Attitudes to English in the Kaleidoscopic Iranian Context: Second, Foreign or International?

Negar Kiavar[1]*, Massoud Yaghoubi-Notash[2]

[1]*Universiti Putra Malaysia, Malaysia*
[2]*Tabriz University, Iran*

Corresponding author: Negar Kiavar, E-mail: kiavar.negar@gmail.com

ARTICLE INFO

ABSTRACT

Today's world seems to be quite overwhelmingly concerned with communication as an incontestable aspect of which is communicating with people lacking a shared linguistic background. A common language (or lingua franca) would, therefore, be needed which can cut across all local, national, and regional linguistic boundaries. This study aimed at exploring the attitudes of 400 bilingual and monolingual college students and EFL learners. It investigated English language status in the linguistically diverse context of Iran. For the purpose of the study, a standardized questionnaire containing 37 Likert-type items was distributed. Descriptive statistics were employed for data analysis revealing that learners from different linguistic backgrounds had significantly different reactions and attitudes to the issues such as: General perception to English, Status of English, text and content matter comprehensibility through English, job prospects, official status, culture learning, integrating with American or British cultures, religion and foreign language learning, English ownership, Adherence to British English, American English or English as an international language.

Key words: Attitude, English as Foreign Language, Multinational Englishes, Ownership of English

INTRODUCTION

Halliday (1977) classified language functions into seven categories, namely, instrumental, regulatory, representational, interactional, personal, heuristic and imaginative. With the rapid pace of globalization and a growing need as well as the possibility of cross-cultural communication, knowing languages other than one's mother tongue to perform these various functions of language is becoming more of a need than a personal interest. Such a dire need would call for a common language and English is currently the only possible lingua franca, if not to say the best. Phillipson (2008) proposed that in addition to lingua franca function of English, it goes further and further and serves other useful functions in a specific setting which imparts an improved life to the world namely a lingua economica, lingua académica, lingua emotive. Aspects related to economics, education and indexing popular cultures are fulfilled via English respectively.

Intriguingly, among all common languages, English has been widely disseminated around the world and has become an international medium of communication even though it is an allochthonous language to many countries. Regarding the tremendously rapid spread of English, Kachru (1992) characterized the functions and uses of English all over the world in three broad types:

- The central type is inner circle where English is used as a primary or principal language. Five countries namely, United Kingdom, New Zealand, United States, Australia and Canada are located in this circle. There are about 320-380 million English users in these countries, accounting for about 20-28% of the total English users (Hult, 2012).
- The next one is outer circle in which English is the second language, but mainly a legacy of colonization. Countries such as India and Singapore are placed here where something around 300-500 million English users, namely about 26% of the total English users are located (Hult, 2012).
- The outermost circle is an expanding circle in which English is a means of technological and academic communication. Countries such as Sweden, China, Iran, Japan, Korea and Egypt are occupied in this circle where English is spoken as a foreign language. Since English in this circle is not used for local communication, no varieties of English are there in this part. According to Hult (2012), there are 500-1000 million English users in this circle which cover almost half of English users (53%).

LITERATURE REVIEW

Throughout the history of English many linguistics have suggested various models in order to classify English speakers. One of the comprehensive models is Kachru's (1985) three

circle model. In this model, English speakers are divided into three categories. Inner circle (English speaking countries), outer circle and expanding circle. A typical example of Kachru's outer circle that we can point out is India. The languages which are spoken in India are various and sundry among which English is forty-fourth in the India's list of languages which has the most native speakers. In 1947, India became an independent country. Shortly thereafter, there was a challenge of superseding English with a native Indian language as the official language of India. However, it was not feasible to select Hindi as the only official language because English was more prevalent than Hindi, hence English along with Hindi were chosen as official languages. The reason why English is the common language in India is that India is a linguistically heterogeneous country, so a common language is needed to facilitate the communication and the solution is English which has the value of Lingua Franca. In addition to that, because India has colonial past, English has penetrated deep into government and schools. Besides, for the sake of getting a better job or making world economy, English is the first and last resort (Azam, Chin, & Prakash, 2013).

An example of Kachru's expanding circle is Iran. English has lived through ups and downs and undergone lengthy processes from hostile attitudes to positive attitudes in Iran. Before the Islamic Revolution in 1979, English was in its heyday. Iran was involved in an active collaboration with the West. As a result, English and English education came to the fore (Riazi, 2005). Nevertheless, after the Islamic Revolution, all aspects of language planning and education policy changed dramatically. The ultimate goal of this revolution was to devaluate the Western norms and valuated Iranian culture and Islam. But because of another revolution in the world, through turning into the medium of International communication, English seems to have found its niche generally all over the world. Particularly in the Iranian context, it is a foreign language alongside other languages in Iran like Persian, Turkish, Kurdish and etc. According to Riazi (2005), two major factors have contributed to the present status of English in Iran one of which is globalization. The other factor is ethnic groups. A country's culture and materials can stay alive if people learn languages other than their first language.

Another representative example of Kachru's expanding circle is Sweden. In 1849, English was considered as an important subject in Swedish educational system. Then, in 1946, which was considered as watershed moment, "English for all," was proposed by an educational commission and emphasized on the crucial role of English for democratization. Finally, by 1962, English became an integral part of Swedish society in order to grasp socioeconomic opportunities. And now, English performs two different functions in Swedish schools: one as a basic subject and another one as a medium for content-based instruction. Although some of Swedish people accept English as second language and some others as foreign language, they generally welcome English as a language through which they can join to globalization. Functional ability in English is of paramount importance to the educational system which is vivid in national syllabus for English where it is a key to Swedish society for internationalization. This occurs in two steps: One is from the world to

Sweden called localization and the next one is from Sweden to the world named globalization. Generally speaking, dimensions of English in the Swedish setting are twofold, namely local and global. English is the only transcultural language which is especially prone to index local and global meanings at once (Hult, 2012).

Kachru's three circle model was criticized by Jenkins (2003) who suggested that the model didn't clearly define English speakers in terms of their English language proficiency. It is unjustifiable to downgrade a competent English non-native speaker as a low proficiency and upgrade an English native speaker as a high proficiency English language user. In addition, she criticized the absence of presumed uniformity across the circles. For example, in the inner circle, there are various types of linguistic varieties such as Australian English, American English, British English, Canadian English, New Zealander English. Moreover, there are cultural varieties for example Australian culture bears no resemblance to that of culture of Canada. Such varieties can be seen in outer circle, too. Therefore, according to Jenkins (2003), Kachru's three circle model (1985) should be substantially revised. Modiano (1999 a) proposed an alternative model called English as an International Language Model (EILM) in which EIL occupies the center ground that is intelligible for both native and nonnative speakers and other varieties of English are assembled around it. Generally speaking, according to Paikeday (1985, p.12), native speaker "exists only as a figment of linguist's imagination".

English also has found its niche in the international business. There are some business organizations which are booming and flourishing internationally, therefore, they have to extend their boundaries over other countries. This fact has become a highly debatable issue since it affects communication within and beyond their boundaries. In order to alleviate this problem, multinational companies (MNCs) mapped out language policies for communication and interaction (Marschan-Piekkari et al., 1999). According to Peltokorpi and Vaara (2012), regarding employees who are working for MNCS, three terms are emerged: A parent-country national (PCN), a host country national (HCN), Third Country National (TCN).

- PCN is a person who works in a country which is not his/her own country (home country). This person is called an expatriate.
- HCN is a person who is the citizen of the country where the foreign subsidiary is located (host country).
- TCN is a person who is from other nationalities hired by a government and who is neither PCN nor HCN.

There are several MNCs from non-English speaking countries which utilize English as their official language (Lauring, 2008). Luo and Shenkar (2006) noted that Language policies and practices can be implemented in three ways at subsidiary level.

- Parent country language is considered as an official language. For example, Panasonic's subsidiary of Japan in the USA speaks Japanese.
- Host-country language is an official language. For example, Siemens' subsidiary of German in the USA makes use of English.

- Official language is a third language. For example, Schlumberger of France in Saudi Arabia speaks English.

Sharifian (2009) drew a sharp distinction between International English and English as International Language (henceforth referred to as EIL). The term *'international English'* lays an emphasis on the particular variety of English while EIL sheds light on all varieties of English such as American English, Indian English, Japanese English, Singaporean English or Chinese English and etc. in which a new paradigm, called world Englishes (WE), appears on the scene. From Crystal's (1999) point of view, from the 1970 onwards, it has been widely perceived that "English" has ceased to refer to a single term anymore because English is superseded by the terms 'new Englishes' or 'World Englishes' or what Nakayama (1989) called Multinational Englishes (henceforth referred to as ME).

ME, as a subject of heated debate, is discussed by Nakayama (1989). By ME, he means any national varieties of English adding that any "valid English", whether English native or non-native speaker, is acceptable. In essences, all language learners should read and listen to Valid ME in both written and spoken form (Smith, 1978). Nakayama (1989) argued that EFL or ESL should be replaced with multinational language. In addition, both native and non-native speakers should be taught in order to be able to negotiate and communicate efficiently. Moreover, the cultural issues in contents of language teaching materials should shift the focus from inner circle to other specified countries. Finally, both native and non-native users of ME should be equipped with knowledge of different varieties of English and cultures.

In Lester's view (1978), what demotivate language learners to have native speaker ability are due to three major reasons. First and foremost is the communication needs. Most of the language learners learn language for the sake of communication and as soon as they meet their needs, they see no need to become master in all language skills and become native like. For example, there is no need for language learners to be master in use of articles which have minor role. The next factor is keeping a balance between linguistic and cultural roles. One should have language knowledge and cultural knowledge. If one is linguistically competent, he/she cannot be fully guaranteed that he/she can understand jokes or illusions in that culture. The last one is identity. Some of the language learners, especially immigrants, wish to be identified with the people and culture of English speaking country. Desire to learn native speaker proficiency boils down to denying one's local identity. There are a vast number of other varieties of English which should be seen as accepted forms. 'Linguistic chauvinism' has no place (Smith, 2015).

WE or EIL and Standard English are always highly debated issues among researchers and scholars. According to Quirk (1981), 'standard' is the natural language that all educated English native speakers use. It is "an endemic feature of our [the native speakers of English] mortal condition … people feel alienated and disoriented if a standard seems to be missing" (p. 30). Quirk (1990) posited that the varieties of Englishes spoken in different contexts specifically in the outer-circle countries are only interference varieties: hence,

English language teachers should focus attention on native norms. In addition, he stated that there should be a common standard both for spoken and written form to keep control of use of English, otherwise English will split into various varieties which are unintelligible and this impedes Halliday's (1977) interactional language function.

Kachru's idea (1985) is in contrast with Quirk's idea (1990) suggesting that such norms were not congruent with sociolinguistic reality. Moreover, Quirk (1990) didn't take into account the Lingua Franca use of English in the expanding circle. Getting into another argument, Kachru widely criticized the Interlanguage theory (Selinker, 1972, 1992). In this theory, second language learners' competence is evaluated in terms of the output produced by learner and to what extend it is similar to Standard English (American or British). An output dissimilar to Standard English is seen as an error and if it continues, it is called fossilization. According to Kachru (1985), the outer circle English speakers flatly rejected the norms of inner circle for example the way they request or complain and thus Englishes in outer circle should not be considered as deficient or error.

Alongside with this status, also English language has been exceeded its authority by English native speakers' country like Britain or America and rippled around the globe. Under a likely scenario, English nonnative speakers will double in number soon. Therefore, English native speaker countries should not be awarded custody of English. Widdowson (2003) claimed that native speakers have no more ownership of English. If English is an international and flexible language, it should not be restricted to standard lexis. Regarding lexical domain, when physicists or stockbrokers utilize specific terminologies, they should not be seen as non-standard. Their professional community should be given not only the right of ownership but the ability of manipulating English in order to meet their objects.

From Jenkin's perspective (2000), bilingual and monolingual English speakers should be substituted for non-native and native speakers respectively. In Cook's view (2004), bilingual English speakers (non-native) are vastly superior to monolingual English speakers (native), therefore, bilingual teachers as proficient language learners and users can be paragon of successful language teachers in teaching English for international communication.

Merriam Webster dictionary defines *'imperialism'* as a policy or practice by which a country increases its power by gaining control over other areas of the world which is divided into linguistic and discourse imperialism. In voicing objections to Linguistic Imperialism, Aliakbari (2003) argues that native speakers should be prevented from getting custody of English. He posited that linguistic homogeneity position deliberately flouts the Grice's (1975) cooperative maxim. A reciprocal cooperation is required for effective communication, therefore, native speaker's linguistic and cultural chauvinism should be neutralized by equality and commonality in status.

In order to connect students trans-nationally, developing telecollaboration projects are the viable alternative. In this project, teacher plays a major role in that he/she should

provide opportunities for student's interaction and manage them in the best way (Egbert, Huff, McNeil, Preuss, & Sellen, 2009). Jackson (2011) proposed that online telecollaboration make students extremely competent to share their own ideas and perspectives and encourage a relationship of mutuality among them and this can be the best way of fostering intercultural learning. Liaw (2006) adds that when language learners share their own cultural information in the target language, tutors can stand a much better chance of learning from his/her students about different cultures.

Menard–Warwick, Heredia–Herrera, and Palmer (2013) carried out a research on intercultural learning by participants in an Internet chat exchange. Participants were teachers who studied English in Chile and graduate students from California. The results indicated that there was significant evidence of mutuality. Language learners found ample opportunity to interact with their interlocutors and gained a clear understanding of different cultures. Both teachers and students strongly supported each other in order to develop trans- national identities and also they achieved intercultural competence

Merriam Webster dictionary defines attitude as 'a feeling or emotion toward a fact or state'. The key role of attitude in language learning is always a subject of debate and is considered as a factor of motivation in EFL/ESL learning (Sugimoto, Rahimpour, & Yaghoubi-Notash, 2006). A Model known as Vector Model, posited by Calder and Lutz (1972), further clarifies the two-dimensional aspects of attitude, namely affective and cognitive components. The former deals with emotion about the attitude object and the later deals with the language learners' beliefs about the information that they have gained and learned. As a result, one's belief about a thing is mainly comprised of putting value on each of these two dimensions which are inextricably interwoven with each other and one affects another indirectly.

After researching various kinds of attitudes, Gardener and Lambert (1972) defined motivation as one of the subsection of attitude which is of paramount importance to language learning. Therefore, in this paper attitude is analyzed within the framework of the notion of motivation. Brown (2007) proposed a motivational dichotomy known as intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. By intrinsic motivation, he means language learner shows an interest in learning English because of intrinsic factors like getting a job or passing an exam while in extrinsic motivation, learner is forced to learn it because of extrinsic factors like parents insisting on sending their children to English language institutions or going abroad for language training which are obliged by companies for the staffs.

A qualitative study in a deductive approach was done by Valdes (1986), who desired to find if there is any relationship between learning and cultural identity. The results indicated that there was positive relationship between cultural identities and learning and concluded that teachers should pay attention to cultural identities of language learners in order to give fresh impetus to learners to learn language successfully.

In the case of ownership of English, 34 Japanese high school students' perceptions on English as an International language were investigated in Tokyo. The data were gathered from private senior high school. A questionnaire and an interview were used. The results indicated that the participants adopted positive attitude toward EIL but they believed that English belong to its native speakers (Matsuda, 2003).

Tsuda (2003) examined positive attitude towards English in Japanese context. The first and second year students of the Faculty of Humanities at Tokai Gakuen University students participated in this study. She found that although informants were cognizant of the value of English in communication, more than half of all participants did not like English as a school subject since they were not successful language learners and they studied English mostly because of exam. They dislike grammatical instruction and preferred to learn English via movie or song. About half of the participants preferred to learn International English or Lingua Franca English. Finally, she concluded that in order to make the situation better, language teachers should encourage students to make themselves relaxed and make them aware that they learn English to use it as a means of communication rather than speak like English native speakers.

A study was conducted to investigate how non-native English speakers and learners perceive English as an International language in EFL countries. To do so, 126 English teachers and 529 college students filled out the questionnaires. The results indicated that teachers preferred standard variety rather than other varieties of English but generally they were interested in being EIL users. In the similar vein, college students desired to learn English of native speakers and believed that native speakers are the only owners of English (Liou, 2010). In another study, Yu (2010) focused on Chinese college students' attitude toward English, different varieties of English, and China English. In addition, those students who had got a lot of exposure to English, adopted more positive attitude. Faez (2011) emphasized looking at linguistic identities and considering it as dynamic, dialogic, relational, situated rather than static and unitary phenomenon.

Martínez and Pérez (2013) examined the attitudes of Mexican American students towards learning English as a second language in a structured immersion program. There were significant differences among participants in terms of gender and grades. Girls were more positive than boys regarding class assignments. Participants with higher grades reflected more positive attitudes toward teacher than those with lower grades. Parmegiani (2014) investigated whether English and IsiZulu have the equal status in the black South African university students' identity construction. The results indicated that they favor their mother tongue over any other languages. Nevertheless, they believed that English is no one's property and it brings about a connection between all nations. Abadi and Darani (2015) conducted a survey with intermediate male and female Iranian EFL learners. They reported that their participants were aware that varieties of English spoken throughout the world are various and sundry. Despite accepting non-native varieties, they had a desire for American and British accents. Sadeghi and Richards (2016) investigated the status of English in Iran, Urmia by studying 115 English language learners. Findings of the study indicated that English in Iran gives one an advantage and person is seen as a prestige one since he/she can communicate with the world.

Although majority of the English users in the world are non-native speakers, this has negligible effect on preferring to learn World Englishes. On the other hand, nearly all of them are not cognizant of different varieties of English and maybe because of this fact, they prefer Standard English. To the best of our knowledge, not much research has been directed to the topic of how college students and EFL learners perceive English in general and world Englishes and ownership of English in particular. Therefore, attitude, as a key variable, becomes a paramount concern in English language teaching and learning. The present study tried to address the following research question:

- What are the attitudes of Bilingual and Monolingual EFL learners toward English?

METHOD

Participants

In this study, there were an overall 400 participants including 150 Persian participants (monolinguals), 114 Azerbaijani Turkish participants (bilinguals), 136 Kurdish participants (bilinguals). Out of 400, 180 people were male.

Materials and Procedure

In this study, the attitudes of 400 college students and EFL learners at a semi-state-run language institute (named ILI) were investigated. We selected the participants from Yazd, Tabriz, and Mahabad, respectively. The attitudes to English in the linguistically diverse context of Iran is the focus of study. For collecting quantitative data in this study, the researchers used a questionnaire consisting of close ended items. The questionnaire was designed based on Dewi's dissertation (2011) with some modifications considering the nature of informants and the context. The time allocation for the questionnaire was 20 minutes. The questionnaires were distributed in the library of each of the universities. The intention of choosing library as a setting for data collection was that a quiet and peaceful place was demanded for implementing the process of data collection. There were 37 Likert-type items. The participants rated the items based on their level of agreement: 5 = strongly agree, 4 = agree, 3 = neither agree nor disagree, 2 = disagree, 1= strongly disagree. In order to assure that participants would achieve high degree of comprehensibility, all items were in Persian, the official language on Iran.

Validity and reliability of the study were confirmed for controlling the measurement error. The questionnaire's validity is to some extent supported by the study on which the present instrument was extracted from (Dewi, 2011). Faces as well as content validity of the study were done successfully as follows. Generally, the face validity is evaluated by people who are not proficient. For this, 20 MA students from different disciplines at Yazd University established face validity. They were not invited to answer the questionnaire, but read the items and evaluated them in terms of coherence and clarity. Their comments were fruitful in improving the questionnaire before administrating it.

A panel of two experts assessed the instruments thoroughly to ensure suitability for data collection. The experts were English faculty members at Yazd University in Iran. Receiving their useful feedback on the instrument, the researchers revised it. Replacement of the offending items made the instrument better. For the second review, the instrument was given back to the panel. Then the validity of the study was established for sure. In addition, effort to elicit detailed data and removing the falsehood, the researchers utilized iterating question tactic. The questionnaire items in this study are reiterated. The researcher checked these items and detected some discrepancies. Then some questions were discarded.

In order to confirm the reliability, the internal consistency of the questionnaire was estimated for each of the four domains of the Likert type scale by applying Cronbach's alpha. As soon as experts confirmed the validity of the questionnaire, it was piloted with 225 Iranian college students pursuing undergraduate and postgraduate studies in Yazd University. For addressing the reliability of the questionnaire, it should meet the standards of reliability ranging from.6 to.7 at least to be acceptable (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994). The Cronbach's alpha for the questionnaire equaled.71

RESULTS

As mentioned above, the researchers explored the attitudes of 400 college students and EFL learners language to ten issues: General perception to English, Status of English, text and content matter comprehensibility through English, job prospects, official status, culture learning, integrating with American or British cultures, religion and foreign language learning, English ownership, Adherence to British English, American English or English as an international language. The participants filled out a five-point Likert-scale questionnaire containing 37 items. In order to make the results more comprehensive and easy to interpret, only those items where there were significant differences in attitudes of participants are reported. In answering to research question, there were significant differences in attitudes of participants regarding ten issues which are mentioned earlier. Table 1 shows the general perception of English.

Persian participants found English language learning very difficult while Azerbaijani and Kurdish participants found it quite easy to learn. There were significant differences only between Persian and Azerbaijani participants. Azerbaijani participants put high value on English language learning. Table 2 below shows the attitudes of participants to the status of English.

Table 1. General perception to English

Item	Mother tongue	Mean
English is a difficult language to learning.	Persian	150.66
	Azerbaijani	108.60
	Kurdish	115.63
English is a language worth learning.	Persian	120.69
	Azerbaijani	148.04
	Kurdish	135.05

Kurdish participants agreed more than others about importance of English along with Persian. Also, they agreed that both English and Farsi should be spoken in Iran.

Azerbaijani and Kurdish participants quite agreed that English should be taught to all school students as well as college students.

In comparison to Persian and Azerbaijani participants, Kurdish participants adopted significantly different attitudes and agreed that English does not have a place in Iran. Attitudes of Azerbaijani participants were significantly different from other participants in that Azerbaijani participants were interested that English is better to be considered as dominant language in Iran. Table 3 below shows the attitudes of participants to presenting a subject in English.

In comparison with Azerbaijani and Kurdish participants, Persian participants adopted significantly different attitudes in that they become confused when a subject or text is delivered in English. Compare to Azerbaijani and Kurdish participants, Persian participants agreed that when a subject or a text is delivered in English, they become confused. Table 4 below shows the attitudes of participants to relation between English and their jobs.

In comparison with Persian and Kurdish participants, Azerbaijani participants agreed that there is a great need for

English if we want to have a promising country. Table 5 below shows the attitudes of participants to English as official language in Iran.

In comparison with Persian and Participants, Kurdish participants agreed that English should be an official language in Iran, besides Persian language. Compare to Azerbaijani and Kurdish participants, Persian participants strongly agreed that English in Iran is a form of linguistic imperialism. Table 6 below shows the attitudes of participants to western culture

In comparison with Persian and Kurdish participants, Azerbaijani participants agreed that they learn many values of Western cultures via English language. Table 7 below shows the attitudes of participants to integrating American or British cultures.

In comparison with Azerbaijani and Kurdish participants, Persian participants agreed with the idea that "I never speak British or American English because it is a western product". But in comparison with Azerbaijani people, Kurdish people agreed that English is western product. Table 8 below shows the attitudes of participants to religion and language learning.

Compared to Persian participants, Azerbaijani participants adopted significantly different attitude to English in that their religion gave them an impetus to learn any lan-

Table 2. Status of English

Item	Mother tongue	Mean
Both Persian and English should be important in Iran.	Persian	132.75
	Azerbaijani	108.36
	Kurdish	150.45
All people in Iran should speak English and Persian.	Persian	126.51
	Azerbaijani	109.92
	Kurdish	157.59
English should be taught to all school students and university students in Iran.	Persian	120.48
	Azerbaijani	148.32
	Kurdish	154.58
English does not have a place in Iran.	Persian	131.51
	Azerbaijani	58.78
	Kurdish	151.86
I would like English to take over Persian language in Iran.	Persian	108.40
	Azerbaijani	137.29
	Kurdish	110.56

Table 3. Text and content matter comprehensibility through English

Item	Mother tongue	Mean
A subject is confusing when it is delivered in English.	Persian	162.49
	Azerbaijani	92.09
	Kurdish	149.90
A subject is confusing when the textbook is in English.	Persian	165.36
	Azerbaijani	89.26
	Kurdish	128.22

Table 4. Job prospects

Item	Mother tongue	Mean
Learning English is an absolute for my career prospects.	Persian	119.42
	Azerbaijani	139.76
	Kurdish	108.41

Table 5. Official status

Item	Mother tongue	Mean
English should be an official language in Iran, besides Persian language.	Persian	127.88
	Azerbaijani	145.57
	Kurdish	156.02
English in Iran is a form of linguistic imperialism.	Persian	155.87
	Azerbaijani	113.31
	Kurdish	123.97

Table 6. Culture learning

Item	Mother tongue	Mean
I learn many values of Western cultures via English language.	Persian	112.50
	Azerbaijani	158.82
	Kurdish	101.99

Table 7. Integrating with American or British cultures

Item	Mother tongue	Mean
I never speak British or American English because it is a western product.	Persian	159.00
	Azerbaijani	124.24
	Kurdish	97.63

guages including English. Compared to Azerbaijani, Kurdish and Persian participants, participants of other languages agreed that their religions encourage them to learn any languages including English. Table 9 below shows the attitudes of participants to ownership of English.

Persian participants reflected significantly different attitude to the ownership of English. Compared to Azerbaijani and Kurdish participants, Persian participants restrict the ownership of English only to those whose mother tongues are English while Azerbaijani and Kurdish participants believed that English belongs to anyone who speaks English. Table 10 below shows the attitudes of participants to American or British varieties of English.

Compared to Persian participants, Azerbaijani and Kurdish participants strongly agreed with the idea that "Employing American or British teachers is the best way of conducting English language teaching". In comparison to Kurdish and Azerbaijani people, Persian participants preferred to learn British English or American English (English as Foreign Language) rather than English as International language.

Table 8. Religion and foreign language learning

Item	Mother tongue	Mean
My religion encourages me to learn any languages including English	Persian	122.92
	Azerbaijani	145.11
	Kurdish	76.23

Table 9. English ownership

Item	Mother tongue	Mean
The owners of English are its native speakers – Americans, British and Australians.	Persian	152.20
	Azerbaijani	79.31
	Kurdish	115.79
Nowadays, English belongs to everyone who speaks the language.	Persian	76.59
	Azerbaijani	157.32
	Kurdish	151.29

Table 10. Adherence to British English, American English or English as an international language

Item	Mother tongue	Mean
Employing American or British teachers is the best way of conducting English language teaching	Persian	110.30
	Azerbaijani	145.92
Students need to be taught British English only.	Kurdish	
	Persian	152.07
	Azerbaijani	114.96
Students need to be taught American English only.	Kurdish	120.32
	Persian	154.94
English should be taught as a foreign language	Azerbaijani	119.92
	Kurdish	125.04
	Persian	176.53
	Azerbaijani	58.61
	Kurdish	60.40

As outlined previously, the present study aimed at investigating attitudes of Azerbaijani participants, Persian participants, Kurdish participants to ten issues such as: General perception to English, Status of English, text and content matter comprehensibility through English, job prospects, official status, culture learning, integrating with American or British cultures, religion and foreign language learning, English ownership, Adherence to British English, American English or English as an international language. The results of this study indicated that Persian participants found English language learning very difficult. Azerbaijani participants put high value on English language learning. Kurdish participants agreed more than others about importance of English along with Persian. Azerbaijani and Kurdish participants quite agreed that English should be taught to all school students as well as college students. Azerbaijani participants were of the opinion that English is better to be considered as dominant language in Iran. Persian participants adopted significantly different attitudes in that they become confused when a subject or text is delivered in English. Persian participants strongly agreed that English in Iran is a form of linguistic imperialism. Azerbaijani participants agreed that they learn many values of Western cultures via English language. Persian participants preferred not to speak British or American English because it is a western product. Azerbaijani participants adopted significantly different attitude to English in that their religious gave them an impetus to learn any languages including English. Persian participants restrict the ownership of English only to those whose mother tongues are English. Azerbaijani and Kurdish participants strongly agreed with the idea that "Employing American or British teachers is the best way of conducting English language teaching". Persian participants preferred to learn British English or American English rather than International language while other participants preferred to learn International English.

DISCUSSION

In comparison to the results of this study, Matsude (2003) found that Japanese high school students believed that native speakers are the only ownership of English or the terms English speakers refers merely to those from USA (United States of America) or UK (United Kingdom). In contrast with the results of this study, Tsuda (2003) found that Tokai Gakuen university students in Japan had negative attitude towards English in spite of the fact that they were aware of the value of English in communication. Also, Liou (2010) found that 126 teachers preferred Standard variety of English rather than other verities of English. In line with the results of this study, Yu (2010) found that those chines college students who had gotten a lot of exposure to English adopted more positive attitude to English. In addition, Martinez and Perez (2013) found that those Mexican American students who had got higher grades had more positive attitude to English. In comparison to the findings of this paper, Parmegiani (2014) found that African university students favored their mother tongue over any other languages. But they believed

that English is no one's property. On the other hand, Abadi and Darani (2015) found that intermediate Iranian EFL learners had a desire for American or British accent. In line with the results of this paper, Sadeghi and Richards (2016) found that 115 English language learners in Urmia put high value on English.

CONCLUSION

The present study aimed at investigating attitudes of bilingual and monolingual to ten issues such as: General perception to English, Status of English, text and content matter comprehensibility through English, job prospects, official status, culture learning, integrating with American or British cultures, religion and foreign language learning, English ownership, Adherence to British English, American English or English as an international language.

Regarding the results of this study, monolingual participants found English language learning very difficult while bilingual participants found it easy and put high value on English language learning. Even bilingual participants strongly agreed with the idea of English as a medium of instruction. Bilingual participants welcomed learning more languages especially English and were of the opinion that English should be as an official language in Iran.

Monolingual participants believed that English only belongs to English speaking countries while bilingual participants were of the opinion that everyone is the owner of English. Monolingual participants preferred to learn one specific variety of English rather than International language while bilingual participants preferred to learn International English.

As the results indicated, the more languages you know, the greater the knowledge of the languages you have equipped yourself with and therefore the more comprehensive view of the culture you have adopted. Meanwhile, it is worth mentioning that Bilingual speakers adopted more positive attitude toward English in comparison with monolingual speakers.

In the case of this study, we can conclude that no one could easily overlook the juggernaut of globalization of English. Under a plausible scenario, English is going to be less and less as a foreign language and more and more as an unrivaled lingua Franca. None of the English varieties is better or more appropriate than another – they're just different varieties of English. Language learners should be aware of these varieties or Englishes in the classroom as far as communication is concerned. No one owns English. English belongs to everyone.

REFERENCES

Abadi, H. T. H., & Darani, L. H. (2015). Exploring Male and Female Iranian EFL Learners' Attitude towards Native and Non-native Varieties of English. *The Journal of Applied Linguistics, 8*(17), 124-145. Retrieved from Retrieved from http://www.ensani.ir/storage/Files/20170121152157-10099-156.pdf

Aliakbari, M. (2003). *Linguistic imperialism, linguistic democracy and English language Teaching*. Proceedings of the International Conference on Information Technology and Universities in Asia. Chulalongkon University Press, Bangkok, Thailand. Retrieved from http://www.stc.arts.chula.ac.th/ITUA/Papers_for_ITUA_Proceedings/Linguistic%20Imperialism.pdf

Attitude. (2017). In Merriam Webster.com. Retrieved from https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/attitude.

Azam, M., Chin, A., & Prakash, N. (2013). The returns to English-language skills in India. *Economic Development and Cultural Change, 61*(2), 335-367. Retrieved from http://ftp.iza.org/dp4802.pdf

Brown, D. H. (2007). *Principles of Language Learning and Teaching*. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.

Calder, B. J., & Lutz, R. J. (1972). An investigation of some alternatives to the linear attitude model. In *SV - Proceedings of the Third Annual Conference of the Association for Consumer Research, eds. M. Venkatesan, Chicago, IL: Association for Consumer Research, 812-815*.

Cook, V. (2004). Bilingual cognition and teaching. Paper presented at the 13th International Symposium on English Teaching, Taipei, TW.

Crystal, D. (2003). *English as a Global Language* (2nd ed.) New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.

Crystal, D. (1999) The future of Englishes. *English Today, 15*, 10-20. doi: 10.1017/S0266078400010816

Culture. (2017). In Merriam Webster.com. Retrieved from https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/culture

Dewi, A. (2011). *Perception of English: a study of staff and students at universities in Yogyakarta, Indonesia* (doctoral dissertation) Monash University, Australia

Egbert, J., Huff, L., McNeil, L., Preuss, C., & Sellen, J. (2009). Pedagogy, process, and classroom context: Integrating teacher voice and experience into research on technology−enhanced language learning. *The Modern Language Journal, 93*(1), 754-768.

Faez, F. (2011). Reconceptualizing the native/nonnative speaker dichotomy. *Journal of Language, Identity & Education, 10*(4), 231-249. Retrieved from http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/15348458.2011.598127

Gardner, R. C. & Lambert, W. E. (1972). *Attitudes and motivation in second-language learning*. Rowley, Massachusetts: Newbury House Publishers.

Grice, H. P. (1975). Syntax and Semantics 3: Speech Arts, *Logic and conversation* (pp. 41-58). New York, NY: Academic press.

Gumperz, J. (1982). *Language and Social Identity*, New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.

Halliday, M. A. K. (1977). *Explorations in the functions of language*. North-Holland, NL, Elsevier.

Hult, F. M. (2012). English as a transcultural language in Swedish policy and practice. *TESOL Quarterly, 46*(2), 230-257. doi: 10.1002/tesq.19

Identity. (2017). In Merriam Webster.com. Retrieved from https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/identity

Jackson, J. (2011). Mutuality, engagement, and agency: Negotiating identity on stays abroad. *Identity formation*

in globalizing contexts: Language learning in the new millennium, 127-145. doi: 10.1515/9783110267280.127

Jenkins, J. (2003). *World Englishes: A resource book for students.* London, Routledge.

Kachru, B. B. (Ed.). (1992). *The other tongue: English across cultures*. University of Illinois Press.

Kachru, B. B. (1985). Standards, codification and sociolinguistic realism: The English language in the outer circle. In R. Quirk and H.G. Widdowson (Eds), *English in the world: Teaching and learning the language and literatures* (pp.11-30). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

Lauring, J. (2008). Rethinking social identity theory in international encounters: Language use as a negotiated object for identity making. *International Journal of Cross Cultural Management*, 8(3), 343-361. doi: 10.1177/1470595808096673

Lester, M. (1978). International English and language variation. In *English as an international language*. London: The British Council.

Liaw, M. (2006). E-learning and the development of intercultural competence. *Language Learning and Technology*, *10 (*3), 49-64. Retrieved from http://llt.msu.edu/vol10num3/liaw/

Liou, Y. S. (2010). Who wants EIL? Attitudes towards English as an international language: A comparative study of college teachers and students in the Greater Taipei area. *College English: Issues and Trends*, 3, 133-157.

Luo, Y., & Shenkar, O. (2006). The multinational corporation as a multilingual community: Language and organization in a global context. *Journal of International Business Studies*, *37*(3), 321-339. doi: 10.1057/palgrave.jibs.8400197

Marschan-Piekkari, R., Welch, D., & Welch, L. (1999). Adopting a common corporate language: IHRM implications. *International Journal of Human Resource Management*, *10*(3), 377-390. Retrieved from http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/095851999340387

Martínez, D. U., & Pérez, J. G. (2013). Attitudes of Mexican American students towards learning English as a Second Language in a structured immersion Program. *Porta Linguarum: Revista Internacional de Didáctica de las Lenguas Extranjeras*, *20*, 205-221.

Matsuda, A. (2003). The ownership of English in Japanese secondary schools. *World Englishes*, *22*(4), 483-496. doi: 10.1111/j.1467-971X.2003.00314.x\

McKenna, S. (2004). The intersection between academic literacies and student identities: research in higher education. *South African Journal of Higher Education*, *18*(3), 269-280. doi: 10.4314/sajhe.v18i3.25496

Menard–Warwick, J., Heredia–Herrera, A., & Palmer, D. S. (2013). Local and global identities in an EFL Internet chat exchange. *The Modern Language Journal*, *97*(4), 965-980. doi: 10.1111/j.1540-4781.2013.12048.x

Modiano, M. (1999a). International English in the global village. *English Today, 15*(2), 22-27. doi: 10.1017/S026607840001083X

Nakayama, Y. (1989). Some suggestions for multinational Englishes: A sociolinguistic view of the language. *JALT Journal*, *11*(1), 26-35.

Norton, B. (2000). *Identity and language learning: Gender, ethnicity and educational change*. Buenos Aires, AR: Editorial Dunken.

Nunnally, J.C. and Bernstein, I.H. (1994) The Assessment of Reliability. *Psychometric Theory*, 3, 248-292.

Paikeday, T. M. (1985). *The native speaker is dead! An informal discussion of a linguistic myth with Noam Chomsky and other linguists, philosophers, psychologists, and lexic.* Toronto and New York, Paikeday Pub Co.

Parmegiani, A. (2014). The (dis) ownership of English: language and identity construction among Zulu students at the University of KwaZulu-Natal. *International Journal of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism*, *17*(6), 683-694. Retrieved from http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/13670050.2014.953775

Peltokorpi, V., & Vaara, E. (2012). Language policies and practices in wholly owned foreign subsidiaries: A recontextualization perspective. *Journal of International Business Studies*, *43*(9), 808-833. doi: 10.1007/978-3-319-42745-4_5

Pennycook, A. (1994). *The cultural* politics *of English as an international language*. London: Routledge.

Phillipson, R. (2008). The new linguistic imperial order: English as an EU lingua franca or lingua frankensteinia?. *Journal of Irish and Scottish Studies*, *1*(2), 189-203. Retrieved from http://www.serwis.wsjo.pl/lektor/1783/R20%20Phillipson%202008%20English%20in%20EU%20lingua%20frankensteinia.pdf

Phillipson, R. (1992). *Linguistic Imperialism*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Quirk, R. (1990). Language varieties and standard language. *English Today, 21,* 3-10.

Quirk, R. (1981). International communication and the concept of nuclear English. In *English for cross-cultural communication* (pp. 151-165). Palgrave Macmillan UK.

Riazi, A (2005) 'The four language stages in the history of Iran', In A. Lin & P. Martin (Eds.), *Decolonization, Globalisation: Language-in-education Policy and Practice* (pp. 98-114), United Kingdom: Multilingual Matters.

Risager, K. (2007). *Language and culture pedagogy: From a national to a transnational paradigm*. United Kingdom: Multilingual Matters.

Sadeghi, K., & Richards, J. C. (2016). The idea of English in Iran: an example from Urmia. *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development*, *37*(4), 419-434. Retrieved from http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/01434632.2015.1080714

Selinker, L. (1992). *Rediscovering interlanguage.* London: Longman.

Selinker, L. (1972). Interlanguage. *International Review of Applied Linguistics in Language Teaching, 10,* 209-231. doi: https://doi.org/10.1515/iral.1972.10.1-4.209

Sharifian, F. (Ed.). (2009). *English as an international language: Perspectives and pedagogical issues*. United Kingdom: Multilingual Matters.

Smith, L. E. (2015). English as an international language: No room for linguistic chauvinism. *Journal of English as a Lingua Franca*, *4*(1), 165. doi**:** https://doi.org/10.1515/jelf-2015-0002

Smith, L.E. (1978). Some distinctive features of EIIL vs. ESOL in English language education. *Culture Learning Institute Report, 5*(3), 5-7 and 10-11.

Sugimoto, T., Rahimpour, M., & Yaghoubi-Notash, M. (2006). Exploring the role of attitude, motivation and gender in EFL learning. *The Seijo University Arts & Literature Quarterly*, *197*, 138-154. Retrieved from http://www.seijo.ac.jp/pdf/falit/197/197-5.pdf

Tsuda, S. (2003). Attitudes toward English Language Learning in Higher Education in Japan (2): Raising Awareness of the Notion of Global English. *Global English-Oriented Research Journal (GEORJ), 7*(3), 61-75.

Valdes, J. M. (Ed.). (1986). *Culture bound: Bridging the cultural gap in language teaching*. Cambridge University Press.

Widdowson, H. (2003). *Defining issues in English language teaching*. Oxford, Oxford University Press.

Yu, Y. (2010). *Attitudes of learners toward English: A case of Chinese college students* (Doctoral dissertation), The Ohio State University, China.