

Paradigm Shift: A Critical Appraisal of Traditional and Innovative Roles of an English Teacher in Saudi ELT Classrooms

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Abstract—The existing teaching practices in Saudi ELT classrooms, largely reflect the implications of traditional teacher-centred classrooms. In this vein, the study discusses diverse manifestations of the most influential scholars on the stereotypical traditional role of the teacher and also highlights pressing need for redefining the role of a teacher in new perspectives. The teacher in a traditional teacher-centred classroom assumes the role of an absolute authoritative figure, who serves as the source of knowledge while learners serve as passive recipients. It is well accepted that this sort of unilateral pedagogy fails to build creativity as well as communicative ability of the learners and thus hinders their language learning process. Hence, the main focus of the study is on how innovative role of the teacher significantly altered the role of the learners and in the thick of all classroom activities they get practical experience of using the language for communicative purposes. The phenomenon of teacher's traditional and innovative role was interrogated and explored using the qualitative research tools, i.e. opinionnaire and classroom observation. The specific population included two hundred male and female EFL teachers from Jazan University to obtain representative sample for the study.

Index Terms—ELT, traditional teacher-centred, learner-centred, innovative roles of a teacher, Saudi context, EFL

I. INTRODUCTION

In any teaching-learning situation, the role of the teacher carries significant importance because it is central to the situation in which the classroom environment evolves. The issue of changing roles of a teacher from traditional to innovative has been the topic of discussion in current scholarly debates and also of the present study in the context of Saudi ELT classrooms. The traditional teacher-centred approach tends to consider students as passive recipients of information, without considering the need for active participation in the learning process. A teacher centred learning environment does by definition neither facilitate nor empower learners' autonomous study-skills and subsequently their lifelong learning skills. This approach heavily relies on grades and students' motivation to do hard work solely based on competition with other students.

Recently the scholars arrived at a point that traditional teacher-centered learning runs into a variety of bottlenecks when encountered with the challenges of our modern life and an emerging globalized world. Hence, the ideal is now for a more democratic, student-centred approach, where the teacher facilitates active and communicative learning strategies among the students. Therefore, the teacher must be clear about his/her role in the classroom so that there should not be a gap between how s/he actually perceives his/her role and what s/he really practices in the classroom. In this backdrop the sole purpose of the present study is to investigate the traditional and innovative roles of an EFL/ESL teacher with a particular focus on Saudi ELT classrooms.

Objectives

The objectives of the study were to:

- highlight the sources wherein modern practitioners and methodologists prefer LCA to TCA, in teaching learning of English as L2,
- identify shortcomings of TCA in teaching-learning of English in Saudi context,
- signify the dynamic aspects of LCA in teaching-learning of English in Saudi Arabia,
- suggest ways how to make a classroom more productive and objective- oriented in teaching-learning of English as L2.

The forthcoming sections are given over to the understanding of the notion of “role” and subsequently to the “teacher’s role” in ELT classroom.

II. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Theoretical and conceptual framework helps determine the pros and cons of a research work. This is the researchers’ own position on the research problem. The review of the existing research brought to the fore what has been done and what needs to be done in the research area under exploration. The most significant aspects have been enumerated as under:

A. *The Notion of “Role”*

The expression “role” has its roots in sociology which manifests that how an individual behaves towards others. Oxford Advanced Learners Dictionary (A S Hornby, 2010) describes the expression “role” as: “the function or position that somebody has or expected to have in an organization, in society or in a relationship.” In a social context, the term “role” means what people are expected to perform or supposed to do in their everyday lives. While in the domain of English Language Teaching (ELT), various methodologists have proposed many potential roles for a language teacher. The next section is given over to the understanding of the concept of “Teacher’s role in ELT Classrooms.”

B. *Teacher’s Role in ELT*

In educational system, the role of a teacher is crucially significant and has diverse manifestations in academic scenario. In the realm of English Language Teaching (ELT), the language teacher performs many potential roles. Richards and Rodgers (1986) perceive teacher’s role as part of a method in these words: “methods typically depend critically on teacher roles and their realizations”. They highlight numerous issues which relate to the teacher roles in methods:

(a) The types of function teachers are expected to fulfill, whether that of practice director, counselor, or model; (b) the degree of control the teacher has over how learning takes place; (c) the degree to which is the teacher is responsible for determining the content of what is taught; and (d) the interactional patterns that develop between teachers and learners.

Nunan (1989) explains that in educational context the term role refers to the parts that teacher and learners are expected to perform in conducting numerous classroom activities in restricted sense of interaction between the participants apart from their social roles in the society. Now a days, in English as a second or foreign language, the idea of a teacher as “facilitator” is considered to be more compatible than the teacher’s role as a transmitter of knowledge to the students with “tabula rasa” or blank slates. The teacher’s role has varied dimensions because it is presented diversely by different methodologists and practitioners.

In the context of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) Larsen-Freeman is of the view that Littlewood (1981) assigned a very broader role to the language teacher in the frame of reference of a “facilitator of learning” instead of attributing with a narrow concept of “the teacher as an instructor or transmitter of knowledge”. He adds that Littlewood perceived the term facilitator as an umbrella term that subsequently entails various sub-roles, i.e. a manager of classroom activities in which s/he establishes situations to promote communication, an advisor where he answers students’ questions and monitor their performance and over and above a “co-communicator” in which he engages students in communicative activities.

Harmer (2001) looks at the term “facilitator” in a much extended way than Littlewood does and points out that the ultimate aim of the role of the teacher is to facilitate and promote effective learning of the students in one way or the other. In addition to this, Harmer prescribes certain comprehensive terms for the different roles of the teacher, which he or she performs in the classroom, viz. controller, organizer, assessor, prompter, participant, resource, tutor, and observer. In a similar vein, he substantiates the point that the teacher also functions as a substitute for teaching devices/tools, particularly when he mimes, uses gestures, works as a language model and provides comprehensible input.

In an educational setting, Dr Intakhab Alam Khan has seen some key roles of a good teacher, i.e. the transmitter of knowledge, a role model, the facilitator, the student assessor, the curriculum assessor, the course planner, and a diamond maker. In addition to this he speaks about the general categories of a teacher, viz. (i) the teacher who genuinely teaches, (ii) who manages to teach; (iii) and who manipulates while teaching. William Arthur Ward elaborates the point: i.e. “*The mediocre teacher tells. The good teacher explains. The superior teacher demonstrates. The great teacher inspires.*” It can be added to this that a bad teacher teaches from the books, not from the heart to finish the course contents, devoid of brining change and transformation. Khalil Gibran (J Harmer: 56 Gibran 1991) puts forward his observation about learner-centred approach in these words: “*If (the teacher) is indeed wise, he does not bid you enter the house of his wisdom, but rather leads you to the threshold of your own mind*”. Tudor (1993) firmly believes that there would seem to be the two roles which the teacher assumes and which are the cornerstones of learner-centred approach. But before going into an in-depth understanding of such a changed view of the classroom, it is crucial to look into the traditional role of a teacher in Saudi ELT classrooms.

C. *Traditional Saudi ELT Classrooms: A Critique from the Frames of Reference of ELT Methodologists and Practitioners*

Every nation has its own national language and set of native dialects. In Saudi Arabia, the country's national language is Arabic. In the context of the present discourse, English language generally in the Arab countries and particularly in Saudi Arabia has a limited scope in everyday communication. Yet its significance in these countries cannot be denied in the backdrop of educational, technological and economic development. Many researchers are of the view that Saudi educational system bears certain crucial aspects that potentially influence and more precisely erode the students' learning. A leading Arab businessman states (Kirdar, 2002) that region would not achieve its full economic potential: "unless we revolutionize our educational system and make a total change to our mindsets". Similarly, Elyas writes that (Cassidy and Miller, 2002) Harvard study of Arab higher education established that: "widespread practices of rote learning and memorization exercises are incapable of developing capacities in students for problem solving and application of theory to practical concepts". He substantiates the point that within the Arab countries strong debates have raged that traditional Arab educational culture emphasized rote learning and teacher based pedagogy which do not support current economic development in the region.

In the words of Sultan Al-Hazmi, (2003) "EFL teacher preparation programs in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia can be described as nonsystematic and inadequate." He is of the view that Saudi educational authorities arrange inadequate teacher training programs for the preparation of EFL teachers in the Kingdom, which he perceives an instrumental cause for not having properly qualified local teachers for the task ahead. In this regard, he has mentioned the need for a systematic approach to pre and in-service education for EFL teachers, with a particular reference to English pedagogy. Grami (2012) observes that many researchers are of the view Saudi educational system suffers from certain issues that could potentially hinder students' learning ability. In socio-cultural context, Grami writes, McKay's (1992) observations that Saudi educational authorities are producing English material with no reference to the English speaking communities. It is very obvious that such learning material would prepare the graduates who cannot establish a logical connection between the content of their textbooks to the real life situations coupled with fail to achieve the appropriate language proficiency. He adds that McKay (1992), Gray (2000) and Whitefield & Pollard (1998) perceive that in the first year of formal education, separation between male and female students is another issue of Saudi ELT classrooms.

In typical Saudi ELT classrooms, the students are accustomed to the repetitive practices, mechanical drills, cramming of vocabulary and memorization of grammar rules. In one way or the other, customary usages and the available textbooks both assigned the teacher limitless authority. The traditional educational values due to their influential role in Saudi culture make the teacher eminent figure in the classroom who deserves immense respect while the textbooks are designed in a style which require constant elaboration or direction from the teacher. Over and above, the process of evaluation and assessment of students' performance bestows upon the teacher additional authority of an evaluator and an assessor. Rigid layout of the classroom, including the seating arrangement reflects traditional approach to language teaching where the teacher is on the front and students sitting in fixed rows, virtually means that the only person at the heights of pinnacles and veneration at any given moment of time is the teacher. Moreover, it is evident from numerous reports as well as the current practices indicate that Saudi ELT classrooms suffers lack of participation on the part of the learners. In this backdrop, a more balanced approach will work more effectively where learners will be the focus of attention and the teacher assumes less authoritative position. The shift in focus from teacher to learners brings effective outcomes only if applied in corroboration with modern collaborative cum communicative approaches. The cooperative learning can be made more effective by conducting activities of pair and group work in which the students are motivated to share their learning experiences with their peers, unlike competitive learning practices that invoke a sense of competition among the learners. Hence, it is well accepted that traditional approaches to teaching require overruled dimensions of teacher's power and control, whereas innovative language teaching demands a greater degree of autonomy on the part of the learners. The next section is given over to the idea of traditional role of a teacher in teacher-centred ELT classrooms.

D. Traditional Role of an English Teacher

In traditional language teaching, teacher plays a more important role than students. For many years, the concept of classroom management was rooted in behavioral theories of teaching and learning. In accordance with the behaviorist learning theory, teaching focuses on the external manifestations of learning rather than on the internal processes. Garrett mentions that Brophy (Brophy, 1999) is of the view that the main focus of the behaviorist model in classroom management was to employ the technique that brings the students' behavior under stimulus control (Garret, 2008). Richards and Rodgers (1986) manifest that the learners play a reactive role by responding to stimuli, and thus have little control over the content, pace or style of learning. He adds that these behavioral approaches in the classroom are the back bone of traditional transmission approaches to instruction.

In the wake of 1960s and 1970s, educational writings enormously revealed its focus on examination-oriented and grammar-and-vocabulary-based traditional teacher-centred classrooms. The criterion of a teacher's evaluation was entirely based on the amount of educational contents s/he crammed into the heads of the students. The more the teacher stuffed the items the best s/he would be considered. Broughton and his colleagues brought to the fore a very typical feature of traditional methodology, i.e.: "teacher-dominated interaction." That means at the core of it, the traditional method is largely teacher-focused. Dr. Abdullah Kuzu asserts that it is based on the: "traditional view of education, where teachers serve as the source of knowledge while learners serve as passive receivers." This idea corresponds to the simile of Jim Scrivener, who manifests that: "traditional teaching [is imagined to work as] 'jug and mug' – the

knowledge being poured from one receptacle into an empty one.” This widespread attitude is based on a precondition that “being in a class in the presence of a teacher and ‘listening attentively’ is [...] enough to ensure that learning will take place.” In this traditional role the teacher assumes absolute authority and firm control on the learners, while students sit quiet passively receive pearls of wisdom delivered by the teacher. Jack C. Richards highlights in his book ‘Communicative Language Teaching Today’, that in traditional methodology, “learning was very much seen as under the control of the teacher” (Richards 4). Richards and Rodgers (1986) point out numerous functions of a teacher in traditional teaching as, for instance, the teacher act as a language model, the lesson planner, the controller and the assessor of learners’ practice and performance, the organizer of grammar oriented language programs, the course planner coupled with a person responsible to select and prepare the material and decide what and how the learners ought to learn.

Here it is pertinent to have a thorough glance on the main features of traditional method of ELT. The central premise on which it resides is the traditional lecture method popular for teaching English for decades now. The teacher lectures at length on particular topics and students listen to him/her with rapt attention. Incorporating this methodology, the teacher infuses discrete items of grammar, phonology, and vocabulary into the mind of the learners, focusing mainly on the formal features of the language at the expense of encouraging students to use the language. The scholars termed it a “synthetic” approach to teaching where a teacher instills discrete bits of knowledge in the mental threshold of the learners in a linear fashion. In the words of Wilkins (1976), in this approach: “*different parts of the language are taught separately and step by step so that acquisition is a process of gradual accumulation of parts until the whole structure of language has been built up*”. This approach finds its roots in the belief that the purpose of all teaching is to make the learning easy and simple. At one end, it breaks the contents into smaller parts and at another end; presents them in a sequential layout. This approach to language learning is explained well by Nunan (1996), who compares it to the laying of bricks in a wall, as for instance:

The language wall is erected on a linguistic “brick” at a time. The easy grammatical bricks are laid at the bottom of the wall, and they provide a foundation for the more difficult ones. The task for the learner is to get the linguistic bricks in the right order: first the word bricks, and then the sentence bricks. If the bricks are not in the correct order, the wall will collapse under its own ungrammaticality.

In this context, the teacher is ‘response-able’ to erect “the language wall” well and considered not only as the organizer and controller of all classroom activities but also as the evaluator of learners’ performance.

The traditional teacher-centred approach neglects students’ needs and interests and perceives them as receptacle of information to pour something into them and as an outcome of it hampers students’ communicative ability. So, in second language learning the significance of talk among the students has its own scope since it functions as a medium of communication between teacher-students and student- student. Long and Porter (1985) declare that teacher dominated classes not only leave negative impacts on the quantity of learner’s ability to converse with each other but also on its quality. Hence it is incumbent upon the teacher to do their level best to get their students involve in different types of communicative activities that encourage them to speak with and listen to their peers. In the light of overviewed dimensions, it can be said that in traditional teacher-centred classrooms the teacher holds dominant status in the class while learners appear to follow passively what is taught in the class. Therefore, the traditional teacher-centred approach naturally advocates for poor teacher-student and student-student interaction and eventually brings unsatisfactory outcomes of language teaching and learning.

E. Innovative Paradigm: Learner Focused Classrooms

As the whole universe is constructed with the binary oppositions in the same manner Dewey’s (1998) key observations about educational theory are based on contrasting pairs. He proposes that: “*The history of educational theory is marked by opposition between the idea that education is a development from within and that it is formation from without.*” To traditional educational approaches Dewey assigned the position of “without”, which he defines as: “*taking bodies of information and of skills that have been worked out in the past and transmitting them to the new generation.*” Long back, Dewey (1938) objected to this kind of spoon-feeding of knowledge, and pointed out the importance of the role of the learners as an active agent in their learning. Contrary to this, he attributed, “within” position to the progressive education, to which he perceived as: “*expression and cultivation of individuality...free activity... [and] learning through experience.*” He laid the foundation of what we now call “learner-centredness”, a term which has now gained tremendous currency in ELT. It is apparent in the proclamation of Tudor (1996) as he points out: “In a learner-centred approach, students are seen as being able to assume a more active and participatory role than is usual in traditional approaches.” He adds that: “a widespread desire in the language teaching community to develop means of allowing learners to play a fuller, more active and participatory role in their language study.” Leo Jones (2007) conceives the same point by articulating: “students can’t be “taught” – they can only be helped to learn.” He notices that in student-centered classrooms the teacher doesn’t relinquish its more traditional role as a source of information, advice, and knowledge. The only change which comes in his role is to help and encourage the students to develop their skills through team and cooperative working. In the context of similar discourse, Vygotsky (1995) gave observations: “The personal activity of the student must be placed at the base of the educational process, and all the teachers art must come down to directing and regulating this activity.” In Addition to this he notices that:

A psychological law states: before you want to involve the child in some kind of activity, interest the child in it being

concerned to make sure that child is ready for this activity, that all the child's strengths needed for it are exerted, that the child will act for him/herself, and that for the teacher remains only the task of guiding and directing the child's activity.

The excerpt reveals Vygotsky's conviction that a teacher should involve the learners through constant collaboration, exploitation of their social settings and their desire and readiness to act together with the teacher. At the core of Vygotsky's theory lies the idea of active dialogue and communication between student-student and student-teacher.

It is evident from numerous reports that Saudi ELT classrooms suffer lack of participation on the part of the learners. In this backdrop, a more balanced approach that benefits the educational process in general and the language class in particular will be more effective where learners will be the focus of attention and the teacher assumes less authoritative position. It has been proven through numerous studies plus actual implementation that the shift in focus from teacher to learner bears effective outcomes only if applied in corroboration with modern communicative approaches. The learner-centred approach moves around the needs and abilities of the learners. It makes the learning more meaningful, especially when the topics are relevant to the students' lives, needs, and interests. It demands from the learners to participate and interact actively in a meaningful interaction and take responsibility for their own learning. The students do not only practice information alone, but they are also motivated to work with their peers. Virtually, learners are treated as co-creators in the learning process and their innovative thoughts and ideas are paid special consideration.

The learner-centred approach in ELT is not the product of a single school of thought, but a result of the convergence of several innovative approaches on ELT. In this framework, the influence of humanistic and communicative theories is illustrious as in recent years both laid a great emphasis on "learner-centred" teaching, which makes the learners' needs and experiences central to the educational process. Hence, the language teaching in learner-centred classes with the backdrop of communicative and humanistic approaches is very flexible, maximum outcome oriented and over and above addresses the learners' interactive needs of real authentic world.

F. Innovative Role of the Teacher in Task-based Language Teaching

The present section aims to explore the teacher's role during task-based activities conducted in learner-centred classrooms to develop communicative competence of the learners. Littlejohn (1998) proposed a comprehensive definition of task: "... "Task" refers to any proposal contained within the materials for action to be undertaken by the learners, which has the direct aim of bringing about the learning of the foreign language". The definition speaks about three significant aspects, i.e. process, participation and content. The Process reflects the way or procedure teacher and learners go through from; participation refers to the manner the learners work in the classroom; content is something that learners focus on while participating in the process. Nunan (2005) defines task as:

A piece of classroom work that involves learners in comprehending, manipulating, producing or interacting in the target language while their attention is focused on mobilizing their grammatical knowledge in order to express meaning, and in which the intention is to convey meaning rather than to manipulate form.

Tasks are central to the communicative language teaching because they provide a context that activates learning process and inculcates reflective understanding of the language in the mental threshold of the learners. Many writers have noted that TBLT can be best understood not as a new departure, but as an offshoot of communicative language teaching that makes the use of real-life situations in the classroom and necessitates interaction among the learners. The teacher sets up a situation that students are likely to encounter in real life. In the words of Nunan, TBLT resides on: "*experiential learning*" or "*learning by doing*" which in my view is, "*learning by involving*" that develops the learners' true empathy, identity and interest towards the content. In this way, TBLT takes the responsibility of breaking the stereotypical image of traditional classrooms because the very act of trying to undertake a communicative task involves planning, interacting and using strategies on the part of the learners. It reveals that the role of the learners gets entirely changed in task-based approach to language teaching, for instance, when they experience full involvement in classroom activities by using the language in real authentic situations. However, the other roles, as, for instance, the role of a teacher as disseminator of information changed into a mediator, motivator, decision-maker, and counselor, etc. Vygotsky observes that in mediational teaching, the teacher becomes a true facilitator of learning for the language learners. He guides them to work collaboratively and helps in constructing the learning behavior through interaction in pair or group work. In the role of an advisor, a teacher observes learners' performance and declares his/her observation in terms of their strengths and weaknesses. He or she also plans the tasks for the future and stimulates the learners' intellect by presenting new language items for learning.

It is pertinent to mention that though the teacher could at best create an effective classroom environment that is conducive to language learning but he could never develop a real control over the learners' natural process of acquiring foreign language coupled with could not accelerate their ability to communicate effectively. However, the communicative skills of the learners can only be developed if they are motivated. It is well accepted that the teacher can facilitate this process by creating diverse interesting and challenging communicative activities, i.e. pair-work, group-work, and role plays. Therefore, through such collaborative activities the teacher could track the learners upon the path of acquiring and using the target language in real authentic situations of concrete actual world.

III. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The present study attempts to answer the following research questions:

1. Why do modern practitioners and methodologists feel a need for switching from teacher-centred (TCA) to learner-centred approach (LCA)?
2. What is teacher-centred approach (TCA) and its shortcomings?
3. What is learner-centred approach (LCA) and its dynamic vistas?
4. How does learner-centred approach (LCA) help in enhancing the communicative ability of the learners?

A. Delimitations of the Study

The study in hand is delimited to the understanding of the scope of paradigm shift from traditional teacher-centred to learner-centred approach in the context of Saudi EFL classrooms and the most specifically Jazan University.. The focus of the study was narrowed down to the critical appreciation of the teacher-centred and learner-centred approaches and the researcher has probed into and explored various dimensions of both the approaches with the help of EFL teachers' responses to the opinionnaire and the researcher's classroom observation.

B. Research Tools

In the present study, the researcher used a cross sectional survey to collect data from a predetermined sample that was drawn from the population of Jazan University, English Language Centre (JUELC). The opinionnaire was designed on a structured pattern in order to obtain precise and useful information from one hundred male and one hundred female EFL teachers on the specific aspects related to the study in hand. The specific population, i.e. EFL/ESL teachers of (JUELC), was focused to obtain responses on closed ended questions. The samples have not been administered randomly, but after cautious planning and judging the specialty of the respondents, so that their responses may render a true, valid and reliable picture of the determined population.

From the very outset, it was in the mind of the researchers that the selection of appropriate and relevant research methods helps identify the research problems. Thus, in order to better understand the phenomena under study, survey research design is selected for this work. As survey is one of the most common forms of research to be engaged in by the educational researchers. It allows researchers to ask a large group of people various questions about a particular topic or issue. The reliability and validity of the opinionnaire were determined by a 'pilot study' and resultantly a revised and structured version of the opinionnaire was designed to get reliable data. Moreover, for further underpinning the study, the researcher observed the existing practices in teaching-learning of English in 3+3= 6 classrooms (3 classroom with TCA and 3 with LCA). An observation sheet was also prepared by the researcher to write down a true depiction of an English classroom in Jazan, Saudi Arabia.

IV. DATA ANALYSIS

At the stage of analysis, participants' responses were analyzed to highlight different roles of the teacher in teacher-centred and learner-centred classrooms and to maintain the significance of the learner-centred classrooms where the learners performed a vital role in their own learning and in the thick of all classroom activities they get practical experience of using the language for communicative purposes.

Opinionnaire: A well-calculated data have been displayed in Table-1 (Female teachers' responses) and Table-2 (Male teachers' responses):

TABLE-1
DISTINCTIVE RATIO OF FEMALE TEACHERS' RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS 1-20 OF THE OPINIONNAIRE

Opinion No.	Total Responses	Strongly Disagree/%age	Disagree/%age	Uncertain/%age	Agree/%age	Strongly Agree/%age
1	79%	4/5%	7/8.86%	4/5%	49/62%	15/18.98%
2	ditto	2/2.53%	5/6%	3/3.79%	49/62%	20/25%
3	ditto	3/3.79%	7/8.86%	2/2.53%	52/65.82%	15/18.98%
4	ditto	2/2.53%	9/11%	12/15%	43/54%	13/16%
5	ditto	4/5%	7/8.86%	7/8.86%	52/65.82%	9/11%
6	ditto	4/5%	17/21.51%	6/7.59%	37/46.83%	15/18.98%
7	ditto	3/3.79%	13/16%	19/24%	29/36.70%	15/18.98%
8	ditto	3/3.79%	5/6%	3/3.79%	49/62%	19/24%
9	ditto	3/3.79%	21/26.58%	14/17.72%	29/36.70	12/15%
10	ditto	1/1%	4/5%	5/6%	42/53%	27/34%
11	ditto	1/1%	4/5%	5/6%	42/53%	27/34%
12	ditto	2/2.53%	2/2.53%	4/5%	38/48%	33/41.77%
13	ditto	2/2.53%	9/11%	7/8.86%	46/58%	15/19.98%
14	ditto	2/2.53%	1/1%	9/11%	33/41.77%	34/43%
15	ditto	1/1%	2/2.53%	3/3.79%	48/60.75%	25/31.64%
16	ditto	2/2.53%	0/0%	1/1%	37/46.83%	39/49%
17	ditto	2/2.53%	3/3.79%	3/3.79%	39/49%	32/40.50%
18	ditto	2/2.53%	4/5%	7/8.86%	42/53%	24/30%
19	ditto	0/0%	2/2.53%	14/17.72%	31/39%	32/40.50%
20	ditto	0/0%	2/2.53%	13/16%	39/49%	25/31.64%

Explanation Table-1: The %ages of 'female teachers' responses to all opinions 1-20 slightly fluctuate between 5-11%, except opinion – 6, 7 and 9. Similarly the %ages of the responses that agree to the opinions, swing within 41-77% to the maximum. The detail is as follows:

- (i) Only 11% teachers disagree to opinion-1.
- (ii) The %ages of the uncertain responses are negligible as compared to the ratio of the teachers who agree to the opinion.
- (iii) Very distinctively, 65% teachers agree to the statement that "the traditional method of teaching is largely teacher-centred" which definitely results in discouraging learning output.
- (iv) In addition to this, TCA is limited to lecture method.
- (v) Here teacher's role is authoritative and regarded as the only knowledge imparting agent.
- (vi) Very frankly, in TCA only teacher is improving his skills while enjoying an active role that dictates the learner merely to be a passive listener.
- (vii) 'Usage' (competency) of English is focused instead of its 'use' (performance).
- (viii) There are mixed-ability students in English classes, but all are expected to go at the same pace.
- (ix) On the other hand, in the LCA, the teacher is just a facilitator and did not spoon the knowledge.
- (x) The LCA help extend student's self-learning, communicative use of English language and the learner himself finds the information.
- (xi) The learner becomes active participant and learns by doing through certain activities.
- (xii) The student's needs are given top priority that demands the teaching practices to be flexible and adaptable.

TABLE-2:
DISTINCTIVE RATIO OF MALE TEACHERS' RESPONSES TO OPINIONS 1-20 OF THE OPINIONNAIRE

Q No.	Total Responses	Strongly Disagree/%age	Disagree/%age	Uncertain/%age	Agree/%age	Strongly Agree/%age
1	79%	10/12.65%	10/12.65%	2/2.53%	23/29%	34/43%
2	ditto	4/5%	12/15%	4/5%	27/34%	32/40.50%
3	ditto	5/6%	8/10%	6/7.59%	23/29%	37/46.83%
4	ditto	2/2.53%	3/3.79%	8/10%	37/46.83%	27/34%
5	ditto	6/7.59%	9/11%	3/3.79%	30/37.90%	31/39%
6	ditto	10/12.65%	4/5%	4/5%	43/54%	18/22.78%
7	ditto	8/10%	3/3.79%	11/13.92%	43/54%	14/17.72%
8	ditto	11/13.92%	16/20%	5/6%	37/46.83%	10/12.65%
9	ditto	3/3.79%	7/8.86%	4/5%	43/54%	22/27.84%
10	ditto	6/7.59%	10/12.65%	7/8.86%	37/46.83%	19/24%
11	ditto	6/7.59%	3/3.79%	4/5%	37/46.83%	29/36.71%
12	ditto	0/0%	6/7.59%	6/7.59%	31/39%	36/45.57%
13	ditto	2/2.53%	5/6%	8/10%	40/50.63%	24/30%
14	ditto	2/2.53%	5/6%	8/10%	39/49%	25/31.64%
15	ditto	0/0%	5/6%	8/10%	28.35%	38/48%
16	ditto	5/6%	0/0%	5/6%	38/48%	31/39%
17	ditto	6/7.59%	3/3.79%	5/6%	39/49%	26/32.91%
18	ditto	4/5%	5/6%	8/10%	40/50.63%	22/27.84%
19	ditto	5/6%	5/6%	12/15%	34/43%	23/29%
20	ditto	5/6%	6/7.59%	10/12.65%	37/46.83%	21/26.58%

Explanation Table-2: The %ages of the 'male teachers' responses to the opinions 1-20 are slightly different than that of the females' responses. The most distinctive differences are given below:

- (i) The female teachers' responses to the opinions 1-10 (TCA) as 'Disagree' are the same except some variations in the ratio. The pendulum of female teachers' response ratio moves from 5-10 % and males' responses 10-20%.
- (ii) The %age of the responses to the opinions, 1-10 as 'Uncertain' are the minimum, i.e. 2-8%.
- (iii) The ratio of 'Disagreed' responses to the opinions 1-10 fluctuates remarkably from 5-27%. Similarly, the %ages of the responses to the opinions 1-10 as 'Agreed' to remain convergent from 48-66%.
- (iv) Contrary to the TCA, the most significant aspects of LCA that came to light through the responses to the opinions, 11-20 may guarantee: (a) self-directed and self-motivated learning, (b) how a learner learns, (c) 'use' and not only 'usage' of English language, (d) communicative and problem-solving activities, (e) learner's active role, (f) student's need-oriented teaching –learning of English, and (g) graduate's better performance expected at different levels.

Classroom Observation: This is one of the oldest and the most reliable research instrument for data collection in classroom situation. The observation is a means of undertaking research into what occurs in English classroom by careful observation and keeping record of classroom events.

The researcher personally observed some English classrooms to underpin the data collected through the English teachers' responses to the opinionnaire. The observation report includes:

Teacher-centered approach

- (a) In the classroom, the teacher was quite active but students seem reluctant to participate.
- (b) In response to some simple question, a few students responded, but that too maximum in Arabic.

- (c) The use of whiteboard and then explanation of those points was a routine.
- (d) Student-student and teacher-student interaction was rare.
- (e) Classroom activities were zero.
- (f) No home assignments for practice.
- (g) The content of quizzes demanded cramming.
- (h) The teachers were over-estimating the students irrespective of the competency in English language.
- (i) Some students seemed blank-faced and uninterested in class and the obvious reason was that the teacher's lecture was not getting across.
- (j) The students were found weak in reading and writing skills.
- (k) No challenging task or creative work was observed in English classrooms.
- (l) Some students were always found without books and copies.

Learner-centered approach

- (a) In the learner-centered English classroom, the teacher was trying his best to involve the students. Here the students with good competency in English language skills were sharing their ideas with the teacher and their classmates.
- (b) The students who were weak in English were not interacting with the teacher, but on asking repeatedly, they were just mouthing words and not meaningful expressions.
- (c) Communicative use of English was observed, but limited to a few students. Others simply nodded their heads.
- (d) The majority of the students were found weak, hence the learner-centered approach too did not prove a success. This alarming state of affairs is self-evident that the competency in basic skill of English counts a lot toward better teaching-learning at college and university levels.
- (e) The English teacher seemed disappointed with regard to classroom and home assignments.
- (f) The students were interested in reproducing i.e. rotting but not ready for creative writing.
- (g) In case of group discussion within the class, maximum students were interacting in their L1, i.e. Arabic.
- (h) In this situation, the teacher was forced to use an eclectic approach, according to the changing situations.
- (i) The students were continuously being motivated by the teacher, realizing them the importance of English language a major lingua-franca of the world.
- (j) English teacher's appreciation and encouragement resulted in maximum sharing of ideas either in English or Arabic language.

V. CONCLUSION

The innovative role of a teacher as facilitator in a CLT or a TBLT classroom is absolutely different from the role of the controller and organizer of all activities that s/he plays in a traditional classroom. Facilitation involves lowering teacher's authority by endowing more powers to learners for more initiative and responsibility. In the traditional teacher-fronted classroom, the learner is always under the firm control of the teacher who decides what to do and when, while in a learner-centred classroom, the teacher rather, facilitator is expected to let go of some of his or her power. Learner-centredness bestows upon the learner greater authority to determine the course of the lesson.

The paradigm shift is not an easy as well as not an unachievable task. It can be accomplished gradually by incorporating numerous concrete as well as abstract changes, as for instance; change of physical layout of the classroom, by developing collaborative environment, by conducting communicative activities in the classroom, by organizing more but appropriate teacher training programs and by changing the mindset at both the teacher and the students' part. It can be safely said that the innovative role of the facilitator, knower and organizer that a teacher is supposed to play in communicative language learning is absolutely different from the role of an instructor/transmitter of information that s/he plays in a traditional classroom. Effective communication, confidence in using the language, understanding of cross-cultural values and problem-solving skills are the abilities that can only be acquired through the learners' personal performance and interaction with others in role plays, pair or group work activities. Therefore, it is ineluctable that passive learning methods should be replaced by an active learning pedagogy to prepare the learners for their new roles as global citizens.

VI. SUGGESTIONS

As study mainly focused on the teaching-learning of English to Saudi students so some measures have been suggested to ameliorate the deteriorating conditions of English language in KSA:

- (a) The cornerstone of English foundation is schooling where students should be prepared for higher studies.
- (b) Whether it is a school or college or university, the teaching-learning of English need to be attached to learner-centered approach.
- (c) The learner-centered approach can function smoothly only when learners have sound foundations in English language, otherwise this too will end in smoke.
- (d) The teacher-centered approach needs eradication in this swiftly moving era.
- (e) Students need to be motivated realizing them the importance of English language for a worldwide successful practical life.

(f) If the teachers want to make their students learn English in a better way, then put them in difficulty, giving them problem-solving activities and creative writing where students need to think a lot.

(g) The educationists expertise, English teachers and representatives of the ministry of education Saudi Arabia, are to put their head together to find out the root causes of the output below the line of expectations.

(h) The English teachers and students should redirect their attention to the weak schooling in English. For this they need to touch specifically the weak areas and syllabus of the college simultaneously. This swinging back and forth would definitely prove fruitful.

APPENDIX A. TEACHER OPINIONNAIRE

SURVEY OF EFL TEACHERS TO INVESTIGATE DIFFERENT ROLES OF A TEACHER IN TEACHER-CENTRED AND LEARNER-CENTRED APPROACHES IN SAUDI ELT CLASSROOMS

Dear Respondent

The researcher is a PhD scholar exploring a topic, entitled: "Paradigm Shift: A Critical Appraisal of Traditional and Innovative roles of a Teacher in Saudi ELT Classrooms." The increasing interest in learner-centred approach in ELT classrooms necessitated redefining the roles of a teacher in new context. In traditional teacher-centred classrooms the teacher bears the burden of the whole class on his shoulders and the learners merely listen to the teacher and may sometime repeat or react to the teacher's direction. While in learner-centred classrooms, the teacher assumes an innovative role of a facilitator and motivates the learners to perform a more active and participatory role in their own learning. This survey is being conducted to identify the scope and differences between innovative role of a teacher as facilitator in LCA/CLT or TBLT classrooms and the role of a teacher as transmitter of knowledge in traditional teacher-centred classrooms. In this regard your cooperation will greatly be helpful in probing into the point in debate.

Please fill in the enclosed opinionnaire carefully and don't leave any column unfilled. I assure you that all the data will be kept confidential and will be used for this research work only.

Your cooperation in this regard shall be highly appreciated.

Thanking in anticipation

Basic information about research topic

A number of previous studies and works have explored different roles of a teacher in traditional teacher-centred, learner-centred and in TBLT classrooms. But it is hard to find any research work that has focused on both the domains and also interrogated the significance of paradigm shift from traditional role of a teacher to innovative with a particular reference to Saudi ELT classrooms. The present study addresses the issue by examining that learner-centred approach knocks at students' creative ability, accelerates their learning as well as improves their communicative competence and makes them self directed learners while teacher-centred approach reduced the learners to empty receptacles to be filled by the all-knowing teacher. During 1970s-1980s the impact of learner-centered approach in language teaching has largely increased with the aurora of communicative approaches. The shift in focus changed the attention of teaching-learning process from language form to language function, or to language use in accordance with the needs of the learners (Savignon, 1997). According to Nunan (1988: 179) the change in approach to language teaching from traditional teacher-centred to learner-centred is, "an offspring of communicative language learning", requires learners to participate and negotiate actively in meaningful interaction. So, primarily this survey is designed to interrogate EFL teachers' perception about the traditional and innovative roles of a teacher with a particular reference to Saudi ELT classrooms.

Section 1: General and Demographic information

Please tick (✓) appropriate check box below.

i. Name _____ (Optional) Profession _____

ii. Gender: 1. Male 2. Female

iii. Age: 1. 25-30 2. 31-35 3. 36-40 4. 41 & above

iv. Qualification: 1. Graduation 2. M.A 3. M.Phil 4. PhD

v. Currently working in: 1. City 2. Town 3. Village

vi. Teaching experience:

(in years) 1. 1-5 2. 6-10 3. 11-15 4. 16-20 5. 21+

vii. Your medium of education: 1. Urdu 2. English 3. Arabic 4. All

ABBREVIATIONS USED IN OPINIONNAIRE:

- TTCA/TCA = Traditional Teacher-Centred Approach/ Teacher-Centred Approach
- LCA = Learner-Centred Approach
- ELT = English Language Teaching
- EFL = English as a Foreign Language
- ESL = English as a Second Language

Section 2: The Traditional Teacher-Centred Approach, and The Learner-Centred Approach

1. The opinionnaire has developed with ultimately closed ended propositions by employing Likert's five point scale. Pls encircle the appropriate number against each statement.

Prominent dimensions of a teacher's role in the traditional teacher-centred approach (TTCA)	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Uncertain	Agree	Strongly agree
1. The traditional method of teaching is largely teacher-centred with the teacher hogging the lime-light.	1	2	3	4	5
2. In the traditional teacher-centred approach (TTCA) the most common teaching method used to deliver instructions is a lecture method.	1	2	3	4	5
3. The TTCA relies heavily on the old pedagogical ideals of the teacher as an authority transmitting knowledge to those "who do not know".	1	2	3	4	5
4. In the TTC classrooms, teacher spends quite a lot of class time using the board and explaining things to transmit/communicate the knowledge.	1	2	3	4	5
5. In the traditional teacher-centred approach (TTCA) the learners are viewed as passive recipients of information and perceived as receptacle to be filled with knowledge given by the teacher.	1	2	3	4	5

2.

Significant aspects of students' role in the traditional teacher-centred approach (TTCA)	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Uncertain	Agree	Strongly agree
6. In the traditional teacher-centred approach (TTCA) students are expected to learn the grammatical rules and items of lexis, and it is supposed that they will be able to use the language.	1	2	3	4	5
7. In the teacher-centred approach (TCA) good habits are formed by memorizing dialogues, performing drills and practicing correct sentences and not through making mistakes. Errors are avoided through controlled opportunities of production.	1	2	3	4	5
8. The TTCA claims that students learn well if they listen to the teacher with rapt attention and do not make mistakes.	1	2	3	4	5
9. Repetitive practices, mechanical drills and memorization of grammar rules are certain important aspects of TCA to language teaching.	1	2	3	4	5
10. In the TTCA, teaching is geared for the average student and everyone is forced to progress at the same rate.	1	2	3	4	5

3.

Dynamic dimensions of teacher's role in the learner-centred approach (LCA)	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Uncertain	Agree	Strongly Agree
11. In the learner-centred approach (LCA) the teacher is a true facilitator of learning for the language learners.	1	2	3	4	5
12. The Learner-centred approach (LCA) allows learners to play a fuller, more active and participatory role in their own learning.	1	2	3	4	5
13. In the learner-centred approach (LCA) the teacher looks at how students learn, rather than at what there is to teach.	1	2	3	4	5
14. In the LCA learners get a hands-on practical experience of using the language for communicative purposes.	1	2	3	4	5
15. In the LCA, teacher always tries to elicit information, ideas, and answers from the students and does not consider them to be empty vessels waiting to be filled by the all-knowing teacher.	1	2	3	4	5

4.

Instrumental features of students' role in the learner-centred approach (LCA)	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Uncertain	Agree	Strongly Agree
16. The learner-centred approach (LCA) focuses on doing activities in the classroom relevant to the students' lives, needs and interests that make the learning more meaningful for them. These activities present the language 'alive' and relevant to the learners' real world.	1	2	3	4	5
17. The active nature of LCA helps students actually work with information and therefore lead them to learn and store knowledge.	1	2	3	4	5
18. The LCA involves learners in decision-making process and they learn by doing rather than just by listening and performing meaningless tasks which are often not in context and therefore 'unreal' to them.	1	2	3	4	5
19. The students taught in learner-centred classrooms retain more material for a longer period of time.	1	2	3	4	5
20. By its nature LCA is adaptable to meet the needs of every student.	1	2	3	4	5

Thank you very much for your assistance. If you have any query about the survey, please do not hesitate to contact the researcher at fahmeedagulnaz@gmail.com

APPENDIX B. CLASSROOM OBSERVATION SHEET

S/No	Classroom practices in teaching learning of English at college level in District Jazan, Saudi Arabia	Yes	No	Some degree
1	Teaching approach is teacher-centered.			
2	Teaching approach is learner-centered.			
3	Lecture method is common.			
4	Communicative method is in practice.			
5	Teacher is authoritative.			
6	Teacher is just facilitator.			
7	Use of whiteboard and then explaining the items.			
8	Teacher tries to elicit information from students.			
9	Students are passive recipients.			
10	Students are active participants.			
11	Teacher himself explains grammatical rules and vocabulary items without involving the learners.			
12	Students are given activities to use the grammatical items and appropriate vocabulary items.			
13	Learning by rote is encouraged by the teacher.			
14	Concepts are taught instead of cramming.			
15	Students simply reproduce the material.			
16	Students are creative in writing.			
17	Mechanical drills are in practice.			
18	Students learn by doing.			
19	All the students are coerced by the same rod.			
20	The teaching approach is eclectic, adaptable and flexible.			
21	Teacher regards students' opinion.			
22	Students exhibit sense of self respect and confidence.			
23	Students like to share with their English teacher in decision making.			
24	The overall teaching process is objective-oriented.			
25	Teacher's attitude is friendly or magisterial.			

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