



دور تدريس اللغة الإنجليزية في تعزيز حقوق الإنسان والعدالة في المؤسسة التعليمية

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المستخلص

يشمل تدريس اللغة الإنجليزية أكثر من مجرد اكتساب المهارات اللغوية، إذ يُعد منصة لتشكيل القيم الأخلاقية، وتعزيز المشاركة المدنية، ونشر مبادئ حقوق الإنسان داخل المؤسسات التعليمية، إلا أن إمكاناته في ترسيخ العدالة ما تزال غير مستكشفة بصورة كافية. تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى بحث دور تدريس اللغة الإنجليزية في تنمية الوعي بحقوق الإنسان، والأخلاق، والعدالة الاجتماعية، ولاسيما من خلال العلاقة بين المنهج الدراسي، والخطاب الصفّي، والسياسات المؤسسية. وتنطلق الدراسة من منظور نظري يرى أن صفوف اللغة الإنجليزية تُعد فضاءات خطابية يتفاوض فيها المتعلمون حول قضايا الهوية والسلطة والقيم الأخلاقية، بما يتيح تحويلهم إلى فاعلين نقديين قادرين على اكتشاف أشكال الظلم ومواجهتها. واعتمدت الدراسة على أطر نظرية متعددة، منها التربية النقدية لدى Paulo Freire في سبعينيات القرن العشرين، والعدالة اللغوية لدى Pierre Bourdieu في تسعينيات القرن العشرين، إضافة إلى تعليم حقوق الإنسان الذي تبنته UNESCO خلال الألفية الجديدة. كما تناولت الدراسة الكيفية التي يمكن من خلالها لاختيارات المنهج، وأساليب التدريس، وطرائق التقويم أن تسهم في تكريس أشكال الظلم البنيوي أو الحد منها. وتؤكد الدراسة أن التدريس الأخلاقي للغة الإنجليزية يتطلب دمج أنشطة تعليمية تركز على العدالة، واعتماد التعليم الحوارّي، واستخدام مواد تعليمية تراعي التنوع الثقافي، مع التحذير من التناول السطحي لخطاب حقوق الإنسان. وتبيّن نتائج الدراسة أن تدريس اللغة الإنجليزية يرتبط ارتباطاً جوهرياً بمنظومة القيم، وأن المؤسسات التعليمية تتحمل مسؤولية مواءمة تعليم اللغة مع مبادئ الإنصاف والكرامة الإنسانية. كما أظهرت النتائج أن التوجه الأخلاقي في تدريس اللغة الإنجليزية لا يسهم فقط في تطوير المهارات اللغوية، بل يعمل أيضاً على تنمية الوعي النقدي لدى المتعلمين، وتعزيز قدرتهم على المشاركة واتخاذ القرارات الأخلاقية، بما يدعم بناء بيئة تعليمية قائمة على حقوق الإنسان والعدالة الاجتماعية. الكلمات المفتاحية: تدريس اللغة الإنجليزية، تعليم حقوق الإنسان، العدالة الاجتماعية، التربية النقدية، المؤسسات التعليمية، المنهج الأخلاقي.

The Role of English Language Teaching in Promoting Human Rights and Justice in the Educational Institution

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Abstract

English Language Teaching (ELT) encompasses more than the acquisition of language skills, serving as a platform for the formation of ethics, civic engagement, as well as the promotion of human rights in educational institutions, while the potential of ELT in the promotion of justice remains under-explored. This study examines the potential of ELT in the development of awareness of human rights, ethics, and social justice, particularly in the nexus of the relationships of the curriculum, classroom discourse, and institutional policies. Through the theoretical lens of the concept of English classrooms as discursive spaces that mediate the relationships of the learner in the negotiation of identity, power, and morality,



the study posits that ELT holds the potential for the transformation of the learner into a critical actor who is able to detect and challenge injustices. Through the theoretical frameworks of Critical Pedagogy (Freire, 1970s), Linguistic Justice (Bourdieu, 1990s), and Human Rights Education (UNESCO, 2000s), the study examines the ways in which the choices of the curriculum, teaching, and assessment in the classroom perpetuate or reduce structural injustices. Further, the study posits that an ethical ELT requires the strategic integration of justice-focused tasks, dialogic teaching, and culturally responsive teaching materials, warning against the shallow integration of the discourse of human rights. Through the application of the theoretical lens of analysis, the study shows that English language teaching is inherently about values, as the educational institutions have the responsibility of aligning the teaching of the language in terms of equity and dignity. The results show that ethical orientation of English Language Teaching (ELT) helps not only in improving language skills but also shapes the critical consciousness and engagement capacities of learners as well as their ethical decision-making abilities to promote a learning environment for human rights and social justice.

Keywords English Language Teaching, Human Rights Education, Social Justice, Critical Pedagogy, Educational Institutions, Ethical Curriculum.

Chapter One: Introduction

1.1 Background of the Study

The English Language Teaching (ELT) profession has moved on from its conventional role as a facilitator of communicative ability, taking a prominent position in the cognitive, social, and ethical development of the learners in the classroom. While English language skills open the door to universal knowledge and employment, they also function as a terrain of ideological struggle, in which the dynamic of power, cultural values, and social stratification are reproduced or challenged (Pennycook 17). While the classroom is regarded as a neutral platform in teaching, it, in effect, mediates the learners' concepts of equity, inclusivity, and civic duty, thus situating the teaching of English as a possible pathway to human rights education. As Freire asserts, "Education is always an act of politics, teaching a language is not a neutral act because it influences the perception of the world and the ability to act upon it" (34). This claim is about the ethical implications of being a professional in English Language Teaching (ELT) because teaching languages is either a reproduction of what is already an injustice in education or a means by which critical awareness and a sense of justice can be developed. Nevertheless, current ELT curricula tend to focus on grammar, vocabulary, and testing, and hence, a classroom is established that does not take advantage of teaching human rights and justice. Thus, it is not only a cognitive task but a moral duty to explore how ELT is relevant in teaching justice at an educational institution.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Although English Language Teaching (ELT) has the potential to enhance citizenship and morality in students, there is an irregular integration of values of human rights in the context of most learning institutions. This is especially the case as human rights are treated as a marginal issue within the curriculum, which does not incorporate them within the overall aims of language learning. This marginalization can create a vicious cycle within education by favoring language skills while ignoring the development of morally



responsible individuals among learners. In addition, there are structural constraints within which teachers are limited within their ability to apply justice-driven pedagogy within their classrooms by factors such as a rigid curriculum, assessment tests, and a school policy that favors performance rather than moral development (UNESCO 12).

1.3 Research Questions

- In what ways might English Language Teaching (ELT) be used as a tool for promoting human rights and justice at schools?
- How do institutional practices in ELT contribute to or mitigate social inequalities among learners?
- How could English language curricula be morally repurposed to incorporate justice-related outcomes without undermining language ability?

1.4 Significance of the Study

The research work enhances various aspects of educational theory and practice. From an academic perspective, the research work enhances the discourse of English Language Teaching (ELT) studies by situating the practice of language education as an ethical and civic activity with the capacity to promote critical consciousness and civic participation (Freire 34; Pennycook 17). From an institutional perspective, the research work provides practical insights for curriculum planners and administrators who may be interested in ensuring that language education is aligned with the values of equity and justice. From an ethical point of view, the research work highlights the responsibility of educational institutions to ensure that in addition to language skills, the moral and civic skills for effective participation in society are also acquired by the learner. This research work demonstrates the capacity of ELT to develop linguistic, ethical, and civic skills at the same time and therefore situates the language classroom as an empowering space for the practice of human rights and justice.

1.5 Scope and Delimitations

This particular study focuses on institutions of secondary and higher education, exploring the intersection of English Language Teaching and human rights in the classroom. While certain broader societal factors, including the media and family, are believed to impact the way in which students perceive justice, the study is limited in its focus on the institutional aspect of English Language Teaching. Further, this study highlights the pedagogy and assessment practices of education, rather than focusing on language standards at a national level.

Chapter Two: Theoretical Framework

2.1 Human Rights Education as a Pedagogical Paradigm

Human rights education (HRE) defines learning as more than the acquisition of rights-related knowledge, but as the development of ethical thinking, civic duty, and critical consciousness. HRE asserts that educational institutions serve as developmental spaces in which the notion of equity, dignity, and social participation is developed among the learners (Tibbitts, 23). According to Tibbitts, "Human rights education should not be reduced to memorizing legal documents, but should involve the critical thinking of the individual as an actor in a society" (23). Therefore, the application of HRE in the English language teaching (ELT) process redefines the language classroom as a place in which the values of ethics are



practiced, as opposed to being transmitted, in turn developing the learners as responsible social actors in justice conversations.

2.2 Critical Pedagogy and Language Education

Critical pedagogy thus becomes a theoretical tool to analyze English Language Teaching as a discourse filled with politics and moral undertones. According to Freire, “teaching is never neutral, for it either reinforces or challenges existing structures of power” (34). In the English language teaching discourse, this means that the way in which discourse occurs in the classroom, as well as other forms of language teaching, affects students’ perceptions of social justice and human rights. This is supported by Pennycook, who asserts, “language teaching carries cultural and ideological assumptions that inform learners’ understanding of the world and their position within it” (17). This means that English language teaching can also become a tool for social critique, in which students come to realize injustices and imagine different, more equitable possibilities.

2.3 Linguistic Justice and Power

A language is more than just a tool for communication; it is also a tool for social power that has the potential for both inclusive and exclusive experiences. In line with Bourdieu, linguistic proficiency in the dominant language is symbolic capital that provides access to resources while excluding others who lack knowledge of that language (Bourdieu 45). This is most pronounced in institutions of learning, where English has become symbolic capital that discriminates in favor of some students compared to others. In order for linguistic justice to be attained in English language teaching, these inequalities in English must be addressed.

2.4 Toward an Ethical ELT Model

To integrate values of justice and human rights into English Language Teaching (ELT), it is necessary to adopt a values-driven and intentional approach that goes beyond the utility of language skills. Ethical ELT is not just about language development but also about the moral development and participation of learners. As UNESCO, education must be focused on strengthening learners’ ability to understand and respond to issues of equity, justice, and human dignity (12). As such, language teaching must be focused on including diverse perspectives in the curriculum, participation in classroom discourse that entails language-related issues, and evaluating language that incorporates morality and language skills. This view of language teaching sees it as a transformative practice that seeks to improve language development and justice.

Chapter Three: English Language Teaching as a Human Rights Practice

3.1 Language, Identity, and Recognition

The English classroom becomes a site where learners build their identity and engage with the ideas of recognition, inclusion, and belonging. The learning of an additional language becomes more than a technical exercise, as it has an effect on the learners’ perceptions of themselves and others, as well as their possible interaction with society in an ethical manner (Norton 5). Teaching English language with human rights in mind challenges the learners to think about equity, respect, and fairness in language use and social interactions. This manner of learning the English language promotes the consideration of the ethical aspects,



as it helps the learners understand different perspectives and the inherent dignity of each human being.

However, the traditional English language teaching curriculum often neglects the views of the minority, which limits the involvement of the learners with the subject of justice (Kubota 42). Through the incorporation of human rights issues into the English language teaching textbooks, the inequality is corrected, and the learners are able to question the social norms that exist.

3.2 Classroom Interaction and Democratic Participation

The way in which English is delivered in the classroom has an overall effect on learners' involvement in democratic and justice-driven practices. Dialogic approaches to teaching in the classroom promote learners to share opinions, question authority, and address moral dilemmas (Alexander 101). According to Alexander, "classroom talk shapes social relationships and provides a rehearsal space for civic engagement" (101). Through the creation of contexts in which learners engage in joint analyses of human rights and justice concerns, the classroom can promote critical awareness and moral responsibility in ELT.

This means that, in practice, the focus of teaching should move from being teacher-centered to being more learner-centered, taking into account the experiences and viewpoints of the students. Role-playing, debating, as well as justice-themed problem-solving exercises help the students exercise their rights-based thinking skills while building their communicative skills. This shows that language learning and civic development complement each other.

3.3 English as Access or Exclusion

English proficiency may also work as an institutional capital, although sometimes it may work as an instrument to reinforce inequality. Using Bourdieu, the notion of language is viewed as an example of symbolic capital, which creates an advantage or disadvantage based on the possession of the code (Bourdieu 45). Many students with less exposure to English may encounter some institutional hurdles that may prevent their participation, thereby excluding their voices from the classroom.

Ethical ELT begins with a consideration of such inequalities and a plan for mitigation. Differentiated teaching, culturally responsive texts, and scaffolding methods offer all students a meaningful participation in language education as a means of simultaneously participating with justice-focused subject matter (Gay 78). In linking language development with ethical concerns, ELT can disrupt hierarchical frameworks by offering students both communicative ability as well as a way to critically think about inequalities within their contexts.

Chapter Four: Institutional Dimensions of Justice in ELT

4.1 Curriculum Design and Ideological Assumptions

Curricula are hardly ever objective, and the values, priorities, and assumptions of the institutions that develop the curricula are reflected in the curricula. In the ELT environment, the selection of contents, topics, and material is often a reflection of the implicit values and assumptions of the selection-makers through the topics and contents that are included and excluded in the selection of material and topics in ELT. According to Apple, "Curriculum is always a political instrument that legitimates certain perspectives and marginalizes others" (56).



The infusion of justice-themed content requires a critical assessment of the content of the curriculum. Textbooks, reading, and activities must include varied perspectives of cultures, focus on human rights themes, and promote critical thinking. For instance, the use of refugee experiences, gender equality, or community activism stories within English language teaching provides students with the chance to address real-life ethical concerns while developing their language skills. These curriculum changes situate English language teaching at the intersection of language and moral growth, undermining the view that language learning is purely technical.

4.2 Teacher Agency and Ethical Responsibility

Teachers are key in shaping the implementation of justice and human rights in the classroom. However, their potential to address ethical matters is often dependent on support and freedom as professionals. According to Zeichner, “teachers’ professional judgment and moral agency are essential in implementing teaching practices to address inequity, although these are mediated by institutional policies and practices of accountability” (Zeichner, 102). In the English Language Teaching community, teachers face the challenge of adhering to the curriculum and assessment requirements while trying to develop critical consciousness in students.

Professional development opportunities for teachers that focus on human rights, social justice, and culturally responsive teaching can help teachers build their agency and make it possible for them to incorporate tasks for social justice effectively into their classrooms. When teachers have the freedom to make their own decisions regarding what is right and wrong in terms of education, it becomes possible for ELT classrooms to be transformative spaces for their learners, providing them with linguistic ability and socialization at the same time.

4.3 Assessment Practices and Fairness

English Language Teaching (ELT) assessment practices can have a great impact either way in terms of perpetuating or reducing inequities. Formal assessment is generally focused on memorization, grammar, and linguistic correctness, and this can act as a disadvantage to some learners who have less prior access and exposure, as well as to some who come from disadvantaged backgrounds. According to Brown, “Assessment is not neutral; it can perpetuate systemic inequalities if it fails to account for diverse learners’ contexts and experiences” (Brown 214).

In order to promote justice in the assessments too, they must be designed in such a way as to emphasize the importance of ethical reasoning and critical thinking skills in addition to language skills. There must be assessments such as portfolio assessment and group work in order to assess the proficiency in the language as well as the engagement with human rights issues in the context of the course.

Chapter Five: Toward a Transformative ELT Framework

5.1 Integrating Human Rights without Instrumentalization

One of the main difficulties in justice-focused English Language Teaching is to ensure that human rights topics are not merely superficially included, leading to justice education as a mere formality. Indeed, as Tibbitts suggests, “Human rights education loses its



transformative power if it becomes a matter of ticking off knowledge instead of ethical practice” (28). In other words, the integration of human rights topics into English Language Teaching needs to be purposeful and designed in a way that is consistent with other educational goals, and English teaching needs to involve more than the mere imparting of knowledge about human rights, as English teaching needs to develop moral reasoning and participation, thus creating a space in which linguistic and ethical goals converge.

5.2 Pedagogical Strategies for Justice-Oriented ELT

Transformative English Language Teaching combines methods that are intended to develop critical consciousness and participation. Dialogical learning, including debate, discussion, and role-playing, offers opportunities to develop language skills while interacting with moral concerns (Alexander 101). Problem-solving learning that focuses learning on practical issues in society inspires students to apply language skills in situations that call for justice and critical thinking. Culturally responsive materials that incorporate diverse perspectives empower students to engage in critical analysis of social injustices while validating their identity (Gay 78).

In addition, reflective writing and portfolio testing also foster metacognition, allowing learners to state their level of understanding of human rights concerns and their language development. These teaching strategies incorporate communicative, critical, and ethical components, ensuring that ELT not only teaches fluent language users but also ethical agents.

5.3 Institutional Recommendations

In order to tap the potential of ELT for transformation, the role of institutions cannot be overstated. “Curriculum frameworks must include, as a priority, the following objectives: to give educators the autonomy to design learning and learning outcomes that focus on equity and critical reasoning” (Apple 56). “Professional development must include expertise in human rights education, culturally responsive teaching, and assessment and evaluation for social justice” (Zeichner 102). “Assessment must include, in addition to linguistic competence, critical reflection, and critical engagement, the recognition of the learner’s ability to use language in a justice-focused way” (Brown 214).

In addition, institutions must encourage participatory decision-making in the development of the curriculum, with teachers and students participating in the development of the curriculum based on their diverse perspectives. This will ensure that ELT classrooms become spaces where the development of the learners occurs.

Chapter Six: Discussion

The previous chapters have presented the case for the English Language Teaching being an extension of the mere tool for the acquisition of linguistic skills and abilities because it has the capacity of infusing the learner with notions of justice and human rights. This particular discussion focuses on the interaction of theory and the structures of the institution.

First of all, the analysis indicates that language, identity, and recognition are necessarily tied to justice-oriented education. According to Norton (5), “Language learning is always a process of ongoing identity construction, which is determined by the social contexts of the classroom.” By including human rights topics within ELT, learners become conscious of injustices and equip themselves with the language of ethical reasoning.



Secondly, what happens in the classroom is essential to encourage participation and democracy. Dialogic approaches, problem-solving activities, and role-playing encourage students to engage with various viewpoints, critically evaluate social norms, and make ethical judgments (Alexander 101). These pedagogical methods embody Freire's claim that education is always already political and becomes a "practice field of democracy" (34). Through the inclusion of justice studies within communicative learning, English language teaching becomes a means of avoiding merely instrumental pedagogy as it enables students to do justice to ethical mandates.

Thirdly, the discourse points to the role of institutions in shaping justice in ELT. The curriculum, the role of the teachers, or the assessment policies may or may not facilitate justice in the classroom. The notion of linguistic capital by Bourdieu suggests that the unbridled promotion of standardized English language ability may lead to the reproduction of social inequities by marginalizing the learning of the less privileged with access to the major linguistic capital (45).

Lastly, some counterarguments relating to the neutrality of language teaching need consideration. Some authors believe that ELT must remain a non-politicized area in order to keep the focus on communication (Canagarajah 77). However, it is evident that the ideal of neutrality is a myth, and every classroom is a place where cultural, social, and ethical values are mediated. Therefore, the inclusion of human rights education in ELT is no longer an addition, but a necessity in terms of the ethical imperative of developing the whole child.

In summary, the above discussion confirms that transformative English language teaching should ensure that curriculum, teaching, and assessment are aligned with human rights, and as such, learners produced in these institutions are linguistically competent, morally conscious, and socially engaged. Such a model locates English teaching as a key to ensuring justice in these institutions.

Chapter Seven: Conclusion

7.1 Summary of Key Findings

According to this study, English Language Teaching (ELT) not only serves as an enabler for language development, it also serves as an important instrument for promoting human rights and justice in the educational setting. Results show that ELT can enable learners to develop their ethical thinking, civic participation, and critical awareness, provided that ELT curriculum design, implementation, and assessment become justice-oriented. Language, identity, and classroom interaction play important roles in enabling learners to achieve negotiation, justice, and moral accountability in their learning experiences (Norton 5). Dialogic teaching, problem-based learning, and cultural teaching materials have been identified to enable learners to develop their language skills and ethical thinking simultaneously, thus exemplifying the synergistic roles of linguistic development and ethical development in ELT (Alexander 101; Gay 78). In addition, this study has shown that ELT, in terms of curriculum design, teacher autonomy, and assessment, has significant impacts on ELT's justice-enabling roles in education. Results have supported the assertion that ELT, or language teaching in general, cannot be apolitical; an apolitical curriculum, in fact, perpetuates power relations, thus making ethical alignment an important issue to contend with in ELT curriculum design (Freire 34; Bourdieu 45).



7.2 Contributions to Knowledge

Conceptually, the importance of the study can be seen in the way it can benefit the field of English Language Teaching by presenting language teaching in the classroom in an ethical light rather than in the light of linguistic technicality. The study proposes a theoretical linkage between the concepts of human rights education, critical pedagogy, and linguistic justice in the classroom to show how the classroom can be a space for the transformation of students in the classroom in terms of their citizenship and morality.

7.3 Implications for Future Research

Several research avenues emerge from the study. Research studies may investigate the efficacy of justice-driven English Language Teaching interventions on various educational levels with comparative outcomes of secondary and tertiary education. Research may also investigate the long-term influence of ethical English Language Teaching on the civic involvement of learners. Additionally, research may investigate the influence of various factors on the efficacy of English Language Teaching interventions on the promotion of human rights with recommendations tailored to the specific context.

Finally, based on the above discussions, the current research has confirmed that English Language Teaching has unexploited potential for the promotion of human rights and justice, provided there is alignment between the curriculum, pedagogy, and infrastructure of English language teaching institutions on the basis of ethical values. English language teaching can develop English language skills as well as ethical consciousness among learners to communicate effectively in English as well as interact with their society members with their ethical perspectives.

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