

Investigating Freires Banking Concept of Education with Reference to English Language Teaching at Tertiary Level in Sri Lanka

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The research was conducted with reference to the Freirian praxis on “banking” concept of education in relation to English language teaching (ELT) in Sri Lanka. Education through the act of depositing, which is prevalent in ELT in tertiary level has obstructed the development of a critical consciousness of the student. Assigning an ‘unalloyed ignorance’ to the incompetent speaker of English, the teacher substantiates the distinction between the student and themselves through intimidating narration of structuralist ideologies of language teaching. An acquiescent inclination towards ‘banking’ concept is perceptible among ESL learners in school and tertiary levels since it’s convenient. Yet, the convenience of the banking approach, as Freire posits, dehumanizes the student and creates a dichotomy between the man and the world. Interviews, questionnaires and activities were conducted with 25 undergraduates of two state universities in Sri Lanka to analyze the manner in which the ‘banking’ concept has hindered their creative power. A dearth of learner autonomy and creativity was conspicuous among the undergraduates, resulting from teacher’s narration that they are accustomed to since primary education. The gravity of depriving the learners from conscientização in the school level, its repercussions and the significance of introducing the undergraduate to critical consciousness through lesson materials were understood in the research.

Keywords: Banking concept, conscientizaca, dehumanization