

From Teaching English as a Foreign Language to Using English as a Global language: Another Look at Pedagogy for English Education in Thailand

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ABSTRACT

Teaching English in non-English environments has been found problematic in countless studies. When it comes to the language skills of teachers, especially non-native English speaking teachers, the superiority of native speakers in such skills as listening and speaking, reading and vocabulary even causes these non-native teachers, including those in Thai educational contexts, to feel insecure. This is even truer as we have been bombarded with a lot of change in political and educational arenas. To survive with more confidence in teaching, we may take into account critical perspectives in teaching, the new status of English through the lens of World Englishes, and approaches to English instruction so we can train Thai students to be ready for any demanding tasks in job markets—local and regional—where their language competence and cultural identities should both be emphasized.

Keywords: Thailand's English education, English as a global language, critical perspectives, World Englishes, post-method teaching approaches

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บทคัดย่อ

การสอนภาษาอังกฤษในบริบทที่ไม่ใช่เจ้าของภาษามีปัญหามากมาย และในเรื่องของทักษะทางภาษาของผู้สอนเองโดยเฉพาะอย่างยิ่งผู้สอนที่ไม่ใช่เจ้าของภาษานั้น พบว่าผู้สอนมักไม่มีความมั่นใจในความสามารถของตนทั้งทักษะการฟัง การพูด การอ่าน และความรู้ด้านคำศัพท์ เมื่อเทียบกับความสามารถของเจ้าของภาษา ซึ่งปัญหาดังกล่าวเป็นปัญหาที่เกิดขึ้นกับผู้สอนชาวไทยเช่นกันโดยเฉพาะอย่างยิ่งในภาวะที่เกิดกระแสการเปลี่ยนแปลงมากมายทั้งในเรื่องการเมืองการปกครองและการศึกษา ในการแก้ปัญหาดังกล่าวและเพื่อเสริมสร้างความมั่นใจของผู้สอนให้มากขึ้น ผู้สอนอาจพิจารณาการผสมผสานแนวคิดเชิงวิพากษ์ สถานภาพของภาษาอังกฤษตามแนวคิดภาษานานาชาติของโลก ตลอดจนแนวคิดในการสอนภาษาอังกฤษเพื่อช่วยผู้เรียนชาวไทยให้มีความพร้อมตามความต้องการของตลาดแรงงานทั้งในประเทศไทยและประเทศเพื่อนบ้านซึ่งทุกบริบทต้องการผู้เรียนที่มีความสามารถทั้งทางภาษาและอัตลักษณ์ทางวัฒนธรรมในระดับสูง

คำสำคัญ: การสอนภาษาอังกฤษในประเทศไทย ภาษาอังกฤษในฐานะภาษาโลก แนวคิดเชิงวิพากษ์ ภาษาอังกฤษนานาชาติโลก แนวคิดยุคหลังการใช้วิธีสอนตามแนวเจ้าของภาษา

1. Introduction

Methodology in ELT has been placed with a number of stumbling blocks, one of which is the notion of competence (see Kirkpatrick, 2007; McKay, 2002; McKay & Bokhorst-Heng, 2008; Pennycook, 1994; Sung, 2012). A number of studies were conducted through the lens of teaching methods, classroom management, learning motivation, and technology-assisted instruction, to name but a few. However, such attempts have rarely located possible culprits and thus left the diseases untreated. Very few researchers and practitioners have realized the discrepancy between the pedagogical principles imposed by outsider scholars, and EFL learners born and bred in different socio-cultural worlds (Jin & Cortazzi, 1996; Sampson, 1984). To extend the learners' learning opportunities and liberate them from the native hegemony, EFL/ESL teachers with reflective teaching should consequently evaluate the perspectives that foreshadow such misused pedagogy so any content and teaching-learning focus can serve the learners' needs more satisfactorily.

How do we EFL/ESL teachers design our instruction? If wishing to do so, what perspectives do we need to consider? What are the learners' needs that entail the classroom teaching and development of teacher-made materials? What factors do those teachers need to take into account if being to depart from such bandwagon pedagogy? These questions will lead us to a new look of our practice.

Given an increasing number of speakers of English as a foreign/second language, the current status of English as an

international language welcomes the language authority and norms of these speakers (Phillipson, 1997), and English is thus considered a very important tool for intercultural communication (Seidlhofer, 2003). Accordingly, critical pedagogy gives some questions about learners' authority and identity, and a new role of English as a medium for cross-cultural communication, all of which put more emphasis on respect for difference, rather than conformity based on the monolingual model. The perspectives with such concerns have contributed to considerable changes in cultural, intellectual and economic dimensions (Jenkins, 2005b).

This is especially true for Thai learners who will be encountering a large number of obstacles, as a result of change, in not only regional but also global alliances like the ASEAN community. While a number of sectors—both governmental and educational—are responding to this new socio-economic commitment with enthusiasm, how many are seeing a larger number of threats crawling and attacking some individual countries who have not prepared themselves properly in terms of educational foundation, economic infrastructure, cultural identities, and, perhaps, most importantly, certain policies of national language and additional ones for economic or international activities. For English, which will clearly function in interface cultures, what, why, and how we teach the language should be reflected clearly. Despite these alarming changes, there is still a conspiracy of silence in ELT worlds. The teachers, especially those aspired “to develop in learners a native speaker communicative and cultural competence,” regardless of the teaching contexts Risager mentioned in her work (1998, p. 244), should realize that we for a while need to put aside our dream to create perfect native-like

learners, the end product of capitalism-oriented pedagogy. Instead, we, with our collective force, should deconstruct such prescribed methods of teaching, that we have been prescribed for a long time, listen to students' voices, and consider their actual needs. Through the new status of English, along with perspectives of critical linguistics, students' awareness of and attitudes toward English varieties and the consequences for society (see Kachru, 1996) in relation to ELT applications should be explored in individual EFL contexts to develop effective resources for EFL/ESL instruction (Seidlhofer, 2003). In this paper, I consequently discuss perspectives in relation to ELT practice with the hope to help Thai researchers and teachers to equip students with the skills necessary for new types of society.

2. Method in ELT

Theory suggests good practice. But it is truer that best practice relies on sensible theory. Method, among three important elements of ELT practice—approach, methods and technique, has been defined in different ways. Method is viewed not only as a holistic concept covering approaches, design, and procedures (Richards and Rogers, 2003), and theoretical perspectives underlying teaching/learning activities (Prabhu, 1990), but also as a more specific, systematic scheme for instruction of language oriented to theoretical assumptions (Anthony, 1963). In this paper, I position my view with Anthony's, where I also consider approach as a theoretical set that highlights method at such a specific level as classroom activities.

Since the 1950s, approaches and methods in ELT have undergone many changes— audio-lingual method and silent way, suggestopedia and total physical response, task-based and content-based instruction, lexical and corpus-based instruction. The newer, the better, a fallacy has made us in a quest of a more fashionable method, jumping from one to another ceaselessly. Salmani-Nodoushan (2006) divides method into three periods, two of which—the method and the post method periods—are of use to practitioners to understand such a quest. In the early period, method was viewed both positively and negative. How Mackey (1950) viewed language instruction is sensible as it included selecting teaching content, sequencing such content, delivering the knowledge by means of instruction, and repeated practice. Although this view is limited to the form and skills of language, it could help teachers understand the very concept of method of this period fairly well. Another helpful view is by Larsen-Freeman (1986), seeing method as insightful as a result of perspectives in applied linguistics and a blessing for instructional activities and procedures. Considering the merit of method, Richards (1990) even argues that it has “a life beyond the classroom” (p. 13).

Despite many more theorists advocating the use of method in classroom teaching, the concept has declined over time due to some perspectives. Agreed among these are some limitations the traditional concept of method offers. That said, there is no purest form of method in practice; method fails for generalizable effects; method is beforehand prescribed; method marginalizes teachers limiting themselves in corners of submissive roles (Akbari, 2008). More alarming are the views that method is used as a tool for those

business educators to designate what method will survive or disappear through publishing houses (Richards, 1990, 2000), and that teaching method was one of the ways to translate linguistic-imperialist messages (see Pennycook, 1994; Tollefson, 1995; Holliday, 1994).

This led educators to the period that follows—the post method period, where a lot of attempts have been made to explore an alternative to method, rather than an alternative method, where new method is not needed, and where language instruction can be achieved with some considerations of critical factors, such as classroom contexts, negotiated interaction, on-going reflection, and more, rather than with relying completely on certain methods or approaches. Here Gebhard's (2005) views are closely related to these suggested ideas. As Gebhard suggests, teachers' empirical exploration of our classroom practice is a paramount requirement. In successful teaching, teachers like us need to develop ourselves by exploring our teaching, "to transcend the idea that development should be based only on the concept of improvement" (p. 2). What can we do to achieve so? In my view, best practice has never come without guiding research findings and theoretical perspectives, so teachers with an 'inner' voice of explorations, need to consult some related factors —critical theory, world Englishes, and some guiding perspectives for classroom practice by Brown (2001, 2002) and Kumaravadivelu (1994, 2001, 2003, 2005, 2006).

3. Critical Theory

When designing course syllabi or lesson plans for any micro teaching, it is important that teachers first of all reexamine the status of English and instructional contexts so we can translate such ideological perspectives to classroom instruction more effectively. Localized instruction, as I mentioned elsewhere (Thongrin, 2008, 2009a, 2009b, in press), should be a suitable shelter to which teachers resort, and such a good shelter needs to rest on theoretical perspectives, and, at the same time, hold an emic approach, a culturally anthropological investigation of local people's view (Kottak, 2006), by reflecting how such flexible structures of theory shape those local meanings provided by students, and vice versa. The political notion of ELT has been raised by several icons (see Pennycook, 1994). The status quo of ELT has been attached to English education and ingrained "in the rhythms and textures of culture, consciousness, and everyday life" (Apple, 1990, xi). In teaching, pedagogy is important, but pedagogy without localized considerations would harm, rather than help, the students of such individual contexts.

Critical pedagogy, educational philosophy described by Paulo Freire, helps teachers see another angle of classroom practice more clearly. When planning for teaching, we take a closer look at three main principles of this critical perspective (see Freire, 1970). First, we should take into account students' locality or lived experience. Second, what we teach should depend on students' voices and needs (Christie, 1990; Cope & Kalantzis, 1993), rather than on prescriptive, fashionable methods. Students learning English as an

additional language, of course, hold with them unique needs different from those speaking English as a mother tongue. Third, language teachers as political agents look into practice in their target society, analyze opportunities to encourage students' equality, and implement them in their classroom practice, a very small but powerful simulated world. In this regard, teachers are important agents for implanting "conscientization" (consciousness) in students. Implanted gradually with critical minds, students will finally be able to evaluate their education settings and connect their problems and experiences to their own society. Clearly, teachers are expected to encourage the transformed society through the formation between theory and practice, thinking and doing (Giroux, 1988). Teachers with awareness of critical pedagogy, when considering classroom practice an inherently political activity, try to explore more possibilities so those marginalized by gender, race, or social class can be included and counted as community members (Giroux, 1983). In language teaching, it is essential that a teacher incorporate perspectives in critical theory into any teaching scheme. What do we do to design courses with students' inner voice and needs? How can we prepare students for their future workplaces? How do we spell out equality issues in the language classroom so we equip students for a changing society beforehand? In my view, language teachers with awareness in critical perspectives first and foremost connect students' backgrounds to classroom practice and foster democratic education using language classrooms as platforms for students' transformation (Thongrin, in press). In ELT practice, this critical look can be integrated into classroom teaching through perspectives in World

Englishes—realistic perspectives that help us hold self-reliant teaching methods.

4. World Englishes

The perspective of World Englishes, localized, non-native forms of English not restricted to conventional English, has been debated, thus questioning the conventional practice in English instruction and creating ill feelings as a result of two extremes between native and non-native teachers. A number of studies have been conducted to explore students' attitudes toward some certain norms of English and multiple localized forms. Such studies have been in unison, putting more emphasis on the new roles of English and the three-circle model by Kachru (1985) who simply reorganizes roles of English in particular regions, all of which have unfortunately been right there politically—the Inner Circle (IC), the Outer Circle (OC), and the Expanding Circle (EC), representing English used as a native language in such economically powerful countries as the United States or the United Kingdom, as a second language by the population of countries with a history of English colonialism, and as a foreign language in countries that were not colonized by any English native-speaking countries, like Japan, Korea, or Thailand. This distinction, however, rarely responds to ELT practitioners' needs to design classroom instruction (Jenkins, 2002, 2005a, 2005b; Kirkpatrick, 2007; McKay, 2003; Shin, Eslami & Chen, 2011; Thongrin, in press). This is strengthened by McKay's (2003) view, arguing that the cultures of IC countries seen as the rich resources for the CLT approach result in some undesirable effects, the "common assumptions of ELT pedagogy" (p. 3):

- Interest in learning English is largely the result of linguistic imperialism.
- ELT research and pedagogy should be informed by native speaker models.
- The cultural content for ELT should be derived from the cultures of native English speakers.
- The culture of learning that informs communicative language teaching (CLT) provides the most productive methods for ELT.

Teaching approaches following the cultures of such IC countries fail to consider the fact that the number of speakers of English in the other circles has been increasing. As a result, the changing status of English and “a new pedagogy” (McKay, 2003, p. 3) are needed. With this conflicting view, Kirkpatrick’s (2007) three model analysis, though more or less related to Kachru’s model, is helpful for us to translate the concept of World Englishes into classroom practice. First, an exonormative native speaker model is oriented to the norms by native English speakers, thus viewed as the “proper” model with “prestige and legitimacy” (p. 184) for the users of English in most OC and EC countries due to some characteristics of standard English, such as being codified, measured, and rich in resources. Second, the endonormative nativised model is a localized form of English, which requires local teachers, as insiders of social norms, to put together students’ socio-cultural background and English instruction with cultural awareness. Although this model is quite promising for teaching English in non-English environments, it is restricted by some limitations, such as insufficient resources and the language, both of which may cause students’ lower abilities.

The drawbacks found in the second model, fortunately, open more opportunities as the third model, where students learn English as a lingua franca model for students in OC and EC countries. However, that the language is not codified has caused some shortcomings. Consequently, it is considered an approach to language teaching that encourages students to become culturally competent communicators.

There have been some attempts adapting these models of World Englishes. Jenkins' series of works (2002, 2005a, 2005b) with emphasis on pronunciation teaching demonstrates well how much she encourages emancipatory language education. For instance, in her 2005a, 2005b works, Jenkins addresses flexibility and intelligibility in pronunciation and grammar as those speakers who use English as a global language still have their own unique Englishes based on their cultural backgrounds and specific needs. While Some sounds, such as /th/ initial sound, /k, p, t/ aspirated sounds, initial clusters, short-long vowel contractions, should be the core features of pronunciation, some sounds like /r/ flexibility should be regarded as non-core features and should be tolerant as long as intelligibility is maintained (Jenkins, 2002).

All the attempts Jenkins and Kirkpatrick have made convince me that some justified models of world English can be spelled out in real-world ELT. Possible implementations, though crating some conflicts between related stakeholders, can accommodate Thai EFL teachers and researchers who support critical pedagogy in language classrooms. As I mentioned in my book chapter (Thongrin, in press), Kirkpatrick's models can be applied in ELT of both OC and EC

countries. Equipping EFL students with the English native speaker model and knowing varieties of English, we will see them use English in their future workplaces fluidly and satisfactorily.

Imagine young Asian students learning English with native- and non-native teachers, and Asian undergraduates exposed to both standard English and more varieties of English. Such wider channels of English will open the learners' view and expand their abilities, and they will thus become professionals in their future workplace well equipped with language ability and awareness of their own culture. (Thongrin, in press)

What these liberal educators try to announce entails what we language teachers should do in teaching, where we seek help from nowhere but our own locality.

The suggestions by Brown and Kumaravadivelu correspond to this view.

5. Principled Approach to Language Teaching

A series of works by Brown (1997, 2001, 2002) and Kumaravadivelu (1994, 2001, 2003, 2005, 2006) provide us with flexible but applicable ideas in any language settings. Brown's (2002) theoretical rationale, a theoretical assumption or "a dynamic composite of energies within a teacher that changes...with continued experience in learning and teaching," can explain what, why and how we teach through the applications of his twelve principles, which I reorganize

as three sub-groups based on their shared entities. The first group is related to students' cognitive processing including five principles: (a) meaningful learning that will then contribute to students' long-term retention, (b) automaticity, students' learning development in second language learning started with controlled modes moved on to the automatic processing, (c) students' interlanguage achieved through proper teacher feedback, (d) students' communicative competence including organizational abilities, pragmatic use, strategies, and skills, and (e) language ego, the students' new ways of learning, thinking, and becoming in learning a new language.

To achieve such goals, teachers need to consider another five principles which I put into the second group indicating importance of learning-environment and students' affective factors—(a) anticipation of reward affectively fostering students' learning behaviors, (b) intrinsic motivation or students' self rewarding to sustain such learning behaviors, (c) students' investment of time and attention to learning tasks and producing the language, (d) students' risk-taking behaviors helping them to go through learning processes, and (e) students' self confidence in learning a new language. The third reclassified group contains two principles—teachers' awareness in language-culture connection to be incorporated into language teaching, and the use of students' native language in both negative and facilitative ways

As we can see, these twelve principles represent theoretical assumptions that teachers take on as approaches to language teaching. With the cognitive elements, we set them as the course goals and thus translate them using the principles in relation to

classroom atmosphere and students' motivation. The elements of language and culture, and the use of students' mother tongue in teaching-learning processes inform us of the sensitive issues, that we sometimes neglect their effective use, so we can run our classroom more directionally. Implementing Brown's principled approach into language teaching, we can free ourselves from such confined methods, and thus listen to students' voices clearly and serve their needs more.

In addition to Brown's guiding principles, another appearing helpful for instruction seems to be Kumaravadivelu's "higher order tenets of language pedagogy" (p. xv), a term he calls in his 2006 work to support teachers to depart from such prescribed methods, are apparently sensible. The three parameters of post-method pedagogy he intensifies (2001) best correspond to the nature of language teaching in non-English contexts with a lot of socio-economic, political changes like the AEC.

First, the parameter of particularity keeps us informed about contextualized instruction which can be translated into the goals and processes of teaching. Taking the AEC into account, we may prepare students by equipping them with not only a few forms of standard English but also some varieties of English probably happening in Malaysia, Vietnam or Singapore. Particular aspects of English used in these regions can be incorporated into a course design or school curricular. Simply memorizing factual information of those country members like their capitals, national dresses, traditional festivals, to name just a few, is quite useless as knowing about such superficial facts rarely represents reality of culture,

although these facts are often used as one of the popular activities in school. However, when these issues are brought into some classroom-related action like materials design or lesson planning, they become rich linguistically, culturally, and most importantly, ideologically. Kumaravadivelu's (2001) second parameter of selecting instructional methods is practicality, where a theory-practice dichotomy should be ended but understood as a continuum of teachers' reflection and action along the way of classroom exploration. For plausibility, the third parameter of a post-methods method, as influenced by Freirean's critical pedagogy, indicates teachers' will to encourage subjective understanding and social equality through classroom settings. Concerned with sociopolitical reality lying behind students' cultural identities, teachers create classrooms with empowerment providing opportunities for students to challenge, question, and seek truth from authority in terms of subjectivity and self identity. This, once again, helps individuals realize culturally who they are before we teach them to accept and respect differences in a more globalizing world. With these flexible parameters of pedagogy, we can adjust our instruction to suit students' socio-cultural backgrounds, best serve their needs, and receive positive results of pedagogy, subsequently contributing to, though partly, substantive growth of the country.

As flexible classroom pedagogy for teachers, Kumaravadivelu (2006) provides ten principles used as macrostrategic framework for L2 instruction: maximizing learning opportunities, facilitating interaction, minimizing perceptual mismatches, activating intuitive heuristics, fostering language awareness, contextualizing linguistic input,

integrating language skills, promoting learner autonomy, ensuring social relevance, and raising cultural consciousness.

However, there is no one-size-fits-all phenomenon. Despite a great deal of enthusiastic advocates of such a non-prescriptive practice, many critics still point out some difficulties. As Kumaravadivelu (2003, 2005) realizes, teachers' certain set of beliefs and mentality seem to be main barriers, keeping them standing frozen in their old practice. Also, some critics claim that the ideas mentioned are not new. The notion of particularization has been mentioned by Prabhu (1990) through the concept of contextualized instruction in applied methodology. It is also the same as the English for specific purposes approach, where teachers are encouraged to take on the ethnographers' roles when designing any courses in which they have little knowledge. In addition, the plausibility parameter is one of the concepts in critical pedagogy Paulo Freire puts in the hope to liberate schoolers (Mahmoodzade, 2011). Still, Bygate, Skehan, and Swain (2001) even downplay the post-methods method as another form of Communicative Language Teaching approach. By nature, this kind of method, which combines a large number of principles drawn from multiple fields, such as language acquisition, classroom teaching, teacher development, educational psychology, and cultural anthropology into its principles, seems to be part of an eclectic fashion; however, Kumaravadivelu technically defines the term(s) to suit his personalized vision for language teaching. In the midst of chaos, the guidelines given in Kumaravadivelu's works are, however, still of use to language teachers to translate the ideas into actual practice delightfully.

The awareness of such issues in critical perspectives, World Englishes, and more alternatives to language teaching should keep us well informed of what we should consider for effective teaching as long as we tend to explore what works and what does not in our practice. For example, in one of my teaching materials set out to help Thai high school teachers with contextualized writing instruction through the use of culturally local resources (Thongrin, 2012), I designed a lesson carrying a Buddhist view, one of the traits in Thai cultural identities, as in the following:

Creative Writing: Read, Think & Write

Animal Problems

Objective: to describe suffering animals and generate critical ideas for problem solving

Language Function: description

Procedure

Warm-up

1. Divide students into groups of three/four.
2. Distribute a copy of the problem email written by a hen.

Dear Any kind person,

I am a very sad hen. I have been cooped up in a cage at a big factory for a long time. All I see is four walls, a roof and my feeding master. My job is to eat, to poo, and most importantly, to lay



eggs—many a day. All I want is FREEDOM! Occasionally many visitors observe me for some reason and just walk away. Now I know that I am getting older and older. The master will not feed me any more as I no longer give him as many eggs as before. I will be killed and my meat will be processed for fried chicken with tomato sauce, then packed and sold in many convenience stores. I keep dreaming of the world outside. I want to have a small family and house in the country side. What can I do? Please help out.

Poor Hen

3. Ask students to brainstorm for suggestions and reply to the hen.
4. Ask each group to select an animal and imagine severe problems it might have. (students' imagination is needed here.)
5. Ask them to write a letter or email according to their invented problems.
6. When finishing, the group trades the problem letter to another group to solve the problem.

Example



Poor Hen,

Your problem is very tough. It is hard for you to escape or for anyone else to help out. This is because the owners of that commercial farm have invested a great

amount of money in their business, and you are one who can

return them some benefits. We are Buddhist. My point is that you should accept your “*kamma*.” While not being able to solve any problems, you may try two important missions. First, be patient; this is a fact of life. Second, practice meditating so that you rest in peace after you are killed. I believe meditation can cut your *kamma* and help you get into heaven after death. Don’t forget to make a wish, a very important wish—not to be born a hen again.

Hope this helps.

A Novice Monk

Possible Problems

Students may have difficulty generating ideas for writing in the first place. Teachers should put the students with mixed language abilities and creativity in the same groups so they help fill in any gap in the groups. For example, the students with creative ideas can take important roles in generating interesting theme while competent learners can help those improvers with language.

(Thongrin, 2012, pp. 159-160)

The role of an old hen suffering his life problem was assigned as an input to stimulate students’ creativity and critical thinking; a novice monk portrayed Buddhists, Thai students, who would solve the problems through the lens of Buddhism, their cultural reality. This means the activity is flexible for teachers in the southern part of Thailand, where some cultural values can be adapted, and where teachers like us can make some changes based on their teaching context all the time.

Admittedly, while writing this material, I was free from any prescriptive methods. Rather, what I at that time had in mind was

my teaching belief that students can learn best under their situated learning and their cultural reality, and that Thai high school teachers should eventually make use of their contextualized instruction.

What we can do for our classroom practice will truly depend on what results we want to see as the class ends. If nothing else, what McKay and Bokhorst-Heng (2008, p. 195-197) suggest for today's English curriculum could be one of the sources we go for:

- EIL curricula should be relevant to the domains in which English is used in the particular learning contexts.
- EIL professionals should strive to alter language policies that serve to promote English learning only among the elite of the country.
- EIL curricula should include examples of the diversity of English varieties used today.
- EIL curricula need to exemplify L2-L2 interactions.
- Full recognition needs to be given to the other languages spoken by English speakers.
- EIL should be taught in a way that respects the local culture of learning.

So much for our effort.

7. Final Remark

As the post-methods method is closely, or inherently, related to or concepts of postmodernism, reactions to or attempts departing from some grand theories seemingly trying to totalize knowledge or

human activities, research in and of itself departs from a positivist perspective to a constructivist one, where meaning and knowledge are sought through a socially constructed reality. As a result, teachers become “a primary source of knowledge about teaching” (Crandall, 2000, p. 35). Related to this is a shift of teachers’ roles from solely passive recipients of prescribed methods to active participants taking part in the process of making meaning. (Kumaravadivelu (1994, 2006; Pennycook, 1989): “it is teachers who have to act as mediators between theory and practice, between the domain of disciplinary research and pedagogy” (Widdowson, 1990, p. 22). This seems to be easier said than done, however. “All teachers by default,” mentions Akbary (2008, p. 648), “are qualified or willing to conduct a postmethod class with all its social, cognitive, political, and cultural requirements.” Although some may doubt this, I believe that our voice and views as learners and teachers using English as an additional language certainly encourage us to voice ourselves, to resist the orthodox, and to take care of students regardless of race, class, or gender so our students can survive in the era of diversity. “It is not the strongest or the most intelligent who will survive but those who can best manage change.” What Charles Darwin said is so true.

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