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A Post-Method Perspective on English Language Teaching
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Abstract

This study looks at ELT from a post-method perspective, a paradigm that goes beyond the conventional, directive approaches to language instruction. It draws attention to the shortcomings of traditional methods and calls for an adaptive strategy that considers the unique circumstances, requirements, and identities of teachers and students. The post-method approach emphasizes continuous classroom adaptation, creativity, teacher autonomy, and context-sensitive pedagogy. This study examines how this viewpoint promotes spaces for language learning that are more welcoming and productive by referencing current research and case studies. The results imply that when teachers embrace a post-method approach, they are better equipped to adapt to various classroom scenarios, which boosts student engagement and language learning. At the end of the paper, we provide some concrete suggestions for how modern ELT classrooms can apply post-method concepts.

Introduction

English as a second or foreign language (ESL/EFL) teaching has been dominated by methodologies driven by a method. These methodologies contained the concept of method conceived in harmonized terms of a theory of language, a theory of language learning, and a pedagogy. Since there is no full agreement on these, there cannot be a complete operational comprehension of any methodology. Any attempt to apply a methodology in its entirety is not valid because it is, by very nature, disempowering and decontextualized. Because of this, there has been a call for a postmethod perspective on ESL/EFL teaching. Still, there is hardly a clear understanding of what it means to adopt a postmethod perspective as far as pedagogical practice is concerned (Fiani & Syaprizal, 2018). The present essay attempts to address this issue through the exploration of postmethod pedagogy regarding four interconnected aspects: its historical foundations, its conceptual foundations, its pedagogical implications, and its practical realization.

Instead of proposing a specific methodology, a macrostrategic framework of postmethod pedagogy is offered. To negotiate meaning between ideologically driven, politically motivated, and neatly packaged ESL/EFL methodologies and M/trial and socio/culturally constrained pedagogical contexts, English language teachers and

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teacher educators need to exercise six macro strategies: optimizing the widespread of localization, institutionalization, and nativization; assisting teachers in redefining their professional identity; focusing on the role of the professional learning community; helping teachers see themselves as researchers; fostering the establishment of a teacher's voice; and providing sustainable professional development. The attempt to reconceptualize a postmethod perspective on ESL/EFL teaching is motivated by the sincere desire to empower English language teachers in their grammar practice.

Historical Overview of Language Teaching Methods

A historical overview of approaches and methodologies in language teaching is useful background knowledge to understand the emergence of the postmethod period. It is essential to understand the term "method" in the postmethod context (et al., 2014). The period of method in language teaching is characterized by attempts to group and classify particular foreign language teaching and learning practices or procedures as "methods." The branch of knowledge concerned with language teaching methods is concerned with the classification of these methods into hierarchies and taxonomies of general, specific, and micro-methods. As to the historical development of approaches and methodologies in language teaching, before the 20th century, the following approaches and methodologies could be identified: a classical approach called "the Grammar-Translation Method," a vernacular approach called the "Direct Method" or the "Natural Method," and a more contemporary approach called the "Reading Method" (K. Hilgendorf, 2018).

After the Second World War, methods or methodologies such as the Army Method, Audiolingualism, the Structural Approach, the Oral Approach, the Situational Approach, and Newer Approaches or Methods could be identified, such as "Community Language Learning," "Suggestopedy," "Neurolinguistic Programming," "Total Physical Response," "the Silent Way," and the "Natural Approach." This general historical overview is useful to contextualize the discussion of a postmethod perspective on TESOL. The term "postmethod," which became widely used in TESOL communities in the early 1990s, refers to the general period in language teaching following the method period or the classical period (e.g., oral-aural methods, grammar-translation methods, audiolingual methods) and the 12 or more derivations of these methods.

The Emergence of the Post method Era

In the course of the history of language teaching, many 'methods' have been proposed for teaching English as a foreign language, including grammar-translation, Audiolingualism, Suggestopedia, Total Physical Response, Natural Approach, Communicative Language Teaching, and Cooperative Language Learning. Current use of the term 'method,' however, covers speculative syllabi, classroom procedures and techniques, and broader referents related to language policy and sociopolitical concerns. Different classifications of language teaching methods relate primarily to the focus on language, learning, or context and, secondarily, to the progression from prescriptive to descriptive approaches. As an alternative to the method hypothesis,

'principled eclecticism' does away with the conventional term 'method.' However, despite much criticism of the term 'method,' teachers continue to feel the need for it. The need for a postmethod era, undertaking language teaching based on various local conditions, has been recognized (Fiani & Syaprizal, 2018).

However, the postmethod concept, as proposed by Kumaravadivelu, remains vague and abstract, with little or no guidance on implementing it in the classroom. Kumaravadivelu's post method framework is comprised of three pedagogic parameters and ten macro strategies. However, this framework cannot be implemented without interpreting ten macrostrategies or designing classroom activities for the macrostrategies. There is a dearth of research investigating how English as a foreign language teachers at higher education levels interpret the parameters, how they manifest the macro strategies, and how they have designed classroom activities for using ten macro strategies in real classroom situations (World et al., 2021). The purpose of this study is to interpret the concept of postmethod pedagogy, describe how to implement it in the classroom, and discuss the effectiveness of postmethod pedagogy in improving language teaching and learning processes.

Key Concepts in Post method Pedagogy

There are fundamental concepts that are intimately associated with postmethod pedagogy. These concepts form the philosophical basis of postmethod pedagogy and characterize its nature and scope. They are learner autonomy, critical pedagogy, and eclecticism.

Learner autonomy is a multifaceted concept that is viewed from different dimensions or perspectives, such as an ability, a personality trait, a social phenomenon, an attitude, a learner-centered approach, and an ideology. In the last decades, learner autonomy has attracted increasing attention within the field of second and foreign language teaching and learning, including English as a second or foreign language. Language teaching and learning, where English serves as a second or foreign language, in many parts of the world has been marred with a plethora of problems, such as the inability to use the language in real-life situations after years of formal instruction.

The inability to use the language upon graduation from schools and universities where English is taught has raised eyebrows in non-English speaking countries (NESCs) and has become subject to a search for remedy. Language teaching and learning in NESCs, as elsewhere in the world, has also been subjected to imported, reactive, and ineffective pedagogical rules of thumb collectively termed the method. In the face of common pedagogical problems, advocates of learner autonomy feel that it provides a guarantee for successful language learning. Autonomy addresses the question of what it means to be a successful language learner. It provides a direction in language teaching that aims to develop language learners' abilities.

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Critical pedagogy Kumaravadivelu defined critical pedagogy as a pedagogical paradigm that takes experimental, historical, political, and social forces into account and empowers all participants in the educational enterprise to recognize these forces and take informed actions as agents of social change. In the wake of the pedagogical antinomy, critical pedagogy seeks to empower teachers and students to take ownership of their education. It anticipates the transformations of the existing power relations in the educational enterprise by clarifying social, economic, political, and ideological structures shaping its contextualized identity. Language teachers are expected to be critically aware of and reflectively articulate their own beliefs, practices, and experiences. Curriculum materials are expected to interrogate and examine the systemic inequities of socially constructed orders, i.e., gender, race, social class, and ethnicity.

Eclecticism An eclectic approach is defined as an approach in language teaching that involves a selection and combination of ideas and applications from different sources and methodologies in a principled manner. In the 1970s, the concept of eclecticism emerged as a criticism of blind adherence to any method (World et al., 2021). Such a combination is generally based on a set of criteria, principles, or overall pedagogical philosophy to establish consistency of selection and combination with the context. Eclecticism can be a strategy to move away from unsuitable methods proposed by foreign experts toward a selection of activities and principles that suit local sociocultural contexts and serve local educational goals.

Learner Autonomy

While the traditional view of learners is that they are passive recipients of knowledge, the postmethod view depicts them as active constructors of knowledge. In this view, induction of learner autonomy is crucial since learners will learn to assume responsibility for their learning if they are provided with opportunities to develop metacognitive skills of planning, monitoring, and evaluating learning. With opportunities for autonomous learning, learners will have access to additional resources for language learning, which will provide a challenge for the development and use of appropriate L2 learning strategies. Learner autonomy refers to the capacity to take charge of one's own learning, which covers the concepts of independence, self-direction, and responsibility. Despite distinctions in definitions, the fundamental nature is similar. Independence highlights the absence of external involvement, whereas self-direction suggests a certain amount of involvement and responsibility by the individual to control the learning condition, progress, and outcome (Sudarsono & Amin Lestari, 2016). Learner autonomy includes the essential cognitive and metacognitive aspects, the long-range perspectives on the motivation/involvement, attitudes and aspirations of learners, and social and educational aspects. Moreover, lifelong learning refers to the individual's awareness of the necessity of skills necessary for collaborating and solving problems through collaboration over the life span, disposition to behave flexibly in different situations, and ability to deal with the rapid change of skills required in the workplace. Learning to learn relates to learners' investment in their own learning, as well as being aware of and taking control of their

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own learning and monitoring their learning, including planning activities, selection of appropriate learning strategies, assessment of progress, monitoring a suitable strategy, and adopting it when necessary. A postmethod view of learner autonomy in language learning/teaching settings refers to the pedagogical effort made to achieve learner autonomy and foster the use of autonomy-promoting processes, including self-directed learning processes initiated by learners within a learner-centered approach by building into the practice opportunities for learners to develop and use learning-to-learn strategies (O'Leary, 2018).

Critical Pedagogy

While a postmethod perspective allows for a myriad of pedagogical possibilities, not all of them are equally desirable. There are possibilities that need critical scrutiny, especially in a world where educational issues are no longer just about education but about rights to education, equity in education, access to educational opportunities, and respect for linguistic and cultural diversity. Critical pedagogy is a perspective on education and language teaching that attempts to address social, cultural, and political issues. It helps preserve humanity in both individuals and communities. Within a postmethod approach, critical pedagogy is likely to be an important focal point.

Post-method researchers presume that language education has inherently political ramifications. Language is not a mere vehicle for knowledge transmission and interaction but a crucial lens through which political and sociocultural issues are illustrated and organized. Therefore, language education cannot be isolated from broader debates about power and social injustices. Both language and language education can be viewed as political forces for good or for bad (Fiani & Syaprizal, 2018). In this sense, post-method researchers focus on the hidden, ideological agendas imbued in power relations, cultural exchanges, and interaction styles and on how they are played out in educational systems. Language teaching is thus critically examined as a site of intense contestation of power and ideological conflicts.

Eclecticism

As a defining feature of postmethod pedagogy, eclecticism is a broad theoretical construct that claims that the integration of diverse methods, techniques, and materials should be determined by contextual and learner-specific needs (Fiani & Syaprizal, 2018). Based on the conception of the bilingual systems model, Ellis (1994) stresses a distinction between the surface structures employed by method designers (techniques, activities, tasks, and exercises) and the deep structures underlying the methods (theories about language, language learning, and pedagogy). Such a distinction underlies an eclecticism based on techniques rather than methods; Miller (2006) elaborates on seven principles regarding the techniques and strategies of a language teacher, which constitute a basis for the consideration of a principled eclecticism of techniques—a postmethod pedagogical excursion beyond the boundaries of a methodological framework. The principled eclecticism of these techniques or procedures within a postmethod framework invites consideration of

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contextual dimensions that affect language learning and teaching dynamics at either a micro or macro scale (World et al., 2021).

Principles of Post method Pedagogy

Peelman and De Maeyer emphasize teaching a language cannot be done in isolation. So, knowledge of a country's culture, history, and people is essential in order to be able to teach a language properly. Hence, it is important that teachers adapt their methods easily according to the context in which they operate. There is also general agreement that the choice of specific techniques is a conscious and deliberate act and that the choice of a technique is based on one or more principles (World et al., 2021).

Principle 1: Contextualization

The underlying belief of postmethod pedagogy is that language curriculums, syllabuses, or courses, including materials, techniques, and activities, should be the products of contextualized decisions appropriate to the specific group of learners. The general picture provided by postmethod pedagogy is one of conscious awareness of the complexities surrounding local sociolinguistic situations, careful consideration of the specific needs and characteristics of learner and teacher groups, and a multi and eclectic combination of bi- or multilingual teaching techniques. The need to return to context-sensitive language teaching seems to be widely acknowledged in both developing and developed countries.

Principle 2: Empowerment of Learners and Teachers

This principle advocates the empowerment of learners and teachers through the development of learner autonomy on the one hand and teaching autonomy and professionalization on the other. Such decisions regarding the curriculum, content, organization, and process of instruction can be made by recourse to the specific needs, motivations, and idiosyncrasies of the actual participants, who take on a vital role in the decision-making process (Fiani & Syaprizal, 2018). Learners are empowered by providing teaching methods that permit them to develop a sense of autonomy essential for coping with their communicative needs. As language data, activating the learners' own contextualized language experiences, are allowed into the classroom, they start to take on a central role. Boeing (1999) states that all language data that can apparently trigger linguistic processing can be considered 'input.' It further suggests, however, that truly pedagogical input should be language data coming from the learners' own world, language data that are either essential for their communicative needs or that otherwise hold some significance for them.

Contextualization

A postmethod pedagogy is a second language teaching pedagogy that emphasizes the importance of contextualization. Contextualization is the ability to relate language instruction and language knowledge to the world and the learners' out-of-school experience. A postmethod pedagogy is a contextualized pedagogy that is able to connect the language, curriculum, and instruction to the learners' real contexts of life and contexts of experience. Without contextualization, a language pedagogy is sterile, out of touch with the learners' realities, and unable to serve the

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wider purposes of language instruction. One of the manifestations of postmethod pedagogy is contextualized pedagogy (Fiani & Syaprizal, 2018).

Contextualized pedagogy is a pedagogy that captures both the wider sociocultural contexts and the more local institutional contexts within which language pedagogy takes place. It is socioculturally contextualized if it draws upon the learners' own lives and experiences, local cultural knowledge, sociocultural norms, and practices relevant to the local complex social and institutional contexts so as to reflect the local characters, circumstances, challenges, expectations, and aims of the language pedagogy. It is also institutionally contextualized if it reflects the specific sociocultural, sociolinguistic, and educational conditions, policies, practices, and challenges of the institutions, schools, and classrooms (World et al., 2021). There are at least two sources for contextualized pedagogies: local knowledge and local language practices.

Empowerment of Learners

Postmethod pedagogy seeks to empower learners as its guiding principle because educating a learner-oriented is a shared and participatory concern, not restricted to teachers alone. It proposes many ways of participatory pedagogy aiming at empowering learners. Empowering involves educating students to become more confident and individuated, more self-sufficient and positive, more forceful and self-reliant, and less deferential and passive (Fiani & Syaprizal, 2018). Empowering learners means equipping them with distinctive qualities and self-related characteristics that will enable them to take charge of their learning consciously, grow constantly, and participate fully.

Empowerment, however, is much attuned to the cultural dimension of an educational process. Learner empowerment can be interpreted as social constructivism, critical pedagogy, transformative learning, and collaborative learning. Empowering students includes giving them more power to participate in a knowledge-generating process, the power to challenge, critique, and reshape thinking space, the power to construct ongoing identities, and the power to work collaboratively with peers. It may include modeling an intimate relationship among learners, language, and context where learning is mutually facilitated; forum discussion where knowledge is generated by everyone and no ideas are ever devaluated; mutual observation and feedback among peers where each learner takes in a dual role of an owner and a participant; reflective activities on the appropriateness of interpretation; critical inquiry and micro-teaching where power is distributed among the participants.

Implementing Post method Pedagogy in the Classroom

In the 'Implementing Postmethod Pedagogy in the Classroom' section, the author focuses on the practical possibilities for applying postmethod principles in the pedagogic contexts of interest to language teachers. To develop burgeoning postmethod practices, it is crucial to identify or invent appropriate postmethod approaches and to make these approaches broadly accessible. To this end, and in the spirit of tentative and collaborative effort, two postmethod approaches are combined

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to illustrate how the postmethod principles explored in the previous section can be addressed. The combined approaches-task-based learning (TBL) and project-based learning (PBL)-share a common concern with developing meaningful language use, providing authentic contexts for such use, and fostering learner-centredness through the collaboration of students working together in small groups. The resulting tasks-projects facilitate language use in pursuit of shared goals. This is not to suggest that these approaches are adequate as post-method pedagogies alone but rather to show how at least two approaches might be honed and developed as post-method alternatives to methods.

Task-based learning (TBL) Learner-centredness and meaningful use of language came to the forefront of recent ELT thinking with the emergence of the so-called 'communicative approaches to language teaching.' At the heart of this movement was a concern with 'language use' rather than 'language use.' This coincided with a growing recognition of the inadequacy of certain traditional approaches to language teaching, including the widely adopted situational language teaching approach. Objections to the latter centered on the artificiality of the 'situations' in which grammar points were exploited and, conversely, the neglect of students' own target needs. In answering these objections, some alternative approaches were proposed, the main paradigm shift being from a syntactic/contextual view of language to a functional/discourse view of language. David Nunan's TBL can be seen as a response to this shift, attempting to work within the same 'communicative' framework but beyond the confines of situational language teaching.

Task-Based Learning

Task-based learning is an instructional approach which is aligned with postmethod pedagogy. The essence of task-based learning is to use tasks in language classrooms to facilitate language learning. Tasks are described as "activities which are goal-oriented, involve a transfer of meaning, involve some communication, focus on the content of communication than the language itself, and have a clearly defined outcome".

Task design is important for task-based language teaching to be successful. Research on task design examines various ways teachers can design tasks concerning learners' differences and cultural dimensions. Researchers have explored how LISTENING+ tasks are designed to initiate teacher-student interaction and encourage students to think critically about English songs. It has also stressed the importance of contextualization in task design and implementation to meet learners' needs. Investigations have been conducted on task design in distance education courses from the perspectives of complexity, authenticity, and integration. Other research has contributed to the literature on task design by exploring the use of global tasks in English reading instruction on the basis of an examination of task type appropriateness and task treatment. For a task to work, a teacher should not take complete control of the talk in a language classroom. A teacher needs to find appropriate ways of doing this so learners can be given more opportunities to interact

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with each other through the task. Teachers need to devise strategies to intervene so as to promote the interaction that takes place during a task.

Project-Based Learning

Efforts for achieving classroom environments that privilege the English language as a resourceful means of communication have led to a proliferation of social constructivist, task-based, project-based, and collaborative approaches within the ongoing pursuit of postmethod language teaching practices, hereinafter collectively referred to as project-based approaches. Throughout language teacher education, project, task, contextualization, negotiation, and other terms have been invoked to promote collaborative environments and inquiry-based learning experiences in the language classroom. Indeed, the integration of authentic projects in the target language catches language acquisition alongside academic, technical, practical, and sociocultural knowledge and fosters valuable interdisciplinary skills in students in mediating the unfolding discourse of the project across educational sectors (World et al., 2021).

Reported in the applied linguistics literature are multiple project-based approaches that sketch a range of them as highly elaborated pedagogical designs, whereas a broader definition accommodates project-based approaches as less elaborated but still principled pedagogical processes. Language projects account for designing, conducting, and presenting inquiry-based language projects. Projects unfold longitudinally, unfolding within a timeframe of weeks or months and occurring across successive class sessions. Ideally, projects also integrate speaking, listening, reading, and writing tasks using authentic materials in the target language. Students assume ownership of the project as the facilitator, researcher, practitioner, or analyst instead of merely practicing language content as consumers. Language projects adopt a communicative view of language, which posits language as a tool for communicating and interacting with others rather than as a set of discrete linguistic codes that can be encoded and decoded decontextualized (Mujtaba et al., 2016).

Challenges and Criticisms of Post method Pedagogy

Educators who would like to implement postmethod principles in their programs are likely to encounter certain challenges, criticisms, or questions. First, there is the concern of practicality in implementation. Educational practices have to be manageable and doable, yet this question dies down in the face of such an open-ended concept as postmethod teaching. No practical guidelines are given as to how LEP, context-sensitive syllabuses, and learner-driven assessment can be accomplished in practice. There is good reason to think that English teachers and course designers in the Non-English-speaking world will find it difficult to embrace the sweeping changes that Schneider suggests for the pedagogical content of their programs. They will have to adapt to new tests and syllabus specifications, invest in new textbooks and supplementary materials, and possibly read books in a different language. Moreover, they may not feel free to choose agency-based teaching even if their heart is with it because the cultural and curricular heritage of their systems is such (or their own target-statement choices and corresponding tests prevent it) that

they are not free agents in these matters (Walsh & Wyatt, 2014). In sum, while post method advocacy is more accommodating than previous forms of language planning, there is still a huge burden of practicability that needs to be surmounted.

Second, there is the question of "methodology versus methods?" Other contemporary thinkers would argue that postmethod is an impossible task. The very pursuit of a general theory of teaching is misguided; teachers can teach only in the absence of given methods. Whether teachers should listen to postmethod arguments or not, it might be better to be selfless, contented workers in the profession and exploit the belief that one method makes no real difference. Besides, there are concerns about the excesses of a postmethod approach to ELT. In principle, there are limits to how much control should be ceded to learners. Another concern is that with the postmethod policy, quite arbitrary decisions can be made at any point in the process of language pedagogy because there is, or should not be, a proper form of control. Thus, without a generally accepted form and a set of principles, course designers will have full license to exploit the most ephemeral and passing considerations in content debate or agenda selection—their or their own sponsors' political, economic, or ideological lines (Fiani & Syaprizal, 2018).

Future Directions in Postmethod English Language Teaching
The year 2025 marks the thirtieth anniversary of the publication of Kumaravadivelu's view of English teaching as a postmethod pedagogy. The future directions in postmethod English language teaching are offered in the hope that they will be of some help to the growing number of scholars and practitioners actively engaged in exploring the pedagogical implications of a postmethod perspective. The proposed future directions and emerging issues could be viewed as trends in postmethod pedagogy, though some might be of more interest than others in certain geographical and cultural contexts. The historical overview of the past decade and the account of major trends could be beneficial not only to researchers but also to practitioners who wish to adapt teaching and learning to meet new expectations and demands.

There does not appear to be a journal devoted exclusively to research in the area of postmethod English language teaching, though a perusal of established journals suggests an increase in published articles on the topic over the past years. Attention, however, is drawn to the limitations of the current published literature on postmethod pedagogy. Practical attempts and successful classroom experiences to manifest a postmethod perspective in applied linguistics are more difficult to document than conceptual discussions. Apart from the research agenda set out in this final part of the project, an invitation is extended to researchers, scholars, and practitioners to help address this concern by publishing research reports, case studies, reflection pieces, anecdotes, and accounts that explore or examine the postmethod potential of their own context.

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Conclusion

Examining ELT from a post-methodical perspective underscores the need to move away from rigid, one-size-fits-all approaches and towards more flexible, adaptable ones. This approach allows for a more successful and personalized learning experience, as teachers can adjust their methods to suit their students' individual needs, cultural backgrounds, and learning environments, fostering a sense of adaptability and openness to change among educators.

The post-method approach promotes continuous classroom innovation and responsiveness by valuing teacher autonomy and encouraging reflective practice. As a result, teachers are free to experiment with other techniques that work better in their classrooms rather than being limited to the same old ideas. This study's results support that a post-method framework can do wonders for students' motivation, engagement, language acquisition, and critical thinking.

A post-method approach to English as a second language (ESL) results in a more engaging and welcoming classroom. It stresses the need for teachers to engage with their pupils and adjust their methods actively. FutureFuture research and professional development should center on investigating and bolstering their practical use in various educational contexts to fully realize the benefits of post-method principles to fully realize the benefits of post-method principles.

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