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# 1

## Dangerous Liaison: Globalization, Empire and TESOL

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### **Introduction**

The central thesis of this chapter is simple and straightforward: the contemporary world is being inexorably restructured by the forces of globalization and empire, which together are shaping the global flows of interested knowledge, hegemonic power, and cultural capital. English, in its role as the global language, creates, reflects and spreads the import and the imagery of the global flows. The forces of globalization, empire and English are intricately interconnected. Operating at the intersection where the three meet, TESOL professionals, knowingly or unknowingly, play a role in the service of global corporations as well as imperial powers. What is required to mitigate the intended and unintended consequences of the dangerous liaison between globalization, empire and TESOL is no less than transformative restructuring of major aspects of TESOL.

While the central thesis is simple and straightforward, the vital issues are not. Taking a postcolonial perspective, I explore some of the issues arising out of the dangerous liaison between the three forces. The chapter is organized in four parts. In the first, I examine the emerging process of globalization. In the next, I discuss the entrenched nature of empire. I then comment on the place of English and the current role of English teaching in these processes. Finally, I offer suggestions for the relocation of TESOL in the light of the foregoing analysis.

### **Globalization and its consequences**

Globalization is a slippery term which carries different meanings to different people at different times. Echoing the current thinking, sociologist Manfred Steger (2003, p. 13) defines it as ‘a multidimensional

set of social processes that create, multiply, stretch, and intensify world-wide social interdependencies and exchanges while at the same time fostering in people a growing awareness of deepening connections between the local and the distant'. While Steger points out that globalization is 'as old as humanity itself', historian Robbie Robertson (2003) argues that globalization as we know it today can be traced to the onset of the modern colonial period, about 500 years ago. He identifies three waves of globalization which can easily be associated with three phases of modern colonialism/imperialism.

### **Three waves of globalization**

According to Robertson, the first wave of globalization started when two maritime powers, Spain and Portugal, sought trade routes to Asia to tap the resources of China and India, which were 'already the world's largest and cheapest producers of a range of highly sought-after commodities' (Robbie Robertson, 2003: 106). In 1492, Columbus, with Spanish military and financial support, landed in the Americas, although he set out to reach India. Six years later, driven by the fear of Spanish trade advantage, the Portuguese successfully explored their own route to the East when Vasco da Gama rounded Africa and opened up the sea route to India. Robertson reckons that this first wave laid the foundation for European empires, for modern global trade and finance, and for the new global systems of production.

The second wave, after 1800, is marked by the fruits of industrial revolution. Robertson argues that competition from China and India 'created the demand for mechanization' (107), and Britain rose to the occasion with a mechanization of industry that promoted productivity, decreased cost, and increased profit. Countries such as Germany, Japan and the USA emulated Britain, and benefited from the process of globalization that arose out of industrialization. But, 'for the majority of the world's peoples, however, globalization meant only one thing: colonialism' (131). Imperial powers treated colonialism as a civilizing mission they were destined to perform:

Schools, churches and mass circulation newspapers and magazines spread the word far and wide. So too music, theatre, literature, the visual arts, even postcards. Imperialism became part of the popular culture. (Robertson, 2003: 141)

Eventually, hegemonic rivalries and economic imperatives led the imperial powers into two World Wars, the end of which also marked the end of the second wave.

The third wave of globalization, after 1945, marked a new era of international cooperation as well as rivalry. The two victors of the Second World War, the United States of America and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, sought to divide the world into two ideological camps – capitalist and communist. They both were imbued with a sense of internationalism deeply influenced by their own desire to secure political and economic advantages. They vied with each other to court several newly independent Asian and African countries. It was at this stage that colonization took on a decisively different turn – hegemonic control without territorial possession. As Robertson observes, despite decolonization,

the ‘civilizing’ zeal of former imperialism was far from dead. In Britain and the United States a new mantra emerged. Western values, Western institutions, Western capital and Western technology. Only by Westernizing could former colonies hope to achieve a modern future. (2003: 182)

Of course, Westernization was presented by the imperial powers and perceived by developing nations as modernization.

To help modernize developing countries and rebuild war-torn European nations, the United States assumed leadership in establishing three international economic organizations: the International Monetary Fund (IMF) in charge of administering the international monetary system, the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (later known as the World Bank) in charge of providing loans for industrial projects, and the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT, which in 1995 became the World Trade Organization (WTO)) in charge of formulating and enforcing multilateral trade agreements. These institutions also helped create a money exchange system in which each nation’s currency was pegged to the value of the US dollar. All these measures were taken to spread the American-style free-market economy around the world, which would, in turn, promote the American economy itself. This effort has only accelerated with the collapse of the Soviet Union in the 1980s, and with the economic liberalization in communist China and later in socialist India. Such a triumph of market economy over political ideology marks one of the distinctive features of the current phase of globalization.

### **The current phase of globalization**

From a historical perspective, then, the projects of globalization and empire have always been intricately interconnected. The current phase

of globalization, however, is dramatically different from its earlier phases. According to a United Nations Report on Human Development (UNDP, 1999), the current phase is changing the world landscape in three distinct ways:

*Shrinking space.* People's lives – their jobs, incomes and health – are affected by events on the other side of the globe, often by events that they do not even know about.

*Shrinking time.* Markets and technologies now change with unprecedented speed, with action at a distance in real time, with impacts on people's lives far away.

*Disappearing borders.* National borders are breaking down, not only for trade, capital and information but also for ideas, norms, cultures and values. (29)

What this means is that the economic and cultural lives of people all over the world are more intensely and more instantly linked than ever before. We are all, whether we are aware of it or not, entangled in a global web woven by global players bent upon corporate profit and imperial power.

The most distinctive feature of the current phase of globalization is the global electronic communication, the Internet. It has become the major engine that drives both economic and cultural globalization. In fact, without global communication, economic growth and cultural change would not have taken place with 'breakneck speed and with amazing reach' (UNDP, 1999: 30). That is why cultural critic Frederic Jameson (1998: 55) calls globalization 'a communicational concept, which alternately masks and transmits cultural or economic meanings'. In a development that is unprecedented in human history, the Internet has become a unique source that instantly connects millions of individuals with other individuals, with private associations, and with educational institutions and government agencies, making interaction at a distance and in real time possible. And in large measure, the language of global communication is English (Crystal, 1997; Graddol, 1997).

Yet another aspect of the current phase of globalization is the rise of Transnational Corporations (TNCs) such as IBM, Mitsubishi, Siemens. The TNCs control much of the world's investment capital and innovative technology. Some of them are so huge that they are economically more viable and more powerful than the economies of several countries put together. It has been estimated that 51 of the world's 100 largest economies are corporations, only 49 are countries, and that, by the turn

of the century, 142 of the top 200 TNCs were based in only three countries: the United States, Japan, and Germany (Steger, 2003: 48). Considering their stranglehold on global economy, Robbie Robertson (2003: 11) declares that 'by the close of the twentieth century, the corporate vision of globalism held center stage'. The impact of economic globalization is indeed remarkable. Equally remarkable is cultural globalization.

### **Cultural globalization**

Cultural globalization has become the topic of intense debate among scholars in social sciences and the humanities. A critical analysis of the relevant literature reveals the emergence of three overlapping schools of thought. Members of the first school, represented by political theorist Benjamin Barber, sociologist George Ritzer and others, believe that some kind of cultural homogenization is taking place in which the American culture of consumerism constitutes the dominant center. They see a simple and direct equation: Globalization = Westernization = Americanization = McDonaldization. That is, they consider globalization predominantly a process of Westernization which, in their view, is not substantially different from Americanization which can, in turn, be easily characterized as McDonaldization. The term 'McDonaldization' was coined by Ritzer (1993) to describe the contemporary sociocultural processes by which the basic principles of the fast-food industry – creation of homogenized consumer goods and imposition of uniform standards – shape the cultural landscape in America and elsewhere. Likewise, Barber's McWorld represents:

the future in shimmering pastels, a busy portrait of onrushing economic, technological, and ecological forces that demand integration and uniformity and that mesmerizes peoples everywhere with fast music, fast computers, and fast food – MTV, MacIntosh, and McDonald's – pressing nations into one homogenous global theme park, one McWorld tied together by communications, information, entertainment, and commerce. (Barber, 1996: 4).

The culture of American consumerism is spreading fast, as evidenced by young people in various parts of the world wearing Levi jeans and Nike shoes, sporting Texaco baseball caps and Chicago Bull sweatshirts, watching music videos on MTV and blockbusters from Hollywood, and eating at McDonald's and Pizza Hut. Such a cultural homogenization is facilitated by global communications industry controlled mostly by

American interests. In the year 2000, 'only ten media conglomerates – AT&T, Sony, AOL/Time Warner, Bertelsmann, Liberty Media, Vivendi Universal, Viacom, General Electric, Disney, and News Corporation – accounted for more than two-thirds of the \$250–275 billion in annual worldwide revenues generated by the communications industry' (Steger, 2003: 76). Once again, as is apparent from the above, the medium of the global communications industry is English.

The second school of thought is represented by sociologist Anthony Giddens, cultural critic John Tomlinson and others. They believe that some kind of cultural heterogenization is taking place in which local cultural and religious identities are being strengthened mainly as a response to the threat posed by globalization. Invoking the image of 'a runaway world', Giddens (2000) asserts that globalization is becoming increasingly decentered. He even suggests, rather polemically, that 'reverse colonisation' is taking place. For him,

reverse colonisation means that non-Western countries influence developments in the West. Examples abound – such as the latinising of Los Angeles, the emergence of a globally oriented high-tech sector in India, or the selling of Brazilian television programmes to Portugal. (2000: 34–5)

It has been pointed out that the so-called global neighborhood denotes not enhanced sociability but only enforced proximity (Tomlinson, 1999). That is, globalization has contributed only to the contraction of space, time and borders but not to the expansion of communal harmony among the peoples of the world. On the contrary, it has only strengthened the forces of fundamentalism which Giddens (2000: 67) describes as 'a child of globalisation'. Religious fundamentalism, whether it is of Buddhist, Christian, Hindu, Islamic or any other persuasion, is premised upon a deep desire to protect and preserve certain types of religious beliefs and practices that are perceived to be threatened by global cultural flows.

The third school of thought is represented by cultural critic Arjun Appadurai, sociologist Roland Robertson and others. Appadurai's oft-quoted statement, 'the central problem of today's global interaction is the tension between cultural homogenization and cultural heterogenization' (1996: 5) broadly summarizes the stand taken by this group. They believe that both homogenization and heterogenization are taking place at the same time, plunging the world into a creative as well as chaotic tension that results in what Robertson has called 'glocalization',

where the global is localized and the local is globalized. They see cultural transmission as a two-way process in which cultures in contact shape and reshape each other directly or indirectly. They assert that the forces of globalization and those of localization are so complex that they cannot be understood from the narrow perspective of a center-periphery dichotomy. The global is brought in conjunction with the local, and the local is modified to accommodate the global.

Any tension between the global and the local is seen to be resolved through a simple accommodation that meets the needs and wants of the receiving culture. Successful global marketing of consumer goods involves what is called micromarketing in which products are tailored to suit religious, cultural and ethnic demands. The American fast-food chain McDonald's, for instance, serves Kosher food in Israel, Halal food in Islamic countries, and vegetarian food in India. One also finds certain traditional Islamic societies embracing the consumer culture of the West without accepting its sociocultural norms. Similarly, Asian countries like Singapore claim to strike the right balance between Western developmental processes and Asian values.

In emphasizing the 'the twofold process of the particularization of the universal and the universalization of the particular' (Roland Robertson, 1992: 177–8), the members of the third group actually draw attention to the lofty ideal of human universality. They believe that the particularization of the universal 'facilitates the rise of movements concerned with the 'real meaning' of the world, movements (and individuals) searching for the meaning of the world as a whole', just as the universalization of the particular facilitates 'the search for the particular, for increasingly fine-grained modes of identity presentation' (178). Such a search for global and local identities, Robertson (2003: 251) hopes, will ultimately display 'dynamic signs of life in the great concert of this globalized planet'. Calling for the creation of effective strategies to handle the challenge of cultural globalization, he urges educators to pursue all possible alternative pedagogies which will prepare our learners to get ready to face the globalized world. There are lessons here for TESOL practitioners. Before considering them, I shall briefly discuss the role of globalization's twin: empire.

## **Empire and its contours**

According to postcolonial scholar Robert Young (2001: 25–30), the words 'empire' and 'imperialism' have 'different histories and different political resonances'. Ever since the Spanish created the first modern

European empire, 'empire' has meant taking possession of foreign countries by means of armies and occupation, administered through a combination of military and political control. 'Imperialism' has been used with two prominent meanings:

It originally constituted a description of a political system of actual conquest and occupation, but increasingly from the beginning of the twentieth century it came to be used in its Marxist sense of a general system of economic domination, with direct political domination being a possible but not necessary adjunct. (Young, 2001: 26)

Imperialism, then, is characterized by the exercise of power either through direct conquest or through political and economic influence that effectively amounts to a similar form of domination.

While the Young explanation gives the traditional view of empire and imperialism, a radically different view, one that is sensitive to the emerging process of globalization, has recently been introduced. Taking a neo-Marxist approach, Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri (2000) argue that imperialism is a thing of the past, and has been replaced by 'Empire'. They believe that the contemporary world has moved beyond the imperialism of a single, powerful nation, and that the present-day Empire does not have an identifiable location or center. In order to differentiate their view of empire from the traditional view, they use the word Empire, with a capital E.

Briefly stated, Empire is the direct consequence of the economic, cultural and communicational globalization outlined in the above section. It constitutes a new form of global system 'composed of a series of national and supranational organisms united under a single logic of rule' (Hardt and Negri, 2000: xii). Evidently, these organisms are sustained by the economic muscle, the technological prowess, the media power, and the political agenda of certain national and transnational entities that operate across the globe. Hardt and Negri observe:

The passage of Empire emerges from the twilight of modern sovereignty. In contrast to imperialism, Empire establishes no territorial center of power and does not rely on fixed boundaries or barriers. It is a decentered and deterritorializing apparatus of rule that progressively incorporates the entire global realm within its open, expanding frontiers. Empire manages hybrid identities, flexible hierarchies, and plural exchanges through modulating networks of command.

The distinct national colors of the imperialist map of the world have merged and blended in the imperial global rainbow.

(2000: xii–xiii).

While the picture of Empire that Herdt and Negri portray has some merit, their argument about the absence of identifiable location or center of Empire has been disputed (Balakrishnan, 2003). It has been pointed out that they have overlooked the possibility of the US using its economic, political and military power in order to maintain its global dominance. This possibility has now become a reality with the American unilateral action in Iraq resulting in a rude awakening to the existence of the American empire.

### The American empire

The ‘shock and awe’ of the American *blitzkrieg* witnessed in Iraq in 2003 has triggered talks of Pax Americana – a throwback to the Pax Britannica, itself an echo of the Pax Romana, suggesting that the United States is following a pattern of imperial dominance. Scholars from various fields, including political scientist Aijaz Ahmad (2004), social scientist Benjamin Barber (2004), linguist Noam Chomsky (2003), historian Niall Ferguson (2004), sociologist Michael Mann (2003) and others have offered insightful views on American imperialism. While they differ in their appraisal, they all agree on one historical fact: America has always been an empire, ‘an empire in denial’, as Ferguson (2004: 6) puts it.

American leaders have always believed, and have always acted on their belief, that ‘by virtue of its unique comprehension and manifestation of history’s purpose, America is entitled, indeed, obligated, to act as its leaders determine to be best, for the good of all, whether others understand or not’ (Chomsky, 2003: 43). Recently, the case for American empire has been forcefully articulated by conservative intellectuals such as Ferguson. He firmly believes that ‘many parts of the world would benefit from a period of American rule’ (2004: 2). Comparing ‘the two Anglophone empires’, that is, Britain in the nineteenth and America in the twentieth/twenty-first centuries, and correctly making a direct connection between globalization and empire, Ferguson argues that the American empire can achieve much more because in ‘Britain’s imperial heyday’, only a handful of corporations could really be described as multinational, but today

the world economy is dominated by such firms, a substantial number of which – ranging from Exxon Mobile to General Motors, from

McDonald's to Coca-Cola, from Microsoft to Time Warner – are American in origin and continue to have their headquarters in the United States. (Ferguson, 2004: 18)

Ferguson and other conservatives have enthusiastically welcomed the dramatic, some would say dangerous, turn to the American imperial perspective: the doctrine of preemption. The US has for a long time followed the principle of deterrence, that is, the promise of massive retaliation against nations that act against its security interests. This principle defined US security strategy for nearly half a century. But that changed. In a commencement address at the military academy at West Point on 1 June 2002, President George Bush insisted that America needed a strategy that would 'take the battle to the enemy, disrupt his plans and confront the worst threats *before they emerge*' (emphasis mine). The Bush administration later fleshed out this speech in a formal National Security Strategy document.

The first test of the doctrine of preemption, the Iraq war, has brought to light the extent of the American power as well as its limitations. Images of the awesome might of the American military that subdued Iraq were beamed through satellite TV into the living rooms of millions of people around the world. But it turned out that military superiority can only win the war; it cannot win the peace. Testifying before the US Senate, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General Richards Myers, admitted that America has been checkmated in Iraq. 'There is no way to militarily lose in Iraq', he said. 'There is also no way to militarily win in Iraq' (US Senate Committee on Appropriations, 2004). In fact, a year earlier, *The Economist* (2003), which had been steadfastly supporting the Iraqi invasion, commented:

So there it is. The American empire passes the duck test: it not only looks like a duck and walks like a duck, it also quacks like a duck. In short, the empire now proclaimed in America's name is at best a dull duck, at worst a dead duck.

The magazine concluded:

People nowadays are not willing to bow down before an emperor, even a benevolent one, in order to be democratised. They will protest, and the ensuing pain will be felt by the imperial power as well as by its subjects.

The imperial pain is not slowing down empire building, however. In fact, except among the radical liberal wing of the American intellectual

community (represented, for example, by Noam Chomsky) which is opposed to any form of American empire, the debate among a number of American politicians and academicians is not whether the US should be an imperial power, but whether it should be a 'hard' imperial power or a 'soft' imperial power. While conservative thinkers like Niall Ferguson and Paul Johnson advocate unilateralism and militarism to maintain American hegemony, moderates like Joseph Nye and Zbigniew Brzezinski call for persuasion and leadership to achieve the same goal. For Nye (2004a), soft power is the ability to get what the US wants through persuasion rather than coercion. It is exercised through political alliances, economic assistance and cultural exchanges. If soft power fails, then, hard power may be employed, with the support of like-minded allies. In a similar vein, Brzezinski (2004) calls for the establishment of 'a co-optive hegemony' in which the US provides the leadership of a global alliance of common interests aimed at maintaining American hegemony. For all the subtleties, soft power 'is merely the velvet glove concealing an iron hand' (Ferguson, 2004: 24).

Regardless of their preferred path, the proponents of hard as well as soft options share the same goal: the survival and success of the American empire. There is also something else they share: they all see the English language as an effective tool in the service of empire. For instance, Nye (2004b: 19) states that 'the most effective spokespeople' for spreading American power abroad 'are not Americans but indigenous surrogates'. He suggests English language education as one of the ways in which America can promote indigenous surrogates:

Corporations can offer technology to modernize educational systems. Universities can establish more exchange programs for students and faculty. Foundations can support institutions of American studies and programs to enhance the professionalism of journalists. Governments can support the teaching of English and finance student exchanges. (2004b: 19)

Paul Johnson is even more explicit. Writing in *Hoover Digest* (Johnson, 2003) about 'America's new empire for liberty', he enumerates several 'compelling reasons why the United States is uniquely endowed to exercise this kind of global authority'. And, his very first compelling reason is:

America has the language of the twenty-first century, English. As first the Greeks, then the Romans, discovered, possession of a common

language is the first vital and energizing step toward embracing common norms of law, behavior, and culture. A more secure world will be legislated for, policed, and adjudicated in English.

There is, of course, nothing novel about these observations. English has been used for policing and adjudicating a 'secure world' for a long time.

## English and its connections

Historically speaking, language has always been a good traveling companion of empire. The problem is that, even when the colonial masters are forced to leave the occupied land, their tongue lingers on. While this is true of all colonial languages, this is particularly true of English because of the length and breadth of British colonialism. According to some, English just happened to be in the right place at the right time (Crystal, 1997), but according to others it rode on the back of colonialism (Pennycook, 1998). *The Economist* magazine summed it all up when it asserted that English is just 'a world empire by other means' (2001). The insidious nature of English linguistic imperialism (Phillipson, 1992), the imperial character that still adheres to it (Pennycook, 1998), the indelible impact it has had on the identities of the colonized people (Krishnaswamy and Burde, 1998) and the indefatigable attempts to resist its imposition (Canagarajah, 1999) have all been well documented. There is, of course, nothing inherent in any language that makes it colonial. A language takes on colonial coloration when it is used as a tool to serve the cause of empire. The history of English language and English language teaching (ELT) shows that its colonial coloration has four interrelated dimensions – scholastic, linguistic, cultural, and economic (see Kumaravadivelu, 2003b for details). Briefly, the scholastic dimension of English relates to the ways in which Western scholars have furthered their own vested interests by disseminating Western knowledge and by denigrating local knowledge. The linguistic dimension pertains to the ways in which the knowledge and use of local language(s) were made irrelevant for learning and teaching English as an additional language. The cultural dimension integrates the teaching of English language with the teaching of Western culture with the view to developing in the L2 learners cultural empathy towards the target language community. These three dimensions are linked to a vitally important economic dimension that adds jobs and wealth to the economy of English-speaking countries through a worldwide ELT industry. Collecti-

vely, then, these four colonial dimensions have served, and continue to serve, the interests of English-speaking countries as well as native speakers and native-speaking professionals.

If the coloniality of the English language is undeniable, so is its globality. 'A language achieves a genuinely global status', observes David Crystal (1997: 2), 'when it develops a special role that is recognized in every country.' Clearly, English has achieved such a role. It has become the world's lingua franca. Because of its association with global economy, it is deemed to be 'the natural choice for progress' (Crystal, 1997: 75). It is seen as opening doors for social mobility. As Robert Phillipson (2003: 16) observes:

English has acquired a narcotic power in many parts of the world, an addiction that has long-term consequences that are far from clear. As with the drugs trade, in its legal and illegal branches, there are major commercial interests involved in the global English language industry.

English as a language of global communication also doubles as an effective tool of global propaganda in times of war and peace (see Collins and Glover, 2003; Silberstein, 2002 for details).

To sum up, the current phase of globalization, aided by transnational entities and powerful regimes, is affecting the economic and cultural lives of people all over the world. It is safe to suggest that while naked colonialism in the form of territorial occupation will not go unchallenged, empire in the form of neocolonial hegemonic control will go on unchanged. English, as a global language, will continue to serve the communicational needs as well as the propaganda purposes of both globalization and empire. The mutually advantageous liaison between the project of globalization, the power of empire, and the politics of English is complex but clear. And, all three are here to stay for a foreseeable future. It is at the busy and dangerous intersection where the three meet that TESOL professionals have found their calling.

### **TESOL and its conduits**

By virtue of operating at the intersection, TESOL professionals may be perceived, rightly or wrongly, 'as a second wave of imperial troopers', who move in to perform the unspoken role of 'facilitating the consent that hegemony requires so that the fist can be returned to the glove' (Edge, 2003: 703). That this is more than a mere perception is borne out by recent reports from Iraq and other parts of the Middle East. An

article on the role of language in Arab educational reforms that appeared in *Al Jazeera.net* (Chughtai, 2004) warns:

The concept of English as a modern Trojan horse carrying a different set of beliefs and views into hostile territory has reared its head in Iraq, where ELT intertwined with missionary work has enjoyed a post-war surge.

In response, there has emerged a group of ELT professionals in the Middle East who have formed an organization called TESOL Islamia. The chief mission of this Abu Dhabi-based professional organization is to promote ELT in ways that best serve the sociopolitical, sociocultural and socioeconomic interests of the Islamic world. According to their website ([www.tesolislamia.org](http://www.tesolislamia.org)), one of their goals is 'promoting and safeguarding Islamic values in the teaching of English as a second or foreign language in the Muslim World'. To achieve their goals, they wish to take

a critical stance towards 'mainstream' TESOL activity particularly in the area of language policy, curriculum design, materials development, language testing, teaching methodology, program evaluation, and second language research.

Even a cursory reading of files in their 'Discussion Forum' reveals that they are all seized upon the impact of the politics of globalization, empire and TESOL. The periphery has declared its intentions to distance itself from the center. Whether it will be able to convert its admirable intentions into actionable plans remains to be seen.

There are signs that a segment of the center itself has started taking a self-critical stance towards mainstream TESOL activity (see Ricento, 2000; Block and Cameron, 2002; and Tollefson, 2002). Several contributors to the Block and Cameron volume on *Globalization and Language Teaching* make useful suggestions to deal with the theoretical and pedagogic implications of globalization. One of its editors, Deborah Cameron, herself warns against using globalization as a pretext to make language no more than

a vehicle for the affirmation of similar values and beliefs, and for the enactment by speakers of similar social identities and roles. Language becomes a global product available in different local flavours.

(Cameron, 2002: 69–70)

Sadly, presenting a global product in different local flavors is precisely what seems to be happening. A striking example comes from John Gray who gives us a glimpse of the ways that the lucrative ELT textbook industry can present its centrally controlled, global product with various local emphases. He discusses two possible approaches to producing global coursebooks for local markets. One approach, meant for large international markets, is for the textbook industry

to produce materials which are tailor-made and take into consideration the number of hours students are expected to devote to English, the methodologies to be used, and the themes which have to be addressed. (Gray, 2002: 165)

The second, meant for smaller international markets, involves the production of a core text but with 'the variety of add-ons' to meet the demand for a local fit. He advises the global textbook industry to follow 'editionizing', a process by which national newspapers customize for local readership. Interestingly, this is very similar to the process of 'micromarketing' used by transnational corporations to sell global products in local markets. With editionizing, Gray reckons 'globalization has the potential to increase rather than threaten diversity' (165). That may be true in terms of diversity of topics and themes. But, what is being overlooked here is that it also has the potential to increase the center's firm grip over textbook authorship and production, and to threaten any possible devolution of power and authority to the periphery ELT community. Diversity without devolution can be dubious.

One should also be aware (beware?) of the use of postmodern and postcolonial vocabulary that masks the attempts to preserve the status quo. Nothing brings out this concern more than a recent proposal by Sue Wright (2004) who concludes that the only solution to the language problem faced by the globalized world is for the people all over the world to become bilingual. She recommends that people should learn 'the group language' which is, in most cases, their native language, and 'the language of wider diffusion', which is, of course, English. She asserts:

The group language provides for socialisation, rootedness, continuity and identity and the language of wider diffusion allows access to higher education, international networks, to information in the international arena, to social and geographical mobility.

(Wright, 2004: 250)

What she does not pursue is the distinct possibility that, for all practical purposes, her brand of bilingualism for the world would mean only one thing: native speakers of English will have the luxury of remaining monolingual while all others will have to learn their language.

The issue is not whether non-English speakers should learn English or not. The globality of the language, the connectedness of world economy, and the power of the Anglophone empire will all ensure that English will continue to reign supreme. The issue, in my view, is one of difficulty and discrimination encountered by non-native speakers of English as well as the power and privilege enjoyed by native speakers of English. The dominance of the English-speaking monolingual also enshrines the issue raised by Robert Phillipson (2003), who observes in the context of language policy in the European Union, that what is

at stake here is whether it is reasonable to expect that someone speaking a foreign language should use the language in exactly the same way as a native speaker. Anyone who functions regularly in a foreign language knows how extremely challenging it is to express oneself in the same degree of complexity, persuasiveness, and correctness as in one's mother tongue. (140)

Wondering whether monolinguals in Britain and the United States even see the problem where others are obliged to function in English, he states:

Those of us who have gone through the demanding process of learning a second language well, and use one regularly, are likely to be in a better position to understand the predicament of users of English or French as a foreign language. (Phillipson, 2003: 141)

In spite of the indisputable inequities, Wright goes on to predict an egalitarian outcome:

There may be all the advantages that accrue to those who possess the language of power and there may be a hierarchy that puts non-native speakers in a weaker position, but, as the language is taken up in more and more sites, the advantages are spread more widely. (2004: 250)

Coming as it does in the penultimate page of the book, this unexplained and unsubstantiated claim leaves it to the reader to figure out how and

when the advantages will spread. Or, whose advantage will spread. What is also left to the reader to wonder is the debilitating nature of the native and non-native bifurcation among English-language educators (see Braine, 1999), and the long and lingering history of the scholastic, linguistic, cultural and economic dimensions of the coloniality of the English language mentioned earlier (see Kumaravadivelu, 2003b). As Walter Mignolo (1998) succinctly puts it:

The question is not so much the number of speakers as it is the hegemonic power of colonial languages in the domain of knowledge, intellectual production, and cultures of scholarship. (41)

## Relocating TESOL

The conflicts and consequences wrought by the dangerous liaison between globalization, empire and English demand that we go beyond the superficial and the surreptitious. What is needed is transformative restructuring of the TESOL professional activity. Focusing on broader aims and strategies rather than specific objectives and tactics, I contend that any transformative restructuring would require significant shifts in our philosophical, pedagogical and attitudinal investment.

### Philosophical investment

Any serious attempt by the TESOL profession to meet the challenges of globalization and empire has to begin with the philosophical underpinnings of its mission and goals. One of its chief goals is to help its members 'foster effective communication in diverse settings while respecting individuals' language rights' (cited in the front pages of *TESOL Quarterly*). Fostering effective communication in diverse settings is more than a matter of respecting individuals' language rights. As Hardt and Negri (2000) point out in the context of Empire:

If communication has increasingly become the fabric of production, and if linguistic cooperation has increasingly become the structure of productive corporeality, then the control over linguistic sense and meaning and the networks of communication becomes an ever more central issue for political struggle. (404)

We need to recognize that in a globalized and globalizing world, language rights cannot be separated from social, political and cultural rights.

Connecting the linguistic with the social, political and cultural is what seems to be the intention of one of the TESOL caucuses, TESOLers for Social Responsibility. Its goal, according to its website ([www2.tesol.org/mbr/caucuses/tsr/htm](http://www2.tesol.org/mbr/caucuses/tsr/htm)), is to integrate language teaching with social responsibility, world citizenship, and an awareness of global issues, such as peace, human rights, and the environment. It is, however, interesting to note that the word '*political*' does not appear even once in the caucus's brief statement of purpose or in its lengthy statement about teaching, research, networking, advocacy and professional development. I wonder how the caucus can even begin to address its stated goals without considering the politics of globalization, empire and English.

If we consider the politics of globalization, empire and English seriously, then we understand its close connection to the politics of identity. Recognizing the importance of individual identity in the era of globalization, the United Nations has chosen 'cultural liberty in today's diverse world' as the thematic focus for its latest Human Development Report (UNDP, 2004). According to the report:

Cultural liberty is a vital part of human development because being able to choose one's identity – who one is – without losing the respect of others or being excluded from other choices is important in leading a full life. (1)

Linking cultural liberty to language rights and human development, the report argues that there is

no more powerful means of 'encouraging' individuals to assimilate to a dominant culture than having the economic, social and political returns stacked against their mother tongue. Such assimilation is not freely chosen if the choice is between one's mother tongue and one's future. (33)

There are those who believe, not without justification, that the economic, social and political returns are stacked in favor of English and against their mother tongue, both at international (Phillipson, 2003) and, in certain cases, at intranational (Ramanathan, 2004) levels. Some others also see English as a Trojan Horse, a hidden threat to one's cultural liberty. In such an atmosphere, the TESOL profession ought to show its sensitivity and sincerity by making a good faith attempt to create, as the UN report suggests, 'an environment in which multiple identities flourish' (42).

One of the avenues open for the TESOL profession to create an environment in which multiple identities flourish is to move away from the prevailing notion of English as a cultural carrier to English as a communicational tool. Varieties of English 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 norms and networks that are typically local. Creative writers such as Salmon Rushdie, Chinua Achebe and others have shown how the Western language can be used for communicating sociocultural nuances that are completely alien to Western culture. Cultural critics such as Frederic Jameson (1998: 59) are never tired of pointing out that 'for most people in the world English itself is not exactly a culture language: it is the lingua franca of money and power, which you have to learn to use for practical but scarcely for aesthetic purposes'. Common people who speak English as an additional language use it to meet their individual and institutional needs, and, for most part, keep it separate from their cultural beliefs and practices (Krishnaswamy and Burde, 1998). For them, English is a language of communicational necessity, not of cultural identity.

While the world at large seems to be treating English as a vehicle for global communication, a sizable segment of the TESOL profession continues to be informed by an anachronistic anthropological belief in the inextricability of the language-culture connection. TESOL textbooks continue to use the English language as a cultural carrier. There are instances where academic papers presented at professional conferences propagate an ethnocentric view of culture learning and culture teaching (Kumaravadivelu, 2002). Even textbooks on intercultural communication, with very few exceptions, still treat Western cultural practices as the communicational norm for intercultural communication across the globe. As Cameron (2002) correctly points out, we

know of no case in which the communicative norms of a non-Western, or indeed non-Anglophone society have been exported by expert consultants. Finns do not run workshops for British businesses on the virtues of talking less; Japanese are not invited to instruct Americans in speaking indirectly. (70)

Clearly, the TESOL profession cannot remain oblivious to the fact that globalization has resulted in greater contacts between people of different cultures, leading to a better awareness of each other's values and visions, and to a firmer resolve to preserve and protect one's cultural

liberty. Besides, the profession can only gain by recognizing, and by seriously acting on the recognition, that

what the current stage of globalization is enacting is (unconsciously) the uncoupling of the 'natural' link between languages and nations. Thus, it is creating the condition for and enacting the relocation of languages and the fracture of cultures. (Mignolo, 1998: 42)

What such relocation entails is that language teachers cannot afford to ignore the global reality that influences identity formation in the classroom, nor can they afford to separate the linguistic needs of learners from their sociocultural needs. Consequently, 'language teachers cannot hope to fully satisfy their pedagogic obligations without at the same time satisfying their social obligations' (Kumaravadivelu, 2001: 544).

### **Pedagogic investment**

Satisfying pedagogic obligations itself warrants a different kind of pedagogic investment in which the center-periphery relationship is reviewed and reconceptualized. Such an attempt would necessarily involve three major areas of TESOL activity: instructional materials, teaching methods and teacher education. As mentioned earlier, textbook preparation and production remain a centrally controlled, globally targeted activity with very little role for local ELT professionals. To be relevant, textbooks should reflect the experiences teachers and students bring to the classroom, experiences that are shaped by the social, economic and political environment in which they operate. Instead of using the process of globalization merely to re-center the textbook industry, as is happening now, what needs to be done is to de-center it so that the periphery ELT community which is knowledgeable about local needs, wants and situations can legitimately enjoy a meaningful sense of authorial ownership and professional contribution.

Similarly, any serious commitment to relocate TESOL methods would demand a move beyond the centralized concept of method and towards the localized concept of postmethod. The construction of method is basically a top-down exercise that adheres to idealized concepts geared towards idealized contexts. Since the audiolingualism of the 1940s, TESOL has seen one method after another roll out of Western universities and through Western publishing houses to spread out all over the world. On each occasion, teachers in other countries and other cultures have been assured that this one is the correct one, and that their role is to adapt it to their learners, or their learners to it.

The concept of postmethod seeks to help the periphery ELT community to activate its latent agency. It is governed by the parameters of particularity, practicality and possibility (see Kumaravadivelu, 2003a). The parameter of particularity seeks to facilitate the advancement of a context-sensitive, location-specific pedagogy that is based on a true understanding of local linguistic, sociocultural and political particularities. The parameter of practicality seeks to rupture the reified role relationship between theorizers and practitioners by enabling and encouraging teachers to theorize from their practice and practice what they theorize. The parameter of possibility seeks to tap the sociopolitical consciousness that students bring with them to the classroom so that it can function as a catalyst for a continual quest for identity formation and social transformation.

Postmethod pedagogy provides one possible way to be responsive to the lived experiences of learners and teachers, and to the local exigencies of learning and teaching. It also

opens up new opportunities for the expertise of language teachers in periphery contexts to be recognized and valued (and) makes it more feasible for teachers to acknowledge and work with the diversity of the learners in their classrooms, guided by local assessments of students' strategies for learning rather than by global directives from remote authorities. (Block and Cameron, 2002: 10)

A context-sensitive postmethod pedagogy that encompasses location-specific teaching strategies and instructional materials cannot evolve in a pedagogic vacuum. It requires the development of teachers who are autonomous decision makers. TESOL teacher education programs, therefore, have to move away from the prevailing transmission model which is designed to pass on a body of received wisdom from the teacher educator to the prospective teacher, and move towards a transformational model which helps them develop the knowledge, skill, attitude and autonomy necessary to construct their own theory of practice. The objective is to produce self-directing and self-determining teachers capable of reflecting upon, and shaping, their own pedagogic experiences, and eventually transforming such experiences.

### **Attitudinal investment**

The philosophical and pedagogical investments deemed to be necessary to restructure TESOL activity cannot be expected to yield rich dividends unless they are buttressed by attitudinal changes. There is no gainsaying

the fact that, at the broadest level, the TESOL profession is divided on the accent line – those who speak English natively and those who do not. One of the ways in which this division manifests itself is through the profession's attitude towards marginality. Historically, there has been a tendency to valorize the native Self and marginalize the non-native Other. While there indeed are noteworthy exceptions on both sides of the accent line, the general attitude that prevails today can be characterized by the process of marginalization and the practice of self-marginalization (see Kumaravadivelu, 2003b, for details).

The process of marginalization pertains to the ways in which the coloniality of the English language with its scholastic, linguistic, economic and cultural dimensions is exploited to maintain the authority of the center over the periphery. It seeks to preserve the dominance of interested Western knowledge over subjugated local knowledge by steadfastly adhering to some of the flawed practices, such as proclaiming the superiority of native-speaking professionals over non-native ones, discouraging the use of mother tongue in TESOL education, treating monolingual speakers and societies as norms for forming hypotheses about bilingual development, and delinking the investigative processes of learning and teaching from sociolinguistic contexts and historical realities of language use.

The practice of self-marginalization refers to the ways in which the periphery surrenders its voice and vision to the center. That is, members of the dominated group, knowingly or unknowingly, legitimize the characteristics of inferiority attributed to them by the dominating group. The TESOL profession is replete with instances where, in certain periphery communities, program administrators 'require' or at least 'prefer' native speakers to carry out teaching and consultancy, and teachers and teacher educators look up to native speakers for inspiration thinking that they have ready-made answers to all the recurrent problems of classroom teaching (Nayar, 2002). By their uncritical acceptance of the native speaker dominance, non-native professionals legitimize their own marginalization. Both the process of marginalization and the practice of self-marginalization bring to the fore the coloniality, rather than the globality, of the English language. They cast a long, hegemonic shadow over the activity of TESOL.

## **In closing**

In this chapter, I have attempted to highlight the dangerous liaison that exists between the forces of globalization, empire and TESOL. I have

argued that, whether they know it or not and whether they like it or not, most TESOL professionals end up serving the profit motives of global corporations and the political motives of imperial powers. I have also argued that only fundamental restructuring, not superficial appropriation, can help us begin to combat the consequences of the liaison. Finally, I have called for philosophical, pedagogical and attitudinal investments that are absolutely essential for any meaningful relocation of the TESOL activity. TESOL cannot remain insulated and isolated from the growing awareness across the world of the impact of globalization and empire.

I recognize that transformative restructuring is a challenge that involves multiple tasks by multiple players. The most intractable challenge of all is to seek abdication of authority on the part of center professionals, and acceleration of agency on the part of periphery communities. Neither of them is easy to accomplish because each of them demands a new mindset that is yet to crystallize. While I have no illusions about the enormity of the task and the power of the historical, political and economic forces arraigned against it, I also believe that we should not allow the challenges to paralyze us from initiating appropriate action, if only because the status quo is neither desirable nor defensible.

In this context, a word of wisdom from postcolonial critic Gayatri Spivak is worth considering. Pointing out that the discipline of Comparative Literature has been, not unlike TESOL, subject to colonial and neocolonial projects, and stressing the need to free it from the imperial shackles, she observes:

We cannot not try to open up, from the inside, the colonialism of European national language-based Comparative Literature and the Cold War format of Area Studies, and infect history and anthropology with the 'other' as producer of knowledge. From the inside, acknowledging complicity. No accusations. No excuses. Rather, learning the protocol of those disciplines, turning them around, laboriously, not only by building institutional bridges but also by persistent curricular interventions. The most difficult thing here is to resist mere appropriation by the dominant.

(Spivak, 2003: 10–11)

I believe Spivak's prescription for the practitioners of Comparative Literature is a good prescription for the practitioners of TESOL as well.

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