Learner-centered Instruction in English Education: Reality and Expectations

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Abstract

This study aims to find out the extent to which classroom instruction in teaching English as a foreign language in the departments of English is learner-centered. The study combines between the elements of a case study, descriptive and self-reflective techniques. The subjects are the teachers and students of English in the college of Sciences and Arts, University of Bisha, Saudi Arabia. To collect the relevant data, the researcher used the tools of a questionnaire and unconstructed observations. The questionnaire is used to find out the extent to which teachers are aware of the concept of learner-centeredness, and the observations are used to note down the behavior of the teachers and students in the teaching/learning process. The observations are a kind of self-reflection notes resulted from my teaching experience in the English teaching field. The findings show that teachers surveyed are not aware of the concept, and when appear to be aware they give contradictory responses about the concept of learner-centeredness. The results from the self-reflection observations appear in the form of different constraints in the way of learner-centered instruction. These constraints are those related to students, teachers, system and family. The most important among these constraints are the ones related to students' lack of motivation to learn. Awareness constrains on part of the different participants comes next. The paper concludes that different types of constraints stand in the way of implementing learner-centered instruction (LCI). Some recommendations and suggestions are offered for a better use of this approach.

Keywords: English, instruction, learner-centered, students

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