Teaching English in Post-method: Perceptions of Learners, Teachers and Teacher-Educators in Bangladesh

Research Paper

Md. Habibur Rahman¹, Tasmia Moslehuddin²*

Abstract

This paper examines the need of 'Teaching English in Post-method (TEP)' approach in the EFL classroom of Bangladesh and the insights of post-method pedagogy among the teachers, also teacher-educators from Kumaravadivelu's lens. Since the start of TESOL or TEFL in Bangladesh, our teachers are teaching English in the Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) approach not quite comprehensibly. Whether for negligence or inexperience, most of our Bangladeshi EFL teachers are not concerned to make the learners skilled to compete with the other world. So, the current EFL situation demands certain imperative teaching tactics for Bangladesh as recommended in this paper and introduces the modern TEP approach after the idea of post-method pedagogy. The study follows a qualitative approach to be developed. The researcher arranged three focus group discussions for 90 learner-participants and adopted semi-structured interviews for 17 teachers and 12 teacher-educators to establish the statement: "TEP is an absolute humane approach that can fervently make learning easy for both the EFL teachers and learners in a context like Bangladesh." Finally, some recommendations were fixated on the effective execution of TEP in Bangladesh.

Keywords: Post-method, TEP, failure of CLT, role of teachers, teacher-educators

1. Introduction

Post method pedagogy permits us to go yonder, and surmount the margins of, method-based instructions (Kumaravadivelu, 2003, p. 34). TESOL or TEFL in Bangladesh is not the newfangled idea and to cope up with the post-method situation of language education, our teaching and learning practice requires being reorganized to compete with the other world of EFL context. To sustain, an imperative standard of teaching and learning through research and development programs, our teachers should handle post-method pedagogic approaches for both the teaching and learning skills. Huq (2015) considers that over the last few decades, discontentment has been conveyed about the current classroom teaching methods. With the current needs, English language education in Bangladesh is spread all over the country's remote regions but unfortunately a perfect approach or method has not been decided yet for the teachers.

So, post-method is an innovative and reshuffled approach for ESL/EFL teaching and learning, that facilitates the TESOL methodologies for teaching English in various circumstances such as applied linguistics and literature, etc. Teaching English in Post-method (TEP) can be an updated approach for EFL teaching and learning in Bangladesh. As in Bangladesh, our education includes

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*Corresponding Author's Email: tasmia@manarat.ac.bd
¹Lecturer, Sonargaon University and Founder & CEO, English Patshala, Mirpur-10, Dhaka, Bangladesh
²Assistant Professor, Department of English, Manarat International University, Dhaka, Bangladesh

both language and literature, so that the approach has been proposed as Teaching English in Post-method (hereafter TEP) without using any of the words- 'language' or 'literature' after English in the title phrase. The progressing study herein cross-examines the fundamental needs of the TEP approach in Bangladesh to stimulate the teacher-educators and the authority to design a new syllabus and develop a remarkable curriculum for developing the competency of Bangladeshi EFL teachers and the learners as well.

2.   Objectives

The foremost objective of the current study is to depict the insights and analysis of fundamental needs to implement and represent Teaching English in Post-method (TEP) as an afresh and innovative approach for EFL teaching in Bangladesh raising awareness and enhancing the language teaching expertise among the teachers and teacher-educators by vividly conceptualizing the inevitable post-method pedagogic approach. This qualitative appraisal is also intended to review the demands and custom practices in the EFL classrooms of Bangladesh using post-method instructional approaches parting the timeworn and retroactive ones.

3.   Literature Review

The primary idea for the current study about implementing TEP in Bangladesh was first coined after understanding the article "Toward a Post-method Pedagogy" of Kumaravadivelu (2001) where he allures the language researchers to cross-examine different approaches of post-method pedagogy in teaching a second language other than the native lingo.

English language teaching and learning are yet to be advanced in Bangladesh. Besides, the background issue of ELT is still a matter of dispute whether there is an English as a Second Language (ESL) context in Bangladesh or English as a Foreign Language (EFL) context (Rahman & Pandian, 2018). Therefore, it is high time we changed our teaching policies to create an appropriate and balanced learning environment replacing all the previous methods with post-method which does not merely exist as a method rather something beyond method as Can (2009) believes that post-method pedagogy does not mean the end of methods but rather it involves an understanding of the limitations of the concept of method and a desire to go beyond those limitations. (p.2)

Though, CLT has been proved to be a failure (also admitted by Huda, 2013; Shurovi, 2014); not working effectively (Rasheed, 2015; Iqbal-e-Rasul, 2016) or need to be modified or changed (Mahbub-ul-Alam et. al., 2014, Rahman, 2015) in Bangladeshi EFL context for some unavoidable reasons, nevertheless, our English language education cannot get rid of this ostentatious and showy approach which was considered as a numb method to the developed world in the early 1990s with the inception of a post-method inkling when we started adopting it. Freeman (2000) believes that the CLT approach advocated instructional practices that improve communicative capability in authentic contexts. So, Iqbal-e-Rasul (2016) considers that the primary emphasis of CLT was to facilitate learners in creating meaning not in developing grammatical structures or acquiring native –like pronunciation. (p. 23)

However, our system introduced CLT in the late 1990s with the incompetent syllabus, grammatical affluence and different modifications. But the modification could not lead the way of teaching and learning a second language verily. For this, TEP has the core plausibility to be successful in the Bangladeshi EFL context if the scholars' eyes fix upon it as TEP provides the ample scopes for both the teachers and learners to have a meaningful communicative and written communication with the needed gestures, postures, and any other implications along with the use of speaking gambits and listening strategies for amenable discourse in the EFL classrooms.

In addition to this, Prabhu (1990) states that the teachers are the significant tool of all teaching and learning procedures since they not only unswervingly take care of the learners, but also apprehend them and also their background the best. However, the teacher-educators must take an intrepid step to train up the teachers, instructors, and cloistered language tutors throughout the country to achieve the worth of TEP in our EFL perspective. Though we have a pretty number of GTM scholars as EFL teachers, we lack CLT scholars. As in ELT, Bangladesh followed GTM till the

years of the mid-1990s. After then, our system adopted CLT for our EFL learners when post-methods hit the world's language teaching and learning methods and approaches without making the teachers adept to adapt with the CLT situations in the then time.

4.   Methodology

The study was conducted from February-2019 to November-2019 in a qualitative approach along with a wide-ranging review of related literature to depict the credibility of the necessities of post-method in the EFL context of Bangladesh. Semi-structured interviews with the opinions of the respective participants were supportive of the study. Though the researcher started with a view of reviewing the current approaches and offering the innovative post-method but later, the study was supported by the participants' views about the current needs of ELT.

Research articles on 'post-method pedagogy' published in different reputed journals worldwide were supportive in terms of analyzing the fundamental needs. As Kumaravadivelu (2008, p.176) considered 'the learner', 'the teacher' and 'the teacher-educator' as three foremost determining elements of post-method pedagogy, the study here deals with these determinants to getting ideas about the needs for the implementation of TEP in Bangladesh for English language and literature teaching and learning predominantly on the latter two. Ninety learners from one secondary and two intermediate level institutions, 17 teachers (Seven from secondary level and 10 from higher intermediate level), and 12 teacher-educators were the primary participants to comprehend their perceptions of the needs of TEP in Bangladesh. Teacher-educators were selected randomly from different public and private universities where MA/MEd degrees are offered in ELT/TESOL/Applied Linguistics and, certainly, not below the rank of Associate Professor. The demographic profiles of the participants are revealed in the Table-1.

Table 1. Participants' demographic profile

Learners	Total	Teachers	Total	Teacher-educators	Total
Age group: 14-18 years		Experience: More than 10 years		Experience: More than 15 years	
Secondary (Grade-X) Age: 14-16 years	30	Qualifications: MA (ELT), M. Ed	11	M. Phil./PhD (Applied Linguistics & ELT)	08
Intermediate (Grade-XI) Age: 16-17 years	30	Qualifications: BA (Honors), B. Ed	04	BA (Honors), MA MA (major): ELT/ TESOL	02
Intermediate (Grade-XII) Age: 16-18 years	30	Qualifications: BA (Pass), B. Ed	02	MA (English/ELT), M. Ed	02

5.   Findings and Discussion

In recent years, swelling attention in ELT courses has significantly been developed across the country. Apart from the language departments, students from different backgrounds are being gradually interested in ELT. Appeal from the business sectors and student communities, ELT practitioners are trying to render a standard level service in Bangladesh with underpinning theories about who teaches it and who should teach ELT courses and prepare course curriculums.

5.1. Focus Group Discussion (FGD): Learners' Perspectives

As English is considered a foreign language in Bangladesh, our greenhorn learners are always scared to learn the English language in both language and literature classes. That is why, TEP suggests the visual teaching resources even the need of smartphones, tabs, and projections of something are also recommended for the teachers and the learners what the learners also expressed as their needs. To know the present status of ELT, the researcher administered three short focus group discussions in the classroom of three different institutions of secondary and intermediate level. The only topic for each session was "Communicative Language Teaching: Phobia or Tonic". The learner-respondents answered the open-ended question as mentioned below.
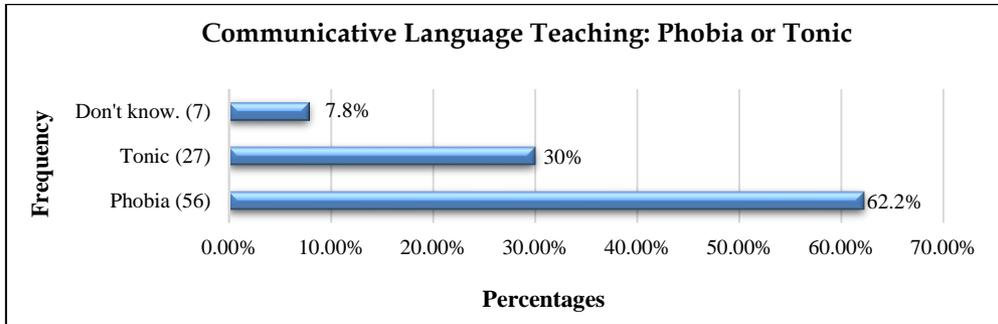
Figure 1. Learner-participants' responses to CLT

Some learners point out that the current approach is not at all supportive of any of the skills. They have also declared that they do not understand why it is so. But few of them clarify that their understanding of the English language has been in stupor. An intermediate learner significantly stated:

> We do not get the proper opportunity to speak English in the regular EFL classes. Moreover, we do not know how CLT actually works.

Another grade-XII intermediate learner specified:

> We just learn English for getting marks but not to repeat the learning ever again.

A secondary learner supported by her fellow mates suggested

> English classes are completely syllabus-oriented. The classes have hardly any activity for listening and speaking though the skills are indeed needed for the current job context.

Many other learners have expressed their dissatisfaction with the class management in the CLT approach. They do not blame their teachers but blame the system which may be a serious concern for the respective authority.

5.2. Teacher Interviews: Panorama of EFL Classrooms, Custom Practices, and Needs

From 17 direct interviews with the teachers of some reputed schools and colleges in Dhaka city, the researcher found a shocking scenario. Few of the teachers have raised questions of using an approach like TEP other than CLT in their EFL classes saying that they are teaching according to the guidelines of the National Curriculum Text-book Board (NCTB). Most of them are not concerned about post-method pedagogic approaches. Two of them are not even introduced to this innovative post-method pedagogy.

The CLT methodology was hosted in midst of the 1990s with the expectation of evolving a workforce with communicative competency in the English language to reinforce "the human resource development initiatives of the country" (Hamid & Baldauf, 2008). The objective behind introducing CLT is stated in the NCTB document, as cited in Haider & Chowdhury (2012)

English needs to be recognized as an essential work-oriented skill that is needed if the employment, development, and educational needs of the country are to be met successfully. English should, therefore, be taught as something to be used, rather than as something to be talked about. (NCTB, 1996: 135-136)

But the fact is, English texts books of secondary and higher secondary levels are not effectually communicative. Sometimes, textbooks are read in the classes only and there is no scope for the development of four language skills. Once our textbooks were full of literature that led the learners to read extensively but now, the textbooks include no indigenous, no extraneous literary texts. With some exceptions, the textbooks are full of non-literary texts, and the quantity of these texts too is not satisfactory for necessities, particularly for reading tenacities.

So, once TEP is introduced among the teachers, they will be the sole determinant of post-method to make out every possible way for their learners according to their levels. Then they can easily use

the digital facilities and materials in the classrooms for stimulating the learners to learn spontaneously. Because one of the extreme needs of EFL classrooms is a trained scholar to implement TEP in the Bangladesh context who can utilize the appropriate teaching aids for the respective learners and conceptualize the actual needs of them.

5.3. Views of Teacher-educators

According to Huq (2015), teacher training usually deals with the 'pre-nominated' and 'pre-sequenced' understanding of the prospective trainers. As our EFL context does not allow the multitude to learn at the same level of learning, we can introduce the new TEP approaches of post-method pedagogy in the EFL classrooms for the betterment of all level learners both of bucolic and urban areas. However, teacher-educators also support the same. 12 venerable teacher-educators were interviewed for the perception study about TEP as their viewpoints are the operational forecasting of the increasing demand for post-method in EFL learning. All the participants considered that TEP could be an effective approach for the current English language teaching situation because the world is following the pedagogy of post-method in a broad-spectrum manner. A participant added that teacher-education programs must take into account the significance of differentiating teachers' expressions and visualizations, the necessities of mounting their subtle competencies, and the farsightedness of attaining 'expressions' and 'visualizations' "through a dialogic construction of meaning" as Kumaravadivelu (2001) also stated.

The teacher educators usually coach and train up the student-teacher for getting more involved in classroom activities with EFL learners. Nunan (1992) suggested that the team must comprise of "senior and more experienced colleagues and learning the required skills on the job". So, the newfangled approach TEP, being a groundbreaking bradawl enforces an uncommon fortification of accountability on all the collaborators, predominantly the teacher educator. Kumaravadivelu (2001) quoted Diamond (1993) for his consideration about the crucial challenge

> for teacher educators is to help teachers to see themselves capable of imagining and trying alternatives — and eventually as self-directing and self-determining (p. 52).

6.   Recommendations

Teacher-training has come out to be the foremost recommendation since the research about ELT in EFL contexts started. Then the failure has also been brought to light to get the expected result. However, there are some fundamental short in-service training on ELT courses offered by TQI, NAEM, SEQAYEP, ELTIP, SESIP, and TTCs. But Haider & Chowdhury (2012) suggests that the teachers, who are doing well in the training rooms, unfortunately, stick to their customary rehearses as soon as they leave the training session. They also mention that all over the world, nowadays, the efficacy of such short courses is being interrogated for failing to generate the stimulus within the teachers which pledges a lengthy modification.

So, the ELT teacher-educators must take the liabilities in collaboration with the appropriate authority to stimulate the teachers to change their custom practices by TEP. To implement TEP in Bangladeshi English language education, the CPH should be considered by making the English teachers of secondary and higher secondary level conscious about the consequence of it in learners' acceptance of language education. The school and college teachers must take the prior responsibility to make the learners communicate in different ways with an independent language learning environment and materials created and provided by them (the teachers) which is the major principle of TEP. Huda (2013) urges that the need for extensive reading texts cannot be underestimated for language learning. Therefore, the prevailing textbooks must be supplemented with a set of erudition materials that might comprise apprentices' drudgery book by linking study materials, rationalized teachers' guides, and extra pictorial or visual materials (Haider & Chowdhury, 2012).

7.   Definition of Terms

TESOL=Teaching English to the Speakers of Other Languages
TEFL= Teaching English as a Foreign Language

CLT= Communicative Language Teaching
ELT= English Language Teaching
GTM= Grammar Translation Method
CPH= Critical Period Hypothesis
ELTIP= English Language Teaching Improvement Project
TTC= Teachers' Training Center
SEQAYEP= Secondary Education Quality and Access Enhancement Project
NAEM=National Academy for Educational Management
SESIP= Secondary Education Sector Investment Program
TQI= Teaching Quality Improvement

8. Conclusion

Finally, the study concludes with TEP's profound concern with the genuine communication in the EFL classroom. Actually, there is no best way of teaching a language particularly if it is officially endorsed as a foreign language. The development of teaching strategy and approaches keep rationalizing and methodizing. So, not just developing a new method but the gradual process of developing the teaching and learning tactics are the imperative tools for successful teaching and learning what the TEP approach offers for Bangladeshi EFL context. The TEP practitioners are the independent theorizers who can standardize their principles of drilling according to the needs in the EFL classrooms. As TEP is in progress to develop the English language education in Bangladesh, it indeed hardly eases an assured conclusion. TEP is something beyond the method (verily is not a method at all) which simplifies the EFL teaching of a novice teacher and EFL learning of a tyro learner. TEP associates the learners, teachers, and the teacher-educators to ensure an effective language learning environment with an amenable approach.

Acknowledgement

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