

Towards Learner Centredness in Higher Education: Exploring English Language Classrooms in the UAE.

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Abstract

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

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

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

Findings indicated that classroom dialogues were of low dialogic quality, consisting of limited, brief exchanges that were teacher fronted. Further, findings also revealed the complexities in implementing dialogic, learner centred practices which reinforce such instruction as being theoretically rich but difficult to apply. While researchers theorize the way learner centred, dialogic instruction needs to occur, the subjective and fluid aspects of learning and learners, who prefer the familiar and resist change, result in

manifestations of this instructional approach to appear quite differently in the reality of the classroom context.

Despite the low educational value of current classroom talk, the results demonstrated that the development of learner centredness through dialogic instruction has been *initiated* within ELT Classroom contexts and are in a 'fledgling' stage. In recognizing that the analysis of classroom discussions revealed an inherent 'talk norm' that was teacher directed and teacher dominant, shared whole class interactions demonstrated attempts by myself as the teacher to model dialogic talk. Two things emerged as a result of data analysis, first that attempts to implement learner centred instruction is made during whole class interactions, however such instruction is not very dialogic in engaging learners with the learning; secondly the potential for such learning to develop further to become more dialogic is apparent through the 'talk awareness' that participants demonstrated during the interactional episodes.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

1.0 Introduction

The interest in making language teaching more engaged, sensitized to learner needs and discursive, has been a feature of much language research over the years. Thus “learner centredness”, a way of making language teaching respond to the needs of the learner and providing a means for the learner to be more participatory and active in their learning of language, has been a fast growing trend and a part of many schools and institutes of higher learning over the last few decades. This trend of language teaching practice has been a feature of ELT (English Language Teaching) classrooms from the 1960’s in many western countries like the UK and the U.S and initially grew out of a desire to change the more traditional, didactic language teaching approach (Tudor, 1996). Learner centred pedagogy shifts the focus of attention from the teacher to the student, putting the student at the centre of the learning experience. The shift from the traditional teacher centred approach to a pedagogy that is more focused and responsive to learner needs is believed to be able to *engage* students better in the language classroom and also prepare the learner for the challenges of life after school in a more holistic way. The movement prevalent for over four decades in the West, gained popularity in the Middle East and Asia more recently over the last ten years (Al-Maktri, 2002).

Rapid industrialization and a surge of development specifically in the Middle East resulted in a society that has ever changing demands on the individual. In order to equip learners with the skills needed to navigate a more competitive and challenging market, the learner fronted model of teaching has been increasingly preferred over memorization, repetition and rote learning. In the field of learning, knowing has shifted from an ability to remember and repeat information to instead being enabled to find and then apply it (Alexander, 2004). This has led to pedagogy which pays attention to the learner as the centre of the education process, rather than the teacher. What this has meant to educational institutes in the Arab region has been revolutionary in terms of reform to their teaching ethos, pedagogical approach, as well as the institutional learning outcomes.

However, research has found that despite the recent widespread adoption of learner centredness in institutes of higher learning, much of language teaching is still very much teacher fronted in the Middle East (Al-maqtri, 2016; Liu, Qiao & Liu, 2006). The claims of some educational institutions regarding their adoption of such strategies is more wishful thinking than reality especially in the Arab region, where learners prefer to receive knowledge from the teacher rather than construct their own meanings, and instruction is still heavily teacher directed (Al-maqtri, 2016).

The goal of this study is to explore and reflect on this very dilemma. In attempting to find out how learner centred instruction is realized in language classrooms in an institution in the UAE, the study is significant in investigating local contexts of learning to understand the way in which such student centred pedagogies manifest and are interpreted by learners. Learner centred instruction is in line with the present day demands in responding to learner needs and placing the learner at the centre of the pedagogical process. The implementation of such approaches may aid in better preparing students to be autonomous persons imbued with the skills and knowledge needed to be productive members of the fast paced and ever changing society. Therefore, this study responds to the needs of individual learners with the aims of tailoring pedagogy to meet the requirements of students and the society at large.

1.1 Learner Centred Pedagogy

The concept of learner centredness is driven by the need for a change in the traditional approach to teaching where students were mostly passive, disengaged and bored (Nunan, 1996; Auerbach, 2000). In order to understand learner centredness, it is necessary to explore the theoretical underpinnings of this approach to language education. Learner centredness is based on a fluid framework as it is defined and redefined by linguists and researchers in the field of language and education (Weimer, 2002). Being an emergent trend that is based on differing perspectives, learner centredness is a complex social phenomenon that is constantly evolving (Tudor, 1996). As terms like learning and autonomy evolve over time, a particularly marked feature of learner centredness has been encapsulating all of its complex realities that are ever

changing. Built on the constructionist view of learning, the theory of learner centred pedagogy resides on the work of a variety of psychologists and theorists, most notably, Vygotsky (1978), Piaget (1967) and Dewey (1956). Its epistemology promotes that knowledge is not acquired in a passive manner, but is constructed actively as individuals make sense of the world and their experiences of it (Weimer, 2013). These concepts will be explored more fully in the second chapter of this study.

The principles of learner centred pedagogy espouse a focus on learner needs, learner engagement and learner responsibility. Previous research has indicated that merely learning content does not constitute learning, but rather a lifelong use of the skills acquired is the aim of student centred approaches. The implementation of the learner centred approach then is premised on educational reform that now aims to meet the needs of the individual learner (McCombs, 2001). By prioritizing learning, these reforms taking place in institutes of higher education focus on understanding learning and learners, and a view of the instructor as a facilitator of knowledge rather than the source of it (Barr & Tagg, 1995). Informed and driven by a focus on the learner, “Learner centredness” is an educational approach that has notably become part of the mission, vision and goal of most higher education institutions. The learner centred approach promotes critical thinking and life-long learning in students; it gives them the basic skills to learn a subject and ensures students are equipped with the *ability* to learn. This has led to institutional adoption of the learner centred model in Western and the Arabian context as well.

Wide ranging educational reforms have been taking place in countries in the East. A commonality characterizing these reforms is that Western pedagogies and teaching approaches are adopted and implemented in local institutions; this is especially the case in many institutions in the Middle East. Based on American models of teaching and learning in higher education that saw a shift from simply teaching content in the undergraduate curriculum to producing positive learning outcomes (Al-Issa and Dahan, 2011), local institutions in the Middle East began implementing similar strategies to achieve successful teaching and learning missions. Teachers were required to teach based on the learning outcomes agreed upon for each undergraduate course and

achieving positive learning outcomes is often the primary goal for teachers. This pedagogical approach has been implemented in a number of institutes of higher education and its effectiveness established in previous research (Crick & McCombs, 2006; Weimer, 2002). The focus of the learner centred paradigm is on the learner and learning. The overall purpose of such learning emphasizes learner autonomy by giving more responsibility for learning to the student, whilst equipping them with the skills and knowledge on how to navigate a specific subject according to the schemata and performance requirement detailed in the learning outcomes.

1.2 Learner Centred Pedagogy and Identity

In order to understand learner experience of learner centred pedagogy and the effect it had on their learning, theories underpinning identity must also be explored. Learners and their 'selves' are the focal point of much research in language education and studies aimed at understanding the identity of learners have contributed to the creation of more student centred, active and dynamic pedagogy (Norton, 2000; Kumaravadivelu, 2006b; Hirano, 2009; Mercer, 2000 and Auerbach, 2000). Learner 'selves' much like learning are fluid and multiple, and conceptualizing learner identities affect learning as a whole (Huba & Freed, 2000).

Despite research in the social sciences increasingly recognizing the powerful and fluid ways in which the multiple identities students associate themselves with affect their learning (Menard-Warrick, 2005) there is a paucity of social research exploring the ways in which learner identity interacts with institutional reforms that mandate classroom policy, especially when "policies are accompanied with new tools" (Lasky, 2005:899) of teaching and learning. Research has shown that English Language Learners engage in 'acts of identity' through the use of language, revealing how their linguistic identities are constructed and perceived (Wenger, 1998). Experts argue further that identity is ever changing and multi-faceted, therefore posing numerous challenges for language pedagogy, especially in the classroom due to the varied multilingual backgrounds and multiple identities that students associate themselves with (Lave, 1996; West, 1992).

The anthropological approach to language and identity adopted by researchers like Lave and Wenger (1991) which view identity as interlaced functions of participants in communities of practice has begun to surface in educational fields (Kramsch, 2000; Block, 2007) especially in recent years. Informed by the poststructuralists theory of language and linguistics communities whereby “the practices of societies are sites of struggle, and that linguistic communities are heterogeneous arenas characterized by conflicting claims to truth and power” (Norton, 2000: 14), this study uses a sociocultural perspective and is located within an interpretive, exploratory framework. This study looks at structure, agency and identity to understand how institutionally mandated reforms on ELT pedagogies meant to foster learner centredness appear in the classroom; how they shape learner experiences; and learner identity. Such a framework will allow me to investigate the complexities of learner identities that are reconciled in order to adapt to the challenges of a pedagogical reform.

1.3 Context of the Study

Learner centredness then is an educational support mechanism that emphasizes on the learner and potentially affects the learner in multiple ways in a ubiquitous process of developing, extending and making meaning of knowledge (Hager, Sleet, Logan & Hooper, 2003; Yuretich, 2004). Such an approach encourages the participatory based method of language pedagogy, emphasizing active involvement in the language class, student centredness, interactivity and autonomy. By accentuating the student as the focal point of the learning process, learner centredness is an approach that is concerned with *enabling* the student to be proficient in today’s fast paced society.

Such an approach has been considered successful in its ability to achieve learning outcomes (Barr & Tagg, 1995); however, it is common during the transitional period of such reforms to see two different pedagogical approaches being taught simultaneously in the institutions. It is of note here that many of the reforms are often passed down from the top management, and teachers as well as learners are not only expected to adapt to these methodologies, but are required to do so in a context where traditional approaches are still being implemented while in the process of being phased out. This often creates

a complex environment that teachers and learners have to negotiate, creating the phenomena referred to in previous studies as 'one community, two systems' (Liu & Fisher, 2010). This 'crossover' highlights a common problem faced by many institutions in countries such as Malaysia, China, and Thailand as well as in the UAE.

With the recent emphasis on learner centredness and the implementation of participation based language learning (Barr & Tagg, 1995), in the Department of Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL) at a large University in the UAE, I found that my own context had become a platform for such a 'world turn' in English Language Teaching (ELT). The reform began at the institutional level with an adoption of learner centredness in the mission and goal statements of the University, and an incorporation of the learner centred paradigm in their strategic planning and self-study reports. At the Department level, the learner centred approaches to pedagogy were applied in the curriculum development, program course outcomes and learning outcome initiatives.

This led to active learning approaches, designed to encourage student participation, student voice, problem-solving in response to the local needs of students being implemented in the language class. The reform advocated a participation-based model of language teaching, however the 'crossover' period meant that these classrooms operated in parallel with traditional transmission based teaching environments. I was interested in what this meant for the English Language Teaching (ELT) classrooms, what did learner centredness look like in the ELT classroom and what did it mean to learners and their learning? This study then is exploratory in its attempts to investigate learner centredness in the ELT classroom and also reflective in showing how pedagogy meant to be learner centred manifests in the context of my own classrooms.

1.4 Statement of the Problem

Although studies exploring such educational reforms and the challenge it represents for teachers, have been numerous, what such pedagogies look like in the ELT classroom as well as the impact of such 'crossovers' on the identity of students; and how they negotiate 'themselves' in the face of such reforms especially in the Arab region have been limited.

My agenda in this study is to explore a significant turn in language teaching occurring in the TEFL Department of an institution in the UAE. The reform calls for a more active approach to teaching methods that promote collaborative learning, student participation and critical thinking.

Such learner centred pedagogy had already been emphasized on by University management in my institution and the implementation of this teaching approach highlights the shift in pedagogy the University encouraged in line with its own aims and goals, in place of the traditional teacher centred learning. This study explores how learner centred pedagogy manifests in the ELT Classroom and how students experience this implementation over the course of a semester.

By attempting to understand the way learners negotiate their identity within classrooms that aim to be learner centred, it is hoped that the investigation offers a reflective opportunity to better inform local pedagogical practices. Despite the call for teaching methodologies that are 'inclusive' and promote student autonomy in the classroom, little work has been done to investigate the challenges students face negotiating their 'selves' within such transitional contexts (Liu & Fisher, 2010; Chapman, 2010).

1.5 Aims of the Study

On the basis of the above, the study reported in this thesis is an attempt to understand where the English Language Teaching (ELT) classrooms in my own context, stand with regards to the implementation of learner centred instruction and the impact this approach to pedagogy has on learners.

Specifically, the study aims to address the following research questions:

- 1. How Do Pedagogies Meant to Foster Learner Centredness Manifest in the English Language Teaching (ELT) Classroom?**
- 2. In What Ways Do Students Experience Learner Centred Pedagogy in the ELT Classroom?**
- 3. How Does Learner Centred Pedagogy Affect the Learner Identity of Students in the ELT Classroom?**

By using multiple, interpretive data collection methods including video captured lessons, student interviews, and written responses, it is hoped that a more informed understanding of the relationship between learner centred pedagogy, English language teaching and learner 'selves' can be generated to provide an inside view and a reflective perspective on teaching and learning.

1.6 Organization of the Study

This thesis consists of eight chapters. The first chapter of the study introduces concepts of learner centredness and its importance to language teaching, presenting the rationale for the study. This chapter also looks at the importance of the study and the potential significance of it. Chapter 2 provides background information on the study. Examining the impact of globalization on English language use and its importance within rapidly growing Arab regions, the second chapter establishes a connection between rapid industrialization, a wealthy community largely consisting of expatriates and English Language Education and Policy in the UAE. It presents information on higher education in the UAE, and introduces the university where participants of the study were from.

The third chapter turns to a review of relevant literature on: the main trends of research on learner centredness, the relationship between language education, thinking and identity, and draws on the same to establish the theoretical frame that underpinned the

study investigation, as well as the study design. Chapter 4 goes on to present my ontological and epistemological stance. Outlining the interpretive research design used to collect and analyse data, the chapter addresses the concerns of trustworthiness of interpretive research specifically to my own position as both researcher and teacher in the study and the potential impact on student participants. Additionally, the ethical considerations and ramifications of the study are also deliberated on.

Findings of the study are presented in Chapters 5 and 6 respectively. Chapter 7 discusses these findings in light of the research questions and then the theoretical frame of the study. The implications of study findings in theorizing the relationship between language, thinking and identity is highlighted. Finally, Chapter 8 concludes the thesis by considering the major contributions of the study, and recommending potential future research before reflecting on my own research journey in undertaking this study.

Chapter 2: Background to the Study

2.0 Introduction

This chapter provides an explanation of the background to my research, on the issues regarding language education in the Arab region generally, and the setting of my study specifically, the UAE. I will start by discussing globalization and its effects on the landscape of English language learning. I will then move to discuss how this trend in globalization has resulted in a rising importance of the English language. Moving on to the Arab region, I will explain how English as a Global Language has come to be dominant in the Arab region, and increasingly, wealth and job security are associated with it. I argue that this has led to a commodification of English through an influx of western education systems, ideologies and educators. My next section discusses what this means to institutes of higher education in the region and how it has influenced curriculum, pedagogies and classroom approach. I will look at the nature of curriculum specifically in the UAE and how there is a gap in what is expected of learners in school and subsequently in tertiary education. Looking at globalization, language education and the case of the UAE, the second half of this chapter explains the growth and spread of English and how it has become inculcated with the Arab culture and identity. Finally, I turn to the context of my study, Armaan University in the Emirates (a pseudonym and hereafter referred to as AUE), a private institute for tertiary education. I consider how policy in language education has informed pedagogy and curriculum design in my own situation and outline the educational setting my participants were from in establishing a clearer context for the current study.

2.1 Globalization and the English Language

Globalization is a term that is used loosely and means different things to different people at different times. According to Manfred Steger, globalization is “a multidimensional set of social processes that create, multiply, stretch and intensify world-wide social interdependencies and exchanges while at the same time fostering in people a growing awareness of deepening connections between the local and the distant” (2003:13). While Steger maintains that globalization can be traced back to the beginnings of humankind,

Robertson (1992) argues that globalization as we know it today is associated with the onset of the modern colonial period, approximately 500 years ago.

According to the United Nations Report on Human Development, the current phase of globalization has shaped the world in three major ways: by shrinking space, shrinking time and disappearing borders (UNDP 1991). This has resulted in the economic, cultural, communication aspects of society and people in different countries becoming more intensely and instantly linked than before. Kumaravadivelu in his article “Dangerous Liaisons: Globalization, Empire and TESOL”, posits that the Internet is the most distinctive feature of the current phase of globalization (2006a). He highlights the instantaneous trans-boundary communication available via the internet as driving both economic and cultural globalization.

It is important to note here that the major language used to communicate through the borderless network of the Internet is predominantly English. Altan (2017) states that the internet has become a major force driving both economic and cultural globalization. Postmodern theorist Bodely (2003) believes that people construct their culture in an ongoing process that is affected by the context they live, work and study in. Due to the developments of technology and the internet, the very nature of culture and cultural exchange between people has also changed. This change has impacted all the countries in the world as well as the UAE where the current study is located. The rapid industrialization and globalization faced in other parts of the world has been enhanced in the Arab region, with changes to landscape, infrastructure, education, technology, communication, amongst other things.

A large measure of this change can be attributed to the rise of Transnational Corporations such as IBM, Mitsubishi, amongst others with strong economic influence. The vastness of some of these corporate giants has resulted in the creation of a global culture based on international trade markets. Contrary to what earlier anthropologists imagined, such powerful commercial interests are shaping culture locally and internationally (Zughoul,

2003). In the midst of such a dynamic change, researchers have noted that the impact of economic globalization has a direct effect on the cultures of the world.

2.2 Globalization Trends and the Importance of English Language

English has gained increasing importance in countries around the world due to cultural globalization. This phenomenon has significant ramifications on education and in an increasingly globalized world it is necessary to understand the tenets of cultural globalization and its impact on educators and learners. Cultural globalization and its three major schools of thought by political theorists like Benjamin Barber, George Ritzer and others attribute the cultural homogenization taking place to the American culture of consumerism. They consider globalization as a process of Westernization, similar to Americanization also coined by Ritzer (1996) as 'McDonaldization'. The concept of 'McDonaldization' relates to the principles dominant in the famous American fast food chain, the creation of homogenized goods and imposition of standards which are beginning to shape local landscapes everywhere. The spread of American consumerism can be locally evidenced by the adoption of Levi jeans by youths around the world, Adidas shoes, eating Pizza Hut and McDonalds and watching MTV music videos. This homogenization is due to the global communications industry controlled by American interests. Steger states that in the year 2000 alone, ten media conglomerates accounted for more than two-thirds of the \$250-275 billion of annual worldwide revenues generated by the communications industry. The ten corporations include AT&T, Sony, AOL/Time Warner, Bertelsmann, Liberty Media, Vivendi Universal, Viacom, General Electric, Disney and News Corporation. From this statistic, the importance given to English by the global communications industry is made clear.

Sociologist like Giddens and Tomlinson (2000) represent the second school of thought regarding cultural globalization. Giddens believes that Globalization is becoming increasingly de-centred. They believe that cultural heterogenization is taking place through which the local and religious identities are being strengthened. They argue that despite the increasing importance of English due to globalization, it is significant that the effect is not a one-way process. Thus local cultures and identities also have an impact on

globalization. The third school of thought represented by Robertson and others, explains the homogenization and heterogenization further, creating what Robertson refers to as 'glocalization' (1995:5). This is a situation where according to Robertson the global is localized and the local is globalized. These theorists assert that cultural transmission is a two-way process and cultures shape and reshape each other directly or indirectly. Successful global marketing of 'Americanism' are recognized as being tailored to suit local demands. For example, the American chain McDonalds serves Kosher food in Israel, Halal food in Malaysia and other Islamic countries and vegetarian food in India (Kumaravadivelu, 2006a).

Robertson summarizes "the twofold process of the particularization of the universal and the universalization of the particular" (1992:177) as being ideals of human universalities that display the active day to day lifestyle of the increasingly globalized realm. In linking the challenge of cultural globalization to education, Robertson further calls on educators to prepare learners with the required skills to face the globalized world. Rossiter (2001) maintains that globalization is not a future development but rather a process that has already taken place. In his article, he reports based on the globalization symposium held in Paris, that 'Globalization is here to stay'.

2.3 English as a Global Language and its Role in the Arab Region

The spread of Western consumerism and 'Americanisation' in an increasingly globalized world has led to the growing importance being placed on English as a global language. Globalization of economies and the dominance of a handful of corporations have led to the spread of what Ferguson defines as the American Empire (2004). He states that the world economy is controlled by such firms such as Exxon Mobil, General Motors, McDonald and Time Warner to state a few, all of which are American in origin and are located in the United States (2004). Indeed, English is growing to become the language that is increasingly adopted by countries like France, Germany as well as many Asian countries. Witt (2000: para 5) defines a global language as "a language that develops a special role that is recognized in every country". He examines the role of English in the EU and ranks it as the most important language followed by French and German. Witt

goes further to state that English is ranked as the number one language to be taught in the schools of the EU (2000).

The history of English and English Language teaching has four major dimensions namely: scholastic, linguistic, cultural and economic (Kumaravadivelu, 2003). The scholastic knowledge refers to the ways in which Western educators have furthered their interests through the spread of Western education and knowledge. The linguistic dimension refers to the redundancy of local knowledge and local language in the teaching of English as a second language. The cultural dimension permeates the teaching of English with the spread of Western culture and the developing empathy of L2 learners toward the English language community (Altan, 2017; West, 2012; Troudi; 2005; and Nickerson, 2015). With reference to the landscape of education in the Arab region, these dimensions delineated above can be seen to be linked to the sudden expansion in economy and wealth experienced by the UAE, whereby the ELT industry has seen a formidable growth as a result of this surge in development.

Increasingly in the UAE, successful acquisition of the English language is equated to security, employment and wealth similar to other English speaking countries and the role of English as a 'gatekeeper' to better opportunities is mirrored here as well (Troudi, 2005:8). In my own context as an ELT educator in an institute of higher education in the UAE, Crystal's explanations of English becoming the default choice for progress due to its association with the global economy (1997:75) is reflected in the aims, goals, and mission statements of the university, as well as the changes in teaching strategies that have been adopted. These are indicative of the global role English has achieved regardless of the means.

2.4 English Language, Globalization and the Case of the U.A.E

The importance of English and English language skills is one that has been accentuated by the recent economic growth of the UAE, one of the six countries of the GCC. Situated in the Arabian Coastline, the GCC countries own two thirds of the world's known oil reserves (Shihab, 2001). The discovery of oil in this region has led to what Shihab refers

to as 'accelerated development', whereby some of the poorest societies in the world have been transformed to the wealthiest in a short span of time. This transformation has led to what Findlow (2006) refers to as a distributive state paradigm; governments obtain loyalty of citizens through what they give, rather than shared effort and taxation. Such a situation Dahl explains has led to a sense of dependency on the government, whereby young people feel a false sense of entitlement which has led to "a sense of apathy towards work and education" (2010:14). Dahl explains further how despite the material improvements to people's lives within these societies, the constant dependency and 'spoon feeding' dished out by policy makers has also led to slowed personal development and independent thought.

Although research in the Arab region on ELT has been sparse in comparison to other regions, studies on the role of ELT and its impact have been increasing. Some commonalities observed in the researchers of ELT within the Arab region include the following: over the last six decades the Arabian countries have gone through radical social and economic transformation due to the discovery of oil; there has been an influx of immigrant workers eager to benefit from the sudden wealth within the region; the English language associated with modernization and development has been given precedence especially in higher education; the need for western based education has led to an influx of foreign faculty (most of whom are native speakers).

English language has been present in the Gulf since the arrival of the British in the 19th century and continued with the British Colonial interest until 1971. Charise (2007) explains how since the 1970's English has flourished in the region, being used as a language of wider communication between the groups of immigrants hailing from multiple nationalities and ethnic groups. Additionally, Hudson (2006:18) in his study of local Emirati students at an English-medium college in the UAE found that English had multiple uses outside of college including: "the internet, when shopping, with domestic servants, when travelling, at hospitals or clinics, at sports clubs, watching TV, at the cinema, listening to songs, when talking to myself in front of the mirror, when playing games with my siblings, and when talking to my children."

With rapid industrialization and globalization in the Arab region, Westernization has led to an influx of American culture in all aspects including food, music, entertainment, business transactions, social networking and the way towns are urbanized. Since the Second Gulf War and the defeat of Iraq, English has become entrenched in the Arab lands (Kumaravadivelu, 2006a). It has begun to noticeably take more away from the native language in these Arab countries, to give more importance to English as a means of communication. It was right after this period that the Kuwaiti government introduced English in the public schools for learners in the First grade at the age of 6 years; this move was closely followed by other Arab Gulf Countries (Zughoul, 2003).

2.5 Language Use in the UAE and the Place of English Language

The official language in the UAE is Arabic, and it is the dominant language in the country and the only language specified in the constitution (Galagher, 2011). However recently, due to the growth and expansion of the economy, English is becoming increasingly popular within the UAE culture and communication patterns. English, Gradol (2006) states is fast becoming the 'de facto' lingua franca in the UAE, it's the language of use for business and in professional environments (outside of the government and semi government organizations). Based on the demographic landscape of the UAE, a population of 8 million people consisting of 220 nationalities-with expatriates making up approximately 90% of the working population and local Emiratis making up 11% of the population and 9% of the working force, (Zughoul, 2001) the Arabic language tied to nationalism and the local Arabic identity, is very much becoming a language of the 'home', whereas English is seen as the language for functionality (Nickerson, 2015; Zughoul, 2001). Findlow (2006) states that despite official documents needing to be in Arabic within the public sector and government institutions, in many of the workplaces like banks, hospitals, educational organizations and institutes as well as in businesses and the private sector, the lingua franca of written documents is predominantly English.

English is quickly becoming the second language in the UAE, moving up from being just another foreign language. As stated in the section above, due to the landscape of the population consisting of more than 200 nationalities and 100 different languages spoken

(Zughoul, 2001), English is the language to facilitate communication and is a point of commonality amidst this multilingual community.

What is of note here is that despite the need for foreign workers in nearly every field to fuel the rapidly expanding economy of the UAE, there is no need for foreign expatriates to learn Arabic in order to live and work there. Although Arab visitors and other nationalities of Arab origin speak Arabic in the UAE, it is not a necessity in order to live productively in this specific context (Boyle, 2011). What is increasingly becoming necessary to ensure economic well-being and security is proficiency in the English language. This transformation and spread in Global English can be seen locally in the UAE through government initiatives to promote English as a second language in schools and in many higher education institutes, as the main language for teaching and learning (Fussell, 2011). This complex situation whereby fluency in English equates to securing a better and economically robust future is especially seen through recent changes in language education and policy changes in the UAE (Findlow, 2006). The drive to produce fluent speakers in English has driven education policy on several tiers and influenced pedagogical approaches and design in local contexts.

2.6 English Language Education and Policy in the UAE

Education in the UAE has moved from being historically available to only boys, to something that is now compulsory for all children between the ages of 6-15 (King, 2008). The UAE government provides free education for all children and scholarships and funding opportunities for local Emiratis to complete their higher and tertiary education. Schooling in the UAE is divided into public schools, private schools and higher education, of which private schools form 60% of the country's schools (export.gov 2018). The curricula in the public schools follow the UAE national curriculum specified by the Ministry of Education, whereas private schools follow 17 different curricula depending on the foreign country the school ethos is based on and are closely monitored by the Ministry of Education (MoE) in the UAE. 90% of the private schools curricula follow U.K, US, India and the MoE, the remaining schools include curricula from International Baccalaureate

(IB), Canadian, French, German, Philippines, Pakistani, Iranian, Japanese, and Russian (export.govt 2018).

The private schools have English as the main spoken language throughout their school years, and although students learn Arabic as a secondary language, the emphasis of education revolves around English. The public schools on the other hand learn in Arabic, all subjects are taught in Arabic and English is a second language subject for students. Although debates have been ongoing about the increasing importance of English displacing Arabic (Issa, 2013) and having a detrimental effect on Arab identity, education policy in the UAE reflects a more worldly and globalized view of language education and legitimizes the growth and wide use of English throughout the education sector. Recognizing that in order to continue to compete within global markets that are becoming ever more challenging, the UAE education policy emphasizes English as an important tool for learners to equip themselves with. In order to obtain high positions in government and private sectors, local Emirati students as well as expatriates are required to complete their higher education. The myriad and diverse school curricular the students undergo lead to a varied classroom of learners in higher education that have different learning needs based on their socio- cultural experience. In acknowledging that teaching is indeed a difficult task (Tudor, 1996), it is hoped that this study would provide a reflective window in understanding learner perspectives and endorse the tailoring of classroom pedagogies to meet the needs of individual learners.

2.7 English Language and Higher Education in the Arab Region

In the field of higher education in the Arab region, the importance of English is even more notable. Excluding Syria, all institutes of higher education learning in Arab countries use English as the medium of instruction in the schools of science, engineering, medicine, and business studies (Zughoul, 2003). Scholars observed that post September 11 and the Iraq war, that there has been a return of the imperialist English medium education. Chughtai (2004:2) argues that 'English is a modern Trojan horse carrying a different set of beliefs and views into hostile territory has reared its head in Iraq' he claims that in the post war efforts ELT has enjoyed a demand in such territories'. Knowledge of English has

been associated with job security especially in the private sector of Arab countries, and thus is associated with a better quality of life and security. Zughoul (2003) observes that English has become so much a part of some Arab countries that Arabic is often given a secondary status. In fact, the English 'hungry' situation found elsewhere in the Arab world is mirrored in the UAE with a demand for native or near native language Instructors for EFL courses (McLaren, 2009). Zughoul (2003) gives the examples of Higher Colleges of Technology, Zayed University, The Institute of Petroleum Studies in addition to the two American Universities, wherein English is the medium of instruction across all schools of learning.

The economic growth and expansion within the UAE has been a contributing factor for the creation of an increasingly multilingual student population, with a growing emphasis being placed on fluency in the English language. Indeed, the English language has been increasingly placed on a pedestal within UAE society. Carli et. al. explain further that globalization and market forces have led to English emerging as a 'language of globalization' (2003:865). The importance of English has also impacted the UAE with an increase in parents choosing English medium schools for their children rather than schools that use Arabic or other languages as their medium of instruction. According to a Gulf News article "the UAE has succeeded in developing knowledge economies before its oil production peaks and made vital progress in its ability in English. The UAE is now ranked number one regionally and 36th internationally in English proficiency among 60 countries" (2013). The adoption of English in tertiary education as well as the commodification of English, reflect global trends around the world. Such a move within the UAE according to Syed (2003), has been linked to governments wanting development and modernization for their citizens.

Institutes of higher education in the UAE therefore have grown due to government investment and development and are characterized by local values. As Baalawi (2009) explains these expensive campuses are gender segregated, allowing both female and male students to pursue 'westernized' higher education with facilities that cater to the strict Islamic values of the locals, allowing them to pursue such West based models and

curriculums on home ground. However, the demand for 'westernized' education meant the demand for foreign faculty (with an emphasis for native speakers), administration and workers, especially a large number of English language teachers. This appropriation and importance given to English medium education resulted in the influx of foreign instructors who were for the most part non-Arab and non-Muslim (Syed, 2003). According to Karmani (2003) the need for modernization in the Arab region has led to a monopoly of tertiary education in the region by British and American education models. While control for the lucrative tertiary education has been monopolized by Western imperialists, the primary and secondary education has been largely left to Arab or Egyptian educators. This has led to stratification in the education system of the UAE, with students entering higher institutes of education with poor English skills, expected to perform in graduate level English courses as native speakers of the Language.

2.8 Armaan University in the Emirates

Armaan University in the Emirates (AUE), the university the current study was situated in, was founded in 1988 as a non-conventional private institution of higher education in the UAE and the Arab Region. Made up of nine different colleges, the University was first founded to promote Science and Technology in the UAE. However, since then Armaan University has grown to offer a total of 32 programs – 22 undergraduate and 10 graduate – all of which are accredited by the UAE Ministry of Education. Out of the nine colleges, two of them namely the College of Arabic Studies and the College of Law use Arabic as the main medium of instruction. The remaining colleges including Dentistry, Medicine, Basic Science and Education, Pharmacy, Mass Communication, Information Technology, Engineering and Business Administration are all taught in English.

The student body at AUE is comprised of diverse nationalities, cultures and languages. Students totalling 36,000 are currently enrolled at the university hailing from 104 different countries. Local Emirati students comprise 30% of the students enrolled at AUE, while approximately 45% of the international students are from Arab countries including: Egypt, Jordan, Palestine, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Iraq and Iran; the remaining students are from countries like India, Pakistan, UK, China and Thailand. The majority of students at AUE

are pluralilingual, and although all of them speak English to various degrees, for a majority of them, Arabic is still the language they use in encounters on a daily basis. This notably is a representation of much of the youth population in the UAE. Despite all students at AUE having passed the standardized TOEFL tests to gain entry into the undergraduate courses, it is of note the varying degrees of English language competence of participants in my study. Some students have low proficiency levels in English and prefer using Arabic for day to day communication and others demonstrate a very high fluency in English and use it as the main medium for functionality. These factors of competency and language use of English may have a bearing on some of my results and will be addressed in the discussions on limitations of the study.

Through the years AUE has gone through a number of changes, the most recent of which saw a change in the University's management structure. Under the diligent guidance of a new Chancellor and Vice chancellor, the University implemented a number of reforms in the mapping of program outcomes to learning outcomes, and to promote a culture of learning not just within but also outside of the classroom. Mandatory requirements from the management in revamping grading matrixes, goals and objectives of the colleges as well as more integration of technology within the classroom, led to the University gaining two international program awards and a place on the QS World ranking list. Recent notable shifts in teaching approaches saw the introduction of e-textbooks to replace hard copies and this was mandated across all programs in the University. Such changes in the workplace I found had two major effects: the learning outcome of courses were now focused on the learner and aimed at encouraging participatory learning; English language education was ever more intertwined in realizing the missions and goals of the university. The discourse in the hallways by faculty now revolved around centring pedagogy around the needs of the learner in the most interactive and effective way possible.

To me, an employee of University, the environment on campus purported two pedagogies simultaneously. For even with all the emphasis on learner centred pedagogy there was still many teachers who stuck to the traditional teaching methods. Personally I believed in learner centredness' and know that as a teacher I want my students to experience

learning in a way that is enriching and inclusive. Since research on teacher perspectives in language and education as well as professionalism topics have been much explored and written about in the Arab region, my interest was in attempting to find out the learner's perspective in the midst of this educational maelstrom. How about the learner? What did they think? How did they feel about all this? Keeping in mind that the background of learners in my own classrooms was quite varied due to the multifaceted curricular of schools they graduated from, I was curious to find out what learner centredness meant to them and whether they had experienced before, and if so, how. Further still I was interested to know how they experienced it in my own classrooms and how this shaped the learning experiences of students retrospectively.

2.9 Chapter Summary

The previous section highlighted the surge of development in the UAE and the rise of English as a means of modernization to succeed in a globalized world. However as the prominence of UAE increases in the Arab region, the challenge to maintain itself as a maverick economy is palpable. In order to continue to be a hub for transnational industries and corporations, it needs to ensure a workforce that is conversant with the global language that is English. As mentioned in the previous section, due to the uneven stratification in the education system, learners in tertiary education are often expected to perform in graduate level courses as a native speaker of the language. The majority of students are faced with native speaker educators and curricular that is increasingly based on *learner centred* learning outcomes and objectives.

Therefore, the higher education in the UAE can be said to have experienced sudden accelerated investment, expansion and development in recent years. They are dominated by Western curriculum, Western faculty and management, bringing western cultural influences and practices to a largely Islamic and conservative society. The institutes are populated by local Emirati students, who feel that free tertiary education is a right rather than a privilege, as well as expatriate students who are eager to equip themselves with a western based education in order to give them an edge in seeking a secure future in the globalized world situation. Although this is an understandable goal in the face of needing

to keep abreast of increasing globalization, the question of how students experience this shift in education and the way in which they negotiate themselves in the face of such changes is relevant in this context.

Based on the research provided in the first section, it is clear that English is not only spread through globalization but in fact is a pivotal aspect of global communication and global culture. It is reinforced through the economic colonization or 'Americanization' that is ongoing throughout the markets of the world. It is important to acknowledge that despite the breakneck speed with which English has spread and the growing demand for ELT in various parts of the world, some cultures view English as a threat to their local languages. Kim (2002) explains that in South East Asia, the attitudes towards English place it as a dominant language in comparison to their native language and perceptions of learners glorify the role of English within their communities. It is clear that the importance and role of English Language pedagogy is imbued with the different facets of globalization as well as the differing needs of communities in different parts of the world. However, the ubiquitous nature of English language forces researchers to question the impact of such a pervasive language on the experiences, identity and culture of individual persons. This research was undertaken then in order to explore this debate further and generate data on the phenomena of English language learners' experience inside the classroom.

Chapter 3: Literature Review

3.0 Introduction

In order to provide a background to the overall topic of the thesis, how a group of English Language Teaching (ELT) students perceive and negotiate their 'selves' amidst the complexities of a learner centred language classroom and the impact of such transformative teaching methodologies on their identities, I turn now to Chapter Three of this study which is a discussion of how issues relating to this theme are presented in the literature. The discussion in this chapter will highlight aspects of the issue which help to position the subsequent analysis of the data in following Chapters.

To do this I first provide an overview of the trends of thought on learner centredness and the growth of interest in learner centred pedagogical research and attempt to position my own study amidst this interest group. I then explain the perspective of learner centredness that will be developed in relation to the current study. The next section provides a historical outline of learner centredness which has shaped the current roles of teachers and learners in the language teaching process. Examining the varying perspectives on learner centredness as an approach to English language education, I then look at the debate between language education and identity construction. I consider factors influencing English language teaching and argue that social constructionism which emphasises the student as the centre of the learning process, is increasing in popularity as a post method approach to teaching ELT.

I connect social constructivism theory to learner centred pedagogy and explain how the paradigm shift to student centred pedagogy has become the new mission adopted by institutes of higher learning. I will detail connection points between recent work on identity, learner centred pedagogy and the impact of such pedagogical approaches in ELT on the learner identity of language students. I conclude by showing that despite an increasing interest in identity and learner centred pedagogy in the region, there has been a gap in the literature discussing the application of learner centredness, especially the impact of this approach on the learner identities of students.

3.1 Learner Centredness: An Overview of the Main Trends of Thought

The concept of learner centredness, premised on a value-based approach to teaching is a broad and fluid one that is understood in a number of ways (Freeman and Richards, 1993). Rather than being quick to label approaches to teaching and learning, the concept of learner centredness resides in the belief that language teaching will be more effective if it is “more responsive to the needs, characteristics and expectations of learners, and if learners are encouraged to play an active role in the shaping of their study program,” (Tudor, 1996:1). As stated in the previous section of the study, despite the increasing use of learner centredness in teaching curricular in language education, one of the main complexities when dealing with learner centredness is uncertainty as to what the terms mean, what such an approach actually involves when teaching and how it might be realized in the classroom. The following sections of this chapter attempt to provide an understanding of how this terminology is used in language education and the growing importance attached to such an approach by researchers in a variety of fields in language education.

3.1.1 Different Traditions within Learner Centred Research

The learning paradigm has evolved to what is commonly referred to in educational research as learner centredness or the learner centred model. Based on the fourteen learner centred psychological principles developed by the American Psychological Association’s Board of Educational Affairs (1997), this perspective states that learning is most effective when it is a shared process of constructing meaning from information and knowledge exchanged in meaningful ways (Table 3.1). This approach accepts differences in learning styles, socio-cultural experiences, language and social backgrounds (APA 1997). Freeman and Richards (1993) state that despite learner centred approach being value based, it still requires teachers to design and prescribe a method for teaching.

<p>The learner centred approach was founded on a trend that recognized the social aspects of learning, the variability of learners and their needs, and a desire to empower learners to be more autonomous in their learning. It includes humanistic psychology, experiential learning, task based language teaching and individualization (McCombs & Whistler, 1997). In learner centred environments, the needs, experiences, backgrounds talents and perspectives of learners' factor in the tailor making of teaching methods that effectively promote motivation, learning and success (Nunan, 1988).</p> <p>Cognitive and Metacognitive Factors:</p> <p>Principle 1: Nature of the learning process. The learning of complex subject matter is most effective when it is an intentional process of constructing meaning from information and experience.</p> <p>Principle 2: Goals of the learning process. The successful learner, over time and with support and instructional guidance, can create meaningful, coherent representations of knowledge.</p> <p>Principle 3: Construction of knowledge. The successful learner can link new information with existing knowledge in meaningful ways.</p> <p>Principle 4: Strategic thinking The successful learner can create and use a repertoire of thinking and reasoning strategies to achieve complex learning goals.</p> <p>Principle 5: Thinking about thinking Higher order strategies for selecting and monitoring mental operations facilitate creative and critical thinking.</p> <p>Principle 6: Context of learning Learning is influenced by environmental factors, including culture, technology, and instructional practices.</p> <p>Motivational and Affective Factors:</p> <p>Principle 7: Motivational and emotional influences on learning What and how much is learned is influenced by the learner's motivation. Motivation to learn, in turn, is influenced by the individual's emotional states, beliefs, interests and goals, and habits of thinking.</p>	<p>Principle 8: Intrinsic motivation to learn The learner's creativity, higher order thinking, and natural curiosity all contribute to motivation to learn. Intrinsic motivation is stimulated by tasks of optimal novelty and difficulty, relevant to personal interests, and providing for personal choice and control.</p> <p>Principle 9: Effects of motivation on effort Acquisition of complex knowledge and skills requires extended learner effort and guided practice. Without learners' motivation to learn, the willingness to exert this effort is unlikely without coercion.</p> <p>Developmental and social factors:</p> <p>Principle 10: Developmental influence on learning As individuals develop, they encounter different opportunities and experience different constraints for learning. Learning is most effective when differential development within and across physical, intellectual, emotional, and social domains is taken into account.</p> <p>Principle 11: Social influences on learning. Learning is influenced by social interactions, interpersonal relations, and communication with others. Individual differences factor.</p> <p>Principle 12: Individual differences in learning Learners have different strategies, approaches, and capabilities for learning that are a function of prior experience and heredity.</p> <p>Principle 13: Learning and diversity Learning is most effective when differences in learners' linguistic, cultural, and social backgrounds are taken into account.</p> <p>Principle 14: Standards and assessment Setting appropriately high and challenging standards and assessing the learner and learning progress-including diagnostic, process, and outcome assessment-are integral parts of the learning process.</p>
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Table 3.1: The Learner Centred Psychological Principles, APA Board of Educational Affairs (1997:1).

Educational decision making recognizes that while learning is a mental process, it is shaped by the sociocultural context through which learners' thoughts feeling and impressions are filtered. The foundations of such an approach include learner

involvement in educational practices, encouraging the diversity in learners and understanding learner differences.

Weimer (2002) defines learner centredness as emphasizing what the student is learning, how the student is learning, the conditions under which the student is learning, whether the student is retaining and applying the learning and how current learning positions the student for future learning (2002:160). Such an approach was born from the need to break away from traditional classroom instruction to a more sensitized environment that would respond to and recognize the needs of individual learners, their interest and abilities. Traditional practices were rigid and unable to provide for flexible, student-teacher relationships and have been criticized for being unable to allow learners to communicate to teachers regarding form and content in order to decipher and understand the learning process (Weimer, 2002). Review of literature on learner centredness has hailed it as an approach (Tudor, 1996; Auerbach, 2000; McCombs & Miller, 2007), a system, philosophy and curriculum (Nunan, 1988), a concept and process (Nunan & Lamb, 2001), a pedagogy (Kumaravadivelu, 2006b) and, more recently an attitude (Nunan, 2008).

3.2 Theorizing the Relationship between Learner Centredness and ELT Pedagogy

Learning is concerned with the process through which humans construct meaning and knowledge in their worlds (Doyle, 2008). The philosophy of learner centred instruction as mentioned in previous sections of this study is not new; it has been there for decades (Al-Maktri, 2016). This concept has been emphasized by theorists like Piaget and Dewey, and is shared by Arab scholars like Khalil Jubran (Al-Maktri, 2016). According to Tudor (1995) the Learner Centred Theory is derived from cognitive, humanistic and constructivist theories that have been prevalent in influencing pedagogy from the 1950's until recently. The following sections will discuss some of the constructionist theories and their importance to learner centred pedagogy: Humanist Theory, Constructivist Theory, Communicative Language Teaching Theory, Learning Strategy Theory and Individualism Theory.

3.2.1 Humanist Theory

Humanistic Theory is based on two main components which have contributed to language teaching: the first is that it places the subjective and personal needs of learners at the centre of language teaching and secondly it concerns itself with the actual process of learning, through the active involvement of said learners in their study of language (Tudor, 1996). It acknowledges the concerns of learners, and recognizes them as complex, fluid and autonomous beings who have an interest and responsibility for their own learning.

3.2.2 Constructionist Theory

According to Vavrus, Thomas and Bartlett (2011), the constructivist theory sees learning as an active process whereby knowledge is added to the existing experience and information that learners already possess. It therefore recognizes learners as beings who already have existing knowledge and legitimizes the experiences and information learners possess in an inclusive process. Learners are not passive recipients of knowledge; instead the constructivist theory views learners as active participants of the learning process and that learners construct new knowledge to their existing knowledge, experience and understanding (Thomas & Barlett, 2011).

3.2.3 Communicative Language Teaching Theory

Originating in the mid 1960's, communicative language teaching (CLT) rose out of two concerns, one that grew from a discontent with structural and situational methods of language teaching, (Tudor, 1996) and secondly from a desire for more responsive teaching structures that considered the communicative needs of learners. CLT is premised on the basic principle that: '...learners must not only learn to make statements about the experiential world, but also must develop the ability to use language to get things done,' (Nunan, 2013:18). Arguing that language is influenced by situational and communicative variables, CLT attempts to make language teaching more responsive to learners' functional language needs. This means that in language classrooms CLT promotes language teaching focused on activities in the classroom that improve the target performance of learners. Activities were no longer viewed as simply drills to learn

communicative language use, but rather focused on requiring learners to do inside the classroom what they will be required to do outside in the real world. Communicative language teaching influenced the main paradigms of language teaching and the development of learner centredness in two main ways: structuring course design according to the communicative needs of the learner and by giving a central role to the learners existing experiences and concerns.

3.2.4 Learning Strategy Theory

Based on the ability of learners to utilize specific tasks in the language classroom to promote their knowledge and practical use of the target language, the learning strategy theory emphasizes the involvement of learners in their language study (Tudor, 1996). Providing an insight to learners and their preferences to shaping teaching strategies, this theory has been invaluable to the learner centred perspective to language teaching (Tudor, 1996). By acknowledging the subjective role of learners in their own learning, it gave way to research on the subjective needs, individualism and learner responsibility in language teaching. The conceptual work on Learning Strategy Research provides a useful framework for describing learner centred environments in that it focuses on learners' active engagement in learning and the goals learners are required to achieve in the way they approach and participate in their own learning.

3.2.5 Individualism Theory

The tenets of the individualism theory rose from a concern in language teaching regarding the break away from traditional classroom instruction which was viewed collectively and as a whole, to a view of allowing learners to progress at their own levels suitable to their individual needs (Tudor, 1996). Recognizing the importance of individuals and their needs, the individualism theory is an attempt to make instruction flexible and fluid; it went on to influence powerful concepts of learner autonomy and learner responsibility in language education.

3.2.6 Conceptualising Learner Centredness

The theories pointed out above attempt to provide an overview of the main trends of thought with regards to learner centred teaching and learning, which have influenced structural roles of learners and teachers, as well as curricular in language education historically. What is clear from the exploration of these theories in the sections above is that the concept of 'learner centredness' is a broad and fluid one. It is understood and implemented in a number of different ways. The review of trends indicates that approaches to language teaching pedagogy that aim to be more learner sensitized and learner responsive were historically relevant to the language teaching process since the 1950's, and are still very much a part of present day language teaching practices (Tudor, 1996). These trends are significant not in structuring a single definitive perspective of learner centredness, the overlapping and differing theories make such definitions rather difficult and unreflective of language teaching practices. Instead, the confluence of theories provides a formative exploration of the concepts learner centredness is based on. Such an overview is fundamental in deriving a common understanding of this approach to teaching and learning, and is relevant in drawing out the perspective of learner centredness that underpin this study.

3.2.7 Towards a Definition of Learner Centredness in ELT

According to Weimer (2013), learner centredness can be defined as an instructional philosophy that is in contrary to teacher fronted approaches in language education: 'the traditional teaching methods' which place the teacher at the centre of the learning process. In the learner centred approach, Weimer argues, the learner is the focal point of learning and the instructor becomes a facilitator of learning rather than the sole point of all knowledge; the instructor empowers students to take responsibility for learning and uses course content to develop students' learning skills. A learner-centred teacher assumes the roles of a facilitator and a guide, and uses evaluation to promote learning and assist students' development as independent and self-directed learners. Gibbs (1992) espouses that learner centredness is a process through which learners are empowered and have greater agency over the content, strategies and the pace of learning. All of this, he argues leads to a scaffolding of learning in a context where learners

play an active role in their own learning. For the purpose of this study the model of learner centredness will be adopted from Weimer’s construct of the five main tenets to creating a learner centred classroom which are detailed in Table 3.2 below.

a)	the balance of power, with students involved in course decisions, including selection of content and assessment;
b)	the function of content, with an emphasis on using content as a stimulus to learning and for the development of learning skills;
c)	the role of the teacher, with a move towards the teacher becoming a learning facilitator that promotes student motivation and engagement, and creates an environment for learning;
d)	the responsibility for learning, which should be placed upon students; and
e)	the purpose and processes of evaluation, that should adopt the assessment for learning through a combination of both summative and formative assessment.

Table 3.2: Weimer’s Five Main Tenets To Creating Learner Centred Classrooms (2013).

The figure 3.1 below provides a pictorial representation of the model of learner centred teaching developed by Weimer (2013) relevant to this study.

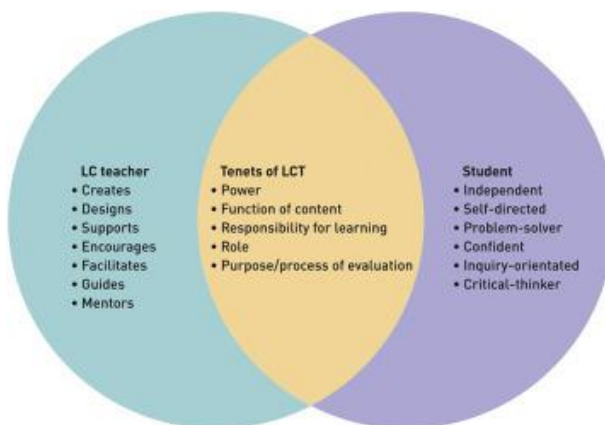


Diagram 3.1 Model of Learner-Centred Teaching (Weimer, 2013)

In brief, a learner centred approach to teaching seeks to work with the complex and diverse aspects of a learner, and attempts to find local solutions to the specific problems individual learners may have in respect of the learning context they are situated in (Tudor, 1996). Therefore, the wide perspective of learner centred approaches to language education adopted for the purposes of this study is derived from two main principles: the

first is that learners are the focal point of the teaching and learning strategies, approaches and processes; the second is that the implementation of such student centred strategies are facilitated and negotiated through teacher-student dialogues, shared interaction and classroom talk. This perspective on learner centredness will be explored and discussed further throughout the various sections and chapters of this study and form the main reference points on which the data analysis and discussion chapters are drawn.

It is important to note that although the current study embedded in my own strong beliefs in support of the learner centred approach to pedagogy in my English Language Teaching (ELT) classrooms, attempts to make the learning environment within these classrooms as learner centred as possible, what I perceived learner centredness to be, has been significantly influenced through the undertaking of this study. Learner centredness is a process which does not happen at one go: in acknowledging my attempts to make my teaching more learner centred based on my existing assumptions regarding this approach, not all of Weimer's conditions of the learner centred classroom were applied. What is of note is that through this study, the practical manifestation of my own implementation of learner centredness served to influence my pedagogy retrospectively.

The next section of this chapter provides an overview of the paradigm shift which led to the construct of learner centred instruction. It discusses the post method approach to learning and teaching before moving on to form connections between the social turn in language teaching and what that means to language education. I then continue to the second important theme of this study, learner selves. By looking at structuralism as an approach in language education, I provide a theoretical perspective for the identity of learners and how pedagogies play a significant role in influencing the way learners' see themselves.

3.3 The Post Method Approach to Learning and Teaching

Watson-Gegeo (2004) points out that a "paradigm shift" is occurring in second language acquisition (SLA) where socio-cultural perspectives are replacing a reliance on "traditional" approaches to teaching language. This is elaborated on by Kumaravadivelu

in his description of a post methodology and how such a shift was aimed at providing “an alternative to method rather than an alternative method” (2006b:73). Although Liu (1995) and Larsen-Freeman (2005) have argued that post method is not an alternative to method but rather an addition to existing approaches in classroom practices, and Bell (2003) points out that post-method minimizes the role and importance of the teacher in the classroom, such dissenting voices have overlooked the importance of ‘teacher plausibility’ (the teacher’s awareness or pedagogic intuition of what constitutes as good teaching) advocated by the post-method approach to ELT. On the contrary, due to the significant role of the teacher in post-method pedagogy, it has been described by Crabbe as a pedagogical approach that emphasizes greater judgment from teachers in each context and calls for “a better match between the means and the ends” (2003:16). The post-method approach rather than minimizing the role of the teacher requires the teacher to engage in specifically created collaborative learning activities, and assessments.

Additionally, Kumaravadivelu (2006b) states that it presents a way for teachers to be aware of the sociocultural experiences of students, so that classrooms become platforms that are socially inclusive and create concussive interactive learning environments for students. Such an approach is relevant in the context of the current study as the students in the language classes are multilingual, multicultural in the experiences and knowledge they bring with them to the classroom context. Therefore, the post-method makes it more feasible for classroom practices to acknowledge and include the diversity of learners and their needs and for practitioners to be recognized in the peripheral context for their contribution in implementing these socially inclusive strategies and assessments. As summarized by Kumaravadivelu (2006b:75):

“We have been awakened to the necessity of making methods-based pedagogies more sensitive to local exigencies, awakened to the opportunity afforded by post method pedagogies to help practicing teachers develop their own theory of practice, awakened to the multiplicity of learner identities, awakened to the complexity of teacher beliefs, and awakened to the vitality of macrostructures–social, cultural. Political and historical- that shape and reshape the microstructures of our pedagogic enterprise”.

3.3.1 The Sociocultural Perspective to Language Education

Built on the work of Vygotsky (1978) of how language and social interaction are involved in the process of human development, the process of acquiring knowledge is treated as a cultural process, whereby people construct understandings collaboratively. Premised on the idea that human intelligence is essentially a social and cultural activity, and that individual thought plays a fundamental role in cognitive development (Sutherland 2006; Mercer, 2013), such philosophy has inspired research empirical and subjective into social interaction and how that influences learning and the meaning making of knowledge. Mercer explains that 'Sociocultural theory provides a theoretical basis for the primacy of language as a cultural and cognitive-and hence educational-tool' (2013:153). The sociocultural theory is relevant to this study in observing how learner centred pedagogies manifest through classroom interactions and how such interactions affect the knowledge appropriation of students. To do this two of the main tenets of Vygotsky's social learning theory will be adopted. Firstly, that the individual development of learners is related to social interactions within communities of learning; second that language learning has a significant transformative effect on an individual's thoughts, ideas and experiences (Vygotsky, 1978).

What this implies is that learners' achievements are not dependent on their own effort alone and their ability to make meaning of knowledge, but rather a shared product which is based on culturally-situated aspects of social interaction (Mercer & Howe, 2012). Knowledge and the process of acquiring it then is not individual but is created through members of communities using specific tools including language, and relational contexts like schools and institutions for that end. Contrary to Piaget's thought of development, Vygotsky placed more emphasis on the role of language and the functions of it in influencing cognitive development. Although Piaget agreed that peer interaction could be a powerful factor in influencing the acquisition of knowledge, this point of view was viewed more through the concept of socio-cognitive conflict (Mugny & Carugati, 1989). As described in Mercer and Howe, this can be regarded as a bridge between Piaget's cognitivism and Vygotsky's socioculturalism in the study of language education (2012).

Such a framework is significant in the study of social learning, on which learner centred instruction is primarily based. The next section looks at the social learning theory by Vygotsky and how it has been adapted in language education to place learners at the centre of the learning process and assist them with the acquiring and meaning making of knowledge.

3.3.2 Scaffolding within the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD)

Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) provides a way to promote and evaluate development in learners by looking at what a child does within a social context and community, rather than as an individual. It recognizes that learning occurs when a learner is assisted by a person with a higher skill set, who continues to assist the learner until the learner is able to accomplish said skill by themselves (1978). In language education Vygotsky's ZPD is seen as scaffolding – a way to support the learner- as they learn to perform a skill or action (Bruner 1975). Initially conceptualised by Bruner (1975) and Bruner, Wood & Ross (1976), whilst applying the ZPD in a number of different educational contexts, 'Scaffolding' is a process where a more experienced and knowledgeable person helps the learner in their ZPD through focused questions and positive interactions, until the assistance is no longer necessary.

Such definitions of ZPD and developments in Scaffolding have been adapted in language education by understanding that these tools may assist in the learning of knowledge, but the learner is still the focal point of learning. Instead of just focusing on the transmission of skills, Scaffolding needs to focus instead on collaborative learning through the use of talk, classroom activities and other tools that mediate learning (Moll, 1990). Mercer (2013) believes that through exploratory talk, competence in subject areas requires meaningful discourse and such exchanges become tools for pursuing knowledge. Wells (2008) explains further that key factors in students' achievement of learning outcomes revolves around dialogue as 'dynamic motor' for precipitating positive change within the classroom context. In understanding that in formal educational contexts, learning is mediated through language via instructions to the learner, feedback and evaluation, the central role of language and discourse and how it shapes learning is evident. One of the main tenets

of the sociocultural theory is its position on individual learning which occurs through interaction with others and that a collective understanding can be achieved through interactions between individuals.

3.4 The Social Turn in Language Teaching

Kumaravadivelu summarizes that there have been three major shifts in language teaching; “-from communicative language teaching to task based language teaching, from method based pedagogy to post method pedagogy and from systemic discovery to critical discourse” (2006b:71). The next section explores some of these changes in language teaching approaches and attempts to connect the social turn in language teaching with the learner centred approach the study is based on.

Learning is defined by prominent scholars in the field of language pedagogy as being a dynamic, dialogic process, imbued by the physical and social contexts it is situated in and spread across persons, tools and activities (Johnson, 2006; Vygotsky, 1978; and Wertsch, 1991). Theories on learning and cognition explain that the acquiring of knowledge is associated with the daily social practices of people; they are negotiated by the people through the activities and social knowledge they acquire through social experience (Johnson, 2006; Lave and Wenger, 1991; Wenger, 1998). Lave and Wenger define these social activities regulated by normative reasoning, using resources and specific tasks in collaborative activity as a community of practice (1991). These theorists argue further that because the development of human learning is based on the social practices people engage in rather than just rote memorization of information, in order to understand learning approaches, the social activities individuals engage in and how they impact the mental ‘selves’ of said learners must be explored, (Johnson, 2006; Lantof, 2000; Vygotsky, 1978; and Wertsch, 1991). Learning is therefore more commonly being viewed as socially mediated activity that is internalized by individual learners and intrinsically results in a transformation of both the individual and the social practice.

3.4.1 Language Teaching, Communities of Practice and Learner Participation

Kumaravadivelu (2006b) summarizes the pivotal turn in language teaching which recognized language teaching to include the social, cultural and political dynamics of language use. The worldview of language teaching moved away from perceiving it as a system and instead recognizing that “It is about creating cultural forms and interested knowledge that give meaning to the lived experiences of teachers and learners” (2006b:70). Lave and Wenger (1991) use the model of legitimate peripheral participation and reinforce language learning as a social activity that is on-going through situated practices in a specific community. Their model of communities of practice have studied various L2 learning contexts such as the perceptions of University students enrolled for Academic writing courses in an English medium University (Leki, 2001), the experience of students and classroom practices (Toohey, 1998) and immigrant women’s language learning experiences (Norton, 2001). Their view permeates learning as a process by which beginners use the social contexts their learning takes place in to progress towards greater participation in a particular community’s activities by interacting and socializing with more experienced community members- also referred to as legitimate peripheral participation (LPP) (Lave and Wenger, 1991). Thus their theory of situated learning emerged in tandem with the growing awareness in language pedagogy of the social nature of learning and cognition in the field of education, cultural psychology and language teaching. According to this framework learning is viewed then as ‘itself an evolving form of membership’ (Lave and Wenger, 1991:53).

Morita (2004) concurs with the framework of LPP, in that learning in such contexts is never an isolated transmission of knowledge but rather a process of negotiation and transformation that is implicated by the social structures involving power relations in communities of practice. Haneda (2005) agrees with Lave and Wenger that the identities of individuals develop and change as they participate in communities of practice through the multiple social relations and roles they experience. In understanding that identities refer to the “long-term, living relations between persons and their place and participation in communities of practice” Lave and Wenger posit that “identity, knowledge, and social membership entail one another” (1991:53).

The CoP theory has been widely adopted in language learning and classroom research and was first introduced by Toheey in 1996 (Canagarajah, 2002; Kanno, 2003; Morita, 2004; Leki, 2001). Toheey in her longitudinal ethnographic study of a group of children, for whom English was a second language, focuses on the community of practice of these children in their Grade 1 classroom (1998). By observing the classroom practices of the children, Toheey focuses on the participatory opportunity of each child within the classroom community as opposed to the child's cognitive activities. Through her case study, she explores how children engaged in learning and how their identities were shaped through the classroom practices. For example, in her study Toheey notes how the physical classroom space was designed to prevent the children from interacting with proficient speakers of the English language. This was done to limit their access to symbolic resources so that it would mediate their learning of English. Her findings indicate that despite such physical constraints, learning was taking place consistently within the classroom community because children were adopting the local practices of school context. Therefore, Toheey uses the CoP framework to show how language learning is an intrinsic and integrated aspect of any social practice and occurs across communities of practice whereby people engage in joint activity (Haneda, 2005).

Morita also uses the CoP framework proposed by Lave and Wenger in her yearlong academic study of the socialization of Japanese students based on their modes of participation in multiple classrooms at a Canadian University and the identities they developed as a result of the communities of practice. Based on the data obtained from interviews and weekly reports provided by the students, Morita shows that a) based on the experiences of individual students in different classrooms, students negotiated their 'selves' in different ways; b) the way in which each individual student developed their identities and how they participated in different classes also varied significantly; c) the construction of identity occurred over a process of practicing actively in one community and marginally in another (Wenger, 1998). Thus on a tangent from Toheey's study, Morita explains how membership in multiple communities of practice impacts the identity formation of individuals.

Despite the number of advantages CoP perspective has on language learning, there are notable limitations of this approach. The first of which is the lack of critical examination regarding the concept of community in the framework proposed by Lave and Wenger. CoP assumes communities to be problem free and there is little emphasis on the struggles experienced by members of individual communities. Thus despite Lave and Wenger acquiescing that norms are constantly negotiated by members in a community, no critical analysis is provided to account for asymmetrical participatory opportunities for individuals in specific communities of practice. Secondly the Morita study highlights diverse, dynamic identities of individuals marked by their different roles in the varying classrooms they become a member of. These diverse roles and entry points “challenge the static notion of newcomers striving to achieve one convergent end point of development (becoming expert participants)” (Haneda, 2005:812). This emphasizes some of the problems of Lave and Wenger’s framework regarding LPP. Further by clubbing participation and learning and applying it to all classroom practices, researchers risk being unable to understand what is being learned and relating the learning that is occurring with a specific classroom practice that is taking place. Thus it is important that participation needs to be defined and differentiated, as studies by Toohey and Morita show that based on individual member’s participation impacts their learning significantly.

3.4.2 Learner Participation in ELT

Murphey and Falout (2010) state that in order to minimize the marginalization of learners’ views in second language acquisition (SLA), students need to participate in classrooms. Through such participation based on a mutual process of understandings between teachers and learners we can work towards improving education as a whole. Auerbach (1995) argues that teachers especially in ELT should adopt a participatory approach to pedagogy, participation that is based on the practice of democracy in the classroom. This approach does not exclude the knowledge of learners; rather it empowers learners by centring pedagogy on the learner’s experience and knowledge (Auerbach 1995). Through this, students participate in the active process of making their learning experiences an enriching and liberating one. This approach to language education resonates with the

tenets of learner centredness that promote student involvement, shared learning and classroom interaction in ELT.

Through the collective dialogue, mutual learning and democratic decisions related to the educational process, students and teachers can work together in creating language learning practices that change conditions of powerlessness in the classroom. It can be something as simple as negotiating how the students want to be evaluated across the semester. For example in one of my academic writing classes I explained to my students how out of the 100% which is their evaluation across the whole semester, leaving out the final exam 40%, and the midterm exam (20%) which are assessment requirements by the University Exam Board, we can negotiate and decide together how they would prefer to be evaluated for the remaining 40% of their grade. Students discussed this in groups and choose whether they would prefer to have biweekly quizzes, writing assignments or oral presentations. We then collaboratively decided on the evaluation tools and the marks allocated for it. Through such process, students become actively involved in their own learning and are given a role in the decision making related to their learning practices.

Proponents of participatory action research as well as cooperative inquiry assert that in order to improve credibility in research and education instructors need to engage their students in participative research that investigates how teaching and learning can be implemented in a more collaborative way (Campbell & Burnaby, 2001). Based on Freirian (1970) and Deweyian (2004) frameworks that emphasize student participation, such frameworks revolve around the noticing, exploring, analyzing, acting and noticing the changes and then “beginning a new cycle of investigation” (Murphey & Falout, 2010). Norton (2001), states that in order to develop collaborative agency and participatory pedagogy in the classroom, teachers need to emphasize dialectic practices and asymmetrical power relationships in the classroom. Students are not ignorant and should not be considered less important than the teacher.

In my previous experience in teaching English to undergraduate students I have noticed that teachers often assume that students are disadvantaged because they simply have a

need to learn something. They are sometimes weak in their command of the English Language and need specific instruction in areas such as academic writing. Some teachers even associate students who are non-native speakers as being remedial and often adopt a condescending approach when dealing with them. However such asymmetrical power relations often lead to non-conducive language classes, whereby the student is de-motivated to learn. By marginalizing the views of students we are in effect hindering the learning of students within their zones of proximal development (ZPD), which according to Vygotsky, (1978), is an area that with assistance from instructors can have potential improvement within students immediate environments. Thus through such guided collaborative processes that contribute to their own and their peers learning, students can recognize their agency and competence to improve themselves which in itself becomes a source to increase the motivation of students for learning (Deci & Ryan, 2002).

McCombs (2001) explains that major transformations in paradigms have influenced changes in thinking and the way reality is interpreted. The learning paradigm calls for a recognition that “all students can learn” and a view of education as “shared responsibility” amongst administration, staff, faculty, student and the community (2001:188). For the purposes of this study learner centredness will be considered as an approach: this pedagogical approach is able to provide local solutions to local problems for example within the context of a particular ELT classroom. It does not apply any particular method of teaching but rather looks at teaching as an active process emphasizing interaction between teacher, task and learner in a context that includes the physical environment, emotional environment, whole school ethos, the wider social environment, the political environment and the cultural setting (Williams & Burden, 1997). Within the learner centred approach students must be active participants of the classroom and the teacher a guide to facilitate the students in their learning. In order to involve the students in their learning, my teaching methodologies attempt to encourage learner centred classes that promote student participation in the classroom context. In my classes I endeavour to apply a variety of learning methods and tools specified in the Weimer model of learner centredness (2013) mentioned in the previous section of this chapter, in an attempt to

ensure that the traditional classroom structure is replaced with a more collaborative and informal learning space for instructors and learners to negotiate.

3.5 Language, ELT and Learner Centred Pedagogy

To understand the way in which learner centred approach influence classroom instruction it is necessary to first review theories related to the role of language in establishing and informing the values and beliefs of individuals, as well as social groups. Language as highlighted in the definition provided above is the main medium through which ideas, concepts and information are shared, learnt and extended in individuals and amongst groups of individuals. The following section of this chapter will examine the association of language to the values and beliefs of particular individuals or social groups and how theorists have linked such associations to the way in which individuals acquire and manage information, both in isolation and as members of a social group.

Language theorists have linked the characteristics and set of beliefs of a particular individual or social group (Ideology) as being embedded in language, (Block, 1997; Brumfit, 2001). Indeed language is the focal medium by which we convey our ideas, perceptions and ourselves, therefore it informs our actions and thoughts as individuals or members of a social group. The association of language to the culture of its speakers is summarized by the Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis (1956), which states that the 'structure of the language one habitually uses influences the manner in which one thinks and behaves' (Kramsch 1998:14), or 'language determines thought' (Kumaravadivelu, 2008:18).

The linkage of language to thought, and subsequently behaviour can be applied to understand the increasing importance given to learner centred pedagogy within classroom contexts. Since learner centredness is concerned with equipping learners with the skills needed to navigate themselves not only in the immediate contexts of their classrooms, but to prepare them for the larger society outside as well, theories of language learning and their impact on the social behaviour of individuals is especially relevant in this context. The idea that language use determines thought processes emphasizes the importance of communication and classroom talk, tenets of learner

centredness relevant to the current study. By encouraging learners to participate in shared interaction, purposeful dialogues and collective discussion, learners immerse themselves in language and subsequently the process of thinking and learning. The following section will review the manner in which such learner centred pedagogy manifests in the ELT classroom and the impact said instruction has on learners.

3.5.1 Learner Centred Instruction

The focus of learner centred instruction is to serve the needs of all learners rather than simply transmitting knowledge, and in order to do this in a successful manner within the language classroom learner perspectives must be understood and acknowledged (Massouleh & Jooneghi, 2012). Ahara (1995) points out that the purpose of learner centred instruction is to develop the learners' inbuilt abilities and intelligence through an enhanced process of transmission. Learners are educated in the skills and knowledge needed to make informed instructional decisions, and the marked difference in a learner centred classroom is that decisions about the content being taught, when it will be taught, how it will be taught and the way in which it will be assessed will be made *with* the learner (Nunan, 2013). Such a view of learner centred classrooms enhances the role of the teacher. For learners cannot be assumed to have a sophisticated knowledge of pedagogy from the very beginning, instead as argued by Nunan, learners embark on a process of learning how to learn which is guided and facilitated by the teacher.

McCombs and Vakili, (2005) explain that learner centred instruction revolves around the promotion of learner responsibility and self-regulation in their own learning process. Despite learners not always possessing all the knowledge required of the pedagogy being taught, each learner brings to the classroom their own knowledge and experience in a diverse and ever changing manner. Learners therefore contribute in unique ways to the classroom learning environment and such a community is built on foundations that facilitate critical thinking, reflection and discourse in a supportive environment (Schaeffer and Presser, 2003). Learner centred instruction then is collaborative in that it builds on the relationship between learners; and learners and instructors. Within this process learners are encouraged to develop their skills through questioning, dialogue, reflection

and critical thinking skills. This then leads to a participatory learning process by all members in the classroom, which educates and supports learners as they assume a greater responsibility over their own learning and move towards a fully autonomous end of their pedagogical process.

Studies have shown that when individuals are exposed to more learner centred pedagogies, they report a greater motivation in the process of instruction and have a more positive outlook on their abilities (Hirano, 2009). Learner perspectives of their instructors' implementation of learner centred approaches play an important role the achieving of positive learning outcomes. Learners therefore can provide meaningful perspectives of the pedagogical experiences associated with learner centredness and how generally they feel about such teaching strategies (McCombs, Daniels & Perry, 2008). Additionally, Nunan (2013) argues that it is important for instructors to engage learners in reflecting on what is learner centred instruction as it relates to the needs of the learner. Through this process, instructors can explore their assumptions about the learning process in a reflective manner to develop sensitized and responsive instructional methods. By challenging existing instructional assumptions and notions of what instruction means to them, instructors will be able to engage in a process that is reiterative and improve their pedagogical practices accordingly. Thus the characteristics of learner centred instruction in no ways side lines the role of the teacher, nor does it require that instructors hand over power and responsibility to learners from day one. It is not an all or nothing approach and instead should be seen as an approach that validates roles of learner and teacher in a relative continuum, whereby all members are active participants of the process of learning and are seen as valuable contributors to this process.

3.5.2 Learner Centredness as a Pedagogical Approach

Research framework on learner centredness is motivated to provide value based learning and aims to produce positive outcomes for all learners. In order to build a research based foundation for understanding the cognitive, motivational and developmental needs of learners, a research based definition of learner centredness is necessary (McCombs, 1997). Learner centredness is indeed a complex and multifaceted concept, and therefore

reliable and valid research examining learning from the perspective of the learner ensures the research and education community of the reliability of this approach. This study aims to contribute to such a goal by investigating what learner centredness looks like in the ELT classroom and how students experience it within their learning environments. Brown (2002) explains that it is important to undertake reflective, research based inquiry that constantly examines and re-examines instruction and applies the knowledge garnered from such investigations to more improved and learner centred environments. Instructors therefore must engage learners and negotiate the making of meaning from knowledge by initiating discursive processes in a learning context that promotes the active participation of learners in the on-going education process. When such a learning situation is created, scaffolding as a form to assist in students learning is realized. Scaffolding within the zone of proximal development states Anton (1999), potentially increase learner motivation and learner success in the language classroom.

For the purposes of this study, learner centredness will be referred to as a pedagogical 'approach' (Pennycook, 1994; Kumaravadivelu, 2006b and Brown, 2002), whereby it refers to classroom practices and methods used in the teaching and learning of language that is sensitized to and attempt to address the needs of learners in a socially inclusive manner. It is the practice of education whereby an ideal learning environment for student learning is created employing new pedagogies and technologies where appropriate. An important facet of learner centred instruction is on the variables relating to learner centred perceptions which are considered vital in the achievement of positive learning outcomes (Brown, 2002). These main elements of learner centredness and how they are distinctively focused on the learner will be explored in the following section to provide a clear way to navigate through the research based perspective in literature related to learner centredness.

Learner Emphasis. One of the main elements of the learner centred approach is its focus on the learner. In this approach learners assume more responsibility towards their own learning and are involved in the decision making (Tudor, 1996; Auerbach, 1995). The course content recognizes and caters to the diversity of learners, and is based on

responding to the needs of local learners. This ensures that teaching pedagogy is continuously revised as each group of learners is different.

The focus on the learner needs is problematic when learners have different needs. In such cases tailoring pedagogy to suit individual needs of learners becomes a challenge for faculty and the potential risk of excluding any one student's needs would result in marginalization of the learner within the classroom community. Additionally, Auerbach (1995) states that tailoring the classroom curriculum and content to student needs lead to an ideology of individualism that often works against community building. Faced with such individualistic learner centred practices Canagarajah argues that it is easy to begin adopting traditional pedagogies that emphasize teacher centred approaches (2006b).

In order to address this, collaborative classroom activities whereby students of different abilities are paired together can address the risk of individualism in the classroom. The whole class, group and peer based learning methods which promote active learning in the classroom, encourage shared learning and learner participation in the classroom. In my own classroom, such shared collaborative activities were realized through peer review exercises, group and peer presentations, debates, peer and group work on class activities, poster forums and group discussions. Some of these classes are presented through the video data in the findings chapter and will be analyzed further. My aim in recording these classes was to explore how students perceive the practice of such teaching methods and the way in which these practices impact learners themselves.

Roles of Teachers and Learners. In the learner centred approach collaboration is the main focus through which learning is negotiated rather than transferred (Auerbach 1995). Since active learning classrooms encourage learners to participate in their own learning (Nunan & Lamb, 2001), the traditional roles of teachers and learners structured on a one-way transmission process from teacher to learner are radicalized. Teachers are designers of the pedagogy and facilitate learning; the focus in the classroom is now more about how rather than what of traditional approaches.

Although such a change in roles and relationship precipitates dialogic learning environments, such approaches are also more complex and require more from learners. In addition to participating in the classroom, they are expected to negotiate aspects of their study and support each other's learning. They are required to critique, question, contribute and review. Thus there is a shift of roles whereby in a community of learners, students act as researchers and shift the onus from teachers to themselves as learners in facilitating and being in charge of their own learning. In this approach teachers and learners work together to negotiate a local view of knowledge and how it can be best shared in order to cater to the needs of the students and their abilities; such collaboration is founded on relationships of mutual understanding and trust.

Curriculum Content. The content and pedagogy are also negotiated between learners and teachers. This involves an on-going dialogue between both parties and the negotiated curriculum would be fluid in order to accommodate the differing needs of each group of student. For example, the instructor might ask the class whether they would like to be given quizzes as part of their course assessment for the semester, or would they prefer the percentage of grade to be added to the larger assignments and possibly do away with quizzes. Nunan states how through negotiated curriculum the student is given more autonomy and responsibility over their own learning (1988). However, Auerbach disagrees with this stating that learner centredness is a false construct and teachers continue to control the curriculum in learner centred classrooms (2000).

Student Assessment. Assessment in the learner centred pedagogy applies a more process orientated approach that encourages critical thinking and reflectivity. In a classroom of diverse learners, a combination of assessment procedures that include traditional testing as well as alternative assessment such as presentations, portfolios and dynamic assessment should be applied (Lambert and McCombs, 1998). Teachers can also design tools that encourage self-assessment by learners. Such practices emphasize autonomy and social justice within the classroom.

Contextual Influences on Learner Centredness. Researchers have begun to realize that learner centredness is not isolated from contextual influences, and despite all the instructional practices is still influenced by these factors (Canagarajah, 1993; Tudor 1996). Thus classrooms are implicated by the political, economic, social, cultural and educational and institutional context in which it is situated (Hu, 2005). Such factors affect learner centred practices in the classroom and impact the effectiveness of the approach. In relation to the current study, the adoption of goals by the institution towards a more student centred has affected a change in the teaching approach of the faculty. The need to produce well rounded graduates who are critical thinkers has placed an emphasis on learner centredness in my own institution. Faculty need to use a collaborative and participatory approach in teaching which promotes critical thinking in learners. This is a local example of how contextual factors are continuously affecting the practice of learner centredness.

In spite of the call for learner centred approaches, such approaches cannot be simply adopted based on Western practices and applied in local contexts. Research shows that such adoption and implementation of teaching methodologies has resulted in a mismatch between practice and student needs. For example studies in Asian contexts showed that students were not ready to take up autonomous learner roles in the classroom and were unable to cope up with the increased responsibility they had for their own learning (Dang, 2006; Jones, 1995). Similarly studies in the Arab region show that pedagogy needs to be sensitized to local needs of students and socially inclusive. They need to acknowledge the sociocultural experiences of students in order to precipitate learner centredness and pedagogy must accommodate these experiences of students (Troudi, 2007; Al Maktri, 2016; Kumaravadivelu, 2006b; Canagarajah, 2004).

3.5.3 Challenges to the Learner Centred Approach in ELT

Delpit (1988) criticizes the process orientated, learner centred approach saying that it allows for the marginalization of minorities within the classroom and fails to provide instruction that will allow these minorities to assume power. Delpit explains that because of a possible lack of shared knowledge, student may be disadvantaged and unable to

perform. Through her description of the Black doctoral student, she explains how the student may feel that the teacher is neglecting their responsibility; similar concerns have been highlighted by studies conducted in China.

Additionally, researchers warn of distraction potentially suffered as a result of such learner centred approaches. In seeking to help students to become active in their own learning, such a goal may fail in the hands of faculty who lack political clarity: “the process by which individuals achieve a deepening awareness of the socio-political and economic realities that shape their lives and their capacity to transform them (Macedo & Bartolome, 1999:140). By emphasizing teaching technique and strategies, teachers are distracted from examining their own ideologies. This allows faculty to propagate mainstream values and practices which are in contradiction to learner centred philosophies.

An exception to this criticism and relevant to this study is a teaching project conducted in Boston on Cape Verdean students (Brito et. al., 2005). The study indicates that the critical exploration implemented the learner centred approach and was successful in producing negotiated curriculum, shared decision making, including student skill, knowledge and expertise, learner responsibility and various assessment practices including self-assessment. Brito et.al. explain that they were successfully able to implement learner centredness by adopting a critical ideology that was aimed at working towards change.

Having reviewed the diverse and multifaceted concepts which influence the learner centred approach to language teaching, it can be summarized that this approach is not fixed, but ever changing based on the ubiquitous nature of education. What is clear from the review of research is that learner centredness differs from the traditional approach to teaching in its view of the learning process as a collaborative and shared one between teachers and learners, it is responsive to the needs of the learner and that it places these needs of the learners at the centre of the pedagogical process. The literature on learner centredness highlight the importance of learner centredness being reflective, both from the learners’ point of view and the instructors, in order to continue to inform classroom pedagogy that is learner focused. This study follows similar tenets in its reflective nature,

by investigating how learner centred pedagogy manifests in the ELT classroom and reporting on how learners experience these pedagogies, it is my aim to contribute valid data to this school of thought.

Previous sections of this chapter outlined how the paradigm shift in teaching and learning has increasingly begun to recognize participatory, learner centred pedagogy as a social activity that is mediated by language use. Learning is no longer limited to being transmitted by the teacher and absorbed by the students; instead it is a negotiated and shared between participants within learning contexts. Based on social constructionist theory in language education, the role of language in shaping learning is evident. Research shows that collective understanding and the acquiring and constructing of knowledge are achieved through interactions between members of the learning community. In linking theories of social constructionism and CoP theory, the next section of this chapter considers the situation of the classroom.

3.6 Classroom Interaction and Learner Centred Pedagogy

Alexander (2004) a sociocultural pioneer explains the role of classroom talk in improving student engagement and achievement of learning outcomes. Research evidence to support the right quality of talk amongst teacher and students, as well as amongst students and students, and how this aids academic performance has informed classroom pedagogies in recent years (Mercer 2000; Sutherland, 2015; Myhill, 2006; Wolf, Crosson and Resnick, 2006). Mercer and Howe (2012) elaborate that while questions from teachers can encourage students to come up with main ideas and develop their reading comprehension skills, pressing them to elaborate on these ideas through questions such as '*How did you know that?*'; '*Why?*' can also serve to guide students learning and use language as a tool for reasoning (2012:13). Through such interactions knowledge is not only constructed but understood.

Mercer and Littleton show that the use of certain instructional strategies by teachers repeatedly has led to the improvement of learning outcomes (2007). Rojas-Drummond and Mercer (2003) in a study of Mexican teachers found that successful teachers used

question and answer sequences to not only evaluate knowledge but also to develop students understanding as opposed to the least successful teachers who relied on traditional learning contexts. The findings of the study reinforce Vygotsky's social learning theory at the classroom level; it suggests that learning is more effective when it is constructed by members of the learning community through shared social interactions. Additionally, Alexander (2001) found that teachers who seek contributions in the form of questions from students in mathematics lessons achieved higher success in the learning of the subject. Similar findings were reported by Murphy and Falout (2010); in a meta-analysis of experimental programmes for the teaching of Science, the study found that teacher led discussion combined with hands on activities in the classroom ensure the greatest positive effect on students' achievement levels. Teacher's questioning strategies in the classroom context thus can be 'scaffolded' to help learners understand content and make meaning of knowledge. The 'scaffolding' of learners is facilitated through the use of interactional strategies emphasising the importance of classroom dialogue and talk by members of the learning community to promote shared, social learning in language classrooms (Alexander, 2004; Rojas-Drummond & Mercer, 2003).

3.6.1 Classroom Talk As A Tenet of Learner Centredness.

In recognizing that the tenets of learner centredness has a communicative emphasis centred on classroom interaction that encourages student voice, engagement, critical thinking and active learning, classroom interactions that foster discussion and collaboration to gain understanding of the subject matter resonate with Alexander's 'dialogic teaching' (2004). All classrooms have student teacher interaction to various degrees, however 'dialogic teaching' moves away from classrooms and lesson organization to look at the quality, dynamic and content of talk that occurs through various teacher led interventions (Mercer, 2004). Studies show that the role of the student becomes more 'activated' when teachers use interventions that promote dynamic, reciprocal and collaborative interaction (Alexander, 2008). Bakhtin's view of dialogue, whereby the exchange, acquisition and refinement of meaning are the central tenants of education (1981), links to Vygotsky's view of discourse allowing the manifestation of the 'selves' of learners within a specific context. Dialogue is the window to the identity of

participants creating 'communities of enquiry'. In the context of the ELT classroom, dialogue through the practice of creating valuable classroom talk, becomes an essential tool for learning (Mercer, 2000; Myhill 2006).

According to Rojas-Drummond and Mercer (2003), teachers' frequent use of initiation – response-feedback (IRF), a common exchange in many classrooms, does not necessarily do more than simply guessing the right answer, known by the teacher. Instead teacher's questions should also:

- a) encourage children to make explicit their thoughts, reasons and knowledge and share them with the class;
- b) model useful ways of using language that children can appropriate for us themselves, in peer group discussions and other settings (asking for relevant information possessed only by others, or by asking 'why' questions to elicit reasons which are relevant to both functions (a) and (b).
- c) provide opportunities for children to make longer contributions in which they express their current state of understanding, or to articulate difficulties.

These strategies can encourage students to generate talk that not only develops their linguistic capabilities but also benefit the listeners and allows the student to consider the content of their talk (Gibbons, 2001). These studies show then that shared dialogue and mediated classroom interaction not only stimulates learning but supports students in their own reasoning and thinking skills (Mercer, 1995). Conceptualizing this framework of meaningful classroom interaction as a catalyst for student learning in the context of my own ELT classrooms was influenced by some of the research highlighted above.

3.6.2 Learner Centredness in Institutes of Higher Education

The complexities of teaching have been highlighted in various research centred on teacher cognition and teacher's concept of education. According to Johnson much of the concerns have centred around "who teachers are, what they know and believe, how they learn to teach and how they carry out their work in diverse contexts throughout their

careers” (2006:236). The review of literature on teaching shows that this is an area that is interlaced with numerous elements including but not limited to teacher beliefs, teacher knowledge, teacher and learner experiences. For the purpose of studying a particular approach in language teaching it is necessary that we examine connections between the teaching paradigm, learning paradigm and the learner centred approach that is increasingly being adopted in institutions in the Arab region.

Barr and Tagg in their article “From Teaching to Learning- A new Paradigm shift for Undergraduate Education” (1995), were among the first to discuss a shift in the nature of higher education whereby traditional pedagogy in institutes of higher learning have been revolutionized into what Barr and Tagg refer to as a new paradigm for tertiary education. The catalyst for the change in teaching and learning approaches is related to the change of purpose institutes of higher learning were undergoing in the 21st century. According to Barr and Tagg, the shift faced by universities and colleges from an organization that exists to provide instruction ‘teaching paradigm’ to an organization that exists to produce and encourage learning ‘learning paradigm’ in student centred environments was a fundamental change in the dynamics of teaching and learning approaches. Their theory explains how institutes originally created to provide for teaching activity which largely consisted of three 50-minute lecture sessions in a week were aimed at delivering instruction.

Universities are beginning to realize now that such an approach which they label as the ‘teaching paradigm’ was however more of a means to a mistaken end. Instead institutes are now realizing that their mission is not to provide instruction but rather stimulate and produce learning, by whatever means suitable. As summarized by Rovai and Jordan “Universities are moving away from a faculty centred and lecture base paradigm to a model where learners are the focus, where faculty members become learning environment designers and where students are taught critical thinking skills. Thus the role of professors in the new school houses is to serve their students by ensuring student learning is of paramount importance,” (2004:1).

In their comparison of the teaching and learning paradigms over six elements including mission and purposes, criteria for success, teaching/learning structures, learning theory, productivity and funding, and nature of roles, Barr and Tagg (1995) found that in the teaching paradigm; the act of teaching is both the method and the product; the purpose of the University is to transfer knowledge from faculty to student in a linear process through course content; knowledge is information possessed by faculty and transferred to students; and success is measured by higher student enrolment numbers, student graduation rates, curriculum development and the credentials of faculty. An emphasis of this paradigm is on the role of the faculty who is the expert and is in control of imparting knowledge. Similarly, Guskin (1999), summarizes the teaching paradigm to involve a structured process over a 12-16 week duration, regular meeting times, grade based assessment, lecture and discussion and the primary transfer of knowledge will be from the faculty to the student. Auerbach explains further that traditional approaches in pedagogy emphasized the teacher as being the expert whose task is to transmit knowledge, to equip learners with new information and skills, most of the time learning learners “silenced and powerless” (1995:145).

In contrast to this, the learning paradigm espoused by Barr and Tagg (1995), focus on creating student centred learning environments that recognize and promote learning sensitized to the needs of the student. In striving towards a learner centred focus in environments that produce learning rather than provide instruction, Barr and Tagg explain that the teaching/learning structure of courses remain fluid in order to support the learning method that works best in catering to the student needs while achieving the learning outcomes of the course. Thus the onus is on the faculty to find the best method that encourages and develops student abilities. In the learning paradigm the role of faculty shifts; they are “designers of learning environments, applying the best methods for producing learning and student success (Barr & Tagg, 1995:25). In addition, all members of the institution are also responsible, together with faculty in producing learning.

The shift in the mission of institutions of higher education from providing quality instruction to producing student learning allows for a community of learners that make discoveries,

solve problems and construct knowledge relevant to their selves. McCombs (2001) explains that major transformations in paradigms have influenced changes in thinking and the way reality is interpreted. The learning paradigm calls for a recognition that “all students can learn” and a view of education as “shared responsibility” amongst administration, staff, faculty, student and the community (2001:188). While there has been much research carried out on teacher implementing learner centred approaches and students’ experiences with such active pedagogies, little of this research has been reflective. Much of the existing body of literature investigates the teaching approaches of other teachers and their implementation of learner centred pedagogies, in classrooms. In understanding the role of reflective research in providing important evaluative information for teachers to look back on and perhaps even learn from, this study looks at my own teaching practices whereby an assumed learner centred intervention is applied in the ELT classroom context. The study looks at how such pedagogies look like retrospectively and explores the effect of such strategies on ELT students in the classroom.

The social turn in language and pedagogy has offered new research strands that have significant ramifications on classroom practices; these include topics such as learner identity, teacher beliefs, teaching values and cultural knowledge (Kumaravadivelu, 2006b). As stated by Norton (2000), it is only by understanding and acknowledging the experiences of language learners, will language teachers be able to create classroom contexts that facilitate learning, participation and increase social justice in the classroom. The following section reviews literature related to the impact of English pedagogy on the identity of learners in the language classroom.

3.7 English Language Education, Identity and Learner ‘Selves’

Having explored the impact of learner centred pedagogy in ELT research, this section of the study examines poststructuralists theories to understand how discourse shapes ones cultural, political and social self. A review of literature based on theories of modernism will be used to connect discourse with culture, society and the impact of such discourses on the identity of learner ‘selves’.

Crookes (2009) posits that the traditions of ELT were based on theories of modernism, which espouses a neutral stance on ELT in stating that ‘a perception of social reality which can be explained in neutral rational terms’ (2009:198). It is important to note here that despite ELT traditions stemming from the objective, modernist views, Canagarajah (2006a:28) argues that this view of the dominance of modernism in ELT discourses has been challenged by;

‘a major philosophical change that characterizes our social context. Our quest for objective, absolute, universal knowledge has been shaken by the questioning of Enlightenment thinking and modernist science. Our faith in certitude died when the positivist view of a rational, closed universe was called into doubt. As a result of this epistemological change, we now have a plethora of theoretical positions and philosophical assumptions shaping research and teaching. The debates between the positivists and relativists ... [highlight] the dilemmas in all ... pedagogical domains.’

In relation to the context the current study is situated in, the epistemological change referred to by Canagarajah, extends to include not only the aspects of the scientifically observable as aspects of modernism but recognizes the significance based on the philosophies of postmodernism and post-colonialism. Despite having roots in modernism, in the last twenty years ELT has been increasingly informed by the field of critical applied linguistics, with roots based on postmodernist traditions.

3.7.1 Post-structuralism, ELT and Identity Research

Postmodernism introduced in the late eighteenth century, was originally used to describe art, religion and music (Anderson, 1997). In contrast to the singular view of an objective reality adopted by modernists, postmodernists see the world as “conjectural, falsifiable, challengeable and changing” (Cohen et. al., 2011: 27). More recently researchers of this view have highlighted social reality to be of multiple perspectives and socially constructed (Anderson, 1997). Post-modernist ideas in philosophy recognize the inseparability of fact and value, and state further that our values and beliefs, our social contexts and paradigms influence who we are as individuals as well as members of social groups.

Post-structuralism, a movement that is closely related to postmodernism, is a term derived in educational research to label the heterogeneous work of prominent critical theorists in the 1960's and '70's. This approach derived from the works of theorists like Foucault and Derrida, argues that individual agency has prominence, and people are different and carry tensions within themselves (based on their social class, ethnicity, sex, social group and so on) (Cohen et. al., 2011). This view of the world recognizes that individuals perceive themselves in certain ways and relate this view of themselves to the way they interpret phenomena. Therefore, poststructuralists believe that in order to understand phenomena, there must be a 'deconstruct' of the multiple layers of meaning and realities as understood, legitimized and produced by the individual. Post-structuralism is relevant to the current study in that it argues for multiple interpretations of social reality to be recognized, calls for the legitimacy of individual selves and voices and rejects the simplistic view of cause and effect laws of social reality.

Halliday (2007) explains that as qualitative researchers we require a 'postmodern awareness' of the people we research, who are we as researchers, and the relationship between us. Halliday explains further that such awareness requires an understanding of identity, but cautions that such an attempt would be faced with complexities. Many scholars in the field of education have highlighted the powerful relationship between identity and language learning, indeed over the past 15 years there has been an explosion of interest in identity and language learning (Norton, 2000; Ricento, 2006; Miller, 2000; Norton, 2010). Miller (2000:173) explains that 'identity has been used as a concept to explore questions about the sociocultural contexts of learning and learners, pedagogy, language ideologies, and the ways in which languages and discourses work to marginalize or empower speakers.' Theories on identity and the way it has been connected to language and education gained momentum after Norton's often cited article title 'Social identity, investment, and language learning', published in TESOL Quarterly in 1995. This article drew on poststructuralists' theories of language and identity and introduced Norton's construct of 'investment' to the field of research.

In reviews of the literature on the debates of identity and the new perspectives it offers on language learning and teaching, many researchers used Norton's theory of investment and identity to research language pedagogy in the classroom (Menard-Warwick, 2005; Ricento, 2006; Block, 2007; Swain & Deters, 2007; De Costa, 2010a, Morgan & Clarke, 2011). In the context of such work, identity has since been established as a research area of its own. Additionally Block (2007) explains that a poststructuralist approach to identity has been the approach adopted by researchers attempting to explore links between identity and language learning. This approach will be the basis in exploring the connections of identity and language learning in the following section of the study.

In the field of identity and language learning, social theories of Bourdieu and Foucault have been more prominent in informing research in the last decade. Many influential researchers have used the social theories of habitus and capital by Bourdieu and Foucault's explanations on discourse in order to understand issues related to identity and learning (Menard-Warwick, 2005; Norton 2005). While Foucault sees power as being beyond agency (the ability of individuals to act independently) or structure (social patterns of arrangement and practice that influence the options available to individuals), Bourdieu sees power as being reinforced by interplay between agency and structure. Bourdieu defines habitus as 'an acquired system of generative schemes objectively adjusted to the particular conditions in which it is constituted' (Bourdieu, 1977:95).

This can be then understood as the socialized norms or practice that influence the behaviour of individuals. Bourdieu posits that habitus is created through a social process, that shifts according to context and time. Navarro (2006) explains that habitus is not fixed but evolves, and rather than being determined by structures it is formed through an interchange between agency and structure. Bourdieu's explanation on capital includes assets that extend beyond material objects to include assets that may be social, cultural or symbolic (1986). These theories have been the basis for studies explaining social asymmetries and unequal structures and the effect of these conformities on agents. The following section reviews literature relevant to theories of language socialization and their role in constructing identities of learners in language education.

3.7.2 Key Research on Identity in ELT

Canagarajah in his study of student agency in the construction of alternate identities, adopts different theoretical positions including feminist scholarship, language socialization studies, Bakhtinian semiotics and Foucauldian Post-structuralism in defining identities of learners as “as multiple, conflictual, negotiated and evolving” (1995:117). Bonny Norton contributed significantly to this field by drawing on the work of Bourdieu in social theory and Weedon on theories related to subjectivity (2000). Norton defines identity as “how people understand their relationship to the world, how that relationship is constructed across time and space, and how people understand possibilities of the future” (2000:5). Her study of five immigrant women in Canada and their experiences as marginalized language learners indicates relationships between power, identity and language learning. Norton theorizes that relations of power can both empower as well as constrain the identities negotiated by language learners in the classroom.

Norton relates “motivation” to the concept of Bourdieu’s cultural capital which Norton defines as ‘investment’. She claims that her study participants have made an ‘investment’ in English in order to master the language used in Canada. Rejecting Bourdieu’s concept of habitus, Norton assumes the social change and educational progress in Weedon’s conception of identity. For Norton (2000), language learning encompasses the adoption of new subjectivities through counter discourses that resist marginalization. McKay and Wong in their article “Multiple Identities, Multiple Discourse” trace the dynamic and often contradicting multiple identities of learners (1996). In their study McKay and Wong relate the discourses and identities of Chinese immigrant students in California to the agency exercised by students in relation to positions of power both in school and in society. This study is especially relevant to my own context as McKay and Wong found that identities associated with being ‘good students’ lead learners to higher agency and participation in academic language skills (1996). In my own context, I am interested in the application of teaching methodologies that encourage participation and learner centred approaches to language pedagogy and how this affects the way learners perceive themselves within the context of the ELT classroom. McKay and Wong’s study showed that students who were

stigmatized with poor learner identities seemed less motivated, participated less in the classroom and showed a lack of interest towards their language classes.

The previous sections explored the changing approaches in teaching and learning and examined developments in post-structuralism theory related to language pedagogy as communities of practice and their impact on the identity of learners in the language class. Having reviewed literature that looked at the roots of the socially inclusive, learner centred approach, it is necessary in line with the aims and goals of this study to connect the effect of such approaches on the learner identity of students. The next section of this study will define learner identity and briefly discuss the impact of learner centred pedagogies on the 'selves' of learners.

3.8 Learner Identity In ELT

In previous sections of this study, identity was understood to be varied, ubiquitous and dynamic (Norton, 2000; Kumaravadivelu, 2006b). It is necessary for the purpose of this study to review research done in the field of learner identity that we may better understand how the identity of students are subject to change depending on the context the learner is in and, the classroom practices and methods which can enhance or undermine students from learning.

Having come to understand from the literature mentioned above that identities are manifold, fluctuating and a site of struggle, the connections between identity and learning are important in crystallizing the learner identity of students. Norton (2000) in her study clarifies that learner difficulties related to access can arise from various aspects of identity such as gender, race and social class. Menard-Warwick (2005) argues further that even when such questions of access are resolved, difficulties in learning due to identity conflicts that ensue from students having to take on new identities can be a depilating process. Additionally, Hirano (2009), in her longitudinal study of an adult EFL learner who perceived himself as having difficulty learning English explains learner identity as being differences inherent to the individual and the relationship between the individual and the context.

Hirano argues further that schools and educational institutions play a crucial role in the construction of learner identities. She extrapolates that “Junior’s identity as a poor learner strongly affected his behaviour in the classroom” (2009:37). Forming a connection between learner identity and its effect on learner difficulty, Hirano posits that the identity ascribed to individuals by institutions such as the ‘poor learner’ one Junior associated himself with can prevent students from acknowledging learning in the classroom. Although Hirano considers such associations in her study and acts to change the ‘poor’ learner identity Junior associates himself with, little attention is given to the institutionally ascribed identities that create such negativity within learners in the first place. In an attempt to examine how the social environment of the classroom and the practices can effect learner identity and the way in which they see their ‘selves’, this study analyses how students respond to the autonomy of active learning classrooms that encourage students to participate in their own education, and move away from institutionalized labels.

Nero in her study of how students position their linguistic identities in her MA-TESOL program claims that many institutions ascribe linguistic identities to students that are often in conflict with existing identities. She argues that such institutionalized ‘labels’;

“1) Assign linguistic identities to students as part of a sorting mechanism in education that directly affects student placement and assessment, the amount and nature of language instruction they receive, and attitudes towards the students; 2) Depending on whether the terms are self- or externally ascribed there may be a mismatch between their intended and perceived meanings; and 3) consistent with postmodern constructions, their meaning can and do shift with time and context” (2005:196).

In her study Nero argues that placement is a vital area affecting the identities of language learners in institution across the U.S. Her study discusses the different language assessment tools utilized in New York City for students who spoke more than one language. Although her study considers the shortcoming of some of these standardized

tests, and questions the ability of such tests in assessing the full range of linguistic knowledge that students may possess, her study does not consider the impact such teacher centred assessments have on the learner identity of students.

Blanton (1999) in her study of college preparatory courses discusses the problematic nature of the institutionalized ESL label and its impact on the learner identity of students. She notes that students in college feel that they shouldn't be placed differently from other U.S. high school graduates and are offended by the ESL label imposed upon them by the institution. Her study points out that assessment practices influence learner identities of students in a negative manner. Ortmeier-Hooper in her study of three immigrant college students clarifies further that "the institutionalized labels that are placed on second language students clearly have a profound effect on how they define themselves in the college classroom and in their writing" (2008:393). In her study she demonstrates that labels such as 'ESL' and 'Generation 1.5' are problematic for students as they negotiate their identities in mainstream composition classes (2008).

The relationship between academic success of ESL students at a large, public, urban college and their scores at the time of admission on basic skills tests in reading and writing by Patkowski (1991), reported that the entrance scores of ESL students do not appear to act as good indicators of subsequent academic success. He found also that the most difficult test for ESL students to pass, the writing test, was also the least predictive. His study alludes to the findings of other studies reviewed here, that basing placement decisions on the basis of "a single score on any particular test" (Patkowski, 1991: 738) is often an unfair and incorrect assessment of students' academic ability. The studies considered above all show that learner identities of students are affected by the learning and teaching approaches, assessment methods and institutional mandates with regards to curricular, (Harklau, 2003, McKay & Wong, 1996, Crawford, 2000). Thus these elements have significant ramifications on the learner identity of students, highlighting a necessity for further research within this field.

3.8.1 ELT Pedagogy, Learner Centredness and Learner Identity

Based on the studies reviewed above, learner identity relates to the differences inherent in the learner and the relationship between the learner and a number of factors including the classroom relationships and context. The literature on learner identity shows that it is changing and affected by several factors including past experiences, institutional labels, assessment tools, placement tests and classroom dynamics, relationships of power and the progress and role the student assumes within the context of the language classroom. The review also shows that despite existing literature on the linguistic labels and ESL labels placed on learner identities, there has been a lack of research in examining the implementation of learner centred approaches and its effects on the learner identity of students.

Learner centredness has had a significant impact on language teaching since its initial movement in the 1960's (Tudor, 1996). The approach which has picked up in momentum and popularity is becoming the option in the new era that calls for social justice and empowerment of students in the classroom. By taking responsibility for their own learning, there is a dynamic aspect to education that seems to coincide with the rapid development and constant evolution of the digital world learners are faced with today. Learner centredness seems to be marching hand in hand with the globalized world that has transcended boundaries and revolutionized real time communication.

In the face of a new era of technological imperialism that is dominated by social networking sites, transnational corporations and capitalistic ventures, the role of English in colonizing higher education is even more poignant. In a race to stay at the cutting edge of revolution and change, learner centred approaches once touted as a Western approach to education, is now being rapidly localized in many institutions in Asia and the Arab world. Whether this learning approach can achieve the necessary balance in including the sociocultural needs of learners based on the context the approach is implemented in, has been poorly researched and in the Arab region remains mostly unanswered. Indeed, the study of learner centredness in Asia and the Arab world has

been limited; much of the research has been on the philosophy of such practices rather than research into the application of such practices. Specifically, there has been a gap in the research with regards to the impact of learner centredness on the learner identity of students in the language classroom. This research attempts to address this gap, by exploring the manifestation of learner centred strategies in ELT classrooms, it is my goal to understand the way such strategies are attempted to be implemented and the effect of such approaches on the learner identity of students.

3.9 Chapter Summary

Learner centredness has had a significant influence on language teaching since the early 1960's and continues to do so to this date. Yet despite the popularity of the approach and the adoption of it by institutes of higher education, learner centredness has not been adequately researched from a sociocultural point of view. This literature review has therefore identified these gaps, and attempted to show how the current study seeks to fill in some of the gaps in the research with regards to the application of learner centredness in language teaching. In light of this, the primary questions that guided this exploratory study were: how do ELT pedagogies meant to foster learner centredness manifest in the classroom?; how are such pedagogies experienced by students?; and how do such pedagogies intended to be learner centred affect the learner identity of students?

The need for exploratory, reflective studies in researching learner-centredness is important. Firstly, the social turn in language teaching is indicative researchers must consider how classroom practices are shaped by social, historical, cultural, and political factors. Teaching choices are inherently shaped by the wider social context that has a direct impact on the learning that occurs in classrooms. Learning strategies, classroom activities and identities are enacted through a variety of discourses that are in constant interaction with one another, creating and shaping the selves of teachers and learners in a dynamic process (Gee, 2005). As such classrooms are viewed as a site of struggle and complexity, with knowledge and interpretation of contexts that need to be acknowledged and validated. Despite this there has been a lack of research into learner centredness especially from a reflective perspective.

Research related to the implementation of learner centredness has for example looked at how well it is being implemented. In studying educational reforms in Turkey, Hatipoglu Kavanoz (2006) found that despite the implementation of pedagogical practices aimed at making students more active participants in their own learning, school teachers lacked the training to implement learner centredness into their classroom. While they were motivated and enthusiastic about implementing learner centred approaches, their classrooms reflected a teacher centred pedagogy. In a study of Thai foreign language classrooms, Nonkukhetkhong et. al. (2006) found that in implementing a ministry mandated learner centred approach in teaching L2 students; teachers lacked the training for the implementation of such approaches, additional there were also constraints of facilities, learning environments and resources that affected the implementation of the learner centred approach. The researcher highlights that learner centredness was seen by teachers as appropriate only for the 'bright and 'highly motivated' student.

These studies do not examine the sociocultural elements students bring with them that shape classroom context and affect the pedagogical choices of teachers. Furthermore, they say little about the impact learner centredness has on learners and their identities in the language classroom. Most studies on learner centredness discuss difficulties associated with the implementation of the approach and state that these difficulties are due to a lack of training amongst faculty, as well as a lack of resource. The impact of such learning approaches on the learners is hardly addressed, and only Dang (2006) discusses this issue by summarizing in his study that learner centredness is a comfortable approach for Vietnamese students who come to know their peers better and feel at 'home' in an interactive classroom.

The recent rejection of learner centred methods in applied linguistics is the second reason why a reflective, teacher-researcher examination of learner centredness is important. The move away from method has led to learner centred approaches being dismissed as inappropriate in addressing language teaching and learning concerns. The rejection is surprising considering the limited research into the application of learner centredness in

language classrooms and how learners experience it, especially from a reflective practitioner point of view. This even more so as the core element of learner centredness- the centrality of the learner- continues to dominate alternative pedagogies (Allwright, 2005). These pedagogies like Widdowson's (2004) "localization' method which emphasizes teaching methods to respond to local contexts, needs and objectives; as well as Van Lier's perspective of the classroom as being 'dynamic and living', still adhere to the learner playing a central role in classroom methodology and teaching strategies. This indicates that the role of the learner as the core ideology of learner centredness is still relevant and there is a need to know more about the role of the learner as well as their experiences with regards to this learning and teaching approach.

Finally, in light of the paradigm shift by intuitions and government agencies towards a learner centred approach to learning and teaching especially in the Arab region, it seems obvious that we need to have a better understanding of it not only in theory but also through the application of it. Through the use of a sociocultural lens to explore how learner centredness is experienced by learners, and how this approach affects the way they perceive themselves and their learner identities, this study will be significant because it contributes to the field of research on ELT pedagogy in the Arab region.

Chapter 4: Methodology

4.0 Introduction

This study is aimed at exploring how pedagogies intended to promote learner centredness manifest in ELT classrooms, the way students experience such teaching approaches and the impact of such learner centred pedagogies on the identity of students at an institute of higher learning in the UAE. In order to provide a transparent and “thick’ account of the research methodology undertaken for this study (Cohen et.al. 2011:18), this chapter will detail the process of developing, refining and finalizing the research methodology. The first section provides a description of the research questions of the study and the participants. This is followed by a discussion of the research paradigm and methodology used to collect data. In the subsequent sections, I discuss the procedures undertaken to collect and analyse data and consider potential limitations and threats to the study. I also focus on the procedures used to maintain the ethical standards with regards to data protection of participants and secure storage of data collected. I conclude by providing a thematic structure used to analyse and present my data.

4.1 Research Questions

The learner centred approach to pedagogy was recently included in the University goals, aims and ethos, and implemented across the colleges in AUE. This approach was promoted as the best approach to pedagogy and all faculties were required to practice such ‘student centred’, ‘collaborative’ pedagogy in line with the university’s mission. This study focuses on understanding how such pedagogies intended to be learner centred appeared in the ELT classroom and the way student experienced and internalized it.

Therefore, the methodology was developed to answer the following research questions;

1. How do English Language Teaching (ELT) pedagogies meant to foster learner centredness manifest in the classroom?
2. In what ways do students experience learner centredness in the ELT classroom?

3. How does learner centredness affect the learner identity of students in the ELT classroom?

4.2 Research Paradigm

Approaches to methodology in research according to the work of Kuhn (1962) reside in 'paradigms' and communities of scholars. Kuhn (1962) defines paradigm as a way of looking at or researching phenomena using an 'accepted model or pattern' (1962:23). Cohen et. al. (2011) explain further that paradigms refer to a shared belief system or set of principles that identify a research community and their way of pursuing knowledge. Different researchers adopt different views or approaches concerning their research. These approaches to methodology in research are referred to as paradigms; "the philosophical intent or motivation for undertaking a study" (Mackenzie and Knipe, 2006:4). Paradigms are the first step towards undertaking a research and as described by Grix (2004) form the basis of any research.

Paradigms can therefore be understood to be conceptions of the social world based on the explicit and implicit assumptions underpinning them (Cohen et. al., 2011). They refer to a set of general philosophical assumptions about the nature of reality or the essence of the social phenomena being investigated (ontology), which in turn result in the epistemological assumptions or epistemology: ways of researching the nature of reality and the nature of things and the way in which we come to know these realities (Cohen et. al., 2011) and gives rise to axiology (the values and beliefs that we hold). My research paradigm for this study is informed by the same sequence, and by doing so it is my aim that such a view allows the current study to explore the implementation of a teaching strategy that promotes student participation, voice and is centred on the student. In this section of my study, I will describe how I arrived at my research paradigm and how my ontology, epistemology and axiology influence my methodological considerations. Finally, I will also discuss how this gave rise to my choice of instrumentation and data collection for the current study.

Interpretivism is based on an anti-foundationalist view of the world that the world does not exist independently of our knowledge of it (Grix, 2004). Cohen et.al. state that the interpretivists believe that “the social world should be studied in its natural state, without intervention of, or manipulation by, the researcher” (2011:17). They are of a view that the world is socially constructed of multiple realities, and the researcher is concerned with the participants’ viewpoints of the context under study (Creswell, 2003). This approach is based on a subjectivist epistemology; whereby the researcher’s aim is to understand the different perceptions of their participants; determine insights into the context under study and form theories based on their examinations (Wellington, 2000). Interpretivists do not begin with a theory, but rather generate or inductively develop a theory or a pattern of meanings through their research process (Mackenzie and Knipe, 2006).

In light of wanting to explore and understand the manifestation and subjective effect of learner centred approaches on the identity of ELT students, I feel that the interpretive paradigm also known as a value laden approach, where concern for the individual is central to the underpinnings of research, is consistent with the aims of my study. In this paradigm efforts are made by the researcher to “...understand from within” (Cohen et. al. 2011:17) and external intervention is generally not preferred. Since I am interested in understanding students’ experiences within the context of the learning environment, the interpretive paradigm concerned with understanding the multiple interpretations of specific events and contexts in their original state without any disturbances, is best suited to my purposes.

However, it is these very value laden tenets of the interpretive approach which are often criticized. Critiques claim that whilst the interpretive approach attempts to understand the participant and their point of view, it is unable to contribute valuable generalizations in the study of social behaviour and more specifically education (Cohen et.al., 2011). Due to the unique nature of each context and situation, generalizability of findings into laws is not possible within this paradigm. Such limitations according to Geertz (1973) can be minimized through “thick descriptions” (Geertz, 1973) of events, and of using multiple data collection methods (Myhill, 2016). Interpretivists therefore use phenomenology,

ethnography, case study, discourse analysis and other such value-laden methodologies in their research. Researchers build theories based on the understandings of the subjects involved and their perceptions of realities; therefore, believing that theory should arise from the findings rather than precede it. Interpretive research is categorized as being inductive as it attempts to understand by empathizing with participants and by putting themselves within the participants natural setting (Smith, 1983). In order to do this successfully researchers within this paradigm focus on small sample sizes which are applicable in the scenario and context of this study. However, the focus is on description heavy data that such explorations produce. The small sample size involved in this approach rejects the possibility that laws of generalizability, or “laws analogous to those set forth in the physical sciences” (Smith, 1983:12) will emerge, however this approach allows the researcher to know a lot about and understand particular phenomenon, the context it occurs in and its implications on participants.

Keeping in mind that teaching and learning practices are often fluid and subjective, the paradigm of the study needed to facilitate an insight into the multi-layered interpretations and opinions my subjects produced during the observation and interview sessions. At the same time my approach also needed to consider my own biases, prejudices and values and the effect of these on the interpretations of the study. Since I am a part of the learner centred classes recorded for observation and retrospectively analysed, my own biases in my position as a researcher would be laced with my own beliefs, values and presuppositions. This study therefore attempts to use the interpretivists approach and ‘make the familiar strange’ (Holliday, 2007) by trying to see a familiar context through the eyes of an observer. My reason for choosing qualitative research is, as pointed out by Cohen et. al. (2011:18) qualitative research seeks to “yield insight and understanding of people’s behaviour” (Cohen et.al. 2011: 18), and generates an opportunity to gain familiarity with a phenomenon or acquire new insight into it, in order to understand the occurrence of certain phenomenon better.

This study investigates how a group of learners perceive and experience the implementation of a particular phenomenon: the implementation of the learner centred

classroom that promotes active learning approaches in the teaching of language. In perceiving a positivist view of the world as being ‘conjectural, falsifiable, challengeable and changing’ (Cohen et. al., 2011:27), my view of reality includes the multiple perspectives and multiple realities brought forward by the researcher, and belief that knowledge is subjective rather than objective. In understanding that our values and perspectives and paradigms determine what we focus on and how we research, selecting my paradigm was personally a formidable task which would potentially have a significant impact on how my findings are interpreted and what my research ‘shows’. Recently researchers have argued that too much importance and emphasis is placed on paradigms. The paradigm wars (Gage, 1989) between quantitative or qualitative approaches to research have been for the most part confrontational and overstated (Denzin, 2008).

Instead of focusing on the differences in these approaches, researchers should concede that one paradigm is not superior to the other and both approaches contribute different but necessary findings within educational research. Indeed, Teddlie and Tashakkori (2009) argue that there is a need for a less confrontational approach to be adopted between the different paradigms that allows for greater convergence dialogue and views the approaches in a continuum (Brannen, 2005). Recent writers vehemently suggest that ‘methodological puritanism should give way to methodological pragmatism’ in being able to address the research questions of a study (Onwuegbuzie and Leech, 2005:377). Creswell (2009) suggests that a mixed method research that abandons polarities of paradigms and instead encourage their compatibility would result in the strengthening of the inferences when answering research questions and in generating theory.

Denscombe (2008:280) explains that pragmatism is ‘practice-driven’ recognizing that there may be both singular as well as multiple versions of the truth and reality as perceived by the subjects as well as the researcher. Rather than engage in the debate over quantitative versus qualitative affiliations, the pragmatic approach focuses on whether the researcher was able to find out what he or she initially wanted to know regardless of the approach (quantitative or qualitative) used to obtain the answers. In line

with pragmatism, the current study uses the most useful approach to answer the research questions of the study. Rather than preferring one approach to the exclusivity of another, the most useful approach to the investigation even if it requires a combination of methods, including observations and interviews that are able to ‘deliver’ useful answers towards the research was applied in this study. Ultimately the approach for this study was driven by the research questions rather than the methodological preferences of the researcher (Glesne, 2011). The write up of the research therefore will aim to present the necessary components of the study, (Cohen et. al., 2011: 24).

4.2.1 Ontology

Choosing a research paradigm infers that the researcher deals with ontological underpinnings that define the multiple underlying perceptions of reality and how it is understood. In recognizing the subjectivity of my participants’ interpretations and individual perceptions of the new learning strategies they are exposed to, my study is informed by the interpretive approach. Grounded by a view of the world that regards conversations, observations and even artefacts as discourses that are constructed and are open to different meanings and interpretations, interpretivism gives prominence to individual agency rather than a given system, and underpins the significance given to subjective accounts in the research process along with reflexivity on the part of the researcher (Burman and Parker, 1993). Researchers like Foucault and Derrida argue that individuals have views of themselves and one task of the “researcher is to locate research findings within the views of the self that the participants hold, and to identify the meanings with the participants accord to phenomena” (as cited in Cohen et. al., 2011:28). Ultimately interpretivism looks for multiple interpretations of a phenomenon and legitimizes the individual within the research.

This approach to educational research is most relevant to my study that focuses on understanding the learner’s perspective in the face of an educational reform. In line with Grix’s anti foundationalist ontology that an understanding of the world is based on the perceptions and interpretations of reality by individuals, this study believes that truths are located in particular contexts and are perceived in multiple and myriad ways by

individuals (Grix, 2004). The aim of this interpretive study is to understand the ways in which pedagogies meant to be learner centred manifest and also the way participants perceive, interpret and are affected by the implementation of such strategies. Informed by the social constructivist theory of language and linguistics communities whereby “the practices of societies are sites of struggle, and that linguistic communities are heterogeneous arenas characterized by conflicting claims to truth and power” (Norton, 2000: 14), this study uses a sociocultural perspective and is located within an interpretive, exploratory framework. The study looks at structure; agency and identity to understand how learner centred approaches appear in ELT classrooms and its impact on students. I believe that my research paradigm informed by my ontological assumptions is appropriate for this interpretive study.

However, I needed to ensure that the subjectivity involved in understanding the interpretations of my participants is minimized. As mentioned previously, interpretive paradigms are susceptible to variations depending on how participants understand and perceive reality and how researcher interprets the perceptions. In order to minimize speculation in which multiple perspectives and multiple warrants are brought forward by the researcher, it is my aim to use the hermeneutic approach whereby shared understanding of knowledge between researcher and participant is used as a research methodology. Therefore, underpinned by a social-constructivist ontology that seeks to not only understand particular situations and contexts, but also allow such findings to inform teaching practices to benefit learners, this research is positioned within an interpretive frame. Additionally, by providing rich data through multiple data collection methods (Myhill, 2016) and a thick description (Holliday, 2005), my aim is to strengthen the inferences made and the theories generated. It is hoped that through such measures the subjective sterility of the interpretive study highlighted by the likes of Silverman (2001) can be minimized.

4.2.2 Epistemology

Epistemology refers to the way in which we know our multiple realities, the ways in which we reach or come to know these realities. Cohen et. al. (2011:6), explain that our

epistemology is influenced by communities of practice that include the relationship between the researcher and the participants who are being researched. My epistemology is grounded in subjectivism, with a view of knowledge as personal, subjective and unique. It emphasizes explanation and understanding of the unique and the particular individual phenomenon (Kirk and Miller, 1986). The aim of my study is to understand how individuals construe the social reality of learner centred classrooms; it rests on the subjectivist theory that different people use different sets of meanings to make sense of their world and social actions within it. Epistemologically my study is interested in understanding the phenomena of the implementation of active learning classrooms that promote learner centred approaches in language education. Geertz (1973) explains that to retain the integrity of the phenomena being investigated, contexts are examined through the eyes of the participants and effort is made to “understand from within” (Cohen et. al. 2011:17). This directly supports the interpretive position of my study in understanding the ways in which learner ‘selves’ are affected by pedagogies meant to be student centred.

Hammersly and Atkinson (2007) describe epistemology as being concerned with behaviour, and as such is “future-orientated”. They explain that human behaviour is varied according to the situations and contexts they occur in, thus my decision to observe the participants *in situ* (Creswell, 2009) and record the language classrooms was to facilitate the gathering of naturally occurring data (Leung, Harris & Rampton, 2004) that would provide insight on the way in which participants experienced learner centredness within the classroom context. Additionally, by adopting an exploratory approach, which provides the tools to collect subjective data by studying real subjects in real contexts (Yin, 2009), I would be able to investigate and “report real-life, complex, dynamic and unfolding interactions of events, human relationships and other factors in a unique instance” (Hitchcock and Hughes, 1995:316). Yin (2009:11) explains further that exploratory studies have been known to include direct observation in combination with participant interviews in order to provide a description of “what it is like” to be in particular contexts.

My study aims to use video recordings of lessons with participant interviews and written responses, to understand the experiences of students engaged in a variety of tasks aimed

at encouraging learning in an interactive, participatory way. Cohen et.al. explain that interviews allow participants “to discuss their interpretations of the world in which they live, and to express how they regard situations from their point of view” (2011:409). Additionally, Kerlinger suggests that when used in conjunction with other methods of data collection, interviews would then be useful in gathering more in-depth data from the results that ensued, to go “deeper into the motivations of respondents and their reasons for responding as they do” (as cited in Cohen et. al. 2011:411). Thus unstructured interviews of specific students are conducted for a more comprehensive and rich understanding of the way in which participants experienced learner centredness.

The goal of interpretive research is to experience naturally occurring data, understand it from the subject’s perspective and generate theories based on this. Theories are generated by data grounded in the research act (Glaser and Strauss, 1967). Interpretive researchers seek to understand meanings and purposes of their source of research in order to generate theory “that makes sense to those to whom it applies” (Cohen et. al., 2011:18). This aim is indeed relevant to my own research interest as my goal through this study is to understand learner centred approaches from the practical context of an ELT classroom as well as the perspective of the student to better cognize how they experience it in the natural setting of their learning environment. I am interested in collecting this data in the context and setting of the classroom in order to understand the nuances and relationships that participants have *within* their learning environment. Through the video recordings, interviews, and written responses, I hope to offer new insight from a student’s perspective; on the recent mission and goal of the University to practice a learner-centred model of education in all classrooms. Additionally, by creating a neutral relationship as an observer (and not just an instructor), I hope to gain a reflective perspective of my own pedagogical approaches to improve them retrospectively.

Block defines agency as individual participation in communities of practice (2007). Such a framework starts with the assumption that “learning is situated in the context of our lived experience of participation in the world...[and] is a fundamental social phenomenon, reflecting our own deeply social nature as human beings capable of knowing” (Wenger,

1998:3). My aim is to explore the implementation the social phenomenon of teaching practices within the familiar context of the classroom and understand participant perceptions and opinions within their everyday learning environment. Through this, I hope that students will be able to realize more agency within an institutional structure that permeates learning.

In recognizing that social research on language and identity theorizes the study of language as a social practice in which experiences are realized and identities negotiated (Norton 2000), I believe that understanding student perceptions are vital in the process of knowledge construction and a necessary reflective tool in informing and improving teaching approaches. Based on this subjective epistemological approach, it is true that this approach has limitations due to the un-generalizability and inapplicability of interpretive studies to different educational contexts (a major criticism of this approach). It is the aim of the research however to explore contexts of learning that are intended to be learner centred and by providing a platform that allows my participants to realize their 'selves' and how their 'selves' are shaped by such strategies, an understanding of the practice as well as the way in which subjects experience this particular reality can emerge. Rather than universal theory "accounting for human and social behaviour" (Cohen et. al., 2011:18) as with an objective epistemology, my subjective epistemology attempts to understand how my participants internalize and interpret their learning contexts.

My own epistemology is informed by my education; a Masters student in Language and Communication Research and more recently a doctoral student in English Education. My background was one that was, from the beginning embedded in multilingual contexts. Schooling in the Malay medium in Malaysia, selecting my undergraduate degree in English Language, my interest in discourse and language education has influenced my worldview over the last 25 years. I have an active background as a debater during my undergraduate days and my relationship with language and discourse continued with my career as an assistant lecturer in the English Department of a government University in Malaysia. Assisting in the course compilation and instruction of Discourse Analysis and

Sociolinguistics, I was indeed surprised that my career took a definite turn towards TESOL with my relocation to the Middle East region.

Despite my multicultural background, my first language is English. My identity therefore and my worldview is linked to that of a native speaker of English. Although native English speakers are often associated with race rather than the language they first spoke, this is what I identify myself with. I am multilingual; I speak Malay, Tamil, and recently, Urdu and Memoni. I identify with being a Malaysian, as that is the context and environment I grew up in. Similar to many English language speakers, I do not see myself as a second language speaker of English. I feel that English is my first language and I avidly sought a career as an Educator in it. Being in the Middle East region I was therefore able to empathize with many of my students who also did not understand the ESL label imposed on them (Ortomeir-Hooper, 2008).

These students saw themselves as native speakers of the language, although they spoke other languages just as fluently as English, their relationship and association with English has been a journey that has lasted a lifetime. The label now attributed to students and indeed others such as myself is 'global English speakers' (Crystal, 2003) and indeed in the current globalized world where borders of countries have been blurred and English has become a 'global' language (Kumaravadivelu, 2006b), such a label seems more fitting than the ESL one. Sharing this 'global English speaker' label with my students helps form a connection between my students and myself, it allows me through this bond to understand them better and form relationships in an easier manner.

Although the impact of such a relationship is indeed a considerable one to my research, the next section of my study on researcher positionality will explore this in more detail. As an educational researcher, I firmly believe that participatory approaches to pedagogy (Auerbach, 1995) can effectively alter traditional education in classrooms. It is important that such approaches include the social experiences and knowledge of students, are dialogic and allow students to feel that teaching practices not only offer them a greater sense of empowerment, but meet their needs and concerns. Such practices are

transformative and encourage critical consciousness (Bourdieu, 1999) amongst my students. It includes them as a part of the classroom social structure and gives voice to their existing knowledge in a comprehensive process that affects the way in which they understand, associate and experience the world. These beliefs, values and perception I hold affects my epistemological position with regards to my teaching and research, and by extension the current study.

4.2.3 Axiology

In addition to ontology and epistemology, axiology refers to the values and beliefs of the researcher (Cohen et. al., 2011) and considers the ethical sensitivity of the study. As summarized by Frankfort and Nachmias (1992) a major ethical dilemma of educational researchers is in their ability to balance their pursuit of information whilst maintaining their subject's rights and values. Such issues with regards to ethics and morals are important considerations in a study such as this one; which aims to understand through naturally occurring data and participant perceptions a new learning approach taught in a context where subjects are positioned in specific social structural roles. In her research in India, Ramanathan (2005) notes, for example, "Questions and issues of what are 'present' and 'absent' clearly underlie what are 'visible' and 'invisible' in literacy events and practices and are determined, to a large extent, by the researcher's lens." (2005, p. 15).

This is specifically applicable in the context of the current study as my own values, beliefs and perceptions will affect the way I observe the ELT classrooms and how I understand and interpret my participant's perceptions. Whilst acknowledging the limitations of being both teacher and the researcher of the current exploratory study, the merits of sharing an insider connection with the classroom culture, history and norms of study participants also deserves mention. The situated knowledge I had being the teacher of the ELT classrooms could potentially offer a deeper understanding of the immediate context of study, contributing significantly to my own practice as well as wider classroom based research. By adopting the role of 'reflective practitioner' (2016:49), my axiology aims to understand my students, my practice as well as our roles within the context of the English language classroom.

4.3 Research Design

This study is framed within an interpretivists approach using an exploratory design that involved 16 student interviews, 57 written responses and 61 video recorded lessons to answer the principle research questions outlined in section 4.1 of this chapter. Cresswell (2008) explains that exploratory designs are developed with an aim of understanding a key concept. The study emphasized broad general questions regarding learner centredness and student perspectives on learner centred language classrooms; the direction of the study was then guided by the emergent responses. In order to facilitate a rich collection of data which according to Lincoln and Guba, (1985) can increase the validity of qualitative research, video capture of lessons, semi-structured interviews and written responses were conducted. Since exploratory research is an attempt to unearth theory from the qualitative data obtained rather than from a predisposed hypothesis, such a methodology fits the purposes and aims of this study. The following sections outline the main methods of the research design in detail, but first there is a need to explore the arguments that frame methods of exploring the implementation of learner centredness and the development of classroom interaction.

Table 4.1 below provides an overview of the study design undertaken in the Fall semester of 2016.

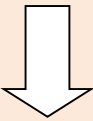
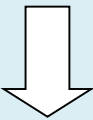
September 2016- December 2016 	Video Recordings of Lessons
November 2016 	Interviews
November 2016	Written Reponses

Table 4.1 Summary of the Research Design

4.3.1 Multiple Research Methods

Video recordings, interviews and written response data allowed for an in depth and rounded view of learner centredness as it occurred *in situ* to be understood and analysed, allowing “the quality, dynamic and content of talk” (Alexander 2004:23) used to teach to

be explored. Additionally, it also allowed for the way students felt about such approaches and its effect on them to also be investigated. The analysis therefore included examination of more than the physical environment of the classroom and lesson organisation, it was focused on the interactions that took place during the lesson and the exchanges between teacher and students, as well as student and students. By studying the speech, turn taking, reformulations and shared references, talk as a shared social construct within the community of learning can be investigated through the participation and contribution of members (Mercer, 2000; Resnick, 1999). Although transcripts are a one dimensional interpretation of talk which is multi-dimensional and is limited in its ability to capture the multiple meanings and connotations that occur and transpire through talk, they allowed for an examination of how dialogues were chained together and shared between speakers (Myhill, 2016).

Due to the nature and design of this qualitative study that seeks to understand the familiar from within, it is important to note that it does not seek to generalize. In spite of the uniqueness of the study, Pring posits that 'there are similarities between different social contexts as each is part of a wider society in which certain understandings and customs prevail' (2004:119). This study aims to emulate similar approaches, by studying the 'familiar' and the 'particular; it is hoped that a deeper understanding of teaching and learning approaches, one that is able to inform pedagogical practices reflectively is achieved.

The study of talk as a tool in developing learning and learner centredness have been discussed in previous chapters as being centred around Alexander's 'Dialogic Teaching' (2004). By analyzing and evaluating the quality of talk that takes place in classrooms, a better understanding of existing talk patterns and behaviors can be obtained. Such an understanding is necessary to determine just how dialogic, and learner centred classroom practices are, (Mercer, 2004). In the context of the current study, the development of talk that aims to extend and promote thinking, can be a tool used to evaluate learner centredness and learning, but requires multiple research methods that would help in

evaluating teaching and learning; social acts that are multiple and subjective (Mercer, 2000).

Learner centred approaches and the implementation of it then can be explored through real time classroom dialogues and shared interactions. However, researchers have acknowledged the difficulty in exploring forms of talk used in the process of learning as posing a definite methodological challenge (Alexander, 2006; Newman, 2017; Mercer, 2004; and Myhill, 2016). Talk is dynamic in nature and not easily pinned down or boxed up into neat and organised categories. It is multidimensional and often rooted in experiences of participants that are inaccessible to the researcher (Mercer, 2000). At the same time teaching and learning is in itself subjective and fluid. Exploring teaching and learning strategies through classroom interaction is a challenging task (Alexander, 2004), and in recognizing this, a multiple data collection method was used to obtain varied dimensions of the classroom practices. These include video recordings of lessons, interviews of participants and their written feedback. By using such multiple interpretations of one phenomenon, the subjective interpretations can be strengthened and more informed (Myhill, 2006). These considerations informed the methods chosen for the current study detailed in the following section.

4.4 Research Sample

4.4.1 Site Selection

Recognizing the ethos of the University that now emphasised student centred teaching and learning strategies in undergraduate classrooms, I was interested in the possibility of conducting research on the implementation of strategies meant to be learner centred and how they appeared in my own classrooms. In the second semester of 2015, I sought approval from my Head of Department to conduct this research in the context of my own ELT classrooms. My Head who was encouraging all faculties in the Department to adopt socially inclusive, participatory learning approaches in the language classroom was keen on the idea. Establishing my interest in the way such transformative teaching methods manifested within everyday classroom contexts, I submitted a written request to the Head of the Department highlighting how such a research would be potentially beneficial not

only to inform my own teaching practices but also allow me to understand the impact of such pedagogies on learners. In concurring that familiar contexts are often ideal sites for reflective research which can inform and improve teaching approaches and strategies (Nunan, 2007), my own ELT classrooms seemed to be a good place to explore pedagogy meant to promote and permeate learner centredness. After obtaining permission from the subject review board at the Exeter Ethics Committee and Review Board (Appendix 10), I began my study in the Fall Semester of 2016 at AUE University in the UAE.

4.4.2 Class Selection

I choose to study the four ELT courses I was teaching the FALL semester of 2016. The classes had a good representation of the various nationalities residing in the UAE, each class consisted of approximately 11-20 students, a majority of whom were female students (Table 4.2 below). The classes were being taught in the English Department lecture rooms which were equipped with projectors, whiteboards, a table and chair for the lecturer and tables and chairs for students. Classrooms were separated using movable separators in line with the Universities policy of segregating male and female students. However, the room was divided by separators in such a way that both female and male students could see the instructor at the head of the class, the white board and projector, but they were not able to see each other.

Courses	Female students	Male students
DA (Discourse Analysis)	14	0
SS (Study Skills)	19	2
Writing (English Writing Skills)	21	2
Tech (Integrating Technology)	14	0

Table 4.2: Total number of female and male students enrolled for each course.

4.4.3 Participants Selection

The participants for this study were selected based on a convenience sampling method (Cohen et. al., 2011) whereby my own students registered for the ELT courses in the Fall semester of 2016 were observed and interviewed. A total of four undergraduate classes taking place in the lecture rooms were observed on a weekly basis for data collection.

Additionally, semi-structured interviews and written responses of the participants were also collected towards the end of the Fall semester. As stated by Creswell, interpretive research that is conducted on own classrooms allow for a relationship between the researcher and participant, fulfilling the necessities of interpretive research (2009).

4.4.4 Identifying the Video Recording Participants

The participants for the study consisted of a majority of female freshman students between the ages of 18-23. A total sample of 45 female students and 2 male students were recorded as part of the video capture of lessons. Some of these students were enrolled in more than one course, and therefore appeared across lessons repeatedly. Each ELT course I was teaching was recorded in order to capture the way participants interacted and used talk to learn during lessons. The table 4.2 presents the number of participants that were recorded as part of each ELT course, with DA having the lowest number of students during the lessons. However, sometimes students were not able to attend the class or were absent, therefore reducing the number of students appearing during the recorded lessons. Additionally, some students were also outside the periphery of the camera, for example since the male students were situated on the other side of the classroom partition, they were sometimes not visible due to the limitations of the camera.

4.4.5 Identifying the Interview Participants

The participants sample for the interviews, consisted of 16 students. Cohen et. al. states that interviewees can consist of a sub category of the main data source (2011), since it was not feasible to interview all 46 student participants of the study who were enrolled for the ELT courses, 16 interviewees who volunteered were included as part of the study sample. All 16 participants were female students and Table 4.3 below lists the names of the 16 interview participants (pseudonyms), their nationality and origin, as well as the number of years they have lived in the UAE and the medium they were schooled in.

The face-to face semi-structured interviews of participants were conducted on a one-on one basis in the researchers' office. Students enrolled in the four ELT courses I was teaching were asked to indicate on a consent form (Appendix 2) whether they would be

interested in participating in an interview regarding their perceptions, and experiences with learner centredness. The interview sessions were then scheduled with each participant who volunteered.

	Pseudonym	Country/Origin	No. years in the UAE	Schooling Medium
1.	Alda	Palestine	19	Arabic
2.	Libina	Canada, Arab origin	20	English
3.	Noki	Syria	20	English
4.	Jalilah	Iraq	20	Arabic
5.	Hawa	Iraq	20	Arabic
6.	Ghiso	UAE	20	Arabic
7.	Khusan	Palestinian	20	Arabic
8.	Lateefah	Iran	2	Persian
9.	Mala	Palestinian	20 years	Arabic
10.	Mares	UAE	21	English
11.	Nimar	Syria	20	Arabic
12.	Rezeki	Iraq	20	Arabic
13.	Maya	UK, Arab Origin	5	English
14.	Tahsad	UAE	20	Arabic
15.	Aman	Syria	19	Arabic
16.	Lasha	Kuwait	4	Arabic

Table 4.3: Participants' Name, Background and Schooling Information

Those who indicated an interest in participating in the interviews were contacted via email and an appropriate time for the interview that was convenient to both the student and the researcher was scheduled. Since the study was conducted during the Fall semester of 2016, the summer months prior to the semester were therefore used to design and construct the interview guide in relation to the principal research questions. In the Fall term, I contacted the participants who had indicated an interest in being interviewed through the email address they had provided on the consent form. Appendix 3 contains a sample of the email that was sent out to the 21 participants that indicated an interest in being interviewed.

Out of the 21 students who had initially indicated an interest, only 18 responded to my email and agreed to attend an interview session scheduled at a convenient time. A follow up email was then sent to confirm these timings and provide the location of the researchers' office for the interview sessions. All 18 participants agreed on coming at the scheduled time which was agreed upon via email. However, when the interview sessions

actually began taking place, two participants dropped out of the interviews due to personal reasons and did not participate in the sessions. This brought the final number of interview participants to 16 students. The Iphone 6S voice recorder software was used to record all interview sessions.

4.4.6 Identifying the Written Response Participants

For the Written Responses data set, a total number of 42 elicitations from students enrolled in the four ELT courses were obtained. Out of these, 41 were from female students and 1 was from a male student. The students were from various backgrounds and nationalities reflective of the UAE population; however a majority of the participants were from Arab nationality and origin. The distribution of participants' nationality was a reflection of the class, whereby Arabs comprised a majority of the students.

I choose the participants because I was interested in the insight and perception of these students concerning learner centredness. I wanted to know if the students had experience with it before and how it affected them as a learner. With all the emphasis being given to learner centred pedagogy at several managerial levels in the University, I wanted to get the opinions of students on this sudden turn in educational approaches, and explore their experiences of it. Exploratory, interpretive research aims to provide an insight about a phenomenon rather than generalizations about a larger population, and this sampling was appropriate as it provided subjective data on the experiences of students and how they perceived learner centred approaches. Data that records stories of students, personalizes participant's experiences, (Gibbs, 2007).

During the data collection process, I worked on being as open and accessible to the participants as possible, this was to support the tenets of interpretive exploratory research that emphasizes a lack of barriers and the building of a "working relationship" during the study (Cohen et. al., 2011). During the process of research, I came to know my students better, and this I believe made it easier for them to be open and talk about their experiences with fewer inhibitions. By building such a rapport, as a researcher it also helps me understand my participants providing new angles on the responses given by

the participants. However, care was taken to avoid researcher bias in the study and issues of power between researcher and participants will be addressed in the ethics section of this chapter.

4.5 Data Collection Methods

The three pronged research design of the study collected video capture of classroom recordings, semi-structured interview responses as well as written responses of students. The design was flexible and fluid, and evolved throughout the research process (Creswell, 2009). The study was limited by the academic calendar of the university as well as the course curriculum of the lessons, thus the convenience of both teacher and students as principal participants of the research had to be considered. The data collection spanned across one academic calendar (September 2016- December 2016) and provided a 'snap shot' of teaching practices within this time frame.

4.5.1 Video Capture of Lessons: Initial Data Collection Method

In order to collect rich and in depth accounts of students experiences with learner centredness, I used video capture of lessons as one of the data collection tools. These recordings were observed and analysed retrospectively. Audivisual recordings are a powerful tool which records both audio and visual data, and is neutral in its ability to not *only* record frequently occurring events (Cohen et. al. 2011). By providing an opportunity to view records of data in an 'unfiltered' way as opposed to human observation, Simpson and Tuscan (2003) state that video capture is an important tool for educational research. It can be viewed several times through playback, and reduces the dependence on prior interpretations by the researcher (Simpson and Tuscan 2003:51). Since I was interested in classroom manifestations of pedagogy that aimed to be learner centred, this tool was acceptable for the aims of the study. Robson (2002) argues that video recorded observations allows for an insight on what people do, which he argues may differ from what they say. Thus, video recordings offer a completeness and comprehensiveness of analysis material that enable a check and balance for daily behaviour that might sometimes go unnoticed or unobserved by a one off human observation (Cohen et. al. 2011). I believe that video recordings of my own lessons would allow me to understand

my teaching practices and provide an insight on how participants experienced the same, which they might not freely discuss during interviews. This might potentially benefit me in informing and improving my practices reflexively.

Despite the fact that recorded observations have an agenda, they allow data collected to be reviewed and to dictate the phenomena being observed and so are hypothesis generating rather than hypothesis testing. This sampling then is appropriate for the exploratory interpretive nature of the current study. To generate everyday data of participants in their natural, social setting and gain an insight into their experience with learner centredness, video captured recordings were observed and analysed. According to Tuson and Simpson, it is less intrusive than other methods of observation (2003). Here the researcher is emphatic and a member of the group being recorded while continuing to act as a researcher. The researcher is balancing a number of roles both as a participant of the phenomena taking place whilst remaining detached from it in order to understand the situation in a holistic way. Kawulich (2005) notes that this research tool helps in building partnerships with participants, enabling the researcher to truly experience what the participants are experiencing as well as the inner subtle working of a group by being a part of it at a variety of levels. Video recordings thus enable thick descriptions to be gathered which fulfil qualitative research tenets, and provide reflexivity for the researcher who becomes part of the research process.

4.5.2 Overview of the Lesson Observation Sample.

Video recorded observations for this study occurred in natural settings which are the undergraduate ELT classrooms and include both oral and visual data. There were a total of four ELT courses which were recorded as part of the study including Writing, Study Skills (SS), EFL Technology (Tech) and Discourse Analysis (DA). Each of the ELT course had different aims and goals which affected the data collection processes in subjective ways. Table 4.4 below provides a short description of each course, the course aims, the pre-requisites required and the year of study the course is generally taken in to give a more rounded perspective of each course.

Based on Table 4.4, Writing, Tech and SS were all courses that students in their first year of undergraduate study registered for, whereas DA was for students in their second year of or beyond. As such DA had students that were more senior in contrast to Writing, Tech and SS which had junior student, most of them in their first year of undergraduate study and fresh out of schools. The rigour for the courses also varied according to the nature of the course and goals, for example Writing, Tech and SS were introductory courses that were aimed at introducing concepts to students in their first year of undergraduate study. DA in comparison was a more rigorous course that expected students to understand complex concepts and theories related to the use and application of language.

Overall students were new, untried and unsure in three out of the four ELT courses, whereas in DA they were senior, more experienced students. The differences between the four ELT courses are notable and potentially impact the research procedure as well as the findings of the research and therefore it is necessary to delineate the same.

Features/ Courses	Course Description	Course Aims	Course Pre- requisites	Year of study
Writing	The course is designed to develop students' proficiency in writing academic essays using rhetorical modes such as analysis, classification and comparison and contrast. The course focuses on organization and logical development as well as lexical accuracy.	Upon successful completion of the course students will be able to; apply a range of essential skills and strategies in writing well developed essays.	None	1
SS	This course deals with the skills that relate directly to the needs of most university students: improving reading efficiency, taking notes, managing their studies, conducting basic academic research, organizing and preparing assignments and learning through discussions.	Upon successful completion of this course students should be able to read academic articles, take notes and conduct basic academic research and utilise the same in specific writing tasks.	None	1
Tech	This course will develop the students' skill in using modern technology in teaching English as a foreign language. Students will learn to use tools to access materials, do projects and create a good language learning context to meet students' individual language needs.	Upon successful completion of this course students should be able to effectively use modern technologies in the teaching of English language and synthesize technology as a tool to facilitate the teaching of language.	Computer Applications	1
DA	In this course student teachers will be introduced to the field of discourse analysis and its relevance to language teaching. Different models of analysis are outlined and evaluated in terms of their usefulness to language teachers.	Upon successful completion of this course students should be able to identify and evaluate different concepts, theories and structures in discourse analysis.	None	2

Table 4.4: Description, Aims, Pre-Requisites and Year of Study of the Four ELT Courses

The courses took place either three times a week or twice a week depending on the schedule it was on. The video recordings attempted to record at least one lesson each week throughout the semester across the courses. Lessons were either 50 minute classes three times a week or 75 minutes twice weekly (please see Appendix 8 for the

lesson segmentation sample). DA and Writing both occurred twice a week on Mondays and Wednesday for 75 minutes, whereas Tech and SS occurred three times a week on Sundays, Tuesday and Thursdays for 50 minutes each.

The reason why video capture was chosen as an observational tool was twofold. Firstly, it would offer an opportunity for me to reflect and understand how learner centred and dialogic my own classroom practices were, an opportunity that would be free from existing preconceptions a human observer would have. Second, the ability to repeatedly view such recordings would allow for thorough analysis, where the possibility of reverting back to the data set to truly understand daily practices was feasible. Since teaching and learning are multiple and subjective, this would provide a thoroughness and comprehensiveness that other tools of observation would not. Furthermore, the potential for such data which included me as the teacher of the lessons would also provide reflexivity, a tenet of learner centredness.

4.5.3 Conducting the Video Capture of Lessons.

For the purposes of this study, classes were video recorded using a Canon video camera that was set up at the beginning of each class. Students were all able to see the video camera and the camera was positioned in one corner of the class in order not to disrupt the lesson. Any student who did not wish to be recorded was seated in an area that did not fall under the recording of the camera. Consent is explained in detail in the ethics section of this chapter. Although students were initially nervous and kept looking at the video recorder, by the second and third week of recording, most of them hardly noticed the camera which was present in the classroom. According to Erickson (1992) video recording can overcome observer bias and is valuable in that it can be viewed repeatedly. Since the researcher was also a participant in the classroom setting it was more convenient to view the recordings post classes for study purposes and to understand interactions in a more thorough and in depth manner.

Video recording does arguably contain certain issues like making participants nervous and more conscious of themselves since they know they are being recorded, and the

video camera may be limited and may miss out some parts of the classroom interaction (Flick 2009). However, they provide rich data and allow the understanding of causal processes make it a valuable tool in qualitative research (Cohen et. al. 2011). Classes were recorded on a weekly basis throughout the Fall semester of 2016 in order to be on-going and in-depth.

One lecture per week was recorded for each course, resulting in a total of 61 video recorded lessons. Video recordings were later transcribed and coded accordingly. Emerging themes from the coding process are discussed in relation to the research aims of the study delineated in section 4.1 of this chapter. The videotaped classrooms were analysed broadly at the macro level and then transcribed for the micro level analysis of talk that occurred. The table below shows the number of videotaped observations across the four courses.

Courses/Data	Writing	DA	Tech	SS	Total
Video Recording of Lessons	20	8	18	15	61

Table 4.5 Total number of videotaped classroom recordings across the Four ELT Courses.

Table 4.5 shows DA with a student enrolment of 14 was recorded the least, with a total of 8 lessons, whereas Writing had 20 recorded lessons, Tech had 18 and SS had a total of 15 lessons that were videotaped. Although it was attempted to record lessons once a week across the four courses in an even manner, the implementation of such recording was influenced by the subjective way the teaching took place through the week, depending on the course and the students enrolled in the course. Thus for ELT course DA which had students who were more senior and classrooms that were not as fixed to the teachers' lesson plan as the other three ELT courses, had fewer recorded lessons due to a difficulty in organizing the videotaping of classes.

Additionally, as mentioned in the previous section, DA occurred only twice a week and since it was a course offered to students in or above the 2nd year of graduate study, the curriculum was more demanding and it was sometimes difficult to initiate the video recordings as regularly as the other three ELT courses. It is important to note that despite

an initial research design which intended to record evenly across all four ELT lessons, the implementation of such a practice was influenced by the subjective and ever-changing nature of teaching, as well as the demands of the classroom context on a day to day basis.

It is of note that due to the distance and limited periphery of the video camera, some of the visual and audio data for student peer to peer discussions and group discussions were not so clearly recorded. This is something that will be discussed further in the section for implications and suggestions for future research. The lesson recordings were then analysed in the preliminary stage which provided an overview of all the recordings, and allowed a funnelling of the videos for further analysis to be done.

4.5.4 Semi-Structured Interviews: Second Data Collection Method

In order to facilitate a rich collection of data which according to Lincoln and Guba, (1985) can increase the validity of qualitative research, semi-structured interviews were conducted. Dyer (1995) explains that interviews are different from everyday conversations; they have an agenda; questions being asked and responses being given. Semi-structured interview according to Cohen et. al. (2011) is a popular tool for research and has limited agenda and direction, compared to structured interviews. Respondents in this manner of interviews are free to express what they feel and are encouraged to talk about the subject. Thus here the interviewer has less control and is more spontaneous about the issues being brought up by respondents. Since exploratory research is an attempt to unearth theory from the qualitative data obtained rather than from a predisposed hypothesis, such a methodology fits the purposes and aims of this study.

Semi structured interviews were chosen as a research tool because they allow participants “to discuss their interpretations of the world in which they live, and to express how they regard situations from their point of view” (Cohen et. al. 2011:409). Since I was interested in student perceptions of learner centredness, their experience of it and the way it affected their identities, such a tool would provide insight into the stances and perspectives of students, by extension fulfilling the research needs of the study. Despite

interviews being a powerful tool for researchers, it is also important to note that interviews are specifically planned, constructed and often susceptible to interview bias (Dyer, 1995). Interviews serve a number of purposes, for the purpose of this study interview was used in conjunction with the written responses and video recordings of lessons. Kerlinger suggests that when used in conjunction with other methods of data collection, interviews would then be useful in gathering more in-depth data from the results that ensued, to go “deeper into the motivations of respondents and their reasons for responding as they do” (as cited in Cohen et. al. 2011:411).

4.5.5 Designing the Semi-Structured Interview Questions.

By focusing on the “individual as the main source of interpretation” (Troudi et.al. 2009: 548), some interview questions were loosely prepared. The questions developed for the interview were “contextual, explanatory and generative in nature” (Troudi et. al., 2009:548). They were aimed at investigating how students perceived learner centred approaches and the way they experienced such approaches in the context of their ELT classrooms. An important point that needs to be made is that when students spoke about their ideas regarding learner centredness a concept that is largely abstract in itself, it was sometimes a challenge for students to verbalize these ideas. In order to crystallize this concept, terms that were more familiar to students including active learning and participatory classrooms were used in the interview to make it easier for students to understand and contribute answers.

These references were more familiar to students and they were used during the interviews to guide and direct participants For example, interview sessions often began with the question: ‘*What do you think learner centredness or active learning is?*’ or ‘*Tell me how you feel about learner centred or active learning practices in the classroom?*’ The questions were also aimed at exploring whether students had experienced it previously: ‘*Can you describe a class you experienced before that was learner centred or applied active learning?*’; what they understood it to be: ‘*How can teachers and student be learner centred during lessons?*’ and the effects of learner centred approaches on their learning

and learner identity: *'How did learner centred classrooms or active learning make you feel about learning?'*; *'How did you perform in the course which you felt was learner centred?'*

The interview questions were unstructured and as highlighted by Dornyei (2007), such questions are advantages in their ability to probe. Additionally, they allow the interviewer to determine if questions were fully comprehended by participants and provide guidance and direction when and if necessary (Perry, 2011). Using semi-structured interviews allowed me to prepare questions that were guided by the themes of my original research question in a systematic manner (Appendix 4). However, they were 'loose' in that any issues or problems that students felt were important were also encouraged and room for unexpected data was also accounted for. This was helpful since some students were not familiar with terms like learner centredness as mentioned above, and I had to explain this by describing the application of the approach or by using 'active learning' to substitute when necessary. A copy of the interview guide was discussed and shared with my supervisor before initiating the interviews.

The interview questions were open-ended and designed to explore through concrete questions participant perceptions and understanding of learner centredness. They were then structured to move on to more abstract concepts of the effect of such pedagogies on the identity of students. All of the participants in the interview were multi lingual speakers and for many of them English was not the native language. Due to this participants' command of the English language varied amongst the interviewees. It was therefore necessary on the part of the researcher to sometimes repeat and explain questions when interviewees were not able to comprehend them.

The interview sessions began with opening comments that were initiated to make participants feel more comfortable and relaxed with the interviewer. The interviews started with biographical questions whereby participants were asked to talk about themselves, their background and their educational experiences. The questions then moved on to participants' perceptions about learner centredness or active learning and their experience with it both in school and at the university. The questions evolved from the

two main research questions of the study: the way in which learner centredness manifest in ELT classrooms and students' experiences of it.

Although these questions formed the starting point for the initial line of questioning during the interview, based on the responses of students, flexibility in following certain threads of responses that were relevant to the research aims were more broadly applied as the interview progressed. Such flexibility was adopted to allow participants to think about their responses, offer their own ideas and suggestions, and explore multiple perspectives regarding the concept of learner centredness.

The third research question aimed at exploring the effect of such approaches on the identity of learners and was left towards the end of the interview. This was done so that a rapport between the interviewer and interviewee could be established first, which would make participants more comfortable and forthcoming about the impact of such learning strategies on their 'selves'. The third research question was interested in the way learners internalized pedagogies that were meant to be learner centred. It was necessary that participants were comfortable before such lines of questioning which were more personal, could offer information allowing the researcher a window to understand the myriad ways participants' learner identities were construed. Through each of the twenty to thirty minute interview sessions, student participants were able to explain their experiences and perceptions in thoroughly and detailed information was extracted from the interviewees.

4.5.6 Trialling the Interviews

Some of the prominent aspects I was interested in confirming before initiating the actual interview sessions with the student participants included, the clarity of the interview questions, the length of interview sessions, the appropriateness of the questions and the functionality of the iPhone recorder. By ensuring familiarity with the interview process, questions, as well as the digital recorder planned for recording all the interviews, it was my aim to refine my interview skills as well as the interview questions whilst testing out my recording tool. In understanding that these were the primary aims of the interview trials, during the summer of 2016 I requested a colleague to partake in the interview trials.

I choose a colleague from a neighbouring University who also teaches in the English Language Department and who I had previously worked with.

She has lived and worked in the UAE for over seven years and was currently a senior lecturer in the English Language Department of a prominent University in the UAE. As a lecturer and researcher, my colleague had extensive experience conducting interviews with student participants and gained successful insights through such research into the norms of local students. The interview trials were deliberately not conducted on students who represent the target population of the study, as I felt that a colleague who shared a more equal relationship with me than a student would be able to offer a more critical perspective on the interview questions. Since my aim was to hone my interview skills and interview questions, I felt such an approach would be better suited to meet my aims. Students find it difficult to be critical of teachers and since I needed to gain useful input on the nature of my questions, my delivery of the questions, my prompts and guidance during the interview session, the overall success of my interviews would benefit from a strong and successful interviewee in contrast to a student. Based on these reasons, the interview trials were conducted with a colleague over the summer months of 2016.

The trial interviews were helpful in adjusting and refining in preparation of the final interview sessions. During the trial session the interview went on for more than an hour. Additionally, through the trial sessions I found that some of the questions were repetitive in nature regarding the concept of learner centredness. Questions with respect to identity tended to also lead the interviewee. Based on the trial sessions, I was able to develop my relatively unskilled self as a better interviewer. Trialling an established and skilled researcher, I was able to gain valuable insight that helped me improve my interview sessions and avoid repetition during my interviews. My colleague in her role as the interviewee was also able to provide useful feedback regarding my style and approach. She informed me that I needed to speak slower and more clearly; and that I needed to allow more time in between my questions. In this way the trialling session proved beneficial not only for the purposes of refining the interview questions for the current study but holistically for me as a researcher.

4.5.7 Conducting the Semi-Structured Interviews

The interviews of student participants began in November of 2016. Before the beginning of each interview session, I attempted to first spend 10-15 minutes talking to the interviewee and explaining the interview process, the tools of recording and the overall nature of the questions in general before beginning the recording of the interviews. This time was often used to talk to the participants in general about concerns or questions they had about the process or even just to talk to them about their day. It was meant to relax participants and establish a rapport between the interviewer and interviewee before commencing the interview session.

During this pre-interview session, I went over the consent form with them and reassured them about the steps that will be taken to protect their identity and store the data carefully. A copy of the consent form can be found in Appendix 2. I was careful to inform participants that they had the right to withdraw from the research at any point and it would not affect their grade for the courses in any way. It was important that this was emphasised as I was both teacher and researcher during the study and I wanted to make the students feel at ease as much as possible before commencing the interview. I clarified that their answers would not have any bearing on their grades for the course and that I was merely interested in improving my teaching practices overall from the valuable information they contributed. I showed them the iPhone recorder which would be used to record the sessions and informed them that I would be making observational notes during the interview sessions.

The interview sessions were approximately 20-30 minutes long and were audio recorded. The interviews were scheduled to take place throughout the month of November and took place three or four times a week depending on the schedule of the participants and researcher. All interviews were completed by the first week of December 2016. Interview sessions were conducted in the researchers' office and participants were given pseudonyms and their identity was protected. The ethics section of this chapter deals with these issues with more details. Students were made to feel comfortable and relaxed

throughout the sessions to re-establish relationships that mitigated the power of instructor versus students, emphasized by the position of the researcher and the official setting of the office. Students seemed quite comfortable for the most part and were open about their experiences and opinions.

Since the interviews were conducted towards the end of the semester, a partnership had already formed between the researcher and participants through the classes they were enrolled in and other activities they were involved in together over the course of the semester. Thus many of the students were no longer 'strangers' to the researcher. Each interview session was recorded by the researcher and observational notes were made during the sessions. Despite research suggesting that note-taking during interviews may prove intimidating, due to the large number of participants I was intending to interview I decided that making notes during the process of the interview would help me in coding and categorizing the data in a more effective manner. Additionally, such field notes would also serve as a good way for me to remember the sessions and the participant in a more legitimate way.

4.5.8 Written Responses: Third Data Collection Method

According to Bruner (1986) 'storied texts' allow participants to make meaning of their experiences in a rich and full manner. Gibbs explains further that written accounts add life to information and help groups crystallize issues and perspectives. Specifically, they help researchers understand insights on particular issues and how these issues affect the identity of individuals. They are valuable in recording key events and experiences of participants, especially those that are meaningful to them (Flick, 2009). In order to understand students' experience of learner centred teaching and how they perceived it as opposed to traditional teacher fronted practices, I designed an elicitation task based on two open ended statements to which students were asked to provide their responses to. The elicitation task was aimed at understanding perceptions student had about learner centred practices as opposed to traditional pedagogical practices.

This written response was aimed at understanding student perspective in a more anonymous way. Since the interview and recording all featured the researcher as part of the data collection process, the written responses offered an opportunity for participants to be more forthcoming with their opinions without the researcher being present. It was therefore hoped that such exclusivity might complement the data set in allowing participants to provide 'true' accounts of their experiences and perceptions. By asking students to provide their insights regarding learner centred and then traditional pedagogy, I tried to gain a view of their stances on such approaches using a tool that was potentially more discreet.

4.5.9 Designing the Written Response Task

The elicitation task consisted of two statements which students were asked to provide a response to. The first statement asked students about their opinion on learner centredness and their experience of it; the second regarding traditional classroom practices and their opinions and experience of such pedagogy. A sample of the statements are provided in Table 4.6 below. An example of the elicitation task itself is included as Appendix 5 of this study.

Statement one	Learner centred approaches encourage students to participate and take an active role in their learning. Students are able to understand, retain and perform better in classrooms that focus on learner centredness.
Statement two	Traditional approaches to learning are boring and outdated. They have no place in classrooms today. Provide a specific example of your experience with traditional learning and state whether you agree or disagree with this statement and why.

Table 4.6: A Sample Of Statements Used In The Elicitation Task

This elicitation task was distributed to students in the four ELT classrooms towards the end of the Fall semester 2016. This was timed so that students would have had a chance to experience classroom pedagogies that possible attempted to be learner centred, and might have also become more entrenched with the educational processes at the university. Thus, they would be able to offer a substantiated account of their experiences.

Further, student participants would have also become more used to and comfortable with the researcher, therefore the possibility of them being ‘truer’ in their accounts was also improved. Students were assured that their written responses would not bear on their grades in any way and that participation in the elicitation task was completely voluntary.

4.5.10 Collecting the Written Responses

Towards the end of the semester, after teaching the same students for 14 weeks and exposing the students to strategies that were intended to promote learner-centredness, I collected students’ written responses on learner centred classrooms and their experiences with it, followed by traditional pedagogy and their opinion on it. The written responses were distributed during class and students were given the first twenty minutes of class time to complete them. All students across the four courses participated and provided their feedback in form of the response statements, resulting in a total of 42 written response statements. Table 4.7 below provides presents a distribution of written responses across the four ELT courses that was collected.

Courses/ Types of Data	Writing	DA	Tech	SS	Total
Written Response (Collected at the end of the term)	8	10	13	11	42

Table 4.7: Distribution of written responses collected across the four ELT courses.

Although responses provide meaningful text and have a legitimate place in educational research Gibbs (2017) which the researcher can analyse based on the criteria of the study, such narratives and responses cannot record everything and verification of events reported may be problematic (Gibbs, 2017). This weakness however can be overcome by gathering accounts from a diverse number of people present during the events and by adopting a selective focus based on the researcher’s study criteria. Thody (1997) explains that despite these limitations written responses and texts take a valid place amongst primary and secondary sources of qualitative data. Due to the responses being rich with the involvement and unique experiences of the participant, they can be considered ‘respectable’ data (Bauman, 1986).

Table 4.8 below provides a summary of the Data Collection Methods and instruments used for the current exploratory study.

Data Collection	Data Collection Period (September 2016 - December 2016)	Instruments
Semi-structured interviews with students (16)	November 2016-approximately twenty minutes each interview	- Semi-structured interview schedule
Classroom Observations (61)	Fall Semester 2016 Twice a week for 12 weeks	- Video Recordings
Written Responses (42)	November 2016	- Elicitation Task

Table 4.8 Data Collection and Instruments.

4.6 Data Analysis

Teddlie and Tashakkori state that qualitative data analysis is an iterative process that is heavy with interpretation and often there are multiple interpretations of the data collected (2009). Gibbs (2007) states further that there is no one singular way to analyse qualitative data and instead such a process should be ascertained based on their appropriateness of each specific study. Therefore, analysis of the data in such research is a merging of the data collection and subsequent analysis, often resulting in data for further analysis. In acknowledging that my data sets were different in their unique forms and variations, each data set required specific and purposeful tools based on their individual characteristics. The following sections outline the procedural steps undertaken in analysing the qualitative data collected including participant observations, interviews, and written responses.

4.6.1 Three Pronged Data Analysis

The data collection conducted in the Fall semester of 2016 elicited a relatively large set of data that required sifting through in order to be systematically analysed. As part of the research design, I followed an analysis procedure abiding by the principle 'fitness for purpose' (Cohen et al. 2011:538) in order to be clear about the data the analysis elicited.

In the proceeding sections I highlight the purpose of each tool used for data analysis and the significance of deciding on these specific tools with regards to the aims of my study. I then explain how I sifted through my 3 different data sets before beginning the actual analysis. A prominent feature of qualitative research is in the analysis of it which begins early on right from the data collection phase (Gibbs, 2007). In order to allow for the data to generate theory, the phases of data analysis were interrelated and it was a process of moving back and forth during the analysis both deductive and inductively.

4.6.2 Analysing the Video Recordings of Lessons

Audiovisual data has been known as a valid form of qualitative data and can be analysed using content analysis, discourse analysis and grounded theory (Rose, 2007). Through the video recorded lessons my aim was to explore the practice of strategies intended to be learner centred. As outlined in section 4.3.1 of the study design, this can be best conducted through exploring the way classroom interactions took place in the ELT classroom, and how dialogic they were (Alexander, 2004). According to researchers dialogic teaching uses talk as a tool in stimulating and extending the thinking of learners allowing them to make new meaning of knowledge (Nystrand 2007, Alexander 2004, and Newman 2017). Additionally, such shared interaction facilitates teachers to become sensitized and aware of student needs and frame learning tasks and activities accordingly. Rose states that discourse structures indicate how participants think about things and determine our actions based on such thought processes (2007). Therefore, to explore the manifestation of pedagogical practices and determine whether such practices were able to promote student centred learning, video recorded lessons were transcribed based on the shared interaction and classroom talk that occurred and then such discourse was later coded and analysed deductively as well as inductively.

In analysing the video recordings, tools of grounded theory, namely open coding were utilised. Konecki (2011) argues that this is done by gathering the visual data, coding the data which generates categories, themes and key features used later to formulate concepts. The video recorded lessons were also similarly analysed. It is important to note that grounded theory risks losing the whole picture of the audio visual data, and

researchers in a rush to code and categorize the data, often fragment data too soon, losing sight of the whole text (Figueroa, 2008). Therefore, I attempted to first look through and listen to the recorded lessons a number of times before segmenting them according to salient features and characteristics of the interactions that took place. The analysis of the video data was organised into 3 main stages including: preliminary analysis, macro analysis and micro analysis.

Through these stages I was able to funnel and narrow the focus on the large set of data in a slow and step-by-step manner in order to move from ‘...a broader view to a sharper more close up focus.. .’ (Figueroa 2008:9), keeping the overall structure of the lessons as a whole in mind. Table 4.9 below provides a summary of the 3 stages of data analysis as well as the steps each stage consisted of during the process of funnelling the video recorded lessons.

Stages of Data Analysis	Description
Preliminary Analysis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All video recordings were observed and categorized according to the course and date of recording. • Recordings that were unclear, and did not have collaborative interaction (ie; Class quizzes, exams and tests) were removed through a funnelling process (Troudi 2007). • Lessons were explored to determine the bigger picture of what was going on in them.
Macro Analysis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A description of the lesson segmentation (Initiation, Task Implementation and Teacher-Student Reflection) to divide lessons based on the nature of the interaction was created. • Video recordings were mapped according to the educational intervention and lesson type that occurred. • Emerging themes from the data (<i>Instructional, Exploratory and Passive</i>) were framed to facilitate a more detailed coding sequence.
Micro Analysis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Building on the findings of the Macro Analysis, three pronged frame to code interaction sequences were structured (Involving, Thinking, Applying). • Transcribed lesson scenes were analysed to evaluate the reciprocal talk that occurred. • Findings were used to form connections between dialogic discourse and learner engagement in the promotion of student centred pedagogy.

Table 4.9: Funnelling the Video Data

4.6.3 Preliminary Analysis of Video Data

The large data set required careful categorisation and cataloguing in order to structure the data in a coherent and systematic way. At the same time in order to retain the ‘global impressions’ of the data set and to allow holistic influences on the detailed analysis that

was to follow, this stage of the data analysis was aimed at providing an overall picture and account of what was going on in the recorded lessons. The preliminary stage therefore involved sifting through the recorded lessons, contextualizing the lesson as it occurred and creating a deductive map to structure the lessons according to the type of interaction that took place based on the dialogic frame developed by Alexander (2004). Specifically, an idea of what was occurring during each lessons was determined to categorize lessons according to the tasks that were being carried out. For example, some lessons included tests/exams and contained no interactions; other lessons were specific to learning a topic and therefore contained interactions.

4.6.4 Macro Analysis Stage

The second Macro Analysis stage involved segmenting the recorded lessons according to the tasks and interactions that occurred during each segment. Lessons were segmented into three segments; Initiation, Task Implementation and Teacher-Student Reflection. The division of lessons helped classify the interaction that occurred in each segment in a systematic manner. The timing and duration for each segment was also noted. At the Macro Analysis stage, data was also coded according to the nature of the classroom interaction that took place. Codes derived from the mapping of interactions in the preliminary stage were used and a code sheet created to categorize lessons based on the type of talk that occurred. An example of these include Whole Class Teacher-Student Interactions, Individual Teacher-Student Interactions and Student Led Talk/Presentation.

The coding of the video recorded lessons was a time consuming and lengthy process. The process continued throughout the year in 2018. The audio and video data was coded directly from the playback of video recorded lessons rather than transcriptions. This was more feasible considering the number of lessons analysed during this stage and helped in retaining the structure and overall impact of the lesson as a whole rather than units that had been deconstructed.

The coding procedure was both deductive at the Macro Analysis stage as well as inductive. Codes were derived from the interactions that transpired and based on the emerging themes and elements. One lesson from each of the four ELT courses was subject to coding and re-coding as the process was refined. The code categories were developed to capture multiple aspects of the shared interaction that occurred including: shared interaction between teachers and students as whole class units; shared interaction between teacher and pair/groups of students; shared interaction between teacher and individual students and shared interactions between students and student groups.

In wanting to avoid de-contextualisation of the data set and avoid separation of codes from the data itself (Cohen et.al., 2011), a table was used to record codes, allowing any relevant contextual information to be coded alongside. This resulted in a mapping of codes to lessons and how each lesson transpired. Such mapping made it more structured and facilitated for lessons to be easily located and drawn on for transcription during the Micro Analysis stage. It is important to note that through such a structured process, code categorize led to the selection of episodes for transcription at the later stage of analysis. Such step-by-step procedures were undertaken to retain the social nature of the classroom interactions and the structures of meaning within them.

4.6.5 Micro Analysis Stage

In the final stage of analysis for this data set, the Micro Analysis stage, the emergent themes and constructs of classroom talk from preceding stages of analysis are exemplified and coded. Lesson episodes were selected based on the catalogue of lesson created during the preliminary and macro analysis stages. These episodes were then transcribed in detail and analytical elements that arose from the text were described in a rich and thick manner in the findings section of the study. Transcription of video data allows for natural data, occurring *in situ* to be analysed (Flick 200). By transcribing video recorded episodes of lessons, researchers are able to go through the data several times, scrutinize the data more fully and present the data for viewing (Silverman, 1993).

During the Micro Analysis stage transcribed episodes of lessons were coded and evaluated to determine the quality of the talk that occurred. The data analysis was layered in that it moved from a broad overview to the detailed analysis of utterances and sequences of talk. It was a cumulative and iterative process that attempted to include all the ‘minute’ parts that formed the whole (the multiple realities of participants (Konecki, 2011)). In generating conclusions based on the transcribed and coded data, the multiple perspectives of participants as well as the overall picture of the lesson was alongside the researchers own interpretations in keeping with the study’s theoretical underpinnings.

4.6.6 Analysing the Semi-Structured Interviews

Interviews provide an opportunity for gathering information that is directly related to research objectives (Cohen et. al., 2011). A total of 16 female students from the 4 ELT courses were interviewed as part of the research design. During the interviews attempts to allow interviewees to speak more and be open about their thought opinions and perceptions regarding learner centred pedagogies was made.

The interviews were organised according to the names of participants (pseudonyms were used) and also the ELT courses they belonged to. The table below provides a distribution of the interviewees across the four ELT courses. For each ELT course there were four students who participated in the interview sessions.

Writing	SS	DA	Tech
Rezeki	Tahsad	Ghamar	Lasha
Latefah	Baral	Khusan	Ghiso
Nimar	Noki	Alda	Libina
Jalila	Maya	Aman	Mahsir

Table 4.10: Summary of Interview Participants with Pseudonyms

Analysing interview data is often an interpretive, reflexive process between the researcher and the de-contextualised data (Cohen et. al. 2011). In keeping in mind that data analysis of interviews is often an integration of analysis and interpretation (Troudi, 2015), attempts were made to maintain the holism of the interview while noting emergent patterns and themes from the data. The analysis constituted two main phases; transcription and

coding. NVivo, the computer based software for analysing qualitative data was used to categorize and code connections and themes from the interview data.

4.6.7 Transcribing the Semi-Structured Interviews

Transcription is an important step in interviewing (Cohen et. al., 2011). However, during transcription there is inevitable loss of data from the original social encounter which is oral and interpersonal to the translation of it into written text (Kvale, 1996). Although the static nature of transcription makes it feasible for repetitive analysis, documentation and references back to the data collected, the very frozen nature of the data makes it abstract from the dynamics of the interactive fluid dimensions in which they occurred.

In the process of analysing the interview data, I listened to the interviews in the first instance, getting myself used to the nature of the discourse and turn taking that occurred during the sessions. During the second playback of recorded data, I began transcribing the interactions and exchanges using my computer. By doing this I attempted to retain the richness of the data based on the description and explanation of students (Kvale, 1996). After transcribing the interviews, I then proceeded to email a copy of the interview transcription to the students to be verified. Through such methods of member checking, the reliability of qualitative data can be increased. Students were encouraged to provide feedback on any discrepancies they noted between what they said and what was transcribed. However, all participants were happy with the transcript texts and no changes were made.

The interviews were transcribed verbatim, in order to provide a realistic picture of the data set and minimize the loss of inherent meanings within the data. Owing to many of the participants being non-native speakers of English there were some errors in the grammar and structures of their sentences. It is of note that despite these errors in the grammar and sometimes sentence structure, the overall meaning of the text was not affected; therefore, such errors were left uncorrected. In cases where the meaning of what students were saying became obscured due to errors in the speech, slight changes were made to

clarify the meaning of what participants were trying to say. These changes were minimal and the intended meaning of participants were maintained.

The table below shows an example of transcribed text that was retained since errors did not affect the meaning of what was said by the student and an example of text which needed slight corrections in order for the text to be clearly understood.

Examples	Transcribed Text
1. Transcribed text which contained errors but were left verbatim	Lateefah: In my opinion ...active, active class is very good and strong specially for me. I can be quiet in the class. And and uhm... a little bit I scare my teachers.
2. Transcribed text which contained errors and were changed slightly.	Original text: Lateefah: That's why I like active class .It makes me calm and relax. Sometimes I think my teacher say for herself. She is not quiet she bothered me always I prefer to be active and annoying Slightly amended text: Lateefah: That's why I like active class. It makes me calm and relaxed. Sometimes I think my teacher says to herself, she (Lateefah) is not quiet she bothers me always, so I prefer to be active and annoying.

Table 4.11: Examples of Transcription Verbatim and with Slight Changes

4.6.8 Coding the Semi Structured Interviews.

The second stage of analyzing the interview data involved coding the data: moving from the general to the specific from the transcribed texts (Miles and Huberman, 1994). Gadd (2004) defines coding as the translation of responses to specific categories for analysis purposes. Gibbs (2007), states that computers can assist with the process of data analysis and the problem of data overload and retrieval that can occur with qualitative data. Additionally, such software is also helpful in retaining the contextual factors of the data. In coding the interview transcripts, the six step sequence developed by Kelle (2000:295) was followed; namely data was entered and formatted; data was coded; it was memoed and referenced; it was compared for textual segments that contain similar meanings; it was integrated with the codes that were generated; and finally core categories were developed.

During the coding of the interview transcripts I began by listening through the interviews a number of times and reading the transcripts of students. Once I understood the overall

meaning in the interview transcription, I then went through the interview transcripts line by line delineating units of meaning within the text in relation to my research questions. I clustered the units of meaning that were relevant to my research aims and categorized these units according to the main codes that I derived from the data.

This process was therefore both deductive as well as inductive and involved defining and redefining codes in an iterative process. A coding table was created to note down the main units of meaning and the definition for each code and an example of transcribed text from the interview was included in the table. Such mappings of code categories helped structure and systemize the coding process and also made it easy for me to refer back to code meanings at later stages of analysis. The codes and their definitions were entered into the NVivo software and information from transcribed texts that fitted into specific code categories were copied and pasted under the code they belonged to (Diagram 4.1 below shows a screen shot of a sample Nvivo coding page). The coded texts were checked and rechecked to ensure they matched the code categories they were clustered under. This involved several stages of ensuring that all the information relevant to my coding categories had been obtained and that no information was left out. A sample of the coding table and the definitions can be found in Appendix 6 of the study.

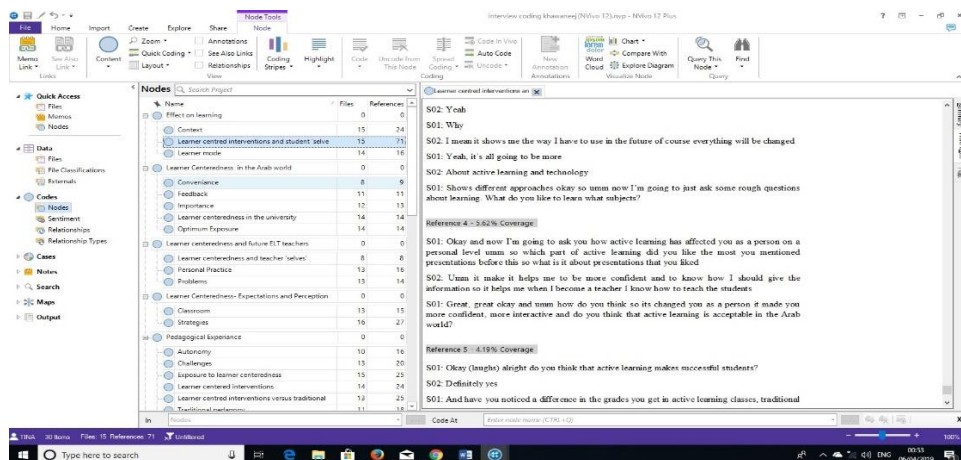


Diagram 4.1: Screenshot of Sample Nvivo Coding for Interviews.

By determining the emerging themes from the classification of interview data, I attempted to verify the common features as well as individual variations within the data. I then wrote down a short summary for each of the common themes from the data, and checked

whether these themes were present in only one interview or appeared in other interviews as well. Using thematic analysis, I looked thoroughly through the data and contextualized the themes within the overall contexts of the text as a whole. Thematic analysis according to Block (2010) attempts to focus on what is said in the interviews leaving out aspects of the social encounter such as how and in what context it was produced. However, despite attempts to be meticulous and rigorous, Kvale (2007) states that interviews do not have a standard source of validity which can be applied across all interview situations, such data ascribes instead to the notions of a fitness for purpose which can be better defended within a systematic and structured framework adopted to address validity in interviews.

4.6.9 Analyzing the Written Responses

According to Gibbs (2007) written responses pass on the perspectives and stance of individuals on a particular topic, they help researchers understand the experiences of participants. Such data is personal and anonymous in that it allows participants to explain their ideas without the presence and scrutiny of the researcher. They can offer a valuable insight to the way learners feel about learner centred pedagogy and were used to complement the interview data. To analyze written responses, I first retyped them into word format as they were all handwritten by students, and then saved each response statement according to the course students were enrolled in. The responses were then transcribed and analyzed accordingly.

4.6.10 Transcribing the Written Responses

Written responses were all first collected and organized according to the ELT courses they belonged to. A total of 42 written response statements were collected and stored in my office. Similar procedures of transcription used in the analysis of the interview data was applied to the written responses data. First I began by reading and reread the original texts written by students to understand the text as a whole. I then went on to transcribe all the responses of students verbatim. Once again errors were not corrected unless the meaning of the text was being compromised. In the case of the written responses, most corrections involved only grammatical errors that made the text difficult to read and no

structural changes to the original text were made. This was done to retain the original meaning of the text as a whole and minimize loss of data. After transferring each of the student responses from the hard copy students submitted into the transcribed soft copy format, I uploaded the texts into the NVivo software for further analysis.

4.6.11 Coding the Written Responses

In attempting to classify categories and code the written responses, attempts were made to retain the synergy of the whole where possible (Gibbs, 2007). Therefore, instead of breaking student statements down into small units I tried to analyze them as a whole and understand the meaning of what they were trying to convey. Since the responses of students to both statements were relatively short, in most cases they were not longer than a paragraph, this was feasible. I identified commonalities in student responses by reading and rereading the transcribed texts and making notes on features that appeared in a repetitive manner.

Due to the specific and finite nature of the response questions (only two), there were notably fewer categories that manifested through the data set and more repetitions of similar concepts and ideas were apparent. A table was created to map and define the code categories, such a table assisted in tabulating the large number of responses in a systematic manner. It is of note that the codes derived for the written responses were similar to the codes created for the interview data. This was due to both data sets being saliently analyzed according to the overall research questions of the study. However due to the texts from written response transcription being relatively shorter than the interview transcriptions, there were fewer code categories for the written responses than the range of codes developed for the interview data. A sample of the code categories and definitions for written response data is included in Appendix 7.

The code categories and their definitions were then entered into the NVivo software and transcribed texts were classified according to the categories they belonged to (Diagram 4.2 below presents a screen shot of the Nvivo coding sample). This was a repetitive and meticulous process whereby the texts and categories were matched and re-matched

several times to ensure they were coded accordingly. Emergent themes were then analyzed using the same thematic analysis structure applied to interview data. The themes for the written response data shared salient features with the themes deduced inductively for the interview data and therefore the analysis of this data set is done in conjunction and under the overarching themes developed for the interview data. Through such combined interpretive analysis, the written responses truly complemented interview data and provide a more in-depth understanding of participant perspectives.

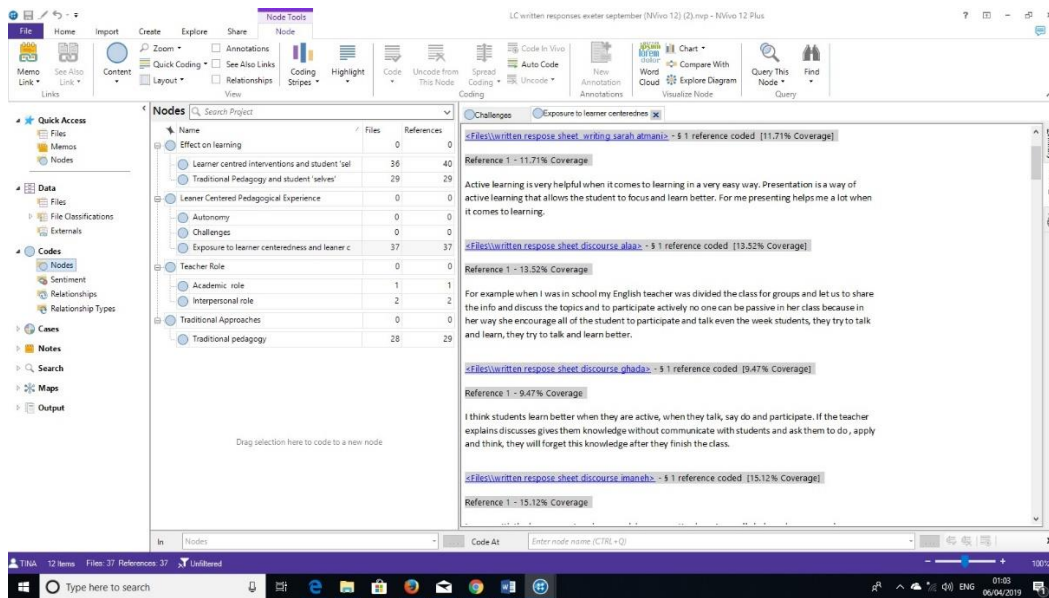


Diagram 4.2: Screenshot of Nvivo Sample Coding for Written Response Data

4.7 Ensuring Data Quality

Qualitative data is subjective and heavy with interpretation (Gibbs, 2007) and standards of quality to ensure the credibility and reliability of this type of data is indeed contentious. Researchers however concur that there is no one correct way to analyze and interpret qualitative data; such interpretations are context and situation dependent (Teddle and Takashorie, 2009). In this section I detail the steps taken to ensure the quality, reliability and validity of the three types of data used in the study and discuss an overview of my own rigor through three main areas with regards to this qualitative research, these include; researcher impact on the data collected and analyzed; trustworthiness and credibility; and finally the ethical considerations undertaken during the study process.

4.7.1 Researcher Impact on the Data Collected and Analyzed

The current research conducted an exploratory study to understand manifestations of learner centred pedagogies in my own ELT classrooms and the way learners perceived and were affected by such teaching approaches. My interpretive stance formed the theoretical underpinnings that were used to inform the study design, data collection and analysis processes. As explained in preceding sections of the methodology chapter, researchers bring their own suppositions, values and beliefs when interpreting the perspectives and opinions of others (Creswell, 2009). Therefore, my own values beliefs and perceptions as a researcher would potentially impact the constructs and meanings identified in the data set. Indeed 'It is the researcher's agenda that drives the research and she who chooses the methodology' (Cohen et. al. 2001: 554). In section 4.2.2, I discuss my own epistemology and experiences as a multilingual 'global' English speaker and my own perceptions and opinions regarding student centred teaching approaches, these experiences and perspectives may influence and shape the interpretations of study findings (Cresswell, 2009; Cohen et.al. 2011; Pring, 2000). Additionally, my position of being both the teacher and the researcher offers an advantageous insider perspective to the research. Sharing classroom history and norms with my students, and knowing what I intend to achieve during each lesson as the teacher, offers specific and situated knowledge of the study context, consequently the analysis of study data becomes potentially richer (Galton, 1999).

Video Recordings of Lessons allow the researcher to 'get a feel' of the situation and experience firsthand interactions and interrelationships as they occur (Rose, 2007). Through such immersion, rich descriptions can be gathered. There are varying degrees of participation in video recorded observations and in this study being the teacher as well as the researcher, my own participation was to take on an insider role in the context of the classrooms that were studied (Cohen et. al., 2011). In cases of complete participation there is a risk that the researcher, immersed in the values, norms and behavior of the group being studied losses her objectivity and becomes simply an individual within the group (Kawulich, 2005). At the same time such a qualitative tool also offers opportunity for the researcher to gain access, build trust and create a relationship with student

participants (Kawulich, 2005). As a participant of the classrooms video recorded, and being the principle teacher responsible for the practice (or not) of learner centred pedagogies, my role was heavily directed by my own intentions, beliefs and aims. The risk was in seeing all approaches as having characteristics of learner centredness, knowing that was what I intended to achieve. At the same time, there was also a potential risk that I would be overly critical of my own teaching strategies and miss instances of learner centredness that may appear through the recorded lessons. Despite video recorded observations being heavily interpretive and subjective, when combined with other sources of data they provide insight into participant accounts and perceptions of contexts and phenomenon (Cohen et.al., 2011). Therefore, by analyzing the recordings of lessons in tandem with interview and written responses, such researcher bias was minimized.

Interviews as a form of qualitative data are often fraught with asymmetrical power relations and are also known to be heavy with interpretation (Kvale, 2007). In acknowledging my own interest in learner centred pedagogy that promoted equitability and justice within classroom contexts, my own assumptions and beliefs weighed heavily on the analysis of the data. Interview data is open to the social encounter being dominated by the interviewer, seeing as I was the teacher for the interview participants I recognized that students might feel the need to offer data they felt was approved of and acceptable to me as their instructor. However, by organizing the interviews towards the end of the Fall semester which allowed for students to know and form relationships with me as their teacher, I hope to address and mitigate some of the power issues that are an inherent part of all interview procedures. Additionally, by complementing the interview data with written responses which were more anonymous and private in the way they offered students a platform to state opinions with being scrutinized and judged, the research attempts to obtain the 'real' perspectives of students with regards to the research questions of the study.

Further, my own background of being a multilingual, global speaker of English, and with my Asian origin, I shared a commonality with student participants that allowed a rapport

to be formed between the researcher and participant. I realize that as a researcher and a teacher my beliefs and values have influenced my interpretations of the results as well as how the students responded to me throughout the study. It is important that such factors are understood, acknowledged and kept in mind through the process of the study to retain as much objectivity as possible. The findings presented in chapter 5 and 6 are therefore an interpretation of the events that student participants shared. They are directly affected by my own beliefs and perceptions; the subsequent narratives are in reality how I interpret and make sense of participant accounts.

4.7.2 Trustworthiness and Credibility

This section reports on the validity and trustworthiness of the current study. It is important that the subject of rigor be addressed despite qualitative studies being distinctly subjective and interpersonal in nature (Lincoln and Guba, 1989). Researchers argue for the suitability of 'reliability' in qualitative research as this is contested as being more appropriate for quantitative studies instead (Winter 2000). This is not to imply that qualitative research cannot be valid, rather as Hammersly explains, validity and reliability have different meaning in quantitative and qualitative research (2007). While quantitative research bases questions of validity on positivist principles which include controllability, reliability and predictability to name a few, qualitative research is concerned more with notions of 'authenticity' and 'fidelity' of accounts (Mishler, 1990). Validity and reliability in qualitative research therefore refer to the meaning that is given to accounts by subjects and the inferences drawn from the data (Cohen et.al., 2011). In the qualitative study context such terms of reliability and validity are replaced instead with 'credibility', 'dependability', 'trustworthiness' and 'applicability' (Cohen et.al. 2011:201).

In educational research then qualitative research is construed as being holistic in attempting to record the multiple interpretations, intentions and meanings attributed to situations and events (Anfara et. al., 2002). Thus as suggested by Dornyei in qualitative research 'trustworthiness' and the ability of studies to do what they have been specifically designed to do becomes an answer to questions of validity (2007). In doing and presenting qualitative research criteria of trust become foundations for the usefulness and

integrity of a study and to the area of practice it is concerned with (Hammersley 2007; Pring 2000). According to Lincoln and Guba (1989) the credibility of a study ensures its trustworthiness.

There are contentions to qualitative research and its ability to provide conclusive, replicable study findings (Guba and Lincoln, 2005). This is attributed to the circumstance, contexts and researchers that are subject to change and therefore result in different interpretations of the same phenomena. Additionally, the subjective interpretations of the researcher are often laced with their own values and beliefs in qualitative research, suggesting that different interpretations of the same set of qualitative data by different researchers are plausible (Kvale, 1996). However, despite these limitations, the authentic and holistic nature of qualitative research still exists and steps can be taken by the researcher to ensure dependability of the data presented (Anfara et.al., 2002). By paying attention to detail, being meticulous and rigorous, the researcher can ensure richness in description while addressing the research questions of the study. Since qualitative research cannot be replicated 'exactly' as with quantitative research, validity is not a concern of said researchers. Despite this, the results of qualitative research can be generalizable in offering new dimensions of understanding and being useful to the efforts of other researchers within areas of similar interest (Radnor, 2001). Auerbach and Silverstein (2003) that qualitative research must be transparent, readers must be able to understand and be informed of the processes by which interpretation is made.

By being clear about my own theoretical frameworks that underpin the study, the trustworthiness of the study is increased (Holliday, 2010). Providing a transparent and detailed account of the research process including the theoretical perspectives that informed the methodological design, data collection and data analysis procedures of the current study, the research aims to be coherent and rigorous in the reporting and interpreting of the findings. In section 4.2 of the methodology the study outlines the researcher's theoretical beliefs that inform the study design. In section 4.3 the researcher's study design based on an interpretivists stance is explained. Section 4.3.1 outlines the rationale behind the data collection methods and participatory research

approaches that the study was interested in. Additionally, in section 4.4 the research sample delineates the study setting and participant descriptions, lending contextuality to the current research. By explaining the step by step procedures undertaken for data collection (section 4.5) and data analysis (section 4.6) the way the study was carried out is clearly explained. Trustworthiness is also achieved through member checking of transcript texts and by meticulous checking and re-checking of categorization units and their definitions.

Further, by using multiple data collection methods including observations, interviews, and written responses the study credibility was increased (Myhill, 2016). The three pronged data set provided a more reflective, in-depth and expanded understanding of pedagogical practices and students' perspectives of them. The varied data offered threads of relevant information, and leads which prompted further usefulness of the study and provided a trustworthy foundation for the research (Thomas and Pring, 2004). The design of the study therefore retained the plausibility of being replicated in a comparable context and setting. Details were set out in a clear and systematic fashion throughout the study with enough information to allow another researcher to attempt to conduct a similar study.

4.7.3 Research Ethics

In qualitative interpretive research the ethical stance of the study and how a researcher reveals the dependability of it is important. Stuchbury and Fox, (2009:492) suggest an epistemological device for considering all ethical issues in educational research: external; (this includes codes of practice; laws); consequential (consequences for individual, groups, society); deontological (what is ones' duty to do, and how decisions are reached); individual (the rationale of respect for individual freedom and autonomy). Ethical decisions work within and between these layers and points of potential conflict are resolved by the researcher determining what is acceptable and what is not by abiding by one's own existing ethics (Hitchcock and Hughes, 1995). Bradburn et.al. (2004) argue that ethics in interpretive research concerns three main components including the right of privacy, informed consent and confidentiality. Each of these tenets will be discussed with regards

to the current study in protecting the individual rights of participants, their privacy and confidentiality in maintaining the ethics of the research.

The study safe-guarded the privacy of participants and confidentiality of the data as much as possible. As mentioned in section 4.4.1, research permission from the University ethics committee as well as the ethics board of Exeter University was both sought out before conducting the study. This ensured that my data collection procedures were ethical before beginning the first phase of data collection at AUE University, which involved recording the ELT classrooms. All data from recorded lessons were securely stored in a locked cabinet in my office and only I as the researcher had access to view the sensitive information through playback which was done in isolation. During the second phase of the data collection, participant interviews, similar standards were followed. All interview sessions were stored safely and accesses to the transcripts was only available to the researcher. Written responses, the third phase of data collection concerned written statements of participants. Student responses were kept confidential and protected throughout the research process.

Before beginning the research process, all participants were asked to provide their informed consent in agreeing to participate in the study. A copy of the informed consent form can be found in Appendix 2 of this study. Ethical procedures can be ensured by upholding rights of participants' informed consent, privacy and their emotional wellbeing (Miles & Huberman, 1994). By seeking the informed consent of the participants in the study before the research process began, the subject is given the right to refuse to take part in the study (Cohen et. al., 2011). In requiring all participants to sign the informed consent form, the research was voluntarily in that it ensured participation through the students own free will, who were made aware of the study risks before taking part in the process. Ruane (2005) states that knowing how much information to provide in the informed consent form is a contentious issue. However, in the consent form used for this study, the reason for the study, the study goals, procedures as well as steps to protect the confidentiality and anonymity of participants were all outlined and approved by the ethics committees.

Participants were informed that the study was voluntary and had no bearing on their grades for the course. They were also informed that they had the right to withdraw from the study at any point, without consequences on their performance and achievement in the course. Since the researcher was also the teacher in the case of the current study, I was aware that students might feel pressure to participate in the study just to be in the 'good books' of the teacher. However, I emphasized this to students a number of times, during whole class consultation sessions prior to the study, within the consent form itself, before distributing the written response form and before beginning the one-on one interview sessions.

Additionally, organizing interviews during timings that were suitable to students and in consideration of their busy schedules, was yet another ethical step of the study. Students were asked to provide a suitable time according to their schedules for the interviews and the researcher was open and flexible to changes in these timings and the rescheduling of the sessions when necessary. Student were made to feel as comfortable as possible regarding these changes, by understanding that it was sometimes difficult for students with their busy schedules to make it for the interview sessions that were pre-arranged, I was open and easy with rescheduling when needed.

Further students who initially agreed and then did not make it for interview sessions were also treated without judgment. Many participants expressed their regret and worry at not being able to turn up for the interview sessions due to the heavy workload at the end of the semester, in such situations the emotional wellbeing of students were prioritized and they were reassured that this was absolutely fine. With written responses, by collecting them during class time the inconvenience factor for participants was limited. Students were again reassured that they did not have to fill up the form unless they wanted to and students who did not wish to participate were asked to continue with their own work during this time. By making students aware and comfortable about withdrawing their participation, the ethical elements of the study were upheld. Such factors were far more

intrusive and threatening in the case of the participant observations, yet ethical considerations were followed during the collection of this data set as well.

Despite observations claiming to be neutral and non-interventionist (Cohen et.al. 2011), issues of privacy and confidentiality of participants are a concern, and is especially the case in overt observations. Such research invades the individual space of participants and can be potentially threatening to participants (Pearson, 2009). Based on the nature of observational data, promising privacy and confidentiality to participants was a difficult issue. Although participants were reassured that pseudonyms would be used to protect the identity of the students, the classes and the University as a whole, the visual record was of a concern. In the informed consent I highlighted to students that the observational data would be confidential, to be viewed only by myself as the researcher. I reassured them that observational data would not be used in presentations of research and they would be stored in utmost confidentiality. Due to the sensitive nature of Arab culture that is conservative to video and photographed data, especially when concerning females, participants were told that those who did not give consent to be videotaped would be left strictly out of the recordings. At the same time audio recordings of the participants interacting within the classroom context would surely occur, and since participants were more concerned about appearing physically in the videos, this was not an issue for participants.

Recording equipment was left turned on for the entire duration of the class and students were advised of this at the start of every recorded lesson. This meant that sensitive; personal, off task interactions were also recorded. Since it is difficult to anticipate every possible situation that may arise (Pring 2000), students were duly advised of such scenarios and encouraged to refrain from making unacceptable comments.

The research, while seeking to learn from participant perspectives and the practical manifestations of pedagogy *in situ*, was also concerned with informing pedagogical practices reflectively. At the same time the research was not intended to critique or pass judgment on classroom practices. The multiple role of the researcher as participant,

teacher and investigator is underpinned by the researchers' own epistemological stance, values and belief as outlined in section 4.2.2 and 4.3 of this chapter. Where possible clear language was used to outline research procedures to participants, focused on enabling students to make judgments regarding their participation in it. By clarifying the research process and methods, the academic integrity and ethics of the research was maintained. Through discussions regarding the researcher positionality, impact and asymmetrical power relations inherent in the study design, the ethical stance of the research has been outlined.

4.8 Limitations of the Study Design

All research designs have their own unique limitations and challenges and so with this study as well. Although some of the limitations were apparent at the initial stages of the study design, many emerged as the study took place.

Classroom video recordings are wrought with questions of invasion of space and privacy; at the same time its ability to offer valuable rich data is undeniable (Kawulich, 2005). Despite ethical codes being abundant in such research, much of this type of qualitative study must be judged on its individual context, setting and situation. Deciding on video recording my own classrooms had a double consequence to the data obtained. Here I was part of the classroom practices, being the teacher who had a prominent role as a participant of the study, as well as the main researcher carrying out the investigation.

During the initial stages of study design, I questioned whether by participating in the lesson recordings, and being the teacher as well as the researcher my own perceptions, judgments and values might overpower that of student participants. However due to video recorded observational research in education being rife with researchers' recording *other* peoples teaching practices and *other* people's classroom, the current research design offered new dimensions into learner centred pedagogical practices especially in the Arab region by being reflective of my own practices (Kheirzadeh and Sistani, 2016). This is especially the case as by being both teacher and researcher I would be better able to

understand, remember and recollect lesson plans, my own aims and the way students responded to them when viewing the recorded lessons retrospectively.

Acknowledging that video capture of my own classrooms offers potential challenges and limitations, the decision to go ahead with the recording and observing my own practices was as much to contribute to this gap in the knowledge as to provide reflectivity in informing my own practices retrospectively. The added opportunity for an inside understanding of embedded discourse patterns and teacher intention that the study would offer through my own role as teacher researcher would highlight the need for more of such research and emphasize the role of the teacher in such processes. Educational practices must be reflective to be truly learner centred and since this resonated with my own beliefs and the overall research aims of the study, attempts were made to address such limitations through a multiple data collection approach (Myhill, 2016).

Video recordings were then conducted in conjunction with interviews and written response statements, Lincoln and Guba (1989) state that by expanding the data, a more dependable and credible perspective can be garnered. Interviews again are sensitive encounters and here the power relations are even more considerable as opposed to whole group interactions. Participants are 'faced off' with the researcher on a one on one basis, in the case of the current study this was the teacher of the participants' courses, someone who traditionally holds all the power in classroom scenarios. The use of interviews therefore can be accrued as a limitation; other forms of data collection have fewer implications. However, I hoped that by conducting the interviews towards the end of the semester relationships between participants and researcher would have become more established. Thus the potential for such limitations might be overcome with students feeling more at ease and comfortable talking to someone they now 'know' and have had interactions with previously.

Additionally, in classrooms I attempted to alleviate asymmetrical power relations as much as possible. By recognizing my students as valuable members of the classroom setting,

I attempted to create a rapport with them throughout the semester. Although this in no way assures that students did not feel pressured to provide answers they thought I was 'looking' for, it signifies that such limitations were acknowledged by the researcher. By complementing interview data with the more anonymous written responses I hoped such limitations might be mitigated to give a truer account of student feelings.

Yet another limitation is that the data was collected in one university, and in one teacher's classroom. The location and setting of the study therefore cannot encompass all 'global' English speakers in the UAE pursuing their undergraduate studies, nor is it a reflection of teaching practices in higher education across the UAE. Despite these limitations, the context and setting of AUE University as a microcosm of institutes of higher education in the UAE, gave the range of nationalities and distribution of students mirrored in other institutes. The specific account of participants is unique despite being reflective of the age, nationality distribution and race prevalent in other institutions. Additionally, the study explored the manifestation of teaching practices of one teacher, which while being potentially revealing and useful in understanding the particular phenomenon it is aimed at exploring, is not generalizable across groups and situations externally. The study does however offer replicability, for those interested in exploring the dialogic quality of teaching and learning practices in ELT classrooms within similar situations and communities, and therefore has internal validity (Cohen et.al., 2011). Consequently, the study design is appropriate in fulfilling the research aims of the study; it is useful in obtaining relevant information and insights that has potential pedagogical consequences for learner centred research and dialogic classrooms.

CHAPTER FIVE: FINDINGS FROM THE VIDEO DATA

5.0 Introduction

As reported in the previous methodology chapter, data for this study was drawn from three different sources: video capture of lessons in the ELT classrooms, interviews with the ELT students and written responses of students obtained at the end of one academic semester. The data was collected to explore student experiences of pedagogy intended to be learner centred and the way these strategies affected the identity of learners. In understanding that the process of teaching and learning is dynamic and complex, the multi-method data collection approach was adopted to provide a rich data set for analysing the way classroom strategies were experienced by learners (Myhill, 2006). This chapter presents the analysis of authentic classroom data that was video captured to explore how interactional episodes promoted (or did not promote) learner centred instruction in the classroom situation and the way such teaching approaches manifested through classroom interaction.

The contextualization of 47 classroom video recordings drawn from the Preliminary stage of analysis will be discussed first. The Preliminary analysis acted as a funnel in narrowing the data set according to the clarity of interactions that occurred within them. These interactions were then further deconstructed through lesson segmentation during the 'Macro-level' data analysis stage. The second phase of the data analysis categorized the interactions that occurred across the lesson segments in relation to the interactions that took place within each segment. The findings from the 'Macro-level' analysis are used to inform a detailed coding sequence which allowed a 'Micro-level' analysis of transcribed lesson episodes to evaluate the quality of the dialogues that occurred within specific intervention categories. The results of the 'Preliminary' analysis phase leading to the narrowing of data for the 'Macro-Analysis' phase will be presented first, this is then followed by an explanation of the emergent themes and categories which facilitated the 'Micro-analysis' of transcribed classroom recordings.

In answering the first of the main research question for the study: How Do Pedagogies Intended to Foster Learner Centredness Manifest in the ELT Classrooms? the coding analysis of videotaped classroom interactions were used to firstly understand the type of talk that occurred during lessons between teacher and students; and secondly evaluate the talk to derive its dialogic quality and thus educational value within learning contexts.

5.1 Exploring Classroom Talk

Based on Alexander's Dialogic Teaching Principle (Alexander, 2004), the recorded classroom observations were analysed to investigate how talk manifests in ELT Classrooms. Both students and teacher were required to participate in learning actively; resulting in classroom contexts where learners are engaged and teachers intervene constructively through talk (Alexander, 2008). This principle emphasizes the role of talk as not just mere interaction bound by the learning objectives of the lesson, but as a tool to shape the development of student learning through purposeful dialogue. In line with this, interactions that occur in classrooms can encourage students' ability to think and understand, playing a pivotal role in extending their learning.

The data analysis was used to inform a structure that allowed for the categorization and coding of classroom talk and the characteristics of the talk that occurred. The analysis of these interactional exchanges and how specific modes of talk were used to promote student engagement, collective learning and teacher-student dialogues were explored to determine their ability in being dialogic and thus promoting learner centred pedagogy. The classroom observations provided a window into how dialogue occurred or (did not occur) in the classroom setting and the way it manifested through the implementation of lesson specific tasks. Underpinned by this, the current chapter explores the video capture of classroom talk and how such interactions manifest in the ELT Classroom.

5.2 Preliminary Analysis of Data

During the Preliminary analysis stage, the first stage of the data collection process, lesson recordings were played back several times and sorted using a three step process that narrowed the data set. The first step within the Preliminary analysis involved clustering

the video captured lessons to be typified according to the ELT courses they belonged to. Table 4.5 in chapter 4, presents an overview of the initial lessons captured across the four ELT courses, resulting in a total of 61 lessons.

The second step within the Preliminary analysis sorted the video captured lessons according to the clarity and interactions they contained. Lessons that were unclear, incomplete or did not contain interaction were removed from further analysis. For example, 7 video captured lessons did not play or played only for the first few minutes and then stopped due to errors in the recording itself. Additionally, 7 lessons that recorded class tests and exams had no interaction within them were also removed from further analysis. The sifting through of videos removed 14 lessons which were deemed unfit for further analysis. This initial step of the Preliminary analysis helped filter through the data set, funnelling the number of video captured lessons to 47, used for further analysis. Table 5.1 below provides a summary of the finalized recordings.

Courses/ Data	Writing	DA	Tech	SS	Total
Video Recording Used for Further Analysis	14	8	14	11	47
Video Recordings Removed From Further Analysis	20	8	18	15	61

Table 5.1: Finalized lessons of video recordings.

The third step of the Preliminary Analysis involved creating a form to contextualize the lesson structure for each video recording. The form was designed to note down details of the lesson recording like the classroom setting, lesson goal and aims of the lesson as well as the names of participants in the class. The initial contextualization of lesson recordings enabled the division of each lesson into three main categories; **Initiation**: whereby the tasks were given by the teacher for the lesson of the day; **Task Implementation**: this was where learners were involved in completing the set tasks either independently, collaboratively through peer or group work or jointly involving the whole class; and **Teacher-Student Reflection**: this segment was used mainly to provide a summary of the task completed during the lesson and a chance for questions and

answers or reflective discussion regarding the completed task, it also sometimes included the assigning of tasks for future classes.

The Table 5.2 below is an example of the lesson contextualization form created during the Preliminary Analysis.

Lesson: Course: Episode: Goal: Teacher Intervention:
Classroom Layout: No. of Students and names: Tools:
Initiation: Task Implementation: Teacher-Student Reflection:

Table 5.2: Preliminary Data Analysis Form

To illustrate this in the form of a lesson breakdown, the sample Preliminary Data Analysis table in Appendix 8 shows how a lesson was segmented according to the categories created and the time allocated for each section. The form also contains observation notes taken during the Preliminary Analysis of data which describe the interactions that took place in each segment. The sample in Appendix 8 shows a typical example of what occurred in the classroom to provide an overview of the way the lessons were broadly analysed.

The initial overview of the data set showed that most of the classroom interaction took place during the Task Implementation Stage of the lesson, whereas the Initiation and Teacher-Student Reflection was more teacher fronted and transmissive. However, some of the lessons showed that the interactions were not often so clear cut and there was some overlap between the segments whereby students would ask reflective questions

during the Task Implementation segment itself. The table 5.3 below shows a typical division of the class time which was dedicated to each segment of the lesson across the videotaped recordings.

Initiation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teacher gives out instructions for the lesson of the day • Specifies the task students are required to complete 	First ten minutes of class
Task Implementation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student engage in the task • This is done individually, in groups/ pairs and sometimes as whole class 	35-40 minutes of class time
Teacher Student Reflection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Summary regarding the completed task • Discussion regarding the completed task 	Last 10-15 minutes of Class time

Table 5.3: Time allocated for each segment of the lesson

Table 5.3 shows that a majority of class time (61%) was dedicated to the Task Implementation segment and this segment contained more classroom interaction than the Initiation and Teacher-Student Reflection segments, which comprised smaller sections of class time and had limited interactions. The diagram 5.1 below represents this data visually.

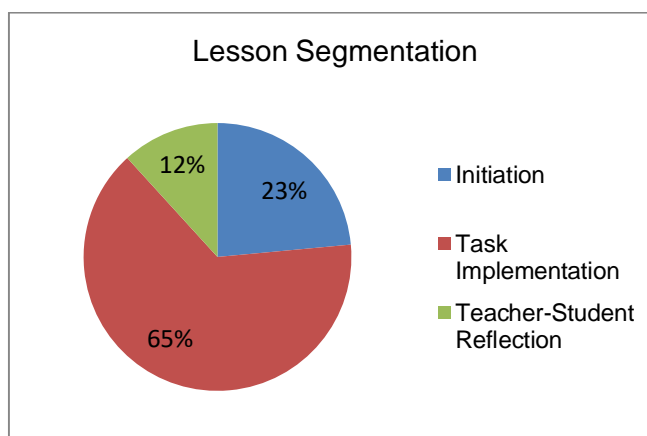


Diagram 5.1: Visual Representation of Lesson Segmentation

5.3 Macro Analysis of Video Data

In the Macro Analysis stage, video data of the 47 lessons drawn from the Preliminary analysis and segmented as; Initiation, Task Implement and Teacher-Student Reflection were analysed further. Despite the Preliminary analysis form (Table 5.2) facilitated the understanding of how lessons were divided into differing segments based on an overview of the talk that occurred during that section of class time, it was not able to code the specific interactions that occurred during the lesson segments and their ability to promote dialogue within the classroom. The notes made from the playback of video captured lessons were helpful in understanding the dynamics of the classroom and which segment provided more interactional exchanges, however a more detailed examination of interaction taking place *within* the segments was required. Furthermore, due to the overlaps that occurred between the lessons segments albeit sparingly, coding categories that were more precise were required. So, I went through the video data again and studied the interactions and how they occurred in relation to the segments iteratively.

From the inductive analysis of the video data, categories to code the type of interaction which occurred during the lesson segments, based on the mode of talk participants were engaged in were created. These categories facilitated the coding of video data across the three segments of the lesson and catered for the overlaps that occurred. The codes included: Whole-Class Teacher Led Talk Students Listening; Whole-Class Teacher Student Interaction; Individual Teacher Student Interaction; Pair/Group Teacher Student Interaction; Pair Work; Group Work; Student-Led Talk/Presentation; and Other. A table was derived to map each of the codes and their definitions; this made it easy for such data to be retrieved and referred to during later stages of analysis and discussion (Table 5.4 below).

A code sheet was then created to table the interaction categories mentioned above, lesson segmentation and contextualization of lessons. This code sheet presented as Table 5.5, is a development of the form created for the Preliminary Analysis (Table 5.2) and facilitated the interactions occurring *within* lesson segments to be coded.

Code Categorise	Definitions
Whole-Class Teacher Led Talk Students Listening	No interaction was apparent in these episodes of recorded classroom lessons, and much of the discourse was teacher fronted. Any singular instance of a comment, question or suggestion from a student would categorize the lesson into the whole-class teacher-student interaction category. According to Skidmore (2000) such interactions are transmissive in nature.
Whole-Class Teacher Student Interaction	This category was based on the tenet of learner centredness that requires interactive whole class teaching (Black and Williams, 1998). All lessons that had student teacher interaction in the form of dialogue and discussion (Skidmore, 2000) were coded here. This included the open responses of students, teacher comments, questions and answers as well as follow ups. In sum any talk that occurred through whole class dynamics was coded in this category.
Individual Teacher Student Interaction	Teachers initiate dialogic pedagogies, in understanding that teachers' role is reformed in the learner centred classroom, it is important to note that the role of the teacher in permeating productive talk is vital (Mercer, 2004; Alexander, 2004 and Newman, 2017). This category allowed the coding of lessons where teacher interacted with students on an individual basis. This included situations whereby students approached the teacher to discuss, question, comment or critique on a one to one basis.
Pair/Group Teacher Student Interaction	Vgotsky's belief that teacher as a promoter of talk rather than a controller of classroom talk form the basis for this category (1972). Talk used for communication with others to interact and gain feedback (Myhill 2006) can be an important tool in process of teaching and learning. Any lessons that had teacher interacting with students working in pairs and groups were coded in this category.
Pair Work	Peer dialogue is a valuable tenet of productive classroom dialogue (Mercer 1995, Alexander 2008). Peer discussion and learning through peer support reside in Vgotsky's theory of zone of proximal development (ZPD). Based on this, lessons where students were observed to be involved in pair work discussing and interacting amongst themselves to learn from one another were coded in this category.
Group Work	Similar to peer interaction, this category allowed for larger groups discussing and working independently amongst themselves. Any teacher interaction even through the response or comment would place the lesson in the pair-group teacher interaction category. Thus the pair work and group work category only considered lessons whereby students worked independently in pairs and groups.
Student-Led Talk/Presentation;	Lessons whereby students led the classroom dialogue through discussion, presentation, argumentation and/or critiquing were classified into this category.
Individual Activity	During sessions of individual activity, students were observed to be isolated while working on learning content. Such individualistic learning did not meet the active and interactive requirements of student fronted learning (Myhill 2006).
Other	Initially this category was created to code something I may have missed out on through the process of the Preliminary categorization of classroom interaction and activity. For example during some lessons students were asked to watch a YouTube video related to the pedagogical content, this episode was then coded under the category of 'Other'.

Table 5.4: Classroom Interaction and Activity Categories Derived during the Macro Analysis.

Lesson: Episode: Course: Goal: Teacher Intervention:								
Classroom Layout: No. of Students and names: Tools:								
Initiation: Lesson Category:								
Whole-class teacher led talk students listening	Whole-class teacher student interaction	Individual teacher student interaction	Pair/Group teacher student interaction	Pair work	Group work	Student-led talk/presentation	Individual activity	Other
Task Implementation: Teacher-Student Reflection:								

Table 5.5: Macro Analysis Code sheet

5.3.1 Classroom Talk within Lesson Segments

The Macro Level Coding of video captured lessons across the initial lesson segments enabled the interactions that occurred within the segments to be analysed. Keeping in mind that teaching and learning and the talk that permeates it is constantly fluid and fluctuating, there were multiple modes of talk occurring within each lesson and within the lesson segments themselves. So for example within the lesson segment of Task Implementation during one video captured lesson, Whole Class Teacher Student Interaction, Teacher Led Talk and Group work might have all taken place consecutively and iteratively. In order to evaluate the quality of talk that occurred within lesson segments, it was necessary to divide the lesson segmentation into shorter episodes of talk that operated on specific modes of interaction. Therefore, when one mode of talk was being engaged Whole Class Teacher Led Talk for example, this was clustered as being one episode. When the mode of interaction changed to a different one, like Pair work this was then clustered as the second episode.

In this way each lesson segments produced different number of episodes based on the modes of talk that occurred within them. This clustering of talk within episodes facilitated

the specific analysis of each mode of interaction that occurred in more detail. Table 5.6 below provides the distribution and number of episodes according to the different modes of talk and lesson segments they occurred within.

Lesson Segment	Mode of Talk	Number of Episodes
Initiation	Whole-class teacher led talk students listening	13
Task Implementation	Whole-class teacher student interaction	15
	Individual teacher student interaction	9
	Pair/Group teacher student interaction	10
	Pair work	8
	Group work	8
	Student-led talk/presentation	16
	Individual activity	6
Teacher-Student Reflection	Other	4
	Whole-class teacher led talk students listening	3
	Whole-class teacher student interaction	2
	Individual Teacher-Student Interaction	1
Total number of episodes of talk	Pair/Group teacher student interaction	1
		96

Table 5.6 Distribution of Episodes Across Modes of Talk Occurring within Lesson Segments

The Macro Analysis of recorded lessons resulted in a total of 96 episodes of talk coded across the three lesson segments, a majority of the episodes were found to occur within the Task Implementation segment (Table 5.6).

It is important to note that the coding categories which allowed for lesson segmentation and modes of interaction to be derived as episodes of talk were not aimed at labelling the learning that occurred in anyway. Indeed, learning does not naturally occur in segments and episodes that can be neatly divided or categorized, it is a process that is flexible and complex in the way it manifests. Instead these categories were an attempt to structure the findings of recorded lessons in a clear manner, consistent with the aims of this study. Additionally, overlaps between the segments as well as the interaction categories were a natural occurrence (despite occurring sporadically); however, the lessons were divided based on the segmentation that occurred across a majority of recordings and the data they elicited.

The Task Implementation Stage of the lesson contained 76 interactional episodes from the total number of episodes coded as containing talk within them. This segment included a whole range of codes that categorized different types of talk. The frequency distribution indicated that, during the Task Implementation segment the code Whole Class Teacher-Student Interaction occurred *most* frequently 15 times, followed by other modes of talk like Pair/Group Teacher Student Interaction (10) and Individual Teacher Student Interaction (9) occurring during this segment of the lesson. The high occurrence of modes of talk that were interactive and shared dialogues indicated that this segment had talk that was predominantly collaborative and joint.

Initiation was more teacher fronted and transmissive, the interaction during this segment were all coded as being Whole Class Teacher Led Talk Students Listening (13). The Teacher-Student Reflection segment occurred the least through recorded lessons, numbering only 7 times across the data set and had different modes of interactions occurring within it. The code Whole Class Teacher Led Talk Students Listening occurred with the highest frequency during the Teacher-Student Reflection segment a total of 3 times out of the 7 lessons within this segment. Whole Class Teacher Student Interaction occurred 2 times whereas Individual Teacher Student Interaction and Pair Group Teacher Student Interaction occurred 1 time during this segment respectively. Although the Teacher-Student Reflection Segment had different modes of talk occurring within them compared to the Initiation segment, it was significant that each code occurred with low frequency during this segment of the lesson (see table 5.6 above). Overall the number of episodes within this segment were low and the modes of talk occurring within them were also fewer.

It is important to note that some of the lessons showed that the interactions were sometimes not so clear cut and there was some overlap between the segments, for example in some cases students would ask reflective questions during the Task Implementation segment itself. However, despite overlaps which occurred rarely, the lesson segmentation and coding of interactions facilitated the analysis of interactions that

occurred within lesson episodes. Therefore, such structuring and coding was done in line with the exploratory aims of the study rather than to categorise the talk that occurred. Keeping in mind that talk is dynamic and fluid, structuring the talk into modes was aimed at presenting the analysis in a clear manner rather than to 'box' the interaction that occurred. By understanding that classroom interaction is dynamic and multiple, effort was made to derive *from* the data rather than impose *onto* the data where possible.

5.3.2 Modes of Talk within the Four ELT Courses

To determine the type of talk that occurred across the four ELT courses, data from the Macro Analysis coding table was also analysed laterally across the four ELT courses. The frequency of episodes for each mode of talk was calculated for each of the four ELT courses, these have been tabled visually as a bar graph in diagram 5.2 below.

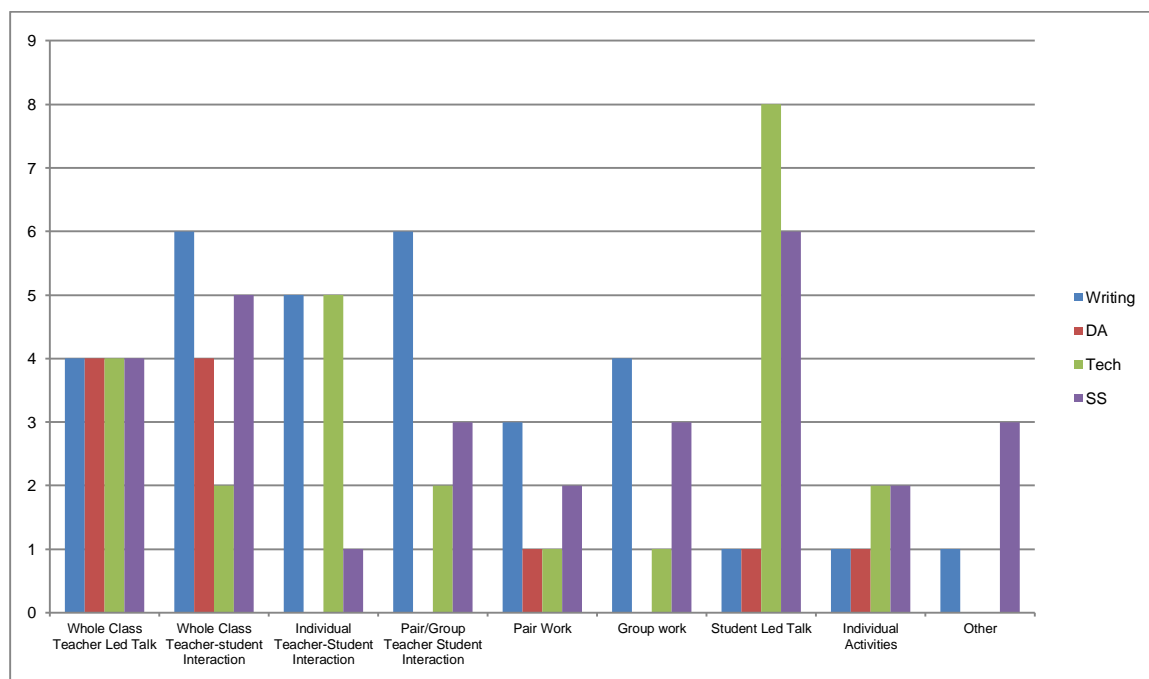


Diagram 5.2: Modes of Talk within the ELT Courses

Drawn from Diagram 5.2 above a majority of the recorded lessons contained interactions that were Whole Class Teacher-Student Interaction (17), this mode of talk featured prominently together with the category of Student Led Talk/Presentations (16) and Whole Class Teacher Led Talk (13) through the lessons.

It was noted through the Macro Analysis mapping of recorded lessons, that some interaction modes did not contain classroom interaction. For example, lessons that were entirely devoted to modes such as Individual Activities with students working independently was recorded six times across the episodes and Other Activities whereby students were watching videos via YouTube or other internet sources was recorded 4 times (Diagram 5.1), showed that there was no interaction recorded during these modes, these categories' were therefore removed from further analysis. Additionally, the intervention modes of Pair Work and Group Work were also removed from further analysis. Despite these two modes of talk contained collaborative dialogue, the recording was not audible as the camera was too far away to record these pair and group interactional exchanges clearly.

Therefore, the modes of Individual Activities, Other, Pair Work and Group Work were removed from further analysis, allowing the coding of interactions to be focused on modes such as Whole Class Teacher Led Talk Students Listening; Whole Class Teacher-Student Interaction, Individual Teacher Student Interaction, Pair/Group Teacher Student Interaction and Student Led Talk/Presentation. The Table 5.7 below presents the frequency of interactional modes that was audible and clearly recorded occurring across the Four ELT courses, used for further analysis.

Courses/Interaction Categories	Writing	DA	Tech	SS	Total
Whole Class Teacher Led Talk Students Listening	4	4	4	4	16
Whole Class Teacher-Student interaction (questions discussions)	6	2	2	7	17
Individual teacher-student interaction	5	0	5	1	11
Pair /group teacher student interaction	6	0	2	3	11
Student led talk/presentations	1	1	8	6	16

Table 5.7: Interaction Modes across the Four ELT Courses Used for Further Analysis

A total of 71 episodes of interactions resulted from the filtering of lessons whereby video recordings elicited varying forms of talk. This basically included classroom dialogue between teacher and the whole class, student to students, teacher and student groups,

individual teacher student dialogues, teacher led talk, as well as student led talks. Drawn from Table 5.7 above, the course Writing had the highest number of interactional episodes through which different modes of talk occurred (22). The episodes of talk within the mode of Whole Class Teacher Student Interaction (6) and Pair Group Teacher Student Interaction (6) occurred most frequently for this course. DA had a total of 7 episodes of interaction, the highest frequency of episodes (4 in total) occurred within the Whole Class Teacher Led Talk Students Listening mode. Tech had 21 episodes in total and the majority were Individual Student Teacher Interactions (5 episodes). SS (21 episodes) had a high number of Whole Class Teacher-Student Interaction occurring (7 episodes). The analysis of modes of talk and the frequency with which they occurred across the four ELT courses demonstrated the way interactions manifested within the classroom context.

The following section of the Macro Level Analysis presents the thematic coding of talk that emergent based on the lesson segmentation and episode analysis that was done.

5.4 The Types of Classroom Talk

Through the coding of video data, it was found that classroom interactions do engage students in discourse, however the nature of the classroom talk varied based on the course as well as the differing lesson segments respectively. What was significant in this Macro Analysis of video recordings is that certain modes of talk elicited more classroom dialogue than others. For example; based on the frequency distributions from Table 5.7 above the mode of Whole-Class Teacher Student Interaction contained more dialogue exchanges and occurred with the highest frequency, being recorded 17 times across the 71 episodes of talk. The mode Whole-Class Teacher Led Talk occurred relatively frequently across the lessons, 16 times. Whole-Class Teacher Led Talk contained very few shared exchanges between teacher and students, or student and students. Similarly, Student Led Talks/Presentations occurred frequently across the episodes (16 times) but did not have much conversational exchange, despite being more student fronted, they were still one way dialogues. The modes of Individual Teacher Student Interaction were found to have occurred 11 times across the 71 episodes and Pair/Group Teacher Student

Interaction was also recorded as occurring 11 times within the episodes. The following sections present the findings of the Macro analysis organized in relation to the three lesson segments derived initially and the type of talk they promoted.

5.4.1 Initiation

The Macro level coding analysis showed that talk during the stage of Initiation, whereby the teacher greeted students and welcomed them to the lesson of the day, teacher also set out the tasks for the lesson and the objectives of the lesson, contained the mode of talk that were for the majority Whole Class Teacher Talking Students Listening. There were 16 recorded episodes whereby Whole Class Teacher Talking Students Listening occurred across the four ELT courses (Table 5.7), and for 13 out of the 16 lessons this occurred during the first 15 minutes of class time, the Initiation segment. The table below presents the lesson segment, mode of interaction and frequency with which it occurred and the lesson timing during which this segment was recorded.

Lesson Segment	Type of Talk	Intervention Category	Frequency	Timing
Initiation: The tasks were given by the teacher for the lesson of the day.	-teacher provided instructions as to how to go about completing the task or activity required of the lesson/ student led one way dialogues with no interaction.	Whole Class Teacher Led Talk Students Listening	13	0-15 minutes of class time

Table 5.8: Mode of Talk during the Initiation Segment

Drawn from Table 5.8 above, the mode of talk during the Initiation segment was teacher fronted and contained transmissive talk. The emerging theme from this Macro level coding which provided an overview of the type of talk that occurred within the Initiation segment was therefore framed as being *Teacher Led Talk*.

5.4.2 Task Implementation

Interactions during the Task Implementation segment of the lesson where learners were involved in completing the set tasks either independently, collaboratively, through peer or

group work, or jointly involving the whole class, resulted in a total of 50 episodes of interaction that were coded across the recorded lessons (see Table 5.9 below). This segment elicited the majority of interactional exchanges as opposed to the Initiation and Teacher-Student Reflections segments. Task Implementation segment was where students were involved in completing the tasks of the lesson and contained interactions like Whole-Class Teacher-Student Interaction, Individual Teacher Student Interaction, Pair/Group Teacher Student Interaction, and Student Led Talk/Presentation.

Teachers and students interacted collaboratively with each other to exchange ideas on different concepts during the Task Implementation segment, the Macro analysis of lesson episodes also showed that 34 out of the 50 episodes (78%) within this segment contained interaction that was shared and engaged participants in the way they used question and answer sequences in the process of learning. This segment included the Student Led Talk/Presentation mode. This mode was found to have occurred 16 times out of the 50 episodes recorded within the Task implementation segment and comprised 32% of the interactions that took place. The talk during the Student Led Talk/Presentation however were one way dialogues and did not have shared interaction or exchanges, they were student led but transmissive in nature. These one way, student directed talk were framed as being *Student Led Talk*.

However, since the Student Led Talk/Presentation mode did not occur as frequently as other modes (please see table 5.9 below), the segment of Task Implementation was therefore framed as being *Shared Talk* based on the majority of interactions occurring within the modes of Whole Class Teacher-Student Interaction, Individual Teacher Student Interaction and Pair/Group Teacher Student Interaction.

Lesson Segment	Type of Talk	Interaction Category	Frequency	Timing
Task Implementation	<i>Shared Talk:</i> teacher and students engage through question and answer sequences in the form of an IRF exchange or a chained dialogue through response and the reformulation of student responses by the teacher, they also include exchanges between students, as well as students and teachers that were shared and/or reflective.	Whole Class Teacher-Student Interaction	15	35-40 minutes of class time
		Individual Teacher-Student Interaction	9	
		Pair/Group Teacher-Student Interaction	10	
	<i>Student Led:</i> student directed one way dialogues/presentations.	Student-Led Talk/Presentation	16	

Table 5.9: Modes of Interaction and Frequency during the Task Implementation Segment.

The table above (Table 5.9), shows a distribution of the episodes during the Task Implementation Segment, the different modes of interactions that occurred, and the frequency with which they occurred.

5.4.3 Teacher-Student Reflection

Much of the talk in the Teacher-Student Reflection segment of the lesson tended to be a summary of the task completed during the lesson and/or a discussion of the completed task. A majority of the episodes of talk occurring within this segment were interactions that contained teacher fronted talk (3 out of 7 episodes), however in some episodes, students also asked questions and initiated exchange sequences during this segment of the class (Table 5.10 below). This segment lasted approximately 10-15 minutes towards the end of class time and was used by the teacher to reflect upon completed tasks, query students’ perceptions regarding completed tasks and provide an overall rundown of the lesson. However, this segment did not occur frequently across the recorded lessons, there were only 7 episodes recorded for the segment of Teacher-Student Reflection.

Lesson Segment	Type of Talk	Intervention Category	Frequency	Timing
Teacher-Student Reflection	<i>Shared Talk</i> : teacher and students engage through question and answer sequences in the form of an IRF exchange or a chained dialogue through response and the reformulation of student responses by the teacher, they also include exchanges between students, as well as students and teachers that were shared and/or reflective.	Whole Class Teacher Led Talk Students Listening	3	Last 10-15 minutes of class time
		Whole Class Teacher-Student Interaction	2	
		Individual Teacher-Student Interaction	1	
	<i>Teacher Led</i> : teacher provided instructions as to how to go about completing the task or activity required of the lesson/ student led one way dialogues.	Pair/Group Teacher-Student Interaction	1	

Table 5.10: Modes of Interaction and Frequency during the Teacher-Student Reflection Segment.

The findings of the Macro level analysis of Teacher-Student Reflection segment led to the interaction during this segment being framed as both *Shared Talk* and *Teacher Led Talk*. However due to the low number of episodes recorded for this segment, it was difficult to analyse the interactions that did occur in a detailed manner. Instead a more specific and layered coding of interactions was required to present a deeper understanding of the nature of talk that occurred during Teacher-Student Reflection segment.

5.4.4 Emerging Themes from Macro-Level Analysis

Talk is indeed a fundamental tool in the process of learning for students in the ELT classrooms and some courses and segments of the lesson result in more classroom discourse than others. Dialogues occurred more during the Task Implementation segment of a lesson as opposed to the Initiation and Teacher-Student Reflection segments which appeared to elicit less interactions across the lesson episodes. Findings from the Macro Analysis show that in addition to lesson segments, the type of ELT course also had an impact on the teacher student exchanges and the frequencies with which they occurred. Courses such as Writing, Tech and SS had talk that were shared and consisted of dialogue exchanges between teacher and whole class; or teacher and student/student groups, whereas DA seemed to have talk that was more teacher fronted with the majority of interactions being coded as Teacher Led Talk Students Listening (Table 5.7).

The Macro level analysis also showed that interactions like Whole-Class Teacher-Student Interaction, Individual Teacher-Student Interaction and Pair/Group Teacher Student Interaction framed as being *Shared Talk* elicited more dialogues when compared to the interaction codes such as Whole-Class Teacher Led Talk Students Listening framed as *Teacher Led Talk* and Student Led Talk/Presentation framed as *Student Led Talk* which were more one way, transmissive dialogues (Table 5.9 and 5.10).

Therefore, to evaluate the quality of interactions that occurred and determine their ability to promote dialogic learning, the codes of Whole-Class Teacher-Student Interaction, Individual Teacher-Student Interaction and Pair/Group Teacher Student Interaction occurring through 39 episodes of lessons, framed as being *Shared Talk* will be transcribed and coded in detail in the Micro- Level Analysis. Episodes containing talk framed as being *Teacher Led Talk* and *Student Led Talk* were removed from further analysis as they did not contain shared interaction or dialogue exchanges. The findings of the detailed coding sequence will be presented in the following Micro Analysis section of this chapter.

5.5 Micro Level Analysis

While the analysis reported in the preceding section of this chapter showed the different types of classroom interaction that occurred through the four ELT courses and the different lesson segments, the interpretations were limited and not able to credence the *quality* of the dialogues that took place in the episodes to determine their influence in promoting learner centred pedagogy through meaningful classroom discourse. This was the rationale for the Micro-Level Analysis whereby a more layered and in-depth investigation of the interpretations was required to answer the research questions outlined at the onset of this chapter.

This section of the Findings Chapter on Video Recordings presents transcribed scenes of the rich interactions drawn from the Macro Analysis section. Firstly, I provide the structure used to analyse the episodes containing the different modes of talk including

Whole Class Teacher Student Interaction, Individual Teacher Student Interaction, and Pair/Group Teacher Student Interaction occurring within the *Shared Talk* frame drawn from the Macro level analysis. The transcribed interactions within the 39 episodes are then analysed using a detailed coding sequence to determine their quality in enabling dialogic learning within the classroom environment. Through such coding sequences, the dialogic quality of interactions can be used to determine the way classroom talk attempted to promote student centred learning.

5.5.1 Framing Classroom Talk

The inductive analysis of 39 episodes found to have interactional talk occurring between teacher and students were transcribed across the three codes Whole Class Teacher Student Interaction, Individual Teacher Student Interaction and Pair/Group Teacher Student Interaction. 204 interactions were transcribed within the 39 episodes of talk. Transcribed Interactions were calculated from the initiation of an interaction followed by the response and its follow up, where talk was used by participants to chain a dialogue sequence. When there was a break in the dialogue or the interaction did not continue this signalled the end of that specific interaction. The start of a new line of talk was then coded as a second interaction happening within the same episode. In such way the specific and detailed talk sequences exchanged between participants was totalled within the modes of talk they operated in (Table 5.11 below).

Types of Talk	Frequency
Whole Class Teacher Student Interaction	107
Individual Teacher Student Interaction	52
Pair/Group Teacher Student Interaction	45
Total	204

Table 5.11: Frequency of Interaction Sequences within the Three Modes of Talk

Based on the frequencies in the table above (5.11), interactions that involved whole class teaching occurred with the highest frequency 107 times through the dialogues exchanged between teachers and students. The category of Individual Teacher Student Interaction occurred 52 times and Pair/Group Teacher Student Interaction occurred 42 times. To structure the presentation of findings, there was a need to develop a systematic way to evaluate these interactions in detail. To facilitate the in-depth analysis of transcribed modes of talk, a frame was derived inductively from the spoken interactions. The three pronged structure that analysed the specific interactional exchanges explored how dialogues transpired in the classroom to support and encourage students' learning.

Informed by Alexander's Dialogic Principle (2004) *Teacher-Student Questions*, *Teacher-Student Exchanges* and *Teacher-Student Exploratory* codes were derived to enable a more detailed coding sequence. The *Teacher-Student Questions* category coded the contribution of participants within the classroom. It included sub-codes that analysed Teacher Open Questions as well as Student Open Questions. It was derived to analyse how teachers and students participated through WH and other open questions during the lesson. The *Teacher-Student Exchanges* category coded how participants reacted and responded in the classroom interactions. In this strand 3 sub-codes were derived namely IRF (teacher asks a question and student provides a brief response) IRRRF (teacher asks a question several students answer) and Teacher Reformulates (Teacher 'picks up' on student response and reformulates another question- chaining a dialogue).

Teacher-Student Exploratory describes the way participants manage the information and knowledge they are exposed to through exploratory interactions that question and challenge a concept or idea. This strand was based on two sub-codes; Student Exploratory (students' talk/question/challenge each other) and Teacher Exploratory (teacher questions to reaffirm content, knowledge and ideas understood and managed by students).

The table 5.12 below presents a definition of the three code categories as well as the sub-codes within them and the frequency with which the codes occurred across transcribed episodes of talk.

Coding Categories	Definition of the Categories	Sub-Codes within the Categories	Frequency
<i>Teacher-Student Questions</i>	Coded the participation of members within the classroom community. It was derived to analyse how teachers and students participated through WH and other open questions during the lesson.	-Teacher Open Questions -Student Open Questions	36
<i>Teacher-Student Exchanges</i>	Coded how participants reacted and responded in the classroom interactions.	-IRF: brief question and answer sequences between teacher and students. -IRRRF: teacher asks a question several students answer -Teacher-Reformulates: Teacher 'picks up' on student response and reformulates another question-chaining a dialogue.	157
<i>Teacher-Student Exploratory</i>	Coded the way participants manage the information and knowledge they are exposed to through exploratory interactions that question and challenge a concept or idea.	-Student Exploratory: students talk/question/challenge -Teacher Exploratory: Teacher questions to reaffirm content, knowledge and ideas understood and managed by students.	11

Table 5.12: Definition of Code Categories, Sub-Codes and Frequencies.

The findings show that the code *Teacher-Student Exchanges* occurred with the highest frequency a total of 157 times within the episodes, this shows that a significant number of classroom interactions consisted of question and answer sequences that included IRF, IRRRF and Teacher Reformulation.

5.5.2 The Dialogic Quality of Classroom Talk

By coding the rich exchanges in an inductive way, the frequencies of interactions within the sub-codes of Teacher Open Questions, Student Open Questions, IRF, IRRRF, Teacher Reformulates, Student Exploratory and Teacher Exploratory were calculated across the modes of talk for each of the four ELT courses. The 204 transcribed interactions were then evaluated for their ability in promoting meaningful dialogues and

hence student centred learning. This section of the findings will first present the frequency with which the codes occurred within the code categories derived at the Micro Level Analysis, as well as across the ELT courses (Table 5.13 below).

Codes / Sub Codes / Courses	Teacher-Student Questions		Teacher-Student Exchanges			Teacher-Student Exploratory		Modes of Talk	Frequency of Interactions
	Teacher open questions	Students open questions	Teacher reformulates	IR RR F	IR F	Students exploratory	Teacher exploratory		
DA	10		4	17	33		1	Whole Class Teacher-Student Interaction, Individual Teacher-Student Interaction; Pair/Group Teacher-Student Interaction;	65
Tech	5	2		4	10		1	Whole Class Teacher-Student Interaction, Individual Teacher-Student Interaction; Pair/Group Teacher-Student Interaction;	22
SS	5	3	9	20	23	4		Whole Class Teacher-Student Interaction, Individual Teacher-Student Interaction; Pair/Group Teacher-Student Interaction;	64
Writing	9	1	2	12	23			Whole Class Teacher-Student Interaction, Teacher-Student Pair/Group Interaction; Teacher-Student Individual Talk; and Student Led Talk/Presentation	47
Total	30	6	15	53	89	4	7		204

Table 5.13: Frequency of Interactions within Modes of Talk for the Four ELT Courses

The findings from the detailed coding analysis will then be used to show transcribed scenes of talk to exemplify the way these codes transpired within the classroom context to determine their dialogic quality. Based on the tabulation of frequencies presented in the table above, IRF exchanges (89) made up the largest type of interactions. This was followed by the IRRRF Interactions with 53 recorded instances and Teacher Reformulates

15 occurrences. Therefore, a significant number of classroom interactions within the four ELT courses involved *Teacher-Student Exchanges*.

Excerpts from the transcribed episodes will be used in the following sections to show how participants navigate classroom dialogues through *Teacher-Student Questions*, *Teacher-Student Exchanges* and *Teacher-Student Exploratory* talk to facilitate the process of learning.

5.5.3 Whole Class Teacher Student Interaction

The mode of talk coded as Whole Class Teacher Student Interaction recorded interactions between the teacher and the whole classroom. Emergent from the Macro Analysis of the data, 17 episodes of recorded lessons were found to have this mode of talk within them across the four ELT courses (Table 5.7) and a total of 107 interactions were drawn from these episodes to be coded using the detailed coding sequence (Table 5.10).

Lesson: Tech 3 n 3.1
Episode:1
Goal: Learn about wikis and the benefits of using them
Learning Task: PowerPoint and group based activity on creating a wiki.

Teacher: How is the wiki organized?
Libina: It should be user friendly
Teacher: Yeah...it should be easy to navigate through it easy to find things you're looking for....isn't it?

Teacher: Do we have wikis on e- learn?
Student:mmmm not sure...(collective)
Teacher: Can we all log in to e learn now and check if wikis are available for students....

Teacher: A good wiki... is user focused ...any idea what that means?...
Mahsir: maybe...it's like...everything is easy to use...like I mean...related to music and stuff

Teacher: yes it all related t the people who are posting it ...so rather than the platform it's focused on the people isn't it?
Students: Yes...mmmmm (collective murmuring)

To determine how talk manifested through the codes of *Teacher-Student Questions*, *Teacher-Student Exchange* and *Teacher-Student Exploratory*, this mode which recorded teacher students' interaction as a whole class unit was analysed. In Lesson Tech 3 and 3.1 Episode 1, a transcribed interaction of the mode Whole Class Teacher Student Interaction is presented and the interactions are first analysed to show how students participate in open questions in the class. The scene then continues to the IRF questions through which participants' talk chained a dialogue.

The above excerpt shows an example of how the teacher asks open questions through words such as *How and What* to *Involve* learners in the lesson. Her open questions regarding students existing knowledge of wikis is a way to encourage students to join in the class by sharing their perspectives with their peers. This excerpt shows that through such open questions, the teacher attempts to involve learners on the subject of the lesson. We can see through the teacher's question on the way in which wikis are organized, she attempts to engage learners existing knowledge regarding the subject and share it with the class. It is important to note however that learner's answers were brief indicating their response to her questions were limited and hesitant. The students seemed unsure of whether the wikis were available on e-learn and the teacher manages this uncertainty by suggesting a learning task through which they can confirm this question. She suggests that they should log in to the University's online learning platform and find out whether they are available for students.

This interaction shows how the participants move from using talk to chain a dialogue through question and answer sequences. The teacher builds on the previous response of students that it is 'user friendly' and encourages them to think about concepts of user centred wikis and what this could mean. By providing a brief response to the teacher, Mahsir participates in the IRF exchange by contributing what she thinks a wiki can offer to be user centred. Through her response we can see that Mahsir is unsure of her answer and yet attempts to elicit her idea and respond to the teacher's prompts. This example shows that learners are supported to construct an answer on the subject being discussed rather than trying to find the correct answer.

Mahsir's response shows how she thinks about the subject being taught during the lesson in a critical way, this attempt is encouraged by the teacher's response to Mahsir's contribution through which she again builds constructively on Mahsir's ideas and reinforces them. Such sequences although short offer an opportunity for learners to think actively during the lesson instead of merely being passive recipients and involve themselves in the learning. Despite student responses being limited and brief, such interactions *attempt* to use dialogic strategies to develop shared learning.

Towards the end of the interaction, the teacher's final question which is a closed one asks students for a yes or no response on the topic. Here although there appears a collective murmuring of assent from students, no concrete answer is forthcoming. This is suggestive that students aren't sure of the answer and therefore do not formulate one specifically to respond to the teacher. It is difficult to state then whether learners achieved a shared understanding of the topic through the interactional exchanges that took place. What is significant in the data is that the exchanges show attempts of dialogism, the responses of students to such learning strategies was hesitant and limited and that the teacher tried to support students learning through facilitated talk to encourage them to be engaged in the learning process.

Findings from the transcription and coding of lesson SS1 and 1.1, Episode 1 are presented below to show how teachers and students negotiate learning through talk that attempts to be exploratory.

Lesson: Study Skills 1 & 1.1

Episode:1

Goal: Learn how to take notes in a comprehension and effective manner

Task: YouTube video, whole class activity and group work.

Teacher: Why does he think the expo should come this country?

Hawa: ...er because we have incredible city

Teacher: ah ha...

Nurul: Because...its like...a safe place...

Teacher: ..safe yeah..these are good ideas...your ideas why it should come to dubai.....but what is....does he actually mention a reason why....think back on it did anyone note anything down at all....

Teacher: So let me ask you...when you were taking notes and listening to this video...which method of taking notes did you use linear or ...? Which method?

Khusan: no any method?

Teacher: you didn't use a method? So...how did you take notes...

Khusan: nothing....just bullets...

Teacher: ok...so that the ..using the linear method...

Student and Khusan: yeah ok....

The transcribed interaction above drawn from Episode 1 shows attempts by the teacher in using exploratory questions to engage students with the knowledge gained from the YouTube video they watched during the class and apply it on the learning task given to students. The teacher asks an open question to encourage students to contribute their ideas on the topic, however the responses of Hawa and Nurul are limited in the single idea they bring forward to the discussion. Although the transcript shows that the teacher accepts these ideas from students as being original and generated by themselves, she seems to be looking for the right answer, something the students needed to have picked up on from the video rather than something they come up with on their own. Here it is noticeable that the teacher inadvertently narrows the dialogue by looking for a specific answer from the students rather than answers students come up with regarding the subject of the lesson. By seeking the *right* answer instead of allowing students to generate their own ideas, the teachers' talk leans towards guided discourse that is less dialogic in reality.

The interaction continues with the teacher asking students which method they used while jotting ideas from the video down. Khusan mentions that she didn't use any particular method but when the teacher discusses her approach further Khusan realizes that even using simple bullet points is still a method. Khusan shows her understanding of the teacher's explanation of her work and here we see that through whole class teacher student discussions the teacher attempts to direct the talk towards being more dialogic; whereby she combines learning with a task students completed in class to *apply* the

knowledge learned through whole class interaction to develop a better understanding of it. However, the success of such strategies in achieving quality dialogic interactions seem to be somewhat undermined by the limited ideas generated by students and instances whereby open questions become in reality quite closed.

5.5.4 Individual Teacher Student Interaction

This mode of talk Individual Teacher Student Interaction, coded interactions between teacher and individual students during lessons.

Lesson: Writing 3 & 3.1

Episode:2

Goal: teaching student to write a descriptive paragraph

Task: watching a YouTube video, writing activity, group work

Teacher: What did you think about the video?

Tahsad: Its useful

Teacher: hmmm?

Tahsad: useful and helpful in giving us an idea on what to right about...

Teacher: useful right?

Teacher: What are the major things you talk about when describing the beach? What are your major ideas? What are you going to say to describe the beach?

Lateefah: The view

Teacher: ok...so you can talk about the view or scenery at the beach...

Teacher: Have you thought about a topic?

Rayan: yeah...ummm I'm still thinking...but I want to talk about Kuwait...the city of Kuwait...

Teacher: yeah...you can base it on your experience of it...what you saw your favourite places...

The excerpt from episode 2 above of Writing 3 & 3.1, is an example of the interaction coded to the category of Individual Teacher-Student Interactions. Here we see that the teacher is involved in question and answer sequences with Tahsad, then with Lateefah and finally with Rayan. The teacher moves from one student to the next and exchanges dialogues with them regarding the subject of the lesson which is writing a descriptive

paragraph and the YouTube video they watched on the subject. Through the transcript we can see how the teacher uses open questions to engage learners in thinking about their ideas on the subject.

By asking Tahsad what she feels about the video, the teacher attempts to involve Tahsad in the lesson whilst prompting ideas from the student. Tahsad says she feels it's useful, and it's helpful as it gives her an idea of what's expected through the task. The teacher then directs her questions to Lateefah. She asks her about her ideas on writing about the beach and the main ideas that such writing might include. Here we can see that the teacher uses the responses of Tahsad to support the learning of another student, in this case Lateefah. Despite the code which categorized interactions as being individual, in that they occurred between the teacher and specific students, these exchanges were also used by the teacher in an attempt to scaffold the learning of other members within the classroom community. Lateefah's response to the teacher's open questions are once again limited as she explains her answer and demonstrates how she tries to navigate her learning of the subject through teacher support.

The teacher then directs her question to Rayan, asking him about the ideas he has. Rayan hesitates to provide an answer, his response shows that he is still uncertain about his topic for the descriptive paragraph and yet the teachers' open question encourages him to share the ideas he might have. The teacher through her statement: 'yeah...you can base it on your experience of it...what you saw your favourite places' builds on Rayan's responses and supports him through his learning of the required task. Here we see how through dialogue exchanges that happen between the teacher and individual students, learning is constructively supported through attempts of the teacher to encourage learners to actively generate ideas. Yet a point of note is how the teacher moves quickly from one student to the next in the episode above. The way the teacher moves from Tahsad, to Lateefah and then to Rayan, demonstrates the rapid questioning strategy applied. Such strategy does not allow for sufficient time to develop and allow each individual student to thoroughly extend their thinking on the subject of learning. Instead what results is a rapid question and answer sequence that is superficial. It is important to

note that sometimes despite questions which aim to be dialogic and open, the way in which they manifest in the classroom can be quite different.

Lesson: Writing 3 & 3.1

Episode:2

Goal: teaching student to write a descriptive paragraph

Task: watching a YouTube video, writing activity, group work

Sabar: Can it be about a person?...like can I talk about or describe someone?...like instead of a place?

Teacher: Yes...it can be about a person...you can describe someone...the paragraph will be all about what she looks like...

Sabar: what about her personality...can I talk about that?

Teacher: yes...but what do you think would it be in the same paragraph?

Sabar: That would be in another paragraph...one that only talks about her personality....

Teacher: yes...thats good... its clearer that way isn't it?

Sabar: oh yeah...yes...

Teacher: While you are working on your major ideas...please come up with a good controlling topic sentence...it needs to limit it down to what you are specifically describing...so if you choose to talk about what they look...then its only about how they look and if you talk about their personality and behaviour then that's what the paragraph will be about...so be specific...

Sabar: OK...

A transcript from scene 3 of the same lesson is provided above, whereby the teacher attempts to use student questions to support learning. The way the interaction develops however, suggests that despite teacher attempts to encourage learners to be engaged with the subject of the lesson, such practices do not always occur so dialogically in the reality of the classroom context.

Here in scene 3 presented above, the transcription shows Sabar asking the teacher a specific question about the writing task to help formulate her own ideas on the topic. However, Sabar's question about the topic she can write about is rather a closed question requiring a yes or no answer from the teacher. Sabar wants to know from the teacher whether it's acceptable for her to describe a person rather than a place. The teacher

answers Sabar's question by saying '*yes...it can be about a person...*' demonstrating the teacher's attempt to try and direct the closed question and answer sequence to being more open and exploratory. The teacher tries to tease Sabar to think further on the information and subject of discussion.

The teacher says yes in answer to Sabar's second question and encourages Sabar to think about the elements the paragraph could potentially describe. Through this response we can see the teacher tries to facilitate the development of the learner by working with her to 'figure out' the answer in addition to giving the answer Sabar seemed to be 'looking' for. However, Sabar's response to the teachers' strategies once again moves away from dialogic exchange, to seek a more transmissive answer from the teacher. Through yet another closed question that asks the teacher for the answer rather than *thinking* through the answer herself, Sabar looks to the teacher for the right information repeatedly.

Sabar asks the teacher if she can write about the personality of a person, and although this question appears open through her phrasing of it as a WH question, it is closed in the yes or no response it seeks from the teacher. The interaction shows how the teacher once again attempts to involve the student in the process of thinking through the answer and tries to move the dialogue towards more dialogic learning. The teacher answers Sabar's question again by saying that it does, but supports her learning by encouraging her to think about where such ideas might occur in the process of writing. Her question '*but what do you think...would that be in the same paragraph?*' attempts to be dialogic in urging Sabar to develop some ideas and think about the task. Sabar's response to the teacher however is limited in the answer it provides. The teacher then attempts to build on the response from Sabar by encouraging her to think about what such structuring might add to her writing, and once again the response from Sabar is brief in simply agreeing with the teacher '*oh yeah...yes*' and did not result in any further attempts on Sabar's part to discuss the topic further.

Here the findings demonstrate how the teacher tries repeatedly to steer the learning to be dialogic through question and answer sequences, and yet gives in to the demands of

the student by providing the answer the student is looking for. Two things are presented through this interaction, first that the student repeatedly seeks a direct answer from the teacher, second that the teacher falls back on directing and providing information by answering the student, despite some attempt to make Sabar think more on the topic. This transcription shows that in spite of attempts to be dialogic in the teaching and learning of descriptive paragraphs the main goal of the lesson, the way interactions actually take place tend to lean toward being limited and monologic. The next lesson shows a scene where teacher and individual students are involved in exploring the subject of the lesson by exchanging and discussing ideas actively.

Lesson: SS 4 & 4.1

Episode:1

Goal: Learn how to brainstorm the pros and cons of a topic

Task: topic and brainstorming session.

Teacher: What are some of the bad effects of video games...can you tell me?

Forna: Maybe children will become...(interrupts) you know addicted...that's not good...

Teacher: Yes...why can you think about why...?

Forna: it affects the physical health and er ummm and the attention cause a problem with the attention of the children.

Teacher: ok...so the attention span goes down you're saying? Its bad for their attention span...

Forna: yeah...

Teacher: yes...How about you Du...any ideas you want to share on this?

Daniele: time consuming

Teacher: its really addictive and children tend to play a lot so they waste their time...yeah? What else is bad about video games?...How about you Noki?

Noki: They don't go out ...and they don't play outside....

Teacher: yes....so lack of exercise...because they're so addicted to video games...yes...any other ideas?

Mares: Aggressive behaviours

T: aggressive behaviour, this is really interesting because have you noticed that all the video games their mostly about shooting fighting killing...the other day my husband give my son let him play a video game I don't know.....why...he's five...and too young to be playing a video game!....I don't know what the game was called but he had to go around and steal cars....

Students: oh yeah....laughing...

Teacher: I had to tell him stealing cars is a bad thing...I kept telling hmmm that...u know its really not good to steal a motorbike or a car...and he was like..ya ya ya...ok let me steal this car or the other car...whatever...I mean why are you giving it to him to play....?...ok what else?

In lesson SS 4 and 4.1 above, we can see the teacher attempts to engage students in discussing and exchanging their ideas on the topic of video games through questions that appear to be exploratory and are aimed at reaffirming learners existing knowledge about this topic.

Here we see that by asking students to contribute their ideas on the negative effects of video games, the teacher moves from one student to the next to encourage them to share what they know on the topic. She first asks Forno her ideas on this and Forno states that it's addictive for children and explains that it is bad for their health. The teacher reaffirms Forno thoughts on this by reformulating and building on the idea she contributes. Through the dialogue the teacher attempts to elicit more from Forno, however it is noticeable that Forno does not contribute more.

The teacher then moves to ask Daniele his ideas on the topic. Daniele states that it is time consuming, once again the response shows that despite teacher efforts to encourage a flow of ideas, the dialogues are quite limited and the contribution by students brief. Through the interaction between teacher and individual students, results show that attempts at dialogic practices seem to become in reality nothing more than IRF exchanges in the context of the episodes above. Answers from students are brief and limited and although the teacher reformulates student ideas, students do not participate in any further explanation or clarification of their ideas. It is noticeable that the teacher attempts to change the question–answer-question sequence by attempting to share a personal experience with the student. This seems to have got a humorous response from students but no other contribution with regards to generating ideas to learn is made by individual learners.

5.5.5 Pair/Group Teacher Student Interaction

The lesson Writing 3 & 3.1 aimed at teaching students to write a descriptive paragraph also includes Pair/Group Teacher Student Interactions in Episode 3 of the lesson. As students get involved in the task of writing their ideas for the descriptive paragraph, pair/group interaction between students and teacher takes place. Episode 3 provides a transcription of the interaction that took place between the teacher and students in the group she addresses. This includes Libina, Hawa and Nurul as we can see from the example provided below.

Lesson: Writing 3 & 3.1

Episode:3

Goal: teaching student to write a descriptive paragraph

Task: watching a YouTube video, writing activity, group work

T: What types of things can you do in a descriptive paragraph?...what can you write about?

Li, Bar and Nuj: A place or person...(collective answer)

Teacher: yeah a person, a place or something like?

Bar: like something...a thing

Teacher: yeah or a thing....like you can describe your car, cause you're so in love with it....these are the things we can talk about or describe.For example....

We can see through the transcription above the teacher uses How and Wh questions, as well as Reformulation to chain a dialogue by 'picking up' on student responses and building on the answer to support students learning on the subject of the lesson. Here the teacher uses talk with students while they work in groups to promote their involvement as well as using reformulation as a strategy to encourage their ideas. The exchange shows how students either collectively as a group or individually attempt to contribute their ideas in answer to the teachers' intervention. Despite the support of the teacher and her attempts to build and reformulate on student responses, the responses of students within their groups, similar to the whole class interaction and individual teacher student interaction seems to be brief. We can see their collective answer suggests that they are *trying* to think through their ideas on the subject, but it is notably brief in contributing two possibilities and not going any further. The teacher then uses the students' ideas to

reformulate a question and get them thinking again. Hawa's response shows that to some degree the group of students try to generate ideas, but the answer being once again limited, tempers the dialogue to the standard question-answer-question sequence rather than anything more dialogic.

Lesson: Writing 3 & 3.1

Episode:3

Goal: teaching student to write a descriptive paragraph

Learning Task: watching a YouTube video, writing activity, group work

Teacher: What are the things a descriptive paragraph does?

Hawa, Libina and Nurul: Describe a person....murmuring place (collective answer)

Teacher: yeah...exactly you can describe this....

Teacher: Can you give me an example...of a topic sentence describing the beach?

Teacher: Don't rush all together at one time... (sarcastic, humor) Come on...

Students:...giggling

Teacher: Why would you like going to the beach?

Libina: You can swim, or even...murmuring

Hawa, Libina and Nurul: you can even have....picnics...

Teacher: Ok anyone else?

Student: No response

Teacher: What should be number 3?

Students: It has white soft sand...sand (collective answer)

Teacher: Very good...as you walk on the beach....

Teacher: Do you see what I mean?

Students: Yeah...yes (collective)...

Teacher: Ok...good...What is the purpose of descriptive paragraphs?

Libina: To show something

Teacher: Yes, it's very important that you try to show something to your readers...you basically need to paint a picture for your readers. Descriptive paragraphs are very flowery; they use a lot of describing words.

Teacher: What would the five paragraphs be can someone tell me?

Hawa: Errrr...introduction

Teacher: Introduction

Hawa: Errrrr...with the thesis statement...

Teacher:....yes the last sentence in the introduction...would be the thesis...

Hawa:...mmmmm and supported ideas...

Teacher:...yes body 1 and

Hawa: And body 2 and body 3

Teacher: Yes and the conclusion...a paragraph on its own...

Teacher: Right at the bottom at the end of your paragraph...what should you have?

Nurul: conclusion...

Teacher: yes...not like a whole paragraph but just one sentence that concludes the paragraph.

The IRRRF exchange in episode three continues between the teacher and the same group of learners and shows details of talk that is negotiated through questions and answers. The teacher asks students about the process of describing the beach in completing the descriptive writing task they are working on in their groups and they answer collectively. Here we can see that the teacher asks the group of students about a subject they recently learned about and one they are working on in their groups. By asking them about their learning, the teacher tries to gauge their understanding of the subject and encourages strategies that are aimed at being dialogic. However, the answer of students in the group is brief and almost uncertain. Again the teacher attempts to ask why they might visit the beach. By building on the previous response of students about describing a place, she tries to use reformulation to continue the chain of dialogue. However, the students do not respond and as such there is a breakdown in the dialogue.

It is interesting at this point that the transcription indicates how the teacher, aware that the chain of dialogue has had no 'uptake' and is at danger of being undermined, switches to something different than the question-answer-question sequence to continue to support the thinking of students. Through the teacher's slightly sarcastic comment '*Don't rush all together at one time*' she attempts to inject some humour in the class while still supporting the students to think about the subject.

The students respond to the humour in an amicable way and this switch in strategies by the teacher seems to have been relatively successful as students begin participating

again by sharing their ideas. They contribute and show how they are thinking through the guidance of the teacher as she uses more questions to encourage them in the process of learning. We can see through this interaction that the dialogue was not very dialogic as student responses were limited and at one point not forthcoming at all, and yet the teacher attempts different strategies to continue the dialogue and support the students in their learning. Through collective group work, dialogue between teacher and a group of students, uses talk to help facilitate thinking amongst the participants about the topic they are learning. Despite the attempts of the teacher to use reformulation and humour to encourage dialogic interactions, the transcription shows that the interaction is heavily teacher directed and falls back into less dialogic sequences.

In lesson SS2 & 2.1 below we see students and teacher working collectively through group interaction using talk as a tool to explore, question and challenge each other.

Lesson: SS 2 & 2.1

Episode:1

Goal: student presents their work on technology topics and brainstorm on a topic.

Learning Task: Present and discuss ideas on technology topic in groups.

Mares: What do you know about the internet? What do you know?

Hawa:..Its a social ah...group to communicate with the other people...those outside...or inside your country actually

Mares: Ok...any other ideas about the internet?

Khsanu: To get some information...if you're looking for something...you can search for anything you want to know

Mares: Ok...any other ideas? (student raises her hand in the back of the classroom not in the visual)

Students: Information...giggling (not clear).

Mares: What do we mean by domain? Anyone know what domain means?

Hawa: What do you mean?

Mares: Anyone of you know any name of domains? Uh...

Noki: Like .net and .com and stuff?

Mares: No...its like you have to know.. chat rooms, games,

Students: Facebook...

Mares: Yes facebook!

Hawa: Aah!

Mares: And ah html.... what do you think about the games online...?

Nimar: It's a waste of time...

Mares: Yeah its for wasting time...giggling....but you can do it if you are waiting or something and you want to waste time anyways...giggling...

Nimar: Yeah but...some of them make you concentrate...and not all of them...

Teacher: Yeah...and it makes you addicted to it so you spend all your time even valuable time on it...you start playing it even when you don't have time to waste...that's the problem.

Nimar: Yeah...there disadvantages is more than their advantages. And that's my point of view....so that's the thing...

Mares: Yeah but...its...easy to just let the kids play it...and they will be away from you....

Students: class giggles...

Teacher: yeah ha ha ha (also laughing)

In the above excerpt from lesson SS 2 and 2.1, we can see how students utilize question and answer sequences in an attempt to challenge each other's ideas and consider alternate viewpoints. When Mares asks what students know about the internet, Hawa attempts to answer based on her existing knowledge and shares her understanding of the concept with the class. Although Mares acknowledges Hawa's answer by saying 'ok...', she prompts her to think further on the topic 'any other ideas about the internet?', indirectly encouraging other students in the group to contribute more ideas on the subject.

This question by Mares is open and exploratory in the way it is used to try and challenge students to think and apply their knowledge about the internet during a brainstorming session. Khusan then states her thoughts on the subject, and students collectively endorse the idea of Khusan as a group, that the internet is for information. Here we see that although Mares repeats her statement and urges students to think more on the topic, student responses reformulate Khusan's answer and no further ideas are put forward by group members. Mares can be seen then to move on to the next subject area. Although Mares's attempts in the beginning of this transcript show her encouraging her peers to explore ideas on the subject being learned, the dialogic learning that should have facilitated a deeper understanding of concepts through group interaction was quite

superficial. Students seem to see such attempts even by their peers as an opportunity for nothing further than brief answers, and again their participation is quite monologic.

The episode continues with Mares asking students again their understanding of the term *Domain*. Here we see through Hawa's question that she is unfamiliar with the term and asks for clarification on the topic. Instead of answering Hawa's question, Mares repeats the question again, seeking other members who might be able to contribute what they know of this term. Here the interaction shows that Mares did not try to stop and assist Hawa with her lack of knowledge, or attempt to provide clarification of the topic for her peer in any way. The support that group work is supposed to promote is undermined here by Mares ignoring Hawa's question. Mares's repetition of the question concerning Domain is answered by Noki who attempts to share her existing knowledge on the subject '*like .net and .com and stuff ?*'. What is interesting about Noki's contribution to the discussion is that it is phrased in the form of a question. This shows that Noki is unsure as to whether her answer is correct but tries to give her ideas on the subject anyway. Noki demonstrates that she is engaging with the subject of the lesson and participating in the group discussion by sharing her ideas.

However Mares by refuting the answer provided by Noki, initiates an argument by disagreeing with Noki on the matter: '*No...its like you have to know...chat rooms, games...*'. Here by challenging and exploring each other's ideas we see that students attempt to share and explore their ideas on the subject and learn collaboratively through discussion.

Instead of taking up Mares's challenge, Noki concedes that Mares has more information on the topic and accepts the knowledge Mares shares with her and the class. By accepting Mares's knowledge, the dialogue does not continue. Therefore, the interaction shows that by agreeing to accept the opinion of a peer, group learning can be noticed as a development of the talk that takes place in the classroom. By reasoning through different concepts, such discourse trains learners in applying their thinking skills through whole class interactions in a comfortable way. Noki's acceptance of Mares's correction

regarding the definition for *Domain* suggests that through the interactions Noki has learnt more about Domain's by voicing her viewpoint which was not entirely correct. Here the teacher allows the students to correct each other and manage their learning independently.

Hawa's response '*Ah!...*' and students collective response '*Facebook...*', towards the end of the transcript indicates that through the argument and exchange of ideas that Mares and Noki engage in, other participants within the group may have also benefitted. The lack of answer to Hawa's initial question although not directly answered by Mares or any other student specifically, seems to have been addressed through the exchange of ideas that occurred between members of the group. Therefore HAwa's exclamation '*Ah!...*' towards the end is suggestive that she has perhaps arrived at a deeper understanding of the subject through the group interaction that took place.

The interaction proceeds with Mares now asking the opinion of her classmates about online games. Mares agrees with Nimar's statement that online games is a waste of time but states that sometimes this might be a necessary evil. Through her statement '*Yeah it's for wasting time...giggling...but you can do it if you are waiting or something and you want to waste time anyways...giggling..*', she accepts Nimar's contribution but offers a different perspective on the point of view. Here we see that through such negotiated participation, Mares attempts to extend the knowledge on the topic by exploring the idea on a different tangent.

Nimar again attempts to challenge Mares's perspective, she seems to be firm in her corner about how online games do not help with concentration, not at all times. This interaction demonstrates the way students use talk to form, share and explore their perspectives on the topic of the lesson. Through the intervention of teacher reformulation, the teacher attempts to build on the ideas contributed by Nimar and Mares to highlight the concern or 'problem' students speculate on during the dialogue. The interaction above shows indications of being exploratory and suggests how talk between groups of students guided by the teacher is significant in its ability to promote collective, supported learning.

While talk is used to negotiate deeper understandings through the exchange of ideas and concepts amongst students, we see examples where learners exhibit confidence through the sharing of their ideas and participating in challenging and arguing about the concepts they learn. This indicates that through such talk stimulated and guided by the teacher, attempts to practice dialogic learning was made through peer/group student teacher interactions.

5.5.6 Using Modes of Talk to Learn

The sample episodes and interactions provided in the Micro Analysis present the main codes of *Teacher-Student Questions*, *Teacher-Student Exchanges* and *Teacher-Student Exploratory Talk* that takes place within modes of talk in classroom scenarios. These interactions were transcribed in detail to show participant attempts at utilizing talk as a tool to navigate their learning. A point of note is that the episodes and transcribed interactions between the overarching codes were not to show distinct differences between the categories, as seen from the data reported the concepts of participating and learning are not one dimensional but multi-layered. It is therefore difficult to avoid overlaps between the categories and to delineate them in neat ways. The main codes and sub codes were therefore derived to structure the analysis and coding of a complicated data set, video captured classroom talk.

The episodes and transcribed interactions were significant in showing that learning is multifaceted and that dialogue is important in facilitating the development of students understanding of new concepts through the support of whole class interaction, purposeful tasks, as well as teacher intervention. Findings also show that although interactions aim to be dialogic in the process of extending the knowledge of learners, the majority of interactions are limited, brief and fall back on the conventional question-answer-question sequence.

In addition to contributions of learners as conversants being brief and limited in the video recordings, findings of the inductive, detailed coding process was also significant in

highlighting instances of dialogue that was disrupted or discontinued by participants. As demonstrated in the preceding section 5.4.5 of lesson Writing 3 and 3.1, episode 2, coding analysis indicated that during interactions there were instances whereby the dialogue had no 'uptake' resulting in the sequences of question-answer-question being let down. During this scene we can see attempts by the teacher to manage such breakdowns by switching strategies to encourage contribution from the participants in the group. These instances and the resulting effect of such breakdowns on classroom talk will be examined in the following section.

5.6 Instances of Breakdown in Classroom Talk

Lesson Tech 1 & 1.1

Episode:1

Goal: Creating an online community for the classroom; creating a class blog.

Learning Task: whole class activity and practice in creating a classroom blog.

Mode: Whole Class Teacher Student Interaction

Teacher: What do you think are some of the advantages of creating an online community for a class? Anyone? Come one...tell me what you think...?

Students: No response

Emerging from transcribed data was also instances in dialogues where 'breakdown' of interaction occurred due to a lack of response from students resulting in a let-down in the 'up take' of the dialogue. In the lesson above, the teacher uses Whole Class Teacher Student Interaction to initiate a dialogue between participants on the advantages of an online community. However, despite her prompts the students do not answer and the dialogue is undermined.

Lesson: DA 1

Episode:2

Goal: To teach students references and how they are used in discourse

Learning Task: discussing activities and working through them as a whole class and in groups

Mode: Pair/Group Student Teacher Interaction

Teacher: How can you decide in a sentence what words like it or that refer to?

Students: No response

Teacher: Think about it. How would you decide by just looking at the sentence...any ideas?

Teacher: This is where you need to refer to what you are talking about in a clear way otherwise it can be confusing for the readers. Don't you agree?

No response

Lesson: Writing 2 & 2.1

Episode:1

Goal: Teaching student to write a descriptive paragraph

Learning Task: writing activity in groups

Mode: Pair/Group Student Teacher Interaction

Teacher: How do you describe a picture?

Students: Murmuring but no clear answer

Teacher: Begin by looking at the details and talking about them from the picture in front of you...try talking about what you can see from the details.

Students: No response...

From the transcribed excerpts of lesson Da 1 and Writing 2 and 2.1, we can see instances where the teacher asks a question and is met with no response from the students. The results of the detailed coding analysis suggest that the teacher manages this 'breakdown' in a number of ways: either by exhorting students to answer; phrasing the question differently or by responding to the question herself; and also by switching strategies to inject humour in an attempt to encourage contribution from students. In all of the scenarios above, there is no 'uptake' from the students and the contributions are made only by the teacher. These instances hinder participation in the classroom context and therefore undermine dialogic instruction.

Such instances combined with a general hesitancy and brief responses from students are significant in the way they present a challenge for the teacher in obstructing dialogic interactions. The occurrences demonstrate a tendency for monologic dialogues and take the class back into conventional question-answer-question sequences which is heavily teacher directed. However, the importance of such interactions in the way they create opportunities for learners to contribute (even if they do *not* or do so briefly) and work

together with the teacher towards implementing more dialogic, participatory exchanges is significant.

Classroom talk is a shared activity, and despite dialogues being limited or being discontinued, the teacher's role in guiding curricular towards initiatives that encourage active, dialogic learning is significant. We can see the teacher attempting to switch between different strategies in an attempt to encourage student participation and response during the interactions. When the question she asks do not elicit a response from the students the teacher tries to change her approach to stimulate and guide idea generation and collective learning in the classroom. The examples drawn from the coding of video data demonstrates instances where she does so: through humour where she attempts to cajole a response from students (section 5.4.5, lesson Writing 3 and 3.1, Episode 1); by changing the way she poses her questions (section 5.5, lesson DA 1, Episode 2); and most notably when no answer is forthcoming the teacher does not leave the question hanging for students to grapple with, instead she offers the answer herself (section 5.5, Lesson Writing 2 and 2.1, Episode 1), and in doing so recognizes that the opportunity to learn even through transmissive dialogues are still valid.

This shows that education should be more than just a choice between two polar opposites, transmissive and interpretive; instead instruction needs to be dynamic, and cater to the requirement of the moment in the learning continuum. By refusing to provide an answer herself in wanting to be dialogic, the teacher would inadvertently leave a void in the knowledge of students, one that would remain unaddressed. Instead by taking on the responsibility to provide the answer herself at the risk of appearing transmissive, she acts in a manner that is necessary rather than one that is prescribed by the philosophies of an approach. Teachers need to be dynamic and sensitize their teaching strategies in ways that respond to the requirements of the learner through instruction that is flexible.

5.7 Participation Structures and It's Influence on Classroom Discourse.

The findings from the Micro Level Analysis demonstrates that classroom discourse within the four ELT courses was not just an exchange of turns, but attempts to be dialogic in the

way it tries to keep enquiry open through articulation, reasoning, contesting and negotiating of ideas. This relationship between students and students, as well as students and teacher structure the interactions of participants and each conversant has a role to play. By facilitating learners to contribute to the topic being discussed, the teacher guides the students in interpreting information.

Lesson: Writing 10 n 10.1

Episode:1

Goal: Learn about the basics of writing an essay, understand the different parts of the essay.

Learning Task: whole class writing activity from textbook

Mode: Whole Class Teacher Student Interaction

T: For example what is the function of an introduction?

Students: to introduce...give information...the topic (collective)

T: Yes...its basically a paragraph telling your audience what you will be writing about and why.

In the example of lesson Writing 10 and 10.1 we can see that using the mode Whole Class Teacher Student Interaction and IRRRF sequences, the teacher invites students to contribute their ideas, and validates them by reformulating them. Here the discourse of students is interpreted by the teacher's treatment of the talk as a source of information and used by the teacher to build on and explain the subject being learnt in more detail. This example shows that the teacher accepts the utterances of students as valuable contributions to the process of learning and an attempt by them to engage with the subject matter. The teacher thus organizes her instruction around the information in a way that endorses the contribution of learners as an element of the learning process.

Lesson: Study Skills 1 & 1.1

Episode:1

Goal: Learn how to take notes in a comprehension and effective manner

Learning Task: YouTube video, activities and group work.

Mode: Whole Class Teacher Student Interaction

Teacher: You now have tried two different methods...what do you think?

Students: The diagram method...diagram is better (collective)

Teacher: Is the diagram better? Or is it because you know what to listen for and this is the second time you're hearing it so you looked out for the answers to the question...? It's the second time you're listening to it...

Students: Maybe...giggling...yeah...

Teacher: So both might have their advantages...yes...go ahead...(Noki puts her hand up, teacher signals for her to go ahead).

Noki: It's a bit harder with the diagram because ...er...you don't know where the main ideas are...so...

Teacher: Yeah...you have the main ideas and the examples in the same place isn't it?

Noki: Yeah its together...yes...the linear method has the major ideas and the examples underneath it so it's a bit more organized...so you might say that...for short talks...the diagram method is ok...but if it's a fifteen minute talk do you want to use the diagram method?...maybe no

Teacher: No...cause you're gona end up with lots and lots of...ah...confusing thing everywhere....this is a four minute video....

All Students: Yeah...(collectively).

In Lesson SS 1 & 1.1, Episode 1, the teacher again uses the contribution of students through Whole Class Teacher Student Interaction to structure the classroom discourse. Here we can see that the teacher attempts through open questions to encourage students to explore ideas about two types of note taking approaches and asks them to reflect on the knowledge learnt about these methods to decide which the better method is. Although the teacher uses open questions like '*what do you think...?*' the exchange which includes contributions from Noki falls back into IRF interactions despite the attempts of the teacher. Noki offers her reasoning of why one method is better than the other; this opinion is accepted by the teacher and validated through her reformulation of it. Here Noki is encouraged to go beyond just providing a one-word answer to the question and provides a rationale for her answer to engage in the learning. The contributions by Noki are limited and brief but suggest that she has been supported by the teacher in the process of extending her thinking on the subject of the lesson.

Lesson: Study Skills 4 & 4.1

Episode:2

Goal: Learn how to brainstorm the pros and cons of a topic

Learning Task: Discuss videogames and brainstorming activity.

Mode: Pair/Group Teacher Student Interaction

Teacher: Alright...let's look at the flip side of it.... what are some of the benefits of video games?

Jalilah: Sometimes...if it's in English...so the game helps you to learn English...

Teacher: Yeah...so I improves your language skills....if it's in English..That's a great way to learn I think.

Forno: It's release the stress...

Teacher: Sorry?...what?...

Forno: Helps in releasing stress

Teacher: Yes...it's a stress buster...

Daniele: It increase...your eye and hand ability...

Teacher: Yes...it helps your motor coordination skills.....these days its quite a skill to play video games...you gotta do so many things...so many levels...you gotta run there...so its actually improves your motor skills like your finger coordination...like my five year old could probably navigate all those controls and things way better than me...so it improves your motor skills...ok....

Lesson 4 and 4.1, Episode 2 presents the way Pair/Group interactions facilitate the contribution of student ideas on the topic of the discussion. The teacher uses open questions to encourage learners to participate in the activity within their groups and share ideas on the topic. The teacher again uses reformulation to *include* the answers of students into the discussion and encourage their active involvement in the lesson. Although learners contribute ideas in a limited way by giving short answers and do not take the discussion further to more exploratory dialogues, the scene suggests that participants *do* play a role in the discussion and engage in the process of learning. The examples above show that the structural relationship of and between participants' influence classroom discourse. When such instructional roles are shared by both teacher and student equally, members of the classroom community work towards creating meaningful discourse.

Through teacher facilitation to encourage such joint, shared and supported contributions, the classroom discourse attempts to be dialogic. Participation structures within the classroom contexts have a significant implication in how classroom discourse is shaped, and sample excerpts demonstrate that despite dialogues in the transcribed episodes of talk presented above being brief and limited, they do have the potential to become more dialogic by using talk to generate, extend and inspire thinking in conversants. The teacher

is important in guiding such talk between participants, by valuing the contributions of students even in cases (as above) where the talk is mostly question and answer sequences, excerpts show that the teacher tries to encourage participants to engage in a process of 'figuring things out' in the process of their learning.

5.8 Summary

Trends emerging from the transcribed data analysis indicate that classroom dialogues are limited, brief and fall back on IRF sequences. Since learning is shaped by the interactions of conversants and the dialogues they participate in, the challenge for instructors is in the development of such talk within the classroom context. The data from this study does not suggest that instruction was successfully dialogic or that dialogic instruction increased as the semester progressed; instead what the data highlights is that instances of dialogic interactions did occur despite the tendency for talk to turn towards being monologic and teacher directed more often than not. What is significant through the coding analysis is that teachers and participants share valuable roles within the classroom context and by working together towards opportunities for interactions that are more dialogic, learning that is truly student centred can be achieved.

Through the detailed transcription of interactions, the video data in this chapter reinforces instruction as being a multiple and dynamic process, and not one that can be defined to fit particular parameters, instead findings suggest that instruction needs to be able to promote learning in the manner that invites contributions from all participants and where discussion is valued. The Micro Analysis section of this chapter was therefore a development of the broad overview of lessons analysed in the previous Macro Analysis. The emerging themes from the layered analysis and detailed transcription of video recorded data was used to form exposés of classroom talk. The following chapter will analyse data from interview and written responses, collating the findings in answer to the original research aims of this study.

CHAPTER SIX: FINDINGS FROM THE INTERVIEW AND WRITTEN RESPONSE DATA

6.0 Introduction

In this chapter, findings from the semi-structured student interviews as well as students' written responses with regards to learner centred instruction in the ELT Classroom and its impact on student 'selves' will be reported. The semi-structured interviews were aimed at exploring the way students perceived learner centred approaches and their experience of it within the classroom context. 16 ELT students of different nationalities and backgrounds participated in the interview sessions and details of each participant is tabled in section 4.4.2 of Chapter 4. The interview questions were aimed at exploring whether students had experienced learner centred approaches previously, what they understood it to be and how they felt about such approaches. The interview data was complemented by written response statements of students obtained through an elicitation task at the end of the semester. A total of 44 written response statements of students were collected and analysed in relation to the main research questions of the study (section 4.1, chapter 4).

This chapter uses the findings from the thematic analysis of interviews and written responses to answer the main research questions of the study. In answering the first research question: 'How do ELT Pedagogies Meant to Foster Learner Centredness Manifest in the Classroom?', participant accounts regarding their expectations of learner centredness and what they *actually* experience in the ELT Classroom is explored. Student perspectives on the characteristics of learner centred instruction and what constitutes a 'good' classroom will be used to gain an interpretive understanding of what dialogic learning might entail. Interview and written response data is also used to explore the second research question: the way learners perceive educational interventions meant to foster learner centredness and their role in creating dialogic classrooms versus traditional, transmissive pedagogical approaches.

Finally, in an attempt to discover the connections between learner centred instruction and student identity, the third research question of the study aimed at understanding the effect of student centred pedagogy on the learner identity of students, will also be investigated. Additionally, learner perceptions of teacher and student roles within the context of the classroom are examined and the potential impact of such structural roles on learner motivation and learner engagement of students will be discussed. In the final section of this chapter student views on whether learner centred instruction has a valid place in the educational structures within the Arab region, as well as within Arab socio cultural norms, particularly with respect to the way students perceive themselves as would be teachers is also examined.

6.1 Definition of Thematic Codes and Distribution of References.

As mentioned in Chapter four (methodology) the coding and recoding of interview and written responses of students resulted in an iterative process of understanding and interpreting the data. This process enabled a framework of main codes and sub codes to be developed and defined over successive rounds of analysis. The thematic categorization was underpinned by this framework and informs the findings for this chapter. Table 6.1 below shows a summary of the thematic codes and their definitions as a result of the coding process.

The interview data from 16 participants contained those who had previously experienced learner centredness (9 students), as well those who had not (7 students). As such through the coding analysis of the data it is hoped a more nuanced and specific understanding of what students perceived learner centredness to be and the characteristics they felt were part of such pedagogical approaches can be gained. Table 6.1 below shows the main thematic codes and their distribution across the different data sources as well as the frequency with which they appear.

Summary of Thematic Codes	Definition
Characteristics of Learner Centredness	Comments which refer to student expectations and perceptions of a learner centred classroom.
Pedagogical Experience of Learner Centredness	Comments which refer to students' experience of learner centredness; exposure to learner centredness, the pedagogical interventions students preferred the most and how learner centred they were, the challenges students experienced in the learner centred classroom.
Learner Centredness Versus Traditional Pedagogy	Comments which refer to differences between the two teaching approaches, comparisons between learner centred approaches and traditional teaching approach; The pedagogical preference of students: comments that relate to the teaching approach they prefer based on their experience of it.
Learner Centred Approaches and its Impact on Participant Roles	Comments which refer to the characteristics of an effective teacher and student roles in a learner centred classroom, classroom structure and the effect on participants.
Learner Centred Pedagogy and Learner Identity	Comments which refer to the impact of learner centred approaches on the learning of students. Impact of learner centredness on students including; student 'selves', students learning, and student emotions; usefulness of learner centred approaches in retaining information; references to changes within their 'selves' as an effect of learner centred interventions.
Learner Centredness in the Arab Region	Comments which refer to the acceptance of learner centred strategies and approaches in the Arab world and the implications of such teachings strategies on potential teacher 'selves'.

Table 6.1: Summary of Thematic Codes and Definitions

Main Thematic Codes	Number and Source of References		
	Interviews	Written Responses	All
Characteristics of Learner Centredness	42	NA	42
Pedagogical Experience of Learner Centredness	69	66	135
Learner-Centredness Versus Traditional Pedagogy	43	NA	43
Learner Centred Approaches and Its Impact on Participant Roles	42	5	47
Learner Centred Pedagogy and Learner Identity	127	65	195
Learner Centredness in the Arab Region	89	NA	89

Table 6.2: Main Thematic Codes and their Distribution Derived From the Data.

The findings of interview and written response coding show that the categorical theme of *Pedagogical Experience of Learner Centredness* as well as *Pedagogy and Learner Identity* is more frequently represented. It is of note that much of the interview focused on

direct questions about learner experiences within classrooms, teaching approaches that were meant to foster learner centredness and the impact of such strategies on the learning of students; this is most likely to account for the dominance in the number of references for these themes.

Additionally, since the written responses were focused on feedback that students gave with regards to learner centred and then traditional transmissive teaching methods, the range of codes and sub codes that emerged from the semi structured interviews was not represented in the written response data. This data set elicited more specific responses from participants due to the nature of the elicitation task they participated in (see section 4.6.9. Chapter 4) and thus had fewer code categories. Despite this, the significance of such feedback is of relevance to this study in that it complements interview findings, allowing accounts of students to be reinforced. The responses from the data set suggest that student perceptions about classroom practices meant to be learner centred are multiple and dependant on the varied experiences they had with it; additionally, the analysis is indicative that such pedagogies impact the structural roles within classroom contexts and affect the way students learn.

6.2 Characteristics of Learner Centredness

Before exploring students' lived experiences of learner centredness, it is important to present their understanding of the concept itself, and what they perceive as the characteristics of learner centredness. The coding of this main theme was divided into two sub codes:

- **Learner Centred Approaches:** comments which refer to the practice of learner centredness in the ELT classroom.
- **The Learner Centred Classroom:** comments which refer to student perceptions of what a 'good' classroom is.

An important point that needs to be made is that when students spoke about their ideas regarding learner centredness a concept that is largely abstract, it was sometimes a

challenge for students to verbalize these ideas. In order to crystallize this concept terms that were more familiar to students like active learning and participatory classrooms were used in the interview to make it easier for students to understand and contribute answers (section 4.5.5 of Chapter 4). However, one student, Nimar demonstrated even the concept of active learning was something about which she was unsure of:

'Actually before that I was guessing because about the active learning cause we are as a teacher they told us in the our institute about the active learning and we should do that... so, I was like I was wondering because we always us to teach on the traditional way, so I open the google as usual because google is my number one helper so I was searching about what is active learning, so I discover that the active learning is ummm a way an professional way to teach the student, like a way from the traditional way'.

This highlights the difficulty in coming to a common understanding of what learner centredness and all that it encapsulates, as students grapple with different terms with which they describe it. This will be a point that will be returned to at the end of this chapter.

6.2.1 Learner Centred Approaches.

Table 6.3 below provides an overview of the different ways in which students attempted to conceptualize what learner centredness means to them, and signals the range of ways in which it is understood. The variety of thinking reflected here reinforces the 'differing perspectives and multiple lines of thought' that is associated with learner centredness (Tudor 1996:2).

One aspect that student thinking represented in this table draws attention to, is the idea that learners are involved with the learning process and suggests that they need to become the focal point of it. For example, Alda suggests this when she stated that teachers need to '*involve students in the learning process to let them engage in different activities or to participate*'. Alda's response shows how such pedagogies involve learners, and teachers need to facilitate such involvement in order to promote learner centredness. Jalila and Hawa both pick up on the idea of the students being at the heart of learning, but emphasise the peer to peer relationship and being able to '*participate or discuss with*

a friend and have the freedom to say like it's wrong' and that students are 'sharing their information'.

In the written responses, both Omaira and Zamar suggest that learner centred learning is intrinsically linked to understanding. Omaira suggests that *'learner Centred ways of teaching are useful for students to understand the course without any difficulty'*. Zamaira expands upon this and includes the idea that this leads to greater student independence:

'In my opinion I agree that we should have learner Centred classrooms sometimes because I think there are some people do not understand what teacher says so we should use for example data show or laptop to give information in a good ways. Also I prefer the student does not depend on the computer or anything like that, but the student should be try and try and use his mind to understand and to depend on himself'.

A second aspect that the student responses reveal is that they see learner-centredness as interactive and participatory, taking place through a process of interaction, participation, questions and answers which allow teachers and students to negotiate the process of learning. This suggests a learning process that is inclusive, participatory and shared by teachers as well as learners. For example, Maya states that learner centredness focuses on the involvement of all:

Students have to participate with each other and have a really strong bond - share their answers and also the teacher shares her answers as well and like if she is, everyone should be a learner in the classroom.

Characteristic	No	Quotation
Involvement (Comments which refer to student involvement within the classroom and with the learning).	1 1	Alda: <i>'Active learning is actually like the teacher is used to involve students in the learning process to let them engage in different activities or to participate in this active learning i mean the teacher can see the difference between students like that'</i> .
Participation (Comments which refer to student participation with the subject of their learning, references to the 'doing' of learning).	8	Alda: <i>'I think they should participate and show their prior knowledge and involve in all activities like that'</i> .
Engagement (Comments which refer to students being engaged and motivated by classroom approaches).	3	Aman: <i>'...you can't really have an active classroom without active participation and active students which comes back to being interesting and not boring but if the material isn't actually engaging but is presented in a way they will be motivated to participate more even if we don't know the answers to try and I think that's kind of missing sometimes you know nobody'</i> .
Technology (Comments which refers to the use of technology in the teaching of ELT courses like YouTube Videos, Google Docs for peer review etc)	3	Libina: <i>'I think active learning is integrating technology in a classroom and this the active learning helps teaching process it helps with understanding the subject matter better and I think that's about it'</i> .
Understand (Comments which refer to how learner centred practices facilitate student comprehension of the subject being learnt).	4	Mares: <i>'Active learning it's good to us it helps us to understand, to memorize, to get knowledge because we use our mind our sense we can do it but in the traditional way no we just have certain way certain text we have to read that and answer questions we memorize it just for the exam after the exam we forget everything'</i> .
Interactive (Comments which refer to learner centred approaches promoting student teacher interactions).	8	Mala: <i>'I think active learning is an interaction between teacher or the doctor and students'</i> .
Discussion (Comments which refer to learner centred approaches encouraging students to express, challenge, and discuss their opinions and perspectives).	6	Rezeki: <i>'I think active learning is make the students communicate in the process of learning and make them more active not passive also to encourage them to express their opinion and discuss their answers not just sit in their seats and retain information its about making them active'</i> .
Questions (Comments which refer to learner centred approaches encouraging students to question each other, the subject and ideas in the extension of their learning).	2	Maya: <i>'You should always you know give in your answer wrong or right and always don't be shy don't keep your answers to yourself and even if you have a question share it cause, another student might be as well struggling with the same question'</i> .

Table 6.3: Terms Used To Describe Learner Centredness by Participants.

Aman too draws attention to the teacher *'getting more involved bringing resources and getting the students to participate to add to what's learned in the class'*. These perceptions

of learner-centredness are reiterated in the written responses. Awla reflects that its ‘a new method that involves students in the learning process’ and she feels there are benefits when teachers ‘make students to engage in learning and participate’. Hafsa also agrees there are learning benefits because ‘learner Centredness allows and encourages students to be more involved in their own learning’.

Table 6.3 above also indicates that terms such as *involve, interact, and participate* were used most frequently by students when describing learner centredness, revealing that the students understand the concept very much in terms of engagement, participation and interaction of learners with their own learning. A third aspect of students’ understanding of learner centredness relates to the importance of language, through discussion, as an important tool in extending their knowledge. Indeed, many of the characteristics in Table 6.3 that represent learner centredness, such as *participating, engaging, discussing, interacting, understanding, talking and asking*, all revolve around language. The data suggest that students perceive talk as integral in promoting learner centred instruction.

Both Aman and Lateefah talk about questioning as a learner-centred strategy. Aman highlights how questions can generate active participation, and how, through this, students can be motivated to learn:

‘Sometimes you will find even you will ask questions and say don’t answer all at once - you can’t really have an active classroom without active participation and active students, which comes back to being interesting and not boring, but if the material isn’t actually engaging but is presented in a way they will be motivated to participate more, even if we don’t know the answers to try and I think that’s kind of missing sometimes...’

Lateefah states further that students should not be afraid or hesitate to interact through questions and answers;

‘But don’t be scared to ask questions. Sometimes, most of the students scare or shy to ask the questions from the teacher...but I prefer in the active class the students ask questions from their friends or their teachers’.

Mala's response points to the role of shared dialogue which creates '*an interaction between teacher or the doctor and students*'. Her emphasis of shared talk and discussion as an important feature of learner centred classroom is reinforced by Rezeki who states that:

'I think that active learning make the students communicate in the process of learning and make them more active not passive also to encourage them to express their opinion and discuss their answers not just sit in their seats and retain information it's about making them active'.

Similarly, the students' written responses are consistent with the interviews in highlighting talk as an integral tool in learner centred instruction. Ghamar for example, believes that the participatory nature of talk enables better learning:

I think students learn better when they are active, when they talk, say, do and participate. If the teacher explains discusses gives them knowledge without communicate with students and ask them to do, apply and think, they will forget this knowledge after they finish the class.

Afra links giving students the opportunity '*to participate and express their ideas*' with increasing motivation avoiding situations where students '*feel bored during the class*'. However, she also sees questioning as a strategy the teacher can use to get a sense of students' learning, and she draws on an explicit episode from one of her applied linguistics classes:

'It also helps the teacher to see if the students have understood or no, once in the applied linguistics class we had this type of learning when the teacher asks a question and every girl have to answer so this gave the opportunity for all of us to participate'.

Talk, then, is perceived by these students as necessary in promoting learner centredness, in line with research which has emphasized the importance of talk for learning (Alexander 2004; Myhill 2016; Newman, 2017 and Mercer, 2000). Overall, both the interview data and their written responses indicated that students perceived learner centredness as approaches which involve and centre learning on the learner, generate participatory and engaged classrooms, and are facilitated through discourse and directed talk. These

findings are in consensus with the results of video data recordings presented in Chapter 5 of this study.

6.2.2 The Learner Centred Classroom.

In wanting to understanding the way learner centredness is perceived by students, their perceptions regarding effective classroom practices and what they believe a 'good' classroom is, was also explored. This then is the second sub code learners referred to in conceptualising the characteristics of learner centredness. A point of note is that in explaining their expectations of 'good' classrooms, student responses sometimes overlapped with the responses coded under the Learner Centred Approaches sub code. These are discussed in detail below. Students had three main terms they used to explain an effective learner centred classroom and the way such classrooms made them *feel*. These are presented in Table 6.4 below.

The table shows the three main ways effective classrooms were described by students and the number of references made for each description. Students seemed to feel that effective classrooms resonated with being participatory and involved shared responsibility between teacher and students. However participants emphasised how 'good' classrooms should not be boring, Aman says when classrooms only convey information they are dull, instead she feels that good classrooms should '*keep students interested*'. Students seem to concur that by encouraging interactions, discussion and making all members a valuable part of the learning process, classrooms become more interesting.

Description of an effective, learner centred classroom.	No.	Quotation
Teacher and Student Roles (Comments which refer to teacher and student roles, and responsibilities in creating an effective learner centred classroom).	4	Alda: <i>'The teacher creates a good atmosphere for the students it will be a good classroom. It's how to manage the classroom how to organize the classroom different activities for different situations- it will be a good classroom I think'.</i>
Participatory (Comments which refer to students engaging and contributing in the classroom).	2	Jalila: <i>'A good class have really participation and free to say'</i>
Interactive and Inclusive (Comments which refer to student teacher interaction, shared learning, collaborative learning and valuing all members of the classroom).	9	Mares: <i>'Let the students involve with the lecture or lesson and make discussions'.</i>

Table 6.4: Description of Learner Centred Classrooms.

The first aspect highlighted by students is the teacher and student roles in creating effective classrooms. Alda and Lee both feel that the teacher is an important figure in creating a good atmosphere that is conducive for learning. Alda states that *'the teacher creates a good atmosphere for the students it will be a good classroom. It's how to manage the classroom how to organize the classroom different activities for different things- it will be a good classroom I think'*. Libina expands on this by specifying the shared role of students and teacher in the process of creating an effective classroom environment:

Well one where the teacher is not authoritative she is not the only source of knowledge. Learning is a two way process. I think a good classroom should also be students also learn from each other. There is a lot of group work involved, a lot of brainstorming. Yeah.

Linking good classrooms to teachers who are respectful and kind, Aman highlights how teachers should always start and end the class on time and refrain from embarrassing students in front of their peers, *'Some teachers might pick on students like if they want to give an example they will say oh so and so always uses their phone. It kind of embarrasses people and it's not nice'*. Aman's comments interrelate to the role of the teacher in a learner centred classroom.

This is a perspective that is shared by Rezeki who also feels that *'the teacher's'* role is very important in making a good classroom' she feels that by *'encouraging the students'* teachers contribute to creating effective classrooms. These comments emphasize the interrelation between 'good', learner centred classrooms and teacher role. It is important to note that interview response interrelated and overlapped between sub-codes and themes, as many aspects of teaching and learning categorised for coding purposes are connected and interlaced in the dynamic and fluid context of the classroom. The importance of teacher role emergent and interrelated by students with concepts of 'good' classrooms will be addressed further in later sections of the study.

The second aspect referred to by students in line with effective, learner centred classroom is the importance of participation and shared talk. Capitalizing on the freedom to contribute in 'good' learner centred classrooms, Jalia explains how students should be able to enjoy *'participation'* and feel *'free to say'*. Najla reinforces this idea, she feels that by applying multiple approaches students should be encouraged to *'...participate with everyone, they can see, they can hear and they can talk ummmm they can give their opinion as well..'*

The third aspect and one that was referred to by students more than other aspects is the ability of good, learner centred classrooms to be interactive and inclusive. Aman explains how good classrooms keep students *'interested'*. Hawa and Khusan both elaborate that by encouraging students to be active, effective learning environments are created. Hawa states that teachers should move away from PowerPoint's and instead let *'student be active'* in the classroom. Khusan agrees with this and claims that through whole class teaching effective classrooms are created; *'Uhhm when the teacher explains for the student they it's nice to.. for them to be active and answer with her'*.

Rezeki links good classrooms with learning environments that promote interaction in a shared learning, by suggesting that good classrooms should be inclusive she feels that *"the arrangement of the seats in groups is maybe more fun and more interactive.'* Lateefah feels that such good, inclusive classrooms can mitigate her intimidation of

teachers and encourage a more involved role from her: *In my opinion ...active. active class is very good and strong especially for me. I can be quiet in the class. And and uhmmmm.... a little bit scared my teachers.*

On a slightly different angle but similar to the previous sub code of learner centred approaches, Mala, Lasha and Maya all highlight the importance of shared talk and interaction in creating effective classrooms that are learner centred. Mala links interaction to student confidence and explains that by creating learning environments that encourage shared talk between teachers and students, lessons are understood better, *'interaction is really important for class like if there is interaction even child students will have confidence to participate to understand and to ask questions'*.

Classroom interaction is a great way to ensure students are not bored in the classroom, Lasha states that *'I think the best thing is interaction and how to grab the student's attention like sometimes you can see nowadays students are busy with their mobile phones the best way is find something to grab the attention and make them interact don't give a space to feel bored'*. Maya extends this by stating how student should not only be encouraged to interact in a learner centred classroom but they should feel free to disagree on different concepts. She explains how classrooms should scaffold learners and include everyone as valuable members of the learning group:

For me I think it has to be where everyone should be welcomed and no judging going on and just everyone's voice can be heard, and everyone should have the right to talk. And to you know even debate if they disagree with something and it's all about supporting each other and listening to each other.

Drawn from the coding of transcribed data, 'good' classrooms are connected to theories of meaning making that learner centredness is premised on. A conducive context for learning can be created through shared talk that is founded on supporting, encouraging and valuing members of the classroom community. Additionally, an effective classroom promotes participation and active engagement from all, when such collaborative and

dialogic methods are integrated into the learning process, the learning that takes place is interesting as opposed to being boring. Such dialogic learning appeals to students as it motivates them to attend and learn.

The analysis of responses provides a window to the way students understand learner Centred pedagogy and what constitutes effective classrooms within educational contexts. By acknowledging what learner centredness means to students and how they perceive it, the data not only summarizes what learner expectations are, but also validates these expectations as being part of what students bring with them into the classroom. The way students express what 'good' classrooms entail revolve around classrooms that are founded on tenets of dialogism that promote participation, interaction and shared talk within the classroom.

It is interesting that in spite of student beliefs regarding shared talk being fundamental to learner centred classrooms, findings from the video data in chapter 5 show that students were hesitant to participate and contribute during whole class as well as pair/group learning sessions. Therefore, there is a potential mismatch between student perceptions of learner centredness and their practice of it in the classroom context. However, the findings are significant in establishing a foundation that allows us to understand student expectations and explore how they are reconciled within the reality of the ELT classroom; a concern this study is encroached on.

6.3 Pedagogical Experience of Learner Centredness

The second theme emergent from the inductive analysis of data explores the past experiences of student with regards to learner Centred pedagogy in an attempt to gage their exposure to such teaching strategies. It also evaluates the way students experience these pedagogies through the different educational approaches and how they promote (or do not promote) dialogic learning in the ELT Classroom.

Learners differ from one another in unique ways, these differences impact the way teaching approaches are internalized by learners as well. In understanding these

diversities, the varied reaction of learners to teaching procedures and the impact it has on the quality of learning must be acknowledged. The accounts detailing student experiences with learner centredness therefore is significant in optimizing the teaching of language. Students' 'telling' justifies them as members within the social community of the classroom, members who are likely to influence learning structures of the community they belong to.

The theme of *Pedagogical Experience* draws on 3 sub codes including Exposure to Learner Centredness: relating the previous exposure of students to learner Centred interventions; Learner Centred Approaches: within this sub code comments about the approaches students felt fostered learner centredness were coded, and the third sub code; Challenges of Learner Centred Approaches: this coded the problems, unsuitability and difficulty students faced with this teaching approach. Table 6.5 below provides an overview of the number of responses in the interviews as well as the written responses which were coded to each sub-code.

Codes/Sub Codes	Number of References	
	Interviews	Written Response
Main Code Pedagogical Experience Of Learner Centredness	42	73
Sub Codes		
Exposure to Learner Centredness	15	37
Learner Centred Approaches	14	36
Challenges of Learner Centred Approaches	20	N/A

Table 6.5: Number of References Coded to Each Sub Code Category

6.3.1 Exposure to Learner Centredness

The first sub-code analysed the previous experiences of students with learner centred instruction. Out of the 16 students who participated in the interview, 7 had never encountered learner centred pedagogy before enrolling in AUE University. An example is Lasha who claims that:

'Honestly, I never heard about active learning because I am from Kuwait and the way they were like teaching us was very traditional and also, I have never heard about active learning until I became a student at the university'.

However, 9 students demonstrated familiarity with the topic and recounted how through specific experience in their school or workplace they had encountered learner centred, active teaching approaches before. It is of note that the accounts of these students regarding learner centred *methods* they experienced was significant in its focus on the integration of technology. Students seem to equate uses of technology in the teaching of a lesson with learner centredness and their responses encapsulate this perception. Jalilah's response of having heard of learner centredness previously is based on using power points for student presentations, she states that: '*It was a simple active learning like showing your PowerPoint to your classmates.* Libina reinforces uses of technology in the classroom with exposure to learner centredness:

' Well my school actually started integrating technology while I was in grade nine so that should be around 2011 if I am not mistaken. We started having tablets they gave us each a tablet. Honestly, speaking I hated it'.

Khusan goes beyond power points and technology when recounting her experience of learner centred instruction to classroom approaches which involve learners in the process of learning: '*Uhh we have present from PowerPoint. We make games, we use social media, smart board like that*'. Rezeki also highlights a number of teaching approaches used by her English teacher to promote learner centredness. By encouraging learners to form '*groups to discuss our answers*' she explains how the teacher used '*critical questions that stimulate us to think and discuss*'. In a similar vein, Tahsad relates her experience of learner centredness as being integrated with technology but such interventions promoted learning in '*a fun and easier way to learn information and skills*'.

The varied experiences of learners indicate an emerging pattern, firstly that exposure to learner centredness for students is often related with the use of technology in the classroom; and secondly that such instruction manifests within classrooms in different ways. However, student responses concur that teachers who encouraged dialogism in classrooms using a range of interventions to support the process of learning were learner centred. Additionally, though such teaching approaches that involved learners in their

learning, students felt they were more engaged and learned in a '*fun way*'. Participation through classroom discussion and directed talk was again a dominant feature of student accounts when narrating their previous experience with learner centredness. Noki explains how mock teaching sessions and group discussions formed her experience of learner centred instruction and developed her understanding of the subjects.

Yeah, the first time I experienced it in methodology class with Dr. Andis like her course was practical okay so she used to let us act like we are the teachers she just gives us each girl her chapter and she says you have to do micro teaching okay and teach the girls as if they are your students and you teach them you should let them like understand everything and you should do activities and all these things. Then with you in technology classroom also with children literature when you used to let us you used to give us parts of a chapter and we used to read about it and explain it to the other students'.

6.3.2. Learner Centred Approaches

The second sub code under the main category of Pedagogical Experience of Learner Centredness attempts to explore student experiences of teaching approaches meant to promote learner centredness in the classroom. Two main trends emerged from the coding of student responses under this sub code, firstly student experiences of such teaching approaches involved the active participation of learners, and secondly it fostered classroom interaction through peer, group and whole class discussion. Alda relates her experience with learner centredness through learning sessions where there was an opportunity to share her knowledge with classmates through practical teaching sessions:

'We do micro teaching and I have a class and I teach them I do activities I prepare lesson plan and it's like experience for me and I can see from the eyes of my other colleagues. I think it's enjoyable for us because we see practical's, we observe other students, we create ideas, ... I think its benefit for us'.

Alda adds that the process of learning can be enhanced through active participation of both teacher and students: '*Teachers should be active and students should also be active*'. This is echoed by Mala who feels that that varied teaching tools and interaction permeate successful classrooms that are learner centred: '*this all is like a successful*

lecture'. On a slightly different tangent, Ghisla gives an example of flipped learning and links it to her experience of learner centred teaching. She explains that by preparing for the class ahead of time, students engage with the subject, and both students and teacher shared in the process of learning:

'Okay umm it was the flipped classroom activity where we actually learned about it in this class and we actually applied it. So it's like about students prepared for a lesson before hand and they come to class and the teacher can focus on what they know and what's lacking and she can work on the students rather than on the topic.'

The second aspect students associated with learner centred classroom approaches were teaching practices that promoted the use of talk as a tool for learning. Students indicated that interaction through group, peer or whole class discussion led to classrooms that were learner centred. Jalilah and Hawa both relate learner centred approaches with group and peer discussion. Jalilah explains how her experience of learner centred approaches involved writing *'paragraphs so we can share it with friends and discuss it'*. She claims that through such shared discourse she was able to *'both discuss the answers and understand'*. Hawa adds to this in stating her preference for shared talk; *'Group work I prefer more than presentation'*.

Similarly, discussing in groups while completing learning tasks are approaches that allowed Lateefah to experience learner centredness, agreeing with Hawa's perspective, Lateefah elaborates:

My teacher some of the time told us to discuss about paragraph, exercises, with our friends and classmates (group work) and sometimes we could discuss about the exercises with our teacher and she gives us the advices and comment.

Lateefah highlights that in addition to sharing with peers, whole class discussions were also learner centred. She explains how through *'Discussion with my friends and my teacher'* she was able to experience learner centredness. Nimar and Tahsad both claim that shared interaction through peer work encouraged different points of views and ideas on the topic of learning to emerge, and such approaches were therefore learner centred.

Nimar states that; *'I felt like I am getting like more than one idea, I can see like how is my partner is thinking about the same topic that I am also thinking about. So, I found like she is like ummmmm... she is thinking in a way that in a different way about this thing she have another point of view about this thing.'*

Tahsad on the other hand associates her experience of using Google Docs in the classroom to provide feedback on her peers' work with student centred learning: *'Yeah also that was very beneficial, and I haven't heard about the Google documents never this was my first time. I like it....it's also easy and can just write what is the mistakes and errors and she will just at the same time just correct it'*.

Two student responses were significant in highlighting that their experiences with learner centred approaches were not always so successful. Capitalizing on group learning as a tenet of learner centred classrooms, Khusan claims that such learning despite having some benefits can potentially distract students from the topic of the lesson: *'Some group works are benefit...are good but the others when you with your friend you just talk and laugh we not doing anything'*. She feels that to avoid such instances teachers need to guide and support the learning to ensure it achieves its specific purposes. She suggests that: *'the teachers have to make the group by herself not students because they will choose their friends and they will just talk and laugh'*. By intervening in such a manner Khusan feels that teachers play a critical role in scaffolding learners in the process of their learning.

Nimar accedes to the same stance highlighted by Khusan. Conceding that group work is twofold in what it offers to learner centred classrooms, Nimar brings up an important point about the autonomy such approaches promote in students through whole class learning sessions. Since during such learning sessions the power to keep to the topic of learning is in the hands of the learner, she explains that learning through group work can be both *'advantages and disadvantages'*. In her case she says: *fortunately, my group was one from the serious groups'*.

In a similar line to the findings of Chapter 5 and the preceding section of this Chapter, student responses regarding their experience and exposure to learner centredness revolve around the importance of shared talk and student participation in the process of learning. By highlighting how teachers and students are both valuable members of the learner centred classroom, and contribute actively to the learning process through whole class, peer and group learning, the data indicates that students are aware of learning being a social process. Mala argues that students are more invested in their learning at the University level and therefore *want* to engage and participant through learner centred classrooms: *'In university you will think about your future so you want to learn, you want to ask questions, you want to engage yourself,... this is also a difference between students'*.

6.3.3 Challenges of Learner Centred Approaches

The third sub code exploring the experiences of students with learner centredness was developed to code the *challenges* learners faced adapting to such classroom approaches. The responses of students regarding the difficulties they had with learner centred pedagogy revolved around 3 main issues, firstly the lack of English language fluency and fear of speaking in public in a non-native language; secondly the stress of giving the wrong answer and competitiveness amongst classmates; and finally such learner centred pedagogy required more time and effort from students. Each of the issues are varied in the obstacles they present to learners and Table 6.6 below provides each of these aspects manifest from transcribed interviews, the number of times students referred to them and an example of student quotes.

Sub Code: Challenges of Learner Centred Approach	No.	Quotation
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1) English Language Fluency and fear of public speaking (Comments which refer to problems with understanding and talking in English, fear of speaking in front of the class)	9	Alda: <i>'The difficulties that you stand in front of the students and try to present or try to speak English actually'</i> .
2) Stressful and Competitive (Comments which refer to fear of participating and contributing due to potential wrong answers and trust issues with group and peer learning).	4	Ghamar: <i>'I was very like stressed but when we started doing like group works and presenting like every week or for each subject or talking in class and sharing ideas I was becoming more and more relaxed'</i> .
3) Time and Effort (Comments which refer to how learner centred approaches are more demanding in time and effort, and require students to be versed with technology and learning apps)	10	Aman: <i>'Yeah it (learner centredness) did require much more effort'</i>

Table 6.6: Challenges of Learner Centred Approaches

The first aspect relates to the difficulty learners had speaking up in front of the class in a language that was not their native one. Alda explains how initially this was a challenge for her as was hesitant about participating due to her low proficiency in the language:

'I don't know maybe there is no confidence language will be ok or people will laugh maybe I was thinking like that'.

This is a problem that is shared by Hawa who states that *'my challenge was the English rules I was really challenged by this problem because my English isn't perfect'* and this inadvertently inhibited her participation in the learner centred class. Lasha echoes such sentiments pointing out that such fear was due to *'speaking a language that is not your native language, so it was very challenging'*. In addition to fear of speaking up due to a lack of confidence in their own English language proficiencies, Ghiso cites her fear of speaking in front of the class as her biggest challenge in the learner centred classroom. Learner centred classrooms promote active engagement and participation of students through discussion, group work and presentations; this aspect was something that Ghiso initially found daunting and a challenge to overcome: *'in my first presentation here I was very like stressed'* however she highlights that it was the very same practical aspects that made her a more confident and better learner *'but when we started doing like group works*

and presenting like every week or for each subject or talking in class and sharing ideas I was becoming more and more relaxed'. Khusan agrees with Ghiso, she feels that she has overcome her fears of speaking up in English which was difficult at first but now she states that she has become a confident and improved learner:

'I feel it's a great thing it gives you self-confidence help you to...be make a good presentation you will avoid your mistakes you will not do it again and its good'.

Lasha and Nimar both relate their fear of public speaking as a challenge for them in the learner centred classroom. Lasha states how *'presentation in front of students, ... as I wasn't used to it also it was very challenging'* but after practicing such approaches regularly it has *'become like a habit now'*. For Nimar difficulty presenting lead to her being negatively graded, she recounts how such learner centred practices instead of helping her with her performance ended up having a negative impact on her scores for the course:

'So, umm when she (the teacher) told me to present I must stand in front of the class and told her I cannot and she cut the marks off my presentation because I really, I cannot and I lost twenty marks out of hundred'.

The second challenging aspect students associated learner centredness with was the way such classroom approaches were stressful and resulted in unhealthy competition and issues of trust during group and peer learning situations. Ghiso explains how despite the benefits of group and peer discussions, she encountered problems trusting her peers and felt that such approaches led to students competing with each other rather than the supported learning it should have permeated:

'when doing group work we shouldn't worry about if I do better or he or she does better. It's a group work the result should be for like all of us but here I think there is competition I wanna do better, I wanna present better'.

In a similar vein Nimar feels that group and peer collaboration during class is a challenge for her more often than not. She explains that during such group and peer learning activities despite asking for help, none of her classmates were willing to help her with the

learning. So instead of being supported she was challenged by peers that isolated her in the process of learning: *'That's why I asked them, I told them how you can do this thing and how you can understand this thing...but no one helped'*.

Mala expands on issues of trust and feeling isolated by explaining that she faced issues of participating on her own in learner centred classrooms. She did not feel comfortable doing so and said this was difficult for her, she would have preferred an option that allowed her to participate together with someone rather than on her own: *'There was no problems but when I participate I want someone else to participate with me'*. However, this was a need that Mala feels was not addressed by learner centred classrooms, the teacher often decided whether students should present on their own or in groups and rarely *'asked us what we want or like to do...when we have to present'*.

Relating her experience of learner centred classrooms with the fear of giving the wrong answer, Maya explains how she found such approaches to be quite stressful initially. She states that the very tenet of student centred learning which encourages participation and interactive learning was something she was unable to do initially. Mala explains that she was afraid to contribute or participate in class for fear of giving the wrong answer and being embarrassed in front of her peers and the teacher. However, she was able to overcome this issue:

'And then when the teachers said it to me face to face and I saw that kids around me ask questions and said the wrong answer and that that is what I think took me out of my shell and I became very confident and I would even yell the answer wrong or right'.

The final aspect students grappled with in adapting to learner centred approaches involves the time and effort such classes required and the need for specialized skills in navigating various technological apps. A total of 10 references were made to learner centredness being a challenge to students as it involved more work than transmissive classrooms. Aman compares the rigors of learner centred classrooms to traditional methods of learning and states that learner centredness is more demanding in requiring

students to participate and take responsibility for their learning. She feels this is much more time consuming than rote memorization:

'Yeah we had to prepare ahead of time whereas for other classes we had to just show up in time and listen to what the doctor has to say, write it down, memorize it for the test'.

Jalilah and Hawa both concede that learner centred approaches was difficult and demanded more from them than the traditional teaching approaches they were used to. Jalilah states that such active approaches required '*more*' effort from students and Hawa explains how students were now more responsible for their own learning through '*group work, peer work, assignments online posts*' which was challenging to adapt to.

Khusan and Nimar add that they had to navigate through new learning apps in learner centred classrooms, knowledge of which they initially didn't have, and had to learn. Khusan explains that her difficulties revolved around '*electronic problems*' and mastering the skills needed to participate in the learner centred classroom. Nimar echoes this:

'I came to the university I saw everything they are doing it in a smart way so I was spending a lot of time at home on devices, on the computer, on the iPad, on the mobile, like to ummmmm.... to learn new apps and understand the thing'.

Maya summarizes the difficulty of students in adapting to a learning approach which was novel and alien to many students. She explains that in addition to being afraid to speak up and risk being wrong, she was surprised by the shift of power in learner centred classrooms. Maya highlights how traditional teacher dominant learning contexts were now more shared and participatory, being centred around the student. She explains that this change in teaching and learning approach came with a challenging set of expectations on the learner, expectations that were previously unknown to them:

'I think it's a challenging thing because you're so used to the teacher having authority of the classroom I think you will be shy at first but by time you have to get confident and you have to participate with active learning there's like you're being graded like on your participation it's like it's a huge thing, so you have to participate'.

6.4 Learner Centred Instruction versus Traditional Pedagogy

To explore the way students perceived the traditional approach to teaching and learning the fourth main code was aimed to collate interview and written responses of students regarding the way they felt about transmissive practices in contrast to the learner centred approach.

This category contains two sub codes namely:

- Demotivating and outdated
- Relevant and necessary

By problematizing the two approaches to teaching and learning that AUE students were managing simultaneously, my goal was to understand the complexities that underpin the existing dichotomy and the effect it has on the learning of students.

6.4.1 Demotivating and Outdated

Out of the 16 interview participants, 13 participants felt that traditional teaching approaches were outdated and affected their learning and scores in courses negatively. Student responses highlight the transmissive approach as being sometimes necessary but not an ideal or interesting way to learn. Noki stated that *'maybe for some topics it may be necessary but maybe not the best way to learn'*. Jalila felt that such traditional teaching approaches did not appeal to her and that she *'score's more in active classrooms'*.

Ghiso and Hawa both agreed that traditional pedagogy did not motivate them to learn. Ghiso conceded that despite being *'more comfortable with this style of teaching and learning'* she found that traditional approaches did not add value to her skills set or classroom experiences in any way. Hawa on the other hand explained how traditional classrooms made her feel *'bored, we feel sleepy all the time'*. Due to this she stated that such practices are *'not useful nowadays'*. Khusan related her experience with traditional teaching approaches as being repetitive, she stated that it's demotivating because *'you are just doing the same thing every day just say and write, say and write, write, write...'*

Mares and Latefah both concurred that traditional approaches are boring, demotivating and teacher dominated. Mares claimed that '*in the traditional way....I feel sleepy*'. Latefah adds to this by explaining that:

'Traditional learning....., it means the students should be passive at class...teachers are always very serious and talking, there is not much talking from students....you know....and don't let students say their opinion, to me...if I think... it's not good'. No,.... it's not difficult but, the traditional course I cannot accept it. It's boring for me I hate it. Yeah and most that time I understand in traditional lecture I am saying myself...err when the course will finish. I want to run away I will not attention to my teacher.

Nimar clarifies the difference between studying in traditional approaches and classrooms that are learner centred as the latter having a positive impact on her overall performance in that course. She argues;

'I used to study on the... on the traditional way ,so it is easy for me , but I really get bored like I hold my mobile the whole time , he is shouting on me (the lecturer) , but in the end also the information is all of them are old , so we are not learning anything new , so that is why we are not doing well in that course but the courses that are using the, the active ways , we are like concentrating on it because we are ummm attracted to that way , like how we can learn because also we are a future teachers so we have also to use these ways on our profession as well . so, I think the traditional way it has to be cancelled from the whole university...'

The interview responses of students indicated that a majority of them felt traditional teaching approaches were boring, did not make them feel interested in the learning and was an approach to teaching and learning that they felt has become outdated within educational contexts. In contrast to the findings from student interviews, the second sub code which explored the written accounts of student views on traditional pedagogy differed significantly from the interview responses.

6.4.2 Relevant and Necessary

Students' feedback when asked to write about traditional pedagogy and its place in the ELT Classroom, indicate that more than half of them (62%) feel that traditional pedagogy still has a valid place in classrooms.

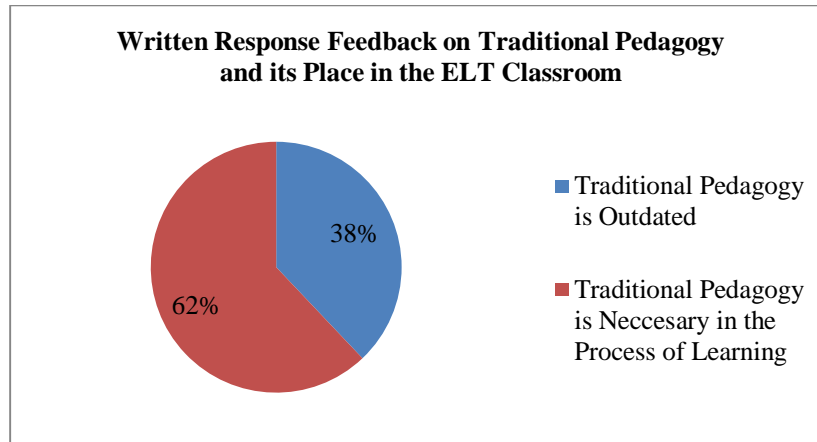


Diagram 6.1: Students Written Response On Traditional Pedagogy

The discrepancy in results could be accounted for due to the different tools used in the process of collecting data. The written feedback offered an anonymous opportunity for participants to discuss their perspectives, without the teacher presence. This could be the reason why students felt more at ease to contribute what they felt rather than what they thought the teacher expected of them. Knowing that the teacher supports and attempts to use learner centred approaches in her own classroom (which participants have been a part of), this might have affected students in wanting to provide the 'right' answer to the teacher during interview sessions. Such feelings might have induced participants to provide an answer that was favorable to the teacher during the face to face interviews rather than the answer they believed in. However, these limitations can be somewhat mitigated by using written responses, a more anonymous form of data collection to complement the results of the study.

Innar in her elicitation explains that she feels traditional approaches are not necessarily outdated, she feels that such approaches are still very much a part of schools and colleges as they tend to be '*easier than the modern approach*' to learning. She explains that through rote memorization she was able to successfully '*get full marks because we memorize everything*', however she feels that such approaches '*didn't really benefit*' her. Mala agrees with Innar, she writes that traditional approaches are boring yet necessary as they are '*strict and therefore allow students to address their weak points*'.

Fat's response shows how she is still indecisive between the two approaches. She hesitates to come out and say traditional methods do not belong in the classroom and prefers a middle ground between the two approaches. Ghiso and Fareeha both explain that traditional approaches is still a valid method of receiving information. Fareeha feels that *'it (traditional approaches) is a good way of receiving instruction from the teacher'* and adds that *'its bad because it get boring and student will start not to be active in class'*.

Ghiso rationalizes that despite its weakness *'traditional approaches still have a valid place in classrooms'* she suggests that transmissive practices can become more effective *'when paired with learner centred approaches'*. Ghamar writes that traditional approaches were effective in helping her gain high grades in the subject, however she feels that such learning was not beneficial to her in the long term:

'This (traditional approaches) makes students unmotivated and think that learning is just something to know not apply or use. Also it is a boring approach students have to sit and listen they do not move, think critically, ask, play.... I remember my teacher of science at grade 5, comes every day to the class explains the lesson, and at the end of the class, she asks us about the previous lessons. Actually my grades in science were high because I were study all the time, but in fact I don't remember anything now'.

Findings from interview and written responses suggest that traditional pedagogy is perceived by learners as being strict, restrictive and boring, in some instances even outdated, however in spite of these characteristics, students indicate that they are not quite ready to completely write off such methods of learning. Instead many demonstrate an attachment to the transmissive approach and state such methods are easier and more comfortable to learn in. Although they agree that learner Centred approaches help them interact, participate and understand the subject matter better, learners feel that instruction should be flexible with respect to the content and learning goals of the course.

Therefore, in some instances when strict and rote memorization is required, teachers should be able to switch to between approaches to fulfil the needs of students. What respondents agree on is that despite being boring and passive, traditional approaches still enable learning to occur, even though the quality of such learning may not be as long

lasting or purposeful beyond the context of the learning environment. The findings reinforce the idea that pedagogy should refrain from prescribing processes of teaching and move away from restrictive labels. This is encapsulated by Noki's response '*I don't think it's an either or. Take the good leave the bad...*'

Findings from interview and written response data suggest that classroom instruction should be *locally* derived based on the structures, learning goals and needs of learners. Additionally, for pedagogy to be effective in achieving its goals and objectives there is a need for teachers and students to constantly 'aware' themselves of the variables they require in from the instruction during lessons. This implies 'shared responsibility' within the classroom structure for all participants. Such strategies are indeed complex and challenging, and have significant implications on the role of participants within the learning environment. The next segment of this chapter explores the structural roles of students as well as teachers as perceived by learners and how this corresponds with the tenets of learner Centred pedagogy.

6.5 Learner Centred Approaches and its Impact on Participant Roles

In an effort to understand the social structure of learner Centred classrooms and the way in which learners perceive their own roles within such learning contexts, this section of study findings was aimed at understanding student expectations of their own roles, as well as teachers' role within the learner centred classroom. The interview and written response coding resulted in two sub codes:

- ❑ Students' Role
- ❑ Teachers' Role

6.5.1: Students' Role

Results of the interview coding indicate that there were 12 references to the role of the students in learner centred classrooms. The responses indicated two emergent threads that participants equated with the role of the student in learner centred classrooms; the first of which were references indicating the need for active involvement from students

with the learning that occurred within the classroom contexts. All 16 interview participants concurred that learner centred classrooms required more from students, Mala exonerates that in the learner centred classroom students were required to *'be active members of the classroom...and had to do more than sit there absorbing information....they actually need to get into learning'*.

Alda and Noki both explain that learner centred classrooms need students to be involved in the learning that takes place, they feel that in learner centred contexts learning is hindered without the active involvement of students. Through such involvement Noki claims that *'they will be motivated to learn even if we don't know the answers'*. Khusan narrates her experience of whole class learning, she says that by sharing answers, both right and wrong, with her peers and the teacher she participated in gaining *'knowledge... information from this and this'* and was therefore able to *'build a paragraph easily'*. She adds that by being involved in the process of learning and sharing knowledge with members of the classroom community, students *'learn new things'* and *'will learn more'*.

Students also connected active participation and engagement as a part of being a student in the learner centred classrooms. Alda states that *'they should participate and show their prior knowledge and involve in all activities'*. Ghiso agrees with Alda she feels that students have to interact in learner centred classrooms by *'explaining to the class'* ideas and opinions on different topics. In this way Ghiso claims that students become *'engaged and.... into lessons'*. Khusan states that students are not *'just talking'* in learner centred classrooms, instead they participate in the learning process by *'presenting something, new ideas.... every time'*.

Lasha provides an interesting explanation of student's roles in learner centred classrooms, she draws on the teachers' role to explain just how involved with the process of learning students need to be: *'they...have to take the teachers role, they have to understand the subject and come to present it to their colleagues so that's the first thing...'*. Rezeki agrees with Lasha and states firmly that learner centred classroom are Centred on students who *'have a much bigger role than teachers'* in the process of

learning. Stressing on learning being a shared process that learners are engaged in, Maya feels that in learner centred contexts students have a responsibility to '*engage with the content*' so that '*everyone in the classroom is a learner*'.

In addition to the active involvement perceived as part of a student's role in learner centred classrooms, responses also indicated the need for students to be more responsible and autonomous in their learning to be truly learner centred. Ghiso clarifies that by being '*prepared for everything before the class*' students need to act responsibly for the '*tasks that he or she should do*'. This suggests that in learner centred classrooms the onus is on the student to take charge of their own learning, an idea that is shared by Lasha who feels that in such learning contexts there is a need for students to '*study before the class*' and therefore familiarize themselves with the learning content. Nimar goes on to explain that in learner centred classrooms students need to be proactive in the way they manage knowledge and make new meaning from it. She states that students in learner centred classroom have a responsibility:

'to get the information or the main idea that the class is about or the lecture is about and they have to for example search by the google if they can see more information'.

Noki breaks down the steps towards being responsible learners, something she feels is necessary for classrooms to be learner centred. She explains that when assigned learning tasks students need to: '*go back home and has to search about it*', the next step involves understanding the content they have found, next students need to '*try to know how it works in practical and not only in theory you know*'. The final step in acquiring and assimilating learning is experiencing it, the best way to do this she says is by '*being able to explain it to his friends*'. Noki asserts that it is only by '*doing it by himself like he is interested in it and he is taking charge of it*' will learning become truly learner centred.

Rezeki draws on participation as a strategy to become responsible learners, she says that learners need '*to express their opinion and discuss their answers not just sit in their seats*'. Here we can see that active participation is viewed as a responsibility assigned to the role of students in learner centred classrooms. This signals that both aspects: being

actively involved in a responsible and autonomous way were not neatly segmented, rather responses indicated that both aspects were seen as being interlaced in the context of what students perceived ideal learner centred environments were. Rezeki adds that in such classrooms:

'The teacher is just a facilitator the important role is more about the students... they must participate in the learning and decide the way and what...you know...like they will learn...'

The role of the student in learner centred classrooms then is perceived by respondents as needing to be involved with the process of learning through participation and interaction, an aspect that seems to be recurrent throughout the various codes and themes of the interview and written response data set. Such active engagement with learning content on the part of students indicates a need for them to be more responsible as well, a second aspect that emerged from coding analysis. By playing a more proactive role in familiarizing and seeking to extend their knowledge from the learning content, student responses indicate that learners need to be autonomous participants of the learning process.

Additionally, participants perceived learners as having just as much responsibility over the learning as teachers had and highlighted how in order to be learner centred such structural roles within classrooms need to be shared. Ghiso states that by taking equal responsibility for learning, students and teachers share in the process of learning allowing lessons to be more focused and teachers to '*work on the students rather than on the topic*'. This is in line with research on characteristics of learner centred classrooms and the way in which such classrooms aim to create a context of shared power between teachers and students in the process of learning, (Nunan 2007; Weimer 2002; Tudor 1996).

6.5.2 Teachers' Role

The second sub code examines the way participants perceived the teachers' role in learner centred classrooms. There were two main aspects that emerged as a result of the coding of interview and written response data namely; Academic Role referring to student

expectations of the method, strategies and tools teachers' need to use to promote learner Centredness, resulting in 15 references from participants; and Interpersonal Role: referring to teacher student relationships, approachability, and comfort and how such emotional connections foster learner Centredness (11 references). The definitions, number of references and a sample quotation for both aspects that emerged within this sub code are presented in Table 6.7 below.

Sub code: Teacher Role	References	Quotation
Aspects: 1) Academic role (refers to student expectations of the method, strategies and tools teachers use to promote learner centredness)	15	Ghiso: <i>'I think a teacher should have the confidence that he is the teacher and whatever is happening is not personal to him and also he and she should be capable of like the material'.</i>
2) Interpersonal Role (referring to teacher student relationships, approachability, and comfort and how such emotional connections foster learner Centredness).	11	Alda: <i>'Teachers should be like friends to their students'</i>

Table 6.7: Definition, References and Quotations for Teachers' Role

In attempting to present the findings in a structured manner, the two aspects of student perspectives on teacher role will be discussed. However, it is important to note that the answers of students were in no way linear, in responding to teaching strategies, student answers often overlapped with the emotional and interpersonal relationship students expect from their instructor. The categories therefore are not an attempt at segmenting the answers of students; rather they provide a way to present findings in a clear manner.

The first aspect that student responses reveal is that they see teachers as being knowledgeable and well versed in the course content. This suggest that students perceive teachers as a source for information and turn to them for answers. For example, Ghiso states that:

'I think a teacher should have the confidence that he is the teacher and whatever is happening is not personal to him and also he and she should be capable of like the material... I think ...what I noticed here in the UAE

that not every teacher or doctor is specialized in the material that he or she teaches'.

Libina and Lateefah both draw on the need for teachers to be knowledgeable to be learner centred, according to Libina a good teacher in learner centred classrooms '*knows her stuff*'. This she feels is a '*number one*' requirement for teachers. Going on to address the complexities of a teacher's role, Libina clarifies that in addition to possessing knowledge about the teaching content teachers also need to '*understand exactly what student's need and in exactly what way to teach*'. Lateefah echoes this sentiment, she states that in order for student to be comfortable with their teachers, teacher must adhere to be '*very strong in the style of teaching*' she adds that such teachers ensure that students '*can understand...and get the good marks in them*'.

Khusan also feels that teachers must know more than merely the subject being taught, she views teachers as a role model for students in all aspects, academic and beyond, '*she teach her students how they have to be in future, how to improve themselves, how to connect with their future students*'. This indicates that teachers are looked upon as being more than only sources of information and knowledge on the topic of learning, they are often reference points for students with regards to the way learners view their own selves within the complex, wider society outside of the learning environment. Mala extends on this through her statement: '*a good teacher should be equal to everyone, meet their needs, try her best to like let all the students understand what she is teaching*'. Such a dynamic requirement is indeed challenging and Mala recognizes; '*that's quite a hard task.... cause when you are a teacher you have a lot of burden....*'.

The second aspect emergent from student responses relates to the interpersonal relationship students equate with teachers of dialogic, learner centred classrooms. The coding data indicated that 11 references were made by students with regards to the relationship they feel a teacher was responsible for fostering in learner centred contexts, suggesting that teachers are accountable for creating positive associations with their students in the classroom. Noki explains that a good learner centred teacher emphasizes on treating her students well, and ensures that the subject was thoroughly explained to

students rather than judging that '*students don't understand*' because they '*weren't paying enough attention*'.

Aman highlights positive relationships that the teacher should inspire within classroom contexts and how this paves the way to student centred learning. She explains that by being friendly with students yet firm, teachers need to encourage and motivate learners by creating opportunities for them to '*express themselves more and so on*', at the same time teachers also need to be able to engage learners with the content they '*are studying in class*', the best way to do all of this Aman adds, is by implementing learning strategies '*that aim to understand learners, are friendly and.... are ...successful and involve learners in everything in the classroom*'. Highlighting being sociable and amicable with learner centred teachers, Alda feels that '*teachers should be like friends to their students*', this she feels is a good way to encourage interactive, comfortable classrooms, something learner centred classrooms are founded on.

Connecting the learner centred teachers' role to one that is sensitized to the needs as well as the emotions of learners Mares and Rezeki both agree, lead to good teachers who aware themselves of learners in their classroom. Mares believes such teachers need to '*uunderstand student emotions in order to be able to help them*', and Rezeki concurs that acknowledging the emotional needs of students is a priority for teachers, this she feels will motivate learners to do their best in the classrooms. Rezeki gives a personal example of what happened to her in a school classroom to exemplify this:

'Ummmmm... when I was in school I was really shy so.... She (the teacher) know I was shy so I was know the answer but I don't raise my hand so she really understand me real good and she encouraged me a lot. She asked me to answer even if I didn't raise my hand, so this really give me encouragement and I rose my hands even more later on...this.....make me... she gave me more confidence and understood my personality'.

In addition to being understanding, friendly and emotionally attuned to students, responses also indicated that a learner centred teacher should be able to make learners comfortable with the learning content and confident of themselves. Hawa states that

teachers need to *'make her student feel relaxed and to get the information easily'*. Ghiso extends on this, it is important she says: *'that the students don't fear the teacher and the teacher is close to them'*, through such positive relationships *'students should be encouraged to be.... assured of their own selves... and more... in control of their learning'*.

Noki crystalizes the role of the teacher by stating that teachers have a responsibility to encourage and motivate learners with their learning, but all of this can only be achieved by empowering learners *'so they will know that... like the teacher trusts them'*. By treating students as equals within the classroom environment, and valuing the socio-cultural experiences they bring with them to the classroom, Noki explains that students understanding of the learning content and overall performance in the classroom, *'keeps on getting better and better'*.

Findings suggest that students view the teacher as an important member in the structure of the classroom and show that traditional perceptions of respect and authority, whereby the teacher is often placed on a pedestal away from members of the classrooms, has evolved to one that is more local and grounded on shared social ties built within the classroom environment. Mares states that *'good teachers have the ability to understand their students, the emotion for the student, to help them to solve the problems, to make all the students involve together not ignore them and focus on everyone.'*

Students also feel teachers need to be a prominent and knowledgeable figure in the classroom, yet someone they can turn to when needed. The teacher must be strong and confident yet able to interact on an equal footing with the students. Student responses suggest that teachers need to foster feelings of 'admiration', 'comfort', 'understanding' and 'trust' in order to be learner centred, while at the same time inspire learners to be more dynamic, interactive and responsible for their own learning. Congruent with findings from other themes, the responses to learner expectations of teacher and student role imply that such roles can be best enabled and activated through classroom talk, teacher student interaction and shared dialogue.

Student and Teacher Roles then are characterised by learners as variables founded on relations that revolve around acts of talk. The relationship both academic as well as interpersonal is built through shared dialogue and when such dialogues do not flourish, responses of students imply that learner centred instruction would inadvertently be hindered. This emphasizes that classroom dialogues shape classroom structure and when such talk is open and shared, learners feel more comfortable and 'safe'. Such feelings foster constructive learning environments for learner Centred instruction. The responsibility of the teacher then is multi-fold. In wanting to create learning that is Centred on the student, the teacher is faced with complex tasks that go beyond the lesson structure, tools and interventions. Indeed, the teacher must be flexible and open; they must 'aware' the needs of learners and deliver pedagogies that are most suited to *that* context of learning.

By acknowledging individual variables through shared classroom discourse, teachers must pursue learner centred teaching in socially and contextually sensitive ways. In answering the second main research question of the study on the ways learners' experience learner centred, dialogic strategies in ELT Classrooms, findings suggest that such experiences include much more than the mental process of acquiring and extending knowledge, indeed truly dialogic learning is an ubiquitous process of negotiation between members of the learning community and their inherent expectations.

The findings from preceding sections of this chapter suggest that learning is a social process, and that meaning is assimilated not only from what is newly learnt and what participants already know, but also through what is learnt by interaction with others. These interactions not only impact what students know about various subjects and topics but also affects their 'selves', their sense of self worth- their identity. As members of a socio-cultural community: the classroom, learners are likely to be influenced by the very social norms, structural roles and learning strategies of the community they belong to. Therefore, learner centred instruction works with various aspects of learner identities in the process of learning. In an effort to understand the way in which such learning approaches affects individual and sociocultural 'selves' of learners (the third main

research question of the study), the next section explores learner centred pedagogy and its effect on learner identities.

6.6 Learner Centred Pedagogy and Learner Identity.

Findings of interview and written responses in previous sections of this chapter suggest that learning is a process whereby knowledge is refined and acquired through interventions that promote participation, engagement and shared learning. Student accounts 'tell' that classroom dialogues are important to establish positive relationships, promote interactive learning and enable the responsibility for learning to be shared within classroom contexts. Previous research has established that such dialogic learning has an effect on learners and shape the way learners view their 'selves' (Tudor 1996; Norton 2004; Nystrand 2007). This section of the interview and written response findings aims to present student perspectives of the effect of learner centred approaches on the identity of learners, in addition to the existing socio-cultural norms and experiences students bring with them to the classroom environment.

The information participants shared during the interviews regarding their previous schooling experience and backgrounds (Table 4.3 of Chapter 4), indicate that participants are of Arab origin and therefore customized to the Arabic norms and traditions; multilingual; and for the majority of them, English was a second or third language. Additionally, interviewees were schooled in a variety of mediums including the UAE national curriculum-12, British curriculum-2, Lebanese curriculum-1 and Kuwaiti curriculum -1. These therefore provide an overview of some of the commonalities in the way participants perceive themselves, however these perceptions do not in any way include all aspects of inherent perceptions within students, rather they were drawn as main frames of existing beliefs in relations to the aims of the current study.

Accounts of participants from interview data as well as written feedback resulted in the thematic categorization of the main code *learner centred pedagogy and learner identity*. This category generated 195 references (Table 6.2) in total with regards to the way

learner centred interventions impact student learning, student personalities, student behaviours and the way they perceive themselves within learning environments. In order to analyse the large number of responses with regards to this theme, three sub codes were developed to structure the way students described the effects of such learning.

These consist of *Motivation*: included accounts of students that referred to how learner Centred instruction assisted in understanding content, it helped learners remember content, it was interesting, supportive, collective and improved the overall educational performance of learners; the second sub code *Engagement*: included accounts of student who felt learner Centredness helped them become more confident of themselves, encouraged them to participate, talk, discuss, express, involve and share as a consequence of the classroom practices; the third sub code *Autonomy*: this included student excerpts that highlight independence, self-reliance, autonomy and responsibility which participants attributed as an upshot of learner Centred pedagogy. Table 6.8 below provides a definition of each sub code as well as a quote from student participants that were categorized to the specific sub code.

Sub Codes	Definition	Sample Quotation
Motivation n = 72	Included accounts of students that referred to how learner centred instruction assisted in understanding content, it helped learners remember content, it was interesting, supportive, collective and improved the overall educational performance of learners.	Libinia: <i>This the active learning helps teaching process it helps with understanding the subject matter better.</i>
Engagement n = 86	Included accounts of students who felt learner Centredness helped them become more confident of themselves, encouraged them to participate, talk, discuss, express, involve and share as a consequence of the classroom practices.	Ghiso: <i>Yea, as I mentioned before like it affected my confidence positively in a positive way.</i>
Autonomy n = 37	Included accounts of students that highlight independence, self-reliance, autonomy and responsibility which participants attributed as an upshot of learner centred pedagogy.	Noki: <i>It (learner centred approaches) gives you independence and self-reliance. You also need to use your brain for more critical thinking and planning things, not just parroting what the teacher said.</i>

Table 6.8: Definition and Sample Quotes for Sub Codes: *Motivation, Engagement and Autonomy*

n= number of references

6.6.1 Motivation

The sub code *Motivation* generated a total of 72 references from participants. Students related that participating in learner centred classrooms was challenging initially, but that such learning enabled them to understand the content of the lesson thoroughly. For many this understanding was long lasting in that they were able to recall what they learned and apply it even outside of the classroom context. Ghiso states that learner centred approaches ensured learning for her was '*long term*', and Jalila concurs that such strategies enabled her to '*understand more*' from her classes. Sabar adds to this, connecting being enthused by learner centred approaches which helped her assimilate learning content in a '*very easy way*', this approach she says, allows '*students to focus and learn better*'. Linking learner centred approaches to being useful both in and outside the classroom, Hawa narrates her personal experience of a study skills lecture which used learner centred approaches:

'Actually before two days I present in study skills my presentationand I think it was useful to my friends and classmates and until now some girls are presenting their presentation and its useful to me also....actually I learned a lot of things.... a lot of informationbut also things that will be useful for when I...work later ...as a teacher....and all'.

In a slightly different vein, Alda relates learner centred approaches to achieving the educational outcomes of the course, she states that learner centred approaches enable learners '*to understand the lessons in a better way*' and also help them '*remember...the things they learn*'. This is a point Ghamar concedes to, such '*active*' lessons that involve learners with the process of learning Ghamar asserts are '*difficult to forget*'. Maira summarizes her experience of such learning as having a positive effect on her performance in the course overall, she explains that she found the experience '*very enjoyable and it helped me to remember what we discussed very well*'.

Students also related how such instruction was interesting and therefore made them look forward to lessons as opposed to classes which resorted to a more transmissive method

of teaching. Khusan states that learner centred approaches, made her feel excited about attending class as she found classes were now '*enjoyable*'. By involving themselves in learning tasks, participants feel that student centred approaches equipped them with various skills in a fun yet inclusive manner. Clarifying that such approaches encourage '*new ways of learning*' she hopes to implement such practices herself as a would be future teacher.

Noki summarizes her experience with learner Centred approaches and the effect it had on her as a learner. She writes in the elicitation task that learner centred approaches encourage learners to:

'Participate, understand, retain information and perform better in their active learning classroom since they feel that they are required to work but in the way they like it, not feeling passive and skipping whatever homework or exams they have to work on. They will participate more once they feel that they can express their ideas their feelings and that they can be creative. They will love to study more, since they're in active classroom and they love the way how they are learning, they will study more and play more active role to understand things better and search for them more. I would take myself as an example how in school there was no active learning we used to be passive and teachers wouldn't care a lot about our new ideas feelings and they didn't give us the chance to express anything. In this way we used to hate studying and going to school. While here everything is different and I do love to go to the university everyday without skipping classes and I love to help the dr's prepare any lesson am going to take'.

Another aspect students associated with learner centred approaches is the tangible improvement they noticed in their existing skills set and abilities as a result of such classroom practices. For example, Ghiso explains that she was able to see a notable improvement on her language skills through practical learning sessions '*like 99 percent of us aren't native speakers and using English everyday presenting in groups with our instructors helps develop the language*', this direct improvement she goes on to explain, '*motivated me to do more*' in the courses and apply herself to the learning content. Describing herself as '*a fast learner*' Ghiso attributes her new found attitude to studying '*why not be dedicated?*' to student centred approaches she experienced in AUE.

Khusan highlights how learner centred approaches allowed her to recollect learning content successfully, being involved with the learning content she clarifies not only ensures that students '*understand the study material*' but also enables such content to '*comes in your mind fast and easily*'. Expressing satisfaction with such methods of learning, she has observed a marked improvement in her overall grades for courses that applied student centred learning. Lateefah adds another perspective to how such approaches were beneficial in making her a more successful student all round as they '*pushed her to be more strong*'. She says that learner centred approaches induce learners to '*use all their senses to understand the information*', this Lateefah goes on to state is what makes student centred learning distinct from traditional one-way pedagogy. Through teaching and learning practices which emphasize and promote student involvement with the learning content, knowledge learnt is retained and students '*will never forget it*'.

In the written responses Mahsir and Mona suggest that learner centred approaches made learning '*more fun*' and '*easy*' to remember, both agree that such learning approaches; '*are helpful for students*'. Rana extends on this by writing that learner centred approaches successfully simplify learning content, this she states encourages students to learn more in a shorter period of time: '*It... makes...the course very easy to understand and students can find the important point of the learning quicker*'. Warna explains that her experience of learner centred classrooms had a positive effect on her learning, she found that in these classrooms knowledge was assimilated easily through collaborative learning. Such learning she claims, also assisted in '*making information stuck in my mind and help me to share information between students that's help us to build our knowledge of that course*'.

The responses above suggest that learners were affected in different ways by learner centred pedagogy. It is important to note that the frames of motivating, engaging and autonomy do not divide or categorize the learning effect of such instruction on students; in fact, responses suggest that these frames often overlap in the effect they precipitate in learners. However, through these frames, the subjective and fluid descriptions of learners can be structured to present student responses in a clear way.

Findings from student accounts demonstrate that learner centred pedagogies motivated learners to attend and involve themselves in their lessons, it was interesting and enjoyable, they were able to retain and recall the information learnt and develop useful skills that equipped them better as opposed to rote memorization of information. Despite the overwhelming response of learners that emphasized how such learner centred approaches led to students becoming better and more effective learners, findings from the video data indicates a contra band in that students did not involve themselves nor participate much in the lessons, therefore they were not very 'learner centred' during the lessons. The discrepancy of learner perspectives regarding the effect of learner centred approaches and their actual involvement within the classroom context is notably a significant one, but it does not mitigate the fact that for student participants', learner centred approaches led to them becoming more motivated, interested and improved learners.

6.6.2 Engagement

To explore the effect of shared dialogue and classroom interaction on the 'selves' of students, the second frame *Engagement* was developed. This frame collates responses of participants to investigate the impact of shared learning and purposeful classroom discourse on the way students see themselves as learners. It is important to note that this frame does not preclude the other two from classroom dialogues and talk, indeed the responses of learner's show that throughout all three frames, *Motivating*, *Engagement* and *Autonomy*, talk was centrifugal in the learning it permeated. However, while the frame *Motivating* focused more on how learners felt about the process of learning, the skills they gained from it and the effect it had on their pedagogical performance, the frame *Engagement* is concerned with the impact such participatory approaches had on learners both within and outside the classroom.

Participant responses that made mention of terms such as express, discuss, talk, shared, confident, participate and relaxed were categorized under this frame. Student accounts were explored to understand how discourse within the context of the classroom affected

the way learners perceived themselves. Alda explains how such strategies which promoted classroom discourse and participation enabled her to talk more and made her feel at home in the University. She states that learner centred, active approaches affected her as a person and a learner to become more confident of herself within as well as outside the classroom:

It affected me that it changed me to another person. I will not be passive or anything I will be able to talk and communicate with other students and other doctors....when I am in the university I will feel that I am in the home my home... I think that it affects me it gives me confidence to talk confidence to be here and....does... do an interview maybe in future somewhere outside... It's a big change if the teacher do active learning. Without active learning there is no lesson there is no lecture. No benefits for students.

Ghiso explains how through interventions that encouraged Whole Class Interaction she was able to become more confident and relaxed as a learner. Despite being used to traditional methods of teaching and learning where '*there is a teacher who lectures and a student who receive*' which she felt she excelled in, she goes on to explain that '*active learning builds your confidence more*'. Narrating her experience of group activities and presentations, Ghiso emphasises that through '*talking in class and sharing ideas*' her learning was much improved. She adds that through practical teaching strategies students who are not native speakers are able to improve their English language skills and this '*has made a difference*' to her as a learner but more importantly enabled her to become '*an efficient person in society*'.

Lateefah and Mala talk about the tenets of learner centredness that fostered a comfortable environment for them within the classroom context, one which encouraged them to share and express themselves openly. Lateefah recounts how these learning strategies created a safe zone for her to openly express herself in the classroom; '*we can feel relaxed, we can say our opinion, we are free we can say our opinion and the teacher can accept our opinion*' Lateefah feels that through such interactive approaches she has become a stronger and more confident learner. Mala adds that participatory approaches has made her more confident of her own opinions and resulted in her becoming a '*collective learner*':

The doctor asks a question she wants everyone to give their opinion this give me more confidence because I share my opinion and she tell me to have a group work this also let's me discuss with other girls and share our knowledge together. I think I am not sure but I think I became more sociable with other people.

Student's written feedback were drawn on to complement the interview findings. Warna writes that learner centred strategies benefitted learners in developing their learning through shared classroom dialogue and interaction:

'Learner centred approach is one of the most useful approaches of learning, many schools and university adopted this approach and added it to their curriculum. In my opinion, this approach is beneficial because it provides students with the chance to practice their knowledge in class. For example when a teacher appoints a class for discussion and allows students to discuss the material given to them, this could be very useful for the teacher and students it provides the teacher with notes about what student like about the subject and what they don't like. What they find difficult and what's really easy for them.

It can also benefit the student by letting them share information together, sharing ideas and maybe even notes this way helps a lot in developing student's performance along with providing an excellent way for them to interact together and benefit from one another. Discussion can be also done with teacher as in teacher student interaction, this could strengthen the bond between the teacher and his students. To sum up, learner centred approaches are now more widely used in classrooms because we came to a realization that this approach truly shows students' knowledge being put into actions rather than just a pencil test submitted without a proper knowledge of the course that been take'.

Maya writes that student centred approaches are interactive and therefore more effective in improving the existing abilities of learners. She recalls that *'some activities I've done (in learner centred classrooms) was so active and were very fun.... we got to mark each other work and record each other'*. Such directed classroom discourse Maya adds, *'made the chapter a lot more fun'*. Lateefah summarizes that learner centred approaches result in receptive learners who: *'are open minded and express their opinion freely and also are creative'*. Such shared dialogues *'help student and teacher have good relationship with each other'* this she believes leads to students having more of an *'interest to their lecture'* instead of being *'passive and lazy'* in the classroom.

6.6.3 Autonomy

The coding analysis of student responses also revealed that for many of them learner centred practices stimulated students to become self-reliant, responsible and autonomous in their learning. The third frame in understanding the effect of learner centred approaches on the identity of students explored the responses of students which suggested self-regulation and independence as a result of student centred approaches. This sub code *Autonomy* resulted in a total of 19 references that included comments which highlight independent learning and increased self-reliance as an off shot of learner centred practices. Noki for example states that learner centred strategies makes successful learners who are: *'independent and self-reliant'*. Such approaches she firmly believes encourage students towards using their brain for *'critical thinking and planning things not just parroting what the teacher said'*.

Jalila and Ghiso cite the unrestrictive and participatory nature of learner centred practices which instil more responsibility in students in the process of making meaning from knowledge. Jalila explains that good classrooms *'have participation.... students feel free to say'* this practice has made her *'a more.... responsible learner'*. Ghiso on the other hand stresses on being unafraid within the classroom context and how open relationships between teachers and students through shared interaction encourage learners to be *'in control of their learning'*. Such learning she goes on to say is *'how the new generation will learn'*.

Emphasising on the responsibility learner centred approaches encourages in students, Lasha narrates her experience of such classrooms which encourage her to try to understand the topic of learning before the class itself. Through lessons aimed at getting learners to familiarize themselves with the topic being learnt and *'prepare for the subject'*, she found that she no longer depended on the teachers' explanation alone. She began depending on her own abilities instead, looking to the teacher for guidance only when and *'if I have any difficulties'*. Aman explains that student centred practices:

Made me love to work more.... to feel independent more you know like it made me like I want to create new things okay. I want to teach others I

want to tell others my point of views and so it changed a lot of things in my personality... And it taught me just to depend on myself without depending on anyone else and I don't know how it is related but also just to trust myself like since I only trust my work so it goes the same things with relationships with all the others you know.

Dalma and Nimar write that active participation in the classroom made them more effective learners. Dalma explains that through peer review activities she was required to provide and defend her opinion of her classmates' work, this approach not only allowed her to become more confident of herself but she was able to perceive and understand her own writing errors better. She adds that learning through student to student feedback sessions, as well as classroom debates, she became a more '*active and autonomous*' learner.

Capitalizing on shared authority in classroom contexts Nimar highlights how learner centred classrooms are *not* teacher dominated. Through shared dialogue during lessons students are taught to '*rely on each other for feedback, instead of just looking towards the teacher as the sole figure of authority who can rectify your errors*'. Such activities she claims are twofold in that they encourage the active participation of learners with learning content whilst making them more responsible for their own learning. Sabar adds to this idea by writing that learner centred approaches result in confident learners who are able to share the information and ideas they have through classroom discussion and achieve the '*good goals*' of education, enabling them to '*understand the lessons in a better way*'.

The findings of interview and written response in line with the coding results of video recording data highlights that interaction and purposeful classroom dialogue is a main tenet of learner centred instruction. Most if not all the strategies which promote participation and learner involvement through educational interventions are facilitated by shared discourse between members of the classroom community. Therefore, in order for learner centred approaches to be coherent of its characteristics, classrooms should permeate dialogism. Dialogic classrooms are founded on shared learning, collective dialogues and teacher and student engagement. Results of the interview and written response coding suggest that classroom interaction mediates not just learning processes

inside the classroom but also plays an important role in the way learners navigate the wider context outside it. Talk is a social process and has significant impact in shaping the selves of participants. In answering the third main research question of the study, the way in which learner centred approaches affect learner identities, the categories of Motivating, Engagement and Autonomy were framed to analyse participant responses.

Results show that learner centred classrooms that promote dialogic learning result in learners that are interested and motivated towards their learning. Participant responses also suggest that dialogic learning is more enjoyable and long lasting as students are able to recall and retain information better. Many of them also highlighted a marked improvement in their grades within learner centred classrooms indicating that such practices led to students becoming effective and successful learners. Additionally, participants recounted that learner centredness encouraged them to discuss, express and speak up, therefore it equipped them with tangible and lasting skills; specifically, improved language proficiency, critical thinking skills as well as a better understanding of the subject they were learning.

Through whole class discussion, as well as group and peer activities that centred around shared talk, interview and written response data suggests that learners were more confident of their existing knowledge as well as the new knowledge they learnt in the classroom. Such collective learning made them feel 'free' and 'comfortable' within the learning context, while at the same time they felt valued for the responsibility they had as members of the classroom community in the process of their learning. Findings indicate therefore that dialogic practices had a direct effect in making learners self-reliant and independent, who were now more in control of their own learning and shared in the authority of the classroom context. Darina summarises the effect of learner centred practices succinctly: '*such learning is very enjoyable*' learners are able to '*express their thoughts and share what they know*'. This she states makes learners realize that '*they are not empty vessel; they have things to say...things to share and they want to share it*'. Classrooms that discuss and encourage participation, she goes on to say '*help me to develop myself and my skills and abilities*'.

6.7 Learner Centredness and Teachers in the Arab Region

“Imitation is the sincerest form of flattery.”

— **Charles Caleb Colton**

Keeping Colton’s famous quote in mind, a good way to understand the effect of learner centred approaches on the ‘selves’ of learners would be to explore whether as future teachers, participants were inclined towards such classroom practices themselves. The final code developed from student interview responses investigated participant views on the place of learner centred practices within educational contexts in the UAE, whether they as future teachers would (or would not) implement such strategies in their own classrooms and the possible challenges that might arise in the event of such an outcome. This theme resulted in a total of 89 references from student participants which were divided into 2 sub codes:

- ❑ Teaching Preferences of Potential Teachers in the UAE
- ❑ Implementing Learner Centred Pedagogy as Potential Teachers in the UAE

6.7.1 Teaching Preferences of Potential Teachers in the UAE

13 out of the 16 participants (81%) stated that as future teachers they would implement active, learner centred approaches in the context of their own classrooms. The diagram below provides a pictorial representation of this data.

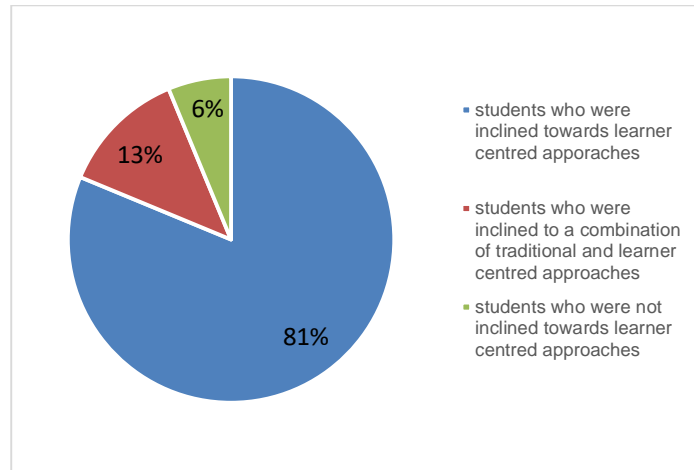


Diagram 6.2: Participant Views on the Implementation of Learner Centred Approaches

Despite her preferences for learner centred approaches as a student, Lasha expresses her concern that such approaches may not be what young learners in the UAE need. She states that because of this, a more traditional transmissive method may be more appropriate for learners, especially in lower grades of school:

'I thought about it I want to try active learning but the problem is the curriculum. Here in the UAE they really focus.... they want you to finish the curriculum so I am kind of afraid that I might not have time to like teach them using new and different methods. We may have time for active learning but not too much time. That's what I am a bit afraid of. I know that a lot of teachers always hurry in school to finish the curriculum. This is a disadvantage. Like I heard in the west they don't care if they don't finish the curriculum they want the student's to learn like quality over quantity but here in the UAE they think more about quantity over quality... Like I said I don't know but I think why did I say I want to mix traditional with direct learning because I don't know but here students if you are so kind with them they don't listen to you. They won't be quiet they will be more rude... It depends on the society also. Here the students if you let them relax a bit they will overdo it... They won't do any studying'.

On the other hand, Maya and Hawa prefer a combination of the two approaches to learning. Having the freedom to switch between transmissive and student centred approaches, Maya explains that she *'would apply bit of both'*, stating her belief that teachers cannot stick to a prescribed methodology when it comes to classroom practices, she argues that instead teachers need to be flexible and open in applying the approach that is most suited to the context of learning and the needs of the learner. Hawa agrees that one approach might lead to students feeling bored, stating that she would not use

any one approach '*for the whole time*' she concedes that switching between traditional teaching methods and learner centred approaches, potential teachers would be able to meet the needs of learners in a more effective way.

The remaining 13 participants were inclined to implement learner centred approaches as future teachers, student responses concurred that such practices will bring positive results on two main aspects: the first in helping them establish a good relationship with their colleagues as well as the school management; secondly such practices would be effective in engaging students with the learning content during lessons, making them more motivated to learn.

For example, Jalilah explains that learner centred practices would be a positive step for her in her career as a teacher, it would '*help me in how to deal with my classmates and other teachers and with the principal*'. Ghamar agrees with Jalilah, she states that in wanting to be a leader in the Arab region with regards to '*education and technology*' learner centred practices are what the UAE government wants to promote in school classrooms. By implementing such approaches as a future teacher, Ghamar feels strongly that schools will therefore '*support this method*' being applied in her own classrooms. Additionally, she goes on to state that such approaches would be '*welcomed*' within school contexts specifically in the UAE, and through the implementation of such practices in her own classrooms, she would be able to demonstrate to her colleagues that she is versed in '*the latest approach...the new ideas in learning and teaching*'.

Noki explains that learner centred practices would add to her career as a potential teacher, she explains how by practicing '*the new methods of learning*' in her classrooms, learners would not be bored and this would be '*a positive step*' for herself as a new teacher. This she feels can contribute to her career as a teacher and therefore she feels that all teachers in the UAE '*should use active...active learning*'. Khusan states that learner centred practices are '*already applied*' in the schools across the UAE, in wanting to stay ahead of learning and teaching practices, teachers must '*think...about the student...and what they want*'. This makes a '*good teacher...more effective in her field*'.

In addition to student centred practices benefitting would be teachers on a professional level, respondents also talked about how such practices result in lessons that are effective and relevant, allowing teachers to aware the needs of learners. Alda and Rezeki explain that student centred practices get learners involved with the lesson, Alda feels because she wants her students to *'be with'* her during her lessons, she would apply learner centred approaches. Wanting to be more sensitized to the needs of the learner, Rezeki explains that learner centred approaches would enable her to *'see what they (students) are good at'* and identify the area they need help with. Maya concedes with Rezeki, highlighting the ability of learner centred approaches to recognize and meet the needs of learners, she feels such classroom practices encourage teachers to *'understand students and the way they learn and their levels and what they are capable of doing'* and therefore assists them to pitch their lesson accordingly.

Aman states that the flexibility and novelty offered by learner centred approaches allows it to be used in classrooms *'in many, many ways to meet different needs, subjects and classrooms'*. This approach is one she herself would implement due to this very fact. On the other hand, Jalilah brings up the need for students to look forward to lessons and learning as a whole. Capitalizing on the ability of student centred approaches to make learning *'more joyful'*, she cites her own experience of interactive classrooms as being *'fun...and interesting'* and how she was *'never bored'*. Based on her previous exposure to such participatory and shared learning environments, she believes her own students would be *'more motivated to learn'* through such learner centred practices.

Highlighting the importance of fostering classroom discourse as a potential elementary teacher, Lateefah explains that such interactive learning supports the learning of new knowledge for young students. This makes learning easier, more interactive and fun for learners. Lateefah supports learner centred approaches and goes on to provide an explanation of how she would plan a lesson:

'I will show them some cartoons after finishing the cartoons I want them to discuss with each other what's happen in the movie in the cartoon and also, I want to give them some flash cards about the words, the root or words, how we can use it, and I try to learn them, teach them, to sing a song'.

The interview responses suggest that the majority of student participants recognize the positive impact of learner centred approaches on learners, therefore as future teachers they are inclined to implement such strategies as part of their teaching practice. Additionally, the dialogic tenets of learner centredness are picked up and emphasised on by respondents, capitalizing on how group, peer and whole class discussions allow '*students of different abilities*' (Nimar) to learn from each other, students concur that interactive, participatory learning is what young learners in the UAE need. Findings from the coding of interview data indicates therefore that: most of the respondents preferred learner centred practices as would be teachers; students felt that dialogic classrooms would facilitate the tailoring of pedagogy to better meet the needs of learners; and that such teaching and learning practices are interesting and engaging, therefore likely to motivate learners to be involved in the process of learning.

6.7.2 Implementing Learner Centred Pedagogy as Potential Teachers in the UAE

In wanting to understand student perspectives of the effect of learner centred pedagogy on the socio cultural experiences of learners as potential teachers, students were asked to state whether such dialogic strategies were acceptable within the norms, traditions and culture of Arabs. Since the participants were all of Arab origin, students were asked whether they felt such teaching and learning practices were acceptable to Arab cultural norms and whether they were necessary and important in educational contexts in the UAE. Although this was not part of the original aims of the study, the exploratory nature of this research and the resulting data that was emergent, indicated that such feedback would provide an introspective view of would be teachers in the UAE. This would potentially provide an opportunity to explore the wider effects of learner centred strategies in the field of teaching and learning.

There were three aspects that emerged as a result of the analysis of responses for this sub code. Firstly, student references to the ease and comfort with which they expressed, shared and conversed with family and friends regarding learner centred practices outside the classroom context, and how important such practices were to teaching and learning contexts in the UAE. Secondly they talked about the optimum age for learners in the UAE to be introduced to student centred approaches that promoted shared, interactive and independent learning. Finally, the respondents also highlighted potential problems that could arise from the implementation of learner centred pedagogies as would be teachers, linking this to the acceptability of such approaches in learning contexts in the region (Table 6.9 below).

Sub Code: Implementing Learner Centred Pedagogy as Potential Teachers in the UAE.	Ref	Quotation
Aspects: 1) Ease and Importance (references to the ease and comfort with which they expressed, shared and conversed with family and friends regarding learner centred practices outside the classroom context, and how important such practices were to teaching and learning contexts in the UAE).	16	Aman: <i>'I don't think it's a cultural issue they really need to embrace active learning in education especially'.</i>
2) Optimum Age (references to the optimum age for learners in the UAE to be introduced to student centred approaches that promoted shared, interactive and independent learning).	14	Mares: <i>'From KG if they didn't do it when they go to universities it will be hard to them to follow the rules of the professors at the university'.</i>
3) Potential Problems (references to potential problems that could arise from the implementation of learner centred pedagogies as would be teachers, linking this to the acceptability of such approaches in learning contexts in the region).	14	Aman: <i>'If the students are not used to that sort of thing so they won't get the best results so in a way the students also need to be taught how to be more active in an active learning classroom'</i>

Table 6.9: Definition, References and Quotations for Sub Codes.

The first aspect collated responses that highlighted the necessity and importance of learner centred approaches in educational contexts in the UAE and whether such approaches were something that students felt were acceptable amongst family and friends in the UAE. All 16 interview participants expressed that learner centred approaches were important and acceptable in the Arab region. For example Alda explains

that there *'is no difference'* between Arabs and other cultures when it comes to learner centred approaches, she reiterates that *'active learning will engage students and loved by them'* therefore she feels strongly that teachers should be encouraged to implement it in UAE schools. Aman agrees with Alda, *'I don't think it's a cultural issue they really need to embrace active learning in education especially'*, she goes on to say that UAE schools would greatly benefit from interactive and participatory learning approaches which would elevate *'sad state'* of learning in schools. Jalilah adds to this by explaining that Arab students are no different from other students in wanting learning to be fun and interesting. She says that:

'Ummmmmm yeah, I think because some students like to do their own works if they try group work like its more useful and joyful they will be more social through this way...of learning'.

Khusan points out an interesting factor about Arab learners, she states that in understanding that learners want to *'play and not study anything'*, teachers need to create learning through play in order to keep students interested in the learning content. She adds that teachers have a responsibility to *'grab their (student's) attention by something so active learning is good way to do this'*. Lateefah draws attention to the changes that the UAE has been trying to encourage in educational sectors recently. In wanting to *'be more like the West'*, she reflects that such learner centred practices are indeed acceptable in contexts of teaching and learning in the region and need to focus more on *'interaction'* between teachers and students, similar to practices in the West. Citing that she has already seen such changes endorsed by the UAE government and being implemented in schools in the UAE, Lateefah reflects that *'teachers are changing they are focusing more on the students'*.

Contrary to the dominant opinion of students who agreed that learner centred approaches were acceptable to Arab cultural norms, Ghiso expresses that Arabs in the UAE are still not ready for such learning to be implemented across all schools. Concerned about such practices being something learners and their parents were actually not yet ready for, she felt that learner centred practices were not suitable for UAE educational contexts. According to Ghiso *'parents still want their children to like work from textbooks and have*

homework', highlighting that parents learnt through traditional methods of teaching and learning, she feels that this is the reason why *'they still expect their children to learn the way they did'* under similar conditions of teaching and learning.

In addition to being acceptable to Arab culture and norms, a majority of students felt that learner centredness has a valid place in Arab society as they felt free to discuss their experiences of learner centred classroom practices with family. 13 out of the 16 participants indicated that such practices were something they were comfortable talking about and sharing with family, and in most cases such learning approaches were encouraged by them. Table 6.10 below provides a summary of the student responses regarding their comfortability in sharing learner centred classroom experiences with family and a sample quotation of the same.

Discuss learner centred experiences freely with family	No discussion or sharing of learner centred experience with family
13	3
Noki: <i>Yeah, yeah... and since my mom is a teacher whenever there is a new thing I tell her you can do this and that for your students, so we discuss different ways of applying it in the classroom.</i>	Khusan: <i>No, they don't talk about it at home</i>

Table 6.10: Sharing Learner Centred Experiences with Family.

A second aspect of the acceptability of learner centred approaches in the Arab regions relates to the optimal age at which learners should be exposed to learner centred approaches. Student participants agreed that learners should be exposed to interactive, participatory learning as early as possible, either during the foundation years or at the latest during the first year of primary school. By being exposed right from an early age, learners would inculcate responsible learning as part of their educational ethos and practice, learning in dynamic and active ways. For example, Jalilah sates that students should be exposed to learner centred practices from *'primary school so like in the university they already know and are used to'* such classroom approaches.

Hawa concurs with this, she feels that by getting used to such approaches in the early learning stage, students would be more confident *'when they are coming to the university'*. Wanting students to be exposed to learner centred practices *'from the beginning'* Lateefah and Mares feel that early exposure to student centred learning will ensure effective learners in higher education. Mares states:

'From KG they have to know it (learner centredness) ... from KG if they know it from KG they will have more responsibility to be good students, they will learn how to listen in which time they have to evaluate others they will respect the time and the teacher and material. From KG if they didn't do it from then, when they go to universities it will be hard to them to follow the rules of the professors at the university'.

Highlighting that young learners pick up methods and practices easily Mala explains that *'students learn from when they are young teach them a method when they grow up they will be used to it, so I think it's better when they are young to be exposed to this (learner centredness)'*. Maya adds another perspective to this thread, claiming that young learners are more creative and capable, she argues that learning should *'never limit a child'*, by limiting children at young age through transmissive and didactic learning approaches *'it really does affect them in the future and they think negatively about their own selves.... like oh that's not possible'*.

The third aspect emergent from student responses include the challenges they anticipate being faced with as potential teachers who implement learner centred approaches in classrooms in the UAE. The biggest challenge which a majority of the participant acquiesced to is the factor of learner centred approaches being a novel approach to learning and teaching, something students may not previously been exposed to and quite different from the traditional approaches they have experienced before. This would participants agreed would potentially be the biggest obstacle for them as future teachers, attempting dialogic teaching. For example, Alda explains that student may not prefer her learner centred classroom practices since they were *'used'* to more transmissive method of learning. Aman stresses that since students aren't used to such methods of learning, *'students also need to be taught how to be more active'*, this she feels would potentially be her biggest challenge as a teacher endorsing learner centred practices.

Jalilah explains that such practices would induce learners to find short cuts, since they were not used to so much responsibility in the classroom. This would mean that teachers who encourage student centred, interactive learning practices would need to constantly monitor their students, to ensure that they do not abuse the freedom given to them during lessons. Giving an example of plagiarism, Jalilah states that student would be tempted to simply copy *'all the assignments and homework's they'll just take it out from the internet'*. This is where the teacher needs to give more rigor and attention in such learner centred contexts, something she feels will be initially a difficulty for her as a new teacher. Admittign that such independent and shared leanring might not be something that students prefer, Hawa concedes that *'one of the problems maybe some student dislike this idea and they prefer traditional ways, and they don't want to participate'*. This then would pose a real concern as classrooms would fail to be interactive and engaging.

Drawing attention to the teacher in learner centred contexts, Ghiso states that many teachers are not equipped or versed in such classroom practices, highlighting that *'teachers need training'* in the UAE, in order to successfully implement learner centred pedagogy. Raising an important issue that Learner centred approaches are new not only to students but also many teachers who have only been trained in traditional teaching methods that are transmisive and teacher dominated, Ghiso explains that the change towards implementing learner centred classrooms needs to be a step by step process.

As a would be teacher she is confident of her owns awareness of learner centred practices but at the same time she feels many teachers in UAE schools are not. Additionally, she also feels that parents do not know much about such teaching and learning approaches, this she feels could potentially be a problem for her as a would be teacher, who implements student centred strategies. Since parents are not aware of such interactive and shared classroom pedagogies, *'they think their children are wasting their time having fun more than learning'*, this could indeed represent a problem for her as she would need to change the parents' mindset regarding methods of teaching and learning in addition to her students in the classroom.

Khusan explains that tailoring pedagogy to meet the needs of learners with differing capabilities and levels of knowledge would be the biggest challenge for her. Citing how UAE classrooms have students with who are of mixed abilities, their needs are therefore also multiple. She feels that developing lessons that would *'balance between them, because some of them are smart some of them...are weaker'* would be tough. However, Khusan suggests that by encouraging whole class and group learning, students would be able *'support'* each other and potentially reduce the learning gaps between them. Whether students who were more used to rote memorization and teacher directed learning would be open to such dynamic approaches is something she is quite unsure about; *'but...again...will they like it...or want to learn this way....(laughs) that I have...I really not sure of'*.

Interview findings suggest that the majority of participants felt that learner centred approaches were suitable and presented no difficulties in being inculcated with Arab culture, norms and traditions. They all agreed that such strategies were easily shared with members outside of the classroom community and were accepted despite being novel in their approach to learning. Participants were also in consensus regarding the age such approaches should be introduced to learners; all of them feel these strategies should be implemented from Primary if not the pre-school stages.

Additionally, some of the problems students feel could potentially arise due to the implementation of learner centred practices as would be teachers revolve around such approaches being new and alien to learners initially, learners who prefer traditional learning and as Lateefah points out *'don't like to be active'*, may find difficulty adjusting to student centred learning environments. Participants also sighted lack of expertise in teachers as a potential problem when implementing this approach across schools in the UAE. They feel they as teachers may need more training in order to successfully implement such learning and teaching practices and agree that current teachers need to be trained in this thoroughly. Highlighting that learner centred approaches is a new concept for learners and their parents alike, participants feel that as future teachers

promoting such novel teaching and learning approaches might initially be challenging for them as would be teachers.

6.7.3 Chapter Summary

This chapter presented findings from the analysis of interview and written response of participants to address two of the main research questions of the study. It expanded upon the findings of chapter 5, to provide a deeper understanding of; student perceptions of learner centredness; their experiences with it; their view of learner centredness as opposed to traditional pedagogy; the way learner centred teaching impacted student and teacher roles; its effect on learning and student 'selves and; the feasibility of such practices in the Arab region. Findings demonstrated that learner centredness was perceived by students as being centred on learners, engaging and facilitated through shared and participatory talk. Expressing the benefits of hands on learning that learner centredness offered, students felt that the challenges and difficulties they faced in adapting to such approaches was worthwhile. These findings reinforce the 'talk awareness' amongst participants, which recognised the importance of shared talk being a tool to extend and promote learning.

Students also talked about the importance of classroom practice that recognised both teachers and students as valuable members of the learning process who had equal responsibility in contributing and influencing learning through talk. Highlighting the positive relationships built between teacher and students, participants discussed the need for trust, respect and appreciation leading to 'comfortable' classroom. Again, talk featured as a fundamental tool in facilitating these connections in learner centred classrooms. These strategies as opposed to traditional pedagogy makes learning more interesting for students who felt themselves become more independent and self-reliant through such processes. Yet, findings also show that a significant number of learners felt that despite being outdated, traditional pedagogy still had a valid place for specific learning content in classrooms.

Connecting the idea of learning and identity, students' felt learner centredness benefitted their learning, improving their existing skills and abilities both within and outside the classroom environment. Students' expressed that through such practices they became more confident, interested and independent in their learning. Recounting their intentions as future language teachers, a majority of students agreed that implementing learner centred practices in their own classrooms would be beneficial for themselves as potential teachers as well as their students. Some students felt that although learner centredness was needed and required within learning contexts in the UAE, the implementation of such practices would be challenging and would require effort on their parts as new teachers. Students talked about the challenges of practicing would likely begin with the need for a change in current talk cultures and beliefs of learners, school management as well as parents. The willingness of students as potential teachers to recognise and accept these challenges in light of the benefits learner centredness would offer their own classrooms indicates the stance of participants that have accepted such strategies themselves. A step that previous studies highlight is a critical one in the proliferation of dialogic teaching.

In light of this, findings from this chapter reinforce Chapter 5 in demonstrating existing 'talk awareness' of participants, it also highlights the philosophical stance of participants that have accepted learner centredness as a practice and signifies the developmental or 'fledgling' stage the process currently is in within ELT classrooms. The following chapter will discuss and interpret these findings in relation to the initial research aims and theoretical framework of this study outlined in Chapter 4.

CHAPTER SEVEN: DISCUSSION

7.0 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to discuss the findings reported in chapters 5 and 6 of this thesis. Underpinned by an interpretive framework, the goal of this exploratory study was to understand how students construed the social reality of learner centred classrooms. In wanting to study the subjective, personal and unique *in situ* (Cresswell, 2009), the main research questions of this study were aimed at investigating the way pedagogies intended to foster learner centredness manifested in language classrooms, and the way in which students experienced such teaching approaches. Furthermore, this thesis sought to explore the effect of learner centred approaches on the identity and learner 'selves' of students; and consider the way such teaching practices are reconciled within the global learning context of the UAE. The findings for the main research questions will be discussed in light of the theoretical framework of this study, presented in Chapter 3.

This chapter is organized around the research questions (Section 4.1, Chapter 4) which guided the study. Using a sociocultural perspective, this study explored learners' perceptions in the face of an educational reform: in this context the implementation of learner centred approaches in language classrooms at a university in the UAE. In understanding that phenomenon is best understood 'from within' (Gertz, 1978; Cohen et.al., 2011:17), this study looked at structure, agency and identity to gain an understanding of how learner centred approaches appeared in English Language Teaching (ELT) classrooms and the way in which they affected learners. Four ELT (English Language Teaching) classrooms were recorded over the course of one semester to observe naturally occurring data. Additionally, semi-structured interviews of students, as well as their written responses regarding learner centred teaching was also obtained. Data was analysed using iterative, detailed coding processes and findings of analysis presented in chapters 5 and 6 respectively.

Grounded by a view of reality that gives prominence to individual accounts, certain assumptions informed this study. First that learner centred pedagogy, a broad and fluid

concept understood in a number of ways, is conceptualized around the belief that learning and teaching must be responsive to the needs of the learner in order to be effective (Freidman and Richards, 1993; Nunan, 2007; McCombs, 2001; Weimer, 2013). Secondly the implementation of such effective and sensitized classroom instruction is best facilitated through shared talk and classroom interaction, known as *dialogic teaching* (Mercer 2000; Snell, 2014; Newman, 2017; Myhill, 2016; Alexander, 2004). Talk is often the tool used to permeate and promote learning, and forms the foundation around which students think and learn (Myhill 2016; Rojas-Drummond and Mercer 2003; Newman 2017; Nystrand 1997; Alexander 2000; 2004). In light of this, study findings which sought to understand just how *dialogic* ELT classrooms were will be presented here.

7.1 Summary of Points for Discussion

The study posits that attempts to stimulate classroom interaction through whole class dialogue, pair/group teacher student dialogues, as well as individual teacher student dialogues is valuable, *even* when such interactions are limited and do not manifest in the way they were originally intended. This study argues therefore that the way in which learner centredness manifests and is experienced by learners revolves around classroom interaction, despite the potential asymmetry of teacher student dialogues in the process of learning (Weimer 2013; Mercer 2000).

This chapter will first reflect on the way learner centred instruction appeared in the ELT classroom; in doing this, learning modes are analysed in relation to the type of talk they promoted during the lesson and their potential to engage and stimulate learning. Moving on to explore the teachers' role, the way the teacher who is also the researcher of the study, attempts to stimulate students through questions, tried to use talk to create 'good' classrooms and supported student learning through shared classroom talk is considered. Specifically, the way in which teacher tried to use whole class interaction to encourage students to think and speculate through classroom discourse is highlighted.

Drawing together concepts of how talk can be used as a tool to mediate the development of students' sense of self and their learner 'selves; the chapter turns to the potential

mismatch between the way learners perceive learner centredness and their actual practice (or not) of it within the context of the classroom community.

The chapter concludes by re-examining the link between student centred teaching, and the role of dialectic pedagogy as a tool to develop the cognitive potential of learners. The theoretical summary expands upon the interpretive, exploratory paradigm the study was initially situated in to consider the implications firstly to language educators implementing learner centred approaches and secondly to policy makers and others that legislate teaching and learning according to defined parameters of learning systems rather than as a localized solution.

7.2 How do ELT pedagogies meant to foster learner centredness manifest in the classroom?

For the purpose of this study, lessons were captured in their authentic state, without predisposed tasks or teaching materials that were given to the teacher as is the case with most previous research (Mercer 2000; Newman 2017; Myhill 2016). Therefore, learner centredness was a 'subtle' theme appropriated according to the knowledge of the instructor at that stage of the study and implemented through various activities and tasks that encouraged students' participation, engagement and interactive learning tasks.

7.2.1 Effectiveness of Whole Class Shared Interaction in Promoting Dialogic Learning.

In line with Alexander's 'dialogic teaching' (2004) and Mercer's 'Interthinking' (2000) which focuses on the dialogic tenets of education that aim to use talk not only to interact but also to think and learn, interactional episodes of ELT classrooms were evaluated to understand the dialogic quality of shared classroom talk that occurred.

Findings indicated that much of the whole class interactions consisted of shared talk that was *Teacher-Student Exchanges* (talk between teacher and students that were brief question and answer sequences that were initiated by the teacher, including teacher reformulation of student responses) occurring 107 times through the episodes (Table

5.11, Chapter 5). This mode of talk between teacher and whole class emphasized the collective and shared learning concepts of *Interthinking* by Mercer (2000:4). Mercer argues that talk is used in creative ways to learn collectively through whole class, group or peer activities, and such learning uses language in a dynamic way to establish 'shared understanding' in the process of making meaning from knowledge (2000). This belief is shared and extended upon by this thesis: shared talk can have 'a significant impact on children's learning and development' (Mercer, 2000:29) and further it is a social action that 'is not just the means by which children learn, but also as a valuable social mode of thinking itself', (2000:29).

However, in contending that much of the classroom interaction consisted of such shared whole class exchanges, it is important to note that the findings of this thesis show that such interactions talked *at* students rather than *with* students (Galton, et. al. 1999). These results seem to be very similar to previous research by Alexander (1991; 1995;) in that most of the whole class shared interaction consisted of questions that were at a low cognitive level, required very brief responses from students and included very few cases whereby students initiated the questions. Classroom interaction was therefore very rarely *Exploratory or Accountable* (Littleton and Mercer 2013; Resnick 1999; Galton 1999; Alexander 1995).

Despite the low educational value of *Teacher-Student Exchanges*, this thesis argues that such findings were significant in demonstrating the *intention* of participants which tried to apply open, exploratory talk to think and speculate on learning content. Previous research shows the difficulties and inconsistencies in defining teacher open questions and acknowledges that *attempts* by the teacher to stimulate student speculation are often not recorded (Alexander 1991; Galton 1999).

In an effort to contribute towards this line of research the study findings highlight such attempts by both teacher and students to argue that dialogic, learner centred pedagogy occurs in stages (Weimer 2013; Alexander 2004), and is currently in a developmental or 'fledgling' state in the ELT Classrooms. This step although appearing to be only fused

with superficial dialogues, is a significant one in that it reflects the increasing willingness amongst members of the learning community in *attempting* to encourage, model and participate in meaningful classroom talk to extend and develop learning.

7.2.2 The Quality of Talk during Whole Class Shared Interactions.

What this study problematizes through the video recordings of lessons are two fold, first that attempts to implement learner centred instruction is made during whole class interactions however such instruction is not very dialogic in engaging learners with the learning; secondly the potential for such learning to develop further to become more dialogic is apparent through the ‘talk awareness’ that participants demonstrated during the interactional episodes. This awareness is significant in that it signals a change in the pedagogical norms within the context of the classroom (Mercer 2000; Littleton and Mercer 2013). Previous research shows that in order to change existing pedagogy and promote enquiry based learning that is dialogic and meaningful, such changes must be initiated first in order to promote dialogism that extends and develops student learning (Mercer 2000; Mercer 2004; Galton et. al. 1999; Alexander 2004).

Observational data in this study revealed that the much of the shared classroom interaction occurred within the talk mode of Whole Class Teacher-Student Interaction and consisted of shared interaction that was brief, and teacher fronted. This echoes previous research in the consistency of whole class interactions occurring more often as opposed to individual and group interactions that tended to be more teacher dominated and teacher dependent (Alexander 1995; Galton 1999). However detailed analysis of the shared talk during the Whole Class Teacher Student Interaction Mode demonstrated that the development of talk was limited and examples showed that learners were supported to construct answers on the topic of discussion by the teacher, rather than coming up with answers on their own. These findings reflect that the cognitive level of interactions were low. Further, in cases whereby evidence indicated that *Exploratory* talk was *attempted*, the tendency of the teacher to probe for the ‘right’ answer, fill silences and fall back on teacher talk to initiate, and dominate the discussion, led to such talk becoming in reality directed and closed (Galton et. al 1999; Howe and Mercer, 2012).

Additionally, coding of shared talk also demonstrated that regardless of attempts to implement dialogic learning, students themselves seemed to prefer a direct response from teacher. The example of Sabar who seemed to steer the dialogue to 'look' for the answer from the teacher, despite the teacher attempting to engage Sabar with the topic and think through the problem for herself indicated this very phenomenon. In Lesson Writing 3 and 3.1, page 162, we see that Sabar demonstrated a need for a 'quick-fix' to questions regarding the issue under discussion by repeatedly seeking the answer from the teacher rather than thinking it through herself. Additionally, during the same lesson, we see the teacher giving in to Sabar's demands, and providing closed, one word answers to the student instead of stimulating the student to speculate and develop her thinking.

This suggests that learners and teacher both tended to lean towards teacher directed talk, whereby 'teachers rather than children do most of the talking; where supposedly open questions are really closed; where instead of thinking through a problem children devote their energies to trying to spot the one 'correct' answer,' (Alexander 2004: 14).

In the Pair/Group Teacher-Student Interaction mode similar findings emerged. Data analysis of *Teacher-Student Exchanges* showed evidences of teacher reformulation of student responses to build and extend learning. There is one case which demonstrates that students engaged in *Teacher-Student Exploratory* talk to think critically about each other's response and engage in relevant talk on the topic of learning. In Lesson Tech 2 and 2.1 we see a group of students navigating ideas through talk and using language to argue, rationalize and contribute different ideas. Such engagement demonstrated evidence of *Exploratory* talk that occurred amongst ELT students, however instances of such talk were rare.

As mentioned above, much of the recorded classroom interactions that involved teacher and students in shared dialogues were predominantly teacher directed, limited and brief. Such findings echo previous research in suggesting that students may have worked *in* groups but rarely *as* groups (Galton etl. al. 1999; Alexander 2005; Blatchford, Kusnick, Baines and Galton 2003). Findings within the mode of Pair/Group Teacher Student

Interactions were similar to that found in other studies in demonstrating a tendency for students and the teacher to ‘cope’ and ‘get by’ rather than engage with the learning content (Alexander 1995; Alexander 2004; Galton 1999; Mercer 2000). What this conveys about the everyday educational practice within ELT Classrooms is that much of the classroom talk may potentially be of low dialogic quality, and therefore of low educational value.

7.2.3 The Development of ‘Talk Awareness’ Through Whole Class Shared Interactions

Despite the tendency for monologic and teacher fronted dialogue, shared talk modes indicate that there is a ‘talk awareness’ that emerges subtly within these learning modes (Newman, 2017). While the overall findings through the three modes of talk suggest that talk is less dialogic than it needs to be to promote learner centred teaching (Alexander 1995; Galton et. al. 1999), what it *did* show is that shared classroom interaction occurred more frequently during the Whole Class Teacher-Student mode and *attempted* to be dialogic (Galton et. al. 1998).

This ‘talk awareness’ that study findings revealed is significant in demonstrating that attempts to change existing pedagogical practices occurred during the lessons (Galton et. al. 1999; Mercer 2003). Such evidences suggest that dialogic, learner centred instruction has begun to take root and is *repeatedly attempted* during learning lessons. What participants demonstrated is a willingness to work towards becoming dialogic and learner centred. Previous research by the likes of Howe and Mercer (2012), Galton et. al. (1999), Weimer (2013) amongst others argue that changing pedagogy requires an understanding of existing demands, norms and needs of learners be recognized first, followed by a collective and conscious effort to precipitate a change in the inherent classroom rules. This thesis argues that such a change in pedagogy is noticeable in the observational data analysed indicating participant’s awareness and interest in changing existing classrooms norms, behaviour and patterns of shared talk.

7.2.4 Ground Rules for Talk: 'Talk Norm'

As described in section 5.6 of Chapter 5, observational data also indicated instances of breakdown in classroom shared talk and a lack of 'uptake' from participants. This aspect of shared talk emergent during lessons resonates with Mercer's stance on 'ground rules for talk' and was drawn on as a point for discussion due to the nuances it implies (Littleton and Mercer, 2013; Edwards and Mercer, 2012).

To decipher the different types of talk that occurs in learning contexts and understand them, it is necessary to appreciate talk for learning being embedded in social norms and patterns of behaviour in communities of learning. Mercer and Littleton extend on this by arguing that; 'the ground rules for any kind of event generate its familiar and distinctive patterns of talk, even if participants are not consciously aware that these rules are operating' (2013:31). Therefore, talk whether it is speeches, debates, interviews or lectures follow rules based on the expectations of participants, and unfold according to the way participants want them to occur, assuming that they all share an understanding of the same set of 'rules'.

Mercer and Littleton provide an example of 'ground rules' for classroom talk amongst students as being 'do not talk (loudly, at least) while the lecturer is speaking; raise your hand if you want to ask a question; and keep your questions and any other public utterances short and to the point' (2013: 31). They argue that any lecturer who wishes to make their classrooms more participatory and interactive would have to first engineer a change in existing patterns of talk or 'ground rules'. The process of changing existing patterns of talk is quite challenging and begins with the explicit recognition of the rules participants are currently following, before participants agree and work together to follow different 'ground rules' instead (Littleton and Mercer, 2013:32).

Findings from the observational data for this study demonstrated breakdowns and lack of 'uptake' from students, suggesting patterns of social behaviour that reflect an existing culture of talk highlighted in Littleton's and Mercer's study. Students hardly spoke and when they did it was brief and only in answer to the teacher. These evidences show an

example of existing 'talk norms' in ELT Classrooms, norms that need to be recognized and understood before participants can agree that they need to be changed.

Transcribed data of lessons demonstrated instances whereby dialogue is undermined despite the attempts of teacher to engage and involve learners in the learning content. This occurs without distinction through modes of talk including *Whole Class Teacher-Student Interaction* (Lessons 1 and 1.1) and *Pair/Group Student-Teacher Interaction* (Lessons DA 1 and Writing 2 and 2.1). The teacher who is also the researcher, tried to ask a number of questions during these lessons, however despite the different ways in which I attempted to phrase my questions, there is a breakdown in interaction as there is no 'up take' from students and the chain of dialogue is let down. I then proceed to fill the silences myself, falling back on teacher controlled talk which hinders dialogic teaching and by extension learner centredness.

Although such instances at the surface level undermine dialogism and represent a challenge for teacher to manage, it indicates existing 'talk norms' that participants seem to share in, manifest in the ELT classrooms. Research shows that there can be a number of reasons why students fail to engage with questions, they might feel that they do not possess the knowledge to give the right answer and refrain from doing so in order not to embarrass themselves; they might think that the teacher should be the one to talk during lessons and therefore hesitate to speak up; they might wait for a peer or classmate to do so first, indicating that it is acceptable for them to participate (Howe and Mercer 2012; Mercer 2005; Galton et.al. 1999). Although there can be a number of reasons for why students did not participate, and why all participants seemed more comfortable in letting the teacher do the talking, the *lack* of Exploratory, joint talk reveals existing 'talk norms' within the learning community being researched, something this study is concerned with (Alexander, 2004).

The trajectory of let downs in the shared whole class dialogues suggests a 'talk norm' whereby teachers should talk in the classroom and students should listen and learn; and that it's acceptable for students not to answer the teacher, the teacher would continue to

fill the silences. However, what did not occur and is *needed* to change such 'talk norm' towards becoming more dialogic is a shared understanding amongst participants that a change in existing patterns of talk is required. Study findings show that the teacher attempts to urge students to participate and engage, but perhaps because the students are not aware that they need to change the way they normally behave and talk, their conduct in the class does not change. This suggests that there is a lack of shared understanding between participants: firstly, on how talk actually occurs during lessons; secondly that classroom talk during lessons needs to change to become more interactive. Therefore, to change existing 'talk norms' an explicit and shared agreement between participants needs to occur first in order for dialogic talk that is joint and interactive can replace existing 'talk norms' within the ELT classrooms, (Littleton and Mercer, 2013; Galton et.al. 1999).

7.2.5 Section Summary

In order to affect a change in the culture of talk within classrooms, it is necessary for participants to first understand existing patterns of talk and then precipitate a change (Littleton and Mercer, 2013; Mercer, 2005; Alexander, 2004). This is often engineered through explicit understanding between all members of the learning community, first of the existing norms and behaviours that are shared, followed by an agreement on how to change these norms. Findings from this study adds to this body of research by suggesting that there is a need for explicit consideration and revision of tasks and learning activities to encourage more dialogic and learner centred instruction to occur during whole class as well as pair/group learning sessions (Alexander 1995; Galton et.al. 1999).

This is not an easy task as all participants need to share an agreement on the need for a different type of talk that would potentially replace existing 'talk norms'. This suggests that teachers need to be more upfront in problematizing existing patterns of interactions before it can be agreed to be changed. This is challenging as teachers are constantly faced with multiple strands of talk intertwined with the multiple needs of students, as well as their own existing preferences for patterns that they are familiar and experienced with (Mercer, 2005). Additionally, it also calls for more reflective discussion between teachers and

students that are embedded on concepts of equality and sharing of power within the structure of the classrooms, concepts that are easy to discuss but riddled with difficulty in practice (Norton, 2000; Weimer, 2013). The following section discusses the teacher's role in supporting the development of classroom talk within ELT Classrooms.

7.3 Teacher's Role: How Does the Teacher Support the Development of Meaningful Classroom Talk?

This section will examine two main threads that emerged from the findings with regards to the teachers' role in supporting the development of shared classroom talk that aims to be dialogic. Firstly, it discusses the way the teacher, who is also the researcher of the study, used talk through questions and reformulation to demonstrate a 'talk awareness' that attempts to be dialogic but in reality was quite directed and monologic; secondly it considers the difficulties I faced trying to implement dialogic teaching, a fact that other researchers also concede to (Sedova, 2017; Weimer, 2013; Alexander, 2004).

This difficulty Mercer and Howe (2012:3) argue in their review of empirical research on talk and learning informed by a sociocultural perspective, can be addressed by recognizing that teacher-student talk cannot be "understood merely in terms of its use for transmitting information, instructing, checking on understanding or controlling behaviour"; rather teachers who want to get the best results from classroom talk need to balance 'authoritative' teacher fronted talk with more student-centred and shared 'dialogues'.

This can be done best when dialogue is viewed as a form of conversation "in which ideas are heard, taken up and jointly considered" (2012:3). The role of the teacher therefore is important in valuing the views, responses and contributions of students, this facilitates the development of student understanding and prepares them for independent learning (Weimer, 2013; Howe and Mercer, 2012; Alexander, 2004). This thesis argues that positive relationships structured through shared classroom interactions, affected the way talk manifested during different modes of learning. Findings revealed that by trying to value student contributions together with their non-contributions, I attempted to support students learning in a step by step manner.

7.3.1 Teachers' Role in Developing 'Talk Awareness'

Study findings of the way talk occurred during whole class shared interactions in the ELT Classrooms were consistent with literature in that such talk exhibited an inherent 'talk norm' of social norms, expectations and patterns that participants practiced (Littleton and Mercer, 2013). In the context of the ELT classrooms, findings revealed an implicit culture that the teacher was responsible for initiating talk during lessons, controlling the dialogue during lessons and was the source of knowledge within the learning community. Despite the high number of *Student-Teacher Exchanges* (107 instances), observational data demonstrated that these exchanges were mostly question and answer sequences that were brief and limited. I was the one in charge of asking the questions and initiating the talk, I guided the talk and dominated the shared exchanges that occurred.

A temporal analysis of transcribed interactions indicated that there were cases where I tried to stimulate students' thinking by asking open questions during lesson episodes (Alexander 2004; Mercer and Howe 2012). In Lesson Tech 3 and 3.1, I used *how* and *why* questions to stimulate students thinking on the subject of wikis. Additionally, in the same lesson by using reformulation to build on student responses I also tried to develop students thinking on wikis. In acknowledging that observational data is often unable to code the *intention* of teachers when they pose a question, i.e. were they testing students' knowledge or seeking to encourage and extend their knowledge on the topic of discussion? (Galton et. al. 1999), this study contributes a significant perspective to the existing body of research. Seeing as the researcher was herself the teacher (a limitation addressed in Chapter 8), my intention during the lesson was twofold.

Not only was I interested in extending and developing students learning through speculation, but I was also genuinely interested in whether students knew how wikis were organized. This echoes the findings of previous research on teacher questions, reinforcing the idea that teacher questions rarely adhere to a one talk strategy and are often multiple, complex and flexible in their intentions and the way such intentions change

according to the needs of learners, the context of learning and the content being learnt (Galton et. al. 1999; Alexander, 1995; Howe and Mercer, 2012).

Previous research argues that it is difficult and challenging for teachers to change their ethos of guiding, directing and dominating classroom talk (Sedova, 2017; Mercer and Howe, 2012; Galton et.al. 1999). During the recorded lessons, I felt the very same challenges.

Wanting to facilitate the lesson, it was difficult to avoid crossing the line into telling learners the answers along with what they needed to do. Although I tried to guide and support learners by encouraging them to combine talk with a learning activity to develop and extend their learning (Mercer and Howe, 2012) much of the classroom talk ended up being heavily teacher fronted and monologic. In Lesson SS 1 and 1.1, I tried to use exploratory questions like '*Why does he think the Expo should come to this country?*' to stimulate discussion about a video student collectively watched and required students to apply it to the note taking task they were learning.

However, such instances were rare and in the case of Lesson SS1 and 1.1, ended up with brief one word answers from students. Additionally, in other cases, the sequence of questions and answers led to questions which began as being open but ended up as closed questions that were seeking the right answer from students rather than to develop their learning. Although these cases demonstrated attempts at using open and exploratory questions to support student learning, the dialogic quality of the talk that develops is low. This suggests that despite my intentions which indicate a 'talk awareness' to try to be dialogic, my own behaviours and patterns of talk reinforce the dominant and asymmetrical features of teacher-student talk. To change existing patterns of classroom talk and work towards becoming more dialogic Mercer and Howe argue that, teachers need to recognise their own asymmetrical patterns of teacher-student talk first, before they can evaluate and then change it (2012).

7.3.2 Cases of Teacher Questions that are not so Dialogic.

Teacher questions is an area of research that has contributed much to pedagogy over the years (Galton et.al 1998; Galton et.al. 1999; Sedova, 2017). My own use of questions provides a reflective window in understanding my classroom practices and potentially impact the way I might improve them. In lesson SS 4 and 4.1 for example I asked open questions like ‘what are the bad effects of video games...can you tell me?’, but the way in which I move quickly from one students’ brief response to the next student ‘yes...*how about you Daniele any ideas you want to share on this?*’ ‘*How about you Noki?*’, indicated that either I was looking for the right answer from students or that I was in a rush to finish the teaching content for that particular lesson. I did not capitalize on the opportunity to follow up on the response of each individual student nor try to extend and develop their understanding of the subject under discussion (Mercer and Howe, 2012). The superficial level of the question and answer sequences which I practiced suggests what Sedova (2017) and others affirm regarding dialogic teaching, such practices are complex, challenging and are demanding for teachers to consistently implement (Mercer, 2000; Galton et.al., 1999).

The study findings acknowledge that I did *attempt* to use questions to stimulate and develop students learning and speculation. However, there are cases where the line of questioning is superficial, closed and monologic. What is apparent through the data analysis is that despite much of the talk being teacher initiated and teacher controlled, it’s patterns indicated that I demonstrated an awareness of existing ‘talk norms’ and tried to precipitate a change in these social patterns of behaviour. Weimer (2013) states that teachers similar to learners, also move through developmental stages, constantly reflecting on their focus of students and learning. This process involves several stages and indeed is one that the teacher reflects and improves on continuously.

Study findings reveal that the ‘talk awareness’ I demonstrated indicates that my *intentions* and *attempts* to practice dialogic, learner centred teaching occurred during lessons, however such practices were rare and were very much in the developmental stage. Further by trying to create opportunities for students to contribute jointly and participate

during lessons, I attempted to use both contributions as well as cases of non-contributions by students to initiate a change in the 'talk norm' of the classroom and by extension the pedagogical practice. However, in the context of the current study this change has only been initiated and is not consistent throughout shared whole class interactions. Therefore, it is my aim that by reflecting on my own talk patterns as well as that of my students', I would be able to improve my practices with an aim to be more dialogic and learner centred.

7.3.3: Teachers' Role in Valuing Student Contributions and Non Contributions

Study findings indicate that the way in which I tried to manage contributions as well as non-contributions from student participants' attempted to value and encourage joint talk within the context of the classroom. Research on classroom discussion by the likes of Barnes and Todd (1995) and Barnes (2008) suggests that shared classroom interactions require an explicitness that is not normally required in everyday conversation. Such talk defined by Howes et. al. (2007) and Mercer (2005) as *Exploratory Talk* involves joint contribution, a sharing of knowledge and co-reasoning that is equitable.

In order to change existing 'talk norms' to become shared interactions that are *Exploratory*, Howe and Mercer posit that teachers need to be able to 'see the talk and sociocultural interaction' from a sociocultural perspective (2012:6). One of the key elements in using talk to stimulate and guide students learning in a productive way and encourage explicitness, is when students believe that their opinions and views are valued (Alexander, 1995; Mercer, 2005).

In Lesson Writing 10 and 10.1, I used open questions to encourage students' contribution and demonstrated to them that their opinion is valuable. This is reinforced through the reformulation and extension of student responses that I also tried to implement in the same lesson. Galton et. al (1999) and Nystrand (1997) agree that reformulation builds on student learning while stimulating speculation. By probing and asking for explanations from students during lessons, the teacher can be seen to value student contributions whilst trying to set a path towards utilizing problem-solving strategies to understand and

extend on learning content (Weimer, 2013; Mercer and Howe, 2012). Through such support, I attempted to model dialogue that encourages student voice and valued student contributions in the process towards becoming dialogic.

The study findings revealed further that in addition to instances of student contributions that were valued, their non-contributions were also used as opportunities to learn. Observational data indicates that I attempted different strategies in managing breakdowns as well as brief and hesitant responses from students. When a question was met with a brief one-word response, data analysis revealed that such responses were sometimes dismissed by me (Mercer and Howe, 2012). Such dismissals signal lost opportunities to develop and extend students' learning. Similarly, at other times I used student contributions to build on the responses, explaining further, adding to it and reformulating yet another response from students (Alexander, 2004).

In this way I tried to keep the tempo of the dialogue up and attempted to implement my dialogic aim (Mercer, 2000). In instances where there is no response from students and the dialogue is undermined, I managed this by attempting to use humour, sarcasm or even by answering the question myself in a bid to model talking to learn for students. This suggests two possibilities, the first that I made my talk expectations explicit through the way I managed and used talk during the lessons (Newman, 2017; Mercer, 2005; Mercer, 1995), second that I was simply fulfilling student expectations of the existing 'ground rules' for talk that it is the teacher who should talk and students should listen (Mercer, 2000; Mercer and Howe, 2012).

The culture of classroom talk within the ELT classrooms reveal a 'talk norm' amongst participants manifest in their brief, hesitant and one word responses, in addition to my own tendency to fall back on talk that was teacher dominated and directive. Additionally, my use of questions suggested that there were cases of lost opportunities and the development of classroom talk was monologic, directed and closed.

Despite this, the ‘talk awareness’ evident in whole class interactions indicated that *attempts* to change the ‘talk norm’ was initiated, and study findings potentially suggests that I as the teacher in the study, am in the developmental stage of implementing dialogic teaching (Weimer, 2013). Although I attempted to engage learners repeatedly in discussion through questions that I thought were open and exploratory, the resulting talk was of low educational quality and less dialogic in reality. These results are significant in providing a reflexive opportunity to evaluate and change dominant patterns of teacher-student talk (Howe et.al. 2007; Mercer and Howe, 2012).

7.3.4 Section Summary:

Findings indicated that the development of learner centredness through dialogic instruction has been initiated within ELT Classroom contexts and is in the developmental or ‘fledgling’ stage. In recognizing that the analysis of classroom discussions revealed an inherent ‘talk norm’ that was teacher directed and teacher dominant, shared whole class interactions demonstrated attempts by myself as the teacher to model dialogic talk. Two things emerged as a result of data analysis: first, despite the current quality of classroom dialogues the need for teachers to be more upfront and reflexive of their management of using talk for learning needs to happen, so that an explicit understanding of existing ‘talk norms’ can be achieved amongst all participants. Second, changing the culture of classroom talk is difficult and challenging and needs to occur in stages, for teachers just as much as students.

7.4 How Do Students Experience Learner Centredness in the ELT Classroom?

This thesis explored the way pedagogy aiming to be learner centred was implemented in ELT classrooms by one teacher and how students experienced such instruction. In order to gain an interpretive understanding of student experiences, the way they perceive learner centredness and how that is reconciled with effective classroom instruction was also explored. The findings of thematic analysis revealed that; 1) there is a discrepancy in the way learner centredness is conceptualized by learners and the way it manifests in classrooms; 2) learners indicate an increasing awareness for the development of learning instruction that is centred around dialogism and shared responsibility within the classroom

context, 3) such learning needs to be locally derived and sensitized to the needs of the learner rather than a preconceived philosophy. These findings have significant implications for teachers, English Language Teaching (ELT) education and education policy makers in general.

The following sections discuss learner's stance and expectations of 'good' classrooms and how these are reconciled with the way learner centredness is defined in literature. Discussing the attempts by students to be exploratory which are sporadic yet present in whole class interactions, the manifestation of 'talk awareness' and what this signifies for dialogic learner centred practice is considered. Moving on to examine the discrepancy between students understanding of learner centredness and their practice of it within the ELT Classroom contexts, the 'fledgling' state of learner centredness within learning contexts is reflected on.

7.4.1 Learners' Stance and Expectations of a 'Good' Classroom

The study findings revealed that learner centredness is a fluid and multiple concept that learners had difficulty verbalizing (Nunan, 1996; Tudor, 1996). In order to understand the way in which they perceived such an abstract concept, student ideas of 'good' classrooms and what they consisted of were reconciled with learner centredness in the literature. Despite this it was difficult coming to a common understanding of learner centredness and all it encapsulates as students used different terms to describe it. Weimer (2013) summarizes that learning is an abstract concept, and literature regarding learner centredness is an instructional theory that is predominantly disconnected with the practice of teaching. In addition to this, the study findings suggest that there are different perspectives and multiple ways in which instructional practice is experienced and understood by learners (Galton et.al. 1999; Alexander 2004).

Data analysis indicated that students perceived learner centredness in a range of different ways. However, the emergent patterns from student descriptions converged around three main concepts in the way they perceived learner centred classrooms; students described such learning as being focused on the student and involving the student (Weimer 2013);

they felt such classrooms were facilitated through shared classroom dialogues (Auerbach, 2000) and that the teacher acted as a facilitator who guided learners towards more engagement and participation with the learning content. Students conceptualized learner centred classrooms by associating 'good' classroom with theories of learner centred teaching. They highlighted the need for such classrooms to involve and value all members of the learning community and recognized that students and teacher had equal responsibility to participate and engage with learning content (Howe and Mercer, 2012).

An interesting finding from the data analysis is the discrepancy between student beliefs regarding the concept of effective learner centred classrooms and their actual practice in the classroom context. This mismatch between student perceptions and actual classroom conduct echoes research on the practice of learner centredness in language education (Tudor 1996; Weimer, 2005; Nunan, 1996; Nystrand, 1997). Student responses indicated that they recognized learner centred classroom to revolve around dialogic instruction. When explaining learner centredness they used terms such as *participation*, *active*, *engaging*, *being free to say* and involving *learners*. However, observational data from the video recordings suggest that despite the 'talk awareness' that student demonstrated in interview and written response data, during lessons students hardly participated, hesitated to contribute and relied on the teacher to direct classroom discourse.

Additionally, classrooms students described as being learner centred and therefore more enjoyable, motivating and appealing to them revolved around aspects of shared talk. They explained that when lessons included learners and fostered learning through shared interaction during whole class, pair/group and other collective learning strategies it was truly learner centred (Mercer, 2000; Littleton and Mercer, 2013). They emphasized that learning should aware needs of learners and be flexible to include such needs as part of classroom intervention (Galton et. al. 1999). Student experiences of learner centred classroom invoked the teacher and teaching strategies repeatedly and this aspect was prevalent through all student responses.

Similar to previous research on classroom talk for learning, student participants in this study seemed to indicate an awareness that learning is a social action that is permeated through relationships that are built within the structure of the classroom (Mercer, 2005; Howe and Mercer, 2012; Resnick, 2006). Their experience and stories of fun enjoyable classrooms revolved around themselves as learners; their teacher as a guide and source of knowledge who precipitated such learning; and shared classroom talk which was used to facilitate learning. Yet findings revealed that these participants refrained, hesitated and hardly participated during actual lessons.

7.4.2 The Discrepancy between Student Perceptions and their Practice of Learner Centredness in ELT Classrooms.

The findings suggest that students related learner centred experiences with models of learner centred teaching in literature (Tudor, 1996; Weimer, 2013; Nunan, 1996). They agreed that such instruction needs to place learners at the centre of the learning process, share the responsibility for learning and tailor learning content to the needs of the participant and context of the lesson (Weimer, 2013). Additionally, students recognized that especially in higher education, learners have a vested interest in their own learning and therefore more reason to involve themselves actively in the educational process (Norton, 2000; Hirano, 2009). Yet despite this awareness, students did not act on their beliefs in the reality of the classroom context.

The challenge for teachers then is not so much in practicing teaching strategies that are learner centred but rather changing the 'norm' and behaviour of students with regards to their participation and engagement during lessons. Study findings reinforce the idea that despite dialogic teaching 'being theoretically rich' it is difficult and complex to practice (Sedova, 2017:1). As stated in earlier sections of this chapter such change needs to first recognize 'talk norms' within the classroom and acknowledging it before attempting to change the dynamics of pedagogical practices. This thesis argues then that such *attempt* to change the 'talk norms' are evident through whole class interactions, however they are yet in the developmental stages (Weimer, 2013; Galton et.al. 1999; Mercer, 2000).

The nuances from student responses point out that learner centredness as a pedagogical approach is preferred by learners, lauded by them and even to some extent expected by them when it comes to lectures. Students feel traditional classrooms are de-motivating, boring and are an outdated way to learn (Auerbach, 2000). And yet within the classroom context, students still look to the teacher as the main source of knowledge and rely on teacher directed talk and answers (Howe, 2010; Mercer, 2005). What emerged out of this multiple and contrary system is a 'fledgling' context that was blurry in its actual dialogic capacity and yet firm in its intentions, perceptions and wants for such teaching and learning.

7.4.3 Towards Dialogic, Learner Centred Instruction in the ELT Classroom

This thesis attempted to show the complexities apparent in contexts of learning and the importance of understanding existing 'norms' or 'ground rules' of talk within language classrooms (Alexander, 2004; Mercer, 2005; Littleton and Mercer, 2013; Howe and Mercer, 2012). Further it also problematized that changing such inherent structures and roles by changing the discourse dynamics of the classroom can be a challenge for teachers, more so than merely changing tasks, learning content and classroom intervention (Galton et.al. 1999; Mercer, 2000; Howe and Mercer, 2012). Indeed, such change is precipitated in stages and it is difficult to label learning which is undergoing change into any one system of practice or educational approach in exclusion to others, (Howe and Mercer, 2012; Galton et.al. 1999; Alexander, 1995).

Classroom learning and teaching are facilitated through talk, yet to say that since talk which occurred was *not* dialogic it is therefore *not* useful is a parody that goes against the very tenets of dialogism; an instructional philosophy that values all discourse as being useful for different purposes, (Mercer and Howe, 2012; Galton et.al. 1999; Tudor, 1996). Yes, classroom discourse should be meaningful, and teachers should facilitate talk to become relevant and extend students' learning. However, such an occurrence is a process which happens one step at a time and begins with an *intention* to implement such learning and teaching (Weimer, 2013).

Study findings reveal that the dialogic process, a blurry one in its current state, has begun and this is an important finding in itself. The manifestation of learner centred instruction and the way it was experienced by learners was termed in this study as being 'fledgling', it has taken root and precipitated an awareness in both learners and teacher, however it is very much in its developmental stage, as it is attempted to be implemented in various phases through talk that aims to be dialogic but is still monologic and teacher fronted in reality. It is significant that such a philosophy is something teacher and learners recognized as being better in various levels, and are willing to work towards achieving through a variety of methods.

7.4.4 Section Summary:

Findings from Chapters 5 and 6 of this study revealed a 'talk awareness' amongst students and teacher in ELT classrooms which indicated that participants understand the importance of dialogism in learner centred classrooms, as well as their own roles as participants within such student centred learning structures. Although data analysis demonstrated a contraband between the way learners perceived, expected and narrated their experience of learner centredness, with the way they actually practiced it within the context of the classroom, the intention to be more dialogic and by extension learner centred is currently in a 'fledgling' state in the ELT Classrooms. Findings also demonstrated that the dialogic quality of classroom interaction was superficial and consisted of monologic, IRF exchanges, and therefore of low educational value. However, instances of exploratory talk between student and students, as well as student and teacher also *did* occur, albeit rarely. This reinforces the idea that the journey towards learner centredness is becoming a part of classroom practice and although it has yet to be a 'ground rule', it is in its 'fledgling' state and therefore significant.

The findings of this thesis also point out the multiple and dynamic way learning occurs, and the complexities in reconciling it to any one linear definition. Instead student responses echo literature in that learning is flexible and ubiquitous in the way it is reconciled with the differing experiences and sociocultural norms of individual learners. Therefore, in using talk as a tool to learn, it is important that such discursive tools are

used to understand local needs and derive pedagogy based on said needs within specific learning contexts. In doing so the importance of understanding learning as a social act and nuanced by human complexity, diversity and the relationships that exist within learning communities is emphasized, (Alexander, 2004). The following sections of this chapter aim to discuss the findings in relation to the way such classroom interactions affected student learning and by extension student identities and the way they perceived their learner 'selves'.

7.5 How Does Learner Centredness Affect the Learner Identity of Students in the ELT Classroom?

The third research question of this thesis aimed to use students 'telling' to derive an understanding of the effect learner centred instruction had on the identity of learners. Talk potentially impacts more than student learning, it also impacts the way learners understand and think about themselves as learners and this was the idea the final research question was premised on (Tudor, 1996; Alexander, 2004; Mercer, 2005). Language learners are individual beings and differ from one another in myriad and significant ways, however the same learners also belong to a community of learning that is influenced by a specific set of beliefs, social norms and expectations. Tudor (1996) posits that to be coherent with the tenets of learner centred instruction, such pedagogy must work together with the various aspects of learners' identities and attempt to validate these aspects.

Student participants of this study were all of Arab origin and potentially shared similar sociocultural beliefs. However, learners differed in the way each of them perceived themselves and the effect pedagogy aimed at being learner centred had on them. The data analysis used reiterative coding processes to frame the three main effects students 'talked' about in the interview and written responses. These include *Motivation*, *Engagement* and *Autonomy*. The following sections will attempt to reflect on each of these themes in relation to the way dialogic pedagogy was attempted to be implemented, the theoretical frame the study was originally derived from, as well as in relation to existing literature on the topic.

7.5.1 Learner Motivation and The Impact of Classroom Pedagogy that Aimed to be Dialogic.

Findings suggested that despite learner centred instruction being more challenging than transmissive teacher fronted pedagogy, learners felt that such instruction enabled them to learn in a thorough and long term manner. Learners explained how learner centredness emphasized practical hands-on learning, enabling a tangible improvement in their comprehension of learning content. Jalila stated that she was able to '*understand more*' and Sabar felt learning was now made easy through such active pedagogy. Students also expressed how learning through whole class interactions affected themselves not only within the context of the learning environment but outside the classroom as well.

Additionally, terms such as 'enjoyable', 'interesting' and 'fun' were associated with whole class interactional learning that attempted to be learner centred. Learners concurred with findings from previous research in identifying the collective nature of learning through shared discussion having a direct effect on making them feel keen on attending lectures and more motivated to learn (Resnick, 1999; Mercer, 2000; Mercer and Howe, 2012).

Another interesting aspect that emerged with regards to the impact on learner selves was the ease students associated with learning new knowledge through whole class interactions. Highlighting the collective, co-contributory aspects of learner centred classrooms, students capitalized on shared talk as a dominant factor which allowed them to understand and manage learning new and difficult concepts in a supported way (Slavin, 2009; Mercer and Littleton, 2007). Students expressed how learning in such a manner was quicker, supported and helpful in understanding new concepts and extending their knowledge on different topics. Commenting on their ability to retain the information learnt through such collective instructional practices more effectively, students noticed improvements in their learning and felt that they wanted to engage in lessons and with the learning content (Littleton and Howe, 2010; Mercer, 2000).

7.5.2 Learner Engagement and The Impact of Classroom Pedagogy that Aimed to be Dialogic.

Learners also delineated *Engagement* as a tenet of learner centredness that affected their student 'selves'. This frame coded the impact shared classroom interactions had on learners both within and outside the classroom. Students used terms such as *relaxed*, *confident*, *participatory*, *active* and *expressive* to explain the effect of learner centred instruction on them. Through shared classroom discourse learners felt that they became more confident learners who were able to express their ideas and opinions better not only inside the classroom but also outside. Students emphasized on the discursive tenet of learner centredness here and how despite having to think, share and build relationships in a language that was non-native to them, these acts of talk made them cultivate skills that would help them long term.

Students explained that being able to share their ideas openly with the teacher, being valued for their opinions and being accepted as member of the learning community was facilitated through shared dialogues between teacher and students. Such dialogues were pivotal in modelling learners to engage with lessons more (Howe and Littleton, 2010; Mercer, 2000). Students recognized that this was a gradual process, as summarized by Ghiso something that needs to be done one step at a time. Findings revealed further that students seemed to understand that providing *opportunities* for them to make mistakes, not respond and not participate also played an important role in the educational continuum (Mercer and Howe, 2012). The fact that such opportunities were repeated despite lack of 'uptake' and breakdowns were significant in becoming a factor that modelled to students the way classroom dialogues need to take shape within learning contexts and students' role in shaping and re-shaping them.

7.5.3 Learner Autonomy and The Impact of Classroom Pedagogy that Aimed to be Dialogic.

The final aspect to emerge from findings as a reflexive project of student selves was the increased *Autonomy* students associated with pedagogical practice that was learner

centred. This theme coded the responses students made to feeling ‘more independent’; ‘self-reliant’; ‘responsible’ and ‘in control of their learning’.

Demonstrating an awareness that such leaning approaches dictate the way new generations will learn (Alexander, 2004), students echoed previous research when they talked about shared classroom interactions that made them feel ‘comfortable’, valued and more connected to their learning (Mercer and Howe, 2012; Galton et.al. 1999; Tudor, 1996). They expressed that by ‘talking to learn’ they had an important role within the structure of the classroom and recognized that such learning required them to contribute, participate and become a responsible and productive members of the learning community (Mercer, 2000; Littleton and Mercer, 2013).

Students explained how initially it was difficult to reconcile themselves to such new ways of learning and ‘being’ in the learner centred classrooms. Many expressed how it was difficult for them to talk and present, and felt that this approach to education required ‘more’ from them than traditional learning contexts. However, slowly they adjusted to such responsibility and began to depend on their own abilities more and turned to the teacher less often, (Mercer, 2000; Mercer and Howe, 2012). Students added further that more of these shared exchanges and dialogues need to occur during lessons to continue to stimulate students and encourage them to think and speculate in the process of learning. These findings reinforce the ‘talk awareness’ participants within ELT Classrooms demonstrated and the ‘fledgling’ state of dialogic, learner centred instruction in these learning contexts.

7.5.4 Structure and Agency in Changing ‘Talk Norms’ in ELT Classrooms

The data analysis concurs with existing literature that language and thought are intertwined in complex ways that affect the inherent social structures that communities function on daily (Alexander, 2004; Mercer, 2000; Mercer, 2005; Newman, 2017). It is the social aspect of learning that must be focused on to precipitate change in instructional philosophy and this can be done through promoting meaningful and purposeful classroom discourse (Littleton and Mercer, 2013; Resnick, 2006). Such changes in ‘talk norms’ begin

by creating an awareness amongst participants about the importance of their own roles within learning structures and the need for positive relationships that are founded on shared responsibility for learning between participants. By valuing members of the learning community, as well as their contributions (or lack of it) such awareness can be developed using a step by step process (Weimer, 2013; Alexander, 2004).

By dismissing talk as teacher fronted and monologic, and therefore not useful, instructors risk upsetting the very balance of power and agency that learner centredness is founded on (Weimer, 2013; Tudor, 1996; Nunan, 1997). Instead a call for more meaningful, purposeful and dialogic interactions while valuing current classroom talk in whatever form, must be promoted and encouraged to develop stages of learner centredness within communities of learning.

7.5.5 Section Summary

Identity a ubiquitous, dynamic and multiple subject in itself is derived in literature as subjective, continuously evolving and intertwined with individual perceptions of culture and social norms (Norton, 2000; Kumaravadivelu, 2006b; Hirano, 2009). Literature posits that learner identities are manifold and fluctuating, at the same time they are nuanced by the relationships between the learner and members of the learning community they are a participant of (Norton, 2000).

In wanting to precipitate a change to the existing structures of learning and participant roles that are inherent within classrooms by promoting dialogic learner centred instruction, it is important to first recognize that student agency and traditional structural roles inherent in classrooms needs to also evolve. When instructors implement learner centred teaching it is often met with resistance in the beginning (Nystrand, 1997, Mercer, 2005), however the findings of this study shows that despite similar instances of resistance manifest during episodes of shared classroom talk, participants also demonstrated an awareness, expectation and preference for dialogism.

Overall, the study findings indicated that learners demonstrated a ‘talk awareness’ and recognized the need for dialogic, student centred learning. Additionally, learners also demonstrated subtly that despite the challenges and novelty of such learning approaches, they are willing to work towards becoming more dialogic, and learner centred in a gradual, step by step process. What this means to learning contexts in the UAE and potential student teachers in the Arab region will be explored in the following section.

7.6 Learner Centredness in the UAE and Potential Teachers.

The student interviews and written responses from the elicitation task resulted in the emergence of several themes, but education especially in the context of the Arab region became increasingly central. This was especially the case when students talked about the effect of learner centredness on their learner identities already laced and founded on Arab tradition and norms. As such topics surfaced during the interviews, the idea of implementing learner centred instruction as potential language teachers and whether participants were inclined to do so in their own future classrooms, provided an insight into the way such instruction impacted students. The final theme which was not initially a part of the main research questions of the study, evolved through the interview sessions the researcher shared with students and was included as part of the study to provide an insight into the way learner centred instruction was internalized by student teachers.

Data analysis revealed that a majority of the participants concurred with the positive impact of dialogic learner centred instruction and were keen on implementing it themselves as future teachers. Student like Nimar and Aman highlighted the ability of such teaching philosophy to be flexible and tailored to the needs of learners; Jalilah said she wants a fun and interactive experience for her students and would therefore choose such approaches. Additionally, Noki, Khusan and Lateefah expressed that such learning methods would make them effective teachers who were up to date with the latest teaching and learning approaches. This would be beneficial for their careers in the education sector long term.

However, Lasha was concerned about the feasibility in practicing such teaching approaches within educational contexts in the UAE. Sighting the emphasis schools in the UAE place on content rather than learning an issue previous research on dialogism has also identified (Sedova 2017; Myhill 2016), she explained that she may not have enough time nor the support to practice learner centredness as a teacher. Maya and Hawa stated that that they would 'practice a bit of both' rather than one approach to the exclusion of another. Stating that transmissive teaching also had a valid place in learning and teaching, they felt that they would switch between approaches based on the needs and requirements of the class.

7.6.1 Learner Centredness, Educational Contexts, and Arab Sociocultural Norms in the UAE.

Keeping in mind that all student participants were of Arab origin and therefore potentially shared commonalities with the Arab identity, they were asked whether learner centred, dialogic instruction was acceptable and compatible with Arab sociocultural norms, traditions and way of life. Since understanding the way would be teachers felt about implementing learner centred dialogic practices in their own classrooms as future teacher would provide an insight into the effects of such teaching philosophy and its implications on student teachers outside the classroom context, it is relevant to this study and therefore included in section 6.5 of study findings.

There were three strands that emerged from the student interviews: Firstly, students felt that there were no particular inhibitions in Arab culture that would make accepting learner centred dialogic instruction improper. In fact, they felt that such active and engaging teaching approaches were necessary and would potential benefit students in the long run. Aman and Jalilah explained how it was not really a cultural issue and that Arab students are no different from other students in wanting fun and interesting ways to learn.

They felt that using talk to participate, interact and learn through shared discussion, would benefit students and develop their thinking skills long term. Such learning approaches are consistent with Arab culture which is known to be a heavily oral tradition.

Therefore, the dialogic tenets of learner centredness resonate with the norms and practices of Arabs which revolve around shared discourse as a way to build and maintain social relationships, pass on traditions and bind individuals as members of a larger sociocultural group.

Secondly students also expressed that they were comfortable talking about such learning with family members and friends. Sharing something novel they practiced in class through tasks that had a learner centred aspect to it was welcomed and accepted by members and many explained how family and friends thought such approaches were interesting. Learners were vehement in expressing that such learning should be a part of the education for young students in the UAE from an early age, by doing so students agreed that learners would become used to learning in a responsible and active manner, and would not have to struggle adjusting to it at a later age, a challenge many of the participants stated they themselves were faced with. Since learner centredness aims to instil students with lifelong learning and the honing of abilities which would aid them both within and outside of the classroom context, students felt that such learning should be inculcated from early stages like pre kg and grade one in order to benefit learners in the UAE from the beginning.

The third strand which referred to the problems teacher might face in attempting learner centredness was highlighted by a number of student participants. One student, Ghiso felt that Arabs especially in the UAE were not ready for such a new approach to teaching and learning. Expressing that parents expected their children to learn in the same way they did, through teacher fronted, transmissive pedagogy, student responses problematized parents who may resist learner centred approaches. In addition to changing the mind sets of teachers and learners, learner centredness is an instructional philosophy that may potentially require changing the mind sets of parents and families who are of external participants in educational processes (Galton et. al. 1999). The fact that student responses acknowledge such challenges as something they would likely be faced with indicates further their level of awareness and understanding regarding the importance of dialogism as an instructional philosophy for current as well as future classroom practices.

Therefore, as future teachers inclined towards learner centred instruction, students demonstrated an awareness of the potential problems they could be met with, despite their misgivings, they felt strongly that such approaches would best be able to meet the needs of learners and extend their learning effectively.

7.6.2 The Benefits of Learner Centred Practices for Educational Contexts in the UAE.

The responses of students inferred two dominant aspects: first that learner centred instruction had a positive effect on their own learner 'selves' and learning, therefore they felt such approaches would benefit young learners within schools in the UAE. Students were also explicit in the way such instruction would be potentially beneficial by stating that young learners would develop long term learning, hone their critical thinking abilities and develop language proficiency which were necessary in the increasingly competitive society of today. They agreed that for them, being introduced to such strategies at the University level was difficult to adjust to and therefore learners should be exposed to dialogism and learner centredness from kindergarten or at the latest first grade.

This emphasizes that learner centredness as an instructional philosophy implemented through tenets of shared talk, power, and responsibility for learning within classrooms structures and centred on students has had positive effects on the learner identity of students (Mercer 2000; Nystrand 1997; Alexander 2004). Consequently, as potential teachers, student participants feel that they would implement similar instruction on their own students to share with them the benefits of such active and dialogic instruction.

Secondly student responses also implied that there is a need within schools in the UAE for such teaching practices. Since they felt underequipped in learner centred classrooms at the university level, they expressed that such teaching approaches should be introduced to learners in spite of potential problems that could initially arise from such practices, especially for new teachers. Stressing on the importance of learning to express, form, discuss and negotiate confidently through meaningful talk for young learners,

students highlighted that effort needs to be put into creating an awareness for using talk to learn amongst teachers and students, as well as amongst parents.

Student responses suggested that there is a need for such awareness amongst parents as well as amongst curriculum developers and policy makers at the education management level in the UAE. Such awareness would be the first step towards successfully implementing learner centredness and students recognized that as future teachers the responsibility for this may be something that *they* might need to precipitate and implement in specific learning contexts.

7.6.3 Section Summary

This section explored an emerging concept based on the discussion and responses of students during interviews. It explored the way learners as would be teachers might or might not want to implement learner centred dialogic teaching as potential teachers. The data analysis showed that the majority of students as would be teachers were inclined towards learner centred teaching as opposed to transmissive teaching approaches and recognized the benefits of dialogic instruction as future teachers in the UAE. Concurring that educational contexts in the UAE would benefit from such dialogic learner centred instruction, students admitted that such instruction may be challenging to implement, especially initially. Additionally, in spite of potential problems that might surface in attempting to practice learner centredness, student teachers felt that the positives of such learning outweighed the difficulties, and were in agreement that learner centredness was necessary for the growth of education and learning as a whole in the UAE.

7.7 The Value of Dialogic Teaching for Learner Centred Instruction

This thesis argued that learner centredness was attempted in ELT Classrooms and manifested through pedagogy that aimed to be dialogic. Research has shown that dialogic pedagogy facilitates the learning of new knowledge and extends student learning in a dynamic and interactive manner (Alexander, 2004; Mercer, 2005; Mercer, 1995; Littleton and Mercer, 2013; Nunan, 1997; Myhill, 2016; Newman, 2017). In lieu of the sociocultural paradigm, dialogism recognizes the importance of shared dialogues and

collectivism in supporting the development of learners (Littleton and Mercer, 2013; Mercer and Howe, 2012). This perspective also calls for recognition that the development of such meaningful talk for learning is a process that is done in stages, (Weimer, 2013; Mercer and Howe, 2012 ; Mercer, 2005).

The ‘fledgling’ state of dialogic learner centred instruction manifest in the ELT Classrooms of this study reinforce the developmental stages of such an instructional philosophy, stages that researchers agree are necessary in working towards dialogism (Littleton and Mercer, 2013; Weimer, 2013). This thesis argued further that the tenets of learner centredness is an instructional philosophy that is facilitated through talk (Mercer and Howe, 2012; Mercer, 2005; Alexander, 2004). This inherently links learner centred instruction with shared classroom dialogues and by extension dialogic learning. The principles that underpin learner centredness are keeping with tenets of dialogic learning in language classrooms; consequently the quality of dialogic instruction has implications on the learning that manifests during lessons (Newman, 2017; Nystrand, 1997, Alexander, 2004).

7.7.1 “Fledgling’ State of Learner Centred, Dialogic Instruction

This thesis argued that the way in which shared dialogues occurred within the context of the ELT classrooms indicated that instruction was centred around whole class learning, with most of the shared interaction consisting of brief, hesitant IRF exchanges that were for the majority teacher directed. This suggested ‘ground rules’ for talk similar to the concept developed by Littleton and Mercer (2013) orientated around norms that indicated ‘teacher will talk more during lessons and students will listen and learn’.

Despite the monologic quality of talk during lessons, this thesis argued that students and teacher demonstrated a ‘talk awareness’ which emerged as a subtle theme during the *Teacher-Student Exchanges* suggesting that participants recognized the importance of meaningful and purposeful shared talk to extend and develop learning. Despite the lack of *Exploratory* talk suggesting the dialogic quality of interactions was low, this thesis argued that learner centredness is in its developmental stages within these learning

contexts and the *intention* of participants indicated that an attempt towards changing existing ‘talk norms’ to work towards becoming dialogic has been initiated and is in a ‘fledgling’ state.

Recognizing that such changes in pedagogical practices is a complex process rather than a quick fix and require consistent reflection on the part of the instructor to aware the needs of learners, learning contexts and learning content, this thesis agrees with previous research in that the development of dialogic talk is difficult, time consuming and complex for teachers as well as students (Mercer and Howe, 2012; Mercer, 2013; Alexander, 2004). Such processes are gradual, therefore the ‘fledgling’ state of such practices are significant in the journey towards becoming dialogic and learner centred, (Littleton and Mercer, 2013; Weimer, 2013; Mercer and Howe, 2012).

Although participant interactions during lessons sometimes went back and forth between being brief, hesitant, question-answer-question sequences and even resulted in breakdowns and lack of ‘uptake’ in the shared dialogues, and the value of educational talk was low, this thesis argued that attempts at *Exploratory* Talk were made. Learning is never linear nor easily categorized and defined, indeed its very fluid and subjective nature emphasizes that all the blurry edges *does* matter and must be taken into consideration as parts of the whole in the process of acquiring, extending and making meaning of knowledge (Mercer and Howe, 2012; Tudor, 1996). This thesis therefore argued that that existing ‘talk norms’ in ELT Classrooms have been acknowledged as one where ‘teacher talks and students listen’; and increase in the ‘talk awareness’ of participants indicates an acceptance for such culture to evolve towards one where participants recognize and want ‘both teacher and students to talk’. Such a change in the dynamics of learning communities is significant in working towards learner centredness and dialogic teaching as an instructional philosophy (Weimer, 2013; Alexander, 2004).

7.7.2 Dialogic, Learner Centred Instruction and Learner Identities

Changing the ‘ground rules’ for talk within the contexts of learning communities’ affects more than the dynamics of shared classroom talk and student learning (Norton, 2000;

Tudor, 1996; Hirano, 2009), this thesis argued that such dialogic processes also impact student perceptions, values, beliefs and the way they see themselves as learners within the context of their learning communities.

Findings from student interviews and written responses indicated that learners preferred dialogic teaching as opposed to transmissive, teacher fronted instruction. Despite the challenges of navigating a dual pedagogy, students were more inclined towards learner centred classrooms even though they were difficult to get adjusted to compared to traditional classroom contexts. This thesis argued that the reason for this preference is the effect such teaching approaches had on individual learners and their learning within the context of the classroom. Data analysis indicated that learners associated positive impacts on their learning and by extension on their 'selves' as a result of being in learner centred classrooms. Noticing a tangible improvement in the way they navigated themselves both within and outside the classroom context, during individual learning tasks and through the learning content itself, learners echoed existing research in highlighting the benefits of dialogism (Mercer, 2000; Littleton and Mercer, 2013).

The interview responses suggested that learners realized improved proficiency in the language, a development of their critical thinking skills and a more comprehensive understanding of the learning topic through instruction that aimed to be learner centred. Findings also indicated that such learning had a direct effect on making learners feel more self-reliant and independent in their learning. Students felt they had an important role in the process of learning and a responsibility to carry that role out through shared classroom talk during whole class as well as group and peer learning sessions. It is a point of note that despite such positive effects of learner centred dialogic instruction on learners which their 'telling' exemplifies; classroom recordings portray a conflicting story.

However, despite the discrepancy in the way learners internalize the effects of learner centred instruction and their actual involvement in class, the significance of dialogism permeated through learner centred approaches leading students to feel more motivated, discursive and confident cannot be side-lined.

Three dominant aspects emerged as a result of the way learners negotiated themselves in the context of learner centred classrooms that were aimed at being dialogic: 1) learners felt that they were more motivated to learn as they observed more competence in their own skills and abilities both within and outside of the classroom context; 2) they began to be more confident in modelling discourse that attempted to be more dialogic; 3) they realized more autonomy and responsibility in the process of learning and extending knowledge and began to rely less on teacher and more on themselves. This thesis argues that because of the positive effects that learners relate with learner centred classrooms, there is a change in the 'talk awareness' of participants. Despite such changes, findings revealed that the development of shared talk was overall monologic and teacher directed indicating that the process of implementing dialogic, learner centred pedagogy is still very much in its initial 'fledgling' stage, however it is no less significant in reflecting that the journey towards learner centredness and dialogic instruction evolves through such stages in order to be relevant within educational contexts.

7.7.3 Dialogic, Learner Centred Teaching and the Case of the UAE.

This thesis argued that the beliefs students had as potential teachers suggested the way learners internalized and were effected by learner centred instruction and reflects the impact dialogic teaching had on their values, philosophies and perceptions. Based on the positive impact learner centredness had on themselves, the majority of students were inclined on implementing similar strategies as potential teachers within educational contexts in the UAE. Students concurred that Arab sociocultural norms were no different from other cultures in being ready for a more engaged and participatory approach to acquiring knowledge. Further, students felt that such dynamic, shared learning was needed in educational contexts within the UAE to instil long term learning and build capable and responsible learners. However, the challenge such a new and novel teaching approach might represent to themselves as fresh and untrained teachers was something students recognized as being potentially problematic.

This thesis argued that the way in which students talked about their expectations as future teachers indicated the awareness and developmental stages that learner centredness is in within the classroom scenarios that this study explored. By problematizing support from educational management, support from parents and most importantly support from learners themselves, student participants demonstrated an understanding of the need for dialogic instruction, but at the same time reinforced that a change in the classroom 'ground rules' or 'norms' needs to occur first. This was something they saw as being the biggest challenge for themselves; not the practice of learner centredness itself but rather in precipitating a change in the existing norms and behaviours of classrooms towards implementing a more dynamic, participatory and shared classroom culture (Galton et. al. 1999; Sedova, 2017). Therefore, inculcating this learning culture in educational contexts in the UAE as early as possible would better prepare learners to negotiate themselves in learner centred dialogic classrooms at the University level.

7.8 Implications of the study for an understanding of the relationship between language, learning and identity.

This section will discuss the contributions this study has made to understanding the relationship between language, learning and identity. The first thing I found is that it was extremely difficult to interpret classroom talk as it was multiple, dynamic and fluid. Talk occurred in a multi-dimensional manner and it was a challenge to narrow it down to linear codes that attempted to understand and present them. It was a challenge for me to explain how each type of talk functioned as it sometimes overlapped and crossed over categorical definitions. What the talk analysis revealed was valuable in the way it allowed me to understand existing 'talk norms' which were teacher directed and of low educational value.

This immediate contribution of the study, allowed me to demonstrate through authentic classroom data that the intention and attempts of participants to be dialogic indicated the 'fledgling' state of learner centred practices. I then began to contest the current emphasis on purposeful classroom talk as being responsible for dialogism, and attempted to show that all types of talk present opportunities for learning. I moved on to propose that by

seeing opportunities for using talk to learn through contributions as well as non-contributions, the study revealed that shared talk impacts learners positively even when such interactions are low in their dialogic quality.

I tried to shed light on the concern over quality classroom talk versus using all opportunities to develop talk. I found that quality talk extends and develops students learning, but I also discovered that low quality talk that attempts to be dialogic, is in the process of working towards becoming dialogic and purposeful. I tried to tease out that these participants had their own ways of using talk to learn, and that their brief and hesitant responses was indicative of this. It did not mean that participants did not learn, it only meant that participants' use of talk was not very dialogic, but they were in the process of acknowledging and understanding it in order to make it more dialogic.

The second contribution study findings made was to the dichotomy that existed between the way learners perceived and experienced dialogic, learner centred instruction and the way they practiced it in the classroom. Although this finding appears to be a contraband at the surface level, I tried to take a positive outlook on this and show that such discrepancy entrenched the idea that intentions and awareness to be dialogic has taken root and needs to be developed further. I argued that despite the tendency to view such discrepancies negatively, it is important that effort is made to understand perceptions versus practice in order for pedagogy to be improved on and evolve. I emphasised that teachers must first acknowledge that teaching is often blurry and messy, in order for them to work towards tidying it up.

As an insider researcher using a sociocultural perspective, my knowledge of the context of research, the classroom culture and history allowed a fuller understanding of shared teacher student exchanges that *aimed* to be exploratory but due to embedded and existing talk norms and expectations, was in reality monologic. My study was therefore a reflexive opportunity for me, as well as other educators to understand that learning is a fluctuating, multiple and social act. Each context of learning is unique in the different needs of participants, content of learning and its learning objectives, all of which affected

the way students used talked to learn, and by extension their learning and learner 'selves'. Currently there is a paucity in teacher research of their own classroom. This study aims to highlight the need for more of such research, where teachers are part of the study context and participants within the community of learning they are studying. Such research offers situated knowledge that outside researchers do not have and emphasises the impact teacher intentions have on the way lessons are carried out in the classroom.

Grounded in a sociocultural perspective, the study findings revealed that this group of students did not contest dialogic, learner centred practices. They did not talk about how such learning practices were foreign and against the normal teacher fronted approaches they are used to, nor did they object to it being practiced within their own learning contexts. What my research highlights is that students were enthusiastic in the interviews about such practices, and felt that by participating and sharing responsibility for learning, they were more motivated, engaged and autonomous in their learning. Student interviews showed that initially learner centred practices were a struggle for them to adjust to, and a practice that was often more challenging and demanding for them. However, such stories were always quickly followed by explanations of the positive impact such practices had on their learning and their abilities, both inside and outside the classroom context.

The interviews and written responses of students indicated that attempts to practice learner centredness through shared interactions and learning activities therefore had a positive effect on students' learning and the way they perceived themselves as learners. Even though they refrained from participating in classroom discussions, and contributed briefly on topics of learning, students seemed 'comfortable' with this approach to learning and seemed to expect it in their lectures. Students were quick to associate boredom and inability to understand with traditional pedagogy, and the opposite was true for learner centred practices. What can be derived from this is that the change in classroom dynamics, albeit a subtle one ties in with concepts of agency and structure conceptualised in Chapter 3 of this study. Findings indicated that students were able to experience more agency and felt that they had important roles within the structure of the learning community. Since students felt valued and were required to engage more during lessons,

they were willing to take on more responsibility for their learning. This study tried to demonstrate that educators must work constantly towards creating a positive, shared and comfortable classroom norm for participants, this can be done by valuing all members of the learning community and encouraging them to engage, contribute and participate equally using talk as a tool to learn.

This study has revealed that talk is a foundation for learning and by experiencing talk that is rich students would potentially be able to develop and extend their learning. Using talk with precision and purposefulness impacts learning and by extension identity construction. It does not mean that low quality talk results in poor learner identities, in this case participants affiliate themselves strongly with becoming a better and more successful learner. However, learning to a specific cultural purpose, requires strategies and interventions that support students' learning. The socio- cultural perspective on Exploratory Talk views low quality talk as being problematic due to its stance on the importance of joint, collective reasoning using language by all participants. However, from a poststructuralist view, joint talk that is co-produced is not a battle to be won or lost. People make sense of themselves using language or talk, and wanting to be dialogic and learner centred is something members in any given learning community continuously work towards, rather than a final statement. In this particular study participants might have a longer journey as opposed to learners in other contexts, but arguably it is the journey that matters rather than the final destination.

This study sets out the research basis for incorporating teaching that gives prominence to talk, through which 'effective thinking and learning' are acquired (Alexander, 2004:9). The idea of dialogic teaching is fast growing, and connects learner centred practices with the benefits of collaborative learning, facilitated and guided by the teacher. Talk is something fluid that most of us participate in and use on a daily basis, unless it is recorded and analysed, it becomes transitory and impermanent (Mercer, 2000). Yet thought and even the identity of individuals is influenced by this function which makes it important that we constantly aware and reflect on how we use talk in the classroom.

My contributions to this topic on dialogic, learner centred teaching is to urge practitioners to see that by observing the use of talk in our classrooms and considering individual perspectives of the participants within our learning community, unique and specific things about own immediate contexts of learning can be revealed. It is easy to dismiss instances of talk as being 'not the right kind of talk' and therefore of low dialogic value. In fact, many classrooms could probably attest to using less purposeful talk that is of low educational value. What is harder to do and required, is to ask how such patterns of talk can be changed to provide better quality talk? How can we use opportunities to support students to think and develop more?

This thesis argued that even shared interactions that are of low educational quality represent an opportunity for teacher to reflect, evaluate and effectively change pedagogy towards becoming more dialogic. My data gives evidence that by creating *opportunities* for students to share and contribute during lessons and acknowledging existing talk patterns, teachers can work towards making instruction more inclusive and purposeful (Mercer and Howe, 2012). This thesis calls for more teachers to understand existing 'talk norms' in their own classrooms, and increase the 'talk awareness' amongst members of their learning community. This can be done in many ways, but what I propose is twofold, firstly educators need to value the views, contributions, as well as non-contributions of all members within their learning community without distinction and constantly work towards joint and collaborative dialogue; secondly educators must practice reflexivity on a consistent basis of their own classroom practices so that they can aware themselves of their own uses of talk and work towards using such findings to inform daily teaching practices.

The study findings reinforce previous research in establishing that there is no one rule to classroom practice (Mercer and Howe, 2012; Weimer, 2013; Alexander, 2004), or standard of practice that can be applied in all contexts. Instead data analysis suggests that classroom practices must be tailored to the requirements of specific learning contexts, and the needs of participants within said environments. In doing so, we can work towards implementing instruction that aims to develop talk in a dialogic and inclusive

manner. This is something that is social, continuous and multiple, extended through collective support based on the needs and expectations of participants and the context of learning.

Finally, my work calls for educators, policy makers and educational management to recognise that learning is a process that is fluid and multi-dimensional. Rather than being quick to label and dismiss, educators need to value, reflect and model in order to promote and permeate learner centred dialogic practices. There is a need for educators to understand, evaluate and then improve pedagogy introspectively. By undertaking this study, the requisite for more reflexive research that can potentially inform instructional practices is reinforced.

CHAPTER EIGHT: CONCLUSIONS

8.0 Introduction

This chapter concludes the research conducted in this thesis by considering the contributions the study has made to understanding classroom practices and the relationship between language, thought and student identities that it sought to explore. It then moves to consider recommendations for future research on the basis of the study findings. Finally, the chapter ends by reflecting on the research process undertaken, and my own personal learning journey.

8.1 Summary of the Study

The purpose of this thesis was to explore manifestations of pedagogy aimed to be learner centred within English Language Teaching (ELT) Classrooms in a University in the UAE and investigate the way such learning was internalized by students. I was interested in finding out just how learner centred my classrooms were in reality and understand how such attempts were reconciled with impressions students held regarding learner centredness. Two main principles underpinned the current study in framing perspectives of learner centredness; the first that learners are at the centre of teaching and learning strategies, approaches and process; second such strategies are facilitated through teacher-student dialogue, interaction and shared talk. I undertook this study due to a current situation in my own context whereby practices which emphasizes the learner and learning outcomes in achieving educational aims replaced learning content as the focus of education in the university.

I wanted to discover how students experienced these pedagogical changes in their classrooms, and if so, how changes in these everyday learning norms impacted their identity as learners. By giving my students a voice, I gained an insight of the situation from the participants' perspective. I felt I was going to the source of this 'dual system' of learning, the learners who were at the center of the current phenomenon. Using a sociocultural perspective, I had an understanding of cognitive development being

culturally situated in forms of social interaction, underscored by relationships between the uses of language to think, learn and develop (Mercer and Howe, 2012).

Additionally, from a poststructuralists stance, the way individuals make sense of themselves and their contexts through language and shared interactions reinforced the multiple and subjective ways identities of learners were formed and reformed through social acts of learning. Specifically, the study was concerned with the way shared talk during lessons attempted to improve classroom practices in stimulating learners' development and how such learning affected their identities. The data analysis generated through the current study therefore contributed several interesting findings about the relationship between dialogue, learning and development, a theory that is still in its developmental stages (Mercer, 2005).

The study of talk and the process of learning have become a popular field of enquiry aimed at improving the quality of education within learning contexts (Howe, 2010). Language and thought are increasingly seen as being linked to development and skill building in young people, and are becoming focal points of educational processes, (Alexander, 2004). In today's increasingly globalized world, the ability to talk purposefully and effectively is associated with success both within and outside the classroom (Alexander, 1995; Tudor, 1996; Weimer, 2013). Working towards practices inside ELT classrooms that improve the abilities of learners to speculate, reason and cognize using collective, shared talk, I was interested in propagating this philosophy in my own contexts and for my students. I attempted to implement strategies and approaches that included student participation and shared learning during lessons; I tried to make learning more hands on and involved my students with learning content; I urged them to consider, evaluate and decide pushing them to become more responsible; I attempted to make my classes more dialogic and learner centred. Or at least this is what I *thought* I was doing.

What I discovered was *actually* happening during my lessons retrospectively was valuable, an eye opener and quite different from the philosophical stance on classroom practices that I held. Similar to findings of other social cultural research embedded on

concepts of using talk to learn (Alexander 1992; Alexander 2001; Mercer 2000; Myhill 2016), the findings of this study showed that whole class interactions occurred more frequently than individual or pair group interactions and contained most of the shared discussions that occurred during lessons. Despite this, data analysis showed that the dialogic *quality* of the shared talk was low; much of the interactions were teacher controlled; students hardly participated and when they did it was brief and only in answer to the teacher. Overall there appeared to be a resistance that students and teacher demonstrated to the joint and shared dialogues that attempted to be open and dialogic; and all participants seemed more comfortable to fall back on traditional teacher dominant exchanges.

So the observational data showed that ELT Classrooms were *not* so dialogic and learner centred, and the 'talk norm' that existed was similar to the findings of previous research in being teacher dominant (Mercer and Howe, 2012; Alexander, 1995). But to the students, learner centred practices were being implemented, they were challenging but more effective and enjoyable than traditional approaches and students seemed to want more of it to occur. Student participants did not seem to see the connection between their lack of involvement and limited use of talk with student centred approaches. They felt strongly that they were engaged, involved and speculative in the classroom. In fact, they were certain that through these active and collaborative learning strategies they were able to notice a direct improvement on the way they learned, their educational performance and on their inherent abilities and skills. Students also demonstrated an understanding that much of these skills and abilities seemed to have developed through their regular and effective use of talk during lessons which also helped them improve their fluency in the English language. So what we have here is a case whereby learner centred practices were *attempted*, but observational data showed that these practices were *not* very dialogic; and yet students seemed to benefit, enjoy and evolve through the very same instruction.

This discrepancy that study findings uncovered can be due to many things, but two which feature prominently include: a) a misconception between learners' philosophical stance

on learner centred practices which extends to what they *think* they are doing in the classroom as opposed to what they actually *do*; b) there is a lack of 'shared understanding' amongst participants in the ELT Classrooms on the value and function of using talk to learn. In being open towards accepting dialogic and learner centred practices, findings revealed that students and teacher are reconciled with such practices at least at the philosophical level, a fundamental step in the process of becoming dialogic (Alexander, 2004). However what study findings also revealed is that existing 'talk norms' in ELT classrooms need to change for learning to move from the developmental or 'fledgling' stage it is currently in. This change can only come about when all participants within the community of learning have a common understand of the importance of using joint, collective and shared talk that is dialectic as a learning tool (Mercer, 2000; Howe, 2010; Mercer and Howe, 2012).

8.2 Contributions to Knowledge.

This study has some useful contributions to knowledge which it made. It underscored important relationships between language use, learning and the development of learner identities, and more specifically it highlighted the need for a shared understanding of existing 'talk norms' before trying to change or improve it. It also demonstrated that participants' acceptance of dialogic, learner centred practices was positive and constructive, despite the limited overall time span the study was conducted in. More importantly, the contribution of the teacher researcher approach taken in the study highlighted the potential of such work in providing a powerful lens to understand classroom pedagogy, talk, and dialogism.

An important issue that this study has revealed is that dialogic teaching is a process, something that is implemented in stages, rather than simply being labelled as high or low quality talk. It begins with an understanding of existing patterns of talk. Once such patterns of talk have been identified, participants within the learning community need to work together towards changing and improving it, forming a new and more dialogic 'ground rule for talk' that all participants understand and try to practice. To do all of this, students and teacher need to have positive relationships that are built through joint talk which

values the contributions of all participants equally. Only then can the occurrence of dialogue that is co-contributory and shared, facilitate talk that is purposeful and meaningful within learning contexts. Findings of this study highlight that such occurrences while easy to philosophise and discuss, are challenging to practice and hardly occur within classrooms (Alexander, 1995; Mercer 2000; Howe et.al., 2010; Littleton and Mercer, 2013).

Acknowledging the difficulty of changing daily classroom practices and the tendency for teachers and students to fall back on transmissive teaching as the default pattern, (Alexander, 2004), the findings of dialogic instruction being in a 'fledgling' state is indeed a significant one, especially within the current study context. Keeping in mind the Arab socio culture and experience of transmissive, teacher dominant approaches students in my classrooms brought with them to the lessons, it was amazing that they accepted the call for shared classroom interactions and acknowledged the importance of their own roles within such learning environments at the philosophical level so thoroughly. Many of the students had never experienced learner centredness before, and yet were willing and inclined towards such teaching practices. Therefore, their acceptance of dialogic instruction through the apparent development of 'talk awareness' study findings revealed is one that must be celebrated.

Educators and policymakers need to be more upfront and forthcoming in admitting the difficulties and challenges of becoming dialogic. Although optimism is always good, by being reflective of the talk in our classrooms and the way teaching and learning occur, we can truly begin to progress towards practices that are less teacher fronted and more student centred. Additionally, it is important that such findings and revelations are shared not only amongst educators and policy makers, but also with our students. We need to talk more *with* them rather than *at* them, in order to truly become a learning community that values every participant. By working collectively to increase awareness of the potential value of using talk for reasoning within communities of learning, we can become truly dialogic (Mercer and Howe, 2012). This instructional philosophy is almost self-serving in advocating that the pathway to producing high quality educational talk, begins

by recognising and appreciating that all the different types of talk that occur, represent different types of opportunities for using talk to learn.

8.3 Recommendations

Keeping in mind that this research was conducted on one teachers' teaching practices in four ELT Classrooms and its students over the course of one semester, it hardly represents teaching practices of educators in the university, nor does it reflect perspectives of all Arab students in the UAE. What it does emphasize is that teaching is a social act that must be reflected on constantly in order to improve such practices, and teachers and learners need to talk more *together* to come to common understandings on classroom approaches in order to work collectively towards making pedagogy more effective.

There are therefore two possibilities for future research. One could take place in classrooms that combine recorded lessons with recordings of dialogues between students and teacher, as they share their understanding of valuing the use of talk as a tool for learning. This would help us determine how effectively 'ground rules for talk' can be changed in classrooms that consist of non-native speakers of Arab origin, who are used to traditional teacher fronted classrooms, with an aim of making said classrooms more dialogic. Secondly, another future study that examines teacher perspective and teacher intention would potentially contribute further to the field of using talk to learn.

Although teacher talk is a topic that is widely researched on, a study that investigates classroom practices from a teacher's perspective and includes their points of view before and after each lesson, might provide a valuable insight to their philosophical stances and how these affect their classroom practices on a day to day basis. According to Smith and Higgins (2006), interactive pedagogy must stem from teacher talk that demonstrates an understanding and concern for interactive learning. Their study highlights that teacher intention potentially affects the way students respond to and interact during shared classroom interactions. Therefore, a study that explores the role of the teacher researcher and their impact on dialogic pedagogy more fully, would be valuable for work in this field.

This would contribute insight to the way teachers understand and model talk to be more open, exploratory and dialogic not only in the UAE but also neighbouring Arab countries like Oman and Saudi Arabia, who share similar educational stratospheres with the UAE. Such a study would shed light on a region that is relatively new to learner centred practices, addressing a gap in the specific area of research on teacher education in Arab region and the potential challenges migrant teachers face within foreign learning contexts.

Furthermore, in view of the fluctuating identities that the largely migrant populations in the UAE share with its neighbouring countries in the GCC (Gulf Cooperation Council), more of these studies that link language, thought and learning to ideas of identity are needed in conceptualising a theoretical frame that is overarching. The identity of individuals is culturally and socially contrived, language whether it is talk or writing, both are heavily embedded in culture and impact the way we see ourselves. By extension, educational research that acknowledges the social processes of learning in trying to make such learning more dialogic needs to inculcate identity as a fundamental aspect of such theories. In establishing the relationship of language, thought and development, which all shape and reshape our sense of self, identity is a fundamental concept than cannot be overlooked. This study recommends therefore that, identity should be included in developing a suitable frame for the new field of enquiry relating the importance of dialogue to learning and development in educational settings.

8.4 Personal Reflections

This study comes with a number of limitations, and I have attempted to acknowledge some of these in previous sections of the study. When I initially chose the methodology I did not realise that the way I perceived learner centredness, the way my students perceived learner centredness and what the literature said about learner centredness would be so conflicted. Learner centredness is a subjective concept, even literature acknowledges that it is understood and practiced differently by different people. What I realised as hindsight, is that perhaps I needed to have come to a common understanding of this concept with my student participants first, before interviewing and collecting their written responses. However, my methods were based on wanting to collect authentic

data, I wanted to understand from the students' own perspectives how they viewed and felt about learner centredness and any prior coaching would have potentially affected the authenticity of the data.

Additionally, I also found that being the teacher and the researcher albeit useful in some ways, possibly weighed heavily on my data. Students knew me and therefore were comfortable in opening up and talking to me during interviews. At the same time my questions about learner centredness seemed to imply to them that I favoured such methods and could have potentially impacted the overwhelmingly positive responses from them regarding such practices. This limitation is further emphasized by the discrepancy between student interview responses, which they had with me face to face, and their written responses which were more anonymous and also more balanced in their view and support of learner centred practices. Furthermore, being the teacher in the classroom observations I recorded and then analysed retrospectively, it was difficult for me to admit that my own practices resulted in low dialogism and were therefore of low educational value. I kept thinking that it was the students who didn't respond rather than examine why I kept trying to fill silences with my own voice.

It was almost surgical, the way I had to view and analyse my own teaching. I had to come to terms with the way I seemed to resort back to 'teacher does the talking' mode during lessons, rather than tease out talk from my students and extend their thinking. Sure there were some positives, I attempted to turn contributions and non-contributions into opportunities for learning, I refrained from judging my students and why they didn't respond, I tried to reformulate, extend and urge students to think and answer. But while doing all of this, I was the one talking all the time. The study findings showed that despite my philosophical stance and my beliefs, I seemed to fall back to being the one who decided who talked, how much they talked and how long they talked about it. Through such controlled question and answer sequences, my classrooms turned into the worst parody of teacher fronted pedagogy, far from student centred practices that I wanted to achieve. But maybe that's not such a bad thing to find out.

In spite of the limitations in being both the researcher and the teacher which might have potentially impacted student answers and the way I looked at the data, I feel strongly that more of such research focusing on teacher reflexivity is needed. I noticed from my review of literature that much of the research on dialogic, learner centred teaching tended to evaluate other peoples' classrooms, other peoples' students and other peoples teaching practices. Very little research currently examines the researchers' own attempts at dialogic practices and the challenges they faced in implementing an instructional philosophy that is as rich as dialogic teaching. So what we end up with is researchers who evaluate, judge and find, but little changes in the way of daily classroom practices.

My own journey through this research study makes me feel fortunate that I have had the opportunity to take a mirror to my own practices, harsh as it might have been. My personal feelings towards learner centredness were at a very superficial level when I initially undertook the study, what I found out about student centred instruction, the way it is centrifugal on talk to extend and develop learning, has been profound in entrenching such instructional philosophies within me. As an educator, this journey has been a rich one of self-discovery, but also one that has been ruthless in the way it stripped away perception from practice of my own values and beliefs as a teacher. I find that I am more grounded now in understanding that such challenges are not only faced by me, but in reality all teachers, and feel fortified in knowing that I am trying to work towards actively changing myself for the better.

It was heartening to find out that my learners philosophically supported learner centredness just as much as I did, and by analysing their talk as well as their writings, I feel a more personal relationship with them, more so than before. I feel that by listening to them and valuing their points of view, our relationships was strengthened. It was good to know from them that my attempts to try to encourage and urge them to more agency was recognised by them and made them better individuals overall. So retrospectively reflexive research is not all bad, it has its joyful and fulfilling moments. However, what this has made me realise is that such research needs to occur continuously as teaching and learning are social acts that are fluctuating and fluid and therefore in a constant state of

change. Even more importantly, in order to create dialogic learner centred classroom, educators must engage with students equally, on a consistent basis and reflect on their pedagogy collectively, in order to proliferate quality education.

Finally, I am hopeful that the study carried out in this thesis will act as a catalyst for further research into practices that aim to stimulate students to reason, speculate and share on learning content. Dialogic Teaching factors language use as a major vehicle for enquiry based learning, there is certainly room to add to our knowledge on how the emphasis on language used by “teachers to teach and children to learn” (Alexander, 2004:1) can be used with precision to think and learn.

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Appendix 1: Video Recording Observation Sample

Lesson: Episode: Goal: Task:
Setting: No. of Students and names: Tools:
Initiation: Timing:
Task Implementation Timing: Teacher-Student Reflection: Timing:

Appendix 2: Student's Consent Form

Consent Form

The purpose of this study is to gather video recordings of lessons and interview data for a Doctoral research project which aims to explore the effect of writing education in the active learning classrooms on undergraduate students. Participation in the study is complete voluntary and does not affect the grade you receive for the writing course. Your participation in this research project will assist me in the PhD program that I am currently pursuing. Therefore, your time and contribution in participating in this study is much appreciated. I will be recording data and using the data recoded to make notes and observations. I will also be holding interview sessions which you can volunteer to participate in.

With regards to the valuable information you provide through the classroom video recordings and interviews, it will be strictly anonymous and following ethical regulations, stored in strictest confidentiality. All efforts to maintain the anonymity of classes, instructors and students will be upheld. Pseudonyms will be used to refer to instructors, and student participants thus references to subjects in the study will remain unknown. The data collected during this study may be used for publication and presentation purposes in addition to the PhD thesis.

Please write your name, and sign in the space below if you consent to participating in this study. If you agree to be interviewed for the study purposes, you will need to indicate your interest by providing your email id so that you can contacted and a convenient time can be scheduled accordingly. The interviews will be conducted on an informal one on one basis and again all data will be strictly confidential.

I consent to participate in the research process:

Name:

Signature:

Would you like to participate in an informal interview session of 10-20 minutes regarding your experience as a student in a learner centered classroom? Please write your mobile no. and email address if you would like to participate in the interview session.

Email:

Mobile number:

Appendix 3: Sample Email Sent To Schedule Interview Sessions

First Email

Dear Student,

I hope this email finds you well. I am writing to you with regards to the interest you showed in participating in the interview sessions regarding learner centred practices on the consent form collected in class.

If you are still willing to participate in the interviews for my doctoral research please let me know a convenient time during the next two weeks during which we can schedule the interview.

The interview will take place in my office, Second Floor J1 Building and will be between the both of us. The interview will be recorded by the iPhone audio recorder. Please note that participation in the interviews is completely voluntary and you can withdraw at any time.

If you can let me know the date and time you are free after 2pm between Sunday to Thursday, we can schedule the session accordingly.

Best regards,

Second Email

Dear Student,

Thank you for showing your interest in helping me complete my doctoral research. Your [participation in this is much appreciated. According to the email you sent me regarding your availability and schedule, Tuesday November 18th at 2.30pm would work for both of us.

If you can come to my office during this time, we can proceed with the interview session.

Please let me know if there any changes to this date and timing.

Regards,

Appendix 4: Student Interview Schedule

Research focus: this is from a project investigating learner centeredness in the language classroom and how students experience it. It also attempts to investigate the impact of learner centeredness on the identity of students. The semi-structured schedule is divided into two sections focusing on how students perceive and experience learner centeredness and the second section, how it affects the identity of students. There are clear constructs being probed (in italics). The key here is to follow up students' responses to the questions to elicit deeper understanding of their thinking.

A. PERCEPTIONS REGARDING LEARNER CENTEREDNESS:

LEARNER CENTEREDNESS (students point of view)

- ◆ Have you heard about learner centered approaches? (Where? How?)
- ◆ Can you explain what a learner centered classroom is? What does it focus on? How should a teacher apply learner centeredness when teaching?
- ◆ Have you previously experienced a classroom where learner centeredness was applied? (When university or school?)
- ◆ What makes a good classroom? - a good English lesson? (*If you were planning an English lesson, what would you put in it?*)
- ◆ What is a good teacher like? – a good English teacher?
- ◆ Describe a successful lecture class.
- ◆ Can you explain what the student's role is in a Lerner centered classroom?
- ◆ Describe one of your favorite classes this semester. (Why did you like it?)
- ◆ What is your opinion regarding traditional teaching methods? (Why? If you taught a class would you apply this method?)
- ◆ What are some of the challenges you faced in a learner centered classroom as opposed to traditional classroom?
- ◆ During your lectures this last semester what percentage of your classes would you say were using learner centered approaches? (what about the remaining classes?)
- ◆ Which approach do you think the University promotes? (why? How do you think they do this?)
- ◆ Do you think the adoption of learner centeredness in language classrooms makes a difference? (on who? Or what? And how?)
- ◆ What are some of the problems you experienced when learner centeredness was being implemented?

Attitudes to learning:

- ◆ What do you like to learn? (*Probe for: areas or subjects that interest them and why etc*)
- ◆ How do you learn best? Do you learn with others?
- ◆ When do you learn the most? (in class, at home, in the library, with friends?)
- ◆ Has the way in which you learn changed since you came to University? (*Probe for similarities and differences in learning practices*)

Attitudes to writing:

- ◆ Do you enjoy writing? (check link with favorite/least favorite subjects)
- ◆ What types of writing do you enjoy? (*stories; poetry; reports; arguments etc*)
- ◆ What do you like to write about, given free choice?
- ◆ Do you write at home?

B. LEARNER CENTERDNESS AND IDENTITY:

Learning preferences:

- ◆ What did you like the most about the learner centered classroom?
- ◆ What about the learner centered classroom was novel to you?
- ◆ How did the learner centered classroom affect you as a person?
- ◆ Do you think that learner centeredness is acceptable in the Arab world?
- ◆ When do you think learner centeredness should be introduced to students?
- ◆ Did you face any challenges when you had to learn actively? (can you explain or give an example?)
- ◆ How has learner centeredness affected you as a writer?
- ◆ Do you discuss learner centeredness with your family? (When? Why?)
- ◆ How would they react to some of these learner centered approaches?
- ◆ Do you think that learner centeredness makes successful students? (Can you explain why or why not?)
- ◆ What do you think is needed to implement a successful learner centered classroom?

Perceptions of active learning from would be teachers:

- ◆ What do you think is a good way for students to learn?
- ◆ Do you think active learning can be applied in local schools in the UAE?
- ◆ What effect would active learning have on a student?

- ◆ Do you think active learning is a better approach to learning than the traditional method?
- ◆ Do you think it would be easy to implement active learning in your classrooms?
- ◆ Do you think active learning would fit well with the local culture and traditions?
- ◆ What do you think would be some of the problems you might encounter when implementing active learning in a classroom?

LEARNER CENTEREDNESS

Main code	Sub code	Summary
Characteristics of Learner Centeredness		Comments about student expectations and perceptions of a learner centred classroom.
	Strategies	(12 students) Students' expectations of a learner centred class, their perspective on the role of student and use of interventions in a learner centred environment. (Some overlap occurs with student's experience of learner centeredness and autonomy, due to some of these concepts being explained in the same sentences by students). Example: <i>'It's a new way to learn students and its creative its make the students active and make them more interest to take the classes its make them more attention and grab their mind instead of thinking about silly things or something like this and its nice its helpful'</i>
	Classroom	(9 students) Comments where students explain what their idea of an effective classroom is; answers given to the question 'what is your idea of a good classroom', sample responses include <i>'I think a good classroom must have...participation'</i> .
Teacher Role		General comments about characteristics of an effective teacher.
	Interpersonal role	(7 students) References to the student teacher interaction and the promotion of learner centeredness; teacher student relationships in and outside the classroom; approachability, comfort and emotions that foster learner centeredness. Example: <i>'Umm what makes a good classroom...I think the relationship between the student and teacher'; She can make her student make feel relaxed and to get the information easily and..'</i>
	Academic role	(9 students) Teacher's role in the learner centered classroom, the methods, strategies and tools used to encourage learner centeredness in the classroom. Example; <i>'The methods or the way how the doctor teaching her own student for example if the doctor depend only on PowerPoint and student book and didn't rely on how they student do active and don't let them do any active'</i> .
Pedagogical Experience		General comments about student experience of learner centeredness; exposure to learner centeredness; traditional pedagogy in the ELT classroom
	Exposure to learner centeredness	(11 students) Comments that refer to student's previous experience and exposure to learner centred classrooms.
	Learner Centred Interventions	(11 students). Learner centeredness and classroom interventions; strategies that students feel foster learner centeredness, approaches that students felt were <i>more</i> learner centered and interactive. Eg.: <i>'Sometimes we have to do paragraphs we can share it with friends and discuss it'...</i> <i>'Okay umm it was the flipped classroom activity where we actually learned about it in this class and we actually applied it'</i> .
	Traditional pedagogy	(8 students) References to traditional pedagogy; what it means to students and their perceptions about the traditional approach to teaching. Student experience of traditional pedagogy and their reaction to such methods in the classroom. Example: <i>'Umm its</i>

		<i>boring sometimes if you just teach us normal everyday it will be not nice</i> '.
	Learner centred interventions versus traditional teaching approaches	(11 students) Comments about differences between the two teaching approaches, comparisons between learner centred interventions and traditional teaching approach; Their pedagogical preference; Comments that relate to the teaching approach they prefer based on their experience of it; Comparisons of effect of learner centred strategies as opposed to traditional strategies on the 'selves' of students.
	Challenges	(10 students). Comments of any problems, delays, unsuitability associated with learner centred interventions. Comments about work load, difficulty adjusting to the approach and language issues. Example: <i>'First of all, my challenges was the English rules I was really challenged this problem because my English isn't perfect so I really tried to change and improve my English and for example may you repeat the question...'</i>
	Autonomy	(9 students) Comments that relate to learner independence through learner centred interventions; did students feel more independent/more autonomous during the LC intervention they experienced? General comments about responsibility and freedom. Example: <i>'Yeah actually when I before for example when I do group work I feel more responsible about my information cause it depend on group'</i> .
Student background		(12 students) Information on student's background relating to their nationality, age, undergraduate level.
	Schooling	(11 students) Information on student's background with regards to their schooling, Arabic or English medium?
	English language Engagement	(1 student) Student's engagement with the English language; in the classroom or at home/with friends.
	Past experience of learner centeredness	(11 students) Comments about previous experience, exposure to learner centred classrooms, where and when; Comments that relate student's experience of classrooms that they felt had NO learner centeredness at all (overlaps with types of activities students perceive to be learner centred).
Effect on learning		0
	Learner centred interventions and student 'selves'	(12 students) What impact did learner centred interventions have on the learning of students? Impact of learner centeredness on students including; student 'selves', students learning, and student emotions; usefulness of learner centred approaches in retaining information; references to changes within their 'selves' as an effect of learner centred interventions ie; more confidence, improvements on English, life skills learnt? More critical thinking; example <i>'I learned how to write a paragraph and more good so like it helps in the exam'</i> .
	Context	(12 students) Learning preferences of students; references to which context they feel contributed to their learning positively; the environment they feel they learned better in ie; in the classroom, alone at home, in the library with friend, alone or with a group. Example: <i>'No, I prefer to learn at home, but I like to join any courses'</i> .

	Changes to learning approaches	(11 students) Comments about the changes in learning students experienced ie; traditional to learner centred; high school to university; references to the type of learner they are and whether or not that has changed or evolved in any way. Example: <i>For example, before I didn't study for the subject, but I have to do everything by myself I have to prepare for the subject I don't I just wait for the teacher to explain but now I have to do everything myself then come to teacher if I have any difficulties</i> '.
Learner Centeredness in the Arab world		<i>References to the acceptance of learner centred strategies and approaches in the Arab world</i>
	Optimum Exposure	(11 students) General comments about whether learner centred strategies should be introduced at school or from university? Examples of questions referring to when student should be exposed to learner centred approaches; <i>'No, I think they should deal with active learning since when they are in the school'</i> .
	Importance	(9 students) The necessity for learner centeredness in the Arab region. How critical are learner centred strategies to the Arab world? References to the suitability of learner centered approaches and Arab norms and customs. Comments about problems that might arise from LC strategies in Arab schools and institutions of higher education due to their compatibility/incompatibility with Arab traditions and norms.
	Feedback	(9 students) Did students share their experiences of learner centred strategies with their families? Comments about the feedback they received from families on the different types of interventions they experienced.
	Learner centeredness and the university	(10 students) Comments about learner centeredness and the University ethos; is it promoted? Supported? Encouraged?
	Convenience	(5 students) Comments about the practice of learner centeredness in the university classrooms and adequacy of facilities to implement it successfully. Including challenges and problems experienced in the implementation of it relating to the facilities.
Learner centeredness and potential teachers		General comments about learner centeredness and what it means to them as potential future teacher.
	Personal practice	(10 students) References to whether students as future teachers would implement active learning approaches in their own classrooms; why and why not. The tools and features they feel would be required/not for learner centred classrooms. Example <i>'Umm I don't think I'll use it for a whole time I will do active learning sometimes to didn't let the students feel bored'</i> .
	Problems	(10 students) What problems do they anticipate could arise as a result of their own implementation of learner centeredness in their future classrooms and ideas of ways to handle/resolve such possible problems.

	Learner centeredness and their role as a teacher	(6 Students) References to what learner centred approaches could add to their teaching and to their classrooms in the future. General comments about their working relationship in their future role as teachers and how learner centred approaches would/would not affect their teacher 'selves'.
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Appendix 7: Code Categories and Definitions For Written Response Data

Teacher Role		General comments referring to the characteristics of an effective teacher, from a student's perspective.
	Interpersonal role	References to the student teacher interaction and the promotion of learner centeredness; teacher student relationships in and outside the classroom; approachability, comfort and emotions that foster learner centeredness.
	Academic role	Teacher's role in the learner centred classroom, the methods, strategies and tools used to encourage learner centeredness in the classroom.
Pedagogical Experience		General comments about student experience of learner centeredness; exposure to learner centeredness; traditional pedagogy in the ELT classroom.
	Exposure to learner centeredness and Learner Centred Interventions	Comments that refer to student's previous experience and exposure to learner centred classrooms.
		Learner centeredness and classroom interventions; strategies that students feel foster learner centeredness, approaches that students felt were <i>more</i> learner centred and interactive.
	Traditional pedagogy	References to traditional pedagogy; what it means to students and their perceptions about the traditional approach to teaching. Student experience of traditional pedagogy and their reaction to such methods in the classroom.
	Learner centred interventions versus traditional teaching approaches	Comments about differences between the two teaching approaches, comparisons between learner centred interventions and traditional teaching approach; Their pedagogical preference; Comments that relate to the teaching approach they prefer based on their experience of it; Comparisons of effect of learner centred strategies as opposed to traditional strategies on the 'selves' of students.
	Challenges	Comments of any problems, delays, unsuitability associated with learner centred interventions. Comments about work load, difficulty adjusting to the approach and language issues.
	Autonomy	Comments that relate to learner independence through learner centred interventions; did students feel more independent/more autonomous during the LC intervention they experienced? General comments about responsibility and freedom.
Effect on learning		
	Learner centred interventions and student 'selves'	What impact did learner centred interventions have on the learning of students? Impact of learner centeredness on students including; student 'selves', students learning, and student emotions; usefulness of learner centred approaches in retaining information; references to changes within their 'selves' as an effect of learner centred interventions ie; more confidence, improvements on English, life skills learnt?
	Traditional Pedagogy and student 'selves'	What impact did traditional pedagogical approaches have on student 'selves', student learning and student emotions; usefulness of traditional approaches in retaining information; changes to student 'selves' due to traditional approaches.

Appendix 8: Lesson Segmentation Sample

<p>Lesson: DA 2 & 2.1 Goal: Teacher teaches conjunctions in DA to students. Task: Explain conjunctions and theme and rheme using activities.</p>
<p>Setting: normal classroom, students sitting at their table, teacher stands at the front of the class. No. of Students and names: (10) Baraah, Ola, Doaa, Imaneh, Hannin, Alaa, Anwar, Ghada, Ghida, Radwa Tools: Textbook, lecture notes and ppt.</p>
<p>Initiation: teacher summarizes previous lesson and explains how today's class will be about conjunctions and what they are in general and their uses. (0-5)</p>
<p>Task Implementation: Teacher explains to students and students participate by responding to teacher's questions, her explanation of the examples in the text. Teacher explains and students can be observed taking notes and highlighting the notes in their hand or directly from the textbook. Teacher moves on to explain from the examples to show causal, temporal relationships .5-15</p> <p>Students work on the examples from their notes individually but there is open discussion between students as well. They can be observed talking, discussing and referring to their notes/textbook. Teacher explains the answers to the activity and examples. Again students interact amongst themselves and the teacher. 15-34</p> <p>In 2.1 (0-25) this format continues, teacher moving on to explain, theme and rheme. Students can be observed listening, to the teacher, taking notes and looking at their notes. Teacher explains why studying this is important.0-5 Teacher asks questions while teaching eg; Teacher: 'The cat walked...?' Students: 'Home' (Collectively).</p> <p>Teacher breaks away from the textbook matter to refer to Arabic; eg Teacher: 'how is it in Arabic? Is it the same SOV?' Students respond: '@...no...not really...different' Teacher: 'oh ..really...'</p> <p>Students also participate and correct the teacher when an error occurs eg; Teacher: ' does, is was...' Ghida: 'No...it's the other way around...' Teacher: 'The other way around?...oh yes....mmmmm...the guardian joyce reads...yeah..i see'</p> <p>Ghida: 'yes...yeah' 25mins</p> <p>Student-Teacher Reflection: There is an unstructured atmosphere to the class, students listen to the teacher, they also participate when she explains and work amongst themselves in groups. They can be observed, taking notes, exchanging them, discussing them, highlighting them. The talk that happens is also multidimensional, there is talk between students, between teacher and student (unstructured), some raising of specific questions (structured) eg:</p>

Student: 'ms... for this one...here causal is...'

Teacher: ...'errr....mmm..thats causal yes...and...'

Student: 'what if...'

Teacher: 'good...'

10 minutes

Some collective answers from students.

Notes:

The informal and comfortable atmosphere is reinforced by students volunteering and participating in the discussion and also speaking up to correct the teacher when an error is made. Yet the authority of the teacher is not challenged. Teacher accepts the correction smoothly.

Appendix 9: Sample Code Sheet of Lesson Recording With Interaction Modes

Lesson: DA 1 Episode:2 Goal: to teach students references and how they are used in discourse Task: discussing activities and working through them as a whole class and in groups									
Setting: Same teachers comes back to the front of the class No. of Students and names:									
Tools:									
Mode									
Whole-class teacher led talk students listening	Whole-class teacher student interaction	Individual teacher student interaction	Pair/Group teacher student interaction	Pair work	Group work	Student-led talk/presentation	Individual activity	Assessment	Other
Code	Tally	Examples							
Teacher open questions (HOW/WHY question)	4	<p>Teacher: why..?</p> <p>Teacher answers: because it can be so confusing, they needed to define it in a clear manner.</p> <p>Teacher: How do people decide which 'it' were they talking about?</p> <p>Teacher answers it herself.</p> <p>Teacher: how is it going?</p> <p>Students: some nod others continue to work</p>							
Student open questions									
Teacher reformulates (teacher 'picks up' student response and reformulates/ as another question – chaining a dialogue)									
IRRRF (Teacher asks question; several students answer the teacher)	1	<p>Teacher: At the end of the day ...who is it most difficult for....what do you think...when it comes to needing to learn a language?</p> <p>Students: other speakers...non native...people who want to learn a new language</p>							
Student exploratory (students talk to/question/challenge each other)									
IRF (Teacher asks question; brief response from student; teacher confirms as in/correct)	10	<p>Teacher: so what do you think it refers to here...which one</p> <p>Ghiso: The decisions of the council of teachers....</p> <p>Teacher: yeah....he means the salary of teachers. But do you see how it can be confusing...</p>							

		<p>Teacher: ok...what does this refer to? Students collectively: venting your feelings... Teacher: ok ...yeah and...</p> <p>Teacher: is that confusing or not? Students: collectively mmmmm Teacher: Do you see Students: yes</p>
<i>Teacher gives instruction and sets task for the class (teacher fronted talk students listening)</i>	7	<p>Teacher: ok so let's look at the activity in your textbook now....</p> <p>Teacher: ok I want you to write it down.</p>
<i>Students respond to teacher talk through action, comments</i>	1	
<i>Students work in pairs /groups discussing and exchanging ideas (body language heads bent together in twos or threes, talking by referring to learning material, sharing pointing out)</i>	4	

Appendix 10: Exeter Ethics Approval Form



GRADUATE SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

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<http://socialsciences.exeter.ac.uk/education/>

CERTIFICATE OF ETHICAL APPROVAL

Title of Project: Flipped Classrooms: Investigating Dialogic Writing Classrooms in Higher Education Institutes in the United Arab Emirates.

Researcher(s) name: Tizreena Ismail

Supervisor(s): Debra Myhill

This project has been approved for the period

From: 08.12.2015

To: 30.05.2016

Ethics Committee approval reference: D/15/16/16

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "P. Durrant", with a horizontal line extending to the right.

Signature: (Dr Philip Durrant, Chair, Graduate School of Education Ethics Committee)

Date: 08.12.2015