EFL teachers' student-centered pedagogy and assessment practices: challenges and solutions

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Article Info	ABSTRACT
	The fact that English teachers encounter challenges while employing student-centered pedagogy and assessment practices is beyond argument. Empirical evidence indicates that, particularly in the context of Najran University, relatively little attention has been paid to researching the issue and offering solutions to coping with it. Consequently, this study examined English as a foreign language (EFL) teachers' employment of student-centered pedagogy and assessment practices in the Saudi EFL context concerning execution, challenges, and solutions. Also, it correlated the respondents' answers with their gender, experience, degree, and specialization. The descriptive survey design was used to achieve the study objectives. The study tools, a questionnaire and a semi-structured interview were applied to a convenient sample of (73) faculty members. The results showed that the study sample highly employs pedagogy and assessment practices focused on students. In addition, the demographic variables of gender, experience, degree, and specialization did not have any significant role in affecting the responses to employing pedagogy and assessment practices. Finally, the content analysis of the semi-structured interview revealed the challenges and solutions to employing pedagogy and assessment practices. In light of the current results, the researchers proposed recommendations and implications.

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1.   INTRODUCTION

The current century since its inception marked the beginning of a paradigm shift in teaching, i.e., from teacher-centeredness to student-centeredness as far as the classroom instructions and assessment domains are concerned. Muniandy and Shuib [1] stated that teachers throughout the world are flipping from using the traditional teacher-centered approach to employing student-centered instruction as education advances toward the 21st century. Student-centered pedagogy and assessment practices enrich students' learning experiences in several ways, and employing these practices, expectedly, ensures not only the students' active participation but also allows them to take ownership of their learning. To achieve this employment, English as a foreign language (EFL) teachers need to keep various academic aspects, including students' learning engagement, autonomy, motivation, role-playing, group projects, and assignments in mind while employing student-centered pedagogy and assessment practices in their respective classes. Trinidad [2] emphasized several areas of student-centeredness, such as engagement through pedagogy, relevance through developing professional and personal skills, and motivation through active participation and engagement. In the same vein, Hativa [3] identified problem-based learning, experiential learning, group work, role-playing,

and case-method teaching as student-centered instructional strategies for ensuring student-centeredness in learning.

The employment of these practices brings changes in the classroom environment. Scholars believe that the effective use of the student-centered approach (SCA) not only boosts students' interest and engagement in learning but also fosters positive attitudes toward the content. Schiller [4] introduced a framework centered around the learner, where key components such as the distribution of authority, the function of content, the teacher's role, learner responsibility, purpose, and evaluation processes are outlined as essential elements for implementing student-centered teaching and assessment methods. Jones [5] outlined a SCA for teaching the language skills. Firstly, teachers, when teaching reading, can promote comprehension through discussion activities that encourage students to collaborate and share their ideas. Secondly, for listening skills, it's important to incorporate learner-centered activities, such as pair or group work, to boost engagement. Thirdly, writing skills are best developed through learner-centered strategies, with actual writing assignments like essays or paragraphs being completed at home as homework. In the classroom, writing activities can be conducted as discussion-based exercises, including brainstorming and idea mapping. And, finally, speaking skills require a particularly learner-centered approach, as they revolve around student engagement. Activities for speaking can incorporate question and answer sessions, role-playing, problem-solving, pair work, and group work. However, scholars also noted the challenges EFL teachers face during employing student-centered pedagogy and assessment practices. These challenges include but are not limited to traditional lecture hall setting [6], a large number of students [7], [8], lack of learning inputs [9], and inadequate training and a limited number of academic staff [9]. The employment of student-centered techniques impacts student learning. Dano-Hinosolango and Vedua-Dinagsao [10] highlighted the substantial impact of learner-centered teaching on students' learning skills and schemes. There is almost always a major success difference when students are taught employing a SCA as opposed to the traditional or teacher-centered methods. Gelisli [11] found that success was noticeably higher in the group where student-centered strategies were employed than in the teacher-centered groups. Many aspects, such as dynamic and meaningful learning, positive attitude, and analytical thinking are strengthened when employing student-centered pedagogy and assessment practices. According to Rutledge *et al.* [12], student-centered and active learning techniques are very effective in promoting meaningful learning, information retention, a more positive attitude in students, and the development of critical thinking skills. Some scholars believe that employing student-centered pedagogy and assessment practices equips students with higher-order thinking and control over their learning and decision-making. DiCamillo and Gradwell [13] stressed that switching to student-centered practices increases the control over learning, use of primary sources, and higher-order thinking, and has a hand in developing learning goals and making decisions in the pacing to achieve such goals. It is apparent that student-centered pedagogy and assessment practices put the student at the center of the learning process, and the teacher's role simply flips from delivering content to facilitating learning in pedagogy, and from measuring the student's ability to apply their knowledge and skills in real-world contexts including involving students in self- and peer-assessment tasks in assessment practices. It is also evident that students learn most effectively when they are actively involved in the process and given the chance to create their knowledge. When it comes to using a SCA in the classroom, there are numerous options: providing feedback, creating a supportive learning environment, employing active learning strategies, giving students choices, employing performance-based assessments, giving students opportunities to self-assess, and utilizing peer assessment. Keeping the significance in mind, this study blends pedagogy and assessment practices and investigates EFL teachers' employment of student-centered pedagogy and assessment practices in the Saudi context with special reference to the execution, challenges, and solutions. The implication of the results may be beneficial to ELT practitioners, English education leaders, and scholars of pedagogy and assessment. This research intended to address the following objectives: i) to identify teachers' execution of student-centered pedagogy and assessment practices in the EFL classroom; ii) to find out any significant difference in participants' responses from gender, experience, degree, and specialization; iii) to discover the challenges teachers face in implementing student-centered pedagogy and assessment practices; and iv) to find out the solutions teachers can employ to implement student-centered pedagogy and assessment practices effectively.

2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Some studies have been conducted on employing student-centered pedagogy and assessment practices in different contexts. Student-centered methods may enhance learning; however, this calls for perseverance and innovative thinking. In particular, for instance, Fadol [14] carried out a study to determine the advantages of implementing SCA in enhancing students' "English-speaking skills" as well as looking into the efficiency of SCA. Employing learner centered (LC) activities including role-playing, drama, debates, and games, the findings showed that students' speaking abilities increased with more practice. Also,

Mokhtaria [15] conducted a study in Algeria in which the results showed that most university lecturers were using certain student-centered learning (SCL) ideas in their classes. They performed various roles and behaved following the scenarios "that they are in." It was discovered that employing the SCL method created circumstances that improved learners' speaking abilities. The study concluded that the SCL encouraged learners' confidence, spurred engagement, and prepared them for communication in everyday circumstances by giving them themes that were connected to their own experiences and lives. In addition, Kiani and Al Bajalani [16] investigated how instructors felt about the SCA's implementation. The research revealed that the lecturers viewed the SCA favorably and employed it in their instruction. They also had favorable opinions on continuous assessment, but the college's assessment framework did not permit widespread application of these techniques. Additionally, presentations, debates, role plays, and short-answer questions were the most widely employed teaching methods in classrooms. Furthermore, Zohrabi et al. [17] compared the effectiveness of learner-centered and teacher-centered approaches in teaching English grammar. The findings favored the employment of the teacher-centered method for enhancing grammar proficiency among Iranian EFL students. Likewise, Dano-Hinosolango and Vedua-Dinagsao [10] conducted a study in which 900 students and ten teachers participated. The checklist for learner-centered teaching was used to observe classrooms. It was discovered that learner-centered teaching has a significant impact on students' learning skills and techniques. This suggests that students can improve their learning skills and techniques to a greater extent if the approach is learner-centered. As cited above, there are numerous positives of employing student-centered pedagogy and assessment practices in the EFL classroom context.

However, studies also highlight some constraints and challenges of employing the SCA. For example, Moradi and Alavinia [18] investigated the challenges and constraints in implementing learner-centered education (LCE). The findings indicated three categories of factors—those arising from teaching practices, those influenced by learners, and those connected to the specific educational context—as being responsible for the limited utilization of LCE. In addition, Barraket [7] claims that integrating SCL with a big class of students is quite difficult. Furthermore, Rasika [6] concluded that teachers encounter difficulties because of the traditional lecture hall settings while implementing student-centered techniques such as team-based learning, mind mapping, and buzz groups in Sri Lankan Institutions. Likewise, Sebarajah [9] noted that while Departments of English Language Teaching offer their academic services to all students, they lack the necessary staffing and other basic infrastructure issues to implement a SCA. Additionally, Yilmaz [19] researched how teachers felt about learner-centered instruction. The findings showed that many difficulties in their classes were related to the administrative set-up of their institutions, including things like huge class sizes and a lack of resources. In the same vein, Hemmati and Malayeri [20] investigated EFL teachers' insight of SCL and their opinions of the challenges to its implementation. The research used a convergent mixed-methods approach. Three key themes emerged from the study of the interviews, including institutional, teacher-student-parent, and sociocultural barriers that prevent the employment of SCL in EFL classes. The findings showed that teachers' opinions on SCL are generally positive; however, they follow the teacher-centered learning due to various restrictions. Also, Nonkukhetkhong et al. [21] looked at the employment of a learner-centered approach by observing five English teachers and interviewing them about their experiences. They concluded that student-centered pedagogy and assessment practices were not as successful as expected. The researchers discovered that teachers faced difficulties in implementing this approach in their classrooms due to uncertainty about its proper use. The underlying issue appeared to be the lack of professional development opportunities that could help teachers acquire the essential skills needed for the effective application of student-centered pedagogy and assessment practices in their English classrooms. Thus, the available literature indicates that studies have been conducted on implementing student-centered methods that are hardly emphasizing the blend of the pedagogy and assessment practices with special reference to the challenges that the EFL teachers face while employing the practices. Therefore, the statement of the problem was reformulated to answer the following research questions: i) to what extent do EFL teachers execute student-centered pedagogy and assessment practices in the EFL classroom?; ii) are there any significant differences in participants' responses from their gender, experience, degree, or specialization?; iii) what are the challenges teachers face in implementing student-centered pedagogy and assessment practices?; and iv) what are the solutions teachers can employ to implement student-centered pedagogy and assessment practices effectively?

3. METHODOLOGY
3.1. Research design
The descriptive survey design was used to achieve the study objectives. The study explored EFL teachers' employment of student-centered pedagogy and assessment practices in the Saudi EFL context concerning execution, challenges, and solutions. Also, it correlated the participants' responses with their gender, experience, degree, and specialization. The study tools and procedures were approved by the Ethics

Approval Committee at the Deanship of Scientific Research at Najran University with the code (010495-023028-DS). Also, the participants' signed consent letter was collected.

3.2. Population and sample of the study

The study was administered to EFL teachers (110) at a Saudi University in the Southern Western Region of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. They are faculty members at the College of Languages and Translation and the Deanship of Preparatory Year. They come from various nationalities, such as Jordan, India, Egypt, Sudan, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Yemen, and Algeria. They have different degrees in English, including, masters and doctorates in various majors. In addition, they have various experiences. Their English language is near-native or foreign. The study sample was drawn conveniently. Convenience sampling is a non-probability sampling technique employed with respondents who are 'convenient' to the researcher. It is a form of sampling that includes selecting a sample from an easily accessible group of the population [22]. Furthermore, the study questionnaire was created using Google Forms, and the link was shared with the study population. The responses percentage reached 66.36%. Table 1 shows the distribution of the study sample. In addition, the participants were asked at the end of the questionnaire about doing an interview. Those who agreed added their contact information. The total number of interviewees was 20.

Table 1. Sample distribution according to their demography

Variable	Group	No.	%
Gender	Male	40	54.8
	Female	33	45.2
Degree	Ph.D.	35	47.9
	Master	38	52.1
Specialization	Applied linguistics	37	50.7
	Linguistics	18	24.7
	Literature	18	24.7
Experience	1-5	15	20.5
	6-10	19	26.0
	Above 10	39	53.4
	Total	73	100

3.3. Study tools

The study utilized two tools, a five point-likert questionnaire and a semi-structured interview to collect the data the answer the research questions. It used a closed-item questionnaire about EFL teachers' employment of student-centered pedagogy and assessment practices in the Saudi EFL context concerning execution, challenges, and solutions from the teachers' points of view. The researchers, based on the literature review, developed the questionnaire items and the questions for the semi-structured interview. The questionnaire consisted of three main sections: demographic data (gender, experience, degree, and specialization) and employment of student-centered pedagogy practices (10 items), and student-centered assessment practices (10 items). The semi-structured interview searched for the challenges and solutions for the employment of student-centered pedagogy and assessment practices in the EFL classroom.

3.4. Validity

The validity of the study tools was ensured by face validity and internal consistency. Nine experienced faculty members in second language teaching assessed the study tools if they can collect data that can answer the study questions and thus achieve its objectives. Based on their reviews, they approved that the study tools can achieve the study objectives. Also, some modifications related to wordiness, language, the study context, and items and domains were present. The following issues were observed by the experts:

From	To
Student-centered pedagogy practices	
Learner-autonomy	Self-learning
Motivation	Motivational tasks
Role play-role	Play activities
Student reflection	Student reflection tasks
Student-centered assessment practices	
Summarizing and note taking	Summarizing, synthesizing, and note taking
Semi-structured interview questions	
From	To
What are the challenges you face while implementing student-	What are the challenges you face while employing student-

centered pedagogy and assessment practices in language learning? What possible suggestions do you recommend for overcoming the challenges of implementing student-centered pedagogy and assessment practices that in turn result in successful language learning?

centered pedagogy and assessment practices in your classroom? What possible solutions do you recommend to overcoming the challenges during the employment of student-centered pedagogy and assessment practices in your classroom?

In addition, the study tool (questionnaire) was applied to a survey sample of (20) teachers for internal consistency. Pearson's correlation coefficient was then calculated between items, domain, and the whole scale. Table 2 presents the analysis results of the pilot study.

Table 2. Pearson's correlation coefficient results

Domain-item	Correlation coefficient-domain	Correlation coefficient-scale	Domain-item	Correlation coefficient-domain	Correlation coefficient- scale
Student-centered pedagogy practices	1	0.918**	Student-centered assessment practices	1	0.923**
1	0.652**	0.650**	1	0.817**	0.859**
2	0.614**	0.624**	2	0.871**	0.873**
3	0.884**	0.802**	3	0.576**	0.556*
4	0.653**	0.466*	4	0.658**	0.631**
5	0.667**	0.752**	5	0.503*	0.613**
6	0.787**	0.788**	6	0.735**	0.803**
7	0.585**	0.635**	7	0.709**	0.732**
8	0.824**	0.778**	8	0.756**	0.737**
9	0.576**	0.556*	9	0.585**	0.635**
10	0.561*	0.463*	10	0.469*	0.448*

**: correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed), *: correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Table 2 shows that pearson's correlation coefficients ranged between items with the total score for the domain between (0.469* - 0.884**). Also, the correlation coefficients between the items with the total score ranged between (0.463* - 0.873**). In addition, the domains with a total score ranged between (0.918** - 0.923**). These results indicate the questionnaire's items, domains, and overall are valid. The correlation values were significant at the (0.01 or 0.05) levels.

3.5. Reliability

The reliability coefficient was calculated on the total score of the questionnaire through Cronbach's alpha equation (test-retest method). The questionnaire was applied twice in three weeks from the first application. The results in Table 3 show that Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient was (0.91), whereas the re-test score was (0.92). These values are high coefficients and indicate that the study tool is reliable.

Table 3. Reliability coefficients for the domains and total score of the study tool

Domain	No. of items	Re-test	Cronbach's alpha coefficient
Teachers' employment of student-centered pedagogy practices	10	0.90	0.87
Teachers' employment of student-centered assessment practices	10	0.89	0.86
Total score	20	0.92	0.91

3.6. Statistical processing

The statistical software (SPSS) version (23) was adopted to analyze the results of the study and answer its questions. The following equations and tests were used:
a. Pearson correlation coefficient to check internal consistency.
b. Cronbach alpha and re-test to verify the reliability of the study tool.
c. Means, standard deviations, and ranks for answering the research questions.
d. Multi-variance analysis (MANOVA) to show differences between the participants' responses due to their gender, experience, degree, and specialization.
e. The following grading was adopted for the items and domains of the study tool to determine the degree of agreement based on the range equation: 1 - 1.80 = a very low degree, < 1.80 - 2.60 = a low degree, < 2.60 - 3.40 = a medium degree, < 3.40 - 4.20 = a large degree, < 4.20 - 5 = a very large degree
f. Finally, the researchers analyzed the qualitative data from the semi-structured interview by the thematic analysis method proposed by [23]; the data was checked, read, and classified into main topics. Then, major themes emerged from the topic.

4. STUDY RESULTS

4.1. Teachers' employment of student-centered pedagogy practices

Table 4 shows the analysis results for the participants' responses to teachers' employment of student-centered pedagogy practices in the EFL classroom by means, standard deviations, ranks, and degrees. The results show that the study sample had a large degree of EFL teachers' employment for student-centered pedagogy practices in the EFL classroom (M = 4.02, SD = 0.555). This result means that the study sample highly perceives that EFL teachers employ pedagogy practices focused on students. At the level of items, all values ranged between (3.70 - 4.30). All items received large degrees except for the first item, which rated very large.

Table 4. Descriptive statistics for student-centered pedagogy practices (teachers' employment)

No.	Rank	Item	Means	Standard deviations	Degree
1	1	I execute interactive classroom activities to facilitate student-centered pedagogy practices.	4.30	0.681	Very large
2	9	I execute extensive lecturing to facilitate student-centered pedagogy practices.	3.89	0.809	Large
3	7	I execute collaborative and cooperative learning tasks to facilitate student-centered pedagogy practices.	3.93	0.962	Large
4	2	I execute differentiated instructions to facilitate student-centered pedagogy practices.	4.19	0.861	Large
5	5	I execute technology (E-Learning Apps) to continue discussion outside classroom to facilitate student-centered pedagogy practices.	4.04	0.716	Large
6	4	I execute self-learning to facilitate student-centered pedagogy practices.	4.14	0.887	Large
7	3	I execute motivational tasks to facilitate student-centered pedagogy practices	4.14	0.787	Large
8	8	I execute role play activities to facilitate student-centered pedagogy practices	3.89	0.774	Large
9	6	I execute student reflection tasks to facilitate student-centered pedagogy practices	3.96	0.676	Large
10	10	I execute community-based activities to facilitate student-centered pedagogy practices	3.70	0.877	Large
		Total degree	4.02	0.555	Large

4.2. Teachers' employment of student-centered assessment practices

Table 5 shows the analysis results for the participants' responses to EFL teachers' employment for student-centered assessment practices in the EFL classroom by means, standard deviations, ranks, and degrees. The results show that the study sample had a large degree of EFL teachers' employment for student-centered assessment practices in the EFL classroom (M = 3.99, SD = 0.696). This result means that the study sample is highly aware of the assessment practices focused on students. At the level of items, all values ranged between (3.37 - 4.45). The degrees of items ranged between large and very large except for item 10, which was rated medium.

Table 5. Descriptive statistics for student-centered assessment practices (teachers' employment)

No.	Rank	Item	Means	Standard deviations	Degree
1	5	I execute cues, questions, and group discussion to facilitate student-centered assessment practices	4.05	0.984	Large
2	4	I execute summarizing, synthesizing, and note taking to facilitate student-centered assessment practices	4.19	0.861	Large
3	7	I execute multiple drafts of written assignments to facilitate student-centered assessment practices	3.92	0.862	Large
4	2	I execute frequent feedback to students on their progress to facilitate student-centered assessment practices	4.30	0.845	Very large
5	1	I execute multiple varieties of class tests/quizzes to facilitate student-centered assessment practices	4.45	0.867	Very large
6	3	I execute shared and independent writing activities to facilitate student-centered assessment practices	4.26	0.834	Very large
7	6	I execute student presentations/participations to facilitate student-centered assessment practices	4.00	0.898	Large
8	10	I execute portfolios to facilitate student-centered assessment practices	3.37	1.124	Medium
9	9	I execute journals to facilitate student-centered assessment practices	3.42	1.212	Large
10	8	I execute self-assessment to facilitate student-centered assessment practices	3.92	0.909	Large
		Total degree	3.99	0.696	Large

4.3. Teachers' responses to student-centered pedagogy and assessment practices by their demographic variables

Table 6 presents the results of the MANOVA test for the differences in the study sample's responses to student-centered pedagogy and assessment practices in the EFL classroom by the variables of gender, experience, degree, and specialization. Based on the results in Table 6, there were no significant differences at (0.05) between the study sample's responses to teachers' employment for student-centered pedagogy and assessment practices in the EFL classroom attributed to their gender, specialization, degree, and experience. This result indicates that the respondents' demographic variables did not influence their responses to teachers' employment for student-centered pedagogy and assessment practices.

Table 6. MANOVA analysis results for EFL teachers' employment for student-centered pedagogy and assessment practices by variables

Source	Dependent variable	Type I sum of squares	df	Mean square	F	Sig.
Gender	EFL teachers' employment for student-centered pedagogy practices	0.057	1	0.057	0.189	0.665
	EFL teachers' employment for student-centered assessment practices	0.003	1	0.003	0.007	0.934
	Total	0.008	1	0.008	0.023	0.879
Specialization	EFL teachers' employment for student-centered pedagogy practices	0.594	2	0.297	0.989	0.377
	EFL teachers' employment for student-centered assessment practices	0.597	2	0.299	0.654	0.523
	Total	0.588	2	0.294	0.830	0.441
Degree	EFL teachers' employment for student-centered pedagogy practices	1.115	2	0.558	1.856	0.164
	EFL teachers' employment for student-centered assessment practices	2.714	2	1.357	2.971	0.058
	Total	1.767	2	0.883	2.494	0.090
Experience	EFL teachers' employment for student-centered pedagogy practices	0.598	1	0.598	1.991	0.163
	EFL teachers' employment for student-centered assessment practices	1.394	1	1.394	3.053	0.085
	Total	0.955	1	0.955	2.695	0.105
Error	EFL teachers' employment for student-centered pedagogy practices	19.823	66	0.300	-	-
	EFL teachers' employment for student-centered assessment practices	30.143	66	0.457	-	-
	Total	23.379	66	0.354	-	-
Total	EFL teachers' employment for student-centered pedagogy practices	1200.610	73	-	-	-
	EFL teachers' employment for student-centered assessment practices	1196.460	73	-	-	-
	Total	1196.698	73	-	-	-

4.4. Teachers' challenges of employing student-centered pedagogy and assessment practices in the EFL context

Teachers' challenges of employing student-centered pedagogy and assessment practices in the EFL context were qualitatively analyzed in the study sample's answers in the semi-structured interview. The results of the content analysis of the semi-structured interview showed that the interviewees presented some challenges in employing student-centered pedagogy and assessment practices in the EFL context. These challenges are related to student motivation, low competence, and performance, lack of passion and confidence, low attitudes, crowded classes, insufficient time, too much syllabus, absent responsibility, poor participation, and reluctance. The following are excerpts supporting these challenges:

- T1: "Student motivation, low competence and performance in language."
- T2: "The challenges included students who felt uneasy working with others, teachers who lacked passion and confidence, a large class size. Low attitudes toward student-centered teaching and assessment, insufficient instructional materials, insufficient time allotted for each teaching period, and teachers who lack motivation due to poor working conditions are responsible."
- T4: "Some students are reluctant to participate."
- T6: "Too much syllabus and poor level of students. Assessment practices are not controlled individually."
- T9: "Individual responsibility is absent. Get information from the teacher in a passive manner observe the course profile. Limits students; choice. Lack of motivation"
- T18: "Lake of confidant/lack of language/lack of self-learning skills"

- T20: "Lack of teachers and students; interest, class size, students feel discomfort when they work with others"

4.5. Teachers' solutions to employing student-centered pedagogy and assessment practices in the EFL context

Solutions to overcome the challenges of employing student-centered pedagogy and assessment practices in the EFL context were qualitatively analyzed in the study sample's answers in the semi-structured interview. The results of the content analysis of the semi-structured interview showed that the interviewees presented some solutions for overcoming student-the challenges of employing centered pedagogy and assessment practices in the EFL context. These solutions include student and teacher training, exerting more interactive efforts, teacher's role change, collaboration, utilizing diagnostic and formative assessment evaluations, technology, and small class size. The following are examples of teachers' answers in the semi-structured interview:

- T1: "Students and teachers a like should receive intensive training courses and workshops. Teachers should exert more efforts in implementing pedagogies and assessments focused on students. Teachers be more ready to change their roles in education from the center of the learning process to a guide or a facilitator of knowledge."
- T2: "Encourage collaboration, support student voice and choice, offer differentiation, and include students in active, or constructivist, learning. Utilize diagnostic and formative evaluations. Use technology to put student-centered strategies into practice."
- T6: "Syllabus should be based on LC pedagogy. Formative assessment should be practiced."
- T9: "Teacher's active role. Positive support and encouragement to students' active role. Active monitoring of the teacher, what is happening in the class."
- T16: Encouraging students to speak English inside and outside the classroom Activate the English club so that students can show their skills"
- T20: "Small class size and extensive online activities."

5. DISCUSSION

The results showed that the study sample (EFL teachers) highly employed pedagogy and assessment practices focused on students. Reasons for the current results may be attributed to the fact that the teachers who participated in this study are qualified, the majority of them have advanced degrees in applied linguistics or English language instruction, and they have years of experience teaching in an EFL context. They are well aware that a SCA to teaching puts the needs and interests of the students first. Instead of rote memorizing and passive listening, it prioritizes active learning, cooperation, and critical thinking. Moreover, the results of this research align with studies conducted in similar settings, indicating that SCL proved to be more effective than teacher-centered instruction in enhancing the reading comprehension of Iranian EFL students [24]. The findings of this study are also consistent, partially though, to De Segovia and Hardison [25] who observed that teachers implement it based on their own interpretation due to their limited understanding of SCL. The results are in support of Nonkukhetkhong et al. [21] who argued that SCL is most suitable for highly capable and motivated learners who are prepared to simulate responsibility for their own learning. However, the findings of the current study contradict Reigeluth et al. [26], who reported that teachers generally encounter challenges in implementing a learner-centered approach, despite holding learner-centered beliefs. The reasons may be attributed to teachers' limited knowledge of learner-centered instruction and the presence of other obstacles. In addition, the results of the current study are not similar to Kaymakamoglu [27], who examined the beliefs and classroom practices of EFL teachers in Turkey. The findings revealed that although teachers expressed either constructivist beliefs or a combination of constructivist and traditional beliefs, they predominantly adhered to a teacher-centered approach. The findings of the current study also contradict the results of a study by Ghaicha and Mezouari [28] which indicated that instructors possess positive perceptions toward SCL, but they are compelled to maintain various traditional teaching practices due to constraints like a standardized curriculum, exam requirements, a shortage of materials, and the presence of large class sizes. The findings of this research are also in contrast with Moradi and Alavinia [18], who conducted a study that examined the execution, limitations, and difficulties associated with LCE. The study's results indicated that three factors—those influenced by teachers, those influenced by learners, and those connected to the specific educational context—are accountable for constraining the implementation of LCE. Likewise, the results of this paper disagree with Zohrabi et al. [17] findings which supported the implementation of the teacher-centered process to develop grammar knowledge. The findings of this study are in contrast with another study conducted by Al-Humaidi [29], who discovered contradictions between the EFL teachers' perceptions and their practices in implementing the SCL. In addition, the demographic variables, including gender,

experience, degree, and specialization had no significant role in affecting the responses to employing student-centered pedagogy and assessment practices. The fact that both the male and female participants in this study have degrees and qualifications in English and that became a factor for no significant difference in the current findings. These degrees' curricula, especially in applied linguistics, give pedagogy and assessment procedures extra significance. Another reason may be attributed to the participants' wealth of experience which discourages them from deviating from the non-implementation of the SCA rather, perhaps, motivates them to implement student-centered pedagogy and assessment practices based on their understanding of the two domains, particularly when they use the same curriculum, pedagogy. The researchers were unable to find any study that might either support or contradict the findings of the current research. The inclusion of gender, experience, education, and skill as study variables may not have persuaded other researchers. Finally, the results of the content analysis of the semi-structured interview showed that the interviewees presented some challenges in employing student-centered pedagogy and assessment practices in the EFL context. These challenges are related to student motivation, low competence and performance, lack of passion and confidence, low attitudes, crowded classes, insufficient time, too much syllabus, absent responsibility, poor participation, and reluctance. The results of the content analysis are in line with those of Rasika [6], who identified some obstacles to implementing a student-centered curriculum, including inadequate training for lecturers, a lack of facilities, a huge amount of subject matter, and the attitudes of conventional instructors. Also, solutions to overcoming the challenges of employing student-centered pedagogy and assessment practices in the EFL context were qualitatively analyzed in the study sample's answers in the semi-structured interview. These solutions included student and teacher training, exerting more interactive efforts, teacher role change, collaboration, utilizing diagnostic and formative assessment evaluations, technology, and small class size. The findings of the content analysis are consistent with the recommendations made by Cooper *et al.* [30] that teachers should train students in effective learning strategies and design engaging activities that encourage them to process knowledge in a variety of ways. Also, the findings of the content analysis are in line with Lynch [31], who recommended that teachers use activities like collaboration, meaningful communication, and cooperation. Additionally, the results of this study's content analysis further support Peyton *et al.* [32] suggestion that some components serve as the foundation for active learning including encouraging student interaction and learning skills explicitly.

6. CONCLUSION

The study surveyed teachers' employment of pedagogy and assessment practices in the EFL classroom from the EFL teachers' viewpoint. The results showed that the study sample (EFL teachers) highly employed pedagogy and assessment practices focused on students. The challenges of utilizing pedagogy and assessment practices in the classroom are student motivation, low competence, and performance, lack of passion and confidence, low attitudes, crowded classes, insufficient time, too much syllabus, absent responsibility, poor participation, and reluctance. Overcoming these challenges, more teacher training, exerting more efforts, teacher's role change, collaboration, utilizing diagnostic and formative assessment evaluations, technology, and small class size were suggested.

The results also show that the study sample had a large degree of EFL teachers' employment for student-centered pedagogy practices in the EFL classroom. This means that the study sample highly perceived that EFL teachers employed pedagogy practices focused on students. At the level of items, all values ranged between. All items received large degrees except for the first item; it was rated very large. The results reveal that the study sample had a large degree of EFL teachers' employment for student-centered assessment practices in the EFL classroom. This shows that the study sample is highly aware of the assessment practices focused on students. The respondents' demographic variables did not influence their responses to student-centered pedagogy and assessment practices.

Additionally, the results of the content analysis of the semi-structured interview revealed that the interviewees presented some challenges in employing student-centered pedagogy and assessment practices in the EFL context. These challenges are related to student motivation, low competence, and performance, lack of passion and confidence, low attitudes, crowded classes, insufficient time, too much syllabus, absent responsibility, poor participation, and reluctance. The researchers also believe that the employment of student-centered pedagogy and assessment practices can be challenging at times, but they can also be very rewarding. Some of the additional challenges, in the researchers' view, that EFL teachers may be encountered are the mindset of teachers and students to adapt to new changes, alignment between pedagogy and assessment, external pressures, etc.

Furthermore, a significant implication for teachers is that the traditional methods are no longer adequate to address the constantly evolving demands of EFL learners in the 21st century. This is largely because we are now in an era characterized by a wealth of information, increased communication, and widespread globalization. EFL teachers must therefore stay current on the most recent modifications to the

paradigm shift from teacher-centeredness to student-centeredness. Since all the participants in this study were instructors, findings cannot be expected to be applied generally due to the participants' constraints. A study like this can produce different results if students and other stakeholders are included.

This study, therefore, suggests planning and implementing the following the initiatives to address the challenges that EFL teachers face while employing student-centered pedagogy and assessment practices: i) training teachers to apply student-centered pedagogy and assessment practices; ii) inclusion of student-centered pedagogy and assessment tasks in the curriculum; iii) implementing step-by-step (not too many at once) student-centered pedagogy and assessment practices; iv) accept if something isn't working, don't be afraid to try something different; v) accept failure and continue to try something, keeping the student-centeredness in mind, or else as necessary; and vi) getting reactions from students and colleagues to your efforts. Finally, further studies are recommended with different variables since the teachers' employment of learner-centered pedagogy and assessment practices is crucial.

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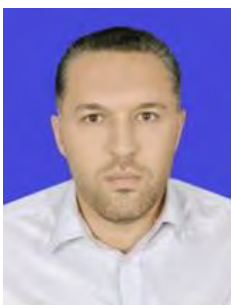
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