

THE EFFECT OF THE SPREAD OF ENGLISH AS A LINGUA FRANCA ON THE JORDANIAN SOCIETY AND ITS LANGUAGES

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ABSTRACT

This study aimed at investigating the effects of the spread of English language as a lingua franca on Jordanian society and its languages. The study aimed to achieve two goals namely to find out the positive aspects of the spread of English on Jordanians and their way of life and to uncover the negative influences of the spread of English on Jordanians and their languages. To achieve the aims of the study, the researchers have chosen a sample of 50 Jordanians to respond to the questionnaire. The obtained data indicate that English is the most dominant foreign language in Jordan. Participants have shown loyalty to the Arabic language, Jordanian culture and identity. English language helps Jordanians keep abreast with technological and scientific developments. Moreover, knowledge of English enables Jordanians to get good job opportunities and improve their economic status. Also, English as a lingua franca helps them to understand different cultures and facilitates their modern life. However, the spread of English language has negative influences on Jordanians and their languages. English as a lingua franca affects the Arabic language in many ways such as English is competing with Arabic because many sectors require it as tourism, government, business, and travel, etc. In addition, the flow of English borrowings will affect the purity of Arabic language. Furthermore, English affects our children; it makes them lose interest in learning the Arabic language.

Keywords: Positive Effects, Spread of English, Negative Effects, Jordan.

INTRODUCTION

English is used as a lingua franca in all continents of the world. It is used as an official one in more than 85% of international institutions. In fact, “the nonnative speakers (NNSs) of English outnumber native speakers (NSs) by a ratio of 3:1” (Crystal, 2003, p. 107). English serves as the common vehicle of communication among speakers with or without the same linguistic and cultural background. It is the language of aviation, the internet, academic conferences, politics, business, education, media, diplomacy, sports, and international scientific exchanges.

The main reason for the spread of English was British colonialism. English became a lingua franca in the 19th and 20th centuries. British colonialism dominated most parts of the earth, such as the United States, Canada, Australia, India, Bangladesh and Niger. Recently, British colonialism dominated Arab countries.

After the fall of the Ottoman Empire, Jordan became under the British mandate. English was the first foreign language to be taught in Jordan before and after independence in 1946. After independence, English was taught in all Jordanian schools at an early date. But after the 1990s, English was taught alongside Arabic in all Jordanian schools at the age of six. This gave English a unique place in Jordan (Drbseh, 2013).

However, Arabic language is both the official language and the language of communication in everyday life. English is the main foreign language, especially in business and commerce. Also, English is taught at public and private schools and it is widely understood by the upper and middle classes. English has a co-official status in the education sector; almost all university-level classes are held in English and all public and private schools teach English along with standard Arabic (Dweik, 1986).

Globalization is a double-edged sword that helps unite and connect people all over the world, but it also threatens to lose the identity and culture of individuals. The global language phenomenon is of interest to many linguists due to its significance and influence on people and their languages. English language has become a global language, because it has spread all over the world. While some linguists believe that the spread of English language has positive effects, others believe it has negative effects on society and its languages.

In this age where the world becomes a small village as a result of the power of technology and the spread of English as a powerful global language, smaller languages may have been influenced negatively under this invasion. Since there is an intimate relationship between languages and their users, it is interesting to investigate this relationship and to find out the influence of language on society. Although there are many studies that have been conducted on this subject in many countries, studies conducted in Jordan are relatively scanty. This study may add new information which may help in filling the gap in literature. This study may benefit teachers, students, researchers, linguists, language scholars, language planners and any other individuals interested in the subject of English language. However, results of this study cannot be generalized to all Jordanians. They are limited to the sample and the instrument used in the research.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The study raised the following questions in order to fulfill the objectives of the study:

- 1- What are the positive aspects of the spread of English on Jordanians and their way of life?
- 2- What are the negative influences of the spread of English on Jordanians and their languages?

REVIEW OF THEORETICAL LITERATURE

Aktuna (1998) believes that there are consequences for the spread of English in Turkey, which indicate a need for language planning and policy making to teach English for the biggest number of students as possible as in Turkey to balance the unequal distribution of power and wealth. The Ministry of Education has a problem in finding enough qualified English language teachers to meet their demand. Also, The Ministry of Education must maintain and strengthen the Turkish role in the educational system in order to assist in the development of the national language. In contrast, there is a need to find alternatives to English borrowings to preserve the purity of the mother tongue.

Phillipson (2001) believes that the spread of English as a *lingue franca* unfairly benefits English-speaking countries and the developed world over the undeveloped world. In fact, knowing English gives one access to information, education, travel, and jobs. However, it is much easier for some to acquire English language because, they were either born in English-speaking countries or they live in a developed country with a high-quality education system that can teach them English. For instance, someone born in Netherlands will be able to learn English more easily than someone born in Uganda. The reasons are the following: Netherlands has more education funding, better education materials, more technology, and better-trained teachers. This creates more opportunities for the Dutch, while Ugandans

remain stuck, their opportunities limited by their lack of English. This seems to add to world inequality, solidifying the gap between the developed and undeveloped world.

Crystal (2003) focuses on the factors that have assisted in spreading English as a lingua franca. He reported that information technology is considered as one of the factors that led to the spread of English as a lingua franca. He mentions that the information which is written on the internet 80% is written in English. So, people from all over the world need to know English to enable them to search for information on Google, and watch major broadcast networks, such as CNN or send an email to their business partner.

Brooke (2005) indicates that English is believed to open ways that local languages do not, owing to the fact that English is a lingua franca. For instance, in Mongolia there is a major drive to make English the primary foreign language in schools. The Mongolian prime minister reports that besides its communicative functions English is actually “a way of opening windows on the wider world”. Brooke explains that learning English is very important. When people can speak English, they will have jobs in international companies and institutions and will earn high incomes. Thus, learning English as a foreign language can improve their lives.

Meanwhile, Drbseh(2013)reports that the spread of English in Jordan has affected education and mass media. The spread of English language as a lingua franca has increased the number of English learners in Jordan. Because English is considered a first priority, most jobs in Jordan require English from their employees or candidates. Sometimes, English is competing with Arabic because many English sectors require it as is the case in the tourism sector, foreign ministry, higher scientific study, business, airport, etc.

Shehu and Shittu (2015) mention that communication on the internet in English has many effects. One of these effects is reshaping many aspects as a lingua franca of the world's economies. Therefore, there is a need to be aware of the role of English and to exploit it for the benefit of business. Actually, there is a need for a good command of English to attract foreign investors or sell products abroad. The economic security of African countries depends on negotiation and marketing skills, this means that their effectiveness or otherwise in the global market may be determined by the extent to which their entrepreneurs possess a good command of English. Consequently, activity as well as better communication in English can boost economic prospects and open the doors to the world market.

REVIEW OF EMPIRICAL STUDIES

Abu Hweij (2010) aimed to explore the effect of the spread of English language on the Arabic language, and the effect of the spread of Anglo-American culture and language on Jordanian culture, identity, economy and psychology. She investigated the impact of the spread of English on Arabic language and Jordanian culture. She used two instruments: semi-structured interview questions and a university students' questionnaire. A sample that consisted of one hundred students from the Jordanian universities was selected to respond to the questionnaire. The sample used in the semi- structured interviews comprised of six university professors who expressed their willingness to participate. The study concluded that while Arabic language is influenced by the spread of the English language, Arabic culture is not directly affected. English language enjoys economic, social and scientific advantages. Eventually, the young generation perceives English language as an essential means for keeping pace with the requirements of the age of globalization. This might lead to a further marginalization of the Arabic language in the future in all vital fields of life.

Hopkyns (2014) aimed to analyze the attitudes and perceptions of female Emirati undergraduate students and female Emirati primary school teachers with regard to global

English and its effects on local culture and identity. She used open-response questionnaires. The sample consisted of 35 undergraduates and twelve teachers. The results showed that 75% of the teachers had positive attitudes as they focused on the opportunities English brought, such as greater self-confidence and being able to communicate with a range of nationalities. The undergraduates and teachers had similar perspectives toward the effects of English on Emirati culture and identity. The results showed that 57% of undergraduates and 67% of teachers feel changes. These changes were both positive and negative with the latter category including 'Arabic loss', clothing and lifestyle changes' and 'desires to be like English native-speakers'. It is clear that, the participants value the importance of English, concerns about its effects on their society were numerous, indicating the 'double-edged sword' nature of English as very much present.

Ke and Cahyani (2014) aimed to investigate something different: How English as a lingua franca online communication activities affects learners' belief of English, including their ideas of and attitude toward English native speakers, the cultures behind English language, and their identity and relationship with English. The data included questionnaires conducted before and after the experiences, students' correspondence records, messages they left in the online exchange forums, students' reflections after each semester, and students' retrospective interviews after the experience. The sample consisted of 58 Taiwanese students and 48 Indonesian students participated in the two-semester project using English as a lingua franca. Results indicated that although most students' beliefs about English remain consistent with the traditional NS-based ELT paradigm, students cared less about grammar after using English as a lingua franca in their written communication. Students gained confidence and started to perceive English as a language they may be able to use.

Poggensee (2016) aimed to establish a better understanding of the effects of globalization in both countries by focusing on the increasing use of the English language. He investigated the Effects of Globalization on English Language Learning in Senegal and the United States. He conducted a literature review, observations, and ethnographic interviews. The sample used in the interviews consisted of students who were learning English at the university level, and were part of the middle to upper class. The results of the study concluded that the negative effects were on the first languages observed by English learners in Senegal and the United States. On the other hand, there are positive effects. Students in Senegal expressed their motivation to learn English as a lingua franca to reach out to people from all over the world who also speak English as a foreign language. However, students interviewed in the United States had a strong desire to be assimilated in the language and culture of the United States.

Hopkyns (2017) aimed to investigate the effects of global English on the cultural identity of UAE students and teachers. Three distinct participant groups were chosen to respond a questionnaire. All of them were working or studying at a large state university in the UAE's capital, Abu Dhabi. The researcher used open-response questionnaires, focus groups and the researcher's research journal. Findings from this study revealed differing views concerning English and Arabic. While English was associated with the wider world, education, future careers and global communication, Arabic was connected to religion, home life, traditions and the region of the Middle East. The majority of Emirati participants held positive views towards English, seeing it as important, necessary and enabling. Concerns were raised throughout the study over its dominance in multiple domains, including education, and its effects on the Arabic language and local culture, especially for the next generation. The study revealed that Emirati cultural identities were complex, multifaceted and at times conflicting. Hybridity in identity construction was prominent in terms of differentiated bilingualism, code switching and use of an informal creative written language combining English and Arabic, known as 'Arabizi'. In terms of teaching preferences, native-speaker English teachers were

favoured, along with a marked interest in learning about western culture as part of an English course.

METHODOLOGY

Sample of the Study

The population of the study consisted of Jordanian citizens who responded to the questionnaire. The sample represented Jordanians who live in the city of Amman. It included students, employees, men, women, educated and people of all ethnic background. From this population the researcher selected a sample of (50) Jordanians to respond to the questionnaire, during the second semester 2018/2019. The demographic background information about the participants' general background included data such as gender, age, education, level of learning English, occupation and marital status. The demographic characteristics of the sample are shown in the table (1) below:

Table 1. Demographic Characteristics of the Sample

Gender									
Males					Females				
23					27				
Age									
less than 20	20-29	30-39	40-49	50-59	60 and above				
2	30	13	3	1	1				
Education									
Diploma			Bachelor degree			Master degree			
6			29			15			
Level of learning English									
Beginner			Intermediate			Advanced			
3			30			17			
Occupation									
Student	Administrative officer	Housewife	Teacher	Trainer	Translator	Cashier	Pharmacist	Engineer	Driver
25	13	2	2	2	1	1	1	2	1
Marital Status									
Single		Engaged		Married		Divorced		Widowed	
25		2		20		2		1	
Total = 50									

Instruments

In this study the researchers used a questionnaire for collecting data. It aimed at exploring the influences of the spread of English on the Jordanian society, languages and culture. A five-point Likert scale was used for the subjects' responses on the statements. The respondents were asked to respond to the statements showing if they strongly agree, agree, undecided, disagree, strongly disagree. The questionnaire consisted of the following sections: the first section started with demographic data about the participants. The second section dealt with the positive effects of the spread of English language on Jordanian society and culture. The third section dealt with the negative influences of the spread of English language on Jordanian languages.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Question One

- 1- What are the positive aspects of the spread of English on Jordanians and their way of life?

Table 2. Percentages and Means Concerning the Positive Aspects of the Spread of English Language on Jordanians and Their Way of Life

Statement	SA %	Ag %	Un %	Dis %	SDi %	Mean	Level of Acceptance
1-English gives Jordanians general knowledge about science and technology.	24	54	16	2	4	3.9200	High
2 – English is important because knowledge of English allows us to earn higher incomes.	36	48	12	2	2	4.1400	High
3-Most jobs in Jordan require the use of English.	48	40	8	2	2	4.3000	High
4- English opens windows on the wider world that local languages do not, because English is a lingua franca.	44	48	2	4	2	4.2800	High
5- English is important in communication with foreigners from all over the world.	64	30	4	—	4	4.4600	High
6- English is a language we need to use in international businesses and trades.	50	40	4	4	2	4.3400	High
7-Knowledge of English attracts foreign investors in Jordan.	34	40	24	—	2	4.0200	High
8- English is needed in aviation and travel.	56	32	6	2	4	4.3200	High
9-English is needed to boost our economic prospects and open the doors to the world market.	36	50	10	—	4	4.1400	High
10- Knowledge of English helps Jordanians to understand different cultures	30	40	20	8	2	3.8600	High
11-Knowledge of English is essential in the development of Jordan at all levels.	32	42	16	8	2	3.9400	High
12- Knowledge of English is necessary in using the internet.	48	26	12	12	2	4.0400	High
13- Knowledge of English facilitates our modern life.	28	50	16	2	4	3.9600	High

Where SA= Strongly Agree, Ag = Agree, Un= Undecided, Dis =Disagree and SDi = Strongly Disagree.

The level of Acceptance in table (2) was determined through the following equation:

Interval Width= maximum point – minimum point/number of levels

- Low level Effect= from 1 to 2.33
- Medium level Effect= from 2.34 to 3.67
- High level Effect = from 3.68 to 5

Results of the first question reported above in table (2) indicate the positive effects of the spread of English language on the Jordanian society, culture and their way of life. The level of acceptance of all statements is high. These results indicate that the participants completely agree that the spread of English on the Jordanian society, culture and their way of life is positive. For example; statements (2, 3 and 6) as shown in table (2) indicate that the respondents believe that knowledge of English allows them to earn higher incomes, since most jobs in Jordan require the use of English. Also, they believe that English is used in international businesses and trades. These findings are in line with Brooke (2005),

Drbseh(2013) and Shehu and Shittu (2015) who asserted that knowledge of English allows people to earn higher incomes because knowledge of English gives people opportunities to work at international companies. In fact, there is a need for a good command of English to attract foreign investors or sell products abroad.

Similarly; statements (5, 8) show that the respondents believe that English is important in communication and aviation. These results agree with Drbseh(2013), Zikmundova (2016) who reported that the spread of English has positive effects on people from all over the world their communities, cultures and lifestyle, since there is a need for a global language to enable people from all over the world to communicate with each other. So, there is a need for a unified language to enable passengers to communicate with pilots of different language backgrounds. Eventually, English has become a lingua franca used during the management of air and sea transport.

Likewise, statement (12) indicates that the respondents believe that knowledge of English is necessary in using the internet. These results are in agreement with Crystal (2003) Zikmundova (2016) and Melitz (2018) who showed that Knowledge of English enables people to search for information on the internet. Because the internet was in English until September1999 allowed the internet in other languages. Moreover, the information which is written on the internet 80% is written in English. So, people from all over the world need to know English to enable them to search for information on the internet.

Question Two

Results of the second question related to the negative influences of the spread of English on Jordanians and their languages are reported in Table 3 below:

Table 3. Percentages and Means Concerning the Negative Influences of the Spread of English Language on Jordanians and Their Languages

Statement	SA %	Ag %	Un %	Dis %	SDi %	Mean	Level of Acceptance
1-English as a lingua franca affects the Arabic language in many ways.	24	52	8	16	— —	3.8800	High
2- Jordanians use English at the expense of their mother tongue.	16	28	38	18	— —	3.4600	Medium
3- English in Jordan represents the western dominance and colonialism.	10	26	36	24	4	3.1800	Medium
4- English is competing with Arabic because many sectors require it as tourism, government, business, and travel, etc.	24	42	22	6	6	3.7200	High
5- English makes us deny part of our Jordanian identity.	6	26	12	38	18	2.6400	Medium
6- Arabic and other languages are endangered by the spread of English language.	16	32	16	26	10	3.2200	Medium
7- English creates a feeling that Arabic language is less significant and inferior to English language.	12	28	22	34	4	3.1000	Medium
8- English has negatively affected our values, traditions, Jordanian culture and religious beliefs.	10	22	28	30	10	2.9200	Medium
9- The flow of English borrowings will destroy	26	40	10	24	—	3.7000	High

the purity of our language.								
10-English prevents Arabic from becoming a means of communication for science and technology.	26	34	18	14	8	3.5600	Medium	
11- English affects our children. It makes them lose interest in learning the Arabic language.	36	30	18	16	— —	3.8600	High	
12 -English is superior to Arabic because the Arabs are weak and the west is powerful.	12	26	24	28	10	3.0000	Medium	
13- The flow of English cultural values i.e food, clothes, behaviors threatens our society.	18	38	32	12	— —	3.6200	Medium	
14- Jordanians who do not know English will not get better jobs in Jordan.	26	32	24	16	2	3.6400	Medium	

*Where SA= Strongly Agree, Ag = Agree, Un= Undecided, Dis =Disagree and SDi = Strongly Disagree.

Results of the second question reported above in table (3) indicate the negative influences of the spread of English on Jordanians and their languages. The level of acceptance of most statements is medium. These results indicate that most participants partially agree that the spread of English on Jordanians and their languages is negative. For example; statements (4 and 14) as shown in table (3) indicate that the respondents believe that English is competing with Arabic because many sectors require it as tourism, government, business and so on. Hence, English language is a double-edged sword. Actually, English has both positive and negative impacts on Jordanian society. These findings are in line with Drbseh(2013) who confirmed that knowledge of English is required for employment. Also, the participants think that knowledge of English enables Jordanians to get good jobs in Jordan. However, if they do not have knowledge of English, they will not get good jobs in Jordan.

As for, statement (5)it indicates that the respondents do not believe that English makes us deny part of our Jordanian identity. These findings contrast with Hopkyns (2014) and Hopkyns (2017) who revealed that Emirati cultural identities were complex, multifaceted and at times conflicting. Hybridity in identity construction was prominent in terms of differentiated bilingualism, code switching. Also, her studies revealed the changes were both positive and negative with the latter category including ‘Arabic loss’, clothing and lifestyle changes’ and ‘desires to be like English native-speakers’. It is clear that, the spread of English influenced Emiratis, their identity. But it did not affect the Jordanians and their identity.

Likewise, statements (6,9 and 10) indicate that the respondents believe that Arabic and other languages are endangered by the spread of English language. These results are in agreement with House (2003) who considered English as a lingua franca in Europe is a killer language that 'kills' a mother tongue. People speak English at the expense of their mother tongue. The respondents think that the flow of English borrowings will destroy the purity of their language. In addition to, English prevents Arabic from becoming a means of communication for science and technology. These results are in agreement with Aktuna (1998) who emphasized that Turkish linguists and some nationalists worry about the purity of the Turkish language, because they think that if the influx of English borrowings continues in Turkish society, it will destroy the purity of their language. It also prevents Turkish language from developing into a means of communication for science and technology.

Statement (8) indicates that the respondents do not believe that English has negatively affected our values, traditions, Jordanian culture and religious beliefs. Such results are consistent with Abu Hweij (2010) who concluded that Arabic language is influenced by the spread of the English language, Arabic culture is not directly affected. English language enjoys economic, social and scientific advantages. Eventually, the young generation

perceives English language as an essential means for keeping pace with the requirements of the age of globalization. This might lead to a further marginalization of the Arabic language in the future in all vital fields of life. These results disagree with Hopkyns (2017) who revealed differing views concerning English and Arabic. While English was associated with the wider world, education, future careers and global communication, Arabic was connected to religion, home life, traditions and the region of the Middle East. The majority of Emirati participants held positive views towards English, seeing it as important, necessary and enabling. Concerns were raised throughout the study over its dominance in multiple domains, including education, and its effects on the Arabic language and local culture, especially for the next generation.

CONCLUSIONS

The obtained data indicate that English is the most dominant foreign language in Jordan. And that the spread of English language does not practically threaten Arabic. Participants have shown loyalty to the Arabic language, Jordanian culture and identity. Learning English is essential in Jordan because English language helps Jordanians keep abreast with technological and scientific developments. Moreover, knowledge of English enables Jordanians to get good job opportunities and improve their economic status. Also, English as a lingua franca helps Jordanians to understand different cultures and facilitates their modern life. However, the spread of English language has negative influences on Jordanians and their languages. English as a lingua franca affects the Arabic language in many ways such as English is competing with Arabic because many sectors require it as tourism, government, business, and travel, etc. In addition, the flow of English borrowings will affect the purity of Arabic language. Furthermore, English affects our children; it makes them lose interest in learning the Arabic language.

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