

## THE DEVELOPMENT OF HUMANISTIC APPROACH IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE

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### ABSTRACT

*“Different theories about the nature of language and how languages are learned (the approach) imply different ways of teaching language (the method) and different methods make use of different kinds of classroom activity (techniques)” (Richards et al. 1985). This paper aims to define approaches and methods and also to draft a detailed account of the development of humanistic approach in English language teaching and learning with some of the humanistic affective factors involved in second language teaching. The subsequent sections will make the readers’ to become better informed about the current trends of English language teaching and learning humanistically i.e. Humanistic Approach and its classifications of methods ranks very suitable in language teaching and learning process.*

**Keyword:** Humanistic, Approach, Method, Techniques, Affective

#### Introduction:

Language teaching and learning came into its own as a profession in the last century. Methodology in language teaching and learning has been enhanced in a variety of ways which links theory and practice. Theory statements like theories of what language is and how language is learned. Such theories of language include objectives, syllabus specifications, and types of activities, roles of teachers, learners, and materials. Features like +/- discrete, +/- deductive, +/- explicit, +/- divergent, +/- cyclic etc, are used to describe a number of methods (Krashen and Seliger). A language teacher has many approaches and methods to choose. The earlier trends of English language teaching have been tried out with varying degrees of success from eighteenth century onwards.

Certain earlier methods, namely the Grammar Translation Method which is advocating language as an exercise in intellectual development through reading and writing of literature of target language and translating that literature into the learner's mother language. The 'Grammar-Translation Method' (18th, 19th and early 20th century) is an early method based on the assumptions that language is primarily graphic, that the main purpose of second language study is to build knowledge of the structure of the language either as a tool for literary research and translation or for the development of the learner's logical powers, and that the process of second language learning must be deductive, requires effort, and must be carried out with constant reference to the learner's native language.

Similarly, the traditional 'Grammar Translation Method' if prescribed in terms of features is (+ deductive, + explicit, - discreet and - divergent). Methods of earlier been named using one or more of these properties which describe the thrust of that method but it is certainly more economical and useful to describe any language teaching method as a combination of several features rather than just one.

The 'Direct Method' eschews the learner's mother tongue and advocates the use of the target language in developing all the four skills i.e. Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing. Direct Method, if prescribed in terms of features is the method is (+ deductive or - explicit) but it may/may not be a discreet point approach or a cyclic approach. It refers to all those methods in which no language other than the target language and no rules of grammar are taught in explicit

'Structural - Situational Approach' is a grammatical approach in teaching language through a careful selection, gradation and presentation of vocabulary items and structures, and through situation – based activities.

A 'Structural Method' similarly can be described in terms of features like (+ Systematic, + Cyclic, + discreet, - explicit). It is therefore a more of a description of what is prepared in the name of language teaching materials or texts or say a pedagogical grammar rather than a method of presenting the same to the learners in a classroom.

'Audio – Lingual/Audio-Visual Method' is a purely structural approach based on the principles of behavioral psychology that views language learning as habit - formation. The audiolingual approach, which was very popular from the 1940s through the 1960s, is based in structural linguistics (structuralism) and behaviouristic psychology (Skinner's behaviorism), and places heavy emphasis on spoken rather than written language, and on the grammar of particular languages, stressing habit formation as a mode of learning. Rote memorization, role playing and structure drilling are the predominant activities. Audiolingual approaches do not depend so much on the instructor's creative ability and do not require excellent proficiency in the language, being always railed to sets of lessons and books.

The 'Bilingual Method' like Grammar–Translation Method, uses mother tongue equivalents of the target language utterance to facilitate learning and reading method views reading basic to any language teaching.

'Phonetic Method' or the 'Oral Method' would therefore imply the use of one's performance channel i.e. oral medium but then that it is not at all about the method. An oral method may recommend practicing linguistic units as discreet units or units in appropriate contexts together forming an integrated whole. Similarly, an oral method may be cyclic or non cyclic, deductive or inductive, explicit or implicit, etc and so on and so forth.

Terms like language teaching 'methods' and 'methodology' have been in use for a number of years now but it is impossible to outline "a single undifferentiated methodological prescription" (Stern, Fundamental Concepts 16) that could be applied consistently and comprehensively to any and every situation in which languages are taught.

### **Chomsky's Theory:**

Chomsky's innatist theory is "Nature" over "Nurture". The general form of a system of knowledge is fixed in advance as a disposition of the mind and the function of experience is to cause this general schematic structure to be realized and more fully differentiated (Chomsky 51-52).

According to Chomsky, crucial parts of the human language ability are built into the brain – part of our biology, programmed into our genes. Chomsky's says that the essential core of grammar is innate and a generative grammar that can produce an infinite range of novel sentences. By the middle of the twentieth century cognitive psychologists like Vygotsky and Piaget enabled theories which help to explain the limited efficiency of the traditional prescriptive and also the mechanistic approaches to English language teaching as a second language.

Beginning in the 1950s, Noam Chomsky and his followers challenged previous assumptions about language structure and language learning, taking the position that language is creative (not memorized), and rule governed (not based on habit), and that universal phenomena of the human mind underlie all language. A language is not just a repertoire of responses because we create brand – new combinations of words every time we utter a sentence; the brain has the ability to create an unlimited number of sentences out of a finite set of rules (Krishnaswamy and Lalitha). This "Chomskian revolution" initially gave rise to eclecticism in teaching which means a teaching situation in which the teacher doesn't use any one particular method but includes a different mixture of different methods to suit their class.

Therefore, rather than believe in any single way of teaching, the teacher subscribes to moderate doses of almost every style of teaching. There are varied methods and approaches to language teaching, each among other things, in an expression of teachers' beliefs about language learning. It is necessary to try and understand the processes of language learning and language teaching and learning, learning and acquisition methodologies etc.,

Today, many linguists whether linked with theoretical or applied research aims to categorize teaching approaches into two main branches such as the humanistic approaches based on the charismatic teaching of one person, and content-based behavioural approaches, which try to incorporate what has been learned in recent years about the need for active learner participation, about appropriate language input, and about communication as a human activity. There has been a great emphasis on individualized instruction called humanistic approach to English language learning which results in a greater focus on the learner.

### **Humanistic Psychology:**

A major approach which has achieved increasing influence in education and training circles is that of humanistic psychology. Arising originally in North American psychotherapy, this essentially optimistic approach emphasizes the role of feelings and motives relating to self-esteem.

In its student-centred application to education it stresses the facilitation of learners' self development through respect for their autonomy at all times, the emphasis is on consultation and negotiation.

Rogers' humanist kind of 'humanising' is a word that deserves a slightly closer look on career and it is a good thing for the most frequent associations which are those of impersonal (e.g. a computer programme), distant or remote (e.g. distance education) or inhumane (e.g. a social system) can be improved through a process of 'humanising'. The related words 'humanist', 'humanistic' and 'humanism' the verb 'humanise / humanize' in an everyday context wouldn't make any connection with humanists or humanism. But in an educational context, things are rather different. Humanism has had such a profound influence on education in the last five centuries. The traditions of Renaissance flowered humanism continue to influence educational practice in many parts of the world. The American school of educational humanism that emerged in the nineteenth century gave a new trend of life and a slightly different meaning to the word.

'Humanism' it is the word that again hit international fame in the twentieth century. In the world of language teaching, humanism of the Rogersian kind made an indelible mark. English language teaching in Britain in 1999, the use of the word humanising in the very particular context seems to arouse interest and to be associated with humanist approaches to



language teaching as they were conceived at the time. The term humanistic describes learning approaches that assert the central role of the 'whole person' in the learning process. Humanistic approaches emerged in the mid-twentieth century which counterbalance to exclusively intellectual (or cognitive) accounts of learning, such as mentalism. 'Humanising' means 'making better' or 'improving' and whereas 'humanistic' is basically synonymous with 'good' aspect (Hilgard). Effective teaching and learning engages the whole person involving the mind, the body and the heart. The learner is the central person in the act of learning.

Creativity, involvement and enjoyment are the essential elements for lifelong learning. A humanist approach to education enhances on the learner as an individual, taking their interests and goals as the basis to organize or to mould and facilitate their learning experiences.

On the other hand, learning is not seen as an end in itself, but rather as a means towards enabling the individual to realize their full potential achieving self-actualization which refers not only the academic needs of the learner, but also their emotional, creative, psychological, and developmental needs.

The humanistic approach mostly emphasise upon recognizing, valuing the dignity of one's own self-worth of every individual learner and upon developing the self-concept of the learner so, it starts from the assumption that the learner must feel positive about themselves and about their ability to improve and progress towards the realization of their full potential and for this the learner must have a clear and accurate understanding of their own strengths and weaknesses.

In practice, a humanistic method of education emphasis on standards, targets, testing, and standardized curriculum (Wang). Humanistic theories of learning seems to be highly value focussed and hence more like prescriptions (about what ought to happen) rather than descriptions (of what does happen). It characterises the "natural desire" of everyone to learn. So, the teacher requires a great deal of authority and becomes a facilitator. From 1970s, humanism in education has impressed more and more people's attention. It is analysed that person cannot satisfy his own basic needs both physically and psychologically, so the person fails to put effort on his language learning whole-heartedly.

Language learning and the affect which does not mean only the basic needs of human body on the whole it means the condition of the physical and psychological activities too. Thus humanistic approach is closely connected and have made many theoretical educators' to arouse interests in this field to do research in which concept related to humanistic approach stating that the learners' first to be treated as human being, then as a learner. Language learning as a process which involves the whole person which it takes into accounts both the passion and spiritual needs of an individual too.



According to Brumfit (1982) the philosophy behind the approach is the ideal world in education should consist of ‘autonomous, creative and emotionally secure people’ (Nagaraj 56). Stevick’s (1980) classification outlines the most important characteristics of humanism such as feelings which include personal, emotional and aesthetic appreciation whereas social relations involves the side of humanism which encourages friendship and cooperation and so intellect refers knowledge, reason, and understanding with self actualization which is the quest for full realization of one’s own deepest true qualities.

### **Humanistic Approach and its Affective Factors:**

The humanistic tradition which 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. Thus, language should be learner-centred, and the content, materials and learning activities should take into account the learner’s emotional attitude towards that language, its culture and their classmates. Humanism could be summarised saying that it is not really possible to teach anybody anything, only to help learners in their acquisition process. “A language teacher can express his theoretical conviction through classroom activities as much as (or indeed, better than) through the opinions he voices in discussions at professional meetings” (Stern, Fundamental Concepts 24).

History shows different trends or models which show a variety of choices and options that have been followed (Howatt). Throughout time, the teaching and learning a language process has been changing and it is interesting to discover the contradictions about the issue so that a solid conclusion is drawn. An open and receptive attitude to analyse the teaching conceptions upon the best methodology to follow is the key to construct solid foundations.

Foreign language learning is a process in which the learner gradually acquires another system of communication. It is to be realized that the new language is not only a set of codes by which the ideas can be expressed, but an important part of a culture different from his own. In fact the learner will find some distinctions in his mother tongue cannot be made in the new language and that other ways of thinking and experiencing are essential to communicate in the language.

As the humanistic approach develops, affect in education gains more and more attention. Some of the factors affect second language learning is anxiety, self esteem, language ego and empathy (Ehrman and Eysenck). Generally, affective factors in language learning are divided into two types, first one is individual factors including anxiety, inhibition, extroversion and introversion, self-esteem and motivation, etc., the second one is rational factors including comprising empathy, classroom transaction, cross-cultural processes, and so on. “Ego

boundaries which are flexible are related to tolerance of ambiguity in ...and the ability to take in another language and culture” (Ehrman 76).

Anxiety is considered to be the most pervasively obstructive factor in learning process. It may be caused by either personal factors like personal hurt, failure, and others’ negative attitudes especially in the childhood and these unhealed past wounds may influence present language learning situation. So, anxiety contributes to poor performance in learning process. Self-esteem is a kind of self-judgment of worth or value. Normally, successful language learners have higher self-esteem than unsuccessful ones. Language ego refers to the relation between people’s feelings of personal identity, individual uniqueness, and value (i.e. their ego) and aspects of their first language. The degree to which one keeps the aspects of one’s personal experience separate is called ego boundaries which may hinder some aspects of second or foreign language learning.

Empathy means putting oneself into someone else’s shoes of reaching beyond the self and understanding and feeling what another person understands or feeling with empathy, one does not necessarily give up his own way of feeling or totally agree with the position of the other, he is just able to imagine and share the thoughts or feelings. Thus, these are the most important factors affecting second language teaching and learning and also link the harmonious coexistence of individuals in society.

### **The Process of Teaching and Learning:**

Creation of self-confidence and appropriate environment along with suitable participants and teaching-learning materials and aids are also considered as factors that are highly responsible for a better teaching-learning activity. As English is being taught as a language and used as a medium of instruction starting from standard-1. There are a number of factors and aspects which have to be given due importance, in order to have a successful educational planning and implementation. Issues related to the teaching and learning process such as learning materials, design, syllabus, procedure, learner role, teacher role, methods/approaches/techniques used and so on are considered as quite prominent and significant in the present day context. Hence, the present research study focuses on the aspects of ‘Humanistic Approach’ with reference to teaching and learning English as a second language at the college level.

Teaching and learning process has four aspects such as ‘Teacher’, ‘Student’, ‘Learning process’ and ‘Learning situation’ (Aggarwal 54). 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. There is interrelatedness between teaching objectives (ends), learning experiences (means) and evaluation (evidence of what is taught and learnt)

(58). The teaching and learning process by and large, finds to be depending on the institution followed by the professional teachers. Thus, the teaching and learning process are interlinked. Language teaching is more effective when teachers provide the development of a positive self-image by sorting success oriented tasks and also in creating a supportive environment. The teachers should allow students' to take risks and to make errors to experiment with the language in different contexts and registers so that the students become aware of using appropriate learning strategies.

Language learning is facilitated when students' developed their literacy skills in their first language and have maximum exposure to the target language. The students should be aware of the learning objectives; the use learning strategies effectively; interact and share information; exchange ideas and opinions and work together by committing errors. The opportunities to be created to use the target language outside the classroom and motivated to find out about people, cultures, music and literature related to the target language. The three stages that are important for any language teaching programme is that the first stage is 'evaluating the linguistic grammars' according to their own terms of reference and extract features which are relevant to language teaching. The second and third stages are 'preparation of structured syllabus' and based on the syllabus 'writing a full array of texts, exercises, explanations' respectively (Halliday et al. 18).

### **Conclusion:**

The approach and the four methods of humanistic approach in broad perspective are learner-centered and also share the significance attached to the learners' feelings and affect for acquisition. In this manner, humanistic approach of English Language Teaching does achieve to motivate learners continuously, to attain confidence level. On the whole if the humanistic approach and its method are followed in the classroom within a global programme. Many advantages would occur introducing by very useful activities, changing the classroom routine and providing the learner with an active role, while at the same time respecting their passions and reducing their anxiety. The thrust of humanism seems, to be the ability to advance as a species through understanding and co-operation. This means that language teachers need to have a thorough grasp of both how people learn and what motivates them to learn. They need to shed the old image of the teacher being the fount of wisdom and replace it with the teacher as facilitator. Learning is not an end in itself, instead it means to progress towards the pinnacle of self-development. In particular to Engineering course syllabus, Technical English- I and II in the present scenario and also states the teaching and learning process with the importance of study aids for the best implications of Humanistic Approach from a broad perspective.



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