

## FORUM

### CRITICAL LANGUAGE PEDAGOGY

#### A postmethod perspective on English language teaching

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#### INTRODUCTION

Much has been written about the coloniality of the English language. Now more than ever, one senses among a section of the applied linguistics community a critical awareness of the fact that the English language, in its long march to its current global status, was aided and abetted by colonialist and imperialist projects that trampled upon the political, cultural and linguistic heritage of millions of people across the globe. The nature of English linguistic imperialism (Phillipson, 1992), the colonial character that still adheres to it (Pennycook, 1998), and the subaltern attempts to resist its dominance (Canagarajah, 1999) have all been documented in detail.

Equally well-documented is the globality of the English language. “A language achieves a genuinely global status,” observes Crystal (1997: 2), “when it develops a special role that is recognized in every country.” Clearly, English has achieved such a role. In that global role, English has spawned a large number of local varieties, aptly called world Englishes. An interesting aspect of the emergence of world Englishes is that it is not confined to former British colonies alone. In addition to *English* in India, *Singlish* in Singapore, etc., one now hears about *Français* in France, *Denglish* in Germany, and so on.

The emergence of world Englishes with their amazing form, function and spread has been the result of what Kachru has called nativization (see, for instance, Kachru, 1982, 1983). Varieties such as Indian English, Nigerian English and Singaporean English represent the extent to which a foreign language can be profitably reconstructed into a vehicle for expressing sociocultural norms and networks that are typically local. Creative writers such as Salman Rushdie, Chinua Achebe and others have shown how the Western language can be used for communicating sociocultural nuances that are completely alien to the Western culture. Common people who speak English as an additional language see it more as a language of communicational necessity than as a symbol of cultural identity. They use English according to their individual and institutional needs, and keep it separate from their local cultural beliefs and practices. What Krishnaswamy and Burde (1998: 153) said about Indian English is mostly true of other varieties as well: Indian English has not “made any serious inroads into the social customs, ceremonies connected with births, marriages and deaths, religious functions and rituals that go with festivals, worship in

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temples, intimate interactions in the family and in the peer group – even in urban areas.” (For a critique of this position, see D’souza, 1997 and 2001.)

There is hardly any doubt that different varieties of world Englishes have successfully nativized the colonial language and have clearly delineated their use in certain specified domains. Nativization, however, is not the same as decolonization (Kumaravadivelu, 2002). In the context of world Englishes, nativization may be seen as an attribute of a language whereas decolonization is an attitude of the mind. Nativization is a relatively simple process of indiginizing the phonological, syntactic and pragmatic aspects of the linguistic system of the English language – a target that has been largely achieved. Decolonization is a fairly complex process of taking control of the principles and practices of planning, learning, and teaching English – a task that has not been fully accomplished. Nativization marks only the beginning, not the end, of the process of decolonization. To erase the lingering traces of English imperialism and to claim ownership of the English language learning and teaching enterprise, it is imperative to move from nativization to decolonization.

A meaningful movement from nativization to decolonization necessarily involves significant shifts in policies and programs and in methods and materials governing English language teaching (ELT). It involves not only decentering the authority Western interests have over the ELT industry but also, more importantly, restoring agency to professionals in the periphery communities. There are signs that the ELT profession is moving, albeit painfully slowly, in that direction. There has recently been a substantial professional engagement with issues related to English language policies and planning (see, for instance, Agnihotri and Khanna, 1997; Foley, *et al.*, 1998; Hall and Eggington, 2000; Tollefson, 2002). However, adequate attention has not been given to a pedagogic area that matters most: classroom methodology. It is true that the concept of method has been problematized before (e.g., Pennycook, 1989). But, to my knowledge, there has been no systematic attempt to explore possible methodological means to decolonize English language teaching. In this essay, I plan to do precisely that. First, I review the colonial character of the concept of method. Second, I present the concept of postmethod as a postcolonial construct. Third, I explain what it takes to treat a postmethod pedagogy as a postcolonial project. And, finally, I highlight a postmethod predicament that might challenge the successful conception and construction of a postmethod pedagogy in postcolonial contexts.

### METHOD AS A COLONIAL CONSTRUCT

By method, I’m referring to prototypical methods (such as Grammar-Translation, Audiolingual, Communicative) that are conceptualized by theorists, not those that are actualized by teachers in their classrooms. Each of these methods is considered to have a particular set of theoretical principles and a particular set of classroom techniques (see, for instance, Larsen-Freeman, 2000). Such a concept of method is perhaps as old as the history of language teaching itself. However, with the emergence of colonialism, method seems to have assumed easily identifiable colonial characteristics. In fact, as has been documented recently, British colonialism used its colonial territories, especially India, to devise appropriate teaching methods (Pennycook, 1998), testing techniques (Spolsky, 1995) and literary canons (Viswanathan, 1989) all with the view to serving its colonial agenda.

Current language teaching methods used in different parts of the world, however modified they are, still basically adhere to the colonial concept of method.

What gives the concept of method its colonial coloration? More than anything else, the concept of method is a construct of marginality. It valorizes everything associated with the colonial Self and marginalizes everything associated with the subaltern Other. In the neocolonial present, as in the colonial past, methods are used to establish the native Self as superior and the non-native Other as inferior. A review of the literature in applied linguistics and other related fields shows that method as a construct of marginality has four inter-related dimensions – scholastic, linguistic, cultural, and economic.

### *Scholastic dimension*

The scholastic dimension of method as a construct of marginality relates to the ways in which Western scholars have treated local knowledge(s). In his book, *Decolonizing History*, Claude Alvares (1979/91) provides a comprehensive and scathing critique of Western interpretation of scientific and technological knowledge in India and China. He has documented how Western scholars have unscrupulously furthered their own vested interests by not only failing to acknowledge, but also by deliberately denigrating, the production and dissemination of knowledge in these two ancient nations. In a similar archival study on indigenous Indian education in the eighteenth century, Dharampal (1983) has shown that the Indian educational system compared more than favorably with the system obtaining in England at the same time. In spite of such a historical tradition, the colonial attitude to local knowledge(s) was one of contempt. Perhaps nothing reveals this contemptuous attitude more than Thomas Macaulay's oft-quoted statement from his 1835 Minutes: “. . . a single shelf of a good European library was worth the whole native literature of India and Arabia . . . It is, I believe, no exaggeration to say that all the historical information which has been collected from all the books written in the Sanskrit language is less valuable than what may be found in the most paltry abridgment used at preparatory schools in England” (cited in Alvares, 1979/91: 4).

British scholars who came to teach English in colonial India brought with them a similar attitude towards local knowledge (Krishnaswamy and Burde, 1998; Pennycook, 1998). Although India has long been a multilingual country with a rich tradition of learning and teaching “second” languages, the colonial scholars evinced very little interest in drawing insights from existing local knowledge. In his book, *A History of English Language Teaching*, Howatt (1984: 215) commends Michael West for consistently using the term “second language” to refer to English, and for his experimental study on Indian bilingualism conducted during the 1920s. The fact of the matter is that, in spite of his work on Indian bilingualism, West was not very enthusiastic about bilingualism and, in fact, asserted that “there is certainly no advantage in being born in a bilingual country, but rather a disadvantage” (1926: 3). As Pennycook (1989) rightly points out, the much fancied *New Method* textbooks by West were designed to give the Indians just enough English language skills “to produce clerks to run the colonial system” (p. 593). Incidentally, this colonial practice was not very different from the neocolonial agenda pursued by the United States. Tollefson (1986) reports that the US maintains a covert policy to ensure that immigrants in the US refugee camps in countries like Thailand, the Philippines, and Indonesia learn just enough English before migrating to the US to perform minimum-wage jobs to avoid welfare dependency, but not enough to move beyond these levels.

### *Linguistic dimension*

Once local knowledge was marginalized and made irrelevant for colonial scholastic pursuits, the next logical step was to make the knowledge and use of local language(s) irrelevant for learning and teaching English as an additional language. Such a step resulted in what Phillipson (1992) has called “the monolingual tenet.” The monolingual tenet, he explains, “holds that the teaching of English as a foreign or second language should be entirely through the medium of English” (p. 185). It is this monolingual tenet that constitutes the linguistic dimension of method as a construct of marginality. In one stroke, this tenet not only prevented ESL/EFL learners and teachers from putting to use their excellent L1 linguistic resource to serve the cause of their second language learning and teaching, but also privileged native speakers of English, most of whom do not share the language of their learners.

The marginality of the linguistic dimension becomes even more apparent if we note the dual approach Britain had historically followed to teach foreign languages to its own citizens, and to teach English language to colonized subjects. As Howatt (1984) points out, foreign language teaching in Britain was for a long time based on the grammar-translation method involving bilingual translation of literary texts. In contrast, “the promotion and maintenance of a monolingual approach to language teaching . . . became the hallmark which set ELT apart from foreign language teaching in Britain” (p. 212). Such a contradiction, Howatt observes, inevitably led “succeeding generations of grammar-school-educated recruits (who) came into the ELT profession” (p. 213) to continually re-discover and re-learn the monolingual approach to English as a second/foreign language teaching. In narrating this piece of history and in explaining the contradiction, Howatt, of course, studiously refrains from making any reference to the colonial agenda. In fact, he goes on to say, rather matter-of-factly, that the dual approach was “relatively uncontroversial, with none of the heart-searchings that are evident in the literature of modern language teaching” (pp. 212–13). The monolingual tenet was so central to the colonial agenda that even the half-hearted attempt by Michael West to introduce a bilingual method in India was eventually rejected.

The centrality of the monolingual tenet is not confined to the teaching aspect of ELT alone; it permeates second language acquisition (SLA) studies as well. As Y. Kachru (1994) has observed, most SLA studies suffer from a monolingual bias because they do not even consider what it is like to learn and teach a second language in a bi/multilingual environment. Earlier, Sridhar and Sridhar (1986) have argued that the interlanguage perspective adopted by Western SLA researchers ignores the acquisition and use of indiginized varieties of English thereby rendering Western-oriented SLA theories counter-intuitive. They rightly assert that the interested discourse on SLA theories that emanates from the West is capable of providing only a partial understanding of the psycho-sociolinguistic and cultural factors governing SLA. In spite of the soundness of these arguments, the ruling “paradigms of marginality” (Kachru, 1996, see below for details) have made sure that these “marginal” voices remain on the margin.

### *Cultural dimension*

Closely linked to the linguistic dimension of method as a construct of marginality is its cultural dimension. A singular focal point of such a cultural dimension has always been the native speaker. As Stern (1992) reiterates, “one of the most important aims of culture

teaching is to help the learner gain an understanding of the native speaker's perspective" (p. 216). It is a matter of the L2 learner "becoming sensitive to the state of mind of individuals and groups within the target language community . . ." (p. 217). The teacher's task is to help the learner "create a network of mental associations similar to those which the items evoke in the native speaker" (p. 224). The overall objective of culture teaching, then, is to help L2 learners develop the ability to use the target language in appropriate ways for the specific purpose of culturally empathizing, if not culturally assimilating, with native speakers of English. In such a scenario, the individual voice and the cultural identity of the L2 learner stand hopelessly marginalized. The ELT profession has not yet recognized that "language teaching would benefit by paying attention to the L2 user rather than concentrating primarily on the native speaker" (Cook, 1999: 185).

Clearly, both the linguistic dimension which focuses on monolingualism and the cultural dimension which focuses on monoculturalism are aimed at benefiting the native speaker of English. Terming this "the native speaker fallacy," Phillipson (1992: 195) observes that it "dates from a time when language teaching was indistinguishable from culture teaching, and when all learners of English were assumed to be familiarizing themselves with the culture that English originates from and for contact with that culture." The effect of such a fallacy, he goes on to say, is "to maintain relations of dominance by the Centre. In a way similar to the monolingual tenet, the native speaker tenet reinforces the linguistic norms of the Centre, creating an ideological dependence" (p. 199). The ideological dependence is still being jealously guarded because method as a construct of marginality also has a vitally important economic dimension.

### *Economic dimension*

In his authoritative book, *Postcolonialism: An historical introduction*, Robert Young (2001) states that "colonization was not primarily concerned with transposing cultural values. They came as a by-product of its real objectives of trade, economic exploitation and settlement" (p. 24). What is true of the colonial endeavor is also true of the ELT enterprise which it is part of. Economy is the engine that drives the ELT industry. What continues to fuel the ELT economic engine is method as a construct of marginality with its monolingual tenet and native speaker tenet. These tenets make sure that the fountainhead of global employment opportunities for native speakers of English does not dry up any time soon.

It is well known that ELT brings immense economic prosperity to English-speaking countries, particularly Britain. Graddol suggests (1997: 57) that the primary challenge to Britain's pre-eminence in the global ELT industry comes from its own monolingualism, and, by implication, not from non-native speaking professionals who, he says, "are not necessarily regarded as 'second best' *any more*" (p. 57, emphasis mine). He notes that people have started asking the question: "How can monolingual British teachers best understand the needs of second-language users of English?" (p. 57). Cautioning that Britain's "monolingual status may become an economic liability" (p. 57), he recommends promotion of bilingualism at home in order to stay competitive abroad. It is apparent that the need for finding strategies and tactics to counter any challenge to the native speaker dominance in the ELT industry has been duly acknowledged. What has not been fully acknowledged is the marginalizing mission of the concept of method.

To sum up this section, I have briefly reviewed the relevant professional literature to show that the concept of method is indeed a construct of marginality. It is a multi-dimensional phenomenon consisting of scholastic, linguistic, cultural, and economic

aspects. It “reflects a particular view of the world and is articulated in the interests of unequal power relationships” (Pennycook, 1989: 589–90). It extends and expands the colonial agenda of economic exploitation and cultural domination. It perpetuates the colonial image of the native Self and the non-native Other. It continues to ignore local knowledge and local interests. Meant for global consumption, it is guided by a one-size-fits-all-cookie-cutter approach that assumes a common clientele with common goals. Clearly, methods that are manufactured and marketed as usable in *all* learning/teaching contexts cannot be useful to *any* learning/teaching context. There is, thus, an imperative need to decolonize the methodological aspects of ELT. Any meaningful process of decolonization of ELT method requires a fundamental shift from the concept of method to the concept of postmethod (Kumaravadivelu, 1994).

### POSTMETHOD AS A POSTCOLONIAL CONSTRUCT

According to Kumaravadivelu (1994), the concept of postmethod signifies a search for an alternative to method rather than an alternative method. He reckons that any attempt to discover a new or a better method within the existing methodological framework is bound to be conditioned by the construct of marginality and thus suffer from the same fundamental flaws discussed above. Accordingly, he suggests an alternative to method in the form of what he calls postmethod pedagogy.

Postmethod pedagogy consists of the parameters of particularity, practicality and possibility. The parameter of particularity is based on the belief that any language teaching program “must be sensitive to a particular group of teachers teaching a particular group of learners pursuing a particular set of goals within a particular institutional context embedded in a particular sociocultural milieu” (Kumaravadivelu, 2001: 538). Such a pedagogy is responsive to and responsible for local individual, institutional, social and cultural contexts in which learning and teaching take place. While making themselves aware of the principles and practices of the colonial construct of method, teachers rely mostly on context-sensitive local knowledge to identify problems, find solutions, and try them out to see what works and what doesn’t in their specific context.

The parameter of practicality refers to the relationship between theory and practice. One of the colonial representations that have endured for long is the Weberian idea that theory construction is the hallmark of the West and that the East preoccupies itself with discrete facts and figures unable to derive any unifying theory. In a sense, it is this kind of (mis)representation that has led the West to marginalize local knowledge. The unfortunate and unproductive division of labor we find in applied linguistics between the theorist and the teacher – that is, the theorist produces knowledge, and the teacher consumes knowledge – can also be traced to this colonial construct of marginality. The parameter of practicality goes beyond this marginalizing dichotomy and aims for a personal theory of practice generated by the practicing teacher.

The parameter of possibility is derived mainly from Freirean critical pedagogy that seeks to empower classroom participants so that they can critically reflect on the social and historical conditions contributing to create the cultural forms and interested knowledge they encounter in their lives. Their lived experiences, motivated by their own sociocultural and historical backgrounds, should help them appropriate the English language and use it in their own terms according to their own values and visions. Such an appropriation assumes greater importance in these days of economic and cultural globalization because

classroom participants cannot afford to ignore the global sociocultural reality that challenges identity formation inside and outside the classroom.

The three parameters of a postmethod pedagogy interweave and interact with each other in a synergic relationship where the whole is greater than the sum of its parts. Together, they constitute a conceptual rationale necessary to construct a postmethod pedagogy as a postcolonial project.

### POSTMETHOD PEDAGOGY AS A POSTCOLONIAL PROJECT

Any attempt to design a postmethod pedagogy in a postcolonial context has to be motivated by a desire to challenge the debilitating effect of method as a means of marginality. It is essentially a bottom-up process in which local language teachers and teacher educators, using their professional and personal knowledge-base take the initiative to construct a pedagogy that is sensitive to their local needs, wants, and situations. In order to do that, they may need an operational framework based on the fundamentals of the three parameters. Towards that end, Kumaravadivelu (1994) has proposed what he calls a macrostrategic framework, and has provided a detailed treatment of the framework in Kumaravadivelu (2003). Given below is a brief outline of the framework.

#### MACROSTRATEGIC FRAMEWORK

The macrostrategic framework consists of macrostrategies and microstrategies. Macrostrategies are guiding principles derived from theoretical, empirical and experiential insights related to second/foreign language learning and teaching. A macrostrategy is thus a general plan, a broad guideline based on which teachers will be able to generate their own situation-specific, need-based microstrategies or classroom techniques. Inevitably, each of these macrostrategies will take on a different content and character depending on local expertise and local expectations. The macrostrategies are:

1. *Maximize learning opportunities*: This macrostrategy is about teaching as a process of creating and utilizing learning opportunities, a process in which teachers strike a balance between their role as managers of teaching and their role as mediators of learning.
2. *Minimize perceptual mismatches*: This macrostrategy is about recognizing potential mismatches between teacher intention and learner interpretation, and what to do about them.
3. *Facilitate negotiated interaction*: This macrostrategy is about ensuring meaningful learner–learner, learner–teacher classroom interaction in which learners are entitled and encouraged to initiate topic and talk, not just react and respond.
4. *Promote learner autonomy*: This macrostrategy is about helping learners learn to learn, and learn to liberate; and about equipping them with the means necessary to self-direct and self-monitor their own learning.
5. *Foster language awareness*: This macrostrategy is about creating general as well as critical language awareness; and about drawing learners' attention to the formal and functional properties of the language.
6. *Activate intuitive heuristics*: This macrostrategy is about providing rich textual data so that learners can infer and internalize the underlying rules governing grammatical usage and communicative use; and about helping them in the process of their grammar construction.
7. *Contextualize linguistic input*: This macrostrategy is about how language usage and use are shaped by linguistic, social, and cultural contexts.

8. *Integrate language skills*: This macrostrategy is about holistic integration of language skills traditionally separated and sequenced as listening, speaking, reading, and writing; and about understanding the role of language across the curriculum.
9. *Ensure social relevance*: This macrostrategy is about the need for teachers to be sensitive to the societal, political, economic, and educational environment in which learning and teaching take place.
10. *Raise cultural consciousness*: This macrostrategy emphasizes the need to treat learners as cultural informants so that they are encouraged to engage in a process of classroom participation that puts a premium on their power/knowledge, on their subjectivity and identity.

The concept of method as a construct of marginality has long been the organizing principle for all aspects of language teaching. It has conditioned the form and function of classroom methodology restraining the practicing teacher from attempting anything radically different. Macrostrategies, grounded on the ideals of particularity, practicality, and possibility, offer the necessary organizing principles that can form the basis for an alternative to the concept of method. Thus, the chief strength of postmethod pedagogy as a postcolonial project lies in its potential to transcend the marginalizing effect of center-based methods. There are, however, several challenges to overcome. I shall discuss some of them under the rubric “postmethod predicament.”

### THE POSTMETHOD PREDICAMENT

In their edited volume, *Orientalism and the Postcolonial Predicament*, Carol Breckenbridge and Peter van der Veer identify two characteristics of what they call the postcolonial predicament:

the first is that the colonial period has given us both the evidence and the theories that select and connect them; and, second, that decolonization does not entail immediate escape from the colonial discourse. Despite all the recent talk of “third-world voices,” this predicament defines both the ex-colonizer and the ex-colonized. To some extent this is tantamount to saying that we cannot escape from history . . . a history characterized by a particular discursive formation that can be called “orientalism.” (1993: 2)

Postmethod pedagogy as a postcolonial project faces a similar predicament: it has to deal with a colonial history characterized by a particular discursive formation called method, which, as the above discussion shows, has been shaped by a form of orientalism. The discursive formation of the colonial concept of method continues to cast a long hegemonic shadow over ELT pedagogic practices even after colonialism has formally ended. It is, however, doubtful whether it can continue to hold such a hegemonic hold without the direct or indirect support of the subaltern. As I see it, then, the postmethod predicament has two dimensions: the process of marginalization, and the practice of self-marginalization.

#### *The process of marginalization*

What makes the structure of the colonial construct of method still stand strong is the process of marginalization with its steadfast adherence to some of the flawed assumptions that continue to govern second language learning, teaching, and research, and its equally steadfast avoidance of any meaningful engagement with critiques of those assumptions.

This process of marginalization is manufactured and maintained by what Kachru (1996) has called “paradigms of marginality.” He has identified a cluster of three paradigms – paradigm myopia, paradigm lag, and paradigm misconnection. These paradigms, he argues, explain why and how flawed research practices – such as treating monolingual speakers and societies as norms for forming hypotheses about bilingual development, claiming the status of “scientific theory” for those attitudinally loaded hypotheses, and delinking the investigative processes of hypothesis formation, hypothesis testing and hypothesis confirmation from sociolinguistic contexts and historical realities of language use – continue to hold sway in applied linguistic circles. He also argues convincingly how these paradigms of marginality are being used as “a very effective strategy of subtle power” (p. 242).

It is this strategy of subtle power that continues to keep interested Western knowledge dominant over subjugated local knowledge. Take, for instance, and note the predicament, the fact that the macrostrategic framework that forms the fulcrum of postmethod pedagogy is based, at least partly, on the theoretical insights derived from already documented Western knowledge-base. Given the stated objectives of transcending center-based methods and of deriving a bottom-up pedagogy, it would, of course, be highly desirable if the theoretical support for it had come from the findings of empirical research conducted and documented in and by periphery communities where English is learned and taught as a second/foreign language. Part of the (neo)colonial agenda is precisely to render local knowledge invisible and inaccessible thereby making the periphery communities continue to depend on the center for documented knowledge-base. In other words, the periphery cannot “escape from history.” Because of historical realities, all it can do at present is, to put it in a familiar phrase, to use the master’s tools in order to reconstruct the master’s house.

That periphery communities do not have adequately documented knowledge-base in second language learning and teaching does not mean that they do not have any knowledge-base at all. Commenting on the macrostrategic framework, Canagarajah (2002) correctly observes: “such strategies have been used by those in the periphery always. They simply haven’t been documented in the professional literature. What is available in published form are pedagogical approaches from the communities that enjoy literate/publishing resources. Periphery teachers have shared their teaching strategies orally in their local contexts” (p. 148). While it is true that the process of marginalization has not gone unchallenged, it is also true that the practice of self-marginalization on the part of the periphery aids the center in perpetuating its strategy of subtle power.

### *The practice of self-marginalization*

Self-marginalization is not a new phenomenon. It is perhaps as old as the history of human domination-subordination. Alvares (1979/91) is right when he observes: “no ideology legitimizing superiority-inferiority relations is worth its salt unless it wins at least a grudging assent in the minds of those dominated” (p. 187). In other words, members of the dominated group, knowingly or unknowingly, legitimize the characteristics of inferiority attributed to them by the dominating group. As social historians have remarked, why “circumstances related to particular historical contexts that may be reversed” have “led colonial peoples to more essential conclusions about themselves is not entirely clear. The fact that they frequently did come to such conclusions was one of

the most degrading consequences of colonialism” (Rudolph and Rudolph, 1969: 167 cited in Alvares, 1979/91: 187).

The practice of self-marginalization by program administrators, teacher educators and practicing teachers in certain periphery ELT communities manifests itself in many ways. It is common knowledge that, even today, private as well as governmental agencies in several periphery communities openly state when they post job announcements that they “require” or at least “prefer” native speakers. Sometimes, they even proudly proclaim: “All of our English teachers are native speakers, teaching natural English as it is spoken in real conversation” (cited in Bamgboşe, 2001: 360). This is in spite of the fact that most native speakers of English have very little personal experience in learning a second/foreign language and even less professional preparation in teaching abroad. In a recent study of the curricular aims and activities of MA TESOL programs offered in the US, Govardhan, Nayar, and Sheorey (1999) concluded that they “cannot identify any program that is quintessentially geared toward preparing ESL/EFL teachers for teaching abroad” (p. 122). But still, they point out, academic administrators in some of the periphery countries do not hesitate to call upon these ESL/EFL teachers “to teach any or all of the following: listening, speaking, reading, writing, composition, English or US literature, syntax, general linguistics, descriptive linguistics, English linguistics, English grammar, morphology, semantics, and pragmatics” (p. 117).

Following the example set by their academic administrators, many teachers and teacher educators also look up to native speakers for inspiration thinking that they have ready-made answers to all the recurrent problems of classroom teaching. By their uncritical acceptance of the native speaker dominance, non-native professionals legitimize their own marginalization. In a most recent study, Nayar (2002) studied the ideological binarism represented in a popular electronic discussion group owned and operated by US-based ELT professionals, TESL-L ([tesl-l@cunyvm.cuny.edu](mailto:tesl-l@cunyvm.cuny.edu)) which attracts at least 20 postings a day from among thousands of members spread all over the world. Through a critical sociolinguistic analysis, Nayar found that on this network, “the rubric of native speaker dominance and power is very strongly sustained and conveyed in a variety of overt and covert ways,” thus reinforcing the assumption that native speakers, “*ipso facto*, are also the ideal teachers or experts of pedagogy, with a clear implication that NNS English and language teaching expertise are suspect (p. 465).” Participating actively in the reinforcement of such assumptions are not just native speakers but also non-native teachers who, according to Nayar, “often seek expert advice from the NS openly and it is not uncommon to see advisory suggestions from NS ‘experts’ that are more noteworthy for their self-assuredness, sincerity and eagerness to help than their linguistic or pedagogic soundness” (p. 466).

Self-marginalization reinforces and reaffirms the negative stereotypes used in the center to define the subaltern space. The center, in turn, perpetuates its dominance by exploiting the practice of self-marginalization on the part of the subaltern. Thus, the process of marginalization and the practice of self-marginalization in various guises constitute the postmethod predicament that any serious practitioner of a postmethod pedagogy has to deal with.

## CONCLUSION

I began this paper by arguing that nativization is an important, but only an initial, phase in the process of decolonization of English language teaching. The next step is to tackle a more intractable problem of the concept of method. I reviewed the colonial character of the concept of method to show that it is a veritable construct of marginality. An alternative to method has to be found in order to transcend its marginalizing effect. Postmethod pedagogy with its ideals of particularity, practicality, and possibility offers one such option. I also maintained that the macrostrategic framework based on the ideals of postmethod pedagogy has the potential to contribute to postcolonial pedagogic projects. I then drew the reader's attention to the process of marginalization and the practice of self-marginalization both of which constitute a postmethod predicament that can challenge any meaningful attempt to decolonize English language teaching.

Postmethod pedagogy seeks to empower practicing teachers in their attempt to develop an appropriate pedagogy based on their local knowledge and local understanding. As Canagarajah (2002) remarks, it liberates them and makes them "truly creative in integrating experience, imagination, and knowledge to devise learning strategies with/for students" (p. 149). It also demands a deeper investment in local knowledge and local conditions from native-speaking traveling teachers by compelling them to "understand the uniqueness of each language teaching situation they enter in order to teach effectively" and "to engage with their students more intensely in the exploration of the strategies and styles that interest/suit them" (p. 149). Thus, postmethod pedagogy along with the macrostrategic framework has the potential to reconfigure the relationship between the marginalizing (neo)colonial system and the marginalized periphery communities. It can truly herald the beginning of the arduous task of shifting the ELT power structure to subaltern agency.

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