



LANGUAGE IDEOLOGY AND ATTITUDES TOWARD “STANDARD ENGLISH” IN MULTILINGUAL EUROPE

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***Abstract** This research paper focuses at linguistic ideologies and attitudes toward "standard English" in multilingual European academic settings. As English becomes a lingua franca, conventional native-speaker norms continue to shape notions of correctness, prestige, and validity. The study investigates how these ideas influence students' identities, confidence, and classroom practices. The article adopts a mixed-methods approach, combining surveys and semi-structured interviews with university students and educators. The findings suggest a conflict between valuing clear, flexible communication and adhering to traditional standards. While participants recognize English as a shared international resource, many continue to associate authority with native-like usage. The research aims for a more pluralistic interpretation of English that reflects multilingual realities and encourages equal participation. The study adds to broader issues about ownership, identity, and the changing role of English in Europe by focusing on how language ideologies function in university settings.*

***Keywords:** English as a Lingua Franca (ELF), standard language ideology, multilingual education, language attitudes, linguistic identity, academic positioning, communicative competence, English proficiency, sociolinguistic variation, ideological negotiation.*

Introduction

The worldwide dissemination of English has converted it from a language associated with native-speaker groups to a common communicative resource used by multilingual societies. In Europe, English is commonly used as a lingua franca,

where effectiveness and intelligibility are valued more than compliance to conventional norms. Research on English as a Lingua Franca (ELF) demonstrates how this movement calls into question long-held beliefs about English accuracy and ownership. Scholars like Jennifer Jenkins and Barbara Seidlhofer contend that English use in multilingual settings indicates negotiation, flexibility, and variation rather than adherence to a single "standard" (Jenkins, 2015; Seidlhofer, 2011). Despite this shift in reality, standard language ideology—the assumption that one prestigious variant constitutes perfect English—continues to influence educational standards and learner self-perception. Research regularly reveals that students and educators frequently acknowledge the practical legitimacy of many English forms while still associating authority with native-like norms (Jenkins, 2015). This tension demonstrates how linguistic ideology effects identity, confidence, and classroom practice in multilingual educational settings (Seidlhofer, 2011). Examining these attitudes is also critical to understanding how English is valued, taught, and experienced in modern Europe, where linguistic variety is the rule rather than the exception.

Main part

English as a Lingua Franca and Attitudinal Complexity

The role of English as a lingua franca (ELF) in multilingual settings has caused scholars to reconsider established language rules and attitudes (Jenkins, 2015; Seidlhofer, 2011). Research shows that learners in many educational settings view English as a useful tool for cross-cultural communication, while also adhering to native standards. A mixed-method study of university students in virtual exchange projects found that while they value the communicative benefits of ELF interactions, their attitudes vary depending on context and experience, with some reflecting on their linguistic effectiveness and academic identity. Similarly, research in Macao indicates that university students demonstrate conflicting attitudes: they value intelligibility and communicative success while still expressing preference for

native-speaker norms in particular elements of learning and assessment (Jenkins, 2015). These findings demonstrate that views toward English in multilingual academic contexts are intricate, contextual, and shaped by both pragmatic communication requirements and deep-seated ideological convictions (Seidlhofer, 2011).

Standard Language Ideology and Pedagogical Implications

Standard language ideology, or the assumption that a particular variety of English is the authoritative model of right usage, continues to have an impact on English language education and learning (Seidlhofer, 2011). Research on this ideology demonstrates that many learners and educators continue to associate linguistic legitimacy with established norms such as British or American English, even when real communication practices differ from these models. Xie's research into standard language ideology and English teaching practices reveals that "new" English varieties are still frequently labelled as weak or incorrect in educational contexts, indicating persistent ideological biases that might influence curriculum and assessment decisions (Xie, 2014). Furthermore, research on teachers' attitudes in multilingual higher education contexts shows that dominant ideologies can limit the integration of Global English perspectives in language instruction, potentially limiting learners' confidence in using English variant forms for genuine communicative goals (Jenkins, 2015). These findings demonstrate how linguistic ideology influences not just individual attitudes, but also has practical implications for educational creativity and inclusivity in heterogeneous classrooms.

Language Ideology, Identity, and Academic Positioning

Language ideology shapes not only instructional approaches, but also how students and academics position themselves in multilingual settings (Jenkins, 2015).

In European environments where English is a key language for academic collaboration, views regarding English proficiency and standard standards intersect with perceptions of academic authority and competence. A cross-regional analysis

of language attitudes and ideologies in Eastern European higher education shows that students often navigate between valuing English as an academic asset and questioning the legitimacy of peers with weaker English skills (Seidlhofer, 2011). This demonstrates a stratified ideological landscape where linguistic competence becomes linked to academic identity and social capital. Language ideologies can promote hierarchies in multilingual learning communities, influencing self-perceptions and peer judgements (Jenkins, 2015).

Multilingual Practices and Ideological Negotiation

The coexistence of traditional language ideology with multilingual practices demonstrates how language attitudes are mediated in everyday conversation (Seidlhofer, 2011). Learners and educators in multilingual situations frequently alter their language use based on social and academic goals, demonstrating both ideological commitment to specific norms and pragmatic responsiveness to communicative demands. While some studies stress the difficulties caused by entrenched native norms, others show an increasing acceptance of the legitimacy of varied English variations when communicative efficacy is prioritised (Jenkins, 2015). For example, investigations of ELF attitudes suggest that students can have positive cognitive and behavioural perspectives about English as a lingua franca, emphasising its inclusivity and practical utility in academic and social interaction (Jenkins, 2015; Seidlhofer, 2011). This attitude negotiation indicates that ideological views and communicative demands coexist dynamically in multilingual Europe, influencing how English is acquired, evaluated, and utilised.

Broader Sociolinguistic Impacts of English Prestige

Beyond direct educational contexts, language ideology interacts with larger sociolinguistic processes in which English serves as the dominant global language (Jenkins, 2015). Critical study on English language hegemony investigates how English's privileged role in the economic, scientific, and educational realms fosters ideological beliefs about its value and authority, frequently at the expense of local

languages and multilingual repertoires (Seidlhofer, 2011). Hegemonic frameworks can influence views towards standard English, encouraging beliefs that native-aligned versions are more valued or prominent.

Conclusion

This study illustrates how attitudes about "standard English" in multilingual Europe reflect a conflict between conventional values and the actual usage of English as a lingua franca (Jenkins, 2015; Seidlhofer, 2011). While learners and educators frequently prefer native-like norms for prestige and correctness, multilingual practices demonstrate that intelligibility and communicative flexibility are just as important. Recognising different English types can help to minimise learner anxiety, promote inclusive pedagogy, and strengthen learners' identities in academic settings. Understanding these views contributes to the development of teaching methodologies that strike a balance between conventional norms and the dynamic, globally negotiated nature of English, resulting in more equitable and effective language instruction across Europe.

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