

## TECHNOLOGY-ENHANCED STUDENT-CENTERED LEARNING IN EFL CLASSROOMS

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**Abstract:** *Technology has significantly transformed English as a Foreign Language (EFL) instruction by enabling student-centered learning environments that promote autonomy, interaction, and personalized experiences. This paper explores how digital tools enhance learner-centered practices in EFL classrooms. Based on classroom observations and teacher-student feedback, the study highlights how technology supports collaborative learning, differentiated instruction, and active participation while also identifying challenges such as digital inequality and instructional overload.*

**Keywords:** *Student-centered learning, EFL, educational technology, digital pedagogy, learner autonomy, language instruction, blended learning.*

The integration of technology into education has redefined teaching and learning paradigms, especially in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) contexts. Traditional teacher-centered models are gradually being replaced by **student-centered learning (SCL)** approaches that place learners at the heart of the educational process. In this shift, **technology plays a catalytic role**, enabling more interactive, personalized, and autonomous language learning.

Student-centered learning encourages learners to take responsibility for their own progress, engage in critical thinking, and collaborate with peers. When enhanced by digital tools—such as language apps, collaborative platforms, virtual classrooms, and AI-powered tutors—SCL becomes more flexible, accessible, and engaging. However, the effective use of technology in student-centered environments requires careful planning, digital literacy, and awareness of contextual constraints.

This study investigates how technology facilitates student-centered learning in EFL classrooms, the pedagogical outcomes it produces, and the challenges that arise in its implementation.

The study used a **qualitative exploratory design**, collecting data from four EFL institutions across urban and semi-urban areas in Central Asia. Participants included:

- **10 EFL teachers**
- **90 students** aged 16–22, enrolled in intermediate and upper-intermediate courses

### **Data Collection Instruments:**

- Semi-structured interviews with teachers
- Online surveys and feedback forms from students
- Classroom observations (in both face-to-face and hybrid settings)

**Data Analysis:** Thematic analysis was used to identify patterns related to the use of technology in promoting learner-centered instruction, student motivation, and participation.

### 3.1. Positive Impacts of Technology on Student-Centered Learning

The study revealed several key benefits of using technology in SCL-based EFL teaching:

- **Increased learner autonomy:** Tools like Duolingo, Quizlet, and Grammarly enabled students to practice independently at their own pace.
- **Enhanced collaboration:** Platforms such as Padlet, Google Docs, and Zoom breakout rooms facilitated real-time group work and peer feedback.
- **Engagement and motivation:** Gamified apps and multimedia tools made lessons more interactive and enjoyable.
- **Differentiated instruction:** Teachers used digital resources to adapt content based on students' language levels, preferences, and learning goals.

### 3.2. Pedagogical Shifts Observed

Teachers reported a transition from lecture-based delivery to **facilitator roles**, where they curated content, guided discussions, and monitored learner progress through LMS dashboards (e.g., Google Classroom, Edmodo).

### 3.3. Challenges Encountered

While the integration of technology showed great promise, several challenges emerged:

- **Digital divide:** Not all students had equal access to stable internet, devices, or digital literacy skills.
- **Teacher overload:** Preparing tech-integrated lessons and managing multiple platforms required extra time and effort.
- **Distraction and misuse:** Some students were distracted by non-educational content or misused online platforms during class.
- **Assessment alignment:** Standard exams often did not reflect the skills practiced in tech-based, student-centered activities.

The findings confirm that **technology enhances the core principles of student-centered learning** by making instruction more interactive, learner-driven, and adaptive. Through digital tools, students gain greater control over content, pace, and method of learning, which is crucial for effective language acquisition.

However, **accessibility and teacher readiness** remain significant barriers. Institutional support is needed to provide infrastructure, training, and policy frameworks that promote sustainable digital pedagogy. Furthermore, **blended learning models** that

combine face-to-face and online instruction may offer an effective balance between structure and flexibility.

Teachers also need to be **digitally literate facilitators** who can select appropriate tools, design engaging tasks, and foster a responsible digital culture among students.

Technology-enhanced student-centered learning offers transformative potential for EFL education by fostering autonomy, collaboration, and personalized engagement. While its implementation is not without challenges, especially regarding access and training, it remains a promising pathway toward more effective and inclusive language instruction. Moving forward, strategic integration of technology should be coupled with pedagogical innovation to fully realize its benefits in learner-centered classrooms.

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