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Department of English

**EFL Students' Perceptions of Balancing
Teacher-Centered and Learner-Centered
Approaches: A Case Study of M1 Students at
the University of Ghardaia**

*Dissertation submitted to University of Ghardaïa for obtaining the
Master's degree in Didactics*

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Dedication

Dedication

In the name of Allah, the Most Compassionate, the Most Merciful.

To Allah alone belongs all praise and gratitude, for He is the source of strength when weakness overcomes us, the light that guides us through uncertainty, and the mercy that carries us through every hardship. By His will, what once seemed distant has now become reality.

To my father,

the man whose love was never measured by words, but by sacrifices too great to count and burdens too heavy to carry alone. You are the pillar upon which my life was built, the strength that never bent under hardship, and the shelter under which I found safety and peace. In your silence, I learned dignity; in your struggle, I learned courage; and in your patience, I learned the true meaning of perseverance.

To my mother,

the purest soul and the most beautiful blessing Allah has granted me. You are the warmth in my coldest days, the light in my darkest moments, and the prayer that never failed to reach the heavens for me. Your love has been the quiet force behind every achievement, your sacrifices the invisible bridge over every difficulty, and your faith in me the reason I kept moving forward when the road felt impossible.

To my family,

whose love has been my anchor and whose faith in me has never faded. Through every challenge, your presence reminded me that I was never alone.

To those who walked beside me in this journey—my friends and companions,

To my teachers and mentors,

for planting in me the seeds of knowledge, discipline, and critical thought. Your guidance has shaped not only this work, but also the person I am becoming.

And to myself,

for choosing to continue when giving up seemed easier, for carrying the weight of exhaustion with hope, and for believing that every struggle would one day become a story of achievement.

*To the roots that kept me grounded, And the wings
that let me soar.*

To my first teachers... My Parents.

Roumissa

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Abstract

Abstract

This study aims to analyze the balance between teacher-centered and learner-centered teaching approaches in English departments, focusing on the perspectives of students at the University of Ghardaïa regarding the impact of this balance on their understanding and classroom participation. The study employed a descriptive quantitative methodology to collect accurate and reliable data, distributing a questionnaire consisting of eleven questions to 35 Master's students in the English Department. The results indicated that students recognize the importance of integrating both approaches; they prefer teacher guidance for understanding complex concepts while favoring student-centered activities to enhance their autonomy and increase interaction. The findings also revealed obstacles affecting interaction and participation, such as the fast pace of lectures or the fear of making mistakes. Based on these results, the study recommends the necessity of achieving an effective pedagogical balance that combines theoretical lectures with interactive activities to improve the quality of education.

Keywords: Teacher-centered approach, Student-centered approach, Pedagogical balance, Classroom engagement, English language students

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General introduction

1 Research background

At the university level, EFL students are expected to develop advanced language skills such as academic writing, speaking, and critical reading. These skills are essential for both academic achievement and future professional success. However, many students still experience difficulties in understanding complex lessons and using English effectively in academic contexts. As a result, teachers are constantly searching for teaching approaches that can better support students' learning needs.

Traditionally, EFL classrooms were dominated by teacher-centered instruction, where the teacher was the main source of knowledge and students played a largely passive role. More recently, educational practices have shifted toward learner-centered approaches that encourage active participation, interaction, and learner autonomy. This shift aims to make learning more engaging and meaningful for students.

Despite the advantages of learner-centered instruction, teacher guidance remains necessary, particularly when students are dealing with complex linguistic concepts. Therefore, an effective learning environment requires a balance between teacher support and learner involvement. Achieving this pedagogical balance can help students improve both their understanding of course content and their participation in classroom activities (Richards & Rodgers, 2001; Brown, 2000).

Statement of the problem

Despite the widespread use of both learner-centered and teacher-centered approaches in EFL classrooms, there is limited research on how university students perceive the balance between these two approaches. In many academic settings, the focus has often been on the

implementation of one specific method, yet there is a significant gap in understanding how students experience the coexistence of both. Some learners may feel that excessive teacher control limits their participation and prevents them from taking an active role in their own learning process. Conversely, other students may struggle to understand complex lessons without sufficient teacher guidance and structured explanation.

The problem addressed in this study is the lack of clear evidence about how balancing learner-centered and teacher-centered approaches influences EFL students' understanding of lessons and their participation in classroom activities. Without a clear understanding of the students' perspectives, it is difficult for educators to determine the optimal degree of teacher involvement versus learner autonomy. This research specifically targets the ambiguity surrounding this pedagogical balance, aiming to provide a clearer picture of how a blended approach affects the two most critical aspects of the learning experience: comprehension and engagement. This study is therefore justified by the need to explore these views in the specific context of university EFL education.

3. Research question

In order to investigate the pedagogical balance between teacher-centered and learner-centered methodologies and its impact on the learning process, this study addresses the following central questions:

- RQ1: How do EFL university students perceive the integration of learner-centered and teacher-centered teaching approaches in their classrooms? This question seeks to understand the students' attitudes and whether they see the combination of both methods as beneficial, or if they have a preference for one over the other.
- RQ2: To what extent does a balanced teaching approach influence students' understanding of complex EFL lessons? This question focuses on the cognitive side of

learning. It aims to find out if providing teacher-led structure (scaffolding) followed by learner-centered tasks leads to better comprehension of difficult academic skills.

- RQ3: How does the synergy between teacher guidance and learner autonomy affect the level of classroom participation among EFL students? This question examines the behavioral aspect of the classroom. It explores whether students feel more motivated and confident to participate when the teacher acts as a facilitator who balances control and freedom.
- RQ4: What are the primary challenges students face when there is an imbalance between teacher-centered and learner-centered instruction? This sub-question helps to identify if "too much" of one approach (e.g., too much lecturing or too much group work without guidance) creates obstacles for students' progress.

4 Research hypotheses

Based on the previously stated research questions, this study proposes a set of predictive statements regarding the relationship between pedagogical balance and learning outcomes.

- It is hypothesized that a balanced use of learner-centered and teacher-centered approaches positively affects students' understanding of EFL lessons. This suggestion is based on the idea that while teacher-led instruction provides the necessary clarity for complex language skills, the addition of learner-centered activities allows students to process and internalize that information more effectively.
- It is further hypothesized that a balanced teaching approach increases students' classroom participation. This implies that when an instructor combines structured guidance with opportunities for active involvement, students feel more motivated and confident to engage in tasks and communicative activities.

- Finally, it is hypothesized that students will value teacher support alongside interactive activities that allow them to use the language meaningfully. This balance is expected to bridge the gap between passive reception of knowledge and active language production.

5 Research Objective

this study aims to achieve the following objectives:

- To explore EFL university students' perspectives on the integration of learner-centered and teacher-centered approaches: This objective focuses on understanding how students perceive the classroom dynamic when a teacher balances direct instruction with interactive tasks. By examining these views, the study seeks to determine if students prefer a specific degree of teacher involvement or if they value the coexistence of both methods.
- To evaluate the impact of a balanced teaching approach on students' understanding of EFL lessons: A central aim of this study is to identify how the combination of structured guidance (teacher-centered) and active discovery (learner-centered) contributes to students' comprehension of complex language skills. It seeks to determine whether providing clarity through instruction while allowing for student-led exploration leads to a deeper cognitive grasp of the material.
- To examine how the balance between these two approaches influences students' classroom participation: This research aims to investigate the relationship between pedagogical methods and student engagement. It focuses on whether a balanced approach—where the teacher acts as a facilitator and provides necessary scaffolding—creates a more motivating environment that encourages students to communicate and participate more actively in classroom activities.

- To provide pedagogical recommendations for EFL instructors at the university level:

Based on the insights gathered from learners, this study aims to offer practical suggestions for teachers on how to adopt more effective, balanced teaching strategies. These recommendations will focus on how instructors can transition from being the sole source of knowledge to becoming guides who support both understanding and autonomy.

6 Research Significance

The significance of this study lies in its potential to provide deep insights into EFL students' views on teaching approaches at the university level. While much of the existing pedagogical literature focuses on the theoretical advantages of specific methods, this research shifts the focus toward the student's lived experiences and perceptions within the classroom. By identifying how students respond to different levels of teacher control and learner autonomy, the study offers a unique perspective that is often overlooked in traditional curriculum design.

Furthermore, the findings of this study may directly assist teachers in adopting more balanced teaching strategies that enhance students' understanding and participation. Educators frequently face the challenge of deciding how much direct instruction to provide versus how much interactive freedom to allow. This research can serve as a practical guide for instructors to refine their methodologies, ensuring that lessons are both structured enough for clarity and interactive enough for engagement.

In addition, the study contributes to the existing body of research on EFL pedagogy and provides a foundation for future researchers interested in the dynamics of learner-centered and teacher-centered instruction. By addressing the specific gap regarding the "balance" of these approaches, the research adds a new dimension to the discussion of

effective language teaching. Ultimately, this study supports the ongoing improvement of EFL teaching practices by highlighting the importance of aligning instructional methods with student needs and preferences.

7 Research design

This section outlines the research methodology employed to investigate EFL students' perspectives on the balance between learner-centered and teacher-centered approaches. It provides a brief description of the research design, the target population, the sampling technique, and the instrument used for data collection. It also introduces the procedures adopted for data analysis to ensure the reliability and validity of the findings.

The current study adopts a quantitative research design. This approach is selected because it allows for the collection and analysis of numerical data to identify general patterns, trends, and relationships among variables. By using a quantitative method, the researcher can objectively measure students' perceptions of teaching styles and their impact on understanding and participation. This design ensures that the findings are based on statistical evidence, providing a more precise understanding of the research problem within the EFL context.

The target population for this study consists of Master One (M1) students majoring in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) at the University of Ghardaïa. The study utilizes convenience sampling, a non-probability sampling technique where participants are selected based on their availability and willingness to participate.

To achieve the research objectives, a structured questionnaire is used as the primary quantitative data collection instrument. The questionnaire is divided into three sections. The first section gathers demographic information such as gender. The second section explores

students' perceptions of teacher-centered and learner-centered approaches. The third section examines the impact of these teaching approaches on students' understanding and classroom participation.

The questionnaire mainly uses 5-point Likert-scale questions ranging from “Strongly Agree” to “Strongly Disagree” to facilitate the statistical analysis of the collected data.

8. Dissertation Structure

The present dissertation is organized into a general introduction, three main chapters, and a general conclusion. The General Introduction provides the necessary background of the study, identifies the research problem, and outlines the research questions, hypotheses, and objectives. Chapter One represents the theoretical framework, where it explores the characteristics of teacher-centred and learner-centred approaches, the principles of Constructivism and Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), and the evolving role of the teacher as a facilitator. Chapter Two focuses on learners' perceptions of teacher-centered and learner-centered approaches in the EFL context. It examines students' positive and negative perspectives toward both approaches and explores their impact on learners' understanding and classroom participation. The chapter also reviews related previous studies relevant to the research topic. Chapter Three represents the practical part of the study. It presents the research methodology, including the quantitative research design, the target population, the sampling technique, and the questionnaire used for data collection. It also includes the presentation, analysis, and interpretation of the collected data. Finally, the General Conclusion summarizes the major findings of the study, provides pedagogical recommendations, and suggests directions for future research, followed by references and appendices.

PART ONE
Literature review

Introduction

The theoretical framework serves as the conceptual backbone of any academic research, providing the necessary definitions and theories that guide the investigation. In the field of English as a Foreign Language (EFL), the dynamics of the classroom are heavily influenced by the pedagogical approaches adopted by practitioners. This chapter aims to explore the multifaceted nature of the university-level EFL context, with a specific focus on the shift from traditional methods to more contemporary models.

Initially, we will define and contrast the Teacher-Centered and Learner-Centered approaches, examining their characteristics, advantages, and the evolving roles of both teachers and students. Furthermore, the chapter delves into the critical outcomes of these approaches: learners' understanding and active participation. By analyzing the factors that influence these two elements, this chapter seeks to provide a comprehensive theoretical basis for understanding how different teaching styles impact the overall learning experience in the EFL classroom.

1.1 The EFL Classroom Context at University Level

The university EFL (English as a Foreign Language) classroom serves as a structured educational environment where English is taught to students who do not speak it as their first language. Unlike a natural communication tool, English is presented as a subject of study. In this setting, students typically encounter the language during designated class times, with limited use outside of the classroom.

EFL instruction at the university level focuses on enhancing students' language abilities alongside their academic competencies, which include reading scholarly articles, composing essays, and comprehending lectures conducted in English. Richards and Rodgers (2001) suggest

that in formal language learning contexts, there is often an emphasis on organized input, with teachers playing a central role in the delivery and organization of content.

In many university EFL classes, particularly in regions where English is not commonly spoken, students rely significantly on their classroom experiences to enhance their language skills. This reliance poses challenges for both educators and learners due to the scarcity of opportunities for genuine communication beyond the classroom.

Additionally, the university EFL classroom is shaped by institutional objectives, curriculum standards, and assessment methods, which frequently prioritize accuracy, grammatical knowledge, and academic achievement. Nonetheless, emerging teaching approaches are advocating for more communicative and student-centered methods to foster greater engagement and participation in the learning experience (Brown, 2007).

1.2 Approaches to Teaching in EFL

In the context of English as a Foreign Language (EFL), teaching approaches encompass the overarching principles, beliefs, and theoretical frameworks that shape how the language is taught and learned in educational settings. These approaches are not specific techniques used in the classroom; instead, they provide a broad perspective that influences teaching methods, planning lessons, and interactions within the classroom (Richards & Rodgers, 2001).

In EFL settings, particularly at the university level, the choice of teaching approaches is vital as it affects how engaged learners are, the type of language input they receive, and the development of their language skills. As noted by Brown (2007), selecting an appropriate approach can significantly influence students' motivation, involvement, and overall success in acquiring the language.

Typically, EFL teaching approaches can be divided into traditional and modern categories. Traditional approaches generally emphasize teacher authority, grammar-focused instruction, and precision, whereas modern approaches prioritize student participation, communication, and interaction. This distinction highlights the transition in language teaching from a teacher-centered model to one that is more centered on the learner.

Thus, grasping different teaching approaches is crucial for assessing classroom practices and enhancing the effectiveness of English language teaching at the university level.

1.2.1 Definition of Teaching Approaches

Teaching approaches encompass the overarching principles and beliefs that form the basis of the teaching and learning process within the classroom. They provide a theoretical framework that helps teachers determine the best ways to teach a language and how students are expected to learn it. In contrast to methods or techniques, which are more concrete and practical, an approach is broader and more conceptual, reflecting views on the essence of language and the process of language acquisition (Richards & Rodgers, 2001).

Similarly, Brown (2007) describes an approach as a set of assumptions regarding the nature of language, learning, and teaching, which informs the development of classroom practices. This means that an approach doesn't dictate specific procedures but rather influences the choice of methods and activities that the teacher employs.

Harmer (2015) further highlights that teaching approaches embody the philosophical stance of instruction, shaping whether the emphasis is on the teacher, the student, or their interaction. Thus, grasping teaching approaches is crucial for evaluating classroom practices in EFL settings.

1.2.2. Teacher centered approach

Teaching approaches play an important role in shaping the learning process. One of the most traditional and widely used approaches is the teacher-centered approach, where the teacher is the main source of knowledge and has full control over the classroom. To better understand this approach, it is important to first define what is meant by the teacher-centered approach.

1.2.2.1. Definition of teacher centered approach

The recent developments in science and technology have ushered in significant changes in field of foreign language teaching. Historically, this model has been the foundation of language instruction. According to Brown (2001), it is defined as a situation where the teacher is the "primary leader, the controller, and the one who provides the knowledge" (p. 46). This view is echoed by Harmer (2001), who describes the teacher in this setting as a "Controller"—the person in charge of every activity, the pace of learning, and the source of all information in the classroom (p. 57). Furthermore, Richards and Rodgers (2001) argue that this approach views learners primarily as "recipients of knowledge" who follow a pre-determined syllabus with little room for personal input or creativity (p. 28). This creates a classroom environment where the teacher is the central figure, while students are expected to be passive and obedient to the instructor's authority. In other words, this approach is based only on the teacher who transmitted knowledge directly to the student, who are expected to listen and absorb information. However, this dependence can lead to a lack of a communicative fluency.

According to Mascolo (2009), traditional education, which is also known as teacher-centered education, assigns the position of the primary authority figure and primary source of knowledge inside the classroom to the teacher. Traditional education also refers to education that is focused on the teacher. The term "traditional education" may also apply to an education that is focused on the instructor. It is expected of students that they would acquire knowledge not only through the delivery of lectures by the instructor but also from other methods in which

information is disseminated. In a student-oriented education, the focus is not only on the learners' needs but also on developing their personal interests. It is widely believed that the teacher should act as a facilitator or a guide. In this case, the student is seen as an active participant who is responsible for their own learning process. This is the role that the instructor takes on for the benefit of the learner.

1.2.2.2. Characteristics of the Teacher-Centered Approach

The teacher-centered approach is characterized by a highly structured environment where the flow of information is systematically controlled by the instructor. In this setting, the teacher is perceived as the ultimate subject expert and the primary decision-maker regarding the lesson's content, sequence, and pace. According to Brown (2001), this mode of instruction often follows a lecture-style format, where classroom routines are rigid and there is a strong emphasis on discipline and order to ensure a controlled learning atmosphere (p. 46). Such structure is often argued to be necessary for maintaining focus, especially when introducing complex linguistic rules or theoretical concepts that require a clear, expert explanation.

Furthermore, Harmer (2001) suggests that in such classrooms, students are primarily expected to listen, take notes, and complete tasks individually, with limited opportunities for spontaneous peer interaction (p. 57). This model's assessment typically prioritizes knowledge recall and accuracy, aiming for the mastery of specific language forms rather than fostering open-ended exploration or creativity. While this ensures a high level of linguistic precision, it often limits the communicative potential of the learners within the classroom setting.

In my opinion, this approach creates a dynamic where the teacher occupies the majority of the classroom time, leading to High Teacher Talk Time (TTT). In this context, the teacher serves as the central "vessel of knowledge," while students are positioned as passive recipients. As Richards and Rodgers (2001) point out, learners in this model are seen as "recipients of

knowledge" who focus on memorization and accuracy rather than fluency (p. 28). This passivity can sometimes lead to a lack of motivation or engagement, as students may feel their personal input is undervalued.

However, it is important to note that the teacher-centered model is not without its merits. According to a recent study by Mehdizade (2025), this framework remains a significant and necessary component in foreign language teaching, especially when dealing with specific educational demands such as exam preparation or the teaching of difficult grammatical structures. The teacher's direct instruction provides a "cognitive map" that helps students navigate new information without feeling overwhelmed. Therefore, while it may limit participation, the teacher-centered approach plays a crucial role in ensuring initial understanding and providing a solid foundation of linguistic accuracy upon which communicative skills can later be built.

According to the recent study by Mehdizade (2025), the teacher-centered model remains a significant and indispensable framework in foreign language teaching, especially when dealing with specific educational demands. Mehdizade argues that in contexts where students face high-stakes exams or complex academic requirements, the teacher's direct intervention is essential for providing clarity and reducing cognitive load. This suggests that being 'teacher-centered' is not necessarily a sign of outdated teaching, but can be a strategic choice made by instructors to ensure that foundational knowledge is correctly understood before moving toward student-led activities. Consequently, this model serves as a vital starting point in the EFL classroom, offering the structured guidance that many university students still rely on for academic success.

1.2.2.3. Advantages of Teacher-Centered Instruction

The teacher-centered model offers several pedagogical advantages that remain relevant in modern EFL contexts, particularly in ensuring a solid linguistic foundation.

Expert Guidance and Accuracy: One of the primary strengths highlighted by **Mehdizade (2025)** is the role of the teacher as a "subject expert." This expertise ensures that linguistic information—especially complex grammar and phonology—is delivered accurately. By providing direct and precise instruction, the teacher prevents the formation of fossilized errors in learners' speech and writing, which is a common risk in unsupervised interactions (p. 120). In the university context, this expert guidance is crucial for students to master academic discourse and formal language structures.

Structured Learning Environment: This approach provides a stable and predictable atmosphere that many learners find beneficial. For students who require clear direction and structured goals, the teacher's control over the syllabus ensures that learning objectives are met systematically and without confusion (Mehdizade, 2025, p. 122). Such an organized environment minimizes classroom distractions and allows students to focus entirely on the material, ensuring that the curriculum is covered within the required timeframe.

Efficiency in Introducing New Concepts: While Mehdizade (2025) notes that a teacher-centered environment is essential for absolute beginners to build a foundational vocabulary, this efficiency also applies to university-level EFL learners when they encounter highly technical or new academic concepts. In these instances, direct instruction is more time-efficient than discovery-based learning, as it provides students with the necessary "cognitive shortcuts" to understand difficult materials. This ensures that learners have a clear conceptual framework before they are expected to engage in more autonomous or communicative tasks.

1.2.2.4. Limitation of Teacher-Centered

Despite its advantages in providing structure, the teacher-centered model faces several criticisms regarding its impact on the modern language learning process.

The "Passive Recipient" Model: A significant drawback is that students often become passive. When the teacher dominates the interaction, learners have fewer opportunities to practice speaking, which slows down the development of their communicative fluency (p. 125).

Suppression of Creativity: Because the teacher controls the materials and the pace, there is little room for students to explore the language or think critically. Learning becomes a process of "memorization" rather than "discovery" (p. 128).

Loss of Motivation: Over-reliance on lecture-style teaching can lead to boredom. Mehdizade (2025) notes that without active engagement, students may lose interest in the subject, as they do not feel a sense of ownership over their learning process (p. 129).

Passive Learning and Low Engagement: A major drawback is the transformation of students into "passive recipients." Mehdizade (2025) points out that when the teacher dominates the classroom talk time (TTT), students lose the opportunity to actively practice the language, leading to a decline in communicative fluency (p. 125).

Suppression of Learner Autonomy: The teacher's total control over materials and activities restricts the students' freedom of choice. This can hinder the development of critical thinking and independent research skills, as learners become overly dependent on "ready-made" information provided by the instructor (Mehdizade, 2025, p. 128).

Decreased Motivation and Boredom: Over-reliance on traditional lecture-style formats can lead to a lack of interest over time. Without interactive and student-led activities,

learners may find the language classroom repetitive, which negatively impacts their long-term motivation (Mehdizade, 2025, p. 129).

My point of view is that while the teacher-centered approach is organized, it stops us from being independent. I think that university students should not only receive information but also learn how to find it. Over-dependence on the teacher makes it harder for us to become autonomous learner

1.2.2.5. Role of the Teacher in a Teacher-Centered Approach

In a traditional teacher-centered setting, the instructor is positioned as the primary authority and the sole provider of information. This role is fundamental to maintaining the structure and academic rigor of the lesson. According to Harmer (2001), the teacher in this model acts as a "Controller," standing at the front of the class, directing every activity, and deciding precisely what students should learn and when (p. 57). This "controlling" role ensures that the lesson follows a predetermined path and that the educational objectives are met within the allocated time.

Furthermore, the teacher dominates the classroom talk time (TTT), acting as the main linguistic model for the students. In this capacity, the instructor provides direct instruction and immediate correction, which is essential for ensuring accuracy and preventing the reinforcement of errors. As the central figure, the teacher is responsible for organizing the environment, managing discipline, and evaluating student performance based on their ability to replicate the transmitted knowledge. While this role provides students with a sense of security and clear leadership, it often positions the teacher as the "sage on the stage" rather than a collaborator, creating a significant power distance between the educator and the learners.

1.2.2.6. Role of the Learner in a Teacher-Centered Approach

In contrast to the authoritative role of the instructor, the learner in a teacher-centered setting plays a passive role. This dynamic is often described through the "banking model" of education, where students are expected to be "empty vessels" that the teacher fills with knowledge. Richards and Rodgers (2001) state that learners in this approach are mainly required to listen, take notes, and follow instructions without much room for creativity or independent thinking (p. 28). Their primary responsibility is to absorb the information provided and demonstrate their understanding through accurate reproduction in exams and assignments.

Furthermore, the learner's identity in this model is that of a recipient rather than a participant. Because the teacher manages the pace and the content, students often become cognitively dependent on the instructor's guidance, which can hinder the development of self-regulated learning strategies. In a university EFL context, this passivity means that students rarely initiate communication or take risks with the language, as the focus remains on avoiding errors and adhering to the teacher's linguistic models. Consequently, while students may gain a solid grasp of grammatical rules, they often struggle with the autonomy required for advanced communicative competence and real-world language application.

1.2.3. LEARNER CENTERED APPROACH

In contrast to traditional teaching methods, modern trends in Education emphasize the importance of focusing on the learner rather than the teacher. The learner-centered approach has emerged as a response to the limitations of teacher-centered instruction, aiming to make students active participants in their own learning process. This approach highlights the role of learners' needs, interests, and experiences in shaping effective learning. Before examining its characteristics and benefits, it is essential to first define what is meant by the learner-centered approach.

1.2.3.1. Definition of learner centered approach

While teacher-centered instruction remains a common practice in many educational contexts, the recent decades have seen a significant advocacy for the learner-centered approach in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teaching (Good & Brophy, 2003; Edwards, 2004). By definition, the learner-centered approach, also referred to as student-centered learning, is a pedagogical model that prioritizes the specific needs, interests, and learning styles of the students over the institutional requirements of administrators or the traditional dominance of teachers. In this paradigm, the teacher's role is redefined to facilitate learning rather than merely transmitting information, ensuring that the educational process is tailored to the learners' individual backgrounds.

According to McCombs and Whisler (1997), this approach is defined by its focus on the learners' unique perspectives and experiences (p. 9). In a learner-centered classroom, the teacher acts as a facilitator rather than a lecturer, encouraging students to take an active role in their learning journey. This shift effectively fosters learner autonomy, as students are no longer passive recipients but active participants who are responsible for their own progress. Furthermore, Brown (2001) provides a comprehensive framework for this approach, stating that it includes:

1. Techniques that account for learners' specific needs and goals.
2. Strategies that give students a degree of control over the learning process.
3. Curricula that incorporate student input and consultation.
4. Practices that encourage creativity and innovation.
5. Methods that enhance a student's sense of competence and self-worth.

In my opinion, implementing these techniques means we must empower students with more confidence. When the focus shifts to what students truly need, they become more engaged

and less afraid of making mistakes, viewing errors as natural steps in language acquisition. This approach promotes more in-depth learning and facilitates the development of students into independent learners. Unlike traditional disciplines, the learner-centered model in EFL settings creates a dynamic environment where participation is driven by intrinsic motivation and the desire to communicate, ultimately leading to a more profound and lasting mastery of the language.

1.2.3.2. Characteristics of the Learner-Centered Approach

According to Brown (2001), a learner-centered classroom is defined by several core characteristics that prioritize the student's agency and psychological well-being. The primary characteristic is that instructional techniques must account for the learners' diverse needs, styles, and goals, ensuring that the curriculum remains relevant to their specific academic paths. Furthermore, Brown (2001) emphasizes the importance of granting a degree of control to the students, which empowers them to take an active part in the decision-making process regarding their own learning. This shift in power dynamics fosters a sense of responsibility and ownership over the educational outcomes.

In addition to individual agency, learner-centered methods are designed to bridge the gap between classroom instruction and real-world application. As noted by Emiliana (2017), these methods prioritize functional language use, allowing students to apply what they have learned in authentic communication scenarios. A central characteristic of this approach is that learners are placed at the heart of the teaching-learning process, where they are expected to be active participants rather than passive observers. This environment encourages students to exchange views and collaborate on tasks within teams, transforming the classroom into a social space for knowledge construction.

Moreover, the atmosphere of a learner-centered classroom is distinctively dynamic. Because students are frequently engaged in pair work and group discussions, these classrooms may be noisier than traditional ones; however, this noise is a sign of active linguistic engagement. In this model, both teachers and students play active roles, contributing to a more effective and democratic teaching process. Finally, the assessment methods in a learner-centered approach are not merely evaluative but are also designed to be supportive. They aim to enhance the students' learning experiences through collaborative efforts and constructive feedback, focusing on the students' progress and their ability to use the language creatively rather than just focusing on grammatical accuracy.

1.2.3.3. Advantages and Disadvantages of Learner-centered Teaching

The learner-centered approach offers several important advantages in language teaching. First, it increases student engagement and motivation, as learners feel a sense of ownership over their learning process (Altun, 2023). When students actively participate in classroom activities, they gain confidence in their ability to demonstrate their skills independently.

In addition, this approach helps students acquire useful knowledge and skills that can support them in real-life situations (Rao, 2020). It is also sensitive to individual learners' needs and preferences, allowing them to construct their own understanding and meaning. Moreover, it connects language learning with students' daily experiences, making learning more meaningful.

Another key advantage is that it promotes active participation and increases the use of the target language. It encourages authentic communication and reduces barriers between classroom learning and real-life use. Furthermore, it provides opportunities to explore learners' motivations, learning styles, and preferences (Benson, 2001, cited in Richards & Bohlke, 2011).

Finally, this approach prepares students for life after university by developing essential skills such as teamwork, problem-solving, independence, and self-confidence.

1.2.3.4. Disadvantages and Challenges of the Learner-Centered Approach

Despite its numerous benefits in fostering autonomy, the learner-centered approach presents several practical and pedagogical limitations that can hinder its effectiveness in the EFL classroom.

- **Learner Resistance and Traditional Expectations:** One of the most significant challenges is the difficulty some students face when adapting to this model. According to **Rao (2020)**, students who have been conditioned by years of traditional, teacher-centered instruction may struggle to take initiative, even with consistent teacher support. This "educational culture shock" can lead to discomfort, particularly for introverted learners or those who do not feel at ease participating in mandatory group work and collaborative activities. For these students, the sudden shift from passive listening to active participation can be overwhelming rather than empowering.
- **Time Constraints and Curricular Demands:** Another major drawback is the extensive time required to implement student-led tasks. Because discovery-based learning and peer discussions are naturally slower than direct instruction, it can become increasingly difficult for teachers to cover the entire required curriculum within the academic semester. Furthermore, this approach demands significant preparation, creativity, and flexibility from teachers. The need to design customized materials and manage diverse classroom interactions may discourage educators from applying learner-centered methods consistently, especially in overcrowded or under-resourced environments.

- **Dependence on Student Motivation and Teacher Skill:** The success of this methodology depends heavily on the students' intrinsic willingness to cooperate and engage actively. If learners lack the necessary motivation or do not see the immediate

1.2.3.5. The teacher's role

The role of the teacher changes from that of the "sage on the stage" to that of a guide and facilitator. In other words, the evolution of EFL instruction has significantly altered both the classroom dynamics and the teacher's persona. In the past, the teacher was viewed as the "Sage on the Stage"—the sole source of information and the primary authority who dominated the classroom through direct instruction (King, 1993). Because they were usually passive recipients, students in this traditional setting had few opportunities for genuine communication and active engagement.

However, according to King (1993) (p. 30), modern pedagogy encourages a change in the role of the teacher to that of a "Guide on the Side." This implies that the instructor's job is to assist students in learning rather than just imparting knowledge. By serving as a facilitator, the instructor gives students the confidence to manage their own education. For our classrooms, this modification is crucial. When the instructor takes on the role of a "guide," we become less fearful of making mistakes. This encourages us to engage more and speak English freely. According to Hedge (2000), the instructor is in charge of offering resources and fostering a welcoming environment where students feel at ease taking chances with the language (p. 26). Additionally, rather than providing students with the answers directly, Harmer (2001) characterizes the teacher as a "prompter" and a "resource" who encourages students to come up with their own solutions (p. 58). According to recent research, the instructor serves as a "consultant,"

helping students with their own research and decision-making. Instead of being lecturers, teachers serve as learning facilitators. In this way, students do more research and teachers do less telling.

In the learner-centered approach, the teacher's responsibilities include designing the course to foster the best possible learning environment, modeling appropriate behavior for the students, encouraging students to learn from and with one another, and giving additional Feedback as needed.

1.2.3.6 The role of the learner

According to Richards and Rodgers (2001), learner-centered instruction fosters a sense of ownership over the language by encouraging students to actively engage with their peers and take accountability for their own development (p. 28). With this method, the teacher becomes a facilitator who directs, supports, and scaffolds learning experiences rather than the main source of knowledge (Weimer, 2002). Instead of being passive consumers of knowledge, students participate in group projects, conversations, and problem-solving exercises that mirror language use in everyday situations (Breen & Littlejohn, 2000).

As they practice using language in relevant contexts, learners can more successfully internalize language structures and functions thanks to this active participation (Brown, 2007). Additionally, the learner-centered approach fosters the growth of critical thinking, self-control, and autonomous learning abilities (Weimer, 2002). Lifelong learning is facilitated by teaching students how to track their own development, evaluate their learning methods, and establish personal objectives (Brown, 2007). Research from other fields shows that this method not only encourages deeper cognitive engagement but also boosts students' motivation and self-confidence by giving them a sense of control over their educational path (Breen & Littlejohn, 2000).

Additionally, peer teaching and collaborative learning are frequently promoted in learner-centered classrooms, allowing students to benefit from one another's perspectives and strengths (Weimer, 2002). This social component of education improves problem-solving, cultural sensitivity, and communication skills, making learning more comprehensive and richer.

In general, a learner-centered approach produces more significant and long-lasting learning outcomes by matching instructional strategies with students' needs, interests, and skill levels (Richards & Rodgers, 2001).

1.3 Balance of teacher and learner centered approach

The landscape of English Language Teaching (ELT) has shifted significantly, changing from the strict, structured limits of the Grammar-Translation Method to the adaptable, interactional focus of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT). At the core of this change is a key discussion regarding the "center of gravity" in the classroom. This issue is not just about methods; it deals with knowledge. It prompts us to consider: Who possesses the knowledge? Is the teacher the only source of linguistic truth, or can the learner actively shape their own fluency?

In the past, the teacher was the "Sage on the Stage," concentrating on the mechanical correctness of the language. Nowadays, the "Guide on the Side" approach prevails in academic discussions, highlighting Student Agency. However, the reality of the EFL classroom, especially in various cultural settings, indicates that a drastic shift to complete Learner-Centeredness can leave students feeling lost. This research investigates the "Golden Mean": a balanced blend that aligns teacher support with student freedom to enhance Second Language Acquisition (SLA).

The Teacher-Centered (TC) method originates from Skinner's Behaviorism, which sees language as a collection of habits created through stimulus and response (Skinner, 1938). In this

approach, the teacher serves as both the main source of information and the language model, directing learners toward proper language use.

Even though current teaching methods frequently criticize this approach as limiting and inflexible, Krashen's Input Hypothesis ($i+1$) supports a strong teacher presence (Krashen, 1985). As per Krashen (1985), for language learning to happen naturally, learners need understandable input—language that is just slightly above their present level.

From the learners' viewpoint, the teacher is the only dependable resource capable of effectively providing this input (Skinner, 1938; Krashen, 1985). Without such help, beginners often face Cognitive Overload, where the difficulty of English grammar acts as a hurdle instead of a bridge to participation.

A critical metric in any EFL observation is the ratio of Teacher Talk Time (TTT) to Student Talk Time (STT). Excessive TTT is frequently the "silent killer" of fluency, depriving students of the critical "output" opportunities required to test their linguistic hypotheses. (Harmer 2015; Selinker 1972).

However, a pure LC classroom with 100% STT poses its own risk: fossilization. If learners only interact with non-native peers and do not receive professional feedback, they may reinforce incorrect grammatical habits. Thus, the "Learner's Perspective" on understanding necessitates a teacher who understands when to speak (to provide clarity) and, more importantly, when to remain silent (to allow space). (Black and Wiliam, 1998; Dörnyei, 2005).

Additionally, because the classroom is a micro-society with its own hierarchy, moving from TC to LC necessitates a psychological redistribution of power, which can make students anxious as they become active participants rather than passive recipients. Sociologically, the teacher's function shifts from "sage" to "guide," changing the social dynamics of the classroom

and elevating participation from a performance for a grade to an act of engagement (Vygotsky, 1978).

However, a purely learner-centered (LC) classroom with 100% STT poses its own risk: fossilization. According to Selinker (1972, p. 205), learners who only interact with non-native peers without professional feedback may reinforce incorrect grammatical habits. The "Learner's Perspective" on understanding necessitates a teacher who understands when to speak (for clarity) and when to remain silent (for space) (Harmer, 2001, p. 4).

Also, to resolve the tension between Teacher-Centeredness (TC) and Learner-Centeredness (LC), the **Gradual Release of Responsibility (GRR)** model offers a structured transition. This model, often summarized as "I do, we do, you do," ensures that the learner's understanding is grounded before they are asked to participate independently (Fisher & Frey, 2008).

1. **Focus Lesson (I do it):** Here, the teacher is the "Model." In an EFL context, this involves explicit instruction on a linguistic point (e.g., the use of the Present Perfect). From the learner's perspective, this phase provides **cognitive security**. It eliminates the guesswork that often leads to frustration in purely discovery-based learning.
2. **Guided Instruction (We do it):** This is the "Scaffolding" phase. The teacher and students work together on a task. The power starts to shift as the teacher asks probing questions rather than providing direct answers.
3. **Collaborative Learning (You do it together):** Students move into peer-to-peer interaction. This is where **participation** spikes. Because the students have already seen the model and practiced with the teacher, their "Language Anxiety" is significantly reduced.

4. **Independent Learning (You do it alone):** The final stage of full Learner-Centeredness.

The student takes full ownership, applying the knowledge in a new, creative context.

5. **TBLT** is perhaps the most effective pedagogical tool for balancing both worlds. It starts with a "Task" (LC-focused), which creates a "need to know" in the student. However, it concludes with a "Language Focus" (TC-focused) where the teacher addresses the grammatical gaps observed during the task. This ensures that the learner's participation doesn't come at the expense of their accuracy.

Digital transformation has provided a unique solution to the TTT vs. STT dilemma. The Flipped Classroom Model allows the teacher to "export" the Teacher-Centered lecture to a pre-class video (Bergmann & Sams, 2012, p. 15).

Outside the Class: The student engages with the "Knower" (the video) at their own pace, ensuring understanding

Inside the Class: 100% of the time is reserved for Learner-Centered activities like debates, role-plays, and problem-solving. From a sociological standpoint, this redefines the classroom from a "Lecture Hall" to a "Laboratory of Language"

Nonetheless, we must acknowledge that Western-centric LC models often clash with traditional educational cultures. In many Middle Eastern or Asian contexts, a teacher who doesn't "lecture" is perceived as unprofessional (Littlewood, 2007, p. 67).

A "soft transition" is suggested by the research, in which the teacher maintains a professional and authoritative presence in order to meet students' expectations while gradually introducing autonomous tasks that increase learners' capacity for independent agency and respect their cultural schema (Nguyen, 2020). Moreover, the balance between Teacher-Centeredness (TC) and Learner-Centeredness (LC) is most evident in the way teachers provide feedback. Conventional TC evaluation is often summative and

punitive, focusing mainly on highlighting errors, whereas a balanced classroom transforms feedback into formative scaffolding that supports learning and participation (Black & Wiliam, 1998). In this context, self-assessment and peer assessment help learners recognize their mistakes, reduce the authority gap, and keep the affective filter low, making correction easier to accept and internalize.

Moreover, when a learner perceives feedback as a tool for growth rather than a marker of failure, their willingness to participate increases. The teacher's role shifts from an "Inquisitor" to a "Coach," reinforcing the idea that understanding is a journey, not a destination (Littlewood, 2007).

In conclusion, the findings of this research suggest that the "Golden Mean" in EFL is not a fixed point but a dynamic state. Effective teaching is the adaptive" ability to shift roles based on the linguistic complexity of the lesson, the emotional state of the students, and the cultural context of the classroom.

1.4 Learners understanding in EFL Classroom

Understanding is a key element in the learning process, particularly in the context of English as a Foreign Language classroom. It is not limited to memorizing linguistic forms, but involves the learner's ability to comprehend, interpret, and use the language effectively in different situations. Therefore, it is essential to clarify the concept of understanding in EFL classrooms before exploring how it can be developed and enhanced.

1.4.1 Concept of understanding in EFL classroom

on the field of English as a Foreign Language (EFL), a process by which the student creates a personal meaning or representation of what is being experienced. When it comes to content taught in school (and information gained elsewhere) the understanding the students

create may be the same as the teachers. Understanding, according to Wiggins and McTighe (2005), is a "way of thinking more purposefully and carefully" about the learning process rather than a "step-by-step guide" to follow (p. 1). According to this framework, the main objective of any curriculum should be to increase student comprehension.

The authors also contend that focusing the curriculum on "big ideas" and "important performance tasks" leads to greater understanding (Wiggins & McTighe, 2005, p. 1). This means that in an EFL context, a student's "big idea"—rather than merely memorization of the language's rules—is their ability to communicate effectively in English. In other words, the concept of understanding is essential because, it allows learners to monitor their own progress, fosters critical thinking, and ensures that teaching methods align with student needs, ultimately improving communicative competence and academic success. We want our students to achieve the desired results; we must redesign our instruction to prioritize performance (using the language) over "content" (knowing about the language). I believe that when students engage in these "performance tasks," their understanding deepens and becomes more permanent. In addition, according to Anderson and Krathwohl (2001), understanding is a fundamental cognitive process that goes beyond mere retention. It is primarily concerned with "Transfer," which allows students to use gained knowledge in various contexts (p. 65). Understanding occurs when learners "construct meaning" from instructional messages, whether oral, written, or graphic.

Furthermore, the authors emphasize that students understand when they successfully build connections between new information and their prior knowledge. This integration of new data into existing cognitive schemas is what facilitates deep comprehension (Anderson & Krathwohl, 2001, p. 66). Therefore, in an EFL classroom, understanding requires students to engage in active cognitive processes such as interpreting, summarizing, and explaining, which are all driven by active classroom participation.

1.4.2. Factors affecting learners understanding

Having prior knowledge is not enough for understanding; it must be actively **activated** to have an effect on learning. A seminal study by Bransford and Johnson (1972) demonstrated that learners who received a "hint" or a topic before reading a passage performed significantly better in comprehension and recall than those who did not. This provides strong evidence that available knowledge needs to be triggered to steer the learning process effectively.

Furthermore, research suggests that failing to activate prior knowledge strategically can hamper learning performance, a phenomenon often seen in learners who lack effective learning strategies. Therefore, in an EFL classroom, the teacher's role is to use interactive techniques that help students "unlock" their existing schemas, making the integration of new linguistic information much easier.

Peer Scaffolding: Understanding is often a social act. According to Vygotsky (1978) and his concept of the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), students can achieve a deeper understanding when they interact with peers. Through "scaffolding" (temporary support from a classmate), a student can understand complex ideas that they might struggle with alone.

- **The Affective Filter hypothesis** states how affective factors relate to the second language acquisition process. The concept of an Affective Filter was proposed by Dulay and Burt (1977), and is consistent with the theoretical work done in the area of affective variables and second language acquisition, as well as the hypotheses previously covered in this chapter. Research over the last decade has confirmed that a variety of affective variables relate to success in second

language acquisition (reviewed in Krashen, 1981). Most of those studied can be placed into one of these three categories:

- **(1) Motivation.** Performers with high motivation generally do better in second language acquisition (usually, but not always, "integrative"¹³
- **(2) Self-confidence.** Performers with self-confidence and good self-image tend to do better in second language acquisition
- **(3) Low anxiety** appears to be conducive to second language acquisition, whether measured as personal or classroom anxiety. In several places I have hypothesized that these attitudinal factors relate directly to acquisition and not learning, since they tend to show stronger relationships to second language achievement when communicative-type tests are used, tests that tap the acquired rather than the learned system, and when the students taking the test have used the language in "acquisition-rich" situations, situations where comprehensible input was plentiful.

According to Dörnyei (2022), motivation directly affects students' effort, persistence, and willingness to participate in classroom activities. Highly motivated learners are more likely to engage deeply with content, which improves their overall understanding. In addition, language proficiency level significantly influences comprehension, as learners with stronger linguistic foundations can process input more effectively (Krashen, 1982).

One of the key cognitive processes involved in language learning is the activation of prior knowledge, also referred to as schema. Research has shown that prior knowledge plays a significant role in reading comprehension, particularly in a foreign language context (Murray, 1980; Anderson, 1994). These studies highlight that understanding how schema functions in the

reading process can explain why some students succeed while others face difficulties in comprehending written texts. Therefore, activating learners' background knowledge is essential for facilitating effective understanding of written materials.

1.5 Lerner' Participation in EFL Classroom

Learners' participation plays a crucial role in the effectiveness of the teaching and learning process, especially in English as a Foreign Language classroom. Active participation allows students to engage with the language, practice their skills, and develop confidence in communication. It also reflects the shift from passive learning to a more interactive and student-centered environment. Therefore, understanding the importance of learners' participation is essential before exploring its forms and influencing factors.

1.5.1. definition of participation

Researchers have defined classroom participation in a variety of ways. According to Vandrick (2000), participation often consists of students speaking in class, answering questions, making comments, and participating in discussions. However, this viewpoint is considered narrow because it focuses solely on verbal interaction. Fritschner (2000), on the other hand, broadens this concept by distinguishing between "talkers" and "non-talkers," explaining that participation can take many forms, including attending classes, listening attentively, completing assignments, and being prepared for lessons.

In the context of EFL classrooms, participation extends beyond these traditional boundaries. Crosthwaite et al. (2015) define classroom participation as students actively participating in all class activities. These activities could include brainstorming, games, quizzes, surveys, group discussions, role plays, simulations, collaborative writing, presentations, and speeches. This

definition relies heavily on the concept of an "active role," which requires students to participate meaningfully in the learning process.

Weaver and Qi (2005) support this idea, arguing that students who actively participate in learning outperform those who are passive. Similarly, Dallimore et al. (2010) show that students' willingness to participate in classroom discussions is positively related to their learning. As a result, learner participation in the EFL classroom encompasses all forms of active engagement—verbal and nonverbal—that contribute to language development and effective classroom interaction.

1.5.1. Types of classroom participation

Classroom participation is a complex phenomenon influenced by various internal and external factors. One of the most prominent types of engagement is observed in passive students, whose silence often stems from diverse cultural and educational backgrounds. This passivity is not merely a lack of interest, but is frequently a result of several interconnected barriers:

- **Academic Preparedness and Knowledge Gap:** A primary group of passive learners includes those who feel "vulnerable" due to a lack of background knowledge. Students who engage in less outside reading or who do not prepare before entering the class often find themselves unable to follow the pace of the lecture. Consequently, they do not know what to ask and prefer to remain in a "receptive mode," focusing entirely on writing notes rather than engaging in the discussion.
- **Socialization and Cultural Background:** For many students, this passive attitude is deeply embedded since childhood through family and school socialization. In many traditional cultures, silence is equated with respect for authority. As evidenced by individual learner testimonies, some students admit

to disliking asking questions since their early years; when faced with a lack of understanding, they would rather delegate the task to a friend to ask on their behalf. This reflects a deep-rooted fear of being in the spotlight or challenging the flow of the lesson.

- **Language Anxiety and Peer Pressure:** Another critical factor is the lack of proficiency in the language used in the classroom (EFL). Many students fear making grammatical or pronunciation errors that might lead to being "laughed at" by their peers. To avoid potential embarrassment and maintain their "face" within the social group, they prefer to keep quiet and adopt a listening-only approach. This linguistic anxiety acts as a major barrier to communicative competence, as the fear of social judgment outweighs the desire for active learning.

1.5.2. Factor influencing participation

Participation levels in the classroom are determined by a variety of factors that must be taken into consideration that when we choose a strategy that will encourage an active learning environment, and therefore increase level of participation. this factor can include:

- **Impact of anxiety on student's classroom participation**

Learners are expected to pick up the skills while studying a second language. Native speakers of the language use it in their culture. Abderrezag (2010) asserts that rather than motivating students to perform well, these methods may occasionally pose a threat to their consciousness. According to Brown (2007), it is a type of language anxiety in which learners experience fear of not being fully proficient in the second language. Language anxiety, according to Brown

(2007), is a stable personality trait linked to a person's propensity to experience anxiety when writing, reading, speaking, or listening in a second language.

- **The impact of instructor in student's classroom participation:** According to the study, both active and passive students agreed that teachers play an important role in any classroom. Positive characteristics of instructors and the method or style of instruction are fundamental sources of motivation. If you want to be a good teacher with students in the classroom, you must be friendly with them, know each student well, not criticize or embarrass students, and, most importantly, maintain a positive attitude. With these positive characteristics of an intelligent instructor, students are more relaxed, and they are not afraid or ashamed to speak up in front of their peers. Additionally, students do not feel left out when they have the opportunity to participate.
- The instructor should provide students with notes to encourage active participation in the classroom. These practices boost confidence, competence, and active participation.
- In my opinion, passive and active students value instructors who are friendly, open, professional, and specially who understand their learners need. If you want to be a good teacher is choosing the wright way to make the students interact with them, and encourage them in participation without laziness or boredom.
- **The influence of shyness on student classroom participation:** Children who are shy experience emotional, social, and academic difficulties. Shy children may be at risk for a variety of negative outcomes, including peer rejection, loneliness, negative affect, and difficulty adjusting to school (Coplan et al., 2008; Findlay et al., 2009). Students in EFL classrooms are taught English as a means of communication. Speaking in front of others is intimidating because

they have a negative image of themselves, which affects their motivation and causes them to be inhibited. Asked. As a result, a shy person may hesitate, pause, or run away from a situation

Conclusion

this chapter has explored the foundational theories of both teacher-centered and learner-centered approaches. While the teacher-centered model provides the necessary structure and 'Cognitive Security' through expert guidance , the learner-centered model fosters 'Learner Agency' and active knowledge construction.

The analysis reveals that neither approach should be used in isolation, as extreme reliance on one can hinder the learning process. Therefore, this theoretical exploration establishes the necessity of a 'Golden Mean'—a strategic balance that ensures academic clarity while encouraging student autonomy. These theoretical pillars will serve as the basis for the next chapter, where we will examine the dynamics of classroom interaction and the practical implications of this synergy."

INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, we explore the factors that influence students' comprehension of complex EFL lessons and the drivers behind their active engagement. By examining the synergy between teacher-led scaffolding and learner autonomy, we aim to demonstrate why students value a 'Balanced Approach'. This exploration focuses on achieving the 'Golden Mean', where the teacher provides the necessary 'Cognitive Security' for understanding, while fostering the freedom required for meaningful participation. This theoretical discussion provides the essential context for interpreting the empirical data presented in the practical part of this study.

2.1 Learners' Perceptions in EFL Contexts

Learners' perceptions play an important role in the field of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learning. They influence students' attitudes, motivation, classroom engagement, and overall learning outcomes. This section presents the concept of learners' perceptions and highlights their importance in EFL contexts.

2.1.1 Definion of Perception

Perception is generally understood as the process through which individuals interpret and organize information from their environment in order to make sense of it (Myers, 2010; Eysenck & Keane, 2015; Woolfolk, 2016). In educational contexts, this concept refers to how learners understand and evaluate their learning experiences, including their views about teachers, classroom practices, and learning tools. Therefore, learners' perceptions play an important role in shaping how they approach the learning process.

2.1.2 Importance of Learners' Perceptions in EFL

In the field of English as a Foreign Language (EFL), learners' perceptions are closely connected to their level of motivation and overall success in learning. Motivation is widely

recognized as a key factor influencing second and foreign language learning, particularly in classroom settings (Al Kaboody, 2013; Shili, 2023). Learners who develop positive perceptions towards their learning environment tend to be more engaged and willing to participate, whereas negative perceptions may reduce their interest and involvement in the learning process.

Learners' perceptions can also be understood as students' beliefs, attitudes, and opinions regarding their learning experiences and the teaching methods used in the classroom (Richards & Schmidt, 2010). In educational settings, these perceptions are not fixed but vary from one learner to another, as students interpret the same classroom situations differently based on their prior knowledge, personal characteristics, and previous learning experiences (Alharbi et al., 2024).

In EFL contexts, research indicates that learners' perceptions significantly influence their level of engagement and motivation. Students who view learning resources, such as interactive materials or mobile-assisted applications, as useful are more likely to participate actively and practice language skills more effectively (Rahmadani et al., 2019; Alharbi, 2021). In contrast, when learners develop negative perceptions towards instructional methods or classroom activities, their motivation tends to decrease, which may limit their participation and negatively affect their learning outcomes (Iman & Angraini, 2024).

Furthermore, learners' perceptions are shaped not only by specific tasks or tools, but also by the overall classroom environment. Elements such as teaching strategies, instructional materials, and the organization of classroom activities play an important role in how students interpret their learning experiences and interact with both teachers and peers (Peng, 2008; Alharbi et al., 2024).

2.1.3 The Role of Teachers in Shaping Learners' Perceptions

Another important factor shaping learners' perceptions is the role of the teacher. Although teachers cannot directly control students' motivation, they can strongly influence it through their behavior and classroom practices (Keller, 2010). Teachers are often considered a major source of motivation, as their attitudes and interaction styles can either encourage or discourage learners (Matsumoto, 2011; Öztürk & Ok, 2014). More recent research suggests that this influence is not only related to the use of explicit motivational strategies, but also to teachers' personality and everyday behaviour in the classroom (Kálmán, 2023). However, earlier studies mainly emphasized the importance of motivational strategies used by teachers (Dörnyei & Csizér, 1998; Lee et al., 2020; Howard, 2023).

2.1.4 Learners' Perceptions of Instructional Tools and Technology

Learners' perceptions are also influenced by the instructional tools and technologies used in the learning process. Recent studies have shown that integrating authentic multimedia materials can create a more engaging and supportive learning environment, especially for slow learners, which helps improve their speaking performance and confidence (Yulian et al., 2022). These tools are also perceived as useful for practicing language skills outside the classroom and increasing students' active participation.

Similarly, digital applications such as Grammarly are viewed as motivating and helpful in enhancing writing skills, as they provide immediate feedback and make the learning process more interactive (Samosa et al., 2021; Rejeki, 2023).

2.1.5 Overall Impact of Learners' Perceptions

Overall, learners' perceptions play a crucial role in the EFL learning process, as they influence motivation, participation, and language development. Positive perceptions towards teachers, learning environments, and educational tools can lead to better learning outcomes, while negative perceptions may hinder students' progress. These aspects highlight the

importance of understanding learners' perspectives, particularly in relation to different teaching approaches, which will be discussed in the following sections.

2.2 Learners' Perspectives on Teacher-Centred Approach

The teacher-centred approach has long been considered one of the most traditional methods in education. In this approach, the teacher plays the dominant role in delivering knowledge and controlling classroom activities, while learners mainly receive information passively. This section discusses learners' perspectives on the teacher-centred approach and presents an overview of its main characteristics and influence on classroom participation.

2.2.1 Overview of the Teacher-Centred Approach

The teacher-centred approach is one of the most traditional and widely used methods in education. In this approach, the teacher plays a central role as the main source of knowledge, while students are expected to listen, take notes, and follow instructions. The classroom is usually highly structured, and the teacher controls both the content and the pace of the lesson. According to Brown (2007), this method focuses on knowledge transmission, where learners are viewed primarily as recipients of information. Similarly, Harmer (2015) explains that teacher-centred classrooms emphasize order, discipline, and direct instruction, which can be effective in certain learning contexts, particularly when dealing with large groups or complex material.

2.2.2 Learners' Positive Perspectives

From a learner's perspective, the teacher-centred approach offers several advantages. Many students appreciate this method because it provides clear explanations and well-organized lessons, which help them understand difficult concepts more easily. Harmer (2015) argues that

structured teaching allows learners to feel more secure, as they are guided step by step by the teacher. In addition, some learners prefer this approach when preparing for exams, since it focuses on delivering essential knowledge in a direct and efficient way. Brown (2007) also highlights that teacher-centred instruction can reduce confusion, especially for learners who lack confidence or struggle with independent learning. Furthermore, in contexts where students are accustomed to traditional education, this method may increase their comfort and sense of familiarity, which positively affects their learning experience.

2.2.3 Learners' Negative Perspectives

Despite its advantages, many learners express negative views toward the teacher-centred approach. One of the main criticisms is the lack of interaction and participation in the classroom. Since the teacher dominates most of the lesson, students often have limited opportunities to express their ideas or engage in meaningful discussions. According to Weimer (2002), this situation can lead to passive learning, where students become less involved and less motivated. In addition, the absence of active participation may prevent learners from developing important skills such as communication, collaboration, and critical thinking. Freire (1970) strongly criticizes this model, describing it as a “banking system” in which students are treated as empty vessels to be filled with knowledge. As a result, learners may feel disengaged, bored, and disconnected from the learning process.

2.2.4 Overall Evaluation

Overall, learners' perspectives on the teacher-centred approach reveal a balance between its strengths and limitations. While this method is effective in providing structured knowledge and clear guidance, it may not fully meet learners' needs in terms of engagement,

autonomy, and active participation. Weimer (2002) suggests that modern education should move towards more learner-centred practices that involve students more actively in the learning process. Therefore, although the teacher-centred approach remains useful in certain situations, many researchers agree that it should be combined with interactive and student-centred strategies to enhance the overall quality of learning.

2.3 Learners' Perspectives on Learner-Centred Approach

The learner-centred approach has become an important concept in modern education, particularly in EFL contexts. It emphasizes the active role of learners in the learning process and encourages participation, autonomy, and interaction inside the classroom. This section provides an overview of the learner-centred approach and examines learners' perspectives toward its implementation in EFL classrooms.

2.3.1 Overview of the Learner-Centred Approach

The learner-centred approach is considered one of the most important developments in modern education. It shifts the focus from the teacher to the learner, emphasizing the active role of students in the learning process. According to Weimer (2002), learner-centred teaching focuses on what learners are learning and how they learn, rather than on the simple transmission of knowledge. In a similar vein, Brown (2007) defines this approach as a method that encourages learners to become actively involved in their own learning, promoting autonomy, participation, and responsibility.

By combining these perspectives, it can be understood that the learner-centred approach is not only about changing classroom activities, but also about transforming the roles of both

teachers and learners. In this approach, the teacher acts as a facilitator, while students are expected to participate, interact, and take responsibility for their learning.

Learner-centred teaching is an approach that focuses on what learners are learning and how they learn, rather than on the simple transmission of knowledge (Weimer, 2002). This approach emphasizes students' active engagement in the classroom and differs significantly from traditional teacher-centred instruction. It promotes collaboration, shared responsibility, and teamwork, transforming learners from passive recipients of information into active participants in the learning process (Bilimoria & Wheeler, 1995; Weimer, 2002). Moreover, teachers in learner-centred classrooms are expected to act as facilitators and guides rather than knowledge transmitters, supporting students while also evaluating their progress (Robertson, 2005).

2.3.2 Learners' Positive Perspectives

From a learner's perspective, the learner-centred approach is widely perceived as highly beneficial and engaging. Many students feel more motivated and involved in the learning process when they are treated as active participants rather than passive recipients of knowledge. In fact, this approach enhances learners' sense of value and respect within the classroom, which positively influences their attitude toward learning. Moreover, it promotes active engagement by encouraging students to participate in discussions, share ideas, and collaborate with their peers, thereby creating a more dynamic and interactive learning environment (Bilimoria & Wheeler, 1995).

In addition, the learner-centred approach plays a significant role in developing learners' critical thinking skills, as students are encouraged to analyze, evaluate, and apply knowledge

instead of relying on memorization. According to Weimer (2002), this active involvement helps learners achieve deeper understanding and makes learning more meaningful. Furthermore, the approach fosters autonomy by allowing students to take responsibility for their own learning, which enables them to better identify their strengths and weaknesses and become more independent learners. It also enhances communication and teamwork skills through collaborative activities, which are essential for both academic success and real-life situations.

As a result, learners generally perceive the learner-centred approach as more interesting, effective, and relevant to their needs, as it not only improves their academic performance but also prepares them to become active and responsible individuals in their educational journey.

While the learner-centred approach offers several advantages in terms of engagement, autonomy, and deeper learning, it is important to note that not all learners experience it in the same way. In fact, despite its positive impact on students' motivation and participation, some challenges may arise when learners are required to adapt to this approach

2.3.3 Learners' Negative Perspectives

Despite its many advantages, the learner-centred approach is not always perceived positively by all learners. Some students may initially feel confused or uncomfortable due to the reduced structure and increased responsibility placed on them. In fact, learners who are accustomed to traditional teacher-centred methods often struggle to adapt to this new approach, as it requires greater independence and active participation. As a result, this transition may create feelings of uncertainty or anxiety, especially when students are expected to manage their own learning without clear and direct guidance from the teacher (Brown, 2007).

Moreover, not all learners feel confident engaging in discussions or collaborative activities, which may limit their participation and reduce the effectiveness of the approach. In some cases, students may find classroom discussions difficult to follow or feel that important concepts are not clearly emphasized, leading to confusion or incomplete understanding. Furthermore, although the learner-centred approach promotes autonomy, some learners perceive the increased responsibility as challenging and even stressful, particularly when they are required to organize their work and meet deadlines independently. According to students' perceptions, this lack of structure can sometimes make learning less secure and more demanding.

In addition, some learners express mixed feelings about this approach, as they may appreciate its benefits while still preferring a certain level of teacher guidance. Consequently, many students suggest that a complete shift to a fully learner-centred model may not always be effective, and that a balanced approach combining both teacher-centred and learner-centred methods could better support their learning needs.

2.3.4 Overall Evaluation

Overall, learners' perceptions of the learner-centred approach reveal a balance between its strengths and limitations. On the one hand, it promotes active engagement, critical thinking, and learner autonomy, making the learning process more meaningful and effective. On the other hand, it may create challenges for students who are not accustomed to independent learning or who require more structure and guidance. Therefore, many researchers argue that the most effective teaching practice lies in combining learner-centred and teacher-centred approaches, in order to provide both flexibility and support. Such a balanced approach can better respond to

diverse learners' needs and enhance the overall quality of the learning experience (Weimer, 2002).

2.4 The Impact of Teaching Approaches on Learners' Understanding

Teaching approaches have a significant influence on how learners understand and process information in the classroom. According to constructivist theory, learning is not simply the transmission of information, but an active process in which learners build meaning based on prior knowledge and experiences (Bruner, 1966; Vygotsky, 1978). The way teaching is organized can affect whether students develop a surface understanding based on memorization or a deeper understanding based on analysis and application. For this reason, it is important to examine how both teacher-centred and learner-centred approaches affect learners' understanding in different ways.

2.4.1 Understanding in Teacher-Centred Approach

In teacher-centred classrooms, the teacher plays the dominant role in controlling the learning process and delivering knowledge. Students are mainly expected to listen, take notes, and reproduce information when required. This approach is often associated with traditional methods such as lecturing and direct instruction.

One of the main characteristics of this approach is that it promotes passive learning. Students receive information without actively engaging with it, which affects the depth of their understanding. According to Biggs and Tang (2011), this type of learning often leads to surface learning, where students focus on memorization rather than true comprehension.

In many cases, learners in teacher-centred environments study with the goal of passing exams rather than understanding concepts. As noted by Ramsden (2003), students in such

contexts tend to “reproduce knowledge rather than transform it,” which limits their ability to think critically or apply what they learn.

Moreover, this approach reduces opportunities for interaction and discussion, which are essential for developing deeper understanding. From a constructivist perspective, learning requires active participation, but in teacher-centred classrooms, students have limited chances to question or explore ideas (Vygotsky, 1978).

Another important criticism of this approach comes from Freire (1970), who describes it as the “banking model of education,” where the teacher deposits information into students, and learners simply receive it. He argues that this method prevents students from becoming active thinkers and reduces learning to memorization.

However, it is important to note that teacher-centred teaching is not entirely negative. It can be effective in providing clear explanations, especially when introducing new or complex topics. According to Brown (2007), structured instruction helps students build a basic foundation of knowledge, which can support further learning.

Despite these advantages, understanding developed through this approach is often limited in depth. Students may remember information in the short term, but they may struggle to apply it in new situations or think critically about it. Therefore, the impact of teacher-centred teaching on learners’ understanding is generally associated with surface-level learning rather than deep conceptual understanding.

In addition, several research studies have shown that teacher-centred instruction may limit students’ conceptual understanding compared to more active approaches. For example, a study by Scott Freeman et al. (2014) found that students in traditional lecture-based classes tend to perform worse in terms of understanding and problem-solving than those engaged in active

learning environments. This suggests that passive reception of knowledge is less effective in promoting deep understanding.

2.4.2 Understanding in Learner-Cantered Approach

In learner-cantered classrooms, students are actively involved in the learning process, and the teacher acts as a facilitator rather than the only source of knowledge. This approach is strongly supported by constructivist theories, which emphasize that learning happens when students actively build their own understanding through experience and interaction (Vygotsky, 1978).

One of the main advantages of learner-centred learning is that it promotes deep understanding. According to Biggs and Tang (2011), deep learning occurs when students try to understand ideas, relate them to prior knowledge, and apply them in different situations. This means that students are not just memorizing information, but actually making sense of it.

In addition, this approach increases student engagement, which is essential for effective learning. As stated by Weimer (2002), when students take responsibility for their learning, they become more motivated and more involved, which leads to better comprehension and long-term retention of knowledge.

Learner-cantered environments also encourage interaction and collaboration between students. Through discussions, group work, and problem-solving activities, learners are exposed to different perspectives, which helps them refine and deepen their understanding. This idea is supported by Vygotsky (1978), who argues that social interaction plays a key role in cognitive development.

Moreover, this approach helps develop higher-order thinking skills such as analysis, evaluation, and problem-solving. According to Brown (2007), active participation allows learners to use language and knowledge in meaningful ways, which strengthens both understanding and practical application.

Research evidence also supports the effectiveness of learner-centred approaches in improving understanding. For example, a study by Scott Freeman et al. (2014) showed that active learning significantly increases students' performance and conceptual understanding compared to traditional lecture-based methods. This indicates that when students are actively engaged, they are more likely to understand concepts deeply rather than memorize them.

Furthermore, Louis Deslauriers et al. (2011) found that students in active learning classrooms demonstrated higher levels of understanding and engagement, even when they felt that they were learning less. This suggests that learner-centred environments may be more cognitively demanding but ultimately more effective.

These findings confirm that learner-centred teaching not only improves students' engagement but also transforms learning from a passive process into an active and meaningful experience, leading to deeper and more lasting understanding.

2.4.3 Comparison of Teacher-Centred and Learner-Centred Approaches

The comparison between teacher-centred and learner-centred approaches reveals important differences in how learners develop understanding. Each approach influences the depth, quality, and application of knowledge in distinct ways.

Teacher-centred approaches are often effective in delivering structured and well-organized content. They allow teachers to control the pace of the lesson and ensure that key

information is clearly explained. According to Brown (2007), such structured instruction is useful for introducing new material and building foundational knowledge. However, this approach tends to position students as passive recipients, which limits their cognitive engagement and reduces opportunities for deeper understanding.

In contrast, learner-centred approaches promote active engagement and knowledge construction. Students participate in discussions, solve problems, and interact with both the teacher and their peers. According to Biggs and Tang (2011), deep understanding occurs when learners actively relate ideas and apply them, which is more likely to happen in learner-centred environments.

From a research perspective, studies have shown clear differences in learning outcomes between the two approaches. For example, Scott Freeman et al. (2014) found that students in active learning environments perform better and demonstrate higher levels of understanding compared to those in traditional lecture-based classrooms. This suggests that learner-centred approaches are more effective in promoting meaningful learning.

However, it is important to recognize that learner-centred approaches are not without challenges. As noted by Maryellen Weimer (2002), these methods require more time, careful planning, and student readiness. In some cases, students who are used to traditional instruction may initially struggle with active participation.

Therefore, the main difference between the two approaches lies in the level of student involvement and the depth of understanding achieved. Teacher-centred learning supports clarity and efficiency, while learner-centred learning supports critical thinking and deep understanding. As a result, many researchers argue that relying on only one approach may not be sufficient for effective learning.

This comparison shows that while teacher-centred approaches focus on knowledge transmission, learner-centred approaches focus on knowledge construction, making the latter more effective in developing higher-order thinking skills.

2.4 Overall Impact on Learners' Understanding

Overall, teaching approaches have a significant impact on the quality and depth of learners' understanding. The previous discussion has shown that teacher-centred and learner-centred approaches influence not only how students receive information, but also how they process, retain, and apply it.

Teacher-centred approaches are effective in providing structured knowledge and clear explanations, which are essential for building a solid foundation. However, as discussed earlier, this approach often leads to surface learning, where students focus on memorization rather than meaningful understanding (Biggs & Tang, 2011).

On the other hand, learner-centred approaches promote active engagement, critical thinking, and deeper cognitive processing. Students are encouraged to construct their own knowledge, which leads to better retention and the ability to transfer learning to new contexts (Weimer, 2002). This aligns with constructivist theory, which suggests that meaningful learning occurs through active participation and interaction (Vygotsky, 1978).

Research findings also support the importance of active learning in improving understanding. For instance, Scott Freeman et al. (2014) demonstrated that students in active learning environments achieve higher academic performance and deeper conceptual understanding than those in traditional lecture-based settings.

Despite these differences, many scholars argue that no single approach is sufficient on its own. According to John Biggs and Tang (2011), effective teaching requires aligning teaching methods with learning outcomes, which often involves combining different strategies.

Therefore, the most effective approach is not choosing between teacher-centred and learner-centred methods, but rather integrating both. A balanced approach allows teachers to provide clear guidance while also encouraging students to actively engage with the content. This combination supports both knowledge acquisition and deep understanding.

In this sense, effective teaching is not defined by a single method, but by the ability to create learning environments where students both understand and actively construct knowledge.

2.5.1 The Impact of Teaching Approaches on Learners' Participation

Teaching approaches play a significant role in shaping learners' participation and classroom interaction. Different approaches influence the extent to which students engage, communicate, and contribute during the learning process. This section discusses how teacher-centred and learner-centred approaches affect learners' participation in EFL classrooms.

2.5.1 Participation in Teacher-Centred Approach

In teacher-centred classrooms, participation is generally limited because the teacher controls most of the learning process. The teacher speaks, explains, and directs the lesson, while students mainly listen and take notes.

This type of environment often leads to passive participation, where students are physically present but not actively engaged in the learning process. According to Brown (2007), traditional teaching methods tend to reduce opportunities for student interaction, as the focus is mainly on content delivery rather than student involvement.

In such classrooms, participation is usually restricted to answering questions when the teacher asks. Students rarely initiate discussion or express their ideas freely. As a result, many learners may feel less motivated to participate, especially if they are afraid of making mistakes or being judged.

From a theoretical perspective, this approach can limit social interaction, which is an important factor in learning. According to Vygotsky (1978), learning develops through interaction and communication. Therefore, when interaction is limited, participation also decreases.

Moreover, Freire (1970) criticizes this type of classroom as the “banking model of education,” where students are seen as passive receivers. In such conditions, participation becomes minimal, and students are not encouraged to take an active role in their learning.

Research also confirms that teacher-centred instruction reduces student participation. For example, a study by Michael Prince (2004) found that traditional lecturing methods result in lower levels of student engagement and interaction compared to active learning approaches. This suggests that when students are not actively involved, their participation naturally decreases.

This indicates that teacher-centred classrooms may create a learning environment where students are present but not truly participating, which can negatively affect their engagement and motivation.

2.5.2 Participation in Learner-Centred Approach

In learner-centred classrooms, participation is considered a central element of the learning process. Unlike teacher-centred approaches, students are actively involved in different classroom activities such as discussions, group work, problem-solving, and presentations.

This approach creates an interactive learning environment where students are encouraged to express their ideas, ask questions, and collaborate with others. According to Weimer (2002), learner-centred teaching shifts the focus from teaching to learning, which increases student responsibility and participation.

One of the key strengths of this approach is that it promotes active engagement. When students participate actively, they become more motivated and interested in the lesson. As noted by Brown (2007), meaningful learning takes place when learners are involved in using language and interacting with content rather than just receiving information.

In addition, participation in learner-centred classrooms is not limited to answering questions. Students take part in discussions, share opinions, and work together, which helps them develop communication and social skills. This idea is supported by Vygotsky (1978), who emphasizes that learning is a social process that develops through interaction.

Moreover, learner-centred approaches create a safe environment where students feel more comfortable participating. They are less afraid of making mistakes because the focus is on learning rather than evaluation. This increases their confidence and encourages them to take part more actively.

Research strongly supports the positive impact of learner-centred teaching on participation. For example, a study by Michael Prince (2004) shows that active learning strategies significantly increase student engagement and classroom participation compared to traditional lecture-based methods.

Similarly, Scott Freeman et al. (2014) found that students in active learning environments participate more and are more engaged in classroom activities, which improves both their performance and their learning experience.

These findings demonstrate that learner-centred approaches transform students from passive listeners into active participants, making participation a key factor in effective learning.

2.5.3 Comparison of Teacher-Centred and Learner-Centred Approaches in Terms of Participation

The comparison between teacher-centred and learner-centred approaches highlights significant differences in the level and nature of learners' participation.

In teacher-centred classrooms, participation is generally limited and controlled by the teacher. Students mainly respond to questions when asked, and interaction is often one-directional, from teacher to students. According to Brown (2007), this type of environment reduces opportunities for meaningful interaction, which leads to low levels of engagement.

In contrast, learner-centred classrooms promote active and continuous participation. Students are encouraged to interact not only with the teacher but also with their peers through discussions, group work, and collaborative tasks. As noted by Weimer (2002), participation becomes a shared responsibility, where students play an essential role in the learning process.

From a research perspective, clear differences can be observed in participation levels. For example, Michael Prince (2004) found that active learning environments significantly increase student participation compared to traditional lectures. This shows that when students are given opportunities to engage, their level of participation improves.

However, it is important to note that teacher-centred approaches may still allow some form of participation, especially in the form of answering questions or short interactions. Yet,

this participation remains limited and often does not involve deeper engagement or collaboration.

On the other hand, learner-centred approaches encourage more meaningful participation, where students actively contribute, share ideas, and take part in the learning process. This type of participation is more effective because it involves thinking, interaction, and communication.

This comparison shows that the main difference is not only in the quantity of participation, but also in its quality, as learner-centred approaches promote more meaningful and interactive participation.

2.5.4 Overall Impact of Teaching Approaches on Learners' Participation

Overall, teaching approaches play a crucial role in shaping the level and quality of learners' participation in the classroom. The previous sections have shown that teacher-centred and learner-centred approaches create very different learning environments, which directly affect how students engage and interact.

Teacher-centred approaches tend to limit participation, as the teacher controls most of the classroom activities. Students often take a passive role, and their participation is usually restricted to answering questions when required. As discussed earlier, this type of environment reduces interaction and may negatively affect students' motivation and engagement (Brown, 2007).

In contrast, learner-centred approaches promote active participation by involving students in meaningful learning activities. Learners are encouraged to express their ideas, collaborate with peers, and take responsibility for their learning. According to Weimer (2002),

increasing student involvement leads to higher levels of engagement and more effective learning.

Research findings also support the importance of active participation in improving learning outcomes. For example, Michael Prince (2004) emphasizes that active learning strategies increase both student participation and engagement. Similarly, Scott Freeman et al. (2014) demonstrate that students in interactive classrooms are more involved and achieve better academic results.

However, it is important to recognize that participation is not only about quantity, but also about quality. Meaningful participation involves interaction, discussion, and critical thinking, which are more likely to occur in learner-centred environments.

Therefore, many researchers suggest that effective teaching should combine both approaches. While teacher-centred methods can provide structure and clarity, learner-centred methods enhance participation and engagement. A balanced approach allows teachers to create a classroom environment where students are both guided and actively involved.

In this way, effective teaching is achieved not by limiting participation, but by creating opportunities for students to actively engage, interact, and contribute to their own learning process.

2.4 Review of Related Studies

This section presents some previous studies related to teaching approaches and their impact on learners' understanding and participation.

Many researchers have studied the role of learner-centred approaches in improving learning. For example, a study conducted by Scott Freeman et al. (2014) aimed to examine the effect of active learning on students' performance. The study used a meta-analysis of different research works. The results showed that active learning helps students understand better and reduces failure compared to traditional teaching.

Another study by Michael Prince (2004) focused on active learning in higher education. The study was based on reviewing previous research. It found that students participate more and are more engaged when active learning methods are used.

In addition, Louis Deslauriers et al. (2011) compared traditional lectures with interactive teaching. The results indicated that students in active classrooms had better understanding and were more engaged, even if they did not always feel that they learned more.

On the other hand, traditional teacher-centred approaches may have some limitations. According to Prince (2004), lecture-based teaching often leads to less interaction and lower student participation.

From these studies, it can be noticed that learner-centred approaches seem to be more effective in improving both understanding and participation. However, teacher-centred methods are still used in many classrooms, especially for explaining basic knowledge.

Conclusion

this chapter has provided a comprehensive exploration of learners' perspectives on teaching approaches within EFL contexts, specifically focusing on the dynamics between teacher-centered and learner-centered methods. The discussion began by examining the nature of learners' perceptions, highlighting how their classroom experiences shape their motivation and engagement. By contrasting both approaches, it became evident that while teacher-centered methods emphasize structured content delivery and teacher control, learner-centered approaches prioritize student autonomy and active involvement.

Furthermore, the investigation into the impact of these pedagogical styles revealed a significant correlation between the teaching method and learning outcomes. While traditional methods often lead to surface learning and restricted interaction, learner-centered practices are more likely to foster deeper understanding and critical thinking. Importantly, the review of related studies provided empirical evidence that reinforces these theoretical assumptions, demonstrating that interactive environments significantly enhance student participation.

Overall, the literature suggests that teaching approaches have a direct and profound impact on the academic journey. However, rather than relying exclusively on one model, the findings point toward the necessity of a balanced integration. Such a balance allows educators to provide the necessary guidance while fostering an environment that encourages participation. These theoretical insights lay the groundwork for the next chapter, which will move from theoretical review to the practical investigation of these variables in a real classroom setting

PART TWO

PRACTICAL PART

Introduction

This chapter represents the practical aspect of this dissertation; the central aim is to investigate the perception of EFL learners towards the balance of teacher-centered and learner-centered instruction in the EFL classroom. The chapter has been divided into three parts. Firstly, a description of the research design and methodology used in the study; Secondly, the research population and research instrument were presented; Thirdly, the results gained from the student questionnaire have been analyzed and interpreted step by step.

The current study was inspired from a central issue within current EFL instruction, i.e. The dilemma of using teacher-centered instruction where the knowledge is transmitted directly from the teacher, and learner-centered approach where the learners have control over the learning process, and are given ample opportunity for interactions. However, this study does not propose an argument for the superiority of the one over the other, but rather, endeavors to discover how the EFL learners in the University of Ghardaïa, perceive and experience teacher-centered and learner-centered approach, and how to strike a balance between the two.

In order to shed light on the subject under study, a questionnaire was designed and distributed to 35 EFL learners. The question was based on closed-ended questions of two types (multiple choice and Likert scale) and one open-ended question. The data gained from the research questionnaire were interpreted both quantitatively and qualitatively in order to achieve a holistic view.

The result which I have presented in this chapter will supplement the discussion of the theories conducted in the preceding chapters, as well as the recommendation provided at the conclusion of this dissertation.

3.1. Research Design

This is descriptive research which utilizes a combination of quantitative and qualitative research methodologies. The mixed methods approach was chosen since it not only permits the researcher to measure and obtain statistical data representing the full spectrum of students' attitudes but also allows one to explore the extent to which these attitudes are held. In addition to these aspects, quantitative research gives a breadth perspective and qualitative research, the depth perspective of student attitudes. The quantitative element of the study has been approached through multiple choice and 5-point Likert scale questionnaires giving numerical data that is easy to present in terms of frequency tables and percentages. In this way, it becomes easier to make comparisons in order to derive dominant patterns and preferences. The qualitative element on the other hand is achieved through the open-ended question (Q11) in which students are asked what they think the teacher should do in order to ensure the correct balance of teacher and student-centered instruction. Qualitative response data were analyzed using thematic approach so as to arrive at recurring patterns in student responses. It has been explained that in mixed-method designs, findings derived from a mixed-methods approach are more complete and valid than from a single research method (Creswell, 2014). They also highlight that combined quantitative and qualitative designs would produce a fuller understanding of research problems than any of the two methods independently, [mixed methods design is to use the findings of one method to help interpret or explain the findings from the other method (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2010). This combined methodology was suitable for this research because the questions had to do with not just what students prefer but also why they prefer it and how they thought their ideal classroom should look.

3.2. Research Population and Sample

The research was carried out within the English Department of the University of Ghardaia (Faculty of Letters and Languages) where English is learnt and taught as a foreign

language. The sample of students. The sample selected for this study consists of EFL learners attending the First-Year Master (M1) level in the department. Thus, 35 students took part in the research by answering the questionnaire during the academic year 2025 2026. This specific level is picked up the students from the First-Year Master (M1) level because of their academic experience and learning background. The questionnaire was administered to all available students at this level. Out of the distributed copies, thirty-five (35) completed questionnaires were returned, all of which were found to be valid and were subsequently included in the final data analysis.

3.3. Data Collection

Data collection is a fundamental stage in the research process, as it allows the researcher to gather the necessary information to answer the research questions and achieve the objectives of the study. In this research, the students' questionnaire was used as the main instrument for collecting data. Therefore, it is important to provide a clear description of the questionnaire, including its structure, content, and purpose.

3.3.1. Description of the Students' Questionnaire

A Questionnaire entitled 'Student Questionnaire: Teaching Approaches in EFL' was designed and administered as the primary data collection instrument for this study. The questionnaire was developed specifically to investigate EFL students' preferences, perceptions, and experiences regarding teacher-centered and learner-centered instruction in their classrooms.

The questionnaire comprised eleven (11) items organized into five thematic sections, as described below:

Section One: Background Information

This section collects basic demographic and academic information about the participants:

- Question 1 identifies the students' current level of study (M1).
- Question 2 determines the gender of the respondents (Male or Female).
- Question 3 investigates students' self-reported general level of participation in class (High, Moderate, or Low).

Section Two: Preferences and Justifications

- Question 4 asks students to identify the learning environment in which they better understand complex lessons (Teacher-Centered or Learner-Centered), with a written justification.
- Question 5 investigates when students feel more motivated to participate — either when the teacher leads the discussion or when working in small groups or pairs — with a written justification.

Section Three: Perspectives on the Balance of teacher centered and learner centered approaches

- Question 6 measures students' level of agreement on whether teachers should combine lecturing and student activities in every session, using a five-point Likert scale.
- Question 7 asks how a balanced approach affects their learning, offering three options.
- Question 8 asks students to indicate their ideal time distribution in a 90-minute session between teacher talk and student activities.

Section Four: Barriers to Students' Participation and Understanding

- Question 9 identifies the main factor that hinders students' understanding when instruction is predominantly teacher-led.
- Question 10 investigates the main barrier that prevents students from participating actively in class.

Section Five: Open Suggestions

- Question 11 is an open-ended item that invites students to describe, in their own words, how a teacher can effectively balance lecturing and student activities.

3.4. Data Analysis

The following section presents the analysis and interpretation of the data collected through the student questionnaire. Each item is discussed in relation to the relevant literature and the research questions. Frequency tables and percentages are used to present the quantitative results, and a figure (chart) accompanies each table to facilitate visual interpretation of the data.

3.4.1 Questionnaire Results Analysis

The analysis of questionnaire results is an essential step in interpreting the data collected from participants and understanding their perceptions and opinions regarding the research topic. This section presents and analyzes the responses obtained through the questionnaire in order to provide meaningful insights related to the objectives of the study.

Section One: Background Information

Background information is essential in research as it helps provide a clear understanding of the participants' academic profile and context. This section presents general information

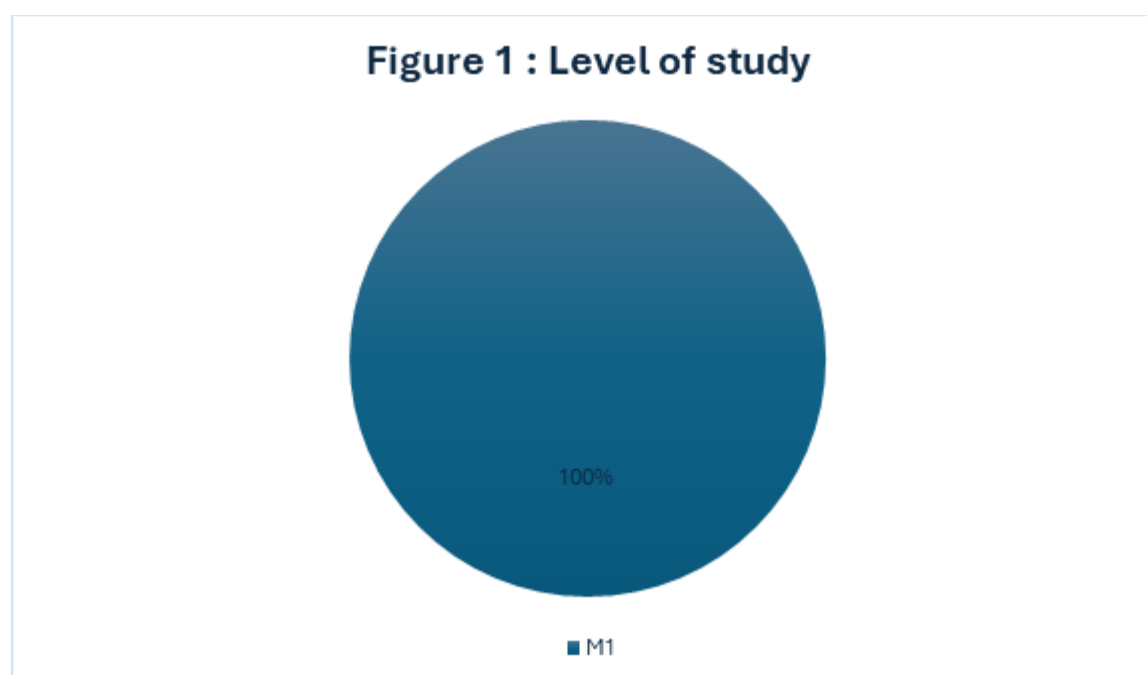
about the respondents, starting with their level of study, in order to better interpret and analyze the collected data.

Question 01: Level of Study

This question was designed to identify the academic level of the participants in order to situate their responses within an appropriate academic context.

Table 1: Level of Study

Options	Frequency	Percentage
M1	35	100%
Total	35	100%



As can be seen in Table 1 and Figure 1, the entire sample (100%, n=35) are in M1 level, this shows that the sample is made up of learners at high levels who have had lots of EFL classes

which might bring more insightful answers with more reflection and critical awareness. Mostly M1 students would know how to look back and reflect on the pedagogy they have experienced.

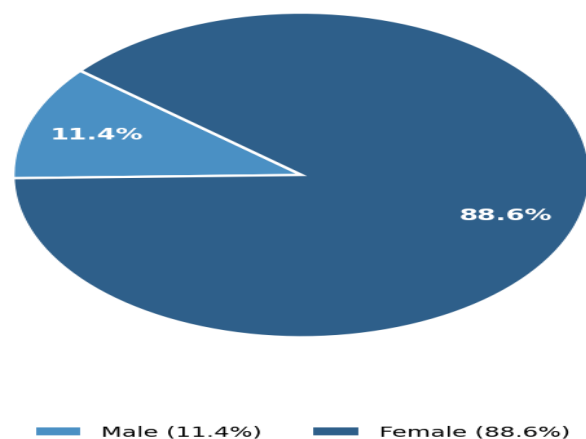
Question 02: Gender

This question aims to identify the gender distribution among the participants.

Table 2: Gender Distribution

Options	Frequency	Percentage
Male	4	11.4%
Female	31	88.6%
Total	35	100%

Figure 2: Gender Distribution



The composition of the sample shown in Table 2 and Figure 2. indicated a significant majority of female students making up 88.6% (n=31) of the total participants while males made up only 11.4% (n=4). This composition is similar to the widely reported trend within English departments in Algeria where female students make up the larger portion of enrolments. While this gender inequality restricts how broadly the conclusions of the study can be applied across

genders, it is remains highly reflective of the actual student demographics and the institutional reality of the population of the English department at the University of Ghardaïa.

Question 03: General Level of Participation in Class

This question investigates students' self-reported general level of participation during classroom sessions.

Table 3: General Level of Participation in Class

Options	Frequency	Percentage
High	4	11.4%
Moderate	20	57.1%
Low	11	31.4%
Total	35	100%

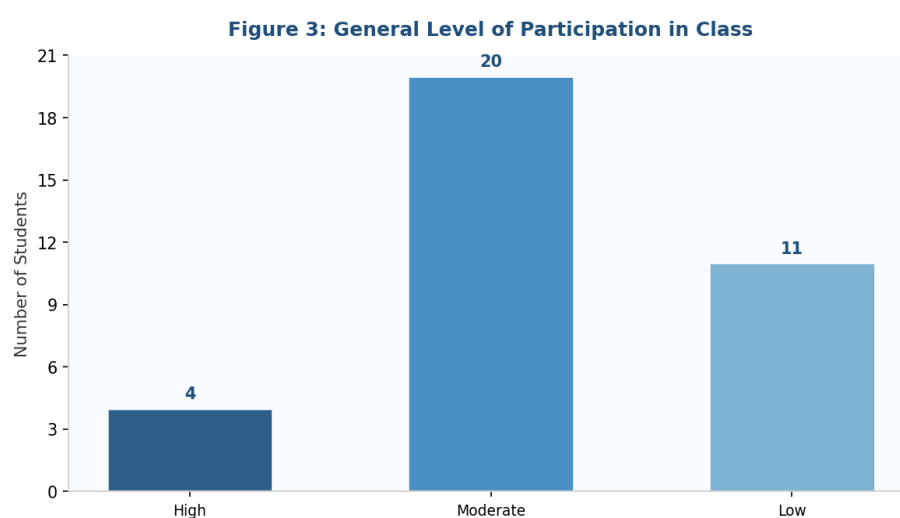


Table 3 and Figure 3 shows that the number of students who perceived their level of participation as medium was highest with 57.1% (n=20), followed by students who thought that their level of participation was low with 31.4% (n=11). Students who thought their level of participation was high were the fewest with 11.4% (n=4). This data reveals that the majority of students participated either at a low level or at a medium level in their EFL classes. The low participation level can be considered as a result of a teacher-centered classroom, where opportunities for students' oral participation are still limited. It is consistent with research on learner participation, where passive classroom settings can affect motivation and oral production of students (Richards & Rodgers, 2014).

Section Two: Preferences and Justifications

The suitability of a teaching methodology is frequently linked to lesson difficulty. In EFL environments, students' choices fluctuate between a need for direct teacher intervention during intricate lessons and a preference for autonomous, interactive learning. This section explores which classroom dynamics learners perceive as most effective for mastering sophisticated linguistic tasks."

Question 04: Better Learning Environment for Complex Lessons

This question asks students to identify the type of learning environment in which they feel they better understand complex lessons.

Table 4: Preferred Learning Environment for Complex Lessons

Options	Frequency	Percentage
Teacher-Centered	16	45.7%
Learner-Centered	19	54.3%
Total	35	100%

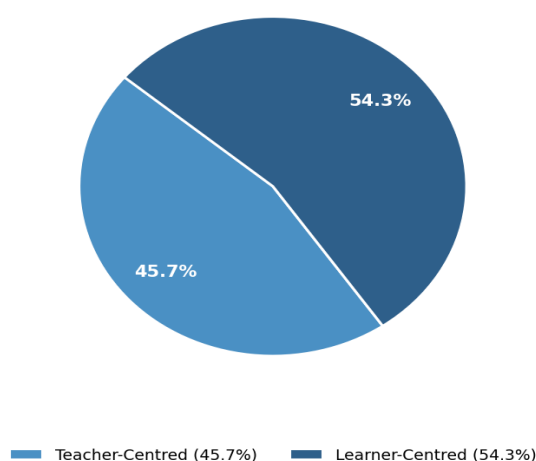
Figure 4: Better Learning Environment for Complex Lessons

Table 4 and Figure 4 shows that only 54.3% (n=19) of the students feel that they better comprehend complex material in a learner centered context where they learn by completing tasks and activities. The other 45.7% (n=16) prefer a teacher centered context where the teacher provides the material to the students. This is not a large majority however the findings suggest that there is still an inclination toward student centered contexts when comprehending lessons, at this level of study. This finding is expected and is strongly in line with constructivist theory whereby meaningful learning takes place when students actively construct their knowledge, not

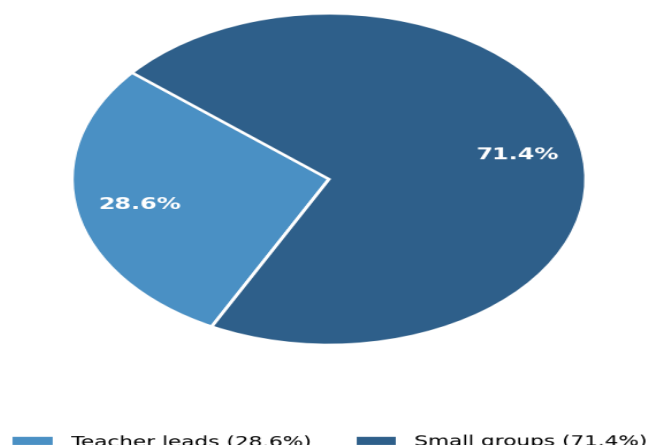
when knowledge is delivered (Vygotsky, 1978). The reasons for selecting this environment in written response by the students who felt that learning best took place in this type of context revolved around aspects such as discovery, group work, and information processing and active engagement with material. Conversely students who preferred the teacher-centred style stated that they relied on direct instruction from the teacher to best learn the content in particular complex and abstract contexts.

Question 05: Source of Motivation to Participate

This question investigates the classroom condition under which students feel more motivated to participate.

Table 5: Source of Motivation to Participate

Options	Frequency	Percentage
Teacher leads the discussion	10	28.6%
Work in small groups or pairs	25	71.4%
Total	35	100%

Figure 5: Source of Motivation to Participate

As observed in table 5 and figure 5, a great proportion of learners (71.4%, n=25) feel more motivated to take part in an activity when they can work in pairs or groups with their peers than the 28.6% (n=10) learners that prefer to work in a context where the teacher initiates the discussion and asks direct questions. It is concluded that group-based, peer-collaboration activity can foster greater learner participation compared to a teacher-initiated conversation. Several learners who chose group work wrote their reason as: working in groups makes the lessons less formal, learners will not feel that much shy speaking in front of the whole class, learners will feel more ease to express their ideas. It's in conformity to studies concerning communication apprehension, as it's been found out that low-anxiety, peer-focused environments can greatly reduce learners' inhibiting factors and thus reduce their communication barriers (MacIntyre et al.1998).

Section Three: Perspectives on the Balance

A balance between lecturing and student activities is important in EFL classrooms. This section explores learners' opinions about combining both approaches to improve learning and participation.

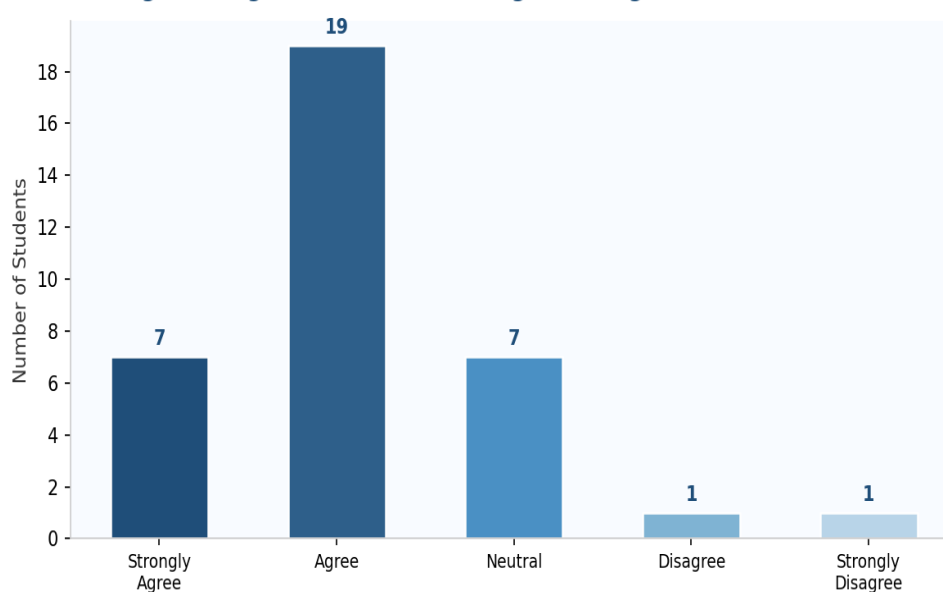
Question 06: Agreement on Combining Lecturing and Student Activities

This question measures students' level of agreement with the proposition that a teacher should combine both lecturing and student activities in every session, using a five-point Likert scale.

Table 6: Agreement on Combining Lecturing and Student Activities

Options	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Agree	7	20.0%
Agree	19	54.3%
Neutral	7	20.0%
Disagree	1	2.9%
Strongly Disagree	1	2.9%
Total	35	100%

Figure 6: Agreement on Combining Lecturing and Student Activities



From the figures above in Table 6 and Figure 6, the overwhelming majority of participants strongly agreed that the combination of the two strategies should be adopted, with 54.3% (n=19) agreement and 20.0% (n=7) strongly agreement totalling 74.3% agreement rate. 20.0% (n=7) chose the neutral answer and 2.9% (n=1) disagreed and 2.9% (n=1) strongly disagreed. These results show that it is believed that it is not appropriate to use a purely teacher-centred or a purely learner-centred method, but the combination of the two strategies is needed, which has been argued by Harmer (2007) and others.

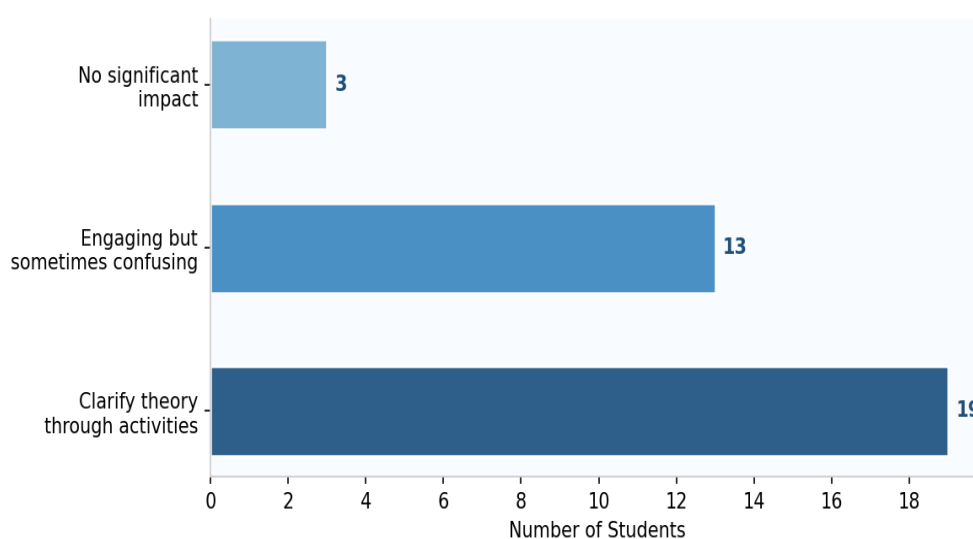
Question 07: Effect of Balanced Approach on Learning

This question explores how students perceive the effect of a balanced approach on their learning process.

Table 7: Effect of Balanced Approach on Learning

Options	Frequency	Percentage
It helps clarify theory and practice through activities	19	54.3%
It makes lessons engaging but sometimes confusing	13	37.1%
It has no significant impact compared to one method	3	8.6%
Total	35	100%

Figure 7: Effect of Balanced Approach on Learning



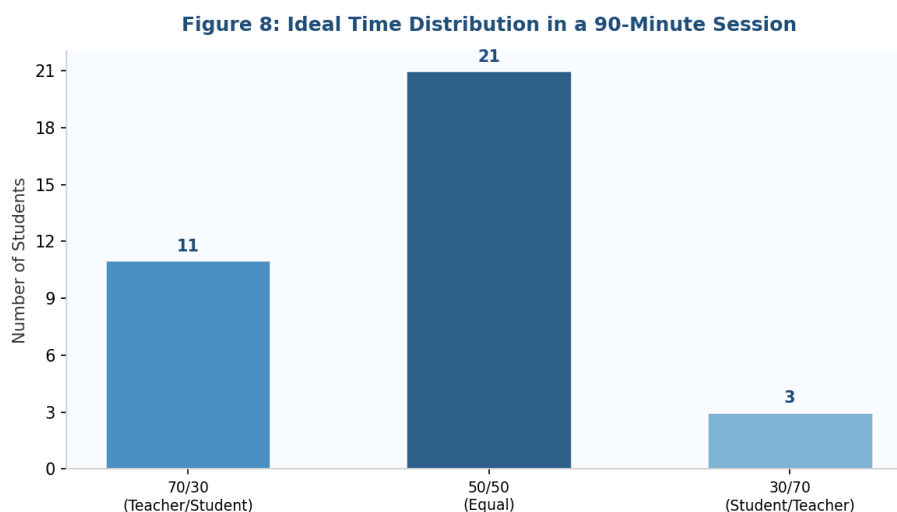
As shown by table 7 and figure 7, more than half of the participants (54.3%, $n=19$) find that it is useful for theory to be clear with the teacher and practice to be in activity as it's a balanced approach. It was admitted by a considerable percentage (37.1%, $n=13$) that this approach may have led to confusion in certain situations, as it's more motivating but it can also confuse participants if teacher and students are not clearly distinct. 8.6% ($n=3$) felt this type of lesson doesn't help. In conclusion it appears to confirm that the balanced approach is a successful method in clarifying the theory and increasing the learner's interest when applied properly.

Question 08: Ideal Time Distribution in a 90-Minute Session

This question asks students to indicate their preferred division of time between teacher talk and student activities within a standard 90-minute EFL session.

Table 8: Ideal Time Distribution in a 90-Minute Session

Options	Frequency	Percentage
70% Teacher talk / 30% Student activities	11	31.4%
50% Teacher talk / 50% Student activities	21	60.0%
30% Teacher talk / 70% Student activities	3	8.6%
Total	35	100%



It can be noted from Table 8 and Figure 8 that an equal amount of time distribution is still favoured by 60% (n=21) of the respondents with 50/50% split. This option received the greatest number of responses. The option of 70% teacher talk, 30% students' activities received 31.4% (n=11) responses with many more students in the teacher speaking mode and finally 30% teacher talk, 70% students' activities which represents a learning centered approach receives only 8.6% (n=3) response. EFL learners appear to want teachers talking to them but not exclusively and also want some interactive tasks included. This approach appears to embrace the idea of the balanced approach proposed by Harmer (2007) and Richards (2006).

Section Four: Barriers to Participation and Understanding

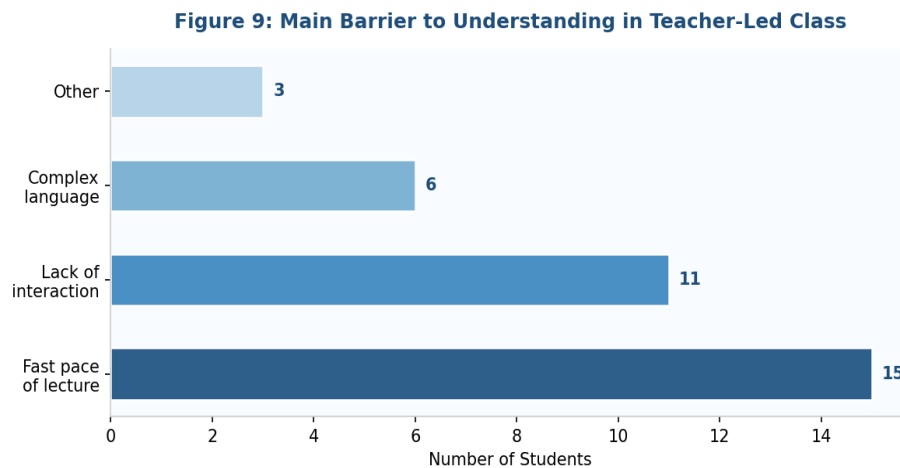
Understanding and participation in English as a Foreign Language classroom can be influenced by several obstacles related to teaching methods, classroom atmosphere, and learners' individual differences. This section aims to identify the main barriers that prevent learners from fully understanding lessons and actively participating in teacher-led classrooms.

Question 09: Main Barrier to Understanding in Teacher-Led Class

This question identifies the primary factor that hinders students' understanding when instruction is predominantly teacher-led.

Table 9: Main Barrier to Understanding in a Teacher-Led Class

Options	Frequency	Percentage
Fast pace of lecture	15	42.9%
Lack of interaction	11	31.4%
Complex language	6	17.1%
Other	3	8.6%
Total	35	100%



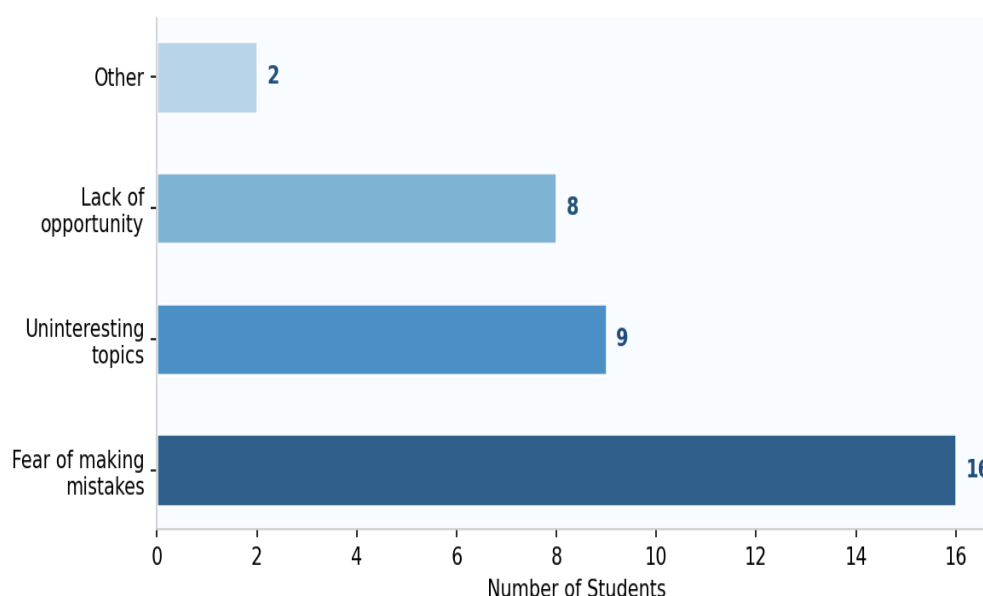
It can be seen from Table 9 and Figure 9 that the main barrier to the learning of lessons in teacher-directed classes is speed of lecture with 42.9% (n=15) respondents identifying this as the major issue. This highlights a difference in teaching style and learning rate, whereby teacher-directed lessons can have too quick a pace and the students are unable to take in the new knowledge quickly enough. Lack of interaction was the second most frequent barrier with 31.4% (n=11) of students identified this as a barrier. This is likely because students find it difficult to clarify doubts when teaching is one-way. 17.1% (n=6) of students found complex language and 8.6% (n=3) stated other barriers. Together, these responses confirm the difficulties presented by teacher-directed learning in an interactive environment.

Question 10: Main Barrier to Participation in Class

This question investigates the primary factor that prevents students from participating actively in class discussions and activities.

Table 10: Main Barrier to Participation in Class

Options	Frequency	Percentage
Fear of making mistakes	16	45.7%
Uninteresting topics	9	25.7%
Lack of opportunity	8	22.9%
Other	2	5.7%
Total	35	100%

Figure 10: Main Barrier to Participation in Class

From Table 10 and Figure 10, fear of making mistakes was the most frequently stated barrier to participation, and it was stated by 45.7% (n=16) of the students, representing almost half of the participants in this study. This demonstrates that communication apprehension and affective factors are significant obstacles to learner involvement. Another identified barrier, uninteresting topics, was stated by 25.7% (n=9) of the participants and this suggests that the relevance of the topics taught is an important factor motivating student participation. Students

also mentioned a lack of opportunities (22.9%, n=8) and this may suggest that in some classroom environments there is little opportunity for the students to express themselves. Other barriers were reported by 5.7% (n=2) of the participants. These findings are congruent with the large amount of research into FL anxiety (Horwitz et al, 1986) where fear of negative evaluation and correction is found to be a major inhibitor of participation.

Section Five: Open Suggestions

In addition to close-ended questions, open-ended questions provide participants with the opportunity to express their personal opinions, suggestions, and experiences in greater detail. This section aims to gather learners' open suggestions regarding effective teaching practices and the balance between lecturing and student-centered activities in English as a Foreign Language classroom.

Question 11: How Can a Teacher Balance Lecturing and Student Activities?

This open-ended question invited students to share their own perspectives and suggestions on how teachers can effectively balance lecture-based instruction with student-centered activities. The 35 responses were grouped thematically into four main categories, as presented in Table 11.

Table 11: Thematic Analysis of Open-Ended Suggestions (Q11)

Theme	Key Student Ideas	Frequency
Time Management & Structure	Explain briefly then give activities; use 50/50 timing; plan sessions	12
Explanation First, Then Activities	Deliver lecture clearly first, then push learners to group tasks	10
Interactive & Active Methods	Integrate discussion, group work, and activities alongside lecture	8
Other / No Response	Good time manipulation; homework beforehand; presentation of cards	5

From the thematic analysis of free-form responses, time management/session structure is the most frequently cited response, 12 students stressed the importance of assigning clear time to teacher-led explanation and student activity (such as 50/50 model or forward planning); 10 students preferred a 'lecture first, activities second' style of lesson (with a clearly explained instruction of the lesson first), and 8 students prefer a more interactive and active teaching style integrated throughout the lesson. 5 students suggested points that do not fit in to the above themes, such as homework before lesson, card-presentations and others, or simply did not respond to this question. This result confirms the result from the quantitative section; students prefer having both well-structured teacher explanation and activity-based learning, and want these two factors to be implemented with clarity, organization and good time-management.

3.5 Discussion of the Findings

This analysis of questionnaire results is useful in understanding how EFL learners at the University of Ghardaia perceive teacher-centered and learner-centered classrooms. Across the

responses to several questions, a theme of favourability for a blended learning environment (structured teacher explanation mixed with learner-centered tasks) becomes clear. In terms of participation, the results indicating that most students characterized their classroom engagement as either moderate or low (Q3), likely due to the teacher-centered nature of their academic experiences at this level, and the fact that the same group reported feeling more motivation in small-group settings (71.4%, Q5) and reported fear of making mistakes as their biggest obstacle to participation (45.7%, Q10), may be evidence of the strong influence of affective factors on student motivation, as well as classroom organization (MacIntyre et al. 1998; Horwitz et al. 1986). Regarding classroom approach, though a narrow majority agreed that learner-centered classrooms would make it easier for them to understand complex concepts (54.3%, Q4), nearly as many (45.7%) prefer a teacher-centered setting, thus providing evidence to the argument that purely teacher- or learner-centered instruction is not enough in EFL classrooms. The students' high agreement (74.3%, Q6) with the idea that teachers should use a mix of lecturing and performing activities, along with the agreement that a 50-50 balance in time would be appropriate (60.0%, Q8), demonstrates a preference for moderation rather than an extreme on either end of the pedagogical spectrum. Students agreed (54.3%, Q7) that combining both methods aids in clarifying theoretical concepts while allowing for an application of new information. The greatest obstacles of fast-paced lecturing (42.9%, Q9) and the fear of making mistakes (45.7%, Q10) must be dealt with by modifying speed, ensuring a psychologically safe atmosphere, and providing activities that challenge without provoking fear of shame. The open-ended responses confirm that students are looking for planned lessons with time allocated for both instruction and meaningful interaction.

Conclusion

This chapter provided a clear illustration of the research methodology as well as a detailed report and discussion of the data collected from student questionnaires from thirty-five EFL students at the University of Ghardaïa. Students have relatively well-thought-out opinions concerning teacher-centered and learner-centered classrooms; rather than choosing to Favor only one, they prefer a judiciously balanced mixture of the two.

Specifically, most students appear to only participate at a medium level in class; only a majority preferred learner-centered instruction when complex material was being discussed; and overwhelmingly, all supported the combination of lecturing with interactive activities each time. Students identified high lecturing speed, a lack of interactivity, and a fear of committing error as major obstacles to both comprehension and participation in the EFL classroom, therefore suggestions are needed in order to increase interactivity and inclusivity in the EFL classroom. Data from the qualitative open-ended question supports the previous quantitative findings and illustrates student suggestions in regard to combining teacher-centered and learner-centered instruction in the classroom.

The student's response is more fully discussed and interpreted within the overall theoretical framework of the study in the next chapter.

General Conclusion

General Conclusion

In the realm of English as a Foreign Language (EFL), the discussion surrounding teacher-centered versus learner-centered instruction remains a significant topic. This study aimed to explore the views of First-Year Master (M1) students at the University of Ghardaïa regarding the equilibrium between these two teaching approaches and their impact on student engagement and comprehension.

The study raised the following research questions:

RQ1: How do EFL university students perceive the integration of learner-centered and teacher-centered teaching approaches in their classrooms? This question seeks to understand the students' attitudes and whether they see the combination of both methods as beneficial, or if they have a preference for one over the other.

RQ2: To what extent does a balanced teaching approach influence students' understanding of complex EFL lessons? This question focuses on the cognitive side of learning. It aims to find out if providing teacher-led structure (scaffolding) followed by learner-centered tasks leads to better comprehension of difficult academic skills.

RQ3: How does the synergy between teacher guidance and learner autonomy affect the level of classroom participation among EFL students? This question examines the behavioral aspect of the classroom. It explores whether students feel more motivated and confident to participate when the teacher acts as a facilitator who balances control and freedom.

RQ4: What are the primary challenges students face when there is an imbalance between teacher-centered and learner-centered instruction? This sub-question helps to identify if "too much" of one approach (e.g., too much lecturing or too much group work without guidance) creates obstacles for students' progress.

General conclusion

Based on these questions, the following hypotheses were formulated:

It is hypothesized that a balanced use of learner-centered and teacher-centered approaches positively affects students' understanding of EFL lessons. This suggestion is based on the idea that while teacher-led instruction provides the necessary clarity for complex language skills, the addition of learner-centered activities allows students to process and internalize that information more effectively.

It is further hypothesized that a balanced teaching approach increases students' classroom participation. This implies that when an instructor combines structured guidance with opportunities for active involvement, students feel more motivated and confident to engage in tasks and communicative activities.

Finally, it is hypothesized that students will value teacher support alongside interactive activities that allow them to use the language meaningfully. This balance is expected to bridge the gap between passive reception of knowledge and active language production.

The dissertation consisted of three core chapters. The first chapter established the theoretical background, examining the fundamentals of both instructional models and the necessity of striking a balance. The third chapter represented the practical part of the study, as it described the research methodology—emphasizing a mixed-methods approach involving a questionnaire administered to 35 M1 students—and followed by the presentation, analysis, and discussion of the result

The study revealed that an appropriate balance between teacher-centered and learner-centered methods is crucial for a productive learning atmosphere. Many students indicated that while teacher-led explanations are vital for grasping complex linguistic concepts, excessive lecturing can lead to passivity and lower motivation, which confirms the first and third

General conclusion

hypotheses. Conversely, learner-centered activities were viewed as essential for fostering communicative competence and independence. The research also identified rapid lecturing and fear of making mistakes as major obstacles to active engagement, thus validating the second hypothesis.

In summary, this research highlights that adopting a more balanced approach—where the teacher serves as a facilitator and the student takes on an active role—is crucial for improving EFL learning outcomes at the University of Ghardaïa. It is suggested that educators explicitly plan for interactive classes and cultivate a supportive environment to alleviate student anxiety. These findings provide valuable perspectives for both teachers and students aiming to enhance classroom dynamics and teaching effectiveness.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the present study, several pedagogical recommendations can be proposed in order to improve learners' understanding and classroom participation in EFL contexts.

First, EFL teachers are encouraged to adopt a balanced teaching approach that combines the strengths of both teacher-centred and learner-centred instruction. While teacher-centred methods remain important for explaining difficult concepts and providing guidance, learner-centred activities help students become more active, independent, and engaged in the learning process.

Second, teachers should integrate more interactive classroom activities such as group discussions, pair work, presentations, problem-solving tasks, and collaborative projects. These activities can increase learners' motivation, reduce passivity, and create more opportunities for meaningful participation.

General conclusion

Third, instructors are advised to pay attention to the pace of lecturing and explanation. Since rapid lecturing was identified as one of the main obstacles affecting students' understanding and participation, teachers should ensure that explanations are clear, organized, and adapted to learners' levels and needs.

In addition, teachers should create a supportive and low-anxiety classroom atmosphere where students feel comfortable expressing their ideas without fear of making mistakes. Encouraging participation, valuing students' contributions, and treating errors as part of the learning process may help increase learners' confidence and classroom engagement.

Moreover, the English Department should organize training programs and workshops that help teachers develop effective strategies for balancing teacher guidance with learner autonomy. Modern teaching approaches such as Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT), cooperative learning, and the Flipped Classroom may contribute to improving interaction and communicative competence in EFL classrooms.

Furthermore, students themselves should be encouraged to take greater responsibility for their learning by participating actively in classroom activities, collaborating with peers, and developing self-confidence in using English.

Finally, future researchers are encouraged to conduct similar studies with larger samples and in different educational contexts in order to obtain broader insights into the relationship between teaching approaches, learners' understanding, and classroom participation.

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Appendices

Appendix01

Students' Questionnaire

Dear students,

This questionnaire is part of a Master's dissertation research titled: "Balancing Learner-Centred and Teacher-Centred Approaches in EFL Classrooms: Learners' Perspectives on Understanding and Participation". Your honest responses will remain anonymous and will be used for academic research purposes only.

Instruction: Please tick (✓) the appropriate answer and provide justification when required.

Section One: Background Information

1. Level of Study:

☐ L1 ☐ L2 ☐ L3 ☐ M1 ☐ M2

2. Gender:

☐ Male ☐ Female

3. How do you describe your general level of participation in class?

☐ High ☐ Moderate ☐ Low

Section Two: Preferences and Justifications

4. In which environment do you understand complex lessons better?

☐ Teacher-Centred: When the teacher explains and provides all information.

Appendices

[] Learner-Centred: When students discover information through tasks/activities.

Justification:

5. I feel more motivated to participate when:

[] The teacher leads the discussion and asks direct questions.

[] I work in small groups or pairs with my classmates.

Justification:

Section Three: Perspectives on the Balance

6. Do you agree that a teacher should combine both lecturing and student activities in every session?

[] Strongly Agree [] Agree [] Neutral [] Disagree [] Strongly Disagree

7. How does a balanced approach affect your learning?

[] It helps clarify theory through the teacher and practice it through activities.

[] It makes the lesson more engaging but sometimes confusing.

Appendices

☐ It has no significant impact compared to using only one method.

8. Ideal time distribution for a 90-minute session:

☐ 70% Teacher talk / 30% Student activities

☐ 50% Teacher talk / 50% Student activities

☐ 30% Teacher talk / 70% Student activities

Section Four: Barriers to Participation and Understanding

9. What is the main factor that hinders your understanding in a teacher-led class?

☐ Fast pace of lecture

☐ Lack of interaction

☐ Complex language

☐ Other: _____

10. What is the main barrier to participation in class?

☐ Fear of making mistakes

☐ Lack of opportunity

☐ Uninteresting topics

☐ Other: _____

Section Five: Open Suggestions

11. In your own words, describe how a teacher can balance between lecturing and student activities:

الملخص

تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى تحليل التوازن بين أساليب التدريس المتمركزة حول المعلم وتلك المتمركزة حول الطالب في أقسام اللغة الإنجليزية، مع التركيز على آراء طلاب جامعة غرداية بشأن تأثير هذا التوازن على فهمهم ومشاركتهم في الصف. استخدمت الدراسة منهجية وصفية كمية لجمع بيانات دقيقة وموثوقة، حيث تم توزيع استبيان مكون من أحد عشر سؤالاً على 35 طالب ماستر في قسم اللغة الإنجليزية. أظهرت النتائج أن الطلاب يدركون أهمية الدمج بين الأسلوبين؛ إذ يفضلون توجيهات المعلم لفهم المفاهيم المعقدة، ويستحسنون الأنشطة التي تركز على الطالب لتعزيز استقلالهم وزيادة تفاعلهم. كما أظهرت النتائج وجود عوائق تؤثر على التفاعل والمشاركة، مثل سرعة إلقاء المحاضرات أو الخوف من ارتكاب الأخطاء. بناءً على هذه النتائج، توصي الدراسة بضرورة تحقيق توازن بيداغوجي فعال يجمع بين المحاضرات النظرية والأنشطة التفاعلية لتحسين جودة التعليم.

الكلمات المفتاحية: الأسلوب المتمركز حول المعلم، الأسلوب المتمركز حول الطالب، التوازن البيداغوجي، المشاركة الصفية، طلاب اللغة الإنجليزية

