



Linguistic Imperialism and EFL Textbooks: The Case of American English File

Assist. Prof. Dr. Sasan Baleghizadeh
Shahid Beheshti University, G.C.
sasanbaleghizadeh@yahoo.com

Ph.D.Stud.Arash Saharkhiz
Shahid Beheshti University, G.C.
saharkhiz.arash@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

The purpose of the present study was to examine the extent to which the outer and the expanding circle varieties of English have been taken into consideration in the widely-used English language teaching series American English File. To this end, the frequencies of the listening tracks including non-native varieties were compared with the tracks not including them through two measures of percentage and ratio. Our analyses demonstrated a trace of linguistic imperialism across all the levels of this series. The amount of exposure turned out to be seriously unsubstantial and ineffective indeed; in addition, the quality of this exposure was not very satisfactory due to the artificiality of the utterances spoken by the non-native speakers in the audio recordings. This suggests that English language teachers be more cautious about the hidden ideologies of the textbooks they expose their learners to.

Keywords: American English File, linguistic imperialism, linguistic purism, textbooks

INTRODUCTION

Undoubtedly, learning English as a second or foreign language has a strong influence on the learners' thoughts, beliefs, life styles, and ideologies. When Phillipson (1992) introduced the concept of linguistic imperialism about two decades ago, he drew our attention to the potentially negative effects that learning a foreign language and its culture, particularly English, could have on a person's way of thinking. This issue was later pursued with more enthusiasm by a number of other scholars (see for example, Canagarajah, 1999, Harvey, 2005, Jenkins, 2003, Pennycook, 1998, Skutnabb-Kangas & Phillipson, 1994, among others). Phillipson (1992), trying to define the essence of linguistic imperialism, stated that "the dominance of English is asserted and maintained by the establishment and continuous reconstruction of structural and cultural inequalities between English and other languages" (p. 47).

One medium through which linguistic imperialism may be actualized is through the content of textbooks published by materials writers from the inner circle (Kachru, 1985; Littlejohn, 1998). By including source culture ideologies in their products and conveying them to the target cultures, some materials writers, consciously or unconsciously, disseminate native speaker norms, suggesting the superiority of a native speaker conduct in the target language (Brown, 1995). Yet, teaching materials need to





include varieties from the outer and expanding circles to avoid conveying the idea that the inner circle norms are the benchmark for second language acquisition and thus avoid being linguistically imperialistic (see the articles in Rubdy & Saraceni, 2006). Few studies, if any, (e.g., Baleghizadeh & Jamali Motahed, 2010) have embarked on an attempt to examine this aspect of English language teaching textbooks, at least in the present authors' context, namely Iran. Taking all the aforementioned into account, in this study, we intend to examine a textbook recently gaining popularity in many language teaching schools in Iran, namely *American English File* (2008) to see whether it conveys any implicit or explicit imperialistic messages or not. We will do this through a thorough investigation of all the volumes of this series to find out how much attention has been paid to the varieties of English other than those most prevalent in the inner circle countries. This will be done both statistically and interpretatively through a detailed description of the findings of our analyses. To this aim, all the class audio CDs in the series will be scrutinized. This will reveal whether this textbook is laden with hidden imperialistic agendas or it is neutral. Finally, we hope this piece of research will trigger further studies of this sort.

English is a language used beyond the borders of the countries of the inner circle; today, we are witnessing its use in countless interactional contexts around the world among people with different first languages even if none of the parties is a native speaker of English. In other words, there are more non-native speakers of English than its native speakers in the world (Crystal, 2003; Graddol, 1997). Therefore, it seems that the ownership is more for the non-native speakers rather than for the native speakers of English (Widdowson, 1994). This leads us to conceive of English as a lingua franca used among the people who do not share the first language (Jenkins, 2004). This is the main reason why many people (e.g., Cook, 1999; Kumaravadivelu, 2003; Matsuda, 2003; Modiano, 2000) support the idea that non-native speaker norms, rather than native speaker norms, should dominate English language teaching (ELT) in at least countries in which English is not the native language, namely in the outer and the expanding circles (Kachru, 1985).

When a native Japanese speaker is interacting with an Arabic native speaker in France, for example, there is no point for the participants in sticking to British or American native speaker norms. Trying to persuade English language learners to strictly follow native speaker norms is at the heart of linguistic imperialism (Phillipson, 1992). This is what is commonly done in most ELT contexts through the beliefs, and consequently the instructions of language teachers, and through the language teaching materials used in the context (Brown, 1995) via neglecting or rejecting the inclusion of different varieties of English belonging to places other than the inner circle in the instructional materials (Jenkins, 2000, 2004). Language teaching materials are the most at hand manifestations of an imperialistic ideology, simply because one can easily observe whether different varieties have been ignored or even kept at bay in a given specific syllabus or textbook (Littlejohn, 1998; McKay, 2002). Matsuda (2003), for instance, found that the English language teaching textbooks developed in Japan represent British or American varieties as the norm for second language acquisition and use. Therefore, we think that through a meticulous analysis of a series of textbooks, we





can find out whether it is based on a linguistically imperialistic ideology or not. The extensive inclusion of varieties of English belonging to places other than the inner circle in language teaching materials not only reduces the possible threats of linguistic imperialism but also provides learners with more frequent opportunities to get familiar with these varieties which they are likely to face in their future intercultural interactions (Jenkins, 2000; Seidlhofer, 2004; Smith & Bisazza, 1982).

As mentioned earlier, what is meant by linguistic imperialism is the fact that English and the culture of its native speakers, namely the peoples of the inner circle, particularly those in the United States and England, is gradually dominating other languages and cultures. This is because of the widespread use of English throughout the world, which has resulted in pushing the exposed cultures and their languages to the periphery (Phillipson, 1992). The norms of the outer and the expanding circle countries are often rejected and the textbooks imported from the US and the UK to these circles are the main messengers of the norms of these two countries (Littlejohn, 1998; McKay, 2002). This is actualized through excluding the outer and the expanding circle varieties of English from ELT textbooks.

Moreover, there have been indications to the role of modern activities in the establishment of linguistic imperialism. Ellis (2003), for example, has argued that task-based language teaching is “an Anglo-American creation” (p.331) and thus it may have unfavorable social and cultural impacts on learners and the language practices it advocates might not be transformative in that they might not lead to critical thinking and learner responsibility. Ellis (2003) further argues that the sociopolitical discourse and messages entailed in teaching through this approach may lead to the spread of the discourses of British or American policies, western cultural norms of behaving, and non-oriental expectations of role-relationships in the classroom environment. As a result, according to him, critical discourses need to be established in the learning environment through consciousness-raising tasks to prevent the passive reception of this neo-colonialist ideology.

One more argument which intensifies linguistic imperialism is the belief that by allowing space to other varieties and thus making them prevalent, we will make English impure (Bartsch, 1987; Honey, 1997; Quirk, 1990; Thomas, 1991). In the eyes of the advocates of this belief, the British or American Standard English and their cultures should be kept intact and one way to do so is to ignore and reject other varieties. English language learners, therefore, should avoid using other varieties and hence be encouraged to get rid of their foreign or even alien accents or dialects because these varieties are degraded and their use is humiliated. This attitude leaves the way open to linguistic imperialism. What follows as a result of this way of thinking is that native teachers of English are preferred to their non-native colleagues. What is more, materials written in the inner circle countries are taken more seriously and enjoy a more prestigious status. Even if we do not take into account those people’s views who are extreme linguistic purists, the milder form of the idea is very common among many second language learners (Chiba et al., 1995) or even non-native teachers of English





themselves; that is, many of the members of these groups undervalue non-native varieties and do not consider them as acceptable English in which they can take pride.

Another important issue worth examining is the role of culture in teaching a second or foreign language. Teaching culture is different from imposing one's culture on learners; textbooks need to be ideologically and culturally neutral (Modiano, 2001). However, this is not equal with evacuating textbooks from any cultural points; on the contrary, as Hinkel (2001) succinctly puts it "the learning of a second culture does not take care of itself" (p.444). The significance of teaching culture is inconvertible as many scholars have emphasized its role in language acquisition. "Language is used to convey meaning, but meaning is determined by the culture" (Chastain, 1988, p.298). Feuerstein sees the transmission of culture as a determinant of task significance (Williams & Burden, 1997, p.70). Moreover, as Hinkel (2001) argues (socio)-cultural competence affects all other aspects of L2 competence and "not understanding sociocultural expectations could impact NNSs' ability to function in a[n] L2 community" (p.443), since appropriateness is a determinant in successful social interactions. In other words, "culture plays an instrumental role in shaping speakers' communicative competence, which is related to the appropriate use of language... Cultural learning illustrated by activities and strengthened physical enactment will motivate students" (Shumin, 2002, p.210). Since language is seen as social practice, culture should be at the core of language teaching (Kramsch, 1993). Kramsch (1993) further maintains that "Cultural awareness must then be viewed both as enabling language proficiency and as being the outcome of reflection on language proficiency" (p.8). The aim is to enable learners to become aware of the sociolinguistic norms of the speech community. "Violations of cultural norms of appropriateness... often lead to sociopragmatic failure, uncomfortable breakdowns in communication, and stereotyping of NNSs" (Hinkel, 2001, p.448).

English is a language that is widely used in many countries and many nations have adapted it according to their own needs, norms, and culture. Obviously, we cannot decide for other nations how to use English and in what contexts (Graddol, 1997). That is why there are now many varieties of English such as Nigerian English, Singaporean English, etc., which have their own norms. Nevertheless, since many students learn English to use it in inner circle countries, textbooks need to include cultural points from the inner circle countries such as the United States, England, Canada, and Australia. But the point is that second language learners should not be bombarded with texts only about the culture of these countries, because this unilateral exposure will convey the idea that the culture of these countries is elegant and superior to their own cultures. In sum, textbooks need to include cultural differences comparing and contrasting the cultures of different countries and contain different varieties of English. All this should be done in order to avoid imposing a single culture and variety or a set of cultures and varieties on learners. This is a main strategy to avoid the debilitating effects of linguistic imperialism.

As mentioned earlier, the present study aims at exploring the widely-used series *American English File* and hence addresses the following research questions:





- 1- Does *American English File* offer any linguistic varieties other than those most prevalent in the inner circle countries?
- 2- How frequently, if any, do the non-native varieties appear in the textbook?
- 3- Are there any differences between the levels of the textbook in terms of the frequencies of the non-native varieties?
- 4- In what contexts do the non-native varieties appear in the textbook? Are there any differences between the contexts in which native varieties and non-native varieties appear?

METHOD

Based on all that has been mentioned so far, we intended to examine the textbook under study – *American English File* – in terms of its consideration of different varieties of English and avoidance of linguistic imperialism. We analyzed it under the framework of linguistic imperialism proposed by Phillipson (1992), Kachru's (1985) inner, outer, and expanding circles, and the concept of English as a Lingua Franca (ELF). The reason why we chose this textbook is that it has recently begun to gain popularity in the context of foreign language teaching in Iran. It is an attractive textbook with many creative activities and interesting illustrations. It appeals to learners with its interesting format including its activities, pictures, etc. Textbooks such as *American English File* can reflect the attractions of the western culture as opposed to the traditions of eastern societies. Yet, it should be noted that it is not the function of a textbook to change the worldviews or ideologies of learners; a textbook should only make them familiar with the culture of the target language. However, as discussed earlier, the culture of the people who speak English is no more confined to those of the citizens of the inner circle countries, because English is now used beyond the borders of the countries of the inner circle. Therefore, in this study, we have set the frequency of the inclusion of various varieties of English from the outer and expanding circles as the benchmark for evaluating the degree of the potential linguistic imperialism of English language teaching textbooks. We take this frequency as the degree of emphasis textbooks put on avoiding linguistic imperialism. The more the number of non-native varieties and the more the ratio of each non-native variety in comparison to that of native varieties in a textbook, the more that book is judged to show concern regarding the threats of linguistic imperialism.

The purpose of the present study was to analyze each of the five levels of the textbook *American English File* and their accompanying class audio CDs separately and report the frequency of the occurrence of non-native varieties both in each level and in the whole series. The percentage of non-native varieties in each level of the textbook and in the whole series and also the ratio of non-native varieties to native varieties in each level of the textbook and in the whole textbook have been reported. Furthermore, we have scrutinized the contexts in which these non-native varieties have appeared and compared them to those for the native varieties. Through this, we believed we could find out whether the contexts for the two categories of varieties are socially and economically equal or not; this was another attribute on the basis of which we could





decide how much desire there existed among the writers and the other stakeholders of this textbook to avoid the potential threats of linguistic imperialism. The more equal the contexts for the two variety categories, the less linguistically imperialistic the textbook was judged to be. To this end, all the audio tracks in all the class audio CDs at all levels of the textbook were analyzed by the authors and the varieties spoken in the tracks were assigned to either of the categories native (associated with inner circle countries) versus non-native (associated with the outer and expanding circle countries). This was done based on the accents of the speakers and the clues in the instructions and introductions given for each listening track in the textbook. Afterwards the frequencies of both variety categories were counted and their percentages and ratios were calculated. Based on these percentages, ratios, and also the aforementioned qualitative information concerning the contexts, we judged the degree of attention paid by the textbook stakeholders to non-native varieties and hence evaluated the degree of linguistic imperialism implicit or explicit in the textbook and its appropriateness for our context via a detailed discussion.

There are two more points which need further elaboration. First, this textbook includes three types of CDs/DVDs for each level: class audio CDs, a self-study CD-ROM called MultiROM which includes different written, audio, and video activities, and a DVD. The reason why we only chose the class audio CDs for our analyses was that these – unlike the other two types – were part of the main body of the textbook and also that many users of the textbook may not work with the other supplementary materials. Therefore, we decided that we should focus on these CDs to have a more practical analysis of the textbook rather than a fairer and more accurate one. Second, for the purposes of our analysis, we only counted the number of mp3 tracks including or excluding non-native varieties. All the tracks including a non-native variety – regardless of the length of the utterance – were categorized as containing a non-native variety; however, not do all the tracks contain an equal number of non-native utterances: a track including even one non-native sentence was categorized so. This may threaten the validity of our analyses and interpretations, but to minimize this potential threat we incorporated a detailed discussion of the contexts and size of the totality of the tracks.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The textbook *American English File*, as it is stated on its webpage¹, is planned based on Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR), which emphasizes pluralism in the sense that no “ideal native speaker” norm is set as the standard for language learning (Council of Europe, 2001, p.5). Intelligibility rather than correctness, therefore, is the norm and the ability to understand all varieties is the desired goal. This allows us to test the truthfulness of the claims of the textbook, because the textbook has maintained its loyalty to CEFR. If it really follows CEFR, it should cater to the pluralism mentioned in CEFR through the inclusion of miscellaneous varieties of English.





All the tracks were scrutinized and the results were statistically analyzed. The total number of tracks at various levels ranged from 145 to 243, but at each level of the book there were three or four tracks allotted to the introduction for each CD which were omitted from our calculations. Besides, in each unit of the book at each level, there was a song track which was also omitted from our calculations, because all the songs were naturally in the inner circle accent and that could muddy our analyses; what is more, learners do not usually understand song lyrics by mere listening and as a result these tracks could not be considered suitable sources for their exposure to inner circle accents. The data are tabulated below:

Table 1 Non-native varieties across the textbook

Level of Textbook	Total No. of Tracks	No. of Song Tracks	No. of Introduction Tracks	No. of Tracks Left for Analysis	No. of Tracks Including Non-Native Varieties	Percentage of Tracks Including Non-Native Varieties	Ratio of Tracks Including Non-Native Varieties to Tracks Not Including Non-Native Tracks
Starter	243	7	3	233	8	3.43	3.55 to 100
Book 1	188	8	3	177	12	6.77	7.27 to 100
Book 2	159	9	3	147	9	6.12	6.52 to 100
Book 3	145	7	3	135	23	17.03	20.53 to 100
Book 4	158	7	4	147	7	4.76	5 to 100
Total	893	38	16	839	59	7.00	7.56 to 100

Most of our interpretations given below are based on the data presented in Table 1. As can be seen, the second column in the table has been allocated to the total number of tracks in each level of the textbook, the third column represents the number of song tracks in each level which were omitted from our calculations due to the justification presented above, and the fourth column shows the number of tracks in each level of the textbook allotted to the introduction to each CD of that level. For example, three CDs were recorded for the volume devoted to the level *starter*; each of these CDs included an introduction track for its CD. All these introduction tracks were omitted because they could not be considered as sources of input for the accent in which they were recorded – that is, standard American accent. The fifth column refers to the number of tracks left at each level for our final analyses after the subtraction of the tracks referred to in the third and fourth columns from the total number of tracks at each level mentioned in the second column.

The sixth column represents the number of tracks including non-native varieties at each level of the textbook. These frequencies range from 7 to 23 across all the levels of the textbook and the number of such tracks throughout the whole textbook totals 59 out





of the total 839 listening tracks in the whole book. From just a cursory look and thought over the figures in the sixth column, we could readily realize that the numbers do not seem to be promising for a textbook claiming to follow pluralism in terms of varieties included, particularly when we take into account the fact that most of the tracks including non-native varieties have not solely been devoted to non-native varieties. In most of these tracks, only a part of the track, and in many cases, a very small proportion of the utterances in the track, has been uttered by a non-native speaker. There are cases in which the whole track or at least most of the track has been spoken by a non-native speaker, like track 4.7 in the level *starter* or tracks 1.1 and 1.6 in level 3 of the textbook, but unfortunately such tracks do not abound. There are even tracks in which only one small utterance has been spoken by a non-native speaker but for the matters of objectivity, it had to be categorized as including a non-native variety and actually such tracks are not exceptional. There are also tracks in which most or at least almost half of the track has been uttered by a non-native speaker but the track itself is not lengthy enough to be considered a useful source of input for that variety. Therefore, what can be concluded based on just a cursory look at the frequencies is that there are not a high number of tracks including a non-native variety, and even the tracks which included a non-native variety were poor in terms of the amount of exposure to the given variety.

However, this conclusion will not seem valid without further detailed scrutiny. That is why we have provided the information in the seventh and eighth columns. These columns are about the percentages of tracks including a non-native variety in each level of the textbook and the ratio of tracks including a non-native variety to those not including a non-native variety in each level of the textbook, respectively. These statistics help us have a more comprehensible, holistic picture of the frequencies of tracks including a non-native variety. As it is evident from the percentages listed in the seventh column, for all the levels except for Book 3 consideration for inclusion of non-native varieties in the content is extremely poor. Even in Book 3 in which 17.03 percent of the tracks include a non-native variety, the amount of exposure to non-native varieties provided is by no means satisfactory. A textbook claiming to follow pluralism needs to include much more exposure to non-native varieties. No standard is set for the amount of such an exposure, but since there are several more outer circle and expanding circle varieties of English than their inner circle counterparts around the world, a textbook claiming to follow pluralism needs to maintain a fair ratio of non-native varieties to native varieties. But this is far from being the case for *American English File*. By taking a look at the seventh column of Table 1, we can easily find out that the percentages of the tracks including a non-native variety in four of the five levels of the textbook are below 7 and this percentage is exactly 7 for the whole book. Such percentages suggest the infinitesimal amount of real attention the textbook has paid to non-native varieties, particularly when, as mentioned above, we take into account the fact that in most of these tracks, only a part of the track, and in many cases, a very small proportion of the utterances in the track, has been uttered by a non-native speaker; that is, the real amount of exposure to non-native varieties is even lower than what the percentages show. Again as mentioned above, this percentage is 17.03 for Book 3 of this series. While this percentage is much higher than similar percentages of the other levels, it cannot be considered acceptable for a textbook which claims to have followed



pluralism emphasized in CEFR. The minuteness of such percentages is better illustrated in the following figure:

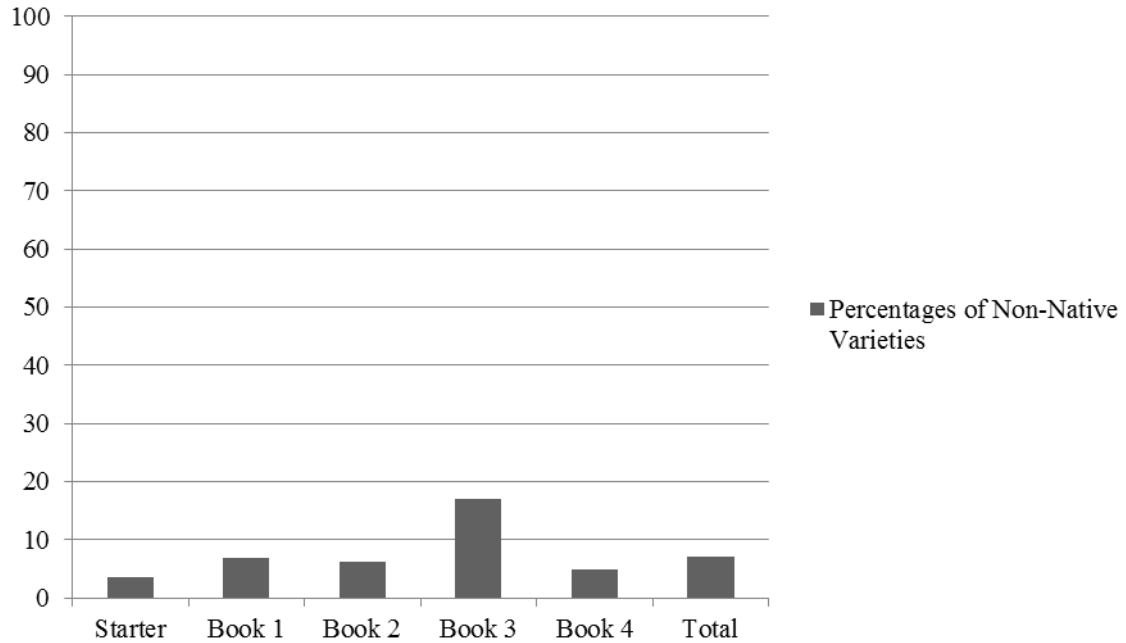


Figure 1 Percentages of tracks including a non-native variety at each level of as well as the whole textbook

By using ratios as another measure, we can compare different degrees of attention native and non-native varieties of English have received from the textbook stakeholders. The eighth column in Table 1 represents this measure. The figures in this column once more indicate the unfair condition ruling the status of non-native varieties in comparison to that of native varieties. Based on these figures, in the textbook as a whole, the ratio of non-native varieties to native varieties is 7.56 to 100; that is, for every 100 tracks not including a non-native variety there are only 7.56 tracks which do include a number of utterances spoken by one or more non-native speakers. This ratio for four of the five levels of the textbook (all except Book 3) is below 8 to 100. This range of ratios is a really unfair one for an English textbook claiming to have followed pluralism emphasized in CEFR. The position of English as a lingua franca necessitates the inclusion of different varieties of English to a remarkable extent in a textbook for the instruction of this language. Establishing such an unfair ratio in favor of native varieties cannot satisfy the need for pluralism propounded in CEFR, the standard which this textbook has claimed to follow. This ratio in Book 3 is 20.53 to 100, which though more promising than the ratio in the other levels of the textbook, is not an acceptable one yet. Given the fact that there exist more non-native varieties of English around the world than its native varieties, even if we take into account the reality that this textbook is produced and published in an inner circle country, this ratio should not be less than 50

to 50 in favor of non-native varieties of English. The limitation of this textbook in this respect is more vividly illustrated in the following figure:

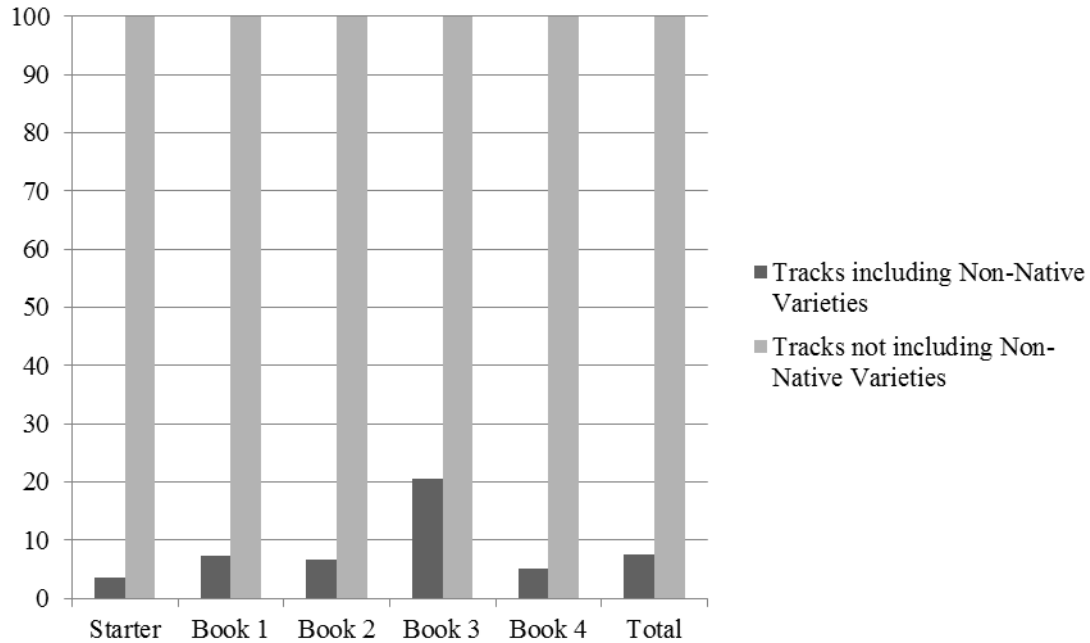


Figure 2 Ratios of tracks including and not including non-native varieties at each level of as well as the whole textbook

Figure 2 lucidly demonstrates that the amount of exposure learners receive to non-native varieties from the textbook is substantially lower than the amount of exposure they receive to native varieties.

All that has been mentioned so far in addition to Table 1 and Figures 1 and 2 can justify our claim that the *American English File* series has failed to include a satisfactory amount of exposure to non-native varieties of English to resist linguistic imperialism. However, we need to delve more into the details of the contents of the tracks before coming to our final conclusion regarding the fourth research question of the study, namely the contexts in which the native varieties and non-native varieties appear.

Context is an aspect in terms of which we do not witness much discrimination between the native and non-native varieties. Considering the number of tracks allotted to non-native varieties, the contexts in which these varieties appear are sufficiently miscellaneous. These contexts include a variety of scenarios including introducing one's nationality, chatting with a colleague, talking about the history of a city, describing one's own business, etc. This is strengthened by including varieties from many parts of the world such as German, Spanish, Italian, Mexican, Indian, Japanese, Korean, Portuguese, Russian, Polish, French, etc. Nevertheless, the contexts in which different



varieties appear are not equal. Some varieties like French and Spanish are more frequent, while some others appear just once or twice throughout the whole textbook. As a rule, the varieties which are more frequent appear to be mostly from European countries.

There are some other important points worth mentioning about the contexts and conditions of the tracks. First of all, the accents of the non-native speakers, except for some instances, do not sound very natural. Most of the tracks which represent a non-native variety seem very artificial and do not seem to have been recorded by genuine non-native speakers. Most of them sound quite identical. Of course, there are some exceptions, such as a French English, which in most cases (e.g., track number 1.14 in Book 3) has speaks very naturally. Second, there are several instances in which the nationality of the speaker is from the outer and expanding circle countries, but their dialogues are spoken in inner circle accents. This suggests that acquiring the native accent of English is not only possible but also desirable, a fact that stinks of linguistic imperialism. When even a non-native speaker speaks English in perfect native English accent, the non-native utterances spoken by other non-native speakers in the textbook are implicitly considered as deficient. This is at the heart of linguistic imperialism: to infuse others with the idea that native English is the best variety to absorb. The last point to be mentioned was the observation that none of the tracks offering practice in vocabulary and pronunciation was in non-native varieties and there were only a tiny number of grammar tracks which were spoken by non-native speakers. This shows the inclination of the textbook stakeholders toward linguistic purism. They do not seem to welcome any amount of exposure to non-native varieties of English in their serious language activities which thoroughly affect the accents or dialects of their language learners. There were even some listening activities including non-native varieties which had a language focus follow-up in which the original non-native variety of the previous activity was rerecorded with a native accent. This is clearly indicative of reluctance to expose learners to non-native varieties particularly when the focus of the activity is on the language of the learners.

All of the foregoing discussions accompanied by the statistical data presented illustrate a lack of much willingness among the stakeholders of *American English File* to include non-native varieties in their material. This shows a trace of linguistic imperialism and linguistic purism in the beliefs of the stakeholders of *American English File*. This is observed through minimizing the amount of exposure to non-native varieties and excluding these varieties from the language focus activities, especially those related to pronunciation. Textbooks as popular and attractive as *American English File* need to pay more attention to the inclusion of non-native varieties in order to avoid both the threats of spreading linguistic imperialism and the loss of their markets in the long run in the outer and expanding circle countries. We teachers also need to be more cautious, while using commercial textbooks, of the potential sociocultural effects they might have on our learners' beliefs.





CONCLUSION

The day-by-day spread of English as an international language is both fortifying its status as a lingua franca and increasing the threat of linguistic imperialism (Phillipson, 1992) on the part of this widely spoken language. Countries of the inner circle (Kachru, 1985), particularly the United States and Britain (Phillipson, 1992), have tried to spread their language and their culture through medium of English language instruction. To this end, a main media for such governments is the textbooks written in and exported from their countries (Littlejohn, 1998) to outer and expanding circle countries (Kachru, 1985). That is why in this study we planned to investigate *American English File* a textbook which has recently begun to gain popularity in the EFL context of Iran for the degree of linguistic imperialism implicit in the hidden agendas of its stakeholders. Our analyses proved this textbook to be highly imperialistic in its approach based on our touchstone namely the amount of exposure to outer and expanding circle varieties of English. The amount of exposure turned out to be seriously unsubstantial and ineffective indeed; in addition, the quality of this exposure was not very satisfactory due to the artificiality of the utterances spoken by non-native speakers. This textbook is just one example of the various textbooks in our context and around the world which are widely adopted without close examination of their different aspects, particularly their ideological and sociocultural features. Once a textbook is adopted, many of its unwanted effects can be neutralized, but the hidden agendas of the textbook may be unconsciously taken up and long-lasting. This is the point that both English language teachers and learners should be aware of.

Note

1. <http://elt.oup.com/teachers/americanenglishfile/>

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Dilsel Emperyalizm ve İngilizce Ders Kitapları: “American English File” Ders Kitabı Örneği

Yrd. Doç. Dr. Sasan Baleghizadeh
Shahid Beheshti Üniversitesi-İran
sasanbaleghizadeh@yahoo.com

Dok. Öğr. Arash Saharkhiz
Shahid Beheshti Üniversitesi-İran.
saharkhiz.arash@gmail.com

Genişletilmiş Özet

Problem: Dilsel emperyalizm kavramı kapsamında, İngilizce'nin benzer, uzak ve gittikçe genişleyen çevrelerde çeşitlenerek farklılaşması ve dünyada kullanılan ortak dil statüsünde yer almasına dayalı olarak İngilizce ders kitaplarının birbirine benzer özellikleri olarak Amerika ve Britanya gibi ülkelerin benimsedikleri ilkeleri yansıtan esas araçlar olmaları, İran'da ve tüm dünyada potansiyel bir problemdir. Sorun, İngilizce ders kitaplarında başka çevrelere yer vermeyerek, yalnızca Amerika ve Britanya kullanımlarına yer verilmesinden kaynaklanmaktadır. Bu durum, yabancı dil olarak İngilizce'nin öğrenildiği İran'da yakın zamanlarda ünlenmiş olan *American English File* adlı ders kitabının hissedarların gizli gündemlerinde yer alan dilsel emperyalizm etkisi açısından incelenmesini gerekli kılmıştır.

Yöntem: Araştırma amacına dayalı olarak, yabancıların ders kitaplarındaki, çeşitlemelere yer veren dinleme parçalarının frekansları ile çeşitlemelere yer vermeyen dinleme parçalarının yüzde ve oranları karşılaştırılmıştır. Ayrıca, yabancılar ve yerlilerde görülen çeşitliliği içeren metinler de karşılaştırılarak incelenmiştir. Kitapta her iki grup için ne kadar eşit düzeyde metin dağılımı gerçekleşmişse, o oranda daha az düzeyde dilsel emperyalist misyonu üstlendiği varsayılmıştır. İncelenen kitabın tüm düzeylerine göre tasarlanmış olan CD'lerdeki dinleme parçaları araştırmacılar tarafından analiz edilmiştir ve parçalarda geçen çeşitli konuşmalar yerli gruba (benzer çevredeki ülkelerle bağlantılı) ya da yabancı gruba (uzak çevreler ya da genişlemekte olan çevrelerdeki ülkelerle bağlantılı) ayrılmıştır. Yüzdelerle, oranlara ve metinlerden edinilen nitel verilere ilişkin, kitap hissedarlarının yabancılar da görülen dilsel çeşitlilik konusundaki duyarlılıkları ve dolayısıyla kitaplarda aleni ya da gizli olan dilsel emperyalizmin derecesi incelenmiş ve detaylı bir tartışma ile değerlendirilmiştir.

Sonuç ve Öneriler: Yapılan analizler sonucunda incelenen ders kitabının tüm düzeylerde yüksek oranda emperyalist bir yaklaşım içerdiği görülmüştür. Aslında, dile maruz kalma boyutu ciddi anlamda asılsız ve yetersizdir; ayrıca, konuşulan dilin yabancı bireylerce yapay kullanımlarından oluşmasından dolayı da nitelik yeterli düzeyde değildir. Araştırma sonucunda, öğrenenlerin ders kitaplarındaki saklı ideolojilere maruz kaldıkları hususunda İngilizce dersi öğretmenlerinin daha dikkatli olmaları önerilmektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: İngilizce Ders Kitabı, Dilsel emperyalizm, Dilsel pürizm (yalınlık), Ders kitapları

