



English Language and Globalization

(An Analysis of Johnson against the Backdrop of ESL/EFL Learners)

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ABSTRACT

Given the history of English becoming the most widely spoken language in the world, there are presently questions and concerns about the function of English vis-a-vis other languages in the globalization context. This study examines the tenets of globalization and its impacts on cultural identity in the English language learning milieu. It also examines how English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners put English above their own languages. It also looks at literature on how learning a second or foreign language impacts one's sense of cultural identity. Numerous research has provided evidence that the learners' cultural identities are harmed by the globalization of English. One of the most accurate ways to determine someone's identity and cultural heritage is through their language. This implies that developing one's cultural identity may be difficult in the absence of language. Learning a second language, however, may cause one to lose certain aspects or understanding of their original languages, as Ged (2013) contends. Second language learning, on the other hand, can impact in both positive and negative ways. In this context, there are three basic viewpoints from which Johnson (2009) argues that it is necessary to comprehend the internationalization of the English language and its impacts on cultural identity are (i) English as a tool for intercultural communication, (ii) English as a fad or lingua franca of the past, and (iii) English as both. This paper will explore all three viewpoints. By looking at these three crucial characteristics, it can be deduced how globalization has impacted cultural identity in the English-speaking world.

Keywords: *Cross-cultural awareness, Cross-Cultural Communication, Cultural identity, Global language, Globalization, International Communication, Lingua Franca, Linguistic Imperialism*

1. Introduction

The process of combining many cultures, languages, organizations, and nations on a global scale is known as globalization (Pieterse, 2019). Everyone on the planet is connected for both personal and professional purposes as a result of globalization. The effects of globalization are evident everywhere. Most visibly, globalization is significantly influenced by the English language (Berger & Huntington, 2002). English language instruction inevitably undergoes changes in a global culture. As a result of globalization, many students have begun studying English as a foreign language and/ or second language. Globalization, according to Appadurai (2001), is best understood as a multidirectional process that involves the exchange of thoughts, people, messages, objects, images, ideologies, technologies, and processes.

This study will examine how learning English as a foreign language or second language in many African and Asian nations affects language learning and cultural identity. The globalization of English has, however, had a range of repercussions on society; one of the most notable one is the loss of cultural identity. (Guilherme, 2007).

1.1 Background of the Study

This section of the study begins with the idea of globalization and the importance of a language in cross-cultural communication before discussing the function of English in today's globalized world.

Globalization and Communication

According to the study titled "According to Todorova and Todorova (2018)", the term "globalization" has several meanings and interpretations in a variety of disciplines, including political science, economics, environment studies, and cultural studies. Although some students view globalization as a sociological phenomenon that eliminates existing boundaries, others emphasize how it may unify and homogenize the planet. The "great concept" of the 20th century was globalization, which includes the process of worldwide integration brought about by the movement of global views, goods, ideas, and other elements of culture and society. Globalization is obviously derived from the term "globe" and its application in the context of the world becoming a global village, is ever expanding. However, there are opposing views that claim globalization is a myth and is on the verge of becoming the cliché of our time, if it hasn't already. The contemporary occurrence of certain processes involving the worldwide transmission of knowledge and experience, which is related to the latest information age and emerging latest technologies, cannot be disregarded, nevertheless. Chen (2012) lists the following five crucial aspects of globalization:

- Globalization is a dialectically evolving cycle brought on by the push and pull of local and global forces, or cultural identity and cultural variation.
- Globalization is always present because it affects every aspect of human civilization and shapes how individuals think, act, and live.
- Globalization creates a huge matrix with interconnected components, and is therefore, holistically integrated.
- Globalization entails a condition of cultural hegemony that permits rapid cultural transmission through new media by invading and dissolving human borders.
- In the age of new media, when each individual's potential and importance are recognized, globalization encourages individual power.

These characteristics simply highlight the opportunities and hazards that must be considered. On the one hand, the new globalization period offers us many opportunities to share and exchange our information, discoveries, experiences, and ideas with others across the world. At the same time, the kinds of communication skills that are required in this scenario have been considerably influenced in recent decades by globalization and the resulting cross-cultural engagement (Ramsey & Lorenz, 2016).

People, however, can no longer afford to have effective communication limited to their own homogeneous cultures. This is especially true of students who now must comprehend how long-distance collaboration functions, how culture impacts speech and body language, and how to use technology to interact with others around the globe. Globalization has made virtual communication and cooperation important elements of workplace dynamics, but they also present obstacles, such as the small variances in people's speech patterns while speaking across countries, and cultural disparities in body language (Quade et al., 2020). Understanding information requirements based on other cultures' or nations' communication methods is also essential.

In the presence of such diversity, the primary communication means for the growth of intercultural competency is language (Swartz et al., 2020). Language is the building block of culture; as such, it contributes to its creation through vocabulary, salutations, and humor, acts as vital indicators of cluster affiliation, and defines the identity of the culture of the masses. One may expand their horizons, think internationally, and grow in self-awareness and empathy by being fluent in several languages (Jones, 2006). What is certain though is that globalization would not have been possible if language (as a means of communication) had not been invented.

Some languages and civilizations are said to have vanished as a result of globalization, while others have grown and come to rule the globe. Globalization, in turn, has both beneficial and detrimental effects on

language which, in turn, have a variety of effects on the language's culture (Hurn & Tomalin, 2013). According to learners, the effect on minority languages, the loss of homogeneity among the main languages, the neglect for the richness and variety of linguistic forms and styles, and the decrease in the study of foreign languages among English speakers are the impacts of globalization on the world's languages that are most obvious (Canagarajah, 2007).

In conclusion, despite the fact that globalization is not a new phenomenon, it is now a widespread tendency. International communication is one of the main pillars of globalization (Riis, 2017). Without the generally understood language that mediates communication across cultures, the diffusion of knowledge around the world would be all but impossible. Social interactions are fundamentally impacted by language, in addition to being influenced by it. It is, therefore, challenging to overestimate the significance of world languages in the context of globalization. The following part of this study looks at how other languages adapt to issues brought on by globalization and looks at the conditions that must be met for English to replace other languages as the main form of communication on the planet.

English language in the context of globalization and its consequences on cultural identity

According to Alfarhan (2016), the internationalization of English has been useful in a range of ways, such as, achieve economic success or create a new class of inequality, as a way to foster cross-cultural awareness and communication, or as a lingua franca that only exists momentarily (Johnson, 2009).

This language globalization has shown that these claims are untrue; a language's primary function, according to Kanno and Varghese (2010), is to facilitate communication. The endeavor to learn a new language has a hidden goal; communication is no longer the primary function of language. According to earlier studies, English-speaking people now feel as though they are part of a group that catalyzed the internationalization of this language. English is referred to as a sign of belonging for a certain group by academics. The English language has a significant influence on the emerging class of second-language English speakers (Alkhodimi, & Al Ahdal, 2019), in third-world nations in Asia and Africa since language is the main component in creating cultural identity (Hatoss, 2003).

English as a tool for economic success

According to Alfarhan (2016), English has played a key role in the expansion of commercial institutions and has been used as a tool for the financial success of those who have created a new class of inequality, new class of

disparities that are mostly dependent on language abilities as a result. According to one study, the English language has had a big impact on how a nation's economy has developed and grown (Johnson, 2009). English is still a crucial tool for gaining self-sufficiency and prosperity as people seek to be successful. It is asserted that learning English helps the economy in a number of ways, including by giving people the foundational skills they need to succeed in the modern era (Seppala, 2011). One can understand the key skills required for modern living, such as computer and driving competence, by having a grasp of the English language. English continues to be the primary communication language for people all over the world despite the advancement of technology. Therefore, learning English gives one the best chance to understand modern civilizations. In this background, English is presented as a valuable cultural asset.

English continues to be the most widely used language for communication as people continue to interact for various purposes (Poggensee, 2016), and that, too, effectively transcending a variety of language hurdles. Businesses are expanding and seeking to do business with and in more nations throughout the world. The majority of people learn English for career purposes rather than with the intention of becoming fluent in the language. People in developing nations are eager to learn English in order to secure better employment. However, to ensure a more promising career conducive to their ambitions, people must overcome several challenging conditions, such as navigating the educational system from kindergarten to college. Because they strive for greatness, they must go through the system to be recognized as qualified for the employment, which may take longer than anticipated. Although understanding and communicating in a new language is the main aim of language acquisition in education, obtaining a better career and becoming economically successful in society should come first (Kanno& Varghese, 2010).

English as a tool for cross-cultural communication

As a language, English has had an impact on even conservative societies like the Chinese. One of the nations where culture is still respected and protected at all costs is China. The repercussions of globalization, however, have altered their commitment to culture, and during the past 10 years, we have witnessed a number of changes (Johnson, 2009): English education in schools which was once frowned upon by the Chinese government, is today promoted as the sole success factor in a globalized world.

These modifications were a result of increasing exposure to the outside world. At the same time, the mother tongue, Mandarin, continues to be the predominant language of teaching and communication despite the fact that English is currently taught in many schools. Internationalization has had a considerable influence on China's English learning, claims Johnson (2009). For the purpose of globalization, many Chinese students

are currently studying English as a second language. Some people were compelled to improve their English skills as a result of the worldwide events that Beijing hosted in 2008, including the Olympic Games. Taxi drivers, personnel of the official games, and hotel staff and management were all compelled to enhance their English abilities in spite of the fact that they did not want to.

According to studies, a person's identity may be significantly influenced by their use of language (Lobaton, 2012). Studying a second language is challenging, and learners face several obstacles. According to a case study conducted in Canada, students are different from their coworkers who acquire English as a second language. As a learner of English as a Second Language, one has no culture to claim. It is necessary to acquire some of the cultural customs of English-speaking nations, in this example, the West, in order to learn English as a second language. This could lead someone to reject their culture, and even if they don't, there will be confusion about the culture they are a part of. This is because they will naturally strive to fit into the new culture that the newly acquired language offers while also parallelly practicing their native culture. Because of this, English as a Second Language learners struggle to overcome the obstacles they face when learning a new language. According to Lobaton (2012), the new language that second-language English learners learn shapes their social identities in distinct ways. Again, because of their diverse positions and identities—largely as a result of their acquisition of a second language—they have various methods of debating their cultural identities. Individuals can adjust to a new culture without renouncing their prior one, claims Hatoss (2003). The uncertainty that comes with learning a second language, however, may lead the native tongue to lose some of its cultural traits, as Lobaton (2012) argues. Lobaton (2012) and Hatoss (2003) both argue that language is a key factor in defining cultural identity. Cultural identity may be affected if the language has been altered.

Hatoss's (2003) assertion, however, might not be true. Despite of being a minority in Australia, the Hungarian tribe has managed to preserve its traditional practices and ethical standards. The methods used by the Hungarians to maintain their culture can eventually be rejected since most people who learn a new language and culture do not use them. To conserve and pass on their cultural values and customs to future generations, the Hungarians, for example, created organizations like the Hungarian Association of Australia. We contend that how second-language English learners are seen is influenced by the globalization of English and how it influences their social identity. Nevertheless, as Johnson (2009) points out, people make an effort to connect with modernism; as a result, they could give up their traditional cultures in order to do so. The internationalization of English has given rise to a new culture among second-language English speakers. Everyone wants to be knowledgeable about the most recent

technology, which is mostly dependent on the English language. Thus, learning a second language such as English may eventually cause a person to lose their sense of cultural identity. According to Hatoss (2003), choosing the culture that is best for everyone becomes a difficult task when there are several cultural groups involved. Additionally, he believes that the minority will almost always be influenced by the majority culture and be moved to embrace it. The same idea holds true for learning English as a Second Language. Children only use their native language at home since English is the language most commonly utilized in education. Since young learners spend most of their time in school, the indigenous culture loses out to the prevailing English culture.

English as a passing phase or the past lingua franca

According to Johnson (2009), whether language is seen as a lingua franca of the past or something totally different—a passing fad, as historians claim—it poses a greater threat to other civilizations. Furthermore, other languages and civilizations suffer as a result of the perceived superiority of English. Because English is the most common language used in news, advertising, and other social contexts, it has dominated the world. More superior protection has been given to English than to other languages. Ged (2013) demonstrates how English as a Second Language learners must go beyond only studying the language to additionally forge a character as speakers of English language. The process may cause one to lose some comprehension of their own culture, the author observes, leading to a loss of cultural identity. A person may learn a language more quickly the more exposure they have to it. Consequently, as stated by Johnson (2009), English is widely spoken, which accounts for its dominance over other languages. According to Wyatt's (2009) investigation of the impact of translating from one language into another across many cultures, a word's meaning may be lost throughout the translation process. As a result, most people will choose to communicate in English rather than struggle through the laborious translation process. To reach a larger audience, the majority of third-world authors publish their novels in English. Their audiences may be limited if they only speak in their native tongues. Although they make an effort to impart information about their communities, readers are more focused on the language, which has an effect on their sense of cultural identification. Some concepts, according to Wyatt (2009), lose their significance throughout the translation process since it is influenced by the communities of the writers. Because of this, although if they compose in English to reach a larger audience, their actual meaning might not be as clear. Poggensee (2016) defines language globalization as the process of increasing the number of languages used as official international languages and eradicating those that are no longer widely spoken. The most frequently used languages, like English, will continue to dominate the others.

1.2 Research questions

In the light of the preceding discussion and analysis, this study answers the following questions:

1. How far does English language affect ESL/EFL cultural identity?
2. What is the level of ESL/EFL learners' awareness on the necessity of maintaining their own cultural identity while learning the target language culture?

2. Methodology

According to the type of this study, the researcher has adopted the descriptive research methodology in order to describe the impact of globalization on ESL/EFL learners' cultural identity. The researcher has collected data presented by Johnson to identify the influence as well as the level of ESL/EFL learners' awareness on the necessity of maintaining their own cultural identity while learning the target language culture.

3. Findings

In response to the aforementioned research questions, the study came up with several findings. However, it is desirable to mention here three key findings.

1. ESL/EFL learners' misconception of the term "globalization" might result in influencing their cultural identity negatively.
2. English as a second or foreign language could pose a threat on learners' domestic cultural identity.
3. Learners of English as a second or foreign language should be made aware that English is a tool of communication bridges the gap between people but not necessarily to be influenced by the culture of its native speakers.

4. Conclusion

It is the duty of ELT syllabi designers and teacher education specialists to provide a common framework for teacher competency in the teaching of English. This paradigm for standardized competency enables educators to identify and address global demands. The framework would give teachers a base from which to assess their abilities and identify their areas for improvement. It could be simpler for a teacher to succeed at teaching

English if they have the abilities required to instruct a global audience. Independent of time or experience, any teacher should be able to acquire and advance their proficiency utilizing a consistent framework. At the time of the interview, even educational institutions may evaluate the proficiency of the teachers. Additionally, seasoned educators might assess their efficiency in the classroom prior to promotion and, if required, prepare for the desired role. As a consequence, a consistent framework for teacher competency and performance would produce exceptional English educators as well as more job opportunities for instructors.

According to Todorova and Todorova, globalization has become a fact of modern life despite popular pessimism (2018). To this end, English has become a means of international communication for globalization. English-mediated technology and the web contributed to the growth of this tendency. On the other hand, other languages of the world are being undermined in terms of establishing cross-cultural and international social relationships. Despite growing concerns among students and politicians who accuse it of linguistic imperialism and homogenizing the identities and interests of the people, many people regard the expansion of English as a positive development, a symbol of wealth, employment, education, modernity, etc. The ongoing debate about the status of English as a global language only serves to highlight how effective it can be when used properly to foster international understanding and protect regional diversity.

Recommendations

1. English language syllabi designers should be scrutinizing culture-related materials carefully prior to their approval for ESL/EFL classroom utilization.
2. Teacher training specialists are advised to raise the awareness of ESL/EFL instructors regarding learners' cultural identity preservation.
3. ESL/EFL instructors are recommended to read more about their own culture and to reflect it to others using English as a tool of communication.

Availability of data and materials

All data and information recorded or analyzed throughout this study are included in this paper.

Competing interests

The author declares that he has no relevant financial or non-financial interests to declare.

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Ethics statement

Ethical review and approval were not required for the study on human participants in accordance with the local legislation and institutional requirements.

Consent statement

Written informed consent from the [patients/participants or patients/participants' legal guardian/next of kin] was not required to participate in this study in accordance with the national legislation and the institutional requirements.

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