Post-Method Era and Glocalization in Language Teaching and Learning

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ABSTRACT

Language learning which develops in this post-global era of the industrial revolution 4.0 cannot be separated from post-methods. The post-method era is a condition that has been occurring in our current language education in which there are various efforts to reconstruct the relationship between theories and practices of methods (and approaches) based on contexts. In short, the post-method era enables teachers to construct classroom-oriented theories of pedagogical practice instead of knowledge-oriented theories of pedagogy. As a result, the post-method condition can lead to what is called “glocalization” (not “globalization”) in language pedagogy. The global principles, designs, procedures, and techniques of methods and approaches that the Western theorists have made are implemented grounded on what local teachers need, want, and experience in the classroom, thus the colonialism or marginalization which places the teachers as the passive consumer of the theorists’ methods and approaches does not happen. This glocalization in English teaching and learning, which is to do with post-methods, can influence or be practiced in many aspects, especially in interlanguage and culture, individual differences, and learning strategies. This paper reviews and highlights that post-method condition is related to glocalization in English language teaching and learning practices in terms of interlanguage and culture, individual differences, and learning strategies. It also puts forward some research questions for further studies, which may lead the researchers to obtain more information for promoting glocalization to enhance English language teaching.

Keywords: Post-methods, glocalization, language teaching, learning

1. INTRODUCTION: METHOD, APPROACH, POST-METHOD

Method and approach are the things which belong to the essential concepts in language teaching in those practicing teachers used to apply the methods and then approaches but there have been significant changes over the period until we have arrived at the post-methods era. As we have known, the method is procedural, while the approach is axiomatic (Richards & Rodgers, 2014). The approach is the theoretical basis for language teaching, the level at which there are theories, assumptions and beliefs or principles about language and language learning (theoretical), whereas method is the level at which the theories, assumptions, beliefs, and principles are put into practice (practical), including procedures, materials, the order, techniques, etc. Burnham (1999) argues that approach influences how practitioners orient themselves towards all aspects of their work, including theoretical constructs with certain concepts, ideas, and framework, while method encompasses how the activities of the systemic practitioner are organized by the approach and facilitate the enactment of the approach. In other words, within one approach, there can be many methods.

There have been many various methods and approaches developed by the language theorists from the past time according to Richards and Rodgers (2014), the Grammar-Translation Method, the Direct Method, the Audiolingual Method, the Total Physical Response (TPR), Suggestopedia, the Silent Way, Community Language Learning (CLL), the Oral Approach and Situational Language Teaching, Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT), Text-Based Instruction (TBI), the Lexical Approach, Cooperative Language Learning, the Natural Approach, Content-Based Instruction (CBI) and Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL), and there are also the Reading Method, the Army Method, the
Structural Approach, and the Bilingual Method (Kumari, 2002) and the Comprehension Approach (Larsen & Freeman, 1990). The teachers always used these methods and approaches in their classrooms and schools.

However, Kumaravadivelu (1994) states that all of those methods and approaches cannot result in satisfying learning outcomes in that the learning and teaching situations are so diverse and complex in reality that there is no single method or approach which can succeed in language learning and teaching. Some scholars even said that methods were dead. Rodriguez (2011, p.119) argues that "generally methods contain detailed specifications such as teaching procedures, techniques as well as roles; this makes them so strict and organized.". This made the theorizers, like Kumaravadivelu (1994), begin a deeper reflection about teachers’ understanding of the method and suggest the necessity of searching for an unconventional option that allows teachers to plan and shape the way they teach by "themselves" and not by following a range of artificial principles, which are commonly far away from their context (Rodriguez, 2011). This reflection took the traditional concept of 'method' towards a “Post Method Condition” or “Post-method Era”.

Post-methods era, a term introduced or popularized by Kumaravadivelu (1994), is a foremost condition which has been occurring in our current language education in which there are various efforts to reconstruct the relationship between theories and practices of methods (and approaches). According to Kumaravadivelu (2003), a method is considered as a colonial construct because it tends to have the process of marginalization, namely the theorist produces rigid and fixed knowledge about methods along with their principles, techniques and procedures and the process of self-marginalization, that is the teacher or practitioner just consumes the rigid knowledge or the methods without considering the local or current contextual condition in the classroom. Owing to this rigid relationship between the theorist as the power center of language pedagogy and the practicing teacher just as the powerless periphery, the concept of the method is like a colonialist (the theorist) who marginalizes the practicing teacher. Hence, the concept of the post-methods era appears to abolish such a top-down marginalization in language teaching. While the conventional concept of the method enables the theorists to construct knowledge-oriented theories of pedagogy, the post-method condition enables teaching practitioners to construct classroom-oriented theories of pedagogical practice (Kumaravadivelu, 1994). The post-method pedagogy or era seeks to establish the idea that the methods are not dead yet, methods and approaches along with their techniques, procedures, designs that the teachers use in classrooms can be implemented or applied grounded on the local or contextual situations, developing the teacher autonomy. Everything depends on the teachers as the central decision-makers.

While the methods era makes theorists the central one in the pedagogical decision making in the teaching practices, the post-methods era makes teachers the one who can also decide the teaching practices based on the teaching contexts in which they teach (Kumaravadivelu, 1994). Because the post-methods era does not enable teachers to use the single method as the best method and therefore teachers can apply any kinds of approach or method based on their specific situational contexts, like the classroom, local culture, differences of students, curriculum, political reasons, etc., (searching for an alternative to the method rather than an alternative method) as Kumaravadivelu (1994) argues, the post-method condition can lead to what is called as “glocalization” (not “globalization”) of language pedagogy. Accordingly, I can argue that this post-method pedagogy is related to the so-called glocalization of language pedagogy, in which approaches, and methods must be applied based on the contexts of teaching and learning.

2. GLOCALIZATION OF LANGUAGE EDUCATION

2.1. Glocalization

The term “glocalization” cannot be separated from “globalization”. Glocalization is commonly a term used to refer to the modification of a global product to meet local needs and norms. Glocalization is the result of the process of globalization and localization (Ahmadian & Rad, 2014). It is a term to advocate the slogan think globally, act locally. According to Gurko (2011, p. 132), glocalization as “a mix of global frameworks and local practices, which greatly increases the potential for independent learning by merging worldwide knowledge and local knowledge”. Patel and Lynch (2013) state that glocalization is the merger of global and local perspectives on the socio-economic and political impact of all phenomena that affect local and global communities. The term glocalization connects the global and local together or a blend of local and global. Ahmadian and Rad (2014) continue to believe that glocalization is the use of global standards to describe the goals and consequently make local plans to achieve global
standards. In other words, glocalization is a good description of blending and connecting local and global contexts while maintaining the significant contributions of the different cultural communities (Patel & Lynch, 2013). Khondker (2004) emphasizes that diversity is the essence of social life in glocalization and that globalization does not erase all differences and autonomy of history and culture give a sense of uniqueness to the experiences of groups of people.

From these definitions, we can see that glocalization is a term which is firstly related to globalization. The term “globalization”, as we have known, is considered as the worldwide spread of common values, beliefs, knowledge, traditions, customs, and other cultural phenomena throughout the globe. In language teaching, this has manifested itself in the way English is widely used as the international or global language or “the shared linguistic code” (Ahmadian & Rad, 2014). However, the fact that globalization also means English language as the global language has led to the view that English is no longer viewed as the property of the inner-circle countries (English-speaking nations) but it is an international commodity sometimes referred to as world English’s. The global spread of English is indeed one of the phenomena of globalization. However, the dominance of English creates certain concerns, such as linguistic imperialism, and identity crisis, as people worry that local languages, cultures, and identities will be destroyed by the blind worship of English (Fang, 2018). To overcome this linguistic imperialism, the speech communities tend to develop their varieties by "localizing" English to express their "cultural conceptualizations" and I refer to this dual and parallel process of globalization and localization of English as the "glocalization" of English (Sharifian, 2016). This process can also be called the expression “localization due to globalization”.

2.2. Post-Method and Glocalization

Referring to this concept of glocalization, it can be said that localized learning and teaching refers to the curricula consideration as well as pedagogical framing of local and global community connectedness about social responsibility, justice, and sustainability (Patel & Lynch, 2013). In English pedagogy, "glocalization" can mean that the global principles, designs, procedures, and techniques of methods and approaches that the Western theorists have made are implemented grounded on what local teachers need, want, and experience in the classroom, thus the colonialism or marginalization which places the teachers as the passive consumer of the theorists’ methods and approaches does not happen. This characteristic is that of the post-method era. This post-method rejection of the homogenizing or globalizing process and the belief in the one-size-fits-all method has given rise to the need to localize the teaching materials to better suit the particular language needs and wants of each specific context (Ahmadian & Rad, 2014), leading to glocalization. It can be said that localizing or glocalizing takes into account that the recognition that what may work in one particular setting may not necessarily do so in another context and this is how the post-method era is.

The first, post-method era or pedagogy is influenced by post-modernism and constructivism. As acknowledged by Kumaravadivelu (2003), the source of inspiration for philosophizing post-method is post-modernism. Postmodernism philosophy, which emerges in a wide variety of disciplines or areas of study including art, music, film, literature, architecture, and technology, originated in France during the 1960s and 1970s and was influenced by phenomenology (the scientific naturalism), existentialism, psychoanalysis, Marxism, and structuralism (Ahmadian & Rad, 2014). It is opposed to modernism, which upholds reason, rationality, the universal, idealism, objectivity, and the search for the truth, the fixed and absolute truth, which can lead to an intolerance of diversity and difference and to a purely materialistic and instrumental view, hence it rejects absolutism, idealism, reductionism, foundationalism, universalism, objectivism, behaviorism, and naturalism. Blackburn (1996) describes postmodernism as a reaction against naïve confidence in objective or scientific truth. It denies the idea of fixed meanings, or any correspondence between language and the world, or any fixed reality or truth or fact (Hashemi, 2011). The postmodernist views reality as a social construction, the product of interactions among actors in a social setting because factors such as diverse social structure, class and power relations play an essential role in the creation of reality (Ahmadian & Rad, 2014). Hence, post-modernism denotes that there may or can be a multiplicity or variety of realities, none of which has any more legitimate claim than any other to be viewed as the reality. In brief, postmodernism is essentially constructivism. Fahim and Pishghadam (2009) describe the characteristics of postmodernists as follows:

1. Constructivist, in which there are no real foundations of truth, there is no truth, except what the group decides as the truth in that truth is a social construct to be eliminated.

2. Against absolutism since postmodernists value relativism. Knowledge is not stable and eternal,
3. Rejecting theories because theories are abundant, and no theory is considered more correct than any other.

4. Against the notion of expertise because in post-modernism, the idea that some people (experts) know more than others (non-experts) are not supported. Post-modernists argue that interaction between the knower and non-knowner is often best seen as a dialog, which leads to mutual influence rather than the simple transmission of knowledge from one to another. The top-down structure is rejected.

5. Rejecting global decisions and universalism or generalization and celebrating diversity because reality and truth depend on culture, change over time, and vary from community to community, knowledge is not universal.

6. Opposed to objectivism and replaced with subjectivism because physical laws are not the main tools to rule scientific disciplines but social and cultural laws.

7. Using analytic strategy which is central to politics of postmodernism, trying to uncover the taken-for-granted relationship which has been hidden for a long time, to denaturalize the naturalized roles in the world and each society, and to analyze a text to find out the hidden and marginalized meanings of it. Postmodernists believe that text is innocent, and every text betrays a fragment of power which should be surfaced.

These characteristics of spirit of the post-modernism have influenced many fields of study, including in language pedagogy, which does not seek to establish absolute, fixed, best methods, but seeks to establish alternatives to methods according to contexts and practitioners' active roles in language teaching. Owing to the influence of post-modernism, the post-method pedagogy emerges to respond to the demand for a most optimal way of teaching free from the method-based restrictions (Chen, 2014).

The second, according to Kumaravadivelu (2003), post-method pedagogy consists of three parameters namely particularity, practicality, and possibility. The parameter of particularity refers to the belief that any language teaching must be sensitive to a particular group of teachers who teach a particular group of learners who pursue a particular set of goals in a particular institutional context which is embedded in a particular socio-cultural condition. In other words, this particularity is consistent with the hermeneutic perspective of situational understanding, which highlights the context-sensitive nature of language teaching and claims that a meaningful pedagogy cannot be constructed without a holistic interpretation of particular situations (Ahmadian & Rad, 2014). This particularity of the post-method greatly upholds contexts or particular situations, which means that the language pedagogy cannot be universalized or globalized because it must be sensitive to the local contexts. Hence, particular socio-local conditions, as well as particular teachers’ conditions, must be considered in the teaching practices, not merely following the fixed, absolute theories of language teaching methods and approaches. It is also reflected in the parameter of practicality, which deals with the relationship between theory and practice, in which the knowledge is derived from practice (bottom-up structure). Teachers are no longer consumers of knowledge produced by theorists but need to act on the conditions they face. This particularity and practicality in the post-method pedagogy indicate that context-sensitive pedagogic knowledge has to come from teachers and their practices of everyday teaching, then they ought to theorize from their practices and practice what they theorize (Ahmadian & Rad, 2014). Thus, the notion of post-method also deals with teachers’ local needs, wants, situations, teachers’ beliefs, teachers’ reasoning, and teachers’ cognition, and a transform of disempowered periphery or merely classroom consumers into strategic teachers or strategic researchers reclaiming their teacher autonomy, which is also frequently considered as following the pragmatics of pedagogy according to Widdowson (1990). In addition, it is also reflected on the parameter of possibility, which is concerned with language ideology and learner identity, empowering classroom participants. Hence, in the parameter of possibility, learner autonomy is greatly promoted and encouraged in the post-method.

Furthermore, unlike the methods era which tends to centralize the theories, principles, designs, and procedures constructed by the West and native speakers, thus promoting monoculturalism and top-down process, Daly (2009) believes that in this post-methods era, where diversity is highly celebrated, non-native speaker teachers are in the best position to act as mediators in the language teaching profession to combine local knowledge and teaching strategies with CLT or other principles from SLA or Applied Linguistics to prepare students of SLA for the needs of a globalized world. Daly (2009, p. 15) refers to this glocalizing activity as “a post-methods principled pragmatics”, which places a terrific
burden on teachers”. The post-method pedagogy considers the teacher as an autonomous teacher and this autonomy is central and the heart of post-method pedagogy (Chen, 2014). Post-method pedagogy recognizes or relies on the teachers’ prior and current knowledge, and their potential to teach and act autonomously to break away from the constraining concept of method. This kind of personal knowledge the teacher develops over time will finally lead them to construct their theories of practice.

The third reason why post-method pedagogy can lead to the glocalization of language education is that some of the macro strategies of post-method proposed by Kumaravadivelu (1994), namely maximizing learning opportunities, promoting learner autonomy, fostering language awareness, contextualizing linguistic input, ensuring social relevance, and raising cultural consciousness deal with context-oriented teaching and learning. As we have known, glocalization means making the global localized. Maximizing learning opportunities and promoting learner autonomy indicates that learners are also given the central role to increase their L2 knowledge in various ways, which also reflects the parameter of possibility. Teachers must also consider their students’ needs, beliefs, personalities, and culture in teaching them, not merely teaching them L2 and global knowledge. Fostering language awareness means that the teachers must also be aware of linguistic knowledge that their students have, which promotes diversity and multilingual awareness, thus teachers must not forbid students to use their L1 or other languages in the classroom, but instead, they need to make the benefit of the linguistic repertoire that the students have and encourage the students to be motivated to learn the L2 through their L1. Besides, teachers must also have a desire to learn and increase their linguistic repertoire from their students, which can develop their language or multilingual awareness. Besides, the rest of the macro strategies like contextualizing linguistic input, ensuring social relevance, and raising cultural consciousness clearly reflect the importance of language use in context, the need for teachers to be sensitive to the societal, political, economic, and educational environment where L2 learning and teaching take place, and treat learners as cultural informants, which encourages them to participate actively in the classroom, which means the teaching process is not teacher-centered, but also student-centered and interactive. All of these macro strategic frameworks undoubtedly show us that the post-method pedagogy tends to be a glocalized pedagogy, which does not deny context and local diversity.

3. INTERLANGUAGE, INDIividual DIFFERENCES, LEARNING STRATEGIES IN GLOCALIZED LANGUAGE PEDAGOGY

3.1. Interlanguage and Culture

The interlanguage is considered as a separate linguistic system, clearly different from both the learner’s ‘native language’ (L1) and the ‘target language’ (L2) being learned, but linked to both NL and TL by interlingual identifications in the perception of the learner (Tarone, 2006). The interlanguage can be said as the language that the learner produces using his/her target language which is influenced by his/her native language (the combination between L1 and L2 or any target languages being learned), Tarone (2006) argues that in the transfer theory, native language plays an important or overall role in language acquisition, whereas language innateness theory contends ‘transfer is an unimportant factor in forming interlanguage. Many researchers studied this topic, and they demonstrated that transfer existed at the pragmatic level and some researchers state that learners tend to transfer their L1 knowledge when they obtain a universalist view as opposed to a relativist perspective on pragmatic norms (Cai & Wang, 2013).

Because the interlanguage will not come about without the influence of the L1, in the post-methods era such as today, teachers must apply the glocalization of L2 teaching through the localizing of the globalized L2. The teachers must not abolish or ban strictly and powerfully the use of the L1 or the native dialect in the classroom. They must not force the L2 learners particularly the beginners to use the full target language like the perfect L2 native speakers and stop using the L1 (except in some certain settings, like in immersion programs or Islamic boarding schools), but teachers must use the L1 or the native dialects of their students as a resource or facilitator for learning the L2. In glocalization in the post-method pedagogy, teachers must be sensitive to the L1 or local/native dialects of the students. Teachers should not force learners to master the native-like L2 dialect. Local culture must also be considered in L2 learning and teaching. For example, in English textbooks, local cultural contents must also be included, thus learners can learn English with a glocal perspective. It means that the cultural contents of English textbooks are not mostly about the culture of English-speaking countries or international culture. One of the characteristics of a good
textbook according to Tomlinson (2012) is that the textbook can ease their students and should provide contents or materials which are familiar to the students, including local culture. There have been numerous studies about the cultural contents of English textbooks, one of which was conducted by Faris (2014), which resulted in the findings that some textbooks contain both English culture and local culture, but a large portion of them contain English culture. Learning English with a local approach or perspective or culture is also one of the examples in glocalized language teaching and learning. When I teach English for beginners in an English course, I must not force my students to pronounce the British or the American accents or the inner-circle countries’ accents (except the time when I need to teach and introduce them about those dialects). Besides, as an English teacher in the post-method era who is expected to possess multilingual awareness.

### 3.2. Individual Differences

Regarding this particularity of the students, the post-method teachers must be concerned with individual differences of their students. Learners are not homogeneous. Human beings are unique. Everyone differs from one another due to many biological or conditioned factors or unconscious forces. According to Zafar and Meenakshi (2012), the most studied types of individual differences that one can explore are age, gender/sex, aptitude, motivation, personality, learning styles, and learning strategies.

### 3.3. Learning Strategies

In this post-methods era, teachers must understand the language learning strategies which their students prefer to use. Because learning strategies are influenced by the students’ learning styles, motivations, and personalities, teachers must firstly know the types of learning or cognitive styles, personalities, and motivations of their students.

According to Zafar and Meenakshi (2012), the choice of learning strategies is strongly influenced by the nature of their motivation, cognitive style, and personality, and by specific contexts of use and opportunities for learning. O’Malley and Chamot (1990) have identified some types of language learning strategies, namely:

1. Cognitive strategies, which operate directly on incoming information, manipulating it in ways that enhance learning. Some of these strategies are: repetition, resourcing, directed physical response, translation, grouping, note-taking, writing down the gist of the text, deduction, recombination, imagery, auditory representation, key word, contextualization, elaboration, transfer, inferencing, the question for clarification: asking a teacher or native speaker for an explanation, help, etc.

2. Metacognitive strategies, which are skills used for planning, monitoring, and evaluating the learning activity. Some of the metacognitive strategies are advance organizers, directed attention, selective attention, self-management, preparation, self-monitoring, delayed production, self-evaluation, self-reinforcement.

3. Social and affective strategies, which involve interacting with another person to assist learning or using control to assist a learning task. These strategies are questioning for clarification, cooperation, self-talk.

### 4. CONCLUSION

It can be concluded that the post-method era is closely related to the glocalization of language teaching and learning. The Post-method era, in which the teachers do not have to apply the fixed approaches or methods, but they should adjust their teaching to the social and cultural context of their students, leads to the glocalized language pedagogy. Post-method era is to do with glocalization because it is influenced by post-modernism and constructivism, it is concerned with particularity, practicality, and possibility, and deals with context-oriented teaching and learning. This glocalization has effects on interlanguage and culture, individual differences, and learning strategies, in which language teachers are supposed to include local culture in their English teaching, teach their students based on the individual differences and learning strategies of their students.

Since it has been obvious that post-method era is in alliance with glocalization, there are some interesting issues and questions to explore and investigate further regarding glocalization. Some of them are how has glocalization been practiced in English language teaching and learning? How has glocalization influenced the cultural contents of the English textbook in Indonesia? How about the use of glocalized dialects in learning English in Indonesia? All these questions related to
glocalization in English language and teaching have not been completely investigated, thus further studies need to be conducted.

REFERENCES


