



Buber's Pedagogy of Inclusion in Fostering Genuine Classroom Relationship

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Abstract. The study is aimed at directing our collective consciousness towards the needs to develop the values of authentic relationship through the pedagogy of inclusion. The existential potency of positive, meaningful and reasonable learning that is directed toward sustainable and holistic development has been recognized to be hinged on the values of human relationship. This is what Buber's existentialism projected to achieve by the philosophical consideration of the pedagogy of inclusion which is based on the existentiality of 'I-Thou' relationship. This promotes the "we-ness" of development that recognized the commonness of human existence, and for the recognition of the forces of isolation, segregation and alienation. The paper recognized that the hostilities that exist in contemporary human relationship that can be healed through the adoption of the pedagogy of inclusion of every individual, especially by fostering genuine classroom relationship by obedience to the values of 'I-Thou' philosophy of life and living. Employing expository method of analysis, the study concluded that genuine classroom relationship can be achieved through the proper understating the pedagogical values of the Buber's existentialism, and which, in extension, will help to develop the commonness of societal development in love, equity, harmony and justice.

Keywords: Classroom, Development Education, Inclusion, 'I-Thou' Relationship, Pedagogy, Philosophy of Dialogue

1. Introduction

If only teachers know how many learners in the classroom feel significant and derive a sense of uniqueness when their questions, ideas, comments and their total being are recognized by the teacher. Learners feel a sense of fulfilment when teachers

confirm their presence in relational encounter (Isanbor 2023; 2022; 2021). As Buber (2000) explains, the key to this ability is to listen to the other and to see the other fully as the 'Thou'. This relates to the dialogical virtue of becoming aware and developing a deep awareness of sensitivity to others. In essence, in turning to the other, you allow the other to "step forth and (become) a presence". Essentially, the central argument in this paper is the need for the teacher to establish learning through genuine and meaningful relationships. Ordinarily, education should open the heart of the individual and develop his mind so that he can discover the truth for himself, as well as make the truth his own (Kanu & Isanbor 2021; Isanbor & Irabor 2020). Learner's education cannot be said to be based on full mutuality between equal partners because of its asymmetrical nature. In this situation, children depend on teacher as they gradually develop their own sense of awareness. Even at that, it is expected that the child's uniqueness should be appreciated.

Education has been severally defined, but in this paper the definition of Martin Buber comes to bear, as specifically as he defines education as "the selection of the effective world by a person". He goes to say that such function is made manifest in the educator who has a critical role to play. Buber note that this noble role can be performed by the educator who must come in person to meet, draw out and engage his pupil in a dialogical context (Isanbor 2023; 2022; 2021).. This stems from Buber's philosophy of dialogical relations. Although, Buber is often characterized as an existentialist, he would rather refer to himself as a philosophical anthropologist given his background study of wholeness and the uniqueness of human beings. Specifically, Buber sees human existence as grounded in relationships.

When the roll call is made of outstanding teachers, the likes of Socrates and Plato become relevant in

education as a result of their emphasis and contribution to dialectical mode of teaching. This mode of teaching has been highly emulated and teachers today learn how to dialogue with their learners and ask students the right questions so that they too can learn for themselves. This teaching pedagogy has been redefined in the Buberian context. Generally, Buber's philosophy of relationship spans across metaphysics, epistemology, axiology and education. However, the focus in this paper is within the context of education where Buber talks about the one-sided 'I-Thou' relation made possible with inclusion, and actualized in education. Buber's advocacy is for a classroom interaction where genuine dialogue is employed. Although he identified that such a relationship is quite an unusual and uncommon phenomenon. It is a situation where the 'I' meets 'Thou' merely by grace. It is even more difficult where the relationship between the 'I' and 'Thou' is asymmetrical, as it is the case between teachers and students. Yet, Buber is hopeful that genuine relationship and communication can be made possible even in such settings through inclusion. It is against this background that this paper explores inclusion as a pedagogy while articulating its relevance, thus, creating awareness for teachers about its potentials. Specifically, this paper takes its premise from Buber's conception of genuine relationships with particular focus on his dialogical element of inclusion.

2. Buber's Conception of Genuine Relationships

As an existentialist, Buber's emphasis was on existential man and the role of man as subject in the world and with the world. Buber stressed the importance of the relation between self and others (I-Thou) and its radical difference between self and objects, that is, "I-It." For a comprehensive understanding of Buber's philosophy of dialogue, it is firstly important to clarify his conception of dialogical relationships. This centred on moment of genuine meeting which could happen anywhere, provided there was openness in such meeting. In this context, Buber talks about the realm between people or between a person and another thing as the meeting place of the 'I' and 'Thou' (Buber 2002). Thus, it recognized that there are two different forms of relationship from where mutuality possibly stems especially when people perceive others in this form. He looked at the 'I-Thou' relationship as a spiritual type of relationship. His explanation being that, once a person becomes aware and recognizes that another person had said something to him or her in a way that 'something' enters into his or her life, it is gone beyond the

physical. It has become a form of inner speech that a person could not grasp in an objective way (Buber 2002).

Buber contrasts this with a monological relationship where the other person is viewed not as an independent person or as a partner but as an object and on impurely emotional terms. This he terms 'I-It' relationship. This relationship is not genuine because the 'I' is partial as it must always have the supposedly 'Thou' in the emotional and subjective terms. This is quite different from the 'I-Thou' relationship where the 'I' takes in the 'Thou' as natural and objective. Precisely, in the dialogical 'I-Thou' which is oftentimes mutual, the 'I' is impartial as it relates to the other person as 'Thou' in his or her uniqueness and for him or herself and in terms of his or her relations to the other things. Significantly, for Buber in an 'I-Thou' relation, there is a recognition of the wholeness of the person. That is why he makes reference to a new entity being created as a 'common world', the very minute that an 'I-Thou' relation is established. This, for him is the essence of humanity, with the hope that other genuine mutual relationships could be further established. Even with the aesthetics that comes with such a relation, Buber still believes that for human existence to go on, both the 'I-Thou' and 'I-It' are necessary. In his explanation, no one could live entirely in the world of 'I-Thou', but added that a person who lives only in the world of 'I-It' is not fully human.

Ordinarily, when Buber talks about a relationship as mutual, his idea is on what he terms 'imagining the real'. This is reminiscent of the views of his teacher, Dilthey who talked about the structural context of the life of the soul or the awareness of the living context of action. According to Buber (1958), when Dilthey talked about perceiving the wholeness of the human being, he actually referred to a perception of a dynamic centre and an awareness of all the manifestation of the human being in his attitude and deeds. Buber, like most traditional existentialists (Sartre, Heidegger, Kierkegaard, Nietzsche, etc) had dealt extensively on the doctrines of co-existence and mutual relationships. Specifically, though, Buber's thinking on these doctrines is mostly ontological, as he attempts to lend clarity to the structural aspect of the fundamental human relations. It is on this score, that he anchors his theory of dialogue on the philosophy of his 'I-Thou' relationship, as against 'I-It' relationship.

Buber describes two types of relationships that exist in human nature. He begins by an exploration of human reality from a dialogical situation. Buber believes that dialogical relations make human life possible. He places two words in pairs to denote the differences in

relations. In his writings, he described the 'I-Thou' as one that establishes a world of relations. The connection here is a mutual recognition that conveys the entire truth of the person or object without transmitting any characteristics (See, Isanbor 2023; 2022; 2021). While in the world of experience, the person recognizes several attributes about a person or object in ways that enable him describe or use the person or the object. As previously mentioned, Buber notes that even though the 'I-Thou' relation seem quite ideal, it is almost impossible to maintain. As he puts it, the melancholy fate of human kind is that every 'Thou' will eventually become an 'I'. In other words, no one could live entirely in the world of the 'I-Thou'. But it would be quite inhuman to live in the world of the "I-It". Be that as it may, Buber is of the view that all dialogue is founded on mutual response and responsibility. However, responsibility exists solely where there is real response to human voice. Unlike the 'I-It' relation, the 'I-Thou' relation demands total commitment where the primary word 'I-Thou' can only be spoken with an individual whole being whereas the 'I-It' can never be spoken with the whole being.

What seems central to Buber's dialogue is a meeting between two sovereign persons who do not intend to impress the other or to make use of the other. Specifically, in the 'I-Thou' dialogic encounter, there is a total exposure of the 'I' which may be entirely denied and rejected such that he is more or less taking a risk giving his total being. While the 'I-It' relationship anchors on a monologue, that tends to transform mankind into an object. But as Buber suggested, a person can live in the full sense of the world within human sphere, "on the narrow ridge where 'I' and 'Thou' meet in the realm of between". What occurs as Buber's 'between' cannot be considered as a routine communication or as a subjective happening, but as an existential reality that actually occurs between two human beings. The most important aspect of the 'I-Thou' relationship is that it allows us to see things not only in relations to oneself but in their individual entirety and meaning. Thus, when the 'I-Thou' is disrupted, it becomes difficult to see the meaningful whole and every attempt to create order increases disorder. It is in this context that Buber (1965) talks of a genuine dialogue. But according to him, an individual is only able to have a true relationship in a genuine dialogue when he is psychologically independent. In other words, a genuine dialogue has both structure and freedom.

In establishing an understanding of the 'I-Thou' relationship, Buber projects the individual's uniqueness that enables wholeness, directedness and

responsiveness of the world. That is why he asked the question, '*what is man*'? In his response, he describes man in his ability to enter into dialogue with his fellow man. Buber explained that a true dialogue is one that takes place between one person and another and not within any person, nor is it a sum of two individual's discourses. In this vein, the 'I' in a relationship cannot exist by itself or have meaning by itself. Instead, the 'I' is a part of a relation either as 'I-Thou' or 'I-It'. It is when the 'I' relates as 'I-It' that we have a partial relationship to the other as an object of observation, analysis, exploitation and utility (Kron 2017). Perhaps, what is distinct about the 'I-Thou' relations is when the 'I' relates to the 'Thou' authentically, perceiving the other's whole and uniqueness, without making the other or 'Thou' as the 'I's' own need or pun (Buber, 1970). Thus, in a genuine dialogue between two or more people, the expectation is that a relationship is immediately created and it is common to all, a relationship that did not previously exist and does not exist inside anyone of them.

In Buber's argument that what is essential is not what goes within the minds of the partners in a relationship but rather what comes to exist between them. As he explained, "innermost growth of the self does not take place as people like to believe today, through our relationships to ourselves but to be made present by the other and knowing that we are made present by him". This makes genuine dialogue an ontological sphere which is constituted by the authenticity of being. In other words, genuine meeting is not in doing but a being (Yaron 2000). In the assumption of Buber, one can meet the other by "making him actually present" – by entering into his 'dynamic centre'. However, Buber is quick to emphasize that such meeting is not at all synonymous with empathy. The argument being that empathy is the transposition of oneself into another being, thereby losing one's own concreteness. This contradicts dialogue which is the opposite of self limitation and the extension of the 'I'.

Generally, Buber's conception of genuine relationship is quite unique in philosophical thought, especially in its element of existentialism. This is implicit in its sense of positivity, when one considers the import in "meeting". It is also imperative to mention that in Buber's explication of dialogical relationships, he gradually proceeds and meticulously too to complete the structure of what a genuine dialogue entail. In so doing he tends to create his own language to match these unique philosophical ideas. Thus, when he uses terms like confirmation, responsibility, inclusion, mutuality and reciprocity, these are employed in ways peculiar to Buber's concept of dialogical relationship. The focus in this paper is one of such terms, inclusion

especially in the context of education as a system of communication.

3. Buber and the Place of Inclusion for Genuine Relationship

As previously mentioned, the five bases of the Buberian dialogical relationship are confirmation, responsibility, inclusion, mutuality and reciprocity. All of these help to express the exact meaning of genuine relations in dialogue (Isanbor 2023; 2022; 2021). It is this deep sense of apprehension of another's experience sensation, emotion or thought that "makes the other person present". Buber calls this 'inclusion' – because I or We have both the apprehension of mine or our experiences, sensations, emotions and thoughts and those of the other. Buber is emphatic that this is not a movement of 'fancy' or an emotional imagination but an "actuality of the being." He further expatiates on inclusion as "an extension of one's own consciousness, the fulfilment of the actual situation of life, the completeness of the reality in which one participates". Precisely, it is a situation where an individual, without sacrificing any personal perception of reality "lives through the common event from the standpoint of the other". In another way, Buber's inclusion is an extension of his concept of confirmation especially as confirmation also opens the door to the 'I-Thou' relationship.

Buber (1965) begins by describing inclusion as the power which takes its lead in establishing dialogical relationships. He goes further to express inclusion as the conception of 'Distant and Relation' and 'Elements of the Interhuman'. As he aptly puts it, inclusion is "imagining the real or the ability to behold before one's soul, a reality arising at this moment but not to be directly experienced". In effect, inclusion gives one the imagination of what the other is at that moment. In Buber's explanation it is an apprehension of the other's "very reality... a living process". In other words, if another is experiencing a specific pain the other feels that pain as well, and not just some vague natural discussion. But in Buber's argument, even with this inclusion, the ontological separation between the one and the other remains, such that the other is yet independent even though (paradoxically) connected and included through an inclusive turning that brings about an intimate connection which is deeply felt. Buber (2002) is quite particular about this "bipolar situation" which he says, emphasizes the lived experience of both the 'I' and the 'Thou' as significant; also, the situation of the encounter or relationship which must be experienced "not merely from his end but also from that of his partner". Such an experience is critical and central to

the significance of dialogue in establishing ontological presence with inclusion. It helps to fulfill the relationship and through it, 'beingness'. In other words, in such a relationship, the 'I' does not only confirm the other (Buber 2002). Buber goes on to add that in the process of the 'I-Thou' relationship and through the process of mutuality or making present, the other becomes a 'self' with the 'me' and through the process of confirmation and the inclusion of turning to the other, both come into the fullness of being.

Basically, what is implicit in Buber's conception of inclusion, especially as it pertains to distance and relation, is for human to "work together to make the other present as a whole and as a unique being as the person that he is". In other words, once the other is fully confirmed as a partner in dialogue and both come into present being, there is every tendency that both are ontological fulfilled. It is also in this regard that Buber talks about inclusion as the "living connection" between two individuals in dialogue. This is further expressed through the ability of at least one of the partners to "directly adapt himself to and become part of the nature and manner of existence of the other". Then, Buber (2000) is of the view that the knowledge of the other lies beyond the confines of time and space, Rotenstreich (1967) refers to such knowing as an immediate knowledge of the 'Thou'.

In his work, *Elements of the Interhuman*, Buber's analysis of inclusion is much more like an empathic turning to the other. As he puts it, it is a "... bold swinging – demanding the most steering of ones being into the life of another". But as Kramer (2003) and Rotenstreich (1967) and even Buber himself claim, Buber is known to assert that he does not believe in empathy. At this juncture, it is therefore imperative to clarify Buber's concern on his conception of empathy. In a distinction between inclusion and empathy, In support of this, Friedman (1985) states that inclusion does not fully immense oneself in the world of the other. Instead, one is able to stand in the others world and his own world at the same time. As Buber (2002) succinctly puts it, "empathy in this perspective, alludes to the inclusion of one's own concreteness, the relinquishing of the other's situation or the life absorption in pure aesthetic season or the reality in which one participates". Thus, for Buber, inclusion is not empathy or feeling one's way into the other life experience. Instead, Buber's conception of inclusion especially with reference to 'I-You' or 'I-Thou' is the "opposite" of empathy.

What can be deduced from Buber assertion is that there is indeed a concrete encounter between two

persons. In essence, when an 'I' and 'You' experience an event together, the experience is one that the 'I' does not merely "glide with one's own feelings" into the life and experience of the 'Thou' when manifesting an empathic response. Rather as Buber explains, the 'I' uses perceptual, sensory, imaginative, intuitive capacity to "experience the other side" to the best he can. It is this extension or expansion of the 'I' own concreteness into the consciousness of the 'Thou'. This evolves an inclusive nature, where the 'I' tries to live through the common situation from the standpoint of the 'Thou' as far that he is able to. Thus, from the ontological status ('I-Thou') in dialogical encounter Buber sees inclusion more of an embrace of the lived and felt experience of the 'Thou' which makes the work of inclusion, the work of "making present". In other words, between the 'I' and the 'Thou', the 'I' imagines what the 'Thou' is "at this very moment wishing, feeling, perceiving, thinking and not as a detached content" but in the living process of this person (Buber 1999). This does not denote vague sympathy either.

The essence of the distinction between the 'I-It' and the 'I-Thou' relation is to establish what it takes to encounter a genuine relationship. Buber in his *Dialogue*, 1947 distinguishes between three realms of communication namely, genuine dialogue, technical dialogue and monologue disguised as dialogue'. He noted the first of this realm, genuine dialogue as the one that corresponds most closely to his notion of the 'I-Thou' attitude. For Buber genuine dialogue involves a turning towards the other; an openness to being addressed by the other in his, her or it present and particular otherness and a confirmation of the otherness of the other. This being the case, genuine dialogue requires each respondent to bring about really, he is or ahead to the dialogue without artifice, seeming or pretence. However, Buber noted that such dialogue does not require all those involved to necessarily speak. In other words, true dialogue and exchange can also take place in silence. But in his response to *what is man?* Buber sees the uniqueness of man especially in his ability to enter into dialogue with his fellow man. Following from this, true dialogue takes place between one person and another, and not within any person, nor is it a sum of two individual's discourses. Buber does not believe that the 'I' exist as an exclusive category nor does it exist by itself because it has no meaning by itself. Instead 'I' is always a part of relationship either as 'I-You' or 'I-It'. When the latter is the case, the 'I' relates to the other partially as an object.

For Buber (1970) what distinguishes the dialogue that he calls the 'I-Thou' relation is relating to the other

authentically, perceiving the other as whole and unique without making use of the other with the 'I's' own need. In addition, Kron (2017) is of the opinion that in any genuine dialogue, between the individuals, an entity that is new, common to all, that did not previously exist and does not exist inside any of them is brought to bear (Buber, 1965). Furthermore, Buber states that in a dialogue there is the interhuman or as the area in which the third being is created. He affirms that meeting in the interhuman is a very real one which takes place here and now, in what Buber terms the 'common world'. The common world is our real world where we participate together as member of the human community. This common world extends to the classroom situation that is built on teacher's and learners' everyday intentional interaction. Like it is expected of the human community, the classroom ought to be characterized by the dialogical quality of relationships.

The question as to how interhuman lived and shared reality can be established in the educational setting is quite imperative in this paper. According to Yaron (2000) while adult education can be based on full mutuality between equal partners, same may not be said of children's education. Even though the education of the children is supposedly marked by mutuality, it cannot be said to be quite symmetric. It is more of an asymmetric relationship especially as teachers and the students are not equal. It is in this vein that Buber describes this mutual relationship between the educator and the student as asymmetrical. In such a situation therefore, it is the teacher's responsibility to create the interhuman and shared reality. This can be done by a special variation of the 'I-Thou' relationship that Buber calls "inclusion". That is the kind of mutuality in both educators' student relationship that can be partial without losing immediacy and authenticity (Kron 2017).

As previously mentioned, the classroom is an asymmetric setting where the relationship between teachers and students is typically imbalanced. However, Buber believed that such an asymmetric relationship could be replaced with an event experienced by two persons in common in which at least one of them actively participate. This is to the extent that in this communion, the active partner does not forfeit anything of himself and of the reality of the activity. In this regard, the relationship is also that of teacher and student, where the former is a dominant partner and the latter the dependent. Buber is also quick to warn that it will not be uncommon for the dependent partner to demand for intimacy, but teachers must maintain a rational, reasonable distance. This is quite important because in the argument of

Buber teachers who become over-involved emotionally with the learners are doomed to lose their self awareness and may even forfeit their professional status.

While not disputing the fact that distance is quite essential to relations as characterized by hierarchy, there should be some sense of flexibility in such educational boundaries especially when teaching. The struggle should be to set minimum standards in discipline and maximum intimacy for the promotion of dialogue, because of its importance for genuine teaching and learning. Therefore, the teacher must be fully present in the classroom since teaching in itself does not educate, instead it is the teacher who educates. Nonetheless, this does not mean that teacher should empathize with their learners. After all, education is conditioned by love not *eros*. Buber talks about the true educator as one who must control his desire for the sake of his pupils. That is why for him, empathy is more of an attempt to 'jet over to the pupils while leaving himself'. This does not allow for a manifestation of the uniqueness of the student, the sincerity of the teacher and the genuineness of the relationship. It is in the light of this that Buber opts for inclusion in dialogue.

The concept of inclusion is the English translation of what Buber named "*unfassung*" particularly, this concept of inclusion within the context of education is a major contribution of Buber to the philosophy of education. He does not see inclusion as a technique or what dependent on atmosphere of feelings, instead it is an attitude with its own rules and boundaries and one that is expressed in behaviours. Buber describes inclusion as the ability to develop a dual sensation amongst those engaged in dialogue. He describes it as expressing oneself and simultaneously perceiving the other in its singularity. In other words, the inclusion of a person causes one to know one's fellow human being, both physically and spiritually. He goes on to describe the two-fold events that occurs between two human beings as the actualization of love which is the expression of the responsibility of the 'I' for the 'Thou'. Buber also reminds that it will be misleading to think that inclusion means that the 'I' should be so taken with the 'Thou' that the 'I' loses his own sense of being grounded in a relationship.

Evidently, Buber's conception of inclusion is not synonymous with two being semiotically joined. Instead, inclusion is 'imagining the real' which means to experience the other side of the relationship while not losing grounds of one's concreteness in this process. This is quite different from empathy where the 'I' goes to the other side of the relationship having left out his own side and the identification that remains

in his own side and cannot go over to the other. Such a relationship limits dialogue and, the emphasis on one meeting the other by "making him actually present" – by entering his "dynamic center". Looking at inclusion as employed in the classroom, the context is one where the teacher who exercises inclusion is leaving from his own side, his life imposes, reaches out to his learners, while making them leave the same imposes. Then that impose is received by the teacher and he lives from that standpoint simultaneously. As Buber (2000) aptly put it, I perceived the other as 'Thou' "but with no neighbour and whole in himself; he is Thou and feels the heavens". This makes the essence of inclusion one that moves beyond the boundaries of egocentricity. This process of mutual, "making present" helps education fulfill its mandate to the learners. It creates opportunities for teachers and students to come into fuller manifestation of the present between teacher and pupils, they become of great character (Buber 2002).

The foregoing, articulates the crucial role of mutuality in relation. Buber describes mutuality as the 'gate of entry into our existence', while reciprocity is the actual achievement. Thus, when happenings of reciprocity are received, dialogical relationship is established. In other words, the effect of reciprocity in mutuality confirms a dialogue. There is no gainsaying that mutuality and inclusion are critical concern for growth in teaching and learning. These allows for deeper exploration and understanding of the pupil's experiences which in turn facilitates psychological and emotional growth (Kanu & Isanbor 2021; Isanbor & Irabor 2020). The teacher can imagine the real as he leaves the experiences in an 'I-Thou' moment, where the teacher is completely involved in the essence of experience. Mutuality in this context which means being able to see, feel and experience from the student's perspective, allows the teacher to be touched by the students and do what he can for them. This is made possible because the teacher has confirmed and accepted the whole potentiality of the learner and has come to recognize in the learner as the person, he has been created to become. Basically, in inclusion the teacher has to be present on both sides while the students can only be where they are as learners. Moreover, because the teacher and pupils have different dispositions towards the situation, the teacher has an edge over the students.

Buber talks about three forms of experience of inclusion in dialogical relations. The first form is the abstract mutual inclusion connected with spiritual being (Kanu & Isanbor 2021; Isanbor & Irabor 2020). In this experience, the 'I' is aware of inclusion from his own side, but presumes the mutuality from the other. The second form a teacher-student relation. In

this case, the teacher includes the students in his self but the students do not exercise inclusion. This he termed a one-sided inclusion, and then, the third is the friendship inclusion. It is so called because it is based on concrete and mutual experiences of inclusion, which Buber terms, concrete – mutual inclusion. In all of these forms of inclusion, Buber insists on a relation based on one-sided inclusion in an educational set up. His argument is borne of the fact that education is conscious, deliberate and willed, only a serious-based relation would be ideal. It is a reciprocal dialogue relation would transcend into the realm of friendship which may be too cordial for education. However, in the school setting, the relation (friendship) among pupils, teachers and among teachers’ pupils outside the educational set up is quite in place.

4. Education: Buber’s Pedagogy of Inclusion for Promoting Genuine Classroom Relationships

Buber’s argument aimed towards the recognition of making dialogue an integral part of curricular and pedagogy in promoting authentic existence. It seems reasonable that learning about dialogue and how to “become dialogue” has a significant role to play in teacher education and in the general business of teaching and learning. The essence of dialogue in the teaching learning process did not begin with the Buberian dialogue. Socrates, as observed by Kneller (1958) is endeared to the heart of the existentialist for his personal, intimate and dialogue method of teaching. However, Socratic dialogue was aimed at induction only, while the Buberian dialogue unfolds the person in an individual. One crucial merit in the Buberian dialogue as it pertains to education is the drive for a genuine dialogical relationship between the teacher and his students. A situation that implies the teacher should accept all his students without any will to choose. As this will be tantamount to *eros* and that is what education is not. There is no gainsaying, that in education, it would be the students who will to learn from books and methods. But Buber argues that, where there is no dialogical relationship, such learning may not fully come forth.

Often times, we hear of dialogue in education but what seem prevalent as dialogue is its conception as verbal conversation. But as de Castell (2004) has noted, verbal dialogue is not all to dialogue. Just like Burbeles (1993) argued, dialogue fundamentally is “at heart, a kind of social relations that engages its participants”. While in the emphasis of Freire (2006) dialogue cannot exist without a profound love for people and the world which generates through relationships and actions of freedom. All of the

foregoing is quite in consonance with Buber’s model of dialogue which centres on ontological grounding of relationality in the world. According to Buber, a person or object is made present and brought into being, in and through the relationships we have made with it. Out of this realization, one turns to the other in response and responsiveness. On this, Buber further suggested that what is essential in life and living is our relation to “all existing things”, and being able to address them from the heart from such acts and humanness (Isanbor 2023; 2022; 2021). It is the light of this that Buber came up with an integrated model of dialogue as a praxis for dialogue relations. These models are presence and confirmation, and inclusion which is the focus in this paper. In effect, dialogue in the educational context should take cognizance of the learners and help develop in them a sense of self awareness. Relationship between teacher and students should be one of the joint exploration, learning, questioning, etc.

According to Freire (2006), teacher should see themselves not so much as transmitter of knowledge but as commoners engaged in the joint exploration and unfolding of knowledge and understanding. Even though, Buber (2002) recognized the asymmetrical nature of the dialogical relationship in education, a situation where teachers possess more knowledge than students, as such, have the unique privilege of having experienced what students have experienced and are experiencing. On the other hand, students have that experience and are not yet able to identify with the experience and understanding of teacher. Buber believes that even in such an asymmetrical relationship, teachers can work towards having it “burst asunder” to a more fully dialogical relationship. Evidently, when teachers and students establish caring relationships, there is the tendency for learning to improve. In essence, mutual interaction between the learners and teacher can ignite knowledge.

Specifically, with the case of inclusion, one of Buber’s integrated models of dialogue, it is intended to help the teacher see and appropriate learning from a standpoint of the students. The teacher is able to imagine what the students perceive, feels, desire or think. This however, does not see the teacher as being empathetic with his learners. Even with the ontological separation between the teacher and the learner, the learner is still independent although through inclusion connected to the teacher (Kanu & Isanbor 2021; Isanbor & Irabor 2020). This provides a solid platform for the real academy of learning. Essentially, turning, distancing, confirming, making present, inclusion and relating are basic movements in Buber’s dialogic that could assist teacher and practitioners of education to define and maintain their role perception, as well as modify

classroom interaction, teaching strategy and valuable classroom climate. Evidently an educational system that takes cognizance of the communion between the teacher and the learner would achieve the needed dialogical relationship in the educational setting (Kanu & Isanbor 2021; Isanbor & Irabor 2020). Through education, Buber recommends 'I-Thou' relationship based on one-sided inclusion on the score that education can successfully proceed only from a relationship that is not so reciprocal as to transcend into friendship. On the whole, it is expedient for teachers to appreciate that it is almost impossible to teach without recognizing and relating with the learner as an independent reality.

5. Conclusion

From the foregoing, the uniqueness and importance of Buber's doctrine of dialogical relationships in teacher-student encounter cannot be under estimated in engendering the factors of genuine relationship. What can therefore be concluded in Buber's dialogic especially with the focus on inclusion are as follows:

- The importance of inclusion in teaching learning process brings about mutuality which blossoms into genuine dialogue. The relation between teacher and pupils characterized by the elements of inclusion vary in degrees. Even though, inclusion means the essential internalization of the other for the inclusion of human commonness.
- There is need to make a conscious effort in teaching and learning as dialogue. This is quite imperative because 'I' is significant to appreciate the learner as a unique individual. Thus, when teacher takes time to ensure that the students being or presence is confirmed, relational form of knowing becomes important. This also means that dialogical relationships are essential and reciprocal.
- As against the 'I-It' relationship which is aimed at merely using and experiencing the other, the 'I-Thou' relationship is purely dialogical and paves way for the realization of essence.

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