Postmethod Pedagogy Macrostrategies Utilized by Iranian EFL Teachers

[1]Tayebeh Najafi
[2]Seyyed Ayatollah Razmjoo*
[3]Rahman Sahragard

Abstract: The English language teaching profession has always witnessed the pendulum swings of language teaching methods throughout its life span. This evolving nature transformed from a method-based approach to a postmethodic orientation of language teaching; however, this shift received a mixed reaction across the community and Iranian EFL society is no exception. The present qualitative study aimed to explore the Postmethod Pedagogy (PMP) macrostrategies used by 18 experienced EFL teachers teaching at various language institutes in Kermanshah. The participants were purposely selected in two phases. First, a postmethod questionnaire was administered to identify respondents familiar with PMP principles. Then, the eligible participants took part in a semi-structured interview to elicit their postmethodical macrostrategies. To facilitate data analysis, the researcher's reflections and opinions were documented using field notes. Afterward, the interviews were audio recorded, transcribed, and coded following Ary et al.'s (2010) three-stage approach of inductive data coding. The findings showed that EFL teachers used integrating language skills, activating intuitive heuristics, and contextualizing linguistic input more than promoting learner autonomy and fostering language awareness macrostrategies. However, they ignored raising cultural consciousness and ensuring social relevance macrostrategies which might be mostly due to teachers' concerns about linguistic imperialism's effect on learners' cultural identity. The findings of this study are of significance for pre- and in-service teachers and generally for novice teachers who seek a guideline to practice PMP principles in their classrooms.

Keywords: Iranian EFL Teachers, Kumaravadivelue's Macrostrategic Framework, Postmethod Pedagogy, Postmethod Pedagogy Macrostrategies, Qualitative Study

Introduction

Since its emergence, PMP as an anti-method movement has been popular among many ELT practitioners. It not only exempted the community from the restrictions imposed by a series of methods but also allowed them to reflect on their teaching autonomously. However, valuing the teachers at the center of language teaching and learning may be a double-edged sword, as it shoulders greater responsibility for them to provide and implement a context-sensitive PMP.

Akbari (2008) stated that postmethod pedagogy teachers are considered to be qualified enough to practice in a postmethodic fashion, while meeting the social, cognitive, cultural, and political requirements of PMP demands great expertise. However, according to Zeng (2012), novice teachers and many in-service teachers lack such a skill and knowledge to critically reflect on the complicated teaching/learning environment to adapt PMP principles to their classes.

[1] PhD candidate in TEFL, tayebeh.najafi@gmail.com; Department of English Language, Qeshm Branch, Islamic Azad University, Qeshm, Iran.

[2] Professor of TEFL (Corresponding Author), arazmjoo@rose.shirazu.ac.ir; Department of Foreign Languages and Linguistics, Shiraz University, Shiraz, Iran.

[3] Professor of Applied Linguistics, rahman.sahragard@gmail.com; Department of Foreign Languages and Linguistics, Shiraz University, Shiraz, Iran.

Despite its popularity, in Iran, PMP status is deemed questionable, and the Iranian ELT community remains uncertain regarding its application in a real classroom context (Fathi & Khatib, 2014; Fathi & Nezakatgoo, 2017; Gholami & Mirzaei, 2013; Razmjoo et al., 2013). Currently, there is a paucity of research and interest in the posthmethodic context-specific macrostrategies used by experienced Iranian EFL teachers, meanwhile, their professional experience and acquaintance with the Iranian context will pave the way for those who are taking their first steps in the profession.

Therefore, this study is an attempt to shed light on the dark aspects of implementing PMP by investigating the ways and the macrostrategies that EFL teachers utilize to reach the threshold level of practical experience. The literature regarding a brief history of the emergence of postmethod pedagogy, postmethod pedagogy strategic frameworks, and relevant empirical studies will be reviewed.

Literature Review

Over the span of its historical development, the discipline of English language teaching has experienced a diverse range of pedagogical methodologies that have emerged and faded away. In the last one hundred years, teachers have been using different language methods with great enthusiasm, since methods were regarded as a panacea for the instructional challenges.

Although each new set of methods was seen as an improvement over the previous ones, they still suffered from severe limitations. In the timeframe spanning from the late 1980s to the early 1990s, the concept of teaching methods was severely criticized due to oversimplifying the complexity of language teaching and learning processes, ignoring teachers' and learners' autonomy, largely neglecting contextual, socio-political, curricular, and institutional factors as well as lack of empirical and theoretical validity and practical utility (Pennycook, 1989).

Following the era of turbulent methodologies and the study of the postmodern school of thought, the groundwork was laid for the development of what was initially referred to as 'postmethod pedagogy' by Pennycook and later recommended by Prabhu, Allwright, Stern, and Kumaravadivelu (as cited in Mohammad Emdadul, 2013). However, according to Zokaeieh and Fakhri Alamdari (2018), Kumaravadivelu was a pioneer in defining postmehod academically and raising it globally. Postmethod pedagogy can be better understood by its main components known as pedagogic parameters. This tripartite system of postmethod pedagogy suggested by Kumaravadivelu (2001) consists of "parameters of particularity, practicality and possibility" (p. 538). Particularity as the backbone of postmethod pedagogy deals with the situational understanding of linguistic, social, and political particularities of language teaching and learning context (Leijen et al., 2018). Pursuing particular objectives, PM teachers should practice localized and context-sensitive pedagogy based on learners' needs and wants. On the other hand, in defining practicality Kumaravadivelu makes a clear-cut distinction between experts' theory and teachers' theory. He believes that teachers, possessing context-sensitive pedagogic knowledge, should engage in the process of theorizing from their practice and implementing what they theorize. Accordingly, theory is meaningful while it is practiced and this harmonic relation helps formation and reformation of one another (2001, as cited in Zakeri, 2014). The parameter of possibility asserts that each pedagogy should account for not only the transmission of information to learners but also should bridge the gap between linguistic needs and their socio-political and socio-cultural needs.

The fundamental principle of postmethod pedagogy is to urge teachers to create strategies for language teaching compatible with their real institutional context and learners' needs and wants. These strategies can be eclectically drawn, adapted, and recreated from a set of established methods. Can (2009) defines postmethod as teachers' adjusted classroom practices and teaching principles based on their background knowledge or experience and acquired teaching strategies. According to Kumaravadivelu (2003; 2006, as cited in Scholl, 2017) to enact the above-mentioned tripartite parameters, teachers should employ macrostrategies which operate as primary guidelines for teachers to adjust them according to contextual factors.

Many attempts have been made to offer a well-defined framework of PMP macrostrategies to bridge the gap between theory and practice and to make a practical foundation for the construction of

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postmethod pedagogy. In 1992, the three-dimensional framework was first proposed by Stern as the first attempt to construct a postmethod pedagogy. This framework consists of a continuum of three-dimensional teaching and learning strategies including a) the intralingual-crosslingual dimension; b) the analytic-experiential dimension; c) the explicit–implicit dimension.

The Exploratory Practice framework has been prevalent for about the last two decades and was first suggested by Allwright (2005). As he puts it, "Exploratory Practice is an indefinitely sustainable way for classroom language teachers and learners, while getting on with their learning and teaching, to develop their understandings of life in the language classroom" (Allwright, 2005, p.361).

Evolving between 1999 to 2006, Kumaravadivelu's (2006) macrostrategic framework captured the attention of many ELT scholars worldwide. According to him, macrostrategies as general guidelines allow teachers to autonomously build their context-specific classroom procedures based on the learners' needs. Being theory- and method-natural, macrostrategies empower them to go beyond method restrictions and develop their theories of practice and practice the location-specific theories. The macrostrategies are enumerated as follows: 1. Maximize learning opportunities; 2. facilitate negotiated interaction; 3. minimize perceptual mismatches; 4. activate intuitive heuristics; 5. foster language awareness; 6. contextualize linguistic input; 7. integrate language skills; 8. promote learner autonomy; 9. ensure social relevance; and 10. raise cultural consciousness. He believes that the compatibility feature of this framework helps teachers to generate context-specific microstrategies from the overall macrostrategies which can be congruent with the wants, needs, values, and ideas of both teachers and learners.

Zeng (2012) in a qualitative case study research on 2 Chinese novice EFL teachers tried to explore teachers' cognition and implementation of the postmethod. He showed that teachers mainly employ four macrostrategies including (a) maximizing learning opportunities, (b) facilitating negotiated interaction, (c) contextualizing linguistic input, and (d) promoting learner autonomy.

Birjandi and Hashamdar (2014) claimed that some microstrategies proposed by Kumaravadivelue's framework are not applicable in the Iranian context, therefore, in their study, they aimed to develop context-specific microstrategies by requesting participants to suggest micro-strategies for the original version of Kumaravadivelue's strategic framework consisting of five macrostrategies. The findings revealed the following micro-strategies: for maximizing learning opportunities, they proposed competition games, cyberspace, and technology in use. Striking bargaining, hardtalk, and critical thinking were suggested for facilitating negotiated interaction. To minimize perceptual mismatch, hand in hand, being on the same boat and thinking aloud micro-strategies; and to activate intuitive heuristics, seeing is learning, the research topic of the week and surfing the net were recommended. Finally, speech act practices and spelling it out were best-matched micro-strategies for fostering language awareness.

In 2014, Zakeri conducted a study to correlate the Iranian teacher's approach to teaching speaking skills with pedagogical factors such as practicality, possibility, and particularity, practicality, and possibility. He found out that teachers utilized shadowing, recording, and paraphrasing techniques to improve their learners' speaking proficiency within a postmethodic framework.

Jahan (2019) explored Bangladeshi English teachers' classroom practice congruence with PMP. The results showed that limited teaching resources can be considered as one of the main barriers to the actualization of the macrostrategic framework. It was concluded that teachers preferred to utilize the maximizing learning opportunities, facilitating negotiated interactions, minimizing perceptual mismatches, fostering language awareness, contextualizing linguistic input, and promoting learner autonomy macrostrategies more than others.

Baytur (2020) also, examined nine prospective English teachers' preferences regarding Kumaravadivelue's macrostrategies. The findings indicated that they gave priority to 'raise cultural awareness', while 'activate intuitive heuristics' was reported as the least employed macrostrategy.

Similarly, David and Poonkodi (2020) attempted to find out teachers' perceptions of Kumaravadivelu's postmethod strategic framework and the way they employ its macrostrategies within

online teaching in the COVID-19 pandemic context. Focusing on particularity, possibility, and practicality parameters and 10 postmethod macrostrategies, this study also confirms the effectiveness of PMP strategies in online teaching.

As mentioned earlier, local studies conducted on the realization of PMP by Iranian EFL teachers have yielded contradictory results leaving the EFL community doubtful about using PMP tenets in practice. Moreover, given the scarcity of comprehensive research on investigating the actual utilization of PMP macrostrategies from experienced teachers' perspective to shed light on this challenging orientation for novice EFL teachers, the present study aimed at answering the following questions:

Research Question One: What postmethod pedagogy macrostrategies are utilized by Iranian EFL teachers?

Research Question Two: What are the most and least commonly used postmethod macrostrategies by Iranian EFL teachers?

Methodology

In this part, the methodology and procedures employed in the study are outlined. To ensure clarity, further details about the participants, instruments, and data collection and data analysis procedures are provided in the subsequent sections.

The Setting of the Study

The current study was carried out in various institutes in Kermanshah, Iran, employing a qualitative research approach. A group of 18 qualified and experienced EFL teachers was purposively selected to participate in a semi-structured interview to elicit their PMP macrostrategies.

Participants

The participants of the current study were Iranian EFL teachers from several institutes in Kermanshah such as Safir, Kaihan, Iran Language Institute, Zabansara, Hasanzadeh IELTS Center, and Language College. They were selected based on purposive sampling. The selection criteria included holding an MA or Ph.D. in TEFL, having a solid understanding of postmethod, being an EFL teacher, and having no less than five years of teaching experience. The researcher purposefully chose specific samples of experienced teachers from private language institutes to be interviewed. Given that this stage of the research is qualitative in nature, the interview process will continue until data saturation is achieved, i.e., until no new construct emerges. The purposive sampling was carried out in two stages, outlined below.

Questionnaire-Phase Participants: In this study, a total of 65 experienced EFL teachers from varying institutes were purposively selected to represent a diverse group of individuals. The age range of the study population fell between 26 to 47 years. Participants were given a validated questionnaire on PMP principles (Razmjoo et al., 2013) to assess their familiarity with the topic. Of the given questionnaires, 48 were filled out by the respondents (32 females and 16 males). Upon conducting a thorough review of the questionnaires, it was determined that a total of 14 were deemed incomplete or carelessly filled out (e.g. systematic response selection). After this phase, the researcher was left with a total of 34 completed questionnaires. Participants who obtained over three on each item were selected, with a total score between 88 and 110 (out of 22 items). Of them, 22 were able to reach the required threshold level and were eligible to be interviewed. Interview Phase Participants: In this phase, those who were familiar with the PMP principles were interviewed according to the results of the already-administered questionnaire (Razmjoo et al., 2013). The interviews were conducted cyclically until data saturation was reached. Finally, the researcher was left with a total of 18 participants including 11 female and 7 male teachers for this phase of the study. The demographic characteristics of the study participants are summarized in Table 1 as follows:

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Table 1

Demographic Characteristics of the Participants

Demographics	Description	Number	Percentage (%)
Age	26-36	12	66.66
	37-47	6	33.34
Gender	Female	11	61.11
	Male	7	38.89
	BA	6	33.34
Education	MA	8	44.44
	Ph.D. candidate	3	16.66
	Ph.D.	1	5.56
Years of Experience	5-10	6	33.34
	11-15	9	50
	16-above	3	16.66

Instruments

Postmethod Pedagogy Questionnaire

A PMP questionnaire developed by Razmjoo et al. (2013) was used. It consisted of 22 items that measured the participants' agreement and familiarity with PMP principles, using a Likert scale with responses ranging from 'strongly agree' to 'strongly disagree'. The purpose of the questionnaire was to identify participants who were more proficient in PMP macrostrategies. Participants who scored more than three on each item were selected, with a total score between 88 and 110 (out of 22 items). The questionnaire was validated by Razmjoo et al. (2013) using Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA). The reliability index was estimated through Cronbach Alpha as 0.88.

Interview

As Ary et al. (2010) put it, the interview is the main method of data collection in qualitative studies. Given the priority of interviews for qualitative studies, an in-depth semi-structured interview was used to collect the participants' viewpoints regarding their teaching strategies within the postmethodic framework. Before holding the interview sessions, it was essential for the researcher to develop an interview protocol as a procedural guideline to plan and frame the interview questions. Thus, to develop the questions and to reach a comprehensive threshold level of insight into postmethod macrostrategies utilized by EFL teachers, a large number of papers in the domain were reviewed, and finally, the researcher came up with 14 questions. Accordingly, the questions were piloted with four available interviewees. Two vague questions were revised and reworded and two others were excluded from questions.

Field Notes

Throughout the course of the study, the researcher carefully documented her reflections, opinions, inquiries, and priorities as an essential tool in facilitating the analysis and interpretation of the data gathered from observations and interviews. The meticulous documentation of the researcher enabled her to derive valuable insights and attain a deeper understanding of the field.

Data Collection Procedure

Due to the imposed constraints for carrying out interview sessions, eighteen participants were virtually interviewed in the form of VoIP (Voice over Internet Protocol) mediated interviews. Lo Iacono et al. (2016) argue that although VoIP technologies cannot fully replace face-to-face interviews, they allow

us to interact with participants more economically and efficiently. The following steps were taken for data collection:

As mentioned earlier, an interview protocol was developed to frame and preplan interview questions. 10 open-ended questions were formulated by reviewing a body of relevant literature on postmethod macrostrategies utilized by EFL teachers to be included in the interview. After piloting the questions on four interviewees, two questions were modified and two were excluded. Therefore, 10 questions were developed as interview questions. The nature of the qualitative study provided an evolving cycle of modification to the original version of the interview protocol to ensure that no paramount points and concepts were overlooked and all key issues had been covered effectively. Eventually, a three-session interview was scheduled: the first was devoted to a virtual briefing session to ascertain that all participants were clear on the interview process and purpose. In the second session, to overcome barriers such as traveling, scheduling, and distance, interview sessions were held on Meet, a synchronous online service. The interview sessions were scheduled at the time and date of participants' convenience and choice. To capture all interviewees' opinions no time limit was established, with the shortest lasting 15 minutes and the longest 27 minutes. To express and support their opinions clearly, the participants were allowed to use either L1 or L2, with which they felt least anxious.

Before the interview, their informed consent was obtained. The interviewees were adequately informed about the purpose of the study and what is being asked of them. After a comprehensive explanation of the research process, their voluntary participation and right to opt in or out of study at any moment was retained. Also, their permission to record the interview for transcription and further analysis was given to them.

Since the researcher had an opportunity to scrutinize the transcripts and field notes, the final session was held to eliminate any potential misunderstandings and data deficiencies. Therefore, the transcriptions were emailed to the interviewees to review and verify their viewpoints and make desired modifications. They were also asked to email them back within one week. This process would enhance the quality of interview transcripts and consequently increase the credibility of Ary et al. (2010) of the study.

Data Analysis Procedure

Before data analysis, all recorded interviews were transcribed. Afterward, complementary notes were added by the researcher at the end of each interview.

To analyze the collected qualitative data, the 3-stage-inductive data coding procedure developed by Ary et al. (2010) was followed to look for any possible macrostrategies used by EFL teachers who practice postmethod pedagogy principles in their educational settings. The coding process was done manually in three stages. In the initial stage, the researchers analyzed each transcript individually. In the initial stage to identify the core concepts, a code was assigned to all significant words and phrases to best represent the main idea of each segment. In the second stage, the researcher examined the relationship between the codes and labels to combine similar codes into emergent categories. This resulted in identifying 10 categories. Finally, general themes (four themes) emerged from bringing the categories together. To ensure the consistency and accuracy of the findings, which is called dependability in qualitative studies, the researcher consistently cross-checked the data with codes and follow-up jot notes verifying that they aligned with the previously obtained data. Moreover, to retain consistency with the given codes inter-coder reliability technique was employed. Two additional coders analyzed the given codes. This meticulous process resulted in a consistency rate of 93.7 percent among the coders. Afterward, the inconsistencies within the coding were addressed and resolved.

Results and Discussion

Table 2 indicates the macrostrategies used by teachers based on their frequency of occurrence ordering from the most to the least utilized macrostrategies, addressing the research questions of the study.

Table 2

Postmethod Pedagogy Macrostrategies Utilized by Teachers

PMP Macrostrategies	frequency	%	cumulative frequency (%)
Integrating language skills	18	20.45	20.45
Activating intuitive heuristics	16	18.18	38.63
Contextualizing linguistic input	15	17.05	55.68
Promoting learner autonomy	10	11.36	16.04
Fostering language awareness	9	10.23	77.27
Minimizing perceptual mismatches	6	6.82	84.09
Maximizing learning opportunities	6	6.82	90.91
Facilitating negotiated interaction	5	5.68	96.59
Raising cultural consciousness	2	2.27	98.86
Ensuring social relevance	1	1.14	100
	88	100	

First Research Question

The analysis of data showed that the most important postmethod pedagogy macrostrategies used by EFL teachers were 'integrating language skills' (f=18), 'activating intuitive heuristics' (f=16), and 'contextualizing linguistic input" (f=15) strategies used by EFL teachers, which according to Kumaravadivelu's postmethod framework (2006) is a subcategory of teaching technique. As shown in Table 1, the most frequent macrostrategy used by teachers is related to *integrating language skills* with 20.45% which is categorized as a teaching technique (Kumaravadivelu, 2006). One teacher stated:

English is a real means of interaction not just an object to pass an examination. The learners should be exposed to authentic language rather than a dissection of language forms. Whether an integrated approach is found in task-based or content-based forms, it should challenge learners to face the whole complex picture of language rather than segregated language items…

'Activat*in*g intuitive heuristics' was the next teaching technique macrostrategy utilized by EFL teachers (18.18%). An EFL Ph.D. candidate teaching at ILI Institute emphasized encouraging students to learn by self-discovery and their own experiences rather than depending solely on teachers. He added:

I try to create a rich linguistic environment in my classes to increase learners' language awareness. This will help them discover the underlying patterns of linguistic systems and grammatical rules…

'Contextualizing linguistic input' was the third most important category of teaching technique strategies (17.05%) used by teachers. Perin (2011) noted contextualization is the most theoretically and empirically supported attempt to promote the learning of low-skilled students. It is evident from interviewees' comments that EFL teachers should take the initiative to introduce contextualized input to connect form and function to meet learners' social and communicative demands:

The role of teachers is vital. We should provide the necessary conditions for our students to integrate form and function in a communicative context…

'Promoting learner autonomy' and 'fostering language awareness" are categorized as two essential teaching objective strategies (Kumaravadivelu, 2006) which were followed by 11.36% and 10.23% of participants in the current study, respectively.

Barfield and Brown (as cited in Balçıkanlı, 2010) argued that student autonomy depends on teachers creating a classroom culture that encourages autonomy. To make it happen, respondents recommended some strategies to be implemented in English classes:

To enhance learners' autonomy, we should provide opportunities for learners to take responsibility for their learning process. To this end, teachers should take some steps as follows: make learners aware of learning strategies; train them to use these strategies effectively; encourage them to act and think independently and critically; recognize their voice; and involve them in the decision-making process…

Other strategies used by EFL teachers include "minimizing perceptual mismatches" (f=6; percentage=6.82%), 'maximizing learning opportunities' (f=6; percentage=6.82%), and "facilitating negotiated interaction" (f=5; percentage=5.68%), respectively. They are classified as teaching content category (Kumaravadivelu, 2006) and teachers used these strategies equally.

As Kumaravadivelu (2003, p. 90) puts it "perceptual mismatches are unavoidable, identifiable and manageable"; therefore, teachers' awareness of mismatch sources and accordingly adaptation of context-specific strategies to bridge the gap between teachers' intention and learners' perception is of significant importance in providing more learning opportunities in classes (Kamali & Behjat, 2018). These macrostrategies are mentioned by some teachers as follows:

I encourage my students to ask for help if they do not understand the instruction…

I try to provide correct feedback and give instructional guidance in a comprehendible way…

In each language activity, I make my students aware of my instructional objective…

I also motivate them to look for help if they are confused about the reason for using certain patterns of the English language...

Another macrostrategy that was well-addressed by an MA EFL teacher was 'maximizing learning opportunities'. According to Zhu et al. (2022) experienced teachers can provide students with more learning space by enhancing their identity, increasing their engagement, and extending their contribution. This is in line with the above-mentioned interviewee's comments:

We need to meaningfully involve our learners to provide more learning opportunities for them. To me, the simplest way is to ask questions followed by giving feedback. Recognizing their voice, persuading them to interact with competent L2 speakers, encouraging them to keep journals, and creating context-sensitive teaching materials are some techniques to utilize more often…

Al-Matin (2021) refers to facilitating negotiated interactions as learner-leaner and learner-teacher interactions in which learners can freely take control of classroom talks and topics. One teacher stated:

Cooperative decision-making activities such as group discussions can help foster meaningful interactions. If done successfully, it will result in improving learners' linguistic competence and their conversational potential. I also try to provide the conditions necessary for learners to manage the conversations and topics to achieve their common goal…

Language and culture are inseparable entities and this significance is emphasized by many scholars. For instance, Choudhury (2013) declared that learning a language without its culture can only produce a person who speaks the language well but cannot understand the social embedding context. Also, Jumanova and Makhmudov (2020) argued that learning English without understanding the culture is like eating a salt-free diet.

Despite their importance, 'raising cultural consciousness' and 'ensuring social relevance' as 'teaching content' categories of macrostrategies appeared to be neglected by respondents and ranked as

the least PMP macrostrategies prioritized by teachers, they accounted for 2.27% and 1.18% of the used PMP strategies participants, respectively.

Azizpour (2021) enumerated several challenges EFL teachers encounter regarding teaching cultural/social standards of the English language as follows: lack of professional training opportunities for teachers, fear of instilling the superiority of the target culture to the native one, lack of inclusion of authentic cultural teaching materials into the curriculum. These challenges are observable during interviews insofar as only one teacher reflected the necessity of integrating cultural and social aspects of language into the curriculum in his interview.

I think two overlooked aspects of EFL teaching in our community are cultural and social norms. This ignorance may be rooted in underestimating the necessity of incorporating them into EFL classes leading teachers to prioritize teaching language rather than English social and cultural norms. My recommendation to novice teachers to tackle this challenge is to make learners aware of the need to use the dominant language while preserving their cultural identity. We are here to help learners maintain a balance between their linguistic and cultural identity. Helping learners "read" cultural events in a way that matches their experience is also helpful…

The above-mentioned findings are presented in Table 3 ordered based on the frequency of their appearance in the teachers' comments:

Table 3

Results of Codification

Theme	%	Category	Sample
Teaching technique	55.68%	Integrating language skills	Integrating language skills and linguistic items Fostering four language skills simultaneously Integration of skills and sub-skills Promoting Learners English competence by integrating language skills
		Activating intuitive heuristics	Encouraging students to learn through self-discovery Creating a rich linguistic environment for learners Helping learners to learn from their personal experiences Increasing learners' language awareness to discover the linguistic system Helping learners to infer the underlying patterns of linguistic systems and grammatical rules Creating conditions necessary for raising learners' consciousness about the linguistic system Making learners aware of the need to notice the gap in their linguistic knowledge
		Contextualizing linguistic input	Providing learners, the conditions to integrate form and function in a communicative context Introducing contextualized input to learners to connect form and function with communicative demands and social context
Teaching objective	21.59%	Promoting learner autonomy	Making learners aware of learning strategies Training learners to use learning strategies effectively Enabling learners to think critically Helping learners to take responsibility for learning
		Fostering language awareness	Helping learners pay attention to the formal form Helping to recognize similarities and differences between L1 and L2 Promoting learners' identities Helping learners transfer information Helping learners to become confident language learners

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Teaching interaction	19.32%	Minimizing perceptual mismatches	Identification of mismatched sources Training learners to recognize mismatch sources Converting the perceptual mismatches to learning opportunities Avoiding learners' perceptual mismatches
		Maximizing learning opportunities	Meaningfully involving learners Asking questions to trigger meaningful interaction Giving feedback Persuading learners to interact with competent L2 speakers Creating teaching materials Encouraging learners to keep journals and diaries Recognizing learners' voice
		Facilitating negotiated interaction	Giving the learners the freedom to control the topic Giving the student the chance to conduct classroom conversation Group discussion activity
Teaching content	3.41%	Raising cultural consciousness	Helping learners read cultural events in a way that matches their experience Encouraging learners to negotiate their cultural values Designing tasks to eliminate stereotypes that perpetuate and make cultural misunderstandings Recognizing learners' personal identities and cultural knowledge Sensitizing learners to the complicated relationship between language use and cultural identity and the rich culture around them
		Ensuring social relevance	Using suitable teaching materials Critically considering the process of standardization Paying attention to home language Helping learners maintain a balance between their linguistic and cultural identity Making learners aware of the need to use dominant language while preserving their cultural identity

Second Research Question

As is evident in Table 2 the most frequent teaching interaction macrostrategies used by teachers were integrating language skills, activating intuitive heuristics, and facilitating negotiated interaction strategies (55.68%). On the other hand, raising cultural consciousness and ensuring social relevance (3.41%) were rarely considered important by them. In the same vein, Jahan, (2019) revealed that Bangladeshi teachers utilized contextualizing linguistic input macrostrategy in their PMP practice. On the contrary, Baytur (2020) indicated that teachers gave priority to raising cultural awareness while activating intuitive heuristics was the least used by teachers. In line with the results of the current study, Al-Kadi (2020) showed that the majority of participants integrated language skills based on students' preferences; teachers also showed their tendency to activate students' intuitive heuristics; however, they were not successful in facilitating negotiated interaction among them. In another study, Hooman et al. (2021) found teachers revealed the least willingness to activate the intuitive heuristic of their students, which is in contrast with the result of the present study.

This study adds to the findings of previous studies by indicating that macrostrategies related to teaching techniques are more widely used by Iranian EFL teachers while teaching content macrostrategies are utilized less often. The reason may be rooted in the fact that PMP principles are commonly practiced by professional practitioners and the development of such expertise requires autonomous, knowledgeable, and reflective teachers (Safari & Rashidi, 2016). Therefore, it is not expected for less experienced and unqualified teachers to use those PMP teaching techniques properly and accurately.

The low use of macrostrategies related to the teaching content category can be attributed to the dominancy of system-based instruction in which reading comprehension, writing, grammar, alphabet recognition, vocabulary, and pronunciation are prioritized over teaching social and cultural issues.

Furthermore, another reason to act conservatively in incorporating culture into lesson plans is the teachers' fear of negative consequences on learners' cultural identity. They also face other significant challenges including limited time and a lack of professional development opportunities and knowledge of transferring cultural skills to their students. (Azizpour, 2021). This ignorance, according to Sehlaoui (2001), may be rooted in the paucity of research on suggesting effective techniques or constructive strategies for teaching culture to learners. Thus, conducting research on incorporating culture into educational programs is a necessity (Coyle et al., 2010).

Conclusion

The current study was an attempt to enlighten the ambiguous aspect of postmethod pedagogy for the EFL community by seeking macrostrategies used by Iranian experienced EFL practitioners. The findings revealed that teaching technique-based macrostrategies including integrating language skills, activating intuitive heuristics, and contextualizing linguistic input are the most frequently macrostrategies used by teachers. As it is obvious, implementing PMP macrostrategies requires qualified, knowledgeable, and proficient EFL teachers who are ready to face the restrictions imposed by policymakers, curriculum and material developers, and test designers. They should be theorizers, researchers, and reflective and autonomous teachers to tackle the burden of implementing postmethod principles in practice. The expertise of experienced teachers in applying the postmethod is attributed to their ability to employ a variety of macrostrategies which can be considered as the primary factor contributing to their success. These results establish a clear correlation between the use of integrating language skills, activating intuitive heuristics, and contextualizing linguistic input macrostrategies and positive outcomes in the application of the postmethod teaching methodology. On the other hand, teaching content macrostrategies consisting of raising cultural consciousness and ensuring social relevance were enumerated as the least employed ones. This ignorance in the inclusion of teaching social and cultural norms of the English language may be rooted in teachers' presupposition that they may endanger their students' cultural identity. Thus, the incorporation of foreign language culture into the curriculum is a critical consideration that educational policymakers must prioritize. Language and culture are inherently interconnected, and integrating cultural aspects can significantly enhance the learning experience. Therefore, policymakers must devote special attention to cultural elements when making decisions about educational programs. This idea can significantly increase the attention of students to communicate with people and create meaningful connections with the cultural context.

These findings must be replicated with EFL teachers from various settings. As the study was delimited to English language institutes in Kermanshah, it is crucial to see if the data collected from other teachers yields similar results. Additionally, this study utilized Kumaravalivelue's PMP framework as its theoretical foundation, other studies can use other frameworks as the point of departure.

The extensive range of macrostrategies and techniques revealed in this research can enhance the teaching practices of educators at every level greatly. These findings may not only provide valuable insights but also offer practical guidance for both pre- and in-service teachers who seek guidelines to improve their instructional methods. Furthermore, novice teachers can derive immense benefits from the thorough analysis and recommendations outlined in this study as they step into their teaching career with confidence.

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Declaration of Conflict of Interests

The authors have no conflicts of interest to disclose.

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