

MOVING TOWARD STUDENT-CENTERED LEARNING IN UNIVERSITY  
LANGUAGE TEACHING

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**Abstract:** This article explores the transition from teacher-centered instruction to student-centered learning in university language teaching. In many higher education institutions, lecture-based methods still dominate classroom practice, limiting students' active participation and communicative development. The purpose of this study is to describe practical ways teachers can create a student-centered atmosphere that promotes independent learning, responsibility, and active engagement. The article emphasizes learner autonomy, reflective learning, task ownership, formative feedback, and flexible classroom management as key elements of student-centered instruction. Special attention is given to strategies that encourage students to work independently, make decisions about their learning, and practice language in meaningful ways. The paper concludes that student-centered learning increases motivation, improves communicative competence, and develops critical thinking skills in university language classrooms.

**Keywords:** student-centered learning, learner autonomy, higher education, language teaching, student engagement, communicative competence, active learning, independent learning

**Annotatsiya:** Mazkur maqola oliy ta'lim muassasalarida til o'qitishda o'qituvchi markazli yondashuvdan talaba markazli ta'limga o'tish masalasini yoritadi. Ko'plab universitetlarda ma'ruza asosidagi darslar ustun bo'lib, bu esa talabalarning faol ishtiroki va kommunikativ ko'nikmalarining rivojlanishini cheklaydi. Tadqiqotning asosiy maqsadi o'qituvchi tomonidan talaba markazli muhitni yaratish, mustaqil o'rganish, mas'uliyat va faol ishtirokni rivojlantirish usullarini ko'rsatishdan iborat. Maqolada o'quvchi mustaqilligi, reflektiv o'rganish, vazifa uchun javobgarlik, shakllantiruvchi baholash hamda moslashuvchan dars boshqaruvi muhim omillar sifatida ko'rib chiqiladi. Shuningdek, talabalarning mustaqil ishlashi, o'z o'qishini boshqarishi va tilni amaliy qo'llashini rag'batlantiruvchi usullar yoritiladi. Natijada talaba markazli ta'lim motivatsiyani oshirishi, kommunikativ kompetensiyani rivojlantirishi va tanqidiy fikrlashni shakllantirishi ta'kidlanadi.

**Kalit so'zlar:** talaba markazli ta'lim, o'quvchi mustaqilligi, oliy ta'lim, til o'qitish, talaba faolligi, kommunikativ kompetensiya, faol o'qitish, mustaqil o'rganish



**Аннотация:** В данной статье рассматривается переход от преподаватель-ориентированного обучения к студентоцентрированному подходу в преподавании языков в университетах. Во многих высших учебных заведениях по-прежнему доминируют лекционные методы, которые ограничивают активное участие студентов и развитие коммуникативных навыков. Цель статьи — описать практические способы создания студентоцентрированной среды, способствующей самостоятельному обучению, ответственности и активному участию студентов. Особое внимание уделяется автономии обучающихся, рефлексивному обучению, ответственности за выполнение заданий, формирующему оцениванию и гибкому управлению учебным процессом. Рассматриваются стратегии, позволяющие студентам самостоятельно работать, принимать решения и практиковать язык в значимых ситуациях. Делается вывод о том, что студентоцентрированное обучение повышает мотивацию, улучшает коммуникативную компетенцию и развивает критическое мышление студентов.

**Ключевые слова:** студентоцентрированное обучение, автономия обучающихся, высшее образование, преподавание языков, активность студентов, коммуникативная компетенция, активное обучение, самостоятельное обучение

## Introduction

Student-centered learning has become one of the most important directions in modern university language teaching. Traditional lecture-based instruction often places the teacher at the center of the learning process, where students act mainly as passive listeners. This approach limits opportunities for language practice, reduces student motivation, and weakens communicative competence. In contrast, student-centered learning shifts responsibility from the teacher to the learners, encouraging active participation, independent thinking, and meaningful language use.

In university settings, moving toward student-centered learning requires not only changing classroom activities but also transforming the overall learning environment. The teacher becomes a facilitator, guide, and organizer rather than the primary source of knowledge. Students are encouraged to take responsibility for their learning, set goals, reflect on progress, and actively engage in tasks that promote communication and thinking.

## Creating a Student-Centered Atmosphere

A student-centered atmosphere begins with changing the roles of both teacher and students. The teacher should reduce excessive explanation and instead provide structured opportunities for students to explore language independently. Clear learning objectives should be shared with students so they understand what they are expected to achieve. When students understand the purpose of learning, they become more responsible and engaged.

Another important element is allowing students to make learning decisions. For example, students may choose topics for discussion, select materials, or decide how to complete assignments. This increases ownership of learning and motivates students to participate actively. When learners feel that their opinions matter, they become more confident and involved in classroom activities.



Creating a supportive psychological environment is also crucial. Students should feel comfortable expressing ideas without fear of mistakes. The teacher should encourage risk-taking and treat errors as part of the learning process. This helps students focus on communication rather than perfection.

## **Encouraging Independent Student Work**

Independent learning is a key feature of student-centered education. Teachers can promote independence by assigning tasks that require students to research, analyze, and present information. Instead of explaining all content, the teacher can provide guiding questions and allow students to discover answers themselves. This approach develops responsibility and critical thinking.

Another effective strategy is using learning journals or reflective writing. Students write about what they learned, difficulties they faced, and strategies they used. Reflection helps learners become aware of their progress and identify areas for improvement. Over time, students learn to manage their own learning process.

Teachers can also encourage students to prepare mini-presentations, summaries, or short explanations of topics. When students explain material to others, they process language more deeply and become active participants in the learning process.

## **Developing Learner Autonomy**

Learner autonomy is central to student-centered learning. Autonomous students set goals, monitor progress, and evaluate outcomes. Teachers can support autonomy by providing flexible tasks and allowing different ways of completing assignments. For example, students may choose whether to submit written responses, oral recordings, or visual presentations.

Providing opportunities for self-assessment is also important. Students can evaluate their performance using checklists or reflection questions. This encourages responsibility and helps students understand their strengths and weaknesses.

Another key aspect is teaching learning strategies. Students should be guided on how to learn vocabulary, improve speaking, and practice independently. When students know how to learn, they become less dependent on the teacher.

## **Increasing Student Engagement**

Student engagement grows when tasks are meaningful and connected to real-life situations. Teachers should design activities that require thinking, problem-solving, and personal response. Students should not only repeat information but also interpret, analyze, and express opinions.

Using open-ended questions is another powerful technique. Instead of asking questions with one correct answer, teachers can ask questions that require explanation and reasoning. This encourages students to speak more and think critically.



Providing regular formative feedback is also essential. Feedback should focus on improvement rather than only correction. When students receive constructive feedback, they remain motivated and continue participating actively.

## **The Teacher's Role in Student-Centered Learning**

In student-centered classrooms, the teacher acts as a facilitator. The teacher organizes tasks, monitors progress, and supports students when necessary. Instead of dominating the lesson, the teacher creates opportunities for students to practice language actively.

The teacher should also manage time effectively, allowing students enough time to think and respond. Silence should not be avoided; it often indicates that students are processing information. Giving students thinking time improves participation and quality of responses.

Another important responsibility is balancing guidance and independence. Too much control reduces autonomy, while too little support may confuse students. Effective teachers gradually reduce assistance as students become more confident.

## **Conclusion**

Moving toward student-centered learning in university language teaching enhances student independence, engagement, and communicative competence. Creating a supportive classroom atmosphere, encouraging independent work, and developing learner autonomy are essential components of this approach. Student-centered learning also promotes reflective thinking, responsibility, and long-term learning skills. The teacher's role shifts from knowledge provider to facilitator who supports and guides student activity.

As a result, students become active participants in the learning process. They practice language more frequently, express ideas confidently, and develop critical thinking abilities. Student-centered learning not only improves language proficiency but also prepares learners for academic and professional communication. Therefore, adopting this approach in university language teaching is an important step toward improving the quality and effectiveness of higher education.

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