An Exploration of Iranian EFL Teachers' Perceptions on the Globalization and Hegemony of English

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Abstract

Globalization as an increasingly influencing force has led English language to become the lingua franca of the world. However, the global spread of English is considered as linguistic and cultural imperialism of English speaking countries to exert their dominance, power, culture, ideology and language over the periphery countries. The devastating consequence of this hegemony, according to Canagarajah (2005) can be putting learners in danger of losing their languages, cultures, and identities, giving rise to the devaluation of their local knowledge and cultures. Here, the researchers administ interview to explore thirty-seven experienced Iranian EFL teachers' (18males/19females) perceptions on English globalization and its hegemony, who were selected based on purposive sampling. The researchers' adoption of Strauss and Corbin's (1998) constant comparative method revealed that although Iranian English teachers admitted globalization as an inevitable reality and English language as a tool in the service of globalization to smooth communication among people, they took up a counter-hegemonic stance and resistance towards the values associated with its use. They also suggested some anti-hegemonic strategies to de-colonize the power, culture, values, and ideologies of the West which tries to marginalize other countries and people.

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U ndoubtedly, no one would deny the widespread penetration of English as the language of globalization or in Cook's sense (2008) as the world's sole "hypercenteral language", in each nation attempting to access to the latest scientific and technological developments of today's modern world. Nowadays, internet, cyber communication, and satellite TV channels provide us with a huge amount of information about what occurs in each part of the globe, how people live and what they do in different countries as if national and geographical boundaries no longer matter. Hence, it seems to be reasonable to believe that we live in the age of globalization. Therefore, to survive in the globalized era, each of us needs a rudimentary competence in English as the lingua franca of the era. Accordingly, Pishghadam and Zabihi (2012) emphasized that due to the global spread of English as the worldwide lingua franca, English proficiency is a key priority for development and progress in different areas including technology, science, business, and finance to smooth international communication. In this regard, Mehrpour and Vojdani (2012, p. 49) also stated that "gaining a good knowledge of English is a must for those who want to get involved in the process of globalization". Thus, with the emergence of globalization, the need to learn English as an international language has more extensively been recognized as a vital and empowering tool for its users (Razmjoo, Ranjbar, & Hoomanfard, 2013).

However, due to the significance of English as an international language, according to Chang (2006), and its use for the global, political, cultural, and economic exchanges, the spread of English seems so natural that nobody even questions its legitimacy as the lingua franca. Hence, during the past two decades, the topic of English globalization has caught the attention of many people worldwide leading to the meetings, dialogues, seminars, and conferences held by the governments and universities around the world (Razak, 2011). In fact, the main concerns of scholars and researchers working on the multifaceted issue of globalization have been on determining the harmful effects of English as a tool in the hands of Western countries to exert their dominance, power, and culture over marginalized countries. Therefore, due to the seriousness of this issue, there is a need for a vast amount of researches to provide insightful findings in this regard. Actually, the researches and studies on this issue help policy makers, language planners, and curriculum developers appropriately devise strategic plans to deal with the challenges that the tsunami of English globalization

brings about in different EFL contexts and Iran is not an exception. Learning English among Iranian people is now more like a contagious love as our market is overwhelmed with a huge number of textbooks and teaching materials which are professionally designed and developed by native speakers of English and reputable international publishers. One of the main concerns of policy makers in government and Educational cycle of Iran would be the learners' cultural shock as they encounter with new cultures and ideologies behind the images, videos, and dialogues in textbooks. So, the researchers' aim, here, is to ask the English language teachers who have already some years experiences of teaching English both in public schools and private English language institutes to share their perceptions on the hegemony of English in Iran and how it can affect the learners' lives experiences.

A Review of Related Literature

Globalization and the Global Spread of English as the Lingua Franca

It is believed that the spread of English is closely related to the globalization phenomenon. Gidden (1990) clarified the notion of globalization as a phenomenon to accelerate and intensify the worldwide social relations for linking distant localities. It means that it has a focus on creating a borderless single society where all nationalities with various languages and cultures co-exist.

Moreover, the amount of interconnectedness and dependencies requires a shared linguistic code or an international language. In Bourdieu's (2001) sense, the expansion of English is one manifestation of this major phenomenon. According to Pennycook (2007), among all the languages, it is English which is closely linked with the process of globalization. Bottery (2000) also asserted that the development of globalization is related to the English language. Short et al. (2001) showed that the cultural globalization is closely tied to the development of English as the global language.

In political studies, the term "linguistic globalization" is also tied to the spread of English as a tool for global communication (Phillipson, 1992; Dua, 1994). Indeed, the notion of "lingua franca" as a necessary tool for communication has emerged in correspondence with the process of linguistic globalization (Gaffey, 2005). Lingua franca is precisely defined

by Crystal (1995, p. 454) as "a medium of communication for people who speak different first languages". However, McArthur (2002) noted that Crystal's definition has been extended to comprise "a language common to, or shared by many cultures and communities at any or all social and educational levels, and used as an international tool". Modiano (2001, p. 170) also added that a lingua franca "is a mode of communication which allows people to interact with others without aligning themselves to ideological positioning indicative of specific mother-tongue speech community".

The Hegemony of English: Linguistic and Cultural Imperialism

Kanpol (1999, p. 34) defines the term hegemony as "those unspoken values, norms, and ideologies that are passed on as common sense", elsewhere he adds, "hegemony acts to exert control over groups of people" and as a consequence of hegemony, "a general adaptation of ideas, values, images, and feeling structures occurs". Martin (1998, p. 66) also puts it as "a mode of social control by which one group exerts its dominance over others by means of ideology". In Gramsci's (1971, p. 216) sense, it refers to a "theory of ideological domination" and "a proliferation of ideas and values that legitimate its power" as well as "organizing principle of the capitalist state".

Actually, the use of hegemony concept by Gramsci was historically developed from the concept of *dominance*. By this term, Gramsci meant the organization of consent created not by the dominance through force rather through political and ideological leadership (Simon, 1982). Abercrombie, *et. al.* (1984) believed that hegemon is ethnocentric, making judgments about other races and cultures by means of the standards of its own ethnocentric assumptions.

Recent studies stress the relationship between hegemony and the global spread of English, pointing out that the dominance of the language is accepted without criticism by governments and academics. The hegemony of English as a global language is referred to as a paradigm of neocolonialism and Western capitalism creating a misconception that English is the superior and dominant language and that only can native speakers of English better teach it (Guo & Beckett, 2007). Accordingly, Choi (2010, p. 237) argued that the process of globalization has reinforced

the dominance and controlling influence of the English language; it has also been "aided by great strides in information technology".

With regard to the hegemony of English, Phillipson (1992, p. 73) defined the respective term as "the explicit and implicit values, beliefs, purposes, and activities, which characterize the ELT profession and which contribute to the maintenance of English as a dominant language". He also claimed that a hegemonic position of English can be witnessed in many former colonies. Concerning the hegemonic position of English, Gaffey (2005) asserts that the use of English in maintaining and extending Western power is dependent on an imperialism discourse whereby a creation of a hegemonic position for English is investigated. Hence, English can be viewed as a means of Western imperialism which perpetuates its hegemony, influencing into the local languages and cultures.

According to Phillipson (1992), the global spread of English can be attributed to the deliberate policy on the part of core-speaking English countries to maintain dominance over periphery countries. In his sense, the global spread of English is a form of imperialism, and that those involved in the spread of English were motivated by colonial ambition. Phillipson (2009) also expressed his concern about the fact that the promotion of British English ensures its learning to their benefit politically, culturally, and economically. In fact, according to him, this is called "linguistic imperialism" related to the "cultural imperialism" including the transmission of values and ideas about the culture of core countries via textbooks, and the contents of English materials. In other words, it entails that certain cultural stereotypes, values, and ideas are presented superior and universal, while others are shown inferior either by omission or direct presentation (Richards & Schmidt, 2002). It might be the reason for ringing the danger bells in policy-makers' and governmental bodies' minds to be cautious concerning the importing of not only educational and training materials to the countries where English is taught especially as a foreign language, but also engaging English language learners with new cultural ideologies, political, and social issues. In fact, students are learning both the English language and the embedded cultural and ideological issues simultaneously.

Concerning the relationship between linguistic and cultural imperialism, Phillipson (2009) also added that linguistic imperialism as a type of cultural imperialism is used to refer to the dominance of English which is asserted

and maintained through the establishment and continuous reconstitution of structural and cultural inequalities between English and other languages; inequalities between native speakers as the perfect model of English and non-native speakers having an imperfect mastery of language. The use of English based on culture-specific prescriptive norms in deed leads to the adoption of a kind of structure which according to Phillipson (1992, p. 55) is described as "an imperialist structure of exploitation of one society or collectivity by another". A number of scholars (Schiller, 1985; Latouche, 1996; Ritzer, 1998) considered the process of English globalization to be hegemonically Western, and above all as a means to extend the American imperialism (e.g. Schiller 1985; Ritzer 1998). For instance, Latouche (1996) suggested the "Westernization of the world" and the progressive "worldwide standardization of lifestyles" exemplified in the United States become the norm to shape the different aspects of people's lives into the convergent styles.

On the impact of globalized English on the local languages and cultures, Pennycook (1995) believed that linguistic imperialism can take place when English gets a gateway to business, employment, and education opportunities and where indigenous cultures and languages are marginalized. Accordingly, Canagarajah (2005) contends that English as the dominant language is imposing an unfamiliar social and pedagogical culture on learners. This, in turn, puts them politically, socio-psychologically, and linguistically in danger of losing their languages, identities and cultures. Thus, the dominant force of English as the cultural and linguistic imperialism in world affairs causes the attenuation and corruption of the distinguishing characteristics of other non-native languages and cultures (Modiano, 2001). Such positioning implies that the promotion of English undervalues cultural diversity and also Angelo-Americanizes the non-native speakers leading to the further suppression of national and ethnic identities.

Purpose and Significance of the Study

Members of the global village accept this reality that at least a rudimentary mastery of English is necessary for the communicative purposes and the accessibility to the latest scientific findings in all disciplines. However, due to its hegemonic status involving cultural and linguistic imperialism and the

fact that it is the language of the superpower countries, its learning is associated with harmful effects. Some people believe that learners through exposure to English might be affected by the cultural invasion causing the loss of their own cultural identities. Thus, after a while, English language proficiency is achieved but at the expense of learners' abandonment of their cultures, identities, or even the corruption of their languages and dialects. So, the researchers are going to explore EFL teachers' perceptions concerning English globalization, hegemony of English, and its effects (e.g. social, cultural, educational, and religious) on Iranian EFL learners' lived experiences in a context where English is taught in primary years of Education (junior highschools and highschools) based on the prescribed syllabi by Ministry of Education. So, they would encounter cultural differences based on what they see and learn from different sources adopted in public schools and private English language institutes.

Research Questions

So, this study aims to answer the following questions:
- What are the Iranian English teachers' perspectives and perceptions about English globalization?
- What ways do Iranian English teachers suggest to cope with the hegemony of English involving the issues of cultural and linguistic imperialism?

Method

This qualitative study with its interpretive nature aims to unearth the Iranian EFL teachers' perceptions concerning globalization, hegemony of English, and the best strategies to resolve the harmful effects of English.

Context

The EFL context of Iran is divided into public schools and private English language institutes. On the one hand, public schools are administered and supervised by the government, in which English is taught traditionally through the textbooks provided by the Ministry of Education. Private English language institutes, on the other hand, are the best choice for

learners to gain oral skills and knowledge in English. As learners are exposed to English through audio- or visual American or British English materials, videos, CDs, and textbooks provided by the companies and authors of English as their native language, Iranian learners' culture and identities might consciously or subconsciously be influenced by exposure to those sources. Thus, in order to provide appropriate data for this study, the researchers chose five English language institutes from Yazd, Shiraz, and Tehran, Iran. These three cities have overpopulated English language institutes where learners of different ages participate in classes to learn English whether to pass international tests of TOEFL and IELTS, or being proficient enough to speak and maybe as a matter of prestige. Some well-known English language institutes have already nation-wide branches in nearly almost cities of the country, and these five institutes are selected among those which have the most registered number of learners.

Participants

The selection of the participants was based on the purposive sampling including homogeneous selection as a method of sampling in qualitative research (Ary, Jacobs, & Sorenson, 2010). The process of sampling was stopped when the data reached the stage of saturation and no new information was forthcoming. Thus, thirty-seven experienced English teachers (18 males/ 19 females) with four to twenty years-experience of teaching English in public schools and English language institutes were selected from a population of English teachers teaching in five private language institutes located in Yazd, Shiraz, and Tehran, Iran. Seventeen teachers held M.A. degree in TEFL (9 males/ 8 females), twelve of them were M.A students of TEFL (3 males/ 9 females), while the rest were B.A. holders of English literature (5 males/ 3 females). In order to establish confidentiality and ethics of the qualitative research, the researchers ensured all the participants not to report their names and identities in the study.

Instrument

In order to obtain an in-depth knowledge about the teachers' perceptions concerning the themes of research, we used the qualitative research

interview which is considered to be as the primary method of data collection in the grounded theory (Ary, Jacobs, & Sorenson, 2010). In fact, according to Kvale (1996), the main task of interviewing is to understand the interviewees' inner thoughts and ideologies. Hence, to fully gain an understanding of teachers' perspectives about the topic, the semi-structured interview was preferred to other types of interviewing. The reason for using semi-structured interview was to provide the interviewer and interviewees with a chance to modify the questions and responses. The modification of questions was aimed at revealing what was important about the issue.

Procedure

The researchers provided the basic theories, ideas and researches on the main themes of research through three 90 minutes sessions during 3 weeks. So, the teachers had an opportunity to read through their sources and work on what they have learned from participation in each class during the week. They had also email correspondences with the researchers if they encounter some vagueness concerning the learned concepts. So, with a week interval after the third week, the researchers interviewed each participant separately to obtain the qualitative data for further transcription and analysis. Thus, at first, the issue of English globalization, the hegemony of English, linguistic and cultural imperialism were explained to the interviewees. Then, each interviewee was free to answer the interview questions in Persian or English on the respective issues. Actually, the interviewer determined no time limit for the interviewees in order to give them chance to critically reflect on the questions. The questions of the interview were designed in a way to elicit teachers' perceptions on the globalization of English and the best means to cope with the harmful consequences of English use. In case the interviewees needed more clarification or additional explanation, the interviewer would provide further elaborations. Sometimes the interviewees diverted from the topic; thus, in those cases, the researcher as the interviewer made an effort to shift their attention to the main issue through grasping and taking the floor to keep the main topic on the right track.

Data Analysis

After collecting the appropriate data, the researchers pursued three steps in data analysis on the basis of Strauss and Corbin's (1998) constant comparative method including open coding, axial coding, and selective coding. At the open coding step, the researchers initially coded the interview transcriptions, as their focus was to find as many as recurring ideas in each interview. However, it happened that one specific phrase to be categorized under two or three teachers' perception of English hegemony or their suggestions to resolve the debilitative effects of English hegemony might have on Iranian learners of English. Then, the researchers' attempt in axial coding step was to categorize the obtained themes in previous process of data analysis. As mentioned earlier, some extracted words and quotations from the interviews were more likely to belong to more than one of the embedded themes in researchers' minds. So, they tried not to be biased concerning the obtained themes as it sounds reasonable one word or quotation belong to more than one theme. Finally, they adopted selective coding to develop and find the core categories that pulled other categories and concepts into an overall theory and meet the researchers' aims of developing the interview questions to unearth the teachers' perceptions on the raised issues of the current research. To ensure the credibility of the collected data, the researchers used member checking as a way of triangulation applied at the end of data collection period to ask participants for further accuracy and meaning (Ary, Jacobs, & Sorenson, 2010). Actually, the emerged themes in this study demonstrated the Iranian EFL teachers' perceptions on English globalization and the strategies to resolve the consequences of English use among Iranian learners.

Key Findings

Through the process of transcribing and codifying the data, the researchers uncovered themes and concepts on the respective issues.

Teachers' Perceptions of English Globalization

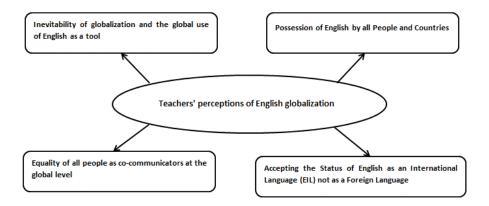The relevant themes are presented in the following figure:

| Inevitability of globalization and the global use of English as a tool | | Possession of English by all People and Countries |

Figure 1. Themes related to Iranian EFL teachers of English globalization.

Inevitability of globalization and the global use of English as a tool

Globalization is so widespread that no one thinks of living without it. The world has changed into the global village in which all the people can socially, politically, and economically communicate. All sorts of technologies and sciences from politics, economics to education are impressed by its tides. This undeniable and unavoidable fact has influenced all societies and people's everyday lives; actually it looks like a continuously moving river with no interruption.

The interviewee's comment emphasizes the point that globalization is seen as an inevitable common process that affects every society, everybody or even every part of the people's ordinary lives furthering communication among all people. As a multifaceted phenomenon, it has happened and continues to impact all the socio-political and economic processes and structures emerging from the knowledge, science, and technology. It seems that nowhere is seen without being touched by this process. Accordingly, another participant said:

> I think the modernity of each society is associated with the globalization. To follow the principles of a modern society, the people should be involved in the process of globalization. For instance, the use of internet is a sign of globalization which has caused the people to approach to and communicate with each other.

This teacher considers globalization as a prerequisite to have a modern society. It is in fact the globalization process which brings each society with modernity. In other words, Sifakis and Sougari (2003) argue that globalization constitutes one of the crucial characteristics of a modern society.

It should be noted that globalization as a general phenomenon has played a significant role in the global spread of English while at the same time the widespread use of English as the international language has facilitated and escalated the process of globalization. In other words, it functions as a tool to feasibly contribute the process of globalization. In this regard, one teacher said:

> In my opinion, English is a means of communication and a tool for need fulfillment. It is a tool in the service of globalization. It is not a matter of English because any other language could have such a status.

From this teacher's view point, English is used as a tool to assist the facilitation of international communication, people's need fulfillments, and globalization process. The significance and legitimacy that English has gained is due to the fact that it is the tool of globalization, the language of science and technology and nothing else since other languages could have this position, too.

Possession of English by all people and countries

Those whose lives in a way are related to English might frequently have heard these questions posed as "which country does English belong to? Does it belong to Britain, America, or any other countries which have a large number of NNSs of English?" Up to now, there has been a controversy over which country English belongs to. As Redman (2002, p. 45) states, "it isn't owned by Britain and America; it now belongs to

everyone". It means that people should have a sense of ownership toward English as an international language in order to represent their cultures and identities. They should consider English as their language because the ownership of English belongs as much to them as to the native speakers. Accordingly, Naji Meidani and Pishghadam (2013) also state that English is identified as an international language not belonging to any particular country and used for global, cultural, political, and financial exchange. With respect to the ownership of English, one teacher explained:

> English belongs to all nations and people who are using to meet their needs; English is used as a common language in many countries not only in America, but also in India, Arabian and many African countries.

According to Shibata (2011), the notion of ownership of English is on the basis of this idea that there is no boundary between native and non-native speakers in international communication. Thus, as the members of global community, people should be taught to value the pluralistic Englishes of the world. In fact, this is the real sense of international language. People can share a topic in one language in different ways to crystallize their own cultures and identities. Further, people are no more assimilated and acculturated, but through a multilingual and multicultural communication in English, they can broaden their minds. Accordingly, a teacher said:

> Since at the international level, English belongs to everybody, a variety of cultures, identities, and voices are expressed so that people can become familiar with a wide range of cultural identities, different ways of thinking, understanding, and seeing things. American or British culture is no more seen as the dominant culture; rather it is expressing the different cultures through the use of English which is of crucial importance.

Equality of all people as co-communicators at the global level

According to Bucher (2004), a harmful consequence of the dominance of English in international settings, is the communicative inequality created between native speakers (NSs) and non- native speakers (NNSs). Actually,

it is generated by the power of using their mother tongue in comparison to other people. NSs are so much better in the position of negotiation, fluency, concentration on the content while NNSs often have to focus on the linguistic forms decreasing their ability to efficiently participate in conversations. Consequently, this inequality leads to linguistic and social discrimination as NSs have a tendency of perceiving NNSs as inferior, by generalizing from their linguistic restrictions. This trend also makes NNSs develop linguistic, cultural, and psychological dependency upon, and identification with NSs, their culture and people.

Thus, it is suggested that if NNSs believe that they are equal with NSs as the two sides of the same coin, no domination and superiority in terms of culture, language, fluency, or competency are easily accepted. The equality between these two sides is highlighted when both perceive their roles as global communicators with the aim of achieving international understanding. This equality in fact empowers the marginalized NNSs to globally communicate with other people whether NNSs or NSs. In this regard, one teacher stated:

> It makes no difference between native and non-native speakers when they communicate internationally and interculturally. I think it is not a matter of advantage of native speakers over non- native ones. If we think of English as an international language, a matter like inequality in communication becomes senseless and ridiculous.

Accepting the status of English as an international language (EIL) not as a foreign language

In fact, with regard to the function of English as the lingua franca of the globe which facilitates communication among people, it is better to reconceptualize the status of English as an international language (EIL). When English is considered as a foreign language (EFL), this misconception is created that it is the language of a foreign country aiming at impacting and destroying local languages, cultures, and identities of other societies. A teacher said:

> English as a foreign language reminds every body of a specific language and a specific culture likely to dominate other countries.

> If this status changes into English as an international language, it is believed it belongs to all people, nations, and countries. Each society drawing on its own cultural, religious, and social principles can use it to make it appropriate for its own purposes.

Another teacher stated:

> I think EFL in the global village makes no sense. All of us must think of English as the international language. Each society can use it while maintaining its own culture, accent, religion, and identity. We can express all these things through the use of EIL.

It means, when EIL is used by different societies, it can be appropriately shaped and reshaped based on the cultural and social norms of those societies to meet the needs of people. In so doing, according to Canagarajah (1999), communities appropriate "English to dynamically negotiate meaning, identity, and status in contextually suitable and socially strategic ways and in the process modifies the communicative and linguistic rules of English according to local cultural and ideological imperatives" (p. 76). Fairclough (2013) also stated that EIL should be perceived as a means of understanding the various aspects of the contemporary society and peoples' constant and dynamic struggles. Actually, this critical look at the use of EIL is conceived as a means to change the society toward emancipation and democracy (Sifakis & Sougari, 2003).

Themes Related to the Best Strategies to Resolve the Harmful Effects of English

Figure 2 represents the strategies and solutions to resolve the harmful effects of English.
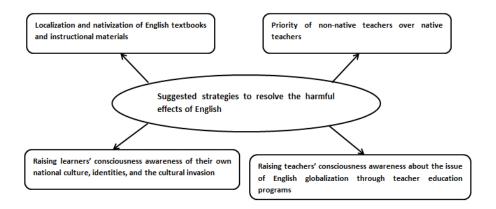
Figure 2. Themes related to the suggested strategies to cope with the harmful effects

Localization and nativization of English textbooks and instructional materials

To counterbalance the hegemony of English, there should be attempts in periphery communities toward localizing and nativizing ELT materials. However, concerning the content of instructional materials, the agenda for teaching and learning English should match the scope of EIL (Matsuda, 2003; McKay, 2002, 2003; Modiano, 1999). It means both local and global agendas and ideologies should be taken into account while designing textbooks for NNSs of English.

In fact, ELT material designers and language planning policy makers are expected to draw their attention to this reality that according to Rajagopalan (2004, p. 111), "English world belongs to everybody who speaks it, but it is nobody's mother tongue" and Matsuda (2003, p. 719) also mentioned that "Consistent with the value applied linguists place on World Englishes, English is taught and learned in many countries because it is an—and arguably the—international language". Accordingly, when students learn EIL, it is necessary to have them be exposed to different varieties of English (Liou, 2010).

As EIL does not belong to any particular country or people, ELT materials should include the contents conforming to local varieties and

indigenous cultures. The use of appropriate instructional materials is a way to perpetuate and legitimize a number of varieties of English and cultures. In so doing, students no more consider British or American English as the Standard English, but they also value other Englishes, too. A teacher said:

> Iranian materials designers should attempt to develop textbooks and materials in which Iranian culture, identity, voice, and even Iranian accent of English are embedded and vividly identified so that learners do not resort to American or British culture and accents as the legitimate and standard norms. In this way, they can also legitimize their own accent and culture.

For this teacher, a way of legitimizing other accents of English such as Iranian accent as a variety of English is to embed them into the instructional materials and textbooks. In fact, being familiar with different varieties of English spoken by NNSs seems to be essential if students tend to use English for international communication. In a study conducted by Pishghadam and Zabihi (2012), it was found that Iranian learners show positive attitudes towards the American culture trying to conform to American or British accents as the prestigious accents superior to other varieties. Thus, they make any effort to imitate either of these accents as much as possible. The more they achieve a near native proficiency of English, the more they become alienated from their Iranian culture. Hence, this process of deculturation takes them away from their own identity and cultural values. This problem can be highlighted by the fact that through Iranian learners' self-marginalization, the West further subjugates the people's national, historical, religious, and cultural identities. Further, Brown (2007) warns about the risk of imposing the value system of English language on learners and thus calls EIL a "two-edged sword". It means that English as the dominant language leads to the imposition of Angelo-Saxon Judeo-Christian culture so that indigenous cultures are undervalued and marginalized (Bisong, 1995). In fact, a number of studies have also shown the superior perception of the Western culture in various countries (Park, 2008; Isik, 2008).

Thus, due to the importance of this issue, this study suggests that instructional materials such as videos or CDs should include voices of people, local cultures, and values from periphery countries using English as

a variety of their spoken language. If, for instance, Iranian material writers develop textbooks in which Iranian culture, ideologies, and values are inserted, learners do not resort to the dominant accents of American or British as the legitimate and prestigious accents provoking their own marginalization. Therefore, learners not only get familiar with other varieties or even cultures, but also understand that American or British English is not the sole English language and culture used as the standard norms. Regarding the significance of nativizing and localizing of textbooks, another teacher also stated:

> When English textbooks are designed based on our own culture, we can close the doors of arriving American or British culture into our own country.

Ketabi and Shomoosi (2007) also claim that in order to hinder or delay the cultural invasion, there should be many efforts to localize ELT and nativize NS materials. Regarding the importance of including local culture in the content of instructional materials, McKay (2002) believes the use of local culture is a way of empowering learners and making them practice English to express their own culture and identity. One teacher raised the issue of including local culture in textbooks of schools and institutes as the following:

> In our state school textbook, we cannot see any global aspects of English even the local one is so rare, two pages out of a hundred pages are devoted to our own culture; on the other hand the textbooks used in language institutes are basically Western regarding the social and cultural activities, that might have some effect on other cultures in case they lack a rich cultural and religious background.

This teacher believes that Iranian EFL textbooks in educational settings lack any inclusion of the local culture. In line with this finding, Aliakbari (2004) argues that Iranian English materials and textbooks are shallow and superficial in regard to the treatment of local cultures. He further adds the instructional materials are not incapable of teaching deeply culture specifics including values and beliefs. In another study, Khajavi and Abbasian (2011) also showed that Iranian national identity, culture, and history have not

been taken into consideration in high school textbooks in the Ministry of Education so that these textbooks are not appropriate for the age of globalization. In sum, this study suggests Iranian material developers are required to insert the contents associated with the Iranian culture, values, and beliefs in English textbooks.

Priority of non-native teachers over native teachers

A teacher stated:

> To teach English perfectly, an Iranian teacher is better than a native teacher. I think both have the knowledge of L2 and teaching skills but an Iranian English teacher can use Farsi as a tool to deal with the problems in communication. In addition, having a common culture and language also facilitates ELT.

Another teacher quoted:

> If we compare non-native teachers with native teachers, it is understood that non-native teachers have some advantages. First, they have acquired at least two languages, their native language and English. The knowledge of learners' native language actually helps the process of learning and teaching. Second, they are familiar with learners' cultural backgrounds, values and beliefs which in turn lead to cultural understanding and the facilitation of communication.

As it is clear from the quotation, non-native teachers are more preferable than native teachers. In fact, with the widespread of English, attention has been shifted to the non-native speaking (NNS) English teachers' contribution and also their position in TESOL education. Hence, the traditional view of effective English teacher needs to be redefined (McKay, 2002). With respect to the outstanding characteristics that NNS teachers have in the realm of teaching English, it seems to be reasonable to substitute NNS teachers with NS teachers.

As Widdowson (1992) puts it, the NNS teachers are indeed English teachers in their own right. However, their bilingual advantages of English teaching to non-native learners were largely ignored in TESOL profession.

Accordingly, Jenkins (2000) believes that the terminology of "non-native speakers" should be substituted with "bilingual speakers", whereas "native speakers" should be replaced with "monolingual speakers". In other words, due to the fact that NNS teachers have a mastery of two languages, their native language and English, they are more advantageous than NS teachers having a mastery of one language. Furthermore, NNS teachers have access to more resources than NS teachers, including a vast knowledge of L1 as well as L2, and also the culture of learners' L1. Cook (1999, 2004) also acknowledged bilingual speakers more than monolingual speakers, in terms of their extensive knowledge of languages and better understanding of other cultures. Thus, bilingual teachers are in a better position to teach English since they are "skilled L2 users" (Cook, 1999) and also successful learners of new languages (Widdowson, 1992) in comparison to monolingual teachers.

Raising learners' consciousness awareness of their own national culture, identities, and the cultural invasion

In English classrooms, in order to enrich learners' cultural understanding, the teacher can shift learners' attention to the issue of indigenous culture through the use of culturally informed texts and the discussion of culturally related topics. Sensitizing and informing learners of their own cultural heritage, identity, and beliefs can be an appropriate way to counterbalance the cultural imperialism and cultural invasion. As a teacher suggests:

> If we as English teachers directly instruct learners our own culture, and cultural heritage, we can surely guarantee the protection of our own original culture against the possibility of being mixed and invaded by the American culture. Learners should gain awareness about this issue which actually can be done by means of using relevant texts and the subsequent discussion.

Another teacher stated:

> Strengthening learners' cultural beliefs is also important. It is the duty of parents, teachers, and educational programs to inform and strengthen learners' beliefs about their own culture which in turn leads to the creation of a shield against the cultural invasion.

To this teacher, cultural invasion can be counterbalanced if beliefs and values concerning the indigenous culture are strongly formed in learners by not only the teachers and educational programs but also the parents. When learners identify their own rich culture and values, they are not influenced by NSs' culture. Further, they cannot feasibly undergo the process of "colonization of the mind" through which the dominated or "the colonized" act as colonizers in their own culture, turn the foreign power into their own power, and undervalue their own culture, replacing it with the culture and values of the colonizer, leading to another kind of colonization (Bucher, 2004).

Learners can consciously be taught that cultural imperialism and cultural invasion cunningly affect learners' culture through an exposure to the authentically based audio and visual texts in which American or British culture is embedded. Doing so helps learners better deal with the issue of cultural hegemony of English while at the same time they accept the status of English as EIL. Actually, learners should be informed that English functions as an international language facilitating the communication between people from various countries not as a means in the hands of superpower to disseminate its culture and language among other nations and countries.

Raising teachers' consciousness awareness about the issue of english globalization through teacher education programs

In order to defy the negative consequences of English globalization, raising English teachers' awareness is considered to be a fruitful strategy as it enables them to critically consider the status of English as an international language. English teachers, according to Igawa (2010), are agents of the process of globalizing English and also the providers of the impact that globalization and English language have on the local people. At the same time, they are the recipients of globalization and its impact as well. As a part of their professional responsibility, English teachers are expected to be aware of the impact of English globalization on their students.

Accordingly, teacher education programs are required to provide English teachers with opportunities to enhance their professional knowledge in this regard. In fact, through such programs, teachers are

instructed and prepared to appropriately deal with the issue of English globalization, English hegemony, and the cultural invasion. A teacher in this project nicely pointed to this matter:

> I think not only learners but also teachers need to be informed about the global spread of English, and cultural invasion. If we want our students to be safe from any cultural invasion, we must begin with teachers. And actually it is the teacher training programs which should have the responsibility of instructing the teachers.

Therefore, it is suggested that increasing teachers' consciousness of the negative effects of such globalization, particularly within the scope of culture, leads them to appropriately approach the issue, predict the possible harmful effects, and find the best strategies to cope with them. Regarding the importance of teachers' awareness of cultural and linguistic hegemony, Sifakis and Sougarari (2003) propose that English teachers should be aware of the cultural and linguistic threats of English and its hegemony with respect to their mother tongue language and culture. Such reflective awareness would enable them to deal critically with the challenges of global English.

It should be noted that the result of this awareness would be beneficial for both teachers and learners. Teachers would not accept anything dictated to them as improving learners' language competency, provided by core countries. Furthermore, this awareness makes teachers' eyes wide open into the hidden and bitter realities concealing themselves under the cover of EFL. The result of this awareness can also be transferred to learners, not to be culturally and linguistically dominated and subjugated by cultural and linguistic power in the form of English language (Safari & Pourhashemi, 2015).

Conclusion

The trend of globalization has caused the status of English to change into the most widely dispersed and ubiquitous international language, as almost all might confirm its global acceptability as the lingua franca of commerce, politics, culture, education; while at the same time will have its own facilitative and debilitative effects on its users' real life experiences. So, it

seems to be an undeniable reality to admit that the texture of our modern world has been woven by the global English. We are all surrounded by English as if there would be no way to get rid of such phenomenon. Indeed, English as a global language has facilitated each individual's communication needs beyond his or her own local community. However, the tsunami of English globalization engulfing everywhere is not without any damages. This study with its focus on Iranian EFL teachers' perceptions concerning the issue of English globalization and hegemony achieved some fruitful findings which might have implications for the EFL profession in Iran, textbook developers, materials writers, researchers, and English teachers. The findings stressed that the globalization is accepted as an inexorable fact impacting and embracing every element of people's lives. Further, English is regarded as a tool which serves the purpose of globalization, facilitates this process, and also smoothes the flow of communication amongst all the people living around the world. With respect to the hegemony of English globalization, as well as the concepts of linguistic and cultural imperialism, the analysis of their views confirmed they all adopted a counter-hegemonic stance towards English through suggesting strategies to de-colonize the power, culture, ideas, and values of the West in the form of English as an international language trying to dominate other cultures, languages, and people. So, Iranian English language teachers confirmed the global acceptability of English, as it is already used by most people without any inequalities. On the other hand, trying to minimize the cultural divergences embedded in the textbooks and teaching materials, providing Iranian teachers with courses to be well-acquainted with native-like proficiencies of English, and increasing teachers' and learners' awareness toward the available cultural differences and how to meet with those unavoidable differences were the teachers' highlights as the solutions to overcome the problems. The research provides insightful hints and clues for policy makers at Ministry of Education to revise the already taught textbooks at public schools. At the same time, it helps those who administer private English language institutes to cooperate with Ministry of Education to work on same sources which are localized based on the Iranian culture and students' needs. It paves the way for some further researches which might look for students' perceptions towards the concept of English hegemony or examining the already localized textbooks and teaching materials to see if they empower students with the pertinent

proficiencies to be competent enough to communicate well outside of the classrooms.

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Appendix A

Interview Questions

1. How do you define globalization?
2. Do you think it has impacted your life?
3. What is the relationship between English and globalization?
4. Does English language as a tool for globalization involve any advantages for English speaking countries?
5. With respect to this issue that English is the native language of America, Britain, and Australia, do you think the people of other countries should follow its norms as used in these countries?
6. Can the English speaking countries claim they are the possessors of English?
7. At the global level, how is the status of people from different countries in comparison to the people from English speaking countries?
8. What is the relationship between English globalization and culture?
9. Regarding English teaching in schools, how can English teachers deal with the issue of English language and culture?
10. Which one can be a good teacher? A native or a non-native teacher of English?
11. Is teaching of English associated with any harms in schools or language institutes?
12. How can English teachers overcome these negative consequences?