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Participatory Action Research Inside an English Second Language Classroom: Towards a Critical Syllabus

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Introduction

It is common to be bilingual all around the world, because of the spread of bilingualism around the world. There are many researchers who are interested in conducting studies on foreign language classrooms and second language classrooms. They are trying to find answers or solutions to second language students' struggles.

For example, Chomsky studies and his exploration in bilingual science. Wei (2000) said, bilingualism is rising around the world and there are one in three people who are bilingual or multilingual. In this paper, I will teach second language students how to conduct a participatory action research using the interview method. The students will choose the topic that interest them and practice their English by enhancing their motivation through the research process.

Statement of Problem

Because of the lack of participatory action research in second language research I am interested in applying this kind of study to my paper and consider the students participants as the object of the study, students who will decide the study starts from the topic to the references. I want to discover how much effort is needed to improve the students' English language using this kind of research, compared to the typical research study, the students' motivation to study and the kinds of topics which are considered interesting for the students.

Research Question:

How the use of Participatory action research at FL classroom helps to improve students language and critical thinking?

Literature Review

Participatory action research youth choose the topics, lead the investigations, collect and analyze the data, present their findings, and design the social actions. The adults are the facilitators who help youth make connections. They teach youth the academic skills they need, and they provide them access to resources that allow them to complete the work (Bocci, 2014). participatory action research can be challenging and can be used inside the classroom as an integrated part of the course experience, because class size, inadequate space, the time provided to students to work in smaller groups, the constraints of trying to work during a class period, the rise of time- and focus-consuming standardized testing protocols, and the curricula design (Ozer, et al, 2010; Phillips et al., 2010). However, with all of these challenges, some researchers have applied participatory action research inside the classroom, and the students reported that they improved their sense of autonomy and motivation through this process (Ozer & Wright, 2012). Other researchers found that students improved their sense of empowerment (Irizarry, 2011; Romero et al., 2008). Also, others found that students improve their collaborative competency through this process (Langhout, Collins, & Ellison, 2013).

Theoretical framework

Sociocultural lens (Vygotsky, 1978)

Vygotsky's (1978) theories present the important role of social interaction in the development of cognition (Vygotsky, 1978); he believed that community plays a central role in the process of creating meaning. Vygotsky (1978) believed that the children's development must precede their learning and that "learning is a necessary and universal aspect of the process of developing culturally organized, specifically human psychological function" (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 90). He has created a sociocultural approach to cognitive development.

Method

The study's participants will be no more than eight high school students aged 16-18. Their English-language level is intermediate or upper intermediate, based on the IELTS exam, which means their score is 4 to 5. The teacher will identify and select students to include in the study. Also, the study will include the English-language teacher, who has graduated with a BA from the Department of Education of English Language and has experience in teaching. The study will be conducted at a public high school that teaches English as a foreign language. The study will last 4 months, for two hours after school. the students will give a pre-test post-test to measure their English-language levels.

In the first month, the students will choose and research about the topic, research question, and problem. In the second month, the students will conduct the literature review and do the interviews then write the method section. In the third month, the students will write the result and discussion sections. In the last month, the students will write the limitation and reference sections. The language the students will use is English, and each month, the teacher will explain to the students the characteristics of each part of the research elements and how they can create it. Then students will work in groups to complete it.

Also, the teacher during the study will use the observation while students do the qualitative study and write journals. The researcher at the end of the study will interview the teacher and the students for no more than 10 minutes about their experiences and expectations at the beginning and end of the study. The teacher will ask about the students' improvement and their motivation to study.

Expect Outcome

- Change in the student's English language proficiency.
- Increase in students' vocabulary, and they will learn how to build a solid sentence to write down their research.
- Students will learn how to conduct a research study.
- Students will learn the various steps of the research process and the characteristics of each research content such as literature review, method and discussion.
- This study will improve students' critical thinking.
- Improve the students' collaboration skills.

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