

Chapter Four. The postmodernist approach considers objectivity to be a veil that hides its real nature of power ; by stripping objectivity of its disguise , some postmodernists seek liberation , while others " retreat to an aesthetic , ironic , detached , and playful attitude to one's own beliefs and to the march of events " (Blackburn , 1994 : 295) . If postmodernism is the dominant spirit of the time and has influenced many fields of study , this question may spring to mind : Has postmodernism affected the field of English language teaching both in theory and practice too ? To answer this question first , we delve briefly into the concept of modernism , the movement from which postmodernism seems to grow or emerge , then we will shed more light on postmodernism and finally we shall see whether there are any implications of this philosophy in the field both in theory and practice . Postmodernism philosophy originated primarily in France during the 1960s and 1970s and was greatly influenced by phenomenology , existentialism , psychoanalysis , Marxism , and structuralism . These intellectual movements portrayed the human subject as alienated in contemporary society , estranged from his or her authentic modes of experience and being , whether the source of that estrangement was capitalism (for Marxism) , the scientific naturalism (for phenomenology) , excessive repressive social mores (for Freud) , and bureaucratically organized social life and mass culture (for existentialism) . In fact , all rejected the belief that the study of humanity could be modeled on (objectivity) or reduced to the physical science (reductionism) ; hence , they avoided behaviorism and naturalism . Unlike hard sciences , they focus not merely on facts but on the meaning of facts for human subjects . Furthermore , studies in the history and philosophy of science have cast doubt on the credibility of the science which was the mainstream Western scientific practice (Kuhn , 1962) , revealing that physical reality is no less than social reality is at bottom a social and linguistic construct and the truth claims of science are inherently theory – laden and self – referential . In fact , there was a return to the true , or authentic , or free integrated human self as the center of lived experience (Cahoon , 2003) . In the 1960s , some French philosophers including Jean – Francis Lyotard , Jacques Derrida and Michel Foucault radicalized structuralism . Like structuralism , they rejected the centrality of the self , believing that it is not the self that creates culture , it is culture that creates the self ; and unlike structuralism , they rejected scientific pretensions and applied the structural – cultural analysis of human phenomena to the human sciences themselves , which are after all human cultural constructions . Hence , they are commonly named " poststructuralists ." In fact , they undermine any and all positive philosophical and political positions and announce the end of rational enquiry into truth , the illusory nature of any unified self , and the impossibility of clear and unequivocal meaning . Another important factor in the development of postmodernism was the situations after the Second World War which led to the decline of grand theories including Nazism , Fascism , and finally Marxism . Lyotard (1984) argued that modern philosophies legitimized truth – claims not on logical or empirical ground , but rather on the grounds of accepted stories or " metanarrative " about knowledge of the world-- what Wittgenstein termed as " language games " . Derrida (1976) denounced the " mercantilization of knowledge " (p . 51) and the contrived invisibility of the author , a presence behind the text exerting authority and influence but protected from recognition and critique unless deconstructed . For postmodernists , Habermas's (1975) " crisis of legitimation " is the recognition that every author exercises authority that promotes an agenda , denies alternative views , and fails to

guarantee its own truth .