



## The Advantages and Disadvantages of Teacher-Centered Instruction in Foreign Language Teaching Amidst Contemporary Demands: An Analysis Based on the Experience of Azerbaijan

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**Abstract;** This article analyzes the shifts occurring in foreign language education due to advances in science and technology, specifically examining the application of the teacher-centered instruction model within the Azerbaijan education system. The rapid proliferation of English, driven by globalization and strengthening international relations, has introduced numerous innovations into language pedagogy. The article highlights the gradual transition from the traditional teacher-centered approach towards a student-centered model. The key advantages of teacher-centered instruction are noted, particularly in the initial stages of language acquisition in primary grades (ages 5-6), where the teacher's role as a guide and resource is crucial. Concurrently, the disadvantages of this approach, including passive participation, restricted student freedom, and the potential use of outdated materials—are discussed. The paper also explores the application of teacher-centered elements across different age groups (primary, 5-9, and 10-11 grades) and the importance of specific methods in inclusive education, such as individualized training, repetition, and emotional support for students with special needs. The conclusion emphasizes the necessity of integrating an optimal and flexible mix of methods, leveraging technological innovations, and tailoring instruction to the students' ages and needs to ensure the effectiveness of modern language teaching. In the contemporary world, various changes have been occurred in recent years, including shifts in the teaching of second or target languages. Advances in science and technology have given rise to numerous innovations in teaching methods. The traditional teacher-centered approach is gradually giving way to a more student-centric teaching model, which, in turn, has led to alterations in teaching methods for educators.

**Keywords:** *teacher centered, student centered, inclusive education, elementary school*

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## 1. Introduction

The recent developments in science and technology have ushered in significant changes in field of foreign language teaching. Utilizing these technological innovations is no longer a choice but a necessity. In modern times, students' expectations in foreign language classes are shaped by the increased use of technology in the learning process. This influences the dynamic within the classroom for both teachers and students. In this article, we will explore the advantages and disadvantages of teacher-centered instruction.

It has been observed that the growth of tourism and commercial relationships among nations has made a unified language system more valuable, resulting in the rapid proliferation of English. Various methods and techniques have been employed to teach English, often combining several methods to achieve better outcomes and introducing numerous innovations in foreign language education. In Azerbaijan, like many other countries, English as a foreign language has become a part of the general education curriculum.

In our nation, the introduction to foreign language instruction commences in elementary school. The teaching of a second language occurs from the initial grade levels through to the senior grades. During the elementary years, the teaching approach is predominantly teacher-centered. This is necessary as students are encountering a foreign language for the first time and are not yet accustomed to understanding it or the learning methodologies involved. (Nigar, 2025)

The state adopts certain laws for education, and it is the teachers who implement these laws. No matter how educated and broad-minded our teachers are, they will bring up the next generation to be as educated. Education should be implement systematically, planned, and programmed by educational leadership and teachers so that the requirements of education are met.

During this initial stage, students might encounter challenges in locating appropriate materials and structuring their learning process, highlighting the crucial role of the teacher as a mentor to assist them through these difficulties. (Nigar.M, 2025)

With the introduction of English language instruction in Azerbaijan, questions arose regarding whether the teaching process should be teacher-centered or student-centered. Initially, language instruction in Azerbaijan followed a more teacher-centered approach, with teachers assuming a primary and dominant role in the classroom. This traditional teaching model persisted for many years, and its effectiveness remained a subject of debate. Subsequently, the influence of science and technology brought about various innovations in language teaching, gradually shifting from teacher-centered to student-centered learning.



## 2. Teacher-Centered vs Student-Centered Instruction

Student-centered education does not imply a passive role for the teacher, where they stand aside and do not participate in the classroom's educational process. Instead, the teacher should serve as a guide, assisting students in their learning journey and helping them determine where and how to start. The teacher must possess the knowledge of what and how to teach, imparting language learning skills to students through diverse methods. Introducing this new language to students requires the guidance of the teacher, prompting them to exert efforts to attain proficiency in the second language to the fullest extent of their capabilities (Javid.b, 2025)

By comparing teacher-centered and student-centered learning, we can determine which approach may be more effective in enhancing the learning process. In teacher-centered learning, the teacher assumes an authoritative role, controlling the entire class and determining the course of action.

In the selection of teaching materials, the activities conducted with them, and the choice of the teaching method, the teacher takes the lead. Peyton, More and Young stated that: In a traditional teacher-centered classroom setting, the instructor predominantly dedicates time to delivering the day's material to the class using tools like the whiteboard, Promethean board, or overhead projector. Students are expected to take notes and pose questions while the lecture is ongoing. This procedure should ideally proceed smoothly and without undue difficulty for the students. (Nigar, 2025)

In the classroom, students do not have freedom, and they must all accept the teacher's ideas and adapt to the method chosen by the teacher. Conversely, in a student-centered teaching approach, the teacher assumes a less central role, allowing the learners to take the lead. Student-centeredness emphasizes cooperative learning, where a student group collaborates to accomplish a designated task, promoting increased interaction among students. (Ismayilli.T, 2025)

In this process, the teachers serve as an observer and a guide. During the lesson, the students' opinions are taken into account, and the lesson is organized to align with their interests. At this time, students' interest to the lesson increases, and their motivation rises. In teacher-oriented instruction, the teacher still employs traditional teaching methods and technologies. This does not capture the interest of children who can freely and easily use all technological innovations in the modern era. They prefer lessons to be conducted with more modern methods and believe that this can be more beneficial for them rather than traditional methods.

Another important issue is the materials used in the teaching process. In teacher-centered instruction, the teacher delivers the materials to the students in a ready-made form and requires them to work only with these materials. This hinders students' freedom of choice. As a result, student don't want to actively participate in the lessons, and the teaching process is carried out



passively. Traditionally, control has been a top priority in teacher-centered classrooms, which has led to criticism for favouring passive students over active ones in the classroom. (Benson, 2015)

In addition, these materials have been used for years, sometimes are outdated, useless, and have no connection to modern teaching methods, which is one of the main problems of teacher-centered teaching.

Furthermore, giving students freedom in the class can sometimes lead to undesirable consequences. In student-centered teaching, some argue in favour of giving students complete freedom during the lesson. However, sometimes this may not be the most effective approach. Mart states that “Dedicated teachers understand that it is their responsibility to inspire students towards active learning and prioritize the promotion of students' intellectual and moral growth. (Brown, 2014)

Considering the age diversity among students, whether this approach can be applied to all age groups may be subject to discussion. Marta stresses Emphasizing the significance of motivation and highlighting it as a key determinant of educational success, it is suggested that sustaining motivation can be effectively achieved through unwavering commitment. (Zulfiyeva,S, 2021)

In some cases, it may not yield good results with young children and lead to confusion in the classroom.

We can clearly say that students or foreign language learners cannot construct or improve their skills and understandings by themselves without a facilitator.

### **3. Age Factor and General Methodological Suggestions**

Also, the age factor has great importance during the teaching process. Teacher should know how to organize lessons according to students' age. To teach foreign language to teenagers and primary school children's is quite different. Teachers can face some challenges when teaching adults and teenagers. Some suggestions can help them to overcome these difficulties.

1. Be guided by the learners
2. Observe
3. Open tutorials and more formal tutorials
4. Give them a voice
5. Regular feedback sessions



6. Active learning process
7. Problem solving or real-life tasks
8. Build on prior knowledge
9. Celebrate achievements
10. Consider that adults may have been working all day - engagement to help motivation is key

As we know teacher-centered language learning still relevant and used in different educational settings - kindergartens, schools, universities, all around the world. Some learners may benefit from teacher-centered method, who prefer traditional teaching methods, who needs additional support and scaffolding.

#### **4. Application of Teacher-Centered Instruction at Education Institutions**

##### **4.1. Teaching English in Primary Classes**

As we know, there are stages and levels of education where education is organized in various forms. The form of organizing education depends directly on the teacher and the institution where the education is conducted.

Education in Azerbaijan starts from the age of 5–6, and from this age, foreign language education, especially English, begins in schools. The role of the teacher in the teaching process during these stages is considered indispensable. Teacher-centered education begins to be taught in various forms according each level and age group.

##### **Teaching English in primary classes**

In primary classes, when organizing foreign language lessons, the main responsibility falls on the teacher because at this time, the teacher is the main manager of the process. In primary class, students are introduced to the English language for the first time. Students who are unfamiliar with this language may have difficulty in acquiring it. The main task of the teacher should be to make students love the language first. This teaching method in lower grades relies solely on teacher-led instruction. Because without the teacher's assistance, students cannot do anything. The teacher must make lessons interesting for the students, as learning a foreign language may seem difficult at first for students who have just started to read and write in their own language. The planning of the lesson process is crucial here, which aids the teacher. The main duty of the teacher is to assist students in acquiring the foreign language. (Mart, 2019)



Since teachers bear more responsibility in lower grades, the role of the teacher is considered very important in classroom conditions. The expression of children's own ideas, the development of their intellectual level, the development and formation of communication skills with other children and individuals are realized through the teacher's means. The teacher must be versatile for this. Teaching children only a foreign language is not enough. The teacher must develop themselves and through this development, contribute to the development of children. Although the teacher directs the lesson, they should give freedom to the children so that they can easily ask the teacher what they want. Because at this age, children are interested in everything, and their desire to learn is high. The teacher must create a supportive environment for them.

In addition, the teacher's supervisory ability should be at a high level. They should monitor each student separately, observe how they grasp the foreign language better, and prepare a training plan and strategy accordingly to this plan.

In this stage the teacher can make the lesson process more effective by using various methods and techniques. The methods that can be mainly used for students of this age can be listed as follows:

1. We can turn lessons into music to teach foreign language to children. This will make lessons more interesting and help students better assimilate the lesson. For example, when teaching students English alphabet, we can easily use the ABC songs from different resources. This will make lessons more enjoyable and comfortable for them. (Peyton, 2021) Additionally, many children's songs available on the internet can also help us. This will increase our students' vocabulary and gradually help them develop proper sentence structure. We can also use various facial expressions and hand gestures to help students understand the meaning of words. Since the structure of songs is simple, explaining them in English and creating conditions for students to understand them is a comfortable process.
2. Visual diagrams and shapes can be used when teaching the lesson. This will help in the formation of students' visual memory and help them better retain information. Students will see the shape of words and directly learn their pronunciation in foreign language. This will gradually help them increase their vocabulary.
3. Passing the lesson with games will make the lessons more interesting and enjoyable for students. It is possible to apply auction method comfortably with children who have a certain vocabulary. This will create conditions for their active participation in the lesson and also help their brains work more actively. Additionally, all children will be eager to actively participate in the lesson.
4. It is necessary to always review previous lessons with children so they do not forget what they have learned and strengthen their memory. Drilling is the main activity during the



foreign language learning process. It will help during the learning of vocabulary and grammar rules.

5. Using multimedia in the lesson can be more effective and enjoyable. If there are facilities in the classroom, we can watch beginning-level cartoons on a projector or individual computers. This will attract the attention of all students. Because in this age students like to watch cartoons or animation movies. At the end of the lesson, we can also give small surprises to students to further motivate them. Small gifts or storybooks will further motivate students who are just beginning to learn a foreign language and create interest in them. It is necessary to instil in them from a young age how beneficial it is to learn a second language.

#### 4.2. Teaching Language in Grades 5–9

Teaching a foreign language in grades five to nine is similar to elementary grades, but there are differences. Here, teachers give students some freedom. However, the process is carried out directly under control of the teacher. Children who have already been engaged in learning a foreign language since lower grades can perform assignments here comfortably and independently. However, teacher-centered teaching still predominates at this stage. Because all of this process is carried out under the mentorship of the teacher. The teacher provides students with necessary information, explains how to learn, and guides them. As a result of the teacher's assistance, students can understand the lesson better. One of the main role of the teacher at this stage is to ensure that students acquire the four skills. Without the teacher's mentorship, it would be difficult to develop these four skills together in students.

At this age, students often experience instances of losing interest in the lesson, which can lead to a loss of interest in the lesson. Therefore, the psychological state of students should also be considered.

The teacher can still be considered the main source of information at this stage because students are at different levels and cannot fully complete their tasks independently without the teacher's assistance. The development of fluent speaking skill in student is considered one of the main goals set by the teacher. Since the students have already acquired a certain level of language skills and have a sufficient vocabulary, they should be able to speak fluently. For this, the teacher can use several methods together or separately. However, it should not be forgotten that alongside fluent speaking, control over the correct pronunciation should also be ensured in students. Sometimes, teachers who only focus on speaking forget these aspects, and even though the students speak fluently, the listener may have difficulties in understanding them.



If the following techniques are implemented by the teacher, students can better assimilate language skills at this stage:

1. Increased use of dialogues – If the teacher wants to develop students’ communication skills, they should give more space to dialogues. Dialogues can be taken mainly from real-life situations. Dialogues related to such situations interest students. The teacher can choose the topic themselves or allow each student to choose a topic individually. As students work with these dialogues, their ability to communicate freely will develop, and they will find it easier to understand the language.
2. Writing essays – One of the main tasks the teacher will give students at this stage to develop their writing skills. The teacher selects a topic and asks students to write essays on it. At this time, students’ writing skill and thinking abilities begin to develop. On the other hand, this can also help enrich students’ critical thinking and expand their vocabulary. When students write essays on a topic, the teacher should require them to find new words related to the topic, use these words in the essay, and create a separate list of newly used words. As students work with new words, they will better assimilate and remember them. This will also affect the development of students’ thinking and outlook. Essay evaluation can also be organized by the teacher in different ways. The teacher can ask students to evaluate and assess the essays of their classmates. Since this stage requires attention, students should be prepared for this process by the teacher and should use the tactics provided by teacher. After students check the essays, the teacher can ask them for their opinion and thoughts on the essay. This is considered advantageous for students because they both write their own essays and read their classmates’ essays and express their opinions. This enhances students’ thinking and develops critical thinking.
3. Watching films – The teacher can organize film days in the classroom to make lessons more interesting. This will have great impact on changing the atmosphere of the class and creating a positive learning environment for students. In addition, the films watched will introduce students to the language of native speakers and help them develop proper pronunciation rules.
4. Teacher mentoring – Through this, students can become acquainted with information that they may have missed during the lesson process through the teacher’s help. Additionally, the teacher should explain the new lesson and provide the necessary information about the lesson to the students. The teacher is the main source that can help students develop proper pronunciation (Nigar, 2023).
5. Education, the basic idea is to develop four skills in students simultaneously. When selecting reading texts, teacher should be especially careful. Here, the students’ age,



language proficiency, and level as well as their area of interest, should be taken into consideration. Reading texts play a significant role in developing students' language skills. New words in these texts help to expand the students' vocabulary, while reading sentences also aids in forming correct sentence structure.

6. Listening activities – During listening activities, significant challenges can arise. Sometimes teachers do not pay attention to listening, while teachers who use listening texts may not explain its ways to students. This can lead to difficulties. Develop listening skill will be difficult for students for the first time. After some practice it will turn easy for students. Because they will be familiar to what they hear and after some time they will do listening exercises more easily.

### 4.3. Teaching Language in Grades 10–11

From 10th to 11th grades and high schools, this level is composed of students who already have a certain level of language proficiency. They have developed independent thinking, respect for teachers and classmates, and respect for others, which creates conditions for the teacher to comfortably organize the teaching process. In this section, the role of the teacher diminishes, and the superiority passes to the student himself. Because they can now work comfortably and freely on their own. This creates conditions for the teaching process to be organized comfortably. Choosing the topic, participating in discussions depends on student, and the teacher can only act as a guide here. In this stage teaching process is more student-centered. Students are active role in this stage. They can choose teaching materials by themselves and can organize teaching process. But teacher's help is crucial. Because finding appropriate materials can be difficult for students and teacher knows where to begin learning foreign language.

### 5. Inclusive Education: Methods of Teaching Foreign Language in Inclusive Education

In the last ten years, inclusive education has begun gain special importance in our country. Attention began to be paid special children in all schools, and this showed how important inclusive education is.

Treating special children with attention and care, educating them, and integrating them into society has become priority issue in the education system. Here, the role of school administration and teacher has been crucial.

In inclusive education, it is necessary to create a special environment for the children where they are welcomed more warmly, a supportive environment is created for them by their families, classmates, and teachers, and all materials and resources are made accessible to these children. It is necessary to create an environment in the class where the students can accept the difference of this students. Inclusive education includes all materials in the curriculum. By using various



teaching methods and techniques, it has been possible to provide quality education. In addition, inclusive education not only provides advantages to special children but also contributes to the development of critical thinking, empathy, and cooperating among those around them. Inclusive education also creates conditions for everyone to receive equal education without regard to race, social identity, disability, or language identity. In addition, teachers are encouraged to constantly work on improving their own methods and skills.

Special approach is necessary when teaching foreign languages to students with disabilities. Because the foreign language learning ability of such children may vary due to the differences in their disability levels. It is possible to achieve effective results by using the following methods and teaching techniques:

1. **Individualized training** – individualized training is a fundamental part of inclusive education. Individualized training is prepared individually by the teacher according to the student's abilities and learning capacity and adapted to that student. Having one or two special children in each class makes teaching more comfortable and creates a convenient and conducive environment for the teacher to engage with them individually. In this case, the teacher can also use many different tools. Showing the word in a foreign language through shapes and explaining it, or giving priority to kinaesthetic methods can attract the student's attention and provide a more comfortable learning environment for special children. In addition, the use of gestures and facial expressions can be advantageous when learning a foreign language.
2. **Emotional approach to students** – It is very important to consider the feelings of such children when teaching a foreign language. The more kindly a teacher behaves towards the student, the more they can engage them in learning process. It is necessary to create an atmosphere for children where they feel comfortable and can easily adapt to other students (Nigar, 2023).
3. **Continuous repetition and reinforcement** – Giving priority to continuous repetition is necessary to help students better assimilate new language understanding. Previous lessons should be reviewed when introducing new lessons to reinforce them in the child's memory. In addition, using games, songs, and interactive activities can make the learning environment more interesting and keep student engaged.
4. **Simplifying the language** – When teaching foreign language to such children, we need to simplify the language as much as we can. We can use simpler sentence structures, simple words and expressions that are more comfortable for children to understand. This will stimulate their interests and make the process interesting for them. A student who feels



they have the abilities to learn language will approach the lesson more comfortably and eagerly, always eager to learn new things.

5. **Use of technology** – Technology is an integral part of the present era. Therefore, it also appeals to the interests of these special children. Using technological innovations in class can attract children's interests. Watching cartoons or simple videos related to the language can make lesson more lively.
6. **Support and collaboration** – Individual tutoring or support from peers can be considered essential. The teacher can offer their personal help to the student and assist them in topics they find difficult outside of class time. In addition, the teacher should involve the student's peers in this work. This will create communication among them and will establish a supportive environment. The teacher can also provide comprehensive support. Comprehensive support refers to the collaboration of parents, teachers, institution staff, professionals involved in this work, and peers. Conditions should be created for the student to manage not only during class time but also after class and to make use of assistance.
7. **Patience and empathy** – The teacher should understand that these children are special. They may have learning difficulties, behavioural issues, or many conflicts. During language instruction, the child may refuse to learn or create noise in class, disrupting the learning process. Therefore, the teacher requires special patience. In my opinion, teachers should undergo special training to adapt to behaviour rules for these children and to manage the classroom environment effectively.

Teachers have pivotal role in inclusive education. Because they are resource of information and great helper for special children. Teacher should consult with the parents regularly for informing them about students' achievement and success.

## 6. Conclusion

The analysis conducted in this article indicates that teacher-centered instruction, while a traditional method, retains its significance in specific phases of foreign language teaching. Particularly in primary classes (ages 5–6), where students are first encountering a foreign language and are not yet accustomed to the learning methodologies, the dominant role of the teacher in managing instruction, presenting content, and conveying core knowledge is essential. In this stage, the teacher can structure the lesson effectively and engagingly by utilizing methods such as songs, visual diagrams, games, and continuous drilling.

However, as the educational level advances, specifically in middle and senior grades (10–11th grades), a transition towards a student-centered learning approach becomes more appropriate, driven by the influence of technology and the students' developing independent critical thinking



skills. In these later stages, the teacher should move beyond being the primary source of knowledge and act as a mentor or guide, directing students toward activities like real-life dialogues, essay writing, and critical analysis.

Furthermore, the requirements of inclusive education highlight the importance of the individualized and emotional components inherent in the teacher's role. For students with disabilities, individualized training plans, simplified language, patience, and empathy must form the core principles of the teacher's professional practice.

In summary, the effectiveness of modern foreign language instruction is achieved not through a rigid separation of teacher-centered and student-centered methods, but rather through the optimal and flexible integration of these approaches, tailored to the students' age, proficiency level, and specific requirements. The teacher must develop a comprehensive and balanced strategy in every teaching context, utilizing modern technological tools to foster the development of the four language skills (listening, speaking, reading, writing) simultaneously.

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