

Language Curriculum Planning for the Third Millennium: A Future Perspective

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Abstract

The evolution of language knowledge continues, as does the inquisitive nature of human beings. But the explosive growth of knowledge in the third millennium seems to herald a new era in language teaching. Deepened insights into philosophy have betrayed the poverty of structuralism to account for language learning. The shift from structuralism to poststructuralism has brought about inevitable, though controversial, trends, e.g., the World Englishes and standards movements. Media proliferation of the “mass-age” (McLuhan & Fiore, 2001) of the globalized era has led to a context where appealing terms such as computer-assisted and Internet-assisted language teaching might get blurred sooner in view of more sophisticated advances. Could the future witness virtual reality or expert systems-based language teaching? Language curriculum development in the third millennium should accommodate a recognition of the interdisciplinary knowledge and dynamicity and multimodality of concepts. Starting with the educational philosophy and moving on to related topics, this paper aims at envisaging the putative future of language curriculum development. Each topic in this article has been investigated followed by its effects on its succeeding topic attempting to provide a coherent framework. Globalization has been introduced as the lost piece of puzzle linking topics coherently.

Keywords: culture, glocalization, identity, language curriculum development, standards movement, third millennium, World Englishes

1. Introduction

Globalization and advancements in technology in the third millennium have resulted in a science boom which has not left language curriculum development intact. Coupled with deeper insights into language, globalization has made the new era ripe for the introduction of more efficient curricular approaches. According to Logan (1997, August), each time there is an information overload and increased complexity, the chaos which follows would lead to the emergence of a new level of order or a new language. The third millennium, with its own information overload, has its own language which necessitates its own curriculum planning.

The third millennium era has witnessed an expansion of specialization which, in turn, has led to discipline proliferation. Ironically, the same era has brought about a growing understanding of the inadequacy of the findings of every discipline claiming to be standing on its own like an isolated island providing omniscient knowledge. The future welcomes an increasing ramification of knowledge into more and more interdependent and overlapping branches. The imposed boundaries of knowledge, once posited for better apprehension of the world, has had the negative repercussion of forgetting their very hypothetical nature. The new era, consequently, favors a specific and new generation of field-independent illuminati who can see the tree without losing sight of the totality of jungle (Note 1). Starting with new insights into educational philosophy, language and related areas and then entwining them, this paper attempts to create a “pattern which connects” (Kumaravadivelu, 2006, p. xiii) different domains with the aim of envisaging the putative future perspective of language curriculum development.

2. Philosophical Underpinning in the Third Millennium

Although no sole fixed philosophical foundation can be attributed to the third millennium, two general

philosophical trends can be observed: first, the interdisciplinary nature of knowledge which is in line with the anti-reductionist and anti-simplistic tenets of postmodernism and second Norton & Toohey's (2002) realization of a shift of philosophy from structuralists' realization of language community as homogeneous and consensual to poststructuralists' realization of it as heterogeneous with "conflicting claims to truth and power" (p. 117).

This shift has led to the realization that meaning is not limited to the signs of language as held by Saussure, the prominent figure of structuralism. Rather, the same words "can have different meanings for different people within the same linguistic community" (p. 116). Therefore, to prominent poststructuralists, such as Bakhtin, meaning is constructed in interaction. Moreover, this view of heterogeneity will point to the inseparability of language from power relations, which is the main concern of Bourdieu, another prominent figure of poststructuralism. Such understandings have led to a shift from conceptualizations of competence (Chomsky, 1965) to communicative competence (Hymes, 1972), interactional competence (Kramsch, 1986) and translingual/transcultural competence (New London Group, 1996), which, in turn, have disillusioned the definition of language and, as such, have important consequences for curriculum planning.

3. New Insights into Language and Materials Development

3.1 Identity

The recognition of the heterogeneous nature of language community has led to the prominence of the notion of identity in language teaching. Language is no longer perceived to be a collection of structures; rather it encompasses identity, culture, and politics. This understanding can also be detected in the evolution of language standards by the US foreign testing services from those espousing non-performance tests to the publication of *Standards for Foreign Language Learning: Preparing for the 21st Century*, where the scope of language standards goes beyond language to include communication, cultures, and multilingual communities (Hudson, 2012).

Kumaravadivelu's (2006) third vantage point towards language, i.e., "language as ideology" (the first and the second being "language as system" and "language as discourse", respectively) echoes the same realization. Fostering such abilities in Kumaravadivelu's (2003) views necessitates "interaction as an ideational activity" which focuses on ideological content, and it is only this dimension which empowers learners to construct their individual identity. To Kumaravadivelu (2006), while the first type of interaction results in better conversational understanding and the second in superior social communication, it is only the third which leads to greater sociopolitical consciousness. Thus holding modern views on language, it is no longer sufficient to provide learners only with the opportunity to fix communication failures through the first type of interaction or to promote personal relationships through the second type. Rather learners must also be provided with necessary tools for identity formation and social transformation. The argument leads to the claim that materials development in the third millennium should include activities to help learners with identity formation.

Investigating the identity of L2 learners is rather a recent interest in L2 acquisition research (McKay, 2011). There is a close affinity between identity and language learning. But probing into such a relationship per se is not of paramount importance; rather it is a shift from structuralists' conceptualizations of identity, being more concerned with individual identity, to those espoused by poststructuralists', being more concerned with social identity, which weighs. In such a shift we observe the evolution of insights into identity from those offered by structuralists as static, trait, and simple to those by poststructuralists as "as multiple, a site of struggle, and subject to change" (Norton, 1995, p. 9). Holding such a view, Norton has argued that the structuralists' conceptualizations of motivation as a unitary, fixed and ahistorical personality trait can no longer account for language learning by itself. Rather this process can be accounted for by what she calls "investment". This notion "conceives of the language learner, not as ahistorical and unidimensional, but as having a complex social history and multiple desires" (p. 9).

The other deepened insight into the notion of identity is the notion of "imagined communities" (Anderson, 1983), the application of which to the field of SLA brought about the notion of "imagined identities" (Norton, 2001). Anderson (1983, p. 6) has defined nation as "an *imagined* [emphasis added] political community" because while it is impossible for its members to know, meet, or hear of all their fellow-members, the image of their communication exists in their mind. According to Norton (2001), the imagined communities may have a reality as strong as those in learners' real life, and their impact on learners' investment might be even stronger. Therefore, teachers' awareness of learners' imagined communities and imagined identities could enhance teacher's ability to develop activities in which learners can invest. The implication of such insights for curriculum development is raising the awareness of the whole stakeholders of the importance of imagined identities and incorporating activities and materials into curriculum which helps learners develop empowered

imagined identities.

3.2 World Englishes (WEs)

It can be claimed that parallel with deepened insights into the relationship between identity and language, the history of language teaching has moved away from approaches emphasizing the apparently facilitating effects of learners losing their identity (e.g., Acculturation Model) to those empowering learners to maintain their identity (e.g., WEs). Such a transition, although not widely accepted (e.g., Honey, 1997; Quirk, 1990), is inevitable in view of globalization and the expansion of English use worldwide. Although the opponents of WEs advocate teaching Standard English rather than WEs' varieties, so far they have failed to provide a unanimous definition for Standard English. Nevertheless, both camps share in common an adherence to the idea that there are *several* valid varieties of language. That is, even to the proponents of Standard English there is no one sole Standard version of English because, otherwise, they will face the enigma of which variety should be chosen as the standard version. For instance Quirk (1985), an out-standing advocate of standard English, holds that recent approaches point to the existence of multiple and variable standard Englishes: "different standards for different occasions for different people—and each as 'correct' as any other" (pp. 2-3). Nevertheless, such attempts to solve the problem seems to be abortive since all they have done is replacing the problem of choosing *which variety* by the problem of choosing *which varieties* should be considered as standard.

WEs is also inevitable in view of critical pedagogy because while advocating one or more Standard English will bring about the colonization of English and inequity of power, WEs tries to decolonize it. In the same vein and following identity approaches to language teaching, the proponents of WEs believe that language use today is often not only English but a mixture of a variety of languages that underline the speaker's identity and proficiency (McKay, 2011). They further claim that we are now faced with the death of a standard version of English since "it is neither possible nor desirable to impose any rigid linguistic norm on the entire world" (Kachru, 2011, p. 163). Consequently, there is no safeguard against the impact of such a movement on language materials. Acknowledging such an issue, Kachru has referred to a paradigm shift in teaching English which WEs signals to other varieties. The inevitable movement of WEs, therefore, demands utilizing other varieties in curriculum to enhance identity formation.

3.3 Culture

Closely related to the interdisciplinary nature of knowledge in the third millennium and identity approaches is the proposal of interdisciplinary curricula by the MLA Report (MLA Ad Hoc Committee on Foreign Languages, 2007). According to this report, "a curriculum should consist of a series of complementary or linked courses that holistically incorporate content and cross-cultural reflection at every level" (p. 5).

Following such an idea, the committee proposed "translingual and transcultural competence" as the desired goal of foreign language majors at U.S. colleges and universities. Consequently, instead of setting the goals of language teaching on the inaccessible objective of replicating "the competence of an educated native speaker... The idea of translingual and transcultural competence, in contrast, places value on the ability to operate between languages" (pp. 3-4), that is, training educated multilingual speakers "who can draw profit from shuttling from one to the other of their languages" (Kramsch, 2012, p. 17). This idea is in line with Cook's (2003) notion of multi-competence and as such welcomes utilizing learners' L1 and nonnative language teachers in curriculum which does corresponds to the whole trend of identity approaches and WEs.

3.4 Pedagogy of Multiliteracies

Parallel with new insights into language, insights into literacy have also undergone fairly similar changes. One such change is the recognition of the dynamicity of both language and literacy. According to Logan (2004, p. 1), language is conceived as "a dynamic living organism which is constantly growing and evolving". In the same vein, Neilson (1989) proposed that the development of literacy is "a dynamic and ongoing process of perpetual transformation" (p. 5). Consequently, changes brought about by globalization and human advancements have also made the dynamic nature of language and literacy amenable to change and ramification.

The other similar change is an apprehension of multidimensionality of both language and literacy to embody many aspects such as culture. This change is in accord with the philosophical move from structuralism to post-structuralism; from Saussurian obsession with competence to Bakhtinian concern about performance. By negating language as a set of idealized forms independent of its speakers and rather as the joint product of speakers struggling to create meaning in social interactions (Maybin, 2001), Bakhtin, like many his predecessors such as Vygotsky, freed the definition of language from linguistic confinements to include many other aspects, including the sociological concept of culture. Holding such a view, language and literacy devoid of culture are meaningless.

Therefore, today literacy like language is conceived to be “a variable collection of dynamic cultural processes” (Kern, 2002). This observation has resulted in the dynamic notion of “multiliteracies” replacing the old static notion of “literacy”. Therefore, “pedagogy of multiliteracies” (New London Group, 1996) was developed to cater for this multidimensionality.

Following the integrated framework of the MLA Report (2007), it can be inferred that language curricula should integrate insights from literacy. Acknowledging this issue, Kern (2000, 2002) holds that literacy can provide a framework and a goal for language teaching and fill its pedagogical gaps. Hence, “pedagogy of multiliteracies” can be utilized to fill the gaps of the higher education addressed by MLA Report (2007) (Willis & Paesani, 2010). The third millennium curricula can benefit from such a pedagogy through the development of language and literacy simultaneously.

According to New London Group (1996), a pedagogy of multiliteracies would involve a range of pedagogical moves, including the four curricular components of

Situated Practice, which draws on the experience of meaning-making in lifeworlds, the public realm, and workplaces; Overt Instruction, through which students develop an explicit metalanguage of Design; Critical Framing, which interprets the social context and purpose of Design of meaning; and Transformed Practice, in which students, as meaning-makers, become Designers of social futures. (p. 65)

3.5 Standards Movement

The literature abounds with language teaching movements which, although controversial, are inevitable. The standards movement, the same as the WEs movement, is so powerful that cannot be deterred. This movement “seeks to ensure educational accountability by developing national standards for achievement in the different areas of the curriculum” (Richards & Schmidt, 2010, p. 554). In fact, “standards have become a part of the educational landscape and are not likely to soon diminish their hold” (Hudson, 2012, p. 493). Nevertheless, standards play a very important role in education and evaluation, while there is neither a universally agreed meaning nor an objective definition of them (Davies, 2008). Yet it seems that there is an agreement on their purpose: they “serve to outline expectations and to encourage consistency” (Hudson, 2012, p. 479). Accordingly, Hudson asserted that they do so by setting out clear content, goals, conditions, and expected outcomes of language learners for all potential stakeholders. Hence, they result in consistency and accountability, objectivity of assessment, efficacy of instruction, and lucidity in organizing instruction. These issues point to the efficacy of implementing standards in curriculum development.

The other advantage of standards is observed in standard-based syllabi. Being categorized as backward designs, such syllabi are more amenable to a needs-based course design (Richards, 2013). Based on whether the starting point in curriculum development is input (syllabus), process (methodology), or output (learning outcomes), Richards has classified the curriculum approaches into the three categories of forward, central, and backward design. Richards believes that in backward designs needs analysis is the starting point in curriculum development. In his view, while most forward and central designs are respectively language-centered and activity-based, backward design is needs-based. This argument is plausible since data from needs analysis can be transformed into behavioral objectives, competencies, or standards, which can be used as the syllabus outline for content selection and design. In fact, it can be claimed that while most syllabi are intuitively needs-based, backward designs—by providing behavioral objectives, competencies, or standards—are more objectively needs-based. According to Wiggins & McTighe (2005), from whom Richards (2013) has borrowed the term backward design, “backward design approach to planning... helps us meet standards without sacrificing goals related to [learner] understanding” (p. 5). To Wiggins & McTighe (2005), the best curricula are those which are written based on the desired learning and what learners can do with this knowledge, not merely based on what will be covered. In fact, they espouse the performance-based movement, the outcome of which, according to Nunan (2007), is objectives movement, competency-based education movement, and standards movement.

Pointing to the importance of learning outcomes, Richards (2013) has referred to a trend in the twentieth century: a movement away from mastery-oriented approaches focusing on accuracy to activity-oriented approaches focusing on the ability to use language communicatively. That is, a movement away from knowledge-based output to performance-based output. This movement is in line with the philosophy of accountability which, according to Moore (2001), is most strident in the field of education. Accountability requires standards (Davies, 2008) and needs analysis is an aspect of this philosophy (Stufflebeam, McCormick, Brinkerhoff, & Nelson, 1985). Consequently, the ground is ready for more focus on standards in curriculum development.

Of course, there are many challenges confronting such a flux, e.g., the teachers’ distrust brought about by mandatory standards which might lead to stifling teachers’ creativity, standards’ atheoretical nature which

endangers construct validity (Hudson, 2012), and standards' subjectivity which results in "enforced homogenization" among stakeholders (Davies, 2008, p. 485). Such problems, as Hudson (2012) further asserts, are alleviated by recent attempts towards the operationalization of standards made by the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) established by Council of Europe (2001).

Nevertheless, the infatuation with standards should not lead us to what Hudson has called "proliferation of standards" (p. 492) or what Popham (2001) has referred to as multiplicity of benchmarks or performance indicators. At the same time, such challenges should not obviate the need for standards because aside from their merits, the vital issue of grading materials into such descriptors as elementary, intermediate, etc. is impossible without well-articulated standards (Hudson, 2012).

3.6 Neurolinguistics

With the advancement in technology and medicine, Applied Linguistics, once fairly dependent on behavioral data can now benefit from more reliable data through neuroimaging techniques and other forms of neurological evidence due to the probably misleading nature of behavioral data. For example, Smith (2010) has referred to the misleading results of behavioral data, such as investigating overt uptake as an indicator of the positive effect of recasts on acquisition which would be an underestimation of the results in an eye-tracker study. In fact, neuroimaging techniques complement behavioral methods of investigating L2 learning mechanisms, especially when differences are not noticeable in behavioral data but are in neuroimaging data (Li & Tokowicz, 2013). For example, fMRI (functional magnetic resonance imaging) can be used to provide a great deal of information about different areas of the brain activated in different tasks (Randall, 2007).

3.6.1 fMRI

fMRI holds great promises for syllabus design. According to Carpenter (2013), "in SLA, fMRI research is typically used to identify brain regions that become active in response to linguistic tasks" (p. 268). Therefore, determining task difficulty, as one of the sophisticated issues in materials development, can be pursued more objectively. Moreover, Pawlak (2007) remarks the efficacy of focus on form can be detected through electroencephalography and fMRI, as they can help exploring interfaces between implicit and explicit knowledge and the effect of different teaching techniques. According to Huettel, Song, & McCarthy (2008), fMRI is suitable for many experimental paradigms since it is noninvasive, require little training to work with, and accompany easy interpretation programs. At the same time, its noisy and claustrophobic nature and its deprivation of body language has rendered its data sometimes unrealistic. Yet, these problems have been alleviated in the new generations of fMRI scanners.

3.7 Media

Logan's (2004, p. 1) metaphor of language as "a dynamic living organism" embodies an ongoing essence of change. The chaos brought about by information overload and complexity of each era would result in the emergence of a new language (Logan, 1997). Therefore, the present information overload which has resulted in the emergence of computers and the Internet as the two most recent languages would inevitably, in turn, result in the development of even newer languages such as virtual reality and expert systems (Logan, 1997).

Prior to the invention of computers and the Internet such ideas as computer-assisted materials or Internet-based materials were far-fetched, but now such programs as WebQuests, or computer-aided argument mapping are available. Consequently, it can be claimed that future might face virtual reality-based or expert systems-based language materials. Also with the advent of web 2.0 (O'Reilly, 2007) and live materials supplanting the so-called authentic materials (Alm, 2006) new insights for materials development will open up. The terms Web 1.0, and Web 2.0, popularized by O'Reilly in 2004 (O'Reilly, 2007), refer to the first and second generations of the Web, respectively. In fact, the evolution of the Web has witnessed a shift from users as viewers and downloaders in the static Web 1.0 to users as uploaders and controllers in dynamic and social Web 2.0 (Haughan, 2015). Alm (2006) has summarized the significant changes in this evolution as follows:

Table 1. Overview of some significant changes

Web 1.0	Web 2.0
authentic materials	live materials
text, pictures, audio, video	RSS, Flickr, last.fm, podcast, videocast
Webpages	blogs, wikis
discussion forum	blogs
separate applications for email, chat, photos, music, video etc.	social networking (e.g., MySpace)

Adopted from Alm (2006, p. 30).

3.8 Authenticity

Recent insights into authenticity point to its relative nature and the fact that it is not global and absolute (Taylor, 1994). Following Widdowson (1979) who theorizes authenticity not to reside in a text but in learners'/readers' responses, and Breen's (1985) distinctions of four types of authenticity (i.e., authenticity of texts, learners' interpretation, tasks, and social situation of the classroom), it can be inferred what is authentic to one group of learners in one context/culture might not necessarily be so to another context/culture. The same idea is conveyed by Widdowson's (1984) distinction between genuineness and authenticity—the former being a property of the text as a product and the latter a property of the discourse as a process. Also his conceptualization of comprehension—as an issue which should not be directed at an analysis of the text product but as developing the discourse process—implies the same idea. Therefore, the characteristics of learners and their social context are very important in determining authenticity. Such issues have important implications for materials developments in that they warn us against the naïve selection of a seemingly called authentic text whose authenticity has been narrow-mindedly determined through textual characteristics irrespective of its intended audience.

4. Putting Pieces Together: Towards Glocalization

We are living “in an era of increased globalization” (Norton & Toohey, 2011, p. 412); nevertheless, globalization has not yet *flattened* the world as perceived by Friedman (2005). The inequity of power exists even in the “global village” (McLuhan, 1962). Therefore, it seems logical to view globalization through McKay's (2011) eyes, who views it “as a reformulation of social space in which the global and *local* [emphasis added] are constantly interacting with one another; ... [where] *neither one* [emphasis added] should be afforded a dominant position” (p. 122). The notion of glocalization is the offspring of such an adherence to the inevitability of eliminating local powers in a globalized world. Glocalization, according to Robertson (1997) “means the simultaneity—the co-presence—of both universalizing and particularizing tendencies” (p. 221).

Different snapshots of the third millennium as suggested in this paper, do not give us a holistic picture. The question raised is: is there a linking thread which by connecting these different curricular issues can provide us with a practical key to the whole picture? It can be claimed that the lost piece of puzzle which links poststructuralists' heterogeneous conceptualization of language community, identity, and the WEs movement, translingual-transcultural competence, pedagogy of multiliteracies, and authenticity is glocalization.

First of all, glocalization can mediate between the forceful top-down homogenizing pedagogy espoused by globalization and the inevitable bottom-up heterogenizing communities postulated by poststructuralists. It can also signify modern perspectives on authenticity and comprehension.

The importance of the mediation of glocalization is not limited to language pedagogy; rather it can also be observed in the evolution of the Web 1.0 to Web 2.0. This shift is important in that while the former has created the infrastructure for glocalized networks, the latter can provide the means for creating a glocalized society (Boyd, 2005). In fact, this evolution can point to a shift from a top-down to a bottom-up environment (Alm, 2006), which is reminiscent of the same flux in language pedagogy away from teacher-centered approaches; a flux which can be steadily reached through glocalization. This realization can be detected in Fuchs, Hofkirchner, Schafranek, Raffl, Sandoval, & Bichler's (2010) study, which in an attempt to describe the social dynamics of the Internet, have referred to “Web 1.0 as a Web of cognition, Web 2.0 as a Web of human communication, and Web 3.0 as a Web of co-operation” (p. 41). Chandra (2004) has also referred to glocalization as a liaison for bonding the close relationship between language, thought, individuality, and social identity in the Cyber age.

In the same vein, glocalization is recommended to mediate between the standards and WEs movements; to compromise between a “global village” (McLuhan, 1962) and heterogeneous identities. It is also advocated by the pedagogical move of Transformed Practice in a pedagogy of multiliteracies. Because this move, by endowing students with the role of “meaning-makers” and “designers of social futures” (New London Group, 1996, p. 65), tries to include the bottom-up movement and power of local into the global picture. Glocalization is also in line with developing translingual/transcultural competence because of the very nature of such a competence. It is also advocated in methodology. In fact, even to the ardent advocates of some methods, the lifelong aspiration of globalizing their methods is impossible without glocalization. Regarding TBLT, Long (2015), for instance, remarks “While the MPs [methodological principles of TBLT] are considered to be widely, potentially universally, applicable, the manner of their delivery is not, and should vary systematically to fit local circumstances” (p. 327).

5. Conclusion

Although according to Howatt (1984) and Kelly (1969), many issues in language teaching are not particularly

new, it cannot be denied that our insights into language have been deepened enormously. The postmodernism has opened up an era of “enlightenment of enlightenment” (Ouyang, 2007). It can be claimed that along with postmodernism recognitions, insights into applied linguistics have changed from an atomistic approach to a holistic one, while not losing sight of an entangled complex web of overlapping constituents. This integration of inderdispliniarity and interconnectedness; of global and local is in line with glocalization precepts.

One of the advantages of implementing glocalization in curricular decisions is increasing accountability. Because while globalization by removing responsibility from the shoulders of local and putting it all on global, weakens accountability, glocalization enhances it by reminding the local not to shirk their duties (Hong & Song, 2010). But how glocalization can be put into practice? In this regard, Brooks & Normore (2010), acknowledging the role of glocalization in enhancing pedagogy, have recommended educational leaders to implement policies for developing global literacy in nine dynamic and interconnected domains of political literacy, economic literacy, cultural literacy, moral literacy, pedagogical literacy, information literacy, organizational literacy, spiritual and religious literacy, and temporal literacy. This view is in accord with a pedagogy of multiliteracies recommended for enhancing education including ELT.

The other important point which should be attended to in trying to envisage the future of ELT curriculum is the apparent conflict between the WEs and standards movements. According to Crystal (1997), while the former is concerned with the need for natural/cultural identity, the latter is concerned with mutual intelligibility. And these two needs are often seen as opposites. However, for the afore-mentioned reasons in this paper, both movements are so strong that cannot be deterred. While mutual intelligibility (brought about by the standards movement) and emancipation (brought about by WEs) are both appealing concepts, the question is how these two movements would work out in the future.

To Crystal (1997) it is possible to create a situation where intelligibility and identity peacefully co-exist. To provide an example, Crystal has referred to a kind of complementary bilingualism where one of the languages is the global language, enabling world communication, and the other local, enabling local communication. But, as he asserts, creating such a situation demands adopting expensive bilingual policies and a climate of cooperation which does not often exists. Nevertheless, the Net, by providing minorities with a louder and cheaper voice than other media, creates a situation where “all languages are as equal as their users wish to make them” (p. 120). Therefore, he believes that through the Net the two movements can balance each other.

On the whole, Crystal believes that if we accept that the WEs and standards movements serve different functions, there will be no conflict between them. The analogy of the centripetal and centrifugal forces for the standards and WEs movements, respectively, might elucidate Crystal’s viewpoint. It is the harmony and equal magnitude of these two forces which keep nature in order. In the same vein, it can be claimed that while the centrifugal force of glocalization exerted by WEs results in other varieties, the centripetal force of globalization exerted by the standards movement does not allow these varieties to be so unintelligible to be considered a different language. But far from the world of physics, is it possible to maintain this equity in the world of languages without interference?

In real world the inequity of powers always exists although in varying degrees. In fact, “there is no such thing as a neutral playing field where all languages enjoy equal status” (Rubdy, 2015, p. 42). The quest for equity has made emancipation one of the human’s most important lifelong desires. As regards language, the emancipatory measures are taken in the third millennium to thwart the “neo-colonial power of English” (Pennycook, 2007, p. 22). While Crystal (1997) believes that the Net has provided an opportunity for equality and identity expression, he has also acknowledged that the balance between the two movements of WEs and standards is fragile, and it is easily affected by social changes. Therefore, it can be claimed that since most social changes are unpredictable, and as such difficult to control, decolonizing attempts in the third millennium should focus more on controllable sources of power imbalance.

Ironically one of such sources of imbalance is the Net itself. Although it cannot be denied that “electric technology fosters and encourages unification and involvement” (McLuhan & Fiore, 2001, p. 9), at the same time the Cyber age in the globalized era has made colonialism threats *faster and wider* than before through accelerated electronic means. One area where the Net can accelerate the inequity is the area of standards and their “enforced homogenization” (Davies, 2008, p. 485). In other words, by advocating the importance of standards we might set the ground for a neo-colonialism threat which this time might creep under the disguise of the hegemony of standards. To Hudson (2012), such a threat is inevitable since “standards often take on political roles and serve social agendas, and are developed to achieve social outcomes” (p. 479). But, in view of the importance of standards, how is it possible to prevent colonialism threat posed by standards without eliminating

standards? Hudson has referred to the atheoretical nature of many standards as one of the criticisms leveled against their implementation in language teaching. Therefore, in line with Hudson, it can be claimed that one way to thwart colonialism threat is through devising theoretically-based standards which are well-informed by powerful SLA theories.

Another point which should be added to the discussion of the two movements of WEs and standards is that following Larsen-freeman's (1997) suggestion of blurring dichotomies it is better to conceive these two movements as falling on a continuum rather than as being dichotomous and opposite. In fact, it seems that there is some affinity between the nurture-nature continuum (or emergentist and UG-based approaches continuum) and the WEs and standards movements continuum in that apparently the advocates of WEs are more inclined to the emergentist end and those of the standards movement to the UG-based end of the continuum. And as there are evidence suggesting both nurture and nature, the WEs and standards movements are also inevitably not mutually-exclusive. All we can hope is taking measures to pave the way for their symbiosis.

Nevertheless, there is no end to the quest for decolonizing ELT because "power works by absorbing alternative forms of power to further its hegemony" (Canagarajah, 1999, p. 33). Therefore, all we can do in future is trying to decrease the magnitude of the inequity of power. Consequently, in spite of the putative future envisioned in this paper, the third millennium might bring about many unpredictable situations, especially in view of the booming electronic developments. In fact, in the multimedia era of the "mass-age" (Note 2) (McLuhan & Fiore, 2001) where "the medium is the message" (McLuhan & Fiore), "the history of language is no longer a guide" (Crystal, 1997, p. 178). We are heading towards an era where concepts are conferred with the metaphor of a "living organism" to embody their complexity, dynamicity, and interconnectedness. This realization has bestowed concepts with the prefix muti-, e.g., Multiliteracies, multiple identities, multiple intelligences, etc. Nevertheless, although the science boom in the third millennium might result in major paradigm shifts and might compel us to choose roads not taken before, there is one thing for sure: language curriculum decisions in the future welcome empowering learners, especially the marginalized ones. So, following an egalitarian philosophy, attempts should be made to balance power and increase accountability. And awareness and human agency are important topics in this perspective. Third millennium embraces a path to emancipation through awareness.

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Notes

Note 1. Field-independent people have been defined in the literature as the people who can see the details. In fact, they “can’t see the forest for the trees” (Brown, 1994, p. 106). In contrast, field-dependent are better at seeing the totality of jungle rather than details such as trees.

Note 2. McLuhan frequently punned on the word “message” changing it to “massage”, “mass-age”, and “mess-age” to show the interconnected pattern of forces which exists among these words (Lamberti, 2012).

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