

Study of Humanistic Education: Concerns, Implications, and Applications

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Abstract

Humanistic is an approach recommended by the ideas of intellectuals, and Scholars like Erickson, Roger, and Maslow began to infuse the field of second language teaching and learning towards the end of 1970. According to Lei (2007), the humanistic approach emphasizes the importance of the inner world of the learner and places the individual's thoughts, emotions, and feelings at the limelight of all human development. As a result of this new shift of focus, language education, and pedagogy changed away from the previous behavioristic and mentality approaches, and consequently, a new kind of education known as humanistic education emerged. Besides, significant changes occurred in all aspects of language education; that is, the traditional roles of teachers and learners redefined, and learner-centered classrooms replaced the previously authoritarian teaching practices. This paper is two-fold. Firstly, it is going to take a detailed look at the main principles and features of humanistic education, and secondly, it aims at discussing the implications and applications of humanistic education. Lastly, it tries to clarify the new roles and responsibilities considered for language teachers to be able to engage the students in the learning process fully.

Keywords: Humanistic approach, humanistic education, implications, applications, traditional

1. Introduction to the study

From the 1970s, following the emergence of a constructivist school of thought and the resulting social, interactionism view, the humanistic principles entrenched. Erickson, Roger, and Maslow's ideas began to infuse and influence the field of second language teaching and learning. According to its theories, the beneficial in education is considered first a human being and then considered as a learner. Wang (2005), "if a person cannot satisfy their basic needs physically and psychologically, they might fail to focus on their language learning whole-heartedly, and it does not only affect the basic need of the human body but the condition and premise of the other physical and psychological activities." As cited by Lei (2007), the Humanistic approach, on which humanistic education-based, emphasizes the relevance of the inner world of the learners and places the individual's thought feelings and emotions at the limelight of all human development.

Aloni (2007) states that unlike the previously authoritarian educational traditions, which overlooked physical or psychological humiliation of impulsive students, humanistic education is after all committed to a social and intellectual climate preserving students toward mental abuse, physical punishment, and dishonor. According to the humanistic attitude which says that people's unique dignity retains in their creative imagination, moral sensitivity, critical reason, free will, and unique personality, humanistic education should prioritize the value of human dignity over any other economic, nationalistic religious, and ideological set of values (Aloni, 2007).

Moskovitz (1978, retaliate in Stevick, 1990) in quoting Combs claims that: presently, there is an area of educational experience attention, and it spread across the concern of personal development, self-acceptance, and acceptance by others, put differently, making learners more and more humans. Humanistic education is, moreover, interested in educating the whole person-the intellectual and also emotional dimensions. It is most directly related to what refers to the "third force," or humanistic psychology, and the potential human movements.

The aim of humanistic education, according to Maples (1979), goes beyond the cognitive and intellectual education to let in the education of the whole person. It relates to personal growth and the growth of creativity and, to some extent, self-directed learning, and the end of education is the same as the end of psychotherapy: making a fully functioning person. Observance to experience, an existential way of living in which life is progressive, flexible, adaptive process, and faith in the organism as the foundation for behavior are characteristics of the person who able to learn and adapt

change (Maples, 1979).

Lei (2007) states that humanistic educations characterized by learner-centeredness in which the aim is not merely developing the cognitive and linguistic capabilities of the learners but also paying ample attention to the learners' emotions and feelings.

Furthermore, humanistic education brought about significant changes in the field of language education: the roles of teachers and learners redefined, learners' needs given the priority, and language pedagogy through crucial modifications. As to clarify the points, this paper focuses firstly on the main principles of humanistic education and, secondly, discusses its necessary implications and applications through the following lines.

1.1 What is Humanistic Education: Rationale and Principles?

Concerning the rationale behind humanistic education, Arnold (1998), humanistic philosophy grew out of a reaction to the neurotic and mechanistic currents constant in psychoanalysis and behaviorism and their description of human nature. According to Alder (1927) then Maslow (1943) paved the way in giving credence to a scientific methods to the role of higher human motives and values in understanding human behavior, rather than imputing human behavior to senseless and irrational neuroses or the 'push and pull' of various contingencies of reinforcement (Arnold, 1998).

Gage and Berliner (1991, contend in Aloni, 2007), humanistic psychology categorized into three main principles, namely 'individual self-worth,' 'feelings are as important as facts,' and 'personal, social and moral development becomes at least as important as academic development.' according to the first principle, Gage and Berliner (1991) asserted that the emphasis upon the value of students rests on the awareness of their dignity and rights as unique human beings, with everyone being on a path of self-actualization. Secondly, a learner's feelings and aspirations regarded with attention to the emotional side of learning, on the development of students' positive selves-concept and selves-esteem, which, in turn, develop selves-efficacy. In reaction to the humanistic principles, many scholars contend that humanistic principles put extreme emphasis on students' emotions and forget the main focus of learning, which is cognitive development. In response to this criticism, Arnold (1998, p. 8) cited that effect must be given to the already living cognitive concentration to enhance language learning. It is not an issue of lowering standards for learners' cognitive development; however, it is a school of thought of realizing that it is beneficial for teachers to opt to focus at times on intuitive issues.

In Arnold's (1998) view, humanistic education places much emphasis on creating a moral climate in the group. Davis cites that such an approach based on Habermas (1984, 1990), who has made significant contributions concerning the place of values in discourse procedures. Arnold advocates an approach comparable to Habermas' ideal speech situation' where participants are free from coercion and deception can weigh evidence objectively, are open to other perspectives, and may reflect critically on their assumptions. Moskowitz (1978, p. 11, stated in Stevick, 1990) comments that, in the process of language learning, youngsters, particularly, are exploring to find their identity and are in demand for self-acceptance. Those youngsters complain of feelings of closing off and disengagement. What defined "humanistic" education is considered a concern for personal growth, self-acceptance, and also acceptance by others, but variously, making students feel like human beings. According to Moskowitz," view, the humanistic education of which she speaks is most directly related to humanistic psychology and the human potential movement.

As the very basic premise in the humanistic approach, one may ask: what does it mean to be more human, or to realize one "s potential? For Moskowitz (1978, stated in Stevick, 1990), there are two major emphases: The primary emphasis is human feelings. Humanistic education focuses on learning and affected by how students feel about themselves. It is absorbed in educating the complete person. Moskowitz's" second emphasis is to bring out the uniqueness of every individual. Being self-actualizing is to function to one "s fullest capacity. In this regard, Moskowitz quotes Roger's" conviction that one should get in touch with one "s real self, the self that underlies surface behavior. (Moskowitz, 1978, p.12, stated in Stevick, 1990, p.24) Except for Moskowitz, other authors have

talked about humanism and humanistic education. The buff that other writers have provided for "humanistic" have been briefer. For example, Medgyes (1986) cites Moskowitz and says: In both the Humanistic-Psychological Approach and the Communicative Approach, learners seen not so much as full-time linguistic objects at whom language teaching aimed, but rather as human individuals whose personal dignity and integrity, and the complexity of whose ideas, thoughts, needs, and sentiments, should be recognized. Foreign language teachers should contribute to the self-actualizing process. (p.109) Rivers (1983) made mention of the humanistic approach that came to the fore during the era of progressive education under the leadership of John Dewey. She furthers:

In the individualization development of the 1970s, humanistic education continued its struggle for recognition of the primacy of the individual personality against deterministic behaviorist emphases. Though content not neglected in a class that uses humanistic techniques, in a practical and humanistic approach, students are motivated to discuss themselves, to be open with others, and to express their feelings. (pp. 23-24)

Rivers (1983) further said that a person with this kind of education is "exposed to new ideas, open to trying the untried, yet not scrub away by intermittent waves of fads and cursory enthusiasms; because there is a mainstay of conviction that derived from understanding beliefs one has made one's own. The foreign language teacher is, importantly, a humanist". (p. 23) Brumfit (1984) similarly states the emphasis on interpersonal relations and fusion of the cognitive and the intuitive, and quotes from Maples a series of adjectives sometimes used by students in defining the personal feelings that have accompanied "humanistic" education: "sensitive," "empathetic," "loving," and "fair."

In brief, among the main premises underlying "humanistic" education, Moskowitz (1978, stated in Johnson & Johnson, 1998) itemized the following:

- 1) *The principal purpose of education is to provide learning and an environment that facilitates the achievement of the full potential of students.*
- 2) *Personal growth, and cognitive growth, is a responsibility of the institution. Moreover, education should deal with both dimensions of humans—the cognitive or intellectual and the affective or emotional.*
- 3) *In order for learning to be significant, feelings must be recognized and put to use.*
- 4) *Significant learning discovered for oneself.*
- 5) *Human beings want to actualize their potential.*
- 6) *Having strong relationships with other classmates is more conducive to learning.*
- 7) *Learning about oneself is a motivation factor in learning.*
- 8) *upgrading one's self-esteem is a motivating factor in learning. Finally to Moskowitz (1978, stated in Mishra, 2000),*

"Affective education is an adequate education; it works on increasing skills in developing and upholding good relationships, showing concern and care for others, and receiving these as well. It is a particular type of interaction in itself, consists of caring sharing, acceptance, and sensitivity. It facilitates understanding, support, genuineness, and interconnection. The humanistic education is a way of relating that emphasizes self-discovery, reflection, self-esteem, and keeping in touch with the strengths and positive attitudes of others and ourselves. Moreover, humanistic education is fun". (p. 14)

Based on the critical principles and characteristics of humanistic education mentioned above, one thing shared across all various statements, and that is the individual attention given to the role of students' effect and emotions which, along with their cognitive and linguistic abilities, play an essential role in the process of language learning. These principles moved the focus from previous teacher-fronted classrooms and trended the education towards considering the students as the critical factor in the entire process. Therefore, significant changes took place in all aspects of language education. To clarify the point, the next sections assigned to detailed descriptions of the main instructional implications and applications of the humanistic approach.

1.2. Educational Implications of Humanistic Education

As Lei (2007) cited, the humanistic approach, as one of the mainstreams of current educational theories and practices, has influenced the second language pedagogy over the past two decades. It has led to specific implications and applications both for language instructors and learners. Several

scholars and authors, investigating humanistic education, have focused on this specific issue, some of the relevant ones discussed through the following lines.

One of the main objectives of educational practices has been mentioned by many scholars to encourage the power of critical thinking in the students. For critical thinking, Richards et al. (2005) described it as "a level of reading comprehension or discussion skills when the learner can question and evaluate what is read or heard" (p. 174). That implicates that in learning, the students are actively engaged in more in-depth processing. Respect should pay to students as independent thinkers who are proficient at specific mental processes, such as analyzing, synthesizing inferring, and evaluating. The humanistic education giving priority to learners' psychological states can prepare optimal learning conditions and enhance critical thinking in the students.

Brown (2007), adapting Rogers' s notions to language learning and teaching, we need to make sure that learners realize themselves and communicate this self to others openly and non-defensively. Teachers who regarded as facilitators should consequently provide a nurturing setting for learners to build their meanings in cooperation with others. When teachers instead programmatically expose students to knowledge, which they later on consume, they may make a climate of defensive learning in which most students try to protect themselves from the contesting with fellow students, from failure, from criticism and possible punishment. Hence, classroom activities and materials in language learning must, therefore, employ constructive context of real communication with students working as a team in the process of becoming "people." From the humanistic process prospect, Rogers (1961, 1983, stated in Zhang & Atkin, 2010, p. 122) advocates a student-centered approach. He underlines the importance, negotiation participation, self-assessment, the similarity of the self-actualizing potential, and the reach for personal manifestation and creativity in fulfilling individual learning goals. The primary tenets determined in the humanistic learning process are that much meaningful learning gained by doing, and learning eased when the students focus on responsibility in the learning process.

O'Hara (2003, stated Zhang & Atkin, 2010), regarding Rogers' s ideas, uses the terminology "transformative pedagogy" to show that in humanistic education, the concentration is away from teaching and shift towards learning. Education is an expedition of change and learning. Learning how to learn is more relevant than taught by something from the "higher-up" viewpoint of a teacher who unilaterally decides what should be taught. Brown (2007) regrets that many of our existing standards in education, proposing curricular goals, and prescribing what shall be learned, deny persons' freedom and dignity.

In light of humanistic philosophy, McKenna (1995) cited that the objective of education is to facilitate the development of the students to achieve self-actualization. Humanistic processes described as a series of progressive changes that optimize the potential of the student towards the goal of essential purposes, internal organization, and infinite creativity. The implications of the humanistic approach, as Huo (2006) states, have also been considered for the educational administration itself. The mainspring in such an organization should be the motivation for growth and learning, which is implicit in each person. The task of the decision-maker is so to fix up the organizational conditions and ways of operation that people can reach their objectives by facilitating the jointly defined ends of the institution. The administration pursues to ease the ability of educators and students to formulate and use their potential by overcoming obstructions and creating an environment of prizing valuing and trusting. Everybody takes part in the organizational process, sharing initiative, responsibility, and authority. In-service training could be used to build up facilitative leaders—the person who could listen, accept, understand, clarify, and communicate—who could assist individuals and groups grow.

From the language learning aspect, Ely (1986) maintains that the variables of class participation and sociability are the possible significant determinants of language proficiency. Ghaith and Diab (2008) disclosed that language acquisition is determined by interaction among several student-related and contextual factors, and the use of the humanistic method of teaching can increase students' motivation and class sociability. As it is evident, all these statements attempt to articulate the central proposition that humanistic education has a positive influence on students' learning competence. Hamachek (1977, as stated in Williams & Burden, 1997) provides particular useful examples of the kind of educational implications that follow from taking a Humanistic approach. First of all, every learning experience should consider within the context of assisting the students to grow a sense of personal identity and associating that to the realistic future goals; that is, learning should personalize

as much as possible. That is in keeping with the view that one significant task for the teacher is differentiation, identifying, and attempting to meet the individual students 's needs within the context of the classroom.

Emotional intelligence relates the capacity for knowing our feelings and those of others, for motivating ourselves and for dealing with emotions well in ourselves and our relationships. Emotional intelligence depicts abilities distinct from, but integral to, academic intelligence, the solely cognitive capacities measured by IQ. It demonstrated that when teachers attend the students' EQ, students will be more probable to take care of their IQ. Therefore, it is better for teachers to communicate freely and empathically with their students and encourage them to do likewise (Cited in Wang, 2005, p. 4). The humanistic approach, as Stevick (1990) expresses, also has some implications for teacher education. A diverse of the cognitive and the affective in education and concern upon the interpersonal conditions for enhancing significant learning demand changes in the preparation of teachers. Teacher education currently emphasizes subject matter and methods of cognitive learning. In order to develop the right interpersonal conditions, counseling learning, or whole-person learning should be facilitated and developed through teacher education programs. Stevick (1990) cited that such a program of preparation would require many capable facilitators of small-group processes. Task-oriented groups of staff members should form to consider the question, "How can this institution support the entire person learn?" These groups should not be belittled to cognitive discussions but would focus on the complete person. The groups would subsist of volunteers who are willing to become involved empirically as well as cognitively. Perhaps, the outcome of such teacher- education programs would be the 'free-university' type of teacher-training institution in which the students would form their curricula, participate in the facilitation of learning, and find other means of evaluation than grades (Stevick, 1990).

1.3. The Applications of Humanistic Education in Language Teaching

Earl Stevick might be the most significant factor for the humanistic approach. He (1980) cited: "in the language courses, success depends less on materials, techniques and linguistic analyses, and more on what goes on inside and between the people in the classroom." From the humanistic approach, there come up three prominent methodologies-the silent way, suggestopedia, and community language learning.

The silent way initiated by Gattengo (1972), and it means the teacher remains as silent as he can when the students are engaged in learning, but the teacher still stays the firm controller of the class. Suggestopedia was established by Lozanov (1979) on the principle that people can learn more if their minds are clear of other things and likewise free of anxiety. Community language learning founded by Curran (1972), based on counseling, that is, the students sit in a circle as a community and decide what they want to say. According to Williams and Burden (1997), the three methodologies have several shared things. Firstly, they are grounded more firmly in psychology rather than linguistics. Secondly, they all regard to affective aspects of learning and language as necessary. Thirdly, they are all interested in treating the students as a complete person and with the complete person involved in the learning process. Fourthly, they see the significance of a learning environment, which minimizes anxiety and increases personal security across the humanistic education, classroom activities involved an integral part of instructional practices so that special care has to be taken in their construction by teachers. Moskovitz (1978, stated in Johnson & Johnson, 1998) enumerates several factors for activities within the humanistic classroom context, among which are:

- .They should accentuate the positive and avert the negative focus.
- .Low risk, non-personally threatening activities, should be used.
- .Activities should allow students to verbalize before others something they like about themselves since customarily; we meant to keep this to ourselves.
- .They should encourage students to look at their peers and focus on seeing the beauty of others.
- Linguistically, they should allow students to practice the language for expressing.
- . Activities should be stratified in such a way to practice the vocabulary.

Hamachek (1977, Stated in Williams & Burden, 1997) points out to the significance of the humanistic approach in language teaching: "humanistic education begins with the idea that students are different, and it aims to support students become more like themselves and less like each other." Teachers shall

be absolute facilitators of learning and focus more on how to learn than what to learn, and it means they should provide students with fishing gear rather than fish. Underhill (1999) categorized the teachers into three groups: teachers who only have the academic knowledge of the topic; teachers who do not only know the topic but also familiar with the methodologies and strategies of teaching the topic; and facilitators who, likewise knowing the academic topics and method, and familiar with the psychological learning process and its atmosphere. In a phenomenon, only the last type best reflects the humanistic approach. Underhill also proposed seven points that teachers should consider as facilitators. i) The way you listen; ii) The way you speak; iii) How you use power and authority; iv) Your attention to the processes in the group; v) Noticing your attitudes and beliefs; vi) Redefining problems and seeing things differently; vii) Your inner state.

Teachers in humanistic classrooms created a community learning atmosphere where a sense of belonging permeate and, as was remarked earlier, and this end is easily achievable by conducting learner-centered learning. Moreover, in these classes, teachers are not the controllers but the actual facilitators. Stated in Wang (2005), within humanistic classrooms, the students' multiple perspectives are valued, and their errors group-work, are good examples for this point since, in such activities, the students can best convey their ideas, and the anxiety is much less while attention requires to pay for the following issues in group- work. i) exchange the members in every group from time to time, for freshness is frequently a significant factor to awaken students' interests in learning; ii) the slowest student and the best one should deny being in the same group since the slowest student can benefit nothing from such group except that their self-esteem declines. As an excellent partner, the only thing he can do is to keep silent (Stated in Wang, 2005, p. 5). As it has emphasized, within the humanistic classroom, according to Arnold (1999, p. 123), new features are assigned to the teacher who, in turn, influences his/her relationship with the other participants of the language classroom. First of all, she/he no more has seen as a traditional "notion-dispenser" who privileges frontal lessons and maintains complete control over the group but instead as a facilitator of the students' approach to foreign language learning. In specific, she/he should be able to support students in their headway to independence and self-awareness through the skillful use of techniques. In this case, learners can become conscious and responsible for their potential and be free to choose the learning style that is most appropriate and suitable for them.

The last aspect that should consider in this context concerns the role of group dynamics and peer-work in the classroom. In traditional teaching approaches, it not mainly explored, whereas, in the affective-humanistic ones, it constitutes an extremely valid component for the benefit of learners. Inevitably, through social interaction and negotiating of meaning among peers, cooperative language learning can foster and support most of their affective factors. It is minimizing anxiety, rising motivation, fostering the development of positive attitudes toward language learning, promoting self-esteem, as well as supporting different learning styles and encouraging perseverance in the confusing and challenging process of learning another language (Arnold, 1999, p. 227).

2. Conclusion

This study discussed the primary principles and features of humanistic education and tried to take a closer look at the educational implications and applications of this latest approach in the field of language teaching methodology. The humanistic approach is a language teaching method that emphasizes humanism as the most relevant factor in the teaching process. As the main idea behind it, humanistic education explores to emphasize that the affective aspect of language learning is as important as the cognitive aspect, and therefore the learner should be treated in some sense as a 'whole person,' that is, every student in the classroom should first look at as a human, then a learner. Subsequently, teachers, paying attention to the students' affect and emotional states, should expect that the answers to language learning issues are more likely to come from psychology than from linguistics. Learners' Psychological states can influence their language performance and learning practices, either positively or negatively. Being happy on a particular day can enhance one's performance while being sad and distressed can frustrate the student to work efficiently. Besides, this fact is ignored by some teachers seeking to attribute the issue to cognitive or linguistic matters rooted in a constructivist social perspective, and humanistic education tries to engage students in interactional practices. In this regard, as Arnold (1999) cited, the teacher should be able to create

social relations together with a positive classroom atmosphere and organize cooperative language work by enhancing the students' emotions. Inner self-finding a motivating force in learners but also herself/himself should be an essential goal to the teacher in order to promote humanistic language teaching, which can influence the personal development of each participant in the classroom.

Besides, teachers should learn how to play their role to reflect on what they do in classrooms as well as what is happening around them. Only if they are willing to explore their emotional reactions to students along with their potential and power in the classroom, to grow both personally and professionally, and thus, can foster the growth and development of the learners' knowledge as well. (Arnold, 1999, p. 123-124) One crucial point teachers should notice is that they should provide students with genuine and real challenges. If foreign language teaching is simply limited to the textbook, indeed, it will fail. It may be appropriate that teachers should bring some auxiliary materials holding some real challenges. In that way, the students' interests awakened, and they will have a strong motivation to learn the language. Activities practicable for these objectives include class debate on a topic, English speeches role-playing, or singing contest, a class press conference. In these activities, students expected to do much work, and they require collecting materials, dividing the activities in the group, and practicing their oral English, and simulate the native speakers. All these are real challenges to students; however, they have considerable interest in doing this. By doing so, students develop the ability to learning independently.

Humanistic teaching methodology, like suggestopedia, as was illustrious earlier, makes use of a comforting environment for language learning. As a matter of fact, as the primary premise, teachers have to use multiple entries in language teaching. In language teaching and learning, environmental work is essential; therefore, teachers are required to do their best to create a conducive atmosphere for the students by using the new teaching facilities. Equally, teachers can use music, art, and action to create an exciting and lively class. Today, multi-media has been often used in language teaching and have created beneficial effects. Although the entire positive points of humanistic education, some teachers resist applying its principles in their classrooms. They think that in the humanistic approach, the role of the teacher declined, and this, in turn, abates their power to manage and control the class. Such teachers think that to be a good teacher is simply a very high knowledgeable - prestige, and a powerful one having all students afraid of him. Nonetheless, humanistic education does not need teachers who are merely good academic ones; instead, it prefers to take advantage of those educators who not only know the academic topic and methods well but also recognize and respect the psychological and emotional states of their learners. Therefore, in language teaching, teachers should always bear the affective factors in their minds and prioritize their students, and then they may achieve success in language teaching. Lastly, according to Stevick (1990), the requirements of humanistic language teaching are as follows:

- 1) *A substantial command of the language being taught;*
- 2) *An appropriate understanding of the teacher's emotional intelligence;*
- 3) *Proper training in language teaching methodology;*
- 4) *Understanding of learner's cognitive and affective*
- 5) *A prudent understanding of learner's language needs; and.*
- 6) *Requirements and personality.*

Declaration

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