

Research Article

Transforming English Language Teaching through Learner-centered Pedagogy

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Abstract

In contemporary education, English language teaching has gradually shifted from a teacher-centered model to a learner-centered approach that prioritizes students' active participation in the learning process. This approach recognizes that learners come from diverse social, cultural, and educational backgrounds and therefore require teaching methods that address their individual needs. Learner-centered pedagogy promotes meaningful learning by encouraging students to take responsibility for their own progress while teachers function as facilitators, mentors, and guides rather than the sole source of knowledge. By incorporating interactive activities, collaborative learning, and flexible instructional strategies, this approach accommodates different learning styles and enhances motivation, critical thinking, and communication skills. As a result, learner-centered teaching has become an essential practice in modern English language classrooms, contributing to improved learning outcomes and greater student engagement.

Keywords: learner-centered learning, English language teaching, active learning, student engagement, teaching strategies, facilitator, learning style, motivation.

Introduction:

The increasing pace of globalization has significantly enhanced the importance of learning foreign languages. Today, people communicate across national and cultural boundaries for education, employment, business, tourism, and international cooperation. As a result, the ability to speak more than one language has become an essential skill in the modern world. Relying only on one's mother tongue is no longer sufficient for effective global communication. Therefore, learning foreign languages has become both a personal and professional necessity.

Among all foreign languages, English has established itself as the primary language of international communication. It plays a vital role in higher education, scientific research, technology, trade, and cross-cultural interaction. Consequently, millions of learners invest their time and resources to achieve proficiency in English. However, merely attending classroom lessons does not guarantee language mastery. Effective language acquisition requires continuous practice, meaningful interaction, and active participation beyond the classroom.

Research in language education suggests that successful English learning depends on creating opportunities for learners to use the language independently. Traditional teacher-centered instruction should be complemented by learner-centered approaches that encourage students to take responsibility for their own learning. In the responsibility for their own

learning. In this context, teachers act as facilitators who guide, motivate, and support learners rather than simply delivering information.

Thus, promoting autonomous learning enables students to become confident, self-directed, and lifelong learners. By combining classroom instruction with independent learning strategies, learners can develop stronger communication skills and achieve greater proficiency in English.

Classroom instruction alone is not enough to develop English language proficiency. Learners should be encouraged to explore different ways of improving their language skills, especially spoken communication. Teachers should act as facilitators by guiding, motivating and supporting students rather than simply delivering lessons. The success of language learning depends on students' interest, motivation, and willingness to learn independently.

The primary objective of education is to develop autonomous learners who can take responsibility for their own learning. In an autonomous learning environment, students become active participants by setting goals, managing their learning, and evaluating their progress. Teachers provide guidance whenever necessary, but learners are expected to study independently.

Approaches and Methods of Teaching English

English language teaching has undergone significant changes over the past few decades, particularly in the field of foreign language education. Although information and communication Technology (ICT) has transformed classroom practices, it cannot replace the essential role of teachers. Instead, Technology should be used to support and enrich the teaching-learning process. Today, educators employ a variety of teaching methods, including the communicative approach, direct method, audio-visual method, and grammar-translation method. Among these, the learner-centered approach has gained widespread recognition for its effectiveness.

Modern education emphasizes the development of critical thinking, creativity, collaboration, and problem-solving skills. Therefore, teachers should create a supportive learning environment that encourages students to participate actively, take responsibility for their learning, and view mistakes as opportunities for improvement. Such an approach promotes confidence, independence, and lifelong learning.

Meaning and aspects of the learner-centered approach

The learner-centered approach places students at the heart of the teaching-learning process. Unlike traditional teacher-centered instruction, this approach focuses on learners' needs, interests, abilities, and learning styles. Students are encouraged to think critically, engage critically, and construct knowledge through meaningful learning experiences.

In this approach, the teacher acts as a facilitator who guides and supports learners rather than simply transmitting information. The emphasis shifts from teaching to learning, enabling students to become independent, motivated, and responsible learners. As a result, learner-centered education enhances academic achievement, communication skills, and lifelong learning habits.

The term "learner autonomy" was first coined in 1981 by Henri Holec, the "Father" of learner autonomy. Many definitions have since been given to the term, depending on the context, and the level of debate educators have come to. This is because autonomy is seen either (or both) as a means or as an end in education. The learner-centric approach is designated by various names to develop students', self-directed learning', 'student - initiated learning', 'student-centered learning'.

Essence of learner autonomy

Cognitive psychology is a modern educational theory that highlights the relationship between the learner and the learning content. It emphasizes that students should actively build

their own knowledge instead of passively receiving information from teachers or textbooks. According to the cognitive psychology perspective,

Knowledge cannot simply be given to students: must construct their own meanings (stage muller, kinzie and simmons, 1998, p.38)

Learner autonomy, independence, and the ability to manage one's learning have become essential aspects of language education. In many classrooms, teachers often feel disappointed because students depend heavily on them and show limited participation. Although learners may be motivated, they sometimes remain passive and avoid taking responsibility for their own learning. Therefore, teachers should encourage students to become active participants by giving them sufficient freedom to monitor their own learning. Therefore, teachers should encourage students to become active participants by giving them sufficient freedom to monitor their progress, make decisions, and take responsibility for classroom activities as well as homework. Independent learning refers to the freedom and ability of learners to manage their own learning process and make informed decisions. To promote learner autonomy, teachers should help students develop a sense of responsibility, self-confidence, and self-directed learning skills so that they can achieve greater academic success.

Major Aims of the Learner-centric Approach

The learner-centric approach helps students become independent and responsible learners. It encourages them to set learning goals, plan their activities, use effective learning strategies, and evaluate their own progress. The main aims are to improve language skills. Promote self-directed learning, encourage realistic goal setting, and develop self-assessment and decision-making abilities.

Teacher's role in learner autonomy

Teachers play an important role in developing learner autonomy by creating a supportive learning environment. They guide students in setting goals, planning their learning and assessing their progress. As learners become more confident and independent, teachers gradually reduce their support in a learner-centered classroom. The teacher acts as a facilitator who encourages students to learn through active participation and meaningful experiences.

Significance of learner-centered learning

There are many benefits of learning through this method. Firstly, a student may not always have the support of the teacher, and therefore needs to be able to learn by himself/herself. Secondly, autonomous learners are likely to be more efficient in their learning, since learning is more personal and focused. Thirdly, the skills required in autonomous learning are ones which will be needed in future, for example in the workplace.

Fostering learner autonomy

Fostering learner autonomy involves learning how to learn, and is a gradual and sometimes difficult process. In order to become autonomous, learners need to be exposed to a range of useful learning activities, and have the opportunity to evaluate and reflect on these. This will be achieved by a combination of efforts by the teacher, peers and the student. Assessment of learning, by all three groups is essential.

Conclusion

The learner-centered approach is widely regarded as more effective than the traditional teacher-centered than the traditional teacher-centered model of instruction. Its primary objective is to make learning meaningful and relevant to the learner. Education should enable students to understand the concepts they study rather than merely memorizing facts. Without genuine comprehension, learning becomes mechanical and has limited application beyond the classroom.

A learner-centered environment encourages students to acquire knowledge as a personal and meaningful experience. It empowers them to apply their understanding in practical situations

and develop essential life skills. Instead of relying solely on direct instruction, learners gain deeper understanding through active participation and experiential learning. Therefore, learning by doing remains a fundamental principle in fostering meaningful knowledge, independent thinking, and lifelong learning.

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