ABSTRACT

The promotion of the native variety of English which was a historically prevalent practice in the field of foreign/second language teaching gradually has come under suspicion of serving the cause of American and British cultural and linguistic imperialism and has faced adamant resistance both at the macro- and micro-levels in many parts of the world. One important micro-level strategy to resist the teaching of English in its western cultural context and to avert its perceived detrimental effects on the cultural identity of the learners of English has been the development of local EFL curricula whose cultural and ideological aspects can be locally decided and controlled. However, cultural resistance through indigenizing the EFL curriculum can achieve its intended goals and remain sustainable if it manages to have constructive effects on the curriculum. Unskillful cultural resistance has a detrimental effect on the EFL curriculum and therefore lacks the desired sustainability. Therefore, maximum care must be taken to manage cultural resistance in such a way that its overall effects on the EFL curriculum become constructive because if the resistance–inspired EFL curricula should fail to be on par with their presumably hegemonic rival curricula, even their highest level of cultural safety will be of no use.

In this study, attempts were made to find out whether the effect of cultural resistance on EFL curriculum in a typical EFL situation, Iran, was desirable and positive or unfavorable and detrimental. Sustainability of cultural
resistance was used as the criterion to determine the effect of cultural resistance on EFL curriculum development and was operationally defined to depend on the satisfaction of three requirements: a) internal harmony among the cultural attitudes of the agents of resistance, b) proportionateness of the null curriculum to the nature and extent of resistance and c) balanced attention to the technical adequacy, cultural safety and overall acceptability of the curriculum. The investigation of the first requirement showed that all the three groups surveyed in this study had a negative attitude towards the teaching of the incompatible aspects of western culture through English in Iran and there was no internal conflict among the three groups’ resistance. The results of the investigation of the second requirement confirmed that the Iranian locally-designed EFL curriculum was culturally safe but its cultural ‘null curriculum’ was overblown. The investigation of the third requirement indicated that the desired cultural safety of the curriculum had not been achieved without losing sight of the technical quality and overall acceptability of the curriculum. Based on the findings of this study, it was concluded that cultural resistance through EFL curriculum in Iran was not sustainable and a number of recommendations and suggestions were made for resistance-inspired local EFL curriculum development as well as regional and international ELT material development. Finally, a model of sustainable cultural resistance through EFL curriculum development was introduced.