English: Well beyond the inner circle dominance

Erdoğan Bada[1]
Ömer Gökhan Ulum[2]

Abstract
What makes a language global goes far beyond its linguistic features. Although status of globalization may be largely determined by political tradition, economic strength, militaristic might and respect for human rights, one significant requirement does seem to escape fair assessment of a 'globalized language'. Here is where English finds itself: the flow of an ever increasing number of lexical items to and from the language, and similarly, an ever expanding cultural heritage due to amalgamation with outer cultural and societal characteristics. In this study, we will look into to what extent cultural elements of the outer circle were carried over into the language by authors producing literary works in an inner-circle language environment. Plots, settings, and characters in these works were analysed and thematised to illustrate the striking phenomenon of how now English has ceased to be the so-called 'property' of the inner circle only. For this, textual analysis principles were utilized in this study.

Keywords: English; culture; inner-circle; outer circle; globalisation.

Introduction

Language is a fundamental tool through which we transmit written and oral data in our daily lives. When it is employed in communicative contexts, it is tied up with culture in various and intricate ways (Kramsch 2009: 3). Culture is a broad, detailed, and a continuously altering concept, which can be viewed from various perspectives, such as sociology, anthropology, linguistics, psychology, and communication, which all in their own way contribute to our understanding of cross-cultural awareness and intercultural communication (Wintergerst and McVeigh 2011).

While anthropologists see culture from the dimension of human beings, sociologists look at it based on the study of social contact between people and groups; psychologists refer to it by considering the mind and behaviour; and linguists view this phenomenon from a perspective of human language (Wintergerst and McVeigh 2011). Language, constructing a world of messages, with all its ranges, emerges in all aspects of daily life. When faced with diverse messages, when trying to understand our identity and build bridges to others' identities, culture stands there to assist us (Agar 1994: 28). Language and culture are interrelated dimensions of a whole mirroring a society. Although language and culture may be kept separate from each other, the result is a significant loss of required data for a genuine interaction the lack of whose awareness endangers the self to take a more universal and less egoistic form (Bada 2000; Genc and Bada 2005). Kramsch (2013: 71) defines culture as "outdoor gardens with no meaning in themselves unless they are related to and contrasted with indoor apartments and dwellings". So, it is time for the ELT field to regard the significance of the global position of English with regard to proper pedagogies and educational

---
[1] Prof. Dr., Çukurova University, Education Faculty, ELT Department, badae@cu.edu.tr
[2] Lec., Adana Science and Technology University, School of Foreign Languages, gokhanulum@adanabtu.edu.tr

stuffs that will aid the students become brilliant bilingual and intercultural humans who are able to perform well in both national and international contexts (Alptekin 2002).

As a lingua franca, English has influenced great numbers of people in many cultures in various useful ways (Kachru 1990). Probably, the most universal categorization of 'Englishes', particularly in the language teaching field, has been the classification of English as a native language (ENL), English as a second language (ESL) and English as a foreign language (EFL). In addition to this categorization, we see the model put forth by Kachru (1985) covering a status of the language consisting of "three circles": *inner*, *outer*, and *expanding*. Kachru (1985) states that the *inner circle* reflects the conventional cultural and linguistic grounds of English (ENL); the *outer circle* refers to the institutionalized non-native varieties of English (ESL) where we see long durations of colonization; and the *expanding circle* stretches along the lands where varieties of English are employed, particularly in EFL contexts.

Based on the premise of this categorization, therefore, this study deals with literary texts from the world of literature produced in English by authors with *outer circle* backgrounds. For ease, outer and expanding circles will be treated under the outer circle umbrella term. In other words, this study aims to highlight the extent of inner/outer circle cultural elements contained in novels authored by writers coming from an outer circle culture.

Research questions

This study focuses on the inner and outer circle cultural elements contained in the literary works of authors originating from an *outer circle* culture, and aims to seek answers to the following research questions:

1. What are the characteristics of *inner/outer circle* cultural elements employed in the literary works of authors coming from an *outer circle* culture writing in English?
2. At what frequencies do such cultural elements assert themselves in the *inner/outer* circle literary works of authors coming from an *outer circle* culture writing in English?

Data Collection

The data for this study was collected from four books authored by writers belonging to an outer circle environment, yet producing works in English. The authors were selected from a list of writers who, in their childhood, were exposed to their native cultures. The main reason for selecting these authors is that they come from different cultural backgrounds. In our examination of each novel, we focused on cultural characteristics reflecting inner and outer circle English elements. The books were perused and as a result, employed cultural inner/outer circle elements were classified as *Media*, *Movies*, *Technology*, *Places, Sports*, *Geography*, *Personality*, *Names, Nationality*, *Faiths*, *Literary Figures/Works*, Food *& Drinks*, and *Titles*. Through a textual analysis, we examined the content of novels to find out the dispersion of the inner and outer circle cultural elements.

Instruments

As was stated above, four novels were selected for this study, and the authors who wrote the books were using English as a second or third language. The books, by which the authors were known best are *Honor* by Elif Shafak, *On the Road* by Jack Kerouac, *Heart of Darkness* by Joseph Conrad, and *Lolita* by Viladimir Nabokov.

Findings and Results

As a first step, for each emerging theme, a frequency test was run utilizing the SPSS (v. 20.0) statistical package. At a second stage, a chi-square test was run in order to identify any significant difference in dispersion of overall themes for each literary work. At a third stage, examples for each cultural element were given regarding inner/outer circle cultural characteristics.

Table 1.

Inner and Outer Circle Themes in the Book, Honor

Themes	Inner		Outer	
	ToM	%	ToM	%
Media	2	100.0	-	-
Movies	2	100.0	-	-
Technology	4	80.0	1	20.0
Sports	2	67.0	1	33.0
Places	15	54.0	13	46.0
Personality	2	34.0	4	66.0
Names	7	22.0	25	78.0
Nationality	4	20.0	16	80.0
Faiths	1	11.0	8	89.0
Food & Drinks	-	-	4	100.0
Titles	-	-	3	100.0
Geography	-	-	2	100.0
Literary Figures or Works	-	-	2	100.0
Chi-Square (Asymp. Sig)	0.000		0.000	

As can be observed from Table 1, regarding the cultural themes in the book, *Honor*, except for very few themes like *media* (100.0%), *movies* (100.0%), *technology* (80.0%), *sports* (67.0%), and *places* (54.0%), the outer circle cultural themes are significantly dominant in the overall thematic dispersion: *food & drinks* (0.0% inner; 100.0%, outer): *faiths* (11.0%, inner; 89.0%, outer): *nationality* (20.0%, inner; 80.0%, outer): *names* (22.0%, inner; 78,0%, outer): *personality* (34.0%, inner; 66.0%, outer): *titles* (0.0%, inner; 100.0%, outer): *geography* (0.0%, inner; 100.0%, outer): and *literary figures* (0.0%, inner; 100.0%, outer). Thematic samples reflecting these themes are presented below:

- The Daily Express, The Times. (inner circle *media*)
- The Gold Rush, The man from the Alamo. (inner circle *movies*)
- Austin Montego, Buick, Cadillac. (inner circle *technology*)
- Mercedes. (outer circle *technology*)
- Chelsea, Nottingham Forest. (inner circle *sports*)
- Moscow Dynamo. (outer circle *sports*)
- Barnsbury, Birmingham, England, Hackney, London, Shrewsbury, Square. (inner circle *places*)
- China, Iran, İstanbul, Turkey, Urfa, Vietnam. (outer circle *places*)
- Harry Houdini, John Wayne. (inner circle *personality*)
- ABBA, Alexander the Great, Julius Caesar. (outer circle *personality*)
- Alex, Andrew, Bill, Katie, Martin, Patrick. (inner circle *names*)
- Esma, İskender, Kader, Pembe, Salim, Tariq. (outer circle *names*)
- British, English, Irish. (inner circle *nationality*)
- Bangladeshis, Chinese, Indians, Indonesians, Pakistanis, Turkish. (outer circle *nationality*)
- Christian. (inner circle *faiths*)
- Muslim, Quran, Ramadan. (outer circle *faiths*)
- Baklava, Halva, Sahlep. (outer circle *food & drinks*)

- Muhtar, Shah, Sultan. (outer circle *titles*)
- Mount Ararat, River Euphrates. (outer circle *geography*)
- Hansel and Gretel, Nasreddin Hodja. (outer circle *literary figures/works*)

Table 2.
Inner and Outer Circle Themes in the Book, On the Road

Themes	Inner		Outer	
	ToM	%	ToM	%
Technology	2	100.0	-	-
Places	56	93.0	4	7.0
Geography	8	89.0	1	11.0
Names	20	83.0	4	17.0
Personality	8	73.0	3	27.0
Nationality	3	43.0	4	57.0
Faiths	-	-	1	100.0
Chi-Square (Asymp. Sig)	0.000		0.000	

From Table 2, with 100.0%, the theme, *technology,* emerged only in the inner circle, with no occurrence in the outer circle. We can see that the theme, *places*, in the inner circle (93.0%) was observed to highly outnumber its outer circle counterpart (7.0%). The theme, *geography*, in the inner circle group (89.0%) was significantly employed with much higher frequency compared to its counterpart in the outer circle (11.0%). Besides, the theme, *names*, in the inner circle (83.0%) emerged as the fourth strongest theme in the inner circle with significant dominance over its outer circle equivalent (17.0%). Additionally, the theme, *personality*, in the inner circle group emerged as the fifth strongest theme (73.0%) outnumbering its counterpart (27.0%) in the outer circle. However, from our observation, we can detect that the theme, *nationality*, in the inner circle (43.0%) was slightly outnumbered by its outer circle counterpart (57.0%). Finally, the theme, *faiths*, with no occurrences in the inner circle, appeared with 100% frequency in the outer circle. Thematic samples related from the book, *On the Road* are presented below:

- Cadillac, Ford. (inner circle *technology*)
- Canada, Colorado, Connecticut, Los Angeles, New York, San Francisco. (inner circle *places*)
- Egypt, France, Gothenburg, Paris. (outer circle *places*)
- Adirondack Mountains, Hudson River, Hudson Valley, Lake Michigan, Mississippi River, Nevada Desert. (inner circle *geography*)
- Nile. (outer circle *geography*)
- Eddie, Hector, Jane, Stuart, Tim, Tommy. (inner circle *names*)
- Carlo, Chad, Chiquito. (outer circle *names*)
- Charlie Parker, Columbus, Jack Dempsey, Richard Rawlings, Roy Johnson, Tim Grey (inner circle *personality*)
- Goethe, Modigliani, Schopenhauer. (outer circle *personality*)
- American, Irish, Scotch. (inner circle *nationality*)
- French, Indian, Italian, Mexican (outer circle *nationality*)
- Buddhism. (outer circle *faiths*)

Table 3.
Inner and Outer Circle Themes in the Book, Heart of Darkness

Themes	Inner		Outer	
	ToM	%	ToM	%
Technology	1	100.0	-	-
Geography	2	67.0	1	33.0
Personality	2	67.0	1	33.0
Names	3	60.0	2	40.0
Faiths	1	50.0	1	50.0
Places	6	35.0	11	65.0
Nationality	1	10.0	9	90.0
Food & Drinks	-	-	1	100.0
Chi-Square (Asymp. Sig)	0.000		0.000	

From Table 3, we can observe that the theme, *technology*, though with a single occurrence, emerged only in the inner circle group. G*eography, with* 67.0% in the inner circle, was seen to be second strongest theme to outnumber its counterpart in the outer circle (33.0%). Following is *personality* with a similar percentage (67.0%) in the inner circle surpasses the outer circle occurrence (33.0%). With 60.0% of emergence in the inner circle, the theme, *names*, similarly did outnumber its counterpart in the outer circle (40.0%). Interestingly, the theme, *faiths*, emerged with equal percentages both in the inner (50.0%) and outer circles (50.0%). Contrary to previously occurring themes, the theme, *places*, in the inner circle (35.0%) was outnumbered by its counterpart in the outer circle (65.0%). Similarly, the theme, *nationality*, in the inner circle emerged with a mere 10.0%, compared to an overwhelming occurrence of its counterpart in the outer circle (90.0%). Lastly, the theme, *food & drink*, though with a single occurrence, emerged only in the outer circle group. Thematic samples pertaining to these themes are illustrated below:

- Martini Henry. (inner circle *technology*)
- Golden Hind, Thames. (inner circle *geography*)
- Erebus. (outer circle *geography*)
- Francis Drake, John Franklin. (inner circle *personality*)
- Eldorado. (outer circle *personality*)
- Charlie, Marlow, Nellie. (inner circle *names*)
- Fresleva, Kurtz. (outer circle *names*)
- Christian. (inner circle *faiths*)
- Buddha. (outer circle *faiths*)
- Erith, Essex, Deptford, Gravesend, Greenwich, London. (inner circle *places*)
- Africa, China, India, Mediterranean, North Pole, Rome. (outer circle *places*)
- English. (inner circle *nationality*)
- Dutch, French, German, Indian, Romans, Russian. (outer circle *nationality*)
- Falernian wine. (outer circle *food & drinks*)

Table 4.
Inner and Outer Circle Themes in the Book, Lolita

Themes	Inner		Outer	
	ToM	%	ToM	%
Faiths	1	100.0	-	-
Places	14	48.0	15	52.0
Names	14	45.0	17	55.0
Personality	5	45.0	6	55.0
Geography	1	33.0	2	67.0
Nationality	4	31.0	9	69.0
Literary Figures/Works	-	-	4	100.0
Chi-Square (Asymp. Sig)	0.000		0.000	

From Table 4, we can clearly see that the theme, *faiths,* occurred only in the inner circle group with only one occurrence. The theme, *places*, in the inner circle (48.0%) was slightly outnumbered by its counterpart (52.0%) in the outer circle. Besides, while the theme, *names,* emerged with 45.0% in the inner circle, it was encountered with 55.0% in the outer circle. Similarly, the theme, *personality*, occurred with the same percentages (45.0%, inner circle; 55.0%, outer circle). Regarding the theme, *geography*, the inner circle occurrence (33.0%) was significantly outnumbered by that of the outer circle (67.0%). In the same vein, the theme, *nationality*, in the inner circle (31.0%) was significantly surpassed by its counterpart in the outer circle (69.0%). Finally, the theme, *literary figures/works*, emerged (100.0%) only in the outer circle group. Thematic samples pertaining to such cultural themes are represented below:

- Christmas. (inner circle *faiths*)
- America, California, Canada, Derby, Massachusetts, New York. (inner circle *places*)
- Bahamas, Bermudas, Florence, Italy, Paris, Portugal,. (outer circle *places*)
- Annabel, Clare, Cooper, Johnson, Monique, Roland. (inner circle *names*)
- Lepcha, Maximovich, Mirana, Rahab, Taxovich, Valechka. (outer circle *names*)
- Hugh Broughton, James the First, Keats. (inner circle *personality*)
- Marlene Dietrich, Nefertiti, Van Gogh. (outer circle *personality*)
- Danube, Riviera. (outer circle *geography*)
- American, Canadian, English. (inner circle *nationality*)
- French, Indian, Russian, Slavic, Spanish, Swiss. (outer circle *nationality*)
- Kreutzer Sonate, Les Miserables, Petrarch. (outer circle *literary figures/works*)

Table 5.
Inner and Outer Circle Themes in Overall Books

Themes	Inner		Outer	
	ToM	%	ToM	%
Media	2	100.0	-	-
Movies	2	100.0	-	-
Technology	7	88.0	1	12.0
Places	91	67.0	44	33.0
Sports	2	67.0	1	33.0
Geography	11	65.0	6	35.0
Personality	17	55.0	14	45.0
Names	44	48.0	48	52.0
Nationality	12	24.0	39	76.0
Faiths	2	17.0	10	83.0

Literary Figures/Works	-	-	6	100.0
Food & Drinks	-	-	5	100.0
Titles	-	-	3	100.0
Chi-Square (Asymp. Sig)	0.000		0.000	

When we look at the thematic occurrences in the analysed four books, we can see that the themes, *media* and *movies*, occurred only in the inner circle group (100.0%), while no such occurrences were detected in the outer circle. Besides, the theme, *technology*, was highly observed in the inner circle (88.0%), compared to its rather scant occurrence (12.0%) in the outer circle. Similarly, the themes, *places* (67.0%), *sports* (67.0%), *geography* (65.0%), and *personality* (55.0%) in the inner circle have proven to dominate the occurrences of those in the outer circle (33.0%; 33.0%; 35.0%; 45.0% respectively). However, the themes, *names* (48.0%), *nationality* (24.0%), and *faiths* (17.0%) in the inner circle were outnumbered by those of the outer circle (52.0%; 76.0%; 83.0% respectively). Finally, *literary figures/works*, *food & drinks*, and *titles* emerged solely in the outer circle group (100.0%); no occurrence of these theme were observed in the inner circle.

Table 6.
Overall Inner and Outer Cultural Elements for the Four Books

	Inner		**Outer**	
	ToM	%	ToM	%
Overall Cultural Characteristics	190	52.0	177	48.0

From Table 6, the inner circle dominance can clearly be seen to be seriously challenged by the outer circle, where the observed themes presented 48.0% of emergence, slightly short of the 52.0% of occurrence of these themes in the inner circle. This finding is rather interesting since the outer circle authors analysed in this study used English as an instrument to express ideas, the themes they employed to represent these ideas were significantly selected from their own indigenous cultural background.

Discussion and Conclusion

Research of cultural elements employed in course books targeting English language learners does exist to an extent where the researchers strictly limited themselves to an English language teaching environment only. Such research conducted by Inglehart and Welzel (2005); Taş (2010); Rajabi and Ketabi (2012); Celik and Erbay (2013); Roshan (2014); Storey (2015) is by no means comparable to this study where we solely endeavoured to identify the use of cultural elements in literary works produced by authors of an outer circle background. To our knowledge, this piece of research, if not the only, it certainly is one of the scantiest of its kind.

The picture drawn by four literary works illustrates that:

- Both inner and outer circle cultural elements did emerge constituting 13 themes which were presented in order of frequency in the inner circle from the highest to the lowest: *media*, *movies*, *technology*, *places*, *sports*, *geography*, *personality*, *names*, *nationality*, *faiths*, *literary figures/works*, *food & drinks*, and *titles*; and
- Although with a slight difference, the inner circle elements (52.0%) were employed more frequently in the analysed literary works compared to those of the outer circle (48.0%). Although this slight difference exists in the dispersion of both types of circles, it is, by no means, significant, and certainly does not give an outright supremacy to the inner circle, which may be interpreted that the English language has already gained a universal status embraced by the international community.

Few, if not none, would argue against the existence of such a status. Crystal (1997), in his fair assessment, did state that what enables a language to gain an international status (thus, dominance over others) depends on economic, political, technological and militaristic might of the society in which it is spoken; and admittedly, no other language at this present time could be more eligible for such a place than English, whose permeability has allowed an influx of cultural elements from other languages to infiltrate and be welded to the very core. The fact is that English, unlike some other languages (where some 'associations' were set up to 'protect' them against 'foreign' influence!), has always kept its doors wide-open to the so-called 'foreign' influence with no apprehension of being 'adulterated' and thus rendered 'non-national'.

At a time where humans, and whatever is related, are increasingly introduced to inner-circle countries, notably, the UK, it is not surprising that we see the reflection onto literary works. Some fifty years ago or so, a literary work would be heavily loaded with inner-circle elements, yet now, as this study has revealed, almost half of the themes occurring in the works produced by English-writing writers with an outer-circle background do not indeed reflect inner-circle characteristics. Moreover, as is the case in Rajasthan, India now, the State is in the process of banning the works of British authors with inner circle themes for they were regarded as incomprehensible: "the majority of the students simply can't understand. In some cases, even teachers struggle to understand words and phrases in a text." (Western writers out 2016). This being the case, can we still talk about a language, i.e., English, with inner-circle dominance? Viewed from the present trajectory, this does not seem to be the case. As for the future, it is highly likely that we will see more and more of such cultural elements employed in English; while some would be comprehensible to the inner-circle inhabitant, some would sound 'alien' and probably require some intercultural-literacy.

References

Agar, M. (1994). Language Shock: Understanding the Culture of Conversation, New York: William Morrow.

Alptekin, C. (2002). Towards intercultural communicative competence in ELT. ELT journal, 56(1), 57-64.

Bada, E. (2000). Culture In ELT. Çukurova Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü Dergisi, 6(6), 100-110.

Celik, S., & Erbay, Ş. (2013). Cultural Perspectives of Turkish ELT Course books: Do Standardized Teaching Texts Incorporate Intercultural Features?. Education and Science, 38(167), 336-351.

Crystal, D. (1997). English as a global language. UK: Cambridge University Press. Print. Genç, B. & Bada, E. (2005). Culture in Language Learning And Teaching. The Reading Matrix, 5(1), 73-84.

Kachru, B. B. (1990). World Englishes and applied linguistics. World Englishes. 9(1), 3-20.

Kachru, B. B. (1985). Standards, codification, and sociolinguistic realism: The English language in the outer circle. English in the world: Teaching and learning of Language and Literature, Randolph Quirk and Henry Md Dowson eds.: 11-30. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Kramsch, C. (2009). Language and culture. Oxford University Press.

Kramsch, C. (2013). Culture in foreign language teaching. Iranian Journal of Language Teaching Research, 1(1), 57-78.

Rajabi, S., & Ketabi, S. (2012). Aspects of cultural elements in prominent English textbooks for EFL setting. Theory and practice in language studies, 2(4), 705-712.

Roshan, S. (2014). A Critical Comparative Evaluation of English Course Books in EFL Context. Journal of Studies in Education, 4(1), 172-179.

Taş, S. (2010). A Critical Evaluation of New English File Series in terms of Culture Teaching. ODÜ Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü Sosyal Bilimler Araştırmaları Dergisi. 1(2), 168-177.

Western writers out, Indian writers in for Rajasthan's schools. (2016, February 19). Retreived from https://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/feb/19/western-writers-textbooks-india rajasthan-schools.

Wintergerst, A. C., & McVeigh, J. (2011). Tips for teaching culture: Practical approaches to intercultural communication. Pearson Education.

Inglehart, R., & Welzel, C. (2005). *Modernization, cultural change, and democracy: The human development sequence.* Cambridge University Press.

Storey, J. (2015). *Cultural theory and popular culture: An introduction.* Routledge.