

## A STUDENT-CENTERED APPROACH TO TEACHING FOREIGN LANGUAGES FOR ECONOMICS STUDENTS

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**Annotation.** *In contemporary higher education, economics students are increasingly expected to communicate in a foreign language within academic and professional contexts. However, traditional teacher-centered language instruction often limits students' opportunities to actively use language for meaningful communication. This article examines how a student-centered approach to foreign language teaching can address the specific communicative needs of economics students. The study argues that learner autonomy, interaction, and professionally oriented tasks play a key role in developing communicative competence. The article concludes that student-centered instruction contributes to more effective and realistic language use among economics students.*

**Keywords:** *student-centered learning, foreign language education, economics students, communicative competence, professional communication.*

The role of foreign languages in economics education has expanded significantly due to globalization and international economic cooperation. For economics students, foreign language communication is not an abstract skill but a professional necessity used in negotiations, data analysis and international cooperation. Economics students are no longer required to possess only theoretical knowledge; they must also be able to communicate effectively with international partners, analyze economic information in a foreign language, and participate in professional discussions. Despite these demands, foreign language teaching in non-linguistic faculties is still often dominated by teacher-centered methods that prioritize grammatical accuracy over communicative ability. Such approaches frequently result in passive learners with limited speaking confidence. In response to this issue, student-centered learning has gained attention as an approach that promotes active participation and meaningful language use [1, 23]. This article explores the potential of a student-centered approach in teaching foreign languages to economics students, with particular emphasis on the development of communicative competence. In student-centered classrooms, assessment focuses on students' ability to communicate meaning rather than on grammatical perfection alone.

**Student-centered learning as a pedagogical concept.** Student-centered learning is based on the idea that learners should play an active role in the learning process. Rather than receiving information passively, students are encouraged to interact, reflect, and apply knowledge in practical situations. In foreign language education, this approach emphasizes communication, collaboration, and learner autonomy. Harmer points out that when learners are given greater responsibility, they are more willing to take risks in using the language, which is essential for developing fluency [2, 45]. For economics students, this means using a foreign language not only to complete exercises but also to discuss economic issues, interpret data, and express professional opinions. As a result, language learning becomes closely connected to real-life academic and professional needs.

**Professionally relevant communicative activities.** A key feature of student-centered foreign language teaching is the use of tasks that reflect students' future professional environments. In the case of economics students, these tasks may include business case discussions, market analysis presentations, and role-plays related to negotiations or financial decision-making. Such activities require students to use economic terminology and functional language in realistic contexts. Dudley-Evans and St John emphasize that professionally oriented tasks increase learners' engagement and help them perceive language as a practical tool rather than an academic subject [3, 73]. Through regular participation in these activities, students gradually develop confidence and communicative effectiveness.

**Collaboration and learner autonomy.** Student-centered instruction also places strong emphasis on collaborative learning. Group work and pair activities allow economics students to exchange ideas, justify opinions, and solve problems together in a foreign language. This interaction supports the development of speaking and listening skills, which are essential for professional communication. In addition, learner autonomy is encouraged by allowing students to choose topics, resources, or presentation formats related to their academic interests. According to Little, autonomy helps learners become more responsible and reflective, which positively influences long-term language development [4, 34]. For economics students, this autonomy increases motivation and relevance.

**The teacher's role.** Within a student-centered framework, the teacher functions primarily as a facilitator. Instead of controlling all classroom interaction, the teacher organizes tasks, provides guidance, and supports students when linguistic difficulties arise. This role is particularly important in economics-oriented language classes, where students may struggle with complex concepts and specialized vocabulary. Coyle notes that effective scaffolding enables learners to engage in communication without feeling

overwhelmed by language barriers [5, 59]. Thus, the teacher's support remains essential, but it does not limit students' active participation.

**Advantages and limitations.** The student-centered approach offers several advantages in teaching foreign languages to economics students. It increases learners' motivation, promotes communicative competence, and aligns language instruction with professional requirements. Students gradually shift from passive recipients of knowledge to active users of language. At the same time, this approach requires careful planning, sufficient instructional time, and appropriate assessment methods. Traditional written tests may not fully reflect students' communicative abilities, making performance-based assessment more suitable.

In conclusion, the student-centered approach to teaching foreign languages represents a highly effective and pedagogically grounded framework for addressing the communicative and professional needs of economics students. Unlike traditional teacher-centered models, this approach shifts the focus toward active learner participation, individualized learning paths, and meaningful interaction, thereby increasing both motivation and practical language use. Through the integration of professionally oriented content, problem-based tasks, collaborative learning formats, and authentic materials, the student-centered model ensures that language learning is directly connected with students' future academic and workplace contexts. Another significant outcome of student-centered foreign language instruction is the development of communicative competence in realistic and professionally relevant situations. By engaging in role plays, business scenarios, research presentations, and group projects, students gain practical experience in using foreign languages as tools for professional interaction rather than merely academic subjects. This practical orientation increases transferability of skills from the classroom to real-world settings.

Overall, the findings support the conclusion that student-centered instruction substantially enhances language proficiency, communicative confidence, and professional readiness. It contributes not only to the mastery of foreign language skills but also to the formation of flexible, independent, and communicatively competent specialists in the field of economics. Therefore, the broader implementation of student-centered methodologies in foreign language education for economics students is both justified and strongly recommended for modern higher education practice.

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