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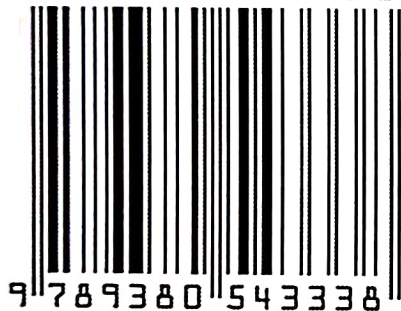
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HUMANISTIC APPROACHES IN ELT

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Abstract

A birth of new and radical approaches to learning a language came to light in the 1970s. These approaches are often seen under the title of Humanistic Approaches due to their method of concentration, touching on the innate ability and capacity of the learners. Humanism psychologists consider learning should have some pleasures, unlike all other classrooms, the atmosphere of the classroom should promote the teachers and the students to think the interpersonal emotion and relation, self-concept and self-respect, continuance of learning and so on. Thus the humanist pedagogical methods promote the teachers to understand themselves rather than the content of textbook.

Introduction

We can teach a lot of things, but if the teacher can't relate by talking to a group of friendly students, he will never be a competent teacher.

- William Glasser, American psychiatrist.

The world we live in today is gradually becoming one big community. Very steady and rapid changes thrust the world and its people to the long ladder of globalization. The people are forced to climb on and reach the ladder's topmost, never ending step. As time rolls, the English language has been accepted globally (in all British colonised countries) as a universal language. This powerful language let the people unaware when it has been indulged in every individual's life internally and externally. So it is essential to learn English language to survive. It is the need of the hour that people to communicate through the foreign language.

Second language learning is not an easy task, be it to the younger or elder. It's very hectic and tedious, when one wants to become a knower of a particular second language in a limited period of time. Learning a language is all time process till it is succeeded. Syntax, sentence, fundamentals, grammar are most important parts to be thorough with. The inter change and inter linked meanings among lexis are very needful matters. Intonation, tone and expression should be expressed without any barriers of communication. Only then the learner can attain success in learning. We also have to admit that today, with travel which has become more available to us, with computer technologies in many of our homes, the nature of social contacts and therefore communications is changing. So this makes calls for new approaches in the second language classroom, the approaches that may help to meet the social needs today. Whether we like it or not, the methods chosen are a social response to the changing world.

Taking the Relationship between Teachers and Students and Teaching Style into consideration this presentation is to discuss what is known today as Humanistic Approach to English Language Teaching. Humanistic Approach's basic principle is in shifting the focus in education from teaching to learning, so that the teacher is no longer the focal point in class but someone who facilitates the process of education.

A birth of new and radical approaches to learning a language came to light in the 1970s. These approaches are often seen under the title of Humanistic Approaches due to their method of concentration, touching on the innate ability and capacity of the learners. Humanism psychologists consider learning should have some pleasures, unlike all other classrooms, the atmosphere of the classroom should promote the teachers and the students to think the interpersonal emotion and relation, self-concept and self-respect, continuance of learning and so on. Thus the humanist pedagogical methods promote the teachers to understand themselves rather than the content of textbook.

Humanistic educators have a broad understanding of the knowledge that students acquire as they grow, and highly value student's affective and social development as well as their intellectual development. The goal of humanistic education is to contribute to the development of energetic, positive, self-respecting, caring human beings who can face this competitive world.

When these approaches are examined the age of the learner plays vital role. At the initial stage of language instruction the teacher certainly dominates in the classroom, trying to gradually shift the focus to the learner as the latter grows and becomes more mature as the knower of the second language. An educator's primary responsibility is to create an environment in which students can do their own growing.

Humanistic approach is not so much as another technique of language instruction but rather as something that makes the learner less constraint, more relaxed, independent and uninhibited. He learns to cooperate with his peers and with the teacher, developing more respect for him and others, thereby releasing the energy that stimulates learning.

Humanistic teaching approaches include the Silent Way, Community Language Learning and Suggestopaedia which arose in the 1970's. They are based on general theories of education rather than on existing language pedagogy. So they are usually regarded as "Humanistic or Alternative or Designer Approaches". The key factor of these methodologies is that they all developed from outside language teaching and were almost all developed by people outside the language-teaching profession. According to these theories, the receiver in education is first a human being, then a learner. If a person cannot satisfy his basic needs physically and psychologically, he will surely fail to concentrate on his language learning wholeheartedly.

Mostly the following practices are done in these approaches' classrooms. Wall posters, Colour charts with images, music are used as aids. The classroom usually has comfortable chairs, in which learners can relax. Learners are asked to close their eyes and do some relaxation exercises like breathing exercises to break the ice in an indifferent classroom. Learners are given new identities to play roles and take up the given tasks. Some introductory work is done by a teacher who uses mime and actions to briefly sketch out the new identities of the learners. Next, a dialogue, based on functions, is distributed. The dialogue is in two columns - one column having the dialogue in the target language and the other having the translation in the mother tongue of the learner. There are also some comments in the mother tongue about the use of certain vocabulary items and grammatical structures in the dialogue. Questions are asked in the target language about the dialogue. Some translation work too is done. Learners do peer work using the same technique. After this, other activities will be done: games, creative language work, etc. Active participation helps in the learning of new material. Role play reduces threat and so barriers to learning can be overcome. The above mentioned activities are some of the practices of humanistic methodologies which can be performed among the learners of language skills in the classroom atmosphere.

One of the humanistic approaches is the Silent Way that was devised by Caleb Gattegno (1972), a mathematician. In the 1960s, he proposed this method, which was based on the tenet that teaching must be subordinate to learning. In the silent way, the teacher is almost silent, and the learners do all the talking. This method follows the 'known to unknown' principle. Due to the teacher's silence, the method encourages peer interaction and group co-operation among the learners and so the learners do not feel threatened. Learning is facilitated by accompanying physical objects and by problem solving involving the course material to be learned.

The physical objects like Fidel charts help to concentrate and create memorable images, which enables students to recall. So these visual devices are more appropriate to discovery learning. Students are encouraged to use all their mental powers to make connections between sounds and meanings in the target language. By looking at the chosen material, the teacher passes the descriptions of the objects or the actions performed. The students give importance to the gestures of the teacher and the mime; to start a switch from the voice of the teacher using the second or the target language in the classroom. With the support of perception and action to the intellectual guess which developed in one's use of the mother tongue the students can work to obtain a similarity. Therefore the Silent Way is a pedagogical approach to language teaching and learning designed to enable students to become independent, autonomous and responsible learners. The method leads students to develop their own conceptual models of all the aspects of the language and this is to help students to become experimental learners.

Study aids like Cuisenaire rods are of small rods with varying colour and length is typically used in this method to introduce vocabulary and syntax, along with colourful wall charts. The Fidel chart consists of blocks of different colours on a black background. Each block of colour represents a different sound in the target language and is used to teach long vowels, short vowels consonant sounds and finally words. The teachers speak only when it is necessary to converse with the students in clarifying the doubts. Learning is facilitated once if the learner innovates or creates rather than remembers and repeats what is to be learned. The teacher issues only a single word or short phrases in order to stimulate the learners into

refining their knowledge of the language with as little correction from the teacher. The silent way method helps language teachers a lot in teaching the learners of lower classes to study the basic grammar rules and as well as to practice the sounds of a word, vocabulary etc.

The main objective of a teacher using the silent way is to optimize the way students exchange their time for experience. Students are encouraged to use all their mental powers to make connections between sounds and meanings in the target language. Hence the students express their thoughts and feelings about the situations created in the classroom by themselves or the teacher.

According to Gattegno, functional vocabulary is most important to understand the spirit of language. So he advocates this method with the choice of crucial vocabulary and versatile words. The scope of Silent Way is to help students to select the appropriate phrases and know how to apply them, with good intonation and rhythm by no use of the learner's native language. Study Patterns contain vocabulary; guides for pronunciation are used to assist the teacher in guiding the students. And the method categorized under the humanistic approaches, with this technique the teacher is supposed to be practically silent and to avoid the tendency to explain everything to the students so, the name of the method is silent way. Thus, the students' learning becomes autonomous and co-operative as well as intellectual.

In the same way Community Language Learning also states language learning should be learner-centred, and the content, materials and learning activities should lead with the learner's emotional attitude toward that language, its culture and their classmates.

The founder figure of CLL was Charles Curran, an American professor of clinical psychology, and developed mainly by La Forge, his student whose work in Counselling Learning was applied to language learning. Community Language Learning (CLL) takes place in groups, either small or large, and these groups form the community. CLL seeks to encourage teachers to see their students as whole persons, where their feelings, intellect, interpersonal relationships, protective reactions, and desire to learn are addressed and balanced.

Curran saw students as a community of learners and noted the importance of social interactions in a classroom. More focus was placed on the importance of relationship building, the desire to learn, physical reactions, and student's feelings.

CLL is the first method to combine the field of language learning with the dynamics and principles of counseling. Students are to be considered as "learner-clients" and the teacher as a "teacher-counsellor". The teacher performs like 'counsellor' rather than a image of authority and a judge of right and wrong. Students are permitted to use their mother tongue, and are provided with translations from the teacher which they later attempt to apply. Grammar and vocabulary are taught inductively. Students are encouraged to express their feel about the learning process, to which the teacher expresses empathy and understanding. CLL was primarily designed for monolingual conversation classes where the teacher-counsellor would be able to speak the learners' mother tongue. But the native instructors of the language are not considered teachers, rather are trained in counselling skills adapted to their roles as language counsellors.

In this counselling-learning approach teachers sit outside a circle of learners and help them to talk about their personal and linguistic problems. The students decide the 'curriculum' according to their needs of second language learning and teacher act as facilitator.

The language-counselling relationship begins with the client's linguistic confusion and conflict. The aim of the language counsellor's skill is first to understand the client's threatened inadequate state and to aid him gently. Then slowly the teacher-counsellor makes him enable to take steps to fulfil his language inadequacy independently. The teacher 'counsels' the students. He does not offer advice, but rather shows them that he is really listening to them and understands what they are saying. Learning at the beginning stages is facilitated if students attend to one task at a time. He encourages students' initiative and independence, but does not let students flounder in uncomfortable silences.

The tape recording and transcription elements play essential aids. Students form a circle. They operate the tape recorder and start the conversation and speak into it. A student speaks out in his mother tongue. Teacher translates it into the target language. Students repeat the chunks in target language. Only target language productions are recorded. The tape

is played back after the conversation is over. Learners listen and then comment on it. Then, the teacher or the counselor takes away the tape and prepares a transcript of the tape. Errors are marked and copies are handed over to each learner in the next class. Learners are allowed to do self-correction. The teacher then corrects their doubts and errors and then the new conversation begins.

On reflecting on experience teacher takes time after carrying out various activities. Students are allowed to express how they feel about the activities. Group work Tasks like discussion of a topic, preparing a conversation are given to the students. So they work in small groups to complete the task and they present it to the rest of the class.

The focus gradually shifts from aspects of grammar and phonetics to actual sharing of ideas, beliefs, opinions, wants and desires. The learning initiative must be with the learners for effective learning. A variety of activities can be conducted in the classroom. For example, focusing on a particular grammar or pronunciation point, or creating new sentences based on the recordings or the transcripts.

This approach works well with lower levels students who are struggling in spoken English. It helps lower students' anxiety and overcome threatening affective filter. It creates a warm, sympathetic and trusting relationship between the teacher and the learners. Counsellor allows the learners to determine the type of conversation and trains students to become independent. Teacher has to be highly proficient in the target language and in the language of students to succeed in this intricate and difficult task.

Suggestopaedia is one among the humanistic approaches developed by Georgi Lozanov of Bulgaria, a Psychiatrist and Parapsychologist in 1979. Lozanov has claimed that by using this method a teacher's students can learn a language approximately three to five times as quickly as through conventional teaching methods. Suggestopedia has been called a "pseudo-science" also. It strongly depends on the trust that students develop towards the method by simply believing that it works.

The theory applied positive suggestion in teaching when it was developed in the 1970s. However, as the method improved, it has focused more on "desuggestive learning" and now is often called "desuggestopedia." Suggestopedia is a collocation of the words suggestion and pedagogy. A common misconception is to link "suggestion" to "hypnosis". However, Lozanov intended it in the sense of offering or proposing, emphasising student choice.

The method considers the function of analytical, linear left hemisphere of the brain and that of intuitive, spatially responsive right hemisphere in a relaxed way which results in accelerated and highly motivated learning. So this method developed out of believes that human brain could process great quantities of material given the right conditions of learning like relaxation. Suggestion can work well when the learners remove the prior automatic pattern and open the access to great potential of mental reserve. Without de-suggesting (removing) the pattern, it is hard for suggestion to function. So light music and dimmed light are the central props used in the class room. Soft music led to increase in alpha brain wave and a decrease in blood pressure and pulse rate resulting in high intake of large quantities of materials given by the teacher. The three main principles of Suggestopaedia are, joy and psycho relaxation, gaining access to the reserve powers of the mind and harmonious collaboration of the conscious and the unconscious. The scope of the method is to supply a friendly atmosphere of total relaxation where understanding is purely accidental and subliminal. Posters, charts, music are used as aids. The chairs are arranged in a semicircle with the learners facing the front of the room where charts and visuals are arranged. Some introductory work is done by a teacher who uses mime and actions to briefly sketch out the new identities of the learners. Dramatization is particularly valuable, playfully activating the material. Fantasy reduces barriers to learning. Music and movement reinforce the linguistic material. It is desirable that the students achieve a state of "infantilization" - having a childlike attitude - so that they will be more open to learning.

At first, teacher initiates all interaction and students respond only nonverbally or with a few words in target language that they have practised. Eventually, students initiate interaction. Great importance is placed on students' feelings, in making them feel confident and relaxed, in suggesting their psychological barriers.

Vocabulary is emphasized in some explicit grammar. Students focus on communicative use rather than form. Teacher uses native language more at first than later when necessary. There are no tests, which would threaten relaxed environment. Errors are not immediately corrected. Teacher models correct forms later during class.

Teaching and learning process has four aspects such as 'Teacher', 'Student', 'Learning process' and 'Learning situation'. Though the above four aspects is a common teaching and learning situation, one can find significant differences as well in different levels of teaching and learning activity. Hence, the present research study focuses on the aspects of 'Humanistic Approach' with reference to teaching and learning English as a second language.

Humanistic approach and affective factors in second language teaching through a humanistic tradition which was represented by Stevick (1980), Curran (1972), Gattegno (1972) Lozanov (1979) and others i.e. Humanism departs from audio - lingual habit theory and cognitive code learning and emphasizes the learner's affective domain.

Conclusion

To conclude, first two methods such as The Silent Way and Community Language Learning are generally considered to reflect the philosophy of the humanistic approach in the fullest measure. Then, the other method like Suggestopaedia consciously incorporates some of the tenets of the humanistic approach.

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