

# Learner Centric Pedagogy In Higher Education: Exploring Dialogism In English Language Classrooms In The UAE

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## **Abstract**

This study explores manifestations of pedagogy intended to be learner centred and the effect of such pedagogy on learning and learners' in English Language Teaching (ELT) classrooms, at a University in the UAE. As an insider researcher using a sociocultural perspective, I explored student perceptions in the face of an educational reform: the implementation of learner centred approaches in my own English language classrooms to understand the way students' construed the social reality of learner centred classrooms.

Foregrounded by theories of social constructionism, this study uses Alexander's (2004) principles of Dialogic Teaching that emphasise the communicative tenets of learner centredness through the development of classroom interaction that encourages student voice, engagement, critical thinking and active learning, to analyse the quality, dynamic and content of talk that occurred through various teacher led interventions. Considering learning and development as social processes, the study assumes a poststructuralist stance to understand how discourse shapes one's sense of self and self-worth. This study investigates pedagogy that aimed to be learner centred by investigating the way students and teacher used shared talk in ELT Classrooms to extend and develop their learning and by extension their identities.

Interpretive data collection methods were used to collect video recordings of lessons, semi-structured interview data as well as written response data over the course of one semester. Using the Nvivo software, transcribed data from the development of shared classroom talk was analyzed to understand how the teacher attempted to implement learner centred instruction and how learners experienced it. Findings indicated that classroom dialogues were of low dialogic quality, consisting of limited, brief exchanges that were teacher fronted.

**Keywords:** Learner centered pedagogy, dialogic teaching, exploratory talk, Writing classroom, ELT