POST METHOD PEDAGOGY: OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES IN EFL CONTEXT OF NEPAL

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Abstract

The purpose of this article is to familiarize the popular concept, Post Method Pedagogy, that has been emerging in the field of English language teaching and its importance in a developing country like Nepal where English language is regarded as the foreign language. The idea of post-method pedagogy was first put forward by Kumaravadivelu in 1994. It is an attempt to go beyond the quest for the best method best restrictions in language teaching. Pedagogy in this premise is not limited to classroom strategies, institutional materials, curricular objectives, and evaluation measures, but also covers traditionally overlooked areas such as historical, political, and socio-cultural experience. It is a three-dimensional system with three pedagogic parameters: particularity, practicality, and possibility. The parameter of particularity rejects the notion of a perfect method and instead emphasizes that teachers' critical awareness of environmental factors should be the primary consideration for language pedagogy. Next, the dimension of practicality is presented as a way for teachers to develop in their practice by theorizing from their practice and practicing what they theorize instead of relying on external sources of knowledge. Third, possibility stance emphasizes that, via critical pedagogy, social inequality can be exposed, the status quo can be questioned, individuals have the possibility to reform their identities, and social transformation can take place. The boundaries of the three parameters are somewhat unclear and the characteristic features of these parameters overlap. They shape and are shaped by one another. They interact with each other. However, it can be said that they together constitute the features of ELT classrooms in the Nepalese context with some basic challenges.

Key words: Post method, Pedagogy, Criticality, Nepali ELT, Implementation

Introduction

The English language teaching tradition has been subject to tremendous change over time. In the sixteenth century, French, Italian, and English gained importance over Latin as a result of political change in Europe (Richards and Rodgers, 2001). However, until the 17th, 18th, and 19th centuries, foreign language learning was associated with the learning of Latin and Greek only. Along with the popularity of the English language, late in the nineteenth century, the classical method came to be known as the Grammar

Translation Method (Brown, 2000). The late nineteenth century and the whole twentieth century have undergone consistent changes and shifts in ELT principles and practices depending on the spread of the English language, its contexts, uses, and its status.

Nevertheless, until the 20th century, which marked the traditional period, ELT largely focussed on traditional practices such as Grammar Translation Method (GTM), Direct Method (DM). Since then as modernism entered the practices in language education, ELT was challenged by the "forces of reform" (Howatt, 1984), and traditional practices were replaced by, as Howatt says, "…saner, more rational, and more practical" (Howatt, 1984) approaches. During the Modern era or the age of method in ELT, from the emergence of the Direct Method in 1920 experts and practitioners in the field, sought to find the best method of teaching English with the best results or learning outcomes in a given period of time (Brown, 2002).

However, with the emergence of postmodernism in ELT, ideas like 'perfection', 'objectivity', and 'observable science' were rejected and ELT started seeking cognitive efforts on the part of learners. In this way, on one hand, ELT in the postmodernism era challenged the established practices, and on the other hand, it incorporated new concepts like constructivism, critical thinking, and multiple intelligences, and worked towards the advancement of the field. It was believed that in a language classroom, one may need and use several methods and approaches or even no organized method for effective teaching. Pennycook (1989) says that the method is a prescriptive context. It should be rejected because the tailor-made single-sized garments do not fit all. It then took such a turn that any single method for teaching the English language was rejected as the ultimate one, and initiated the gradual "demise of method era" (Pishghadam & Mirzaee, 2008).

On the whole, ELT approaches, methods, materials, and assessment models have been continuously revised to seek native-like best teaching practices and learning results in the last century. But the recent practice believes that the stress on the best method and result is misleading (Kumaravadivelu, 1994), and the current need is to explore endless possibilities of multiple realities of pedagogy. Pedagogy is now not limited to classroom strategies, institutional materials, curricular objectives, and evaluation measures, but also covers a wide range of historical, political, and sociocultural experiences that directly or indirectly influence L2 education (Kumaravadivelu, 2001, p. 538)the L2 profession is faced with an imperative need to construct a postmethod pedagogy. In this article, I conceptualize the parameters of a postmethod pedagogy, offer suggestions for implementing it, and then raise questions and concerns that might come up in implementing it. Visualizing a three-dimensional system consisting of the parameters of particularity, practicality,

and possibility, I argue that a postmethod pedagogy must (a. Post-method pedagogy is, thus, both a paradigm shift in teaching methodology and a better-seeking movement.

When we conceptualized the ELT scenario in Nepal, we realized that Communicative Approach or Method could not cater the need of ELT in Nepal. Rather, we need a language teaching method which is suitable to the context where English language is taught accordingly. Considering this, we conceptualized that Post Method Pedagogy should be the ultimate method that is suitable for catering the ELT needs of Nepal. Therefore, Post Method Pedagogy has been chosen as the final method of ELT practice in Nepal.

Discussion and Reflection

This study is based on the information obtained and experienced by the researcher and the required information was obtained from the practice ELT practitioners have been doing in a typical Nepalese English language classrooms. In other words, some of the anecdotes have been collected from our experiences and whatever we found in our native context. Some citations have been made from Prabhu's works and they have been naturalized in Nepali context by citing some examples and anecdotes too.

Post-method pedagogy is a result of tripartite pedagogies: particularity, practicality, and possibility. The constitutive possibility of these pedagogies in the Nepalese EFL context is discussed in the separate headings below.

A Pedagogy of Particularity

In Nepal, most of the students are made to mug up things. Teachers writing a long essay on the board and asking students to recite it the next day is the usual practice of free writing. Honestly speaking we remember our high school English teacher who used to teach English stories in a way that could exactly be retold to my illiterate mother - all in colloquial Nepali language. we are still reporting about more or less the same practice of ELT in our village. we were taught the English textbook designed in communicative approach but unfortunately, we had heard about pair work and group work only in ELT materials and practice courses in our university education. After our bachelor's degree, we both joined a private boarding school as an English teacher, and there I could see and observe wide hiatus between what the students used to bring in schools and what would happen in the school. Right after winter vacation, the topics in English class used to be something like Nelson Mandela or writing an email. we could read the difficulty faced in visualizing Mandela's personality or the mechanism of writing an email, in students' face. I and my colleagues had no options and autonomy in incorporating their experience and our experience into our pedagogical process. Finally, with forceful motivation, students used to come in our track and would get

things done. Whatever they mugged up used to be transferred into figures in the report cards and we used to be boastful about our success. We can consider about how pathetic the situation of ELT is in our context.

Now after getting acquainted with the pedagogy of particularity under post-method pedagogy, We imagine how fruitful the pedagogy of particularity would be in that condition as (Kumaravadivelu, 2001)the L2 profession is faced with an imperative need to construct a postmethod pedagogy. In this article, We conceptualize the parameters of a postmethod pedagogy, offer suggestions for implementing it, and then raise questions and concerns that might come up in implementing it. Visualizing a three-dimensional system consisting of the parameters of particularity, practicality, and possibility, We argue that a postmethod pedagogy must (a puts it:

> Language pedagogy, to be relevant, must be sensitive to a particular group of teachers teaching a particular group of learners pursuing a particular set of goals within a particular institutional context embedded in a particular sociocultural milieu …All pedagogy, like all politics, is local. To ignore local exigencies is to ignore lived experiences. (pp. 538-539)

Following global practices in the local context is sometimes counterproductive. The highly acknowledged communicative approach was found to make students "terribly exhausted", and "creating

psychological barriers to learning " in the Indian context (Shamim, 1996, p. 109 as cited in Kumaravadivelu, 2001)the L2 profession is faced with an imperative need to construct a postmethod pedagogy. In this article, We conceptualize the parameters of a postmethod pedagogy, offer suggestions for implementing it, and then raise questions and concerns that might come up in implementing it. Visualizing a three-dimensional system consisting of the parameters of particularity, practicality, and possibility, We argue that a postmethod pedagogy must (a. In our observation, the Nepalese ELT context is not different from the Indian context, rather further complicated it is. Thus, context is very important in pedagogy. Context-sensitive pedagogic knowledge can emerge only from the practice of particularity; this can account for the need of the day in our context.

But in the context of Nepal, pedagogy of particularity has a danger as well. The parameter of particularity rejects the notion of a perfect method and instead emphasizes that teachers' critical awareness of environmental factors should be the primary consideration for language pedagogy. The question here is how to ensure the teachers' professionalism to be able to practice the pedagogy of particularity. The government does not care about their schools. We had once volunteered in my school in the village after my intermediate. Management was terrible. Teachers were busy with

political discourses and activities. Training programs are unproductive. Teachers did not want to update with research and study. Teachers are supposed to be those who did not land any other jobs. They are not found convinced about what and why they teach. In addition, students are not worried about their future. With the consensus of teacher and students, the whole year can pass doing nothing. In this condition, the pedagogy of particularity, with the key role of teachers in incorporating local context in pedagogy, may be detrimental until and unless there is a strong monitoring mechanism.

A Pedagogy of Practicality

The pedagogy of particularity is related to the pedagogy of practicality. What is particular cannot be achieved or understood without its practical ground. In the literature of post-method pedagogy, practicality is not limited to the everyday practice of classroom teaching, rather it encompasses the relationship between theory and practice. Theories also do have two basic orientations. Professional theories are those that are generated by experts whereas personal theories are those that teachers develop by interpreting and applying professional theories in practical situations. A pedagogy of practicality blurs this "theory dichotomies by encouraging and enabling teachers themselves to theorize from their practice and practice what they theorize" (Kumaravadivelu, 1999b as cited in Kumaravadivelu, 2001, p. the L2 profession is faced with an

imperative need to construct a postmethod pedagogy. In this article, We conceptualize the parameters of a postmethod pedagogy, offer suggestions for implementing it, and then raise questions and concerns that might come up in implementing it. Visualizing a three-dimensional system consisting of the parameters of particularity, practicality, and possibility, We argue that a postmethod pedagogy must (a539).

The limitation of the pedagogy of particularity likely to be encountered in the Nepalese ELT context is compensated by the pedagogy of practicality as (Kumaravadivelu, 2001) the L2 profession is faced with an imperative need to construct a postmethod pedagogy. In this article, We conceptualize the parameters of a postmethod pedagogy, offer suggestions for implementing it, and then raise questions and concerns that might come up in implementing it. Visualizing a three-dimensional system consisting of the parameters of particularity, practicality, and possibility, we argue that a postmethod pedagogy must (a puts the basic premises of the pedagogy of practicality:

> If context-sensitive pedagogic knowledge has to emerge from teachers and their practice of everyday teaching, then they ought to be assisted in becoming autonomous individuals. This objective cannot be achieved simply by asking teachers to put into practice theories conceived

and constructed by others. It can be achieved only by helping teachers develop the knowledge and skill, attitude, and autonomy necessary to construct their own context-sensitive pedagogic knowledge that will make their practice of everyday teaching a worthwhile (p. 541).

Pedagogy of practicality, thus, keeps teacher-generated theory of practice in centre. It is based on the belief that 'no theory of practice can be useful and usable unless it is generated through practice' (Kumaravadivelu, 2001, p. 541)the L2 profession is faced with an imperative need to construct a postmethod pedagogy. In this article, we conceptualize the parameters of a postmethod pedagogy, offer suggestions for implementing it, and then raise questions and concerns that might come up in implementing it. Visualizing a three-dimensional system consisting of the parameters of particularity, practicality, and possibility, we argue that a postmethod pedagogy must (a.

A Pedagogy of Possibility

The roots of the pedagogy of possibility rest on Brazilian educator Paulo Freire. The pedagogy of possibility emphasizes that, via critical pedagogy, social inequality can be exposed, the status quo can be questioned, individuals have the possibility to reform their identities, and social transformation can take place. In this regard, Kumaravadivelu (2001the

L2 profession is faced with an imperative need to construct a postmethod pedagogy. In this article, we conceptualize the parameters of a postmethod pedagogy, offer suggestions for implementing it, and then raise questions and concerns that might come up in implementing it. Visualizing a three-dimensional system consisting of the parameters of particularity, practicality, and possibility, we argue that a postmethod pedagogy must (a) opines:

> The experiences participants bring to the pedagogical setting are shaped not just by the learning/teaching episodes they have encountered in the past but also by the broader social, economic, and political environment in which they have grown up. These experiences have the potential to alter pedagogic practices in ways unintended and unexpected by policy planners, curriculum designers, or textbook producers (p. 543).

Post-method pedagogy seeks to empower practicing teachers in their attempt to develop an appropriate pedagogy based on their local knowledge and local understanding. This is where comes to play the pedagogy of possibility which rests on critical pedagogy. Now, the need is for critical pedagogy as Hawkins & Norton (2009) opine "critical pedagogy is directly concerned with social action and educational change." This type of pedagogic practice aims to empower people to challenge oppressive

conditions in their lives. Being critical in education means focusing on and seeing how dominant ideologies in society shape the construction of a social system that sooner or later privilege certain groups of people while marginalizing others. Thus, it is imperative to see how dominant ideologies underpinned by dominant traits related to caste, gender, religion, geography, economy, language, etc. enact to dominate their counterparts. This type of investigation will help gear the whole education system towards equilibrium.

Nepalese ELT is still not free from the oppression of one type or another. The experiences Nepalese students bring to the pedagogical setting are shaped not just by the learning/teaching episodes they have encountered in the past but also by the broader social, economic, and political environment in which they have grown up. These experiences have the potential to alter pedagogic practices in ways unintended and unexpected by policy planners, curriculum designers, or textbook producers. In the process of sensitizing itself to the prevailing socio-political reality, a pedagogy of possibility is also concerned with individual identity. More than any other educational enterprise, language education provides its participants with challenges and opportunities for a continual quest for subjectivity and self-identity. The issues may not be broader ones related to caste or ethnicity or gender, but even in the issues of child right, pedagogy of possibility is constitutive in our context. Private schools, for example, are found giving torture as some of them restrict students to get involved in extra-curricular activities. They do not want the overall development of students. They just want to show to others that their students got good grades.

Conclusion

ELT methodology is said to have moved beyond methods to the post-method condition. Three principles, or pedagogies, summarize how the post method defines L2 teaching: practicality, particularity, and possibility. Pedagogical barriers and ideological barriers are the major challenges of post-method pedagogy in our context. Post-method pedagogy at least to boost the confidence to the teachers to argue that their approach to teaching is their overall philosophy of teaching. Nepalese EFL teachers to meet the challenges of the 21st century, must be provided with the skills and techniques needed to understand contemporary educational developments as well as to gain extensive linguistic and cultural knowledge so that they may build up the confidence for the successful delivery of particularity, practicality, and possibility-based education. The precise demarcation of these three pedagogies and idealization of the context are still a problem in our Nepalese ELT milieu.

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