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A Humanistic Approach To Enhance The English Proficiency Of Rural Students

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Abstract:

A qualitative investigation of an exploratory scope was carried out among the students of rural areas of Tadepalligudem in west Godavari of Andhra Pradesh with a population of 30 rural English language teachers and a sample of 10 of them, who were selected intentionally, in order to design a Humanistic Approach-Based Didactic Strategy to improve rural students' English language learning. Analytic-synthetic, inductive-deductive, and hermeneutics were the investigation methods used, along with the survey technique. The findings revealed that cooperative, direct, and traditional teaching methods were utilized by rural educators in the majority. Additionally, the fact that the majority of activities were developed around the interests of teachers demonstrated that the teaching-learning process was primarily teacher-centered. The English language teaching and learning process occasionally included humanistic elements like collaborative learning and the freedom to choose the subject that students wanted to learn about. Finally, the proposed didactic strategy, which had five stages, included humanistic-based actions and procedures: pre-planning, making use of previous knowledge, learning through immersion, receiving feedback, and participating in the community. In conclusion, despite the fact that some rural teachers' teaching methods may be centered on particular humanistic principles, this does not imply that they have a comprehensive understanding of the humanistic approach that enables them to develop humanistic-based didactic guidelines for the English language learning of rural students.

Keywords: Didactic Strategies, English Language Learning, Humanistic Approach, Rural areas

Introduction

Humanism considers that the way students feel about themselves plays a fundamental role in how effective their English learning process is. In addition, learning achievements are directly related to the inclusion of their personality in the classroom. (Kathib, 2013).

Tadepalligudem has been ranked as one of the places with the lowest levels in English language proficiency in Andhra Pradesh, India, as well as private schools in rural and urban areas of Tadepalligudem, must teach English as a foreign language; nevertheless, it has resulted in some emerging issues. On one hand, qualified English language teachers are not enough to cover the educational needs in the whole territory and, on the other hand, most of the people in rural areas of Esmeraldas still have a mindset that maintains the English language as an

unnecessary, complicated, and boring subject. Due to the qualified English teachers' shortage, in many schools belonging to the rural area, the English teacher is the same who teaches the other subjects, causing a lack of effective methods and strategies to teach English in the classroom environment. Rural teachers of Tadepalligudem are trained enough to teach principal subjects such as Mathematics and the Hindi Language, but they do not have the required English level proficiency to teach English. Even worse, teachers lack knowledge about how to handle methodologies and resources to make students learn the English language causing unmotivated and discouraged learners whose general view of this subject is that of a very difficult and boring one.

The use of Humanism as a teaching approach could influence positively on the English language learning of students from rural areas, therefore the following question is posed: how can a Humanistic Approach-Based Didactic strategy contribute to improve rural students' English language learning?

The general objective was to design a Humanistic Approach-Based Didactic Strategy to improve rural students' English language learning in rural areas of Tadepalligudem region. To accomplish it, the specific objectives were to determine English teachers' didactic strategies to teach English as a foreign language; to identify rural students' English language learning needs; to determine who has the central role in the English language learning process and to create some actions based on a Humanistic approach that English teachers can use to improve the teaching-learning process.

Rural Students' English Language Learning Needs

Educating parents about the significance of learning English: The students' preference for farmland and trading activities over English language instruction must directly relate to their parents' low expectations of personal development through education.

Free access to a wide range of learning English resources:

The use of a variety of cutting-edge resources, such as technology, is necessary for an effective English learning process; however, the majority of families in rural areas do not have sufficient income, and in some cases, they live in poverty. They also feel abandoned by the government because it doesn't invest enough in the education of rural students. As a result, students should be provided with materials and resources to help them learn English more effectively.

Logistic support:

Due to a lack of logistical support, rural schools frequently use multilevel and multitasking classrooms. As a result, rural principals and teachers have prioritized the need for classrooms and appropriate spaces to promote a high-level education for many years.

Better qualified teachers:

Not only do qualified English language teachers need to have a sufficient level of English proficiency, but they also need to have sufficient knowledge of teaching methods and techniques to help students acquire language skills. Rustic regions need qualified English instructors and thus, it influences the understudies' advancing adversely.

A Humanistic Approach to Teaching

Humanization is, in the words of Freire (1972), "the process of becoming more fully human as social, historical, thinking, communicating, transformative, creative persons who participate in and with the world" (p. 8). In this context, the primary objective of a humanistic teaching strategy is to offer a model of education that teaches students to first become aware of their actual situation and then to consider ways to enhance their development in order to contribute to the improvement of the world.

Learners centered class:

It consists of education that primarily targets students rather than teachers. This indicates that learning is deeply rooted in students' knowledge inquiry, experiences, and exploration as well as emerges from students' interests and needs. The phrase "balance of power between teachers and learners" appears on page 16. The flow of rapport in the classroom is thus provided by learners-centered classes.(Chen, 2016)

Critical thinking:

According to Scriven and Paul (2003), critical thinking is "the intellectually disciplined process of thinking actively and skillfully" (p. 25), which involves thinking critically to comprehend how the world functions and adopt diverse positions. These stands will help students improve their personal growth and performance in a variety of life areas.

Collaborative learning:

As its name recommends, it is primarily founded on bunch individuals' participation, which includes managing a variety of convictions interests, and perspectives in this way, cooperative learning features individual qualities such regard and resistance. A common task or activity is one of the main characteristics of collaborative learning; small group learning, working together, interdependence; as well as personal accountability (Lejeune, 1999).

Experiential Learning:

It is referring to the knowledge gained from the experience. "Knowledge results from the combinations of grasping and transforming the experience," writes Kolb (1989) (p.74). This indicates that the experiences of students serve as the foundation upon which subsequent learning is built.

Antecedents

Schmidtke and Chen (2016) conducted research to demonstrate how teachers could become more effective at assisting students in learning by incorporating humanistic elements into their instruction. The results showed that they used some strategies and methods that could be considered humanistic, like working in teams and putting the needs of the student first, which clearly helped students succeed.

Jin (2014) recorded a lesson that was taught to English as a second language target group of multicultural students using a humanistic approach. The lesson's humanistic elements included allowing students to choose the ceremonial speech they liked, boosting their confidence because they chose a topic they were interested in; Finally, the teacher was a facilitator who constantly supported the students and encouraged them to try their best. The students were allowed to work in groups through cooperative learning and social interaction.

Korobchenko & Khmel'nitskiy's (2015) critical analysis-based investigation revealed the need for incorporating the following humanistic principles into educational reform: respect for a child's personality and teachers as the main characters, consideration of students' skills and age-specific characteristics; the individualization of instruction as well as respect for the man's right to choose his own path in life and work. The primary objective of the research carried out by Mora and Villegas (2019) was to propose a humanistic pedagogical teaching model. At PUCESE University in Esmeraldas, Ecuador, Ramirez (2020) developed a Humanistic Theoretical Approach to Educational Research on English language teaching. There, three fundamental dimensions have been established to assist educators and students in researching real and significant educational issues and locating solutions that are in the best interest of the educational community. ELT experiment projection, ELT innovative intervention, and ELT contextualized assessment are the dimensions. Three characteristics emerge from these dimensions: appropriation of the ELT educational context, intervention of the ELT educational context, and evaluation of the ELT educational context. Researchers are guided by these qualities to identify the requirements of teachers and students, develop instructional strategies or didactic materials, implement these tools in the classroom, evaluate the outcomes, and then disseminate the information they have gathered with the community.

Method

The present investigation was carried out in a few sparsely populated rural areas of the Tadevalligudem region. As a result of the early involvement of residents in agricultural and livestock activities in rural Esmeraldas, some students' parents do not have a formal education. Consequently, rural students typically receive limited parental support for their education.

According to Hernández (2016), the purpose of the qualitative non-experimental design of the investigation was to "analyze a theme of investigation which has not been deeply studied and it has generated many doubts that have not been clarified before," so the design was qualitative. Poverty, isolation, and a sense of abandonment are all factors that put rural communities at risk. Moreover, it was engaging exploration on the grounds that its motivation was to "indicate applicable properties or qualities of any peculiarity and depict gatherings or populace patterns" (Hernández, 2016, p. 382).

Ten teachers from various rural schools made up the sample, which included 30 teachers in the population. The premise was: Students' ability to learn English in Esmeraldas' rural areas could be improved by developing a humanistic-based didactic strategy for teaching the language.

Analysis-synthesis, inductive-deductive, and hermeneutics were the methods used because the information that was revealed was carefully examined to organize it, and the most relevant aspects were thought to lead to accurate results, starting with the most general aspects and working their way up to the most specific ones. A survey with a questionnaire and bibliographical reviews provided support for the investigation. This one had nine questions aimed at getting responses from the participants that would make it possible to achieve the goals.

Results

The results revealed that cooperative learning strategies like dialogues and discussions in group work or pair work were the primary teaching-learning strategies that worked better for rural teachers in the classroom (table 1).

Table 1: Strategies that work better in teaching English as a foreign language

Teaching Strategies	Frequency	Percentage
Cooperative teaching strategies	8	80%
Directive teaching strategies	7	70%
Traditional teaching strategies	5	50%
Gamification strategies	4	40%
Communicative language teaching strategies	3	30%
Task based learning strategies	2	20%

Source: Survey. Author's own elaboration

In terms of the needs of rural students, table 2 reveals that parental support and awareness of the subject's significance rank higher among students' needs in relation to English language learning. Similarly, other aspects are apparent.

Table 2: Rural students' needs in the English language teaching-learning process

Rural students' needs	Frequency	Percentage
Parental support and awareness about the importance of English language	9	90%
Free access to a wide range of technological resources	7	70%
Logistic support in their educational institutions	7	70%
Better qualified teachers	6	60%

Source: Survey. Author's own elaboration

When it comes to deciding who ought to play the central role in the teaching-learning process, the responses in table 3 indicate that teachers, rather than students, are generally thought to be the learning center for English language learning.

Table 3: Central role in the English language teaching-learning process

Central Role	Frequency	Percentage
Teachers	70	70%
Students	30	30%

Source: Survey. Author's own elaboration

It was first necessary to conduct research on the application of humanistic elements in the English language learning process of rural students in order to design a didactic strategy based on the humanistic approach. As it is uncovered in table 4, humanistic components are sometimes utilized by rustic educators.

Table 4: Humanistic elements in the English language teaching-learning process

Humanistic aspects	Frequency	Percentage
Consideration of students' interests before designing a teaching strategy	Never	50%
Free decision making about what topics they want to learn about	Sometimes	60%
Planning curricular or extracurricular activities that involve students' parents or community.	Sometimes	50%

Source: Author's own elaboration

A Humanistic Approach - Based Didactic Strategy

In some rural areas of Tadepalligudem, the creation of a Humanistic Approach-Based Didactic strategy has emerged as a pressing need following the diagnosis. There are five stages to the strategy: pre-planning, making use of previous knowledge, learning through immersion, receiving feedback, and the involvement of the community. The figure and table that follow provide a comprehensive explanation of these.

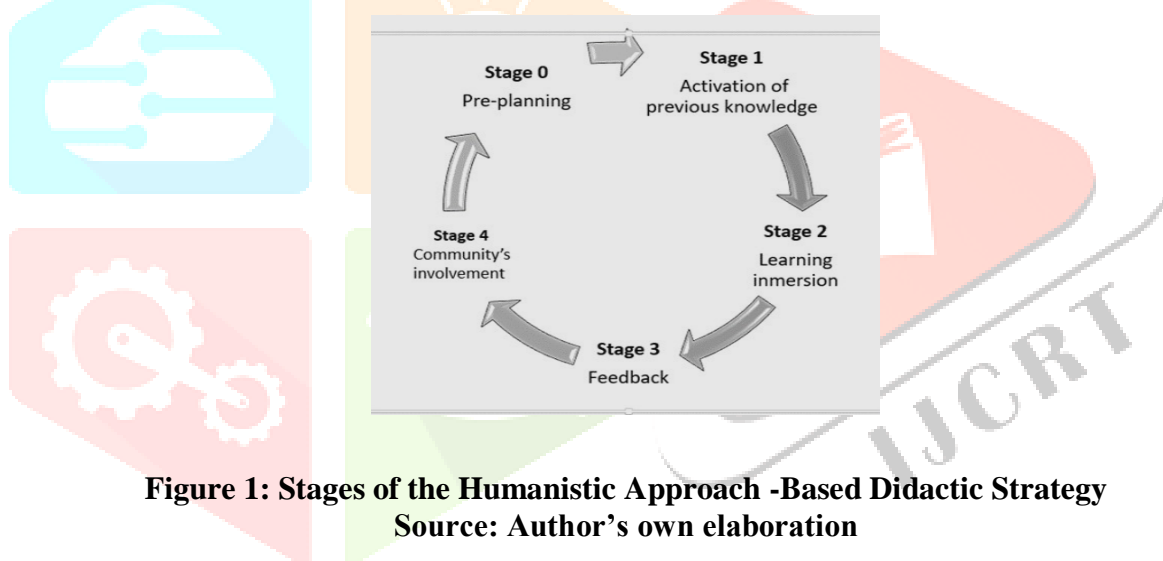
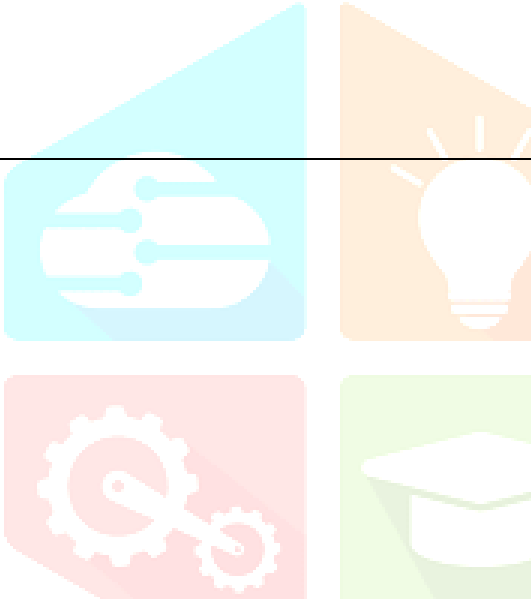


Figure 1: Stages of the Humanistic Approach -Based Didactic Strategy
Source: Author's own elaboration

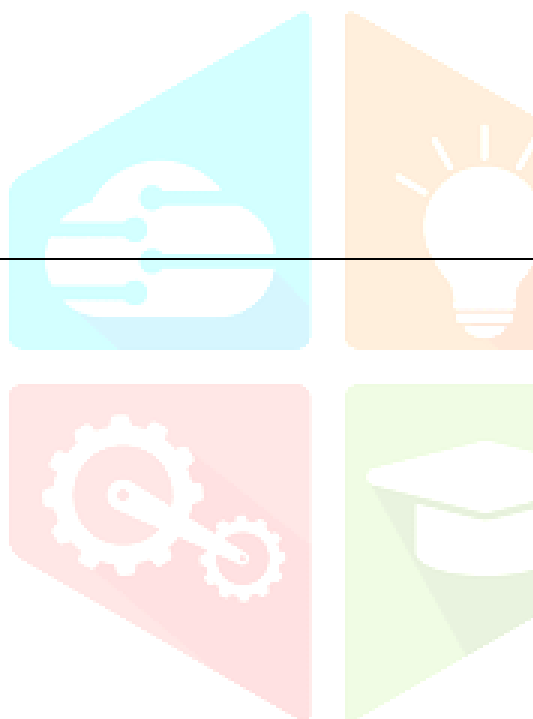
Table 5: A Humanistic Approach -Based Didactic Strategy

<p>GENERAL OBJECTIVE</p>	<p>To improve the English language learning through the application of a humanistic strategy</p>
<p>STAGE 0: Pre-planning (This stage aims to alleviate students' anxiety or fear by creating a welcoming classroom environment)</p>	<p>Teachers' actions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - to suggest students engage in close conversation in order to encourage everyone to interact. -Based on what the students have discussed, to let them choose from a variety of topics what they want to learn. - To plan future lessons with the teachers with whom students have a connection.
	<p>Students' actions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - to communicate their feelings, experiences, and interests. On this stage, understudies are permitted to utilize the L1). -To pick the point they need to find out about in a popularity based situation. -To begin making assumptions regarding the subject they have picked.
<p>STAGE 1: activation of Previous Knowledge (this stage aims to activate the students' prior knowledge so that they can connect their previous experiences with the new information and, as a result, achieve learning internalization. Additionally, one important aspect is encouragement and motivation.)</p>	<p>Teachers' actions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Once the subject has been chosen, the teacher must contextualize it so that students can learn about something that is relevant to their own environment and important to them. -To introduce the topic and some methods for motivating, encouraging, and inspiring students, such as using visuals, real-world scenarios, and asking questions or solving problems.
	<p>Students' actions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - to actively participate. -To consolidate some other subjects of interest.

stage 2: LEARNING ImMmERSION

(Students must participate in their English learning process at this stage, which is the strategy's central point. Even though students are in charge of their own education, it is important for teachers to support and monitor them in order to help students develop more autonomy and internalize what they learn.)

- In order to give students the freedom to work together, they must work in small groups or pairs.
- To separate the point picked by subtopics, things, or related angles.
- To clearly communicate instructions.
- The tasks to be completed must be interactive, inquisitive, and tailored to the language level of the students.
- To grant students the freedom to select the working environment they prefer.
- To play a role that is supportive, enabling, and monitoring.
- To record and listen to the student's brief presentations. The assessment focuses primarily on students' efforts rather than outcomes.



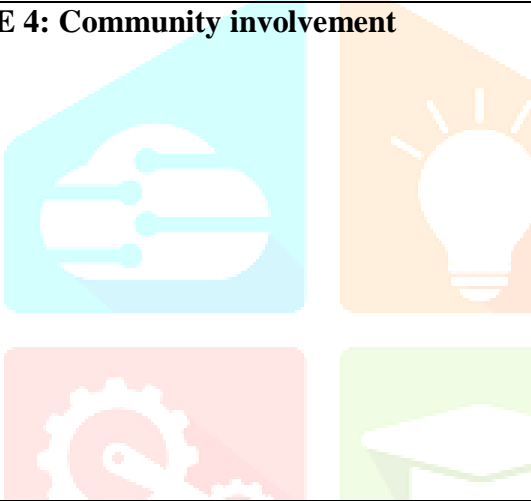
Students' actions

- to group people according to how much they like their classmates.
- To choose the subject considering the assessments of every one of their gatherings individuals, it implies the point is picked justly.
- To dispel any doubts regarding the activities suggested by the instructor.
- Choosing a location where you can relax and feel at ease can be done inside or outside of class.
- When assistance is required, to accept it and request it from the teachers.
- To give brief presentations.

STAGE 3: FEEDBACK

Teachers' actions

- To suggest a conversation that can be had with the students around after the suggested activities have been completed.
- To project a close and confident figure, carefully listens to the students, congratulates

	<p>them on their efforts to work as well as possible, and acknowledges their efforts</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -To generalize correct some mistakes observed or heard during the activity's development.
	<p>Students' actions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - to participate and feel connected to their instructor and classmates. -To talk about their thoughts, impressions, difficulties, or limitations regarding the activities that the teacher has suggested. -To pay attention to the corrections made by the teachers and to promise to do better.
<p>STAGE 4: Community involvement</p> 	<p>Teacher's actions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - to plan a class or extracurricular activity that gives students a chance to practice their new skills. - To call a meeting to invite parents of students to the planned event. - To encourage students to present their work at an open event attended by members of the educational community in the area
	<p>Students' actions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - to work together and contribute suggestions for the event's execution. -To be a part of the teacher and parents' conversation. - To give their brief presentations and receive praise from the community for their efforts.

Source: Author's own elaboration

Discussion

According to Mora and Villegas (2019), students' active participation in the class may also be viewed as a humanistic teaching strategy, and Chen and Schmidtke (2016) acknowledged that teachers unconsciously employ humanistic strategies like learning centered classes.

An investigation carried out by Korobchenko and Khmelnytskyi (2015) revealed the pressing need to design a reform to Ukraine's educational system. They argue that humanistic principles should be incorporated into the aforementioned reform. Jin (2014) recorded a lesson taught to an English as a second language target group

using the Humanistic Approach. The Communicative language teaching method served as the foundation for the applied methodology, which included granting students' autonomy.

Mora and Villegas (2019) proposed a pedagogical model to boost the performance of fifth-grade students in a Colombian public school on external tests. It took into account pre-planning, activating prior knowledge, immersion learning, feedback, and community participation. However, they did not include parental involvement in the learning and teaching process.

A humanistic approach to language teaching necessitates a diagnosis, educational context intervention, and evaluation, as demonstrated by previous research by Ramirez (2020).

Based on all the research carried out by eminent personalities across the world it is understood that the humanistic approach is quite useful even in the Tadepalligudem region in Andhra Pradesh of India.

Conclusions

Teachers in rural areas typically employ cooperative, direct, and traditional methods of instruction because, in their opinion, these methods are more effective at achieving accurate results in students' English language learning. In contrast to humanistic theories that place students at the center of any methodological process that is carried out, rural professors believe that teachers have a major influence over students in the teaching-learning process.

The diagnosis revealed that the greatest need for rural students was parental support and awareness of the significance of English language learning. As a result, the proposed humanistic strategy aims to involve the community in order to increase parental awareness and student encouragement.

Even though rural teachers occasionally employ humanistic practices in the classroom, such as taking students' interests into consideration, allowing students to choose their own learning topics, and involving the community in the English language teaching process, this does not imply that they are well-versed in the Humanistic Approach.

In the rural communities of Tadepalligudem, a strategy that is based on humanistic elements and principles like collaborative and experiential learning, critical thinking, learner-centered lessons, relevant content that is tailored to the students' reality, and a safe and friendly learning environment has become a priority step by step.

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