

The attitudes of Turkish researchers towards English and Turkish as the medium of instruction and publication: A comparative study of researchers in a core country vs. researchers in a semiperiphery country

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This paper compares the attitudes and perceptions of researchers from the Middle East Technical University (METU) with those of Turkish researchers resident in the United Kingdom towards English as a language of education and publication. At this point, it is clear that the research focuses on the relationship between Turkish academics and their usage of English as the language of education and publication; however, it could be argued that this relationship is a part of a bigger picture. A macro-level theoretical approach is used to understand the mentioned relationship. There is no doubt that there is a strong relationship between English's being lingua franca and the UK and later USA's being hegemonic power. As a result, the macro-level theory referring "hegemonic power" while analysing the world system at the centre of the research helps us understand the attitudes of semiperiphery academicians towards English. Most universities in Turkey now tend to use English as the medium of education and research publication at the expense of Turkish. The Middle East Technical University is often taken as a model for new universities in Turkey as English has been the instruction language since the university was opened in 1957. Thus, it is a good departure point for investigating the hegemonic side of English in Turkey. By also considering the experiences of a few Turkish researchers working and producing in a core country (the UK), we aimed to find out how life at the centre affects the attitudes of Turkish researchers towards both English and Turkish as a medium of instruction and publication. In addition, another aim has been to explore how the Turkish language bears up as a tool for scientific communication tool compared with English, the hegemonic language of academia. Therefore, we investigated particular 'scientific' or 'academic' community case (METU) to describe the broader tendency of the Turkish scholars in academia towards English as a means of education and publication in general. The data, collected via interviews, signals the extent to which these researchers hope to participate in the mainstream international scientific community and their reasons for it.

BIODATA

Erdem AKBAS completed his PhD at the Department of Education, University of York (UK) supervised by Dr. Jan Hardman (July, 2014). He was a sponsored student of Turkey between 2009 and 2014. By receiving this scholarship, he was given the opportunity to study abroad. He holds his MA in TESOL from University of York (October 2010). He is in the editorial team of IBERICA, ELT, and International Journal of Applied Linguistics & English Literature (IJALEL) as a reviewer. His research interests include Discourse Analysis & Language Teaching; Written Discourse Analysis; Teaching Academic Writing; Language Curriculum Design & Evaluation; Contrastive Rhetoric.

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