bangladesh) perceive English as a linguistic tool for global communication to access global information, economy, communication, education, cultures, and languages (Davis, 2009; Kachru, 1992).

Similarly, some researchers support teaching English as a global language despite their perspective on English as part of linguistic imperialism. These researchers emphasize teaching English as a global language by integrating other cultures and languages in English language classrooms. To exemplify, Gao (2014) suggests accepting English as a global language and teaching English at schools by integrating various cultures in which it is spoken. Similarly, examining Taiwanese English language learners, Yeh (2013) also suggests learning world Englishes instead of teaching learners only standard British or American English, which, as Yeh (2013) states, makes EFL learners "less confident" and causes learners to have "uncertain identities" (p. 338). Finally, focusing on the relation between English as a global language and identity in South Korea, Sung and Park (2011) criticize English as "an emotional and financial burden on South Koreans" (p.2) and suggest teaching and learning World Englishes instead of standard British or American English in education.

To sum up, despite recognizing English as a global language to communicate and trade globally, some communities are criticizing English as a threat to local cultures,

identities, and languages. Two of the reasons to perceive English as a threat are, first, the belief that teaching and learning English may undervalue local languages and cultures, which in turn affect cultural and individual identities; second, recognizing English not as a global language but as a language of certain countries where English is used as a native language.

English Language Education Curriculum Used in Globalization

To teach EFL in globalization, it is essential to be able to present English as a tool to access resources that globalization presents (Bildik & Altun, 2022; OECD, 2020). To this end, in foreign language education, global issue-based curriculum (Omidvar & Sukumar, 2013), internationalized curriculum (Whitsed & Wright, 2013), learner-centered curriculum (de Segovia & Hardison, 2009), and technology-based curriculum (Menard-Warwick et al., 2013) have been designed and used in different countries. For example, through a global issue-based curriculum, global issues, such as globalization, poverty, environment, human and animal rights, and peace, are exercised in English language education classrooms to raise awareness of learners towards issues in globalization through English as a global language (Omidvar & Sukumar, 2013). Thus, English language learners are expected to relate global problems to their local culture, which aims to “promote tolerance and appreciation of different beliefs, cultures and backgrounds” (Omidvar & Sukumar, 2013, p.155).

Internationalized curriculum is also used in English language education to help learners “develop global perspectives, cultural independence, and achieve global competence” (Whitsed & Wright, 2013, p. 228). By integrating international topics into English language education, English is aimed to be taught beyond teaching a language but to involve a global community. Similarly, a learner-centered, global-issue-focused curriculum is applied in English language education primarily to raise learners' awareness of the importance of English as a global language (de Segovia & Hardison, 2009). A learner-centered curriculum “provides learners with more autonomy to cope with the dynamic process of globalization” (de Segovia & Hardison, 2009, p.155). Finally, technology-integrated English language education is suggested to foster intercultural awareness and provide opportunities for English language learners and teachers, especially for those who do not have a chance to travel abroad (Menard-Warwick et al., 2013). Therefore, designing curricula that integrate global issues and international cultural awareness is necessary for English language education to help English language learners use English as a linguistic tool to adapt to globalization and access various resources that globalization offers.

Method

Participants

Ten English language teachers working at the K-12 level in Türkiye were recruited as participants in the study. Research participants were selected based on their willingness and availability to be recruited for the study and their perspectives on English as the global language (Creswell, 2005). In selecting and recruiting the participants for the study, snowball sampling was first used to invite EFL teachers to the study. Second, for convenience sampling, a survey was applied to select EFL teachers working at the K-12 level who perceived English as a global language. In connection with the survey analysis, ten EFL teachers were recruited for the study (see Table 1).

Table 1. Profiles of the Participants

Pseudonym	Gender	Age	School (K-12)	Years of Experience
P1	Male	45	Middle school EFL teacher	12
P2	Female	32	High school EFL teacher	19
P3	Female	29	High school EFL teacher	8
P4	Male	38	Middle school EFL teacher	8
P5	Female	36	Primary school EFL teacher	10
P6	Male	43	Primary school EFL teacher	13
P7	Female	32	Primary school EFL teacher	6
P8	Male	34	Middle school EFL teacher	15
P9	Male	30	Primary school EFL teacher	9
P10	Female	30	High school EFL teacher	10

Data Collection Tools

The study adopts a qualitative approach. Semi-structured interviews were used as data sources. In pursuit of approval from the institutional review board, interviews were conducted with ten EFL teachers in Turkish and in the schools where the participants work. The interviews were audio-recorded and lasted between 60-90 minutes. The interview questions incorporated 1) the EFL teachers' perspectives on the role of English as a global language in the global world, 2) the curriculum and course materials used in EFL education in Türkiye, and to what extent these documents reflect English as the language of globalization, and 3) suggestions for teaching English as a global language at the K-12 level in Türkiye.

Data Analysis

Content analysis was applied to analyze the interview data (Krippendorff, 2018). First, data were read systematically, and line-by-line open coding was applied to identify specific concepts and codes. In pursuit of reaching code saturation with the repetition of similar codes, the initial codes were grouped and categorized. Considering the study's research questions, the codes were read multiple times to decide on themes (Creswell, 2005). Finally, three themes were decided upon through selective coding and presented as the study's findings. In data analysis, pen and paper, as well as mind-mapping software, were used. In addition, an independent researcher was requested to analyze a certain amount of data for validation. Inter-rater reliability was calculated by dividing the total number of agreements by the sum of the total number of disagreements on the codes (Miles & Huberman, 1994). As a result, 84% agreement was reached between the researcher and the independent co-rater.

Findings

EFL Teachers' Perspectives on English as the Language of Globalization

All participants perceive English as the language of the global world, not the language of specific countries where English is spoken as a native language. For example, P4 says:

Today, English should not be considered only the language of the United States or the United Kingdom. Many people in different countries speak English for different purposes. So, we can say that English is now a global language.

Similarly, P9 considers English as a global language because of the necessity to have a common language to be used in the global world:

In the global world, people have to communicate and understand each other about global issues. That is why there has to be a common language, English. Thus, English is the language people use worldwide.

In addition to the perspective on English as a global language, participants also believe that English is necessary to access diverse forms of capital available in globalization. For example, P1 states:

Through English, we can access various resources that are available around the world. For example, my English knowledge has helped me to travel to different European countries for educational and tourism purposes. Similarly, as I know English, I can

communicate with people in different parts of the world since we all have a common language: English.

Here, the experience of P1 with English shows that English helped P1 accumulate cultural capital (i.e., education) and social capital (i.e., communicating with people) in the global world. Similarly, P2 stated that he uses English to earn money by tutoring; thus, he accumulates economic capital.

I have been teaching English since my university years. I have been teaching English to individuals at various levels and earning money. People need to know English to be a member of the global world, and they demand to learn it. As a tutor, I help them in learning English. In turn, I earn money.

EFL Curriculum and Materials to Teach English as a Global Language

All participants perceive English as a global language and believe that the knowledge of English helps accumulate different forms of capital available in the global world. However, the participants do not find the EFL curriculum in Türkiye as goal-oriented in presenting the role of English as the language of globalization. Moreover, participants believe that EFL course materials need to be more motivating for K-12 English language learners to learn English to access different global resources. For example, P3 states;

In Türkiye, the curriculum used in EFL education does not clearly define English as a global language. Instead, the curriculum presents English as content knowledge and a compulsory course that K-12 students must learn to complete their K-12 education.

Similarly, P5 does not find the EFL curriculum in Türkiye as goal-oriented to help EFL teachers teach English as the language of globalization;

The English language education curriculum in Türkiye is not explicit enough. For example, the curriculum does not define English as the language of the global world but as a foreign language. However, if English was defined as a global language in the curriculum, the instructional materials could also be prepared to teach English as a global language, not as a content subject or as a foreign language as we teach now.

In addition, participants do not find EFL course materials motivating or encouraging K-12 learners to learn English as a tool to access different resources that globalization offers. For example, P6 says;

Unfortunately, in Türkiye, course books used in English language classrooms often introduce the British accent of English as if it is the language of only the United Kingdom. English is presented with English spelling, and pictures are often from the United Kingdom. This limits students' perspectives on English and does not help motivate students to learn English as a global language used by people from different cultures.

Similarly, P8 states that coursebooks need to be more inclusive because they need to present English as used by people living in various communities. P8 mentions world Englishes and supports including world Englishes in English language education materials in Türkiye.

People from different countries all over the world use English. While using English, naturally, each community reflects its accent, language, and culture. That is why I believe the English coursebooks used in Türkiye do not sufficiently reflect this reality. Both English language education curricula and coursebooks focus on only certain accents of English.

Suggestions for Teaching English as a Global Language

Participants suggest preparing a goal-oriented English language education curriculum to teach English as the global world language. P10 states;

It is a fact that English is a global language, and in Türkiye, the English language education curriculum needs to be prepared based on this fact. The goal of the curriculum should be to define and offer to teach English as the global world language.

In addition, P7 suggests “explicitly stating the role of English in the curriculum as a linguistic tool to access resources in the global world.” P7 adds;

English is a linguistic tool used worldwide to access education, earn money, meet people from different cultures, and travel. This role of English should explicitly be stated in the curriculum so that learners are aware that by learning English, they can access different resources that are internationally available.

In presenting English as a tool to access various forms of capital, curriculum and course materials used in English language education in Türkiye should also present and embrace various accents of English used by people from other countries, as P1 states;

Encapsulating various English accents in coursebooks used in English is essential. In this way, students can be aware of the countries where English is used. Students can also be aware that English does not represent only certain cultures where native speakers of English use English. Being aware of the world Englishes can motivate students to learn English and encourage them to use it even with different accents.

Discussion

This study employs a qualitative approach based on the theories of globalization and forms of capital. The study focuses on ten EFL teachers' perspectives on the role of English in the global world and the curriculum and course materials used in English language education in Türkiye. The study's findings show that EFL teachers in Türkiye perceive English as the language of globalization. The teachers also believe that English is a linguistic capital that helps learners access various forms of capital available globally. However, EFL teachers do not find materials used in EFL classrooms in Türkiye inclusive enough to represent English as a global language and a linguistic tool to access globalization.

A positive perception of English as a global language is required to create encouraging contexts to motivate English language learners to learn English in education (Ryan, 2006). However, some communities find their linguistic resources to be of meager value in globalization (Blommaert, 2010). Such underestimation demotivates local cultures towards learning and teaching English as a global language and reduces these communities' feelings of belonging worldwide (Wenger, 1998). In such communities, English is taught by integrating national and international cultures in English language education textbooks and designing English language education curricula considering the learners' needs to access resources in globalization.

To teach English as a global language, it is crucial not to associate English with only one geographical or cultural community (e.g., American) (Lamb, 2004). Similarly, comprising different cultures in English language education and going beyond rote learning of grammar help English learners understand English to be used in the global context and feel part of a worldwide culture (Shahed, 2013; Yihong et al., 2014).

In addition, cultural self-awareness and integrating local culture and languages facilitate the internalization of English because the learners' familiarity with their local cultures can contribute to designing culturally familiar environments in English language classrooms (Davis, 2009). For example, Alptekin (2006) found that adapting local culture and practices to the reading texts written in English facilitates Turkish EFL learners' reading comprehension in English. Similarly, Cheng (2012) found that integrating local culture in English language classrooms in Taiwan helped to provide familiar and motivating learning environments for English language learners and teachers. Wee (2014) analyzed the Singaporean English language education policy. It emphasized the requirement of cultural self-awareness by integrating local culture and practices in English language education, especially in a multicultural country.

Researchers also advocate integrating only local languages and cultures in English language education (e.g., Gandolfo, 2009; Imam, 2005). These researchers claim that integrating local languages and cultures in English language education helps learners and teachers think critically about the target language and culture and save local language and culture in linguistic globalization. For example, Gandolfo (2009) claims that using English as a medium in education is the main reason for undervaluing indigenous languages in Africa. The researcher suggests raising awareness towards the English language in education, emphasizing the importance of local languages, and claiming that it is a "myth" to consider "every important (consequential) thing is written in English" (Gandolfo, 2009, p.329). Thus, Gandolfo (2009) proposes teaching English in a knowledge-based construction where learners can use the local language and recognize their cultural identity.

Similarly, Imam (2005) argues for raising awareness of the English language in education in Bangladesh. At the same time, the researcher emphasizes the importance of the knowledge of the local language, which he explains as an initial step to adapting to globalization and signifies that "learning the national language is foundational to Bangladesh's global strategy" (Imam, 2005, p.483). Considering this, Imam (2005) also suggests re-designing strategies in English language education regarding locality; that is, the local language needs to be used in English language education to cover both local and global areas under the same dome.

In Türkiye, English learners are also often demotivated to speak English due to the fear of making mistakes related to pronunciation (Tekir, 2021). However, as the participants

of this study also state, including different accents of English used by people living in other countries in the global world can raise students' awareness of different accents of English and motivate them to use English without any fear (Babaci-Wilhite, 2015). Moreover, the research studies reveal that students learning various English accents have a good knowledge of other cultures and where English is used, positively influencing students' accumulation of cultural capital (Diouani, 2021).

Conclusion

Globalization is a process in which English goes beyond its national borders and has become an instrument to access the dimensions of this process. Communities in the global world are often required to use English as the language of globalization to communicate and access forms of capital. There are also different perceptions of English as a common language in globalization. While some communities consider English a cultural threat to locality and a danger to identity, others identify English as a tool for economic power, prestigious jobs, and international communication (Babaci-Wilhite, 2015). Despite various perceptions of English, communities accept that English is a global language and that it is necessary to learn and teach it to adapt to globalization (Blommaert, 2010).

In addition, adapting to globalization and accessing its dimensions often depend on English language education. Thus, understanding linguistic globalization can play a significant role in adapting to globalization through English language education. Knowing that English goes beyond standard American and British English and cultures is essential to teach English as a global language. This awareness may help design curricula for English language education in globalization and help teachers and students integrate other cultures into EFL classrooms.

Moreover, accepting English as a global language may bring global and local issues to English language classrooms, through which English language learners can discuss, think creatively and critically, tolerate other cultures, notice globalization through English language education, and adapt to the globalization process. Thus, comprehending globalization and English as a global language influences pedagogy and practice in English language education in various cultures. Therefore, communities, including Türkiye, need to understand globalization and perceive linguistic globalization as an instrument to access globalization, as a possible source of richness for locals, and as a process influencing the motivation,

perceptions, and identities of students and teachers who are the main participants of English language education.

However, teaching a global language through local languages in local contexts is open to discussion. Because using local languages in English language education may not go beyond the translation of languages, which is not enough, especially when adapting to globalization; in other words, excessive use of local languages in teaching English may hinder the awareness of cultural diversity. Thus, in linguistic globalization, English language education must be considered teaching not a language of specific countries where English is spoken as a native language but a language of globalization in which it is spoken among various cultures. Therefore, local languages may not be used as instruments to teach English as a global language. However, as a global language, English may enrich local cultures, languages, and communities. To achieve this, teachers must teach English as a global language, integrating linguistic and cultural diversity awareness in English language education. That is, instead of arguing that English threatens local culture and identity, it may be helpful to accept it as a possibility to develop a global identity, which can be achieved through English language education (Ryan, 2006).

Many researchers agree that integrating national and international cultures in English language education is helpful for teaching and learning English as a global language. Teaching varieties of English in English language classrooms and bringing varieties of cultures in which English is used as a global language can also help motivate English language learners and enhance their awareness and enthusiasm to learn English. Cultural awareness and cultural competence can be significant in English language classrooms. Providing cultural diversity in English language classrooms can avoid stereotyping and help achieve autonomy in knowing other cultures and languages (Shahid, 2013). Thus, integrating culture and raising cultural diversity awareness is vital to respecting other cultures in the globalized world and recognizing English as a global language in classroom pedagogy (Altan, 2017). Therefore, it is essential to train teachers to teach various cultures through English as a global language and design English language textbooks by integrating cultures of not only native but also non-native English-speaking countries.

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Interview Questions

Questions about Perspectives on English

1. How do you define the role of English in globalization?
2. How can English help access globalization?
3. What kind of resources are available in the world of English, and what may help students access them?

Questions about English Language Education in Türkiye

1. What do you think about Türkiye's English language education curriculum to access globalization?
2. Do you think English language course books in Türkiye are inclusive enough to help students understand globalization?
3. How do you think English language course books and curricula can be revised to raise more awareness of globalization and help students learn English as the language of globalization?
4. What are your suggestions for teaching English as the language of the global world?
5. What are your suggestions for raising students' awareness of English as a tool to access resources in the global world?