



A Critical Look at Language Teacher Practices Using the KARDS Model: Meeting the Postmethod Condition

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Abstract

From an interpretivist viewpoint, the authors demonstrate current practices inside the language teaching environment and compare them against the qualities within KARDS model to language teacher education (Knowing, Analyzing, Recognizing, Doing, and Seeing) for a global society encompassing the macrostrategic framework toward modern language teaching based on particularity, practicality, and possibility (the 3Ps). The guiding questions to this comparative case study are: Do teachers in practice possess these proposed traits? How do they meet or not the postmethod condition? English language teachers with various Master's degrees and their students participated in the study at a Colombian university. Analysis of teacher reported data, classroom observations, and student reviews of their teachers, demonstrated teachers have strong practical and personal knowledge in their understanding and attempts to meet learner particularities. Additional findings indicate, however, a lack of critical approaches toward fostering student critical thinking and critical practices. Recommendations are made for more explicit language teacher education practices including critical reflection and action.

Keywords: *Language teacher education, English language teaching, English as a foreign or second language, Modular model of language teacher education;*

1.0 Introduction

Recent demands within educational contexts not only impose innovative ideas and approaches regarding English language acquisition [1], but also warrant a shift upon underlying instructional practices. Throughout second language learning and teaching history, studies show that 1) combining receptive notions, productive behaviors, and personal factors such as learner beliefs, attitudes, and age [2], [3], [4] support second language development; 2) classroom practices are often shaped by language teachers' perceptions, working environments, and institutional policies establishing inextricable links between language teachers' pedagogical knowledge and beliefs as well as instructional practices [5].

The postmethod condition in language teaching, as discussed by Kumaravadivelu "refigures the relationship" between theory and practice by finding an "alternative to method rather than an alternative method" and "principled pragmatism" [6]. Within this condition, he describes the relevance of postmethod pedagogy, the macrostrategic framework and its intertwined pedagogic parameters (the 3Ps): *Particularity*, participants' sensitivity toward the learning context; *Practicality*, theory and practice relationship; and *Possibility*, socio-political, economical and historical environments [7].

2.0 Theoretical background

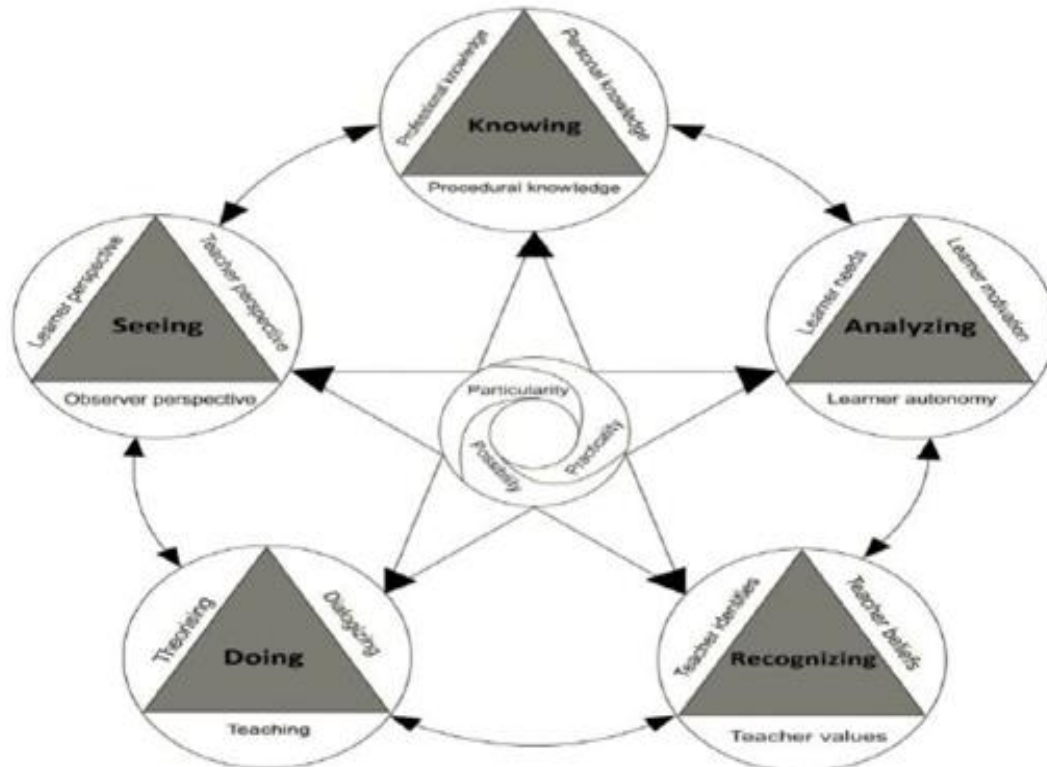
Language teacher education initially emphasized how and what teachers should learn, a perspective informed by the dual relationship between thought and action [8]. Studies have examined teacher learning cognition [9], narratives [10], professional development resulting from inner motivation [11], the specific content that must be learned, [12] and the core competencies that should be acquired [13].

Current frameworks of language teacher education derive from theory and models of learning. Nation [14], developed the *Fours Strands Framework*. Each strand is identified by a set of necessary conditions which teachers can use to guide their practice and help language learners achieve their goals. Similarly, Jimenez, Lamb, and Vieira, [15] proposed a flexible framework that fosters teachers and learners' autonomy to encourage and enhance classroom dynamics. Korthagen and Vasalos [16] developed a

model based on the various depths of a person's core qualities so that teachers reflect to discover their qualities, ideals, strengths, and obstacles to overcome.

The macrostrategic framework "(e)merged" with postmethod pedagogy in modern language teaching and teacher education and includes 10 macrostrategies aimed toward promoting critical, creative, contextual, reflective learning spaces as well as enabling teachers to "theorize from practice and practice what they theorize" [6]. The KARDS model of language teacher education for a global society [17, Fig. 1] further enhanced and contextualized the postmethod pedagogy and the macrostrategic framework: *Knowing*, the teachers' ability of paying attention to and reflecting upon professional, procedural and personal knowledge; *Analyzing*, the teacher's ability to determine learner needs, motivation, and autonomy; *Recognizing*, the teacher's ability to recognize and renew identity, beliefs, and values; *Doing*, the choices the teacher makes to approach a classroom situation; and *Seeing*, the application of knowledge to connect the agents to the action and vice versa; the lived experiences [18] of change and connection [17].

Fig. 1. Modular model of language teacher education for a global society: KARDS [17]



3.0 Purpose and aims of the study

The guiding questions to this comparative case study are: Do teachers in practice possess these proposed qualities? How do they meet or not the postmethod condition? The aims are to compare and interpret what in-service teachers reveal about their teaching practices versus what takes place inside the language classroom through the lens of the modular approach to language teacher education.



4.0 Methodology

The research was conducted in a Colombian university language institute with nine English language teachers and their students ($n=121$). Teachers' experience ranges from one to 20 plus years. They hold language and linguistics Master's degrees conferred in different regions of the world.

The data obtained for this study were analyzed quantitatively considering the aspects and particulars of each module of the KARDS model through teacher personal responses and reflective journals, classroom observations, and student evaluation of teachers. Teachers worked freely on the journal procedure and reported fortnightly in a personalized Google Doc. The observations happened concurrently depending upon teacher and observer availability.

A checklist and its rubric were designed for data collection from the 3Ps and the qualities within each module of KARDS and their respective components. Criteria quantify the degree to which the trait or behavior of the component was met (5, the teacher obviously demonstrates the traits or behaviors incorporated within the category to 1, none were noticed). All data were then placed into SPSS 25 accordingly.

4.0 Results and discussion

4.1 Personal responses

The personal responses were analyzed within the modules in the following manner: *Knowing and Doing (combined)*, *Analyzing, Recognizing, and Seeing* (T perspective). The average measure ICC was .909 with a 95% confidence interval from .779 to .976 ($F(8, 56) = 11.00, p < .001$). Correspondingly, Rater 1 reported ($M= 4.1, SD=0.78; M= 4.2, SD=0.67; M= 4.1, SD=0.78; M= 4, SD=0.71$) and Rater 2 ($M= 3.6, SD=1.1; M= 3.6, SD=1.1; M= 3.6, SD=1.1; M= 3.7, SD=1.1$). Though results from the two raters are acceptable, the results demonstrate a possibility of some more critical reflection of their individual teaching practice and theoretical knowledge.

4.2 Teacher reflective journals

The reflective journals were analyzed the same as the personal responses. The average measure ICC was .893 with a 95% confidence interval from .779 to .976 ($F(8, 56) = 9.303, p < .001$). Respectively, Rater 1 revealed ($M= 3.9, SD=0.5; M= 3.9, SD=0.3; M= 3.7, SD=0.6; M= 4.1, SD=0.4$) and Rater 2 ($M= 3.3, SD=0.6; M= 3.2, SD=0.5; M= 3.2, SD=0.6; M= 3.0, SD=0.6$). Again, the results are acceptable from the two raters with Rater 2 averaging more toward the lower end of the scale. This could demonstrate that the reflections indicate less knowledge of classroom practice than the teachers' classroom practices.

4.3 Classroom observations

Classroom observations were measured using the postmethod criteria (3Ps) as well *Knowing, Doing, and Analyzing* along with corresponding micro components. Within *Practicality*, 27.5% measured below noticeable. In *Particularity*, participants recorded above average, but *Possibility* showed that only 25% reached noticeable. Results for *Knowing*, in both the professional and procedural components, 25% measured below noticeable and 12.5% in the personal component. The results for *Doing* scored below noticeable in both theorizing and teaching, at 25% and 37.5%, accordingly. In *Analyzing*, 25% within learner needs and 12.5% for learner motivation were below average, but an astounding 62.5% did not measure above noticeable. Two of those participants did not demonstrate any action for promoting learner autonomy during the observation. These results also demonstrate that teachers tend to lean toward pedagogical knowledge over contextual particularities and needs. Student participation is rarely noticed from the outsider perspective. This could indicate prescriptive, routine behaviors hindered by years of practice or novice skills resulting in the student remaining a secondary participant in the language learning process.

4.4 Student evaluations

In general, students agreed strongly that their teachers acted accordingly and managed the areas very well (Table 1). Teacher 4, however, yielded lower scores than the other participants with an $M=2.6$ for



statement 4 and an $M=3.3$ on question 2. The results show that students are satisfied with their learning with these teachers.

Table 1. Student evaluation of teachers

Teacher # (student=)	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5
1 (n=18)	5	4,9	5	4,8	4,7
2 (n=32)	4,9	4,9	4,8	4,8	4,8
3 (n=11)	4,7	4,9	4,6	4,6	4,7
4(n=17)	3,9	3,3	4	2,6	3,5
5(n=16)	4,7	3,8	4,7	3,7	4,1
6(n=2)	5	5	5	5	5
7(n=9)	5	5	4,7	4,9	4,9
8(n=16)	4,6	4,6	4,8	4,6	4,5
Total n=121	4.7	4.6	4.7	4.4	4.5

5.0 Conclusions

These findings demonstrate that in-service teachers possess most of the proposed qualities within the KARDS model. First of all, within *Knowing* and *Doing*, teachers demonstrate they are knowledgeable of the content and how to teach it. The teachers were good at analyzing classroom events, but a gap exists between teacher perceptions of practice and the observed practice. *Analyzing, Recognizing, and Seeing* however, demonstrate a lack of critical approaches among teachers and possibly students toward manipulating and discussing contextual particularities, fostering student critical thinking, and enabling more reflective and critical practices. Our recommendation is that a wider range of in-service teacher practice research challenges and helps teachers meet the postmethod condition.

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