



An Insight into Humanistic Approach of Language Learning & Teaching

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ABSTRACT

Language is the tool of expression and communication. Though, English is taught as a second language in most of the schools in our country, it is preferred as an academic language by both parents and students. Teaching of English has undergone a lot of change, English is now considered as a language of social mobility. Today there are numerous approaches to deal with teaching of English. Till recently the aim of English teacher was to develop student's communicative competence and observing the ongoing advancement of science and technology, while interpersonal communication associated with human association had taken a back seat. The paper elaborates on the necessity of humanistic values for English language teachers also it deals with techniques to develop humanistic quality in language teachers.

Keywords: *Humanism, communicative, language teachers, humanistic education*

Introduction

The place of English in the global context is indisputable, therefore it has become imperative to impart the knowledge of English language to the students of non-English speaking countries as a second language or foreign language. Teaching English to the non-native speakers is a challenging task which needs a combination of methods to enhance their competence in using English. Humanism is a branch of psychology that deals with Humanistic approach. Towards the end of the Twentieth Century, Humanism is

introduced by the ideas of Scholars like Erickson, Roger, and Maslow, who began to permeate the field of second language teaching and learning. Therefore, Humanistic approach of teaching language gained momentum in Twentieth century and there is a great demand for improving language teachers' humanistic quality.

Humanistic Approach- a necessity

According to Lei (2007), humanistic approach emphasizes the importance of the inner world of the learner and places the individual's thought, emotion and feelings at the forefront of human development. Due to this new shift of focus, language education and pedagogy deviated from the previous behavioristic perspective resulting in a new kind of education known as humanistic education. Therefore, significant changes took place in all aspects of language education, that is, the traditional role of teachers and learners are redefined. Authoritarian teaching practices are now being replaced by learner-centered approaches. The goal of humanistic education, according to Maples (1979), moves beyond cognitive and intellectual education to let in the education of the whole person. It regards personal growth and the growth of creativity and to some extent the self-directed learning. The end of education should be the same as the end of psychotherapy: making a fully functioning person.

Essentials to inculcate humanistic quality in language teachers

Teachers should take the initiative and mould their duties, roles and actions according to the needs of the students. In certain colleges and universities where the multicultural environment prevails, the language teacher has a vital role to play as the students may be affected by different values and different thoughts at any time. It is the responsibility of the language teachers to instill and insist on correct outlook of life and its value to the students. Only teachers who cherish their job and devote wholeheartedly to work can exert personality charm. A teacher with noble personality and treats his/ her profession as a duty is a real competent teacher. Stevick (1990), points out the requirements of a humanistic language teaching, firm command over the language being taught, Proper training in language teaching methodology and understanding of learner's cognitive, affective requirements, personality and language needs.

Self-Evaluation

Self-directed learning is one of the key components of humanism, which involves students learning what they want and need to learn, not what the teacher randomly decides to teach. In this approach, the teacher becomes more of a supporter than a disciplinarian. The learners frame a prescriptive lesson plan and the teachers support them in following their passion, instead of insisting the students to learn

what the teacher has proposed to teach. It is believed that this passion for a subject will motivate students to learn. For instance, if a student is not interested in reading and learning grammar, the teacher will show him books about improving his grammar in an easy way and help him in the process of reading by providing him with some interesting articles to read. As a result, the student would be much more likely to be excited about learning and that excitement would translate into real, deep understanding of the key concepts.

Flip Teaching

Changing the class room from teacher centered to learner centered eliminates all barriers in the learning process of the students. In this approach, the teacher functions as a facilitator and helps the students to sharpen their language skills. Therefore, self-directed learning is very important as it ignites students' passion for learning. Humanists believe that, grades turn students off instead of making students what they want to learn. It's true that a student might work to get a good grade so that he/ she can become eligible to join a job. But the grades are extrinsic motivators, or things outside a person that motivates them to do something. Studies have shown that extrinsic motivation isn't sensible in the long-term for learning and accomplishment.

Tips to improve Humanistic Quality of Language Teachers

Classical literary works contain the essence of people. Therefore, an effective way to improve teachers' literary accomplishment is by learning classical literary works of the world. one can inherit humanistic spirit by reading it. Another important element is motivation. It focuses on the social and psychological aspects of teachers towards the students. Motivation has three elements- intrinsic, extrinsic and integrative. Intrinsic motivation is strengthened by perceptions of autonomy, support and feedback from the teacher.

New ways to explore Humanistic Education

Rivers (1983) speaks of a humanistic approach that came to the fore during the era of progressive education under the leadership of John Dewey. She continues:

In the individualization movement of the 1970s, humanistic education continued its struggle for recognition of the primacy of the individual personality against deterministic behaviorist emphases. Though content is not neglected in a class that uses humanistic techniques, in an affective or humanistic approach, students are encouraged to talk about themselves, to be open with others, and to express their feelings. (23-24)

Further she goes on to say that a person with this kind of education is "open to new ideas, open to trying the untried, not swept away by intermittent waves of fads and superficial enthusiasms, because there is an anchor of conviction that results from understanding beliefs one has made one's own. The foreign language teacher is

essentially a humanist” (23) Colleges and universities should encourage a newer approach which highlights the students' dominant role instead of traditional teaching practices that are teacher centered. Teachers must guide learners to get confidence in learning and make students finish learning tasks by creating a democratic and harmonious classroom teaching atmosphere, pursue personalized teaching, view even the tiny progress of students, set their learning plans and realize their learning tasks via hard work.

Devotional spirit in Language teachers

Moskowitz (1978, cited in Mishra, 2000), states that, "Affective education is effective education. It works on increasing skills in developing and maintaining good relationships, showing concern and support for others, and receiving these as well" (14). It is a special form of interaction in itself, consisting of sharing, caring, acceptance, and sensitivity. It facilitates understanding, genuineness, support and interdependence. Humanistic education is a way of relating that emphasizes self-discovery, introspection, self-esteem, and getting in touch with the strengths and positive qualities of others and ourselves. Furthermore, humanistic education is fun. Cultivation of devotional spirit cannot be separated from schools' ideological education work, so leaders of colleges at all levels must pay attention to English teachers' ideological education work, use all kinds of methods, strengthen ideological education, improve cultivation of English teachers' professional ethics and cultivate English teachers' lofty ideological character and professional ethics. It is essential to establish some assessment methods, reward mechanism, a combination of material motivation with spiritual motivation to stimulate teachers to improve ideological understanding conscientiously. It is necessary to insist on the principle 'people first' to evaluate performance and ideological education work of teachers.

Implications of Humanistic Education

As Lei (2007) states, the humanistic approach as one of the mainstreams of contemporary educational theories and practices has influenced the second language pedagogy over the past two decades and has led to certain implications and applications both for language teachers and learners. Many students and authors, who are studying humanistic education have targeted this specific issue. some of the important ones are mentioned through the subsequent lines.

One of the main goals of educational practices has been mentioned by many scholars to be encouraging the power of critical thinking in students. As to critical thinking, Richards et al (2005) define it as "a level of reading comprehension discussion skills when the learner is able to question and evaluate what is read or heard" (174). This implicates that · learning the students are actively engaged in a deeper processing. Students, who are independent thinkers and who practices specific mental processes, like analyzing, inferring, synthesizing and evaluating, should be paid respect. Humanistic education giving priority to learners' psychological states can prepare optimal learning conditions and, a result, foster critical thinking in the learners.

According to Brown (2007) in adjusting Rogers 's notions to language

learning/ teaching we need to make sure t learners realize themselves and communicate this self to others openly and non-defensively. Teachers who are regarded facilitators should consequently provide the nurturing setting for learners to build their meanings in cooperation with others. When teachers rather programmatically expose students to knowledge, which they later on consume, they may make a climate of defensive learning in which most learners try to protect themselves from competition with fellow students, from failure, from criticism and possible punishment. Here, classroom activities and materials in language learning m consequently employ meaningful contexts of real communication with students working together in the process of becoming "people."

From the humanistic process perspective, Rogers (1983, cited in Zhang & Atkin, 2010) advocates a student-center approach. He underlines relevance, participation, negotiation, self-assessment, the centrality of the self-actualizing potential, and the reach for personal manifestation and creativity in fulfilling individual learning needs (122). The basic tenets demanded in humanistic learning process are that much important learning is gained by doing and learning is eased when the student focuses on responsibly in the learning process. From humanistic approach, there comes up three prominent methodologies---The Silent Way, Suggestopedia and community language learning.

"The Silent Way" initiated by Gattengo (1972), shows that the teacher remains silent while the learners are engaged in learning, but the teacher still stays as firm controller of the class. "Suggestopedia" is established by Lozanov (1979) on the principle that people are able to learn more if their minds are clear of other things and likewise free of anxiety. It is primarily designed to accelerate the learning process. This technique is designed to solve the major problem in the language class like memorization of words and patterns of language and their integration into the personality of the students (252). Community age learning was founded by Curran (1972), on the basis of counseling, that is, the learners sit in a circle as a community and determine what they want to learn.

Based on Williams and Burden (1997), all the three methodologies have a number of common things among them. they are grounded firmly on psychology rather than linguistics. All these methodologies regard effective aspects of learning language as important. They are all interested in treating the learners as a complete person with complete involvement in the learning process. Fourth, they see the significance of a learning environment which minimizes anxiety increases personal security.

Conclusion

Language teachers should be aware of the importance to students' difference, autonomy and independence. Teachers can get a good respect and response from the students only when they care for the students and respect their personality. To sum up, humanistic feelings is to realize human dignity, respect other's independence and personality, to recognize diversities in language,

culture and tradition, accept the view of and self-development. Its final purpose is to improve people's quality of life and also to make them realize people's value. Teachers must help their students to respect various cultures, the peculiarity and diversification of all kinds of civilization and can comprehend difference among various cultures with tolerant attitudes.

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