

Abstract

The standard ideology, embedded in discourses of traditional language teaching, has been found to have an influence on non-native speakers' linguistic identities. It manifests itself in their preoccupation with grammatical correctness and accent, and consequently in shaping negative self-perceptions, by focusing on the lacks in proficiency relative to the native speaker model. Some of the recent studies, however, reported contrasting findings. They reveal a weakening of this influence, which stems mainly from the current role of English as a global lingua franca. The ultimate goal of this study is to explore the English non-native students' perceptions of their English, as it served as a main shared resource for socializing within their community, in order to find whether and how this decentralization, combined with the "real life" use of English within an informal environment of an Erasmus community of practice, might impact their linguistic identities. The theoretical part of this study consists of three sections. Firstly, it provides a description of the concept of English as a lingua franca and its development. The second part explicates the relation between ELF and linguistic identity whereas the third part introduces the community of practice approach, which has been employed both as a conceptual and analytical tool. In addition, a brief overview of previous research is presented. The material for the empirical analysis consists of two types of data, i.e. qualitative interviews complemented by fieldnotes from participant observations. The findings are marked by significant ambivalence. On the one hand, the students underwent a positive change in terms of increased linguistic confidence as a result of their experience. At the same time, however, some of their discourses revealed that they also hold some negative attitudes towards non-native English, particularly with regard to accents.

Keywords: English as a Lingua Franca, linguistic identity, community of practice, non-native speaker, standard language ideology, Erasmus mobility