The Effectiveness of Student-Centric Approach on EFL Learner's Attitude and Accomplishments

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Abstract

As English is taught as foreign language in Afghanistan context, the purpose of learning English is to be able communicate effectively and empower the skills in order to achieve the goal. Learners have insufficient achievements during the learning process, they have shown indicators of poor affect such as low motivation, poor autonomy, high anxiety and low self-esteem when speaking English. The researchers felt that such enfeeble notions among the learners exist. It seems that the reason of such condition of English learners in EFL context could be teacher centric approach. As a result of implementing TC method. The findings of the research clearly indicate that using student-centric method improves foreign language learner's capacity and provides learning opportunity to enhance their ability to have a better language performance in academic and real-life context. This approach provides leaning environment very influential which improve motivation and achievement for all language learners.

Keywords: Student-centric, Approach, Learner, Teacher, Afghanistan context.

Introduction

As it is very obvious that English is a foreign language in Afghanistan context. Individuals learn the language through private courses, or other learning institutions which grammar translation method is usually applied. In this approach, interaction is taken place from instructors to students, and there is little commencement and little student-student interaction. As a result of this leading instruction, learners have poor performance, achievement, autonomy, self-steam and poor motivation. The two terms (teacher centered and student-centered methods were described by educators (Amiri, & Saberi, (2017). Teacher-centered is typically referring to learning situations in which the teachers emphasize control over the materials and the ways in which students study them. For example, where, when, how, and at what speed they learn. Bagherzadeh,

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H. (2012)., believes that in teacher-centered classes, the teachers tend to be the most influential and active person in the classroom and do most of the talking (e.g., by indicating concepts, giving lecture, reading loudly, or delivering instructions), however students spending most of their time sitting, listening, taking notes, providing brief responses to teacher's questions. In contrary, student-centeredness is typically referring to form of teaching that students have more opportunities to lead the learning process such as, learning activities, more active participation in class-discussions, explore topics that interest them, design learning projects. Learners can better improve in educational field when they are able to demonstrate in real-life the knowledge and skills they have learned. Students should have the chance to make choices about designing and contributing their own learning.

In contrast, considering Afghanistan context, the teacher-centered instruction is a dominant teaching method in EFL classrooms in all levels. According to Alrabai (2016), among all other sources that contributes poor achievements and poor affects amongst learners comes from teacher-centric approach. It was added that language learning results are generally initiated by the dominance of teacher-centric instruction and spoon-feeding techniques. The administration of teacher-centric method leads to poor language performance and achievements- prevents students' educational growth and development. Benson, P. (2011), asserts that in teacher-centric classes instructors perform most of the tasks, and students are always passive receivers of the knowledge. There is a common consent that this negative correlation between teacher-centered instruction and that student centric approach leads to better language learning and have better affects comparing with teacher centric instruction. Due to the reason that students can learn better by doing things by themselves rather things done by teachers. In student centric teaching teachers encourage learners to think and perform the tasks or activities themselves. According to Rajab, H. (2013), student-learning method provides learning environment which improves motivation and achievement for all levels of students.

Problem statement

English is being taught as foreign language in Afghanistan, observing private courses and institutions in Kabul, Afghanistan the researchers realized that learners confined their learning process with merely proficiency. However, they have insufficient achievements during the learning process. On the top of the mentioned points, they have shown indicators of poor affect such as low motivation, poor autonomy, high anxiety, and low self-esteem when speaking English. The investigators felt that such enfeeble notions among the learners exist. It seems that the reason of such condition of English learners in EFL context could be teacher centric approach. As a result of implementing TC method students will have weak language

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achievement and performance. The researchers applied both methods for one year, for the first semester, TC (teacher centric approach) was applied, and for the second semester SC (students centric) method was implemented. The outcome of student-centered method was satisfactory. The study will answer the following questions:

1) What are the impacts of student-centric method on EFL learner's attitude, motivation, anxiety, autonomy and views about language learning?
2) What is the outcome of implementing student-centered instruction on EFL learners' achievement?

Background information

      Anxiety is the first attitude component which affects the language learning. Language anxiety is something common among the speakers of various language it is not restrained to a particular language or people, as Mohammed, A. (2015), believe that language anxiety is not limited to a particular language skill even when speakers give speech it is associated with high level of anxiety. It can be said that it is a distinctive complex of feelings, believes, behavior and perceptions. Motivation is the second element that can influence language learning and impacts on the performance of foreign language learners. According to Peyton & Yonug (2010), it is a mixture of exertion desire and favorable attitude about learning a language or achieving a goal. Furthermore, Gardner, R. (2001) believes that it depends to the level of energy and enthusiasm the learner may have to the materials and activities of learning, he claims motivation is the key for leaning a language. Attitude is another crucial factor that can inspire the language learning. According to Visser (2008), it is learner's eagerness to wards something that s/he desires to learn or achieve it. He claims student's attitude consists of attitude towards learning target language. It is unquestionable that attitude can be positive or negative, learners with positive attitude can learn language or achieve goal easily. Another worthy element of learning is the autonomy of learning. It can be utilized with in the learning class or outside of classroom.

      Little, D. (2009) asserts that learning autonomy is the aptitude of the learner to undertake the responsibility of his/her own learning process. Notion or belief about learning a language is also more important. Kassem, H. (2013) reflects that key contributors to language learning is belief abut language. To sum up there are certain factors that affects language learning such as, anxiety, motivation, attitude, learning autonomy and language believe. The researchers would like to discover the effectiveness of student-centric method on Afghan EFL learner's performance and achievements.

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Methods and Materials

The participants are from various living backgrounds both male and female. Majority of them were from middle class background according to socio-economic status. Being their teacher for one semester we recognized that they have alike rate of exposure to English language. Therefore, we choose them as participants in the research, mainly they were taught by teacher centric approach. Then we decided to apply student-centered method for one semester in order to expose them to the student-centric approach so that we could get their attitude about the impacts of the SC method on learner's achievements and performance. This study relies on questionnaire which is adopted from Hassan M. Kassem. At the end of the term the questionnaires were distributed on the audience and the data were collected. The class that is supposed to participate in the research is selected by convenience sampling method. Number of the participants were 40 freshman dentistry students of KUMs. This scientific investigation is conducted using a quantitative research approach. Finally, the information wsa reported based on statistics with excel. This study focuses on primary data which include 40 first year dentistry students of Kabul Medical University and Sciences Abo-Ali Sina. The data was analyzed with excel to find out percentage of student's perceptions to towards impacts of student-centric approach on learner's performance and achievements. This scientific research is performed at Kabul University of Medical Sciences, Afghanistan.

Analysis Based on Percentage: The graphs/Figures below indicate that the percentage of students who believe English is important for their career to learn is significantly high (65%). Additionally, participant's responses to the statements; (I study English to get a good job, Studying English gives me pleasure, I study English because people respects who knows English.) were positive, the overall percentage comparing with other statements are high. Our findings in figure1 about student's motivation with the regards of learning English in percentage measurement reveals a fact that a great number of populations reacted positively and they showed positive motivation towards learning English.

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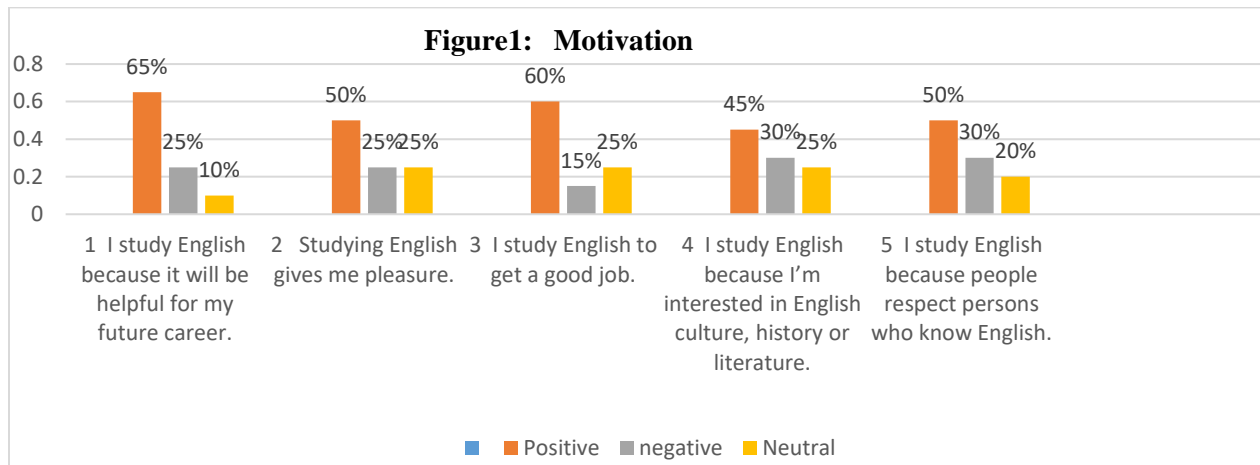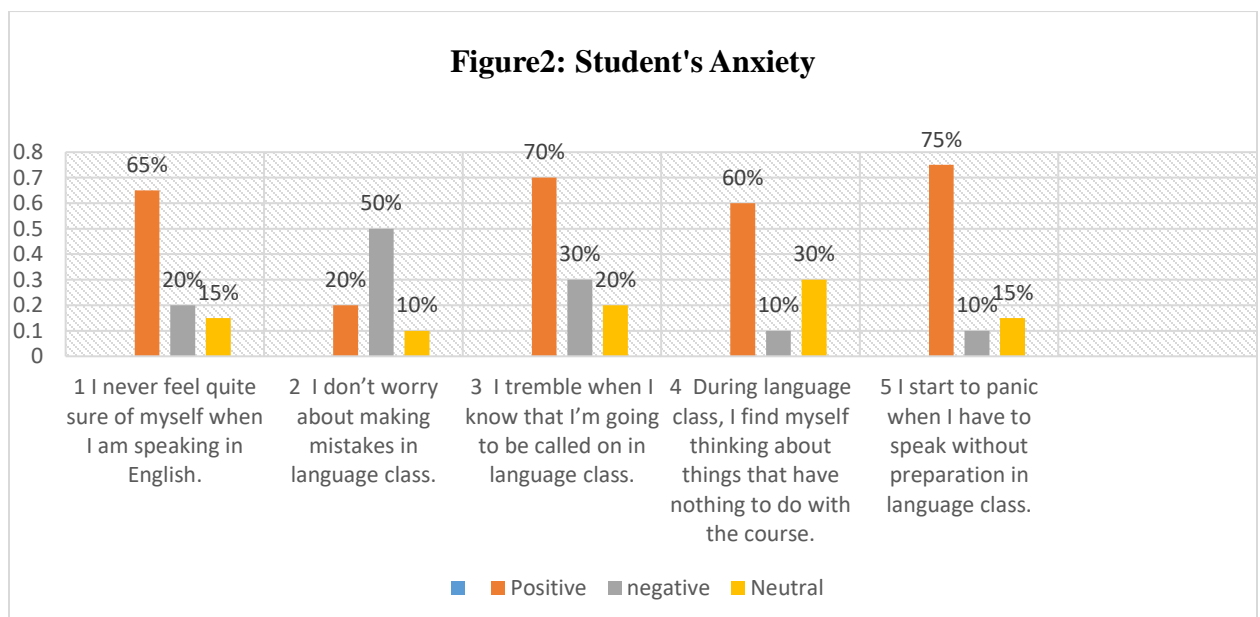
Figure1: Motivation

Figure2 shows student's responses percentage vis, it clearly signifies that a huge number of students who showed nervousness towards speaking English in the class, let's see sentence vis two statement which got highest reaction (75%) are; I start to panic when I have to speak without preparation in language class, I tremble when I know that I am going to be called on in language class (70%). I never feel quite sure of myself when I am speaking English (65%). Majority expressed their nervousness about speaking English in the class. From this we can judge that making the environment of the class friendly will contribute students to speak without hesitation and express themselves freely.

Figure2: Student's Anxiety

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Our finding from figure 3 indicates that since a significant number of the participants showed positive attitudes in majority of the statements. We can see the statements; (Studying English makes me proud 80%). (In my opinion people who speak more than one language are distinguished70%). (I wish I could have many English speaking friends 70%). So we come up with the point that providing more and more opportunities for the learners to be enthusiastic it will also have positive impact on the performance of the learners in academic as well as in real life situation.

Figure3: Attitude
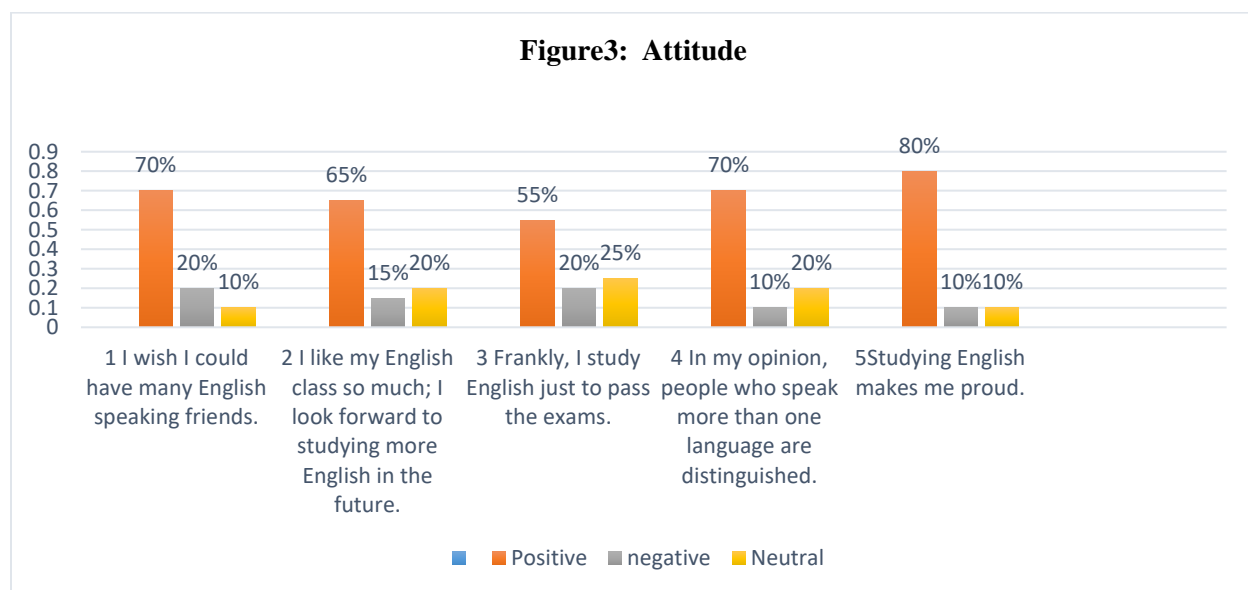
Our finding from figure 4 designates that since a significant number of the participants showed positive views in majority of the statements. We can see the statements; (I make good use of my free time in English study 60%. It is out important to me to see the progress I make 65%.), majority participants reflected positive and not only that a drastic number of the respondents showed affirmative perceptions towards language learning. So we can reach to the point that giving more freedom to the students will empower their learning process.

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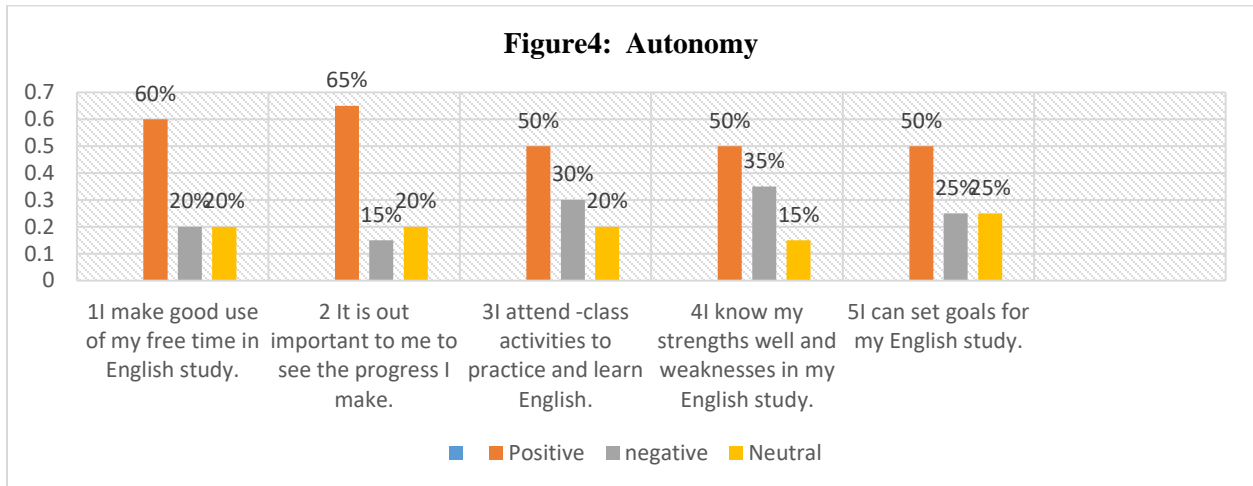
Figure4: Autonomy

Figure 5 signposts that since a significant number of the participants showed negative attitudes towards belief about language learning in majority of the statements. We can see the statements; (A poor learner of English will remain so throughout the years of study 60%. You should not say anything in English until you can say it correctly 55%. Learner should speak English even if they would make mistakes 50%), participants reflected negatively about the wrong beliefs regarding language learning. We can reach to the point that it needs to be improved based on the learner's interest of the English learning, so that students could get utmost benefit of the language classes.

Figure 5:   Belief about Language Learning
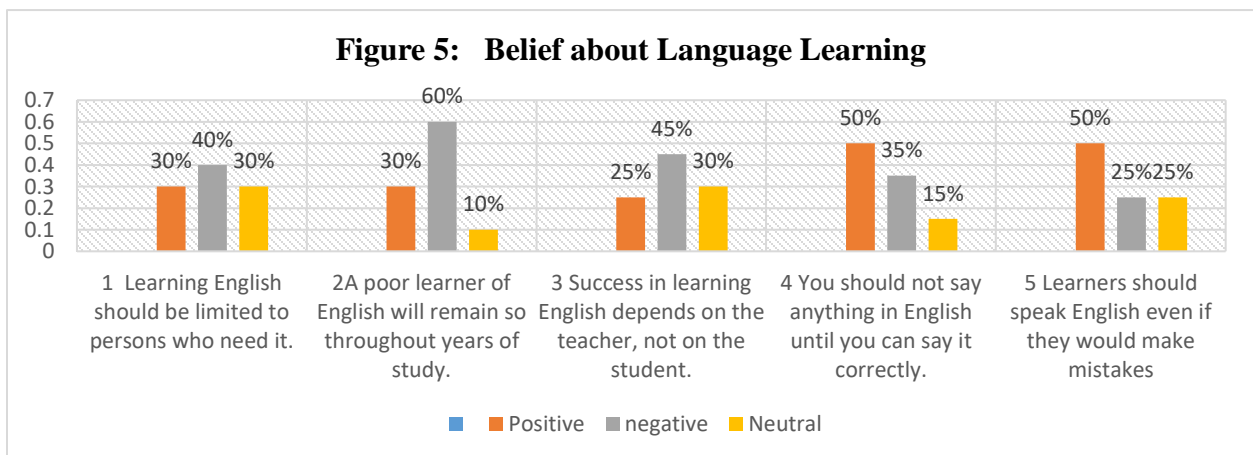
Result

This section is to present the outcomes of the research in a scientific result, the collected data were analyzed by the excel. According to the analysis, the general findings are presented below.

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Figure1 has determined that 65% of learning motivation among participants the statement *"I study English because it will be helpful to my future career"*, indicates that students are immensely eager to learn English for it is helpful to their future careers. Through learning English language, they will be able to capacitate themselves and use modernized materials to their field of studies.

In figure2, reveals the highest percentage which is 75% about anxiety among the participants, the statement is,*"I start to panic when I have to speak without preparation in language class"* reveals that without preparation student will face anxiety in the classroom and will have a negative impact on the language outcome.

Figure3 illustrates that more that 75% learning attitude among participants, from the statement *"studying English makes me proud."* We can recognize that English studying makes students proud and motivate them to study more and more.

Figure4 has shown that 65% of autonomy among the participants, the statement *"it is out important to me to see the progress I make.* Shows the importance of their progress is valuable and will bring a big change to their attitude and nature of leaning. Figure5 has exposed that the highest percentage 60% is belief about language learning among the participants, the statement *"A poor learner of English will remain so throughout years of study."* designates that a poor learner will remain the same through years. If there is not a positive change in there learning process, they will not grow and won't reach to the targeted learning goals.

Discussion

In this research, we have found the impact of student-centric method on EFL learning's attitude, motivation, anxiety, autonomy, and views about language learning. Student's idea about learning attitude is significantly high. More than half of the participants believe about importance and significant of student-centric method on EFL learning. One of the participants stated that studying English is good for getting a good job, and it give him pleasure. The reaction of research population mostly was positive motivation towards leaning English language as it is shown in figure 1. Nearly, 65% of the participants find English language learning helpful to find a job, and 50% of the population notified that English learning was fun for them. Less than 50% of the participants showed that they are fond of English culture, history, and literature. Half of the population believes that people respect those who know English language. Anxiety is a psychological problem. Overall, speaking second language has its own dilemma. In this case 65% of the participant expressed that they never feel quite sure of themselves whenever they speak

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English language. Most of them believe that they do not have any concerns while making mistakes in the language classes. 70% of the research participants expressed that being called on in a language class is nerve-racking. Over 55% of the participants believe that they think about things that are not related to the language classes. Less than 70% of the audience agree that it is dreadful to speak in a language class without being prepared. Autonomy is a skill of learner to undertake the responsibility of his/her own learning process. In figure 4, the participant of the research obviously explained the process of the autonomy of leaning method. More than half of them stated that they have strategies to study English in their free time. Above 64% of the contributors of this study stated that their progress is really important to them, and half said that doing the class activities will help them to learn the language. 50% of the individuals believe that they evaluate their strengths and weakness while they are in the language classes. The literature about learning language reflects that the key contribution to language learning is believe about language. The finding in figure 5 illustrates that learning language is limited due to the person's need. It means that whenever a person feels the need to learn English, he/she start to learn it. Less than 50% believe that learning English language depends to person's interests and needs. If they are interested and need the language, they will successfully try to learn it. More than half of the subjects believe that unsuccessful learners will not grow after years of trials. 45% of the participants agreed that successful teacher will produce successful students. Some of them suggested that English sentences should be produced errorless. 50% of them believe that the learners are supposed to speak the language and should not be quite if they are not sure what to say.

Conclusion and Implications

Findings of the research clearly indicates that using student-centric method improves foreign language learner's capacity and provides learning opportunity to enhance their ability to have a better language performance in academic and real-life context. This approach provides leaning environment very influential which improve motivation and achievement for all language learners. In addition, the students have the flexibility to learn anywhere and anytime which means that learning can be achieved outside of educational centers. In Afghan context, most of the institutions are still applying very old methods which will distract students' learning motivation and enthusiasm; therefore, teachers are highly recommended to learn new methods and apply the suited ones based on the community needs and requisitions. The change will not occur suddenly, but it will be implemented gradually in order to make their classrooms' instructions inductively based and eliminate the negative elements and techniques. We suggest that further research should be conducted to find out the perception of the teachers regarding the impacts of student-centric approach on learner's performance and achievements.

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