

## ***Linguistic Imperialism and Foreign Language Teaching***

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This paper unfolds into two parts: The first part presents arguments against linguistic imperialism. The relationship between the center countries and the periphery countries is examined by giving specific examples from Turkey. The center countries are namely the USA and England. They produce both language materials and language teaching methodology. The periphery countries are those countries that are dependent on the center countries with respect to materials and methodology. The second part of the paper discusses some proposals to reduce the detrimental influence of linguistic imperialism on language education.

**Key words: foreign language teaching, linguistic imperialism, materials adaptation and development**

### **BACKGROUND**

Today, no one questions the global role and importance of English. Armed with technological, scientific, military, political, economic, academic, and cultural powers, English has become a golden key to keep pace with technological, economic and social advances and has assisted in integration with the rest of the world (Jenkins, 2006). The fact that the vast majority of scientific texts are published in English makes it essential to keep with the recent advancements in science and technology. In addition, international

business is conducted in English and it has become the language of international diplomacy. Moreover, the advances in communication technology, which have facilitated communication between people all over the world, have helped English function as the common language of global communication. Furthermore, English has dominated the Internet, computer technology, and software infrastructure in such a way that countries have become more and more English-dependent. It has also become one of the essential assets for social mobility. Most of the good jobs require English, hence it has become a powerful tool to determine individuals' socio-economic status. In short, the English language is recognized undoubtedly as the most important language to learn and countries and individuals sacrifice and invest much to make their future brighter (Crystal, 1997; Krashen, 2003).

Although English has been a unifying force for the business and political world and has aided in bringing countries together, not everything has been beneficial. The global dominance of English has created a stigmatized term "linguistic imperialism" (Phillipson, 1993; Phillipson & Karmani, 2005). Linguistic imperialism refers to the dominance, supremacy and hegemony of one language over other languages. It is such a broad concept that it ranges from imposition of one language on others by conquest and occupation to the transmission of the values and modes of thinking of a particular culture via language education. It does not come into existence alone; it is the byproduct or natural outcome of social, cultural, military, economic, and political power. As a result, these factors create a linguistic power ready to invade and dominate all the other linguistic domains in relation to the powers mentioned above. Armed with these powers, a language competes with other languages and spreads its hegemony, which ranges from extinction of other languages to lexical invasion. In other words, it continuously increases in terms of the number of people who speak it and the functions it fulfills. As Phillipson (1993) mentions, it both replaces and deplaces other languages. In the case that it does not (or cannot) replace other languages, it limits the functions of the dominated languages and creates linguistic inequality; so that it fulfills almost all prestigious functions and lets the dominated languages only carry

out some ordinary functions. This linguistic inequality creates cultural, social, economic, and political inequality within the society, giving its speakers power and prestige, which allows them to control the society in turn. Moreover, linguistic imperialism leads to full or partial assimilation depending on the context. When the relationship between the language and national identity is considered, it can threaten the existence and future of nations. Since a dominant language offers some advantages and opportunities to its speakers among the speakers of the dominated languages, the need or demand is created to learn the dominant languages at the expense of the mother tongue. Consequently, their thought processes, value judgments, etc. are invaded by the dominant language, which may give rise to full or partial loss of national and self-identity.

This leads us to the idea that it is a requirement to be critical about knowledge produced by the dominant countries. Knowledge is a product of a particular content. Social, political, cultural, economic factors determine the production of knowledge. It reflects the values, ideas, and beliefs of a certain content. Hence, it is impossible to talk about politically culturally and socially neutral knowledge (Alptekin, 1996; Pennycook, 1989; Phillipson, 1993). Similarly, language teaching is a way of life and all the methods and materials carry the ideology of those who produced them. Hence, ELT, today, is dominated by center countries, namely the US and UK. They evaluate the fields by using Anglo-Saxon standards in the name of professionalism, create the norms, and impose their ideas on the periphery countries- all the other countries, which the center dominated. Ideological, political and social messages are expressed and exported to the periphery, which has become dependent on the center (Brumfit, 1983; Pennycook, 1989, 1996; Phillipson, 1993; Rogers, 1990). In short, it is possible to use ELT as a means of imposing desired behaviors and attitudes on other groups of people.

The effects of linguistic imperialism can also be observed in foreign and second language education. Ex-colonial countries provide examples of how a dominant language can be used to maintain colonial ties. Although they became independent, colonial institutions continue to exist, controlled by the

elite educated in those institutions and speaking the language of colonizers. Thus, the retention of the colonizers' language maintains socioeconomic discrimination in the society (Fasold, 1991; Rogers, 1990). Therefore, the language of the colonizers is used in those institutions and has become the key factor for social mobility, power and prestige. In this respect, the hegemony of the colonizers continues and, and ex-colonies depend on the one-way flow of information from the dominant society. Generally, they do not create or produce anything; they just consume the ready-made prescriptions prepared by their ex-bosses. This kills self-confidence and creativity, and always keeps them in the dominated position (Choi, 2003).

If the dominant language is taught as a foreign language, then the situation is not so hopeless as in the case of second language education. Since the dominant language is geographically far (or at least there are borders) from the dominated language, its influences are limited in comparison to the second language education case. However, in this case there is also unequal competition between the dominant and dominated languages. The dominated language cannot compete with the dominant language powered with rich, sophisticated linguistic means to fulfill any kind of function. The dominant society most probably produces new technology, science, waves in fashion, music, sports, arts, etc. and consequently generates new terminology and concepts that do not exist in the dominated language. As a result, this leads to lexical invasion of the dominated language by the dominant one. Because of this, the dominated language cannot improve itself to meet the needs in the fields mentioned above, and a kind of discrimination and gap occurs between them. The dominant language may replace some of the functions of the dominated one in this respect. Since the dominant language continues to generate new concepts and terminology, the gap between the dominant and dominated languages continuously increases, making the dominated one more dependent on the dominant one. Since the dominant language is usually the language of science, technology, music, fashion and art, governments often make plans to teach it to their citizens, and people feel the need to learn it. Obviously, this facilitates a one-way flow of information from the

dominant to the dominated language, and the dominated becomes the borrower of new concepts and lexical items. Therefore, as Pennycook (1990) points out, it is far from enriching the dominated one, but responsible for keeping it in its present lower, impoverished condition.

In addition, foreign language education is a way of maintaining ties with the dominated society and influencing it in various ways. A dominant foreign language, at least, affects the attitudes of its speakers positively in the dominated society. Through foreign language education a dominant language can easily reach a lot of people all over the world and help present the beliefs and attitudes of a dominant culture to attain global support. Therefore, as in the case of second language education aiming at creating a monolingual society, foreign language education seeks to create a world in which the dominant language can be used as a *lingua franca*, and by which the dominant culture retains its benefits all over the world.

### **Linguistic Imperialism and Foreign/ Second Language Teaching**

How does linguistic imperialism affect the language teaching in an EFL context? The center becomes the dominant and the periphery the dominated. The center assumes the right and role of producing all the ideas, principles, and techniques about language teaching. Consequently, the center produces the materials in relation to the ideas and principles they have produced and monopolizes the materials development process (Pennycook, 1989, 1996; Rogers, 1990). What is worse than this is the fact that the periphery assumes this subordinate, dominated role, that is, the technician role and carries out the EFL process in accordance with the norms specified by the center. In other words, their minds are colonized and they have lost their confidence. They do not or cannot think that they can also come up with new ideas and produce materials relevant to the needs of their context. There are some bizarre examples that can illustrate this situation: There have been some representatives in international publishing offices in Turkey who have served as teacher trainers. Although some of them have had no ELT background and

do not know the Turkish context, they have trained local English teachers who are professionals in the field. Another example; during an ELT event sponsored by international ELT publishing companies, two Turkish EFL teachers approached the stand of an international publisher and asked the representative which course book she could suggest for their students. The teachers teach in Turkey and know their context better and naturally could choose the most appropriate books. But, they thought they weren't good enough or they did not have enough capacity to choose their own coursebooks.

Similarly, as can be seen in Table 1, native speakers dominate EFL in Turkey. Cultural associations supported by the center and International ELT publishing companies organize talks or ELT seminars some of which are held in expensive hotels where teachers could eat and drink after the event. Companies invite native speakers and they inform the local EFL teachers about innovations in language teaching. Actually, they prescribe them how to teach or how to use particular materials. Some of these materials have already been used in Turkey and some teachers have applied them in their classes and known the weaknesses and strengths of these coursebooks. However, instead of teachers using these materials, they invite native speakers who may not know the materials as well as local teachers. The idea behind this is that even if the Turkish EFL teachers use these materials, they cannot evaluate these coursebooks as well as a native speaker. Besides that, when ideas come from native speakers, they are more valued by the local English teachers. A final example; one of the international ELT publishing companies prepare a general syllabus for the teachers as if they could not do it themselves. All these examples reflect how they perceive Turkish EFL teachers, what they think about their expertise in the field. Unfortunately the local ELT teachers have generally assumed this subordinate role. The center provides everything for them and they consume ready-made ideas and materials. Hence, such an approach assimilates teachers rather than equipping them with necessary expertise in the field.

**TABLE 1**  
**The Number of ELT Events in 2004 and the Native Speaker vs. Turkish**  
**Workshop or Seminar Leader**

The number of ELT events	Workshop or seminar leader (native speaker)	Workshop or seminar leader (Turkish)
23	23	0

Furthermore, the center, which produces and offers a compact ELT program, also specifies the norms of assessment and produces tests accordingly. To be successful on these tests, the EFL learners are to assimilate not only the linguistic standards the center puts forth, but also the Anglo-Saxon culture. They are expected to imitate Anglo-Saxon patterns of language use and culture to pass the international tests. Since test-takers are unlikely to achieve high levels in assimilating Anglo-Saxon patterns of language use and culture in an EFL context and have enough schemata about them, their success on these tests is hindered. Thus, the validity of such tests is questionable, since they test not only English, but the knowledge of Anglo-Saxon culture as well (Isik, 2000; Wallace, 1997).

This one-way flow of information brings economic advantages to the center. The center sells ideas, sends native speaker ELT experts and teachers and sells coursebooks to the periphery. They market monolingual ELT materials all over the world and this big industry gets bigger by feeding on the inadequate resources of the periphery. To provide EFL education, these countries sacrifice a lot. The price of a course book is between \$20-30. Of course this increases when the whole set is bought. On the other hand, a locally-produced scientific book prepared by experts is 3 times cheaper than an ELT course book in Turkey. In a school, it was reported that about \$5000 is spent per student for a one-year prep class education. Since the Turkish society knows the value of acquiring a foreign language for social mobility, a great demand for foreign language materials arises. As those materials are prepared and sold by the dominant society, as Phillipson (1993) mentions, it becomes an extremely profitable and indispensable business. Their publishers and cultural aid institutions work together and try to create demands, which can be also artificial, such as the idea that everybody should learn a foreign

language. Hence, some resources of the dominated country, which can be used efficiently in other fields, are wasted. The economic advantages of the dominant culture in the dominated one are not only limited to foreign language teaching materials. As the number of speakers of the dominant language increases in the world by using the language, the probability of advertising and selling the products of the dominant culture increases. Hence, foreign language education provides several economic advantages to the dominant society. In other words, the center has strong economic concerns in the periphery countries and this can be interpreted as kind of exploitation (Phillipson, 1993; Rogers, 1990).

As mentioned above, not only does the center export ELT materials but experts and teachers as well (see Table 2). They are all well-paid. They are respected and have a high status at their schools. They dominate almost all kinds of decisions about language teaching methodology and materials. Moreover, they generally act as a teacher trainer at their schools (see Table 3).

**TABLE 2**  
**The Number of Native Speaker and Turkish EFL Teachers in Three Major Private Universities**

The number of native speaker EFL teachers	The number of Turkish EFL teachers	Total
59	34	93

**TABLE 3**  
**The Number of Administrators/Teacher Trainers in Three Major Private Universities**

Native speaker	Turkish	Total
9	6	15

**TABLE 4**  
**The Number of Plenary Speakers in ELT Conferences**

Native speaker	Turkish	Total
17	3	20

They also dominate ELT events and conferences. Most of the leading figures of those events are native speaker teachers of English (see Table 4).

Hence, academically they have a superior position in the periphery. It is also the same economy-wise. For example, in private institutions a native speaker teacher of English earns \$4000 or more while a Turkish English teacher earns between \$400- 800 a month. This is a big gap between the two groups. These native speaker teachers who are supposed to serve the people of periphery emerge as a new social-class, which is economically superior to average people of the periphery. They lead a wealthy life in their own native speaker social club, and rarely get in touch with local people socially. They have a closely-knit society of their own. They live in the distinguished and luxurious districts of cities. A number of them do not even try to learn the language of the local people.

But how is such a context, in which the center dominates ELT, created? The mastery of English is accepted as the golden key of modernization and individual welfare. It is believed that it contributes a lot to the westernization process through social, political and economic changes. For this reason, the periphery countries emphasize ELT and spend a lot of time and money on this issue. They issue new laws and regulations, make ELT compulsory at schools and even specify a year in schooling –prep class- for the mastery of English. Individuals also think in the same way. Bombarded with English in their daily lives, they believe that English is the key to leading a better life. In media, for example, people are exposed to English in the form of music, sports, fashion, science and technology. English seems to be everywhere. Hence, parents think that their children must learn English for a better education and a better job. They send their children to preparatory courses to pass the exams of those schools, which emphasize ELT.

The official institutions of the center operating in the periphery countries also guide ELT. They have teacher centers and libraries. They organize workshops, seminars, and conferences in which native speaker “experts” share their ideas with the local English teachers. These talks sometimes become prescriptive. Through these events and organizations the local teachers get mentally prepared for the further actions taken by these institutions. For example, in the early 1990s, one of these institutions in

Turkey organized workshops, seminars, sent newsletters about task-based learning. They made local teachers believe that they should carry out task-based learning in their classes. After a while, there appeared ELT materials prepared according to the task-based learning principles. The mentally prepared teacher naturally preferred those course books. Thus, the ELT issue is multi-dimensional and more than an academic process.

### **The Possible Effects of ELT on an EFL Society**

Then, what about the effects of such efforts on the local society and culture? Learning a dominant language provides power and prestige to its users, which leads to social discrimination. The speakers of the dominant group have greater social mobility. When there is a relationship between success in a foreign language and socio-economic status, middle and upper class children have an advantage from the very beginning, so there is no equal opportunity for all members of society (Choi, 2003). Mostly, the members of the middle and upper classes achieve success in a foreign language, acquire prestigious positions, and control the society. This continues in a vicious cycle.

Moreover, there is the issue of what impact that language learning has on the individual's own thought processes. Linguistic determinism asserts that language itself influences the way one thinks. If this claim is true, one can easily understand how learning a foreign language may affect the modes of thinking of its speakers. A language is made up of culturally loaded elements (Alptekin, 1996; Pennycook, 1989; Phillipson, 1993). Therefore, when learning a language, some of those elements are naturally imposed on its learners. Moreover, language teaching does not occur in a vacuum, but takes place within a context. Naturally, the context is based on the way of life of the dominant culture; so, while learning a language the learners are exposed to the values of another culture, and some of them are transmitted to learners. The situation gets worse when language-teaching materials are prepared by the dominant group. Therefore, an assimilation process also accompanies

language teaching to some extent.

If the center dominates ELT so much and ignores the local context, it loads ELT with its own ideas reflecting the realities of the culture of the center, which may not fit those of the periphery. Hence, applying those ideas without filtering them in relation to the local norms brings failure. Similarly, insisting on the idea that the target language should be taught together with target culture brings a lot of culture-specific elements to the language class. While the focus should be on cultural awareness and interculturality, the center tries to produce acculturated, bicultural speakers (McKay, 2000). This causes reactions among local English teachers and students. According to a research carried out in Istanbul in 37 schools, about 78% of the teachers and 80% of the students stated that they did not want to learn about the target culture while learning a language (Isik, 2002). Another study carried out in Denmark and England shows a similar finding: When a sample group of teachers in both countries were given a list of topics and asked to rank them, they were seen to omit “high culture” topics like literature and art, drama, and to give low priority to the topics which may be described as increasing intercultural awareness and inducing reflexivity (Byram & Risager, 1999). Not only does this reaction create a negative attitude, it also creates cognitive difficulty for EFL learners. While learning a second language, learners have to handle new formal properties of language. When this is presented within a culture-specific context which learners are unfamiliar with, language learning burden doubles. Besides the formal properties of language, learners have to struggle with the content in which language is presented. Since they lack enough schemata about the target culture, there will be comprehension problems. Since comprehensible input is vital for language learning, culture-specific content, which makes the language input incomprehensible, may impede the language learning process (Alptekin, 1996). Besides these, due to the cognitive burden culture-specific elements create, learners may not handle the tasks and may develop negative attitudes towards the target culture or language; they may lose their self-esteem and motivation and stop learning the target language. Thus, imposing target culture and including culture-

specific elements in EFL materials have detrimental effects on EFL.

### **Summary**

It can be argued that a language program developed by the dominant culture, which provides learners with a different way of life, value systems and modes of thinking, brings enrichment. Learners can gain a wider perspective and their reasoning ability develops. They can become more open-minded, tolerant and flexible. Their cross-cultural understanding develops which might also bring economic advantages and opportunity for social mobility. Being equipped with the language, value system and mode of thinking of the dominant culture helps individuals attain socioeconomic power. It also helps them to be successful in the dominant culture, and provides them with various opportunities (education, etc.). It also has some societal advantages. Since the norms of that system are set by the dominant culture, it forces the dominated culture to meet those standards, encouraging social development. It also gives the dominated culture access to the dominant culture's science and technology to be used for improving itself. Eventually, it can also help it produce its own technology, as in the case of Japan at the turn of the century. Furthermore, it can increase communication among cultures, fosters cross-cultural understanding, and thus leading to the achievement of global peace.

However, any prescribed, universal and imported model is far from considering this reality. It does not analyze the needs, characteristics, attitudes, values and worldview of the native culture to design a specific language education plan that can work for that specific culture. It neither takes into account national and international goals, policies and relations, nor considers the availability of resources. In short, such a policy is far from determining the language education goals of that specific culture based on the analysis of the nature and the context of language education. Naturally, such a policy, which does not seek the factors mentioned above, may not meet the needs, demands, and goals of a society, with the result that there will be a

mismatch between the prescribed language education program and a native culture. Since it is based on the dominant culture's norms, this policy is unlikely to work in another context (Pennycook, 1989). In this case, as Brown (1995) and Richards (2001) point out, such an application brings failure rather than success, and the limited economic resources and human power of that culture continue to be wasted.

Moreover, such a prescription leads to one-way flow of knowledge and creates inequality between the dominant and dominated cultures. Since prescription kills creativity and freedom, the dominated culture will become dependent on what is produced by the dominant one. The dominated culture loses self-confidence and is deprived of the opportunity to produce its own knowledge. Furthermore, such a prescription exposes individuals in the dominated group to the dominant culture's value system and modes of thinking. This can cause a reaction in the native culture and such a program cannot be implemented. Furthermore, individuals, who are exposed to such a value-laden approach, may experience a kind of anomie and may have adaptation problems to their own culture. In addition, since this prescription is based on the norms of the dominant culture -including the American /British middle class way of life, value systems, and modes of thinking- it may serve the interests of the elite by keeping the lower classes in their places. Consequently, it can give rise to race and class discrimination (Pennycook, 1989). In short, such a prescription may give rise to cultural, economic, educational, linguistic imperialism and to a certain extent, assimilation (Pennycook, 1989).

### **AN ALTERNATIVE PERSPECTIVE FOR ELT TO MINIMIZE THE DETRIMENTAL EFFECTS OF LINGUISTIC IMPERIALISM**

The arguments mentioned above raise critical concerns about linguistic imperialism and are not against English education. It is beyond doubt that

English is vital for societal and individual enrichment. The question that must be asked is “how is it possible to live with English without getting dominated by it?”. In this section some solutions are proposed to cope with the negative influence of English.

### **Filtering the Knowledge and Adapting it to a Particular Context**

Pennycook (1990) mentions that there is no apolitical, universal knowledge applicable to all contexts. Such claims are put forward to hide some covert aims and new tactics developed by the dominant group(s) to control the dominated ones or to maintain the inequality between them. He claims that there is no value-free knowledge, and that carries the characteristics of the context in which it is produced. Since all knowledge produced within a particular configuration of social, cultural, economic, political, and historical circumstances always both reflects and helps to (re) produce those conditions, it serves the interests of the group which produces it. If this is the case, then it is necessary to be critical about any kind of knowledge produced by the dominant group in two aspects:

- a. 1. To what extent does the knowledge produced in another context fit to another context?
2. Does it reflect the nature of another context?
3. Does it meet the needs of another context?
4. Is it appropriate for the value system, way of life, worldview, etc. of another culture?
5. Is it compatible with our national and international policy and foreign relations and how does it affect them?
6. Do we have enough resources to apply that in our context?
  
- b. Are there any covert policies to be fulfilled with the help of that knowledge?

In short, the applicability of that knowledge in one context depends on the

careful analysis of the nature of that particular context and its economic, social, cultural, and political circumstances. The aim is not to reject that knowledge but transform and adapt it to a context in which it is used. It implies the critical evaluation of the knowledge produced in USA or England. For example, communicative language teaching based on student participation may not work in the Turkish context, because it is a teacher-dominant society. The language teaching materials also reflect American/British middle class ways of life, value systems, and worldviews, some of which are contradictory to the Turkish ones. Topics such as teenage pregnancy and cohabitation might cause frustration and resistance among teachers and students.

### **Making use of the “lingua franca” role of English**

Nowadays the lingua franca status of English is commonly welcome (Alptekin, 2002; Jenkins, 2006; Kayman, 2004; McKay, 2003; Modiano, 2001a). This seems to be a better solution to neutralize ELT, but not the best. It is now commonly mentioned that English has become a common language of international communication. Besides the native speakers, it is spoken as a second or foreign language all over the world. It has become a world language, which cannot be monopolized by any specific group of people any more. The new identity of English, a tool for international communication makes it break out its boundaries and encompass the whole world. When this new role of English is reflected to ELT, it leads to new or alternative perspectives in ELT philosophy, methodology, and materials. Therefore, ELT cannot imitate any specific native speaker model nor be founded on any culture-specific topics. This would free English learners from any imposed target values. Rather, a wide variety of topics, intercultural contexts and varieties of English can be used in ELT. For instance, a conversation between a Japanese EFL speaker and a German EFL speaker at an automotive fair in Istanbul can take place in English. It is something natural. Such neutral topics and contexts can be utilized in ELT. While designing general EFL courses, it has to be kept in mind that, the majority of the learners are not going to live

in a country where English is spoken as the mother tongue. Hence, there is no need to impose culture specific elements and native speaker models on them. These do not reflect their reality and need. In such a class, there is no relevance between what they learn in class and what they do with English. Naturally, this kills learner motivation. Moreover, they may develop negative attitudes towards the language learning process because of target culture-loaded nature of materials and class work. Thus, neutral topics and contexts can fit what they will do with English in real life, and foster positive attitudes towards topics. This may cause more personal involvement and better performance in the learning process. Not only does this foster language education, but it strengthens the international identity as well. While dealing with international topics presented within international contexts, the EFL learners may feel that they are the members of an international community. In such contexts, dealing with international topics is more relevant than what they do with English and their reality. Hence, considering the lingua franca role of English while designing English course programs and developing materials is likely to cause more student participation, give rise to positive attitudes and lead to better performance in ELT (Alptekin, 2002; McKay, 2003; Modiano, 2001a, 2001b). However, such an approach is still far from providing relevant EFL methodology and materials, nurturing local EFL teachers' creativity and self-esteem, and realizing personal involvement of EFL learners at high levels.

### **Analyzing the Extra-linguistic Matters in Language Teaching**

Language education does not take place in a vacuum; it takes place within a context. Therefore, the entire context should be considered for a successful language education; otherwise, failure is inevitable. In other words, considering extra-linguistic factors in language teaching is of great importance for the success of a language program especially in an EFL native context. Since every context is unique, it is imperative that a special language-teaching program be prepared for each particular context (Canagarajah, 2006; Fasold,

1991; Kumaravadivelu, 2006). Then, it can be concluded that there is no common language teaching policy applicable to all situations. In other words, the value of a so-called apolitical, asocial, acultural, universal language teaching policy is definitely questionable for a particular society, and the success of any language-in-education planning depends on the degree to which it considers the nature of the context in which the language education is carried out (Brown, 1995; Richards, 2001). Such an approach depends on a detailed and careful analysis of that particular context, and the goals of language teaching are determined accordingly. In other words, the decisions are not prescribed by the dominant culture unaware of the realities of the native context, but they are based on the ideas of specialists with an understanding of the native culture. As a result, the actual goals of language teaching can be identified, and a more logical, realistic language-teaching program can be designed. In this case, there will be no disparity between the goals and the nature of the program and the nature of the native context. Naturally such a language program, reflecting the needs and nature of that context, is adopted by the native culture, leading to success (Brown, 1995; Richards, 2001).

In addition, taking the extra-linguistic factors in that particular context into consideration by the detailed analysis of that context promotes the efficient use of limited economic and human resources. This helps to attain the desired aims of the language education and serves the economic, scientific, and technological development of that culture in turn. Furthermore, since the ideas of the experts of that native culture are included in decision-making, such a program does not hurt their feelings; they do not feel that they are in a subordinate position (Pennycook, 1989). Their self-respect is preserved and they feel independent and confident enough to produce their own materials. For the dominant group, such an approach helps them realize plurality and the different nature of each context. It also improves their sensitivity. Moreover, such an approach does not have any covert aims, and deals with educational goals only. Therefore, language-in-education planning does not become the means of non-educational purposes, but an end in itself.

### **Developing the Local EFL Materials**

The discussions above lead to another solution; materials reflecting the realities, topics, aims of the local context are likely to overcome the problems created by materials and related methodology produced by the center. Including international context, topics, and international varieties of English in ELT materials is likely to decrease the problems, but it is far from offering a complete solution. Of course, they may not impose any culture specific norms and models to be followed, and they are neutral. However, they do not reflect the issues, culture, and realities of an EFL context and cannot meet its specific demands (Canagarajah, 2006; Kumaravadivelu, 2006). Hence, high levels of mental and psychological involvement of learners cannot be realized. The lack of enough personal attachment for those materials may impede the ELT activities in class. Moreover, dealing with unfamiliar issues and context may bring cognitive burden and make the learning process more difficult for learners. However, if the local familiar topics and contexts are chosen and used in ELT, then the personal attachment of both learners and teachers can be achieved with the ELT materials. Since the language teaching materials reflect their own context and norms, and serve their own interests, they cannot be neutral towards the issues handled in those materials. On their part, they can invest something personal in the learning process.

Moreover, while learning a foreign/second language learners are exposed to the unknown formal properties of language. If they are not presented within familiar topics and contexts, then during the learning process they are exposed to two unknown elements and the process gets more difficult. It is not possible to eliminate the formal properties of language, the first unknown, but it is possible to eliminate the second unknown, content. As discussed by Cummins (1994) choosing a familiar content provides extra-contextual support for learners, increases the comprehensibility of ELT materials and makes learners deal with only one unknown element, the target language. Hence, it saves time and energy, and facilitates the language learning process.

Furthermore, developing language teaching materials can increase the self-

confidence of local ELT teachers and methodologists about improving their own ELT methodology and practice and sharpen their creativity in materials development. This may bring a new local enthusiasm about ELT and increase the quality of language teaching/learning. This will put an end to the one-way transfer of knowledge reflecting the realities of the culture in which it is produced and dependency on the center (the USA or England). When local knowledge and materials are produced, they are likely to be applied more successfully because the local teachers have developed their own culture-specific materials and methodology in implementing them. Since they are in their own territory, they have almost full control on the methodology and have personal affiliation with them. Naturally, these bring quality to language education. In addition, developing local methodology and knowledge will also put an end to the monopoly of the dominant countries and provide economic advantages for a country where English is taught as a foreign language.

Conversely, Alptekin (2002) points out the danger that localizing ELT is far from realizing the lingua franca status of English. With local materials English may not fulfill its role as a tool for intercultural means of communication. On the other hand, such an international perspective is a broad term that may not directly and specifically address the requirements of an ELF country. If the general international ELT methodology and materials are created with no reference to that specific local EFL context and no contribution of local methodologists and practitioners are provided, then this will not better ELT because this will make that EFL country dependent on other sources again. Another pitfall that has to be taken into consideration is that if the methodology and materials of the international perspective of ELT are produced by the center and the periphery just consumes them, this will bring no change to localize ELT and foster the creativity of local methodologists and practitioners. Thus, what is needed is a localized perspective of the lingua franca role of English. Analyzing the local and international needs of an EFL country, the context, topics, and language are to be chosen. This locally-tailored version of international English and ELT

is likely to help an EFL country come up with its own methodology and materials. This will enable the country to manage both the local and international perspective which fits its context. Moreover, it will also help local methodologists and practitioners to create and improve their own methodology and materials. Thus, what is needed is not a general international perspective of ELT but one tailored for the local EFL context.

To sum up, developing local ELT knowledge and materials is what is desired to increase self-confidence and creativity of ELT methodologists and teachers and provide personal involvement of both teacher and learners in language education. In this case, the quality of ELT will increase and the EFL country will be independent of the center. If an EFL country cannot accomplish this, then, at least the knowledge and materials obtained from the center should be adapted in relation to its needs and norms (Isik, 2003).

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