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Glocalizing “foreign” language teaching in Taiwan: Conditions and convergences

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Abstract. With the transformation of English as an International language, the English as a Foreign Language (EFL) industry – from researcher to publisher to teacher – is burgeoning. However, as globalization deterritorializes English from native speaking peoples and places and thus necessitates a Non-Native Speaker (NNS) English Language Teacher population greatly outnumbering the Native Speaker (NS) one, the EFL industry has entered into a foggy post-methods era in which both the standards defining English as a language to be taught, and how it should be taught, are being contested in both English and non-English speaking countries alike. The deterritorialization of English and the massive population of NNS EFL teachers, however, are also the conditions that point towards a solution to the pedagogical contentions: a principled pragmatism that encourages a convergence of “foreign” and local EFL pedagogies is starting to emerge.

Keywords: EFL, Taiwan, English as a Lingua Franca, NS teacher, NNS teacher, post-method, globalization .

1. Introduction

Although there is disagreement about just exactly when globalization started, there is agreement that the current age is defined by unprecedented flows of information, money and people across national borders. What’s more, these flows are uncontainable, and their interconnections – and interdependencies – are inescapable. Globalization has left no human activity untouched, and its effects have perhaps been most salient on language, the very basis of all human interaction. The Foreign Language Teaching industry has correspondingly become a rapidly expanded and valued site in this era of evaporating borders and distances. However, it has also become a contentious site of cultural, political and pedagogical clashes.

On the cultural level, globalization is defined by a double-movement: a convergent move towards blending and cultural heterogenization, while simultaneously a divergent move towards cultural homogenization as a backlash. In the case of English Language Teaching in Taiwan over the past two decades, the complex issue of language pedagogies has attracted a lot of attention, often in journal articles, newspaper editorials, teacher training classrooms and at one time or another, in most language educators minds, regardless of whether they are native or non-native speakers, local- or foreign-trained. In reality, generations of local and foreign English Language Teachers (ELTs) in countries like Taiwan have quickly discovered the difficulties of uncritically implementing this approach in their culturally and politically framed classrooms that are driven by national curricula (Chen 1988; Chowdhury 2003; Coleman 1996; Hu 2002).

These pedagogic debates and tensions, whether overt or tacit, often involve the following questions: are “foreign” approaches to language teaching from English speaking countries (Britain, North America, Australia, or BANA for short) superior to local, non-English speaking countries? Or the converse: are local approaches superior because they are tailored to the local context and based on specific cultural and pedagogic sensitivities?

Clearly, the answer to these questions is neither completely in the negative nor the affirmative. The real solution to this globalization-induced conflict lies in determining where the BANA and local approaches can meet and complement each other. The purpose of this paper, thus, is twofold: 1. to sketch the conditions enabling this convergence, and 2. to provide some concrete suggestions for this convergence.

2. Globalization problem: BANA vs. local approaches

2.1 BANA research and CLT approaches

In the last two decades a number of different language teaching approaches have risen to prominence, some focusing on content as a whole-language-means to learn language (e.g., Content-based Instruction), or on instructional tasks that promote learning (Task-based Learning), and others in a more product-based orientation (e.g., Competency and Genre-based). Jack Richards (2006: 22-23) has grouped these recent trends under the umbrella term of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), which designates an approach, rather than a set of methods and techniques (see Table 1 for a comparison with recent research trends).

Table 1. Richards’ list of CLT principles correlated with recent research and trends

Richards’ CLT core assumptions	Examples of recent research and trends
1. Learners should be engaged in interaction and meaningful communication	→ Sociocultural theory; Vygotsky’s (1978) “Zone of Proximal Development”
2. Learners negotiate meaning, notice how language is used, enter in meaningful interpersonal exchange	→ Sociocultural theory (Bruner 1985); Vygotsky (1962, 1978)
3. Meaningful communication is relevant, purposeful, interesting, and engaging	→ Learner motivation (Dörnyei 2001)
4. Use of several language skills or modalities	→ Whole language learning (Rigg 1991)
5. Inductive learning of underlying rules of language, as well as analysis and reflection	→ Role of “noticing” in learning (Schmidt 1990)
6. Creative use of language with trial and error with goal to use the new language both accurately and fluently	→ Focus-on-form and conscious learning (Dekeyser 1998); the importance of output (Swain 1985)
7. Learners have different routes to and rates of language learning, and different needs/ motivations	→ Learner motivation (Dörnyei 2001)
8. Effective learning and communication strategies	→ Learner autonomy/strategies (Chamot 1987)
9. Teacher facilitates learners’ use of language	→ “Output hypothesis” (Swain 1985)

10. Classroom is a community where learners learn through collaboration → “Output hypothesis” and “Zone of Proximal Development”

Many of these assumptions have historical precedents, such as the debates on the value of practice-based learning over rule-based learning in 16th century England, the inductive methods of learning grammar proposed by Augustine in the 4th century, Francis Bacon in the 17th century and Henry Sweet in the next century, and Comenius’ 16th century set of educational principles took into account affective and motivational factors in learning, learner collaboration and learning by doing (Pennycook 1989: 599-600). Even though not entirely novel, Richards’ assumptions do have research corollaries and historically arose in response to previously popular methods, especially the Grammar-Translation Method (GTM) and Audio-Lingual Method (ALM) (or at least aspects of them), which were both dominant in the 20th century across most of the world.

GTM’s focus on grammatical competence emphasized linguistic analysis and reading skills while de-emphasizing productive skills like speaking. Overcoming some of GTM’s weaknesses, ALM focused on listening and speaking, as its name implies; but this method’s deductive 3-P approach (present-practice-produce) was founded on an overly simplistic behaviorist conception of learning: strictly controlled learner language output via mechanical drills could not only optimize accurate language output but also lead to habit formation and automaticity. With these shortcomings in mind, CLT recognizes the importance of social interaction, output and fluency, and that mistakes, or inaccuracy, are the natural course in developing creative and meaningful language expression. Research has also shown the faulty assumptions behind the 3-P model. As students rarely ever learn what teachers intend in their lesson plans, CLT thus espouses inductive approaches to language learning in which learners are guided to derive rules or meanings for themselves.

2.2 Local context: official CLT rhetoric, traditional practices

For more than two decades, Taiwanese language educators attending conferences and submitting articles to professional journals and newspapers have used many of the terms and concepts of CLT and touted its benefits. In 1999, the Ministry of Education even revised the grade 1-9 curriculum guide and emphasized the English teaching goals of enhancing oral and written communication and cultural awareness. This guide set out seven objectives:

1. Improve students' basic communicative competence in reading, writing, speaking and listening
2. Prepare students to make effective use of English language and knowledge
3. Choose topics relevant to students' daily lives, needs and interests
4. Help develop students' autonomy in learning English
5. Address cross-cultural issues (e.g., social customs)
6. Incorporate reading, writing, speaking and listening into class activities
7. Incorporate the use of technology in classes (Su 2006: 267)

However, these objectives, which echo many of Richards’ CLT principles, are seldom realized in secondary and tertiary foreign language teaching practices. Since the 1990s, many English teachers have also become more pedagogically aware that foreign language teaching involves getting students to learn how to use language, but there is still a gap between what teachers do and what they think they should do. One study on teachers’ teaching methods in China, for example, found that over 90% of surveyed teachers described their main role in the language classroom as a “language explainer” and “language modeler”; however, 77% also admitted that they believed the major task of a language teacher *should be* “providing guidance on how to learn a foreign language” and “improving students’ language proficiency” (Jiang 2006: 16). What are the reasons for this disjunction between belief and practice?

The results of interviews with six Taiwanese teacher educators who either had been or were currently in charge of the English teacher programs in the universities in which they were teaching point to an answer. This study revealed three main factors that impeded efficient learning and teaching:

- (a) the majority of learners lack motivation and interest in learning English as a result of rigid, form-based instruction;
- (b) many teachers' and parents' belief in the efficacy of traditional (grammar-based) teaching inhibit innovative teaching practices; and
- (c) teachers often receive little support from school administrators who prefer uniform textbooks, standard syllabi and similar exams (Wang 2002).

I have elsewhere outlined in detail the dynamic and nested complex of factors inhibiting the implementation of CLT in Taiwan at the cultural, political, institutional, and individual levels (Daly 2009). At the cultural level, respect for authority, tradition and the prestigious place of education and unique role of exams in Confucian, especially in Chinese societies, set up the conditions for transmission and deductive-style teaching, learner responsible learning and memorization, discrete item testing and test-driven teaching. Political and educational democratization and decentralization in Taiwan in the 1990s further made the implementation of national teaching guidelines, like the CLT-based ones mentioned above, almost impossible. School autonomy in choosing texts and shaping curriculum, and principals elected by teachers resulted in tremendous power allocated to teachers - who, as a collective, will naturally resist change especially considering that their primary obligation to students, parents and school is to prepare their students to perform well on all-or-nothing exams at the high school and college entrance levels. Institutionally, EFL classes are often mixed and huge - 53 was the average university freshman English class size in 2001 (Ministry of Education, Taiwan 2002). Finally, at the individual level, many ELTs in Taiwan may not have the language abilities or confidence in their language abilities to focus on oral communication (Butler 2004), or be a communicative-styled teacher, who has been described by Péter Medgyes as “a multi-dimensional, high-tech, wizard-of-Oz-like-superperson - yet of flesh and blood” (Medgyes 1994, cited in Chowdhury 2003: 286). A recent educational forum in Taipei revealed a comparatively low English language proficiency among Taiwanese ELTs who scored an average of 539 on the TOEIC test in 2007, which is 95 points lower than teachers from all other countries (Hu 2008: 2).

The pedagogic result at the level of individual teacher and classroom interaction is a tripartite, self-fuelling cycle that recurs at all social levels of the Taiwanese English language education system: exams, teacher roles, and product-based practice (see Figure 1). The examination system shapes the attitudes, expectations and pedagogical styles of teachers and students.

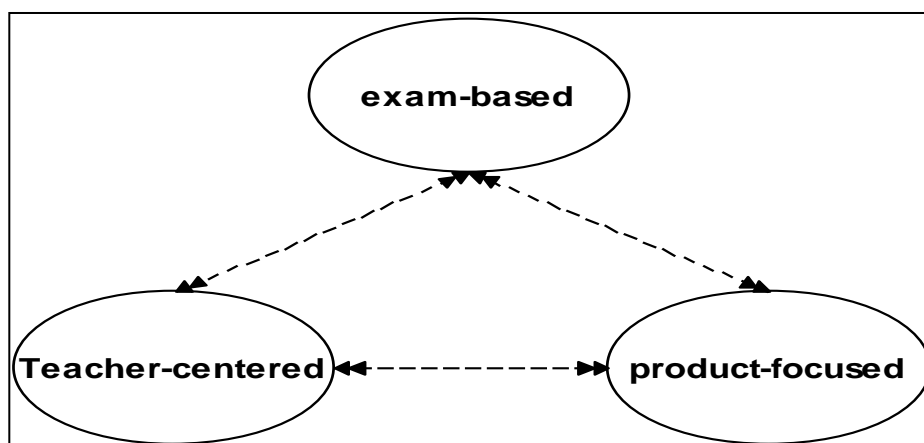


Figure 1: Taiwan's ELT pedagogic triangle

Teachers' roles involve firstly transmitting knowledge to receptive students, and secondly enabling students to perform well on exams, which are the expected means of establishing a learner's competence, and a source of pride and accomplishment for students and their families, teachers and schools. Due to the centrality and respect

for exam-based education, a new form of motivation unique to Chinese cultural contexts has been called the “Chinese Imperative” (Chen, Warden & Chang 2005) in that it deviates both from the Western notion deeply influenced by John Dewey (1916) that education should be an end in itself, and also from the binary opposite of being a purely external form of motivation. These tendencies result in a third teaching factor situated in the classroom: product-based teaching and the preponderance of drills. In Taiwan, these three factors guide and give shape to the behavior of in-class teaching that resists CLT.

3. Globalizing conditions: deterritorialized language and blurred center-periphery relations

Cultures, and by extension languages, are never homogenous. Composed of different elements that interact with each other, these social “assemblages” are dynamic because the parts of one system may be nested in another system. Cultures and languages constantly evolve in a never-ending process of assembling, or becoming, by borrowing and appropriating from other cultures and languages. The wasp, to use a Deleuzian illustration of this concept, enters into an assemblage with the orchid: the wasp becomes part of the orchid’s reproductive system, while the orchid becomes part of the wasp’s digestive system (Deleuze & Guattari 1987: 10). Globalization’s double-movement, i.e., cultural homogenization in the nationalisms and fundamentalisms that reject outside influences as threats, and cultural heterogeneity that appropriates and assembles outside influences to create new hybrid forms, irrevocably alters all social assemblages.

In the field of EFL, the potential for new pedagogical assemblages is emerging from three interrelated conditions: the deterritorialization of the English language, the empowerment of teaching professionals in NNS periphery countries and a simultaneous critical humility of teaching educators from NS center countries (BANA). Both NS and NNS camps are raising concerns, challenges and criticisms of important “Western” assumptions about language, communication and teaching, especially in FL contexts.

3.1 The deterritorialization of English: English as a Lingua Franca

Globalization has left its marks on every language, especially English. The traditional concept of English, still guarded in several BANA circles of SLA research, and textbook and test production, is a purist version of Native Speaker (NS) English that resides in native speakers and native speaking countries. Yet defining NS English is very problematic. The English used in the U.S., for example, has different varieties of pronunciation, idioms, functional language and even grammar depending on the region and register, and this question of an English standard gets exponentially more complicated – and arbitrary – when taking into account the other NS countries of Canada, the U.K. and Australia, and their various regions.

Although deciding what variety of NS of English should be the standard is a thorny issue, the relevance of the very concept of NS itself has been increasingly called into question. Because most NNS in the world today use English to communicate with other NNS, many language theorists and researchers, such as Jennifer Jenkins (2006) and Barbara Seidlhofer (2004), over the past two decades have challenged the uncritical use of NS English as the foundation and back-drop of most second language acquisition (SLA) research, textbook scopes and sequences, standardized language test contents, and classroom teaching practices. NS English has generally attained an unquestioned supremacy as the ideal for students to achieve and has been promulgated by virtually everyone from researchers to publishers to language teachers and also their students. But this ideal for most language students is often unachievable – even undesirable and an impediment for many who see English in functional terms as a tool for communication, not as an identity marker (e.g., U.K. English) to be emulated. In fact, the reality in this “global village” is that English as a lingua franca means that most learners in NNS countries need English to communicate not with NS, but rather with other NNS in business, academic or tourist situations.

Consequently, English is being deterritorialized, detached from its geographical and cultural origins. More scholars are also turning away from NS English and toward “World Englishes (WEs)”, “English as an International Language” (EIL), and “English as a Lingua Franca” (ELF), and finding publishing platforms in recently established journals like *World Englishes*, *English Worldwide* and *English Today*. Tying together these new designations of English is an underlying notion, Elizabeth Erling points out, that they “place emphasis on functional uses

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of the language instead of geographical varieties and recognize that English can be used as a language of communication without necessarily being a language of identification” (Erling 2005: 40). English as a language is thus being seen more for its capacities than its properties. For most English language learners, the reason to study English is primarily for what it enables them to do (study, business, entertainment) – not for its specific properties of grammar, and even less for NS cultural and territorial markers such as idiomatic usage and pronunciation. While some theorists see a standard of NNS English emerging in the world (e.g., Crystal 2003), others see a plurality of regional Englishes developing, a regional phenomena that shows at once an acceptance of the fact that English is a global language but also a resistance to the hegemony of any one kind (U.K. or U.S.) of English. English is becoming “decolonized”, and not just “de-nationalized” but also “re-nationalized” and appropriated by NNS countries (McKay 2002: 12).

3.2 Method to post-method: NS critical humility and NNS critical confidence

In an international academic milieu where the research topic of English has become property of a commons and not birthright of a minority, NNS researchers and teachers are feeling less pressure to defer to colonial owners and are offering both criticisms and insights in greater numbers and more confident voices

In Chinese cultural contexts, several educators have commented on the problems of incorporating CLT in a Chinese milieu. In a review of 20 years of research into CLT in China, YuJun Li (2001) concluded that that study of CLT in China lacked planned and systemic research, and it was more theoretical than empirical, and more evaluative than creative; and although the CLT approach is evident in the national syllabi and textbooks of China, most kinds of tests are based on traditional knowledge-centered testing theories and methods. GuanYi Li (1989) maintained that CLT and traditional teaching can supplement each other, while YiLu Cao (1999) proposed the alignment of CLT with traditional methods by attaching importance to input and developing more effective activities and techniques for memorization. However, several local teachers have been made to feel an even greater disconnect with – and even resentment of – CLT when Western advisors see their modified versions of CLT and criticize them for not understanding and not really doing CLT (Liu 1998). CaiYing Han (1999) has thus criticized the blind advocacy of CLT, which has its own weaknesses and teaching methods that suit other countries but may not be suitable for China’s FL teaching. Yet arguably the most serious challenge to CLT, with its heavy bias towards Western communicative styles and values, comes from Constant Leung (2005), who points out that despite its debt to Hymesian ethnographic-based conception of communicative competence, which demands sensitivity to social and cultural contexts, current versions of CLT are based on “abstracted contexts and idealized social rules of use based on (English language) native speakerness” (Leung 2005: 119).

An awareness of the significance of context has also inspired reflection and criticism in the BANA-circles of research and publication. Decentralizing and deterritorializing forces of globalization have further reinforced the anti-foundationalist tenets of the post-modernisms and post-structuralisms that have pervaded especially BANA humanities and social sciences in the last few decades, and these influences have been felt in TESOL as well. They have actually contributed to the heralding of the current age of Foreign Language (FL) teaching as a “post-methods” era. The “post”-methods era is contrasted with previous times of “method” obsession, dogmatism and debates, and of times of uncritical transfer of ELT theories and techniques from ESL BANA to EFL peripheral countries. In lieu of “methods”, a discourse of “principles” and “strategies” has emerged (Brown 1993; Ellis 2005; Kumaravadivelu 2003; Nation 1993, 2007).

Perhaps the most well-known “method” critic and post-method advocate is H. Douglas Brown, whose 1994 *Principles of Language Learning and Teaching* has already gone through five editions and advocates approaches to language class teaching practice that are “principled”, i.e., based on a finite number of general, widely accepted, research-based principles categorized into cognitive, affective, and linguistic principles. Similarly, in his *Beyond Methods: Macrostrategies for Language Teaching*, the NNS critical theorist B. Kumaravadivelu undertook a critical analysis of the literature on methods in TESOL and suggested ten macrostrategies to supplant the concept of methods in order to guide teachers in their teaching practices. As can be seen in Table 2, both principles and macrostrategies share not only considerable overlap with each other, but also with Richards’ condensation of CLT into 10 core assumptions (see Table 1).

Table 2: Comparison of Brown's principles and Kumaravadivelu's macrostrategies

Brown's (2002) 12 principles	Kumaravadivelu's (2003) 10 macrostrategies
1. Develop language <i>Automaticity</i> by limiting language practice and avoiding overanalyzing language	1. <i>Maximize Learning Opportunities</i> and remain flexible during lessons
2. Engage learners in <i>meaningful learning</i> , e.g., content-centered approaches	2. <i>Minimize Perceptual Mismatches</i> between teacher intentions and student interpretations
3. Create opportunities for the <i>Anticipation of Rewards</i> in class	3. <i>Facilitate Negotiated Interaction</i> to encourage creative in-class learner communication
4. Foster <i>Intrinsic Motivation</i> so that language learning is self-rewarding	4. <i>Promote Learner Autonomy</i> in giving learners the tools and attitudes to become more responsible for their learning
5. Facilitate <i>Strategic Investment</i> by helping learners acquire language strategies so they can maximize their own learning	5. <i>Foster Language Awareness</i> of the formal and functional properties of the target language
6. Be sensitive to the fragile <i>Language Ego</i> that is tied to the perception of the second language	6. <i>Activate Intuitive Heuristics</i> by providing rich input to help learners learn inductively by discovery
7. Promote <i>Self-Confidence</i> by enabling attainment of in-class tasks	7. <i>Contextualize Linguistic Input</i> to reflect the natural use of language
8. Encourage <i>Risk Taking</i> by pushing students to interpret and use language just above their level	8. <i>Integrate Language Skills</i> because language skills are interrelated and mutually reinforcing
9. Highlight the <i>Language-Culture Connection</i> by teaching not only the language but cultural customs, values, ways of thinking and acting	9. <i>Ensure Social Relevance</i> by being sensitive to the societal, political, economic, and educational environment in which language is being learned
10. Pay attention to the <i>Native Language Effect</i> : how the native language positively, but especially negatively affects language use	10. <i>Raise Cultural Consciousness</i> to shed light on classroom processes that acknowledges their power and knowledge structures
11. Monitor <i>Interlanguage</i> by giving feedback to learners in class and help them generate their own feedback outside the classroom	
12. Develop learners' total <i>Communicative Competence</i> to prepare them for real world contexts	

These post-method views of teaching reject the implacable faith in one-size-fits-all methods and relocates the practice, or craft, of teaching in the teacher. In this reconceptualization of language teaching, the teacher can be viewed as an artisan whose craft demands the development and skillful deployment of both knowledge and sensibility of the tools, materials and environment he is working with. In other words, the teacher's knowledge of subject-matter and context is activated by principles, with the (hopeful) result of skills that engender efficient learning.

A post-methods era is necessarily less dogmatic, and thus NNS teachers – who make up at least 80% of the world’s English Teachers – are finding the freedom and encouragement to increasingly draw on their own traditions to find what works. Even Western educators and writers in TESOL are not just blindly following western ESL theories, but have become more sympathetic to local teaching and learning conditions (e.g., Holliday 1994). Post-colonial inferiority is slowly, and fortunately, dissipating in this environment.

This is a welcome trend because NNS EFL teachers and researchers have long had to live in the shadows of their NS counterparts, often for superficial reasons like marketing or perceptions of authenticity. It is true that NS language teachers can be motivating as live role models for written and spoken English, and even a cultural novelty, but NNS are often more effective, especially for lower level learners, in EFL contexts due to their unique knowledge (Canagarajah 1999). NS teachers in EFL contexts, on the other hand, often lack knowledge of learners’ learning habits and needs. Medgyes (1994) has listed six fundamental advantages of NNS Foreign Language teachers who can 1. provide a good role model, 2. teach learning strategy effectively, 3. provide more information about the language to their students, 4. understand the difficulties and needs of students, 5. anticipate and predict language difficulties, and 6. use students’ L1 to their advantage.

Just as English has become English as an International Language (EIL) by virtue of the numbers of non-native speakers who use English with each other, ELT is becoming IELT as both NS and NNS ELTs in local contexts like Taiwan struggle to adopt, adapt and adjust traditional and western teaching approaches and practices. A picture of this “glocalization” of Foreign Language teaching is sketched out in the next section.

4. Convergence: glocalizing principled pragmatics

A concerted effort between NS and NNS teachers and researchers is required to develop a more pragmatic and user-friendly approach to principled teaching. In fact, in this post-methods age, NNS teachers are in the best position to act as mediators in the EFL profession to combine local knowledge and teaching strategies with CLT or other principles from SLA or Applied Linguistics. In this way, a more systematic (and hopefully less teacher-responsible) approach to FL teaching for exam-oriented contexts can be devised to better prepare EFL students for the needs of a globalized world.

In Taiwan, owing to the centrality of examinations, a change in the format of high-stakes tests along the lines of TOEFL iBT, would likely catalyze a change in the teaching. All things being equal, if Taiwan’s major exams for high school and college were to test a learner’s productive and integrated language skills, teachers and the education industry would similarly be compelled to reflect this format in textbook publications and in-class practice and assessment. However, things are rarely equal: to devise and correct language examinations that test not only communicative competence but integrated skills would be prohibitively expensive, especially in light of the government’s already considerable budget allocated to English language instruction.

Nonetheless, for teachers who are concerned about the mismatch between knowing “about” and knowing “how to use” language, the prospect of resignation in the face of cultural, policy, institutional and classroom constraints is frustrating. They know that English language users in this globalized age need to demonstrate creative and effective use of language – not a demonstration of its knowledge – in order to develop business, academic or even social relationships that are essential for enhancing people’s careers and also pastimes. Ideally, these enlightened teachers’ teaching practices should be dialectically informed “bottom-up” by local context and practice and “top-down” by current research principles derived from linguistics, applied linguistics and other language-related disciplines. That is, *glocalized* EFL teaching is context-based local teaching taking into critical account the local culture, educational policy system, and learners as well as research insights from BANA and local classrooms.

Language teaching at its most basic, as Jane Willis (1996) once succinctly summarized, contains three essential conditions for language learning: input, output, and motivation. As she reminds us, any successful learning depends on motivation. In the Chinese cultural context, the motivational value of exams should not be underestimated. Culturally and historically, high-stakes all-or-nothing exams are not negatively perceived; on the contrary, they are seen as a fair means of assessment and one of the greatest sources of pride and “face” for test-takers, their

families, teachers and even their schools. Hence the neologism “Chinese Imperative” has been devised to describe this allegedly culturally unique form of motivation to Chinese societies. However, an additional source of motivation lies in the capacity of English as a tool, or a means to ends, like school admission, academic study, business promotion, or job procurement. In fact, in the stagflationary economic climate of Taiwan in the first decade of the 21st century, the combination of the “Chinese Imperative” and view of English as a tool has resulted in what may be described as a “Consumer Imperative”; that is, many learners, for better or worse, are demanding concrete results for their tuition fees, like a TOEIC score or a resume-boosting communication skills certificate. In cram schools and commercial language schools, like the one I direct in Taipei, the decrease in enrollment for regular general English classes – matched by a corresponding increase in Test Preparation classes in the last few years – attests to this rising Consumer Imperative. Teaching practices and attitudes must take the learners’ motivations seriously.

As for the input and output part of FL instruction, Paul Nation (2007) put forward four major pedagogical principles, which he calls *strands*: meaning-focused input, meaning-focused output, language focused learning and fluency development. Organized around these strands, he also puts forward ten principles to guide course development and lesson planning:

Table 3: Nation’s 10 principles

1. Provide and organise large amounts of comprehensible input through both listening and reading
2. Boost learning through comprehensible input by adding a deliberate element (focus on form and consciousness raising)
3. Support and push learners to produce spoken and written output in a variety of appropriate genres (to match learners’ needs)
4. Provide opportunities for cooperative interaction
5. Help learners deliberately learn language items and patterns, including sounds, spelling, vocabulary, multiword units, grammar and discourse
6. Train learners in strategies that will contribute to language learning
7. Provide fluency development activities in which the four skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing
8. Provide roughly equal balance of the four strands of meaning-focused input, meaning-focused output, language focused learning and fluency development
9. Plan for the repeated coverage of the most useful language items
10. Use analysis, monitoring and assessment to help address learners’ language and communication needs (Nation 2007: 10-11).

All things being equal (to small size, well-equipped BANA ESL classes), these principles are soundly grounded in research and common sense, like Richards’ and Kumaravadivelu’s; but, again, things are rarely equal. If local teachers (both NS and NNS) are to best serve the language needs and motivational interests of their students, these principles will have to be tempered by contextual considerations. Although Nation’s Principle 8 recommends a balance of the four strands throughout the course, divided equally 25% each, local teaching realities may preclude this. In Taiwan, for example, Principles 3 and 4 with both oral and written output will be circumscribed by large, mixed-level classes, and the fluency activities associated with Principle 7 involve no new learning and thus will often be overlooked due to time limitations and pressures to cover as much material as possible.

Nonetheless, research-based principles like the inductive approach of Principle 2, while requiring more time to lead students to the answer compared to just telling them with a direct teacher-centered deductive style explanation, has a judicious place for certain language targets for which exposure to rich input can make understanding easier. As for promoting learner training and strategies, which also demands precious class time, ones which enhance learner autonomy are increasingly valuable in an age where language output is becoming crucial in both local academia and commerce, and thus actively knowing how to use language is more important than simply passively knowing about it.

5. Principled pragmatics in action: glocalizing activities

Considering the context of physical restraints (class size), lack of logistical support (resources), lack of intrinsic (integrative) motivation, while not forgetting the “Chinese Imperative” (exams as motivators) and its corollary of Confucian study ethic, this last section is a brief foray into a convergent area with suggested teaching practices and activities that are consonant with a glocalized version of principled pragmatics. These include making full use of a. L1, b. memorization and learning strategies, c. translation, d. dictation and e. dicto-gloss.

Knowing the learners’ L1 in a homogenous EFL context is invaluable. And although L1 use is frowned upon in many CLT environments (at the commercial language school where I work, for instance, L1 use is prohibited for both teacher and student in the high-elementary and above level conversation classes), it can save time and frustration, and even promote trust and rapport between teachers and students. NNS teachers thus have an advantage here as they can communicate complex ideas with students, understand both the positive and negative effects of L1 transfer, relate to interlanguage development, and act as role models by embodying successful local language learners. But even NS EFL teachers who cannot speak the students’ L1 can allow students to use it amongst themselves when working on problem-solving or engaging in metatalk to discuss vocabulary or grammar. The teachers’ and or students’ use of the L1 can help learners deliberately learn language items and patterns (Nation’s Principle [hereafter NP] 5), can minimize perceptual mismatches between teachers and students (Kumaravadivelu’s Macrostrategy [hereafter KM] 2) and allow teachers to be sensitive to their students’ language egos (Brown’s Principle [hereafter BP] 6).

East Asian students, especially Chinese students, are renowned for their diligence and memorization techniques, but also disparaged for the latter in the West. However, Biggs (1996) has convincingly argued that rote memorization for many Chinese learners is not superficial and mindless, but a means to a deeper understanding. Even Confucius, the most venerated teacher in Chinese history, railed against mindless memorization: “If a man who knows the three hundred Odes by heart fails when given administrative responsibilities and proves incapable of exercising his own initiative when sent to foreign states, then what use are the Odes to him, however many he may have learned?” (Lau 1979: 119). Cao (1999), as previously mentioned, has also urged a return to traditional Chinese teaching methods and the development of effective memorization activities. Memorization is an important, perhaps even necessary, component of learning a language; it is also a testable learning strategy that can be taught to students for both vocabulary and grammar. For the former, memorization and learner training in the proper use of good learner dictionaries and corpora can facilitate the learning of how to use words, especially multi-word units (Boers, Eyckmans, Kappel, Strengers & Demecheleer 2006); as for the latter, a focus-on-form can provide an effective learning of grammar, as Jessica Williams (2005) has clearly laid out. Useful methods of memorization can promote learner autonomy (KM 4), language automaticity and strategic investment (BPs 1 and 5), deliberate language learning and learning strategies (NPs 5 and 6).

Guy Cook has interrogated the “taboo” status of translation (Cook 2002) and challenged its resistance in foreign language classrooms, claiming that “the practice of translation has been condemned so strenuously for so long without any really convincing reasons that it is perhaps time the profession took another look at it” (Cook 1998: 120). David Atkinson (1987: 245) has further argued that “activities that involve translation from the mother tongue can help students make the important step of beginning to think not in terms of ‘How does one say X in English?’ but rather ‘How can I express X in English?’”. In Taiwan, ChungAn Chang (2007) for one has suggested new insights and more innovative possibilities of translation and mother tongue use in Taiwanese EFL classrooms. One strategic activity of translation, for example, requires the L1 to be translated into L2 and then compared to other translations, and another is *retranslation*, in which L2 is first translated into L1 and then with the L2 text taken away the L1 is retranslated back into the L1. These two activities use the traditional practice of translation, albeit modified, to allow students to notice the gap in their language (NP 2) and the effects of L1 (BP 10), to work together in collaboration (NP 4) in negotiated interaction (KM 3), and also to integrate language skills (KM 8) to improve communicative competence (BP 12).

Finally, dicto-gloss is a variation of traditional dictation activities. Similar to translation, students reproduce a form of language input, but whereas translation directly employs the L1, dicto-gloss makes use of the L2. In the basic version of this activity, students first read or listen to a complete original text, which is then taken away; after this, the students individually write from memory, then compare with classmates to reconstruct, and finally compare with original. This activity facilitates students' noticing the gap between in their L2 language (NP 2, BP 10, KM 5), negotiated collaboration (NP 4, KM 3), integrating language skills (KM 8) and improvement of communicative competence (BP 12).

This small sampling of activities blends local teaching practices and exam practice considerations with CLT and post-methods principles. As such, teachers can engage students by taking advantage of the local conditions and training students to understand what is required to learn a language and become competent language learners. Essentially, what is needed is to affirm the legitimate goal, and motivator, of preparing students for tests, but reject the short-sighted conception that solely preparing for the test around the corner is sufficient. The reality for many EFL students in this globalized era is that there will always be tests, but these tests will often involve communicative rather than grammatical competence. A globalized EFL convergence for most EFL teachers in Taiwan would mean a balance of teaching and learning that focuses on developing language competences supported research-based principles and while still focusing on concrete tests, testable activities like translation and dicto-gloss, and learning strategies like memorization.

6. Conclusions: charting new territories

The problem of blind, wholesale adoption of BANA approaches to EFL teaching like CLT in a Taiwanese context has been addressed since the last years of the 20th century. However, with the effects of globalization only now coming to light, solutions are appearing on the horizon. The conditions for this solution involve the deterritorialization of English, the self-critical humility of Western language researchers and the increasingly vocal EFL researchers in periphery countries like India, China and Taiwan, whose confidence – and opportunities to speak – have been increased in what Thomas Friedman (2005) has called the increasingly level playing field of the “flat world”. The solution to the problem entails a convergence of, and greater communication between, BANA and local approaches: the former adapting to local conditions, while the latter adapting to research-based language learning principles.

The implications for TESOL research, then, involve filling the void of knowledge of local teaching practices and techniques and how they can not only reconcile with, but also augment, a post-methods principled pragmatics. At present, this principled approach is cautious, tentative and hazy. For most in-service and pre-service teachers, it is like being given a box full of electronic components to make a GPS system, and being expected to find their way to a specific McDonald's in a city they've never heard of. This places a terrific burden on teachers, in sharp contrast with the “methods” era, which squarely attributed teaching success to methods, not teachers. At least that was the implication of the rhetoric. But does this post-methods approach once more show the rhetorical distance between the literature on teaching and the actual practice of teaching? In previous method-framed times, how many teachers were truly GTM or ATM?

It would be genuinely instructive if FL teachers – especially local, NNS teachers – became researchers to map out their EFL domain that remains conspicuously absent in TESOL literature. To reduce traditional NNS EFL teaching practices to GTM or ALM approximations both ignores the richness of teaching context and belittles the effective and inspiring teachers who achieve language learning success with their students. Take Jun Liu – the first NNS to become President of TESOL (2007-2008) – as one example among countless others: he mastered English in the EFL context of China undoubtedly with the aid of talented NNS teachers. Local NNS teacher research, especially more thick-description ethnographies, could shed light on this dark and as yet uncharted territory, and by sharing these results, as Geoff Brindley (1991) has also called for, a more enriched picture of ELF pedagogy can come to light. Teacher research involving the “careful building of data sets from a wide range of contexts” can lead to a “more powerful set of theoretical principles to inform practice” (Savignon 2007: 218). With a more complete set of teaching possibilities and principles, teachers and applied linguists can thus better tackle the task of

developing a more systematic and, at least for teachers, more detailed map of the EFL pedagogy in order to help more teachers effectively navigate the EFL terrain.

And if principles are the best we can hope for, then teacher-training programs (both pre- and in-service) must face this reality. Language teacher education will need to grapple with the problem of not just presenting abstract principles, but providing the opportunity to practice, learn and embody them, especially with what Ray Brown (2000) has described as “cultural continuity” in mind to match the socially and institutionally sanctioned practices that need to be implemented in both Second Language and Foreign Language communities.

These are the challenges that globalization has set before us. But with the challenges, globalization has also provided the convergent conditions for a more enlightened assemblage of foreign and local FL pedagogies, a double-movement of teacher “becomings”: the NS-becoming-NNS, and NNS-becoming-NS. Only with the cooperation of language experts across the world working and learning together can we truly glocalize the FL teaching that our learners need to meet all the demands of a glocalized world.

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