



A Comparative Analysis of Teacher-Centered and Student-Centered Language Teaching Approaches

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Abstract

In response to the changing requirements and preferences of students, a variety of strategies for language education have emerged over time. The teacher-centered and student-centered paradigms for teaching languages are two of the most common ones. Both approaches have their advantages and disadvantages. This study examines the characteristics, advantages, and disadvantages of both strategies in order to provide educators with the information they require to make informed decisions regarding their teaching strategies.

Keywords: Teacher-Centered Teaching, Student-Centered Teaching, Effectiveness

Teacher-Centered Language Teaching

The conventional or direct instruction style, also known as teacher-centered language teaching, positions the teacher as the main authority figure and information source in the classroom. This approach focuses on teaching students new material while emphasizing scheduled sessions, clear explanations, and monitored practice. The teacher takes on a major position as the main source of information and control in the classroom in the teacher-centered language instruction approach (Mascolo, 2009). This method entails the teacher lecturing and explaining material, setting the pace and structure of the session, and controlling the activities and evaluations that take place in the classroom (Hancock, Bray, & Nason, 2003; Peyton, More, & Young, 2010). While this strategy ensures the delivery of well-organized information and professional direction, it may also reduce opportunities for peer interaction, student involvement, and a variety of learning styles. Therefore, educators must take these factors into consideration when selecting the best teaching strategy for their objectives and the needs of their students.

The teacher-centered language teaching style organizes lessons along a predetermined, linear path, often following a particular textbook or curriculum. Lessons are designed to gradually introduce new ideas, building sequentially on previous material. This

approach aims to ensure a reasonable increase in complexity and a comprehensive understanding of language components. However, the rigidity of this approach can hinder the spontaneity, flexibility and assimilation of actual language use. While ensuring adequate documentation is provided, educators need to think about how to balance the possibilities of delivering a dynamic, student-centered and hierarchical learning experience.

The teacher acts as a direct instructor in the teacher-centered language instruction method, specifically outlining topics and grammar rules for students. The teacher gives students a thorough comprehension of language components such as grammar, vocabulary, and syntax through clear and concise explanations. These explanations sometimes include breaking complicated ideas down into simpler parts so that children may understand the basic linguistic building blocks. The teacher also acts as a role model for language usage, pronunciation, and sentence construction. By providing clear illustrations and explanations, teachers help students build a strong foundation in language mechanics. To support active language learning and communication, teachers must also consider including interactive activities that enable students to apply these norms in context.

In the teacher-centered language instruction approach, evaluation and feedback are primarily concentrated on the teacher's function as the evaluator. The teacher creates tests to determine how well students have understood the subject matter and have correctly used grammatical conventions (Lewis & Reinders, 2007). These examinations, assignments, quizzes, or other planned activities that ask students to demonstrate their command of grammar, vocabulary, and language use are frequently utilized as these types of evaluations. The teacher's feedback is intended to improve students' accuracy by highlighting mistakes, proposing fixes, and providing explanations. The implementation of this methodology contributes to the progress of students because it is ensured that they will receive assistance with improving their language skills and mastering the subtleties of the language.

This strategy facilitates the systematic delivery of a significant amount of content in a relatively short period of time by taking use of the teacher's role as the major source of knowledge. The learning process is streamlined by the teacher's capacity to organize lessons, convey knowledge, and give clear explanations, ensuring that students are exposed to a variety of linguistic concepts and norms. To create a more comprehensive language learning experience, teachers should consider offering students the opportunity to participate in communicative activities that emphasize fluency and real-world language use in addition to stressing correctness.

Concepts and language norms are methodically given in a clear and orderly manner in the teacher-centered language instruction style, which is especially useful when dealing with complicated issues. Teachers assist students understand the underlying structures by breaking complex language concepts down into digestible parts and giving them step-by-step explanations. This methodical technique helps students understand complex

grammatical ideas or nuanced linguistic subtleties by demystifying them. Students are better able to comprehend the logical flow of the language norms and their linkages by methodically untangling this complexity. This technique does improve comprehension, but teachers should also urge students to put these norms into practice. This will help them grasp the material better and will help them adapt what they learn in the classroom to real-world language use.

A substantial degree of consistency in the delivery of the content is achieved in the teacher-centered language instruction approach as a result of the teacher's control over the lesson framework. All students will enjoy a consistent learning process thanks to this uniformity, since classes adhere to a predefined order and pace. The teacher's control over the curriculum ensures that important ideas, linguistic conventions, and subjects are taught consistently across all educational sessions. This consistency is especially helpful when maintaining a structured curriculum since it reduces differences in material coverage and aids students in developing a strong foundation by exposing them to key linguistic elements on a regular basis. To promote a more effective learning environment, teachers should be open to modifying the structure in response to students' input and changing educational requirements (Mart, 2013).

Students frequently play passive roles in the dynamics of the classroom when teaching a language using a teacher-centered method. They essentially serve as information consumers, listening and watching while the teacher disseminates knowledge. This passive approach can reduce possibilities for students to engage in active critical thinking and problem-solving since they may not always be encouraged to evaluate, query, or apply the material they are taught. The teacher's primary responsibility for material delivery might unintentionally result in a one-way flow of information, impeding students' capacity to develop autonomous thinking abilities and relate linguistic concepts to real-world situations. Although this technique is effective in transferring knowledge, teachers should balance it with interactive exercises that allow students to actively participate, share their views, and work together to solve issues.

Opportunities for student-student contact and communication practice may be constrained in the teacher-centered language instruction approach because of the teacher's pivotal position as the main authoritative figure and source of knowledge. Less time may be allotted for peer interactions as a result of the focus on material delivery and teacher-directed activities. As a result, there may be less opportunities for students to participate in real-world discussions, debates, or group projects that promote active language usage and communication skills. The development of fluency, conversational competence, and the capacity to negotiate real-world language issues may be hampered by this constraint on student-to-student engagement. While keeping a structured curriculum is crucial, teachers should try to include exercises that motivate students to communicate with one another, express their ideas, and use their language abilities in useful, interactive circumstances.

The teacher-centered approach to language instruction may unintentionally fail to consider the various learning styles and velocities of individual pupils, thereby leaving some learners feeling behind. Due to the teacher's predominance in class planning and pace, the teaching strategy may not be able to properly consider the different learning styles and aptitudes of the pupils. If the speed is too sluggish, some students may lose interest and some may pick up concepts more rapidly, while others may find it difficult to keep up if the pace is too fast. Different strategies are needed to properly acquire and retain knowledge for different learning styles, such as visual, auditory, or kinesthetic. Some students may not receive the specialized help they require when these variations are not sufficiently considered, which can result in dissatisfaction, diminished motivation, and a restricted understanding of the material.

Student-Centered Language Teaching

The communicative approach, sometimes referred to as student-centered language instruction, places a high value on the participation, interaction, and independence of the learner. It focuses on developing a setting in which students actively engage, work together, and employ linguistic abilities in authentic situations (Brophy, 1999).

Learners take on an active and self-directed role in determining their learning experience while using the student-centered language teaching style. They have the authority to decide on their objectives, the rate of their development, and the methods they will use to learn the language. This method promotes autonomy by letting students define their goals and establish attainable milestones while acknowledging that each student's learning experience is unique (Freire, 2018). In order to best meet their unique requirements, students are encouraged to reflect on their strengths, limitations, and preferred learning methods. Increased motivation, engagement, and ownership of the learning process result from this active participation (Collins & O'Brien, 2003). By putting the students at the center of the learning process, teachers recognize their agency and enable a more individualized and flexible learning environment that encourages students to become self-motivated, lifelong learners.

The major emphasis in the student-centered language education method switches from simple memorization to encouraging meaningful conversation. This method encourages pupils to utilize the language in real-world situations because it acknowledges the value of language as a tool for communication. Students participate in projects, conversations, and assignments that simulate how language is used in real-life situations rather of just memorizing vocabulary words and grammar rules. With this method, students may practice the language in situations like those they would come across outside of the classroom, such as expressing opinions, haggling, and exchanging ideas. Teachers may encourage students' active participation, critical thinking, and problem-solving abilities as

they successfully manage language barriers by emphasizing meaningful communication. This method not only improves linguistic proficiency and practical abilities but also fosters a greater awareness for the language's cultural and social dimensions (Sawyer, 2008; Vavrus et al., 2011).

Learning activities are intentionally created to emulate real-world language use through tasks and projects in a student-centered approach to language instruction. These exercises simulate real-world scenarios where language abilities are used. These kinds of activities help children negotiate linguistic difficulties within relevant situations while also fostering critical thinking and problem-solving skills. These assignments could include discussions, role-playing, group writing, or even the creation of presentations. Through these interactions, students not only strengthen their language abilities but also grow in their ability to think critically and creatively. By encouraging active inquiry and application of linguistic principles, this approach goes beyond rote learning. Teachers can play a part in designing assignments that spark students' curiosity and motivate them to overcome linguistic challenges in order to develop a deeper and more thorough mastery of the language.

Peer contact becomes a pillar for improving language abilities in the student-centered approach to language instruction. Through group activities that promote collaborative learning, such as discussions and debates, students actively interact with their classmates. These exchanges give students a forum for communication practice, meaning negotiation, and idea exchange, reflecting real-life language use. Students hone their reasoning abilities by debating diverse viewpoints during discussions. Through cooperative group projects, students may work together to overcome problems connected to language. As students engage with other ideas, these exchanges not only develop language competency but also interpersonal skills, cultural awareness, and empathy. The teacher's job is to foster a climate that supports open communication, facilitates group debates, and offers helpful criticism to ensure that these interactions greatly advance the overall growth of the students.

Students' active engagement and agency in their learning process result in increased engagement and motivation in the student-centered language teaching approach. Learners have a feeling of ownership and relevance in their education when they are given the freedom to choose their own objectives, pick their own learning approaches, and work together with peers. This internal drive fosters a stronger dedication to language mastery. Students get a deeper awareness of language subtleties as they investigate themes that are relevant to their interests and participate in interactive activities. Additionally, the sense of pride they get from playing an active part boosts their confidence and self-esteem as language users. This method not only encourages pupils to truly appreciate the language but also equips them with the skills necessary to be lifelong learners.

Language learning is contextualized inside scenarios that closely reflect real-life

events in the student-centered language teaching approach, developing practical communication skills. Instead of isolated drills, students interact with language in real-world situations by ordering meals, acting out a job interview, or conversing about current affairs. Students must use their language abilities in these settings in a realistic way, from utilizing the right terminology and syntax to understanding subtleties in tone and cultural sensitivity. Students gain the capacity to utilize language as a tool for effective communication outside of the classroom through learning in context. This approach emphasizes the true value of language in their daily lives and provides students with the practical skills needed to engage confidently and successfully in a variety of contexts.

The student-centered language teaching method allows for the construction of personalized learning routes and is specially designed to support a range of learning styles. This method provides a variety of activities and tactics that appeal to visual, aural, kinesthetic, and other learning modalities because it acknowledges that learners have unique preferences and talents. Students can select instructional strategies that best suit their learning preferences, improving their language understanding and retention. Additionally, this method allows personalized learning routes, enabling students to advance at their own rate (Wright, 2011). Some people could spend a lot of time studying a certain subject, while others breeze through what comes more naturally to them. By encouraging this adaptability, teachers recognize that each student's path is unique, eventually developing a more inclusive and successful learning environment that accommodates to a wider range of learning styles.

Spending extra time planning and executing interactive activities is frequently required when using a student-centered teaching strategy. Student-centered techniques, in contrast to conventional methods, emphasize conversations and engaging exercises that reflect real-world language usage. For teachers looking to create a more dynamic and effective learning environment, even if it may initially require more work, the advantages in terms of better engagement and critical thinking make the investment worthwhile.

Evaluation of student performance in a student-centered classroom is more complex and considers both correctness and communication effectiveness. The emphasis on practical language use makes examinations of skills like presentations and projects, which judge linguistic competency and practical utility, necessary. Teachers must work across a wider range of aptitudes, emphasizing both accuracy and the capacity to communicate effectively in real-world situations.

Even while student-centered learning encourages independence, certain students could benefit from a more organized approach for clarity (Condelli & Wrigley, 2009). A completely open-ended approach could be confusing, especially for people who benefit from explicit direction. Self-directed learning and organized instruction should coexist to suit different learning styles and to guarantee that all students are actively engaged.

Conclusion

The dispute over teacher-centered vs student-centered language teaching methods is not about deciding which is better; rather, it is about comprehending the circumstances in which each method is most successful. While student-centered techniques encourage active involvement and pragmatic language usage, teacher-centered approaches can be useful for effectively presenting knowledge. In order to establish a balanced and productive language learning environment that meets the various requirements of their pupils, educators are advised to use components of both techniques. The ultimate objective should be to enable students to develop into competent, assured communicators in the target language.

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