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**Investigating the Effect of Learner-Centered
Activity on EFL Primary School Pupils'
Engagement. The Case of Fourth Year at
Mohammed Ben Chainoune Primary School.**

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Dedication

First and foremost,

I thank Allah for showing me the right path

To my dear parents,

Kamal OUAHABI and Razika ALLAOUA

To my dear brother and sisters

To my grandmother, may Allah have mercy on her

To my dearest partner in the journey, Bouchra

To the one who believed in me

To all my beloved friends

To my lovely pupils

I dedicate this work,

Zineb Lina OUAHABI

Dedication

Alhamduli'Allah with love, thanks and gratitude for beginning and concluding

To the symbol of generosity and sacrifice,

my dear father Abdelhamid OUKALI.

To the one who welcomes me with a smile and bids me farewell with a prayer,

my beloved mother Habiba BOUCETTA

To that deep source of strength and love, my brothers and twin sisters.

To my dear partner Lina, who shared this long journey with me

To all my dear friends

I dedicate this research to you, the result of my efforts, sleepless nights and endless

hope, with all my love.

Bouchra Zineb OUKALI

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Abstract

The current study investigates the effect of learner-centered approach (LCA) on English as a Foreign Language (EFL) primary school pupils' engagement. The case study of fourth year primary school pupils. The main objective of the present study is to examine teachers' perceptions of the use of LCA and determine its effectiveness on EFL primary school pupils' engagement. A holistic theoretical framework is reviewed to provide insights about the two variables: Learner-Centered Approach and Pupils Engagement, highlighting their both definitions and importance, features of LCA and dimensions of engagement. This descriptive study employs a qualitative approach, incorporating interviews and classroom observations conducted with a sample of thirty-five (35) fourth year primary school pupils and fourteen (14) EFL primary school teachers during the academic year 2024-2025 under normal conditions. After analyzing the data gathered from the research instruments, findings reveal that teachers view LCA as an essential and effective teaching approach, and the implementation of this approach in EFL primary school classes is effective on pupils' engagement, when they actively participate, understand better and show interest and motivation. Based on the results, the study inform recommendations for addressing curriculum gaps, incorporating formative assessment and extending session durations. However, the study notes certain limitations which include the short duration of the session, the impact of small sample size on the generalizability of the results and the research short period which may affect the observation of the long-term effect of LCA. In spite of the mentioned limitations, the study offers significant insights for the implementation of LCA in EFL primary school education.

Keywords: Learner-Centered Approach, Pupils' engagement, EFL learners, English as a Foreign Language, EFL teachers, Teachers' perceptions, Features of LCA, Dimensions of engagement, Active participation, The implementation of LCA.

List of Abbreviations

%: Percentage

EFL: English as a Foreign Language

LCA: Learner-Centered Approach

L2: Second Language

N: Number of Students and Teachers

P: Page

PBL: Project Based Learning

PhD: Doctor of Philosophy

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GENERAL INTRODUCTION

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The inclusion of English as a foreign language in primary schools is a challenging point for teachers to deliver the educational message clearly, since they are dealing with young learners who will be learning this language for the first time. The primary school stage is considered as the basic step in learners' educational careers, which requires selecting the appropriate methods that align with their ages. Hence, the learner-centered approach (LCA) is widely adopted globally for teaching foreign languages. In light of this thought, LCA implementation seems to have effective results on EFL primary school pupils' engagement. Therefore, all EFL primary school teachers need to be aware of how applying LCA in their classes. In view of this awareness, this approach would be helpful for learners in terms of addressing their needs and interests, boosting their comprehension and increasing their participation. In addition, it helps teachers to reach their goals when they contribute in developing learners' educational growth, experience creativity in teaching and ensure learners' engagement. This means that the appropriate implementation of this approach can guarantee the success of the teaching-learning process.

1. Statement of the Problem

After integrating the English as a foreign language in primary schools, it has become essential to engage pupils in the learning process. The Teacher-centered approach limits the opportunities of active participation and engagement, which results a passive learning environment and disengaged pupils. Thus, this study aims to fill this gap by investigating the effectiveness of implementing the learner-centered approach on fourth year EFL primary school pupils' engagement. Particularly, emphasizing on the crucial role of LCA in enhancing pupils' behavioral, cognitive and emotional

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engagement. Ultimately, it is important to advance the teaching field by incorporating updated teaching methods that ensure the effective transmission of the educational message.

2. Research Questions

The current study has two main questions, which seeks to answer:

1. What is the effect of the implementation of the learner-centered approach on EFL primary school pupils' engagement?
2. What are the teachers' perceptions towards the implementation of learner-centered approach in EFL primary schools?

3. Objectives of the Study

This investigation revolves around two main objectives:

1. To determine the effectiveness of implementing LCA in enhancing EFL primary school pupils' engagement.
2. To examine teachers' perceptions regarding the implementation of LCA in EFL primary schools.

4. Aim of the Study

The present study deals with the implementation of the learner-centered approach in EFL primary schools. It aims to investigate the effectiveness of implementing the LCA on EFL primary school pupils' engagement. Particularly, examining the influence of LCA on the three dimensions of engagement including behavioral, cognitive and emotional engagement. In addition to that, it aims to explore teachers' perspectives on applying this approach.

5. Significance of the Study

The findings of this study hold considerable significance for the research topic. This descriptive study explores the implementation of the learner-centered approach in

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EFL primary schools, which plays an essential role in the teaching-learning process. In educational contexts, this approach has a positive effect on enhancing EFL primary school pupils' engagement. In other words, the effective implementation of this approach is achieved when its core features are applied appropriately; as a result, pupils' engagement will be developed. The study also seeks to gain a comprehensive understanding of teachers' perceptions towards using the LCA in EFL primary school settings. Finally, by bridging the gap between theory and practice and suggesting recommendations, this research aims to enrich the pedagogical experiences of both EFL teachers and researchers.

6. Research Methodology

This study utilizes a descriptive method taking a qualitative research design to comprehensively collect insights into the research topic.

6.1 Participants

The targeted population of this study is fourth year EFL primary school learners at Mohammed Ben Chainoune Primary School during the academic year 2024/2025. The sample consists of thirty-five (35) primary school pupils from a total population of fifty-five (55) pupils. The sample population was selected using non-probability sampling, particularly the convenience one. The reason behind choosing fourth year primary school learners is that it is their second year of studying the English language and they are at a suitable level that helps researchers to conduct this research. Fourteen EFL primary school teachers, on the other hand, also are considered as participants in this investigation.

6.2 Research Instruments

This investigation incorporates multiple data collection tools to collect valuable insights to answer the research questions. An interview was addressed to EFL primary

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school teachers to investigate their perceptions towards the use of LCA in their classes. In addition to the interview, classroom observations are conducted to facilitate obtaining observable outcomes related to learners' engagement.

6.3 Data Analysis

After conducting interviews with teachers and undertaking classroom observations, the results will be analyzed by using descriptive analytical paragraphs. The interview responses will provide insights about teachers' perceptions towards LCA implementation and its effectiveness. While, the observation checklist will be analyzed thematically to confirm the findings obtained from teachers' interviews.

7. Structure of the Dissertation

The dissertation follows a structure with two core chapters. Each chapter is divided into two main sections. The first chapter is purely theoretical, while the second one is about the fieldwork. The first chapter includes two sections, section one is concerned with the variable "the Learner-Centered Approach". It presents its definitions, features, advantages and importance. While the second section is about "Pupils' Engagement". It focuses on defining the term engagement, encompassing its dimensions followed by its importance. Then, it explores the way this approach can effect pupils' engagement.

The second chapter is also divided into two sections. The first one is devoted to the research methodology, including research design, setting, sample population and instruments. The final section addresses the description and data analysis, which details the description, objectives and the data analysis of the research instruments. It also includes the discussion of the results, recommendations and limitations of the study concluding by a general conclusion.

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Learner-Centered Approach

1. Introduction

This section serves as the theoretical foundation about the main concept Learner-Centered Approach (LCA). It begins by defining the general concept of teaching methods. Then it provides the historical overview of learner-centered approach. Furthermore, it tends to define this approach according to several scholars, following this by exploring its key features. This section highlights the difference between the two approaches **the learner-centered approach** and **the teacher-centered approach** and examines the implementation of learner-centered approach in primary school EFL classroom. Additionally, it emphasizes the teachers' crucial role in learner-centered approach, then it stresses the importance of this approach. By the end of this section, the researcher illustrates the advantages of the implementation of the learner-centered approach in primary school EFL classroom.

2. Teaching Methods

Teaching can be both an art and a science. As a science, it requires teachers to possess certain sort of rules, information and the basics about teaching. As an art, this action demands creativity, intuition, and a deep understanding of students' emotions rather than just following certain rules or standardized methods. It is a flexible process that requires a variety of teaching methods, which ensure effective results in learning, foster a better understanding and address diverse students' needs.

While definitions of *teaching* and *methods* may vary, they are interrelated terms because they have a complementary relationship in the pedagogical field.

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According to Medley (1979), teaching is a multifaceted concept that focuses on three essential components. Firstly, it is interpersonal, which means that there is a strong, respectful relationship between the teacher and the learner that realizes a supportive learning environment. Secondly, it is interactive, which encourages both teachers and learners to actively participate in the learning process, by asking questions and participating in group discussion, which enhances their understanding. Finally, it is described as an instructional process, which is organized, planned and designed with objectives that facilitate learning. In addition, teaching plays a crucial role in developing students' abilities, enabling them to acquire knowledge, skills and values.

While a method is defined as "an umbrella term for the specification and interrelation of theory and practice" (Richard & Rodgers, 1982, p.154). This means that method is a broader framework that connects theoretical principles with practical applications, because it includes many aspects, such as selecting teaching methods, learning theories and techniques to implement them in the educational settings. Consequently, effective teaching is based on both the educational theories and their practice in real classroom situations.

A teaching method, as defined by Liu and Shi (2007), is a structured approach which is composed of principles, procedures and strategies that teachers apply in classrooms to facilitate learning and achieve educational goals. For instance, when a teacher is explaining a lesson related to "the daily routine", he can apply principles of a particular teaching method like grammar transitional method, which requires learning and highlighting vocabulary. For the procedures and strategies, the teacher in this lesson can use translation and drills to facilitate the learning process of the vocabulary items found in the lesson of "daily routine".

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Additionally Richards and Rodgers (2001), defined teaching methods as "A coherent set of links between actions and thoughts in language teaching, based on a theory of language and learning. Methods provide specific instructional designs, classroom activities, and roles for teachers and learners." This suggests that there is a connection between actions (practices) and thoughts in the theory of language teaching and learning. Also, this definition emphasizes that teaching methods are deliberately chosen rather than applied randomly when selecting the appropriate materials and activities. More, Richards and Rodgers (2001) highlight that a teaching method is a structured approach aligned by linguistic and educational theories. This teaching method is an interactive For example, in the lesson of "school commands", instead of translating the word "underline", the teacher may perform the action to teach it, he provides a worksheet with classroom objects and asks the pupils to underline the word "book". In this way they learn vocabulary through action (practice).

Further process where teachers, learners and teaching materials play equal significant roles, meaning what teachers should do, how learners should interact, and which type of teaching materials should be used to support the learning process. To illustrate, the teacher may organize a role-play activity about "favourite toy", in a dialogue, where pupils ask each other, "What is your favourite toy?" using toys' flashcards. Here, the teacher's role is to guide and correct mistakes, the learner's role is to practice speaking and listening skills, and the instructional materials used are flashcards.

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3. Historical Overview

Over time, the learner-centered approach has been integrated in education. Therefore, it is difficult to conduct a research about any concept without reference to its history. Its origins as an idea go back as far as constructivist theories. The idea of learner-centered approach rooted in ancient Greece, where Socrates used techniques of questioning to encourage thinking. Starting from this idea, the learner-centered approach has been appeared.

Dewey (1938), emphasized that education should encourage student's active involvement, and focus on practice and real-life experiences instead of relying on rote memorization. Dewey prioritizes active learning, cooperation and real-world experiences since teaching puts the primacy of students' needs and interests instead of rote memorizing and passive learning. During 1960 in England, where child centered version has become part of education policy. Also, The USA embraced the learner-centered approach through progressive education.

In recent decades, learner-centered approach becomes widely spread in the global South, where it is considered as an educational tool. Additionally, based on international organization including UNICEF have strongly supported its effective implementation in education. Since the inception of the current century, there is a significant shift in teaching, flipping from teacher-centered approach, which is commonly referred to as the traditional mode of instruction to learner-centered approach because of its effectiveness in learners' outcomes.

4. Definition of Learner-Centered Approach (LCA)

Various scholars have proposed diverse definitions of Learner-Centered Approach (LCA). It is commonly defined as a teaching method that prioritizes learners'

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interests and needs. In this approach, the teacher's role is a facilitator and supporter, rather than only an information deliverer I traditional methods, where learners are passive recipients of knowledge. When applying this method, it is commonly known that learners have more opportunities to show their interests, participate actively in lessons and collaborate with peers and groups (Llego, 2022).

Furthermore, according to Richards and Schmidt (2010, p.326), students' nature and willingness influence the learning process. They emphasize that students' needs, interests and abilities should be at the core of all aspects of language teaching, this includes the act of planning, teaching and evaluation. For instance, when a teacher observes that his learners are struggling with reading skill, he may include pictures and topics related to cartoon that interest his students in the reading lesson to support comprehension. During assessment, the teacher considers students' levels and differences by giving easier tasks for the intermediate learners and more difficult ones to the advanced learners. Similarly, Collins and O'Brien (2003, p. 338) stated that student-centered pedagogy is an approach that prioritizes the students' active role in their learning. Which means they help the teacher to decide what to teach them, how to teach and what teaching materials are used, and how fast or slow the lesson goes. Such an approach encourages the students to take responsibility for their learning experience.

Additionally, Bransford and others (2000), asserted that "the learner-centered approach acknowledges that learners come with prior knowledge, experiences, and individual differences. Effective learning environments support students in making connections, developing skills, and applying knowledge meaningfully." According to the definition mentioned above, it can be viewed that every student possesses existing knowledge and a variety of individual characteristics. These differences need to be

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considered while teaching in order to construct new knowledge, develop skills and actively engage students in the learning process.

5. Key Features of Learner-Centered Approach

Mostly, teaching is effective when students are actively involved in their learning process. The learner-centered approach serves as an approach that enables students to be more responsible for their own learning by giving them opportunities and freedom in making choices and decisions about their learning experiences. Thus, the learner-centered approach is characterized by certain fundamental features, which are mentioned as follows:

- Balance of Power.
- Aligning Subject Matter to Fit Students' Needs, Background and Interests.
- Allowing Students to Participate in Decision-making about their Learning.
- Sharing the Responsibility for Both the Teacher and the Student to Learn.

The central feature is “the balance of power”, which is highlighted by Weimer (2002) and Blumberg (2009). It emphasizes a balanced learning environment by creating a shared process classroom rather than a one-sided shift of knowledge, since the teacher is not solely the knowledge provider instead, the student also has a say in his learning process by switching the control to him, this shift allows the learners to have a voice in classroom decisions. Similarly, Barr and Tagg (1995) argued that adopting student-centered learning approach allows teachers to involve students in the

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teaching-learning process. Consequently, this approach transforms the students from passive traditional role to an active participatory role in the learning process.

The second characteristic includes "aligning subject matter to fit students' needs and interests" (Cleveland-Innes et al., 2005). This feature encourages a sense of ownership over the learning process because when students recognize the value of what they are learning, they are more likely to be active participants and feel enthusiastic. This characteristic sheds light on the importance of selecting what students are interested in while learning. In other words, teachers are not required to blindly follow the curriculum, but they should have the flexibility to adapt their lessons and materials to align with their students. As a result, learners will be engaged since the content is designed according to their needs and interests.

Another element, which specifies this approach is "allowing students to participate in decision-making about their learning" (Blumberg, 2009; Doyle, 2008). This feature supports the idea that learners actively participate in shaping their own learning process rather than just receiving the information passively. Learners take part in making decisions based on selecting their preferred methods, teaching materials, assessments and content they want to learn. This involvement increases learners' confidence when their decisions and perspectives are valued and their learning is designed according to their preferences.

Lastly, "sharing the responsibility for both the teacher and the students to learn" (Barr & Tagg et al, 1995) is a crucial feature of learner-centered approach, which concentrates on the student-teacher partnership, highlighting their shared participation in the learning process. There is a joint effort between teachers and their learners and that appears when learners take the responsibility in their learning development. This responsibility boosts critical thinking and problem-solving skills.

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6. Learner-Centered Approach VS Teacher-Centered Approach

In the educational field, teaching is relied on various teaching methods. Each method is implemented to achieve specific academic goal. One of the most traditional and well-known used methods in teaching is teacher-centered approach.

According to Gage and Berliner (1998), they stated that the teacher-centered approach is an instructional method where the teacher's role is the only knowledge deliverer and provider, while learners are passive recipients of information. This contrasts with the learner-centered approach where the teacher acts as a facilitator who guides the students in constructing their own knowledge, while actively engaged in the classroom.

Regarding students' roles in the learning process, Schunk (2012) asserted that, in this approach the students' involvement is minimized in making decisions, passively listening and memorizing the information provided. In contrast, students in learner-centered approach have an increased engagement, high critical thinking and problem solving skills. In a traditional classroom, the teacher explains “grammar lesson” while learners listen quietly and write, they passively memorize the provided information. On the other hand, in a learner-centered classroom, the teacher takes into account learner's interests like writing about their hobbies. Here, the teacher involves students in group work to discuss their ideas and ask questions. These two examples illustrate the high and low involvement in both teacher-centered and Learner-centered approaches.

According to Arends (2014), the teacher-centered approach is purely lecture-based, which limits students' chance to interact, discuss and share ideas. However, in learner-centered approach, the teacher gives the students the opportunity to play an active role in their learning. Thus they are encouraged to discuss topics with each other,

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interact by asking questions and participate in problem solving activities, thereby reinforcing a more dynamic and effective learning environment.

7. The Implementation of Learner-Centered Approach in EFL Primary School Classroom

Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL) refers to the act of teaching English to non-native speakers (learners) for whom English is not their mother tongue. Scholars like Brown (2007) stated that EFL learners learn English in their own countries, where the language is not the mother tongue, unlike ESL learners who study English in countries where it is the main language of communication.

Over time, significant changes have occurred in second language teaching, especially when Noam Chomsky (1959) argued that language acquisition does not occur through habit formation (imitation, memorization and repetition). Instead, he suggested that humans have an innate capacity for language learning. From this respect, learners' role have been shifted from passive recipients to active participants in their own language development. As a result, learning a second language is seen as a natural mental process where students are responsible for their learning experience.

Chomsky's idea supports the implementation of learner-centered approach in EFL classrooms, where learners take an active role in learning rather than passively following teacher's instructions. Since Chomsky emphasizes that language learning is a natural cognitive process, teachers in learner-centered classrooms provide learners enthusiastic opportunities to engage in meaningful activities that boost critical thinking, problem solving and knowledge construction (Noam Chomsky, 1959).

Additionally, Krashen (1982) stressed two key hypotheses in his theory of second language acquisition, which support the implementation of learner-centered

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approach in primary EFL classrooms. In the input hypothesis, learners are exposed to comprehensible input that is slightly beyond their current level "i+1". In learner-centered classroom, teachers provide activities depending on their level of input, permitting students to acquire language meaningful instead of rote memorizing. Similar to Vygotsky's (1978) Sociocultural Theory, learners acquire language effectively through communication and scaffolding, emphasizing the crucial role of interaction. This approach helps students improve their learning through collaboration, active engagement and take ownership of their learning.

Moreover, while implementing the learner-centered approach teachers use effective strategies such as Project Based Learning (PBL). According to Tomas (2002, p.1) Project Based Learning is described as an instructional strategy based on projects dealing with difficult tasks and questions. Through these tasks, learners actively participate in problem-solving and decision-making. This process reinforces autonomy and independent learning. PBL aligns with the learner-centered approach by shifting the focus from teachers to learners. Highlighting teacher's role as a facilitator rather than knowledge provider. Thus, learners take an active role by solving problems, making decisions and constructing knowledge.

8. Teachers' Role in Learner-Centered Approach

The effective implementation of the learner-centered approach requires an understanding of teacher's roles and responsibilities in the teaching environment. Rather than simply providing knowledge, teachers are expected to adapt instructions to students' needs and provide chances for interaction and engagement. This role is essential for effective foreign language teaching and learning (Da Luz, 2015).

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Spencer and Jordan (1999 p.318) argue that “The pedagogic shift from the traditional teacher-centered approach, in which the emphasis is on teachers and what they teach, to a student-centered approach, in which the emphasis is on students and what they learn, requires a fundamental change in the role of the educator from that of a didactic teacher to that of a facilitator of learning.” They highlight a key shift in educational field, where the focus has shifted from the teacher as solely an instructor to a facilitator who guides and supports students.

Teacher's roles are summarized as follows:

- Facilitator of Learning Experiences
- Motivator and Encourager
- Designer of Learning Experiences
- Assessor and Feedback Provider
- Personalized Learning Guide
- Supporter of Collaboration

In learner-centered approach, the teacher fulfills multiple roles while teaching. The fundamental role is a facilitator of learning, this appears in designing learning experiences that helps students build knowledge through their own understanding and actively engage them in learning process. This aligns with Weimer's (2013) assertion that in the learner-centered approach, teacher's role has changed from the only source of knowledge to a guider who facilitates learning experiences that support students to actively engage in building their own understanding. Similarly, Hostel and Garland, (2016), they stated that the instructor has a role of contextual facilitator in meeting learners' needs.

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In Alibakhsi's (2021) study, within the learner-centered classrooms, the teacher plays the role of motivator and encourager, who inspires, encourages and supports students' emotionally and academically. The author asserted that motivation is the responsibility of the teacher in facilitating the learning process, as not all learners possess an innate motivation when they learn. Through feedback provision, Students effort recognition and the creation a positive emotional environment, teachers effectively boost students' engagement and enhance active participation in the learning process.

Furthermore, the teacher also acts as designer of learning experiences, by creating meaningful activities and authentic tasks that encourage learners in processing information (Cooper et al, 2000). For example, when teaching "food and health" lesson, the teacher can organize a fun activity where pupils draw different kinds of food. Then they work in groups to classify them into "healthy" and "unhealthy" categories. After that, each group presents their project to the class. This activity helps pupils to learn by doing and share what they learn with others. As a result, it shows the important role of the teacher in creating meaningful tasks to aid pupils understand better and encourage their critical thinking.

Moreover, the teacher takes on the role of an assessor and feedback provider. According to Black and Wiliam (1998), effective teaching is more than just evaluating students' work at the end of a lesson. They emphasize the importance of continuous feedback through formative assessment by checking their progress during the learning process that help students understand their improvement. This type of feedback is not just about giving marks, but it helps learners think of their understanding, make modifications, and take responsibility for their own learning. Effective formative assessment directs students toward better performance and deeper learning

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Not only that, but also the teacher plays the role of personalized learning guide. In this approach, the child should be at the center of the school rather than the curriculum by providing instructions that fulfill students' interests, needs, learning preferences, as stated by Tomlinson (2014). Equally, Westbrook (1999), emphasizes that in the teaching process, educators should consider students' unique preferences and needs in their educational activities to lead to valuable outcomes.

The last role is supporter of collaboration. Accordingly, Lynch suggests that activities such as collaboration, cooperation and meaningful communication effectively reinforce students' interaction and communication skills. Also, Bruner (1966) emphasizes the guidance of teachers in collaboratively constructing knowledge with their peers, creating a safe collaborative learning environment. Ultimately, teachers' awareness in their role is vital for effective teaching. They must be conscious of students' differences, learning styles and development, confirming that instructions are applied accordingly.

9. The Importance of Implementing Learner-Centered Approach in EFL Primary School Classroom

Today's EFL classrooms are unlike those of the past couple decades. Learner-centered approach is gaining traction in education systems worldwide. LCA plays a crucial role in enhancing learning outcomes and developing learners' skills.

In the learning process, learner-centered approach is significant in enhancing students' learning experiences by prioritizing meaningful and effective learning opportunities. According to Blumberg and others (2009), this approach emphasizes the learning process and to what extent the learning results are achieved. Doyle (2008) asserted that learner-centered teaching involves evaluating all teaching activities by

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asking whether considering his students, the lesson and the classroom environment, will increase their chances to learn effectively?. In response to Doyle's question, (Barr & Tagg et al, 1995) highlighted that in learner-centered teaching, the focus is not given only to what the students learn but also to how they learn and whether they can retain and apply their knowledge effectively.

Depending on students' needs and interests, the teacher organizes activities that lead to valuable learning outcomes (Westbrook, 1999). As a result, effective learning occurs when the teachers align students' interests and their capabilities with the skills developed and the subject matter being taught (Dewey, 1985). This is particularly valuable in highlighting the importance of enhancing effective learning by tailoring activities to students' needs and preferences, ensuring an engaging learning environment and fostering skill development.

Johnson and Johnson (1999), stated that cooperative learning enhances academic achievement, improves retention and fosters positive peer interactions. This will contribute to motivate students to participate and engage them in a solidary environment, make them confident and strengthen the teacher-student partnership. Through working in group work students learn to appreciate each other's ideas and viewpoints, which builds a respectful environment in the classroom.

Concluding the previous views, the implementation of learner-centered approach in EFL classrooms has a dual (double) importance for both teachers and students. This is evident in fostering meaningful learning experiences, supporting skills development, enhancing student engagement, promoting effective retention and strengthening peer relationships.

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10. The Advantages of The Implementation of Learner-Centered Approach in EFL classrooms

Learner-centered approach is widely used in foreign language classrooms in order to facilitate the learning process. Teachers tend to make students engaged and participate in constructing knowledge through the integration of learner-centered approach. In this respect, Benjamin Franklin stated that "Tell me and I forget, teach me and I may remember, involve me and I learn." This highlights the benefits of active learning, where students are involved in the learning process instead of receiving knowledge passively. The implementation of learner-centered approach in EFL classrooms offers various advantages, which are discussed below:

Firstly, as Ma and Gao and others (2010), highlight the positive impact of engaging students in making decisions regarding their learning. When students are given a chance to choose topics, materials, or setting learning goals, they start to see themselves as an active participants rather than passive recipients of knowledge. This sense of responsibility boosts both their academic performance and personal growth and supports them to be engaged, motivated and more responsible for their education.

Secondly, in student-centered approach the teacher's role shifts from delivering content to facilitate learning. This places the student at the center of the learning process. In the researchers' view, adopting student-centered approach promotes control over learning, the use of primary sources, higher-order thinking and having a hand in developing students' participation in setting learning goals and making-decisions to achieve academic goals (DiCamillo and Gradwell).

Additionally, Reece and Walker (1997) suggest that a highly motivated learner with less ability can achieve greater success than a more intelligent learner who lacks

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motivation. In the same vein, McCombs and Whistler (1997) emphasized that learner-centered environment fosters for all learners a highest level of motivation and achievement. This results in active participation, critical thinking and interaction.

Furthermore, academic self-efficacy is a vital predictor in students' achievement. When the teacher involves his students in the learning process by encouraging them to share their ideas in group discussions, create projects related to the lesson, and act out scenarios with their classmates, students will believe in their ability and their confidence will develop. As a result, they will be motivated to engage and participate freely and take ownership of their learning journey. This supportive academic environment will strengthen their belief in their capabilities and positively impact their academic performance (Schemers et al., 2001).

Among the last advantage, Armbruster and others (2009) stated that the learner-centered approach and active learning methods effectively reinforce meaningful learning, cultivate positive attitudes and develop critical thinking skills. This appeared when Ambruster and colleagues designed an undergraduate introductory biology course by incorporating the implementation of student-centered approach and active learning. The course content was recognized around key themes with problem-based activities integrated into lectures and applied strategies to foster a more student-centered environment. The researchers observed a notable increase in student engagement, highlighting that such approaches not only enhance academic performance but also encourage critical thinking and boost positive attitudes toward learning.

In summary, the learner-centered approach grants numerous benefits that boost students' learning experience. By shifting the control to learners, it empowers students

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to learn independently. As Socrates wisely stated, “Education is the kindling of a flame, not the filling of a vessel.” This significantly captures the essence of learner-centered approach implementation, which aims to inspire curiosity instead of simply depositing information. Ultimately, LCA creates an interactive and dynamic learning environment, where the learners actively participate in their own intellectual growth.

EFL Primary School Pupils' Engagement

Introduction

This section provides a comprehensive examination of Engagement. Initially, it defines engagement in language learning from divergent perspectives. Following this, it explores the dimensions and indicators of engagement, including behavioral, cognitive and emotional engagement. Furthermore, it highlights the importance of engagement in EFL classrooms. Finally, it examines how the learner-centered approach affects EFL primary school pupils' engagement.

1. Definition of Engagement in Language Learning

Over the past few years, teachers have shown an increased interest in the concept of engagement as a way to improve students' involvement, prevent students' disengagement and increase students' motivation and academic achievement. Curiously, the term engagement was mainly known as a legal or ethical obligations (Axelson & Flick, 2010). However, it has recently spread in the educational context, focusing on students' involvement in learning.

Engagement is broadly defined, as it does not arise from a vacuum. It is shaped by culture, community, family, school, classroom dynamics, and peer interactions (Finn & Zimmer et al. 2012). According to Astin (1984) students' engagement in learning depends on both physical as the time they spend in studying or when they participate in the class, and mental efforts as attention, interaction and thinking, a student puts in their studies.

Skinner and Pitzer (2012) produced another definition, they stated that in learning, engagement fundamentally involves actions. Although there are various

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definitions and perspectives on engagement, the idea of engagement as an action remains the same across different definitions (Reschly and Christenson, 2012). This viewpoint suggests that, engagement action encompasses students' physical and mental efforts. Therefore, students' actions should be clearly purposeful goal-oriented.

Kuh (2003) introduced a new perspective on engagement by defining the concept of student engagement as the time and energy that students put into learning, both inside and outside the classroom environment. This includes mental and behavioral efforts as interaction, asking questions, and engaging in discussions with classmates inside the classroom. Outside the classroom, student engagement is appeared in activities like doing homework, preparing projects, and revising lessons. Kuh's definition also embraces educational practices that encourage students to take part in learning activities.

Through the definition of Newman and others (1992), student engagement in academic work is the psychological efforts and commitment students put into learning. It is not just about doing task, it is about understand and master the skills or knowledge that their school activities aim to develop. In other words, engaged students are not only completing tasks without aim; they are engaged by taking an active role in their learning and achieve academic success.

In summary, despite the diversity of definitions, a shared understanding is that engagement is an active process that requires effort, commitment and purposeful actions. This concept involves students' physical and mental investment in their academic experience, which promotes learning outcomes and creates an effective educational environment.

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2. Dimensions and Indicators of Engagement

Engagement is a multidimensional concept that reflects students' diverse patterns of motivation, cognition, and behavior (Fredricks et al., 2004). In their comprehensive review of engagement, Fredricks and others (2004) defined engagement as a flexible, involving and multidimensional construct that includes three broad dimensions: behavioral, cognitive and emotional. According to them, these dimensions are interconnected rather than independent.

2.1 Behavioral Engagement

In the context of second language (L2) learning, behavioral engagement refers to the extent and quality of learning, through measurable factors such as active participation, word counts and turn counts (Bygate & Samuda et al. 2009). Fredricks and others (2004), defined behavioral engagement in three key ways. The first method is positive conduct which encompasses following classroom norms and rules, and avoiding disruptive behaviors such as skipping school. The second manner emphasizes participation in academic activities which involves behaviors such as paying attention, asking questions and demonstrating persistence (Fredricks et al. 2004). The last way is involvement in educational activities that include school governance and sports (Finn et al. 1993). Since behavioral engagement is directly an observable dimension in L2 learning, indicators such as attendance, preparation and participation in curricular and learners' voluntary involvement reinforce students' levels of engagement.

2.2 Cognitive Engagement

According to Reeve (2012) and Svalberg (2009), cognitive engagement is defined as a learner's mental effort and activity in the learning process. When learners show deliberate, selective and focus their attention to achieve learning goals. In other

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words, this dimension refers to students' involvement in learning, highlighting their willingness and intentional effort to master challenging tasks, and promoting the effective use of learning strategies (Fredricks et al. 2004). In L2 classrooms, research on cognitive engagement has focused on verbal and non-verbal indicators. Verbal indicators include peer interactions, questioning, volunteering answers, providing feedback. On the other hand, cognitive engagement can also be examined through non-verbal indicators, where learners verbalize their thoughts, such as body language and positioning, eye contact and facial expressions (Fredricks & McColskey 2012).

2.3 Emotional Engagement

Emotional engagement refers to different terms, as a motivational engagement (Linnenbrink & Pintrich, 2003), psychological engagement (Finn, 1993), or affective engagement (Archambault et al., 2009). Despite the various terminologies, this dimension has a shared focus on students' feelings towards their academic environment (Fredricks et al., 2004). Emotional engagement is positively reflected in students' feelings of showing interest, happiness as well as the lack of negative emotions like anxiety, sadness and boredom (Fredricks et al., 2004).

3. The Importance of Engagement in EFL Classrooms

In EFL classrooms, the challenges of teaching different learners emphasize the crucial role of student engagement in fostering effective language learning and enhancing the learning experience. According to Fredricks and others (2004), engagement is important in language learning, as it includes three key dimensions: behavioral, emotional and cognitive engagement. They foster participation in learning tasks, maintain learners' interests and process knowledge in a meaningful way. They collectively enhance language acquisition and academic achievement.

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Additionally, engagement has a great significant for effective language learning. When learners are emotionally and cognitively involved, they improve linguistic competence by maintaining interest in, connecting to the learning process and motivating them to be active participants, which helps them develop their linguistic skills. It also contributes in promoting learner autonomy, allowing them to be responsible and independent in their language use. This aligns with the idea of Mercer and Dörnyei (2020).

Another importance is increasing communication and collaboration among students through interaction-based engagement which plays a vital role in developing linguistic skills. Valberg (2009) highlights the importance of incorporating social factors when assessing engagement stating that active participation enhances the language acquisition process. Group projects, discussion and peer feedback are examples of how social interaction can encourage the language learning process.

In summary, engagement is a fundamental aspect of effective language learning in EFL classrooms by enhancing language acquisition, improving linguistic competence, promoting learner autonomy and fostering communication and collaboration, making the learning experience effective and meaningful. When students' engagement increases, they become more involved in the learning process, resulting a deeper understanding, a successful academic achievement and better long-term retention of language.

4. The Effect of Learner-Centered Approach on EFL Primary School Pupils' Engagement

The learner-centered approach (LCA) promotes engagement among EFL primary school pupils by prioritizing active student participation over teacher-led

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instruction. Its core features, balance of power, aligning subject matter to students' needs, involving students in decision-making and sharing responsibility, positively effect behavioral, cognitive and emotional engagement, by encouraging active participation, autonomy and motivation, leading to more effective learning.

1. Balance of Power and Its Effect on Engagement

The balance of power in learner-centered approach significantly influences the three dimensions of engagement in EFL primary school pupils. Behavioral engagement is effected when power is shared between teachers and learners by making learners take an active role in participation, discussions, decision-making and group work, rather than passively receiving knowledge (Fredricks et al. 1997). This will encourage them to take ownership of their learning process and follow classroom norms.

From a cognitive engagement perspective, when students have a say in their learning, they increase critical thinking, problem solving and deeper language processing, through participating in tasks and activities (Reeve, 2012; Svalberg, 2009). Learners develop a stronger connection to the learning process by becoming independent in their thinking, reflection and decision-making. This sense of ownership encourages students to take part in the classroom activities and be autonomous. As a result, their confidence will grow, leading them to take a more active and engaged role in their learning and ultimately have an improved academic performance.

Emotionally, a balanced learning environment enhances students' sense of ownership, confidence and motivation. It also develops a positive attitude toward English and reduces anxiety (Fredricks et al. 2004). For instance, when learners feel safe, they are more able to express their ideas, participate with the teacher and collaborate with their classmates. Thus, shifting control to learners not only supports

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active participation but also fosters learner's self-esteem, creates a strong emotional connection and empowers engaged classroom environment.

2. Aligning Subject Matter to Fit Students' Needs, Backgrounds and Interests and Its Effect on Engagement

Aligning learning content with students' needs, backgrounds and interests plays a crucial role in fostering engagement. Behaviorally, when content is relevant to students' interests, they are motivated to attend classes regularly and actively participate in discussions and language activities (Bygate & Samuda et al. 2009). For example, incorporating topics such as music or video games into language lessons may attract students' attention and encourage them to participate actively. This connection between the content and students' needs and interests fosters a sense of engagement in the learning process

Moreover, learning materials aligned with students' interests positively influence cognitive engagement by fostering comprehension, retention, deep thinking and problem-solving (Fredricks et al., 2004). For instance, when the teacher provides his learners educational games like puzzle or cross words that interest them and fit their needs, they recognize the relevance of their learning, enhance their analytical thinking, problem solving and they will think critically and engage in learning activities.

Additionally, emotional engagement is strengthened when students establish a personal connection with the subject matter. Incorporating interests in lesson design increases motivation and enjoyment, minimizing boredom and disappointment (Archambault et al., 2009). This positive emotional connection helps students in developing a confident attitude toward English, making the learning process both engaging and effective.

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3. Allowing Students to Participate in Decision-Making and Its Effect on Engagement

Involving students in decision-making about their learning significantly fosters behavioral, cognitive and emotional engagement in EFL primary school classrooms. From behavioral engagement perspective, learners have the chance to select their learning activities, materials or projects. As a result they become invested participants and volunteers in classroom tasks (Finn et al., 1995). This involvement fosters autonomy, responsibility and active engagement.

Concerning cognitive engagement, allowing learners to choose their learning strategies promotes metacognitive awareness, strategic thinking and intellectual curiosity, leading them to exert greater mental effort in learning (Fredricks & McColskey, 2012). When students choose their preferred learning strategies like storytelling, role playing and group work, they cultivate independent learning skills, improving their ability to process and retain information effectively.

Furthermore, when students have a voice in making decisions, their emotional engagement is strengthened. In such an environment, students' opinions are respected, valued and empowered, which boosts confidence in English learning (Fredricks et al. 2004). During the lesson, the teacher gives the students a list of topics for the next presentation and ask them to choose one of them. By giving students the opportunity to select the topic that are interested in the teacher respects their selection and strengthens their emotional connection to the lesson. As a result, by integrating students' input into this learning activity, teachers can create a more personalized and motivated educational experience.

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4. Sharing the Responsibility for Both the Teacher and the Students to Learn and Its Effect on Engagement

When teachers and learners share responsibility for learning, EFL classrooms benefit greatly, as it improves the three dimensions of engagement. Starting with behavioral engagement, this shared responsibility between learners and teachers in the learning process appears when both participants actively participate in the lesson and take part in shaping their learning experiences. Thus, this collective responsibility promotes active collaboration with both their peers and teachers, reinforcing teamwork, leadership and engagement in both academic and extracurricular activities (Finn et al.1993).

Regarding cognitive engagement, assuming responsibility supports self-directed learning, problem-solving and critical thinking. Learners can take responsibility in their learning process when they participate by asking questions for more clarification, make choices for their learning activities and educational materials, manage their time and tasks by completing their homework and monitor their own progress without relying to the teacher. These actions help learners develop a deeper understanding of language concepts, making their educational journey more impactful (Svalberg, 2009).

Lastly, emotional engagement is enhanced through the student-teacher partnership. This collaborative environment helps learners to reduce anxiety and fear of participation, increase confidence, rise motivation and create a supportive and enjoyable learning atmosphere which positively impact students' academic achievement and contribute to the development of their proficiency (Linnenbrink & Pintrich, 2003).

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In summary, the learner-centered approach significantly contributes to enhancing engagement among EFL primary school students by improving their involvement, independence and enthusiasm for learning. Balancing power, aligning subject matter with students' needs, backgrounds and interests, involving students in decision-making, and sharing responsibility for learning, all boost students' participation, emotional connection to the content and critical thinking. Implementing this approach empowers students to participate, develop problem-solving skills and build confidence, which creates a more dynamic, effective and supportive learning environment.

5. Conclusion

In conclusion, the whole chapter aims at providing the literature review of the two variables. The first section is concerned with the introduction and the explanation of the main theoretical terms such as Teaching Methods, Learner-Centered Approach and Teacher-Centered Approach. From the historical overview of LCA to its theoretical foundations, this approach represents a significant shift in teacher's role from merely being a knowledge provider to a facilitator of learning. Understanding the key features of LCA by contrasting Learner-Centered and Teacher-Centered Approaches. Highlighting the effective implementation of this approach in primary school EFL classrooms. Thus, this approach brings significant benefits, including the development of critical thinking, increased motivation, active learning and greater students' ownership of the learning process.

Concerning the second section, it examines engagement in language learning. Based on the discussed concepts, several key ideas can be drawn. This includes an overview of engagement in language learning and its definitions as provided by various scholars, also it explores the dimensions and indicators of engagement, emphasizes its

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importance in EFL classrooms, and concludes by highlighting the positive effect of learner-centered approach in EFL primary school pupils' engagement.

CHAPTER TWO: THE FIELD WORK

Research Design and Methodology

Introduction

This study aims to investigate the effect of learner-centered approach on EFL primary school pupils' engagement. This chapter is devoted to the field work. It introduces the practical part of this research. The initial section outlines the framework of theoretical basis which encompasses the research methodology and design, research settings, the sample population and the research instruments. The subsequent section covers the description and the objectives of the research instruments including teachers' interview and classroom observation, followed by analysis and interpretation of the data collected from these instruments. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the results, offering recommendations for further research projects, highlighting the study's limitations that may have influenced the results, and ends with a general conclusion.

1. Research Methodology

The current study adopts a descriptive research method, which is considered the most appropriate for investigating the effect of learner-centered approach on EFL primary school pupils' engagement. Descriptive research, as defined by Suharsimi Arikunto (2007), is a type of research that aims to gather data and information about a phenomenon in a specific field of study, without any manipulation or external influence (p. 234). Furthermore, to collect the necessary data, a qualitative research approach is particularly well-suited for this investigation, as it enables researchers to explore in depth and provide detailed insights and data related to the present research Patton (2002).

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2. Research Setting

This study was carried out at one primary school, situated in Sidi Aissa city, M'sila. The research took place during the academic year 2024/2025 under normal conditions.

3. The Sample Population

The population of this study are fourth year primary school learners. They were specifically selected because the pupils are in their second year of studying English language. As a result, they are at a suitable level that helps the researchers conduct this research. Moreover, they exhibit a degree of independence in their learning, which encourages them to engage actively in the learning process, rather than being passive recipients of knowledge. For these reasons, fourth year pupils were considered the most appropriate choice for this study. The total number of learners is 55 learner, drawn from one school and divided into two classes. The first class (A) consists of 35 pupils, while the second class (B) consists of 20 pupils.

From this population, the first class (A) of thirty-five learners ($N = 35$) were selected using non-probability sampling, specifically convenience one. This sampling method was chosen due to its practicality, the ease of access and availability. These characteristics were appeared in class (A), due to their convenient number of learners and consistent attendance which made them suitable choice for gathering data. Concerning the teachers involved in this investigation, the researchers have selected fourteen English teachers ($N=14$) from primary schools.

4. Research Instruments

According to Creswell (2012, p. 151), an instrument serves as a means used to collect data through measurement, observation or documentation. Researchers use such tools to assess achievement, evaluate individual skills, monitor behavior, or develop

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psychological profiles. To validate the findings of the current study, the researchers employ a diverse set of research tools to collect rich data on the effectiveness of implementing the learner-centered approach in EFL primary school pupils' engagement. Initially, the study relies on interviews with teachers as a suitable tool to determine their perspectives toward the implementation of this approach and its effectiveness. Subsequently, classroom observations are conducted to prove the data gathered from the interviews.

Description and Data Analysis

1. Description of the Research Instruments and Data Analysis

This section focuses on the description of the research tools used in the study namely the teachers' interview and the classroom observation, describing their structure, elements and objectives. Moreover, it presents the analysis of the data gathered through interviews and classroom observations. The outcomes of the instruments are examined by using descriptive analysis, and they are presented in the form of tables, charts and descriptive paragraphs to investigate the effectiveness of implementing the learner-centered approach on EFL primary school pupils' engagement. Teachers' interview answers are analyzed using tables, pie charts and bar charts. Additionally, the classroom observation findings are analyzed by descriptive paragraphs.

1.1 Teachers' Interview

The first instrument used in this research is an interview created by the researchers under the guidance of the supervisor. It was particularly designed to target EFL primary school Algerian teachers. This tool was chosen because it provides more rich detailed data relevant to the objectives of the study. The interviews were conducted with teachers from different schools.

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1.1.1 Description and Objectives of Teachers' Interview

The purpose of this interview is to obtain valuable insights and comprehensive data from teachers' experiences about the implementation of learner-centered approach in EFL primary school classrooms and its effect on pupils' engagement. Therefore, a semi-structured interview was conducted with a purposive sample of fourteen (14) EFL primary teachers. This interview is divided into two main sections namely **Teachers' Profile and the Effect of LCA on Students' Engagement** (See Appendix 01).

The first section, which covers the teachers' profile, encompasses 03 closed-ended questions aimed at identifying the gender, academic qualifications and years of teaching experience. As previously mentioned, the second section which is related to the effect of LCA on students' engagement comprises eight (08) open-ended questions. This questions allow teachers to answer the interview flexibly and freely to articulate their perspectives and responses on the target topic.

These questions examine teachers' application of LCA and its effectiveness, while also investigating learners' behavioral interaction with LCA activities. They also examine teachers' views on students' engagement and the observable improvements resulting from the implementation of LCA. Additionally, the questions aim to identify the teaching materials used to implement LCA and their effect on students' engagement. Lastly, they seek to explore teachers' perspectives on the implementation of LCA in EFL primary school. The interview was piloted to seven EFL primary school teachers. This pilot study aims to ensure the correctness and clarity of the questions being asked, and whether they are relevant to the research or not. After reviewing the interview, the researchers administrated it to fourteen teachers who were welcomed and cooperative to answer the questions and be a part of this research, ensuring their understanding of the research goals.

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1.2 Classroom Observation:

Classroom observation is the second research instrument used in this investigation. It was conducted to validate the findings obtained from the teachers' interviews. According to Cohen and others “The distinctive feature of observation as a research process is that it offers an investigator the opportunity to gather ‘live’ data from naturally occurring social situations” (2007, p.396). Therefore, the use of classroom observation aims to gather authentic data and gain access to firsthand evidence concerning the effect of the implementation of learner centered approach on EFL primary school pupils' engagement among fourth year primary school pupils.

1.2.1 Description and Objectives of Classroom Observation:

To facilitate the classroom observation process, a checklist was designed by the researchers and evaluated by the supervisor to ensure the clarity, correctness and validity of the statements. It contains ten (10) statements targeted for both the teacher and learners; each statement was assessed using Yes/No options. The observation checklist was created to evaluate specific classroom behaviors regarding the teacher's implementation of the learner-centered approach and the learners' level of engagement. These statements provide the researchers with data about teacher's way of implementing the learner-centered approach in his classroom including lessons design, teaching materials and instructional activities. In parallel, they also reveal the learners' interaction with the LCA instructions including active participation, individual efforts, interest and motivation. Consequently, eight observation sessions were conducted under normal classroom conditions during the third trimester of the academic year 2024/2025.

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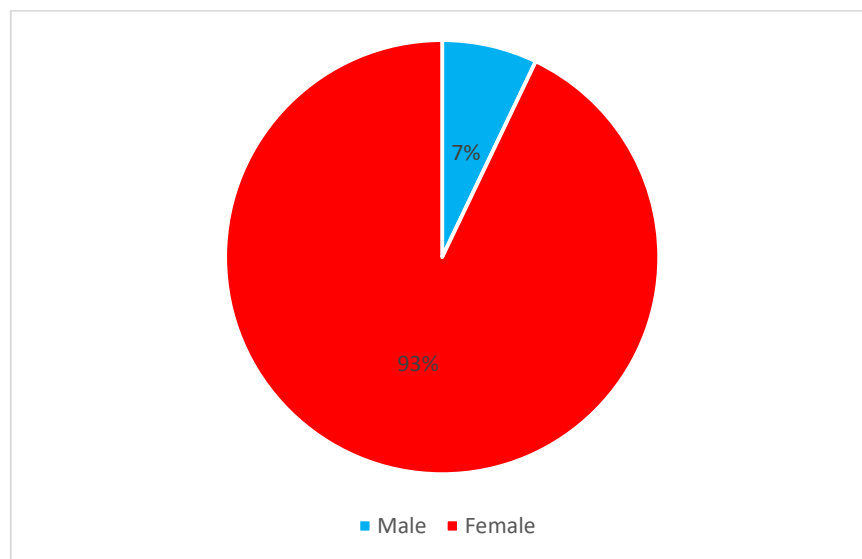
2. The Data Analysis

2.1 Data Analysis of Teachers' Interview

Teachers' interview consists of 11 questions divided into two sections. It was conducted with 14 EFL primary school teachers from different schools, all of them responded to every question. Their responses will be analysed as follows:

Section One: Teachers' Profile

- **Specify your gender**



Graph 01: Teachers' Gender

The data gathered from the first question, as presented in the previous pie chart (Graph 01), indicate that the majority of the participating teachers are females (92.9%) and the remaining percentage is male (07.1%).

- **What is your educational qualification?**

Options	Frequency	Percentage
Licence Degree	04	28.6%
Master Degree	09	64.3%
PhD	01	07.1%

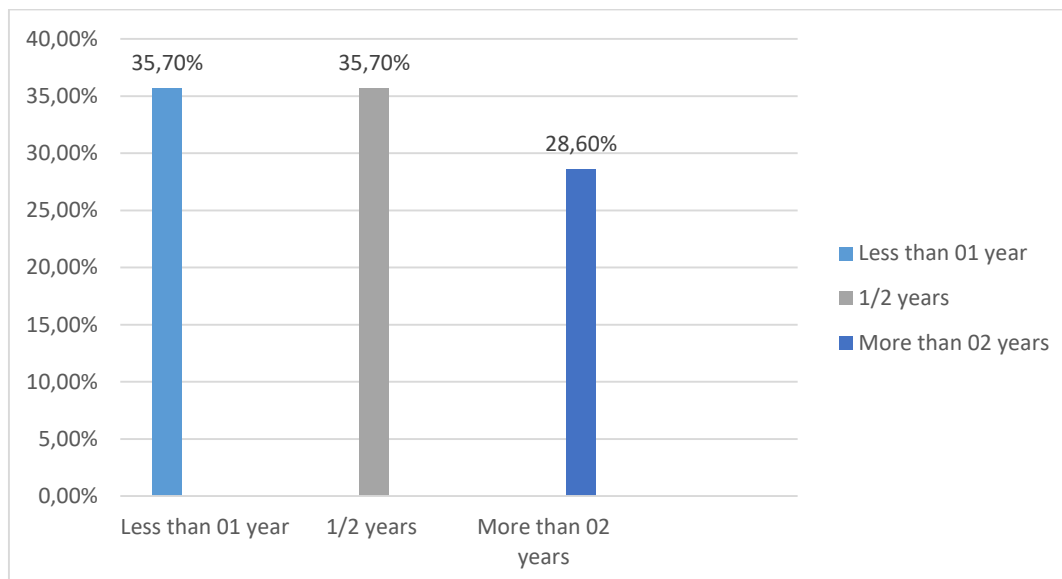
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Total	14	100%
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Table 01: Teachers' Educational Qualifications

Based on the data tabulated above, Table 01 illustrates the educational qualifications of the teachers. Out of a total sample of fourteen (14) teachers, a remarkable (64.3%) of respondents hold a Master degree, (28.6%) have a Licence degree, and the remaining percentage (07.1%) possess a PhD. This suggests a diversity in teachers' degree of study. In this sample, the majority of teachers hold a Master degree, which reflects a high level of academic qualification among these participants. These data shed light on the educational degrees of the participating teachers, which may effect their perspectives on implementing LCA in EFL classes.

- **How long have you been teaching English language?**



Graph 02: Teachers' Years of Experience in Teaching English

The data presented in Graph 02 illustrate the teaching experience of 14 teachers, which highlight various levels of experience in teaching EFL primary pupils. Five teachers (35.7%) have less than one year of experience, five teachers (35.7%) have 01

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or 02 years of experience, and the remaining four teachers (28.6%) have more than two years of experience. This data show a relativity balanced distribution of teaching experience among the participants.

Section Two: The Effect of LCA on Students Engagement

- **Are you applying the learner-centered approach in your classroom?**

The aim of the first question is to check whether the EFL primary school teachers are applying the learner-centered approach in their classrooms or not. The results show that all the interviewed teachers (100%) apply this approach regularly, which indicates that all teachers are aware of using this approach.

- **If yes, how many times?**

Regarding the second part of the first question about the implementation of the learner-centered approach in EFL primary school classrooms, the majority of teachers (08 teachers) reported that they frequently apply this approach in their lessons. Four teachers stated that they always apply it in almost every session. The remaining two teachers mentioned that they apply it at the beginning of each new sequence, which occurs approximately once or twice per month.

- **From your experience, how do learners usually respond to LCA instructional activities?**

According to teachers' experiences, learners generally respond positively to LCA instructional activities. They explained that they become more engaged, motivated and show greater enthusiasm and noticeable interest, especially when the content aligns their needs. Learners tend to be curious and eager to learn more about the lesson, discover new vocabulary and determine its meaning. When it comes to

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group work, they are excited to solve problems as a team, share ideas with their classmates and express their opinions. Learners typically take an active role in classroom interaction by participating with the teacher, having a chance to speak and passing to the board to try read or act out a dialogue. Additionally, most learners enjoy lessons when dealing with fun activities such as games, real-life situations and role-plays. However, a minority of teachers declared that a few learners may be shy at first, but they usually adapt quickly and participate more over time. This means that the majority of learners participate actively as a response for LCA instructional activities.

- **Do you think that applying LCA in EFL primary schools is effective?**

The data collected from this question indicate that all teachers consider the implementation of the learner-centered approach in EFL primary schools to be highly essential, effective and promising with positive outcomes.

- **If yes, please mention some of its advantages?**

Based on the results of the respondents' answers, various advantages of implementing the learner-centered approach in EFL primary schools can be analyzed and summarized as below:

- It helps students become more active, confident, and motivated to learn and use English meaningfully.
- It increases student engagement, supports language practice through participation, and helps to develop critical thinking.
- It enhances student autonomy, improves communication skills through interaction, and creates a more dynamic and inclusive learning environment.
- It encourages learners to be productive by solving problems in various situations they may face and performing role-plays.

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- It makes learners more involved, provides more opportunities to speak, express themselves, and builds their social skills.
- It encourages creativity, and makes learning more fun and enjoyable.
- **Which teaching materials do you utilize in your classroom to successfully implement the LCA?**

When teachers were asked about the teaching materials used to successfully implement the LCA, all of them reported using a combination of instructional materials. They stated that since they are dealing with younger learners, the most effective materials that align with LCA include visual aids such as flashcards, pictures and posters which are used in almost every lesson. In addition, they utilize videos, educational songs, audio speakers, data show and other educational applications. Real objects, including toys and classroom objects, are also employed to facilitate learning. Furthermore, Educational games such as word games, matching cards, puzzles are sometimes integrated depending on the nature of the lesson. Other materials mentioned include slates, interactive worksheets and storybooks. This indicates that balancing these diverse teaching materials together can contribute successfully to the effective implementation of the LCA in the classroom.

- **How do these teaching materials promote student engagement?**

This question was designed to assess learners' engagement through the use of the previously mentioned teaching materials. Teachers expressed a positive outlook regarding their effectiveness; their responses are summarized as follows:

- Teaching materials make learning fun, engaging, and interactive which promotes active participation.
- They capture learners' attention and simplify abstract concepts to help them connect lessons to real-life experiences.

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- The use of various materials depending on learners' preferences and styles, helps students interact differently.
- They reduce boredom and anxiety, which make students more confident and enthusiastic about the learning process.
- These materials help learners enhance comprehension, recall new vocabulary easily and speak confidently.

This indicates that the variety of teaching materials enhance learners' engagement.

- **Do you think that learners are more engaged to LCA activities?**

The teachers' responses to this item emphasize that learners are definitely engaged to LCA activities, especially when this approach is implemented appropriately and in an enjoyable manner. Teachers asserted that when considering learners' needs, using engaging teaching materials and incorporating enjoyable activities that align with their interests and age. This reveals that all these techniques help to create a comfortable and supportive learning environment in which pupils are more willing to participate actively, engage with instructional activities, take responsibility for their learning, collaborate with peers, and become curious about the future lessons.

- **Have you observed any improvements in your students' level as a result of implementing LCA in your class, and in which aspects?**

In response to this question, teachers reported noticeable improvements in their students' level as a result of implementing LCA in their classes. These improvements appear in various aspects. Behaviorally, learners take the responsibility of their learning, actively participate with the teacher, engage in group work and peer discussions and interact by raising their hands during lesson. Cognitively, most teachers observed improvements in specific skills such as listening and speaking, in terms of trying to express themselves in English even with limited vocabulary and involving in

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role-play dialogues. They also become able to understand new vocabulary within different contexts and they use these new words to exchange roles, which helps them to remember the words easily. Furthermore, they are more able to analyse situations and identify words meanings and general ideas in texts. Emotionally, during speaking learners feel more confident and happy. They enjoy the learning process without feeling bored, anxious or afraid of making mistakes. These improvements in learners' level confirm the effectiveness of LCA.

- **How do you perceive the use of LCA in EFL primary school classrooms?**

From teachers' perspectives, the responses exhibit positive perceptions of using learner-centered approach in EFL primary school classrooms. Teachers view it as a crucial, helpful and effective approach for engaging students. Their perspectives are analyzed as follows:

- The use of LCA in EFL primary school classrooms makes the learning process highly positive and promising.
- The learner-centered approach is a powerful and necessary approach. It respects learners' individuality, fosters creativity, and prepares students to be active participants in their learning journey.
- LCA is highly effective in EFL primary classrooms. It creates an enjoyable learning environment, which helps students to use English more frequently and enhances their speaking and communication skills.
- LCA is a useful method. It helps young learners stay active participants rather than passive recipients, enjoy the learning process and meets their needs.
- LCA is helpful for both teachers and learners, as it facilitates comprehension, improves learning outcomes, and reduces learners' anxiety and fear of learning a new language.

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- The use of LCA in EFL primary schools is a successful way to engage learners, build their confidence and supports their language development.

Based on learners' engagement, teachers' perceptions indicate that LCA is an effective approach.

2.2 Data Analysis of Classroom Observation:

The researchers attended eight sessions with fourth year primary class at Mohammed Ben Chainoune Primary School. These sessions were divided into listening and interaction, reading, speaking and writing sessions. The observation checklist guided the researchers to observe both the teacher's and the pupils' behaviors during the teaching-learning process. The ten statements of the observation checklist are analyzed in a form of paragraphs as presented below:

After observing the classroom, the researchers confirmed that the teacher is implementing the learner-centered approach in her sessions. Accordingly, she designs her lessons based on pupils' needs, interests and abilities by selecting the appropriate vocabulary that suits their levels and choosing topics that interest and engage them. For instance, during the oral production session, the teacher preferred to present the lesson using role-play technique (acting out a scene) which both interests the learners and meets their needs to develop speaking skill. This means that the teacher is implementing the LCA appropriately.

During the observation process, the researchers noticed that the teacher incorporated various teaching materials depending on the nature of the lesson as well as the learners' needs and interests, which helped attract their attention. These teaching materials consist of flashcards, pictures, posters, colors, worksheets, real objects (realia), songs and videos. The use of these materials resulted in positive interaction from the learners. This appeared when pupils engage with pictures and flashcards of

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food, showed curiosity to identify their names (vocabulary) and used them in correct sentences. In the oral production session, when the teacher used realia representing different categories such as drinks, vegetables and fruits. Learners started to choose foods, name them, and then classify them based on their category and whether they were healthy or not. These results indicate that using multiple teaching materials guarantee learners' participation.

Concerning the creation of a supportive and collaborative environment for peer and group work, the researchers observed that the teacher implemented such techniques in some sessions, especially during reading and oral production ones, based on the objectives of the lesson. For the reading session, it was observed that the teacher assigned a peer work in which pupils performed a dialogue in pairs. This activity helped them understand the topic better, improve their reading skills, pronunciation and the use of body language. Additionally, in the oral production session, the teacher asked the learners to join groups: "Team one" (healthy food) versus "Team two" (unhealthy food). Here the pupils introduced themselves as different types of vegetables or fast food. At the end of the activity, the teacher advised "Team two" to avoid eating unhealthy food and stay healthy. This reveals that the collaborative work encouraged learners to respect each other's opinions and accept the teacher's advice.

While observing, the researchers found that learners were making remarkable efforts to complete the given tasks independently, without relying on any external help. This appeared mostly during the written production sessions, where learners were involved in different activities that required individual focus. These activities included tasks such as filling in the gaps, reordering words to form correct sentences and practicing in cursive writing. These individual efforts indicate that LCA enhances learners' autonomy.

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In all the observed sessions, the researchers noticed that the teacher gave learners opportunities to participate and take part in the learning process. This active participation was evident when they interacted by answering the teacher's questions, guessing the names of items, repeating individually, raising their hands, passing to the board to read or write and performing role plays. For instance, in one of the oral production sessions the teacher introduced a dialogue between a "mother and her son". While performing these roles, the pupils actively participated and enjoyed the idea of being a mom who prepares the lunch and the hungry son who want to eat. Also, in the reading session, the pupils participated in a "speed read game" which raised their excitement to compete with one another. This activity effectively enhanced their motivation and encouraged them to take part in the learning process. This may indicate that learners were interested and motivated to learn.

3. Discussion of the Results:

The data collected through teachers' interviews and classroom observations were analysed to investigate the effect of the learner-centered approach on EFL primary school pupils' engagement. These gathered results have certain shared findings regarding the effectiveness of this approach on pupils' engagement.

Regarding the implementation of the learner centered approach; all teachers apply it regularly in most sessions with a primary focus on the pupils' needs, interests and abilities, due to its importance and positive outcomes. Teachers believe that LCA enhances learners' autonomy, confidence and motivation moreover; it encourages productivity, and language practice through participation and engagement. This aligns with research by Richards, T.S. (2014) indicating that LCA boosts language practice opportunities, engagement and participation. The results indicate that all teachers are

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aware of how to implement this approach appropriately and its significance in the teaching-learning process.

The integration of LCA in EFL primary school instructions offers valuable opportunities for learners to be engaged and interested in learning, particularly when considering their needs and interests and designing lessons with enjoyable and meaningful ways. Research by Cameron, L. (2001) confirms that taking into consideration learners' needs and interests in designing lessons helps to engage pupils in classrooms and enhance meaningful learning. As a result, learners respond positively to LCA instructional activities by demonstrating enthusiasm, excitement, curiosity about upcoming lessons and motivation to participate in group work. Their responses prove that they experience a comfortable and supportive learning environment, which help them to be active participants.

For the use of teaching materials and its effect on learners' engagement, the results collected from teachers' interviews and classroom observations confirm that teachers incorporate a variety of teaching materials, including visual and audio aids, educational games and real objects. These materials result in positive attitudes from learners, which contribute to enhanced engagement, improved comprehension, increased active participation and captured attention. This is supported by research from Harmer, J. (2007) which highlights that the effective management of teaching materials is important in learner-centered classrooms, which ensures that any material can align with learners' needs, interests and styles. This indicates that effectively managing varied teaching materials can play a significant role in the successful implementation of LCA in the classroom.

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Teachers agree on perceive LCA as a crucial and effective pedagogical approach in EFL primary school classrooms. This is simply attributed to the fact that it is a powerful and necessary approach. Teachers asserted that there are observable improvements in learners' levels resulting from applying LCA in their classrooms. These improvements are evident in multiple aspects. Concerning the behavioral improvements, learners actively take part in the learning process. In terms of cognitive improvements, they are able to express themselves, understand word meanings and produce simple sentences. Emotionally, they tend to be more confident and motivated, especially when speaking even with limited vocabulary. These results mean that LCA is a successful way to engage learners and improve their levels.

Conclusion

This section is devoted to the description and the objectives of the research instruments and their data analysis. It begins with the description and analysis of the teachers' interviews, and followed by the description of the classroom observations and their data analysis. The section concludes with the discussion of the overall results obtained from the research instruments used in this investigation. The analysis and the discussion of the results provide clear answers to the research questions, which are linked to the main variables learner-centered approach and pupils' engagement. The findings confirm the effectiveness of implementing the learner-centered approach on EFL primary school pupils' engagement.

4. Recommendations and Pedagogical Implications

Based on the achievable results which this investigation has reached, a set of recommendations are suggested for EFL primary school teachers, curriculum and textbook designers and future researchers which would contribute to enhance the

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implementation of the learner-centered approach. Hence, it is suggested to assign sufficient time for English language sessions, at least one hour instead of 45 minutes. In addition, they should incorporate engaging and interactive content into their curriculum and textbook. Also, it is advisable to offer participation opportunities for learners of all levels, provide more individual tasks and homework and encourage group projects to promote teamwork and foster learners' creativity. Furthermore, it is preferable to employ formative assessment to monitor learners' progress and identify individual strengths. For further research, it is recommended to conduct a study about the challenges faced by EFL primary school teachers in implementing the learner-centered approach.

5. Limitations of the Study

This investigation presents valuable insights into the effect of learner-centered approach on EFL primary school pupils' engagement. However, it is important to mention some limitations:

- The learner-centered approach would be better implemented if the session duration was more than 45 minutes.
- Overcrowded classrooms affected teacher's management to cover all learners' needs.
- The small sample size affects the generalizability of the results.
- The short period of the research may effect the observation of long-term effect of learner-centered approach.

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General Conclusion

The implementation of learner-centered approach in EFL primary school classrooms raises several questions about its effect on learners' engagement and teachers' perceptions. This investigation aimed to determine the effectiveness of implementing LCA in enhancing EFL primary school pupils' engagement and to examine teachers' perceptions of the its use.

To gather valuable data and answer the research questions, this research employed a descriptive method with qualitative approach. Interviews were directed to fourteen (14) EFL primary school teachers, and classroom observations were conducted with a fourth year classroom at Ben Chainoune Mohammed Primary School. The interviews' questions were analyzed individually, while the data gathered from classroom observations were analyzed thematically. Each research instrument has completed the other and provided significant insights about the study's results.

In light of the analyzed data and discussed findings, the research questions have been answered. The results proved that the implementation of LCA in EFL primary school classrooms has a positive effect on pupils' engagement. Particularly, the findings confirmed that the use of LCA promotes learners' behavioral, cognitive and emotional engagement, fostering active participation, deeper understanding and a supportive learning environment. Additionally, the findings answered the second research question regarding teachers' perceptions of using LCA, highlighting that it is perceived as a powerful, necessary and effective approach that boosts learners' engagement.

After analyzing the data and reaching the final results, it is recommended to expand the English language sessions, integrate engaging content into the curriculum and textbooks, provide opportunities for all learners to take part in the learning process,

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give learners individual tasks and homework and use formative assessment to monitor learners' level. Researchers also suggested recommendations for future research, which could include conducting a study on the long-term effects of learner-centered approach, as well as the challenges faced by EFL primary school teachers when implementing this approach. To conclude, this investigation presents results that support the application of learner-centered approach in EFL primary school classes, guarantee valuable insights for further pedagogical practices.

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Appendices

Appendix 01: Teachers' Interview

The present research aims to investigate the impact of the Learner-Centered Approach on EFL primary school pupils' engagement. To gather relevant data, a set of questions has been structured to interview EFL teachers, their answers will contribute to understanding the effectiveness of this approach in the classroom.

Section One: Teacher's Profile

1. Gender:

Male Female

2. Degree of your study:

Licence Master PhD

3. How long have you been teaching English Language?

Less than 1 year 1 / 2 years More than 2 years

Section Two: The Effect of LCA on Students Engagement

1. Are you applying the learner-centered approach in your classroom? If yes, how many times?

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2. From your experience, how do learners usually respond to LCA instructional activities?

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3. Do you think that applying LCA in EFL primary schools is effective? If yes, please mention some of its advantages.

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4. Which teaching materials do you utilize in your classroom to successfully implement the LCA?

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5. How do these teaching materials promote student engagement?

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6. Do you think that learners are more engaged to LCA activities?

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7. Have you observed any improvements in students' level as a result of implementing LCA in your class? If yes, in which aspects?

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8. How do you perceive the use of LCA in EFL Primary School Classrooms?

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Appendix 02: Classroom Observation Checklist

Statement	Yes	No	Comments
1. The teacher implements the Learner-Centered Approach in his classroom.			
2. The teacher designs lessons based on learners' needs, interests and abilities.			
3. The teacher uses teaching materials that attract learners' attention and interests.			
4. The teacher gives learners opportunities to			

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participate and take part in the learning process.			
5. The teacher creates a supportive and collaborative environment for peer and group work.			
6. Learners participate actively in learning activities.			
7. Learners exhibit interest and motivation during the learning process.			
8. Learners make efforts in doing tasks and assignments independently.			
9. Group work helps students understand better and respect others' opinions.			
10. Learners interact with diverse teaching materials that align with their needs and interests (flashcards,			

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videos, body activities...).			
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Résumé

La présente recherche explore l'influence de l'approche focalisée sur le comportement des apprenants du cycle primaire vis-à-vis de l'apprentissage de l'anglais comme langue étrangère, en se basant sur les apprenants de quatrième année primaire. L'objectif principal de cette étude est d'examiner les différents points de vue des enseignants à propos de l'utilisation de l'approche centrée sur l'apprenant, ainsi que de définir son rendement sur la réaction des élèves dans l'apprentissage de l'anglais comme langue étrangère. L'étude inclue une revue théorique intégrale des deux variables : l'approche centrée sur l'apprenant et l'engagement des élèves, en se focalisant sur leurs définitions et leurs importances ainsi que les caractéristiques de l'approche et les aspects de la réaction des apprenants. Cette enquête descriptive opte pour un procédé qualitatif, comprenant des entretiens et des observations au sein d'un groupe classe. Elle a été élaborée auprès de 34 élèves de quatrième année primaire et 14 enseignants d'anglais langue étrangère, durant l'année scolaire 2024/2025, et cela, dans des circonstances d'enseignement normales. Après le recueil des données, l'analyse révèle que cette approche centrée sur l'apprenant est considérée par les enseignants comme fondamentale et efficace. La contribution des apprenants favorise son application en classe primaire. En partant de ces résultats, l'étude suggère plusieurs remédiations afin de combler les lacunes du programme, associer une évaluation continue et allonger la durée des séances. Cependant, certaines contraintes font face, telles que la durée limitée des cours et le court volume de l'échantillon. Ce qui peut mener à restreindre l'observation de l'influence de cette approche sur le long terme. En dépit de ces restrictions, des pistes intéressantes s'offrent pour l'exécution de cette approche.

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ملخص

تبحث الدراسة الحالية في تأثير النهج المتمركز على المتعلم على تفاعل تلاميذ المرحلة الابتدائية في تعليم اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية، للحالة الدراسية لتلاميذ السنة الرابعة ابتدائي. الهدف الرئيسي من الدراسة الحالية هو دراسة وجهات نظر المعلمين حول استعمال النهج المتمركز على المتعلم، وتحديد مدى فعاليته على تفاعل تلاميذ المرحلة الابتدائية للغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية. تتضمن الدراسة مراجعة الهيكلة النظرية الشاملة لتقديم معلومات حول المتغيرين: النهج المتمركز على المتعلم وتفاعل التلاميذ؛ تركيزًا على تعريف وأهمية كلاً منهما وخصائص النهج المتمركز على المتعلم وجوانب التفاعل. تستعمل هذه الدراسة الوصفية المنهج النوعي، مُتضمنةً مقابلات وملاحظات صفية، حيث تمّ تطبيقها على عينة مكونة من خمسة وثلاثين (35) تلميذاً من السنة الرابعة ابتدائي وأربعة عشر (14) معلماً في اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية، خلال السنة الدراسية 2024-2025، في ظل ظروف طبيعية. بعد تحليل البيانات المُجمّعة من أدوات البحث، تكشف النتائج أنّ المعلمين يرون النهج المتمركز على المتعلم كطريقة تدريس أساسية وفعّالة وكذلك تطبيق هذا النهج في أقسام الابتدائي للغة الإنجليزية يُعزز مشاركة التلاميذ، وذلك من خلال مشاركتهم النشطة والفهم وإظهار الاهتمام والتحفيز. اعتماداً على النتائج، تُقدّم الدراسة مجموعة من التوصيات لمعالجة ثغرات المنهاج الدراسي وإدماج التقييم المُستمر وتمديد الحجم الساعي للحصة. ومع ذلك، تُشير الدراسة إلى بعض القيود، مثل المُدة القصيرة للحصص الدراسية وصُغر حجم العينة الذي قد يؤثر على إمكانية تعميم النتائج، بالإضافة إلى قُصر فترة البحث ممّا يؤثر على ملاحظة تأثير المدى البعيد للمنهج المتمركز على المتعلم. بالرغم من القيود المذكورة، تعرض الدراسة أفكار مهمة حول تطبيق النهج المتمركز على المتعلم في تعليم اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية في المرحلة الابتدائية.