Influence of Post-Method Pedagogy on Chinese EFL Teachers' Perception of Teaching Approach

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ABSTRACT

Objective: The study aims to explore the influence of Post-Method Pedagogy (PMP) on Chinese English as a Foreign Language (CEFL) teachers' perceptions of their teaching approaches. ***Methods***: A case study was conducted involving four CEFL teachers at a university. Data were collected through interviews, reflective journals, surveys, and observation checklists. ***Results***: Exposure to PMP positively impacted the teachers' teaching approaches, shifting their roles from primary authorities to facilitators of learning. The emphasis was on context-sensitivity, reflective teaching, and building connections with students. Influencing factors included teachers' educational background, institutional demands, and preconceived notions of teacher-student relationships. Teachers developed more open, inclusive, and autonomous attitudes and beliefs towards PMP, becoming more sensitive to learners' needs and showing improvements in teaching autonomy. ***Conclusion***: Integrating PMP into early teacher training programs can positively prepare future EFL teachers for globalized teaching contexts. Challenges in implementing PMP were also identified, suggesting the need for ongoing support and development in this pedagogical approach.

1. INTRODUCTION

English language teaching in China is of critical importance for many students' academic success, career advancement, and participation in a multilingual society. Various educational reforms have been initiated by the Chinese education system such as the practice of Outcomes-Based Education (OBE), including the establishment of a national criteria for teaching quality in English language programs in 2016. This effort emphasizes the need to adapt and redefine English Language Teaching (ELT) in higher education to foster inclusivity and to cater to students' diverse learning needs both within and outside the classrooms (Du & Wang, 2019). However, both OBE and the teaching quality criteria treat teachers as implementers of prescribed teaching methods and overlook teachers' potential to develop teaching strategies based on their own teaching and learning philosophies. Consequently, students continue to learn EFL within a limited scope, hindering their true potential for success in higher education. The aim of this study is to apply Post-Method Pedagogy (PMP) in the classrooms of four Chinese EFL (CEFL) teachers, empowering them to contextualize their teaching practices, liberate them from the constraints of prescribed methods, and meet the diverse learning needs of their students.

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1.1 Basic Concepts
1.1.1 Method

The history of English language teaching (ELT) has been characterized by the persistent pursuit of the best teaching method. The concept of method, both with a lowercase "m" and an uppercase "M," has played a crucial role in this pursuit. As defined by Bell (2003), a **method** is "a grab bag of classroom practices," while **Method** is "a fixed set of classroom practices that are prescriptive, and therefore do not allow variation" (p. 326). Brown (2000) added that a "method" oversimplifies language teachers' classroom practices, neglecting the influence of various teaching contexts. Similarly, Richards and Rodgers (2014) assert that methods are an umbrella term that comprises approach, design, and procedure. They further explain that a method is theoretically linked to the approach, organizationally determined by the design, and practically realized in the procedure. In summary, the teaching method is no longer a rigid framework, and flexible teaching has become a popular approach to both teaching and curriculum design that acknowledges the changing needs of learners in a rapidly changing world (Kariippanon *et al.*, 2019; Pane, 2018). Flexible teachers are willing to explore different instructional materials and strategies to meet their students' needs and are not tied to traditional methods of instruction that educational institutions have developed (Joan, 2013). Flexibility allows educators to respond to different learner abilities, needs, and interests and is beneficial to tailor the approach to each individual student. Flexible learning is a method of learning whereby students are given freedom in how, what, when, and where they learn, and it addresses how physical space is used, how students are grouped during learning, and how time is used throughout teaching (Detyna *et al.*, 2023).

A significant development in ELT is the realization that the decades-long trend of pursuing the best teaching method needed reform, and flexibility is key to effective teaching and learning allowing for customization and adaptation to meet the needs of learners. Acknowledging the complexity of teaching contexts and embracing a context-sensitive approach is essential for promoting effective language instruction in diverse educational settings (Han, 2022; Littlewood, 2013). By moving away from a one-size-fits-all approach, language educators can develop a more nuanced understanding of teaching practices and make informed decisions that align with the specific needs and goals of their learners.

1.1.2 Post-Method Pedagogy (PMP)

Post-method pedagogy or PMP was first introduced by Kumaravadivelu (2003) in his influential paper entitled "Toward a Post-method Pedagogy," and it emerged as a pivotal contribution to the field of language pedagogy.

This concept was a result of a collective dissatisfaction and critique of traditional teaching methods among educators that persisted until the turn of the twenty-first century. The earlier methods had restrictions on instructional practices and hindered teachers' professional growth (Abbas & Al-Bakri, 2020; Kamali, 2021; Kandel, 2019). A more recent trend in methodological practice occurred in the form of the exploration of alternative approaches in designing effective teaching strategies (Aburayash, 2021; Affendi et *al.*, 2020; Goedhart et *al.*, 2019; Santikarn & Wichadee, 2018) and a call to overcome the constraints of the transmission model of teacher education by emphasizing the search for alternative methods to foster the development of proficient teaching professionals (Laili et *al.*, 2022; Marina et *al.*, 2019).

In response to the two research orientations, Kumaravadivelu (2003) developed the post-method framework which comprised an innovative teaching strategy matrix and a modular teacher training model. The pedagogy in PMP includes not only issues pertaining to classroom strategies, instructional materials, curricular objectives, and evaluation measures, but also a wide range of historical, political, and sociocultural experiences that directly or indirectly influence L2 education (see in Figure 1). Kumaravadivelu (2006) believes that a teacher's role is significant in constructing pedagogic theories based on past and present learned theories and experiences, practices, and activities in real contexts. The post-method pedagogy was conceptualized in the form of a three-dimensional pedagogy of particularity, practicality, and possibility.

PMP represents a significant shift in education by encouraging teachers to leverage their personal knowledge and contextualized experience in their teaching practices. However, PMP has faced criticism for its perceived one-size-fits-all nature, being considered an illusion or a hypothetical reality, because the effective realization of PMP requires highly qualified teachers mastering sufficient pedagogical knowledge
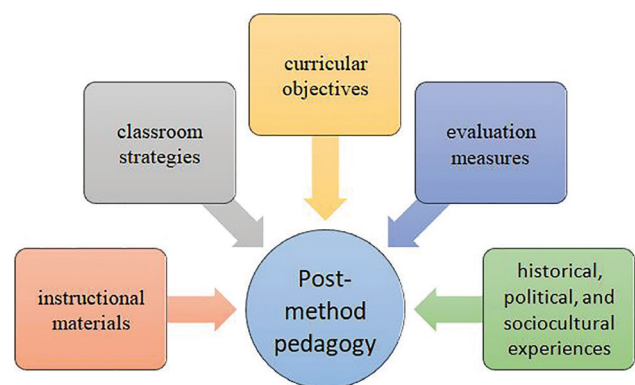

Figure 1. Post-Method Pedagogy Constituents
Source: *Kumaravadivelu, 2006*

and sociocultural backgrounds (Akbari, 2008; Ziafar & Namaziandost, 2019). Therefore, substantial renovation of teacher education infrastructure and sufficient practical guidance for teachers comes as a predominant necessity (Sun, 2021).

Empirical research elsewhere has provided evidence of the disparity between the theoretical acceptance and practical implementation of PMP. In his study, Mahdi's (2022) empirical research displayed a process of tweaking the micro-strategies of PMP to adapt to the Iraqi EFL context. Islam's (2020) study conducted in Bangladeshi tertiary education identified various factors, such as syllabi, course books, and the evaluation system, that hindered teachers and students from exercising autonomy. While teachers were able to match teaching materials to students' needs to achieve particularity, they faced limitations in addressing practicality and possibility. Kandel's (2019) research among prospective EFL teachers in Nepal revealed that although pre-service teachers had some awareness of PMP, teacher education was not updated to enable its implementation. Teachers were not viewed as knowledge creators, rather as passive technicians. Golzar's (2020) systematic review highlighted a significant gap between theoretical recognition and practical implementation of PMP. It can be inferred from the above that while practitioners acknowledged PMP, they often succumbed to contextual barriers or implemented it in an insufficient way (Sun, 2021).

1.1.3 Teacher Role in Post-method Pedagogy

According to Kumaravadivelu (2006), Post-method Pedagogy (PMP) or pedagogy in progress emphasizes teaching context analysis and understanding learners in actual classrooms before deciding on a teaching method. This analysis process is an ongoing effort. Feedback from the classroom and teacher reflection are important for this pre-analysis stage. In a deconstructionist approach teachers address teaching issues and conduct their teaching practice by breaking past familiar practices and interpreting multiple meanings from the actual teaching context. Past studies demonstrate that the essential prerequisite for student engagement, classroom participation and responsiveness, self-efficacy, motivation, and aspirations, positive emotional adjustment, prosocial behavior, and ultimately long-term academic success lies in the teacher who exhibits these capabilities (Dörnyei, 2014; Naeini & Shakouri, 2016; Sun, 2021). Therefore, language teachers must adapt and prepare themselves for the context they are to face. Strategies that work with one student or class may not be effective with others, and even the same student or class may require different approaches on different occasions (Dörnyei, 2014; Sun, 2021).

In practicing PMP, language teachers are required to identify specific micro-strategies guided by macro-strategies which are theory-neutral and method-neutral, respectively, but the micro-strategies proposed by the PMP still need tailoring before being used in certain contexts (Mahdi et al., 2022). Figure 2 illustrates the parameters of particularity, practicality, and possibility which serve as the axis connecting and anchoring the center of the pedagogic wheel (Kumaravadivelu, 2003). The macro-strategies act as spokes that connect the pedagogic wheel to its center. The outer rim symbolizes language learning and language teaching. There are also concealed or unknown wheels within the
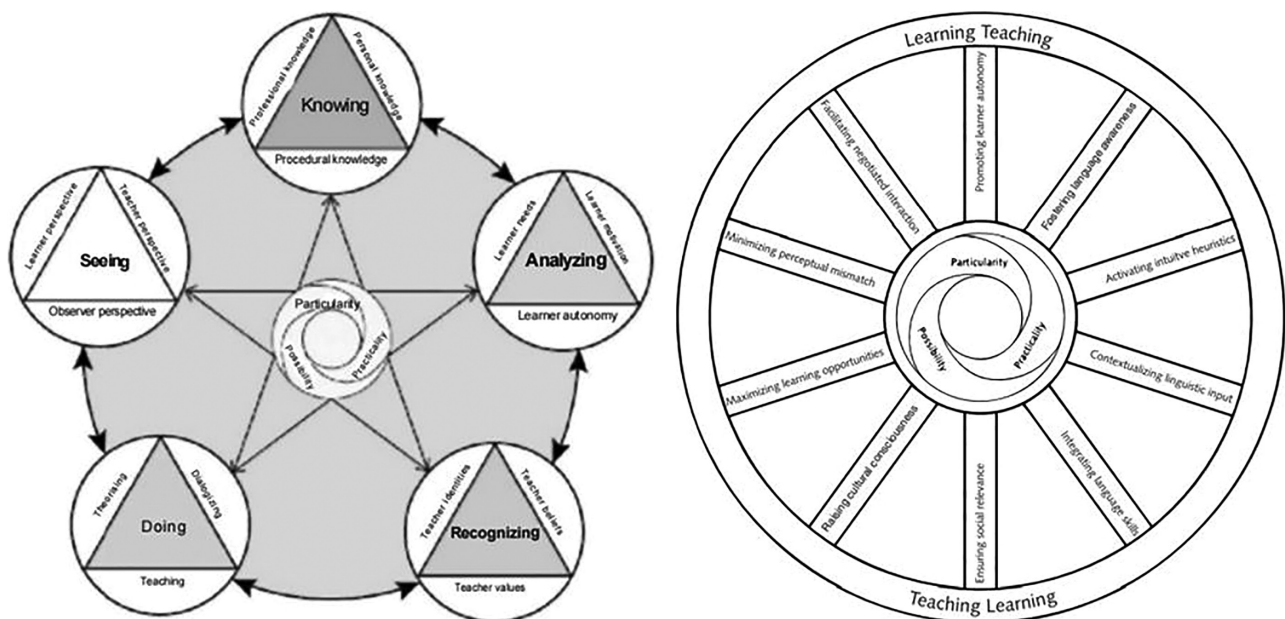

Figure 2. The PMP Framework
Source: *Kumaravadivelu, 2003*

wheels—individual, institutional, social, and cultural factors—that exert influence on language learning, language teaching, and language use within a given communicative context.

1.1.4 Teaching Approach

In the past, a teaching approach was defined as a set of assumptions that addressed the nature of language, learning, and teaching. A method referred to a comprehensive plan for the systematic presentation of language, based on a specific approach. In the traditional three-tier framework comprising approach, method, and technique, approach is at the highest level, with method representing the holistic plan for the systematic presentation of language within a specific approach. However, Richards and Rodgers (2014) restructured the three levels of pedagogy, replacing "approach-method-technique" with "approach-design-procedure" relationship (see in Figure 3). Furthermore, they introduced a separate category for method, which became a hypernym beyond the "approach-design-procedure" relationship. This new category serves as an umbrella term encompassing the specification and interrelation of theory and practice.

Similarly, Kumaravadivelu (2006) simplified the description of post-method framework and created a two-part distinction: principles and procedures. Principles indicate a set of insights derived from theoretical and applied linguistics, cognitive psychology, information sciences, and other related disciplines that provide theoretical foundations. Principles thus include not only the theoretical assumptions governing language learning and teaching, but also those governing syllabus design, materials production, and evaluation measures. Procedures are the set of teaching strategies adopted or adapted by the teacher to accomplish the goals of language learning and teaching in the classroom. Thus, the basic elements of approach are covered by the definition of principles. Procedures comprise classroom events, activities, or techniques. In this study, Kumaravadivelu's (2003) definition of principles is adopted as the theoretical base to understand the teacher's perception of teaching approach.

The teaching approach as defined by Kumaravadivel's (2003) principles is the reflection of teachers' dynamic and changing process of personal and professional development (Stenberg et al., 2014). In PMP theory, teachers' teaching approach is affected by and presented in the forms of classroom strategies, instructional materials, curricular objectives, evaluation measures, and the historical, political, and sociocultural experiences.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

PMP, marking a shift from a "methods-directed" approach to a post-method model in language teaching, encourages teachers to take initiative and become explorers and managers of their own classrooms. To achieve this, teachers must redesign their classes, considering not only classroom strategies, instructional materials, curricular objectives, and evaluation measures, but also the broader historical, political, and sociocultural factors that directly or indirectly influence second language (L2) education (Gokmen, 2023). While there is a considerable body of literature on the concept of PMP, many articles focus on theoretical and philosophical discussions, offering interpretations of how PMP can be applied in teaching. Similarly, within the context of China, there is a growing number of studies exploring the emotions, experiences, and understandings of teachers in relation to PMP. Many teachers have recognized the importance of negotiating knowledge between themselves and their students, as well as with other teacher educators. However, research which specifically focuses on the influence of post-method pedagogy in the Chinese context is scarce. To date, no studies have been conducted in China to investigate the perceptions and experience of teachers implementing PMP in real classrooms.

Despite this need, there have been very limited research efforts focused on the effects of post-method pedagogy on EFL teachers' profession. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to investigate the influence of PMP in reconstructing the existing practices of Chinese EFL teachers' instructional practice, which helps to improve the EFL teachers' professional development and flexible teaching. The study was designed and conducted among tertiary level EFL teachers to examine and explore their perceptions and experience of the post-method approach to teaching English in China. Consequently, this study seeks to address the specific issue of the undefined role of the post-method approach in improving the teaching approach and practice of four CEFL teachers at a public university located in Shanxi Province, northern China.

1.3 Research Objectives

The EFL context in China, as in many other EFL teaching and learning environments, is distinct culturally, socially, and politically. Therefore, research must consider the practical constraints and challenges specific to this context. In China, all EFL syllabi and materials are prescribed by the Ministry of Education, leaving teachers
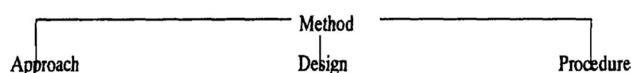
Figure 3. New three-tier system of Method
Source: *Richards & Rodgers, 2014*

with little choice, but to work with these materials. Some textbooks have not been updated to reflect recent developments, and students' individual needs and proficiency are often overlooked. Furthermore, the professional development of Chinese non-native-speaking EFL teachers, particularly those in underdeveloped areas, faces significant challenges. Few studies have examined how these teachers, who often have limited training and growth opportunities, apply context-sensitive aspects of PMP in their real teaching contexts. Addressing this gap would contribute to the following objectives:

1. To understand the effectiveness of PMP in helping Chinese non-native speaking EFL teachers to enhance their teaching approaches.
2. To investigate the Chinese EFL teachers' perceptions of their instructional practices of PMP in class.
3. To explore the possible challenges and difficulties in practicing PMP.

1.4 Research Questions
1. How does the process of practicing PMP help to improve the teachers' teaching approaches?
2. What are the teachers' perceptions of the practice of PMP in their EFL classrooms?
3. What are the challenges faced by the teachers in using PMP?

1.5 Research Significance

Building upon previous research, this study aims to examine how PMP can serve as an alternative to traditional teaching methods in language instruction at the tertiary level in China. This research is important for both theoretical and practical aspects of language teaching. The study's theoretical contribution lies in determining the overall role of PMP in exploring pedagogical theories related to language education. On a practical level, the findings will provide teachers with a comprehensive understanding of their classroom dynamics. This understanding will enable them to systematically observe their teaching, assess the outcomes, identify challenges, find solutions, and determine which techniques and strategies are effective and which are not.

2. METHODOLOGY

This study employed a case study design and incorporated a phenomenological approach, which is a qualitative research method that explores the subjective experiences of individuals. The choice of a case study research design was driven by the research questions, which focus on a contemporary phenomenon and require an extensive and in-depth understanding of the process

(Yin, 2015). This aims to capture variations and differences in how individuals understand and experience various aspects of their world.

The researcher utilized multiple tools, including interviews, reflective journals, observation checklists, survey questionnaires, and focus group interviews in the collection of data. All interview transcripts were transcribed verbatim before they were analyzed using N-vivo software that employed a thematic analysis approach (Yin, 2015). All written data were then uploaded into N-vivo for comprehensive analysis. Thematic analysis via the constant comparative method was employed to generate themes and categories (Braun & Clarke, 2006). An audit trail was maintained, and peer review was conducted after the data analysis to ensure the validity and trustworthiness of the study.

Ethical considerations were considered, and permissions were obtained from all participants for the interviews. Informed consent was obtained prior to conducting the interviews, and the objectives and nature of the study were explained to the participants. Due to space limitations, this paper presents only the results from one participant, Emmy, to provide an understanding of the case.

2.1 Participants

A purposive sampling method was employed for the case study, and participants were selected based on the following criteria: (a) a genuine interest and motivation to improve their teaching approach, (b) no prior exposure to PMP, (c) a minimum of 5 years of experience working in the same institution, and (d) willingness to participate in the study. This sampling method was chosen to ensure that rich and in-depth narratives could be obtained regarding how the teaching approach is influenced by the implementation of PMP in the classroom within a specific educational context, particularly when the teachers have had no prior training in PMP. The details of the participants are shown in Table 1.

2.2 Procedures

Phase 1: Interview - Prior to implementing the PMP practice, teachers were interviewed to assess their initial teaching beliefs and models. It should be noted that the concept of PMP was introduced by the researcher during these interviews.

Phase 2: Teacher Training - The researcher, acting as a teacher trainer, conducted an 8-hour training session spread over two weeks. The training covered four main topics: Concept of method, Post-method Condition, Post-method pedagogy framework, and Practicing PMP. Additionally, the teachers were provided with six academic papers on PMP for further reading and discussion.

Table 1: Demographic Information of Interview Participants.

Participants (Pseudonym*)	Gender	Age	Years of study at university	Highest Qualification	Academic Position	Courses Taught
Emmy	F	40	8 years	Master in Linguistics	Lecturer	Comprehensive English
Jessie	F	47	15 years	Master in American Arts	Associate Professor	American Literature
Frank	M	43	10 years	Master in TEFL	Associate Professor	American Culture
Randy	F	42	10 years	PhD of Education	Lecturer	Translation

Source: *Author*

Table 2: Summary of Findings

Factors describing the changes of the teaching approach	Themes	Illustrative Quotes
Teacher identity	• student-centered • learning-centered • autonomy range • guide and explorer	• I believe the class should be student-centered, but I used to teach on my own assumption and understanding. • I need to consider some specific ways to improve the learning process of the students rather than delivering what I need to teach. • I think the major autonomy for a literature teacher is to read more, not limited by the textbook but in all areas. • post-method pedagogy proposes to train teachers and learners to be explorers. To realize the goal, students should be allowed more time to think and speak
Context sensitivity	• students' needs • emotion • social development • multiple resources	• I hope we can become friends and equally share our ideas on a work. • In class when we communicate smoothly, I feel I am free and have a lot of choices. When we can't communicate smoothly, I feel depressed that I can only transfer the information rather than elicit the understanding.
Teaching strategies	• clarify teaching aims • meaningful communication • logic in teaching • more learning opportunities	• Enlightened by maximizing learning opportunities, I think I should do something first to meet their learning needs. • In my class, I practiced this by adjusting the order of questions. I led them to enjoy the process of exploring, from description to comment, from objective to subjective.
Teaching reflection	• reflection on more aspects • regular reflection • make decisions after reflection	• When reviewing my teaching, I usually made the decision by myself. I think I wanted to make a student-centered classroom, but actually it's still a content-based or teacher-centered one. • Feedback from students: Although I didn't ask students' feedback directly, I can feel their relax from their willingness to express themselves and from their farewell after class. • I need to make decision after referring to my reflective journals.

Source: *Author*

Phase 3: Implementing PMP in Class - Each participant independently implemented PMP in their EFL class for five weeks. The researcher observed each participant's class twice, recorded teaching practices and student feedback using a checklist, and required the teachers to maintain reflective journals.

Phase 4: Survey Questionnaire - At the end of the five-week teaching period, participants completed a survey questionnaire with eight open-ended questions. The questionnaire sought their opinions on the feasibility of adopting PMP in their specific working context.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The researchers identified and analyzed themes and factors based on Kumaravadivelu's (2006) model of post-method parameters and pedagogic indicators, and presented the summary of the themes in the form of a table (see in Table 2). The teaching approach in this study is considered a complex, emergent, and self-organizing process, requiring a detailed and comprehensive description. The emergent themes were categorized according to Kumaravadivelu's model of the Post method framework, which encompasses four main phases: (a) teacher's identity, (b) context sensitivity, (c) teaching strategies, and (d) teacher's reflection. Teacher's self-cognition refers to the teacher's understanding of herself/himself and individual autonomy. Context sensitivity involves making sense of the teaching environment, students' feedback, and emotions. Teaching strategies pertain to the identification and implementation of strategies for student learning. Finally, teacher's reflection signifies the initiation of a new teaching approach cycle, incorporating insights from the other three phases.

3.1 Teacher identity: from passive knowledge deliverer to active participant in the teaching activity

Teacher identity is a fundamental aspect of teaching practice, and this study revealed significant shifts in the participants' perception of their roles as EFL teachers through the implementation of PMP. The process of adopting PMP led to a transformation from being passive knowledge deliverers to active participants in the teaching activity. The participants' teacher identity formation was influenced by various factors, including reflections on their classroom practices, discussions on native/non-native English speaker distinctions, emotional experiences related to identity, and their knowledge of post-method pedagogy and its constraints. Notably, the changes in their teaching approach were primarily observed in their recognition of their identity as EFL teachers. It is important to acknowledge that these changes in identity formation may be temporary and subject to the temporary stimuli of the training, thus potentially lacking long-term stability. As suggested by Fairley (2020), in language teacher identity development, the features of this development comprise transformative, agentive, advocacy, and a competencies-based approach.

3.2 Teacher's belief: from teacher-centered model to learning-centered model

The implementation of PMP within the community revealed a common realization among teachers that their student-centered teaching beliefs were not consistently reflected in their actions. This recognition prompted a collective effort to reassess the ways in which students could be placed at the center of the learning process. Teachers began to consider the specific needs and motivations of their students, leading to adjustments in teaching goals and content. Initially, teaching goals were primarily determined by the syllabus requirements and the teachers' own experiences. However, as the community embraced a more context-sensitive approach, they started to re-evaluate the authentic needs of their students and adapt the weighting of teaching goals accordingly. This shift in perspective allowed the community of teachers to foster a more student-centered and responsive learning environment, which in turn helped the teachers have a more positive emotional feedback and self-belief in teaching (Czajka & McConnell, 2019).

The first teacher shared her reviews of the practice:

"The teaching goals of literature course lie in two aspects, language and interpretation...to my experience, the literature course is an advanced course which cannot just cater for the students' needs of language skill learning,

but should put more importance on how to improve their critical thinking and values."

"In the past, I aimed to provide new perspectives for the students to view the world as the ultimate objective, so when I designed the questions, I always gave those of abstract or literal type that focuses more on readership and their spiritual experience. However, enlightened by maximizing learning opportunities, I think I should do something first to meet their learning needs. What do the students want to get from the class? I assume that they have three needs: the story content, language skills and spiritual improvement. Following the path, I need to review my questions."

From the above excerpts, we can notice that the teacher started to convert her belief in choosing the proper goals and designing the class. Rather than sticking to her own experience of reading who is obviously a much more advanced English learner than her students, she took the initiative to come down to the real class and get to understand the students more.

3.3 Teacher's autonomy: from a content driller to a believer to more possibilities

The teachers in this study exhibited limited knowledge and awareness of teacher autonomy. Their perception of autonomous action primarily involved extensive preparation of teaching content through reading relevant materials. However, there was a lack of consideration for the student's perspective, resulting in a rigid and fixed teaching approach. Despite being exposed to post-method pedagogy, the teachers were hesitant to make significant changes to their teaching models. This reluctance stemmed from concerns about potential discomfort for the students, highlighting a weakness in their language teaching knowledge and reflecting a lower level of autonomy in practice. It was found that the English researcher found teachers' autonomy increased as they become professionals, and this serves as the key for improving teacher job satisfaction and retention (Worth & Brande, 2020). In light of the findings, it is important to consistently enforce PMP and practice detailed teaching standards and appraisal:

"I think the major autonomy for a literature teacher is to read more, not limited by the textbook but in all areas. In class, the students restrain my autonomy. When we communicate smoothly, I feel I am free and have a lot of choices. When we cannot communicate smoothly, I feel depressed that I can only transfer the information rather than elicit the understanding."

"Although it aims for teacher growth, both teachers and students will grow if the teacher takes the method in his/

her class planning because teachers' more autonomy should be based on the teacher's broad reading and critical thinking and giving the teacher much autonomy may ensure the students' more learning or thinking opportunities."

There existed a disparity between the theoretical and practical levels of teacher autonomy. Bridging this gap requires not only professional knowledge of language education, but also a contextual understanding of students' proficiency levels and emotional needs. From the excerpts, it can be observed that while the teacher's progress in expanding her autonomy was limited, she did demonstrate a growing recognition of the importance of providing students with increased learning opportunities.

3.4 Teacher's role: from a lone worker to cooperator

The teachers in the study acknowledged their role as guides in the classroom and attempted to fulfill this role by adjusting the manner and order of their questioning to make it clearer for the students. However, the students did not perceive themselves as the center of the class. Instead, they felt like they were being taught and constantly trying to catch up. The teachers aimed to establish a friendly relationship with the students to facilitate smoother communication, but they struggled to improve the dynamics of their relationship and interaction.

PMP appears to emphasize the transformative intellectual role of the teacher, encouraging them to go beyond the limitations of traditional methods and explore new possibilities in the classroom together with the learners. It also recognizes that teachers can contribute to the development of teaching theories and approaches, not solely relying on existing theorists' methods. Enabling teachers to become their own theorizers is an important aspect of post-method pedagogy and teachers should be empowered o shape and reshape their own teaching and develop applicable teaching ideas (Al-Kadi, 2020). This perspective highlights the need for teachers to actively engage in ongoing reflection and exploration of teaching practices to enhance student-centered learning experiences.

"I think the teacher should be a guide in class and it is determined by the course or the subject that you can't dominate the class or teach everything. I don't think I am satisfied or discontented with the role, but only feel it's such a complex and challenging job that I need to read more to shoulder the job of being a guide, and I enjoy the role in this way."

"Post-method pedagogy proposes both the teacher and the learners should be explorer. This lets me think

about such a question: What is the condition to be an explorer? Independent thinking is essential. Besides mental independence, the ability to question is also necessary. Therefore, in my class, the questions offered by me should take the students' real situation into consideration."

From above data collected from the interview, during the implementation of post-method pedagogy, the teacher started to engage in reflection on the role of the explorer, as proposed by Kumaravadivelu, and considered the necessary conditions for fulfilling this role within her teaching context. The teacher recognized that facilitating independent thinking, which encompasses critical thinking and the ability to question, was crucial. However, the teacher still heavily relied on own experiences and assumptions, resulting in the development of vague and unsubstantiated theories when attempting to construct self-teaching framework. This highlights the need for a more systematic and evidence-based approach to theory-building in order to enhance the effectiveness and reliability of the teaching practices.

3.5 Context sensitivity: trying to understand the contextual effects from more perspectives

Context plays a pivotal role in language as discourse. Initially defined by Celce-Murcia and Olshtain (2016), discourse refers to spoken or written language that exhibits identifiable internal relationships in terms of form, meaning, and coherence, which are aligned with a communicative function, purpose, and specific audience or interlocutor. The emphasis on context has enhanced the connection between language structure and its immediate social context of use. Consequently, it has facilitated the exploration of classroom techniques such as turn-taking, turn sequencing, activity types, and elicitation techniques in language classrooms.

In essence, context sensitivity necessitates teachers to adjust language operations at the interface of cultural and ideological meanings, while also considering the underlying forms of language that contribute to the organization of such meanings (Carter & McCarthy, 2010). However, for many CEFL teachers, developing context awareness, particularly an understanding of the practical context of language teaching and learning, is not as intuitive as textual awareness.

"The students' different proficiencies including reading ability, cognitive level, and social experience. I cannot guide them to the point or elicit the expected answer from them."

"technology is a good invention, because it allows the students to get the information from the internet easily and makes the foundation knowledge become not only textbook thing."

"I have to pay attention to the social shifts and the political, cultural environment when preparing the class."

Through the implementation of PMP in the classroom, teachers have shown an increased awareness of the broader context within which their teaching takes place. This expanded perspective encompasses considerations such as students' diverse backgrounds, the influence of technology, and the socio-cultural environment. By taking these contextual factors into account, teachers like Emmy are better able to understand and respond to students' feedback and different reactions in class, leading to more effective communication. In the design of their lessons, teachers now consider the students' needs and existing knowledge, aiming to identify information gaps and focus areas for the class. However, there may still be limited adjustments in teaching techniques to accommodate the individual personalities and characteristics of the students.

3.6 Students' role: fixing the disconnectivity between teacher and the students

PMP assumes that language learning is an activity which requires the learners to autonomously direct, regulate, and take responsibility for themselves (Safari & Rashidi, 2015). In fact, the requirement can only be realized with teachers' promotion for their strategic investment. Thus, learner in post-method has a meaningful role in pedagogic decision making (Kumaravadivelu, 2006), so the teacher must pay attention to the students' role in class and activate them to develop their autonomy when they are given an active and meaningful role in classroom.

"I hope we can become friends and equally share our ideas on a work… but in fact, it's very difficult because the students' different proficiency including reading ability, cognitive level, and social experience. I cannot guide them to the point or elicit the expected answer from them."

"I think the biggest difficulty lies in students' poor or not enough reading expiration, or motivation for the literature. Because in literature class, they seldom get the learning of the language skills or strategies, they don't think the literature study is practical."

"In my ideal class, I can hear students talk, communicate and share all the time. But in reality, I do most of the talking and students just listening."

Students play a passive role in class, as they listen, watch, think less and speak little. When the teachers reflected on the students' class responses, it is believed that students' proficiency and motivation differed and resulted in an inactive class. When implementing the post-method of context-sensitive approach, the students'

participation still formed the major difficulty for their teaching since teaching autonomy was much influenced by the students, but teachers always ignored their teaching autonomy in altering the teaching methods and strategy investment can influence the students vice versa.

3.7 Teaching method: exploring more possibilities

The term "methods" as used in the field of second and foreign language (L2) teaching, does not refer to what teachers actually do in the classroom; rather, it refers to established methods conceptualized and constructed by experts in the field. However, post-method pedagogy tries to invoke the teacher to rethink and theorize their own teaching. The teachers are experienced teachers and have a strong belief in what they choose to do in class. With the teachers' traditional knowledge of teaching methods, their teaching practice mostly focuses on the trying out the effectiveness of certain teaching methods. Therefore, they altered the teaching methods according to the procedures prescribed by the textbook and examine the availability of the teaching methods in class, rather than combining or creating their own teaching methods in class.

"I have always been perplexed by the choices of methods. I used to use one method when I was a green hand, but gradually I noticed that one method can't meet different works…Now I have two major methods: one is to teach, the other one is to ask questions. I mean I give them questions and we discuss together."

"post-method pedagogy proposes to train teachers and learners to be explorers. In my class, I practiced this by adjusting the order of questions. I led them to enjoy the process of exploring, from description to comment, from objective to subjective. The principles behind this are to help students conquer the horrified mood for the course, and to prepare them well before independent thinking."

Through the PMP practice, the teachers started to follow the five processes (knowing, analyzing, recognizing, doing and seeing) approach to realize new possibilities in class. Before this, their teaching process included only two parts: building a viable professional, personal, and procedural knowledge base, and teaching. In the latter process, they urged themselves or get empowered to start to analyze learner needs, motivation, and autonomy, to recognize their own identities, beliefs, and values. By implementing these two procedures, she would theorize and know better about her teaching.

3.8 Teaching reflection: seeing from multiple perspectives

In this research, the diary is a resource of data collection as well as a prompt for the teacher to reflect

on her teaching. In the process, we can notice that the teachers not only did reflection-on-action which occur before and after a lesson, but also reflected during the class by monitoring the ongoing performance and students' feedback.

"When reviewing my teaching, I usually made the decision by myself. I think I wanted to make a student-centered classroom, but actually it's still a content-based or teacher-centered one."

"The principle of maximizing learning opportunities gives me a chance to reflect my class. In the past, I mainly focused on the chances to stimulate the students' thinking. And now, the principle lets me realize that I ignore the students' participation before. In fact, not all students' needs are the same in the literature class. Maybe some guys just want to learn what happen in the story, others maybe want to learn the language, and maybe someone attends the discussion for the reason I take for granted before the class---to get a different understanding about the world or to think something we never thought worth thinking. Maybe I need rethink the principle of designing the questions before the class."

"Feedback from students: Although I didn't ask students' feedback directly, I can feel their relax from their willingness to express themselves and from their farewell. In the classes before, the number of students to give their voices is less than that in this class. Also, they usually left the class in silence before, but this time, almost every student by me said goodbye with smile and delight."

The macro-strategy of "maximizing the learning opportunity" stimulated them to reflect their teaching before class as they planned for a lesson. Then, they reviewed the questions from the perspective of students and evaluated the effectiveness of the questions. When giving classes, the teachers started to notice the students' emotional feedback, locate unexpected problems on the spot and then adjusting teaching instantaneously. By reflection, their teaching autonomy in teaching has been improved and less restrained by the students.

3.9 Feasibility of the PMP

In this study, the teacher, as an independent implementer of PMP, practiced the PMP for five weeks in class after two-week training. Under limited access to PMP, incomplete understanding of PMP, and the first time of trial of PMP in class, the teacher got a positive impression on PMP as a whole. Three key factors emerged as being helpful in providing teaching guidance, allowing more freedom for the teachers to practice, and empowering the teacher to theorize their own teaching.

"It benefits me for that it offers me the basic guideline to make my teaching aims and to organize the class discussion."

"It is worth to be spread because what the teachers need is the general guideline rather than the concrete teaching methods. Only after having the general idea in the minds, can the teachers think about the certain teaching methods used."

Meanwhile, according to the teachers' response to the questionnaire survey, there are three major barriers to PMP, namely ideological barrier, pedagogical barrier, and experiential barrier. As Kumaravadivelu (2003) puts it, the base of PMP is the ideology of against the marginalization to valuing the colonial, center, theories, and methods through visible and accessible documentation or publication in favor of dominant side. The teachers, educated with the traditional sequence and theory-based coursework, cannot easily accept and convert to the PMP model that allocates the teachers to associate between PMP and other models, say CLT and eclectic method. In addition, teachers of the institution under investigation are less likely to have the training opportunity to get the newly developed overseas teaching pedagogy which sensitizes the CEFL teachers to local sociocultural contexts. Lastly, in the teachers' opinion, PMP depends much on the CEFL teacher's experience in multiple sides, professional knowledge, communicative teaching techniques, and the readiness and agency of unexpected changes.

"I think it can be realized on the condition that the teacher her/him self works hard enough. I personally think the realization of post-method requires the teacher's wide knowledge, which covers both professional knowledge and social knowledge."

"To build a good communication with your students, to widen your knowledge and to be ready to appreciate any unexpected opinion in the class."

As most PMP scholars believe, the post-method pedagogy has liberated the language teachers and learners from authorized knowledge systems and disseminated them into thoughtful consideration of unique local exigencies by cooperatively discovering their own styles and strategies (Chen, 2014; Golzar, 2020; Kandel, 2019). According to the results of this present study, post-method pedagogy with its macro-strategic framework and other frameworks can help to improve the CEFL teacher's teaching approach or readiness for the unexpected changes, including shaping the CEFL teacher's identity, promoting their context-sensitivity, reconsidering teaching strategies according to the principles, and forming regular reflection.

All aforementioned factors of teaching approach development is entrusted as a bottom-up way to summarize the emerging themes from the teachers' actual practice, which lead us to transform the roles of teachers from sheer language trainer to the educator or guide role for or within the life by enhancing the quality of life in the classrooms, updating tolerance and belief in the other beliefs and realities, collaborating but not competing among all the managers of language education, seizing the opportunities emerging in the negotiated interaction in class, embracing a sense of critical thinking regarding everything both inside and outside language education venue to reach the multiple realities.

4. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this research highlights the transformative process experienced by CEFL teachers when implementing the PMP framework. The findings illustrate a reconstruction of teaching that involves a heightened focus on students' language needs, reevaluation of teaching identities, contextual awareness from multiple perspectives, regular reflection on classroom practices, and stronger connections with students to inform decision-making. However, it is important to note that participants' past experiences and teaching beliefs still played a significant role in shaping their decisions throughout the process, so experienced teachers should make a more effective adoption of PMP than the novice teachers. In addition, a positive outcome of this implementation is the increased awareness and consolidation of the teacher-student relationship in various forms.

Furthermore, this study revealed that applying PMP in the CEFL context is a complex undertaking. The challenge lies in being sensitive to the unique characteristics of teachers, learners, goals, institutional contexts, and sociocultural environments. Promoting learner autonomy and teacher autonomy in practice can be difficult, as there exists a gap between autonomous mindset and autonomous practice. Bridging this gap requires addressing factors such as teachers' professional knowledge of language education and facilitating effective and meaningful interactions within the context. As emphasized by Maley (2019) and Prabhu (2019) the importance of teacher autonomy on decisions as to which successful strategies to use in the classroom depends also on the specific contexts and on teachers' own "sense of plausibility" based on their own experience (Littlewood & Wang, 2022). Considering the preceding factors mentioned, future research needs to examine in-depth the relationship between different teacher communities and the functions and limitations of post-method pedagogy.

4.1 Recommendations for institutions

The EFL institutions and teacher training programs should include the PMP framework into the curriculum and provide clear guidance regarding the standards for teachers' professional development, emphasizing the importance of involving teachers in the design of content, processes, and objectives more actively. In implementing the PMP, the EFL teachers should undergo their teaching plan in a group-or-couple-based way that can form the triple-vision observation construct, which can not only offer more trustful feedback of the class, but also serve as a tempt for the teachers' professional development. The construct will play a crucial role in assisting teachers in identifying their primary developmental needs, process, and assessment. The successful implementation of PMP largely relies on how teachers and their partners perceive the relevance of the professional development they undertake to their actual teaching practice.

4.2 Opportunities for future research

This research presents fresh evidence on EFL teachers' PMP practice, providing evidence on the effectiveness and drawbacks of adopting PMP in the tertiary EFL classrooms in China. However, there are certain inquiries that remain unanswered due to limitations in the datasets employed. Regarding the influence of PMP on the teachers' teaching approach, the findings demonstrate the positive effects on certain aspects, such as teacher identity, context-sensitivity, teaching strategies and reflections, as well as potentially confirming some previous research on the disconnect between the theory and practical possibility. To fully grasp the intricacies of these findings, future research should delve into the detailed implementation of PMP in a larger range, and collecting the data from multiple parties, including the students and the observers, to make a more holistic and better implementation of PMP.

Declaration of Conflicting Interests

The author declared no potential conflicts of interest with respect to the research, authorship and/or publication of this article. This article is the sole work of the author and has not been presented or published elsewhere.

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Appendix 1:

Interview questions
Semi-structured interview for the teacher:

1. Could you tell something about your experience in designing your EFL course?
2. What did you put on the top place to consider when you design the class?
3. What is your role in class?
4. How do you describe the teacher's relation with the textbook, with the syllabus, with the students?
5. Could you tell me your understanding of teacher's autonomy?
6. What is your opinion on different EFL teaching methods?
7. Do you think one fixed method is suitable to one particular course or otherwise? why?
8. Do you review or reflect on your own teaching?
9. If yes, please tell me how you do it. If no, why not?
10. Can you describe the ideal EFL teaching method in your mind? Could you note the discrepancies between your teaching reality and the ideal one?

Appendix 2:

1. Survey on your attitude towards using postmethod in your class (please write as much as you can under each item)
2. Could you describe your learning and practicing experience on postmethod pedagogy?
3. What did you do to practice the postmethod pedagogy in your class?
4. Does postmethod pedagogy benefit your teaching? Why or why not?
5. Do you think postmethod pedagogy can have any room in the EFL context you are in? If your answer is yes or no, please explain more.
6. What types of problems, constraints, or obstacles did you meet on the way of its realization in our context?
7. Can the postmethod be realized in the context of China? Please elaborate the basic conditions.
8. Would you yourself as a teacher prefer this pedagogy to apply in your classroom? Why or why not?
9. What are your suggestions, pedagogical hints, or advice to those who want to apply this pedagogy?

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