



Glocalization of Media Education in Post-Colonial Countries: Challenges and Prospects

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Abstract

The term 'glocalization' mediates with the concepts of 'global' and 'local' by suggesting how macro and micro interact with each other and sometimes merge and mingle up in the form of glocalization. This study explores the challenges and opportunities of post-colonial countries for getting glocal in media education which means simultaneously getting global while addressing the needs of the local. The major challenges for glocalization of media education from Pakistani perspectives are; westofixation, de-westernization, political economy of knowledge and research, language imperialism, intellectual dependency, geopolitics of emotions, colonial legacy, ethnocentrism of the west, hegemony in published research, and technological determinism.

Keywords: Westofixation; Glocalization; Indigenous education; De-westernization; Human development

Introduction

In the 21st century, technology is universal, pervasive and can be conceptualized and applied positively for the recognition of the self and the collective identity through glocal education. Education helps individuals and societies to flourish by providing them a sense of which they are their past history, ancestors, customs, traditions, norms and values, their existence in the present realms and their individual and collective vision of the future. Western-generated media theories and models such as the cultural imperialism paradigm and cosmopolitanism do not reflect the reality of how the media operate in non-western societies. Discourses on journalism and journalism education have been American dominated [1]. In western superstructures individual is central and preferred over institutions but in

eastern societies individual is always situated in a community. Therefore the conceptualization of challenges and opportunities in an individualized social context cannot be applied in a society embedded in a collective approach. This paper argues in support of glocalization of media education as a system of greater harmony and increased integration.

The term 'glocalization' mediates with the concepts of 'global' and 'local' by suggesting how macro and micro interact with each other and sometimes merge and mingle up in the form of glocalization. According to the dictionary meaning, the term "glocal" and the process noun "glocalization" are "formed by telescoping global and local to make a blend" [2]. Khondker [3] views glocalization as twin and interdependent processes of macro-localization and micro-globalization. "Macro-localization involves expanding the boundaries locality as well as making some local ideas, practices, institutions global" [3]. The examples of macro-localization can be traced in the religious or ethnic revivalist movements that exist worldwide. While explaining micro-globalization, [3] suggests that the process "involves incorporating certain global processes into the local setting. Consider social movements such as the feminist movements or ecological movements or consider new production techniques or marketing strategies which emerge in a certain local context and over a period these practices spread far beyond that locality into a larger spatial and historical arena" [3]. As many campaigns, movements, and industries originated from a particular locality but became a global phenomenon. In this age of technological advancement, global and local are continuously effecting each other in every domain of life including politics, economics, culture, religion, education etc.

Cheng has highlighted a few potential positive and negative impacts of globalization on developing countries which can be moderated by education along with other factors [4] (Table 1). Adapted from keynote speech of [4] at The International Conference on Globalization and Challenges for Education

Table 1: Impacts of globalization moderated by education.

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← Negative Impacts (Threats)	Positive Impacts (Opportunities) →
Moderated by Education & Other Local & International Factors	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increasing the technological gaps and digital divides • Creating more legitimate opportunities for electronic colonialism • Exploiting local resources and destroying local/indigenous cultures • Increasing inequalities, conflicts, and clashes • Promoting cultural imperialism • Strengthening asymmetrical communication, facilitating haves • Contributing to jobless growth, promoting outsourcing • Promoting voiceless growth, and language imperialism 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increasing knowledge sharing, research, and skills • Providing platforms for mutual support, and benefits to synergize at various levels • Encouraging multi-cultural contributions at different levels • Fostering global citizenship for greater harmony • Promoting multiculturalism and acceptance to cultural diversity • Facilitating multi-way communications and interactions • Promoting self-employment, digital entrepreneurship, and outreach • Giving voice to everyone by promoting common language

The above table shows how globalization can serve as an opportunity as well as a threat depending on the moderating variables. Education is a strong moderating variable that has the potential to transform globalization threats into opportunities, to a great extent.

Cheng has suggested a typology of multiple theories for the promotion and integration of indigenous and global knowledge to foster human development in a globalized world [4]. He proposes six theories: Theory of Tree; Theory of Crystal; Theory of Birdcage; Theory of DNA; Theory of Fungus; and Theory of Amoeba. According to Cheng, “The theories of tree, crystal, birdcage, DNA, fungus, and amoeba provide different approaches such as cultural roots for growth, local seeds for crystallization, ideological boundaries for protection and filtering, replacement of poor components, digestion of global knowledge, and total openness to localize global knowledge in the process of globalizing education” [4].

This perspective can promote glocalization and can contribute to facilitate ‘pluriversal’ trends in the field of communication and media studies. Forte introduces the term of ‘indigeneity’ to refer to the global construction of indigenous identity, which means registering the existence of local at global level (micro-global) often facilitated through information and communication technologies [5]. Education helps to flourish individuals and societies by providing them a sense of which they are their past history, ancestors, customs, traditions, norms and values, their existence in the present realms and their individual and collective vision of the future.

However, glocalization of media education is facing many challenges. A few of them are given below.

Westofixation

Western education system has been successful in developing

strategies for dissemination of knowledge to establish power and control that is deeply ingrained in western education. Western education predominantly focuses on material pursuits and conquest which was not the sole purpose of education in eastern societies. Colonial countries after their independence were more concerned about political and economic developments and could not focus much on developing adequate philosophical foundation of education or restoring the traditional education system. The legacy of colonial education along with its objectives, ideals, outcomes and standards continued. This process is labeled as ‘westofixation’ by Hamid Mowlana as it tends to set the western criterion to evaluate scholarly and professional efforts [6]. Moreover, the dominance of western news coverage in the postcolonial countries (developing countries) has facilitated the unconscious process of approaching, understanding, and evaluating issues and problems from western perspectives that has facilitated ‘westofixation’. Western countries are rich in technological hardware and software and they use media as a tool to promote their ideology. According to Mowlana, the proliferation of western pop cultural consumer products in developing countries is not only leading to ‘desecration’ of indigenous cultures but also encouraging ethnocentric depictions of the people and cultures of developing countries [6]. The trends of ‘Westofixation’ have undermined the local and regional cultures, traditions, knowledge, and wisdom. This phenomenon has also contributed to intellectual dependence, however glocalization can facilitate to gain confidence in local by getting glocal.

De-Westernization

According to Chen, Iwabuchi and Miike, de-westernization demands to promote local values, indigenous perspectives, and traditional analytical frameworks to create academic spaces for the cultivation of a regional mindset and to reevaluate conventional Western wisdom and arguments from

local perspectives [7-9]. Waisbord and Mellado suggest de-westernization of communication studies in four dimensions; the subject of study; the body of evidence; theoretical framework; and academic cultures [10].

The Subject of Study

The field of communication studies needs expansion and reassessment on ontological horizons; analyses of the absent and understudied issues; local political, economic, cultural, religious and social forces shaping media institutions and communication processes needs to be evaluated in the backdrop of conventional knowledge and local forms of communication. The process of indigenizing media education demands to consider and highlight conventional knowledge and local forms of communication including folk media and local wisdom.

The Body of Evidence

The thrust of western cases needs to be balanced as it has led to presumed generalizability of arguments and findings. The processes of glocalization can help to develop transnational deliberations with a contrapuntal base around similar or common theoretical/conceptual and empirical questions. Critical evaluation and proper application of the concepts, arguments, theories and models across settings and contexts in order to produce knowledge can also serve to abandon westofixation. Simple replication of western theories cannot help to achieve this goal rather we need to reflect and internalize local issues, concerns, and problems in the given context.

According to Willems, "a higher degree of self-reflexivity among media and communication scholars in 'the West' about their own potential complicity in the marginalization of knowledge from elsewhere could be a start towards a more 'pluriversal' and truly 'global' field of media and communication studies" [11].

Theoretical Perspectives

Western theories are not appropriate to understand the local perspectives, issues and processes. It is observed that dominance of western secular theoretical perspectives vs. marginalization of religious theoretical perspectives is in the limelight as compared to normative approach. Moreover positivist empirical approach and scientific perspective is preferred on moral and ethical perspectives. Many indigenous analytical frameworks are different from conventional western models, as they are grounded in local cultures and religion and offer a different viewpoint for various concepts like life, gender, community, identity etc. Western theories fail to capture eastern and indigenous conditions therefore, do not produce 'legitimate' knowledge e.g. concept of modernization is contemptuous to local cultures and history [10].

Academic Cultures

In post-colonial countries, education system is divided into eastern and western or foreign and indigenous/local systems which have produced two different academic cultures opposing

each other. Binary opposition between western and non-western forms of academic knowledge produced two different classes and cultures which needs to be reconsidered by post-colonial counties to find common elements. It will help to relocate discourses of 'Orientalism' and 'Occidentalism' from monolithic and stagnant vs. dynamic and diverse perspectives. Academic culture can be defined as "the way scholars distinguish themselves in terms of their own personal characteristics, professional experiences, dedication to teaching versus research and their scientific production" [12].

Political Economy of Knowledge and Research

In a capitalist system, the overall drive for production of knowledge, development of skills and training is predominantly commercial in nature. Media education and media production in capitalist societies is market oriented and used to develop and cater popular culture and taste for profit maximization. According to Schiller "...in the late 1960s, the international price of a half-hour episode of the US TV drama ranged from \$4200 in the UK down to \$22 in Kenya" [13]. By offering programs in extremely cheap rates, it created a dependence of developing countries on the western content and successfully cultivated taste for western programs and grabbed commercial market as well which facilitated the process of cultural imperialism. Indigenous media production was expensive as compared to the foreign media content which helped to popularize them. Schiller identified the factor of American media commercialization at international scale. "Without the international commercial broadcasting, there would be no outlets for advertising material. Without advertising material, there would be no markets for US cars, soft drinks, soap powder, and other commodities. Without markets for their products, US industries would experience a crisis of overproduction and the consequent depression and capitalism would re-enter the nightmare of the 1930s" [14].

Though the developing countries have developed their own media organizations but the programs are mostly produced in western format, style and spirit which undermines local tastes, culture, norms and values. Smith explores the production of research and knowledge within the local contexts and concludes that interests and concerns of non-indigenous researchers are different as compared to local needs and requirements [15]. There is a need to integrate local needs and global perspectives in media education.

Language Imperialism

Language is instrumental in the creation of knowledge, power, identity, control, and value system; knowledge in foreign language means limiting local people to get control, power, knowledge and develop their own identities. However, translations can be of great help to defend against cultural imperialism. To be a polyglot is an attribute but to degrade and undermine local and national languages leads to inferiority complex and flourishes colonial legacy.

Intellectual Dependency

Communication not only shapes a nation's image and identity but it also influences individuals' ways of thinking. Classical Liberals such as Stuart Mill consider every individual as sovereign on oneself but this sovereignty is challenged owing to intellectual dependence. Garrouste suggests that western education has made it possible for indigenous people to accept that their traditional knowledge is not knowledge at all [16]. Glocalization appears as an intellectual shift with many meanings; intellectual independence (integrating international and region-centric forms of knowledge); an act of cultural and ideological defense; an anti-imperialist strategy for intellectual independence to nurture academic autonomy; an urge of the modern scholars for adopting a critical and analytical perspective that can reflect local, alternate, de-centered, marginalized, and vibrant contemporary world.

Geopolitics of Emotions

The ideas of westernization have inherently contributed to the debate of Orientalism and Occidentalism. Therefore, indigenized education can help to conceptualize phenomenon in their own perspective. Glocalization can serve as an opportunity to step outside the Anglo-American orbit and perceive media experiences from a third perspective.

Colonial Legacy

Western education as a system emerged in the early 15th century and penetrated in colonial countries by colonialists to modernize social life through science and technology [17]. Therefore, education in postcolonial countries is westernized. Pakistan as a postcolonial country of the British Empire, dominantly continues with the British systems, functions and structures even after more than seventy years of its independence. Pakistani education system is seven layered; nursery, primary (grade 1-5), middle (grade 6-8), high (grade 9-10), intermediate (grade 11-12), college (grade 13-14, except 4 years programs), university (15-upwards). At all levels the preferred system of education is western which has resulted in undermining the local and indigenous knowledge. Pakistan has both public and private sector education systems. That education system has contributed to inequitable postcolonial relationships and undermined the wellbeing of indigenous communities. Indigenous education which had the potential to develop and promote indigenous language, culture, and identity, could not flourish in the presence of western education as the foreign education system in Pakistan produces about 445,000 university graduates and 10,000 computer science graduates per year.

Ethnocentrism of the West

Ethnocentrism of the west in the academic discourse and in international media while covering postcolonial countries means taking the ideas of 'othering' to a global scale. The history of the marginalization of the traditional and local media in the

colonial countries by the colonialist was a calculated move to relegate and discredit the local systems [18]. As a result, the local people developed a consciousness of viewing traditional values and lifestyles as wrong and outmoded which is not true. In order to create a pluralistic knowledge society which can appreciate holistic form of education, educators need to reflect on their ethnocentrism while dealing with multi-cultural and indigenous issues. It is only possible through decentralizing the international western paradigm of knowledge and education along with developing indigenous standards in order to promote the production of knowledge and culture with local perspectives and voicing them at the global scale.

Western Knowledge and Research Hegemony

Asante [19] challenges the notion of western supremacy over the production of knowledge by chalking out a timeline of major civilizations which is as follows:

1. Writing originates in Egypt around 3400 BCE.
2. Menes unites Egypt around 3200 BCE
3. Imhotep builds the first pyramid around 2900 BCE
4. Ptahhotep writes the first book, 2900 BC
5. Hsia starts around 2000 BC; Shang 1523 BCE; Chou 1027 BCE
6. Homer, Greek poet, 800 BCE

According to Asante the first Greek philosopher Thales appears in 600 BCE [19]. The western scholars embraced philosophy as the most learned of all sciences and excelled in it. However, they never acknowledged African or Egyptian philosophers and established eurocentrism. Western cultural values are embedded in communication theories which are borrowed or super-imposed on non-western settings and environments that makes the trainers and the trainees to wear the western glasses voluntarily and serve as an agent of reinforcement and endorsement of western perspectives [20].

Research is the backbone of knowledge that helps to create, establish and advance knowledge. On the basis of such knowledge, goals, policies and strategies are devised to make a sense of very own existence and future direction. It is observed that the training and education of media people in postcolonial countries is grounded in the western theories, perspectives, and approaches therefore, media content is much westernized in spite of the productions by indigenous people. For a pragmatic approach it is quite crucial to consult researchers who are knowledge producers as well as knowledge consumers as stakeholders in the education. Media education and research in Pakistan has been greatly influenced by western-oriented notions which need to be localized.

Technological Determinism

21st century is the century of technology, playing an

important role in developing cognitions, shaping perceptions and changing behaviors. According to McLuhan "Societies have always been shaped more by the nature of the media by which men communicate than by the content of the communication." The nature of mass communication has experienced drastic changes due to technological sophistications. Media technology of each era has been contributing to the cognitive developments and behavioral patterns. Print media labelled as cool media by Marshall McLuhan because it provides less sensory data and gives more time to reflect and rationalize as compared to the hot media providing rich sensory data and less time to reflect and rationalize. Moreover, communication is now multi-dimensional owing to the technology; uni-linear, interactive, and transactional. Therefore, the traditional sender-receiver approach to conceptualize, theorize, understand, and realize mass communication is unable to grasp the latest media landscape. In a multi-cultural and global world, mass communication needs to be understood from different and multiple standpoints.

Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) are affecting every sphere of life. Due to internet, the idea of citizen journalism and global citizenship is taking practical shape and contributing to the welfare of humanity. Cyberspace is offering new prospects and opportunities in different realms of life including basic human rights. Global citizens are now producers and consumers of the content at the same time. They can choose media contents like news, music, film, and can interact with virtual communities as per their choices. Unlike the traditional media, internet is more interactive and transactional thus creating vigilant audience. Global citizens also termed as 'netizens' are contributing to wither the state boundaries to some extent through cyberspace, along with multi-national corporations and transnational corporations. Knowledge-Gap theory now seems to be less relevant for socio-economic strata as China has made ICTs very cheap and accessible for poor people as well. Traditional classroom concepts as well as contents of education are continuously changing. Global is affecting the local and in turn local has got the potential to be global. Now technology is widespread and can be conceptualized and applied positively for the recognition of the self and the collective identity through glocal education.

Discussion and Conclusion

Glocalization is shaping new public spaces, new genres, new tools of accessing information, new strategies of persuasive communication, and new modes of advertisement which needs to be evaluated. The impact of local (regional and community based media) as well as transnational media (such as CNN and Russia Television) needs to be explored for micro-globalization and macro-localization. Though access to information has become incredibly easy, at times lack of credibility or prevalence of fake news leads to skepticism and cynicism among audience. The problem of cynicism suggests introducing media literacy as a compulsory component of education to equip audience with skills to understand, analyze and filter media content to be active participants, conscious public, and informed citizens.

Media and communication research in Pakistan is blindly following the western paradigms at the cost of local knowledge and wisdom. Instead of considering local knowledge and wisdom as a parallel and/or alternative in certain cases, western knowledge and perspectives are still prevalent and continue as the focal point. One of the reasons is that the mass communication educational resources are embedded in foreign needs and objectives. It is only through glocal media education that national objectives can be materialized and translated to address the local needs as well as Pakistan can integrate itself into global community. With the development and growth of education sector in terms of technology, fields and disciplines, there is a need to focus more on interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary research in mass communication.

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