

Learner-Centered Instruction as a Motivational Tool in ESL Reading Class: A Case Study of Pharmacy Students in a Thai Private University

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Abstract

University students in Thailand need to develop English language skills to prepare themselves for their selected specialized area and a career after graduation. As reported in quite a few previous ESL studies, Thai university students were not well-prepared for the career-based demands in functional communication skills in English as a Second Language (ESL). They were not able to develop their English skills to a functional level in reading, listening speaking, and writing. On the teaching side, limitations could have stemmed from the lack of sufficient interactions between the teacher and students--characteristic of the traditional teacher-centered method. The researcher therefore would like to explore a combination of *learner-centered teaching*, *interactive learning*, and *authentic assessment strategies* to motivate learners for target performances or learning outcomes. It in fact shifts a focus from the teacher to the learner in performing communicative language tasks. This paper reports a case study on the effects of learner-centered instruction in 9 sessions of an undergraduate reading course with 30 second-year Thai students in the Faculty of Pharmacy at a Thai private university. The findings obtained from the structured interview responses given by fifteen randomly selected subjects revealed the students' positive feelings toward the learner-centered teaching method in that they had ample opportunities to perform their learning tasks or communicate with their peers in English. The tried method could serve as a practical guideline for ESL teachers to improve their reading course as seen fit in their teaching-learning ESL context.

Keywords: *Learner-centered instruction, motivation, ESL reading, university students*

1. Introduction

English has been a required language for schools and universities in Thailand. University students are required to study English to obtain knowledge in new technologies or technological advancement, science, education, business, and culture (Chumpavan, 2001). Thai students need to communicate functionally in English for everyday transactions in their study as well as at work after their graduation.

Segovia & Hardison (2008) reported that ESL teaching in Thailand was compulsory and typically covered about 200 hours a year for second-year university students. At the university level, an undergraduate program generally requires four to six courses in a four-year-curriculum. Unfortunately, a few hours per week in English classes are the only time some Thai students are formally exposed to the language. Given the limited exposure to English, Thai university students find it not possible to attain the target competence specified in their program curriculum.

A well-known Thai educator Srisa-arn (1990) pointed out that English language instruction in Thai universities is oriented around teachers, textbooks, and assigned individual work in class. As a result, students have few opportunities to practice English in real-life situations due to the fact that teachers position themselves as the center of every learning process and the sole source of knowledge in the classroom, and thus do not provide time for language communication. In addition, Yaoharee (2013) reported that learning English in Thailand had its focus on grammatical accuracy and vocabulary learning. Vanichakorn (2003) expressed a similar viewpoint that Thai students were passive and simply waited for teachers to impart knowledge and instructions. They were therefore unable to function in English—particularly in real and unpredictable communicative contexts.

Since ESL instruction in Thailand has been perceived as ‘traditional’ with a Thai cultural approach to rather passive learning with teachers as the center for imparting knowledge and not providing interactions for language practice, students are not supported at the classroom level or motivated to function in real communicative contexts. According to a NIDA Poll (2014), Thai university graduates are not well-qualified for the employment market; many are simply interested only in seeking their degree. From such negative data, the the author-researcher felt an urgent need to shift ESL instruction from the teacher-centered to the learner-centered mode, as to be reported in this paper.

2. Background of the Study

The background of the study is in three major areas to facilitate readers’ understanding of the factors that involve the shift from the teacher-centered to the learner-centered mode in ESL instruction, as exemplified as a case in this study. They are (1) learner-centered teaching, (2) interactive learning for specific learning outcomes, and (3) authentic assessment of language performance strategies. These factors in turn can help motivate learners for target communication skills development.

2.1 Learner-centered teaching

A learner-centered instruction is closely intertwined with motivation for language performance in this study. The learner-centered teaching approach is a combination of creative teaching, learning, and assessment strategies to motivate learners by focusing on learning processes and learning outcomes (Fulcher, 2004; Nonkukhetkhong, et al., 2006; Committee on Academic Programs and Teaching [CAPT], 2015). A radical change in such an approach to language teaching and learning adjusts the role of the teacher to a facilitator or motivator with the use of learning activities for specific learning outcomes. Nonkukhetkhong, et al. (2006) further explained that learner-centered teachers generally share responsibility for the learning experience with their students by letting them design their own learning processes, actively participate and negotiate in meaningful interaction to achieve their learning objectives.

The Committee on Academic Programs and Teaching Thailand (2015) has specified the requirements of a learner-centered environment to include in-class strategies that promote student interaction with the use of assigned learning contents, support their learning process and the teacher’s facilitating tasks. The teacher is to assume a more active role in managing

activities for students while taking class size and the structure of the curriculum into careful consideration (Weimer, 2002).

2.2 Interactive learning

Learning English in a non- English-speaking country like Thailand can be a challenge to how the teacher can provide for students language interaction they need for skills development (Chusanachoti, 2009). It is of prime importance that students be given learning time to perform target language skills in listening, speaking, reading and writing. To cope with constraints in language exposure, teachers are expected by school administrators and the Ministry of University to devise learning methods, contents, language activities for real life communication Chusanachoti (2009). As emphasized by Dörnyei (2000, 2001) the teacher in the first place is to raise student motivation, interest, and awareness in learning. These three aspects that demand attention from the teacher, represent key factors in the rate and success of second language learning. Motivating students for language interaction should be a priority if language teachers or practitioners want their learners to be successful academically and professionally.

2.3 Authentic assessment

To Grant (2004), teachers and school administration need to find appropriate method to assess students' language performance or the level of communicative competence pertinent to the target learning outcome—be it listening, speaking, reading or writing. It is important to use authentic assessment when it comes to such productive skills as speaking and writing. It should be noted that language activities be closely related to the target performance for final assessment with clear-cut specifications to ensure required communicative abilities (Evans, 2009; Pholsward 2014).

In accordance with authentic assessment of specific language functions or communication skills, the teacher should consider the use of authentic materials in the areas of interest or specialization for groups of students under language training or coaching (Banditvilai, 2006). Assessment is to be for specific knowledge or skills for language achievements at target levels (Evans, 2009).

In particular, speaking fluency assessment in ESL should be done authentically and holistically by more than one evaluator to ensure whether learners can perform at the elementary, intermediate or advanced in terms of communicative abilities. This issue is always a great challenge for language practitioners as well as researchers to find ways to assess learners' language performance effectively and authentically (Wrenshall, 2005; Yanyan 2009). It should be noted that authentic assessment will be complete with the teacher provides feedback to learners on the basis of assessment results (Spiller, 2009).

3. Research Objectives

As indicated in the introduction and the background of the study related to Thai students' English skill limitations, the researcher would like to use learner-centered instruction in her teaching of reading. It was expected that the trialed instruction can help

improve students' learning motivation that could result in achievements in terms of communicative abilities.

The specific research objectives are in two: (1) to explore the use of a combination of *learner-centered teaching*, *interactive learning*, and *authentic assessment strategies* in motivating learners for target performances or learning outcomes, and (2) to report qualitative responses from students being motivated by the three aspects in combination used in language classes at the university level.

4. Research Methodology

This section will deal with the subjects and research instruments as follows:

4.1 The Subjects

The subjects were 30 second-year Thai students (M = 6, F = 24) in the Faculty of Pharmacy at a Thai private university. They voluntarily participated in 9 sessions of an undergraduate ESL reading course using learner-centered instruction. They were given ample opportunities to perform their learning tasks or communicate with their peers in English. The subjects were informed of data confidentiality in that their individual data would be reported by student number, not by their name.

4.2 Research Instruments

There were three research instruments in the study: (1) learning activities, (2) reading materials, and (3) a set of questions for structured interviews. The first two instruments were meant to support learner-centered instruction. The third instrument secured responses from the subjects on how they were motivated to work conscientiously for the target language performance. All instruments were constructed by the researcher and were content-validated by two ESL specialists at the university level to be revised for the final version.

1. Learning activities

Three sets of classroom activities in three modules were created to enable students to use learned points in reading as a platform to produce two productive language skills: speaking and writing. These three sets or modules were based on *interest*, *effort* and *attitude*—all in support of learner-centered instruction and students' motivation.

Communication skills were identified as reading, speaking and writing—all followed by students' individual or pair work to ensure their end performance in speaking and writing. There were six activities in each set: two each for reading, speaking, and writing, respectively. Each set of activities was designed for three sessions, i.e., one set of specifications for interest-based, effort-based, or attitude-based was repeated twice—altogether in three sessions for each set or a total of nine sessions for three sets of learning activities. Repetition of each set of specifications was to ensure that the end performance of individual learners' target language skills be consistent within each set to a certain extent, not by chance.

Each class or session was 120 minutes duration using learner-centered instruction, student participation and interaction, followed by authentic assessment. These learning activities in three sets or modules were presented in Figure 1 below.

Modules 1-3: Interest-based		
Communication skills	Individual work	Pair work
Reading	Clarifying	Making connections
Speaking	Questioning	Predicting
Writing	Summarizing	Evaluating

Modules 4-6: Effort-based		
Communication skills	Individual work	Pair work
Reading	Scanning	Skimming
Speaking	Presenting	Discussing
Writing	Detailing	Highlighting

Modules 7-9: Attitude-based		
Communication skills	Individual work	Pair work
Reading	Independent searches	Collaborative searches
Speaking	Reporting	Reacting
Writing	Selecting	Commenting

Figure 1: Learning activities

Interest: Students are motivated and prepared to sustain a lifelong passion for language learning.

Effort: Students are motivated to overcome reading difficulties by highlighting as well as electronically sharing learning experiences and thoughts among peers and teachers.

Attitude: Students are motivated to choose their own reading materials as well as a place and time to read them.

It should be noted that in each class module, the subjects did the activities for each type of communication skill individually and in pairs. They were allowed to select or change their partners freely according to their preference throughout the course. The subjects were guided to do all the activities and expected to show a *gained* or *maintained* level of the end performance on speaking or writing. Such expectation was based on the researcher’s experiential assumption that learner-centered instruction with interest-based, effort-based and attitude-based activities should be able to motivate the subjects to attain a gained performance.

2. Reading materials

Nine reading texts in science or science for daily life were used as a platform for the productive skills of speaking and writing. Each text was chosen by the researcher on the basis of a specific length, authenticity, class time, and particularly its capacity to generate (1)

classroom discussions and individual/ pair work, (2) learners' language functions and (3) target performance on speaking and writing.

Structured Interviews

The researcher conducted a preliminary interview with 6 second-year students who were not included in the study. The purpose was to identify the scope of questions to be created for structured interview. Preliminary data revealed the students' negativity toward ESL with their reasons. Below are exemplified responses:

- Student 1: *In the past, my English teachers just only gave lectures about grammar. I didn't have any chance to think or speak much and used to be afraid of making mistakes. I didn't have enough chances to practice and use English. So I felt it was no use learning it.*
- Student 2: *During secondary years, I always played with a mobile phone in English class. The teachers just told me to do exercises from the books or take notes from what they wrote on the board. It was so boring.*
- Student 3: *I started disliking English when I was in secondary school. In my freshman year here I experienced the same thing in English classes which confined me and hemmed me in. If I couldn't do as the teacher wanted, she then cut my marks. If I didn't understand her scope of activities, again she cut my marks.*
- Student 4: *The traditional style of learning was not bad; it never stimulated anything new or encouraged us to look for additional information outside the classroom. In my opinion there were two factors that created student interest: classroom tasks and activities, and the teacher. The teacher was a very important factor in motivating the students to learn and do activities. In my past experience I rarely had motivating teachers in English courses. They just came to class, gave lectures using one-way communication, and finished the class.*
- Student 5: *In my previous speaking classes, the teachers just gave only the topic and told us to do dialogs: We just memorized it and presented in front of the class. This demotivated me to do it because the topic was controlled by the teacher.*
- Student 6: *From my experience at my old school, every English teacher used to say that their classes were learner-centered, but sadly, this never actually happened. One of my former English teachers was also an administrator who was very strict about school regulations. In class she didn't teach anything but tried to find fault with us. So I never really had a learner-centered classroom experience in my life. In every previous English class I just memorized the contents of old handouts. All activities were fixed. We just completed them and that's all. We never had any additional content or ideas outside the textbooks. In my English classes at this university, I just followed everything from the textbooks and didn't have any chance to think for myself. Sometimes I thought that the learner-centered type of learning didn't really exist and would never exist.*

Based on the preliminary interview data, the researcher constructed six interview questions with a specific focus for each:

1. Were you actively involved in the learning tasks and classroom activities? (How?) (focus on interaction)
2. Did you try to communicate more using the target language with the teacher and your peers? (How?) (focus on interaction)
3. Did you pay good attention to your teacher in class? (Why?) (focus on teacher- or learner-centered)
4. Did you try harder to communicate your intended meaning and ideas effectively? (How?) (focus on interaction/ authentic assessment)
5. Did you enjoy being in the class and working on the learning tasks? (What?) (focus on interaction/ authentic assessment)
6. Did you become more confident that you could manage to understand the most difficult and complex material the teacher presented for practice? (Why?) (motivation)

The researcher used six questions to interview 15 subjects after the nine teaching classes were completed. Half or 15 of the total number of the subjects (30) agreed to volunteer their interview time. The researcher used a reference from Adler and Adler (1987) who asserted that at least 12 interviewees could give a researcher sufficient experience in planning and structuring interviews, conducting and partially transcribing these, and generating quotations for a research paper. For this study, qualitative data were obtained from structured interview for the researcher to gain insights into how students perceived learner-centered learning and how they were motivated to do ESL activities for the target end performance.

5. Data Collection

The researcher used the constructed lesson plans in the planned class time and collected points obtained from the pre- and post-questionnaire, and scores from all three modules or nine lessons. As for structured interviews, the researcher used six questions to secure responses regarding the subjects' reaction to the learner-centered teaching mode and their learning motivation. In one week after the completion of nine-session teaching, the researcher arranged for face-to-face interviews with fifteen students whom were randomly selected from the sample group with mixed abilities, including both male and female subjects.

The researcher transcribed recoded data and selected typical response-examples to illustrate their reaction to the learner-centered teaching as well as their viewpoints on how they were motivated to perform on speaking and writing tasks and learning activities as designed for all nine lesson plans. The subjects asked the researcher to be interviewed in Thai to enable them to give answers without language restraints. The interviews were video-recorded and photographed with the subjects' permission.

6. Data Analysis

The quantitative data were obtained from the pre- and post-questionnaires, each containing 10 questions on a five-point-scale to generate 50 points for each questionnaire. As for the lesson plans in three modules, each module contained a score of 10 for speaking and writing, respectively, thus making a score point of 20 per module.

As for qualitative data, the researcher used transcribed data to make conclusion on points made by the subjects regarding their reaction to the learner-centered teaching mode with learning activities, followed by their motivation supported by the nine lesson plans that were interest/ effort/ attitude-based. The researcher selected typical response-examples and translated the selected examples from Thai into English. The translated version was rechecked by her two ESL colleagues.

7. Results and Discussion

7.1 Results of the subjects’ pre- and post-questionnaire points and their scores on three interest-based lessons

The researcher reported interest-based data as exemplified quantitative data for students’ reaction to the learner-centered teaching and learning activities of the subjects. It should be noted that the subjects’ performance on effort-based and attitude-based speaking and writing tasks yielded results similar to those of the interest-base task. Since the researcher, in this paper, put a focus on how the subjects explained via structured interview on the way they were motivated for their end performance in speaking and writing, the results on structured interviews were given in detail.

As seen in Table 1, the subjects showed their gained points in both pre- and post-questionnaire and varied performance points in a gained status. The subjects were listed by

Table 1: Interest-based Module: Pre- and Post- Questionnaire points and Lesson Scores of 30 Subjects

Student#	Pre-Questionnaire (50)	Post-Questionnaire (50)	Performance (20 points/lesson)		
			Lesson 1	Lesson 2	Lesson 3
4	14	48	12.75	15.25	11.50
29	15	46	12.75	12.75	15.00
24	17	47	12.75	14.00	14.00
23	15	44	15.50	14.75	15.75
6	18	45	13.25	14.50	14.50
9	14	41	12.50	13.00	13.75
14	19	46	13.50	15.75	14.00
12	13	39	11.75	12.50	12.00
30	13	39	13.00	10.00	12.25
10	16	41	12.25	14.50	16.50
13	20	45	15.25	15.00	15.75
1	23	47	14.75	15.50	15.25
26	14	38	14.00	14.50	14.00
3	24	47	== Incomplete assignments==		
18	22	45	== Incomplete assignments ==		
20	18	40	14.00	14.75	15.75
11	24	45	14.75	13.75	14.50
15	15	35	13.25	15.25	14.75
19	19	39	12.75	15.00	14.75
22	12	32	11.00	11.50	15.25
21	19	36	13.75	15.75	15.75

16	18	34	10.25	13.00	14.75
25	25	40	14.25	15.25	13.50
7	27	41	13.00	15.75	16.50
27	21	35	12.75	14.00	12.75
5	22	35	15.25	15.25	16.00
28	28	41	13.25	15.25	14.25
17	22	34	15.00	13.75	15.50
8	21	30	16.00	16.00	13.25
2	45	47	9.25	15.25	8.25

Pre- and Post-Questionnaire contain 10 statements in each; each statement is on a scale of 1 (low) to 5 (high) in terms of agreement. There are three statements each for interest-based, effort-based and attitude-based, and one statement on overall learning motivation in terms of interest. The total point of ten statements on the rating scale is 50.

As shown in Table 1, most subjects showed speaking and writing performance in a gained status with exception of students 11 and 26 who demonstrated their maintained status. The researcher noted that student 8 did not complete the last assignment in lesson 3, and student 2 did not complete the assignments in lessons 1 and 3. In addition, students 3 and 18, though with their gained point in the post-questionnaire did not complete assignment given in lessons 1-3 to earn scores to be reported in this table.

7.2 Structured interview responses

The subjects' post-course interview responses spelled out vividly the positive effects of learner-centered instruction. Simply put, their enthusiastic interview responses below to this type of instruction showed how the learning process, classroom activities prompting interactions, and tasks related to learner-centered instruction with authentic assessment proved beneficial to them. Some of the subjects' responses can be shown below:

1. Were you actively involved in the learning tasks and classroom activities? (How?)
(focus on interaction)

- I was quite *actively involved* in the learning tasks and activities—especially at the beginning because I never had any class like this before. I felt everything was new and that the reading topics stimulated self-learning, and unlimited thinking. So, I did my best.
- I never had English classes like this before. I loved this learning style that allowed me to think freely. It was different from the old styles I had experienced before: that was a one-way learning style. I had more interest in learning during this course because these kinds of *classroom activities* interested and *challenged* me greatly.
- Sometimes I thought that the *learner-centered type of learning* didn't really exist and would never exist. However, in this course I could think and use my own ideas and thoughts fully: for example, when *I did activities* about the immune system. The more information I could *search* by myself, the more fun the class became. This aroused my interest greatly. I had never done anything like this in an English class before in my life.

2. Did you try to communicate more using the target language with the teacher and your peers? (How?) (focus on interaction)

- I could use my English skills a lot in this course and this made me active and enthusiastic. Compared to three other courses I had previously here I can say that I was most active in this course. *I tried my best to speak English* because the teacher gave us freedom to speak and enough time to do it in class.
- *I tried using English more to talk together* about tasks and activities. I can tell you that this course interested me a lot. The thing that interested me the most was the opportunity to use more skills than in my previous courses. I never knew anything about this new learning style, so I was very interested to learn.
- *I became more confident to communicate in later class sessions because I saw my peers do well.* And most important: the teacher in this course could break through the wall in my heart that had been like a barrier between me and English for a long time.

3. Did you pay good attention to your teacher in class? (Why?) (focus on teacher- or learner-centered)

- After three class sessions in this course I thought I could improve and *had more courage to speak* because I was able to practice. Also, the class atmosphere was enjoyable and *there was not so much emphasis on grammar.*
- I paid very close attention in this course because it was more interesting than other English courses I had before in my life. I mean I could do everything I wanted in this class. *The teacher gave the basic ideas of study points and let the students do the activities* as they thought best. This created a lot of student interest. I had freedom to do every interesting activity. I could talk to the teacher anytime I wanted.
- I paid close attention because this class was so interesting. I could use my own ideas and didn't have to worry if they were right or wrong. *I had full freedom to show my ability* and was not hemmed in as I was in the past. I could use my own judgment. As long as my work was based on the reading topic I would never make any mistakes. I found that *this course* was enjoyable and was really, in fact, *learner-centered.*

4. Did you try harder to communicate your intended meaning and ideas effectively? (How?) (focus on interaction/ authentic assessment)

- The teacher in this course never blocked my freedom to do what I liked. I didn't have to follow everything from slides in class. This interested me the most and *motivated me to try more and more.*
- I tried harder in later class sessions after I found that nothing was 'fixed' in this course. In doing activities such as *searching* I tried to read and understand the topics clearly.
- *The teacher allowed us to think by ourselves and find the best way to complete our work.* I also tried to understand the main ideas so that I could give a good presentation later.

5. Did you enjoy being in the class and working on the learning tasks? (What?)
(focus on interaction/ authentic assessment)

- I enjoyed this course because nothing was fixed and I had full freedom in class. *The activities allowed the students to think freely.* I loved the technique of using a reading topic as a platform for other activities. *I could select any aspects of interest based on the reading text for my writing.*
- This course was the most enjoyable because I was not hemmed in. I could *search* for more vocabulary and topics of interest by myself. I could select the ideas I liked and understood well to present to the teacher.
- *This style of learning created motivation* better than any traditional learning styles: Here the students could do everything by themselves. I felt I had power and freedom and had to *practice self-control to complete the activities.* Nobody forced me to learn, but the activities directly promoted gaining knowledge. The wall in my heart disappeared. The wall that had blocked my learning English was just like bitter medicine. But everything in *this course motivated me* to come to class, to learn, and to do all activities.

6. Did you become more confident that you could manage to understand the most difficult and complex material the teacher presented for practice? (Why?) (motivation)

- I felt more *confident* because I always had freedom in this course. I could think and complete the tasks any way that I thought best. There were no fixed answers. *The teacher never put any pressure on the students.* That's why I'm more confident now.
- *My confidence increased* because the activities moved gradually from easy to harder, so I could also improve myself step by step. All the tasks in this course could serve as platforms or blueprints for doing other tasks in the future. Moreover, I can apply all skills I practiced in this course class in my life.
- *I felt more confident* during the course because I gained more experience in every class session. After the course, I had higher confidence that I would be able to manage any materials and tasks in English. I am not afraid or nervous anymore.

As seen in the subjects' responses to six interview questions, all subjects were positive to *learner-centered instruction* in that they were given freedom to do the tasks in learning activities in the way they thought best for them to learn. Two subjects responded to question 1 that they were actively involved in the learning tasks and activities and they enjoyed doing activities, particularly searching for needed information for the given learning tasks.

The subjects experienced learner-centered instruction as boosting their motivation for language performance, as emphasized in the work of Fulcher (2004) and Nonkukhetkhong et al. (2006). They were supported by the teacher in a new role as a facilitator rather than simply a person imparting knowledge to learners. As stated in their responses, they enjoyed language activities provided and managed by their teacher (Weimer, 2002).

The subjects were well aware of *interactions* required in the speaking tasks and gradually gained courage in communicating with their peers. As shown in their responses to

questions 2 and 3, they subjects tried their best to speak English when given freedom to communicate meanings without being grammatically restrained. The subjects gained their freedom and confidence through practice and support from their peers as well as facilitation from the teacher.

It was evident that interactions served as the key to the subjects' success in language skills development in both speaking and writing (Chusanachoti, 2009). From the subjects' responses, they asserted that interactions positively prompted them to talk to their peers and gained confidence in their efforts to communicate their intended meaning. With interactions initiated by language activities, the subjects were motivated to learn with awareness of their own learning strategies, emphasized in the studies by Dörnyei (2000, 2001) and Chusanachoti (2009).

It should be noted that the subjects were pleased that their performance were *assessed authentically* by the tasks given—be it speaking or writing as the end performance. The subjects were motivated to try harder to achieve, like searching for their speaking and writing tasks for end performances. The subjects showed in their responses to questions 4 and 5 their appreciation for freedom to think for themselves and find the best way to complete the given tasks. As a result, the subjects asserted on their *motivation* that they gained more confidence in speaking and writing because they were given freedom to make decision for themselves how to handle the learning tasks and the teacher facilitated their learning and not putting pressure on them. Their motivation and increased confidence were expressed clearly in their responses to question 6.

Authenticity in materials used for language activities and assessment methods valid for the target performance is of prime importance when it comes to productive skills development as in speaking and writing (Grant, 2004; Banditvilai, 2006). In this study, the subjects were assessed authentically in the speaking and writing tasks as specified as end performances. With reading as a platform for the subjects' practice via language activities in support of the end performance. The subjects were well aware of their own language development and increased motivation or willingness to try their best to communicate in speaking and writing, followed by clear-cut criteria for language skills assessment informed by the teacher. As a result, teachers or school administration need to find appropriate and practical methods to assess students' language performance or the level of communicative competence pertinent to the target learning outcome and provide feedback to learners for sustaining skills development. Such points of concern were emphasized in the work of quite a few earlier researchers: Wrenshall (2005), Yanyan (2009), Evans (2009), Spiller (2009), and Pholsward (2014).

8. Limitation of the study

The study was somewhat restrained by limited time for data collection. Class schedule was fixed by the Faculty concerned and it had impact on those subjects who were absent and were not able to participate in language activities for the expected end performance. That was the case of students 3 and 18 who did not move to the final performance because they were missing from the language activities provided prior to their

end performance. The case of students 2 and 8 was similar in that they managed to participate in language activities but missed assignment submission as required. In such cases, it was unlikely for the researcher to re-arrange or make up those activities required for them to reach their end performance due to the Faculty's class schedule was closed in the semester calendar.

9. Conclusion

As shown in this study, the researcher demonstrated how learner-centered instruction was trialed with university students. It was evident that ESL teaching has shifted its focus from the teacher-dominated instruction to a student-centered learning mode. From the subjects' end performance in speaking and writing, it was obvious that the subjects showed their gained status in their language performance. Their responses in the structured interviews revealed a similar trend on how they were motivated to learn by language activities that prompted their interactions for communication tasks in speaking and writing with reading as a platform to information to do language activities as well as gain ideas to perform on speaking and writing tasks as required in nine lessons. The subjects asserted that they enjoyed freedom and autonomy in their own learning with facilitation from the teacher. They had ample opportunities to develop various skills through discussion, negotiation, and decision making.

The study has also demonstrated benefits of learning and working in a learner-centered atmosphere. They subjects were led through experience their language learning by interacting and communicating with their peers, and gained confidence in so doing. They were encouraged to search for needed information for their speaking and writing tasks. As their language performance were assessed authentically with specific criteria informed to them, the subjects were encouraged to perform toward their goals on conveying their intended meaning and their language tasks were assessed in terms of success in communication, not on language grammar as traditionally evaluated.

It was expected that ESL teachers and practitioners should perhaps take this study as an example on how to implement learner-centered instruction by means of facilitation and language activities provided by the teacher. The significance of language interactions for communication tasks as well as authenticity for used materials and assessment methods should be carefully considered regarding relevance and practicality. It should be noted that a supportive language teacher should value students' thoughts and feelings toward materials of their interest, accommodate their learning processes, and find way to assist and motivate them to communicate successfully with their peers; success in learning as such will create a sense of achievement that in turn can sustain their interest in attaining even better performance as their ESL learning goal.

10. The Author

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12. Appendices: Lesson Modules based on *Interest, Effort* and *Attitude* with Pre- and Post-Questionnaire

12.1 Interest-based lesson plan modules 1-3

Lesson model on Reading-Speaking-Writing reflecting INTEREST

LESSON MODULE LAYOUT

➤ 120 minutes allocated: 110 minutes + 10 minutes for spare time

Pre-questionnaire of INTEREST component – Before opening of Module 1 (10 minutes)

.....
Module explanation: Target learning outcome; objectives; learning task performance assessment; student feedback; and teacher feedback (10 minutes)

Silent reading

Learning Activity 1 – Communication skills in Reading = Clarifying

Learning Activity 2 – Communication skills in Reading = Making connections

Learning Activity 3 – Communication skills in Speaking = Questioning

Learning Activity 4 – Communication skills in Speaking = Predicting

Learning Activity 5 – Communication skills in Writing = Summarizing

Learning Activity 6 – Communication skills in Writing = Evaluating

Student feedback (10 minutes)

Teacher feedback

.....
Post-questionnaire of INTEREST component – Before closing of Module 3 (15 minutes)

TEACHING METHOD & PROCEDURE:

The teacher uses the teaching method and procedure emphasizing learner participation and interaction in two modes: teacher-student and student-student. Learner participation and interaction are reflected in learning tasks and learning activities with clear-cut lesson module specifications.

SELECTED SKILLS: Reading, Speaking, and Writing

OBJECTIVE: Students will be able to transfer learned language knowledge in reading to productive language skills: Speaking and Writing.

LEARNING OUTCOME [language achievement]

Communication skills in Reading: 1) Clarifying; 2) Making connection

Communication skills in Speaking: 1) Questioning; 2) Predicting

Communication skills in Writing: 1) Summarizing; 2) Evaluating

LEARNING TASKS 1-6

[INTEREST: work independently and collaboratively]

➤ Communication skills in Reading:

1. Clarifying [work individually]

2. Making connections [work in pairs]

➤ Communication skills in Speaking: Performance score (perhaps 1-10)

1. Questioning [work individually]

2. Predicting [work in pairs]

➤ Communication skills in Writing: Performance score (perhaps 1-10)

1. Summarizing [work individually]
2. Evaluating [work in pairs]

LEARNING TASK 7

INTEREST: Students are motivated and prepared to sustain a lifelong passion for language learning. [Search for more information from extended reading.]

LEARNING TASK SPECIFICATIONS

[For research tools: pre/post-questionnaire; classroom observation; student feedback; teacher feedback; and selected interview]

A desire to learn the language (INTEREST)

1. Students are actively involved in a task and classroom activities.
2. Students try to communicate using the target language with teachers and peers.
3. Students ask teachers to clarify concepts they don't understand well.
4. Students are attentive during the lessons.

Pre-Questionnaire of INTEREST component – Before opening of Module 1 (10 minutes)

Directions for students: Please tell us about your desire to learn English in the INTEREST modules 1-3 by choosing figures 1 (low) through 5 (high) to indicate what you feel about learning tasks, learning activities, and your classroom performance as shown below. Select the figure by drawing a circle around it [hard copy] or highlighting it in yellow [soft file]:

1. I will be actively involved in assigned learning tasks and learning activities1 2 3 4 5
2. I will try to communicate in English with the teacher.....1 2 3 4 5
3. I will try to communicate in English with my fellow students.....1 2 3 4 5
4. I will ask the teacher to clarify concepts I don't understand.....1 2 3 4 5
5. I will try to make connections for ideas in the assigned reading text.....1 2 3 4 5
6. I will use Questioning techniques to help me comprehend the reading text better.....1 2 3 4 5
7. I will use Predicting techniques to help me think critically about the reading text1 2 3 4 5
8. I will use Summarizing techniques to help me comprehend the major points in the reading text1 2 3 4 5
9. I will use Evaluating techniques to help me think analytically and critically about the reading text1 2 3 4 5
10. I will be attentive to all classroom activities and target skill practices1 2 3 4 5

Post-questionnaire of INTEREST component--Before closing of Module 3 (10 minutes)

Directions for students: Please tell us again about your desire to learn English in the INTEREST modules 1-3 by choosing figures 1 (low) to 5 (high) to indicate what you feel about learning tasks, learning activities, and your classroom performance as shown below. Select the figure by drawing a circle around it [hard copy] or highlighting it in yellow [soft file]:

I have been...

1. actively involved in assigned learning tasks and learning activities.....1 2 3 4 5
2. trying to communicate in English with the teacher.....1 2 3 4 5
3. trying to communicate in English with my fellow students.....1 2 3 4 5
4. asking the teacher to clarify concepts I don't understand.....1 2 3 4 5
5. trying to make connections for ideas in the assigned reading texts.....1 2 3 4 5
6. using Questioning techniques to help me comprehend the reading texts better.....1 2 3 4 5
7. using Predicting techniques to help me think critically about the reading texts1 2 3 4 5

8. using Summarizing techniques to help me comprehend the major points in the reading texts.....1 2 3 4 5
9. using Evaluating techniques to help me think analytically and critically about the reading texts.....1 2 3 4 5
10. attentive to all classroom activities and target skill practices.....1 2 3 4 5

12.2 Effort-based lesson plan Modules 4-6

Lesson model on Reading-Speaking-Writing reflecting EFFORT

LESSON MODULE LAYOUT

- 120 minutes allocated: 110 minutes + 10 minutes for spare time

Pre-questionnaire of EFFORT component – Before opening of Module 4 (10 minutes)

.....
 Module explanation – Target learning outcome; objectives; learning task performance assessment; student feedback; and teacher feedback (10 minutes)

Silent reading

Learning Activity 1 – Communication skills in Reading = Scanning

Learning Activity 2 – Communication skills in Reading = Skimming

Learning Activity 3 – Communication skills in Speaking = Presenting

Learning Activity 4 – Communication skills in Speaking = Discussing

Learning Activity 5 – Communication skills in Writing = Detailing

Learning Activity 6 – Communication skills in Writing = Highlighting

Student feedback (10 minutes)

Teacher feedback

.....
 Post-questionnaire of EFFORT component – Before closing of Module 6 (15 minutes)

TEACHING METHOD & PROCEDURE:

The teacher uses the teaching method and procedure emphasizing learner participation and interaction in two modes: teacher-student and student-student. Learner participation and interaction are reflected in learning tasks and learning activities with clear-cut lesson module specifications.

SELECTED SKILLS: Reading, Speaking, and Writing

OBJECTIVE:

Students will be able to transfer learned language knowledge in reading to productive language skills: Speaking and Writing.

LEARNING OUTCOME [language achievement]

Communication skills in Reading: 1) Scanning; 2) Skimming

Communication skills in Speaking: 1) Presenting; 2) Discussing

Communication skills in Writing: 1) Detailing; 2) Highlighting

LEARNING TASKS 1-6

[EFFORT: individual presentation and pair discussions]

- Communication skills in Reading:
 1. Scanning [work individually]
 2. Skimming [work in pairs]
- Communication skills in Speaking: Performance score (perhaps 1-10)
 1. Presenting [work individually]

- 2. Discussing [work in pairs]
- Communication skills in Writing: Performance score (perhaps 1-10)
 - 1. Detailing [work individually]
 - 2. Highlighting [work in pairs]

LEARNING TASK 7

EFFORT: Students are motivated to overcome reading difficulties by highlighting as well as electronically share learning experiences and thoughts among peers and teachers. [Search for more information from electronically extended reading.]

LEARNING TASK SPECIFICATIONS

[For research tools: pre/post-questionnaire; classroom observation; student feedback; teacher feedback; and selected interview]

Motivational intensity (EFFORT)

- 1. Students make every effort to communicate meaning and ideas effectively.
- 2. Students try for good marks and test scores by striving to learn as much as possible.
- 3. Students look for additional information to clarify points they don't fully understand.
- 4. Students share learning experiences and thoughts among peers and teachers.

Pre-questionnaire of EFFORT component – Before opening of Module 4 (10 minutes)

Directions for students: Please tell us about your motivational intensity in the EFFORT modules 4-6 by choosing figures 1 (low) through 5 (high) to indicate what you feel about the learning tasks, the learning activities, and your classroom performance as shown below. Select the figure by drawing a circle around it [hard copy] or highlighting it in yellow [soft file]:

- 1. I always make every effort to communicate meanings and ideas effectively in assigned learning tasks and learning activities.....1 2 3 4 5
- 2. I always try my best to make good marks and test scores by striving to learn as much as possible.....1 2 3 4 5
- 3. I always look for additional information to clarify points I don't fully understand.....1 2 3 4 5
- 4. I always share learning experiences and thoughts among peers and with the teacher.....1 2 3 4 5
- 5. I often use Scanning techniques to identify the specific information of the text to help me better understand the reading text1 2 3 4 5
- 6. I often use Skimming techniques to help me get the main idea of the text and better comprehend the reading text1 2 3 4 5
- 7. I often use Presenting techniques to share new ideas from the reading text assigned in class and communicate them to my peers1 2 3 4 5
- 8. I often use Discussing techniques to share learning experiences and thoughts with my partner and the teacher.....1 2 3 4 5
- 9. I often use Detailing reading techniques to help me understand and identify all points being made in the reading text.....1 2 3 4 5
- 10. I often use Highlighting techniques to help me understand the important points or facts in the reading text and to better comprehend the reading text1 2 3 4 5

Post-questionnaire of EFFORT component--Before closing of Module 6 (10 minutes)

Directions for students: Please tell us again about your motivational intensity in the EFFORT modules 4-6 by choosing figures 1 (low) to 5 (high) to indicate what you feel about learning tasks, learning activities, and your classroom performance as shown below. Select the figure by drawing a circle around it [hard copy] or highlighting it in yellow [soft file]:

I have been...

1. making every effort to communicate meanings and ideas effectively in assigned learning tasks and learning activities.....1 2 3 4 5
2. trying my best to make good marks and test scores by striving to learn as much as possible.....1 2 3 4 5
3. trying to look for additional information to clarify the points I didn't fully understand...1 2 3 4 5
4. sharing learning experiences and thoughts among peers and with the teacher.....1 2 3 4 5
5. using Scanning techniques to identify the specific information of the text to help me better understand the reading text1 2 3 4 5
6. using Skimming techniques to help me get the main idea of the text and better comprehend the reading text.....1 2 3 4 5
7. using Presenting techniques to share new ideas from the reading text assigned in class and communicate them to my peers1 2 3 4 5
8. using Discussing techniques to share learning experiences and thoughts with my partner and the teacher.....1 2 3 4 5
9. using Detailing reading techniques to help me understand and identify all points being made in the reading text1 2 3 4 5
10. using Highlighting techniques to help me understand the important points or facts in the reading text and to better comprehend the reading text1 2 3 4 5

11.3 Attitude-based lesson plan modules 7-9

Lesson model on Reading-Speaking-Writing reflecting ATTITUDE

LESSON MODULE LAYOUT

➤ 120 minutes allocated: 110 minutes + 10 minutes for spare time

Pre-questionnaire of ATTITUDE component – Before opening of Module 7 (10 minutes)

.....

Module explanation – Target learning outcome; objectives; learning task performance assessment; student feedback; and teacher feedback (10 minutes)

Silent reading

Learning Activity 1 – Communication skills in Reading = Independent searching

Learning Activity 2 – Communication skills in Reading = Collaborative searching

Learning Activity 3 – Communication skills in Speaking = Reporting

Learning Activity 4 – Communication skills in Speaking = Reacting

Learning Activity 5 – Communication skills in Writing = Selecting

Learning Activity 6 – Communication skills in Writing = Commenting

Student feedback (10 minutes)

Teacher feedback

.....

Post-questionnaire of ATTITUDE component – Before closing of Module 9 (15 minutes)

.....

TEACHING METHOD & PROCEDURE:

The teacher uses the teaching method and procedure emphasizing learner participation and interaction in two modes: teacher-student and student-student. Learner participation and interaction are reflected in learning tasks and learning activities with clear-cut lesson module specifications.

SELECTED SKILLS: Reading, Speaking, and Writing

OBJECTIVE:

Students will be able to transfer learned language knowledge in reading to productive language skills: Speaking and Writing.

LEARNING OUTCOME [language achievement]

Communication skills in Reading: 1) Independent searching; 2) Collaborative searching

Communication skills in Speaking: 1) Reporting; 2) Reacting

Communication skills in Writing: 1) Selecting; 2) Commenting

LEARNING TASKS 1-6

[**ATTITUDE:** engage in reading voluntarily both inside and outside the class]

- Communication skills in Reading:
 1. Independent searching [work individually]
 2. Collaborative searching [work in pairs]

- Communication skills in Speaking: Performance score (perhaps 1-10)
 1. Reporting [work individually]
 2. Reacting [work in pairs]

- Communication skills in Writing: Performance score (perhaps 1-10)
 1. Selecting [work individually]
 2. Commenting [work in pairs]

LEARNING TASK 7

ATTITUDE: Students are motivated to choose their own reading materials as well as a place and time to read them. [Search for more information from electronically extended reading.]

LEARNING TASK SPECIFICATIONS

[For research tools: pre/post-questionnaire; classroom observation; student feedback; teacher feedback; and selected interview]

Favorable attitude toward learning a language (ATTITUDE)

1. Students enjoy being in the class and working on learning tasks.
2. Students like to help their peers to complete pair tasks.
3. Students express impressions and positive feelings toward the language and/or about the speakers of the target language.
4. Students feel confident that they can manage to understand the most difficult and complex material presented for practice by the teacher.

Pre-questionnaire of ATTITUDE component – Before opening of Module 7 (10 minutes)

Directions for students: Please tell us about your attitude toward learning English in the ATTITUDE modules 7-9 by choosing figures 1 (low) through 5 (high) to indicate what you feel about the learning

tasks, the learning activities, and your classroom performance as shown below. Select the figure by drawing a circle around it [hard copy] or highlighting it in yellow [soft file]:

1. I always enjoy the class and working on assigned learning tasks and learning activities..1 2 3 4 5
2. I am always glad to help my peer to complete pair tasks and activities.....1 2 3 4 5
3. I always express impressions and positive feelings toward English and/or about speakers
.....1 2 3 4 5
4. I am always confident to manage and understand the most difficult and complex
material presented for practice by the teacher.....1 2 3 4 5
5. I often use an Independent searching for good reading material and voluntarily
choose a place and time to read it.....1 2 3 4 5
6. I often use a Collaborative searching with my peer for good reading material and
voluntarily choose a place and time to read it together.....1 2 3 4 5
7. I often use Reporting techniques to help me express my impressions and feelings about the issues in
the reading text given by the teacher.....1 2 3 4 5
8. I often use Reacting techniques to express my impressions and feelings about the issues and
information in the reading text selected from a collaborative searching.....1 2 3 4 5
9. I often use Selecting techniques to help me manage and understand the most difficult and complex
material presented by the teacher for practice.....1 2 3 4 5
10. I often use Commenting techniques to help my peer to complete assigned learning
tasks and learning activities.....1 2 3 4 5

Post-questionnaire of ATTITUDE component—Before closing of Module 9

Directions for students: Please tell us again about your motivational intensity in the ATTITUDE modules 7-9 by choosing figures 1 (low) to 5 (high) to indicate what you feel about learning tasks, learning activities, and your classroom performance as shown below. Select the figure by drawing a circle around it [hard copy] or highlighting it in yellow [soft file]:

I have been...

1. enjoying the class and working on assigned learning tasks and learning activities1 2 3 4 5
2. helping my peers to complete pair tasks and activities.....1 2 3 4 5
3. expressing impressions and positive feelings toward English and/or about speakers1 2 3 4 5
4. confident in managing and understanding the most difficult and complex material presented for
practice by the teacher1 2 3 4 5
5. using Independent searching to find good reading material and voluntarily choose a
place and time to read it.....1 2 3 4 5
6. using Collaborative searching with their peers to find good reading material and
voluntarily choose a place and time to read it together.....1 2 3 4 5
7. using Reporting techniques to help them express their impressions and feelings
about the issues in the assigned reading text1 2 3 4 5
8. using Reacting techniques to express their impressions and feelings about the issues
and information in the reading text selected from Collaborative searching.....1 2 3 4 5
9. using Selecting techniques to help them manage and understand the most difficult and complex
material presented by me for practice.....1 2 3 4 5
10. using Commenting techniques to help their peers to complete assigned learning
tasks and learning activities1 2 3 4 5