The Center-Periphery Constellation of English Language Co-Teaching in Taiwan: Examples from the Spectrum of Four Different Classrooms

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Abstract

This paper examines the tensions and links in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) co-teaching in Taiwan. Using four vignettes from teacher observations, face-to-face discussions, and teaching reflections, we describe the various ways in which the "Center(s)" and "Periphery(ies)" operate on the local level in Taiwan. Data come from our field notes and one-hour formal observations of these teachers' co-teaching. In addition, we mediate these observations with our own reflections serving as teacher trainers for these co-teaching pairs. These reflections serve not as a critique of individual teachers but rather as a comment as to the ways in which the current system of institutionalized co-teaching and beliefs about native speakerhood need to be re-evaluated. Our observations show what seems to be a disconnect between government language policies of internationalization and globalization, parental ideologies about what counts as "good" English and "good" English instruction, and local-level interactions what is actually happening in the classroom. In considering the interrelationships between center and periphery in EFL in the Taiwan context, we call for the need to look more carefully at both local and global concerns when thinking about language policy and planning.

Keywords: English as a Foreign Language, English Language Teaching, co-teaching, teacher training, Taiwan

Introduction

As two professionals involved in teaching English to East Asian students, in our many years of experience teaching students from elementary to tertiary levels, there is perhaps not a more hotly contested pedagogical topic in language teaching for parents and school administrators in East Asia than "the best" way to teach English as a Foreign Language (EFL), or how to have a student speak "like a native speaker" of English (cf., Jeon 2009; Erling 2017). Meeting the needs of various stakeholders while at the same time iteratively, critically questioning the commonly accepted notions associated with native speakerhood has been an issue that the two of us have struggled with both personally and professionally.

Much of the earlier pedagogical techniques to enhancing teaching EFL at the curricular and extracurricular levels heavily relied on bringing in a foreign teacher from a so-called norm-providing, Inner Circle, English-speaking country (Kachru 1990), thereby imposing hegemonic ideologies about language and language teaching that perpetuate "dominant cultural, linguistic, and educational notions and practices as neutral and unproblematic and, in this way, conceal relations of domination and subordination in the school system and the pedagogy of language teaching" (Lin 272). Not only this, these policies caused deep feelings of anxieties and shame on local English teachers (Park 2009) and relinquished ownership of English solely to native English speakers from Inner Circle countries (Lee 2014); these sentiments are felt not just in Taiwan alone. This problematic type of "center to periphery" percolation of knowledge, of what counts as knowledge, and of knowledge economies seems to have shifted a bit in the midst of changing social and global forces facing English language teaching today. More and more work has looked to ways in which local knowledge and expertise, not those imported from the "Center," are practiced and interpreted locally within the constraints of the social contexts (Canagaragah 2002; Tin 2014), thereby instigating a shift that reflects more of a "periphery to center" orientation.

In this paper we report data related to these tensions between the "periphery" and the "center" from elementary school co-teaching observations between U.S.-based English teachers

and local Taiwanese English teachers, mediated by our own experiences and reflections serving as teacher trainers for these co-teaching pairs. By engaging in this process of reflexivity, we aim to bring fuller consciousness to our own positionalities (Briggs 1986) in the process of teaching and teacher training and to add to the literature of intercultural exchange, and shifting the focus onto a more pluricentric, relentlessly local form of English teaching (Levinson and Holland 1996).

Literature Review

Below we review some of the literature related to the center-periphery in EFL, co-teaching, and language policy and planning in Taiwan.

Center-Periphery in EFL

In the fields of English Language Teaching (ELT) and Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL), much has been discussed with regards to the role of linguistic imperialism and English language spread. Closely linked to imperialism theory (Galtung 1988) this work separates the Center, marked as powerful, western countries and their own vested interests, from the Periphery/ies, usually marked as the countries and contexts dominated by the Center. Phillipson (1992) famously put forward the notion of linguistic imperialism, where "the dominance of English is asserted and maintained by the establishment and continuous reconstruction of structural and cultural inequalities between English and other languages" (47). Linked intimately to power inequality and unequal access, Skutnabb-Kangas (1988) notes that linguistic imperialism "reproduce[s] an unequal division of power and resources (both material and inmaterial) between groups which are defined on the basis of language" (13). To this end, both scholars note the Anglo-centricity of judging other English users by the standards of an imagined Anglo speaker, which also fuels into discourses about who counts as a legitimate practitioner and professional in the field of ELT and the methodological choices being packaged by the Center as being universally and culturally appropriate (Holliday 1994).

Others (Bisong 1995; Davies 1996; Pennycook 2000) have pointed out that notions of linguistic imperialism and linguicide do not focus on the equally important elements of English user agency and the ways in English speakers decide to put English to use. Rather than overgeneralizing the gargantuan role of English across the world (and various Peripheries), scholars have suggested investigating the nuanced ways in which English is both used and contested in local contexts (Canagaragah 1999). In doing so, one would also see, as Holborow (1999) mentions, that a Center-Periphery model of linguistic imperialism is not always enough to capture what goes on in the Periphery. For example, the degree to which the Periphery is suppressed by a Center force is not fixed; rather, local elites at the periphery are also benefiting from the Center. Thus, what is being illustrated is not that linguistic imperialism does not exist, but instead that language and power relations operate under global infrastructures that must absolutely be analyzed by context. Moreover, there is ample research that calls for the need to understand how the local resists and hybridizes top-down imposed norms (Canagaragah 1999; Eoyang 2003; Sonntag 2003, among others). Canagaragah and other scholars have also made note of the fact that when ELT is adapted to learners' own needs and contexts, learning is much more meaningful and relevant, even when the divide between "established, dominant thinking or globally and officially valued norms" is at odds with "local, legitimate peripheral knowledge" generated in daily social practices (Tin 398).

The literature relating to center and periphery is not without its critiques. Lin (2013) notes, "The dichotomy between the dominant Centre and the dominated Periphery is problematic, especially when the Periphery is no longer a passive and submissive receiver but a more active participant in the process of English spread" (8). That being said, Lin also notes that the ways in which contexts resist also illustrate various power struggles between various countries at the "Center" and the "Periphery." That is to say, English language instruction must necessarily be "relentlessly local" (Levinson and Holland 1996). Meyer (2007) also notes that ELT at the Center, in her case, the U.S., itself is diverse and varied. She meaningfully queries: where is the center?, a

question that exposes "certain assumptions that underestimate the diversity and complexity of English language teaching contexts at the Center" (214).

EFL in Asia

With regards to EFL in Asia, Tsui and Tollefson (2007) discuss the role of national language policies in enforcing English as media of instruction, by national needs and interests:

> [L]anguage policy responses to globalization have been shaped, and even determined, by the linguistic practices and preference of multinational corporations, transnational organizations, and international aid agencies. Asian countries have little choice but to legitimize the hegemony of English. (18)

Pickford (2005) discusses the need to explore local vernacular and ELT practices in "peripheral" contexts," and Tin (2014) elaborates on understanding language teaching practices that are considered "peripheral" (in the sense that they seem idiosyncratic but work for the context) in places that are also geographically peripheral (in that they usually do not receive much airtime in the literature). In these contexts, ELT practices offer a "fascinating mix of the center and periphery, the new and the old" and where a "convenient coexistence" can be established (Canagaragah 248).

In the Taiwan context, foreign language teachers have been a huge part of the private English language institute setting. These language institutes, called English cram schools or English *buxiban*, almost tripled within a decade, increasing from 1949 in year 2001 to 5,338 in 2010 (Wang 2010). The booming industry of private English language institutes means the increasing demand for English-language teachers. In addition to local Taiwanese teachers, foreign teachers have always been in high demand as both a marketing tool and pedagogical novelty. Due to this demand for foreign teachers, the quality of these foreign teachers is in question in that they may not have ample training in language teaching (Quirk 1990). Furthermore, the turnover rate of the foreign teachers is high in some language institutes because the reason they stay in Taiwan may be not only to teach English but also to travel and to exchange cultures. Like in many other East Asian contexts, this

global English teaching market has attracted young people from countries where English is a dominant language to "teach English, travel, see the world, and gain some teaching/employment experience" (Erling 92).

This being said, scholars have discussed the domination of native speakerism in ELT (Holliday 2005), a belief that native English speaking teachers (NESTs) are better than non-native English speaking teachers (NNESTs). Those who conform to the idealized native speaker, namely, those who appear white, blonde, and/or blue-eyed, are viewed as more marketable and desirable to the employer, students, and parents (Wang 2010; Erling 2017). It is clear, then, that in addition to native speakerhood, race is also a crucial factor in ELT. In turn, these concepts are linked to larger discourses of who counts as a native speaker, who is deemed a "good" or "qualified" English teacher, as well as local and global ideologies about what English is (and is not).

English Language Policy and Planning in Taiwan, and Co-teaching

In Taiwan, English has been taught as a subject starting from elementary school in Kaohsiung and Taipei since 1997 and 1998, respectively. After the Nine-year Integrated Curriculum for Elementary and junior high schools was put into action in 2001, English was listed in the domain of Language Arts with other local languages (Chern 2010). Sommers (2003) mentions that Taiwan experiences a very unique push and pull between private educational companies hiring foreign teachers mentioned earlier and state-controlled language planning. Mediating these tensions is also parental demands for more English education despite the Ministry of Education's promotion of mother tongue education in Holo, Hakka, and Indigenous languages (Sommers 2004; Oladejo 2006). Additionally, as Wu (2009) mentions, in situations where resources are centered in capital cities, like the cases in Kaohsiung and Taipei, allocating new functions to a linguistic system (in other words, putting heightened weight and value on English as a school subject), contributes to the spread of English from the center (capital city) to periphery (all other counties in Taiwan). These policy and planning issues also have a strong connection to socioeconomic status and class,

as more affluent cities and counties "can (or have to) attend to what their residents ask for (i.e., more English education) since their residents tend to pay more tax to the local governments" (Wu 111). Recently, the Taiwanese government is planning to make English as an official second language (Pan 2017), and experimental schools have adopted bilingual education and content language integrated learning (CLIL) to implement the policy in school subjects like arts, music, and physical education, so that students can be immersed in English (Central News Agency 2018). However, since teachers in Taiwan were not trained to teach academic subjects in English, introducing foreign teachers to teach in Taiwan becomes a potential solution to provide comprehensible and natural English for students to grasp academic subjects through co-teaching between local English teachers and subject teachers. Take the bilingual education initiative in New Taipei City, for example. Each of the bilingual experimental schools will have at least one foreign teacher as a human resource to facilitate the implementation of the bilingual education (New Taipei City 2016).

With regards to teaching and pedagogy, collaboration among teachers has been cited as one of the main components to effective professional development and student success (DelliCarpini 2008). Team teaching as a concept has been practiced for over 40 years, but the idea of it is still considered new and even threatening (Dyrud 2010). East Asia has experienced a saturation of foreign English teachers through various recruitment endeavors such as the Japan Exchange and Teaching (JET) Program in Japan, the English Program in Korea (EPIK), the Native-speaking English Teacher (NET) Scheme in Hong Kong, and the Foreign English Teachers Recruitment Program (FETRP) in Taiwan. Each of these programs varies in terms of the types of teaching environments (i.e., solo teaching versus co-teaching, degree of training of teachers), but across these contexts, there has been substantial research that has looked at issues relating to co-teaching, from co-planning (Fearson 2008; Herbert and Wu 2009) to poor working relationships (Fujimoto-Adamson 2005; Chen 2007) to general difficulties and limitations (Tajino and Tajino 2000; Jeon 2009). Some scholars have noted that the rigid distinction between native English-speaking

teachers (NESTs) and non-native English teachers (NNESTs) overshadows their actual range of training and teaching experiences (Andrews 2007; Wang 2012). Wang's (2012) research with 258 pre-service English teachers in Taiwan shows that most of these teachers look forward to team teaching and are willing to teach with NESTs, most would actually prefer to co-teach with NNESTs instead, and half of the participants stated they would rather teach alone.

While a general definition of co-teaching is when "two or more professionals delivering substantive instruction to a diverse or blended group of students in a single space" (Cook and Friend 109), many difficulties certainly exist, including lack of training (Mastropieri, Scruggs, and Graetz 2005), lack of balance and parity in the classroom (Spencer 2005), and the general belief that one teacher is the "main" teacher while the other is a "glorified paraprofessional" or "in-class tutor for one or two students" (Spencer 297). The rewards, though, include building upon each other's strengths and assets, while productively collaborating and negotiating (and being transparent about) pedagogies and teaching processes. Scholars note that some of the baseline questions that co-teachers should openly discuss include how to express mutual respect and negotiation towards one another, what expertise each teacher brings to the classroom, how individual responsibilities will be doled out, and how disagreements will be handled. Without addressing these baseline questions and without frequent communication and check-ins with each other, co-teaching relationships can be stressful and uncomfortable (Sacks 2014).

With these issues at hand relating to language policy and planning as well as co-teaching in Taiwan, the unique opportunity to work with pairs of U.S.-based English teachers and their local Taiwanese counterparts has given us a first-hand view of and a chance to mediate the very real frustrations that both parties feel when interacting in the classroom together. Given that this pairing is quintessentially an example of the "center" and the "periphery" engaged in dialogue and praxis together, we felt that analyzing data from these pairs were particularly fruitful. We view these interactions as local ways in which teachers are interacting with and operating within various forces enacted at the center and the periphery. We acknowledge that there are certainly also other ways

to gather data to investigate this topic (e.g., in-person interviews, surveys) but feel that this manner of presenting our data provides the additional possibility for ourselves to reflect upon these observations. As evidenced in the following section, it is impossible to extricate our positionalities from the teacher training work we are engaging in.

Positionalities

We come at this research from the perspectives of EFL teacher trainers hired to work intensely with a cohort of nearly 90 assistant English teachers from the U.S. teaching in Taiwan public schools. Our previous employment has given us the opportunity to work as an elementary school English teacher and *buxiban* teacher in Taiwan (First Author) and as a high school assistant language English teacher in Japan (Second Author). Both of us also currently work at the university level teaching English in Taiwan (First Author) and the U.S. (Second Author). We both identify as being English language learners: the First Author is a Taiwanese L1 speaker of Mandarin, Taiwanese, and Hakka, and the Second Author is a Chinese American L1 speaker of Cantonese. As such, in both our personal and professional lives, our positionalities have afforded us intimate views of the links and tensions of the "peripheries" and "centers" of EFL and the language teaching industries.

Presentation of Vignettes and Methodology

In the following section we present vignettes of four major moments, or stories, from working with co-teachers. In our discussions with each other as teacher trainers, both co-authors discussed the various classrooms we each encountered. From this pool, we decided upon four co-teacher pairs that best encapsulated the various tensions and links between periphery and center in the EFL context. We then went back and pulled the specific field notes and one-hour formal observations of each of these teachers co-teaching as well as the typed up feedback documents that were given to both co-teachers following their observation. Co-teachers were made aware in advance that they would be observed and had time to prepare for their observations. Following

the formal observation, co-teachers engaged another hour-long post-observation conference with us and various administrators and/or teachers of their school and sometimes county. We spoke with each teacher individually as well as in a team. In addition, we collected the 36 reflections (nine each) written biweekly from the four U.S.-based English teachers', which detail more fully their struggles co-teaching since these documents were not read by their Taiwanese co-teachers of English. As a team, we went through our field notes and teachers' reflections to further reflect upon what we observed, and our reflections are presented below each of the vignettes.

We use these stories not to compare and/or place value judgments on the various co-teachers; rather, we feel these examples showcase the various ways in which the "centers" and "peripheries" operate at the local level in Taiwan. All names used in the anecdotes are pseudonyms, and more details about the teachers profiled are provided in Table 1.

Story 1: Two Stars Were in a Classroom, but Only One Glittered

The English class began. Crystal, the U.S. teacher, and Jessy, the Taiwanese teacher stood in the front, Crystal in the center, Jessy aside. Crystal started reviewing the vocabulary and sentence patterns taught last class and asking students to repeat after her. Then she had a question-and-answer activity with substitution drills. During the review and activity, Jessy was observing the students, disciplining or reminding them to pay attention to the class without interrupting the ongoing class. Later, they had a jeopardy game in which each group of students had to take turns choosing a grid with a question and corresponding points one could obtain from a 6 by 5 chart. Crystal energetically and passionately encouraged students to choose questions and answer them in group. Jessy walked around to see whether the students needed help from her. After the game, they had a "look and write" activity. Each group had to look at what Crystal showed them and wrote the answer down by using the sentence pattern they learned. Still, Jessy circulated around the classroom to monitor whether they could follow the instruction and provide help if students

needed. The class was wrapped up with the announcement of homework and vocabulary review by Crystal. Jessy made sure all the students understood what the homework was in Mandarin.

In the post observation conference, it was suggested to have a variety of co-teaching patterns like taking turns leading the classes and more interactive demonstration by both teachers. However, Jessy explained that they did co-plan the lessons together, and she thought that Crystal taught very well and ardently and that she learned a lot about teaching from Crystal. Another local teacher who co-taught with Crystal also echoed this opinion by saying that Crystal always came up with lots of fantastic teaching ideas and inspired the Taiwanese teachers.

Reflections. Crystal is a capable teacher. Although she was a foreign teacher in Taiwan, she took hold of the students' attention and taught almost without the local teacher's assistance. She used simple language, gestures, and body language to guide the students to review the materials and encouraged students to answer the questions in the jeopardy game. In the "look and write" activity, she had a comprehensible demonstration to have students follow her instruction.

Comparably, the local teacher, Jessy, seemed to have high confidence in Crystal to teach in the class and Crystal did. However, it yielded an unusual situation where Jessy, the local teacher with the authority in the classroom, did not articulate anything during the lesson albeit she disciplined and translated for the students. The interesting point was that Jessy definitely had training in the profession of teaching because she recognized how well Crystal taught and admired the activities Crystal had furnished the class. However, it was a pity that the only actions we could observe in her class was her circulating around and translating from English to Mandarin in the classroom even though Jessy mentioned they co-planned the lesson together.

In this anecdote, the co-teaching became a near solo teaching by the center, who was usually assumed to be a better choice to teach English. In reality, the center did handle the class well, but the periphery did not endeavor to make her presence felt and deemed that the center was a more appropriate choice to teach English and gave up agency in classroom. If co-teaching is defined as "two or more professionals delivering substantive instruction to a diverse or blended

group of students in a single space" (Cook and Friend 109), then, both teachers in co-teaching settings are encouraged to contribute to the class regardless of native speakerhood. In addition, NESTs may face a lot of difficulties teaching English in Taiwan, like mixed ability or students' lack of motivation (Silalahi and Sitorus 2015). Thus, the periphery in Taiwanese context may help the center to solve the difficulties and facilitate students' learning in class.

Story 2: Two North Stars were Guiding on the Road to Learning

Kurt, the foreign teacher, and Cony, the local Taiwanese teacher, greeted their students together. Then they started to review the biweekly sentences by a small skit to demonstrate it, taking turns reading the sentences, and asking the students to repeat them. After students became familiar with the biweekly sentences, they began reviewing the vocabulary words of Unit 2 by repetition drills and a matching game. Cony read the first word and asked the students to repeat, Kurt later read the second one and had the students say it after him, and it went to Cony's turn to read the third one and had students practice, and so forth. While the students were reading the words, Cony sometimes paused and corrected their pronunciation of the words, like "steak" and "stick" to practice the st- cluster, and "French fries" to practice the fr- cluster. After Kurt noticed that Cony corrected the students' pronunciation, he also paid attention to the students' pronunciation and corrected them when it was his turn to lead the class. Repeating the words several times, they invited students to match the words with the pictures. They checked the answer by asking the students whether the volunteers got the right match. Afterwards, they demonstrated how to use the target sentence pattern in Unit 2 by question-and-answer. Cony asked Kurt the question, "What would you like to eat?" Kurt answered, "I'd like some pizza." Then they interchanged to lead the class to use the sentence pattern through repetition and substitution drills.

After the warm-up to review the biweekly sentences, the vocabulary words and sentence pattern in Unit 2, they started working on the dialogue in Unit 2 by playing the animation. Kurt took over to lead the class, and Cony took charge of the computer. Kurt guided the students to

watch the animation and read the lines. Next, he played the roles in the dialogue, acted them out with a variation of his voice and asked the students to repeat after him. Some comprehension questions were followed to make sure the students understood the dialogue. While Kurt was teaching, Cony assisted to control the computer, observed the students, sometimes interrupted to give the students supplemental information or knowledge, or remind the students of some key concepts or frequent errors students made at the time when there was a pause in the flow of the class, or during transitions between activities.

Afterwards, Kurt and Cony alternated to introduce the phonics pattern, "ea, ee, e_e" by demonstrating how to pronounce the long vowel and practice after the teachers. Then, they had a word finding activity. The students who were divided into two groups based on their gender were asked to look for words with one of phonics patterns in the textbook or their 400 vocabulary sheet and write the words on the board in one minute. The words included old, new words and some words that did not have the same pronunciation. They read it together, and Cony explained some words do not follow the same rule. The lesson was followed by a phonics board game. The students rolled a dice and spun their pencil on a wheel on the board to form a phonics word. They moved their token forward after they read the phonics word correctly. Cony and Kurt circulated around the classroom to help students and ensured that the students read the words correctly. The class ended with an exit ticket activity in which the students should write down the words matching the phonics pattern.

In the post observation conference, Kurt stated that he had a great time co-teaching with Cony, and Cony also expressed that she cooperated well and pleasantly with Kurt. Kurt provided great teaching ideas, too. What is more, she mentioned that the students like Kurt a lot. If Kurt does not show up in the class, the students would feel disappointed. Besides, Cony inquired whether they had sufficient co-teaching in the class. In fact, they adopted different co-teaching patterns throughout their teaching. Even though there was only one teacher leading the class, the other teacher dealt with other classroom matters or assisted the students.

Reflections. Cony and Kurt had great rapport with each other and their students. Because they introduced a variety of activities and reviews, the students were highly engaged in the class. Another reason that they had a fluent co-teaching was that they did not just assign a teacher to be responsible for a certain task or part of teaching; instead, they took turns leading the class, making them equally important and powerful in the classroom. In this class, they taught phonics together, which seems to be a topic that a native speaker could demonstrate better, but the local teacher did not back off teaching this section. Instead, she still shared the teaching with Kurt. In this way, when only one of the teachers led the class, the students were still attentive to the class rather than distracted by the other who was just assisting or observing.

Cony played a part in controlling what they can co-teacher in the class. Although Kurt offered some interesting teaching activity like the phonics board game, Cony observed what Kurt and she are capable of doing in the class. For example, Cony was aware that Kurt was able to perform with his voice and body language in class, so she encouraged Kurt to do it. Furthermore, she knows that Kurt as a native speaker of English is the best candidate to demonstrate the dialogue in class, so she left this part to Kurt. However, as an experienced teacher, she knows what she could still contribute to the class and what the key points the students should know. Hence, she gave students the supplemental knowledge rather than giving out the classroom to Kurt. On the other hand, Kurt also discerned that Cony is an experienced teacher and is able to notice what students need in the context and refine the teaching.

In fact, this is a traditionally ideal way to teach as a team because both the center and periphery work together to contribute to the classroom. In other words, the center, who is seen as the source of the natural English, played his role to deliver the natural English, which is anticipated by most parents and the authority, and the periphery, who is trained to teach English learners and familiar with learners, teaching materials and school systems in Taiwanese context, played the role to provide their experience and knowledge about English teaching in Taiwan to the class.

It is not deniable that the center speaks better American English than the periphery in terms of nativeness, but the periphery is equipped with experience and knowledge about foreign

language instruction, which makes the periphery an indispensible figure in the classroom and exerts her own agency by switching off teaching in the classroom. Interestingly, in this case, the center also recognized the ability of the periphery. Kurt followed what Cony did to correct students' pronunciation and gave Cony some time to put forward the supplemental information. It is important to note that the center and periphery play an equally critical role in the language classroom. As Medgyes (1999) concluded, NNEST and NEST have their own strengths and weaknesses in a language classroom. Therefore, if the periphery and the center can collaborate in a complementary way, it may benefit the students the most in the classroom.

Story 3: Two Stars were Shining, with One Leading the Way

The numbers warm-up was first led by Vivian, the local Taiwanese teacher, and supported by Sarah, the U.S. based teacher. Later, Sarah did the larger numbers by writing all numbers on the board under each number organized by tens. Sometimes not all students could see the numbers because of where Sarah was standing. Both Sarah and Vivian reviewed the more tricky minimal pairs (e.g., fifty/fifteen, forty/fourteen) and reinforced spelling as well. Three rounds of the guessing numbers game were played, with the whole class repeating the numbers each individual student said and Sarah doing movements to indicate a number that was higher or lower. Students seemed interested enough in calling out isolated numbers and getting the number correct because points were involved. There seemed to be good collaboration and interaction between co-teachers here in this activity. Next, both teachers then practiced telling time using a large analog clock. Students seemed especially engaged with the game involving picking a number and answering a specific vocabulary (e.g., minutes, hour) or a time/number related question. Two of the three groups, whose members included the students with stronger English, seemed more participatory, but the third group also worked hard and chimed in when they could, with encouragement from Vivian, who called on members of this group at strategic times (e.g., when more points were associated with the question, which gave them a chance to catch up to the other two groups).

During this exchange both teachers had good rapport with students, especially Vivian. Vivian also had excellent classroom management routines in the class, including various clapping and chanting routines to get students' attention, which was reinforced during the whole duration of the class. After the game, students were asked to turn to page 21 to review previously learned content and were reminded of which pages to review for the upcoming exam.

Reflections. As far as classroom interactions go, both teachers kept students engaged and interested throughout the duration of the class. The items that were on the game were diverse and ranged in difficulty and chosen with intentionality, with both basic and more tricky words and minimal pairs ranging in points and difficulty. Working in teams, students were able to help and encourage each other, especially as they were trying to accrue points to collect an extra stamp in their workbooks after class. There was also use of both analog and digital clocks, which mirrored actual everyday use.

With 15 years of teaching experience, Vivian's rapport with the class was very apparent, from her attention-grabbing routines when students were too animated, to her quick quips in English with students when they gave correct (or even incorrect) answers. She also made explicit efforts to include the students who were struggling at just the right moment. When both Vivian and Sarah taught "together," it seemed like Vivian was handing off running on high gears to starting over at a lower gear. Though both teachers had good rapport with each other and their students, Sarah's engagement with the students, though positive and pleasant, seemed far less uninhibited. Sarah echoed similar feelings in her reflections, noting that since Vivian often took the lead with classes, Sarah was sometimes unclear as to how to insert herself in a productive way, leaving her to work with individual students who were struggling or acting out in class by standing next to their desks while Vivian taught. She wanted to assert more of a presence in class by bringing in more songs, but felt unable to because Vivian was already doing such a good job managing the class with existing curricular materials. Interestingly, in an individual meeting with Vivian, she expressed discontent and some frustration with the fact that Sarah was often late to work and lackadaisical

when it came to lesson planning; as such, Vivian explained, she took the lead in the class and left Sarah with the tasks of creating games or choosing songs. Vivian mentioned other school administrators also knew about the lack of professionalism but said she tried her best to smooth things over by standing up for Sarah. Vivian knew she was doing the bulk of the work and seemed to feel responsible in pulling the weight not just in the classroom but also when it came to being Sarah's co-teacher and *de facto* "ambassador" and ally at the school.

What this illustrated to us was how the "center" (i.e., the American NEST) was positioned across various moments as the periphery; instead, we see the local NNEST, traditionally seen as "peripheral," stepping up as the content and context expert. Vivian did not dominate the classroom or leave Sarah without tasks to work on in the classroom, however, as there still was some degree of co-teaching happening in the class. That being said, due to Sarah's lack of teaching experience, the types of activities that the students engaged in still seemed peripheral in scope and depth. This seems to echo Holliday's (1994) observations that the methodologies being pre-packaged by the Center are not always universally and culturally appropriate; in other words, it is not enough to simply have fun games or songs for students to play in English. Left with this gap in the classroom, it is not a surprise to see Vivian taking charge or Sarah left feeling unsure how to be more meaningful in the classroom.

Story 4: Two Stars Existing in Different Galaxies

The students in Johnny, the U.S. teacher, and Linda's class began with an exercise asking students to show their teachers various items: pencil, book, eraser, bag, ruler, marker. Johnny began teaching the phrase structure "it's + a _____" using words beginning with a consonant. Then the structure "it's + an _____" was introduced. During this time Linda roamed around, calling on students to answer and participate. Linda also iterated what Johnny was saying to students using Mandarin, telling them when and where to use "an," explaining that it was whenever there was a *muyin* ('vowel') before the word. The next segment included Linda and Johnny calling on students,

asking, "What's this" and having them respond with the phrase, "It's a/an ____." Students were also taught that proper nouns do not need to take an a/an (e.g., no need to say, "It's a Johnny"). Sometimes in lieu of the word "this," "that" was used. Students seemed a bit confused about which to use, and no explicit instruction was given to distinguish. Spontaneously during the lesson, the word "what" was explained, but not "this" or "that." Next, Johnny played a video on YouTube was used to illustrate the sentence patterns, "What's this" and "What's that." Some students were singing along but not all, and it was unclear whether Johnny's goal was to sing along or just watch the video. Students were then given a stack of cards by Linda with names of various vocabulary words to pull out. Linda called the words out, and students were expected to extract the correct card out of the stack and show Linda. Though the majority of students were able to pull out the right cards, not all students were able to pull them out. Johnny was standing off to the corner of the classroom repeating the words Linda was saying but not checking on what cards students were pulling out. Students were then told to clip the vocabulary cards to a bingo sheet, but it was unclear whether they were going to play a game with it later. The class then sequenced into Linda playing another game with where she pulled objects out of a mystery box. All 15 students had a chance to pull something out and name the object by saying, "This is a/an ___" and a candy prize was given once the correct sentence was articulated. During this time Johnny was also roaming around in the corners of the classroom, but there was little sharing of the floor between co-teachers. Sometimes Linda was using Mandarin in conversations with students, not always for instructional purposes, and it was unclear whether Johnny understood what was going on.

Reflections. As a whole, each of the instructors had differentially positive rapport with students, which was good because the overall vibe of the class seemed positive, but most of the activities being demonstrated seemed quite disjointed from each other. Each teacher seemed to take twenty minutes of the forty-minute class for themselves and led two separate lessons around a shared topic.

In individual conversations with both teachers, each expressed extreme exasperation, bordering on disdain, for each other, illustrative of the many "textbook" struggles co-teachers experience when the baseline expectations are not clearly articulated (Sacks 2014). Johnny, already a licensed ESL teacher in the U.S., said that within the first few weeks of classes, Linda had already expressed that she was "very busy" and would not have time to lesson plan with him. While originally this was acceptable to Johnny because he thought he was already experienced enough to create lesson plans alone, in the subsequent weeks, he felt that Linda was trying to undermine his credibility in classes. He said she would purposely teach a topic he was already working on, or would make disparaging comments about him in Mandarin in class in front of their students. Linda similarly commented that Johnny "did not know how to teach" and made her do all the work in the classroom. She added that since she knew the students, their needs, and the national curriculum better than Johnny did, she was better off teaching alone. She also made a side (and snide) comment that the county was "wasting taxpayers' money" by having unqualified foreign teachers working in their schools. Not only this, she commented how sad it was that schools "always take the foreign teachers' side" when it came to co-teaching conflicts even though it was the local teachers who are permanent teachers and foreign teachers changed yearly. Johnny and Vivian's case was one of the most extreme; they refused to talk to each other in and out of class, and their lessons continued being two twenty-minute lessons taught by one teacher, with the other standing aside during the lesson taught by the "main teacher." Both openly complained about the other's lack of professionalism in the workplace. This particular co-working relationship was unfortunate because given more open communication and collaboration, students might have been able to experience much more cohesive lessons from these two teachers. A little more conversation about each teacher's aims and objectives would have allowed students to understand what they were doing and why they were being asked to do it.

What this observation painfully illustrated to us was an extreme case of how the center and periphery can be at odds with each other, with little room for negotiation between both parties.

While much of the literature discusses what seems like more of a uni-directional exclusion of the periphery towards the center (Greenberg 2011), or the shifting and (re)construction of the center (Laitin, Solé, and Kalyvas 1994), this example seems to suggest mutual resistance on the parts of the NNEST, who thought having a U.S. teacher was a waste resources, and NEST, who felt the tension and did not want to collaborate with someone who was so openly hostile towards him. In this sense, Linda, situationally positioned at the periphery, is not a passive recipient in its interactions with the Johnny. Rather, she is demonstrating her own agency by disengaging with the act of co-teaching. Unfortunately, this comes at the expense of the students' learning in the classroom.

Discussion and Implications

Examining the four stories above, one might feel a slight sense of dismay, as we both certainly did, at the tensions that exist at various levels of the English language classrooms we have observed. Essentially, in nearly 30 classes we have observed in one school semester, four of whose vignettes we present here in this paper, only one observation seemed to have been an example of relatively successful co-teaching as described in the existing literature on co-teaching. Again, we do not mean this comment as a judgement of any of the language teachers' expertise, but rather as a comment as to the ways in which the current system of institutionalized co-teaching needs to be re-evaluated as well as why various types of additional and ongoing training for local and foreign English teachers should be required before these types of team-teaching relationships are launched. What seems to be happening, as in many other scholars have already extensively documented, is a disconnect between government language policies of internationalization and globalization, parental ideologies about what counts as "good" English and "good" English instruction, and local-level interactions what is actually happening in the classroom (Lee 2014).

Here we are reminded of Pennycook's (2008) discussion of the pluricentricity of English, as well as it being "plurilithic" (as opposed to monolithic). One might extend the argument here

that the teaching of English is similarly pluricentric and plurilithic, relying on the local just as much, if not more, than the norms propagated from the center. Meyer's (2007) query of where exactly this "center" is, is also relevant here, as well as the idea that while there certainly seems to be more of a "periphery to center" orientation happening in these classrooms, this trend is not uni-directional. This also seriously begs the question of the efficacy of having a foreign English teacher in a classroom where a local English teacher already has a strong teaching background, and what implications this has for co-teaching (for example, in the cases of Story 2 and 3). Linda's comment in Story 4 about wasting taxpayers' money also gives us a sense of pause in thinking through the diminished returns of having such hostile co-teaching interactions for the sake of having a native speaker in the classroom and how the market economy plays a role in dictating language policies and planning (cf., Wu 2009). Given how the trend of hiring foreign English teachers is not going to wane (Tsui and Tollefson 2007), the most tangible takeaway from these examples is the continual need to continue opening dialogue and communication between local and foreign teachers, who ideally should start off the conversation together with their expectations and views about engaging in the act of teaching English and co-teaching in English, which are two separate entities.

In the four examples we detailed, we provided two rather extreme cases (Story 1 and Story 4) where we venture to say co-teaching did not actually happen, though English instruction did. In Story 2, the NNEST and NEST were able to come up with productive ways to work together with their collective assets, in essence bringing their individual strengths into a classroom that showcases plurilithic norms and expectations. In Story 3, we see glimmers of ways that the center and periphery are (slowly) mediating their co-teaching responsibilities together, even though the NNEST is still shouldering the bulk of the roles. We argue here that though the work is not split evenly between the co-teachers and that there may some latent issues related to professionalism and maturity underlying why the work is not even, how these issues translate into classroom teaching might offer insight as to the implementational spaces (Hornberger 2005) where change and dialogue could take place. In other words, given time and heightened familiarity, both teachers

might begin peeling the layers of politeness and face-saving mechanisms and open up to their concerns. Moreover, it is important to recognize that teacher collaboration is not just about teaching for the students but also about teacher learning to communicate and develop teaching and learning goals (Martin-Beltrán, Peercy, and Selvi 2012). As such, in considering the interrelationships between center and periphery in EFL in the Taiwan context, we echo Cooper's (1989) reminder to account for "who plans what for whom and why" (45) when thinking about language policy and planning.

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Table 1

Demographics and Length of English Language Teaching of Focal Teachers

Teacher Name (Pseudonym)	Place of Origin	Age	Years of Prior English Teaching Experience	Certified English Teacher (in U.S. or Taiwan)?
Crystal	U.S.	Early 20s	3	Y
Cony	Taiwan	Early 40s	9	Y
Sarah	U.S.	Early 20s	0	N
Linda	Taiwan	Late 30s	8	Y
Jessy	Taiwan	Late 30s	7	Y
Kurt	U.S.	Early 20s	0	N
Vivian	Taiwan	Early 40s	15	Y
Johnny	U.S.	Late 20s	3	Y

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