CONTEXTUALISING POSTMETHOD IDEAS IN BANGLADESHI SCHOOL

Rubaiyat Jahan

ABSTRACT

This article aims to investigate the evidence of postmethod pedagogic practices from the Bangladeshi English teachers' reported classroom practices. Kumaravadivelu's (2001, 1994) idea of postmethod pedagogy presents the view that the conventional method-based pedagogy has limitations, as the method based pedagogy arguably undermines the peripheral knowledge base of teaching-learning primarily because of its top-down approach, hence calls for the actualization of location-specific English teaching methodologies. Data of this study was collected through semi structured open-ended interviews, and on the basis of purposive sampling twelve English teachers of Bangladeshi secondary schools took part in the interviews. Findings of this study suggest that although the participant teachers' described classroom teaching characterizes various aspects of the applications of postmethod pedagogy, those teaching practices are not necessarily indicative of the teachers' true understanding (or their ability to apply) of all the constructs of the postmethod pedagogy. Though not in explicit way, some subtle references of reflective as well as transformative practices of teaching are evident in the data. Finally, on the basis of the findings, a three layered model (dominant, developing, incubating) is proposed for the future reference of the actualization of postmethod pedagogic principles in the Bangladeshi context. This model tends to rank the degree of application of varied teaching strategies that can be aligned with Kumaravalivedu's (1994) concept of macrostrategic framework. The key implication of this study is the necessity for a review of the organizational constructs of the macrostrategic framework to actualise it in the Bangladeshi context. Another implication is that teacher education provided for ELT practitioners in Bangladesh should incorporate the theoretical ideas of how to help the prospective teachers to articulate their beliefs on teaching.

Keywords: Postmethod pedagogy, macrostrategic framework, reflective practices, Bangladeshi English teachers.

INTRODUCTION

A noteworthy feature in English language teaching (ELT) has been frequent changes of ideas and practices with one innovation in teaching methodology giving way to the next. In this process of change, Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) has been a dominant approach for about three decades, from the 1970's to mid-1990s and seemed revolutionary in many ways. However, since the 1980s,' problems have been experienced with the implementation of CLT at different Afro-Asian and Latin American EFL/ESL contexts (Jarvis and Atsilarat, 2004; Sato, 2002; Yu, 2001; Li, 1998; Chick, 1996; Shamim, 1996; Tickoo, 1996; Prabhu, 1987), and this is primarily due to the mismatch between the traditional teaching-learning culture of particular EFL/ESL contexts and the teaching-learning culture embedded in CLT. From this background, the new ideas of appropriate methodology (Holliday, 1994) or postmethod pedagogy (Kumaravadivelu, 2006, 2001) emerged, sharing key reflections on the limitations of English teaching methods (Bell, 2007). Kumaravadivelu's (2006, 2001) idea of postmethod pedagogy (PMP) emerged with a view to empowering English teachers practicing on the *periphery* by providing them with a method-neutral macrostrategic framework (Kumaravadivelu, 1994) with which they can develop their own location-specific context sensitive personal knowledge base of teaching.

Likewise, current ELT situation of Bangladesh seems to struggle over implementation of modern approaches in everyday teaching-learning. Realizing the importance of English as global mode of communication for business as well as for the job market, English learning has been emphasized by the Bangladeshi policy makers (Chowdhury and Kabir, 2014; Erling et al., 2014). With a notion to better English teaching-learning modern innovative ideas for ELT, such as CLT, were introduced in Bangladesh in the mid-90s, and to implement CLT new textbooks were produced and teacher training initiatives were organised for the English teachers. With the introduction of CLT, it was expected that learners would be able to use English effectively in real life situations through good communicative classroom activities. Contrary to this, research studies (Rahman and Pandian, 2018; Chaudhury and Karim, 2014; Hamid and Honan, 2012; Kirkwood, 2013) indicate that there remains still isolated grammar focused traditional English classroom where the students are mostly passive listeners.

As it appears, the English teachers of Bangladesh seem not to take advantages of the provided innovations in ELT and teaching methodologies. Although tasks and activities of English textbooks reflect a communicative approach, the data (Hamid and Honan, 2012; Kirkwood, 2013) of actual teaching practices shows that teachers are still very much traditional and examination focused in their approaches. One possible reason of this stated problem is that the prevalent teaching-learning culture (e.g., teacher centered classroom) of the Bangladeshi context contradicts with the teaching-learning culture (e.g., students centered classroom) embedded in the communicative approaches. Among other variables of the teaching-learning culture, teachers' beliefs and attitudes to a particular teaching approach play an important role in the proper implementation of that approach in the classroom. For successful introduction of new ideas or innovations in teaching-learning, attitude change on part of the teachers is necessary. The new ideas tend to compete with the well-established principles of teaching-learning that teachers hold, and which are again the products of teachers' past experiences and beliefs (Karavas-Doukas, 1996). For the successful implementation of modern approaches in ELT, it is also important to make the teachers aware of their changing roles along with the curriculum

innovations by helping them articulate their beliefs and develop their knowledge of modern innovations. In addition to this, the existing school curriculum here in Bangladesh is so structured that it almost neglects the space required for the practicing teachers' to reflect upon their teaching, and that eventually mars their spontaneous teaching. Rahman, Pandian, and Kaur (2018, pp. 1121) rightly pointed it out in their recommendation by stating that "Teachers' voice in curriculum development should be incorporated. The uncontested top down mandate of policy makers needs to be challenged".

Under this reality, it would be timely to address the whole issue through the lens of PMP (as conceptualised in Kumaravadivelu, 2001; 1994) for the Bangladeshi ELT situation, as PMP offers the teachers a scope to practice personal ways of teaching. It would not be unreasonable to assume that very few Bangladeshi English teachers working in the school system are aware of Kumaravadivelu's work. Hence, this study highlighted the implicit evidence of postmethod pedagogic principles from some Bangladeshi English teachers' reported classroom practices in order to find out which of their current practices could be seen as corresponding to the principles and which do not. Consequently, this research tended to fill a significant research gap. Literature survey (e.g., Rahman, Pandian, and Kaur,2018; Chaudhury and Karim, 2014; Erling et al., 2014; Kirkwood, 2013) in the Bangladeshi context demonstrates that too few studies have been conducted to enhance understanding of the practicing English teachers' stated beliefs and attitudes to teaching-learning; and no available study focuses on English teachers' understanding of the postmethod teaching-learning conditions.

Based on the findings, for the purpose of future references in Bangladesh or other comparable contexts for the actualization of the postmethod condition a three-layered model has been proposed. This model illustrates the degree of application of postmethod macrostrategies by the Bangladeshi English teachers that can be categorized as *Dominant*, *Developing*, and *Incubating*.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Kumaravadivelu's (2003a, 2001, 1994) model of PMP highlights the inbuilt limitations of method based language teaching, questions the power struggle between the theorists and the practitioners, as well as between the centre and the periphery, and provides a method-neutral macrostrategic framework to implement the three operating principles (*particularity*, *practicality*, *possibility*) of the postmethod conditions in the non-English speaking contexts. It however can be argued that Kumaravadivelu's PMP pedagogy exert more influence on the debate at the conceptual level than on the actual use in the classroom contexts. Therefore, in deconstructing PMP it is important to examine its ideological as well as structural base.

Ideological basis of postmethod pedagogy

While it is apparent that for classroom teaching, teachers' decision making and instructional practices are informed by their interpretations of the situations, personal knowledge and experiences along with institutional, social, and political realities (Borg, 2006; Pennycook, 1989), a universal nature of the western produced ELT policies and 'one size fits all' methods with their so called scientific rationale of teaching-learning may appear to be imposing to the peripheral non-English teaching contexts (e.g., current Bangladeshi ELT situation), and thereby facilitating marginalization. The process of marginalization in ELT demonstrates the superiority and domination of the centre over the periphery (Kumaravadivelu, 2003a,). Kumaravadivelu's model of PMP in relation to ELT in the non-English teaching context attempts to provide some suggestions on how to redress the western interest vested ELT. The ideological underpinnings of PMP tend to work towards decentring the Western hegemonic authority of ELT business, and also emphasising the possibility of restoring context-embedded professional developments in the periphery.

To understand the essence of PMP, it is important to recognize the power struggle that exists between the conventional relationship of theorizers and practitioners of methods: "As conceptualisers of philosophical underpinnings governing language pedagogy, theorizers have traditionally occupied the power centre of language pedagogy while the practitioners of classroom teaching have been relegated to the disempowered periphery" (Kumaravadivelu, 1994, pp. 29). Interestingly, the teaching-learning principles upon which these method concept is constructed are 'far removed from classroom reality' and are not derived 'from classroom experience and experimentation' (Kumaravadivelu, 1994, Pennycook, 1989).

Theoretical constructs of postmethod pedagogy

PMP opposes the universal nature of education and thereby argues for context embedded *particularity* condition of pedagogy. To actualise the *particularity* condition, classroom teachers need to come up with a critical awareness towards local linguistic, social, political and economic condition of classroom reality and engage themselves with an ongoing cycle of 'observation, reflection, and action' for the exploration of context sensitive pedagogical knowledge (Kumaravadivelu, 2001). Therefore, *pedagogy of particularity* constitutes a goal to achieve the implementation of PMP and at the same time a process through which teachers can practice their own experience driven personal theories in the classrooms. The *practicality* condition of PMP stands against expert generated theories of teaching and calls for teacher generated theories. Along with the teaching, teachers need to engage themselves in various classroom based research with the intention of theorising from their practices. The pedagogy of *possibility* entails tapping the socio-political consciousness of the learners with a view to empowering them: "To empower is to enable those who have been silenced to speak. It is to enable the self-affirming expression of experiences mediated by one's history, language, and traditions. It is to enable those who have been marginalized economically and culturally to claim in both respects a status as full participating members of a community" (Simon, 1987, pp. 374). The *possibility* condition necessitates learners to be autonomous in the form of *academic*, *social* and *liberatory*: "these three aspects of autonomy promise the

development of the overall academic ability, intellectual competence, social consciousness, and mental attitude necessary for learners" (Kumaravadivelu, 2001, pp. 548).

Macrostrategic framework

For actualizing teaching in the class through the postmethod condition Kumaravadivelu's (1994) macrostrategic framework is a broad guideline which helps the teacher to generate their situation-specific need-based teaching techniques. This framework is based on the assumption that since the objectives, situations and needs of L2 teaching-learning are unpredictably multifaceted so practicing teachers will be equipped with a capacity to generate varied and situation specific ideas within a framework that makes theoretical and pedagogical sense. Thus, it empowers the practicing teachers to come up with their personal theory of teaching in the form of teaching strategies relevant to their contexts. Besides, it is an interim open-ended option that encourages a strategic and sensitive approach to teaching prior to the emergence of local teachers/educators' own theory for classroom teaching. This macrostrategic framework consists of ten teaching principles derived from historical, theoretical, empirical, and experiential insights into language teaching and learning. These basic principles are: Maximising learning opportunities (MLO), Facilitating negotiated interactions (FNI), Minimizing perceptual mismatches (MPM), Activating intuitive heuristics (AIH), Fostering language awareness (FLA), Contextualizing linguistic input (CLI), Integrating language skills (ILS), Promoting learner autonomy (PLA), Raising cultural consciousness (RCC), and Ensuring social relevance (ESR).

Teacher cognition and postmethod pedagogy

As mentioned earlier, through the pedagogic parameter of particularity and practicality PMP requires teachers to articulate their personal ways of teaching, and theorizing is helpful in achieving this. Theories for practice as opposed to theories of practice (Burns, 1996), maxims of teaching (Richards, 1996), principled practices (Breen et al., 2001), etc are a few good studies that demonstrate how language teachers validate their own ways of teaching.

Burns' (1996) study in the context of Australia shows that the teacher negotiated her beliefs through the 'intercontextuality' of institutional ideologies or philosophies, personal beliefs and expectations on language, learning and learners; and instructional objectives and planning. Based on the data of L2 adult classroom practices, Burns (1996) illustrates how a teacher's implicit theory for practice emerges through the process of self-reflections, and how beliefs of teaching filtered through various contextual realizations of the teacher. On the other side, Richards (1996) states that teachers are not only concerned about the content during actual teaching, but they also try to implement their personal philosophies of teaching which can be realised as *maxims of teaching*. Richards' (1996) *maxims of teaching* is similar to the macrostrategic framework of Kumaravadivelu. Only difference is, while *macrostrategic framework* has emerged from the theoretical as well as pedagogical knowledge base on L2 teaching, Richards' (1996) m*axims of teaching* emerges only from the practicing teachers' experiences. In addition, it seems to lend support to Kumaravadivelu's (2006, 2001) concept of the "practicality condition" in the sense that it legitimises the practicing teachers' personal theory of practices.

Similarly, Breen et al.'s (2001) exploratory study with 18 experienced ESL teachers in the Australian context is significant to illustrate how language teachers' personal pedagogic principles can be realised through their preferred practices, and how these pedagogic principles can be established for a particular context. As described by Breen et al. (2001), these preferred practices are influenced by the interactive mediation between the background knowledge of the individual teacher and ongoing classroom experiences. Through observations of ESL class lessons and interviews with the 18 teachers, Breen et al. (2001) examined the relationship between the teachers' personal theories of teaching and classroom practices at the individual as well as the group level, and revealed that a single principle of teaching may lead to several distinctive teaching techniques; likewise a single practice may be a reflective of various teaching principles. Findings of this study highlight a particular pattern in the participant teachers' diverse teaching principles which is reflective of 'a collective pedagogy' for a particular context. Breen et al.'s (2001) concept of 'collected pedagogy' should have an impact on the pedagogy of practicality of PMP, as the concept of 'collective pedagogy' demonstrates a possible way to validate and establish the teachers' personal theories of teaching. These studies discussed above indicate the reflections of the practicing teachers' beliefs in their personal theory of teaching in the absence of any specific program of training.

Research on the implementation of postmethod pedagogy

A contemporary literature survey on PMP shows that although papers on the associated theoretical debate are many, only a few studies (e.g. Ahmad, 2014; Zakeri, 2014; Zeng, 2012) have been done so far to explore the implementation of PMP.

Zeng's (2012) case study with two novice EFL (English as foreign language) teachers in the context of China was an effort to examine the actual use of PMP in the classroom teaching. The data for this study was collected through four classroom observations followed by semi-structured interviews. Findings of the research suggest that 'neither the learners nor the teacher has autonomy', the participant teachers do not agree with the idea of 'theorising from practice', and there is a large discrepancy between teachers' beliefs and their teaching practices. In addition to this, analysis of lesson observations reveal the fact that the teachers mostly adopt four macrostrategies namely (i) maximising learning opportunities, (ii) facilitating negotiated interaction, (iii) contextualising linguistic input, and (iv) promoting learner autonomy. However, one key limitation of this study is that, it does not define the behavioural aspects of teacher autonomy therefore it is not clear which are the missing aspects (except the teachers' heavy reliance of the textbooks and exam oriented teaching) the researcher is talking about. Alos, Ahmad's (2014: 96) study advocates the implementation of Kumaravadivelu's (1994) macrostrategic framework in the context of Saudi Arabia and discusses some microstrategies for each macrostrategy on the basis of the situational realities of EFL teaching-leaning in Saudi

Arabia (e.g., prevalent teacher-centred instructions, teachers' reliance of outdated methods, use of frequent L1 in the classroom, teachers' low proficiency in English, etc). In addition to this, Zakeri's (2014) study, in the Iranian context, tries to relate the teacher/researcher's own way of teaching of speaking skills to the pedagogy particularity, practicality and possibility. For this study the teacher/researcher reflects on his experience and come up with three techniques (*shadowing*, *recording*, *and paraphrasing*) that are supposedly appropriate for the learners. Though the findings suggest a gradual improvement in the learners' proficiency, this study does not provide any justification of why those three techniques are appropriate for this context.

Though the above-mentioned studies tried to extract evidence of applications of the macrostrategic framework (Kumaravadivelu, 1994) from the classroom teaching, more research focussing on the detailed understanding of the practicing teachers' views on the PMP is required.

RESEARCH METHOD

The key research question addressed in this study is:

What is the evidence from Bangladeshi English teachers' reported classroom practices that overlap with the construct of postmethod pedagogy?

As this study sets out to feature the Bangladeshi English teachers' beliefs and understanding of Kumaravadivelu's model of PMP, semi-structured in-depth interview appeared to be appropriate primarily for two reasons. While the theoretical underpinning of open-ended semi structured interview emphasized the *insiders*' point of view (Dörnyei, 2007) which helped to extract the participant teachers' personal understanding of teaching; ideologically, *interviewing* in this research would give the participant teachers a platform to articulate their views on the teaching thereby facilitating their empowerment. Twelve English teachers from ten different secondary schools were interviewed based on purposive sampling. The participant teachers are ranging in experience of teaching from 3 to 23 years. Considering the ethical issues of the participants, pseudonyms were used, and no question of a sensitive and personal nature were asked in the interviews that might potentially cause any harm to participants' personal and professional life. During interviews no theoretical or technical questions were asked, rather focus was solely on the participant teachers' descriptions of their classroom teaching (referring to *Appendix 1*).

All the interviews were conducted in L1 of the participants (that is, Bangla) and were audio recorded. The data analysis was done following the sequence of (as discussed in Dörnyei, 2007) (i) transcribing the data, (ii) pre-coding and coding, (iii) growing ideas- memos, profiles, etc recording, and (iv) interpreting the data to draw conclusions. As researcher's subjective interpretation formed the basis of data analysis, and some questions may raise regarding the reliability of the interpretation of the data. However, intra-data reliability was checked by re-coding the same transcripts, and significant amount of consistency was found.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Bangladeshi English teachers seem to register a strong indication of their understanding of the situational realities and their capabilities to transcend those constraints during teaching, thereby, facilitating their autonomous practices in teaching. A few limitations of the macrostrategic framework have been discussed in relevance to actualizing it in Bangladesh.

Bangladeshi practices of particularity condition of postmethod pedagogy

Large class size, relatively small class time (45 minutes), and lack of sufficient teaching resources/aid are a few significant contextual constraints that Bangladeshi teachers encounter in regular classroom teaching. As far as Bangladeshi teachers' capabilities to transcend varied situational realities are concerned they seem to excerpt the condition of principled pragmatism (Kumaravadivelu, 1994) and sense of plausibility (Prabhu, 1990). One participant teacher, *Raya*'s effort to compensate for the lack of technology in her classroom for the learners to maximize sufficient opportunities to practice speaking and listening skills is a good case in point of her critical appraisal of the teaching learning context. In Raya's own words,

> for listening.. they (learners) need to rely on my speaking or through peer learning.. for listening test or practice I don't have audio system for the class... and for this class they need to rely on reading comprehension I mean during reading aloud the class listens

Raya's independent decision to transcend the contextual constraints can be related to Kumaravadivelu's (1994) description of teacher autonomy. Burns (1996) explains how the interconnection and interaction of *intercontextuality* (comprising institutional, classroom and instructional contextual realities) influence the teacher in classroom decision making. This concept appears to resemble with *Raya*'s independent decision for her class as it was influenced by a specific feature of her institutional context (in this case the inclusion of a listening component in the examination), classroom context (her personal philosophy of teaching, view of the language), and the instructional context (the teaching plan she made being based on the basis of availability of teaching resources).

In relation to their interpretations of large class size and their preferences of group work/pair work or individual work, two teachers (*Rakib* and *Shahidul*) came to be widely different despite the fact that both teach in the same city with a similar teaching context in terms of contextual factors. While *Rakib* prefers individual work in his classroom as in a large classroom seating

arrangement for group work is "problematic" and in "*group work few speak and few don't speak at all*" and "it's hard to monitor"; *Shahidul* on the other hand argues for group work by saying "*I always prefer group work… not pair work... if I go for pair work then I need to come up with 25 pairs that are virtually impossible to monitor in 45 minutes*". This fact bears the resemblance with Sanchez and Borg's (2014) concept of 'teacher constructed context'.

Bangladeshi practices of practicality condition of postmethod pedagogy

It can be argued that in PMP the concept of teacher research as well as reflective teaching have gained a new dimension. In traditional teacher education, teacher research refers to work on the improvements of the established theories of teaching and learning in the form of action research or collaborative research between the theorists and the teacher/researcher; contrary to this, teacher research in PMP requires the teachers to produce the personal theories of practice (Kumaravadivelu, 2006, 2001). In doing so, teachers need to be reflective practitioners but their reflections should not be limited only to *reflect in* and *reflect on* the classroom teaching. Akbari et al.'s (2010, pp. 212) description of reflective teaching follows three basic steps in which a teacher 'critically examines his/her practices, comes up with some ideas as how to improve his/her performance to enhance students' learning, and puts those ideas into practice'. As it appears, in PMP reflective practice has been preconditioned with four steps in which teacher will critically examine his/her teaching with a view to ensuring improvements in teaching, use a sense of plausibility to generate ideas as how to improve teaching to enhance students' learning, put those ideas into practice, and finally will monitor the impact of those actions to ensure whether those reflective practices are worth doing.

Raya's reflections on time management with a view to producing effective learning for her learners helped her to generate own ways of teaching by reorganizing her classes according to the needs. The statement of *Raya,* given below, provides an example of her reflective practice:

> …sometimes I find it hard to compile my class in the given time.. students sometimes stay with the slides much longer than I planned...then it happened… well lately for this reason I divide my plan into two classes.. 50% in one class and the rest in other…so that I can explain in my own way and they can be satisfied with their queries… *thing is when I faced such problems initially then I came up with this idea...meaning substitute option or solution*

The described classroom practice of *Raya* is significant in the sense that, firstly, she tried to reflect on the emerging problems (e.g. relatively little class time); secondly, she came up with a successful solution for her class by her own terms as a means of overcoming the situational realities; which features some characteristics of Kumaravadivelu's (2006, 2001) idea of teacher generated theory of practice. This above mentioned example of classroom practice of *Raya* is important because it also shows a resemblance to Burns' (1996) theories for practice. It was motivated by *Raya*'s multilevel cognitions such as her beliefs to ensure effective learning, positive mind-set to overcome the situational constraints, and provide a possible solution.

In discussing how possibly the teachers can establish their personal theories of teaching as a teaching methodology suited best to their context, initially the participant teachers were not sure about their intended responses to it. And, it resembles with the study findings of Zeng (2012). However, with the initiations from the researcher/interviewer some teachers suggested some ideas (e.g. share views with colleagues, writing articles, organise workshop/seminar, or even upload the recorded teaching in the YouTube) which seemed to suggest some features of *dialogizing* as argued in Kumaravadivelu (2012). One idea of *Rakib* in relevance to personal theories of teaching is significant as he calls for 'uniformity or standardized teaching' for establishing his theory of practice for his context, which is similar to Breen et al.'s (2001) concept of 'collected pedagogy'.

Bangladeshi practices of possibility condition of postmethod pedagogy

The Possibility condition of PMP pertains to teachers' role as change agents and it facilitates the view that whatever learning is happening inside the classroom certainly has an impact in the broader social contexts. For actualizing the possibility parameter of PMP, an emphasis on learners' *liberatory autonomy* is significant. Liberatory autonomy promotes learners' potentiality and emphasizes the enhancement of their critical thinking so that the learners can reflect on the learning uptake. liberatory autonomy compels learners to be 'mini ethnographers' so that they just will not rely on the provided lessons and can have the potentiality to go beyond the institutional teaching learning (Kumaravadivelu, 2006; 2001). In classroom teaching learners' liberatory autonomy can be tapped by using tasks and activities that require brain storming and that can aim to learners' critical engagement with the text. Auerbach (1992) theorises through his five steps of activities of how learners can be critically engaged in problem-posing activities. An identical description of Auerbach (1992) of classroom activities that require critical thinking on part of the learners can be seen in *Shreya*'s description of classroom activities. *Shreya* narrated that,

> In class six there is a story of a boy who is a cleaner who became sick for a week or so, so could not clean the suburb… as a result this suburb becomes stinking and dirty… all the residents start suffering for this .. and after a week when that cleaner start working again then all the residents of that suburb feel his contribution to this society , though usually his work remains unnoticed until he got sick and remained absent from his job… *I discuss the story in the class and then I ask the students try to find out other such people who you think really contribute in the society but they remain unnoticed*…I ask them to think and tell me about such people and their job .. I am really amazed... some of them wrote about night guard, some of them speak of postman... common few professions but it's interesting to get it from them…I think according to their age group those are good responses.

Besides, many teachers claimed that their classroom activities were predominantly of problem solving tasks that potentially could tap the learners' critical faculty. It appears that those instances of classroom teaching can be considered as the participant teachers' acts of transformative practices (in some forms of implicitness) especially when their tasks help the learners to be socio-politically aware. Likewise, Fischman (2009, pp. 210) asserts that "potentially transformative characteristics that are already present in many teachers, even if those are formulated in naïve forms or in common sense terms".

Bangladeshi teachers' application of macrostrategic framework

Evidence of varying degrees of all the teaching principles of this framework have been extracted from the data, but some macrostrategies (e.g. MLO, FNI, CLI) tended to be more relevant than others for the Bangladeshi context. The table below summarises the aggregated data of application of various macrostrategies used by all the participant teachers (While "**X**" refers to presence of evidence of macrostrategies, "**-**"refers to absence of evidence of macrostrategies:

Table 1. The aggregated data of application of various macrostrategies used by all the participant teachers

	MLO	FNI	MPM	AIH	FLA	CLI	ILS	PLA	ESR	RCC
Shreya	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	-	X
Mitu	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	-	-
Rakib	X	X	X	-	X	X	X	X	-	X
Raya	X	X	X	-	X	X	X	X	-	X
Kafi	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	-	-	-
MIzan	X	X	X	-	X	X	-	X	-	-
Shila	X	X	X	-	X	X	-	-	-	-
Kader	X	-	X	-	X	X	-	-	-	-
Halim	X	-	X	-	X	X	-	-	-	-
Shahidul	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	-	X
Samia	X	X	X	-	X	X	-	-	-	X
Saba	X	X	X	-	X	X	-	-	-	-

It is to be noted that teachers are not necessarily familiar with the terminology of the macrostrategic framework. Therefore, evidence of implicit awareness of the elements of the frameworks and (where appropriate) also application in teaching was derived from mention of teaching techniques. For example, to understand the teachers' application of MLO focus of inquiry was on how the individual learner's problem has been addressed in the class by the teachers; likewise for understanding the application of FNI the evidence was highlighted from the teachers' mentions of the answers to referential questions during the classroom activities, and also from the role playing activities among the learners.

Although it is not possible to make strong claims of generalizability, the evidence seems to suggest that MLO, FNI, MPM, FLA, CLI, and PLA are the macrostrategies that have a strong influence on the teaching and learning of English in this context in Bangladesh. In fact, those teaching principles (specially, MLO, FNI, CLI) are common features of a range of teaching methodologies as also discussed in Kumaravadivelu's (1993). In this respect, this study seems to support Ur's (2013) and Bell's (2003) claim that PMP is not actually free from the features of conventional method (such as CLT), and is in fact derived from the local level of CLT.

A reconceptualization of FLA seems to be essential for the Bangladeshi context. Kumaravadivelu (1994) suggests that, ideally practicing teachers need to make their learners aware about the implicit imperialistic characteristics of English. Though numerous evidence suggests the teachers' applications of FLA in relation to Kumaravadivelu's (1994) conceptualization of critical language awareness, for the Bangladeshi teachers FLA refers to other meaning as well. The teachers were undecided as to whether they should be teaching *English as a language* as opposed to *English as a taught subject*. All the teachers stated that they perceived and wanted to teach English as *a language* but at the same time, they furthermore raised the examination issue which eventually forced them to consider it as a *taught subject* as well. The perception to see English as taught subject or even examination focused teaching-learning is significant as it may influence (if not yet) the teaching-learning outcomes of English in Bangladesh.

As shown in *Table 1* no application ESR is underlined. Reason is, in Bangladesh there seems to be an overlapping of the constructs of ESR and FLA. While ESR refers to teachers' goal setting for the assumed target competency of the learners, FLA, on the other hand, refers to teachers' effort to create language awareness for the learners. In the test-focused learning environment in Bangladesh, it is hard to differentiate between competency and proficiency in actual classroom teaching. As a result, when the participant teachers were asked about the issues of competencies of the learners, all of them interpreted and discussed in terms of proficiency. Nevertheless, an overall interpretation of the data specifies the fact that besides the communicative competencies the teachers has the tendency, unconsciously though, to tap a non-English speaking context reflective competency (referring primarily to critical language awareness and, liberatory autonomy, and transformative practices) of the learners.

The defining characteristics of AIH necessitates independent discovery of grammar rules by the learners, thereby it facilitates inductive approaches of grammar teaching. As it appears, not *a*ll the participant teachers are aware of this teaching principle. Teacher-led explicit grammar teaching (e.g. grammar-translation method) is very typical of the Bangladeshi classroom and data also shows that even many of the teachers (except *Shreya*, *Mitu*, *Kafi*, and *Shahidul*) seem not to be convinced about the fact that without the help of the teachers or without having some basic knowledge on the grammatical rules, learners cannot explore

grammar by themselves. Empirical reported research (Basturkmen, 2012; Borg, 2006) on teacher cognition supports the view that teacher's beliefs influence his/her classroom decision making. Henceforth, under this reality, it can be argued that AIH contradicts most of the Bangladeshi teachers' beliefs and does not seem relevant in the Bangladeshi context regardless of the fact that it has the potentiality to maximise grammar knowledge acquisition of the learners in other contexts.

Overall, questions may be raised regarding the impact of this macrostrategic framework in actual teaching. The ten teaching principles (MLO, FNI, MPM, AIH, FLA, CLI, ILS, PLA, ESR, and RCC) of this macrostrategic framework potentially can encourage a teacher to be well aware of theoretical and ideological values of English teaching, though not necessarily make the teacher produce innovative teaching techniques or microstrategies for actual teaching. It does not discuss how to compensate for the limited teaching resources which are common problems in the peripheral contexts. In addition, it would not be wrong to assume that the nature of curriculum/textbooks do have impact on the nature of teaching.

The proposed three-layered model (Dominant-Developing-Incubating)

On the basis of the teachers' applications of macrostrategic framework, a three-layered model is proposed. This proposed model illustrates the degree of applications of postmethod macrostrategies by Bangladeshi school teachers that can be categorised respectively as *Dominant*, *Developing*, and *Incubating*.

Figure 1 Proposed three-layered model

Dominant (MLO, FNI, MPM, CLI, FLA, PLA)

Developing (AIH, ILS, RCC)

Incubating (ESR)
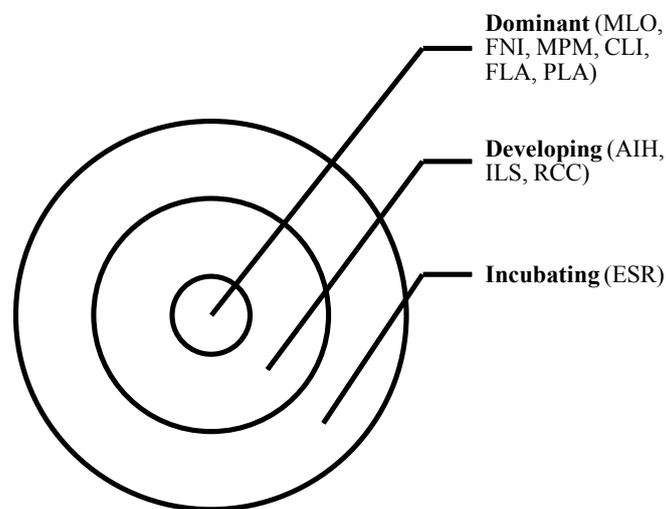
As shown in *figure 1* six macrostrategies (MLO, FNI, MPM, CLI, FLA, and PLA) referring to inner circle tend to govern the teaching of the participant teachers of Bangladesh, thus as far as the degree of applications is concerned those six macrostrategies are quite common in Bangladesh, and so are *dominant*. As the data suggests, during a class the teachers quite frequently utilize learning opportunities created by the learners (referring to MLO); and come up with activities that require role playing or facilitate learner-learner/learner-teacher interactions (referring to FNI and CLI). The references of MPM, FLA, and PLA have emerged many a time earlier during the discussion of the teachers' capabilities to transcend the contextual realities, or the teachers' reported practices aligned with possibility condition of PMP. Apart from the teachers' overtly mentioning of teaching techniques of those dominant teaching principles (see *Table 1*), as discussed earlier, those six principles are some common features for any teaching methods; so those are the core guided English teaching principles for the Bangladeshi school.

The outer circle of the proposed model comprises of three teaching principles (AIH, ILS, and RCC) of which most of the teachers are not aware of. Some evidence of applications of AIH, ILS, and RCC is also extracted from the data, but as it appears, the applications of those teaching principles are not conscious preferences of the participant teachers. For example, in discussing the notion of language skills teaching practices *Mitu*'s thought seems interesting and it is given below:

> it depends on the class and my objectives.. sometimes I separate between listening-speaking and reading - writing… when its listening-speaking in that case I focus on oral practices .. but in the writings its on grammar , content *but yeah.. I explain them in English*

This statement made by *Mitu* is very similar to the responses of a few other participant teachers of this study. Like other participant teachers *Mitu* initially gives the impression that she separates her class for different skills according to the class objectives though her classroom instructions are predominantly in English. It appears from her discussion that she probably fails to notice that classroom interactions in English always facilitate speaking and listening even in cases where the lesson is focused on reading or writing. Under this circumstance, it can be argued that those teaching principles (AIH, ILS, and RCC) are gradually *developing* in the Bangladeshi context.

The expanding circle of this proposed model has got only one teaching principle (ESR) of the macrostrategic framework. As shown in *table 1*, ESR is the one teaching principle appears to be missing in applications in Bangladesh primarily because of its operational construct overlaps with FLA. Nonetheless, when the participant teachers showed their concern for critical language awareness and as their described practices can be compared with some implicit indications of transformative practices, it is logical to assume that ESR (though in a subtle way) for Bangladesh entails a non-English speaking context reflective competency. Thus, ESR seems to be *incubating* for the Bangladeshi context.

This model primarily will serve couple of purposes. It can be used as a reference for applications of various teaching principles in contextualizing macrostrategic framework in Bangladesh or similar contexts. Besides, this model opens up the path for further enquiry with a view to implementing some aspects of the 'grammar of decoloniality' as conceptualised by Kumaravadivelu (2016). The centrality of this model lies with the levels of applications of teaching principles in the likes of FNI, FLA, PLA, and ESR which are again significant for the implementation of grammar of decoloniality.

CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATION OF THE STUDY

To sum it up, it can be argued that while the participant teachers' described classroom practices demonstrate their good understanding of the teaching-learning situations; their understanding of teacher research in relation to generating the personal theory of practice appears to be less than clear. A few evidence certainly displays the participant teachers' autonomous practices in relation to classroom decision making. Although evidence demonstrates that the participant teachers' classroom tasks and activities are to an extent problem solving in nature so compel the learners to use their critical faculties, this practices do not fit the definition of transformative practices as defined by Kumaravadivelu (2003b).

The key implication of this study refers to the associated limitations of the macrostrategic framework (Kumaravadivelu, 1994) in relation to the Bangladeshi context. One major obstacle to the application of the framework is its failure to take into account the limitations of teaching resources. If this macrostrategic framework is to be applicable in the peripheral context (such as Bangladesh) then the issues relating to limited teaching resources need to be addressed. This is not in conflict with the original conceptualisation of the framework, as Kumaravadivelu (1994, pp. 43) maintains that the ten teaching principles are an interim plan which has to be 'continually modified, expanded, and enriched by classroom teachers based on ongoing feedback'.

Another implication is that to actualise the postmethod pedagogic principles in the classroom teaching of the Bangladeshi context, the teachers need to be better oriented with the *theorising* role in relation to generating the personal theory of practice. Moreover as it appears, the articulation of subjective understanding of teaching is important to generate the personal theory of practice, and the practicing teachers should have some opportunities to articulate and share their views on teaching. Teacher training programmes provided for the ELT practitioners in Bangladesh should address this issue. Borg's (2011) study shows how a training programme can help the teachers to articulate their beliefs on teaching, and how articulation of beliefs on teaching can have good impact on the in-service training programme. Furthermore, to make prospective teachers more aware of the ideological issues in ELT, Hawkins and Norton (2009) discusses a model of critical language teacher education constituting *critical awareness*, *critical self-reflection*, and *critical pedagogical relations*. Hence, as it appears, to actualise PMP in the Bangladeshi context the teacher education programme should incorporate those ideas discussed above.

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Rubaiyat Jahan
Institute of Education and Research
University of Rajshahi, Bangladesh
Email: finnegunwake@yahoo.com

Appendix 1 Interview questions

Underlying construct of postmethod pedagogy	Questions
Teacher's autonomy	How do you prefer to take your class, I mean, by strictly following the syllabus or recommended textbooks; Or, you sometimes go beyond the textbooks assuming students will learn better by doing this (e.g. newspaper, audio/video clippings)? How often you use other teaching aids/materials other than textbooks? Do you think that it is better for meaningful teaching/learning to change teaching techniques according to student's conditions and needs? How do you decide when to change technique? What key challenges you usually/may face to adapt your teaching techniques/strategies for different classes of your school? Most importantly do you think it is/will be feasible for real classroom practice?
Teacher's reflection / critical appraisal of teaching or teaching-learning context	How do you evaluate your teaching? Why do you think it is important to evaluate class teaching? Do you discuss/consult with your colleagues?
Teacher research and peer consultation	How do you find out about developments in teaching methodology?
Learners' autonomy	Do you think students can learn better if they try to manage their learning activities by themselves (alone or with fellow students)? How can you encourage and engage students into such activities? Do you really think, students of your class will enjoy such tasks/activities?
Learner as critical thinker	Do you encourage your students to critically examine texts in English? Can you give me an example?
Maximizing learning opportunity	How often you address individual student's problem in the class? Why do you think it is important to do so? Do you ask the students to choose a topic on which the class will be conducted?
Facilitate negotiated interactions	How often you ask question to your students? What is nature of questions whether open ended or close end question? Why open ended/referential questions are important? How it helps the learners?
Minimise perceptual mismatches	Do you some time find yourself in such a state that despite your all efforts you fail to make the learners interested in the class or you fail to make them understand the topic? In such a situation what you usually do? Why it happens? How do you teach grammar? Direct or indirect way? Deductive or inductive way?
Activate intuitive heuristics	Do you think learner can learn grammatical rules by himself? How do you see English, is it a language or a subject like other subjects in school?
Foster language awareness	If it is a language do it needs to be native like? What should be target culture? How often you encourage the learners to discuss on topic? Role playing?
Contextualize linguistic input	How often you provide the learners problem solving tasks? How do you do it?
Integrate language skills	What according to you, students of your class need most to focus on learning- grammatical rules or reading skills or oral fluency or combination of all? Considering the existing teaching aids/resources how far you think you can create opportunity for your students for teaching/learning of four basic skills? Most importantly are you confident enough to teach these skills?
Ensure social relevance	Do you think learner should attain native like competency? Why or why not? How do you usually introduce the cultural elements/norms of English speaking countries to the students?
Raise cultural consciousness	What do you think is it or is it not important to know about other cultures whose language is not English into English class? Do you think is it important to compare these cultural norms with the students own cultural norms? Most importantly are you confident enough to teach these skills? Without almost any exposure to real English speaking country's context and culture to what extent it is difficult to teach those? How do you compensate for these difficulties?
Particularity condition of postmethod pedagogy	What are some specific features of your context that affect your decisions?
Practicality condition of postmethod pedagogy/ Teacher research	To what extent you are enthusiastic to develop your own way of teaching considering your resource limitations as well as students' needs and expectations for more effective teaching/learning environment? What are the probable ways to develop your own way of teaching?
Possibility condition of postmethod pedagogy	What change do you think should be made to how you teach? What changes are possible in given time for example in next 5 years?