Implication of Humanistic Language Teaching with reference to Maslow's
need hierarchy as a path towards Nation Building

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Abstract:

Humanistic principles emphasize the importance of the individual and specific human needs as well as human's natural capacity for learning. Humanistic ideas in education are widely known since in the 60s and 70s the work of well known psychologists such as Rogers or Maslow put forward theoretical bases for the Humanistic movement. Humanism in education has been in concern during the last few decades. However, there are controversies as whether to use its principles in foreign language classrooms or not. The article emphasizes that Humanistic education is more dependent on the inner need for self – evaluation which is the base of nation building process. Abraham Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs is an example of emphasising the inner value of learning for individual which can be used as a foreign language teaching. Basic needs, safety needs, belonging needs, esteem needs and self-actualization needs; all have their own implications to our language teaching in humanistic framework.

Keywords : Humanistic Language Teaching, Nation Building, Hierarchy of needs, Self-actualization

Introduction

Humanism in education has attracted a lot of attention since the 1970s. Humanism is a general term in psychology which is highly concerned with the 'self.' It gives high importance to the inner world of humans and considers the thoughts, feelings, and emotions of individuals as the foreground of other human achievements. In simple terms, it gives priority to affective factors of language learners. As Underhill (1989) maintains, the Components of humanistic psychology are not new; Abraham Maslow and Carl Rogers are two people who are specifically associated with evolution and development of humanistic psychology.

Definition

Humanism is generally linked with beliefs about freedom and autonomy and notions that, "human beings are capable of making significant personal choices within the constraints imposed by heredity, personal history, and environment" - Merriam.

"Humanistic education is a way of relating that emphasizes self-discovery, introspection, self-esteem, and getting in touch with the strengths and positive qualities of others and ourselves. - Moskowitz

Humanistic principles emphasize the importance of the individual and specific human needs. The major assumptions underlying humanism are: (a) human nature is inherently good; (b) individuals are free and autonomous and therefore, they can make major personal choices; (c) human beings have unlimited potential for growth and development; (d) self-concept has a significant role in growth and development; (e) individuals are urged to move toward self-actualization; (f) each person defines reality by himself/herself; and (g) individuals have responsibility to both themselves and to others . Emphases of Humanism, Stevick (1990) states that the word 'humanism' has been used in different meanings in the field of gn language learning. The different meanings have five overlapping emphases. Those emphases are as follows:

1. Feelings: Humanism rejects whatever causes people to feel bad or whatever destroys enjoying esthetics.

2. Social Relations: Humanism encourages friendship and cooperation, and rejects whatever may reduce them.

3. Responsibility: Humanism accepts the need for public scrutiny, criticism, and correction, and disapproves whoever or whatever denies the importance of such issues.

4. Intellect: Humanism rejects whatever interferes with the free use of mind, and is doubtful about whatever cannot be tested intellectually.

5. Self-actualization: Humanism believes that the search for realizing one's uniqueness leads to liberation. These emphases include both the development of certain qualities and contribution for achieving human potential in language learning.

Humanistic principles, in general, and its emphases, in particular, make highly valuable contributions to language teaching and learning.

Abraham Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs:

Maslow's hierarchy of needs is a motivational theory in psychology comprising a five-tier model of human needs, often depicted as hierarchical levels within a pyramid.

Maslow (1943, 1954) stated that people are motivated to achieve certain needs and that some needs take precedence over others. Our most basic need is for physical survival, and this will be the first thing that motivates our behaviour. Once that level is fulfilled the next level up is what motivates us, and so on.
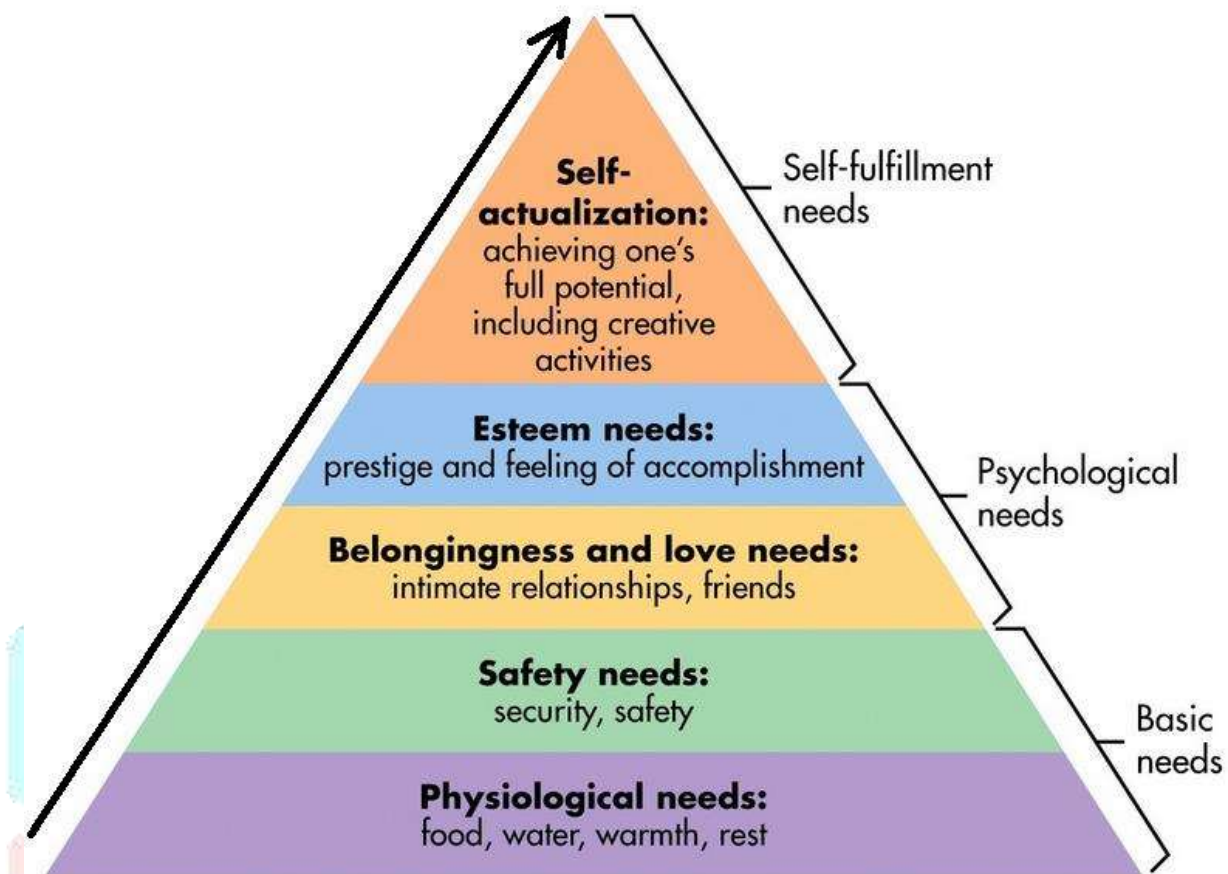
This five-stage model can be divided into deficiency needs and growth needs. The first four levels are often referred to as deficiency needs (*D-needs*), and the top level is known as growth or being needs (*B-needs*).

Deficiency needs arise due to deprivation and are said to motivate people when they are unmet. Also, the motivation to fulfil such needs will become stronger the longer the duration they are denied. For example, the longer a person goes without food, the hungrier they will become.

Maslow (1943) initially stated that individuals must satisfy lower level deficit needs before progressing on to meet higher level growth needs. However, he later clarified that satisfaction of a needs is not an"all-or-none" phenomenon, admitting that his earlier statements may have given "the false impression that a need must be satisfied 100 percent before the next need emerges"

When a deficit need has been 'more or less' satisfied it will go away, and our activities become habitually directed towards meeting the next set of needs that we have yet to satisfy. These then become our salient needs. However, growth needs continue to be felt and may even become stronger once they have been engaged.

Growth needs do not stem from a lack of something, but rather from a desire to grow as a person. Once this growth needs have been reasonably satisfied, one may be able to reach the highest level called self-actualization.

Every person is capable and has the desire to move up the hierarchy toward a level of self-actualization. Unfortunately, progress is often disrupted by a failure to meet lower level needs. Life experiences, including failure in exam and loss of a job, may cause an individual to fluctuate between levels of the hierarchy. Therefore, not everyone will move through the hierarchy in a unidirectional manner but may move back and forth between the different types of needs.

Maslow continued to refine his theory based on the concept of a hierarchy of needs over several decades. Regarding the structure of his hierarchy, Maslow proposed that the order in the hierarchy "is not nearly as rigid" as he may have implied in his earlier description.

Maslow noted that the order of needs might be flexible based on external circumstances or individual differences. For example, he notes that for some individuals, the need for self-esteem is more important than the need for love. For others, the need for creative fulfilment may supersede even the most basic needs.

Maslow also pointed out that most behaviour is multi-motivated and noted that "any behaviour tends to be determined by several or all of the basic needs simultaneously rather than by only one of them"

Hierarchy of needs summary

(a) human beings are motivated by a hierarchy of needs.

(b) needs are organized in a hierarchy of pre-potency in which more basic needs must be more or less met (rather than all or none) prior to higher needs.

(c) the order of needs is not rigid but instead may be flexible based on external circumstances or individual differences.

(d) most behaviour is multi-motivated, that is, simultaneously determined by more than one basic need.

Maslow's Need Hierarchy pyramid has the top most need of self actualization and this is the point with which young generation or tomorrow's citizens can walk on the path of Nation Building. To take students or learners at the height of self actualization is the target responsibility of teachers.

Self-actualization

Instead of focusing on psychopathology and what goes wrong with people, Maslow formulated a more positive account of human behaviour which focused on what goes right. He was interested in human potential, and how we fulfil that potential.

Psychologist Abraham Maslow stated that human motivation is based on people seeking fulfilment and change through personal growth. Self-actualized people are those who were fulfilled and doing all they were capable of. The growth of self-actualization refers to the need for personal growth and discovery that is present throughout a person's life. For Maslow, a person is always 'becoming' and never remains static in these terms. In self-actualization, a person comes to find a meaning to life that is important to them.

As each individual is unique, the motivation for self-actualization leads people in different directions. For some people self-actualization can be achieved through creating works of art or literature, for others through sport, in the classroom, or within a corporate setting.

Maslow believed self-actualization could be measured through the concept of peak experiences. This occurs when a person experiences the world totally for what it is, and there are feelings of euphoria, joy, and wonder.

It is important to note that self-actualization is a continual process of becoming rather than a perfect state one reaches of a 'happy ever after'.

Maslow offers the following description of self-actualization:

'It refers to the person's desire for self-fulfilment, namely, to the tendency for him to become actualized in what he is potentially.

The specific form that these needs will take will of course vary greatly from person to person. In one individual it may take the form of the desire to be an ideal mother, in another it may be expressed athletically, and in still another it may be expressed in painting pictures or in inventions'.

Implication of Maslow's Need Hierarchy pyramid in Language Teaching :

According to above mentioned theory of Maslow, Hierarchy of needs can be used in this regard to have the following implications of humanistic language teaching.

1. **Safety needs implications:**

- Well planed structured lessons
- Clearly defined process, procedure, rules and practises
- Fair discipline
- Consistent Expectations
- Students feel free to take risk
- Attitude of teacher (accepting, pleasant, non-threatening)
- Provide praise for correct responses instead of punishment

2. **Belonging needs implications:**

- Use one to one instruction
- Use teacher conferencing
- Get to know students
- Be available for students in need
- Be supportive
- Listen to students
- Class discussion
- Provide situation requiring mutual trust
- Shoe and tell, sharing
- Provide positive comments and feedback
- Teacher personality, empathetic, considerable, patient, fair, positive attitude

3. **Esteem needs implications:**

- Develop new knowledge based on background knowledge so as to help ensure success
- Pace instruction to fit individual need
- Focus on strengths and assets
- Take individual needs and abilities into account
- Be alert to students difficulties
- Be available and approachable
- Involve all students in class participation and responsibilities

- When disciplining, do as privately as possible

4. **Self actualization needs implications:**

- Expect students to do their best
- Give students freedom to explore and discover on their own
- Make learning meaningful
- Plan lessons involving meta-cognitive activities
- Get students involved in self expressive projects

Conclusion

Self actualisation is the highest level of Maslow's hierarchy and in fact it is the highest level of life also. As we can see today's scenario, young generation achieves only lower level of Maslow's hierarchy pyramid i.e. physiological needs, safety needs and belongingness needs. Actually for healthy Nation Building young generation should be reached at esteem needs and self-actualization as today's students will become tomorrow's citizen.

Thus, teachers should know that although they are expected to humanize their classrooms, they must bear the fact that they should make choices about what principles of humanism are applicable to their teaching context, and how they should make such choices wisely. It is the responsibility of teachers to prepare whole humanize citizens for the country and for that Esteem needs and self actualization is necessary. As Indian Constitution says, " Future of India is constructed in the classrooms."

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