Heritage Languages in English-Dominated Contexts: Creating Barriers or Opportunities?

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ABSTRACT

The following paper conceptualizes the notion of "othering" minority languages and cultures, which is a long-time borrowed tradition of colonialism. The first section of the paper reviews debates among scholars regarding the role of English as an imperial language on the one hand, and the language of globalization on the other hand; consequently, the elevated status of English could be linked to marginalizing certain groups who are not entitled to legitimate linguistic rights. The second section of the paper presents insights into possibilities to empower language minority students by emphasizing the value of bi/multilingualism by maintaining heritage languages while acquiring English. In post-colonial context and multifaceted, multicultural modernity, heritage languages may be viewed as an empowering possibility for minorities to have a legitimate voice and participate in the process of knowledge production and voicing perspectives from different localities. The author concludes with some pedagogical implications of heritage language maintenance in TESL (Teaching English as a Second Language) educational contexts.

INTRODUCTION

The marginal or 'minority' is not the space of celebratory, or utopian, self-marginalization. It is a much more substantial intervention into those justifications of modernity—progress, homogeneity, cultural organicism, the deep nation, the long past—that rationalize the authoritarian, 'normalizing' tendencies within cultures in the name of the national interest or the ethnic prerogative. (Bhabha, 1991, 4)

The status of English as a global language or lingua franca is typically associated with increased opportunities for global cooperation, international travelling, career opportunities, educational prospects and international trade. Post-colonial scholars, however, emphasize the other side of this international language of communication, specifically, its long-term alliance with colonialism and oppression: "the power and the fixity of the discourses of colonialism as they adhere to English are very great" (Pennycook, 1998, 214).

While two facets of English, as the language of both oppression and opportunity, seem to spark no debates and are taken for granted, there is still some ambivalence as to all those clichés and labels assigned to English. After all, it is just a language, one of the thousands existing, flourishing, surviving, or, unfortunately, dead languages. It is not fair to blame a language for all injustices performed by its speakers or those allied with it. There is a need to create alternative terminology that will reflect the human factor, not purely linguistic associations ("English as a killer language," for instance). As a speaker of English and Russian (both are not my first

languages), I dislike the way people refer to these languages as imperial. These two languages became a part of my life, my socialization, my feelings, my way of accumulating knowledge and information; I cannot imagine my present life without these "two imperial" languages. In their attempt to find a more accurate term for English as a Second Language (ESL), Novakovich and Shapard (2000) coined a phrase "stepmother tongue," since they believe ESL sounds very impersonal and formal for those fluent ESL speakers of English who successfully integrated it into their lives. On the other hand, for many minorities in former colonies, English was the only language to express themselves, to have a voice, to defend their position. Pennycook (1998) states that:

> this is one of the fundamental dilemmas of colonialism and postcolonialism: how does one establish a relationship to the languages and cultures of the colonizers when they represent both colonial oppression and the possibilities for anti-colonial struggle? How does one work with a language that one may both hate as a language imposed in school and love as a language one has come to work with? (Pennycook, 1998, 213).

This duality of English, or love-hate relationships could be attributed to different localities where English was spread and promoted, probably as well as the temporal or historical realities of particular language policies. Cummins and Davison (2007) differentiate English as a foreign language in non-colonial contexts, where English is "the polite guest that knows its place" (4), and English as the only legitimate language in former colonial contexts, where it usually replaced local mother tongues. Moreover, Pavlenko and Norton (2007) assign English a significant role in the formation of the national identities when people may construct their identities "through and in opposition to English" (672). The role of English as a colonial language, or rather the colonial legacies of ELT (English language teaching) and their continuing traditions in the present (Pennycook, 2007), the practice of "othering" language minority students and some popular myths associated with bi-/multilingualism will be presented in this paper in order to underscore the importance of minority and heritage languages within the educational context of globalized multilingual communities.

COLONIAL PRACTICE OF "OTHERING" WITH REGARD TO LANGUAGE MINORITY STUDENTS
Pennycook (1995) argues against the common assumption that the spread of English around the world was natural, neutral and beneficial for all non-English speaking communities. He also insists that while acquiring linguistic competence, ESL students inadvertently absorb Western knowledge that may not be applicable in their local context, yet serves as a key to more prestigious, even elite,

status. By reformulating the common abbreviation TESL as "Teaching English as a Superior Language," Pennycook (1998) argues that ELT practices can not only be traced back to colonialism but must be viewed as a direct product of colonialism: "ELT not only rode on the back of colonialism to the distant corners of the Empire but was also in turn produced by that voyage" (Pennycook, 1998, 19). Anglicism was, in a way, a predecessor of ELT not only as a medium or tool of intervention but also as an independent policy producing its own constructions. The popular binary of native /non-native speakers, discourses of "Self" and "Other," stereotypes about other cultures and ESL learners must be viewed as colonial legacies (Pennycook, 1998). In a globalized new world, the colonial practice of Anglicism reappeared under a different name of "English as a global language" and, in a way, created a "new global empire" with its own means of spreading English (Pennycook, 1998). Within this context, minority and heritage languages are often viewed as subjugated and deprived of legitimacy. However, analyzing crossing and code-switching between a dominant English language and home languages among adolescents in Great Britain, Rampton (2005) concludes that in some instances, minority languages could be strategically used to demonstrate resistance to the dominant discourse and acceptance of cultural, racial and linguistic differences.

The practice of "othering" linguistic minorities is, by default, supported by various overt and covert policies regarding the legitimacy of certain languages. Fairclough (2001), applying the so-called "critical language study" in the analysis of linguistic discourse, concludes that there are always tangible or invisible connections between languages, ideologies, and power relations in society. Tollefson (1995) emphasizes the double standards of some official policies, which on the surface proclaim equality and opportunities for everyone, but in practice serve to further marginalize linguistic minorities into the periphery of the dominant society and economy. However, Pennycook (1998) states that it is difficult to judge language policies as either good or bad since we should take into account the historical context and specific location where the policy was implemented. He provides an example of these double standard policies when in colonial India, English was the language of instruction in educational sphere under the pretext of civilizing local ignorant peoples, but the real task was to produce obedient contributors to colonialism. On the other hand, the British rulers did not want to overeducate the local population since too much English was considered to be dangerous and lead to a class of "discontented and disloyal members of the community" (Government of India, 1963 as cited in Pennycook, 1998, 202-203).

The societal attitudes towards different forms of bi/multilingualism can also fall on a broad spectrum from tolerance to celebration and encouragement. Ruiz (1984) contemplating orientations in language planning, summarizes three common attitudes towards minority languages viewed as "problem," "right," and "resource." Cummins (2000) provides more contemporary examples of double thinking with regard to language policies; he illustrates how language minority Muslim students in Greece and Spanish-speaking children in the USA have their home background and languages devalued, and these children are forced to be educated in a second or even third language while losing their home language. The same linguistic practice is viewed as a stigmatized minority bi-/multilingualism or elite multilingualism: "bilingual education is a cause of further impoverishment for the poor but a potential source of further enrichment for the rich" (Cummins, 2000, 26). Bilingualism, as one of the particular characteristics of minorities, is considered to be the problem in mainstream society (Skutnabb-Kangas, 1999). In the same vein, Fuller (2009) claims that there are two different forms of bilingualism: "immigrant bilingualism (which is stigmatized) and elite bilingualism (which is prestigious)" (340).

Relationships within schools and between teachers and students are influenced by power relations between communities in a broader society, which also influences the patterns of academic success and failures of minority students (Cummins, 2000). The classroom power discourses are often invisible and unpronounced, but they "permeate the fabric of classroom life" (Auerbach, 1995, 9). Language choice within the classrooms contribute to the 'we' and 'they' concepts assigning either 'ingroup' or 'outgroup' identities: "in classrooms, there is often one legitimate way of speaking, the acceptance of which devalues all other codes" (Fuller, 2009, 345). As a result, minorities may internalize the feelings of shame and oppression (Cummins, 2000), which Freire (1970) also refers to as "fatalism" or the belief of subjugated people that they are powerless, and it is their fate to be on the margins. Consequently, ESL and minority students who feel that their cultural and linguistic backgrounds are not valued by the educational system in the dominant society may choose to withdraw from active participation.

Wagner (1991), in analyzing illiteracy among subordinate groups, distinguished between "illiteracy of oppression" and "illiteracy of resistance," both resulting from limited interactions between minority and majority languages and limited access to schooling. "Illiteracy of resistance" means that minority groups reject the mainstream education and would rather be illiterate than sacrifice their identity and language; on the other hand, "illiteracy of oppression" is a result of

assimilation when linguistic minorities lose their languages while being integrated into the mainstream system; both lead to poor academic achievements or failures (as cited in Cummins, 2000). Lee (2008) rejoins by claiming that classroom discourses, in particular in the language-learning environment, can produce "locally – and globally – subjugated (or Othered) student identities" (92), so the classroom discourses and relationships between teachers and learners influence not only immediate academic progress, but also have adverse long-term consequences. In the educational context dominated by mainstream linguistic and cultural practices, ESL learners "are often positioned within a deficit framework that limits the kinds of identities and communities that can be imagined by and for these learners" (Pavlenko & Norton, 2007, 676). Addressing the subjective and biased understanding of literacy, Williams (2008) acknowledges that we may jump to conclusions about another person's ignorance or lack of linguistic competence based on our own conventions.

One of the traces of colonial language practices in contemporary ELT is the fixity of labels and stereotypes assigned to ESL learners and their "other" cultures. Pennycook (1998) notes that:

> The 'SOLs' of TESOL are fixed and denied and determined by their cultures, whether this be in the way they write (cross-cultural rhetoric), the way they learn (learning strategies), or in the invitation for them to tell us about their own cultures (189).

Attitudes towards immigrants, international students and linguistic minorities are inextricably linked to language ideologies in particular political, cultural and linguistic contexts. Leeman (2012) asserts that the construction of the concept of heritage speakers implies "not just linguistic knowledge or experience but also an ethnoracial identity linked to particular cultural knowledge or experience" (48). She analyzes the presence of discriminatory ideologies at different levels of educational settings in the USA regarding Spanish-speaking students whose first language is not only surpassed by the mainstream one (i.e., English) but is also not valued equally with the European (i.e., standard or correct) variety of Spanish. In a similar vein, Mateus (2014) illustrates how heritage learners are prescribed certain deficient identities in terms of their contribution to the classroom activities in dual language education programs in the States.

Similar to the colonial practice of viewing difference as the symbol of "other" or deficiency, language educators may be unaware of their bias when they consider foreign students educated in a totally different context as deficient and in need of correction. Pennycook (1998; 2007) provides an example of common stereotypes associated with Chinese students as lacking independence,

critical skills and creativity, passive rote memorizers often resorting to plagiarism. The bigger issue is probably not the labels themselves, but their spread among educators. These stereotypes may become not merely an individual bias but more like an unwritten truth or common-sense knowledge to such an extent that even when teachers come across cases and students that totally violate their preconceived assumptions, they would rather treat this as an extraordinary exception to the rule. Pennycook (2007) compares the learners' cultures to the colonial construct of "Orientalism," while the English language teaching represents "Occidentalism." Ironically, once learners have access to English-mediated education and achieve fluency in a second language, they automatically assume a higher status in comparison to their peers. The only accepted and expected variety of English in TESL field is the so-called "Standard English," which is elevated above other varieties and dialects (De Costa, 2016). However, the understanding of standards and norms may also vary depending on where the language is being taught. Despite the claim that "many developing countries, especially those with a colonial past, have worked hard to liberate themselves from curricula, books, tests and ideals of their former colonial masters" (Brock -Utne, 2012, 784), the dominant status of English is still present in post-colonial context. Ramanathan (2007) emphasizes British colonial practices in present-day India, where representatives of a middle class with access to Indian English education are considered to occupy a higher privileged position in the social hierarchy as opposed to other local students who are educated in vernacular languages. Low-income children educated in vernacular schools have no other choice but continue their education through local languages, which significantly limits their future professional choices. The further inequality in terms of language hierarchy is also observed in higher educational institutions when arts are taught by medium of vernacular languages and sciences are taught in English since they are considered to be more prestigious and important regarding future academic and professional choices. Consequently, those students who were educated in vernacular schools have very limited possibilities to take science classes. The task in TESOL for educators is to find some balance between two or more languages and value their learners' backgrounds in order to achieve a possibility for power redistribution (Ramanathan, 2007).

The practice of othering language minority students reflects Bhabha's (1994) concept of hybridity, mimicry and fixity of the "Other": when all representatives of the same culture are viewed as a homogenous mass rather than individual learners with their own specific needs and challenges; when ESL students, influenced by dominant discourses of monolingualism, attempt to

acquire native-like accents and merge with the mainstream society; when educators assign some fixed identities and future trajectories for ESL learners and refuse to admit the changing and developing nature of human beings.

In many cases, the ground for "othering" ESL students can be not just their limited language proficiency, but even their cultural practices which are in dissonance with the dominant accepted ones. For example, Blackledge (2003) illustrates how in contemporary Britain, the analysis of school reports linked visits to students' heritage countries with their poor academic achievements based primarily on the number of absences from school as a result of those visits. Dismissing any other potential causes of minority students' underachievements, school administrators found a convenient excuse to explain the overall low grades of minority students; on the other hand, since classroom discourses are reflections of power distribution in a larger society (Cummins, 2000; Auerbach, 1995; Lee, 2008), this also illustrates unwillingness of the British society to include "other" cultural discourses despite the proclaimed commitment to diversity. "Other" cultural practices can be acknowledged and possibly accepted only if they go in line with the dominant practices of the host society (Blackledge, 2003).

Another example of othering and disbalance in cultural and educational discourses is offered by Andreotti (2011), who analyzed the hidden message in what appears to be a beneficial exchange between white students from a British school and those in Ghana. In this exchange project, the British students were acting as the "world citizens" trying to improve the conditions of those who are less fortunate by teaching them English, literacy and computer skills, whereas those students in Ghana were once again reminded that they had no agency and could be only recipients of the benefits contributing nothing to the project except from some cultural excitement (Andreotti, 2011). On the other hand, minorities themselves frequently allow and even welcome the changes brought by Western culture and education assuming that their local knowledge, language, and educational systems are inferior to those in the "developed" countries. Consequently, in our contemporary world, I would not only blame the Western imposition of power and dominance because in many localities it is a two-way agreement: developing nations welcome and celebrate the interference and changes from the West, and only when the local practices become under threat or extinguished, they realize the harms of the "beneficial" improvements.

INSPIRING POTENTIALS OF BILINGUALISM

Cummins (2000) claims that educators may reinforce either "coercive relations of power" or promote "collaborative relations of power"; the first act when the dominant group, individuals or cultures require subordinate groups to give up their languages and identities for the sake of potential benefits in a mainstream society. Cummins (2000) finds the signs of coercive relations of power in the following educational practices: not including language minority parents into the educational process by virtue of their limited language proficiency; submersion programs where the learners' first language is under threat of being lost; the content of school curriculum and textbooks that do not include the cultural perspectives of the minorities; application of biased standardized tests for minority students assessment; narrow-minded pedagogy behind teacher training programs that are still oriented on ephemeral monolingual white middle-class learners (Cummins, 2000). Skutnabb-Kangas (1999) defines what she calls "nonmodels" or "weak models" for bi-/multilingual students where their mother language and cultural background are not appreciated; as a result, they cannot promote bilingualism and are in line with Cummins' concept of coercive relations of power. Submersion, transitional, segregation and early-exit programs are "weak models" that may well be considered as forms of linguistic genocide (Skutnabb-Kangas, 1999).

Alternatives to "coercive relations of power" will be "collaborative relations of power" when:

> 'power' is not a fixed quantity but generated through interaction with others. The more empowered one individual or group becomes, the more is generated for others to share, as is the case when two people love each other or when we really connect with children we are teaching. Within this context, the term empowerment can be defined as the collaborative creation of power (Cummins, 2000, 52).

If educators manage to build collaborative relations of power in the language learning environment, students feel more confident to participate in classroom activities since they believe that their unique identities are valued (Cummins, 2000). In addition to promoting collaborative relations of power, bilingualism could be a tool to give a voice to language minority students in the educational context:

> When two languages are used in the school to affirm the experiences and cultures of the students and communities who speak those languages, this in itself challenges the discourse of superiority and evaluation that characterizes social relations between these communities in the wider society (Cummins, 2000, 18).

Cummins (2000) is a strong advocate of maintaining and developing L1 literacy not at the expense of L2, but as a valuable asset with the possibilities of transferring literacy skills. Both languages, LI and L2, can complement and enrich each other rather than cause confusion and delays. Cummins (2000) points out that opponents of bilingual education view it as a threat to national unity due to a high influx of immigrants with diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds. On the contrary, it is time to revisit the historical shameful tradition of subjugating linguistic minority children by punishing them for their L1 use, assimilating and segregating them within the dominant society. By providing a fair bilingual education, the long-standing colonial legacies can be reversed (Cummins, 2000).

Another benefit of bilingual education is the possibility of "cross-linguistic transfer" when learners with strong literacy skills in their mother tongue can potentially transfer those skills when acquiring literacy in a second language; of course, this transfer does not happen automatically or naturally, so a sufficient amount of formal instructions in L2 is still required. Consequently, the research data dismantle the popular myth of damaging influence of L1 while learning L2 (Cummins, 2000). Multilingualism should be viewed as "one of the goals of proper education" (Skutnabb-Kangas, 1999, 58) since it is potentially beneficial for all students, not only language minorities.

"Transformative/ intercultural orientation" as opposed to Freire's (1970) concept of "banking education" (i.e., providing information in an authoritative way without possibilities of questioning or criticizing) should replace "exclusionary/assimilationist orientation" when cultural diversity should not be perceived as a threat to the integrity and purity of the dominant language when we try to recreate a more tolerant and accepting society "where there is cooperation rather than competition across cultural boundaries and where cultural and linguistic differences enrich rather than fragment the whole" (Cummins, 2000, 248). Multilingual and bilingual education may be an alternative to decrease the failure and underachievement among subordinated students whose potential contribution to the whole society may be lost; as a result, multilingualism is a tool to develop cultural and linguistic resources of the nation and the society. Many educators tend to find the causes of underachievement and failures in the ELL students themselves rather than in the sociopolitical contexts surrounding the schools (Cummins, 2000). Addressing different forms of minority assimilation and educational practices within the dominant society, Skutnabb-Kangas (1999) concludes:

It does no good to try to change the minority child to fit a majority school. It is not enough to try to give the minority child an emergence kit so that the child can manage in a racist society. It is not enough to enrich the majority child through a bit of exposure to other cultures. Instead, the whole school must change. Society must change (48).

HERITAGE LANGUAGE MAINTENANCE AS AN EMPOWERING COUNTERDISCOURSE

Grin (1999) analyzes the patterns that affect people's choice of languages, which in turn, predetermines the factors of language maintenance and loss. One possible explanation of human linguistic preferences is illustrated by "human capital theory" or "network externalities" (Grin, 1999) according to which the popularity of language depends on the number of speakers: the more people use this language the higher chances that other people would like to acquire the proficiency in this language. This theory, however, does not account for bilinguals' linguistic preferences who can alternatively use one language or the other; obviously, there must be some other hidden constricts that predispose people to choose one language but not the other in specific circumstances. Bi-/multilingual speakers may have preferences in terms of languages not only for the sake of effective communication but also because they may perform roles assigned by their linguistic environment. Official language policies aim at shaping the existing linguistic environment based on the status of a given language and its speakers: "Language policy (or planning) is a systematic, rational, theory-based effort at the societal level to modify the linguistic environment with a view to increasing aggregate welfare" (Grin, 1999, 18). Since language policies are presumably trying to achieve the best linguistic circumstances for all members of society and claim a collective welfare, individuals have rather limited influence on the language choice in terms of public domains, so the only unregulated space is left for home and close social network communication. Skutnabb-Kangas (1999) believes that our ethnicity and mother tongues are somewhat prescribed by the fact of our birthplace in a specific community, but these pre-given constructs tend to be shaped and influenced by the general socio-economic and political realities of our life context.

In the research literature, heritage languages are often defined as home languages different from mainstream one and without formal institutional support (DeCapua & Wintergerst, 2009) or "nonsocietal or nonmajority languages spoken by groups often known as linguistic minorities" (Valdes, 2005). The term "heritage language" is rather contestable since there are debates and disagreement in the field regarding the status of heritage language learners, their levels of proficiency and bilingualism. Heritage languages may comprise the home languages of new

immigrants actively in use, or just languages of second and third generations whose ancestors were speakers of languages other than the mainstream ones. While for some it is the language of interactions and ethnic identity, for others, this may be just a symbolic tribute to old family traditions. Fishman (2001) states that heritage languages are defined as those that "have a particular family relevance to the learners" and include in this group the indigenous, the colonial and the immigrant languages. In terms of terminology, the research literature offers some synonyms to the term "heritage language," such as first language, home language, mother tongue, and minority languages. While these terms have each slight connotation in meanings, there is some opposition among scholars to the label "minority" since under the modern circumstance of human migration and heterogeneous cultural composition of our society; almost everyone may be assigned to some kind of minority which makes this term "virtually meaningless" (Peyton, Ranard & McGinnis, 2001, 6). On the other hand, the adjective "heritage" is also considered inaccurate, since it has some projection to the past, rather than to the present and provokes some associations with old forgotten traditions not connected to the future (Baker & Jones, 1998 as cited in Wiley, 2001). Some scholars who were trying to avoid the labels "minority" and "heritage" coined alternative terms for students whose parental language is different from the official language in the dominant society; these learners are often called "linguistically diverse students" (Wiley, 2001) or culturally diverse learners.

Regarding mother tongue maintenance as one of the "linguistic human rights," Phillipson et al. (1995) assign some hierarchical relations to language acquisition in terms of which language appears to be the most important. Chronologically, a person naturally learns first his or her mother tongue, the language of immediate community one is born into. The second level in this linguistic hierarchy is assigned to a "language of national integration" that is the language necessary in order to function and participate successfully in a broader society, which for linguistic minorities would mean a dominant language; finally, there may be a need to learn a foreign language for international communication beyond one's nation-state (Ngalasso, 1990 as cited in Phillipson et al., 1995). For those whose first language happens to be a global language (English for example), the linguistic hierarchy does not really exist since the person can be monolingual without any need to master additional languages, while for linguistic minorities denial in being educated and socialized into the mother tongue reflects the violation of human rights since the mother tongue is

the most important in the hierarchy, and its limited proficiency may further restrict the educational, economic and other possibilities for minorities (Phillipson et al., 1995).

Canagarajah (2005c) opposes distinct definitions and constructs shaping ethnic communities since "exclusive categories of identification can lead to ethnic and linguistic sectarianism" (17). If linguistic communities are perceived as homogeneous, they run a risk of ignoring the need of inner "hidden minorities" (17). That is, he supports the idea of heterogeneity from within (similar to Bhabha) when individuals in the same communities may be equally communicating in more than one mother tongue depending on the context (school, neighbourhood, family, official organizations), so they can be identified with more than one mother tongue (Canagarajah, 2005c).

Although the chronological theory of language acquisition seems to prioritize one's mother tongue as the most important in the linguistic hierarchy, such a hierarchy is hardly plausible. Phillipson et al. (1995) caution against blind reference to primordialism or instrumentalism in attempts to emphasize the priorities of some languages over others. By primordialism they mean an assertion that people are born into specific languages, they inherit languages from their parent without any conscious choice, and so the mother tongue is assigned to an individual. Strong advocates of this view erroneously position languages in the hierarchy based on some "biologized" conception, which implies that some languages may be ranked as more complex, logical, or developed. These mistaken assumptions in extreme forms "support hierarchizations of people under the cover of hierarchization of languages, ethnoses (ethnic groups) and cultures, which can lead to genocide" (Phillipson et al., 1995; Phillipson, 1999). Another extreme is instrumentalism, which views languages as acquired by an individual or a group. Proponents of this view emphasize the instrumental function of languages which may be mobilizing forces of ethnic groups for the sake of some political or economic benefits. The overstated version of instrumentalism may see languages as a means of manipulation in ethnic conflicts ignoring other true factors. Both views, primordialism and instrumentalism, are equally inadequate in attempts to rank languages because speakers of all languages have similar linguistic needs and rights (Phillipson et al., 1995; Phillipson, 1999).

Each language has its unique cultural content that cannot be fully transferred through translations, so representatives of ethnic groups who lost or never acquired their heritage language

are not able to perceive the lost language in its full meaningful entity. Among many identity markers, heritage language is the only one that "carries extensive cultural content" (Dorian, 1999, 31). Languages should not be mistakenly viewed as some symbols of "nation-ness" along with songs or traditional costumes; language serves to build "particular solidarities" among members of imagined communities (Anderson, 1992). In general, under favourable conditions, individuals do not refuse their mother tongues; heritage language loss happens only as a result of pressure from outside factors such as "political suppression, social discrimination, or economic deprivation" (Dorian, 1999, 39). Heritage language loss may also occur as a result of intergroup interaction which usually goes hand in hand with assimilation or marginalization. In some cases, the minority groups may find a compromise by means of "economic assimilation (in work), linguistic integration (by way of bilingualism), and marital separation (by endogamy). This implies that the minority can share some values with the majority without sacrificing their minority culture" (Liebkind, 1999, 142).

Some factors contributing to language maintenance or loss could also be attributed to the so-called "theory of core values" which states that some ethnolinguistic groups may have a stronger attachment to their mother tongue as the most important distinct cultural value, while for some other groups language may be replaced by other important concepts, such as religion for example (Smolicz, 1995). If a language has this special "core value" and serves as an identity marker and symbolizes alignment with some specific community, then in case of a second language acquisition a learner forms a bond with all other speakers of this additional language thus enriching their whole community with his or her cultural resources:

> Learning a second or third language can then release the culturally and economically productive forces of all citizens, without depriving anyone of his or her right to a particular linguistic heritage. Instead, that heritage is made to work as a linguistic resource for the benefit of the whole society (Smolicz, 1995, 237).

In the process of integration into mainstream society, some ethnic, cultural and identity markers may be preserved while others can be altered or lost. If an individual manages to maintain their mother tongue, she or he will turn into "a bilingual person with a bicultural identity" (Liebkind, 1999, 142). This scenario is ideal, but in reality, especially in the context of multilingual society, the possibility of transforming into a bicultural and bilingual individual equal to those monolingual and dominant members in terms of their language and culture is rarely realistic.

Fishman (1991) strongly opposes the idea of "uniformation" which implies the same language for everyone; he uses the metaphor "the law of the jungle" to demonstrate that this kind of linguistic practice always involves unequal power relations which are comparable to mere physical survival (as cited in Dorian, 1999). Anderson (1992) admits the fact of disappearance and dying of some languages, but assures that linguistic unification is not possible.

There is also a debate as to who may be considered beneficiaries of linguistic human rights: individuals or groups. Phillipson et al. (1995) claim that collective and individual linguistic human rights should complement not replace each other. On the one hand, linguistic rights are individual, especially regarding one's mother tongue. Every person has the right to be socialized into the language of his or her immediate community; in this sense, a first language ensures the continuity and bonds between generations. On the other hand, a person also has collective linguistic human rights which should guarantee free access to education in all official languages of the country they live in, so that the individual is not restricted from full participation in political, cultural, economic and other processes in the country he or she lives (Phillipson et al., 1995). Among all discussions regarding linguistic human rights, the most vital questions concern the right to learn and be educated in one's mother tongue, especially in terms of minorities. While this right is not denied to majorities due to their privileged position, minorities are often encouraged to learn and develop the majority language, which presumably grants them social benefits and assimilation into the mainstream societies (Phillipson et al., 1995). Kanno (2007) mentions debates in Japan regarding providing English with a status of a second official language. Opponents claim that this policy will establish the dominance of English and will ignore the need to support other minority languages. For example, Brazilian students in Japan should have a potential benefit in learning English over Japanese students since there are more similarities between Portuguese and English. Yet, these students cannot enjoy this advantage since they have to learn English through Japanese, one foreign language through the medium of another (Kanno, 2007).

Languages, besides performing their primary function for communication, often serve as a way for some higher powers to manipulate the subjugated communities (Sonntag, 1995). Fairclough (2001) asserts that "language itself is a stake in social struggle as well as a site of social struggle" (73). For those language minorities trying to defend their linguistic rights, their mother tongue is definitely a "stake," while for others actively revitalizing and maintaining their first languages, it is more like a "site." Damm (1993) notes that colonizers used military power

supported by "the power of words" to establish their supremacy. Tollefson (1995) characterized language policies as "both an outcome of power struggles and an arena for those struggles" (2). In post-colonial contexts, language policies are mostly inherited from former oppressors when new leaders keep up the higher status of colonial languages while denying the local or vernacular languages to perform their major functions and refusing to acknowledge them as national languages (Tickoo, 1995; Phillipson & Skutnabb-Kangas, 1995). While in post-colonial context, mother tongues are denigrated, the education through vernacular mother tongues was one of the strategies of colonialism to divide and rule the oppressed population while supporting the construction of them as "others." Pennycook (2002) refers to this strategy as "protectionism," which is "the preservations of cultures as viewed through exoticizing gaze of the colonial administrator" (16). In our modern world, English as a global international language also has some associations with power and distance among non-native speakers of English:

> Vietnamese for me is primal. The word chua, for instance, which means sour, invokes a more sour taste to me than the English word sour. That is, I would salivate more if I heard chua instead of sour. But to deal with something like globalization, something abstract, Vietnamese is woefully inadequate (Lam, 2000, 28).

While English plays multiple important roles for non-native speakers, it fails to adequately express the plethora of feelings, associations, and nuances the way native languages can.

Canagarajah (2005 a; 2005b) advocates for granting a pronounced role to the local, which should not be viewed just as a simple additional or secondary voice to the global power and knowledge of a few dominant communities. The potential of globalization could be realized by constructing contextually specific plural local discourses. He claims that in an attempt to standardize the construction of knowledge from the perspective of the powerful, the local knowledge was unfairly underestimated and unappreciated. While it should not be viewed as panacea, the perspectives of the oppressed and marginalized may offer an alternative discourse and help in determining biases and injustices. Canagarajah (2005b) urges to revise educational and linguistic policies that will reflect "domains both larger and smaller than the nation-state" (20). Since migration, cultural fluidity, transnationalism, and multilingualism are becoming undeniable realities of our modern life, we no longer should adopt a hostile view to "outsiders" who put our own cultural and linguistic traditions under threat. Referring to Said (1994) and Bhabha (1994), Canagarajah (2005b) rejoins that immigrants and newcomers have an advantage of "double vision" or "critical orientation towards both home and host community" (21).

Enlightenment and modernism, in an attempt to unification and systematization, challenged local knowledge as inadequate to satisfy the requirements of a more global approach to knowledge production, but at present, the biggest challenge for local knowledge traditions is not from globalization but from a more powerful discourse which may well be another local knowledge (Canagarajah, 2005c). Consequently, any knowledge must be viewed as a process, not a final product, and most importantly, we cannot dismiss our own locality and the "angle" from which we act as scholars, critics, and participants in the process (Canagarajah, 2005 c). Referring to what Bhabha (1994) calls "the topos" and "the locus" of annunciation, it is highly probable that minority languages can act as a liberating means to express those local values and knowledge which are still missing in the dominant discourse.

CONCLUSION

English language teaching is also not immune to porous borders between cultures, languages and practices. Consequently, there should not be one universalized dominant discourse, which we deal with at present when native speakers, standard English and accent, Western knowledge and understandings of effective educational practices are often blind to their own limitations and to the possibilities that may be located beyond Western academia. As Cummins and Davison (2007) appeal:

> Language planners and educators must be concerned not only with planting the seeds of English in soil with proper nutrients, but they must also take account of interactions with other plants so that the ecology of the entire garden is enhanced. If English thrives by choking the roots of other plants or by denying them sunlight then the garden as a whole suffers. Thus, ELT must be planned and implemented in such a way that it enhances rather than undermines the social ecology of the entire community (11).

The specific pedagogical implications for language educators, and ESL teachers, in particular, would be to reconsider popular "English only" rules in the classroom context; to dismiss shame and punish students who use their first languages in ESL classes; to consider learning foreign languages so that monolingual educators can gain this experience and possibly more empathy for students; to encourage minority students to use skills and resources from their mother tongues, and to possibly engage in what Canagarajah (2013) refers as "translingual practice"; to stay away from teacher-centred practices in the classroom and instead provide a safe and supportive environment and acknowledge all students as proficient multilingual speakers irrespectively of their actual levels of proficiency (Palmer, Martinez, Mateus & Henderson, 2014).

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