THE IMPORTANCE OF THE POSTMETHOD PEDAGOGY IN AN EFL SETTING

LIKE COLOMBIA


By


Diego Fernando Paredes Acosta


Submitted to the School of Human Sciences in partial

Fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of B.A in English and Spanish

Linguistics and Language Department

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**Resumen**

Como el propósito de la presente investigación es justificar porque la pos metodología debería ser considerada como la tendencia metodológica más adecuada para un escenario de inglés como lengua extranjera en Colombia, este trabajo comienza brindando una base teórica, definiendo términos como: método, enfoque, técnica, y metodología. Después de explicar estos conceptos, esta investigación de recopilación abarca todo lo relacionado al pos método; su definición, principios, roles de los profesores y de los estudiantes. Además, se ofrece un análisis acerca de las posibles potencialidades y limitaciones encontradas para implementar la pedagogía del pos método en escenarios de inglés como lengua extranjera. Luego, para que esta investigación pueda ser coherente, se describe algunas adversidades que los profesores de inglés tienen que afrontar para dirigir sus clases en Colombia. Finalmente, se ofrece algunas conclusiones y recomendaciones prácticas para que sean tenidas en cuenta a la hora de incorporar las ideas del pos método en nuestras escuelas.

*Palabras clave:* método, enfoque, metodología, pos método, escenario de inglés como lengua extranjera.

**Abstract**

As the aim of the present research paper is to justify why to demonstrate that the post-method pedagogy must be considered as one of the most adequate current methodological trend for Colombian English teachers, this paper starts providing a theoretical background, defining terms such as: method, approach, technique, and methodology. After explaining these concepts, this compilation paper encompasses all about postmethod; its definition, principles, teachers' and learners' role. Besides, it is offered an analysis about the possible potentialities and limitations found to implement the postmethod pedagogy in EFL settings. Then, for this compilation paper can be consistent, it is described some constraints English teachers have to deal with to conduct their lessons in Colombia. Finally, it is given some conclusions and practical recommendations to be taken into consideration for incorporating the postmethod ideas in our schools.

*Key words:* method, approach, methodology, postmethod, EFL setting.

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**The Importance of the Postmethod Pedagogy in an EFL Setting like Colombia.**

Throughout history, many researchers, teachers, psychologists and linguists such as: Diller (1978), Fries (1945), Gattegno (1963), Lozanov (1970s), Curran (1970s), and Asher, (1969), among others, have been immersed in an endless, and impossible search for a unique and perfect method in all of the possible contexts where teaching and learning English as a foreign language may take place. However, this quest has obviously not been fruitful and that is the reason why the post-method pedagogy has emerged as a great paradigm shift in foreign language learning (FLL) in the last two decades. The lack of adequacy when trying to implement one perfect method regardless of context is clearly seen in our country, even more so with the advent of foreign language standards in 2006. Since the Colombian government has been implementing imported methodological trends and standards from other contexts (namely Europe with the Common European Framework of Reference), English teachers in this context have had to face an important number of constraints and limitations in their teaching environments which make it virtually impossible to fully implement these foreign ideas. Regarding these decontextualized methods Brown (2000) declares "virtually all language teaching methods make the oversimplified assumption that what language teachers 'do' in the classroom can be conventionalized into a set of procedures that fits all contexts" (P. 170).

Teachers know that an implementation of methods in their purest form is not feasible and they are aware of the need to adapt, contextualize and add their own practices. That is, bring the post-method into their classes. As it was mentioned above, to design new methods or adopt any older ones to be applied rigidly, it is not a wise decision and much

less in the Colombian context where teachers in charge of classes in elementary schools are sometimes not foreign language teachers. The aim of this paper is then, to demonstrate that the postmethod pedagogy must be considered as one of the most adequate current methodological trend for Colombian English teachers, and for policymakers who are partly responsible for the failure or success of English instruction.

The learning and teaching conditions in our educational setting are variable and complex, some of them are related to the top-down approach the government has regarding decision-making, and policies. Other problems relate to lack of resources, large groups, few hours a week for learning, and -it has to be included- the demotivation that most learners as well teachers have concerning learning this foreign language since they do not have an immediate use for it in their context (Sanchez & Obando, 2008). To overcome these constrains, policymakers and in special teachers should adopt the Postmethodology because it allows teachers to be more competent putting into practice and assessing theories designed by experts and then, being provided with freedom enough to construct their own theory of practice. In other words, by reading and analyzing what the present paper develops, EFL teachers are going to be provided with a theoretical and practical support to cope with the teaching adversities just mentioned.

Furthermore, as it has been previously said, this compilation paper is not only addressed to teachers, but the definitions, the principles and the practical ideas included in it invite administrators or any kind of readers involved in the field of education consider the information contained along it to a certain extent because postmethod pedagogy goes beyond teaching English as a foreign language, since it equips educators of any nature to work more efficiently in any setting, even in a complex setting like ours (Kumaravadivelu,

2003) where education in rural areas is difficult, materials are not readily available for

teachers and violence affects society.

A further reason to read this research paper is because this current methodological

trend has not yet to be discussed. In fact, this is the first paper that provides a theoretical

and practical background regarding this topic at the Linguistics and Languages Department

so far. For its innovative nature, this topic offers a great change of mentality in language

learning and teaching. Thereby, through the reading of this paper, some traditional

paradigms will be broken and some concepts will be reformed, assigning new roles to

policymakers, theorists, methods, and of course to teachers and learners. In this manner, it

will contribute to improve the teaching and learning process of English as a foreign

language in Colombia.

The fact that the Postmethod Pedagogy is a current methodological trend, does not

mean that the historical background of TESOL has to be put aside. On the contrary, it is

necessary to start delving into historical development of language teaching and learning to

comprehend depth such a trend. Let us begin by discussing the concepts of method and

methodology.

**Defining method and methodology**

With the purpose of providing a clear explanation of the postmethod, it is crucial to

begin clarifying the concepts of method and methodology. There is a considerable level of

misunderstanding or lack of awareness in the characterization of these terms in language

teaching so they are often used interchangeably (Kumaravadivelu, 2006).

Regarding this confusion between method and methodology Kumaravadivelu asserts:

> Many of us in the language teaching profession use the term, method, so much and so often that we seldom recognize its problematic nature. For instance, we are hardly aware of the fact that we use the same term, method, to refer to two different elements of language teaching: method as proposed by theorists, and method as proposed by teachers. What the teachers do in the classroom is different from what is advocated by theorists (2006, p. 83-84).

To distinguish between methodology and method, Brown (2007) suggests that: "Methods are typically top down impositions of experts' views of teaching" Whereas, methodology is the particular way of teaching that every teacher puts into practice. Now, to continue providing a historical overview to understand better the post-method era. The following section will help to differentiate some concepts such as: approach, method and techniques. Subsequently, it will be stated why methods were considered relevant for language teachers to conduct their classes.

Another distinction, an old one, but one that withstood time, is that stated by Anthony. This one comprises a hierarchical scale among approach, method and technique. According to Anthony (1963) an approach is the broadest element of such a scale, it is axiomatic. Therefore, despite the fact that approach is a set of mere assumptions connected to the nature of language, learning, and teaching, there is no doubt of its existence and usefulness for the theory that supports language teaching. To conceptualize the second term; method, it is important to paraphrase Anthony's definition. He claims that every

method is related or connected to a determined approach. Methods are also prescriptive and consequently, contain specifications for teachers' and learners' role, content, and of course, teaching procedures with their corresponding techniques.

The final term defined by Anthony is that of technique. Techniques, these are the activities, the practical part to work on what is taught in the classroom. Techniques are the smallest part in the scale mentioned above. Every technique is derived from a particular method and, consequently, connected to an approach. It is important to mention, however, that one technique can be connected to more than one method or approach. For example, jigsaw activities are tasks that can be found in content-based instruction, communicative language teaching and task-based instruction.

Before moving on the next section, it has to be said that even though the concept of method entails some limitations in relation to the context where it is applied, methods are considered as a really important teaching framework for teachers and particularly for novice ones, who probably do not know how to conduct a class and need a set of initial steps and roles for their professional practice. For teachers, methods are a kind of path to be followed, organized sequentially, assigning roles for them and their learners. (Richards and Rodgers, 2014).

As the concept of method has been briefly explained, now it is relevant to define EFL to understand the demise of methods and concurrently the reasons why the post-method era emerged.

**Definition of EFL**

English is one of the most spoken languages worldwide, especially for international communication, face to face or online conversations, tourism and so forth. According to the setting where it is taught or the conditions under which it is learned, there are some differences: EFL (English as a Foreign Language) and ESL (English as a Second Language) are familiar terms for teachers, but the two terms might be confusing for many people. The first one is described as a situation where English is not the first language and learners attend to formal lessons of it in a classroom, this concept also refers to the "learned system"(learning), which implies a conscious process from the student. In this case, English is not spoken outside the classroom. On the other hand, the latter involves the "acquired system" (acquisition), in this case learners live in the place where English is spoken as L1 like the United States, Britain, Australia Canada, and among others. Here the learners acquire the language through a subconscious process because they are seen forced to pick the language up to survive. (Harmer, 2007, Krashen, 1987). Since many of the proponents of methods worked in ESL settings, it may be suggested that one inadequacy of methods is the limited scope they have for EFL settings and contexts like Colombia. Attempting to implement every step outlined in the procedure of methods in a school here may be frustrating because teaching and learning conditions vary. There are other limitations methods display. These are sketched next.

**Reasons for the emergence of the Postmethod pedagogy**

For over a century, many experts and others involved in the field of teaching, such as teachers, linguists, SLA professor and researchers have attempted to develop a single method to teach a foreign language efficiently. However, they have not succeeded in accomplishing this goal so a universal method cannot work in every context. In that regard

Pennycook (1989) mentions "We still commonly refer to methods in terms of Anthony's earlier understanding. For most researchers and practicing teachers, a method is a set of theoretically unified classroom techniques thought to be generalizable across a wide variety of contexts and audiences". It is clear that a method which appeared in certain conditions in a determined context, cannot be applied in another one, since the teaching conditions are not likely to be similar. Additionally, other factors such as the teachers' knowledge of the L2, class size, the available materials, the curriculum the school has, etc., affect the application of the method.

Following the same idea and to provide a further argument, Brown remarks:

> In the century spanning the mid-1880s to the mid-1980s, the language teaching profession was involved in what many pedagogical experts would call a search. That search was for a single, ideal method, generalizable across widely varying audiences that would successfully teach students a foreign language in the classroom. Historical accounts of the profession tend, therefore, to describe a succession of methods, each of which is more or less discarded in due course as a new method takes its place. (2002, p. 9)

Another reason to justify why the postmethodology arose is that methods tend to be prescriptive, they are designed to be strictly followed according to the principles of their proponent. Furthermore, most of them are not grounded in real learning-teaching conditions so they are based on a set of assumptions and belief with regard to the nature of language and learning. (Nunan, 2003, p.5). What is more, owe to the fact that methods are prescription for practice, many language teachers are not well-trained enough to follow

methods' steps. To emphasize the ideas previously presented, it is worth bearing in mind this Richards' & Rodgers' (2001) quote:

> Some approaches and methods are unlikely to be widely adopted because they are difficult to understand and use, lack clear practical application, require special training, are not readily compatible with local traditions and practices, and necessitate major changes in teacher's practices and beliefs. (p. 347).

After having suggested some reasons why the methods we know may not be suitable for an EFL setting, the Colombian educational context is described.

**Colombia as an EFL setting.**

In spite of the fact that a number of teachers in Colombia do not display an outstanding proficiency in English, they have managed to teach English facing unfavorable conditions that have already been mentioned such as large classes, lack of materials, lack of time for teaching, being forced to teach other subjects besides English and so on. It is also necessary to say that the Ministry of Education of Colombia has made the situation for foreign language teachers even worse because of the top-down approach regarding decision-making. An example is the importation of the Common European Framework (CEF), whose origins are grounded according to the conditions from Europe in contrast to the ones present in Colombia. In other words, in an educational context like ours teachers and learners have to stand hard policies imposed by the government without taking into consideration their opinions, goals and needs. (Sanchez & Obando, 2008).

One teaching constraint that English teachers have to deal with in Colombia is the lack resources at schools, especially in public ones. Such a scarcity of resources becomes

more evident thanks to the large discrepancy between what CEF proposes and the reality.

That is to say, CEF tends to communicative approaches such as: content-based,

communicative language teaching, competency-based language teaching, and task-based

instruction be implemented. But, these ones require a variety of technological resources to

be applied appropriately (Internet, multimedia, text-messaging, the reading of multimodal

texts, chat and so forth. Moreover, the approaches mentioned above demand teachers to

conduct the class only in English but here the CEF pitifully clash with reality since most of

teachers tend to speak Spanish in the classroom. (Sanchez & Obando, 2008).

Large groups is probably the toughest barrier teachers have to struggle with. English

teachers at schools, public ones in particular, look at how their classes are affected due to

the big amount of students per group, every one of them with a different socio-cultural and

political background. To illustrate this problematic situation, it is relevant to quote Locastro

(2001), cited by Sanchez & Obando (2008). She describes how lessons are hindered as a

result of an inadequate class size:

> …Among the pedagogical difficulties we find the carrying out of speaking, reading,
>
> and writing tasks, the provision of feedback and monitoring of work, the promotion
>
> of individual work, setting up of communicative tasks and avoidance of demanding
>
> activities; regarding classroom management she mentions that correction of students
>
> is virtually impossible, and group work are difficult to carry out, and there is a high
>
> noise level when classes are truly participative… (p. 190)

Another difficult situation is the number of teaching hours per week and students'

previous knowledge, these are some hard obstacles English teachers in Colombia have to

overcome. In Colombia's schools, English is not regarded as an important subject so

learners generally have a maximum of three hours per week of English lessons (Sanchez & Obando). What makes the matter more difficult is that English sometimes is taught on Fridays or during the last hour of the school day. This leads learners to be unable to progress much since, when they are not tired, they have forgotten what was studied in the previous class. Consequently, the teacher wastes time explaining the same aspects more than once. What can be concluded from this is that traditional methods fail to cope with all these particularities found in Colombia.

The lack of motivation from teachers and learners is a variable that must not be taken for granted. According to Brown (2007) motivation is a key factor to fail or succeed in any task, if an EFL student has intrinsic motivation, s/he is more likely to learn the L2 than another who has extrinsic one. Many students perceive English lessons as tedious and complex because they do not attend to classes for learning rather, for obeying their parents' orders (p.160). On the other side of the coin, some teachers also tend to be demotivated. They do not want to be up to date but, in this changing and globalized world, that is a must nowadays.

Following the same idea, the lack of motivation that our foreign language educators have to keep up to date, it is reflected on the use of traditional methods, which unfortunately continue being the most used by them. In this regard and in connection to the post-method era, Sanchez & Obando (2008) asserts "The need for constant updating is clear for teachers. With the advent of post-method trends teachers also need to reinvent themselves inside the classroom" (p. 187). The post-method seems to be one option teachers could have to reinvent their professional practice where instead of trying to apply a method or parts of it, teachers follow principles that are flexible and adaptable.

Finally, it can be suggested that the ministry of education made a mistake using the CEF standards as a basis for Colombian standards because they are not sensitive to our context in terms of culture, socio-economic and political conditions, e.g. one thing is living in the country and another is living in the city, farmers are not likely to learn a foreign language since they do not need it. Respecting this, it is pertinent to regard Gonzales' point of view.

> Although this analysis has focused on the use of the CEF, the adoption of any foreign language framework for teaching and learning English is an inadequate approach to promote bilingualism in Colombia. There is no one single model that fits our reality regarding the diversity of settings, achievement of standards, resources, teacher preparation, student motivation, and curricula. The construction of a Colombian framework for foreign language teaching and learning would have been the most relevant support in developing the policy (2007, p. 312).

After explaining some key concepts involved in language teaching history, describing the Colombian educational context that teachers have to deal with and how the isolated and decontextualized application of a method may not be the answer, it is pertinent to explain what the post- pedagogy consists of, its main advocates, and the functions learners and teachers have to perform to be "postmethoders" and to make informed decisions about teaching.

**Definition of Postmethod**

After the dissatisfaction with respect to methods, it was evident that the endless seek for a single and universal method was in vain. Thus, a change of paradigm in language teaching was needed. In this case it is valuable what Brown says:

By the early 1990s it was readily apparent that we didn't need a new method. We needed, instead, to get on with the business of unifying our approach to language teaching and designing effective tasks and techniques that were informed by that approach (2007, p.40).

As a result the postmethodology appeared, it is not a method, nor an approach, but rather a teaching philosophy, a principled approach. In other words, it is a particular way of teaching that every teacher develops according to his own experience, learners' needs and wants, educational policies, and the available resources.

Methods are not entirely obsolete, as it was said before methods are a framework and a beginning for novice teachers, so are approaches but, the way of applying them is different in the post-method era. In this regard, teachers do not have to adapt to methods rather, these have to be adapted to the educational, socio-cultural, political, and economic context where the foreign language is being taught. To sum up, teachers draw on methods and approaches that they like most in order to create and apply their own teaching theory.

To close with a flourish this section, it is relevant to recall Kumaravadivelu's quotation:

In the search for an alternative organizing principle, the pedagogic parameters of particularity, practicality, and possibility deserve serious consideration. I believe that these parameters have the potential to offer the necessary conceptualization and

contextualization based on the educational, cultural, social, and political imperatives

of language learning, teaching, and teacher education. In addition, they offer a

pattern that connects the roles of learners, teachers, and teacher educators,

promising a relationship that is symbiotic and a result that is synergistic. The choice

of the pedagogic parameters as an organizing principle opens up unlimited

opportunities for the emergence of postmethod pedagogies that can truly serve the

interests of those they are supposed to serve. (2001, p. 557)

As it was mentioned above, the three parameters comprise a fundamental basis for

teachers can implement the post-methodology. For this reason, the corresponding

explanation of each of them and the concept of pedagogy according to Kumaravadivelu,

who is probably the principal advocate for this teaching philosophy, are as follows.

**Postmethod Pedagogy**

When talking about Postmethod era, Kumaravadivelu and his contributions to the

postmethod paradigm need to be mentioned. He is probably one of the most important

advocates of the post-method methodology. For that reason, it is vital to explain his own

concept on pedagogy before going into detail about the highlighted terms.

Kumaravadivelu defines pedagogy as follows:

I use the term pedagogy in a broad sense to include not only issues pertaining to

classroom strategies, instructional materials, and evaluation measures, but also a

wide range of historical, political, and sociocultural experiences that directly or

indirectly influence L2 education (2001, p. 538).

As it can be seen when referring to pedagogy, this term alludes to a kind of holistic approach liberated from any approach or method in particular. In addition, such a holistic approach sees the local context where teaching takes place as a whole. According to Kumaravadivelu (2001) pedagogy is a scheme that consists of three interacting pedagogic parameters: *particularity, practicality and possibility*. Explaining how these three terms are conceived by Kumaravadivelu can help us understand how teaching and learning can change going beyond methods. These definitions are coming next.

**Particularity**

Particularity means that pedagogy has to be context-sensitive to the local linguistic, sociocultural, and political features of the place where teaching takes place. In other words, pedagogy has to be contextualized to the place where English is being taught, bearing in mind learners' goals, teachers' belief and experiences, and also the institutional context. There is no space for an established method with a generic set of theoretical principles and a generic set of classroom practices. For example, if in Germany, English teachers apply task-based instruction and it succeeds there, it does not mean that it is going to work in Colombia. Here our context is totally different from the German one, one of the differences is related to resources so in order to apply task-based, a great deal of them should be used, which is an element our country lacks.

As pedagogic particularity does not only involve a goal, but also a process, post-method educators, policymakers and program administrators must be committed to work together perceiving the educational context as a whole trough a holistic approach. Observation, reaction and action must be developed as a habit into an ongoing cycle (Kumaravadivelu, 2006). In this sense Tickoo (1996), cited by Kumaravadivelu (2001),

illustrates how important particularity is: "From India, Tickoo points out that even locally

initiated pedagogic innovations have failed because they merely tinkered with the

methodological framework initiated from abroad, without fully taking into account local

linguistic, sociocultural, and political particularities". (536)

**Practicality**

To start explaining pedagogy of practicality, it has to be clarified that particularity is

embedded in it so they are closely linked.  Practicality refers to the existent dichotomy

between theory and practice. That is to say, one thing is what experts in the field of

education state, and another very different thing is what teachers do in reality. Experts

create their theories based on assumptions and theoretical backgrounds (expert-generated

professional theories), and these ones are often valued. Whereas, teachers construct their

own theories based on putting into practice and assessing experts theories, selecting what

works and what does not (teacher generated personal theories), these other ones are often

ignored. As a result, another dichotomy emerges, this one involves theorists' theory and

teachers 'theory, which in certain way has made that reflected teaching and action research

gain significance (Kumaravadivelu 2001). At this point, it is practical to consider Elliot's

(1991) point of view regarding action research's aim, "the fundamental aim of action

research is to improve practice rather than to produce knowledge" (p. 49).

Besides, owing to the fact that teachers are underestimated, seen as mere

implementers of professional theories, they do no tend to assume a role as reflective

individuals. In addition, for teachers to construct a context sensitive pedagogic knowledge,

it is not sufficient for them to apply theories conceived by others because they need to be

supported to develop the knowledge, skills and autonomy necessary to carry it out.

To solve any possible doubt with regard to the concept of practicality, it is appropriate to consider what Kumaravadivelu claims: "A pedagogy of practicality, as I visualize it, seeks to overcome some of the deficiencies inherent in the theory-versus-practice, theorists' theory-versus- teachers'-theory dichotomies by encouraging and enabling teachers themselves to theorize from their practice and practice what they theorize" (Kumaravadivelu, 1999 cited by Kumaravadivelu, 2001).

**Possibility**

Regarding the pedagogy of possibility, this theory seeks to go beyond teaching a language. That is to say that language teaching is not just about teaching grammar, vocabulary, or pronunciation, but is also intended to encourage students to raise their sociopolitical consciousness and reflect on their living conditions. In addition, it is also intended that students do not lose their identity as can happen in some cases. The idea is to use the foreign language as a medium to grow and form national or regional identity in EFL learners. In that sense, elicit a social transformation. Owing to the fact that possibility is as important as the other two parameters, it is necessary to consider Paulo Freire's (1993) point of view on pedagogy:

> Education either functions as an instrument which is used to facilitate integration of the younger generation into the logic of the present system and bring about conformity or it becomes the practice of freedom, the means by which men and women deal critically and creatively with reality and discover how to participate in the transformation of their world. (p. 34)

These principles are flexible, adaptable, consider teachers and learners and their

context, involve being critical and make teachers important agents of teaching. Now, being

coherent with it was already said, it is sensible to describe the roles teachers and learners

have to perform to exploit the benefits offered by the implementation the postmethod

pedagogy.

**Postmethod teachers**

Bearing in mind all that has been written along this paper, it seems worth asking the

following question: What is the teachers' role into the post-method pedagogy? In order to

make teachers' function and position clear, first of all it is relevant to start from a short

overview of the roles teachers have assumed in the history of language teaching.

At the beginning of language learning and teaching theory, teachers were

considered as the most important part in the classroom, this view was derived from

traditional education; it was reflected in methods like Grammar Translation Method in

which the teachers are a kind of translators and the only ones knowledge's owners,

especially drawing on literary texts (Prator and Celce-Murcia, 1979). In the Direct method

teachers are also the last authority but, here they use the target language as a means by

demonstrating instead of explaining or translating. By the way authority, in

Dessugestopedia teachers have to be respected by their learners even though, this method

attempts to reduce learning barriers so language educator must try hard to create the right

environment for their pupils to learn. Concerning the Audio-Lingual Method, this is not an

exception as for traditional methods, so here teachers are orchestra leaders, they are firmly

in command to make their learners to repeat every single word in the same way they do it.

Afterwards, the role of teachers started being more flexible, as an example is the Silent

Way, through this method learning or acquiring the knowledge was no longer in charge of teachers only since learners were already taken as responsible for their own learning. In the above methods mentioned, of course teachers are instructors but in Community Language Learning, they also need to perform as counselors for learners to feel confident enough to practice the L2. (Larsen-Freeman, 2000)

The teachers role went on changing, with regard to Total Physical Response, teachers are still a sort of directors but, here they are more focused on controlling learners' behavior and provide learners joy in the classes, especially for the little ones. (Rodgers & Richards, 2001).

Unfortunately, the methods mentioned above failed to make learners to use the L2 efficiently outside the classroom. Learners were unable to transfer and apply the knowledge learned from lessons to real life speaking situations. As a result of this flaw, communicative approaches arose. One important element is that in communicative approaches teachers are multidimensional, they have many roles and responsibilities. In Communicative Language teaching, teachers would continue being as advisors and communicators as well. Regarding a teachers' position and function referring to Content Based Instruction (CBI), Task Based Instruction and Participatory Approach, educators are communicators, they are still important in the classroom but they are no longer the ones who force learners to accomplish their rules. Teachers become a ''scaffold'' for their learners to use the language as a vehicle to learn not only English but also knowledge about any kind of subject matter. (Larsen-Freeman, 2000; Rodgers & Richards, 2001).

In short, teachers have performed a great variety of roles but most of them are bound to procedures and principles that every single method determines. Now it is

reasonable to address the attention to postmethod teachers. The triple pedagogic parameters above explained are a basis to guide the teachers towards being post-methodologists.

Into the postmethod philosophy, autonomy is probably the principal characteristic. Teachers have to construct and then, implement their own theory of practice. Although, it has to be said that the challenge of being autonomous is not an easy one because teachers need to have a good level of competent and confidence, to make their own decisions relying on themselves. Teachers do not have to be knowledgeable, in this regard, Kumaravadivelu (2006) establishes that "Post method Pedagogy recognizes the teachers' prior knowledge as well as their potential to know not only how to teach but also know how to act autonomously within the academic and administrative constrains imposed by institutions and textbooks". (p. 178).

In addition, this post-method teacher characteristic deals with the practicality and possibility. The first one relates to autonomy because here the teachers cannot perform the role of passive technician to avoid being attached to any method in particular, but rather, it is a must for them to develop a reflective approach. Such an approach comprises two types of reflection that every teacher should put into practice. In order to delve into this matter, it is sensible to consider Kumaravadivelu's (2003) definition. He defines that:

"… reflection on action can occur before and after a lesson, as teachers plan for a lesson and then evaluate the effectiveness of their teaching act afterward. Reflection in action on the other hand, occurs during the teaching act when the teachers monitor their ongoing performance, attempting to locate unexpected problems on the spot and then adjusting their teaching instantaneously" (p. 10).

The autonomous teachers have also to be sensitive to the educational context where language teaching may take place. That is to say, teachers build their own methodology according to the particularities encountered in the educational setting such as: age, beliefs, student's prior knowledge, available resources and imposed policies.

Another equally important characteristic of postmethod teachers is the one connected to the parameter of possibility, is being transformative intellectuals. Nowadays language teachers must not just consider by themselves as mere providers of knowledge. They need to assume their role as holistic educators, whose compromise goes beyond teaching the language. Freire (1985) affirms that education is an act that is tied to politics so every educational practice implies teaching values, projects, and utopias to legitimize, question, and transform the existing relations of power in a determined society. Therefore, the role of the language teacher is also to enable students to think critically about their living conditions.

The last characteristic that a teacher should develop, but not less important is being a "teacher research". This one is a fundamental requirement for language teachers to be efficient concerning particularity, practicality, and possibility. To sum up, the definition of teacher research is essential to consider Mohr's (1999) concept. "Teacher research is inquiry that is intentional, systematic, public, voluntary, ethical, and contextual". Besides, she highlights what teachers researchers have to do:

- Develop questions based on their own curiosity about their students' learning and their teaching.

- Investigate their questions with their students systematically documenting what happens.

- Collect and analyze data from their classes including their own observations and reflections.

- Examine their assumptions and beliefs.

- Articulate their theories.

- Discuss their research with their colleagues for support as "critical friends" to validate their findings and interpretations of their data.

- Present findings to others.

- Talk to their students.

- Give presentations (talk to teacher in room next door, go to conferences)

- Write about their research (school-wide publication, national) participate in teacher research web sites, online forums, and e-mail communications.

**Postmethod learners**

As it was done in the previous section, to explain the learners' role in the Post-method Era, it is pertinent to begin providing a short overview of the language teaching history.  In the classical method like Grammar Translation, learners are limited to obey what the teacher says, learners are just allowed to interact with the teacher, and memorization as well as translation are their main function in it. With respect to function of students in Direct Method, they are still passive though, in a lower level than in Grammar Translation. Students belonging to this method also need to emphasize on learning pronunciation and culture about people who speak the target language, grammar is not a duty for learners to study it. Nearly 1950, the Audio Lingual method appears, students who

are conducted through this method, have to repeat and imitate each line of a dialogue provided by the teacher. A little time longer the Silent Way would allow students to be more autonomous and independent so they are the only ones in charge of their own learning. Concerning Desuggestopedia, students not only must respect teachers' authority, but also accept them as a paternal figure. In regards to this learners' position, Knight asserts (2001) that they ought to have "faith in the system and accept that they are in a childlike situation where they follow the teacher/parent"(p. 154).

Later in time, language teaching theory tended to be more humanistic, in Community Language Learning, students have to cooperate and work as a team. Regarding the Total Physical Response, it is opportune to take into consideration Richards and Rodgers' (2001) definition. They claim that "learners in Total Physical Response have the primary roles of listener and performer. They listen attentively and respond physically to commands given by the teacher".

Although it is true that for most of the methods mentioned above, the goal was to allow students to communicate in the target language, it is also true that it became evident that the goal could not be accomplished in the way as expected. Students were not able to use the language outside the classroom so linguistic structures were not enough to communicate in a real-life situation. Following the same thought, Hymes (1972) introduces two important terms such as: linguistic competence and communicative competence, he refers to the first one as the materialization of the latter. That is to say, learners must apply the knowledge about grammar and syntax into a real context. As noted above, most of the methods did not succeed to enable learners to be communicative competent so communicative approaches were embraced.

Throughout Communicative Language Teaching, Content-based, Task-based and Participatory Approaches, learners started been considered as communicators, they are allowed to interact with the teacher as well among them. Here the students are more independent so they take charge of their own learning. Johnson and Paulston (1976), cited in Richards and Rodgers, (1991, p.23)

Despite the fact that along the course of the history of language teaching, learners had been growing in importance and autonomy, they still need to assume other functions demanded by their educational and living context. Consequently, here is where the significance of postmethodology resides; to enable language learners to stretch and apply their learning beyond classroom. The further roles proposed by the Postmethod pedagogy will be explained based on Kumaravadivelu (2001), its main proponent.

According to Kumaravadivelu, autonomy is probably the principal characteristic of a postmethod learner. He puts forward three types of autonomy but, before going in depth into those ones, it is appropriate to define this term. "Autonomy is a situation in which the learner is totally responsible for all the decisions concerned with his [or her] learning and the implementation of those decisions" (Dickinson, L). Going back to Kumaradivelu's (2001) propositions, he illustrates three kinds of autonomy that a learners should work on.

Academic autonomy: it intrapersonal is connected to learning, in order to learners to become more active participants and take the responsibility to learn on their own, they need to exploit the great range of resources offered by the modern world since teachers are not the unique source of knowledge, students can also develop their learning potential and monitor their learning process by their own account. For learners to be academically

autonomous and consequently successful in accomplishing the goal of learning a foreign language, they have to identify the most suitable learning strategies and styles for them. They also should have as a reference the strategies employed by successful language learners. Another requirement for students to become autonomous is being in a constant cycle of evaluation. That is to say, they need to take standardized tests to assess their results, weaknesses and strengths. Lastly, students must look for further opportunities to practice the target language, beyond their classroom.

Social Autonomy: it is interpersonal and means that learners are required to maintain a sense of cooperation as members of a classroom community. Having a good way to interact with others is a key because students have to seek for situations inside or outside the classroom to be provided a feedback through conversations or dialogues, taking in account that foreign language teachers are not the only ones who are able to provide an input. Besides, foreign language learners to be socially autonomous need to develop a sense of collaboration concerning group work.

Liberatory autonomy: it basically consists of allowing students to become critical thinkers. This type of autonomy goes beyond the educational context. That is, students need the teacher's help to analyze and reflect on the sociopolitical impediments like discrimination as for religion, race, gender or sexual orientation. After analyzing those barriers, learners have to cope with them to cultivate their human potential. Learners have to be promoted to play the role of miniethnographers investigating the reason why language rules and language use are socially linked. In this regard, students also become investigators because seek for knowing what is their role in the society, how they are

connected to social context the live. As a last requirement for foreign language students to

have a liberatory autonomy is done through self-awareness and self-improvement.

To conclude this section, it can be said that teachers are still important individuals in

language learning and teaching, without them, there would be not any possibility for

learners to have social consciousness, intellectual competence and mental attitude to

become autonomous.

**Possible limitations of implementing postmethod ideas in EFL settings.**

Even though the need of implementing the postmethod in EFL settings is

undeniable, it is necessary to say that such an implementation might present some

limitations. One of them is the opposition to adopt new ideas about teaching by some

teachers who are accustomed to apply a methodology according to their own conviction

and criteria. In this regard, Kennedy (1999) cited by Kumaravadivelu (2001) says, the

challenge of change in teacher's methodology not only implies methods and materials, but

also attitudes and beliefs.

Another limitation, and probably the strongest one is related to government policies.

In EFL settings policymakers and administrators are the ones in charge of making

decisions, so it means, in some EFL context, teachers are likely to be obliged to apply a

determined method, use a decontextualized book, and also neglect learners' goals and

needs. They probably do not have sufficient freedom "to theorize from their practice and

practice what they theorize" (Kumaravadivelu. B. 2001, p. 541).

In spite of these two possible limitations to apply the postmethod ideas, the number

of potentialities of implementing a pedagogy based on postmethod in EFL settings is more

significant, so there will be provided some reasons why EFL settings should implement this teaching philosophy.

**Possible potentialities of implementing postmethod ideas in EFL settings.**

Postmethod pedagogy may have some important potentialities when it is implemented in EFL settings. Based on the all of the concepts previously explained throughout this paper, it can be affirmed that methods applied in the traditional way in EFL settings, are not fruitful.

One significant potentiality resides on the fact that postmethod permits teachers to adapt methods and approaches according to their EFL context, their needs, their learners' needs, their goals and resources. As it was stated, every setting has its own particularities so the implementation of methods cannot work because they were created in different conditions, and even some of them were conceived in SLA settings. By the implementation of postmethod ideas, teaching is context sensitive. Consequently, students might be benefitted so their motivation is more likely to increase due to their needs, goals, learning styles and opinions are going to be taken into consideration.

Additionally, as a consequence of the students' increased motivation, teachers have more possibilities to promote autonomous learning to overcome the low intensity of hours a week assigned for English classes. Even though the number of hours varies in every country, learning English as a foreign language denotes learners are probably not going to be exposed to the target language outside the classroom, or practice because they tend to not need to use it. In short, if teachers implement one of the main characteristics which is autonomous learning, they are going to enable their students to learn on their own and

concurrently, teachers are going to cope with such a lack of practice and exposition to the target language that learners have.

Another possible potentiality by implementing postmethod ideas is that teaching goes beyond English. That is to say, education has to be holistic; grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation and all of the skills with regard to learning English are important but, it is also a must to empower students to be critical about their social, political and cultural milieu.

Finally, this possible potentiality is not about learners but, it is related to teachers training. In EFL contexts as in any kind of learning or teaching context, it is a necessity for teachers to be updating constantly, and through the implementation of the postmethod pedagogy this is attainable. When EFL educators put into practice the postmethod ideas, they develop teacher research and become reflective teachers. In this sense, they are enabled to adjust their methodology to the probable variables regarding policies, materials, approaches, techniques, and cultural ones. As a result, learners are going to see benefited since teaching is more adjusted to them, creating more opportunities to learn.

**Conclusions and practical recommendations for incorporating the postmethod ideas in our schools.**

Bearing in mind the review of literature about postmethod and the teaching conditions of Colombia as an EFL setting, it can be concluded that the traditional way of applying decontextualized methods does not work, to cope with the mentioned adversities in this paper, is the teaching philosophy of postmethod. To emphasize more on the importance of postmethod in Colombia, it is appropriate to draw on an article from Cruz Garcia (2013). He says that "rather than adjusting a reality to a method or approach,

language educators should base their professional practice on the diverse situational features of the setting, community and policies of the teaching and learning environment they are a part of" (p. 88).

In addition to the apparent benefits with respect to teaching and learning English by implementing the postmethod pedagogy, there is a further sake that goes beyond this. This one deals with the parameter of possibility conceived by Kumaravadivelu; students cannot be regarded as individuals who just need to develop the four language skills in the target language, but rather, they must be considered as members of a local and global community. Hence, they have to be enabled to develop critical thinking about their living conditions and in the same way, they can become transformers of their reality.

In spite of the fact that the main aim of this paper was to justify why the postmethod pedagogy should be employed in Colombia, there are some considerations that might make the implementation of this alternative methodological trend a challenging task. As occurs with methods and approaches applied rigidly, the postmethod conception also demands teachers to be well-trained, to have an outstanding knowledge of their profession, to create their own theory of practice and sometimes teachers lack the time and energy to accomplish this. Other limitations that might hinder the implementation of the postmethod principles include the policies imposed by the government and teachers' beliefs, which makes it difficult that language educators modify their habitual teaching methodology.

Additionally, it has to be stated that even though learners and administrators perform an important role in the process of implementing the postmethod philosophy, teachers have to assume much more active and demanding role. In the post-method era, teachers are not only required to have a certain level of proficiency in English, but also, to

be autonomous, reflective, transformative intellectuals, and researchers. To put it briefly, in the postmethod pedagogy, teachers have to be holistic educators.

Now, being consistent with one of the main purposes of this compilation paper, it is advisable to offer some practical recommendations for teachers to incorporate the postmethod ideas at schools and so the adverse teaching conditions described before, can be tackled.

The first practical recommendation deals with the lack of resources that our learning-teaching context presents. To cope with this constrain teachers could use the DIY materials (do-it-yourself). That is to say, teachers ought to draw on materials designed by themselves or downloaded such as: picture files, flashcards, worksheets, pictures, downloadable images, drawings, wall charts (Sanchez, 2014).

Besides, realia is another useful alternative to overcome the scarcity of resources and still have the authenticity and contextualization that the post-method era demands. To bring tangible material not only makes compensate such teaching with limited resources, but also raise students' interest in learning because it allows them to see, hear, touch, smell, and probably taste (Renaud, Tannenbaum and Stantial, 2007).

Another good alternative material could be a dictation, this decreases the boredom of copying from the board, and it is also helpful because listening and retentive are additional skills that can be developed in addition to writing.

Large classes is another adversity which hinder teachers' lessons, particularly in relation to assessment, the provision of corrections and feedbacks. However, the big amount of students is not too negative as may seem at first glance, since a large class can

mean a great variety of human resources to promote interaction and cooperation. Here, teachers can take advantage of their more proficient pupils, assigning them roles as leaders, monitors and teaching assistants to help the rest of the class. (Renaud, Tannenbaum and Stantial, 2007).

Following with the adversities caused by large groups, discipline-related issues are also a common constraint that teachers have to endure. Sanchez (2012) suggests a set of tips to maintain the control of lessons.

- Quickly make your students go quiet before starting the class

- Use students' names as much as possible to show control of your class

- Walk around the class to know what your students are up to at all times

- Have an adequate tone of voice: not to slow and monotonous, not too fast. Pause to raise interest, to keep discipline, to emphasize content.

- Use comprehension questions to keep students attentive and to make sure they are following what you are trying to present.

- Work on time management and plan your time wisely before stepping into the classroom

- Treat students with respect, be warm and friendly (but not a buddy, your students already have friends)

- Be tolerant of noise: students must interact in postmethod classrooms.

  As for the demotivation from Colombian students for learning English, one first step that a postmethod teacher should put into practice is making their pupils to be conscious about the benefits of learning a foreign language. Equally important, it is to let students

know the aim of every learning activity, so that they can be more well-disposed to follow instructions (Renaud, Tannenbaum and Stantial, 2007).

An extra practical postmethod recommendation for increasing learners' motivation is connected to the parameter of possibility proposed by Kumaravadivelu. Instead of using cultural content of the target language, what the teachers should do, it is to exploit the local culture to make the classes more interesting and encouraging for learners. E.g. if the educator conducts a course in Pasto, s/he should exploit traditions like Black and White Carnivals, if the teacher works in Cali, s/he might take advantage of the industrial area to teach a certain vocabulary related to trading, advertising, offering, and so on. Nonetheless, it does not mean that cultural content from other contexts cannot be utilized (McKay, 2000, p. 7). In order to learn another culture and be aware of it, we need to contrast it with ours.

Finally, teachers can, by making use of postmethod ideas, overcome the number of teaching hours assigned for English to be taught at schools. Post-method ideas promote autonomous learning, it allows students to figure out meanings and explore the language, exploratory projects are a good way to let your pupils learn on their own. Sanchez (2014) also suggests the following:

- Maximize pair and group work for controlled activities for beginners and hold each student accountable but give them more freedom to work when they are advanced.
- When working in projects teachers must accept the fact that projects will take more time than grammar exercises. Teachers need to have clear goals and not attempt to achieve high proficiency fast.

- Projects require teacher preparation in terms of creating and organizing clear directions before starting the task (even using the L1) and, if possible, use technology tools to keep students on track (e.g., giving students a worksheet with directions, groups, individual tasks and group tasks, deadlines and your e-mail or a class blog so that students can ask while carrying out the project).

- Decide who will work with whom before the task and, if you have to, divide people in a way that is not threatening to them. For example alphabetically, using playing cards or at random.

- Provide the goal, the processes students have to go through and the outcome of the task initially. Clarifying this will give you more instruction time and if students know what they are supposed to do they will engage more easily in the task. Also, assessment is facilitated by having clear parameters and goals.

The main conclusion that this paper has is that there are many options teachers can use to teach a foreign language. There is not a perfect method as it was explained before. There is not a perfect approach or a perfect place to teach the L2, but teachers need to make the best possible choices based on theory and practice. Teachers in the post-method era cannot complain or say that they cannot teach because they do not have certain conditions. The post-method principles give teachers the power and the responsibility to choose what is best for them and for their students. These choices will be the result of their curricular guidelines, their theoretical background, the application of the post-method principles, their students' needs and their teaching and learning goals.

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