'Humanistic Approaches' to Language Teaching: from Theory to Practice

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1. Introduction:

> "I think, therefore I am"
> - René Descartes

Language is to live. Language is a gift. Teaching language is a *privilege* – that is how we teachers can touch many lives. When it comes about touching and enlightening lives, one particular language teaching philosophy comes into much discussion and debate: *humanistic approaches*, offering suggestions and solution to the growing tension in teaching and learning situation, came forward in the 1970s. It aims to give importance to the choice of individual so that the individual may enjoy a well-developed *being* and ultimately contribute towards a well-constructed value oriented society. Humanistic teaching engages *emotion, empathy*, encouragement, and learner involvement. While, proponents advocate *humanism*, opponents say learning a language has nothing to do with these *affects*. However, these claims couldn't stop the growing awareness of Humanistic approaches in language teaching.

In this paper, I have explored the history of humanism in education, and discussed about the effects of humanistic approaches on language teaching in general and English language teaching in particular. I have also recalled my teaching experience and looked at the potential application of *humanistic approaches* in my teaching context in Bangladesh.

2. Humanism

"A musician must make music, an artist must paint, a poet must write, if
he is to be ultimately happy. What a man can be, he must be."

- Abraham Maslow (1954)

Humanistic psychology is an expression of the extreme concern generated from the growing spiritual, moral, and ethical hollowness within the modern society. This concern gave birth to a set of psychoanalysis and psychotherapy theories recognising the *physical, organic, and symbolic reality* of human existence in life cycle. This is an awakening of consciousness in human life where expression of value, culture, personal decision and responsibility are stressed.

Although this movement, in modern form, started in the late sixties, the process has its origin back in history (Association for Humanistic Psychology, 2001). Let us then, start the journey from the renaissance, the period of enlightenment.

2.1. Origin of Humanistic Education:

During this renaissance, a wave of knowledge emerged from within the every corner of human life. A religiously non-biased "human needs" and intellectual fulfillment was its centre of attention, developing humanistic philosophy of life. Humanists were considered culturally enlightened, and free from religious orthodoxy. Indisputably, this era saw a shift from 'church' to the academic arena (Bertrand, 2002:44).

Pratte (cited in Bertrand, 2002:44) compared humanistic education with that of liberal education. According to him this "humanistic educational theory" is the fruit of the thought of "Greco-Roman world modified by the Hebrew-Christian tradition" and its main goal was to create an educational environment that would bring up *homo universal* or "cultivated gentlemen", well-versed in values determined by art, language, Literature, culture, moral sense - which would direct him to free his inner-self.

This renaissance sway lasted till the twentieth century. But the aspects of humanism became too rigid. There was too much importance on learning about science, technology, and behaviourism. The entire educational system went off too mechanised and competitive: learner's "inner-self" and "subjectivity" was ignored. A student was rather constructed, instead of being nurtured, by the demand of the society. Hence, throughout the twenty first century the need of humanistic psychology in education came forward in wider discussion, giving impetus to different perspectives of this view, termed as *self-actualising education, spiritualistic education, and group dynamic education*. The endeavour was to create a society where individual has spiritual freedom with a harmony among mind, body, and soul, - that is, the person is to be considered as a *whole person*, where the need of soul and mind would agree with body, giving it a stress free state towards a better learning. In order to do that, interaction between minds within society and learning environment was given importance. Person-oriented choices would be more important than the society's choice - these person oriented choices would "build a society that advances choice, growth, and creativity" (American association for humanistic psychology; cited in Bertrand, 2002:304). Although *humanistic approaches* do not comply with behaviourism,

Burden and Williams (1997:30-45) later on interrelated this aspect of humanism with that of behaviourism in terms of its learning process through social interaction within a social environment.

In brief, with the concept of human being becoming more *humane*, humanism reached its height in the 1970s. It was a great psycho-philosophical movement from Freud (1920) to Nietzsche (1883-1185) to Maslow's 'third force psychology' (Burden and William, 1997:30-40) - a gradual shift from behaviourism (*the first force*) to existentialist psychoanalysis (*second force*) to personalism giving birth to modern humanism (Association of Humanistic Psychology, 2001). Thus, emerged a more systematic 'open education model' called humanistic education offering four models of humanistic programmes: developmental, self-concept, sensitivity & group orientation, and consciousness expansion model (Miller, 1976; cited by Sinclair, 2006). In broad spectrum, school education was its main area of concentration (Sinclair, 2006). The forerunners of this re-awakening in education were the scholars, educators, and thinkers like Erik Erikson (1963, 1968), Abraham Maslow (1968, 1970) Carl Rogers (1969); Arthur, W. Comb (1970), and George Isaac Brown (1975).

2.2. Therapeutic Origin of Humanistic education:

> The world's best moment is a calm hour passed
> In listening to a friend who can talk well.
> How wonderful is life from first to last!
> - Al-Ma'arri

During late 60s and 70s, Carl Rogers (1969), a psycho-therapist cum educator was stirred by the social consequences that were coming out from the too emphasised *intellectual* and *cognitive* learning, a threatening effect on the self-image of the learner. Roger stressed

upon the *affective factors that* a learner should be regarded as a *whole person* with emotion and cognition; thus s/he shouldn't feel unsecured in the learning environment in total. He pointed out that good teachers carry the quality of a good therapist: empathy, unconditional regard, and congruence. These are essential to help students to become 'fully functioning person' who is ready to *cope* up with the 'demands of the modern world'. Hence, the teachers should carry a therapist like responsibility and the students should be regarded as clients with *specific needs* (Burden & Williams, 1997; Brown, 1994:30-40; Sinclair, 2006).

Some educators like Bailey (cited in Brown, 1994:86) and Brown (1994:86) think that Carl Rogers therapeutic teaching technique might appear too 'non- threatening' that in the process the purpose and need of learning might be disappeared. Nevertheless, in its originality, approach, and humanistic influence, therapeutic teaching technique is a unique and significant contribution towards the pedagogical practice and research.

3. Language Teaching Methods based on 'Humanistic' theory:

"If you love only those who love you, what merit is there in that?
Luke 6:32 (The Holy Bible)

Broadly discussed in 1970s, *humanistic* way of language teaching integrates several methods: they are the Suggstopaedia, The Silent Way, Community Language Learning (CLL), and Total physical response (TPR). They are *humanistic* in the sense that they carry humanistic attitude and derivate from the similar psychology and philosophy of education. Praising the affective factors in *humanistic theory* Nunan (1991:239, cited by Sinclair, 2006) says, if they are followed properly, they will surely result in a 'successful learning', and its absence in practice will fail any latest theory.

In the following sections we will look into these love offerings, made by the pundits, at the Altar of education. In addition, I will also pencil in my understanding on how this light reflects upon the English Language Teaching sphere.

3.1. Suggestopaedia:

Light, my light, the world-filling light, the eye-kissing light, heart-sweetening light!
Ah, the light dances, my darling, at the centre of my life;
-Tagore, Gitanjali. (1913)

In 1980s a Bulgarian psychologist, Gregori Lozanov, became deeply concerned about learning anxiety and negative feelings about learning. Lozanov (2005) believed that the human brain has infinitive learning capability, but performance apprehension and fear of failure stand as a psychological barrier to this potentiality. With the idea of learning stimulating the brain, he came up with this revolutionary teaching technique called suggestopaedia, which associates classical music & art, relaxation, meditation, flower, colourful environment, imagination, fantasy, dramatic voice, humour & laughter, role play, mother tongue, *new names,* and *new biographies* – these are practiced not as isolated activities but as a whole for the *brain does not respond to isolated stimuli*: these stimuli "do not dominate but different states of mind" (Lozanov 2005). Lozanov presents these in forms of 'suggestions' thus desuggesting *from* the guided teaching technique and limiting social suggesting norms'. The jingle of suggestopaedia's educational feature is: *do no harm.*

Creating a psycho-physiological safety through 'love' within the students learning domain, the suggestopedic teaching – learning session offers four stages: *introduction, concert sessions, elaborations*

and performance from the students. The underlying principle of these techniques is to create 'joyful concentrative calmness', 'dynamic, structured and hierchial globality', 'freeing the capacity of the brain and mind' (Lozanov 2005). Diane Larsen-Freeman (1986:72-4) observed some suggestopedic classes of certain teachers named Dan Dugas and Lyn Dhority. The students with their eyes closed were sitting relaxed in cushioned chair, in a semi circle position facing the 'front wall' where lots of travelling posters containing grammatical forms were hung, in the background there was music going on; in dim lightening room the teacher lead them through *in-out* breathing meditation to their imaginary land where only English is spoken. Emphasizing a stress free learning environment, the teachers used children songs, mother tongue to instruct, and some phrases like "do not worry", "enjoy yourself", "just enjoy" etc. They carried out a series of activities full of fun that included games, role play (*adopting sometimes child like role*), *skits*, aimed at learning pronunciation, grammar, dialogue for immediate application.

Error in producing language form is ignored in suggestopedic classes. In extreme cases the teacher uses the 'correct form' (Larsen-freeman 1986:83). Harbord (1992) suggests that the use of mother tongue in classroom is useful as it allows the exact expression of language, but with the ongoing process it should be used less frequently (Lozanov, 2005; Larsen-Freeman 1986:80). These activities make the learning material 'activated' when the learners learn in a 'child like attitude', revealing that 'learning is enhanced when there is a unity between consciousness and sub-consciousness' (Larsen-freeman 1986). However, Lozanov (2005) suggests that a teacher shouldn't practice suggestopaedia unless s/he is trained enough to practice these 'suggestions', and s/he has to develop own personal-spiritual state of mind.

In my language teaching experience, I have found a well decorated class (for example: flowers, posters, well arranged chairs), a beautiful musical experience, and a time of relaxation enhances students' learning and motivation. On the other hand, since Lozanov drew his concept based on his own culture, suggestopaedia might appear as a very ethnocentric approach towards language teaching: students of the East might not be relaxed listening to Bach, Mozart or Ramo, then again, music has cross boundary appeal, and therefore a *carefully selected* piece could bring success.

Some opponents claim that suggestopaedia is harmful because it involves hypnosis - however, Lozanov (2005) denied this claim. Others say this method is *costly* in terms of the expenses it involves. Nonetheless, decoration, flowers, *harmonious* environment, teacher-student relationship, and meditation all these aspects do not really have cultural or economic barrier. I believe, even a school in the extreme corner of a poor country in South Asia can have the access to these resources easily. What is important is the philosophy and implication of the approaches or techniques themselves.

3.2. Community Language Learning:

During the 70s, Charles Curran, counsellor and educator cum priest developed the Community Language Learning (CLL) method also called counselling learning. It has its origin in Rogerian therapeutic counselling theory (Richards and Rogers, 2001:90; Sinclair, 2006). In the CLL class the entire environment should be non-defensive, where *security, expression, attention, reflection, retention & discrimination* are involved. Richards and Rogers (2001:93-4) put these alternative orders: translation, group work, recording,

transcription, analysis, reflection and observation, listening, and free conversation.

In a typical CLL class, learners sit in a circle. Standing outside the circle, the teacher tells them about the purpose, and students decide what they want to learn. Students say something in their first language, while the teacher translates it in the second language. Each utterance is taped and transcribed. The students listen to the tape, read the transcript, reflect over their learning and discuss it freely with their peer and teacher.

In CLL the teacher is the bilingual *knower*, who acts as a therapist and initiates the mono-lingual students to determine their own learning goal. Critics say that this method has no specific learning objective or syllabus; moreover, it focuses only on introvert students. On the other hand, this method is also viewed as a wonderful treatment to develop individuals in group situation (Lindsay, 2001:249).

3.3. The Silent Way :

"A calm imperturbability yields the tranquility needed for careful deliberation. That deliberation will achieve the desired goal."
                                                            - Confucius

Originated by Calleb Gategno (1972), a mathematics programs educational designer in the early 70s, The Silent Way seems to be a very interesting and rather out of the way approach to teaching language involving colour / fidel charts (*colour coded pronunciation chart*), and coloured Cuisenaire rods (*coloured wooden rods of different lengths*). The key words in the process are "silence", "awareness", "inner criteria", and involvement (Larsen- Freeman, 1986:62-63). Learners use their first language (L1) knowledge to develop their

second language (L2) skill, which Harbord (1992) finds a humanistic way since using the mother tongue allows the students to express exactly what they want to say. In The Silent Way lesson, the teacher most of the times remains "silent" "giving non-verbal clues" – just as Gattegno says, "the teacher works with the student; the student works on the language" (Larsen-Freeman,1986:63). The philosophy implied, here, is that the students should have more independence, autonomy, and responsibility in learning and developing their *inner criteria* towards a *self-correction* and use the target language "to express their thoughts, perceptions, and feelings" thus *liberating* the self (Larsen-Freeman, D. 1986:62). Teachers encourage the learners to produce without the fear of making *errors* as it is considered natural component *of the learning process*.

Typically, the teacher points out to the rod or charts and the students utter or pronounce the alphabet or word. If s/he makes any mistake his or her peer is initiated to utter the correct form, or else the teacher speaks out when it is needed. Students' self correction or peer involvement in the process is initiated. From small alphabets, phrase, chunks, it moves forward to longer phrases or sentences, and finally producing them in written form. As a result, in the silent Way, students' spoken skill generates their reading and writing skill (Larsen-Freeman, D. 1986:64; Knight, 2000) that contains a 'traditional structural view of language' (Knight, 2000): students engage themselves in the learning process, discovering the rules of the language they are learning. However, Richards and Rogers (1986) claim that there is no empirical evidence, not even made by Gattegno, of the success of the silent way as the claim is made on *elaborated assumptions*.

3.4. Total Physical Response (TPR):

Founded by Asher (1997), Total Physical Response suggests the characteristics of the techniques in its name itself: it involves speech and physical action in combination of rot repetition involving right-brain hemisphere in learning. TPR follows structure – based syllabus, giving stress to both 'form' and 'forms'. In order to build speaking skill, *imperative* action drill is used. For example, to introduce verb, teacher says, "Pick up the triangle from the table and give it to me" or "walk quickly to the door" or "sit down quickly and laugh". Here humour is also used as a technique to create stimulus situation.

Just like an infant observes, listen, and slowly produces words, phrases, and sentences, students do not say anything in the beginning because it is believed that the understanding of the target language should be developed before speaking . Although mother tongue is used to begin with, but later on it is avoided. (Richards and Rogers, 2001:73-4; Larsen-Freeman, 1986).

Total Physical Response (TPR) is a less discussed humanistic approach, but its origin suggests its *humanistic* concern: Asher (1997, cited in Brown 1994:98), observing too much anxiety in the language classes, wanted to bring about a stress free method that rejected over consciousness and defensiveness in learning. Thus, there is no doubt that TPR is true a member of the humanistic family of methods.

4. Humanistic language teaching:

The mediocre teacher tells. The good teacher explains. The superior teacher demonstrates. The great teacher inspires.

-William Arthur Ward

In this section of the paper I am going to discuss how humanistic methodology has influenced learner motivation and procedures and tasks in language teaching. I will draw some idea from Earl Stevick (1976, 1980, and 1990) and Gertrude Moskowitz (1978), two most influential advocates of Humanistic language teaching. In addition, I will explore the process in which motivation takes place in learning, thus language acquisition.

4.1. Five emphases of humanism:

Language teacher and researcher Earl Stevick (1976, 1980, and 1990) has long been playing the role of a *mediator* who emphasised on *humane* practice in teaching. He has characterised *feelings (H1), social relations (H2), responsibility (H3), intellect (H4),* and *self actualisation (H6)* as the five emphases within humanism (Burden and Williams, 1997:37; Sinclair, 2006; Tudor, 1996:4). The theme is to develop emotional and aesthetic appreciation; discard resentment, and enjoy aestheticism; create friendship & cooperation as it is a crucial part of social interaction; create acceptance of public scrutiny (as criticism and correction is a part of learning process); acquire freedom of mind towards knowledge, reason, understanding, and testing intellectuality. These are the keys to creating awareness of one's uniqueness and ability towards the liberty of mind. Stevick prescribes these as the basic components or guideline to the *humanistic* teachers.

4.2. Activities and procedure:

Teaching theories come alive through classroom activities. We teachers might become cognizant of theories and pedagogical aspects but these are in vain unless we prove them to be true in our practice. Stern (1993:25), defining language teaching as the activities

that generate 'language learning', says "theory is implicit in the practice of language teaching". Moskowitz took the key role in this aspect. Following her are Jane Arnold, Mario Rinvolucri, Underhill and many others.

Moskowitz (1978) proposes low risk activities to develop inter-personal skill. Her activities ideally would follow four steps: (1) preparation, (2) direction, (3) processing, and (4) summarisation. First, the students should know the purpose of the activity; second, students should be given some direction, examples of the activity; third, the student evaluate their learning outcome, express their *feeling* and *reaction* towards the activity; finally, the teacher gives a rationale of the purpose and objective of the activity.

Opponents raised some questions against some of these techniques used, i.e., using voice volume (Mellville *et al.* 1980, cited in Atkinson 1989), practicing *emotive* vocabulary, using adjectives to describe quality, 'greeting each other by touching earlobe.' Gadd (1998) says, because of their little number of "registers of English", these techniques won't give language fluency, and Atkinson (1989) finds no *linguistics value* in these techniques and says they are not suitable for adult learners. Both of them articulate that these activities are based on *affective* filters thus not e*ffective* because they ignore the *cognitive* in learning. Opposing this, Arnold (1998) quotes Stevick (1996:253) that "alongside linguistic meanings are personal meanings: how the activity relates to each learner's immediate purposes, overall objectives, loyalties, self-image, emotions and the like." Therefore, Arnold (1998) claims, humanistic approaches do not ignore the *cognitive*, rather put together the *affective* in order to build up the *whole person*.

However, personally I believe that stimulating activities with the *affective* involvement direct the students not only towards learning for the immediate purpose but also activate their mind for future learning, and in the case of adults, originators and proponents of humanistic approach already stated that learners learn better in infant like mind-set.

4.3. Role of Humanistic Approaches in Learner Motivation:

Motivation, including *extrinsic* and *intrinsic*, can be defined as the need or reason and urge to do something. Acquisition of any language involves motivation. In fact, I consider motivation as the first step in learning. In this part of my assignment I am going to explore the influence of humanistic approaches in creating motivation in learners of language.

When we are discussing *motivation*, we must go back to Abraham Maslow (1954, 1968, 1970), who is considered as the founder of humanistic Psychology. Back in 1954, Maslow wrote "Motivation and Personality" where he placed motivation in five levels of *hierarchy*: (1) Physiological: hunger, thirst, shelter, sex; (2) Safety: security, emotional and physical protection; (3) Social: affection, belonging, acceptance, friendship; (4) Esteem: ego, self respect, autonomy, recognition, attention; (5) Self actualisation: realisation of one's potentiality (Briner, 1999, Burden & Williams 1997). These are the catalysts in motivation: human being move forward from lower level motivation towards higher level motivation that is *self-actualisation.* When these principles are followed in the form of curriculum, approaches, or techniques, language learning becomes motivating.

Furthermore, standing on Maslow's theory, in language learning motivation could be more *integrative* as it gives access to new culture (target language community context), and the call to be active participant in it (Gardner, cited in McDonough, 2002:97). Schumann (cited in Schmitt, 2002:97) asserts that teachers can create stimulus environment to direct students' motivation. The elements are 'novelty', 'pleasant', 'goal or need significance', 'coping potential', 'self and social image'. Cohen & Dorneyi (2002) also state that by implementing some systematic methods learners' motivation can be directed in a positive way (Schmitt, 2002:172). Thus, identified by these elements, humanistic approaches function significantly on creating learner's motivation towards learning a language.

5.1. English Language Teaching and 'Humanistic Approaches':

Language is a means of interaction and beyond 'speech', 'sign', interaction', and of bringing 'meaning' into learning which is true for every learning context (Vygotsky, 1962, 1978, cited in Burden & Williams). Vygotsky and Feuerstein (Burden & Williams, 1997:40) believed that significant persons, termed as *mediator*, can help selecting and shaping learners' learning experience. Humanistic approach, then, has the eligibility to be practiced in English Language Teaching. Earl Stevick believed so, and put significant contribution in advocating humanism in ELT. He believed in the concepts of humanism i.e., *whole person, emotive behaviour, learner-centeredness*, and rejected *alienation*, and learning apprehension. Therefore he firmly believed that *Humanistic* Approaches can be incorporated in to English Language Teaching (Early, 1984). However, Brumfit (1992), Gadd (1998), and Atkinson (1989) are skeptic whether the discussed humanistic elements make English Language Teaching successful. At the same time, Arnold (1998) is

highly optimistic when she views *humanistic approaches* as a 'privilege' for English language Teachers.

In my view, supporting Jane Arnold or Rinvolucri, I find there are many aspects of ELT that rest within *humanistic approaches*. For example sugegstopaedia offers imagination where the student imagines s/he is in the target language land where everything is in English; Total Physical Response involves utterance of words phrases & sentences along with physical demonstration; Silent way uses pronunciation chart, cuisenaire rods for grammar forms; and more. These approaches use the techniques to reduce anxiety in English Language Learning, involving learners' personal concern and promote learning from the subjective point of view (Tudor, 1996) and simultaneously developing learners' personality.

5.2. Application of 'humanistic' approach to my teaching context:

For many years teachers all over the world are trying and searching for the best theory, approaches, methodologies, and techniques that are suitable for their teaching context. Probably there is no end to this quest, and we are still in the dawn of finding our way towards the *Promised Land* - if there is any. Brown (cited in Stern, 1983:15) says a successful theory of second language acquisition is 'yet to be constructed' – it is on the process but advance analysis and 'feedback' is needed to fulfil the aim. This is like a journey of the scholars, where many ideas and factors came up to the scene; scholars, educators, researchers are more considering the factors that create the best L1/L2 learning situation. Nevertheless, success and failure of reaching the target depends upon the teacher (Cook, 1996:199). As there is no *best method*, the responsibility of choosing the best material for teaching and analyzing the learning needs and condition lies on the teacher. Brown (1994:15) says one cannot

"teach without understanding varied theoretical positions" and the "best method' comes from this "careful formulation" and "reformulation" made by the teacher.

Therefore, as a teacher I only take the advantage of hypothesizing the appropriate method to be implemented in my teaching context where the term 'humanistic approach' is relatively new. Perhaps there are teachers who are doing the activities or tasks without knowing that theirs is a *humanistic* way of teaching, but on the other hand, in most cases teachers hold a traditional concept of teaching method.

In the following section of the paper, first I will present the English language teaching scenario in our country; second, I will reflect upon my teaching experience, and discuss some of the techniques associated with *humanistic approaches*, which I practiced focusing on enhancing reading, writing, and speaking ability of the students.

6.1. English Language Teaching (ELT) in Bangladesh:

English language has existed in this region since the British Rule in Indian Sub-continent. In the beginning, English language was taught for the sole purpose of the East-India company so that the clerical jobs could be done by the natives. English language started to take place strongly in the curriculum in the early 1900 when there was a strong wave of incorporating science and knowledge (Khan, 2007). This was the time, presumably, when English teaching was being shifted from the hands of missionaries to native teachers. Since the inception of English language, more than four hundred years have passed, but apart from introducing Community language Teaching (CLT) in the syllabus design (National curriculum) in the early 90s, no other change has taken place. So,

practically, the techniques and principles in ELT still exist in the colonial period teaching and learning shape.

After the liberation in 1971 and onwards education was divided into different streams: religious schools (madrasha), English medium schools, government schools. In national curriculum English is to be taught for 12 years. The reality is that after studying English for 12 years students still do not come up with sufficient working English language knowledge. This starts from the primary and at the end affects the tertiary situation. Ultimately the learners are victimized by this existing vicious cycle. Furthermore, at present, the country is facing the socio-economic need and pressure of taking part in the globalization process – English language being the medium. I believe this comes as a tremendous pressure on the students' as well as teachers' shoulders.

Sadly, English teachers over here are mostly not certified to teach the language. Moreover, in government and semi-government schools, teachers are to follow the set of books prescribed by the education board, and a large number of students come from there. The learning situation is teacher centred, and the method followed is traditional grammar oriented. Moreover, English medium schools follow their own curriculum - mostly direct method, but the learning goal or purpose is absent. There is no focus on learners' need, psychological development, cognitive and meta-cognitive issues. For the students, learning is not fun but a burden. Likewise for the teachers, teaching is boring and tiresome. The *end* is same: the total learning process becomes monotonous, purposeless, and when the students come to the real life situation they can not apply their knowledge. As a consequence, at the tertiary level, when the students are exposed to broader learning ingredients, they fail to show their English language competency.

Over the years I taught at different levels starting from kindergarten to tertiary level. Within these eleven years span of teaching I found that our students, irrespective of age or level, face learning difficulties mainly due to constant pressure of competition, lack of motivation, socio-economic and cultural issues. Specifically, in language learning and producing, there is a peer pressure: thus, fear of making mistakes, boring grammar and vocabulary lessons, memorizing poems come as barriers to acquiring the language skill. In some major cases teachers' corrective attitude turns the teacher into a monstrous character to the student: students do not want to learn from them naturally! On the other hand I have found if proper environment is presented, - where *love, care, share, joy, music, dancing, tapping are involved* - students learn better.

Therefore, I become convinced that incorporating *humanistic* techniques into my teaching context is a prospective direction that would expose the brighter side both to the learners as well as teachers.

6.2. Teaching English with rhymes, rhythms, and role play: some aspects of humanism in my teaching

During my teaching year in primary school I taught English to the children of kindergarten, grade 1, grade 2, and grade 5. In the Kindergarten students were to learn mainly vocabulary, basic reading, writing, and rhymes. Dictation and memorising rhymes were a big part of their learning as it was considered a way to learn the target language. It was boring for them. So, I tried to do it in alternative ways. We used to stand or seat in circle and recite aloud together with melody, clapping, turning and moving along with the rhyme "clap, clap one, two, three, turn around and bow to me." These were there most enjoyable moments. There were many things

associated with the teaching, particularly when the children used to become restless: I had to find the way for their motivation. Doing something that enhances their imagination always was an inspiration to them. Children loved drawing, drama, and singing with physical action. They were allowed to draw anything, put any colour. Later on they were encouraged to describe what they drew. Surprisingly, the children were never short of vocabulary describing their thoughts.

From the school authority and the parents there was a pressure for more home work, and to be more corrective. I sometimes became strict to them - which I regret till day. However, I somehow managed to settle with my way that is the children's way: joy and happiness. Instead of being authoritative, I used gentle voice, became friendly with them: talked about their hobby, their best friends, and pets. As humanistic teaching is about nurturing and building the *whole person*, I believe all these discussions in this section have some suggestopaedic and TPR feature to some extent. Moreover, these attributes of humanism also involve the 'affect' to build up cognition as well as linguistic ability.

6.3. Incorporating Humanism at tertiary teaching using music, simulation, and visual aids:

6.3.1. Simulation and Technology: At Stamford University Bangladesh, most of my classes are large. I usually teach Public Speaking (based on the rhetoric principle), Business English, English Composition, and Advanced Reading and Writing Strategies. One course lasts for one semester. The duration for one weekly class is 1hr and 20 minutes. In order to make my teaching more interactive, and effective, I use multimedia, group work, *simulation,* and one to one interaction.

In the business English class students are required to learn writing reports, reading and thinking critically in business communicative perspectives. I teach them some distinct grammar form related to their writing activities. Although humanistic approach does not practice grammar teaching explicitly, Chomsky (Brumfit, 2001:51) says that "acquisition of some particular grammar is appropriate for any natural language." For grammar lesson I use colourful power point presentation associated with picture and music. In a well organised classroom, during the presentation, I turn the lights dim so that the whole class room gets a quiet environment and the students put all their focus on to the screen. I have observed that in my multimedia class, students normally stay relaxed, and attentive. Beard and Wilson (2006) assert that this sort of *multi sensory* learning engages the learner in *understanding*. Moderate use of technology in higher education can enhance creativity (Beard and Wilson, 2006). In addition 'silence', 'meditative' mood, solitude revive power of reflection, which is the nature of true learning (James, 1995:35, cited in Beard and Wilson, 2006).

Simulation or complex role play imitating real life situation - is another activity that is best suitable for Business English Class (Lindsay, 2000:244). In the process, students learn the communicative aspects of business world. Activities like imagining oneself as a CEO, manager, conducting a group meeting enhance their learning: when dialogues containing sensory words are used, learners experience emotion (Early, 1984). Thus, in writing they can relate the matter to their need and purpose. We can identify these aspects *humanistic* since they create environment that reduces anxiety and increase expectation.

6.3.2. Humanism in practicing rhetoric:

Students are supposed to be already confident in spoken English in Public Speaking class. The course content requires the students to learn speech making based on the rhetorical principles; it comprises writing, delivering and presenting the speech as well as awareness of culture, society, and self esteem. In order to do that they have to conquer topophobia, in other words build confidence. Unfortunately, almost all the students cannot even formulate one sentence correctly, so there is no question to be confident in speech making, on the other hand as a teacher I have to make sure they know the principles. The usual picture of the first few classes is every one remains silent – no interaction, no motivation. My first role is to motivate them, engage them, talk to them, ask them about their expectation out of their course, and create task for them accordingly. I let them relate their assignment to their real life. Much imagery, sensory activities are used in the process. Students are asked to visualise a situation where they are delivering a speech; they are encouraged to deliver their speech without fear of making a mistake; they are encouraged to see themselves successful, avoid 'ethnocentrism', practice ethical principles: these give the students an awareness of the self and the society and initiate social interaction. Opposing Gadd (1998) I assert: teaching rhetoric is much *humanistic* when proper technique is followed.

6.3.3. Suggestopaedia in enhancing creative writing :

> "Heard melodies are sweet, but those unheard
> Are sweeter: therefore, ye soft pipes, play on"
> John Keats, *Ode on a Grecian Urn*

Writing is a big part of activity in English Composition class. In my practice, I found playing classical music to enhance creative writing

is a good technique. Garfield-Vill (1998, cited in Harmer, 2003:259) compares creative writing with that of a journey of discovering the self which enhances effective learning. I used creative writing because it generated a sense of confidence within the students. It could be done exactly following Lozanov's suggestopaedic steps:

1. Introduction: students are told what they are going to do in the class. They know by this time that it is a free activity class. They would listen to music and relax.

2. Concert sessions: the teacher turns on the music. The students close their eyes and listen to the music. They are encouraged to let their mind soar into imagery and imagination.

3. Elaborations: at this point the teacher stops the music, and asks the students if the music makes any difference to them. Students are encouraged to express their honest feelings. Most of them admit they do not feel or visualise any thing. The teacher turns the music on again. They are invited to listen to the music again.

4. Performance from the students: at this point the students start writing. The music still goes on in the back ground. Later on they would read their piece of writing. Ur (1996, cited in Harmer, 2003:259) says generally people feel pride in their piece of work and want to read it.

This activity, I call suggestopaedic because there is no pressure of writing any particular topic, no fear of errors as it is a free writing class. The relaxed environment involves classical music to encourage imagination. When the teacher instructs, she uses gentle voice. Her attitude is supportive. The ultimate goal is to enable students' inner-capability, make them realise their potentiality and at the end *activate* the students' mental metabolism.

6.4. Practicality and prospect of 'Humanistic' theory in my teaching context:

The success of any theory lies in its application. It depends not only on the content and process but also other aspects like socio-economic structure, culture, and religious orientation. In this segment of my paper, we will carry a brief discussion on the *cons* and *pros* of importing *Humanistic* theory into my teaching context.

The cons: I have mentioned that Humanism in its implication is a better approach irrespective of situation, but some of its aspects might not be practical and prospective as Widdowson (1990, p.13) points out "if people learn by caring and sharing and linking hands in" one place, " it does not follow they will learn by similar therapeutic techniques in" another.

There are certain reasons behind this: first, Bangladesh is a pre-dominantly muslim country: by heritage and culture, saying prayer is considered as *meditation*. To some groups and institutions, music is forbidden action. In addition, there are lack of logistic support and lack of trained teacher. Thus, incorporating music and social interaction might be a barrier in some places where a distinct segregation and distance between the male and female is maintained. Moreover, as practiced by counselling teaching, a student might have a social orientation that s/he wouldn't feel it within a manner to open up mouth and express personal feelings or desire to someone else.

The pros: Bangladesh is a country with deep rooted culture. The prospect of humanistic approach in this context lies within some negotiation; integrating some culture oriented factors might make it more applicable. This assumption is for the scenario at large. In

smaller scale that is in the cities, teaching is varied. So, varied methods might be applied. This is individual-institutional choice. The silent way seems to be a very prospective technique as it involves usage of first language and some set of procedure. Total Physical Response (TPR) is also prospective as it does not really confront culture and religion. I have already discussed broadly about suggestopaedia, which, with teacher training, could be incorporated.

Whatever the humanistic methods applied or to be implemented needs teacher training, which involves policy and economic aspect. Governmental policy is involved in this respect. Therefore, the theory itself might seem 'bottom-up' in process but its implication in my context, seems 'top-down'.

Conclusion:

The demands of today's world are excessive. They create pressure and anxiety. Humanistic psychology of teaching reduces the anxiety and offers a teaching and learning approach that not only constructs students' knowledge but also gives them a self realisation of their own potentiality. Although humanistic approaches have some opposition, in seeing and believing the *whole person* it is unique.

Though the humanistic approaches of teaching are very new in my teaching context, the goal of teaching is universal. Learning about Suggestopedia, silent way, Community Language Learning, and the Total Physical Response gave me much insight to reflect over my own teaching. In exploring and learning about giving importance to learner potentiality I have realised about my own responsibility as a teacher to be little more careful, sensitive, thoughtful, and

systematic in my own teaching so that in the process I do not deprive my students from their right to true learning.

Finally I add, humanistic methodology offers me not bondage but freedom and choice to ponder over and construct my practice. It gives me a privilege to be in the position where I can keep the mark of my foot-step in enlightening someone else's life - to lead somebody towards his or her own path of learning. As a teacher it is my *privilege* indeed.

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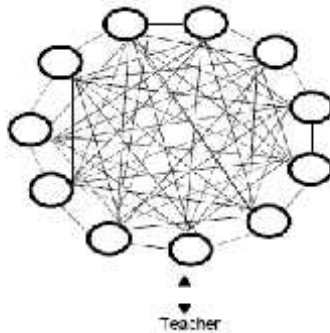
Appendix One: Counselling-Learning model

Teacher

Figure 1

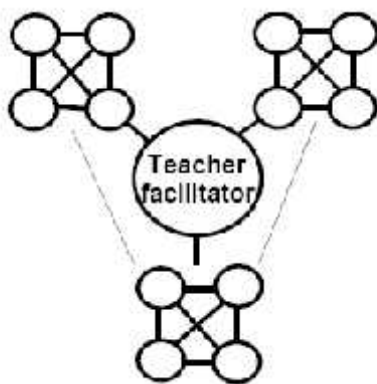**Curran's Counselling-Learning model:** helping each other along the path of learning

Figure 2

**Stecker's (1997) moderate version of Counselling-Learning model
depicting language acquisition as a social activity**

Academics and English Language Acquisition

Department of Multicultural Education

School District of Palm Beach County, Florida

(2003) [online image]

Available from:

<http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdesped/download/pdf/ELL_LangAcq

Article.pdf> [Accessed 28 May 2007]

Appendix Two: A suggestopaedic foreign language classroom

A suggestopaedic foreign language classroom at the Research Institute of Suggestology, Bulgaria.

[online image]

Available from:< http://dr-lozanov.dir.bg/book/start_book.htm>

[Accessed 6 March 2007]

Appendix Three: Teachers evaluation of suggestopaedic teaching

A Basic Checklist:

1. Integrated knowledge and the believing system of the individual students in the group. ☐

2. Used varied *intonation and behaviour* to convey the study material. ☐

3. Used the "laughter" system in a practical way. ☐

4. Mastered the "song" to be used in the class and used it in a realistic way. ☐

5. Used varied intonation during the *concert session*. ☐

6. Maintained 'dynamic global principle at each moment of teaching: transition from the whole to the part and from the part to the whole.' ☐

7. Used peripheral perceptions. ☐

8. Prepared illustrative material and used in attuned to brain (stimulating). ☐

9. Knowledge transmission process was both *active and passive.* ☐

10. Was able to recognise and use or avoid particular gesture. ☐

11. Was able to recognise the enticement of a *hypnotic state* and did not permit its appearance. ☐

12. Was able to organise and utilise the three means of desuggestive teaching: *didactic, psychological and artistic.* It was done as a whole, not partly or segmented. ☐

13. Appreciate, understand and apply love for human beings. ☐

Ref:

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Appendix Four: Nursery Rhymes for Total Physical Response (TPR) class activity

Topic:	Teaching vocabulary through nursery rhymes
Class profile:	Kindergarten students Age:3-5
Objective of the activity:	• Students will learn expression associated with the vocabulary • Student will learn to express their feelings • Making learning stimulating and stress free • Get the students motivated in learning
Instruction:	In the beginning teacher explains the activity to the students. Teacher demonstrates while she recites or sings. Students follow her.

If You're Happy (or Sad)
Traditional Song

If you're happy and you know it clap your hands
  (clap 2 times)
If you're happy and you know it clap your hands
  (clap 2 times)
If you're happy and you know it then your face will surely show it
If you're happy and you know it clap your hands
  (clap 2 times)
If you're happy and you know it stomp your feet...
...tap your head
...jump up and down.
  (Substitute with any appropriate action)

Variation: substitute **sad** for happy with appropriate actions.

Hands on Shoulders

(Students follow the actions described in each line)

Hands on shoulders,
hands on knees.
Hands behind you,
if you please;
Touch your shoulders,
now your nose,
Now your hair and now your toes;
Hands up high in the air,
Down at your sides, and touch your hair;
Hands up high as before,
Now clap your hands, one-two-three-four!

Appendix Five: Caleb Gattegno's English Fidel Chart

Caleb Gategno's English fidel chart (1978). [online image].

Available from:

http://www.englishraven.com/Phonics_fidelchart.html

[Accessed 29 May 2007]