

Reflections on Kumaravadivelu's Post-Method Pedagogy: Juxtaposing Perceptions and Practices¹

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Abstract

Departing from Kumaravadivelu's (2006) post-method principles (PMPs), this study set out to explore the relationships between teachers' beliefs about PMPs and their teaching practices at the collegiate level in Yemen. Data were collected through a survey of perceptions of 57 university teachers during the academic year 2019-2020. Out of this initial sample, nine informants who claimed to be post-method teachers were singled out for classroom observations. Results show that the majority were less sanguine about the post-method practices, regardless of the magnitude of their teaching experiences. Besides questioning the existing practices, this paper brings to the fore some suggestions to liberate teachers from restrictions of conventional method-based teaching. Teachers are encouraged to shape and reshape their teaching relying on their own experiences to develop useful teaching ideas for their contexts. Instead of searching for a 'best' method to follow, they should find effective teaching strategies to enhance their teaching repertoire.

Resumen

Partiendo de los principios post-método (PMP) de Kumaravadivelu (2006), este estudio se propuso explorar las relaciones entre las creencias de los profesores sobre los PMP y sus prácticas docentes a nivel universitario en Yemen. Los datos fueron recolectados a través de una encuesta de percepciones de 57 docentes universitarios durante el año académico 2019-2020. De esta muestra inicial, nueve informantes que afirmaron ser maestros post-método fueron seleccionados para observaciones en el aula. Los resultados muestran que la mayoría se mostró menos optimista sobre las prácticas post-método, independientemente de sus experiencias docentes. Además de cuestionar las prácticas existentes, este trabajo trae a la luz algunas sugerencias para liberar a los profesores de las restricciones de la enseñanza basada en métodos convencionales. Se anima a los profesores a moldear y remodelar su enseñanza basándose en sus propias experiencias para desarrollar ideas útiles para la enseñanza en sus contextos. En lugar de buscar el "mejor" método a seguir, deberían encontrar estrategias de enseñanza eficaces para mejorar su repertorio de enseñanza.

Introduction

When going to the classroom, language teachers are assumed to have a vision of how to go about teaching a second or foreign language. This vision, termed *an approach*, comprises a range of methods— formal step-by-step procedures for conducting classes. Teaching methods, which are the realizations of a particular approach, have undergone a cycle of action and reaction. Some argue that a reliance on method alone results in failure, and learners could be successful regardless of the teaching methods (Arikan, 2006; Brown, 2000; Davies, 2007; Thornbury, 2011). All the existing methods (also called teaching assumptions) remain open to criticism, and the debate has spilled over into a rejection of the notion of 'method' altogether. Scholars such as Pennycook (1989), Stern (1992), Kumaravadivelu (1994), and Allwright (2003) questioned the scope, nature, and shortfalls of the conventional methods, arguing that an authoritative method fitting all contexts hardly exists. Such scholars initiated a post-method vision, putting an end to seeking a *best method* and steering the path of English Language Teaching (ELT) towards what Kumaravadivelu (2003) dubbed *beyond method*. It corresponds to post-structuralism, post-modernism, and post-colonialism.

This anti-method movement is more than a passing trend. It has matured to a revolutionary phase of ELT that endorses a transformative approach to curriculum development. It supports formulating a new style of classroom practices in which teaching L2 (English is a case in point) is based on experiences of teachers and realities of local contexts rather than an externally imposed pedagogy. It grants teachers a pivotal role in the realization of this transformative process (Huda, 2013; Naeini & Shakouri, 2016; Yinghua, 2016; Zeng, 2018). Notwithstanding the chances it affords, this change poses challenges to teachers and learners who have evangelical faith in the method. In Islam and Shuchi's (2017) words, "the transition from a long-established method-based pedagogy to an emerging post-method pedagogy could not altogether meet the expectations rather gave birth to new confusions and challenges" (p. 539).

A wealth of prior research grounded on the theoretical aspects of Kumaravadivelu's framework of post-method pedagogy that contradicts method in theory and practice (Islam & Shuchi, 2017; Richards, 2013; Thornbury, 2009), and the study presented here dwells on this evolving area of research to problematize the central tenets underpinning the new perspective in the local EFL context. It examines teachers' familiarity with post-method principles (hereafter PMPs). It ascertains any statistical differences between

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the teachers' applications of PMPs, which are made up of ten macro-strategies, according to the magnitude of their teaching experiences. It chiefly draws on Kumaravadivelu's (2006a) framework that relocates the position of teachers in the teaching process. The study was also inspired by other studies built on Kumaravadivelu's theory of post-method (Aboulalaei et al.; 2016; Dağkiran, 2015; Soto, 2014; Zeng, 2018).

Research Questions

The investigation hinges on the following questions:

1. To what extent are teachers cognizant of PMPs in the Yemeni EFL context?
2. How do teachers' actual classroom practices reflect this familiarity or lack of thereof?
3. Are there any statistical differences between the teachers' applications of Kumaravadivelu's macro-strategies according to their years of teaching experience?

Significance of the Study

The study provides a lens to see L2 (English) pedagogy through the theory of post-method that counts on classroom-oriented theories, local initiatives, and locally-made materials. By giving room for localness of L2 pedagogy, the study strengthens the collective and coordinated results of research grounded in Kumaravadivelu's works that challenge the hegemonic forces that impose methods and their associated materials including tests and teacher preparation programs. This attempt gives teachers more leeway to shoulder the responsibility of their teaching by engaging them in critical self-reflection to become pedagogically independent and knowledge generators rather than knowledge transmitters (Kumaravadivelu, 2006a). The study is specifically useful for those who wish to become L2 teachers in the post-method era, wherein teachers are encouraged to start from their own experiences instead of relying on contentious methods. The study also provides implications for research projects that change tracks and challenge trends in TESOL methods (Kumaravadivelu, 2006b).

Literature Review

Method VS Post-Method

The post-method came into existence after an escalation of methods. A teaching method, touted as construction of approach, design, and procedures (Richards & Rodgers, 2001), is governed by views on language, L2 education goals and objectives, type of syllabus, the roles of teacher and learner, activities, techniques, and procedures (Didenko & Pichugova, 2016; Richards, 2013; Thornbury, 2009; Ur, 2015). In this light, teachers work from a package of strategies, techniques, and materials dictated by certain methods to address certain aspects of the target language.

Sifting through the existing methods yielded dissatisfaction among numerous ELT experts and researchers who found the prescriptive nature of every method unconvincing (Allwright, 2003; Kumaravadivelu, 2006a, 2016; Naeinib & Shakouri, 2016). A common argument against method is the diversity of teaching situations, making every teaching context unique. A particular method is not on par with teaching needs in all L2 contexts in terms of teachers and learners' needs, culture, and exam requirements (Didenko & Pichugova, 2016; Ur, 2015). Arguably, there are unforeseen needs and preferences in every context, and a certain method usually fails to recognize such invisible local requirements (Kumaravadivelu, 2016). None of the established methods fulfills learners and teachers' needs (Huda, 2013). Richards (1998) argued that adhering to a single method can "impede the teacher's full potential" (p. 44). Ur (2015) believes that the dictates of methods prevent teachers from autonomously deciding what works and does not work in a given class. Rashidi (2015) joined this line of debate maintaining that methods produce results insensitive to local needs. These reasons, among others, weakened the position of method and inspired numerous scholars to search for a viable alternative.

The breakdown of methods breathed life into the post-method conception. Pennycook (1989), Stern (1992), and Allwright (2003) first proposed the perspective of the post-method. Kumaravadivelu, the premier founder, strengthened it in his seminal publications, *The Post-Method Condition* (1994), *Beyond Method* (2001), and *Understanding Language Teaching: From Method to Post-method* (2006). Kumaravadivelu used the term in a much broader sense. He redefined the viewpoints of language education by including "not only issues pertaining to classroom strategies, instructional materials, curricular objectives, and evaluation measures, but also a wide range of historical, political, and socio-cultural experiences that directly or indirectly influence L2 education" (2001, p. 538). The author exerted efforts to convince debaters and educators of his insightful PMPs that aim to refine what he called "the debilitating relationship between

theorists and practitioners” (Amiri & Sahragard, 2018, p. 4). He has convincingly transferred the international *awareness* of post Methodism in L2 pedagogy to *awakening* and he aspires to take it from awakening to *attainment* (Kumaravadivelu, 2006b). The latter (i.e., attainment) has been largely unchallenged in L2 contexts.

Compared to the notion of method, the post-method pedagogy is not an exact teaching method, but an open teaching idea. In Kumaravadivelu’s (1994) words, it is “the research on the choice of method rather than the alternative method” (p. 30). It entreats teachers to go beyond the linguistic aspects of language teaching and incorporate socio-political and sociocultural aspects that influence the classroom interaction directly or indirectly.

Kumaravadivelu’s Framework

In 2006, building on his previous works, Kumaravadivelu came up with an adaptable framework of three core principles: particularity, practicality, and possibility. Particularity refers to the teachers’ sensitivity to their local contexts, matching teaching acts with educational, institutional, and social dimensions of particular local exigencies. Arguably, this principle enables teachers to evaluate their outcomes and identify problems and solutions. Practicality refers to the inadequacy of theory unless it is generated through practice. That is, for a theory to be fully useful and usable, it should be applicable in reality. Possibility refers to (a) the recognition of learners’ and teachers’ class, race, gender, ethnicity, and (b) the impacts of these elements on education. These three principles comprise ten interwoven macro-strategies:

(a) maximize learning opportunities, (b) facilitate negotiated interaction, (c) minimize perceptual mismatches, (d) activate intuitive heuristics, (e) foster language awareness, (f) contextualize linguistic input, (g) integrate language skills, (h) promote learner autonomy, (i) raise cultural consciousness, and (j) ensure social relevance. (Kumaravadivelu, 2006a, p. 201)

Such strategies align macrostructures (cultural, historical, political, and social dimensions) to the microstructures of the pedagogical enterprise. Kumaravadivelu’s framework is not based on any specific theory of language education but is derived from “available theoretical, empirical, and pedagogical knowledge related to L2 learning and teaching” (Kumaravadivelu, 2006a, p. 201). Being applicable in other contexts, the macro-strategies guide both experienced and less experienced teachers for professional development. To Kumaravadivelu, pedagogy is not a transmission of knowledge to learners but a connection between language and socio-political needs; theory informs classroom practices, practice informs theory, and theorists assist teachers in generating various situation-specific insightful ideas within such a general baseline. Given this reciprocal relationship, teachers construct proper concepts of practice based on classroom experiences. This ambitious vision enables teachers to design their syllabi and teaching plans, empowers learners to be planners of their own needs, and makes the learning process more learner-centric (Huq, 2015).

Salient Features of Post-Method Pedagogy

A major feature of the post-method is the unfailing focus on teachers as decision-makers within their local, political, social, and linguistic settings. It grants them the right to bring about a major departure in the curriculum. Kumaravadivelu (2003) adamantly conceived teachers as strategic researchers who “systematically observe their teaching, interpret their classroom events, evaluate their outcomes, identify problems, find solutions, and try them out to see once again what works and what does not” (p.16). Supporting Kumaravadivelu’s PMPs, Richards (2013) claimed that teaching is much more than just a collection of strategies in a training program or a handbook. Rather, it is the teachers’ own cognitively based activity. The author contends that Kumaravadivelu’s three core principles encapsulate a set of macro-strategies that help teachers to make decisions in their teaching. Thornbury (2009) believes that post method teaching fosters not only learner autonomy but teacher autonomy as well. Khodabakhshzadeh et al. (2018) advocated, “Autonomous teachers are empowered teachers and may be more effective teachers and are influential in their students’ achievement” (p.433). Departing from Kumaravadivelu’s view of post-method pedagogy, Tasnimi (2014) elaborated on teachers as educators, arguing that the teacher’s role has changed from ‘information-based to inquiry-oriented.’ That is, teachers are not only practitioners but also self-directed theorizers, a view endorsed by Yinghua (2016) who debated that teachers are no longer receivers of theories but theory makers.

Another feature of the post-method pedagogy is what Ur (2015) proposed as a product-orientation in lieu of the traditional three-stage process: presentation, practice, and production (abbreviated as PPP). The production itself is the focus of post method teaching. The former (i.e., PPP) accentuates the teacher

following procedures in the classroom to achieve goals, and the focus of the latter (i.e., PMPs) is the learners' production of language. While methods target skills of the language, which in many cases are isolated from contexts (decontextualized), language aspects in the post-method era are necessarily contextualized (Ur, 2015), and the mother tongue, arguably, supports teaching L2 in a given context.

Drawbacks

The post-method suggests a departure from teaching methods to teaching ideas. This change aroused new anxieties and difficulties for teachers who were trained on methods. Kumaravadivelu's perspective, which "emerged with the promise to come out of the stranglehold of the method" (Islam & Shuchi, 2017, p.539), has limitations similar to the methods' (Didenko & Pichugova, 2016). For instance, some aspects of language (e.g., teaching certain rules or jargon) need to be decontextualized (Ur, 2015). Likewise, the post-method pedagogy encourages teachers to tailor their context-bound methodologies, yet it does not define teachers' duties in the post-method pedagogy (Akbari, 2008). The new perspective enables teachers to exercise full freedom, but the freedom of choice, the author argues, results in the adoption of a concoction of techniques, and even if teachers disassociate themselves with the method, the teaching materials they follow (e.g., textbooks) affect pedagogical practices. Such materials dictate the dos and don'ts of teaching a course or a series of courses.

The new paradigm has assigned heavy responsibilities to teachers to overcome a variety of challenges within unsupportive atmospheres (Karimvand et al., 2014; Khodabakhshzadeh et al., 2018). Only a few have the time, resources, or the willingness to fashion classes to the post-method model; some also lack the required skills to do so (Akbari, 2008). Furthermore, the post-method pedagogy, like methods, is inapplicable in all contexts. It requires a paradigm shift of learning and teaching strategies, needs, and attitudes; many contexts, undeniably, undergo the sway of traditional methods and approaches wherein, understandably, teachers are trained to follow certain methods. Therefore, what Kumaravadivelu depicts as an ideal classroom environment is questionable, particularly in contexts that have centralized educational systems. It is healthy to expect post-method teaching not to emerge out of a centralized system, or from those individuals who have a genuine enthusiasm for method, unless simultaneous shift of policies and training takes place.

Previous Studies

The post-method pedagogy has been investigated in several contexts. For instance, it has been the thrust of several studies in the Turkish context (e.g., Dağkiran, 2015; Tekin, 2013), in Bangladesh (Huda, 2013; Huq, 2015), in Iran (Aboulalaei et al., 2016), in the Thai context (Saengboon, 2013), and China (Chen, 2014), to mention but a few. These authors examined—via quantitative and qualitative research—how Kumaravadivelu's PMPs influence EFL teachers' attitudes, classroom practices, and teaching strategies. The results generally show that teachers work from methods rather than the non-method paradigm. Such studies, however, provided implications that each context had its own cultural and situational variables that require context-based teaching practices. In a similar vein, Scholl (2015) surveyed 189 teachers online to investigate TESOLers' beliefs about post-method teaching, focusing on the factors that influence a teacher's belief in the PMPs. The results showed that the participants' commitments to PMPs and classroom practices were statistically irrelevant. The author contends that schooling is an uninformative factor of belief in PMPs that led to the absence of this relationship.

Despite the changing status of method, the concept of teaching method continues to hold sway (Didenko & Pichugova, 2016). The method has not lost adherents. Some authors such as Zeng (2018) view the post-method as a transcendence of method. Saengboon (2013) argued that the communicative approach "comes close to post method pedagogy because it is a set of guidelines, thereby leaving ample opportunity for teachers to implement any of its principles ... in ways that will be fruitful to learners" (p. 157). Overshadowing of the communicative approach and its associated methods such as the task-based and eclectic methods apparently exist in numerous contexts and remain the subject matter of several editions of books, journal articles, teacher-training programs, conferences, and seminars. While it is reasonable to argue that the universality of a method is far-fetched, it is still important to give teachers an insight into how ELT has developed as a field. The concept of method is obviously an integral part of teacher preparation programs and vibrant in online ads for language courses. It is, in Thornbury's (2011) words, "alive and well in the public mind" (p.194). Several contexts have gradually imbibed the concept of post-methodism, yet it has received insufficient attention in the Arab World EFL contexts that accentuate the method-based paradigm. The present study falls within these rather uncharted research landscapes.

Methodology

The study adopted a descriptive research design, combining quantitative and qualitative data with a precedence of the quantitative paradigm because the study is primarily an analysis of teachers' entrenched beliefs and practices of post-method teaching as ensured from highly close-ended data collection tools.

Participants

The sample consisted of 57 teachers of English (43% female, 57% male) affiliated with five public universities that offer EFL programs at the undergraduate level in Yemen. Sixty percent of the cohort had degrees in linguistics and ELT, and 40 percent in English literature. The sample had teaching experiences ranging from two to twenty-five years. Teachers with more than five-year experience were classified as more experienced ($n=39$) than teachers with less than five-year experience ($n=18$). The purpose of this division was to compare the impact of teaching experience on PMP adoption.

Instruments

Online Survey

A questionnaire was designed to collect data on the extent to which the EFL teachers were cognizant of the post-method teaching in their local teaching context. It was built around the macro-strategies suggested by Kumaravadivelu in his two books: (a) *Beyond Methods: Macro-Strategies for Language Teaching* (2003), and (b) *Understanding Language Teaching: From Method to Post-Method* (2006a). Some items were adapted from Huq (2015), Khodabakhshzadeh et al. (2018), Rashidi (2015), Aboulalaei et al. (2016), Tasnimi (2014), Yinghua (2016), and Dağkiran (2015). The survey encompassed three parts. The first part elicited background information; the second unearthed teachers' familiarity with PMPs; and the third part dealt with the participants' applicability of PMP in their teaching. In other words, Part II (15 items on a 5-point Likert scale) focused on theory and Part III (40 items) focused on practice. Before implementation, the questionnaire was piloted on a small group with similar characteristics ($n=10$), amassed, and its psychometric characteristics were checked. The Cronbach's alpha was 0.862. The final version was developed and administered. The items of the second and third parts were reduced to fifty-five only, and repetitive or ambiguous phrases were removed or adjusted.

Classroom observation

A non-participant classroom observation was used to capture data from ongoing classes to evaluate PMPs integration in classroom teaching. Class sessions of nine teachers were observed in three public universities. They were nominated from the body of informants who responded to the survey and claimed to be post-method instructors. Five of them had more than five years of teaching experience, while the remaining four had fewer. An observational checklist, relatively structured, was designed to specify in exact terms the focus of the observation. It was made up of items quite similar to the ones in the questionnaire with ample space for taking notes of how teachers delivered their lectures. Only PMP-related concepts were considered (e.g., language skill integration, the interaction between teachers, students, and materials). The checklist was based on previous works that drew on Kumaravadivelu's (1999, 2003, 2006) PMPs, giving space for notes of local linguistic, socio-cultural, and political particularities.

Procedures

Prior to data collection, the researcher met the head administrators of the target universities to obtain a permission that eased accessing the participants who were selected for classroom observations. Upon approval, the researcher prepared an open invitation message for shared groups on Facebook and WhatsApp so that interested respondents would voluntarily access the online survey and respond accordingly. As for the classroom observations, all the observational sessions were scheduled to be conducted during normal teaching in the first semester of the academic year 2019-2020. Throughout the observational sessions, descriptions of ongoing classroom actions (relevant to the issue being investigated) were noted. During an observation, every five minutes the researcher checked boxes in the observational guide and took field-notes about teachers' PMP-related activities.

To abide by ethical standards, the researcher explained the purpose of the study through an instruction sheet and a consent form beforehand in order to help the participants make a decision on whether or not to partake in the study. In the analysis, the real names of the teachers under observation were replaced with pseudonyms.

Data Analysis

This study, which is descriptive in nature, fostered a concurrent combination of quantitative and qualitative constituents at the levels of gathering, analyzing, interpreting, and reporting the data. Primacy was given to the quantitative paradigm as the study largely deals with numerical data. The author used IBM SPSS to calculate the descriptive statistics (means, standard deviations, percentage) and the p -value of the t-test (in SPSS called Sig.), which works on normally distributed data to compare two means. The quantitative data in the stacks of completed questionnaires were screened, cleaned, and filtered, taking into account the missing data and outliers in the raw dataset. The data were subjected to some statistical procedures such as testing normal distribution and parametric vs. nonparametric analysis. The close-ended items in the observational guide were treated statistically, and the notes taken during the observations were first sorted into emerging themes. The wordy notes were reduced to manageable categories and similarities were grouped under appropriate themes.

Results

The study addressed teachers' conversance with the post-method principles and how their teaching experience capitalized on such principles. The first part of the investigation surveyed the respondents' perceptions by collecting relevant data through the questionnaire. The mean scores and standard deviations of Part II (items 1-14) were obtained. The responses were recorded on a five-point Likert scale (1 stands for *strongly disagree* and 5 *strongly agree*). Table 1 outlines the participants' responses to the concept of method and post-method. As data in the table indicates, the mean values of the items 1 through 6 are of a higher rate than those of the items 7 through 13. The mean values in the former set (1-6) are greater than three and less than four ($3 < \mu < 4$) and in the latter (7-13) the mean values $2 < \mu < 3.5$. The former set relates to the method and the latter to the post-method. Mean scores in both sets range between two and four. Noticeably, the extreme values 1 and 5 are non-existent. Although items 1-6 show that the teachers tend to rely on methods, the items 7-14 discloses the informants' familiarity with some principles of post-method teaching; yet the bland responses did not correspond exotically to the PMPs.

	The questionnaire items	No.	Mean	St.D
1	Method is a viable tool of instruction for language teachers.	57	3.90	1.35
2	Method helps teachers deliver their lessons more efficiently.	57	3.86	1.35
3	Methods should be geared to the values of native speakers.	57	3.89	1.04
4	Teachers should follow the principles of a certain method in their classes.	57	3.77	1.07
5	Teachers use, and not produce, teaching theories.	57	3.51	1.00
6	Prospective teachers of English should be instructed on methods.	57	3.39	1.11
7	Methods arise from practices in the classroom.	57	3.11	1.30
8	Teachers should change approaches/methods to match local needs.	57	2.47	1.54
9	Teachers should have their own methods of teaching.	57	2.89	1.40
10	An ideal teaching method never exists.	57	2.33	1.53
11	Teachers are adept at producing their own teaching methods.	57	3.11	1.13
12	Teachers should be sensitive to their teaching settings in terms of economy, politics, and social factors.	57	2.86	1.41
13	Teachers should increase tolerance for other cultures.	57	2.58	1.48
14	Teachers should teach their classes with a variety of methods.	57	3.64	1.54

Table 1: Informants' perceptions of the concept of Method and Post-Method

The second part of the analysis relates to real classroom teaching, depending on data ensued from the questionnaire (Part III) along with supportive evidence from the classroom observation. The results arranged in Table 2 exhibit how the teachers in question monitor their teaching effectiveness. The informants responded to a five-point Likert scale ranged from *always* to *never* (coded from 1 to 5, with 1 being *never* and 5 *always*). In the table, three values are treated: the extreme values (never (N) vs. always (A)) and values that come in between (S for sometimes). In the given dataset, only 13 (out of 23) teaching practices are remarkable. The items 6, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 18, 19, 20, and 23 ranked 50% and above; the respondents stated that they always implement those elements in their teaching. Findings surfaced from data in the table illustrate that while the teachers in the given context play quite active roles, they do not usually design their teaching. They generally follow prescribed course descriptions and use ready-made materials and their performance is assessed on this basis of following such imposed teaching guidelines.

	The questionnaire items	A	S	N	100%
1	I write about the accomplishments/failures of each class.	28%	30%	42%	100%
2	I partake in meetings on to L2 pedagogy (e.g., seminars, conferences)	44%	23%	33%	100%
3	I initiate my own teaching theories/concepts.	44%	37%	19%	100%
4	I extract local thoughts and practices from global thoughts.	44%	32%	24%	100%
5	I do research based on my classroom teaching.	49%	35%	16%	100%
6	I analyze my teaching strategies and techniques.	51%	40%	09%	100%
7	I analyze inconsistencies that occur in my classroom practices.	44%	32%	24%	100%
8	I read books and papers on recent language teaching methods.	67%	17%	16%	100%
9	I unify my thoughts and actions in my teaching.	72%	23%	5%	100%
10	I identify my teaching problems and solutions.	81%	14%	5%	100%
11	I analyze my strengths and weaknesses as a teacher.	81%	12%	7%	100%
12	I consider alternatives in my teaching.	88%	12%	00%	100%
13	I decide on what works and does not work in my teaching.	86%	12%	2%	100%
14	My teaching procedure differs from class to class	72%	23%	5%	100%
15	I think of social events that can influence my classroom teaching	65%	24%	11%	100%
16	I abide by a given syllabus/course description	44%	38%	18%	100%
17	I use ready-made materials to achieve my teaching goals	47%	42%	11%	100%
18	I devise my own teaching materials that fit in with the course I teach	65%	30%	5%	100%
19	I keep accounts of my teaching to review it	58%	33%	9%	100%
20	I discuss practical/theoretical issues with my colleagues	54%	37%	9%	100%
21	I invite colleagues to observe and comment on my teaching.	25%	31%	44%	100%
22	Policymakers and administrators have influence on my teaching	40%	28%	32%	100%
23	My teaching philosophy in life affects my teaching	61%	30%	9%	100%

Table 2: Teachers’ self-ratings of evaluation of their teaching

In terms of student/teacher interaction, the informants responded to a five-point Likert scale ranged from *always* to *never* (coded as above), and the results are outlined in Table 3. As displayed in the table, the majority of participants adopt such macro-strategies as *raising cultural awareness* in their classrooms, considering *students’ gender, race, social background, ideologies, hobbies, interests and abilities*. These elements, from the post-method stand, affect students’ achievements and influence classroom teaching. One more aspect is *skill integration* (perceptive and productive skills). The majority of the informants stated that they integrate language skills and teach language according to students’ needs and preferences (means scores: 4.32 & 4.19 respectively). Although they tend to consider each group of students ($\mu=4.23, SD=0.63$) and activate students’ sense of exploration ($\mu=4.28, SD=0.75$), they were short at facilitating *negotiated interaction* between their students ($\mu=4.06, SD=0.71$).

	The questionnaire items	No.	Mean	St.D
1	I integrate all the language skills	57	4.32	0.85
2	I open negotiation and encourage interaction in my classes	57	4.06	0.71
3	I consider each particular group of students	57	4.28	0.75
4	I connect my language teaching to students’ needs and preferences	57	4.19	0.72
5	I promote my students’ self-confidence	57	4.70	0.53
6	I encourage my students to learn various learning skills/strategies.	57	4.60	0.56
7	I help my students to do things differently (sense of exploration).	57	4.23	0.63
8	I contextualize language input in my classes	57	4.04	0.78
9	I consider gender, social class, and race as they influence my students’ achievements	57	3.21	1.24

Table 3: Student-teacher interactions and learning opportunities

With relevance to teachers' roles, Figure 1 displays the post-method teachers' roles such as theorizers, innovators, and researchers were at a lower rate of the current practices. The respondents played more information-oriented roles than inquiry-oriented roles. The majority of the informants tend to play multi-dimensional roles: evaluator, consultant, observer, and facilitator — characteristics of the teacher' roles in the communicative teaching.

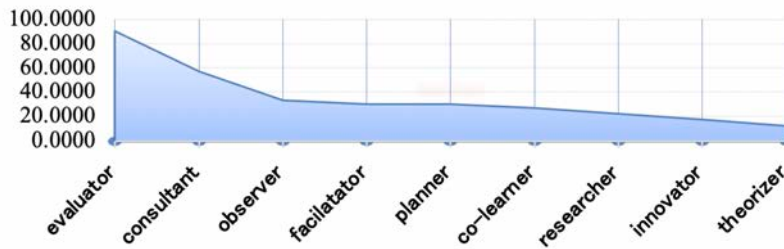


Figure 1. The participants' responses on their roles as teachers

Observational Data Analysis

Claiming to be post-method instructors, nine informants underwent close classroom observations. Table 4 outlines five themes relevant to the post-method that emerged from the observations: teaching paradigm, teacher-students interaction, teaching materials, language skill integration, and social relevance. As displayed in the table, the teachers under observation relied heavily on traditional teaching delivery. In terms of method, Ahmed, Rosa, and Fatima (pseudo-names) worked from an eclectic approach while Fuad adopted the direct method, Fadia and Abdul adopted the audio-lingual method– depending on the nature of classes that happened to be scheduled for observation. An obvious element of the method-orientation was observed is what Ur (2015) termed the PPP (presentation-practice-production); the post method pedagogy underscores the outcomes rather than the process itself. Dictated by such methods, most of the teachers adopted whole class instruction, giving little room for learners to work individually or in pairs. The teacher dominance and whole class teaching, which are method-driven, exceeded learner centeredness and individualized learning, which post-method-oriented.

Participant	Language Skills	Materials	Interaction Pattern	Social Relevance	Class Orientation
Ali	integrated	center produced	teacher-whole class	Observed	presentation-practice-production (PPP)
Ahmed	integrated	context-sensitive	teacher-whole class	Observed	PPP
Fadia	integrated	center-produced	learners in pairs	Observed	PPP
Rosa	integrated	center-produced	teacher-whole class	Observed	PPP
Fatima	integrated	center-produced	learners ingroups	Observed	PPP
Faud	integrated	context-sensitive	learners ingroups	Observed	PPP
Yahya	integrated	center-produced	teacher-whole class	Observed	PPP
Aisha	integrated	center-produced	teacher-whole class	Observed	PPP
Abdul	integrated	center-produced	learners in pairs	Observed	PPP

Table 4: *Post-Method elements in classroom teaching* of the teachers under observation I

Likewise, in the given sample, only Abdul and Fatima used L1 for a few instances. The remaining of the sample seem to have been driven by the notion of method, which straitjackets using the mother-tongue in L2 teaching situations. The *Direct Method*, for instance, prohibits using L1 in teaching L2, which is a topic of controversy in the post-method era. Moreover, socially-based materials that reflect the learners' own life and culture were seldom observed. The common materials drew largely on L2 culture and norms. The textbooks and supplementary materials were mainly taken from Western book houses. In their teaching, Fadia and Abdul used a few activities focusing on learners' problems in the local social setting. As for the political aspect, it was reflected in two lectures in which the teachers discussed issues of political background. For instance, one of those lectures, the teacher related some aspects of the novel *Animal Farm* (by George Orwell) to current situations in the context under scrutiny.

The impact of experience on PMP was measured in two ways: the t-test and descriptive analysis. This was stimulated by a hypothesis that teachers who were trained on the notion of method find it difficult to shift to the non-method paradigm. To answer this inquiry, the participants were divided into two groups: experienced ($n=39$) versus less experienced ($n=18$) teachers. By running a One Sample t-test, the perceptions of the two groups were compared, and the following hypotheses were attested:

- Null hypothesis (H_0): $\mu_1 = \mu_2$ (i.e., the means are equal).
- The alternative hypothesis (H_1): $\mu_1 \neq \mu_2$ (the means are not equal, i.e., there is at least one significant difference amongst the group means).

The results of the t-test arranged in Table 5 display that the F -Value=.375 and P -value=.709. The Sig. is greater than .05 ($p > 0.05$). Therefore, a significant difference between the means is inexistent. The means are generally identical. Statistically speaking, the null hypothesis (H_0) is accepted. That is, there is no significant difference in the mean scores of the two groups.

	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	108.527	2	54.264	.375	.709
Within Groups	20145.213	128	157.384		
Total	20253.740	130			

Table 5: T-Test results of teachers' perceptions of PMPs according to the variable of experience

To reinforce the statistical evidence ensued from the results of the t-test, the responses regarding classroom practices were divided based on the informants' experience breadth. In light of this division, the actual teaching practices were compared. The classroom procedures outlined in the questionnaire (Part II as outlined in Tables 2 & 3) were clustered around Kumaravadivelu' (2006a) macro-strategies and represented as MS1 through MS10. The distribution of these macro-strategies among the respondents was examined to identify the extent to which they adopted Kumaravadivelu's strategies. The results are displayed graphically (Figure 2). Responses of the two categories of informants (experienced vs. less experienced) show that in MS1, MS4, and MS5, the percentages of the less-experienced group were higher than that of their counterparts. In contrast, MS6, MS7, MS8, MS9 were higher in favor of the experienced group. Both groups were equal insofar as MS2, MS3, MS10 are concerned. Taken together, there is no big difference in the percentages of applying the PMPs.

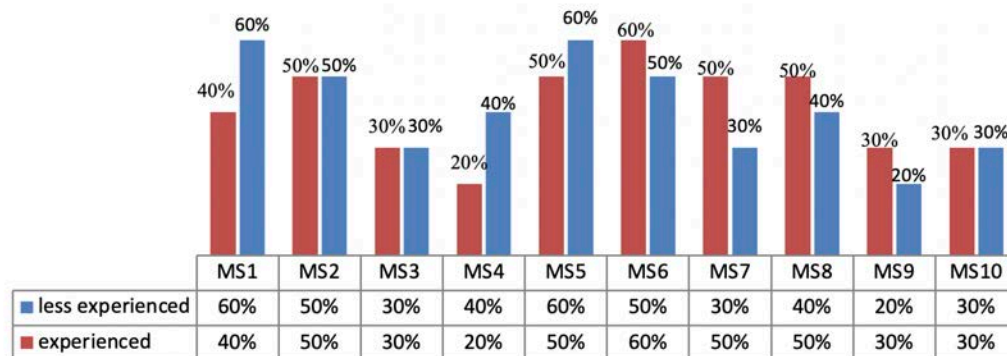


Figure 2. Distributions of macro-strategies among experienced and less experienced teachers

Discussion

Post-Method Orientations

Under the current situation and analysis, the PMPs are not well-researched. With relevance to Table 1, teachers did not rely heavily—with few exceptions—on method nor did they resist the PMPs and macro-strategies ($2 > \mu < 4$). As Table 2 displays, the teachers generally work from existing methods rather than philosophizing their teaching. The results stemming from classroom observations showed that teachers worked from certain methods. During their teaching, they tended to follow principles of well-known methods, dominant the teaching process, and forbid using the mother-tongue—elements that the post-method pedagogy opposes. Concerning methods selection, Kaplan (1993, as cited in Davies, 2007) once argued,

“Whatever the method, only desire can make a student learn a language, desire, and necessity” (p. 66). Hence, teaching should be directed towards learners’ involvement.

Following Kumaravadivelu (2006), “teachers embarking on formal teacher education programs bring with them their notion of what constitutes good teaching and what does not, largely based on their prior educational experience as learners and in some cases, as teachers” (p. 552). Kumaravadivelu replaced the teaching method with the notion of *teaching ideas* that stem from practical classroom teaching in every context, and he opposes confining language education to linguistic elements obtained within the classroom (Kumaravadivelu, 2001). The post-method conceptualizes teachers as architects of their own teaching, and teaching method/idea is what emerges over time due to the interaction among several elements: the teacher, students, materials, and activities in the classroom. This *classroom-oriented theory* is implausible in the context of the present study. Table 1 shows that the participants generally had a view that teachers should not follow a certain method in their classes ($\mu=3.77$) but combine a variety of methods. That is to say, they had a fervent belief in methods with a tendency towards eclecticism — a baggy method that provides no criteria for the best theory (Stern, 1992), or something between method and non-method. While the eclectic approach enables teachers to select from the list of methods, the gist of post-method pedagogy is that teachers should have their own methods, and this point did not ring a bell for a great deal of the informants.

As touched on above, applying PMPs is apparently a daunting issue. The results arranged in Table 1 show that the status quo of post-method pedagogy in the local context accords with other similar contexts (e.g., Amiri & Sahragard, 2018; Chen, 2014; Huda, 2013; Karimvand et al., 2014; Khodabakhshzadeh et al., 2018; Rashidi, 2015; Saengboon, 2013). Such studies, alongside the findings ensued from the current investigation illustrate the significance of teachers’ training to shape up their teaching. Because post-method pedagogy does not spell out in detail how to prepare teachers as post-method practitioners (Akbari, 2008; Soto, 2014), the teachers accustomed to methods cannot suddenly jump to the post-method teaching. Hence, training would promote teachers’ self-observation, self-analysis, self-evaluation, and a sense of plausibility. This could be imparted by the subjectivity of understanding their teaching contexts. Theory-based teaching is also important to help teachers— particularly less experienced teachers— attain the outcome of the learning goals (Richards & Rodgers, 2001).

Classroom Practices

Putting pedagogy into practice, the results in Tables 2 and 3 show some post-method learning opportunities represented in terms of percentages and mean values. Both tables show the extent the participants engage in PMP reflective practices. In the dataset (Table 2), the percentages of teachers’ self-evaluation of teaching are below fifty percent. Nonetheless, the majority of teachers appeared sensitized to their teaching settings. With relevance to the particularity of local-context boundedness, Table 2 displays that 44 percent of the participants abide by predetermined syllabi and course descriptions. Although 72 percent of them stated that their teaching varies from class to class, they— more often than not— have no say in making these syllabi/course guidelines. In other words, they are implementers of the curriculum rather than its designers.

The percentages of responses are generally far from the required post-method pedagogy. Although data in Tables 2 and 3 show that the informants attempted to contextualize linguistic input, raise cultural consciousness, and relate their teaching to their linguistic, socio-cultural, and political specificities, the mean values and percentage are considerably low. In terms of skills integration, Table 3, along with observational data outlined in Table 4, indicates that the respondents tend to integrate skills in their teaching. While listening has been conventionally associated with speaking, and reading with writing, the post-method pedagogy views this association another way; learners may listen to the lecturers and write at the same time. What is important then is not the skill integration but ample chances to use language for all the skills (Kumaravadivelu, 2001), and this is what was missing in the context of this study.

A salient feature of the PMP is its emphasis on teachers being the executive recipients of curricula. Data in Figure 1 shows that the teachers in question still play the common roles dictated by the communicative teaching. The post-method roles and teacher autonomy are still uncommon. Teachers adapt, mix, or disregard some of the post method principles. In accordance with Dağkiran (2015), the current roles the informants play in their teaching limit their reflective teaching. According to Kumaravadivelu’ (2006) PMPs, teachers are not only transmitters of knowledge but also creators of the language environment, mentors of teaching activities, and consultants for students’ independent tasks (Akbari, 2008; Zeng, 2018). For teachers to be at the core of curriculum development and reform, their roles “should be restored and developed” (Yinghua, 2016, p. 53) to furnish ideas that boost students’ learning and put these hunches into

practice based on what goes on in the classroom. Yinghua argued that although teachers “have been executors of teaching reform for a long time, they have not had the opportunity to exhibit their rights and energy as the dominant roles in education” (p. 53).

The teachers who were observed ($n=9$) established some features of PMPs in their classes unsuccessfully. They follow no generalizable methods. In an informal discussion after the observational sessions, the teachers who were observed stated that they adhered to certain methods commensurate with their personal taste. Although the respondents’ roles in the classroom were diversified, it is difficult to get a generalizable result from the obtained data. The major part of all the lectures observed was teacher-dominated. This is partially because teachers, being under the pressure of transmitting the prescribed knowledge in the given syllabi, had little time for learners to take a large part in the classes. Compared to the traditional method, Ur (2015) theorizes that production in the process of learning results from two preceding stages: presentation and practice (PPP). The post method pedagogy, however, focuses on the end of the process (production) rather than the process itself. In all the classes under observation, the teachers integrated some language skills to achieve certain objectives. They based their teaching on a mixture of methods, namely, communicative language teaching, audio-lingual methods, and grammar-translation methods. These are the common views of teaching in the country and there is no formal evaluation of the appropriateness and relevance of these methods to the local needs.

It is widely believed now that the complexity of classroom teaching is influenced by political, social, cultural contextual factors that the enforced methods address inadequately. The cohort of respondents contends that some variables influence their teaching. They mentioned examples that thwart PMP convictions. For instance, they believe that policymakers and administrators frequently dictate some rules and instructions that stir the direction of their teaching. As for social and political relevance, Kumaravadivelu (2003) suggested that instead of banning the mother tongue (L1), teachers could use it as a resource to enrich the L2 teaching context; it allows teachers to connect L1 to L2, thereby ensuring social relevance. Due to these socio-political factors, teachers cannot reform their teaching or bring about a change towards post methodism. It contradicts Kumaravadivelu’s (1994) claim that teachers practice what they theorize and theorize what they practice.

Impact of Teaching Experience on PMPs

Theoretically, it is more attainable for experienced teachers to adopt PMP for they have supposedly taught in different situations following different methods and have extensive knowledge of various teaching contexts. However, this is not always true. The results of the t-test outlined in Table 4 show that the variable of experience has no obvious impact on the adoption of post-method pedagogy. Similarly, Figure 2 indicates that the current stances of experienced vs. less experienced teachers’ macro-strategies indecisively support what Kumaravadivelu (2016) termed “context-specific instructional strategies” (p.81). This is contrary to common predictions that experienced teachers are likely to be more adaptable to PMP. The results in Table 4 and Figure 2 illustrate the lack of significant differences between the perceptions and practices of the informants according to their years of teaching experience. This result is at odds with Scholl (2015) and Huda (2013) in that significant differences in teaching practices stem from the magnitude of experiences. This is probably because both groups of teachers in question work in the same context where the norms of post method barely exist. Similarly, teachers were trained on the same pedagogy of method, and they slavishly follow it.

Limitations and Further Research

Before drawing a conclusion, the findings of the study are admittedly subject to certain limitations. First, an observation protocol fails to provide a complete picture of life in the classroom, irrespective of its thoughtful format and design. This is because closed techniques in structured observations may miss the insights provided by the participants themselves that could have been elicited through an interview. Second, the sample is relatively small and may not represent the beliefs and practices of the larger population in the country. Third, such a short scale investigation focused on some but not all the issues nested under the post-method pedagogical framework, and this may be revisited to dig into the entire spectrum of PMP practices. Future researchers may undertake these issues to mitigate the limitations raised from the current investigation. Other researchers may also explore teachers’ perceptions and practices of PMP before and after they attend a training program, and compare the differences, if any. Still, as it stands, this endeavor brings to light insightful ideas for syllabus designers and policymakers to prepare post-method teachers of English.

Conclusion

The study embarked on the premise that teachers are creators of their own teaching methodologies. It mainly touches on the claim that accepting post-method practices requires skills beyond those of content knowledge. Teachers in the present study– as in some other contexts– explicated a mixture of method and post-method conventions. They tend to be flexible toward the changes in the status of methods, and the results suggest that they need more opportunities not only for training on PMPs to improve their performance as post-method teachers but also for having a say in the curriculum development. The findings imply that shifting to the new paradigm would not pay off – insofar as the context of this study is concerned– unless it is coupled with honing pedagogical skills through teacher training. Institutional constraints, too, need to be revised. For successful post-method instruction, teachers, being cognizant of their local contexts, should be empowered to implement their locally developed theories and strategies in lieu of the generic western-oriented ELT methods that generally ignore contextual sensitivity, yet administrators still adopt them without questioning the obvious misfit. If teachers are well trained to the point that they can question the legitimacy of such status-quo in language program administration, they are expected to bring about a change. Equally important, training novice teachers on methods is useful to retain some principles and procedures for effective teaching and bolster self-confidence. If they are attuned to go beyond method, they would be able to use innovative ideas that suit their contexts and match their students' needs. As they develop as professionals, they will likely become aware of the weaknesses of methods and thus realize the need to shift to the post-method paradigm.

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