

## **Pragmatism and Its Contribution to English Language Teaching and Education**

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**Abstract:** In the context of English language teaching and education, the philosophical foundation needs to be a concern and mastered by teachers or educators. The philosophical foundation of teaching and education is a set of assumptions that come from philosophy which is used as a starting point in teaching and education. This study aims to describe the concept of Pragmatism and its contribution to English language teaching and education. This study uses a qualitative approach with a library research method. The data were obtained from various scientific works related to the problem discussed in this study. The data were analyzed by using 'content analysis' technique. The findings showed that the philosophy of Pragmatism has given many contributions to English teaching and education; in terms of understanding the nature of learners or students, the goals of teaching and education, curriculum and teaching methods. According to the philosophical rationale of Pragmatism, curriculum and teaching methods can be developed in accordance with the learning objectives to be achieved.

**Keywords:** Education, Pragmatism, Teaching

### **A. Introduction**

In the context of teaching and education, the philosophical foundation needs to be a concern and mastered by educators because of the following reasons: First, education is normative, so in discussing educational theory and practice normative assumptions are also needed. Assumptions in the field of normative education are more or less sourced from philosophy. The philosophical foundation of education that is prescriptive and normative will provide clues about what should be in education and or what is aspired in education (Piggott, 2015). Second, that education is not enough to be understood only through a partial and descriptive scientific approach, but also needs to be viewed holistically. This holistic study of education can be raised through a philosophical approach.

The philosophical foundation of teaching and education is a set of assumptions that come from philosophy which is used as a starting point in education. This set of assumptions is deduced or elaborated from the system of philosophical ideas in general with the scope of ontology, epistemology, axiology formulated by a

particular school of philosophy. Based on this, it can be understood that there is an implicative relationship between beliefs/ideas in the study of philosophy (ontology, epistemology, and axiology) and educational theory and practice ideas.

In this case, the philosophical foundation of teaching and education is discussed by a special branch of philosophy, namely the philosophy of education. Philosophy of education is an activity of philosophical thought that focuses on problems and solutions in the world of education. The philosophical thought process is a series of activities that include synthesizing, contemplating (contemplation), determining, and analyzing, also determining self-attitude which includes self-awareness, deepening, understanding, and flexibility, as well as the nature of thinking which includes radical, systematic, free, coherent, consistent, and responsible. With a series of thought processes, the philosophy of education becomes a reference for the development of education both theoretically and practically.

Teaching and education as a social activity, in theory and practice is always developing. In this case, as adopted by the philosophical understanding of Pragmatism, that what is believed to be the truth today, is not necessarily recognized as the truth in the future. So, the relativity of truth depends on time and space. Likewise with education, as a social activity oriented to individual change, is also always developing and must be developed. It is undeniable that the influence of advances in information technology has narrowed the distance and made it easier for someone to communicate with other people, as well as make it easier to find information, as well as various technologies that facilitate in the sense of helping human work, bring about changes in human life. Seeing this phenomenon, it is inevitable that the education system must always develop and be developed. In this case, the philosophy of Pragmatism rests on the practical side of a system. The truth in a pragmatic concept is of practical consequence. Something can be said to be true and appropriate when it can be used practically.

Pragmatism was originally introduced by Charles Sanders Peirce in 1839. Pragmatism has been widely discussed and put into practice in teaching and education. The discussion covers the philosophical thinking and strategies in solving practical problems. Pragmatism is known to have attitudes and methods that lead to the usefulness and effect function of each concept or idea. Pragmatism is an attitude of method and philosophy that uses the practical value of thoughts and beliefs as the criteria of truth, including education (R. Ormerod, 2006). In accordance with this opinion, Singh (2007) states that there are several principles of Pragmatism, including the following: the truth is relative, truth is shaped by the result, democratic social values, and the importance of activity or experience (Morgan, 2014).

Pragmatism is known as a practical philosophy it has no fixed or absolute

standards. Pragmatism is an attitude, method and philosophy that uses the practical consequences of thoughts and beliefs as a measure for establishing values and truths (R. J. Ormerod, 2021). Pragmatism generally believes that experience is the source of all knowledge. In the same way, they define education in terms of experience: education is the result of experience, but not every experience is educational. An educational experience is the kind that creates other experiences in the future. This means that experience should be productive. Pragmatism believes that what is right is what has practical consequences or can be applied in life, so Pragmatism believes that experience is the basis of teaching and education. On the other hand, something that cannot be applied, based on Pragmatism point of view, is not true. Pragmatism believes that humans tend to create new values; therefore, education should help him in doing so.

Pragmatism has made many positive contributions because it can bring theory into the realm of practice, striving for philosophy to be able to deal with the problems that are currently happening, not just about theory. In other words, Pragmatism tries to spread the philosophy so that it can be used practically to solve various problems that exist around humans, as Dewey said, that the philosophy of Pragmatism has the aim of improving human life and its activities to meet human needs.

Pragmatists believe that life is dynamic which is subjected to constant change; hence the aims of education are bound to be dynamic (Kaushik & Walsh, 2019; Marginson, 2006). According to them, education deals with human life, so it must help the children to fulfill their biological and social needs. Thus, according to Pragmatists, education should enable a child to create values in his life.

In the context of teaching and education, Pragmatism is basically trying to put more emphasis on methods and positions, which emphasizes the importance of human experience, rather than a systematic philosophical doctrine. Pragmatism philosophy emerged as a response or criticism of previous philosophical systems such as materialism, idealism, and realism. In the perspective of pragmatism, students must learn how to think and adapt to society (Elkjaer & Simpson, 2011). An action will be meaningful if it has practical consequences or tangible results that are beneficial to human life. The past and the future are considered things that have and have not happened. While the present is a reality, then face the present reality with a big struggle.

Pragmatism argues that education should be a social activity related to the benefits of life. In the teaching-learning process, students need to adapt to an environment that tends to change over time (Churiyah et al., 2020). Learners will learn more and faster when the teacher encourages their curiosity, doesn't make them stiff. Therefore, learning based on the philosophy of Pragmatism tends to use various

games in the learning process. The information that learners need (to solve problems) is based on their own perspectives and is controlled by the teacher.

Pragmatism has contributed to developments in teaching and education. Pragmatism has caused changes to many aspects such as curriculum, learning objectives and other aspects. With the rise of this philosophy, the paradigm of teaching and education has changed from a traditional paradigm to a modern one. In addition, pragmatism has introduced the nature of democracy in education (Neubert, 2010). Accordingly, Pragmatism has had a lot of influence on the progress and development of the education system in the world.

## **B. Methods**

This study aims to describe the nature of English language teaching and education from the perspective of Pragmatism philosophy. This research uses a qualitative approach with library research methods. Library research involves identifying and locating sources that provide factual information or personal/expert opinion on a research question; necessary component of every other research method at some point. Literature study is carried out by collecting various kinds of scientific writings and sources related to the topic or problem of the study. Data sources are published scientific works (such as journal articles, book, etc.), either collected from the library or internet. The activities are carried out systematically to collect, process, and conclude data using certain methods/techniques to find answers to the problems faced. The data of this study were analyzed by using content analysis. Content analysis is a systematic analysis technique not only of content but also of the main themes and ideas found. The content analysts typically use some guidelines for inference (based on existing theories, previous research, or experience) and strict procedural (coding) rules to move from unstructured text to answers to their research questions.

## **C. Results and Discussion**

### **Teachers and Teaching Goal**

Pragmatism believes that humans are fundamentally dynamic and changeable. Humans are active organisms, continuously reconstructing and interpreting and reorganizing their experiences (Elkjaer & Simpson, 2011; Plass et al., 2018). Children will grow when they interact with others. The child must learn to live in a community of individuals, work with them, and adapt intelligently to the needs and aspirations of the society.

According to the Pragmatism, the students or children are the central figure in

teaching and education. The most important thing for teachers is to pay attention to psychological and sociological aspects in relation to the relevance of subjects for the social life of the students or children and society. Therefore, teachers should consider the relevance and integrate learning for the lives of students in the future.

The teacher, in Pragmatism perspective, is as a helper, guide and philosopher (thinker). To play the roles, there are core components that must be possessed by teachers, namely: practical knowledge, content knowledge, contextual knowledge, pedagogical knowledge, personal knowledge and reflective knowledge. A teacher is responsible to give questions or problems to his students and stimulate them to find their own solutions to the problems given as well as to provide opportunities for them to develop their competences. Thus, from this explanation, it is clear that in Pragmatism perspective, teachers are required to be creative.

The goal of teaching English is to increase students' communicative competence through listening, speaking, reading and writing skills. Hymes stated that when a child acquires language, the child acquires knowledge of sentences, not only grammar, but also the suitability of the sentence in its use. Accordingly, the implication is that the goal of teaching English is not only increasing students' mastery of linguistic elements (eg. words, sentences, etc.), but also overall communication skills.

## **Curriculum**

Etymologically, the curriculum comes from the Greek words *curir* and *curere* which means racing line, run, a kind of route in a race that must be passed by the participants of the race. In other words, the route that must be taken must be obeyed by the race participants with all the consequences in order to reach the expected finish effectively and efficiently.

There are several definitions of curriculum put forward by experts; some define the curriculum as an instructional design, as a product and as a process (Richards, 2013). The curriculum as an instructional design is a system for decision-making and action in relation to the function of the curriculum directed at a particular population. As an instructional design, curriculum has three functions: production (to produce a curriculum for an identifiable population), implementation (to implement a curriculum in a particular school), and assessment (to assess the effectiveness of the curriculum developed). The curriculum as a product means a set of documents to be implemented. In other words, the curriculum is what actually happens in the classroom and what is done to prepare and evaluate. It must consist of a variety of learning experiences that can improve thinking processes and give students the freedom to develop their social attitudes.

Curriculum development must consider the interests of students. The point is that learning activities that are included in the curriculum must attract the interest of students. According to pragmatism, in addition to considering the principles of utility, interest and experience, the curriculum is also developed by taking into account the principles of integration of subjects and activities. This is in line with the pragmatic philosophical concept of reality, namely that reality is an interaction between humans and their environment. The world will be meaningful as long as humans learn the meaning contained in it. Change is the essence of reality, and humans must be ready to change the ways they will do it. Humans are essentially dynamic. Reality is what can be experienced and observed with the senses.

Based on the explanation above, it can be seen that according to pragmatism, the curriculum is essentially flexible, dynamic and integrated which helps children who are developing and a society that continues to change more and more according to the needs, demands and situations. Knowledge is a transaction between humans and their environment, and truth is part of knowledge. Experience is always changing, so it will not require permanent and eternal knowledge. Consequently, curriculum development must be based on the learners' needs for both their present and future lives.

Language as a means of communication is used in various ways function and presented in a meaningful context. It is inseparable from the nature of its function as a means of communication; the use of which is tied to the situation. So, the essence of language learning is to improve the learner's communicative competence. Communicative competence is the main goal of the language learning proces. In addition, linguistic knowledge is a means to formulate and develop communicative competence through listening, speaking, reading and writing. Therefore, the curriculum to be designed must include communicative competence.

The communicative competence consists of grammatical competence, sociolinguistic competence, discourse competence, and strategic competence. Grammatical competence is an understanding of linguistic or linguistic aspects. Sociolinguistic competence refers to an understanding of the social context in which communication takes place, including: role relationships, shared information from participants, and communicative goals for their interactions. Discourse competence refers to the interpretation of individual message elements in terms of their interrelationships and how meaning is represented in relation to the overall discourse or text. Strategic competence refers to the strategies that communicators use to initiate, terminate, maintain, improve, and direct communication.

Pragmatism has many positive influences in English teaching and education. Learning that is oriented towards the study of language "structurally" will of course cause many obstacles when it is not related to the practical use of language in certain situations. In communicating, students are required to achieve pragmatic qualities. They are expected to be able to use the target language according to the context. From this opinion, the communication that occurs is oriented towards achieving pragmatic quality, so that students can use language according to the particular context.

Learning English is directed at improving students' ability to communicate in English properly and correctly, both orally and in writing. However, to achieve a "good" level of communicative competence, it is not possible to do just by studying the linguistic aspects. This is because there are many factors that might affect the communication process. In this case, the pragmatic approach is very helpful in language learning which is oriented towards its practical use in communicating.

As explained above, it is clear that with the pragmatism approach, English language learning is able to accommodate practical language needs in accordance with real conditions. With a pattern based on pragmatic studies, the language learning process received by students will automatically refer to a practical condition of communication. This learning orientation will also require adjustments to various aspects of learning such as curriculum, teaching-learning process, etc.

### **Teaching Method**

In teaching and education, one of the important things that must be considered is the method used. Teaching-learning process must be learner-centered, that is, it must take the learner as an individual in his or her own right. In addition, the readiness and development of the learner must also be considered. There is no point in assuming that the learner is capable of doing something if s/he is psychologically incapable of doing it. It must be realized that every learner (individual) is unique and therefore must be treated differently. Besides, the learner's current needs, interests, and abilities must also be considered, but this should not stop with current needs.

Teaching-learning are two inseparable things. Based on the Pragmatism point of view, learning is the process of constructing meaning actively, while teaching is showing or helping learners to learn how to do something, giving instructions, guiding in learning something, imparting knowledge, and making the learners know or understand. The method in Pragmatism's review is an activity-based learning method; students learn through experience. So, in teaching-learning process, a language teacher must act as a facilitator. As facilitators, teachers play a role in providing services to facilitate students in the learning process. Teachers

should act and position themselves as a facilitator and the appropriate learning method would be student-centered learning. They play an active role in providing facilities in the process of learning activities, planning goals, interpreting learning activities, and teachers must carry out evaluations and assessments so that the implementation of teaching and learning interactions runs smoothly and pleasantly.

Based on the principle of social democratic values that must be applied in the application of learning methods, teachers must understand the democratic values of the community so that they know the right things to teach and appropriate learning methods that can be accepted by students. In addition, in accordance with the principle of Pragmatism which states that children or learners are central figures in the education and learning process, the development of English learning methods must be based on activities or experiences which can create interactive learning activities. The point is that the learning process must be connected with the learner's personal experience so that what learners get in the learning process will be useful for them in practical life.

In the context of English teaching-learning, pragmatism has changed the learning paradigm from a structural approach to contextual learning. With the development of thinking in modern linguistics, language learning has begun to leave the traditional learning model, the grammar translation method. The previous learning method focused more on learning objectives on understanding and mastering internal aspects of language or grammar, turning to methods that aim to improve students' understanding and mastery of the ability to communicate with others. In other words, the learning method shifts to mastering the communication aspects as a whole.

There have been a number of English teaching methods using pragmatic approach or communicative approach such as: Direct Method, Audio-Lingual Method, Silent Way, Suggestopedia, Community Language Learning, Total Physical Response, Natural Approach and Communicative Language Teaching. The essence of these teaching methods is to provide opportunities for students as social beings to be able to interact with their environment in a democratic learning process. Teaching-learning process is not only carried out in order to increase the students' knowledge/mastery of the internal aspects of language, but also to improve their communication skills in various social situations. The process emphasizes learner-centered learning and emphasizes communication skills both orally and in writing. This is in line with the philosophical concept of Pragmatism which considers that humans are social beings need to interact, cooperate and collaborate with the natural surroundings so that they can face their life in the future. Therefore, by applying communicative learning methods, students are prepared to be able to face changing times and language changes.

Several researches showed that these methods have provided positive benefits for learning English. Firstly, Audio-lingual Method is one of the effective methods which can be used by the English teachers in teaching English. The use of the Audio-lingual Method can help improve students' listening comprehension. Secondly, in learning English grammar, the use of the Silent Way can also make students become problem-solvers, active and independent, and help them become learners who think creatively. Thirdly, Suggestopedia can improve the learners' English performance. This method helps the students (especially elementary school students) to learn English vocabulary easily. Fourthly, by applying the Community Language Learning methods, students' confidence to participate in class conversations increases. Fifthly, total Physical Response was not left behind; this method can motivate children to be interested in learning English vocabulary because this method is very entertaining for them. Sixthly, the Natural Approach is proven to be able to help students learn better. Finally, Communicative Language Teaching, which is a method that is familiar to English teachers, has also contributed a lot to learning English. Most teachers have a positive perception of the use of Communicative Language Teaching in learning English; according to them, students can speak English fluently.

Dealing with the implementation of teaching methods, Pragmatism emphasizes the role of the environment. To create the best communication environment that helps students to engage in one particular activity is to do it in the target language and also to increase its value, quality and attractiveness. To achieve these goals, learning should include the following: 1) Activities that involve real communication that can encourage learning; 2) Activities to carry out meaningful tasks to improve learning; and 3) Meaningful language for students to support the learning process.

#### **D. Conclusion**

Level Widget usage turned on category often that is 70.00 % and quite the opposite level fitness physically a child dominant on category ok matter this to show if using the widget can more control Again and redirected on activity desired figure a child therefore will more increase fitness a child in to do different activity. Gadgets can give influence dependent on a child so that to become focus parents and teachers to give control children, so using gadgets/smartphones is easy so no minus influence activity social a child including sports. although in matter This is not a gadget factor the main one in to obstruct activity sport a child.

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