

Future Teachers, Future Perspectives
The Story of English in Kuwait

Submitted by
Reem Al-Rubaie

to the University of Exeter
as a thesis for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

September 2010

This thesis is available for library use on the understanding that it is copyright material and that no quotation from the thesis may be published without proper acknowledgment.

I certify that all material in this thesis which is not my own work has been identified and that no material has been submitted and approved for the award of degree by any other university.

Signed:

Abstract

In Kuwait, the English language is increasingly gaining importance signifying globalisation and internationalisation of the local culture and linguistic environment. Alongside the positive effects of the wide-spread usage of English there are negative tendencies which emerge onto the scene. This thesis is concerned with the educational aspects of such influences where it explored trainee teachers' conceptualisations of English as an international / global language, and examined the implications of current views of English for teacher preparation in light of the most recent methodological trends such as global English delivery, expansion of teacher knowledge base, the introduction of linguistic rights and instructional policies to educational stakeholders, and the merging of language and culture in English language teaching. Through questionnaires and in-depth interviews the study found that the relationship between the local and global in Kuwait is a complex issue with social, educational and political implications. Multiple functions for English and its status within the local context were voiced and consequently alternative futures for Standard Arabic as the main source and medium of local literacy and language of academia against the background of rapid Anglicisation emerged. The results may attract the attention of Kuwait's educational theorists and practitioners, and the hopeful outcome would be to inspire teachers to engage in critical thinking and challenge their realities; and encourage Kuwait's educational policy makers to find a balance between the source and target languages/cultures, as well as bring to the foreground local expertise and knowledge.

Table of Contents

Chapter One: The Problem.....	10
Study Rationale	14
Significance, Aims, and Research Questions	18
Organisation of the Study	20
Chapter Two: Research Context.....	21
Global Comes to Kuwait – Kuwait Goes Global	21
Education in Kuwait: A New Way to Communicate with the World	24
Schools in Kuwait – English in Schools.....	27
Changing Times – Changing Methodologies	32
Primary, Intermediate, and Secondary Schools.....	34
Preparing Teachers to Meet Future Needs	39
Rough Corners of the English Language Teaching Policy in Kuwait.....	44
Conclusion – Researching Kuwait’s Modern English Language Context	49
Chapter Three: Literature Review	51
Role of the English Language in the Global Network	52
World Englishes or English Worldwide?	56
Models of English Language Utilisation	56
English: A Blessing or a Threat?.....	64
TESOL: A Silent Revolution?.....	70
Linguistic Ecology.....	73
Critical Epistemology	75
Critical Methodology.....	78
Value of Resistance	81
English Language Teacher Preparation.....	84
Language Policymaking	91
Trends from Malaysia, Iceland, and Israel	94
Trends from the Middle East	99
Building a Case for Kuwait	104
Chapter Four: Methodology	106
Research Framework and Theoretical Justification.....	106
Research Design	114
Research Participants.....	117
Data Collection Tools and Justification	119
Questionnaires	119
Interviews	123
Procedures of Data Collection.....	125
Procedures of Data Analysis	126
Pilot Stage.....	126
Questionnaires	126
Interviews	127
Step 1: Data management.....	127
Step 2: Reading/memoing.	127
Step 3: Describing, classifying, and interpreting.....	128
Step 4: Representing/visualising.	129
Marrying the Data: Analysing Collectively	131

Interviews vs. Questionnaires.....	132
Rho-correlations	134
Intertopical Links in Interview Data.....	135
Issues of Trustworthiness and Credibility	136
Ethical Considerations.....	140
Limitations of the Study	143
Chapter Five: Data Analysis and Discussion	146
Topic I Analysis: The Status of English.....	146
Theme I – 1: Importance of English for Kuwaitis.....	146
Theme I – 2: Contexts of Using English vs. Arabic – “A Secret Language”	152
Domestic context.	152
Professional context.....	156
General socio-linguistic context.	159
Theme I – 3: English in the Educational Context.....	162
Theme I – 4: Level of ELT in Kuwait – Panic and Frustration.....	169
Theme I – 5: Impact of English on Arabic – Issues of Power and Identity	173
Theme I – 6: Projected Futures for English and Arabic: Is There a Balance?	179
Topic I Discussion: Many ‘faces’ of English in Kuwait	183
Concept 1: English as a “modern” Language: Implications of Progress and Advancement	188
Concept 2: English as a “cool” Language: Implications of Trendiness and Freedom	193
Concept 3: English as a Language of “prestige”: Emergence and Sustainment of Socioeconomic Inequalities.....	197
Concept 4: English as a Language of the ‘enemy’ and Arabic as a Language of ‘identity formation’: Resistance or Mimicry?	199
Topic II Analysis: Professional ELT Preparation from the GE Perspective	205
Theme II – 1: What Should an English Teacher be Like – Different Perspectives	205
Theme II – 2: Presentation of English in the Teacher Education Curriculum	214
Presentation of the idea of GE in the curriculum.	215
Presentation of English as EFL/ESL.	217
English as a medium of instruction.	219
Theme II – 3: Culture in Language Teacher Education	222
Theme II – 4: Policy of English as a Language of Instruction.....	226
Theme II – 5: Is Knowing the Language Enough to be an English Teacher?.....	230
Challenges future English language teachers might face in their work.	230
Curriculum – considering changes?	233
Theme II – 6: The Goal of Training – To Make Novice Teachers Aware	236
Quality of trainee teacher graduates.	236
Raised awareness – slowly but surely.	240
Topic II Discussion: The Act of Problematizing.....	244
Problematizing: What English do Kuwait's Future Teachers of	245
English Deal with?	245
Problematizing: Which Quality and for Whom?.....	253
Chapter Six: Conclusion.....	261
Research Findings and Implications.....	261
Question 1: How is English perceived by Kuwait’s future English language teachers?	262

Question 2: What do the participants see as the implications of current views of English for teacher preparation?	266
Research Contribution and Recommendations	270
My Personal Research Journey	275
Appendix A	277
Appendix B.....	278
Appendix C.....	280
Appendix D	285
Appendix E.....	287
Appendix F	294
Appendix G	297
References	303