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The Positive Impact of a Learner-Centered Approach on Learner Motivation in the EFL Classroom

A thesis submitted in partial satisfaction

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in Teaching English as a Foreign Language

by

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The thesis of Magdalina Arzakanyan is approved.

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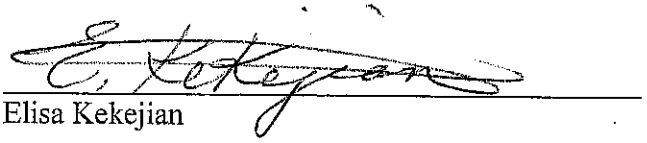

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ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS

National Reform in education in Armenia has targeted innovative teaching approaches and methodologies as an educational need that must be met to satisfy the new societal needs of the country. One of the requirements of the new national curriculum is a major shift in the classroom context with notable focus on the affective domain of the learner. Fully acknowledging the impact of affective factors on learning, the researcher attempts to show that motivation as an element of the affective domain has a strong positive influence on learning process and it may be enhanced in classroom contexts where learner-centered principles of teaching are practiced.

The study is designed as a case study. It is conducted in one of the classes at the Extension Program of the American University of Armenia (EP AUA), which offers students a one-year intensive English language program. Each proficiency level of the overall course, from the beginner to advanced, lasts nine weeks. The subjects of the study, all of whom are students at the AUA Extension Program, included 15 learners of English as a foreign language. They are students at the advanced proficiency level.

The data analyses resulting from class observations, student, the course instructor interviews, and questionnaires confirmed the benefits of learner-centered approach to TEFL, which creates a positive context for increasing and sustaining learner motivation.

Chapter 1:

INTRODUCTION

Armenia is a country in transition from an autocracy to a democracy, and this process has required drastic changes in political, economical, and social spheres. In fact, the transitional period is the time both societies and individuals need for making gradual changes in order not to collapse. Education, as an inseparable part of the society's culture, reflects the values and beliefs of the society, which is why, in newly created conditions national educational policy also has to take steps toward necessary changes.

Educational policy has always been sensitive to the requirements set by the government, which holds interest in educational institutions as perfect places for imposing new ideologies on the younger generation. However, educators and researchers agree that it is never easy to change a people's mentality that has been shaped through decades. Having been a part of such an authoritarian country as the former USSR for seventy years, Armenia was an example of a large power distance society, in which inequality in power was accepted as normal by less powerful people in the society. The same inequality was used for teacher/student interactions in the classroom, and was recommended and encouraged by the government, whose goal was to educate obedient non-individualists with collectivist thinking. Such educational ideology is typical of all governments with an authoritarian ideology. For instance, an English teacher in China, another authoritarian country, states that the system, which has educated these students, does not encourage them to actively express themselves or voice their real opinions. (B.Insull, Forum, 2001, Vol 30 No 4).

Now, when the Government of Armenia has announced the principles of democracy as a priority of its political course, the educators admitted the need for school reform. The ministry of Education and Science started to develop the new national curriculum since it was

obvious that along with the changes taking place in the society, traditional notions about teaching and learning have been challenged and require changes.

The component of classroom environment is given considerable importance in the new curriculum, where new approaches and teaching methodologies are to be applied. That is why, in today's changing context of learning goals and objectives, classroom research should be given a great importance since the classroom is the crucible – the place where teachers and learners come together and language learning, we hope, happens (Gaies, cited in Allwright & Bailey, 1991). This is particularly true about today's EFL classrooms in Armenia where the societal role of English has acquired entirely new meanings and functions both for individuals and society.

Fully acknowledging the necessity of changes in EFL classrooms, we have tried to investigate one of the opportunities for creating a better learning environment (i. e. classroom climate) for teaching English in Armenian EFL classrooms. One such opportunity is - providing a classroom environment that contributes best to learner motivation. The literature on learning and educational psychology considers the concept of motivation as an inseparable part of the learning process. For instance, McCombs & Whisler (2002) find that,

> When *a living system* such as education, made up of human beings, supporting a human purpose, and dynamic and interactive in nature, is to be transformed, the transformation must consider the people the system serves and how best they can be served so as to accomplish the desired mission. In the case of education, this mission, we assert, must revolve around motivation, learning and academic achievement for all learners. ("The Learner-Centered Classroom and School") p.151.

The literature on the concept of motivation in EFL classrooms points out the classroom atmosphere, as a crucial factor in creating and encouraging learner motivation. That is why, through this study we have attempted to find out whether a learner-centered classroom provides a classroom climate more efficient for developing and sustaining learner motivation than does the traditional teacher-centered classroom common at all levels of school in

Armenia. This research question was prompted not only by the background literature, but was also based/inspired by the researcher's experience of teaching English in both types of classrooms.

The study was designed as a case study and was conducted in one of the classrooms in the Extension Program of the American University of Armenia (EPAUA). The hypothesis to be confirmed by this case study is that the overall classroom environment, directly influences student motivation[1]. Since the classroom environment is defined as a key to creating learner motivation, we find it helpful to present the overview of each type of classroom, that is teacher-centered and learner-centered.

The following two boxes summarize the key features of the two types of classrooms. The statements in the boxes represent my experience as both a learner and a teacher in both types of classrooms; it was very much similar to what I found in related literature.

BOX 1.

TEACHER-CENTERED CLASSROOM
Students unarguably respect their teacher
Order in class is important
Any communication is initiated and encouraged only by the teacher
Students speak up only when asked by the teacher
Students always accept what the teacher says
The teacher knows best what and how to learn
Pair and group work, class discussions seldom, if ever, take place
Students' individual needs and interests are not considered
Personality and learning style differences are ignored

[1] The role of motivation in the learning process is discussed in the literature review.

BOX 2.

LEARNER-CENTERED CLASSROOM
The teacher displays mutual respect for students
The teacher is sensitive to the individual needs and interests of students
The teacher is a facilitator concerned with class atmosphere
Student initiative is strongly supported
Any kind of meaningful communicative interaction is encouraged
Students feel free to express their own ideas and opinions
Pair and group work are regular activities

The above features of the teacher-centered approach have been especially characteristic of foreign language classes, where the teacher has been, and to a great extent still is, the main source of both linguistic and cultural knowledge. This fact has made native students feel too discouraged and too anxious to display any positive attitudes or behaviors in EFL classrooms.

How may this kind of classroom atmosphere, where the teacher is the only authority, affect the learner and the learning process?

The first and the worst effect for the learners is that in such an environment they adopt teacher-dependent, teacher-directed behavior during the lessons. As a result, very important "intuitive heuristics" and "negotiated interaction" (B. Kumaravadivelu, TESOL QUARTERLY Vol.28, No. 1, 1994) as essential sources for learner motivation in the classroom may never occur. The role of motivation is also denied when the students are not encouraged to evolve into autonomous learners sharing responsibility for their own learning.

Significant inequality in power between a teacher and students deprives the learners of the opportunity to make a "strategic investment in their own linguistic destinies"(Brown, 1991).

In a teacher – centered classroom the role of the teacher is strictly authoritative; he is the one who makes all decisions and sets classroom rules; even the students' successful learning is credited to the excellence of the teacher. Peer interaction in group or class work is not practiced at all since they are threats to discipline, as well as a path to unsolicited student creativity and "unplanned" questions.

Thus, the classroom rules are such that the teacher's authority is least likely to be challenged and the teaching method is not questioned or criticized.

On the other hand, the teacher-centered approach should in no way be presented as a purely negative method of teaching where learning does not happen in the classroom. For example, it is an undeniable fact that the Soviet educational system provided learners with fundamental knowledge in the fields of sciences and mathematics. Some characteristics of the teacher-centered approach should be seriously considered as an effective tool in teaching. Positive aspects of teacher-centered instruction, are clearly specified objectives, lessons that remain focused on those objectives, well-defined content, and teachers taking primary responsibility for teaching the content (Eggen & Cauchak, 1999).

As stated above, the culture of a given society plays a decisive role in determining educational policies in general, and interactions in the classroom in particular, when considering a classroom as a social milieu. How strongly these phenomena – society and classroom cultures - are interrelated is described by G.Hofstede (cited in Brown,1994; Polak, 2001) in his four-dimensional model of cultural differences. The four types of models are characterized as individualist/collectivist, small/large power distance, small/large uncertainty avoidance, and masculine/feminine cultures. Soviet Armenia would well fit in Hofstede's description of a large power distance, which means, "a big inequality in power is considered

by the less powerful members of a society as normal". What is more relevant to our study is that Hofstede describes the differences in teacher/student and student/student interactions within each of these model groups that are greatly affected by the rules functioning in the society. As described in Table 1, a teacher-centered classroom clearly reflects the societal rules of large power distances.

According to Nunan (2001), if you define culture as a set of often-implicit rules of norms, then every classroom has its own culture, which essentially defines teacher's approach to the learning process. An analysis of some key " rules of norms" characteristic of traditional teacher-centered classrooms shows why official educators encouraged that approach to foreign language teaching, which was so effectively supported by Grammar-Translation method. The fact that this approach to foreign language teaching has been so long-lasting in the former educational system, in my opinion, was not only due to educational policy, but was also due to the intense use of the Grammar - Translation method in our schools with its specific expectations from the teacher and the student as participants of the learning process. The two of characteristic features of Grammar–Translation approach stated by Celce-Murcia (1991)

- the teacher does not have to be able to speak the target language,
- the result of this approach is usually an inability on the part of the student to use the language for communication,

not only do these features exactly describe English lessons in our schools with no concern for the communicative aspect of the foreign language, but they also demonstrate why the Grammar-Translation Approach was quite compatible with the method, applied in a teacher-centered classroom, if we accept Anthony's (1991) definition of approach, as " a system that spells out rather precisely how to teach a language" and the definition of method, as a " set of procedures" (cited in Celce-Murcia,1991).

However, foreign language classes have not benefited from the academic system of teaching that could hardly meet the basic requirements of language learning, that is, developing communicative competence and ability to apply knowledge and skills learned in the classroom in real-world situations for the completion of authentic tasks.

That is why, our concern is to find ways for creating optimal learning conditions for students' motivation, attitudes, and behavior, which will contribute to achieving the specific goals and objectives of foreign language classes, while it is obvious that the teacher-centered classroom environment with the identified features analyzed above cannot best serve this purpose. By turning the learners into passive participants in the teaching/learning process and by suppressing their individual drives and needs, this classroom approach does not offer opportunities for learner motivation. This opinion is also confirmed by critics of teacher-centered instruction, who "argue that it is based on a behavioral view of learning, focuses on low-level objectives and emphasizes performance instead of understanding" (Eggan & Cauchak, 1999).

Considerable shifts in the cultural beliefs and values in Armenian society brought about a need for a new classroom approach. It has as much significance for the newly developing social order as teacher-centered approach for the former system. In order to extend the reality of democracy to all groups of society, schools and classrooms appear to be the best soil for disseminating the new ideas of democratic principles. So, parallel to transition of the society from an authoritarian to a democratic political system, educational policy has started a reform to create a school system capable of educating generations with loyalty to democratic values.

Thus, new societal needs have set forth new requirements for new teaching approaches and methods. The field of foreign language teaching, particularly English, turned out to be among the first to face the challenge of dramatic changes in education. The entire view of

goals and objectives for teaching English had to be restructured because of the new societal role ascribed to English language. From being one of the academic subjects taught at school, English language has now become an efficient means for getting a better education and making career advancement for individuals. In general, the English language has acquired the role of an accelerator in integrating Armenian society into the international community.

For educational reform to be successfully implemented, introduction to new methods most logically had to be started at the classroom level. That the classroom atmosphere plays a key role in the learning process is strongly supported by the representatives of such different theories of learning as Behavioristic, Cognitive, and Humanistic, who have held different views concerning other aspects of learning (Bigge & Hunt, (1964), Seifert(1991), Eggen & Cauchak (1999), Allwright & Bailey(1992), Brown(1993), Dubin & Alshtain(1986).

My experience of eight-years of teaching at the AUA (the American University of Armenia) Extension Program has been an invaluable opportunity allowing me to compare the learner-centered approach (practiced in the program) to teacher-centered instruction (I used to apply while teaching in state institutions). So, if the hypothesis that the learner-centered approach in TEFL contributes to increasing learner motivation is confirmed by this study, the results may interest the educators involved in school reform.

The learner-centered approach as classroom methodology, in a broader sense, assumes democratic principles of teacher/student and student/student relationships encouraged by classroom atmosphere. According to the definition of a classroom as a democratic group by Bigge and Hunt (1964, p.13)

> ...successful and permanent operation of democracy seems to require that a group maintain certain conditions which contribute to its functioning, for example, if participation is to be full and free, a group must establish an accepting atmosphere in which every member is considered important and has his opinions guaranteed a hearing. The teacher in this type of classroom plays the role of a democratic group leader... his ideas are subject to criticism

> just as are the ideas of students...although an authority on his subject, the situation is arranged so that students are encouraged to think for themselves.("Psychological Foundations of Education").

Learner-centeredness, as an innovative concept in the teaching-learning process, was brought to the scene due to both socio-cultural developments and new perspectives in linguistics and educational psychology. As noted by McNeil (1977), in many instances, communicative language programs have incorporated educational philosophies based on humanistic psychology. The Humanistic view of learning with its principles has proved to be the approach to teaching most fully responding to the needs of learner-centeredness. Those principles, when practiced in the classroom, are capable of creating sustained learner motivation in EFL classrooms.

It was Humanistic psychology, presented by C. Rogers, A. Maslow, F. Perls, E. Berne, that introduced the idea of a "fully functioning person". This is a type of learner, whose goal is to develop as " a whole person within a society". The new active role of the learner along with other new ideas brought about significant changes in educational psychology.

Those changes in turn affected teaching approaches and methods in classrooms. The humanistic view of learning and motivation is chosen as an approach to confirm the hypothesized question of this study, since it is the main principles of this theory that form the basis of a learner-centered classroom as presented in Box 2 (p.4). These principles point out fundamental differences of the roles of both the teacher and the student when the teacher-centered classroom is compared to that of a learner-centered one. Roles newly obtained by the teacher and students will definitely result in a change of classroom atmosphere. This kind of democratic classroom highly values personality, allows learners to take responsibility for their own learning and make decisions on their own, choose activities, and express feelings and opinions. If we analyze the characteristics of the learner-centered approach, we find

much in common with the framework of 10 macrostrategies for foreign language learning suggested by Kumaravadivelu (1994), who recommends his postmethod condition to "enable practitioners to generate location-specific, classroom-oriented innovative practices". The focus of these macrostrategies, similar to learner-centered approach, is to create necessary conditions for motivational learning.

Thus, the direct impact of classroom climate on learners' attitudes, in general, and on the construct of motivation in particular, has been acknowledged by representatives of humanistic view of learning as well as by contemporary authorities in the field of EFL/ESL.

CHAPTER 2 Literature Review

2.1. The Concept of Motivation

Second or foreign language acquisition is as complex as any phenomenon related to the human mind and behavior. The problem stated in this study, which is the connection between the construct of motivation and the classroom climate variable, is directly related to the affective domain, which is described by Brown (1994) as the emotional side of human behavior and refers to emotion or feeling. Although the cognitive domain of language learning has always been awarded more attention than the affective domain, an authority in human learning and cognition, Hilgard has noted that purely cognitive theories of learning will be rejected unless a role is assigned to affectivity (cited in Brown, 1994).

The significance of the affective domain in human behavior is defined in Bloom's taxonomy (Brown,1994). Concepts of receiving, responding, and valuing described by Bloom highlight important aspects of second language acquisition theory. Thus, understanding the role of the affective domain factor is crucial to foreign language teachers, who have to deal with people of diverse psychological types and individual styles of learning.

Moreover, studies of the role of the affective domain in SLA (Second Language Acquisition) have resulted in innovative, more efficient teaching approaches and methods. Though no final answers are found about the precise role of notions such as, self-esteem, anxiety, or motivation in second language learning, there is more than sufficient evidence

both in theory and practice that they are closely related to human learning in general, and to second/foreign language learning in particular.

Motivation is one of the affective domain constituents, the particular importance of which for foreign language learning is consistently traced in related literature.Although theories of the concept of motivation have passed through many stages of development, studies and publications of new views on this phenomenon still continue.

The term motivation first appeared in the writings of English and American psychologists in the 1880's. Bindra and Stewart (1973) give an overview of the development of the concept of motivation from the end of the 1880's to the 1930's. In their selected readings on "Motivation" (Introduction, p. ii ,1973) they have presented key concepts on motivation. Sully (1884) wrote that the desire that precedes an act and determines it is to be called its moving force, stimulus or motive, Dewey (1886) stated that a desire when chosen becomes a motive. McDougal (1908) suggested that instincts were the prime movers of all human activity, and Woodworth(1918) first used the concept of drive to refer to " "the motives and springs of action" that arouse a particular type of action. In 1936 Young published his *Motivation of Behavior* which brought together much of the early research. Since then 'motivation' has been referred to as a fundamental psychological concept. At a later period, when learning became the core of any study in educational psychology, the construct of motivation was given particular importance as a "force that energizes, sustains, and directs behavior toward a goal"(Ormrod, 1999). In fact, some researchers, as Pintrich (cited in Eggen & Kauchak,1999) claim that learning and motivation are so interrelated that a person cannot fully understand learning without considering motivation. All learners may well recall their school-year experiences when some lessons were a drag and they didn't learn much in those classes, yet others were so exciting that students looked forward to them. The latter ones were stimulating, because they made the students think and motivated them to productive work.

Motivated learning fostered and maintained their desire to continue learning. In a broader sense, student motivation is the students' desire to participate in the learning process.

Although no one with learning/teaching experience will hesitate to confirm that in practice motivated students have proved to be more successful learners than those with poor or no motivation for learning, it is complicated to explain what it means exactly to say someone is motivated. That is why it is of vital importance for teachers to have adequate theoretical background on this issue, since they are directly responsible for creating an environment most appropriate for motivating students to learn. As noted by Stipek (cited in Eggen & Kauchak, 1999) teachers contribute a great deal to students' desire to learn and to take responsibility for their own learning, and though they will not be successful with every student, with a positive, proactive approach to motivation, they can influence many. The three major theories of motivation are behaviorist, cognitive, and humanistic, all of which may help teachers to apply teaching principles that will promote motivational learning in classroom settings.

Brown (1994), Ormrod (1999), Eggen and Cauchak(!999) have analyzed the three views and their implications for student learning. Since it is beyond the scope of this study to discuss all advantages and disadvantages of the three views, we will focus on their interpretations of how, specifically, the variable of learning environment may influence learner motivation.

Pavlov and Skinner are the best-known theorists of behavioristic views of learning. The physiologist Pavlov, as a result of his research, discovered the phenomenon of the stimulus-response connection, known as classical conditioning or respondent learning, because the learner is responding to the environment. From the classroom perspective, if the teacher is able to provide an emotionally safe and pleasant learning environment serving as a stimulus, most probably the learner's response on such an environment will be highly positive. As

noted by Ormrod (1999) the durability and generalizability of some classically conditioned responses point to the need for a positive classroom climate for our students beginning with

day one. Students should experience academic tasks in contexts that elicit pleasant emotions... When students associate academic subject matter with positive feelings, they are more likely to pursue it of their own accord.. This means that in the long run positive stimuli will help students develop positive attitudes to learning and feel motivated to participate in classroom events.

Skinner's operant conditioning, another major concept of behaviorism, uses positive reinforcement (a stimulus that increases the subsequent frequency of a response) to encourage motivated behavior. For instance, when praised by the teacher constantly for certain behavior, the student is reinforced to behave similarly to gain praise again. However, some experts see positive reinforcement as a threat to decreasing intrinsic motivation (e.g. effusive praise loses credibility with many students, Eggen & Cauchak, 1999).

In summary, behaviorism suggests that motivation result from using positive reinforcers (e.g. praise, reward, high scores) effectively. Opponents of the behavioristic approach to motivation claim that reinforcers detract students from intrinsic motivation and cause them to focus on the reinforcers instead of learning. Therefore, it is recommended that operant conditioning techniques be applied in certain cases when dealing with students with low motivation, high anxiety or academic failure, rather than generally practicing it with all students.

The Behaviorist theory of learning explains the process of learning based on the changes of learner's behavior, as a result of relationship between environmental conditions (stimuli) and observable behavior (responses). It does not accept the critical role of mental processes in learning, since those kinds of activities cannot be observed or measured. As an alternative to

behaviorism, in the 1950-60's cognitive psychology established itself as a theory placing emphasis on cognitive processes in people. Simultaneously, cognitive views of learning emerged. According to Eggen & Cauchak, from a cognitive perspective, learning is a change in a person's mental structures that provides the capacity to demonstrate different behaviors, such as, knowledge, beliefs, goals, expectations, and others. Outstanding researchers who first came up with cognitive views of learning earlier than the first half of the 20th century were Edward Tolman, Jean Piaget, Vygotsky, and the Gestalt psychologists. Later contributors to the theory were Noam Chomsky, David Ausubel, and others.

The Gestalt psychologists with their views of organizational processes in perception and learning, Piaget's theory of equilibrium, Vygotsky's developmental theory, all were major fundamental contributions to learning theory.

Of particular interest for this study is Ausubel's identification of six needs underlying the construct of motivation; 1. the need for exploration, 2. the need for manipulation (operating on the environment causing change), 3. the need for activity, 4 .the need for stimulation, 5. the need for knowledge (processes and internalizes the first four), 6. the need for ego enhancement. If teachers realize clearly the underpinning ideas of these needs they may discover plenty of practical advice on how to motivate students in classroom settings.

Another excellent example of cognitive views of motivation is Piaget's concept of equilibrium, which argues that people are intrinsically motivated to try to make sense of the world around them (cited in Eggen and Kauchak ,1999) and as learners "they are motivated to resolve cognitive conflict when experiences don't make sense to them" (Ormrod,1999). And though the cognitive views of motivation offer considerable ideas that can be applied in EFL classrooms, humanistic views of learning and motivation, in my opinion, propose the most effective basis on which learner motivation should be built.

2.2. Humanistic View of Learning and Motivation

The critical difference in humanistic views of learning, as apposed to behaviorist and cognitive views is that the humanists studied the "whole person" as a physical and cognitive, but primarily emotional, being. Rogers' formal principles focused on the development of an individual's self-concept and of his/her personal sense of reality, those internal forces that cause a person to act. The roots of this view can be found in Renaissance Humanism, which believed that man was to be the starting point in satisfying man's urge toward individual development. This idea of Renaissance Humanism has been supported by humanists of our era, who view motivation as defined by Hamachek (cited in Seifert,1991) as people attempting to fulfill their total potential (physical, emotional, interpersonal, and intellectual) as human beings.

It was in the 1970's that the followers of the school of humanistic psychology "exerted an important influence on the field of education in the United States resulting in learner-centered pedagogy and confluent educational practices which combine affective and cognitive objectives" (Dubin&Olshtain,1986, p.75). Humanistic views of learning are especially appealing to our study since they place emphasis on the emotional and personal side of learning, where the factor of motivation has a critical role to play, and, in addition, classroom climate is considered by humanists an essential variable in teaching-learning process contributing to motivated learning.

Thus, we suggest that the principles of humanistic views of education be the basis for learner-centeredness as an approach to foreign language teaching with its emphasis on motivational factor in learning.

However, no research that attempts to study human motivation can succeed without seriously considering Abraham Maslow's comprehensive theory of motivation. Maslow, one of the pioneers of the humanistic movement, proposed a hierarchy of needs. The person's innate drive to meet these needs behaves as a motive for action. Afterward, when a need at one level is satisfied, it stops acting as a motivator and the next, level above becomes a motive for a human to move toward satisfying his new needs. Maslow (cited in Eggen & Cauchak, 1999) described needs as existing in two groups: the first consisting of basic needs, such as survival and safety, and the second based on a desire for self-fulfillment and self-actualization.

The important idea to be learnt is that deficiency needs (survival, safety, belonging, self-esteem), energize or move people to eliminate them, because they are unpleasant to experience. In contrast, growth needs (intellectual achievement, aesthetic appreciation, self-actualization) are hardly ever completely "met" since they serve to expand a person's growth and development, which can never be completely exhausted; they are pleasant to experience and people try to maintain them.

Although the theory may sound too theoretical and philosophical, it has resulted in fascinating classroom applications. For example, when Eggen and Cauchak (1999) characterize humanistic classrooms as safe environments, where students believe they can learn and are expected to do so they actually, refer to satisfying learners' safety needs by creating a warm and caring atmosphere free from fear of punishment and/or anxiety; or the students become motivated by natural need for self-respect and peer respect. To help students meet their esteem needs, Covington (cited in Seifert, 1991) recommends that teachers provide as much recognition in the classroom as possible. Acknowledgement of student achievement is an excellent source of motivation for their motivation depends on how they view themselves and what their perception of the classroom is. For classroom teachers it will be of great practical value to know the differences between deficiency needs and growth needs,

because those differences definitely affect the way students behave at different levels of learning. Teachers should never ignore theoretical knowledge on learning as a powerful basis for teaching practices. Even the strongest teacher intuition developed by years of practice needs to be refreshed by new ideas offered by research in the field.

For instance, the requirements for a learner-centered classroom to be a motivating place for learning can be explained by Maslow's hierarchy of needs with practical implications in classrooms suggested by Seifert - be sensitive to students' physical needs (hot /cold, board can be easily seen, etc.), be aware of students' safety needs by providing a safe and predictable environment; be conscious of those students who may feel they do not belong and intervene in a constructive way (belonging needs); be aware of students who have little self-esteem and help them by providing plenty of opportunities to succeed in class, and quite possibly every experienced and reflective teacher could continue this list of practical advice.

In summary, Maslow's theory demonstrates how the interrelationship of physical, emotional, and intellectual needs "make up" a "whole person" and that the concern for the learners' emotional well-being lies at the core of the humanistic approach to teaching. Basic principles of the humanistic view of motivation supported by Maslow's theory as well as by other researchers (Blumenfeld, Brophy, McCombs, cited in Seifert1991) suggest that teachers need to create learning environment where students are free from physical or emotional threat. Students who are threatened by potential embarrassment or who work in an otherwise unsafe and disorderly environment are less motivated to learn and achieve less than those whose learning situations are safe and stable.

Thus, humanistic view of learning and motivation confirm that the classroom environment is critical to learner motivation, and the analysis of learner-centered classroom principles (see Table 2, p.4) demonstrates that it is the most appropriate for promoting learner motivation.

2.3. Types of Motivation

Once a teacher is convinced that motivation plays a central role in learning, and that students who are motivated work more purposefully and energetically, he/she will attempt to know as much as possible about the concept. The types of motivation are not just a theory; the understanding of the differences between them is of practical value to teachers. A practicing teacher should distinguish between intrinsic and extrinsic motivation as well as between instrumental and integrative types, since they address different aspects of learner motivation.

A generally accepted description of intrinsic motivation is that it occurs when a person pursues learning for reasons that lie within himself and the task. As noted by Deci (cited in Ormrod, 1999) people seem to engage in activities for their own sake and not because they lead to an extrinsic reward...and intrinsically motivated activities are ones for which there is no apparent reward except activity itself. Intrinsically motivated behaviors are aimed at bringing about internally rewarding consequences.

Extrinsic motivation, in contrast, occurs when the source of motivation lies outside the individuals and they are often in anticipation of a reward of some type. No doubt both types of motivation should be encouraged to the extent that they lead to learning, though most studies have proved the numerous advantages, hence, the productivity of intrinsic motivation. While extrinsically motivated learners may lose interest when outside reinforcement disappears, intrinsically motivated learners are cognitively engaged in the task. They are more likely to pursue learning goals on their own initiative and strive to achieve at higher levels. Following Seifert's (1991) definition, students who develop, what she calls a learning orientation, are intrinsically motivated in that they focus primarily on mastering skills or new

knowledge, whereas students who develop a performance orientation are extrinsically motivated in that they concern themselves with others' impressions of their learning or skills. But this doesn't mean that extrinsic motivation must be avoided completely. In each classroom teachers may come across situations where they feel they have no choice but to appeal to extrinsic motivators, still bearing in mind that intrinsic motivation is the optimal state of affairs in the classroom.

Gardner and Lambert at different levels (cited in Richard-Amato,1996) carried out fundamental research over 12 years, which essentially contributed to understanding how motivational and attitudinal factors affect second/foreign language learning. In their results, instrumental and integrative motivations were differentiated. They described instrumental motivation as a desire to use the language to obtain practical goals such as studying or getting a job, and integrative motivation as a desire to integrate and identify with the target language group. Based on this and some other studies Gardner and others (Smythe, Clement, Gliksman as cited in Brown,1994) came to a conclusion that integrative motivation provides stronger and longer-lasting drive for learning the target language.

However, later research conducted by others and Gardner himself came to challenge this point of view. In some students with high instrumental motivation have proved to be more successful learners of the foreign language. The social context in Armenia may serve an excellent confirmation of the latter view. A great number of people nowadays attempt to learn English driven by instrumental motivation. In practice, it is also quite common, that during the learning process one type of motivation transfers to the other, which shows that it is almost impossible to isolate one type of motivation, or say that they are mutually exclusive.

So, different types of motivations contributing to successful foreign language learning may vary within the individuals and learning contexts. It is the teacher's responsibility to recognize, then promote and sustain the motivational type the most effective for the learner,

and it is for this worthy purpose that classroom teachers should enhance their knowledge of motivational issues.

Other evidence of the importance of learner motivation is frequent discussions of the topic by English language teachers working in EFL contexts in different countries. They have raised many common problems in articles published in the English Teaching *Forum* in different years. The English teachers from Congo, Cuba, China, Spain, Korea, Turkey emphasize the role of motivation in foreign language learning and see learner-centered classroom methodologies as the best promoters of motivational behavior. They offer much evidence from their TEFL practice that in a learner-centered learning environment students progress more.

Other EFL teachers also mention that student motivation is negatively affected by their prior learning experience and/or the national environment being far from supportive. A Chinese student confirms this opinion by describing the traditional classroom as a place where the teacher is the center of the class; the students are only listeners hoping to receive information and the correct answer from their teacher without using their own minds. ...the teacher gives the answers not encouraging them to think *why*. (Insull, *Forum*, October, 2001, p.35). There is also a considerable discussion on TEFL in various international contexts being constrained by pedagogic traditions of teacher-centered approaches to learning. The review of *FORUM* publications (Niederhauser,1997,.35 No1,Baloto, F. (1996). How to motivate Learners of English. Forum, Vol.34 No 1, Corria, I. L. (1999). Motivating EFL Learners. Forum, Vol 37 No 2, Insull, B. (2001). Encouraging Student Voices in a Chinese Classroom. Forum, Vol 30 No 4,Altan & Trombly Ch. (2001). Creating a Learner-Centered Teacher Education Program Forum, Vol 39 No 3).

shows that practicing EFL teachers are unanimous in claiming that the learner-centered approach to classroom management is a key to creating and enhancing learner motivation.

CHAPTER 3:.

CLASSROOM CLIMATE VARIABLES

According to Eggen & Cauchak (1999) classroom climate refers to teacher and classroom characteristics that promote students' feelings of safety and security, together with a sense of success, challenge, and understanding. Climate is important because it creates an environment that encourages both motivation and achievement. In other words, if the teacher is able to create an appropriate learning environment, learner's needs, stated in Maslow's theory of motivation may be fully satisfied, from the lowest to the highest, that is, from safety to self-actualization. Since the study requires testing the hypothesis that by applying a learner-centered approach a higher level of motivational classroom climate will be developed, the focus on classroom climate variables is of key importance to the study.

Related literature of both theoretical and practical relevance, suggests a large number of variables, which may contribute to creating such a classroom climate. Although these variables are interdependent and cannot be considered in isolation, it is obvious, that analyzing all possible classroom variables in one study would not be feasible. So, based on my experience of teaching adult learners in an EFL context[2]. I have highlighted/distinguished three variables, which, from my point of view, play a key role in creating a classroom environment promoting students' motivation for learning.

These three variables are: teacher-student rapport, student-centered tasks/activities, and teacher feedback.

[2] For an ethnographic description of the classroom context and the subjects in Chapter 4

Establishing rapport

As noted by Seifert (1991), educational psychology recognizes that classrooms are social settings and that teaching is, among other things, a social process that unfolds over a period of time. Relationships, therefore, develop both among the students themselves and between students and the teacher. The basis for further positive and efficient classroom relationships should be laid from the very first encounter with students. It is especially crucial in the context of intensive EFL classes, such as the setting of this action study, where the time constraint is a major problem. Unlike academic courses, which last at least one year, in our Extension Program (EP), each of the seven levels lasts nine weeks. Since not all students continue through all seven levels, the teachers have very little time at their disposal to get to know their students better and to establish good rapport with them.

The other major problem is that these courses are attended by learners of different age groups with diverse educational backgrounds, with a variety of personal needs and drives. This fact often requires the teacher to think about addressing different types of learner motivation.

Despite these very real difficulties, intensive language course teachers should be highly conscious of the significance of establishing rapport with students as one of the key factors for creating positive learning environment, a point of view strongly supported in relevant literature. Dornyei and Scizer (1998) have created a list of key steps, which they have called 10 + 1 commandments for motivating L2 learners and establishing rapport with students is one of them. Brown (1994) also emphasizes the importance of establishing rapport defining it as "...the relationship or connection you establish with your students, a relationship that is

built on trust and that leads to students' feeling capable, competent and creative. If the teacher, who is trusted by the students, it will be easy to organize the learning process in the most efficient way.

Nevertheless, there are circumstances to be seriously considered. In an EFL context like the one in EP, where students come from teacher-centered classrooms, the principles of learner-centered methodology, one of which is a new quality of teacher-student relationship, should be introduced gradually, taking into account the learners' prior ideas and learning experiences. If the teacher succeeds in establishing rapport in the classroom, there will be the lowest level of resistance, if any, to innovative teaching methodologies or techniques.

As an independent variable, "positive teacher-student relationships define the cornerstone of an effective learning environment-one that promotes both learning and self-development" (McCombs,Whisler 2002). This variable should function as a factor creating psychologically safe climate, in which students are encouraged to express their opinions and risk being different. By establishing good rapport, it will be much easier to create a classroom climate that motivates learners.

Tasks and Activities

In discussing tasks and activities as a variable, my intention is not only to focus on their content or types, (which may be conditioned by the course syllabi, textbooks or other circumstances), but also on general principles of the approach to tasks, viewing them as a key factor of achieving learners' active involvement.

One of these principles must be helping students see how the course content, its goals, and objectives are related to their personal goals. Admitting that goals are the immediate regulators of behavior (Green, 1995), the teacher should help each student with setting

personal learning goals within the scope of the course, achievement of which will sustain the learners' motivation for further improvement.

Another general principle underlying tasks/activities should be presenting them as a set of choices for achieving goals, which makes learning more enjoyable. The goals set at the beginning necessarily should be revisited at different points of the learning process, in order to adjust them to changing learning situations, which may also be implemented by moving from easier tasks/activities to more challenging ones, assigning home tasks that require more time investment and more resourcefulness than the ones assigned at the beginning of the course. By setting realistic goals for learners through tasks and activities, teachers provide sustained motivation by making each goal achievable. In this way, the teacher may transform extrinsic or instrumental motivation into intrinsic motivation, which may best promote autonomous learning.

With regard to the content of tasks and activities applied in the class, it should be noted that teachers are not always free to choose teaching materials. For example, the textbooks or course requirements may tie teachers' hands to some extent; however, their task is to show the students how most of the materials can be used beneficially. For example, it may be worth mentioning how useful they have proved to be with previous classes, or their utility or value outside of the classroom context. Wise teachers show their respect for learners' prior knowledge and learning experience by asking them to come up with their suggestions and ideas about the materials and possible changes in the syllabus. By involving them in decision-making, they are made to take responsibility for their own learning. Feeling in charge is always more motivating than being a passive participant.

Needless to say, when given an opportunity, by selecting authentic materials teachers will succeed in many aspects. Authentic materials are indispensable for introducing the culture of the target language, awareness of which promotes integrative motivation.

"Bringing culture content into the language classroom is one of the best ways of increasing motivation. In a society in which the conflict between globalization and nationalism remains unresolved (which is true about Armenia), its members greatly appreciate the opportunity to learn about life in other countries and to exchange ideas with teachers who are sensitive to both cultures"(English teacher in Korea. Source unknown).

As for the types of class activities, such as pair/group work, class discussions, they should focus on instrumental incentives (real world) and on the "anticipated intrinsic pleasure of learning". Pair/group work also helps decrease anxiety and build confidence through working with peers. Generating learner motivation through classroom activities greatly contributes to a pleasant and safe learning atmosphere. To make students participation in such activities truly motivating, they need to have the underlying benefits explained. It is especially necessary for students accustomed to teacher-centered classrooms, where interactive teaching methods and activities haven't been a priority and students may be intimidated by their unusual roles, and as a result, feel demotivated. Therefore, as suggested by Altan and Trombly (2001), it is necessary to clue students into this teaching approach (i.e.learner-centered) by explicitly stating the purpose underlying the new tasks and activities in the daily lesson plan. They should see the activities as meaningful and close to real world situations, since it is one of the main characteristics of communicative teaching. Application of classroom knowledge to the real world increases learners' motivation for acquiring more, since they have enjoyed its practical value.

The principles underlying classroom tasks and activities mentioned above will greatly contribute to learner-centeredness if they lead to "discovery learning, inquiry, cooperative learning, individualized instruction, technology (Eggen & Cauchak, 1999), if they contribute

to "maximizing learning opportunities, activating intuitive heuristics, promoting learner autonomy"(Kumaravadivelu, 1994).

In addition, as noted by Jerry Cerny (General Principles of Motivation, 2003), motivation is enhanced by the way in which the instructional material is organized; the best-organized tasks/activities make the information meaningful to the individual. If all these requirements are met in and through tasks and activities, they will function as variables efficiently contributing to creating learner-centered classroom climate.

Teacher Feedback

In the framework of this study, our purpose is not to analyze various techniques or types of teacher feedback, but rather the motivating role of feedback in a learner-centered classroom. Much research exists to suggest that teacher feedback promotes learning and has positive impact on sustaining learner motivation. Research indicates that feedback used to improve future performance has powerful motivational value (Clifford, 1990 cited in Eggen & Kauchak, 1999). Nunan (1991) defines motivational feedback as teacher's utterances intended to motivate a learner to continue active participation. Eggen and Kauchak also note that the influence of feedback is so powerful that it could be called a principle of learning and motivation.

Not only the representatives of the humanistic view of motivation emphasize the role of feedback in learning, but also those of cognitivist and behavioristic views recognize its importance for learning process.

For example, though the behaviorists view feedback as information about the accuracy or appropriateness of a response, not considering its cognitive and affective power, provision of positive reinforcement (behavioristic theory of operant conditioning) may well be as motivating in the form of praise and will increase the likelihood of behavior recurrence.

While reinforcement may also be negative (e.g., punishment), positive reinforcers are recommended as more efficacious (Nunan, 1991, Brown,1994). Receiving this type of feedback, learners become more willing to cooperate and more motivated to correct their mistakes.

The cognitivists also accept the key importance of feedback for learner motivation. Such cognitive theories of motivation as attribution, expectation x value, and self-efficacy theories offer well-grounded explanations for learners' acute need for teacher's permanent feedback. This type of feedback increases motivation to learn by helping satisfy learners' intrinsic need to understand how they are progressing and why (Clifford cited in Eggen & Kauchak, 1999).

Vigil and Oller's (cited in Allwright & Bailey, 1991) note that foreign language learners get at least two kinds of feedback, that is-cognitive and affective. Of particular interest to our study is the affective type of feedback, which is the emotional response to student's utterances from their interlocutors. They state that cognitive feedback (information about language use) must be accompanied by positive affective feedback not to discourage learners because of mistakes and to ensure continued communication in the target language. Researchers also agree that providing feedback may sometimes cause "a mild level of anxiety, which is useful in motivating the individual" (Cerny, 2003), but teachers need to be extremely careful not to let a high level of anxiety ruin the safe atmosphere of the classroom.

In conclusion, it should be once more emphasized that the choice of these three variables by no means minimizes the significance of other classroom variables that are held constant in this study. And also their strong interdependence must be considered as a token of their effectiveness. For example, tasks and activities, if selected thoughtfully, may contribute to establishing good teacher-student rapport, and good rapport will allow the students to accept the teacher feedback as positive and supportive.

Chapter 4: Study Design

4.1. The Settings (Subjects and Data Collection)

The study was designed as a case study. Gall et. al. (1996) define case study research as the in-depth study of instances of a phenomenon in its natural context and from the perspective of the participants involved in the phenomenon. The phenomenon under study is viewed from both the emic and etic perspectives. The purpose of this study is to show that when a learner-centered approach is practiced in an EFL class, learner motivation will be enhanced and will provide a wider variety of learning choices conditioned by the humanistic teaching philosophy of the learner-centered approach. The study also tends to confirm that for creating a classroom climate effectively contributing to developing and sustaining learner motivation certain classroom variables should be emphasized.

The case study was conducted in one of the classes at the Extension Program of the American University of Armenia (EP AUA), which offers students a one-year intensive English language program. Each proficiency level of the overall course, from the beginner to advanced, lasts nine weeks. The department uses *New Interchange (2003)* and *Passages (2000)* written by Jack Richards, as textbooks. All of the instructors except one are graduates of the AUA CTEFL program. Hiring graduates of the CTEFL program as teachers is a preference for the department, since that program introduces the students, who are English teachers, to new approaches and methodologies in the EFL field. In addition, the underlying philosophy of the educational policy of the department is that learning a foreign language is more rewarding, meaningful and effective when the language is used for authentic communication. The textbooks used in the Program greatly contribute to this approach by

providing authentic materials as reading materials and task-based activities that allow learners to personalize the tasks, make use of their own knowledge and experiences, and express their own ideas and opinions. There are also sets of supplementary teaching materials developed by the instructors of the department. All the above-mentioned factors are supposed to help teachers create classroom environment promoting learner motivation. That is the main reason why one of the classes in this department was chosen for observation as the setting of the study. The subjects of the study, all of whom are students at the AUA Extension Program, included 15 learners of English as a foreign language. They are students at the advanced proficiency level (Level 6), where they have been placed either as continuing students from previous levels or based on the results of the placement test administered by the department. The classes meet three times a week for three hours for nine weeks (total: 81hours).

In the class under study nine students are continuing and six are matched to Level 6 by the placement test. The language of instruction at the educational institutions at which they are studying or have studied is Armenian; they had been taught English at high school and university as a foreign language. There are six male and nine female students in the group. Four of them are still studying at different universities, two of them attend high school, and the rest are working after graduating from universities. The age range of the group is from sixteen to forty. Though the subjects come to this language course from different educational backgrounds, they all share common prior learning experience of traditional teacher-centered methods and techniques in their English classes. The course instructor is Canadian Armenian, male, with good command of Western Armenian, though the native language was hardly ever used as an instruction language. An important fact is that from 1984 to 1985 this instructor had observed English classes at Soviet secondary and higher educational institutions for his research purposes. Thus, he is well aware of the traditional teacher-centered learning experience of his present students.

Data was collected in three ways: through class observations, interviews with the students and the instructor, questionnaires for the students and the instructor. These different types of data-collection procedures allowed the researcher to use triangulation. In this study, as it will be shown in data analysis section, interviews and questionnaires confirmed the results of field notes made during class observations.

The first data collection procedure was taking notes during regular class observations during the nine weeks of the course. The observation procedure started from the third day of classes, when the list of attending students was confirmed and the teacher-student "getting-to-know-each-other" stage was completed. The observation was as unobtrusive as it could be so as not to interfere with the natural setting and not to affect the students' behaviors. The researcher obtained the role of observer participant, which assumes that she acted primarily as an observer collecting data in the natural setting and interacting with the subjects indirectly. Not to attract attention, the observer didn't take any field notes during the first two classes sessions (it was done after the class from memory). It was also agreed with the instructor that no introduction would be made. The third time the observer's presence was taken for granted and note taking did not attract anybody's attention.

After four class observations, the researcher started to communicate with the students during the breaks. Occasional, informal conversations with students helped the observer to find out their opinions and attitudes toward the issues under study. General questions were asked about both the learners' prior EFL experiences and their impressions of the current program. Sixty percent of the subjects were continuing students. They had the advantage of comparing different levels of the course with different teachers, which was very important to the researcher for getting a more complete picture of teaching methods in the department, since they attended courses with different instructors. The new students were inspired by the non traditional method of teaching and enjoyed their new experience of learning English.

After about a month of observation and after establishing friendly relationships with the students, which was in part due to the instructor's intentional involvement of the researcher in the lesson process, the researcher told the students in general terms about the purpose of the class observations. The students' interest toward the topic was beyond the researcher's expectations. They all appeared to be very willing to share their opinions and feelings about their prior experience of learning English and to compare them with their new experience at the AUA Extension Program course.

When the researcher felt that she had built rapport with the students, she started conversations with individual students, who seemed more enthusiastic about responding to the open ended questions of the researcher. Later, two group interviews were conducted to obtain more information on the topic and to have an opportunity to compare the answers asked at the initial stage of learning to that of the final stage. Group interviews proved to be an extremely relevant data-collection method for eliciting information on the classroom variables important for the study. Finally, the students were asked to answer two questionnaires on a voluntary basis. Fourteen students were willing to participate in the survey. One student, who did not participate, was very often absent from the class because of his frequent business trips.

One questionnaire was on different classroom variables; the second focused on classroom climate specifically as the dependent variable of the study. In contrast to interviews, where Armenian was used, the respondents preferred English as a questionnaire language. Nevertheless, to avoid any misunderstanding, before completing the questionnaires, I asked the students to go through the survey questions and ask for clarification if needed. There was also a short introduction paragraph presenting the purpose of the questionnaire. But because Armenian students are not used to completing questionnaires, I found it necessary to emphasize that the

answers were not going to affect anybody (the students or the teacher) in any way. The survey results were analyzed by calculating the mean of the answers for each survey question.

CHAPTER 5: DATA ANALYSIS

5.1. Analysis of the Observational Data

Since there are three classroom factors (the independent variables) that are hypothesized by the researcher as determining the creation of a motivating classroom environment (the dependent variable), the data analysis were directed at finding out learners' attitudes and opinions about those three independent variables in particular. The field notes were taken with focus on the following classroom context categories: classroom behavior of the teacher and students as an indicator of teacher-student relationships/rapport; how the tasks affected the student's interest and motivation; and what was the effect of teacher feedback on the learning process, in general, and on student motivation in particular.

As far as the classroom climate is concerned, this class provided learning conditions highly supportive of the students' "attempts to fulfill their total potential as human beings"(Hamachek, 1987), thereby, promoting their motivation as learners. The physical condition of the classroom was satisfactory in the sense of meeting the first levels of Maslow's deficiency needs – the classroom was bright and warm with an appropriate classroom arrangement. The desks were arranged in a circle to allow the learners to engage in pair/group work and to feel comfortable during class discussions. This might seem not so important at first sight; however, a classroom setting contributing to learner-centered activities is a key to their successful language practice. This was also mentioned in student interviews related to the question of differences between the classrooms they used to have in their institutions and the environment at these courses. The students stated that the arrangement of tables was an element facilitating peer interaction and class participation.

Another example of meeting learners' physical needs was the teacher's serious consideration of the fact that the students were attending the lesson after work, and thus were

rather tired. Nevertheless, the teacher was very successful in " waking them up" with warm-up activities, by asking individual students questions on their work, by discussing important current events, by making jokes in his "broken" Russian, which students enjoyed greatly. These kinds of activities not only would freshen up the learners, but also contributed to creating a context, where people could get to know each other better and cooperate more productively.

Apparently, the classroom climate was emotionally safe, too, which is another key characteristic of the humanistic view of learning and motivation. The non-threatening classroom environment enhanced the learners' desire to move up the hierarchy of needs toward growth needs of belonging and self-esteem. These needs involve acceptance, recognition, and approval from the teacher and peers, which greatly contribute to motivational learning from the humanistic perspective on learner needs.

To confirm the assertion that the classroom climate was appropriate for motivational learning and that the teacher practiced learner-centered approach, two instruments, that is, Rating Scale for Classroom Control and Rating Scale for Classroom Warmth have been used to evaluate the classroom climate (Borich,1999) (see Appendix 1 and Appendix 2). Though these two instruments were used only once, toward the end of the course, the dynamics of classroom climate from somewhat controlled to more democratic and learner-centered could be obviously observed. Student interviews confirmed both this observation and the results received through applying Instrument 1 and Instrument 2 (see Appendix 1 and Appendix 2). On Instrument 1(see Appendix1) **The Use of Praise** as a form of feedback was rated the highest. During the observations several important characteristics of teacher feedback were stated. When providing feedback on the students' performance the emphasis was always on their individual progress and mastery and students' achievements there had never been compared or contrasted, thus making them feel safe from unhealthy competition.

Another motivating application of feedback was relating it to student goals. For example, at this proficiency level students are required to develop writing skills. So, the teacher would assign writing tasks, mostly essays, at almost every lesson. He explained to the students that based on both the results of the AUA admission exams and the placement test in the Extension Program, it was apparent that writing skills had always been a weak point for adult learners. Besides, they should know from their own experience that well developed writing skills were required both for further education and work. So, the acute attention to improving writing skills was not occasional and the students were convinced that detailed feedback on writing assignments had direct relevance to their learning needs. In addition, teacher feedback was a valuable source of information about the learner's progress toward their achievement.

The analysis of mistakes in each essay was done in front of the class and the students found it extremely useful (mentioned in the interviews), since they had an opportunity to learn from the mistakes of others' as well. The feedback on essays was provided rather thoroughly at word, sentence, structure, and stylistic levels. Comprehensive teacher feedback allowed them to use new strategies if they had failed, or feel accomplished when the goal was attained. Extremely important was the fact that it was not only a corrective type of feedback, though research indicates that feedback used to improve future performance has powerful motivational value (Clifford, cited in Eggen & Cauchak, 1999), but also the motivational nature of feedback was obvious. The teacher always focused on the progress the students were making and positive feedback was presented in such an encouraging way that students tried their best to deserve the teacher's praise as a reward. The teacher would particularly praise the effort of the students who were less confident for either personal (shy, reserved, inconfident) or proficiency reasons. From the changing behaviors of students it was easy to observe how the teacher's praise and positive feedback to their responses enhanced their emotional well being and encouraged them to participate in the lesson more actively. In fact,

no student learning effort remained unnoticed. The student interviews and the survey confirmed the importance of teacher feedback to the learners and its motivational impact on goal attainment. Indisputably, the way the teacher feedback was provided greatly contributed to creating emotionally safe and learning-conducive environment, one of the main assets of the humanistic view of learning.

The Amount of Criticism, Scolding and Reprimanding (Appendix 1) is rated the lowest. The teacher was excellent at using jokes for criticizing if needed. Criticizing was never personally offending, but sharp enough to make the student pay attention to the problem. For example, a student who hadn't done homework more than once, instead of being scolded was mentioned that the number of his mistakes had increased. (Oh, we know you're busy with saving the world (considering the profession), but will you, pojaluysta ("please" in Russian) find time to write an essay on your favorite book, before you forget English, (then in a serious tone) I know you're busy, but try to find time). I paid attention that the next time that student came with homework and the teacher appreciated the effort.

Use of Student Ideas and **Responsiveness to Student Requests (Appendix 1).** These descriptors, actually, were one of the central elements during the lesson process. The organization of the lessons were, in fact, based on student ideas in the sense that the textbook offered a lot of tasks requiring student discussions, opinions, suggestions, problem solving. In addition, the teacher regularly asked for the students' opinion about the type and amount of homework, about their preferred types of class activities, and individual learning needs. For instance, when the students said, that they did not like group work very much (one of the consequences of their teacher-centered learning experience), the teacher explained its advantages for developing some specific skills. Nevertheless, these kinds of activities were not assigned as frequently as they should be in a learner-centered classroom, and I evaluated it as responsiveness to student requests. In fact, the teacher took into account the students'

prior learning experience, which is an important factor in a transition classroom. Also, he did not focus on grammatical rules heavily, though the students said that would like him to (another specific element of teacher-centered approach). Instead, he would make students pay attention to the pragmatic use of the rules explaining that the use of language should not be restricted by rules and their memorization (another evidence of the students' traditional language learning experience).

Regularly provided feedback helped students to attend and review their learning goals and strategies. In addition, whenever the students asked the teacher to pay attention to a particular language problem, the teacher would provide additional teaching materials, explanation and discussion. In fact, responsiveness to student requests and use of their ideas has been used as another means of providing efficient feedback.

Such descriptors as **Reference to Formal Rules (Appendix 1)** and **Use of Punishment (Appendix 1)** are rated low. These two have not been applied as means of promoting learning. In the beginning, the students were informed that not completing daily homework decreases the student's overall final score by 1% for each homework unit and the requirement for being on time for class was mentioned only once. The fact that the teacher was never late for class was an excellent example of model behavior. Foe example, the students said they liked that they did not have to stand up when the teacher was entering or leaving the classroom as they did in their institutions. They enjoyed the informal atmosphere and did not think standing up was demonstration of respect for the teacher, since they could be heavily reprimanded should they not do it in their classrooms.

Student Spontaneity, Risk-Taking Behavior, and Student-Initiated Responding is evaluated on the Rating Scale for Classroom Control (**see Appendix 2, INSTRUMENT 2**). The teacher's behavior was encouraging these types of student behaviors. The atmosphere of emotional safety and low anxiety created by the teacher, is greatly due to his good sense of

humor and caring attitude, which allowed students to demonstrate spontaneity and self-initiated participation since they were not afraid of making mistakes and being reprimanded, criticized or teased for it. However, the teacher was rather careful that not always the same students would be responding. He would elicit responses from students who were less self-confident and more hesitating and, hence, more passive. As a result, in sthree-week time almost all students became active participants in class activities. There were only two students who would wait for the teacher to call on them. During group interviews I was convinced that it was their personality types that conditioned their passiveness.

As for these three independent variables, it must be stated that they progressed immensely in the course of time, since due to the good student-teacher rapport; the students knew they had the teacher's support and encouragement for their learning efforts. If these descriptors had been rated at the beginning of the course, they might be somewhat lower, which seems to be quite natural. The noticeable increase in such behaviors is an evidence that the classroom climate was meeting the requirements of a learner-centered classroom, and it would fit the description of one of the premises of a learner-centered model stated by McComb and Whisler (2000) that learning occurs best in a positive environment, one that contains positive interpersonal relationships and interactions, that contains comfort and order, and in which the learner feels appreciated, acknowledged, respected and validated.

Along with the increase of student risk-taking and self-initiated responding, the **Amount of Teacher Talk (see Appendix 2)** and **Teacher Authority (see Appendix 2)** decreased.

For instance, after two weeks (six lessons) students would challenge the teacher's opinions and judgments during class discussions, whereas during the first lessons they were not so active and enthusiastic; as the course advanced, they sounded more confident when making their own suggestions about the assignments (e.g. the teacher assigned the class to write a

summary on a story by H.Toumanyan (famous Armenian writer) everybody had read, but a student suggested that everyone write a summary on different stories by the same author and the others found it more interesting) and their preferred activities. As compared to the first weeks, the classroom has become much more learner-centered by the students practicing a lot of pair and group work; the students enjoyed their independence and autonomy in learning. Due to the teacher's personality, which could serve as a separate topic for research, learning was great fun for these students. This fact was frequently confirmed in student interviews.

So, in order to assess the overall classroom climate, two rating scales with the maximum of seven have been used. Based on the observer's rating the averages of both dimensions, that is, Classroom Warmth and Classroom Control are summarized in Table 3.

Table 3: The Averages of Classroom Control and Warmth

Control Average	**4.2**
Warmth Average	**6.5**

Afterward, the axis of Classroom Climate (see **Appendix 3**), which contains verbal definitions (Borich, 1999) was used to determine the place of the observed classroom in one of the quadrants of the axis. According to Classroom Control and Classroom Warmth data averages the classroom is located in Quadrant C, which is defined by the chart of descriptors (Borich, 1999, **Appendix 3**) as a classroom with high warmth and low control. The results of classroom climate average allow us to characterize it as rather learner-centered, since in addition to above mentioned descriptors it also met other key characteristics of the learner-centered classroom: learner needs were considered and respect for the individual was emphasized; student initiative was strongly supported; meaningful communication was

encouraged by providing authentic tasks presenting real-world situations; pair and group work was practiced. Such factors as student-teacher relationships, task orientedness, and teacher feedback were addressed to increase motivation for learning and achievement.

Observation has also confirmed the fact that a good foreign language lesson is a combination of a great number of factors, which are extremely interdependent. The researcher's focus on only three of them has been conditioned by the fact that in the framework of one study it would not be feasible to analyze and discuss all possible factors affecting learner motivation. As mentioned above, the emphasis on these specific factors as contributing to learner motivation was prompted by the researcher's teaching experience and by background/related literature.

5.2 Analysis of Student Interviews.

At start of each interview the researcher-interviewer presented her research topic and its purpose to the subjects once again Earlier it was done during the informal conversations with the students in more general terms, which was agreed upon in advance with the teacher.

Student interviews were conducted with the whole class and also with a smaller group of five subjects. This group of students were the ones who could find extra available time for the interview. These students were asked to sign consent forms, so that they could be recorded and their names could be used in the study. The students preferred to speak in Armenian. Individual interviews were not been conducted since we agree with qualitative researchers, who find that "the interactions among the participants stimulate them to state feelings, perceptions, and beliefs that they would not express if interviewed individually".(Gall et.al., 1996).The interview was designed as informal conversational with open-ended questions. As recommended by Michael Patton (Gall et. al., 1996) the general interview guide approach has

been applied, which means that the order of topics and questions have not been predetermined, so, the questions were asked as the interview proceeded. Although the researcher-interviewer was particularly interested in evolving discussion on the three variables under the study, she would rather propose than impose the topics. And since the students appeared to be very eager to discuss every detail of the lesson, the interview questions were related to the lesson process as a whole. After discussing and finding the Armenian translation of the term together, all subjects assessed the learning atmosphere as motivating. Nerses, a student with the best knowledge of English in the class, said; "The teacher makes learning so interesting that we forget we are tired after a working day, and work intensively all the three hours". Another respondent appreciated the fact that there was no feeling of competition among students, since the teacher was able to create an atmosphere of equity independent of the student's level of English. All agreed that the students, who were reserved and shy at first, opened up due to the teacher's caring attitude and became active participants. Nerses said that he felt how he was learning by participating. Araxia mentioned that class work was organized in a way that you felt it important to bring your "per cent" of participation to the lesson process, as a part of a team. "I constantly feel that the teacher is interested in my learning", said Gohar, who was rather inhibited in the beginning. They mentioned that they really enjoyed the informal relationships with the teacher. In one of the student's words, "the atmosphere was democratic, but not out of control. You wouldn't sit with your feet up". One student recalled that when she was late after break (the teacher himself was absolutely punctual), the teacher with his good sense of humor said he knew the cafeteria serves delicious dishes and she had to try them all, but lessons are also important. It didn't sound offensive, yet she was told being late was not welcomed.

Concerning the student-teacher rapport all students were unanimous that it was very good and they mentioned the teacher's personality as a crucial factor. A medical student said;

"This is the kind of relationship that you are not afraid of asking a question and sounding stupid". We were particularly interested in the opinion of a teenager, a high school student, about student-teacher relationships, to see if there have occurred any changes in this respect at Armenian high schools today. Tigran said that his relationship with his school English teacher were rather formal, whereas with the instructor he feels more comfortable and willing to learn. This was true as during the observation it was noticed that because of his young age this student felt intimidated among the adult learners. And it was due to the teacher's proper treatment that very soon the boy became as active a student as a bright teenager could be. The difference between the classroom environments in the educational institutions they used to learn in and the one in this program were defined as democratic and authoritarian, retrospectively. Later this opinion was confirmed in anonymous questionnaires.

With regard to teacher feedback all respondents acknowledged it as a crucial factor to their learning. Along with the importance of corrective feedback, they would constantly give examples of getting motivational feedback, though they would not use this terminology. For example, "Even if your answer is not exactly correct but is somewhat close to it, he accepts it with such encourageing words, smile and gestures that you don't feel guilty for making a mistake". Others frequently mentioned this fact as well, which might be due to their prior learning experience. In teacher-centered classrooms the teacher usually perceives and presents students mistakes as learning failures; most teacher feedback on learners' mistakes is negative; it is usually put as reprimanding or scolding- something that never happened in this classroom. Each student gave ample examples of what would be described as provision of motivational feedback. For instance, Gohar said; "Whenever I forget a new word, or the mistake I had made, it's enough for me to recall his voice intonation, his expressive explanations in gestures, and I immediately remember what the mistake was". All subjects emphasized the teacher's explanatory and feedback-providing style and technique as highly

impressive. One student, a university professor herself, said, "His technique of explaining a lesson and/or a mistake is a piece of art", another student added, "He demonstrates the new material in a way that it's impossible to forget".

Interestingly, many of these opinions expressed by the students in this class are stated as characteristic of a learner-centered teacher by Murray and Renaud (cited in McComb, Whisler 2002) these teachers "speak expressively, move around, use humor, are enthusiastic, ...call students by name, ask questions of students, are respectful of them, and have rapport with them". The subjects' opinions concerning teacher-student rapport and teacher feedback stated in the interviews have been supported by researcher observation and later by questionnaires.

As tasks are concerned (one of the classroom variables contributing to learner motivation) the key role of teaching materials should be considered. The Extension Program has been using *Passages* as a textbook written by Richards and Sandy (2000), who wrote in the introduction to their book that "it has been their goal with *Passages* to provide stimulating subject matter that will make learning English fun while at the same time giving students the tools they need to communicate in the real world". This description is completely justified by the tasks found in the textbook, which present real-world information generating students' interest; the topic-driven syllabus maximizes the opportunity of student personalization, discussions. Communicative and learner-centered approach to teaching EFL is well presented through various fluency-focused pair/group activities and other activities encouraging discussions and exchange of information. Grammar is presented in both controlled practice and in a free communicative context. Readings taken from authentic sources are of great cultural value and present information contributing to integrative motivation. We find it essential that tasks be introduced in such detail, since it explains the fact why during the interviews and later in the questionnaires, the subjects did not think that the teacher should

necessarily explain how the tasks were related to their learning goals or, for example how it was related to real-world situations. Due to the availability of extensive information nowadays and, perhaps, because of the advanced foreign language proficiency level of the students, they themselves could recognize and appreciate the high relevance of tasks to their needs as learners. For instance, during the interview, Araxia said that very often while watching movies in English she would identify a lot ofvocabulary learnt in this class. She has attended two other language courses before joining the EP, but nowhere has been so up-to-date. Nerses added that the lessons also help him understand cultural "things" both in movies and in communicating with foreigners. All the students unanimously assessed the topics presented in the textbook as greatly interesting. Mourad mentioned that he was convinced that the topics must have been selected with thorough consideration of psychology, since there were no topics that would prevent students from wanting to have their own say in the discussion. It was interesting that when to the question whether all tasks were equally motivating was asked, one of the younger students answered that she was not very enthusiastic about the theme "Sleeping issues, dreams, sleeping problems", whereas another student, who was older, said she was very interested in the information and discussion of the topic. She added that the younger student would get interested as soon as she faced thees problems. In general, the students completely agreed that all the topics were motivating in terms of their interest and relevance. They liked the design of the tasks, their practicality ("you can take it and use in the real life situation", said a student). The diversity of viewpoints presented in the book and supported by the teacher, who always participated in discussions by giving his own opinions and some additional information on the topic, encouraged student "disagreement" and interaction. Some students talked about the irrefutable advantages of learning a foreign language in a group, where pair/group activities

offer an opportunity of learning choices introduced by other learners. They emphasized how encouraged and supported they felt by the teacher, when coming up with diverse opinions.

They added how much they appreciated the teacher's not correcting mistakes during these types of activities, which is not a common practice in their traditional classrooms, where correcting students' mistakes is a sign of a teacher's superiority. Everybody accepted how different this classroom atmosphere was from the ones they used to attend, or some of them are still attending. In those classrooms students are not encouraged to give their opinions on the topic of the lesson and, usually, they are afraid of making mistakes while speaking not to make a bad impression on the teacher. In general, teachers are not enthusiastic about any type of discussions; nor do the textbooks offer such choices. At this point, all students noted how uninteresting their textbooks used to be, and that those textbooks had been in use for decades. (I would know from my own experience)."Group/pair work is out of question", said one student. Neither the tasks nor the teachers encourage pair or group work.

It has been very helpful to apply Stevick's six essential criteria (in Wajnryb, 2000) of "whole-learner" materials for the evaluation of tasks, derived from his notion of humanistic language teaching and to see to what extent they coincided with students' opinions about the tasks and materials. Stevick's approach to learning tasks is especially appropriate to the topic of this study since we have considered (see the Literature Review) the concepts underlying the Humanistic View of language teaching/learning as the most directly addressing learner motivation. It is particularly true about adult language learners, who Stevick believes have to be treated as a complete person, not seen in exclusively cognitive terms(cited in Wajnryb, 2000). In their interviews, the students, in fact, confirmed the observer's overall positive evaluation of the materials and tasks, which basically met the criteria for materials choice or development put by Stevick (in Wajnryb, 2000), (see Table 4).

Table 4: Stevick's 6 criteria for "whole learner" materials

The language of the materials	**Positive**
"Reality" as reflected by the materials	**Positive**
Appeal to the learner's "affect"	**Positive**
Scope for choice/disagreement	**Positive**
Quality of students' interaction	**Positive**
Safety of the learning environment	**Positive**

In addition, during the observations, the task evaluation form developed by Nunan, 1989 (**Appendix 4**) was applied. Since the course textbook contains the same type of tasks and activities throughout twelve units (each unit consisting of two sections), the results of two evaluations could be generalized.

During the interview with the course instructor, who is the dean of the Extension Program, no prestructured questions were asked. The instructor shared his experience of an observer in the former Soviet schools as part of his research work in the past. In fact, it had been his first practical encounter with a highly authoritarian classroom, with a high level of teacher control. In his opinion the Extension Program classrooms should be described as transitional ones from teacher-centered to learner-centered classrooms. He mentioned that though the majority of instructors in the EP, are graduates of the AUA TEFL department and have been well introduced to a learner-centered approach, their prior teaching experience in traditional classrooms should not be ignored, which means the teachers themselves may not be entirely committed to the learner-centered approach in practice. And what is more important, the learners' mentality and prior English language learning experience should be given serious consideration while exposing them to the new learning environment. These two factors make him think that learner-centeredness like any innovation, should be introduced gradually. The

course teacher was also asked to complete a Teacher Belief Survey (McCombs & Whisler, 2002, see **Appendix 5**). The survey answers, which were scored the highest and the lowest by the course teacher, were selected as best reflecting the teacher's strongest beliefs. The analysis of the survey showed that he matched the description of a learner-centered teacher (see p.43). Although the variable of teacher personality was supposed to be held constant, its significance could not be denied, and therefore, it might be referred to as rather an intervening than a constant variable. In this regard, it was interesting to find out (through interviews and informal conversations) that despite the fact that the teacher was Canadian Armenian with good knowledge of Armenian, he was perceived by students as a native English-speaking teacher (NEST). The teacher would use Armenian (his Western Armenian dialect is different from the local Eastern Armenian) for making jokes only and never as an instruction language. The students would never ask him for translation as they usually do with non-native speaking teachers. It should be noted that the students' perception of the teacher was justified as his teaching behavior falls under the comprehensive description of NESTs as compared to non-NESTs (Medgyes, 2001).

5.3 Analysis of Student Questionnaires.

The analysis of both surveys (see **Appendices 6,7**) confirmed the findings yielded through class observations and student interviews. To avoid the threat of leading questions the questions have been presented with five optional answers to allow students to make their choices. According to the scoring rate the maximum mean score is five.

The highest mean (4.57) was received for the question on regular teacher feedback. This fact was not surprising, since in their interviews the students had emphasized its key role in their learning. On the other hand, it was noted in observation analysis that teacher feedback was provided rather effectively, so it was appropriately evaluated. The second highest mean (4.21)

was related to tasks' being real-life oriented. As already discussed, it is one of the elements' that maintains learner motivation and in their interviews the students expressed their complete satisfaction with the level of interest of the tasks. There was another confirmation of this opinion by responses to the question whether they needed explicit explanations for the task goals. This item has received the lowest score (2.29), which means the tasks met the learners' goals and they did not wonder about their relevance. It was surprising though that the students said in their interviews that all tasks were interesting, the question whether the students felt equally motivated about all tasks and activities received the mean of 3.43, which seems not very high when as compared to the means received for other questions. This fact can be explained by one of the characteristics of adult learners identified by Knowles in "Principles of Adult Learning" that adults are practical, focusing on the aspects of a lesson most useful to them in their work (cited in Lieb, 2003). It was also confirmed by the subjects' answers to the question why they were taking the course. All adult learners, except one, needed it for career advancement. So, this may mean that even if the task *is* interesting, it is not sufficient to make it motivating, and it is the teacher's task to make the task as relevant to learners' needs as possible.

To the first question if there was much difference between the learning environments in this course and in their institutions the result was not unexpected when the average was 4.14. However; the average to the answer about the prior learning experience interfering with learning at this course was rather low 2.57. Another adult learning principle stated by Knowles may explain why they did not feel intimidated by the new learning atmosphere-"Adult learners are goal and relevancy-oriented. Upon enrolling in a course, they usually know what goal they want to attain". A simpler explanation could be that 75% of the subjects were continuing students and the learning environment and teaching methods were not unknown to them.

Finally, the last question that involved another crucial element of a learner-centered classroom, that is, "feeling responsible for their own learning" recorded one of the highest means 4.14 and a paraphrased statement of the same question connected with the classroom environment on the second questionnaire got the mean of 4.43 thus, confirming the result of the previous similar question.

In regard to the second survey on classroom climate specifically (see Appendix 7), all statements except one yielded a mean higher than four, which is rather high. The only statement with a slightly lower average of 3.93 was whether "Classroom climate fostered cooperation in learning". Interestingly, during the interviews one of the students, quite a reserved one, mentioned that he realized and appreciated the advantage of learning in a group as compared to individual learning, because different students demonstrate different learning styles, "bring in" their knowledge and you get the opportunity of learning more for a shorter period; another said that he always felt more comfortable speaking in a smaller group during a pair or group work than in front of the class. And though almost all students complained about the big size (15) of the class, they accepted its benefits, too. At the same time, the low mean received for this statement should not be surprising since fostering cooperation in learning has never been an objective in teacher-centered classrooms. In traditional classrooms, discussing topics with classmates during the lesson is viewed as violation of discipline and disrespect to the teacher.

Summing up the questionnaire on classroom climate by counting the arithmetical mean for each statement (Appendix 6,7 (tables attached)), it is apparent that by students' evaluations it was assessed as learner-centered.

CHAPTER 6: Research Findings

The data analyses of this case study show that the three classroom elements selected as independent variables greatly contribute to creating a learner-centered classroom as the best learning environment for motivating students. The results of the study concerning each variable (i.e. student–teacher rapport, teacher feedback, and tasks) find confirmation in many other studies (Dubin & Olshtain,1994; McComb & Whisler, 2002; Eggen & Cauchak, 1999; Ormrod, 1990; etc).

On the other hand, the data collected through class observations and student/teacher interviews confirmed that these three variables are not the only ones to be considered as factors creating and maintaining learner motivation. The reason why other variables have not been discussed in the data analyses section is that they were beyond the scope of this study. However, it was natural that during informal conversations and interviews the students spoke about other classroom factors as well, and their general comments on other aspects of the lessons helped the researcher to get a more comprehensive picture of student perceptions concerning the three variables under study. As mentioned above (Chapter 3) classroom climate variables may be as numerous and complex as the process of learning is. Being extremely interdependent, they cannot be applied successfully in isolation

Another interesting finding was the features of adult learning that emerged in the process of this case study. Adult learning as a new phenomenon to the educational system of Armenia could be a useful topic for further research, since these days a greater and greater number of adults are interested in learning English. The results of this case study may set an example of how to take the advantage of the learner-centered approach to motivate adult learners. For example, both the interviews and the questionnaire results have displayed how willing they are

to take new opportunities, since they are motivated by possible changes in their workplace, advancement in one's career, or moving to other countries. In fact, they are motivated by a need to increase their self-esteem through expanding their knowledge and developing skills. This finding is supported by previous research, which emphasizes motivation as an irrefutable aspect of adult learning (Lieb,1991; Huit,2001; Research in Oklahoma State University, Classroom Motivation, 2003, etc).

This finding, in turn, confirms the fact that in spite of their prior learning experience in traditional teacher-centered classrooms adult learners are primed to accept new approaches and teaching methodologies if it meets their expectations. These students enjoyed the democratic atmosphere of the classroom; enjoyed sharing the responsibility for decision-making and negotiating learning choices. They felt that communication, trust, and relationships are more important tnan ideas and programs (McComb, 2002).

To summarize, the major finding of the study is that the learners are best motivated to learn when their individual voices are heard and considered by the teacher; and the humanistic classroom with its principles of learning suggests the most appropriate classroom environment for motivational learning.

Chapter 7. Limitations of the Study and Suggestions for Further Research

An observational case study, by its nature, suffers from some limitation. As stated in Research Methods in Education (Wiersma, 2000) because case study occurs in a natural setting it is extremely difficult to replicate it and because of a small sample size such a study can hardly be overgeneralized. Also, from the point of view of Gall et. al. (1996) the responsibility for the issue of generalizing case study findings may be placed on the "consumers" of the findings rather than the researchers, thus allowing the user/reader of the case study to determine the applicability of the findings in their own situations. For example, a researcher may observe the same variables for identifying the classroom climate she/he will be working in.

Another limitation of the study is the teacher's background/personality. Though ethnic Armenian by birth, he fits the description of a NEST (native English speaking teacher) suggested by Medgyes (2001) which affected the learners' perceptions and behaviors. For instance, they would not expect translation and use of L 1 for explanations, which made them behave more independently (e.g., using dictionaries instead of asking the teacher, seeking cooperation from classmates instead of teacher), while with a native Armenian teacher their learning habits and behaviors continue to remain more teacher-dependent. And since the subject teacher is the only native speaker in the department, this might be viewed as a limitation for generalizability of the study not only for AUA EP, but also, to an even greater extent, for other institutions in Armenia, where English is not taught by native speakers.

This limitation sets a direction for further research. A case study conducted in a classroom with a non-native speaker teacher might reveal differences or/and confirm similarities between the findings of two studies. It will be more valuable if two different

classrooms with different teachers can be observed and compared, which will also increase the sample size, another typical limitation of a case study like this one.

Furthermore, the teacher's teaching philosophy may be selected as an independent variable affecting the learning environment. The Teacher Belief Survey used in this study may be applied to observe if the teacher's answers are confirmed by his classroom teaching behavior.

Finally, conducting two case studies in different natural settings simultaneously, (one in a traditional classroom at one of the state universities and the other in our program in a learner-centered classroom), both attended by native adult learners, might greatly add to this effort in promoting a learner-centered approach as a better environment for supporting student motivation to learn.

In fact, the transition from teacher-centered classrooms to learner-centered ones is one of the significant steps reflected in the new national curriculum, so any attempt to contribute to a more efficient transition to new approaches and methods in the educational system would be valuable.

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APPENDIX 1

INSTRUMENT 1. **Rating Scale for Classroom Warmth**

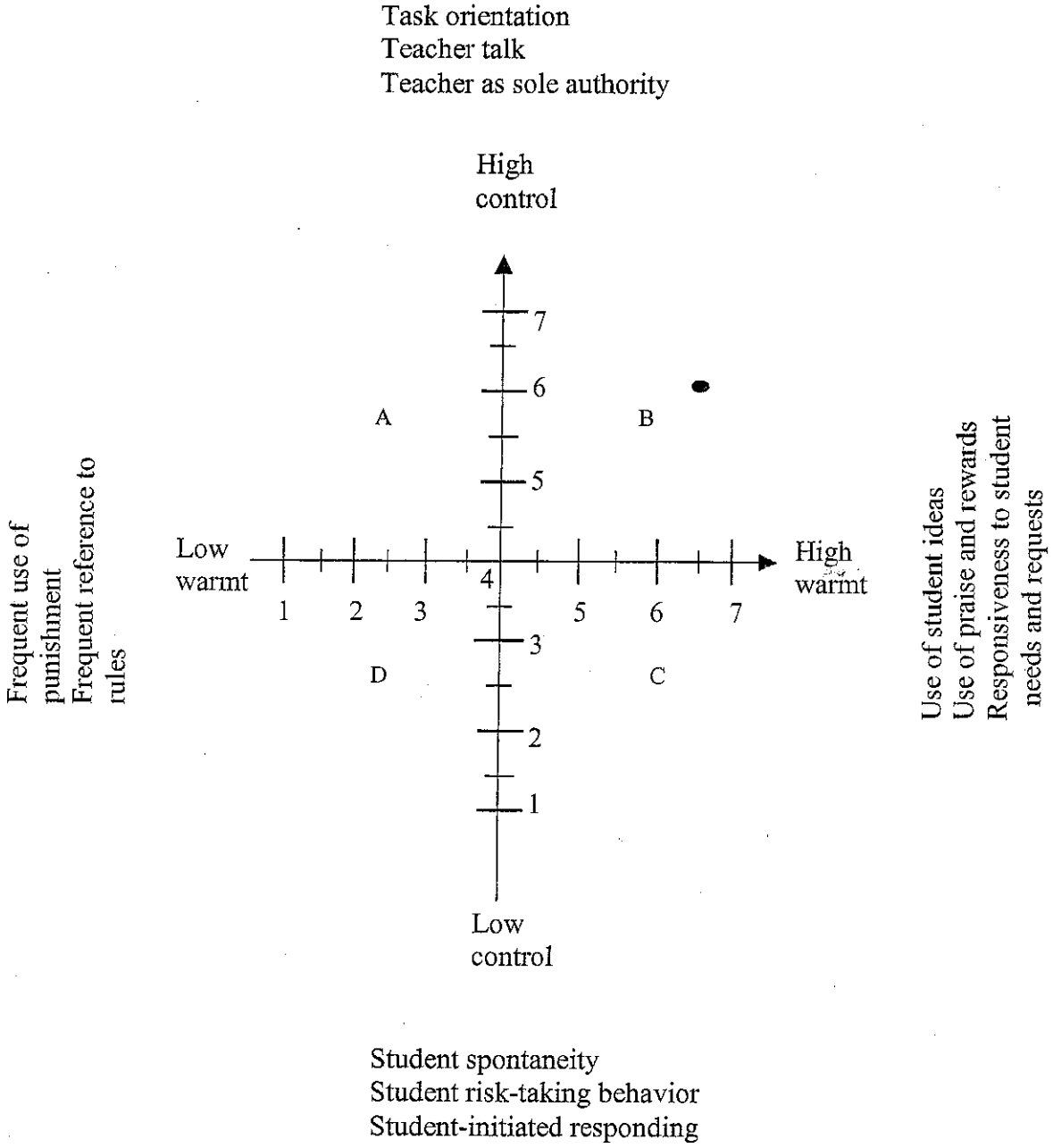
Use of Praise and Rewards								
High	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	Low
Amount of Criticism, Scolding, and Reprimanding								
High	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Low
Use of Student Ideas								
High	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	Low
Reference of Formal Rules and Procedures								
High	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Low
Responsiveness to Student Requests								
High	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	Low
Use of Punishment								
High	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Low

APPENDIX 2

INSTRUMENT 2. **Rating Scale for Classroom Control**

Student Spontaneity								
High	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Low
Amount of Teacher Talk								
High	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	Low
Student Risk-Taking Behavior								
High	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Low
Task Orientation								
High	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	Low
Student-Initiated Responding								
High	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Low
Teacher Authority								
High	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	Low

APPENDIX 3


Task orientation
Teacher talk
Teacher as sole authority
High control
Low control
Low warmt
High warmt
Frequent use of punishment
Frequent reference to rules
Use of student ideas
Use of praise and rewards
Responsiveness to student needs and requests
A
B
C
D
1
2
3
4
5
6
7
Student spontaneity
Student risk-taking behavior
Student-initiated responding

APPENDIX 4

Task design and evaluation

0 - not a characteristic of a good task

1 - this characteristic is optional

2 - this characteristic is reasonably important

3 - this characteristic is extremely important

4 - this characteristic is essential

Statements

Good learning tasks should:

a) enable learners to manipulate and practice specific features of the language (0 / 1 / 2 / 3 / 4)

b) provide an opportunity for learners to rehearse communicative skills they will need in the real world (0 / 1 / 2 / 3 / 4)

c) involve learners in risk - taking. (0 / 1 / 2 / 3 / 4)

d) involve learners in problem - solving or resolution. (0 / 1 / 2 / 3 / 4)

e) be process - as well as product - orientated. (0 / 1 / 2 / 3 / 4)

f) offer learners choice. (0 / 1 / 2 / 3 / 4)

APPENDIX 5

Teacher Beliefs Survey

Please read each of the following statements. Then decide the extent to which you agree or disagree. Circle the number to the right of the question that best matches your choice go with your first judgment and do not spend much time mulling over any one statement. PLEASE ANSWER EVERY QUESTION.

	Strongly Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly Agree
1. Students have more respect for teachers they see and can relate to as real people, not just as teachers.	1	2	3	4
2. There are some students whose personal lives are so dysfunctional that they simply do not have the capability to learn.	1	2	3	4
3. I can't allow myself to make mistakes with my students.	1	2	3	4
4. Students achieve more in classes in which teachers encourage them to express their personal beliefs and feelings.	1	2	3	4
5. Too many students expect to be coddled in school.	1	2	3	4
6. If students are not doing well, they need to go back to the basics and do more drill and skill development.	1	2	3	4
7. In order to maximize learning I need to help students feel comfortable in discussing their feelings and beliefs.	1	2	3	4
8. It's impossible to work with students who refuse to learn.	1	2	3	4
9. No matter how bad a teacher feels, he or she has a responsibility not to let students know about those feelings.	1	2	3	4

APPENDIX 5

	Strongly Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly Agree
10. Addressing students' social, emotional and physical needs is just as important to learning as meeting their intellectual needs.	1	2	3	4
11. Even with feedback, some students just can't figure out their mistakes.	1	2	3	4
12. My most important job as a teacher is to help students meet well-established standards of what it takes to succeed.	1	2	3	4
13. Taking the time to create caring relationships with my students is the most important element of student achievement.	1	2	3	4
14. I can't help feeling upset and inadequate when dealing with difficult students.	1	2	3	4
15. If I don't prompt and provide direction for student questions, students won't get the rught answer.	1	2	3	4
16. Helping students understand how their beliefs about themselves influence learning is as important as working on their academic skills.	1	2	3	4
17. It's just too late to help some students. Knowing my subject matter really well is the most important contribution I can make to student learning.	1	2	3	4
18. I can help students who are uninter-ested in learning get in touch with their natural motivation to learn.	1	2	3	4

APPENDIX 6 ***Student Questionnaires 1***

Dear student,

I would very much appreciate if you answer these questions on your learning experience in our department.
There are no right or wrong answers. Your responses will help us evaluate our teaching methods and approaches and to improve them based on your comments.
The questionnaire is anonymous.
Thank YOU !

1. Is the classroom environment at our courses different from the one you had at your higher educational institutions? How?

Not at all Very little Somewhat Very much Most definitely

2. Has your prior learning experience interfered with your learning at this course?

Not at all Very little Somewhat Very much Most definitely

3. Do you feel anxious about not making mistakes? (e.g. Does it hold you back from participating in classroom activities?).

Not at all Very little Somewhat Very much Most definitely

4. How are teacher-student relationships different? (e.g. more/less authoritative, more/less democratic).

5.Do you feel more or less dependent on the teacher? (Underline either "more" or "less").

6. Do you find the tasks real-life oriented?

Not at all Very little Somewhat Very much Most definitely

7. Do you need explicit explanations why you have to complete the task?

Not at all Very little Somewhat Very much Most definitely

8. Do you feel equally motivated about all tasks and activities ?

Not at all Very little Somewhat Very much Most definitely

9. Do you find regular teacher feedback on your mistakes, and on your learning progress effective for your learning?

Not at all Very little Somewhat Very much Most definitely

10. What do you especially like about this class?

11. Does this method of teaching offer you more independence in learning or do you need more teacher control?

Not at all Very little Somewhat Very much Most definitely

12. What is the your purpose for taking this course?

13. Has this course encouraged and taught you learning skills to continue learning English on your own?

Not at all Very little Somewhat Very much Most definitely

APPENDIX 6.1

Question Number	Question	Mean
1	. Is the classroom environment at our courses different from the one you had at your higher educational institutions?	3.50
2	Has your prior learning experience interfered with your learning at this course?	2.57
3	Do you feel anxious about not making mistakes? (e. g. Does it hold you back from participating in classroom activities?).	2.43
4	How are teacher-student relationships different? (e.g. more/less authoritative, more/less democratic).	
5	Do you feel more or less dependent on the teacher? (Underline either "more" or "less").	
6	Do you find the tasks real-life oriented?	4.21
7	Do you need explicit explanations why you have to complete the task?	2.29
8	Do you feel equally motivated about all tasks and activities?	3.43
9	Do you find regular teacher feedback on your mistakes, and on your learning progress effective for your learning?	4.57
10	What do you especially like about this class?	
11	Dos this method of teaching offer your more independence in learning or do you need more teacher control?	3.43
12	What is your purpose for taking this course?	
13	Has this course encouraged and taught you learning skills to continue learning English on your own?	4.14

APPENDIX 7. ***Student Questionnaire 2***

We would also like to know to what extent has the working environment (classroom climate)

1 – totally disagree; 2 – partly disagree; 3 - neither agree nor disagree;

4 - partly agree; 5-totally agree

... helped you to pursue personally meaningful goals	*1 2 3 4 5*
...made the learning experience fun	*1 2 3 4 5*
...involved you actively in the learning process	*1 2 3 4 5*
...contributed to positive learning experience	*1 2 3 4 5*
...increased your level of motivation	*1 2 3 4 5*
...increased your interest in learning	*1 2 3 4 5*
...contributed to meeting your individual learning goals	*1 2 3 4 5*
...fostered cooperation in learning	*1 2 3 4 5*
...helped you to assume a level of personal responsibility	*1 2 3 4 5*
...helped to make the learning process less threatening	*1 2 3 4 5*

APPENDIX 7.1

Question Number	Question	Mean
1	... helped you to pursue personally meaningful goals	4.14
2	... made the learning experience fun	4.14
3	... involved you actively in the learning process	4.43
4	... contributed to positive learning experience	4.36
5	... increased your level of motivation	4.14
6	... increased your interest in learning	4.50
7	... contributed to meeting your individual learning goals	4.57
8	... fostered cooperation in learning	3.93
9	... helped you to assume a level of personal responsibility	4.43
10	... helped to make the learning process less threatening	4.14