

Master Students' Voices about Post-Method Pedagogy

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Abstract: Post method pedagogy can be regarded as a good way to deal with the lacks experienced by the usage of traditional methods. It compels us to restructure our view of language teaching both in pedagogical and ideological aspects. It requires that teachers should consider the essential components of post method pedagogy. As Kumaravadivelu (2006) forwarded, post-method pedagogy can be visualized as three-dimensional system consisting of three pedagogic parameters: particularity, practicality and possibility. This study aims to explore if English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teachers, who are also Master of Arts (MA) students, have knowledge on Post-Method Pedagogy; to learn about their attitudes, beliefs and preferences towards it and to examine whether there was a probable relationship between these practising teachers' attitudes and reflections on their classroom applications or not. To do this, 9 active EFL teachers pursuing their MA degrees at a Turkish state university, Institute of Educational Sciences, in English Language Education Master's Programme were administered a survey. Findings indicate that the participants have knowledge of the post-method pedagogy and most of them have positive attitudes about the classroom practices regarding implementation of strategies and parameters. Participants' responses indicated "particularity" as the most important parameter. In terms of the 10 macro-strategies, the participants gave the highest importance to the strategy of "raise cultural awareness", while they reported to employ "activate intuitive heuristics" as the least.

Key words: Macro strategies, particularity, pedagogic parameters, post-method pedagogy

Yüksek Lisans Öğrencilerinin Yöntem Sonrası Pedagoji hakkında Düşünceleri:

Özet: Yöntem sonrası pedagojisi, geleneksel yöntemlerin kullanımıyla beraber yaşanan eksikliklerle başa çıkmanın iyi bir yolu olarak kabul edilebilir. Bizleri, hem pedagojik hem de ideolojik açılardan dil öğretimine bakışımızı yeniden yapılandırmaya teşvik eder. Öğretmenlerin, yöntem sonrası pedagojisinin temel öğelerini dikkate almalarını gerektirir. Kumaravadivelu'nun (2006) öne sürdüğü gibi, yöntem sonrası pedagoji, üç pedagojik parametreden oluşan üç boyutlu bir sistem olarak görselleştirilebilir: özgünlük, uygulanabilirlik ve olabilirlik. Bu çalışma, yüksek lisans yapan İngilizce öğretmenlerinin yöntem sonrası pedagojisi hakkında bilgi sahibi olup olmadıklarını araştırmayı; onların bu pedagojiye yönelik tutumları, fikirleri ve tercihleri hakkında bilgi edinmek ve bu öğretmenlerin tutum ile sınıf uygulamalarına etkileri arasında olası bir ilişki olup olmadığını incelemektir. Bunun için, bir Türk devlet üniversitesinde, Eğitim Bilimleri Enstitüsü İngiliz Dili ve Eğitimi programında yüksek lisans yapmakta olan 9 aktif İngilizce öğretmenine anket uygulanmıştır. Bulgular, katılımcıların yöntem sonrası pedagoji hakkında bilgi sahibi olduklarını ve çoğunun ilke ve parametrelerin uygulanmasına ilişkin sınıf uygulamaları hakkında olumlu tutumlara sahip olduğunu göstermektedir. Katılımcıların yanıtları, "özgünlüğün" en önemli parametre olduğunu gösterdi. 10 ilke açısından, katılımcılar en büyük önemi "kültürel farkındalık yaratma" ilkesine verirken, en az "sezgisel buluşları aktifleştirme" ilkesine verdiler.

Anahtar sözcükler: İlkeler, özgünlük, pedagojik parametreler, yöntem sonrası pedagoji

1. Introduction

Throughout the history, learning of a language and teaching process have been at the center of debates. Starting from the early years of the 18th century, researchers and scholars believed that successful language learning could be possible only with the employment of an appropriate method. As a result, various methods have emerged in order to teach language in the best possible way. Several researches (Brown, 2002; Richards and Rodgers, 2001) have put forward the limitations of language teaching methods such as being too prescriptive, assuming too much about a context before the context has been identified limiting the teacher's own personal initiative and teaching style. Having realized the limitations of methods method era', the need for an alternative way has arisen and method era has left its place to a new understanding called as Post-method Era.

1.1. The History of Language Teaching Methodology

Starting from the early years of the 18th century, researchers and scholars' idea was that successful language learning could be possible only with employment of an appropriate method. However, this idea changed in the late 20th century calling as "the changing winds and shifting sands" (Brown, 2004, p.52), and the concept of methods was criticized (Richards & Rodgers, 2001). Brown (2002) states that in describing method, there was a difference between the philosophy of language teaching at the level of theory, principles and procedures for language teaching. In order to make this difference clear, Anthony(1963) proposed a scheme and identified three levels of organization in a hierarchical way. According to this scheme, there are 3 elements namely; approach, method and technique. *Approach* is a set of assumptions relating with language learning and teaching. *Method* is procedural plan for a specific approach including teachers' and learners' roles. *Technique* is implementation that takes place in a classroom (Richards & Rodgers, 1986).

For Richards and Rodgers (2001), these definitions were correct but inadequate to give sufficient attention to the nature of method; therefore, they defined method as an umbrella term to cover approach, design and procedure. Prabhu (1990) sees method as both classroom exercises, and the rationale advising these activities. However, all the detailed explanations of methods, the need for an alternative way has arisen and method era has left its place to a new understanding called as Post-method Era.

1.2. The Death of Methods

Having realized the limitations of methods, the reasons of this phenomenon was put forwarded by some of important figures with their statements of the reasons. Stern (1983) reported that several innovations reflect a shift in language pedagogy. The reason of this innovation was because researchers did not see the advantage of a method over another. Moreover, Brown (2002) and Richards and Rodgers (2001) stated the reasons that methods are too prescriptive, which assume too much about a context before the context has been identified. The second one was related with the teachers who were unable to overcome the limitations of the methods hindering their own creativity. Relatively, Richards and Rodgers (2001) commented on the role of teacher in the method era by stating that "there is often little room for the teacher's own personal initiative and teaching style" (p. 247). The limitations of methods that they mentioned provided reasons for the emergence of 'post-method era'.

1.3. The Logic of Post-Method

Post method is based on a new understanding in reconstructing language learning and teaching. It is the different way of looking at the problems and change in the perception of language teaching and language teacher education. Based on postmodern ideas, Kumaravadivelu (1994) identified the term 'post-method condition' instead 'method'. Kumaravadivelu (2006) criticizes the concept of method that affects the classroom for making it artificial land far from the reality. Therefore, rather than any potential alternative method, there is a need for an "alternative to method" (Kumaravadivelu, 2003a, p. 32).

1.3.1. The Post-Method Teacher

Post-method pedagogy sets the teacher at the forefront of language learning and instruction and emphasizes his/her views, practices and skill. (Can, 2009). In post-method era, the teachers are not practitioners but the technicians and creators of their own methods. It is the post method teachers who identify the learners expectation and teaching problems, seeks solutions for them, applies and assesses the results of solution and chooses the best one among them(Wallace, 1991). The post method teacher is in heart of learning, s/he is autonomous and reflective, as well as being critical thinkers.

1.4. Pedagogic parameters

Post-method pedagogy as put forwarded by Kumaravadivelu, (2006), has the following parameters; the parameter of particularity, the parameter of practicality and the parameter of possibility. By *particularity*, emphasis is on the idea that every learner, the teacher, the school, the class itself are particular and unique. For *practicality*, the relationship between theory and practice is underlined. “*Possibility*, on the other hand, seeks to highlight the socio political consciousness that students and teachers bring to the classroom” (Tig̃li, 2014, p.4).

1.5. The macrostrategic frameworks

Looking for effective ways of using classroom interaction analysis in order to see how teacher education can be made more sensitive to classroom events and having been sceptical about the teacher education programs. Kumaravadivelu (2006) thinks that professional knowledge does not reach the local needs of teachers and the unpredictable, needs and situations of second/foreign language learning. Within this perspective, he proposed a framework consisting of 10 macro strategies. Within these discussions in mind, all the following 10 strategies presented below are from Kumaravadivelu’s perspective.

1. *Maximize learning opportunities*: This strategy focuses on creating as much learning opportunities as the teacher can in and outside the classroom (Kumaravadivelu, 2003).
2. *Facilitate negotiated interaction*: This strategy enables students to take part in meaningful conversations, by asking question to grasp the meaning and to empathize with the person s/he is speaking with.
3. *Minimize perceptual mismatches*: This principle is about acknowledging perceptual mismatches between teacher intention and learner comprehension. In order to minimize this, teachers create class atmosphere in which learners can express themselves without hesitation.
4. *Activate intuitive heuristics*: This strategy highlights the meaningful learning that occurs when students are actively taking part in language learning by discovering rules etc.
5. *Foster language awareness*: This principle emphasizes drawing learners’ attention to the language forms and functions to promote learning.
6. *Contextualize linguistic input*: This principle is about teachers’ representing the language forms in meaningful contexts.
7. *Integrate language skills*: This strategy is about considering the language as a whole entity with combination of four skills.
8. *Promote learner autonomy*: This strategy allows learners being active and autonomous with the assistance of their teachers.
9. *Ensure social relevance*: This strategy sees the learners as individuals who bring their own culture, thoughts and social backgrounds into the classroom.
10. *Raise cultural consciousness*: “This principle emphasizes creating awareness and empathy towards L2 culture by giving students the opportunity to make comparisons between their culture and the target culture and to develop critical cultural consciousness” (Can, 2009, para.1).

One of the most remarkable characteristics of post-method pedagogy is its emphasis on local conditions and needs. Yet, the data obtained by means of local studies in relation with post-method pedagogy is still limited (Delport, 2010). Akbari (2008) highlights that there is a growing need to hear the reflections of teachers who are dealing with language teaching on daily basis.

Few research studies conducted on post-method pedagogy in Turkey. Among them, Arıkan’s (2006) study refers to a critical consideration, the role and importance of teacher education with regard to post-method condition. Can (2009) investigated the teacher growth in terms of post-method pedagogy. Tosun’s (2009) study outlines the key elements and interprets the future of the post-method pedagogy. In the light of these studies, there is a need to outline whether post-method pedagogy has received, or continues to receive sufficient attention and familiarization among MA students in English Language Education Programme who are also active Turkish EFL teachers.

The present study, drawing on the abovementioned need, focuses on how EFL teachers/MA students perceive post-method pedagogy and what sort of reflections, if any; this perception has on their teaching practices. It tries to find answers to the following research questions;

- 1) What is the main goal of language teaching according to MA students? Does their understanding have post method ideals?
- 2) Are MA students familiar with pedagogical content terminology about Post- Method Pedagogy?

- 3) What is their perception about the applicability of three pedagogic parameters?
- 4) Which parameter was found to be the most important one by MA students and how do they justify their reasons?
- 5) Do they use each of 10 macro-strategies? How frequently do they use macro strategies in their classes?

2. Methodology

2.1. Research Design

The present study adopts both quantitative and qualitative research design, by using open-ended questions with nine EFL teachers/MA students to investigate their perceptions and preferences about language teaching parameters and macro strategies, and about the use of these parameters and strategies in their classes within the perspective of post-method pedagogy.

2.2. Participants

There are 2 male and 7 female participants who are active teachers with age ranges varying from 27 to 36 years and with teaching experience from 3 to 11 years. They have English language teaching experience with language levels varies from A1 to B2.

Table 1.

Demographic Information of Participants

Participant code	Gender	Age	Teaching Experience	Teaching Proficiency
MAS1	F	33	9	Beginner
MAS2	F	28	4	Elementary
MAS3	F	29	5	Intermediate
MAS4	F	32	8	Elementary
MAS5	M	29	5	Beginner
MAS6	F	36	11	Upper-intermediate
MAS7	M	33	7	Elementary
MAS8	F	29	5	Beginner
MAS9	F	27	3	Beginner

A survey was designed for the purposes of the study. The first part aims at collecting demographic data about the participants, while the second part asks some information about the participants' pedagogical content knowledge related with Post-Method Pedagogy and afterwards. The third part aims at to assess EFL teachers/MA students' perceptions about the main goal of language teaching. The fourth section asks their perceptions about the applicability of three pedagogic parameters and aimed to elicit their choice the most important parameter and the reason of it according to them. Finally, the last section aims to find out whether they use the strategies and how often they use those macro- strategies in their classes.

2.3. Data Collection

The data was collected in 2014-2015 Fall Term in academic year. At the time of data collection, all the participants were active EFL teachers pursuing their MA degrees. They received "Beyond the Borders of Language Teaching Methodology" course for 3 hours in a week at university.

Prior to the administration of the survey, the participants were asked for their consent and were informed that the information collected through the survey would be used only for research purposes and their answers would remain confidential. They were also informed about the number of questions, and approximate duration of the survey. The survey was conducted after the lecture of regular meeting. The participants were given a hard copy of the questionnaire. After being completed, the participants handed in their completed questionnaire to the researcher.

2.4. Data Analysis

The quantitative data were analyzed through SPSS (version 22.0) by means of descriptive statistics and the qualitative data were analyzed with regards to its content by considering the relevant literature.

3. Findings

Research Question 1: What is the main goal of language teaching according to MA students?

The teacher participants were asked the main goal of language teaching and whether they understand of post method ideals. The content analysis of the participants' responses to the question reveals that the great majority of the participants believe in that the main goal of language is not only to teach linguistic structures, but also to make learners active responsible citizens and want them to think critically. One of these nine participants (MAS3) who is currently working with learners with A1 level, says:

To me, the main goal of language teaching is both helping learners be proficient users of target language and guiding them to be responsible individuals who could make an effort to change the world for a better place.

This answer is keeping with the learner autonomy in perspective of post-method pedagogy. As Kumaravadivelu (2001) suggests one of the three aspects of the learner autonomy is liberatory. According to him, learning to learn means learning to use appropriate strategies to reach desired goals. By using appropriate strategies, learners are able to monitor their learning process and maximize their learning potentials; therefore learners can form their learning communities, and provide opportunities for exploration. However, learners will only be able to achieve such a goal particularly with their teachers.

Research Question 2: Are MA students familiar with Pedagogical Content Terminology about post method pedagogy?

The participants were asked the pedagogical content knowledge related with Post-Method Pedagogy. Responses show that all of the participant student teachers ($N = 9$), are familiar with the terms of Post-Method Pedagogy and afterwards. The reason might be that student/teachers, while taking 'Beyond the Borders of Language Teaching Methodology' course at university, might have become familiar with the terms and topics related with the post-method pedagogy.

Research Question 3: What is their perception about the applicability of three pedagogic parameters?

The participants were asked their opinions about the applicability of parameters. An analysis of the participants' responses reveals that the great majority of the participants have positive opinions about the applicability of these three parameters. Especially, seven of the participants reported that all parameters can be actively used in their teaching. While, two of these nine participants stated that practicality can not be applied for the reason that the teachers may not transform the theory into practice. MAS5 thinking particularity is applicable says,

"I think particularity could be applied, because teachers could consider each students as unique and local conditions could be involved in many ways. Teachers may design the objectives, curriculum and materials in relation with students' needs and expectations so that students actively take part in learning."

All the participants whose responses are "The particularity can be applicable in teaching practices" can show us that they have not been passivized by one set of teaching principles and procedures within the educational system.

On the other hand, one of two participants who is not agree with the applicability of the parameter of practicality says:

"Sometimes it is difficult to put into practice what you theorize due to large classes, lack of time, unqualified teachers and learners."

As can be inferred from the participant's answer that this is in fact a reflection of the difficulty experienced by teachers. Finding them faced with actual realities of Turkey's ELT with, large class sizes and problematic unwilling students and unqualified teachers, it seems, teachers feel disappointed to find a quite different world from the one described in ELT methodology courses.

For the possibility, all the participants ($N=9$) believe in that it can be applied. One of the participants states that:

“Possibility is ability to change. We can change our learning environment, students, society by language teaching. Raising awareness about the deficiencies and problems of the society that we are living on, is important that we can put things right and change the problematic issues.”

The participants’ responses to the question about possibility show that, they point out social change is important for them and through language use it is possible to change something.

Research Question 4: Which parameter was found to be the most important one by MA students and how do they justify their reasons?

For the fourth question, there are different arrangements for the importance of parameters. The frequency of each parameter with regard to the participants’ responses was calculated and *the parameter of particularity* had the highest score ($M=2.33$) compared to the other two parameters. This might be the reason that all the students-teachers believe in the idea that everything starts with the local all the participants give importance to the ‘uniqueness’. The participant, who believes that particularity is the most important one, says:

“Everything starts with a belief. If the teacher believes s/he can change the society then it is the turning point of his/her teaching life.”

To sum up, most of the participants had positive beliefs and attitudes in relation with Post-method Pedagogy.

Research Question 5: Do you use each of 10 macro-strategies? Please indicate how frequently you use macro strategies.

According to the data for the answer of this question, the participants use “raise cultural awareness” ($M= 3.84$), “promote learner autonomy” ($M= 3.67$) and “maximize learning opportunities” ($M= 3.44$) most. It can be inferred that the teachers regard cultural teaching as an integral part of L2 teaching thus they want help their learners to gain an empathy and understanding toward the culture of L2 community.

For the frequency of strategies’ usage, the findings indicate that, the participants always use “promote learner autonomy” ($M = 4.22$), usually use “contextualize linguistic input” ($M= 4.00$), sometimes use “integrate language skills” ($M = 2.33$), and rarely use “foster language awareness” ($M = 2.22$). It can be inferred that the participants give high importance the learner autonomy, so that learners are able to monitor their learning process therefore learners can form their learning communities, and provide opportunities for exploration.

4. Conclusion

An analysis of the collected qualitative data concerning the teacher-students’ knowledge about macro strategies and parameters on post-method pedagogy revealed that participants have knowledge concerning most recent issues in ELT such as the post-method pedagogy and afterwards.

An important finding of this study is that most of the participant teachers have positive attitude about the classroom practices with implementation of strategies and parameters. They seem to reject top-down teaching procedure in current Turkish Educational System. All of the participant teachers seem to have developed autonomy to make their own decisions about the teaching and learning process that they are involved in.

Two participants did not believe the applicability of the parameter of practicality regarding facing lots of problems including class size, problematic students and unqualified teachers. This may be because they might have been affected by realities of the Turkish Educational System.

The present study also shows, the course that participants take ‘Beyond the Borders of Language Teaching Methodology’ in MA program makes a contribution on active EFL teachers. They have a common strong belief that language teaching is not about teaching linguistic structures but for communication and making students critical thinkers and citizens.

In sum, teachers’ experiences and knowledge have great value in teaching a language in post-method era. In this respect, teacher education is of great importance which provides the teacher-students with necessary skills for transforming and adapting the methods into their own situations and local contexts with learners’ interests and needs in mind. They are able to theorize what they practice and teach in real classroom settings. It is clearly seen that they mainly show a desire to go beyond the borders and limitations of ELT methodology.

- a) How long have you been teaching English? _____ year (s)
- b) With what levels have you had English language teaching experience? Circle the one(s) that apply to your situation.
- A1 or Beginner
 - A2 or elementary
 - B1 or intermediate
 - B2 or upper - intermediate
 - C1 or advanced
 - C2 or mastery.

PEDAGOGICAL CONTENT KNOWLEDGE

4. Are you familiar with these terms? Please put a tick.

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| (....) Critical Pedagogy | (....) Frankfurt School |
| (....) English as a Lingua Franca | (....) Empowerment |
| (....) Critical-Thinking | (....) Post-modern Education |
| (....) Progressivism | (....) School of Linguistics. |

THE AIM OF LANGUAGE TEACHING AND YOU

5. What is the main goal of language teaching to you? Please specify.
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PEDAGOGIC PARAMETERS

6. Post-method Pedagogy can be visualized as a three- dimensional system consisting of three pedagogic parameters: particularity, practicality, and possibility.

- a) Do you think particularity is applicable? Yes () No ()

Why/ why not?

- b) Do you think practicality is applicable? Yes () No ()

Why/ why not?

- c) Do you think possibility is applicable? Yes()No ()

Why/ why not?

- d) Can you put these 3 parameters in order of importance?

Particularity () Practicality () Possibility ()

- e) According to your answer, please explain the most important one to you.
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MACRO-STRATEGIES

7. Do you use the following macro-strategies?

	YES	NO
Raise cultural awareness		
Promote learner autonomy		
Integrate language skills		
Maximize learning opportunities		
Foster language awareness		
Facilitate negotiated interaction		
Activate intuitive heuristics		
Minimize perceptual mismatches		
Ensure social relevance		
Contextualize linguistic input		

If yes; please indicate how frequently you use strategy (ies)

	RARELY	SOMETIMES	USUALLY	ALWAYS
Raise cultural awareness				
Promote learner autonomy				
Integrate language skills				
Maximize learning opportunities				
Foster language awareness				
Facilitate negotiated interaction				
Activate intuitive heuristics				
Minimize perceptual mismatches				
Ensure social relevance				
Contextualize linguistic input				

A) Please give a specific example in which you can demonstrate your employment of this strategy.
