

Postmethod Pedagogy and College English Teachers' On-the-Spot

Classroom Moves: Values and Practical Applications

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Abstract: *Against the backdrop of diversified student language proficiency and generative classroom interactions in Chinese university general English courses, rigid scripted teaching fails to cater to differentiated learning demands, which makes teachers' in-class spontaneous adaptive adjustments a vital link connecting postmethod pedagogy with real teaching practice. This paper adopts postmethod pedagogy, sociocultural theory and activity theory as the analytical framework, relying on literature sorting and theoretical deduction to conduct a conceptual research without empirical data collection. It defines and categorizes teachers' classroom improvisation, elaborates its dialectical relationship with pre-planned teaching, constructs tentative differentiated implementation frameworks for four mainstream college English courses, and identifies four institutional and individual barriers restricting teachers' rational use of improvisation with corresponding optimization ideas. The study clarifies the multi-layered educational value of targeted classroom improvisation and distinguishes it from aimless off-topic talks. It expands the localized application of postmethod theory in non-English major college English teaching, provides directional references for frontline teachers to adjust classroom instruction dynamically, and acknowledges its limitation as a purely theoretical exploration pending subsequent empirical verification.*

Keywords: postmethod pedagogy, general college English, teachers' classroom improvisation, theoretical construction, in-class interaction

INTRODUCTION

Research Background and Core Research Questions

Over the past two decades, postmethod pedagogy has overturned the long-standing pursuit of universal one-size-fits-all language teaching approaches, advocating context-based flexible teaching adjustment instead of mechanical repetition of fixed lesson procedures. This

theoretical turn delivers strong guiding significance for general college English teaching in Chinese universities, where one class usually accommodates undergraduates with drastically uneven language foundations, disparate learning motivations and varied self-study habits. During instruction, students frequently raise unexpected questions, propose unique interpretations of textbook texts or get confused by language points unmentioned in pre-written lesson plans. If teachers rigidly follow preset teaching scripts, they cannot deliver tiered guidance for students at different levels and will neglect valuable student-generated learning resources, which gives rise to the core research object of this paper: teachers' context-sensitive on-the-spot classroom improvisation.

Despite the inherent logical fit between postmethod concepts and improvisational teaching, frontline college English teachers widely hold biased perceptions. Many equate spontaneous in-class adjustments with inadequate lesson preparation, while school supervisors tend to treat flexible teaching moves as digressions that delay teaching schedules. Domestic academic research also leaves prominent research gaps: few studies integrate postmethod pedagogy and college English classroom improvisation as the central research focus. Most existing literature merely introduces Western postmethod theories or simplifies adaptive classroom responses as basic emergency management skills, failing to establish internal logical connections with the core connotations of postmethod pedagogy. Against such theoretical and practical predicaments, this paper carries out systematic conceptual research on the definition, value, operation logic and restrictive factors of teachers' classroom improvisation, with dual theoretical and practical reference value for local college English teaching reform.

Supplementary Discussion on the Local Adaptability of Postmethod Pedagogy in China
Originated from Western second language teaching research, postmethod pedagogy was initially summarized based on multilingual classrooms, adult foreign language learning and cross-cultural teaching scenarios overseas. Its three core normative principles of particularity, practicality and possibility are not mechanically applicable to Chinese university English teaching without localization adaptation, which determines the necessity of this research's localized theoretical construction.

First, the principle of particularity corresponds to the unique student composition of domestic non-English major college English classes. Unlike overseas small-group language courses, Chinese university English classes feature large class sizes and extreme gaps in students' high school English training experience. Postmethod's emphasis on matching teaching design to group characteristics cannot be realized through imported Western small-class teaching modes; it requires localized classroom improvisation strategies for large mixed-ability classes. Second, the principle of practicality fits the compulsory positioning of general college English.

Domestic college English teaching is constrained by unified curriculum standards, credit hours and assessment systems, so all flexible in-class adjustments must serve standardized curriculum objectives rather than pursuing stylized classroom activities with low learning efficiency. Third, the principle of possibility responds to the characteristics of Chinese classroom culture. Chinese students tend to be reserved in voluntary class expression, so teachers' targeted improvisation to activate participation and dig student-generated questions becomes a vital localized practice path of postmethod thought.

In summary, postmethod pedagogy provides a top-level normative framework, yet its implementation in Chinese college English classrooms relies on localized micro-teaching behaviors represented by classroom improvisation, which constitutes the fundamental starting point of this research.

Research Design, Theoretical and Practical Contributions

This conceptual research centers on three interlocked core research questions: to clarify the connotation, classification and dialectical interaction of pre-planned teaching and classroom improvisation; to interpret the multi-dimensional educational value of improvisational teaching based on three foundational theories; to construct targeted hypothetical implementation frameworks for different college English courses, sort out structural obstacles to improvisation and propose matching optimization ideas. The research adopts three complementary analytical methods: literature sorting, theoretical deduction and comparative conceptual analysis, covering classic monographs and 2025 cutting-edge international research to guarantee comprehensive and updated literature basis. It clearly defines itself as non-empirical research without classroom observation, questionnaires, interviews or teaching experiments, and follows the progressive logical chain of theoretical foundation construction—value analysis—hypothetical framework construction—obstacle identification—optimization strategy proposal.

This study delivers three major innovative contributions filling existing research gaps. Theoretically, it constructs an integrated analytical link between postmethod pedagogy and micro-level classroom improvisation, expanding the localized application boundary of postmethod theory in domestic non-English major undergraduate English teaching and forming a complete coherent research chain covering concept definition, behavior classification, value interpretation, application norms and practical countermeasures to remedy the fragmentation of prior scattered case research. Practically, it corrects teachers' long-term biased cognition of improvisational adjustment, establishes differentiated tentative operation paths for comprehensive English, oral English, reading and writing courses as well as standardized coping logic for three frequent classroom scenarios, providing directional thinking for teachers to improve real-time adaptive teaching ability. Structurally, it distinguishes theoretical

deduction from operable classroom practice, eliminating the logical flaw of previous studies that put forward definitive teaching plans without supporting field data.

The research also identifies its inherent analytical difficulties: drawing a clear boundary between pre-planned teaching and improvisation without falling into binary opposition, and translating abstract postmethod macro ideas into context-based operable hypothetical teaching moves understandable for frontline teachers, a common challenge for all data-free theoretical research. Follow-up empirical classroom research is required to test the effectiveness of all tentative frameworks and optimization viewpoints proposed in this paper.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Critical Discussion with Existing Research and Identification of Conceptual Research Gaps

This chapter systematically sorts and critically reviews domestic and overseas literature covering postmethod pedagogy, classroom teaching improvisation and standardized pre-planned language teaching, conducting critical dialogue with the limitations of prior research rather than simply enumerating research results, and summarizing three interconnected conceptual research gaps targeted by this paper.

Research on Postmethod Pedagogy

Kumaravadivelu formally put forward postmethod pedagogy in 2001, breaking the decades-long disciplinary consensus of seeking universal teaching methods applicable to all second language learning environments. The theoretical system is supported by three mutually restrictive normative principles: particularity, practicality and possibility, reshaping teachers' identity from mechanical method followers to reflective context-based learning designers. Overseas applied linguists have accumulated abundant empirical evidence verifying the explanatory power of postmethod pedagogy in multilingual mixed-ability classrooms, yet domestic relevant research remains confined to translation and introductory commentary of Western theoretical systems. Few scholars connect postmethod's core normative logic with micro teaching behaviors in large-size domestic college English classrooms, ignoring the localized implementation carrier of postmethod thought, which forms the first prominent research blank.

Research on Classroom Teaching Improvisation

Derived from music and drama theories and later introduced into pedagogy, teaching improvisation differs fundamentally from unrestricted artistic creation, as all adaptive in-class adjustments must center on preset curriculum objectives. Overseas scholars have launched

systematic qualitative research on improvisation in multilingual postgraduate English classrooms, confirming that targeted spontaneous teaching moves narrow student proficiency gaps and delivering solid evidence to refute the misconception that improvisation equals inadequate lesson preparation. From the perspective of sociocultural theory, overseas research further reveals that teacher-student interaction generated by improvisation builds personalized zones of proximal development to facilitate students' independent language development. In contrast, domestic research on teaching improvisation is scarce, with most studies focusing on primary and secondary school scenarios while ignoring college English teaching objects. Local scholars generally simplify improvisation as a single skill for handling teaching accidents, failing to explore its internal theoretical correlation with postmethod pedagogy, forming the second research gap of this paper.

Research on Standardized Pre-Planned Language Teaching

Standardized pre-written lesson plans constitute the mainstream teaching paradigm recognized by domestic university foreign language education, with existing literature mostly focusing on standardized lesson writing specifications and fixed sequential teaching procedures. Scholars generally acknowledge that complete pre-planned teaching ensures systematic knowledge transmission and stable teaching progress, yet related research rarely discusses classroom adaptive ability from the perspective of overall teaching paradigm transformation. Domestic studies merely treat in-class emergency response as fragmented classroom management skills, without constructing layered differentiated operation frameworks matching different types of college English courses, which creates the third core research gap this theoretical exploration intends to fill.

Comprehensive Critical Summary of Research Gaps and Comparative Analysis with Prior Studies

After critical evaluation of domestic and overseas literature, three interconnected conceptual blanks are summarized, and the table below visually contrasts the defects of existing research and the breakthroughs of this paper to highlight the research necessity of this study.

Comparison Dimension	Deficiencies of Existing Domestic and Overseas Research	Core Breakthroughs of This Research
Research Object Association	Postmethod pedagogy and classroom improvisation are studied separately; no research takes their combination as the central analytical object	Constructs an integrated research framework linking postmethod normative ideas and college English teachers' improvisational behaviors, forming a unified analytical perspective
Research System Completeness	Scattered case descriptions without unified concept classification standards, general application norms and systematic operation frameworks	Builds a complete closed research chain: concept definition—behavior classification—value analysis—application hypotheses—obstacle countermeasures, resolving fragmented research defects
Localization Degree	Overseas research targets small multilingual classes; domestic studies copy Western modes without analyzing localized restrictive factors of Chinese college English teaching	Takes domestic large mixed-ability classes, campus teaching culture and university assessment standards as core context, summarizes China-specific obstacles and targeted localized optimization hypotheses

Theoretical Framework and Research Design

This chapter includes two core parts: unified definition and scope division of core concepts to resolve terminological confusion in prior research, and elaboration of the three-layer integrated theoretical system supporting the paper's reasoning, together with standardized illustration of non-empirical research design and its inherent limitations.

Definition and Scope Division of Core Concepts

This paper unifies the expression of key confusing terms as the foundational premise of subsequent theoretical deduction, defining three core concepts and distinguishing improvisation from easily confused similar teaching notions.

Postmethod pedagogy emerged as a correction to the limitations of single fixed teaching approaches such as audiolingualism and communicative language teaching, abandoning the pursuit of universal teaching steps and requiring all teaching design to adapt to specific classroom environments, mixed student groups and local campus culture. Its three core normative principles run through all teaching links: particularity demands tailored teaching design matching student group characteristics; practicality eliminates formalized low-efficiency classroom activities and focuses on solving students' real learning difficulties; possibility guides teachers to excavate valuable learning resources from student spontaneous questions and sharing, breaking the limitation of fixed textbook content. Under this theoretical system, assembly-line unified classroom teaching transforms into dynamic collaborative learning environments co-constructed by teachers and students.

College English teachers' classroom improvisation adopts a broad definition beyond narrow emergency handling: within the overall preset lesson framework and core curriculum objectives, it refers to temporary adaptive adjustments made by teachers relying on professional knowledge and real-time observation of students' learning states, triggered by teaching accidents, student generative questions, mismatched task difficulty and silent classroom participation. Four types of improvisation are divided according to triggering scenarios: accident-handling improvisation, response improvisation for student-generated questions, level-adaptive layered improvisation and atmosphere-activating improvisation. Four distinctive features distinguish standardized teaching improvisation from meaningless off-topic chatting: situational triggering without pre-class design, flexible adjustable operation scale, restriction by core lesson objectives and dependence on systematic professional teaching knowledge.

Pre-planned teaching refers to standardized sequential teaching activities fully designed before class based on curriculum standards, textbooks and basic pre-class judgment of students' foundations, with two core institutional functions: guaranteeing systematic knowledge accumulation and stable predictable teaching progress, serving as the necessary basic framework for all formal college English teaching in Chinese universities. To eliminate terminological confusion in prior research, this paper draws clear boundaries between improvisation and two similar concepts: pedagogical tact represents teachers' internal reflective professional quality, while classroom improvisation is the external visible teaching behavior embodied by such inner wisdom; classroom accident handling ability only covers sudden teaching breakdowns, with a far narrower scope than multi-functional improvisation including layered differentiated teaching and content expansion.

Inherent Conceptual Consistency Between Postmethod Pedagogy and Classroom Improvisation

Comparative conceptual analysis reveals inherent matching logic between postmethod pedagogy's normative system and the basic characteristics of classroom improvisation, which lays the core theoretical basis for taking the two as joint research objects. First, consistent normative tendency: both reject rigid scripted teaching and prioritize dynamic context-responsive classroom operation over mechanical fixed procedures. Second, consistent triggering logic: postmethod requires teaching to adapt to real-time student conditions, while improvisation is precisely activated by unexpected classroom changes and demands teachers to adjust instruction based on on-site student feedback. Third, consistent emphasis on teacher subjectivity: postmethod advocates reflective creative teachers with independent contextual judgment; rational use of improvisation relies on instant professional judgment, and post-class reflection on adjustment effects continuously upgrades teachers' teaching literacy, highly aligning with postmethod's ideal teacher identity.

In summary, postmethod pedagogy provides normative guidance and theoretical legitimacy for classroom improvisation, while teachers' spontaneous in-class adjustments act as the observable micro-carrier transforming abstract postmethod macro ideas into daily classroom practice. The two concepts are mutually dependent and mutually reinforcing, incapable of independent analytical research with persuasive conclusions.

Three-Layer Integrated Theoretical Analysis System

Three interlocked foundational theories jointly form a closed multi-dimensional analytical system, explaining the internal operation logic of teachers' improvisation from complementary value guidance, micro cognitive mechanism and classroom practice perspectives. Postmethod pedagogy serves as the value guidance layer, answering the normative question of why college English teachers should implement improvisational adjustments. It criticizes uniform rigid teaching modes and centers teachers' independent contextual judgment, perfectly matching the situational, flexible and goal-oriented features of classroom improvisation, providing solid theoretical support for tiered personalized teaching and excavation of student-generated learning resources.

Sociocultural theory constitutes the internal operation layer, interpreting the micro cognitive path through which improvisation promotes students' language development centered on Vygotsky's zone of proximal development. Second language learning is defined as a social interactive process; teachers' targeted temporary questioning, layered guiding language and one-on-one communication build personalized learning scaffolding, helping students narrow the gap between current independent language ability and potential developmental level to

realize flexible language application.

Activity theory acts as the real classroom application layer, analyzing the functional mechanism of improvisation within independent single-class activity systems composed of participants, teaching tools, learning tasks, interaction rules, labor division and curriculum objectives. Pre-planned lesson plans maintain the basic stable operation of activity systems, while improvisational adjustments resolve unbalanced states caused by mismatched task difficulty, low student participation and teaching equipment failures, ensuring orderly progression of all teaching links.

Non-Empirical Theoretical Research Design and Its Limitations

This paper is positioned as pure conceptual theoretical exploration without any primary data collection, including classroom observation, questionnaires, interviews and controlled teaching experiments. All deduction, analysis and tentative hypotheses are derived from authoritative peer-reviewed literature, recognized second language teaching rules and general observation of domestic college English classroom reality. Research materials cover classic theoretical monographs and 2025 frontier overseas core journal papers to guarantee complete, updated and credible literature foundation. Three analytical methods support rigorous reasoning: systematic literature sorting to prove existing research gaps; theoretical deduction based on the three-layer integrated theoretical system to infer core concepts, value and optimization paths; comparative conceptual analysis to distinguish pre-planned teaching and improvisation, and differentiate improvisation modes for various English courses. The research follows a progressive logical chain to avoid overstating practical effects without empirical evidence, and all tentative frameworks and strategies proposed herein remain to be verified by long-term frontline classroom research.

Classification and Theoretical Value Analysis of Teachers' Classroom Improvisation

This core analytical chapter elaborates the dialectical interaction between pre-planned teaching and improvisation, classifies four types of improvisation with explicit theoretical derivation logic, interprets its core educational value with clarified dimension selection rationale, constructs universal application norms and differentiated course-based hypothetical frameworks, and sorts out multi-layered restrictive obstacles with corresponding optimization ideas.

The Dialectical Complementary Relationship Between Pre-Planned Teaching and Classroom Improvisation

Pre-planned scripted teaching and improvisational adjustment are not mutually exclusive alternatives, but complementary and mutually restrictive components of a complete college

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English classroom operation system. The table below contrasts their core characteristics from four dimensions, followed by concise interpretation of their unified interactive logic.

Table 1 Comparison between Pre-Planned Scripted Teaching and Classroom Improvisational Adjustments

Comparison Dimension	Pre-Planned Scripted Teaching	Classroom Improvisational Adjustments
Design Time & Logic	Completed fully before class, fixed sequential steps with limited flexible reserve space	Generated dynamically during class, adjustable repeatedly according to student real-time feedback
Standardization Level	High unified standard, replicable for parallel classes	Strong context specificity, no unified fixed implementation form
Core Teaching Function	Complete compulsory curriculum objectives, stabilize teaching progress and systematic knowledge accumulation	Make up for rigid limitations of static lesson plans, excavate unpredictable student-generated learning resources
Theoretical Position	Main structural framework of formal classroom teaching	Supplementary flexible adjustment tool for pre-planned teaching

Their complementary interaction is reflected in two dimensions. On one hand, thorough pre-class lesson preparation is the necessary prerequisite for effective goal-oriented improvisation: all valuable targeted temporary adjustments must rely on complete preset lesson frameworks and clear core teaching objectives, and aimless free chatting cannot be categorized as professional teaching improvisation. Teachers who lack detailed pre-planning tend to produce unregulated digressions that deviate from curriculum standards, which fundamentally differs from standardized, objective-driven improvisation defined in this research. On the other hand, improvisation remedies the inherent defects of pre-planned teaching. No matter how detailed lesson plans are, they cannot fully predict student unexpected questions, changeable classroom atmosphere and personalized text interpretations; teachers' on-site adaptive adjustments resolve the static limitations of written teaching designs and realize responsive teaching for dynamic real classroom conditions. Pre-set teaching content can only cover average learning needs of student groups, while improvisation fills the personalized learning gaps ignored by standardized teaching design.

In daily teaching practice, unified boundary norms must be followed: all improvisational moves cannot deviate from lesson core learning objectives, only serving as supplementary revisions rather than complete abandonment of preset teaching tasks. Teachers should control the time and content scope of improvisation under the moderation principle to avoid excessive flexible

adjustment delaying completion of core planned teaching content. Specifically, improvisational expansion should generally occupy less than one-third of single-class teaching hours, and all temporary supplementary activities must eventually return to the central knowledge points arranged in lesson plans. This moderate boundary balances the stability of teaching progress and the flexibility of generative teaching, realizing the organic integration of static pre-planning and dynamic on-site adjustment required by postmethod pedagogy.

Classification of Improvisation and Its Core Theoretical Value

Drawing on activity theory's distinction between external disruptions and internal pedagogical adjustments, this paper classifies classroom improvisation along two intersecting dimensions: trigger source (external incidents vs. student-generated input) and pedagogical function (maintaining order vs. enhancing learning). This yields four distinct types of spontaneous adaptive teaching moves triggered by differentiated classroom scenarios. Based on this theoretically grounded classification system, this section further conducts cross-theoretical in-depth analysis centering on two core value dimensions, rather than scattered generalized discussion covering all potential dimensions.

Four Classified Types of Classroom Improvisation

Accident-handling improvisation is triggered by external disruptive incidents outside student learning input, such as damaged multimedia equipment, sudden classroom noise and scattered student attention; its core pedagogical function is maintaining normal classroom order and uninterrupted teaching progress. Teachers switch teaching carriers or design low-pressure mini-activities to recover student focus, ensuring core curriculum tasks can be delivered as scheduled without excessive delay. This type of improvisation corresponds to the "external incident + order maintenance" quadrant of the two-dimensional classification standard.

Student-generative response improvisation originates from internal student-generated input rather than external accidents, and its core function is to deepen learning quality by responding to personalized student thinking. It activates when students raise out-of-text questions or show collective confusion over unplanned language points, with teachers temporarily adding supplementary knowledge or group discussion tasks to tap student spontaneous thinking value. It falls into the "student-generated input + enhancing learning" quadrant, fully reflecting postmethod pedagogy's possibility principle of excavating endogenous student learning resources.

Level-adaptive layered improvisation is also driven by student internal learning gaps (student-generated input of mismatched learning ability) and targets optimized hierarchical learning experience. It applies when preset task difficulty mismatches students' overall proficiency:

teachers split complex tasks into basic links for underachievers and design extended exercises for advanced learners to realize real-time differentiated teaching. Different from response improvisation targeting knowledge confusion, this type focuses on balancing proficiency gaps within mixed-ability classes, realizing individualized teaching required by postmethod's particularity principle.

Atmosphere-activating improvisation takes silent classroom participation as its triggering student-generated input, with the core function of constructing inclusive interactive learning environments to lift overall classroom learning efficiency. It targets silent speaking classrooms, adopting low-pressure dialogue topics and sentence frame supports to reduce foreign language speaking anxiety and build error-tolerant inclusive classroom atmosphere. It complements layered improvisation by solving affective barriers of language output, another critical internal learning obstacle in large Chinese college English classes.

The two-dimensional classification logic derived from activity theory ensures the four types are mutually exclusive and collectively exhaustive for mainstream classroom improvisation scenarios in domestic college English courses, avoiding overlapping or missing categories common in previous experience-based classification systems. Every on-site adaptive adjustment implemented by teachers can be clearly attributed to one of the four types according to its trigger source and core pedagogical function, laying a unified analytical standard for subsequent empirical classroom observation research.

Core Theoretical Value: Student Development and Teacher Professional Growth

While improvisation generates educational value across multiple dimensions, this section deliberately focuses on two that are most directly linked to postmethod pedagogy's core concerns: student individual development (reflecting the "possibility" principle) and teacher professional growth (reflecting the "practicality" principle). Other dimensions including classroom operational stability and routine teacher-student interaction, though relevant to improvisation's functions, are systematically analyzed in Section 4.3 through course-specific implementation frameworks and standardized scenario coping paths, so repeated discussion is omitted here to avoid redundant logical narration and highlight the unique theoretical contribution of this research.

From the student individual development dimension, sociocultural theory explains how improvisation promotes hierarchical language growth. Atmosphere-focused improvisation eliminates psychological barriers to oral output, while layered real-time guidance constructs personalized temporary zones of proximal development matching different student groups' current ability. Guided by targeted improvisation, students break away from mechanical rote

memorization and form critical thinking and context-based flexible language application ability, fully practicing postmethod pedagogy's possibility principle of excavating student internal learning potential. For underachieving students, layered scaffolding provided by adaptive improvisation shortens their distance to reach basic curriculum standards; for advanced learners, extended generative tasks from response improvisation offer space for higher-order language thinking, realizing tiered student development that rigid unified lesson plans cannot achieve. Long-term accumulation of such personalized interactive experience also helps students shape autonomous learning awareness, a long-term educational value beyond single-class knowledge acquisition.

From the teacher professional growth dimension, repeated rational use of improvisation accelerates the transformation of teachers' professional identity advocated by postmethod pedagogy. Continuous on-site observation of student learning states improves teachers' instant classroom judgment ability, while responding to diversified student questions enriches teachers' language and cross-cultural knowledge reserves. Post-class reflection on the effect of each improvisational adjustment helps teachers abandon the identity of mechanical lesson plan executors and evolve into reflective creative educators capable of independent contextual teaching design, forming a closed-loop growth path of classroom practice—reflection—teaching optimization. Unlike standardized pre-planned teaching which only consolidates teachers' fixed teaching routines, improvisation pushes teachers to conduct real-time contextual judgment every class, continuously polishing their pedagogical tact and contextualized teaching literacy, which is the core practical connotation of postmethod pedagogy's practicality principle.

General Normative Hypotheses and Course-Based Tentative Operation Frameworks

Combining postmethod normative principles, college English curriculum characteristics and conventional classroom operation rules, five universal normative hypotheses for rational improvisation application are summarized, all untested theoretical viewpoints pending empirical verification. Based on these unified norms, differentiated tentative implementation frameworks are constructed for four mainstream college English courses, together with standardized coping paths for three most frequent classroom triggering scenarios.

The five universal normative hypotheses include the goal-centered hypothesis (all adjustments must serve core lesson objectives), moderation hypothesis (improvisation acts only as supplementary teaching tool), level-adaptive hypothesis (adjustments cover mixed student proficiency groups), professional accuracy hypothesis (temporary supplementary knowledge maintains academic rigor) and inclusive participation hypothesis (positive feedback reduces student expression anxiety). Each hypothesis restricts the boundary and operation logic of

teachers' improvisational moves, preventing the alienation of classroom improvisation into aimless off-topic chatting.

For differentiated course frameworks: comprehensive English courses prioritize knowledge-expanding improvisation supplementing grammar and cross-cultural background explanations; oral English courses adopt situational interactive improvisation adjusting task difficulty according to student oral output state; academic reading courses rely on critical thinking guiding improvisation through layered follow-up questions; academic writing courses implement viewpoint-expanding improvisation supplementing writing angles and standard sentence examples. Standardized coping paths are summarized for three common scenarios: silent student participation, student out-of-text questions and mismatched task difficulty, providing directional operation logic without fixed replicable teaching steps. Every course framework fully matches the four types of improvisation classified above, combining activity theory's two-dimensional trigger-function standard with curriculum teaching priorities to ensure operability for frontline teachers. This part systematically interprets the classroom operation and interaction dimensions of improvisation's value, which are not expanded in Section 4.2.2 as previously explained.

Structural Obstacles to Improvisation and Corresponding Conceptual Optimization Hypotheses

Four layers of interconnected structural barriers restricting teachers' rational use of improvisation are sorted from individual cognition, professional literacy, school lesson design norms and external teaching management environment, with the table below concisely presenting specific restrictive manifestations and matching targeted optimization strategies.

Table 2

Obstacle Layer	Specific Restrictive Performance	Corresponding Conceptual Optimization Strategies
Teachers' Biased Cognitive Perception	Equate improvisation with insufficient lesson preparation; limit its function to accident handling, ignoring tiered teaching value	Carry out systematic postmethod theory training to clarify the complementary relationship between pre-planned teaching and improvisation; reserve flexible adjustment space in daily lesson design and establish goal-centered judgment standards for effective improvisation

Insufficient Teachers Professional Literacy	Inadequate knowledge reserve to respond to student random questions; weak real-time student observation and emergency response ability	Expand language and cross-cultural knowledge accumulation; predict common unexpected classroom scenarios during lesson preparation; form post-class reflection habits to summarize improvisation experience
Rigid School Lesson Design Specifications	Mandatory word-for-word fixed lesson scripts without flexible reserve space; no standardized post-class reflection mechanism for adaptive teaching moves	Adopt modular flexible lesson drafts with reserved blank space for predictable classroom changes; build closed-loop teaching optimization flow: modular pre-class design—in-class improvisation—post-class reflection—lesson plan revision
Restrictive External Teaching Management Mechanism	Classroom evaluation standards favor unified scripted teaching; heavy administrative work squeezes teachers' reflection and practice time; lecture-centered traditional classroom culture resists interactive dynamic teaching	Revise classroom evaluation criteria to recognize goal-aligned improvisational adjustments; hold regular teaching research seminars for case exchange; streamline non-teaching administrative workloads to free up teachers' professional development time

Flexible modular lesson plan design serves as the core hub connecting teacher ability improvement and institutional environment optimization. Teachers should abandon fully fixed scripted lesson drafts, predict common student questions and classroom emergencies based on prior teaching experience to prepare spare supplementary materials in advance, and record short post-class reflection notes for each improvisational move to continuously optimize subsequent lesson design, realizing organic integration of pre-planned teaching and in-class adaptive adjustment.

CONCLUSION

Guided by postmethod pedagogy and supported by sociocultural theory and activity theory, this paper completes systematic conceptual research on college English teachers' classroom

improvisational moves, forming integrated theoretical conclusions centered on the core argument: classroom improvisation acts as an intermediate supplementary scaffolding transforming rigid pre-planned instruction into student-centered teaching under postmethod logic.

Teachers' spontaneous on-site adjustments fall into four theoretically categorized types triggered by distinct classroom scenarios, maintaining a dialectical unified relationship with pre-planned teaching derived from complementary functional positioning within activity theory's classroom activity system. Pre-class lesson design constructs the stable basic framework of formal teaching, while improvisation delivers targeted context-based supplementary revisions to remedy the inherent rigidity of fixed lesson scripts; organic combination of the two is the necessary path to implement postmethod's student-centered teaching ideas in Chinese college English classrooms. Improvisation carries dual core educational value for promoting students' hierarchical language development and driving teachers' transformation into reflective creative educators, corresponding to postmethod's possibility and practicality principles respectively. This paper constructs differentiated tentative operation frameworks for four mainstream college English courses, yet four layers of structural barriers including biased cognition, insufficient professional literacy, rigid lesson design norms and restrictive institutional environments hinder rational implementation of improvisation, requiring coordinated optimization covering conceptual renewal, ability training, flexible lesson design and institutional guarantee.

Clear Summary of Theoretical Contributions

Different from repetitive restatement of prior research content, this section systematically sorts out three progressive theoretical breakthroughs made by this paper to answer the core question of how this research advances existing theoretical systems. Every contribution point starts with comparative evaluation against the limitations of existing literature, highlighting the incremental theoretical progress formed by this conceptual research.

First, theoretical localization and research perspective expansion. Whereas prior domestic postmethod research has remained confined to superficial theoretical translation and broad macro teaching reform discourse without linking postmethod's three core normative principles to micro real-time classroom teaching behaviors, this study anchors postmethod pedagogy to classroom improvisation as a localized micro implementation carrier, expands the theory's applicable scope to large mixed-ability non-English major college English classes unique to China, and enriches localized analytical dimensions for Western-originated second language teaching theories by matching postmethod's three normative principles with the dual-dimensional classification logic of improvisation derived from activity theory. Previous

domestic studies only introduced postmethod as a top-level reform concept without operable classroom landing paths; this research fills the gap between macro theoretical norms and micro daily teaching behaviors through the medium of classroom improvisation.

Second, systematic closed analytical framework integration. Unlike the fragmented scattered case descriptions that dominate existing domestic literature on teaching improvisation, which lack unified concept definition, standardized classification criteria, complete application norms and systematic obstacle countermeasure analysis, this research builds a coherent closed research chain covering concept demarcation, theoretically grounded behavioral classification, multi-dimensional value interpretation, course-differentiated operation hypotheses and targeted institutional optimization countermeasures. The complete analytical system formed in this paper provides a unified theoretical reference framework for subsequent empirical research on college English classroom improvisation, resolving the long-standing fragmentation defect of isolated case discussion in related domestic studies.

Third, standardized logical boundary between theoretical deduction and practical teaching operation. While most prior foreign language education research mixes abstract theoretical speculation with definitive replicable teaching schemes without clear limitation statements for non-empirical conceptual research, this paper uniformly clarifies all proposed improvisation operation frameworks and institutional optimization viewpoints as untested theoretical hypotheses requiring follow-up classroom empirical verification. This revision repairs the common logical flaw of overstating universal practical effects without supporting field data in similar domestic theoretical studies, and establishes a standardized rigorous academic expression paradigm for conceptual theoretical research in the field of college foreign language teaching.

Research Limitations

As a purely theoretical deduction research without any classroom empirical testing, this paper has obvious inherent limitations. All tentative improvisation operation modes and supporting optimization strategies proposed herein need long-term multi-school frontline teaching practice to verify their actual classroom effects; the two-dimensional classification standard of improvisation derived from activity theory also requires large-scale classroom observation data to test its classification accuracy and scene coverage. The research scope is limited to compulsory general college English courses for non-English majors, excluding primary, secondary and vocational English teaching scenarios, so the theoretical framework constructed cannot be directly transplanted to K12 or vocational foreign language classrooms without adaptive revision. In addition, this paper does not conduct comparative analysis of improvisation judgment logic and ability gaps between novice and senior college English

teachers, ignoring individual teacher developmental differences that significantly affect the quality of on-site adaptive adjustments, leaving independent research space for follow-up targeted empirical research focusing on teacher group heterogeneity.

Suggestions for Future Empirical Research

Corresponding to the above research limitations, three clear directional paths for subsequent empirical research are put forward, each closely matching the theoretical hypotheses and analytical frameworks constructed in Section 4 to realize two-way dialogue between theoretical deduction and real classroom data. First, launch cross-regional multi-school classroom observation and controlled teaching experimental research to test the practical teaching effectiveness of the differentiated improvisation hypothetical frameworks constructed in this paper, and revise the normative application rules and two-dimensional classification standard based on real classroom data collected from large mixed-ability college English classes. Second, carry out comparative research on novice and experienced English teachers, analyzing group differences in improvisation trigger judgment, response logic and adaptive teaching ability to form targeted layered teacher literacy training suggestions for different career-stage educators. Third, keep pace with digital education development trends, explore new forms and new restrictive challenges of teachers' classroom improvisation under online and blended college English teaching environments, further expand the research boundary of classroom improvisation theory and realize continuous deepening of localized postmethod pedagogy research adapting to digital teaching scenarios.

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