**The effect of postmethod and postmodernism on the Iranian English as a Foreign Language (EFL) for teacher education**

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**Abstract**

With the advent of technology and science, especially in the current century, the use of a second language is an undeniable necessity. Accordingly, much progress has been made in enhancing the teaching techniques and performance of the students in the class. Postmethod and postmodernism are fundamental techniques that need careful consideration in developing countries. Postmethod is related to the qualities of the contemporary era in ETL. Hence, trustworthy techniques are used under serious scrutiny. Notably, postmodernism contrasts the idea of advancement with utopian assumptions concerning evolution, social enhancement, and attempts in education to produce reform. The challenges of both concepts are examined in the present systematic review. As the traditional techniques are not appropriate in the existing world, developing countries such as Iran must develop postmethod and postmodernism. Such issues are comprehensively examined to see the possibilities for Iranian teachers using the mentioned methods.

**Keywords:** Teacher education; English Language Teaching (ELT); Post-method; Novel teaching method; EFL

**1. Introduction**

Nowadays, the need for the English language is sensed more than ever since people must communicate to share knowledge and experiences. The coloniality of the English language is a necessity among the applied linguistics community and contributes to better international relationships. The previous decades have witnessed a striking growth in English Language Teaching (ELT), leading to quality problems and undesirable learning outcomes (Chen, 2014). The various techniques like oral method, audio-lingual technique, contend-based teaching, communicative method, and flourish are essential. Kumaravadivelu stated that such methods contain various pathways for language learning and teaching. However, the overlap existing between theory and practice plays a key role in elevating the level of English learners. Kumaravadivelu believed that the method concept could be theoretically valid and less practical. The postmethod pedagogy put forward by Kumaravadivelu for the first time in 1994 met the demand for an efficient way of teaching English free based on the method-based limitation.

Overall, post-method refers to the construction of classroom processes and rules the teachers consider based on their prior and experiential knowledge and specific strategies. According to the postmethod era, teachers play a challenging and crucial role from information-oriented to inquiry-oriented (Can, 2009). Recent years have always witnessed the evolution of ELT to determine solutions to language teaching issues. Also, many changes have been made to improve novel teaching techniques and meet the learners' requirements in various periods. English is a global language that led scholars to call for a paradigm shift in ELT so that the new sociolinguistic landscape matches the twenty-first century (Rose et al., 2021). Nuraeni stated that Total Physical Response (TPR) technique has a positive effect on young learners of ELT at Panti Asuhan Yauma (Nuraeni, 2019). The authors considered a descriptive qualitative method and defined the activities conducted by teachers and students employing TPR.

Postmethod pedagogy collects the teachers around the center of language learning and teaching. This technique values the teachers' beliefs, experiences, and knowledge. The teachers are valuable since they are the only people that know their students and the classroom context (Arıkan, 2006). The quality of the contemporary era in ELT is regarded as the postmethod situation based on scrutinizing previous reliable techniques. Particularity, practicality, and possibility are the main principles of postmethod pedagogy which receives much attention in the literature (Scholl, 2017b). One of the significant prospects for understanding the equality of the world of language teaching with the concept of method and its replacement is postmethod, which is independent of limited methods. For years, researchers have been working on the familiarity of English language teachers with the post-method and its role in producing foreign language learners, which have provided opportunities for planning for the development of English language learning (Kumaravadivelu, 2003).

Due to the failure of various language teaching methods in the 20th century, the post-method, with its theoretical foundations, was introduced as a promising solution (Kumaravadivelu, 2001). postmethod was especially welcomed due to the fact that it gave the teacher freedom of action and paid more attention to the needs of the language learner. Nevertheless, after a while, some researchers and theoreticians questioned the practicality and appropriateness of postmethod principles and rejected them. Therefore, there was a heated debate among the language teaching community about the practicality and appropriateness of the postmethod. Since the postmethod is sometimes discussed in Iran, the practicality of its principles has yet to be comprehensively investigated. The use of novel techniques in developing countries such as Iran has always been a challenge and requires more consideration and foundations (Khany & Darabi, 2014).

The current study attempts to examine the post-methods helpful for the process of teaching English in Iran. The aim is to lead the students towards the post-method and modernity instead of the traditional ones. The growth of English learners contributes to better communication in the world and facilitates connections. The previous studies are investigated as a systematic review for finding the solutions useful in tackling the challenges of postmethod in developing countries. Accordingly, the methodology of the present paper is outlined in the second section. Then, the third section reviews some related studies in detail. After that, the concept of postmethod and modernity is explained in the fourth section. Besides, the challenges and solutions of postmethod and postmodernism in developing countries, especially Iran, are presented in the fifth section. The sixth section presents the fundamental solutions for tackling the mentioned problems.

**2. Methodology**

The procedure of conducting the present research is highlighted in Figure 1, based on which the main steps taken for reaching the final results are specified. The type of review considered here is the systematic review that covers the updated publications along with the ones that were significant in recent years. The main sources of research are Google Scholar and Science Direct. Notably, about 130 papers were extracted from well-known journals like Elsevier and Springer. Then, the unrelated ones were eliminated, and the rest were categorized based on the method and aims. Finally, 87 references have been cited in this systematic review to reach the main gaps and shortcomings. The postmethod is considered the main solution for improving the teachers' abilities for the Iranian English as a Foreign Language (EFL).



**Figure 1.** The structure of conducting the present systematic review based on the previous studies

**3. Literature review**

In the last few decades, a new philosophical and social point of view has been proposed in the works of thinkers, which has been referred to as "postmodernism" (Grenz, 1996; Kayi-Aydar, 2019). This point of view has raised new issues and debates in various fields, such as philosophy, politics, art, culture, and social sciences. It has also created novel questions and attitudes toward education. It seems that addressing this issue and related challenges is an important part of the current intellectual, social, and educational needs of the developing society, which, as a member of the global community, interacts intellectually, culturally, and politically with other nations (Baratova, 2022). The statistical report highlighted in Figure 2 indicates the growth of research in the field of postmethod in Iran. It is also essential to answer the relationship between postmodernism and education and the questions raised in this field (Das, 2003). Overall, many studies, and the current one, focused on postmodernism in education (Dawkins, 1998; Hutcheon, 1989; Malpas, 2004). In 2022, Povoroznyuk et al. examined the organization of remote English language learning in quarantine based on postmodernism (Povoroznyuk et al., 2022). It was revealed that the organization of remote learning is required for the educational process according to the synchronous and asynchronous modes. The authors proved that during the pandemic of Coronavirus, parents found it difficult to work with digital programs and remote applications. Hence, the student assessment resulted in the wrong answers and analyses. In 2021, Angelo examined the relationship between neoliberalism and communicative language teaching in n language-in-education policy and obtained essential results (Angelo, 2021). The authors stated that neoliberalism could increase the paradoxical discourses. As stated by Renani et al. in 2019 (Renani et al., 2019), there is an undeniable correlation between teaching quality and prosperous learning in EFL since professional and competent teachers are eager to consider teacher education programmers. In 2019, Güngör et al. indicated the form of pre-service teachers’ activities shaped considering the disciplines of schooling embedded in the national educational system (Güngör & Güngör, 2019). In 2020, Hassani et al. examined the mindsets of the Iranian EFL teachers for both genders on the postmethod pedagogy (Hassani et al., 2020). The authors concluded that there is a striking difference between their mindsets according to the rules of postmethod technique.



**Figure 2.** The striking growth of the post method in Iran

A large number of existing studies in the broader literature have examined the utilization of v as a promising solution in line with enhancing the level of English teachers (Al-Kadi, 2020; Fathi & Afzali, 2020; Geneyikli, 2020; Hall, 2017). In 2017, Rashidi et al. conducted qualitative research to elicit the novel EFL teachers' opinions and perceptions concerning postmethod pedagogy (Rashidi & Mansourzadeh, 2017). The authors probed into the novel EFL teachers" perceptions of postmethod status considering the main context and requirements. For this purpose, ten novel EFL teachers were selected and classified into three groups according to the teaching experience as a purposive sampling process. In 2018, the principles of English teaching in Bangladesh were outlined based on the 2016 World Bank report on worldwide per capita Gross Domestic Product (GDP) (Rahman & Pandian, 2018). The authors examined the main issues of ELT in Bangladesh that can stop the use of the novel Language Teaching (CLT) curriculum considering the teachers' point of view. In 2020, a systematic review was conducted for 37 experimental research that examined English teacher identity and its concept using classroom practices between 1997 and 2020 (Golzar, 2020). More studies are summarized in Table 1 based on the purposes, techniques, and case studies.

**Table 1.** A brief summary of the related studies regarding the postmethod techniques

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **No** | **References/Year** | **Method** | **Aim** | **Case study** |
| 1 | (Siregar et al., 2021)/2021 | Postmethod pedagogy | Tackling the problems of the pandemic era | The pandemic era in the world |
| 2 | (Al-Khazaali & Enad, 2022)/2022 | Postmethod pedagogy | Examining the possibility, practicality, and particularity of the micro strategies in the schoolroom | Iraq |
| 3 | (Chaulagai)/2020 | Postmethod pedagogy | The benefits of using the post method for Nepali ELT classroom | Nepali |
| 4 | (Khany & Darabi, 2014)/2014 | Principles-based and Postmethod pedagogy | Examining the reflection of the mentioned techniques for specifying the teachers' performance in the Iranian class | Iran |
| 5 | (Scholl, 2017a)/2017 | Postmethod pedagogy | Generating a comprehensive conceptualization of post-method for employing second-language teacher education and academia | England |
| 6 | (Hekmatshoar Tabari & Hekmatshoar Tabari, 2020)/2020 | Postmethod pedagogy | Examining the responses of the Iranian EFL teachers against postmethod | Iran |
| 7 | (Paul)/2022 | Postmethod pedagogy and method-based ELT | Examining the use of the mentioned methods in raising the level of teachers | Bangladesh |

Postmethod was especially welcomed due to the fact that it gave the teacher freedom of action and paid more attention to the needs of the language learner. But after a while, some researchers and theoreticians rejected the practicality and appropriateness of postmethod principles. Therefore, there was a heated debate among the language teaching community about the practicality and appropriateness of the postmethod (Kumaravadivelu, 2006). As regards Table 1, since the postmethod is sometimes discussed in Iran, the practicality of its principles has yet to be comprehensively investigated in Iran. The current research needs a comprehensive investigation regarding the concept of postmethod and modernity in Iran.

**4. Postmethod and postmodernism**

In this section, the concept of postmethod and postmodernism is illustrated based on the previous study. A history of both concepts is given here, and their relationships with English teaching are specified. Also, the studies conducted based on the use of postmethod and postmodernism for teaching English are reviewed.

*4.1 History of postmethod*

In 1994, Kumaravadivelu introduced postmethod pedagogy as a novel technique for overcoming the perception of the diverse sociocultural milieus based on which language education is embedded (Kumaravadivelu, 2001). A characteristic technique can be more useful than the rest, which is successfully applied to English language education irrespective of what leads people to the most method. The postmethod era denies the existence of a perfect technique that can be used to change the spotlight from the method to the teacher. Accordingly, the teachers can analyze the contexts properly and make better decisions for the students according to the realities.

In the late 1990s, English teachers believed that no method or research could successfully enhance the FLT, as reported in this study by Brown. Based on the remarkable effect of postmodernism in the world, postmethod meets the requirements of teaching English free by overcoming the method-based limitations (Brown, 2002). Kumaravadivelu introduced postmethod as a state of affairs for enabling refiguring of the connections between theoretical and practical aspects. Accordingly, the conventional concept of method leads theorizers to create knowledge-oriented pedagogic theories. On the other hand, the postmethod situation contributes to the practitioners in producing local, characteristic, and new practices (Kumaravadivelu, 1994). Kumaravadivelu considered the term pedagogy for a vast range of fields, including classroom strategies, instructional materials, curricular purposes, and assessment criteria. Due to historical, political, and sociocultural experiences, postmethod pedagogy has a striking influence on ELT (Kumaravadivelu, 2001). After the failure of various language teaching methods in the 20th century, at the end of the 20th century, the post-method with its theoretical foundations received much attention (Kumaravadivelu, 2003). In the postmethod, the focus is on the process of English teaching and learning based on which the student's requirements and specifications. As mentioned earlier, the major principles of postmethod consist of particularity, practicality, and possibility. Kumaravadivelu considered postmethod as a result of 'the widespread dissatisfaction with the conventional concept of method.' The postmethod same, like other techniques, has seen many evolutions in recent years and is now one of the dominant techniques among English specialists and teachers. The challenges and effects of postmethod among Iranians are comprehensively discussed in the following.

*4.2 Postmethod in the English language*

One of the most important prospects for understanding the equality of the world of language teaching with the concept of method and its replacement is the Kumaravadivelu post method, which is independent of limited methods. For years, researchers have been working on the familiarity of English language teachers with the postmethod and its role in the production of foreign language learners, which have provided opportunities for the development of English language learning. The teachers that use postmethod adapt themselves to the novel ideas based on the local and contextual factors while some macro strategies guide it. Maximizing learning opportunities and promoting learner autonomy are the main macro strategies. In the cutting-edge paper of 1990 (Prabhu, 1990), Prabhu claimed that no method exists while the individual teachers propose an approach corresponding to their sense' sense of plausibility.' The fundamental indices of postmethod pedagogy are related to the learner, the teacher, and the teacher educator. According to the perspective of postmethod pedagogy, the learner's performance is acceptable. Three aspects of learner autonomy, including academic, social, and liberatory, are converted to only academic and liberatory in the principles of teaching, as reported in the study of Kumaravadivelu in 2006 (Kumaravadivelu, 2006).

There have been numerous studies to investigate postmethod for Iranian English teachers. To mention a few, Seidi examined the concept of postmethod and its nature for Iran's educational context EFL teachers (Seidi, 2019). The authors demonstrated that teacher burnout is associated with teaching quality which is influential for the learners and, subsequently, teachers' performance. The relationship between the postmethod and teachers' burnout was investigated to reveal the teachers' tendency and conformity towards the rules of postmethod pedagogy. Hence, the performance of Iranian EFL teachers was assessed based on the post-method pedagogy and burnout inventories. Due to the outcome of Pearson Correlational analysis, it was found that post-method has an undesirable relationship with burnout. In 2020, Maniruzzaman examined four fundamental postmethod frameworks proposed by Allwright, Stern, Kumaravadivelu, and Brown to see their reflections on English language teaching in the Bangladesh context. The main restrictions of the postmethod pedagogy were specified in the considered fields, and striking findings were given. In another study, Sun employed the lens of postmethod pedagogy to investigate a veteran teacher's implementation of the Socratic circle in secondary EFL teaching (Sun, 2021). The findings benefitted those aiming to progress in the Socratic circle to EFL learning. The dialectical correlation between the method and postmethod was also determined. In 2020, Rashed considered the three aspects of postmethod, namely particularity, practicality, and the possibility of addressing the sensitive English teachers' requirements (Rashed, 2020). The authors claimed that using such aspects could be crucial for local teaching techniques. Fat'hi et al. investigated how the Iranian teachers' tendency and conformity in using postmethod pedagogy principles affect the students' performance (Fat'hi et al., 2015). The five elements of teachers were related to the three post-method components based on the constructs' nature and domain.

*4.3 History of postmodernism*

The term postmodernism was first used in 1939 by Arnold Twain. Artists and critics later used the term in the 1960s in New York, then by European theorists in the 1970s. Jean-François Lyotard, one of the European theorists, in his famous work titled the postmodern condition, attacked the legalized and generalized myths of the modern age, such as the idea of the grand narrative. Modernity is a distinctive and unique social life form that characterizes modern societies. Hence, modern societies appeared in Europe around the 15th century (Jahanbegloo, 2004). However, as a definitive formula, it was found in the discourse of the Age of Enlightenment in the 18th century, and in the 19th century, modernity was identified with Industrialism and defined political, economic, and cultural developments in union with it. In the 20th century, a number of non-European societies, such as Australia and Japan, joined the camp of advanced industrial societies, and modernity became a progressing phenomenon. According to what happened, it should be said that modernity has had a long and complex evolution and is made up of clauses or joints of different historical processes that work together during a single historical event. Based on a philosophical and sociological point of view, it can be said that the scientific foundation of modernism, especially what became popular in the 18th and 19th centuries, is based on the idea of progress, evolution, and the idea of history and society as a dynamic and evolving being. Modernity started with the thought of progress and modern science, which is disciplined, lawful, and subject to a general pattern (Vahdat, 2003).

Modernity and modernism, with deep roots in the historical developments of close to six centuries, from the fourteenth century and the Renaissance until now, are considered the inheritors of these six centuries of developments. What is mentioned under the title of modernity is nothing but profound political, social, economic, intellectual, cultural achievements, etc., in all areas of human individual and social life. Although these achievements and developments started in the distant past, their peak can be seen from the 18th century onwards. During the years of the 1960s and 1970s in Europe, we witnessed the emergence of numerous intellectual and theoretical currents in various fields of human knowledge, especially in the humanities and social sciences; Currents that, with their rise, followed the decline of previous currents. Among the most important of these movements, we can point out the emergence of the post-structuralism school in the late 1960s and early 1970s in the intellectual life of France, which is the expansion of the critical currents against structuralism. The post-structuralist school, by washing its hands of any claims of the constructivist school regarding objectivity, certainty, and comprehensiveness and putting aside and ultimately negating and rejecting such claims, opened a new way for social and human sciences research. Instead of the universal, comprehensive, and universal concepts accepted in structuralism, it emphasizes plurality, multiplicity, detail, dispersion, incoherence, and individuality of concepts. Now it is essential to see the evolution of postmodernism in English teaching and stuff like that.

*4.4 Postmodernism in the English language*

Postmodernism, whether considered a part of modernism or a different and new phenomenon, is a relatively new idea in philosophy and philosophy of education (Godazgar, 2007). Although this way of thinking is not the brainchild of philosophers, it was born and spread due to their efforts. The thoughts of pragmatists, existentialists, phenomenologists, linguistic philosophers, and critical theorists have been the foundation of many of the intellectual principles of postmodernists. Postmodernism has various branches both in philosophy and in the philosophy of education. In the philosophy of education, ethnographic approach, super structuralist critical pragmatism, ultraliberalism, and social reconstructionism are among them. This diversity is fully manifested in relation to the three basic components of formal education, i.e., goals, programs, and methods. As stated by Fahim and Pishghadam (Fahim & Pishghadam, 2011), postmodernism represents the various disciplines or regions of research, such as art, music, film, literature, architecture, and technology. Postmodernism is also defined as a reaction against a naїve confidence according to scientific knowledge (Blackburn, 2005). Since postmodernism has a remarkable effect on many fields, it is interesting to know how it can affect the English language theoretically and practically (Green, 1995; Kestel & Korkmaz, 2019). What is the difference between the postmethod and postmodernism? Such questions are answered in the following, considering the Iranian learners.

**5. Challenges and solutions**

This section reviews the effect of postmethod in the advancement process of English teachers, especially Iranian ones. The challenges are examined, and fundamental solutions are proposed for them. Postmethod is the connection between theory and practice. Also, teachers' agency is observed by the parameter of practicality as the primary place. The challenge of the method concept is attributed to the unequal power and condition among the experts and teachers. Kaimvand et al. attempted to reveal the perception of Iranian teachers considering the issue of applicability (Kaimvand et al., 2016). Besides, the authors examined the implementation challenges based on the facilitative and deterrent criteria. In the research, 23 teachers were chosen for the quantitative phase, and a piloted questionnaire was given to them. Chi-Square was used for analyzing the respondents of the parameter of particularity, and it was revealed that 36% of them used particularity in teaching. Due to the analytical results, the language center and supervisors were the facilitative factors, and the lack of time and interest among the students were the main challenges. Safari and Rashida believed that English teaching methods in Iran have dramatically changed in recent years (Safari & Rashida, 2015). The authors stated that the novel techniques and theories that emerged in the post-transmission era have successfully solved political, ideological, and critical problems. The alternative theories had a minor effect on Iranian teachers despite the global evolution in education programs. As the study is related to about eight years ago, we need to investigate this issue for the current developments in Iran. The authors indicated that the applicability of the post-transmission perspectives and theories could enhance pre-service and in-service ELT teacher education in Iran. The challenges of postmethod for the Iranian teachers are categorized in Table 2.

**Table 2.** The existence of three aspects of the postmethod

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **No.** | **References/Year** | **Contribution** | **Particularity** | **Practicality** | **Possibility** |
| 1 | (Khany & Darabi, 2014)/2014 | Using the Delphi method to examine the perspectives of the Iranian EFL domain practitioners |  | × |  |
| 2 | (Amiri & Sahragard, 2018)/2018 | Tackling the challenges of the nature of postmethod in the different towns of Iran |  | × |  |
| 3 | (Fathi & Nezakatgoo, 2017)/2017 | Examining EFL teachers' tendency to perform post method in the Iranian context | × |  |  |
| 4 | (Ebrahimi et al., 2021)/2021 | Investigating the impact of the contrastive lexical method on the writing skills of Iranian EFL learners  |  |  | × |
| 5 | (Derakhshan & Ghiasvand, 2022)/2022 | Learning-oriented assessment (LOA) |  | × |  |

Galante (Galante, 2014) stated that ELT techniques had evolved from a constricted methodology based on a complicated post-method instructional practice. Accordingly, the methods and techniques designed for ELT have a specific position in language classrooms. Galante stated that a metaphor in the post method plays a determinant role which illustrates that the knowledge of teaching techniques can match an awareness of the significant aspects. Notably, the challenges of postmethod and postmodernism are different for Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL). In other words, TESOL is rather complex in the postmethod with unique challenges. For example, we can imagine a journey and an obvious destination (learning English) while the itinerary is intricate (how?). The teacher may know the right path with a GPS (knowledge of methods). However, several ways are correct, like Figure 3. In this case, the teachers may return home since they feel lost and can have an opportunity. Selecting the correct way in the postmethod depends on the teacher and the learners' aims. The question that comes to mind is when the students are interested in learning, how can it be to guide them? Teachers need to know the several techniques and the crucial aspects defined for the journey to be useful for teachers and students.



**Figure 3.** The various ways of postmethod(Galante, 2014)

Furthermore, the preceding has many implications in the TESOL, while only some can be mentioned. Since the 1990s, the effect of postmodernism on TESOL has been significant, as reported in the literature (Kelly, 1969). Nowadays, Iran is dominated by the ideas of modernism, as there is no vestige of postmodernism at its whole educational level. The centralized educational system existing in this country indicates that the authorities only make the entire decision. So, the schools and teachers should follow the rules and not have any impact on this system. The infrastructures of the developing countries for embracing postmodernism are the main obstacles. In Iran, teachers are not autonomous in deciding or taking any classroom-oriented action. As stated by Brown, the best alternative as a mad scramble in schools and English language institutes is very conventional (Brown, 2002). According to the reported works, TESOL is in the era of postmodernism (Akbari, 2008). Nevertheless, in developing countries, TESOL is in the modern era practically.

**6. Conclusion and future work**

In summary, the current review investigated the use of postmethod for improving the process of teaching English in Iran. Since the traditional teaching methods are not appropriate for the existing world, we need to lead the teachers towards the postmethod and modernity. The growth of English learners contributes to better communication in the world and facilitates connections. The previous studies were examined as a systematic review for finding the solutions helpful in tackling the challenges of postmethod in developing countries. As regards the related studies, particularity, practicality, and possibility are the main principles of postmethod pedagogy, which receives much attention in the literature. The challenges of postmethod were examined considering such issues. It was revealed that postmethod was useful since it gave the teacher freedom of action and paid more attention to the needs of the language learner. But after a while, some researchers and theoreticians rejected the practicality and appropriateness of postmethod principles. Notably, postmodernism can be considered as a reaction against a naїve confidence based on characteristic knowledge. Additionally, the updated publishments emphasize the applicability of the post-transmission perspectives and theories in improving the pre-service and in-service ELT teacher education in Iran. Notably, the challenges of postmethod and postmodernism are complex for TESOL. Future investigations are necessary to validate the kinds of conclusions that can be drawn from this study. Looking forward, further attempts could prove quite beneficial to the literature. The postmethod can be examined for the public and private institute of English language in Iran. The effects of postmodernism in the academic level of English learners must be studied and compared for the developing nations. Furthermore, the use of novel technologies such as Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Machine Learning (ML) can be very important in this regard.

**Conflict of interest**

The author claims that he does not have any conflict of interest.

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