

Hybrid Multilingual Education Program as Human Rights Education(HRE)

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1. Basic principles of Human Rights Education(HRE)

Human rights are, by definition, universal and its education should be universal.

What does it mean that human rights education(HRE) is and should be universal and how could we put it into concrete program?

Firstly, human rights view every human as equal in dignity and rights and HRE's goal is to nurture a sense of equality of human regardless of their origin, sex, age. The major challenge in this enterprise is, as Richard Rorty so convincingly elaborated¹, is that we, human, quite often unconsciously and unintentionally tend to put boundary between human like us and quasi-human unlike us. So, in addition to the solid and rational knowledge about human nature, we need "sentiment education" which could expand a sense of "people like us" as much as possible.

Secondly, human rights as universal norm must find appropriate philosophical justifications in order to be integrated into Non-Western societies and such justifications must be attractive and inspiring for ordinary citizens in those societies and be based on their own intellectual resources, including local languages.

Hence, HRE must embrace intercultural education in the globalizing world.

Intercultural education is education based on interculturalism, a new political ideology

¹ Richard Rorty, Human Rights, Rationality, and Sentimentality, in Stephen Shute and Susan Hurley eds., *On Human Rights – The Oxford Amnesty Lectures 1993*, BasicBooks, 1993.

which has been taking over multiculturalism recently.

Charles Taylor contrasts interculturalism in Quebec with multiculturalism in English Canada as follows:

The ‘multi’ story decentres the traditional ethno-historical identity and refuses to put any other in its place. All such identities coexist in the society, but none is officialized. The ‘inter’ story starts from the reigning historical identity but sees it evolving in a process in which all citizens, of whatever identity, have a voice, and no-one’s input has a privileged status².

In my interpretation, interculturalism is a political ideology for managing cultural and religious diversity through explicitly addressing the de-facto inequality from the perspective of each ethnic master-narrative in the given society and ensuring all parties equal participation in the process of making the new collective identity.

Hence, HRE must be culturally sensitive, meaning that it must be attentive and respectful for individual cultures, especially marginalized and oppressed ones for long while aiming at making a new collective identity as global citizen so that the people will be equipped with a sense of citizenship, a strong will to participate in decision-making process in given society.

Thirdly, HRE must take into account globalization, which has been boosted by the recent development of science and technology.

HRE must accommodate rapidly changing social/political/economic structure and nurture individual mind-set, reframed by the recent development of science and technologies as the major engine of globalization.

It is our common understanding that we are now entering the information age as coined by Alvin Toffler, a prominent futurist. At the information age, knowledge-production and information-processing is taking over standardized mass-manufacturing and consequentially transforming a mind-set and industrial structure. Steve Case, a founder of American Online, inspired by Toffler’s works, published *The Third Wave* in 2016 and presented his own interpretation of three stages of the information age focusing on Internet. In his account, there are three waves;

The First Wave of the Internet was building the infrastructure and foundation for an on-line world,

² Charles Taylor, Interculturalism or multiculturalism, *Philosophy and Social Criticism*, Vol.38, No.4-5, May/June, 2012, p.418.

The Second Wave was development of on-line services such as Google and SNS which make it easier to utilize digital information already available on the web,

The third Wave, coined as InterNet of Everything, is transformation of major, real-world avenues such as health and education sectors by well-established and ever-expanding ubiquitous connectivity on the web³. Cathy N. Davidson, a leading scholar of higher education reform at the cyber age, emphasizes that one-size-fits-all model and standardization cannot fit in a world of social networking, crowdsourcing, customizing and user-generated content⁴. Case says that 2016 is the starting year of the Third Wave. How it affects the nature and scope of human rights and HRE?

Take the freedom of expression, particularly the freedom of the press, which was highlighted during the US presidential campaign in 2016.

Freedom of expression, particularly the freedom of the press is the essential condition for the liberal democracy.

However, the recent development of the Information and Communication Technology is transforming the landscape of the media industry and the resulting commercialization, politicization and globalization is posing the most serious challenge to the ethics of the Press.

2016 is coined as “post-truth” as the Oxford Dictionaries Word of the Year and the first year of the third wave of the Internet which begins to transform not only the real-world structure but also the mindset of the people and their code of conduct.

HRE must address this issue squarely. In this regard, Information and Communication Technology (ICT) and other sciences and technologies such as Artificial Intelligence, Big Data Technology and Robotics should be utilized to promote HRE.

Fourthly, HRE must take into account multilingualization in the world.

For instance, English, which 1.75 billion people speak worldwide now and it is expected to be 2 billion by 2020, is radically multilingualized/localized as it is spreading globally. Robert Gibson, an intercultural consultant based in Munich, Germany, said that the English language is changing quite radically and the trend is not to have one or two clear standard Englishes like American English and British English, but to have a lot of different types of English⁵.

³ Steve Case, *The Third Wave – An Entrepreneur’s Vision of the Future*, Simon & Schuster, 2016, pp.1-7.

⁴ Cathy N. Davidson, *Now You Can See It*, Penguin Books, 2011.

⁵ Lennox Morrison, You need to go back to school to relearn English, in BBC Capital, 16 December 2016. <<https://goo.gl/9PYxiK>> confirmed on June 10, 2017.

The presupposed premise of dominance of one standard English in the diversity paradigm is now facing serious challenge and need to be reconsidered⁶.

HRE must aim at transforming societies and organizations from a homogeneity paradigm to a diversity paradigm and reeducating monolingual English speakers who have no insight about the multicultural challenges to their English. In this regard, multilingual education must be a part of HRE.

In summary, sentimental education, intercultural education, STEM(Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics)education and multilingual education must be parts of HRE.

2. Experimental HRE

2-1. First trial

In April 2015, I introduced the multilingual language acquisition program of the Hippo Family Club (Hippo) at SHOKEI GAKUIN University as a formal curriculum for the first time in the history of Japanese higher education institutions .

The LEX Institute – Hippo Family Club (the Institute for Language Experience, Experiment and Exchange) is a non-profit corporation founded in 1981. Based on the theme, “Scientifically exploring humans and languages,” it aims at natural acquisition of several languages (multiple languages) regardless of age through (1) community-based activities known as “Families”; (2) opportunities to meet with people from all over the world through “international exchanges”; and (3) “research activities” exploring languages through natural science. There are presently about 20,000 members participating in “Families” in approximately 700 locations throughout Japan with members’ ages ranging from 0 to 99.

The reaction from the students was beyond expectations, “My view of foreign languages has changed. I used to hate them because they were difficult and I couldn’t understand anything. Now I have a grasp of what is being said and have decided to mimic them for the time being.” “I am surprised that I have begun to grasp the meaning of what is being sung in songs that I didn’t understand at all in the beginning.” “I had thoughts

⁶ Gérard Bouchard presented the five major paradigms for ethnocultural diversity; (1) diversity(English Canada, the United States, Sweden, Australia, India), (2) homogeneity(France, Japan, Russia), (3)bi-or multi polarity(Malaysia, Bolivia, Switzerland, Northern Ireland), (4)duality(Quebec), (5)mixité(Brazil, Mexico). Gérard Bouchard, What if interculturalsim ?, McGill Law Journal 56:2(2011),pp.441-444.

about how fun it would be to speak with many people, but this class has convinced me that I have to speak with people from other countries.”

In addition to students’ very positive comments, I’ve got an extremely valuable insight from one of my faculty members. After listening to my brief explanation, she instantly commented that it is exactly HRE as students learn to see any language as equal and eventually recognize every human as equal regardless of their origin, language and culture.

In fact, Yo Sakakibara, a founder of Hippo Family Club, has already discovered this multilingual dynamics.

Any two-way relationship has a tendency toward the absolute, with ample potential for polarization and confrontation. A three-way relationship, on the other hand, is all about relativity; it encourages coexistence, tolerance. And the uncertainty such a relationship triggers in our mind offers us the opportunity to discover new things about ourselves.

For example, suppose we give English-only story tapes to the children in our language program. No matter how much English this exposes them to, it will always be the “other” language for them, as opposed to Japanese.

Now suppose that instead, we give the children story tapes in two or more foreign languages. As they listen to all these languages as once, their preferences fluctuate: “I like this language. No, I like that one!” There fluctuations begin to affect how they view their mother tongue, too⁷.

2-2. Second trial

In April 2017, we have started a full-fledged multilingual language acquisition program of the Hippo Family Club (Hippo) at SHOKEI GAKUIN University, all Hippo 15 classes in one-semester. This time, we connect our real classroom in the campus with the headquarter of the Hippo Family Club in Tokyo so that we could test how hybrid multilingual program works. For this experiment, we select ZOOM⁸, on-line conference system developed in US.

⁷ Yo Sakakibara, Language is Our Music-The Natural Way to Multilingualism, Language Research Foundation, 2013, pp.42-43.

⁸ ZOOM is on-line conference system with content-sharing function, cloud-recording capacity and breakout session which makes possible simultaneous hybrid interactive class.<
<https://zoom.us/feature>> confirmed on June 10, 2017.

In classes, we could interact with students in internships at the headquarter who are from different countries and speak different mother tongues through ZOOM.

3. Some reflections

This experiment has been developed based on my experience as a human rights educator, having experimented participatory human rights education method by using expressive arts therapy last 12 years as well as the new insights that I have obtained recently through exercising LEX multilingual program, coaching⁹, mindfulness program¹⁰.

In our experimental classes, I found that a sense of equality of human-being and open-mindedness could be nurtured through developing emotional awareness of languages as equal and that multilingual environment under perfectly affirmative conditions helps in developing such a sense of open-mindedness and a sense of compassion for different others¹¹. As Richard Rorty stressed, sentimental education arguably facilitates and expands a sense of equalness of human, but only works in the relaxed environment in which people feel secured and safe to listen to others.

How can we develop a sense of sentiment through on-line program which lacks face-to-face contact which carries bodily communication as basis of emotion/sentiment?

My preliminary experiment of on-line workshops ascertained that on-line collective wisdom building exercise works as alternative of bodily communication for nurturing a sense of connectivity with others¹². Richard Eleftherios Boyatzis, an expert on emotional intelligence, also said that several studies about the impact of on-line communication on developing a sense of connectivity are underway and may be published soon¹³.

⁹ Coaching is “partnering with clients in a thought-provoking and creative process that inspires them to maximize their personal and professional potential”.

<<http://www.coachfederation.org/index.cfm>>

¹⁰ The mental training program widely practiced in global corporations such as Google. <<http://www.mindful.org/>>

¹¹ The details about the experimental class were presented at the International Conference on Innovation in Arts, Social Science and Education which was held December 21_23, 2015 in New York. <<https://goo.gl/Hwgd6k>> confirmed on June 10, 2017.

¹² The details of this experiment will be disclosed by Masato Tahara, self-organization facilitator and on-line education producer, in his forthcoming book.

¹³ Richard Eleftherios Boyatzis is an American organizational theorist and professor of

Therefore, my next research target is to examine how the simultaneous multilingual hybrid education program could affect the mental condition of participants by the solid scientific methodology drawing upon the recent findings in the field of neuroscience, computer science, artificial intelligence, on-line education and social media.