The Third Way: A Call for Breaking the Dependency on the Mainstream English Language Teaching

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Abstract
The worldwide spread of English, especially through the tenets and assumptions of the mainstream English language teaching (ELT) has had ideological, socio-cultural and political implications in the field of education. Reviewing these tenets and assumptions, this paper attempts to reveal this growing industry through publicizing the spread of Center-created methods, materials, curriculum and expertise as well as legitimizing only the Center's linguistic and cultural norms, introduces itself not only as a merely educational and value-free trend, but hides its biased exclusive and hegemonic nature. Then, to reveal its hidden nature and functions, it attempts to introduce and problematize some important assumptions of ELT taken for granted. Finally, through some practical and defensible suggestions, the rationale for applying critical pedagogy or in Canagarajah's (1999) words, "the third way" as a panacea to breaking the dependency on the mainstream Center-based pedagogy as an exclusive tradition in Periphery countries is introduced and discussed.

Keywords: critical pedagogy, mainstream ELT, culture, Center, Periphery

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Introduction

Today English has traveled to many parts of the world and has been used to serve various purposes. Such a recent growth in its use and presence in many aspects, its unprecedented expansion, and especially its consequences and implications in some fields of study including applied linguistics, sociolinguistics, etc. have led to calling this language with terms such as 'global language' (Crystal, 1997; Nunan, 2003), as 'world language' (Bailey and Görlach, 1982; Mair, 2004), as 'international language' (Hassal, 2002; Holliday, 2005; Jenkins, 2000; Le Ha, 2008; Mckay, 2002; Pennycook, 1994; Seidlhofer, 2002; Sharifian, 2008), as 'lingua franca' (Gnutzmann, 2000; Jenkins, 2007), as a 'medium of intercultural communication' (Meierkord, 1996) or with some new concepts like 'World English' (Brutt-Griffler, 2002) and 'global Englishes' (Pennycook, 2007), which each one, by and large, reveals its spread, rise, globalization as well as its role and dominance. Such a situation, as Mesthire and Bhatt (2008) note, has led to viewing and studying this phenomenon from a number of perspectives including:

- as a Macro-Sociolinguistic topic –'language spread'– detailing the ways in which English and other languages associated with colonization which have changed the linguistic ecology of the world;

- as a topic in the field of Language Contact, examining the structural similarities and differences amongst the new varieties of English that are stabilizing or have stabilized;

- as a topic in Political and Ideological Studies – 'linguistic imperialism' – that focuses on how relations of dominance are entrenched by, and in, language and how such dominance often comes to be viewed as part of the natural order;

- as a topic in Applied Linguistics concerned with the role of English in modernization, government and – above all – education; and

- as a topic in Cultural and Literary Studies concerned with the impact of English upon different cultures and literatures, and the constructions of new identities via bilingualism.

The appearance of such studies and perspectives especially in the field of applied linguistics with its special reference to the issue of education has resulted in forming a new situation. In this regard, while especially in the second half of the 20th century the spread of this language specifically through ELT, as the most systematic way of English spread, was considered as a favorable development or as a purely pedagogical advantage from the Center to the Periphery, the appearance of an increasing wave of books, inspired mostly by some newly-emerged leftist critical views, has been effective in stimulating a considerable degree of soul searching within applied linguistics in general and ELT profession in specific. In a more precise word, in the midst of showing enthusiasm toward teaching and learning English, the advent of some outstanding critical views and theories about the spread of English especially through ELT aroused some awareness among the educationalists, language planners and applied linguists.

Certainly such a situation has led to some controversy and discussion surrounding the ELT, as a field that without it, in Brutt-Griffler's (2002) words, English would not be a world language. Not surprisingly, in this era, there is no doubt that ELT has undergone some radical changes and cannot be confined to the traditional or mainstream features and liberalist attitudes which have been mostly current in this field. In this regard, Kumaravadivelu (2012) notes this fact that the worldview that characterizes most part of the studies in second language acquisition has for long been premised upon notions such as interlanguage, fossilization, acculturation, communicative competence- all of which are hardly tilted towards the episteme of the native speaker, has been encountered with some challenging critical attitudes instrumental in strengthening a newly growing critical camp of thought in the field of applied linguistics. As a result of such a situation, it is found that the current status of English teaching and learning has led to a number of challenging questions which are not directly limited to purely pedagogical ideas and theories (Zacharias, 2003). In other words, the unique position

of English in the world has some repercussions on the way it is seen, defined, presented, learned and taught and has led to a position which has been discussed from ideological, cultural, social and political standpoints (see Block and Cameron, 2002; Brutt-Griffler, 2002; Canagarajah, 1999; Edge, 2006; Holliday 2005; Kirkpatrick, 2007; Pennycook, 1994, 1998 and 2001; Phillipson, 1992 and 2009).Thus, it is nothing to be surprised when Mckay (2002) writes that the teaching and learning of English in present day must be based on an entirely different set of assumptions than the teaching of any other second or foreign language. Inspired by the appearance of some significant critical works especially the publication of Phillipson's book "Linguistic Imperialism" in 1992, the 1990s turned into a milestone in critical studies in applied linguistics in general and ELT in particular. According to Johnston (2003), possibly the most significant development in ELT in the 1990s was the acceptance of this idea that ELT is and always has been a profoundly and unavoidably political activity. Anderson (2003) writes that since the 1990s the concepts of ELT and ELT profession have undergone radical changes and this field has experienced an intellectual shift. In this regard, introducing ELT as an educational activity, Akbari (2008) also strongly maintains that ELT is an activity filled with politics. In Baladi's (2007) terms, the teachings of English and English language itself have, for a long time, been seen as clean and safe exports, as a practical means of communication carrying few ethical implications. According to Matsuda (2006), the spread of English and its function as an international language significantly complicate ELT practice because it requires that most basic assumptions in the field be re-evaluated and re-negotiated vis-à-vis the current sociolinguistic landscape of the English teaching. In her words, the complexity resulting in the spread of English is not limited to its linguistic forms and functions but has also found its political and ideological dilemmas, and poses a new set of questions about an aspect of ELT that has received only peripheral attention until recently. Canagarajah (2005) also asserts that after the decolonization and around the Cold War, ELT shifted to an important activity and English was remarked as a more effectual channel of hegemony. In this case, Gray (2002) writes that contrary to the mainstream ELT pedagogy known especially in the critical literature as the liberalist ELT, its beliefs, practices and tenets, the appearance of some notable critical attitudes which have been raised in recent years mostly through an increasing wave of books by some researchers of great renown such as Pennycook (1994, 1998, 2001), Canagarajah(1999) and so forth has changed the scene. In his opinion, what these works have had in common is a belief that the global spread of English is inherently problematic, inextricably linked to wider political issues and that ELT practices are neither value free, nor always culturally appropriate.

The main gist of this controversy can be introduced in this way that currently the mainstream or liberalist ELT presents itself as a mere educational activity, publicizes native-based or the Center varieties of English especially the American and British ones, ignores or rejects World Englishes, introduces itself as the only legitimate reference of planning, developing and producing methods, materials and programs, advertises the homogenization of cultural and educational goods influenced by global standardization carrying from the center to the periphery, and shrewdly equates learning English in its Center variety with global understanding (see Kubota, 2002; Ghaffar Samar and Davari, 2011). In contrast, the outstanding appearance of the critical or alarmist ELT has significantly challenged and complicated the mainstream ELT. Proposing that ELT functions as a vehicle for imposing western capitalist values and beliefs, questioning the cultural and social relevance and appropriateness of center-produced methods and materials, focusing on the political, cultural, social, economic and ideological aspects of ELT, challenging the established and globally known tenets and bases of ELT and promoting critical pedagogy as an alternative approach to the mainstream pedagogy, this new critical camp of thought has tried to manifest itself mightily.

Here, the following table with an especial reference to the educational aspects has been provided to review the growing rich literature on the topic and to present the gist of their main ideas and debates on the role, position and function of English and ELT. Needless to say, the opposing views on the topic are not confined to these fifteen categories:

Table 1. Two main opposing camps of thought in ELT

Category	Mainstream or Liberalist Position	Critical or Alarmist Position
- ELT Methods: Nature, Function & Essence	- Methods as value-free and neutral instruments of teaching - Center-produced methods as the best and most efficient ones	- Methods as non- neutral cultural constructs - Rejecting the validity and appropriateness of Center-produced methods
-Material & Curriculum Development	- Center-produced materials and Curriculums as the best and most appropriate - Developing materials as their exclusive rights	- Rejecting the appropriateness of Center-produced materials -Insisting on the necessity of developing materials and curriculum in the Periphery
-Native vs. Nonnative **(Teachers, Standards, Varieties)**	- Native-speaker tenet - Standard English	- Native-speaker fallacy - World Englishes
- English, ELT & Culture	- No threat to other cultures - No mutual dependency between English language & western culture	- Threat to other cultures - Tools of cultural expansion of the West
- English, ELT & other Languages	- No danger to other languages or minority languages	- Dangers to other languages and minority languages
- English Spread & Policy	- Accidental or lucky expansion - English & ELT as neutral activity without any political or cultural dominance	- Purpose-built expansion through the Center language planning and policies - English as a tool for political and cultural dominance

- English & the Western Political & Economic Systems	- No political view to English & ELT	- The necessity to view English & ELT politically
	- No tie between English and western political and economic systems	- Strong& strategic tie between English and western political and economic systems
- English: equality vs. Inequality	- Bringing equal opportunities for all	- Source of inequality
- Resistance & Criticism	- The need to welcome English & ELT	- The need to resist against the global spread of English & the mainstream ELT through critical approaches
- International English Exams	- No cultural & social biases	- filled with cultural & social biases
	- The best criteria for measuring the English proficiency applicable globally	- Serving the US and British interests
- Early Start Education	- Early start tenet	- Early start fallacy
- Monolingual Education	- Monolingual tenet	- Monolingual fallacy
- English: the Language of Science	- The sole language of higher education	- Higher education in mother tongue
- Inherent Qualities	- Enjoying inherent qualities	- All languages are inherently the same
- English as a Second Language	- An ideal situation for the Periphery	- A threat to national and minority languages as well as the cultures of the Periphery

Simply put, the appearance of these notable critical studies has resulted in questioning and challenging the assumptions, tenets and principles of the mainstream ELT including its neutral essence, no threat to other cultures and languages, native-speakerism, monolingual tenet, no tie between English and western political, cultural and economic systems, etc. In fact, the advent of this critical shift in ELT has not only challenged and complicated the mainstream or liberalist ELT or in a

more precise word, its hegemonic nature, but has mostly introduced critical pedagogy (CP) as an alternative approach to the mainstream ELT.

Why critical pedagogy?

Phillipson (1992, 2009) writes that the global expansion of English especially in two interrelated sectors of government and education perpetuates the dependency of the Periphery countries on the powerful Center countries. Canagarajah (1999) also notes that turning the Periphery countries into the mere consumers of the ELT expertise, methodology and materials, dispensed by the West, promotes the Western ideologies and contributes to its domination more subtly. So, on the one hand, accepting this political side of ELT, especially as Akbari (2008) reminds us, and on the other hand, the importance of English language as an undeniable fact, with an especial reference to Canagarajah (1999, p. 147), "what is demand is a "third way" or Critical Pedagogy that avoids the traditional extremes of rejecting English outright for its linguistic imperialism or accepting its wholesale for its benefits". Avoiding some conceptual dimensions common in its literature, now it is attempted to highlight, introduce and incorporate some of the practical aspects of CP in ELT especially in Periphery countries.

a) Incorporating Source Culture as well as other Cultures

According to Akbari (2008), culture has always been treated as an indispensable part of any language teaching/learning situation. While Crystal (1997) clearly asserts that different cultures throughout the world can exist along with the global spread of English, the scholars belonging to CP tradition including Phillipson (1992), Pennycook (1994, 2001 and 2007),and Canagarajah (1999) maintain that the spread of English not only threatens different cultures in the world, but strengthens the cultural hegemony of the Center. In this case, Pennycook (2007) introduces the impact of English culture so great that he clearly asserts we must rethink the relationship between English, pedagogy and culture within the contemporary world.

As criticized by Kumaravadivelu (2012), for a long time developing L2 linguistic competence has also meant developing L2 cultural competence and consequently cultural assimilation has been the desired destination with integrative motivation as the preferred path to get there. Regarding this situation, the main justification of the mainstream ELT has been that those who want to learn English want to communicate with the users of this language, and successful communication would not be possible without the learners' familiarity with the cultural norms of English speakers (Akbari, 2008). In this case, insisting on the fact that this assumption is only true for those who want to migrate to countries such as the US or UK for work or study, he reminds us that due to the scope of English application both geographically and communicatively, most of the communication carried out in English is between people who are themselves the so-called non-native speakers of English with a distinct cultural identity of their own. Thus, there is little need in this context for the Anglo-American culture, since neither party is a native with whom the other interlocutor is going to identify. In his words, incorporating source culture, i.e. learners' own culture, is valuable since focusing on local cultures contributes to learners to reflect on the positive and negative features of their own culture and consequently explore ways to make changes in the society if change is required. Mckay (2003) also in response to why anyone would learn about their own culture in English, notes the important point that students need to talk about their own culture when they talk to people from other cultures. In addition, reliance on learners' culture as the point of departure for language teaching will make them critically aware and respectful of their own culture and prevent the development of a sense of inferiority which might result from a total reliance on the target language culture where only the praiseworthy features of the culture are presented. Matsuda (2012) also points to this fact that a possible source of cultural content can be learners' own culture. In her views, when English was considered the language of the UK and US, the knowledge of a narrowly defined "English-speaking culture" may have been adequate. Due to the undeniable fact that this language today is not limited to exchange between native and non-native speakers to English, a critical reflection on local culture of any society can be legitimately incorporated into classrooms.

In addition, integrating the possible culture(s) of learners' future interlocutors might be noteworthy. Another suggestive but challenging point to note might be encouraging students to learn about and reflect on other cultures as a way of reflecting on their own values and customs. Through this pass, as Mckay (2012) writes, reflecting on own cultural values as well as learning about differing cultural values might lead to increasing the learners' sensitivity to cross-cultural awareness.

b) Integrating Local and Global Issues in ELT Materials

According to Bardovi-Harling (1996), teaching materials, especially textbooks, are perceived as a prestige source of input and play an important part in curriculum design of a foreign language class, because learners especially in EFL contexts do not receive much input outside the classroom. In this regard, reviewing the current ELT textbooks shows that their topics are mostly Center-oriented or in sharp contrast with the Periphery countries' atmosphere. Gray (2002) maintains that one effect of globalization is the imposition of Center materials on the Periphery in the increasing spread of global ELT couresbooks which are thematically and culturally "inclusive" and "inappropriate". According to Banegas (2010), such couresbooks are criticized not only for avoiding provoking topics, but also for presenting a romantic view of countries such as Britain or the USA. In his words, in an attempt to avoid some controversial and real issues, material writers opt for selecting themes that are rooted in the British or American culture. Gray (2000) writes that topics are chosen in such a way that the target culture seems to uphold values and living standards that are better than those of the student's culture, leading to the perception that the target culture is superior to the student's. Even if textbooks do contemplate topics such as poverty, hunger, or even discrimination, they are contextualized in Africa or the Muslim world, creating the idea that poverty or discrimination is nowhere to be found in Europe or the USA. Hillyard (2005) points out that when we study the topics of such textbooks, there is little controversial material. On the contrary, we find themes such as the family, sport, hobbies, travel, pop culture, festivals from remote countries which bear no impact on students' lives, fashion and food, among others. Also according to Banegas (2010) recently for reasons generally attributed to the production and matching of mainstream couresbooks produced for the general EFL class regardless of where they are used, publishers avoid the inclusion of provocative topics in developing the units of work couresbooks may be divided into.

In CP, what is more essential for both teachers and students are being critically aware of issues surrounding them both locally and globally (Byean, 2011). Regarding the local issues, Akbari (2008) believes that a problem of commercially produced couresbooks is their disregard for the local issues or in a more precise word, their real-life concerns. In addition to local topics, CP insists that global issues should be incorporated in ELT. In Sampedro and Hillyard's (2004) terms, global issues can no longer be dismissed as the "out there", but they are very much "in here" too and can no longer be safely ignored. Matsuda (2006) points out since at present learners want to become effective users of English in the international context, some awareness of global cultures and issues needs to be fostered. In her words, such topics as world peace, environmental conservation and other relevant topics in the field of global education provide appropriate content for readings, class discussions and course assignments.

Since CP, insisting on improving critical thinking, aims to empower language learners and provides an opportunity for the learners to transform their lives, on the one hand, it is strongly suggested that the topics and content of textbooks, class discussions and course assignments be contextually and locally situated and on the other hand to be effective users of English in the global context, integrating global issues needs to be fostered. Needless to say, incorporating global topics which in Matsuda's (2012) words includes topics that cut across national boundaries and are relevant to the global society as a whole, can not only foster the learners' awareness of the global culture, but develop the sense of global citizenship among them.

c) A Joint Goal: Social Development along with Language Development

Reviewing the current commercially ELT textbooks indicates that, as Rashidi and Safari (2011) note, most of them are a compilation of information and activities with the purpose of

improving English communicative abilities regardless of the social issues or in a more precise word, they have been designed for traditional banking education. Having a set of prespecified objectives settled down prior to the actual occurrence of the learning situations, supporting practices indicating a superficial understanding of the discussed topics, developing activities and exercises which incorporate language skills without involving students in contextualized activities and so on are the main features of the mainstream ELT textbooks.

In Crookes and Lehner's (1998) words, in a critical L2 pedagogy, materials pursue a "joint goal" which its general aim is to help students to read with and also to read against. In fact, contrary to the mainstream ELT, critical pedagogy attempts to make the learners experience a sense of empowerment through engaging in the emancipatory praxis, i.e. the cycle of reflection and action. In such a situation the learners can discover new ways of challenging the status quo and engaging in transformative actions to improve their lives (i.e. social development) while they improve their mastery of the target language (i.e. language development). Thus, the materials must be developed in such a way that besides providing valuable language input, they construct and reinforce critical attitudes to learners' surroundings. According to Pishghadam and Naji (2011), through this trend, ELT policies can shift towards language for life purposes, especially in EFL contexts in which learners may need not much to use the language for real-life purposes. in their words, this trend gives English courses a new flavor; learners do not go to English classes to become familiar with Anglo-American culture, or to learn a language for its own sake, but to boost their social competencies, become more prepared to deal with unprepared situations, and internalize life skills.

Undoubtedly, noticing this joint goal can pave the way to prepare learners to "read the world" while "read the word". Certainly, centering English lessons on social life skills and development not only can transcend discussions over language, but also can turn language classes into language-and-life classes.

d) First Language as a Source

The common practice in L2 professional literature has been the rejection of learner's L1 (Akbari, 2008). Contrary to this tenet of the mainstream ELT, critical pedagogy tradition regards L1 as an asset facilitating communication in L2. Introducing this tenet as the "monolingual fallacy", Phillipson (1992) argues this belief is rooted in the maintenance of colonial power and in misguided and negative beliefs about bilingualism.

In Akbari's (2008) words, the rationale for the total exclusion of L1 from classes must be sought mostly in the political, economic dimensions of L2 teaching and the inability of native English teachers to utilize the mother tongue potential of their learners. Ford (2009) also maintains that, in terms of classroom practices, the imposition of an English-only approach can be considered as authoritarian and reflecting a supposition of linguistic and cultural superiority. From a critical perspective, Akbari (2008) notes that denying the significance and learners' first language is part of his or her identity and a force which has played a crucial role in the formation of that identity.

There is no doubt that the prevalence of native-speakerism that according to Mckay (2003) privileges Inner-Circle curriculum and teaching methodologies, in a world in which about 80% of English language teaching professionals are bilingual users of English, does not have any reason except the hegemonic practices of ELT industry that according to Phillipson (1992) purposefully perpetuate the concept of the native speaker. In fact, one way to break the Center-based tenet can be moving away from the current "modernization" model (Tollefson, 1991) of curriculum development, where Western models are applied by Western experts (Inner-Circle countries) to non-Western (Outer- and Expanding-Circle countries). In this model, it is advertised that the use of first language lowers the learners' proficiency and the standards of teaching. On the contrary, through the critical paradigm, the learners' knowledge of their mother tongue is the greatest asset that they generally bring to the English classroom (Khati, 2011). Regarding the psychological reality of the first language, Dawson (2010) notes that teachers try to prevent their students from using first language, but they cannot prevent them

from using first language in their brains. In this regard, Nation (1990) also argues that the exclusion of the mother tongue is the criticism of the mother tongue itself and has harmful psychological effects on learners. Introducing first language as an important tool for language learning, Macaro (1997) reminds that it is impractical to exclude the first language from the classroom. According to Aurbuch (1998), using first language can be applied in cases including classroom management, language analysis, presenting rules governing grammar, discussing cross-cultural issues, giving instructions or prompts, explaining errors and checking for comprehension. Brown (2000) also maintains that first language can be a facilitating factor and not just an interfering factor. Supporting the role of mother tongue in the classroom procedures in various methods, Larsen-Freeman (2000) notes the issue that the use of first language can enhance initially the students' security through providing a bridge from the familiar to the unfamiliar.

In CP, as Ford (2009) writes, learners' freedom to use their L1 in the second language classroom, not as a medium of instruction, but as a means of facilitating communication and comprehension, is nothing less than an expression of "linguistic human rights".

Concluding remarks

This paper was firstly an attempt to introduce the hidden nature and function of the mainstream ELT and to challenge some of the most notable beliefs and assumptions of ELT taken for granted, then to insist on seeing English and ELT through a broader sociopolitical and cultural perspective. Also, considering this fact that we cannot deny the importance of English in the modern world, the authors strongly believe that it is essential for the Periphery countries, as mostly the mere consumers of the Center, to adopt a more dynamic, critical and conscious position. To achieve this goal, critical pedagogy as an alternative and efficient approach to the liberalist ELT pedagogy was introduced and discussed. There is no doubt that not paying attention to the nature and function of ELT could lead to further marginalization and cultural derichment of the Periphery's applied linguists and ELT professionals as well as its learners. Thus, to avoid the ballyhoos of the mainstream ELT which are dominant and prevalent in the realm of ELT worldwide, especially in EFL Periphery countries, it is strongly recommended that ELT professionals in such contexts place a high premium on hearing such critical voices helping them, as Kumaravadivelu (2012) holds, become acutely aware of some thought-provoking issues as linguistic imperialism, discourse of colonialism, native speakerism, the political economy of ELT, reclamation of local knowledge, etc. In his words, what is surely and sorely needed is a meaningful break from this dependency, if we are serious about sanitizing our discipline from its corrosive effect   and sensitizing the field to the demands of globalism.

Attending to such critical notions and especially resorting to some practical applications of critical pedagogy can wisely make the Periphery free of entangling in theoretical and terminological knots of mainstream ELT that have contributed not only to the dominance of the Center's mainstream ELT tenets, but also the preservation of the Periphery dependency and marginalization. Therefore, this is no surprise when Kumaravadivelu (ibid., p. 17) notes that " entrapped within such a biased mode of knowledge production and unable to break from their dependency on them, scholars in periphery countries have been doing mostly reactive, not proactive research."

Beyond all doubt, what is needed for the Periphery to break the dependency on the mainstream ELT is firstly the necessity to question the Center-produced tenets, to identify their potentials as well as needs, and to apply practically their findings in ELT profession and practice.

In all, taking this critical approach, which itself entails a critical understanding on the part of policy makers, materials developers and English language teachers of the nature of English and ELT function, as Canagarajah (1999) argued for, can provide a situation in which the Periphery students become insiders and use this language in their own terms, according to their own aspirations, needs and values, not as slaves, but as agents, creatively and critically. This trend certainly will be in line with the call by Pennycook (1995, p. 55) to all applied linguists and English teachers around the world

to "become political actors engaged in a critical pedagogical project to use English to oppose the dominant discourses of the West, and to help the articulation of counter-discourses in English".

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