Transforming Education: Bio-Pedagogical Mediation and the Recognition of the Human Being in Holistic English Language Teaching

Transformando la educación: mediación bio-pedagógica y el reconocimiento del ser humano en la enseñanza holística del inglés como lengua extranjera

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ABSTRACT

This paper aims to analyze and delve into bio-pedagogical mediation and the recognition of the learner as a human being with feelings, emotions, and experiences. It emphasizes that these aspects should be acknowledged by the mediator to facilitate accurate interactions in the holistic development of English language teaching as a foreign language. Learners need to be valued and recognized to have the motivation to learn and awaken positive emotions in their learning process, as well as to have the encouragement of metacognition and autonomy that empowers them to take control of their learning. Some proposals are presented to improve pedagogical mediation practices.

Keywords: Bio-pedagogical mediation, emotion, motivation, metacognition, autonomy, human being.

RESUMEN

Este artículo pretende analizar y profundizar en la mediación biopedagógica y el reconocimiento del educando como un ser humano con sentimientos, emociones y experiencias. Se resalta que estos aspectos deben ser reconocidos por el mediador para realizar interacciones certeras en el desarrollo holístico de la enseñanza del inglés como lengua extranjera. Los estudiantes necesitan ser valorados y reconocidos para tener la motivación para aprender y despertar emociones positivas en su proceso de aprendizaje, así como tener el estímulo de la metacognición y la autonomía que les permita tomar el control de su propio aprendizaje. Se presentan algunas propuestas para mejorar las prácticas de la mediación pedagógica.

Palabras clave: Mediación bio-pedagógica, emoción, motivación, metacognición, autonomía, ser humano.

OBJECTIVE

To explore bio-pedagogical mediation and emphasize the importance of recognizing learners as holistic individuals with feelings, emotions, and experiences. It is argued that acknowledging these aspects is essential for effective interactions in English language teaching as a foreign language. The article highlights that, when learners feel valued and recognized, their motivation is enhanced, positive emotions are fostered, and metacognition and autonomy in their learning process are encouraged.

INTRODUCTION

Education is a broad term that touches everyone at some point, and it is not just a board, a teacher, and students. It is related to life, interaction, respect, and mutual learning. Embarking on language teaching is a fantastic and rewarding journey that requires commitment, creativity, and a genuine passion for helping students achieve their goals. In Colombia, many schools face significant challenges due to a lack of necessary physical and human resources, which hampers their ability to provide quality education. Additionally, numerous students are situated in difficult contexts marked by violence, making them vulnerable to negative influences and poor decision-making due to harmful peer associations. Despite this, it is time to become brave educators to change traditional methods to encourage students to develop new skills and provide them with the tools to strive and grow not only in knowledge but also in their personal lives through real pedagogical mediation. Hence, the importance of mediation and not to impose knowledge to encourage metacognition as Tébar (2003) affirms: "Mediation aims to build skills in the mediate to achieve full autonomy" (p. 68). This article aims to elucidateeflections with an analytical view of the logic of bio-pedagogical mediation that emphasizes the holistic development of learners recognizing them with emotions, feelings, and unique experiences that significantly influence their learning processes leading to transforming society.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

To start, it is vital to know that it is challenging for teachers to play their best role when they often face learners who lack family affection and love. This absence of support is frequently manifested in rude or defiant behavior, negative attitudes, and a general sense of disengagement. At first sight, the context seems frightening for any educator, especially for new ones. Some resign and others try traditional strict and autocratic discipline or punish those who disobey orders. However, the challenge is to put oneself in the learners' situations to know their contexts and transform their niche for a better learning process. The ecological niche is the environment where the living being interacts and it is changeable (Maturana, Yáñez, & Muñoz, 2016). The niche can be changed, but educators must have the best attitude to do it and foster emotional connections by recognizing the learners as whole individuals.

Accordingly, it is important to consider the fact of seeing the learner as a biological being in a cultural environment with feelings, emotions, and interactions, so the teacher can get closer to learners to make interactions and to take care of their beings. Maturana et al. (2016), suggest that "we human beings, as living beings that exist in languaging, are biological–cultural beings in which our cultural and our biological manners of existences can be distinguished but cannot be separated." (p. 631). In this way, I believe that getting close to learners and treating them with love as humans, not as objects, makes a difference. The goal is to involve students in a fun language learning journey; instead of treating them as objects, the focus is to foster communication and dialogue that highlight the significance of everyday life and create unique experiences for everyone. (Devia, 2018). Transforming the punishment of traditional education into love and respect makes the difference. Devia (2018) states:

It is only through the biology of love, through which we accept the legitimacy of the other, that the educational work must be carried out and, therefore, give privilege to the configuration of the being and have its doing as a fundamental epicenter. (p.188).

In this way, the mission of mediators is to change the negative replies to students into positive statements with esteem that value students' efforts and talents, guiding them to discover and show the best version of themselves. By exploring this point, students will start knowing another perspective to adapt postures in communication to a level of caring for others and respecting others the way they are respected. Therefore, the mediator becomes a support and guide in positive reinforcement and a role model for love and kindness in the educational setting. As a result, learning processes ceases to be practices that promote fear, hatred, sadness, punishment, and frustration in learners (Devia, 2018).

Additionally, pedagogical mediation is a way for learners to make lifelong contact by addressing a range of emotions that are meaningful and by promoting enriching learning experiences to nurture holistic development that helps them to have a healthy self-esteem that empowers them to achieve higher goals. In terms of arousing emotions in learners, mediators can foster curiosity that encourages learners to question, research, and navigate the world of inquiry as they explore new ideas and become active in their learning process. According to Macintyre & Gregersen (2012), "As language teachers, learners and researchers we have yet to fully appreciate the value of imagination and the power of emotion in our accounts of the learning process" (p.194). The authors reaffirm the fact of valuing the power of emotion during

the educational journey, facilitating a deeper understanding and retention of information while having a good time learning. To achieve the goal of touching emotions, it is necessary to know their context, their background, and their ecological niche to intervene in the best way, as Maturana & Bloch (1996) state:

If you can see the emotion of a living being in the realm of existence, you will be able to know how it lives and, conversely, if it knows how it lives, you will be able to intervene in its emotion (p.43).

By addressing positive emotions and knowing learners' contexts and backgrounds, it is possible to cultivate empathy and respect for self and others' perspectives, fostering an inclusive environment that ensures that all students feel valued and included, regardless of their identity, race, stereotypes, or abilities, and creating opportunities for all voices to be heard and respected. Touching emotions also involves recognizing the importance of mental and physical care that creates structures of positive transformation, according to Devia (2018) states:

Therefore, educating starts with emotion, a vital ingredient for teaching, as it involves the body and the mind as a vital niche in the interweaving that transforms the learner and their environment towards building the world they want for themselves and others (p. 184).

In contrast, the traditional saying "knowledge enters with blood" represents the outdated belief that only through punishment or harsh teaching methods it is possible to ensure discipline and effective learning. However, this popular proverb is nullified by

bio-pedagogical mediation that nurtures the human being and fosters learner's holistic development. "As language teachers, learners, and researchers we have yet to fully appreciate the value of imagination and the power of emotion in our accounts of the learning process" (Macintyre & Gregersen, 2012, p. 194). Mediators have the right to create an environment of trust, security, and respect, as this is the best way to interact with learners and allow them to express themselves while awakening positive emotions in the learning process.

In addition, fostering positive emotions increases learners' motivation and enthusiasm for learning. Frederickson (2001), cited in MacIntyre and Gregersen (2012), describes five benefits associated with cultivating such emotions in learners. Firstly, it expands attentional focus and enhances thinking. Secondly, it balances the lingering effects of negative emotional states. Thirdly, it fosters resilience by eliciting adaptive responses to stressful situations. Fourthly, it facilitates the formation of social bonds between learners and mediators. Finally, it contributes to an upward spiral towards greater well-being in the future. Another significant notion to go beyond teaching is the role of motivation in language learning, as delineated by Richards (2002), which encloses four distinct motivations. Firstly, instrumental motivation arises when learners seek to cultivate a language for its practical benefits. Secondly, integrative motivation emerges when learners aspire to engage with native speakers of the target language, fostering social and cultural ties. Thirdly, intrinsic motivation is manifested when learners enjoy and feel satisfied from the act of language acquisition itself. Finally, extrinsic motivation is driven by external factors such as rewards, punishments, or parental pressures, which influence the learner's engagement with the language learning process.

In addition, the mediator must have the capacity to adapt to students' abilities and make the information accessible to their cognitive styles. It is also critical to adapt various modes of communication to different cultures (Tébar, 2011). Facilitating learning experiences by using several resources to foster curiosity, to facilitate discussions will create an agreeable environment. In this way, learners can explore and learn to achieve their language learning goals is likely to make a significant impact on language proficiency and overall personal and academic growth. Considering that learners have different cognitive styles, Tébar (2011) emphasizes that the meditator should perceive complexity and adapt the language according to the modality, which is challenging for creativity, but it is essential in mediators when presenting topics using analogies, tables, diagrams, schemes, and more. Furthermore, Tébar (2011) also highlights the importance of exposing students to conflicting and challenging situations, providing a high degree of their potential and confronting them with their possibilities, a cause of motivation, and desire to excel. The challenge for mediators is to progressively raise the level of complexity of the activities for students until they can master more complex tasks. This will avoid demotivation when perceiving very complex tasks from one moment to the next. In this way, it is necessary to have a control of complexity, considering going from the simple to the complex, implementing help processes for complex tasks, and organizing increasingly varied tasks.

REFLECTION

For an English language mediator, there are several challenges, because the aim is not only to teach specific language rules, grammar, and linguistics, but also to go beyond, to encourage learners to use

effective learning strategies, and to help them consciously learn how to learn by using metacognitive strategies, autonomy, and self-regulated learning for lifelong needs (Haque, 2008). Therefore, the initial step to improve pedagogical mediation is to value students as human beings and recognize their uniqueness from a starting characterization that provides information about their lives, previous knowledge, family, likes and dislikes, learning styles, preferences, strengths, and weaknesses. This kind of information will be the starter for a great experience of language learning, which will be crucial to create a connection and to propose fun activities that will raise their motivation to learn while they feel safe and valued in the learning process. Having a variety of students from different places and traditions and multiple backgrounds makes the process even more interesting to interact with each other's roots and customs. Three proposals are exposed below for better interaction with learners based on the literature and rationale of pedagogical mediation.

The first proposal to improve mediation practices is to challenge students to develop projects that increase their metacognition. This fact will take them to a level of awareness of their knowledge and experience. In the same way, it provides guidance and supervision throughout projects to help students develop planning, organization, and self-assessment skills according to cultural topics or curriculum themes in which students can have the freedom to choose sub-topics of interest and take ownership of their learning. The project may focus on specific aspects of the language, such as the culture of the target language and problem-solving in real-life situations. Students could also develop outcomes from their projects that positively affect their territory, such as a local charity event, labeling common zones with positive phrases in English, or volunteering

to teach English. Since learning should have emotion, this type of project could awaken positive emotions in the process and the mediator must do everything possible so that interaction produces interest and curiosity. Learners must know the objectives to ensure reciprocity and advance the goals (Tebar, 2011). In this way, the implication of metacognition states that students who lack metacognitive strategies are essentially learners with no direction or opportunity to organize their learning, track their progress, or evaluate their achievements and future learning paths (O'Malley and Chamot, 1990, cited in Anderson, 2008). In other words, aimless boats in the immense sea of knowledge, sailing wherever the current takes them.

The second proposal involves encouraging autonomy by proposing fun tasks that they can develop inside and outside the classroom as a self-improvement plan that allows them to choose the tools they prefer and make them feel happy while practicing the English language in several ways. Murray (2011), cited by Richards (2014), provides plenty of opportunities to learn English in a stress-free context outside the classroom, where students can feel free to interact with language materials, including movies, television programs, books, magazines, audio recordings, conversation groups, workshops, and social events. This is incredibly useful, because learners will feel free to interact regardless of making mistakes or being graded, will practice, and will improve their skills. Richards (2014) claims that "Typically, learners such as these realized that they would only make progress in learning English if they made use of opportunities to learn English out of the classroom" (p. 3).

The third proposal is the implementation of technology and gamification in the classroom to motivate learners to absorb

the language and put it into practice in a fun way. Incorporating visual aids in the form of technology, diagrams, and hands-on activities allows students to relate linguistic input to concrete experiences. It promotes comprehension and retention while having an enjoyable time with peers and mediators to foster linguistic fluency.It will encourage a sense of respect for other's opinions, creating community among learners and enhancing their overall learning experience. Nowadays, technology has a great impact on generations and has gained significant attention in learning environments. This allows learners to cater to their likes and preferences to practice the target language. The implementation of gamification is an interesting way to motivate students to achieve learning objectives while enjoying the process (Nicholson, 2015).

CONCLUSIONS

In summary, it is possible to replace the traditional teaching methods focused on punishment, fear, and pain, in which students are merely objects in the classroom, with a bio-pedagogical mediation where the learner is the center of the learning process and a human being with opinions able to transform their territories with leadership. It is possible to transform education through better bio-pedagogical mediation to awaken learners' positive emotions, to motivate, and enjoy fun innovative materials. It will foster metacognition and autonomy and in the same way challenging mediators to guide learners to achieve their goals, develop skills, and become agents of change in society.

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