



English Language Teaching as Lingua Franca¹

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ABSTRACT

Today, English is used and taught as a common language all over the world; however, there have been changes in the way it is taught. Over the past thirty years, English Language teaching has expanded to the extent that those whose native language is not English currently use English even more widely. It can be inferred from its status that it is the lingua franca of the world. In order to prepare learners for the changing demands across the globe, the teaching of English should be updated. Up until now, many approaches, techniques and methods have been created and used one after another. According to the latest trends, English Language teaching should create or organize conditions that promote learning. By using the language simultaneously through the student participation in classroom activities, a process rather than a product-oriented view of teaching has become popular. This study will review English Language teaching resulting from the usage of English as a lingua franca.

Keywords: English, Lingua Franca, Trend, Teaching, Learning.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Purpose and Significance

The origin of global English goes back to as far as the 5th century when English came from northern Europe to England. It then began to spread around the British Isles, and after the Norman invasion, to Scotland, and in 12th century, to Ireland. At the gateway to the 21st century, English has taken a new role as a requirement of the globalized world. The growing need for efficient communication in English has created a huge demand for English teaching around the world. Students have important aims for learning English. They want to be able to master English to a high level of accuracy and fluency, and their motivation for learning originates from the desire to communicate in meaningful ways about meaningful topics.

Methods

The teaching of English by focusing on grammar practice and vocabulary or the use of an alternative skill based curriculum appears not to have been considered recently. Teachers are expected to know cultural aspects and culture teaching activities in the classes that are not easy in practice. Alptekin (1993) supports this difficulty, stating that the acquisition process causes learners to be subject to novel cultural data, whose organization for the purposes of comprehension and retention becomes difficult or even impossible to achieve. On the other hand, looking back the past decades the acceptance of English as the lingua franca around the world has cause much debate and a great deal of research (Cogo, 2012; Groom, 2012; Jenkins, 2015; Kirkpatrick, 2010) on teaching styles. The fast spread of English as a lingua franca (ELF) also manifested changes in language teaching. In the application of English language teaching, modern classroom techniques and activities are necessary, and improvement in the roles of teachers and learners in the classroom in parallel with ELF. Richards (2000) and Gross (2016) argue that instead of using activities that require repetition and memorization of sentences and grammatical items, learners should perform activities for comprehension and to interact meaningfully.

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Results

Since one of the main goals of language learning is to acquire fluency in language practices among individuals in the world, in this multicultural interaction, the idea of teaching culture besides teaching a foreign language has become in the focus of attention recently in teaching the language. The appearance of cultural variation has brought significant perception into the education process. Serçu et al., (2005) argues that foreign language teaching should not only focus on language but should also include a cultural dimension in a broader sense. If English language teaching (ELT) follows the actual developments in the teaching of English, it has to keep up with the changes in the way it is taught for intercultural and international communication. Since current ELT techniques approaches and methods aim to make students communicate efficiently, a shift of focus is necessary for ELT to meet the demands of widespread international English usage nowadays.

Discussion and Conclusions

This study reviews English Language teaching resulting from the usage of English as a lingua franca. The historical development of English and how it developed into a lingua franca and the place of culture in teaching and spread of English on a global scale were investigated from some aspects. In response to the rapid growth of English, it is necessary to reconsider the way that English is learned and taught, the teaching materials used, the assessment forms, techniques, approaches, methods and teaching philosophy in classroom settings. Thus, within this context it has become an obligation to consider the shifts of trends in English teaching methodologies with regard to the emergence of learner populations and cultures. For comprehension, culture must be included to some extent and it is a very important component in language learning and teaching. Language teachers should include cultural items in every aspect and level of the language they teach, as the world has become a global village. English language teachers should also guide the students when necessary. Attention has been paid to the issues that English as a lingua franca by taking into consideration the emerging trends in ELT classrooms. In conclusion, the issue of ELT as lingua franca has been touched upon to some extent in this paper, but more detailed research is needed in the future.

Lingua Franca Olarak İngilizce Öğretimi¹

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ÖZET

Bugün İngilizce dünyada yaygın olarak kullanılmakta ve öğretimi konusunda bazı değişiklikler olmaktadır. 30 yılı aşkın süredir İngiliz Dil öğretimi büyük oranda artmış olup, günümüzde de ana dili İngilizce olmayan uluslar tarafından giderek daha da yaygın olarak kullanılmaktadır. Buradan çıkarılacak sonuç günümüzde İngilizcenin lingua-franca haline gelmiş olmasıdır. Bununla bağlantılı olarak dünyadaki değişen taleplere cevap vermek için İngilizce öğretimi güncellenmelidir. Geçmişten günümüze çok sayıda metotlar, yaklaşımlar ve teknikler ortaya çıkmış ve birbiri ardı sıra kullanılmıştır. Yeni akımlara göre İngilizce öğretimi, öğrenmeyi ve dili kullanmayı eş zamanlı olarak ayarlayarak ve sınıftaki öğrenci katılımıyla birlikte oluşturmak ve organize etmektir, yani çıktı temelli değil de, işlev temelli öğretim gözde olmuştur. Bu çalışmanın amacı İngilizcenin lingua franca olarak kullanılması ile ilgili olarak öğretiminin değerlendirilmesini yapmaktır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: İngilizce, Lingua Franca, Akım, Öğretim, Öğrenme.

1. Introduction

At the gateway to the 21st century, English has taken a new role as a requirement of the globalized world. The growing need for efficient communication in English has created a huge demand for English teaching around the world. Students have important aims for learning English. They want to be able to master English to a high level of accuracy and fluency, and their motivation for learning originates from the desire to communicate in meaningful ways about meaningful topics. Richards (2000) argues that the growing necessity for English has generated an enormous demand for accredited language teaching materials and resources.

At the same time, the revised needs of English language learners have to be taken into consideration. The development of a comprehensive understanding about student needs and ideas regarding which kind of English they wish to learn, will allow teachers to focus and relevant (Gross, 2016; Jenkins, 2014).

1.1. Development of English on a Global Scale

Historians of the English language divided the history of English into three periods, namely; Old English (450-1106), Middle English (1106-1500) and Modern English (1500-). The dominance of English began with the press and media. It was the language of the press from the 17th century when the *Weekley Newes* appeared in 1622. With the development of news communication, English usage in the popular press became very prominent (Crystal, 2003) ,and it began to be seen in institutions such as Associated Press and the BBC, presenting international news by means of English (Graddol, 2006). Today, the function of English, the world's most powerful language, has to be considered by nations across the world. The Internet, press, radio and TV are classified as the most important means of communication around the globe. Therefore, it can be said that worldwide, people cannot live efficiently without the aforementioned means of communication. Originating from here in the 21st century, the formation of new terms such as information literacy, media literacy, media in teaching, digital literacy, digital culture and digital citizens have started to appear.

Thanks to the variety of communication devices, individuals can now connect in the commercial arena and the areas of education, technology, and the English language is an even more important factor. Borders have become less important and English has become the contact language among people from different countries, growing into a worldwide lingua franca.

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1.2. *English as Lingua Franca and Culture*

The teaching of English by focusing on grammar practice and vocabulary or the use of an alternative skill based curriculum appears not to have been considered recently. Teachers are expected to know cultural aspects and culture teaching activities in the classes that are not easy in practice. Alptekin (1993) supports this difficulty, stating that the acquisition process causes learners to be subject to novel cultural data, whose organization for the purposes of comprehension and retention becomes difficult or even impossible to achieve.

On the other hand, looking back the past decades the acceptance of English as the lingua franca around the world has caused much debate and a great deal of research (Cogo, 2012; Groom, 2012; Jenkins, 2015; Kirkpatrick, 2010) on teaching styles. As a result of these research studies, many assumptions have been made within the context of English Lingua Franca (ELF) concept. The fast spread of English as a lingua franca (ELF) also manifested changes in language teaching. In the application of English language teaching, modern classroom techniques and activities are necessary, and improvement in the roles of teachers and learners in the classroom in parallel with ELF. Richards (2000) and Gross (2016) argue that instead of using activities that require repetition and memorization of sentences and grammatical items, learners should perform activities for comprehension and to interact meaningfully.

One of the main goals of language learning is to acquire fluency in language practices among individuals in the world. In this multicultural interaction, the idea of teaching culture besides teaching a foreign language has become in the focus of attention recently in teaching the language. The appearance of cultural variation has brought significant perception into the education process. Sercu et al. (2005) argues that foreign language teaching should not only focus on language but should also include a cultural dimension in a broader sense.

However, one of the consequences of the fast expansion of English is that it has been accepted as a lingua franca (ELF) in the communication of non-native speakers from large variety of cultural backgrounds. These days, speakers whose native language is other than English, communicate in English with other non-native speakers (Llurda, 2005). It is estimated that in 1991, the common foreign language of 80% of the non-native speakers across the world is English (Seidlhofer, 2005). Over the past twenty years, this number has certainly arisen; with the result that those who use English now are more than those whose native language is English.

If English language teaching (ELT) follows the actual developments in the teaching of English, it has to keep up with the changes in the way it is taught for intercultural and international communication. Since current ELT techniques approaches and methods aim to make students communicate efficiently, a shift of focus is necessary for ELT to meet the demands of widespread international English usage.

1.3. *The Spread of English: Concepts*

Globalization is a multidimensional aspect. Giddens (1990) refers to globalization as “the intensification of worldwide social relations which link distant localities in such a way that local happenings are shaped by events occurring many miles away and vice versa”. Kumaravadivelu (2008) describes globalization as “a dominant and driving force that is shaping a new form of interconnection and flow among nations, economies, and people. It results in the transformation of contemporary social life in all its economic, political, cultural, technological, ecological, and individual dimensions”.

According to Crystal (2003), the widespread use of English can be expressed by means of mainly two concepts: a) geographical-historical and b) socio-cultural. The historical concept refers to the origins of English, however the socio-cultural concept is related to the recent positioning of English in international and intercultural areas such as communication, politics, teaching and learning, and why people all over the globe have been encouraged to acquire English for purposes such as economic, prestige, and life standards. The spread of English took place mainly in the following concepts;

Historical Concept

The origin of global English goes back to as far as the 5th century when English came from northern Europe to England. It then began to spread around the British Isles, and after the Norman invasion, to Scotland, and in 12th century, to Ireland. These circumstances occurred only within the British Isles. The transportation of the English language to new domains around the world materialized via two major

forms of transmission: from England, Scotland and Ireland to America and Australia; and secondly to Asia and Africa.

Cultural Concept

There was a cultural dimension in the spread of English. It has become an international and intercultural means of communication in areas such as the media, entertainment, technology, education, and travel (Crystal, 2003).

Educational Concept

Throughout the world, English is used mostly either as an official language or a foreign language. It is preferred as the primary foreign language in schools and educational institutions. Within the context of education, it is the communication medium of science and technology. The English language has become an important and indispensable part of education in the world today.

Media and Entertainment Concept

The role of English in the media is the world's most powerful force. As it is divided into several forms such as radio, and TV, the media and press are commonly the definition of these various means of communication. It is considered as the world's highway to information; thus, it can be said that the world cannot have function without the media. According to Graddol (1997), television is the most popular means of entertainment around the globe. The popularity and advancements in satellite TV channel usage have increased the spread of English across nations by means of popular programs, films, TV serials and, of course, news.

Technological Concept

English is increasingly used for a wide range of purposes in technological, scientific and similar areas. This has increased the size of vocabulary, changed grammatical structures and modes of speaking and writing in related areas. By means of transmission by the Internet, English is seen as the advancement of 'net English' (Graddol, 1997).

Travel Concept

People over the world travel for a variety of purposes such as education, business, trade, or tourism. In this respect, the world-wide spread of English is related to the role that it has as a means of communication for domestic and international travel purposes.

2. Discussion and Conclusion

In this paper, the historical development of English and how it developed into a lingua franca and the place of culture in teaching and spread of English on a global scale were investigated from certain aspects. In response to the rapid growth of English, it is necessary to reconsider the way that English is learned and taught, the teaching materials used, the assessment forms, techniques, approaches, methods and teaching philosophy in classroom settings. Thus, within this context it has become an obligation to consider the shifts of trends in English teaching methodologies with regard to the emergence of learner populations and cultures. For comprehension, culture must be included in language learning and teaching to some extent as it is important component of the language itself. Language teachers should include cultural items in every aspect and level of the language they teach, as the world has become a global village. English language teachers should also draw the attention of their students to the fact that English is a lingua franca by taking into consideration the emerging trends in ELT classrooms. In conclusion, the issue of ELT as lingua franca has been touched upon to some extent in this paper, but more detailed research is needed in the future.

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