Investigating Iranian Undergraduate EFL Learners' and Teachers' Attitude Towards Partnership Approach

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Abstract. This study aimed at investigating the Iranian undergraduate EFL students' and teachers' attitude towards Partnership Approach as a new way of engaging learners in the learning process. A descriptive, ethnographic research method, using a questionnaire along with focus group semi-structured interview, was employed. Seventy-two undergraduate EFL learners and 40 EFL teachers with more than ten years of experience in teaching English were included in the study. They were males and females of different ages. They responded to two different attitude questionnaires. Some of the participants were randomly interviewed to shed light on the accuracy of the information collected. The

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results indicated that both students and teachers had a significantly positive attitude towards the Partnership Approach. The EFL teachers appeared to hold a more positive attitude and were inclined to support the students' engagement and the implementation of the Partnership Approach, believing that partnership increases interaction in the classroom, enhances the quality of teaching and learning, and makes the management of the classroom easier. The EFL learners claimed they would learn better and with higher quality, enjoy more, feel more responsible, and have more opportunities to evaluate themselves in such classes. They added it would be interesting to have a part in creating the material.

Keywords: Attitude, interaction, partnership approach, students' engagement

1. Introduction

In an educational context, Partnership Approach involves sharing knowledge and opinion, mutual learning, dialogue, exchanging feedback, and organizational development. It is influenced by a variety of factors which might be either external or internal to different partners. Through the partnership, students will experience a different way of thinking, learning, and working together. They will begin to reflect on their assumptions about each other and the learning and teaching processes. They will more consciously attend to their attitudes towards learning, and the extent to which their attitudes may influence their learning. The authors of Higher Education Academy (HEA) (2014) state that partnership is not the goal or the outcome, but it is a process or a way of doing. It refers to the students' interest, attitude, attention, curiosity, motivation, and passion for learning or being taught which, in turn, results in their progress and higher academic achievement. They suggest "partnership offers the potential for a more authentic engagement with the nature of learning itself and the possibility for genuinely transformative learning experiences for all of those involved" (p. 55).

The partnership is a give-and-take relationship. This concept is not limited to teaching and learning; it also comprises feedback, assessment, employability, research, curriculum development, and other aspects of an educational system. Concerning education, the partnership may mean different things to different individuals at different levels of language

ability. For both students and teachers, partnership takes its meaning in the process of learning and teaching at different module levels or different courses. The central concept to the partnership is sharing that means sharing goals, responsibilities, power, values, experiences, and participating in decision-making (Cook-Sather, Bovill, & Felten, 2014).However, the partnership may not be appropriate or even possible in all teaching and learning contexts. Various factors such as students' and teachers' attitude, subject matter, context, the degree of control of professional bodies, level of the study, and level of the participants' experience of partnership work can determine the level of partnership and influence the overall success (Bovill, 2013).

In the 21st century, one of the most important and debated issues in higher education is about engaging students as partners in learning and teaching. Engagement through partnership offers different types of relationship and interweaves through other debates such as assessment, feedback, and research. In the present study, the collaboration between teachers and students as well as among the students was the desired type of relationship. Such a relationship involved collaborative learning and teaching, great autonomy, sharing opinions, coordinating efforts, group decision making, and group evaluation. Hence, engagement through partnership aims at trying to include the entire class and ensure an inclusive approach to partnership.

The term attitude has been defined as "an opinion that includes an evaluative and an emotional component" (Aronson, 2008, p. 114). Reid (2006) defines attitude as "knowledge about the object, or the beliefs and ideas component (cognitive); a feeling about the object, or the like or dislike component (affective); and a tendency towards action, or the objective component (behavioral)" (p. 4). When students felt safe and supported in the class, they will develop a positive attitude towards the teaching approach, and the learning process, and will more willingly participate in the learning process. Moreover, the attitude has a determining role in guiding teachers in their teaching practices, their acceptance of new teaching techniques and approaches, and in implementing different activities (Donaghue, 2003).

Unsuccessful or ineffective learning and teaching are mostly attributed

to poor teaching, inappropriate teaching material, or both. However, experience shows that it can be the result of developing negative attitudes towards learning or teaching. Another controversial issue in education has long been the possible why(s) of some of the students' reluctance, particularly, in the EFL classrooms. In this relation, introducing more challenging approaches, and employing more effective teaching methods can encourage students to learn, and influence their attitudes. Since affective variables are influential factors in the classroom, teachers need to have a better understanding of the learners' emotional states. In the present study, partnership addresses the learners' active engagement in learning as well as in teaching, material development, feedback, and assessment to enhance learning, teaching, and gaining from working together and sharing experiences. This study can encourage both the EFL students and teachers' more serious commitment. It can also motivate teachers to think more critically over the teaching methods and the materials they employ and help them make more thoughtful decisions for their classroom practice. This can enhance the students' interest and their engagement in the learning process which, in turn, contributes to educational improvement.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Theoretical background

Literature review on the role of the learners' attitude in their academic achievement reveals that concerning attitude, psychological and sociological factors are the two main contributing factors which are dependable and interrelated. Psychological factors are internal and include cognitive and emotional factors, while sociological factors are external (Wittrock, 1986). The idea is that students' cognition is influenced by teaching, and their thinking mediates learning and achievement. Teachers' opinions, their views and attitudes, and their experiences are important factors which influence understanding and improving educational processes. These factors, according to Wittrock (1986), can determine teachers' strategies in their struggle to cope with the challenges they encounter in their daily professional life, motivate students, shape the students' learning environment, and influence their overall achievement. Popham

(2005) maintains that affective status is a powerful predictor of students' subsequent achievement and behavior.

A collaborative approach to learning is a subcategory of the social constructivist epistemology (Bruffee, 1993). Quiamzade, Mugny, and Butera (2013) refer to it as "social psychology of knowledge." Collaborative learning is concerned with peer-interaction, teacher-student interaction, and the teaching context in general. What is important is the participation of each student to achieve a shared goal and building a shared cognition. According to Bulpitt (2012), the partnership between different groups or collaborative work can connect different features of an institution. In a school, such synergy offers students a situation in which they can get involved in a more holistic experience that, in turn, fosters their final success. Students will experience a condition in which all aspects of an institution cooperate to complete each other and form a more efficient system (Quinlan, 2011). Through collaborative working, teachers develop a greater understanding of the skills, roles, and characteristics of their students and the staff which can contribute to the establishment of good working relationships, as well as building institutional cohesion (Macfarlane, 2011).

The theory behind students' engagement is rooted in their motivation, interest, and positive attitude based on the extent to which they find learning and the learning material both meaningful and useful (Willms, 2003). Thomas (2012) claims students will develop a more positive attitude towards the Higher Education Institution when they interact with academic staff. It also fosters their sense of belonging to the institution. He further argues that such a feeling can positively impact their engagement in their studies, their Higher Education experience will develop, and it is more likely that they complete their qualification successfully.

2.2. Empirical evidence

Some researchers found that students generally had positive attitudes towards group work and employing partnership strategies in educational settings and learning contexts (Farzaneh & Nejadansari, 2014; Mehrvarz Bahambari, & Rahimi, 2016). They asserted that group work and en-

gagement in partnership learning activities provided opportunities for them to ask for assistance when required, helped them improve their self-confidence, more easily solve learning problems, and ultimately enjoy learning. They further argued that having a positive attitude towards the partnership and group work could indirectly affect the students' interest and their attitudes towards language learning. However, Shun (2008) found no significant relationship between the educational methods and teachers' attitude and their beliefs.

In another study, Bisland, O'Conner, and Malow-Iroff (2009) found no significant relationship between teachers' beliefs and attitudes and their classroom practice. Harcarik (2009) concluded that such a relationship existed particularly in the areas of resources, time, and classroom practices. Marzano and Marzano (2003) believe that students' achievement will improve as a result of having a positive attitude towards learning, group work, and collaboration with peers and developing an interpersonal relationship. Popham (2005) also maintains that students' behavior and their achievements are greatly influenced by their affective dispositions, such as their attitudes and interests.

Yook (2010) states the realization of the new information is influenced by the teachers' attitudes and their predetermined beliefs which also impact their understanding of the educational changes. With the teachers' attitudes and beliefs about teaching and learning, Abdi and Asadi (2015) claim these ideas are developed by the teachers' personal experiences as university learners, and Amiryousefi (2015) believes teachers' beliefs identify what they do. Awang, Jindal-Snape, and Barber (2013) assert that individuals' attitudes towards education and their academic commitment and performance are strongly related. They state that when learners have negative attitudes towards education or classroom activities, they will show anti-social behavior and unwillingness to undertake the learning tasks. Erdogan, Bayram, Deniz (2008) studied the learners' attitudes towards modern learning technologies and their academic achievement and found a significant positive relationship.

Trowler (2010) studied research available on the role of students' engagement in the learning process and concluded that students' engagement had a pivotal role in their effective learning. She added such

engagement could be enhanced through students' active participation in the learning process both inside and outside the classroom, their participation in the collaborative activities such as peer-to-peer learning and assessment, and their involvement in all learning programs like designing their learning, and in self-assessment. Gallup (2013) also proposes that student engagement is used to describe the learners' interest, their enthusiasm for learning, and their degree of attention which positively impacts their academic performance. Since in the Higher Education students are mostly adults, the specialized nature of the knowledge makes it difficult to apply the Partnership Approach. However, recently, this approach has received more attention at the university level (Barkley, Croos, & Major, 2007; Exley & Dennick, 2007).

According to the aforementioned literature review, the learners' and teachers' affective state and their attitude play an undeniable role in how they approach the learning and teaching processes, and the way they behave. In this relation, attempts have been made to investigate more effective teaching and learning techniques. Hence, the present study focused on the relationship between the undergraduate EFL learners and teachers' attitude towards the Partnership Approach as a new way of engaging learners in the learning process and the way their attitude might influence what they do in the classroom. Accordingly, the following questions were addressed in the study.

1-What is the Iranian undergraduate EFL learners' and teachers' attitude towards the Partnership Approach?

2-How does the EFL teachers' attitude towards the Partnership Approach influence their job?

3-How does the EFL learners' attitude towards the Partnership Approach influence their academic achievement?

3. Methodology

3.1. Research design

To answer the questions addressed in this study, a descriptive research method was employed. An ethnographic research method, using a questionnaire along with the focus group semi-structured, the open-ended

interview was utilized for the sake of having methodological triangulation. The EFL teachers' and students' responses to the attitude questionnaires were carefully collected and analyzed. Some of the participants were also attended semi-structured, open-ended interview sessions to elaborate on and give more explanations about their responses to the questionnaires' items. In this study, questionnaires and interviews went hand in hand to provide the opportunity to ask about more detailed information and have a deeper understanding of the participants' attitudes and beliefs.

The study was conducted at the English Department of the Islamic Azad University (IAU)-Najafabad Branch as an EFL setting. The rationale behind running the study at this setting was that a sufficient number of EFL undergraduate students were available and they showed interest and expressed willingness to cooperate in completing the study. The study was completed in the period between March 2018 and June 2018.

3.2. Participants

Among the population of the undergraduate EFL learners at IAU- Najafabad Branch, 72 students participated in the study. The sampling technique was non-probability or opportunity sampling for its convenience. The participants were both male and female students, and their age range was between 18 and 26. Moreover, forty male and female EFL teachers with at least ten years of experience in teaching English who were teaching at different universities in the Isfahan province, including IAU-Najafabad Branch, participated in the study. To ensure that sufficient data would be collected, the number of the undergraduate EFL students and teachers were included in the study so that if some of the participants did not complete the questionnaire as expected, they could be ignored.

3.3. Instruments

Two five-point Likert-scale researcher-developed attitude questionnaires, addressing the EFL teachers' and learners' attitudes towards the Partnership Approach, were employed. A scale that gave an equal number of positive and negative choices, ranging from strongly agree to disagree strongly, was utilized. The items in each questionnaire were designed

based on the objectives of the study and an appropriate length, neither too long nor too short. Each of the items addressed one point at a time to avoid confusion. The questionnaires were printed on the light colored A4 papers. Although the first section of the questionnaire addressed the participants' demographic information, the questionnaires were responded to ensure the participants' privacy anonymously.

The reliability of the questionnaires was established through pilot testing with 105 EFL teachers and 108 EFL learners. The reliability of the questionnaires was measured using the KR-21 formula, and it was proved to be (r = 0. 87) and (r=0. 834) respectively. The validity of the questionnaires was also examined and confirmed by seven experts in the field. Piloting helped the researchers to decide whether the items had the appropriate wording and were comprehensible enough if they were in an appropriate order, and how much time would be needed for responding to the questionnaires' items. Also, a group of expert judges, of more than ten years of experience in teaching English to the EFL undergraduates, reviewed the items in the questionnaires for the sake of validity check.

The study was closed with a focus group interview session to supplement the data collected, collect related descriptive information, and have access to more individualized data in the students' own words. Out of the 72 EFL learners and 40 teachers who participated in the study, 30 students and 15 teachers were randomly selected and interviewed. The interview was kept brief and to the point and was so arranged that the respondents remained interested throughout the interview. A semi-structured interview guide was developed. The questions intended to elicit the information which was directly related to the research questions. In order to have a systematic data collection process and have access to more complete data, a pre-determined sequence was employed. It also made the comparability of the responses possible.

3.4. Data collection and data

Analysis Procedures: A mixed-methods approach to data collection was employed. This involved documentation of the participants' attitudes towards the Partnership Approach and the students' active engagement in

both learning and teaching through their responses to the questionnaires' items and the interview questions. After explaining the Partnership Approach and making sure that everything was clear enough for all the participants, an attitude questionnaire was given to the EFL learners to study how their attitude towards the new approach might influence their academic achievement. Another attitude questionnaire was e-mailed to the EFL teachers with more than ten years of experience in teaching English to study the role of their attitude towards the Partnership Approach in their job. The rationale behind the questionnaires, and how the participants were expected to respond were explained to them. The participants were asked to avoid choosing the open option unless they found it very difficult to choose the other options.

The quantitative collected data were analyzed for the deeper understanding of the participants' attitude and their viewpoints using the Statistical Packages for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 23. For each questionnaire, first, the frequencies of the participants' responses to each questionnaire item and their mean scores were computed. Then the overall mean score for the whole questionnaire was measured. Finally, one-sample t-test was conducted to make sure whether the students' and teachers' positive attitude reached statistical significance or not.

Then, some of the participants were randomly interviewed to shed light on the accuracy of the information collected, giving them chances to elaborate on their responses or add more details for the sake of further clarity. Their answers to the interview questions were audio-recorded to be transcribed and analyzed after the interview session. The interviews were conducted by the researchers and two other colleagues to increase the reliability and validity of the job. As the initiator of the interview, the interviewers played the major role in making particular decisions about the progress of the interview. The participants' responses to the questionnaire items and their answers to the interview questions were compared and carefully studied to see which aspect(s) of the Partnership Approach had greater influence or could play a more effective role from the participants' point of view.

4. Findings

The result of the pilot study to establish the reliability of the questionnaire A (on the EFL learners' attitude towards the Partnership Approach) and questionnaire B (on the EFL teachers' attitude towards the Partnership Approach) has been presented in tables one and two below.

Table 1: Reliability Statistics for the questionnaire A

Cronbach's Alpha	Number of Items
.834	30

Table 2: Reliability Statistics for the questionnaire B

Cronbach's Alpha	Number of Items
.873	30

The reliability indexes for the questionnaires A and B were 0.834 and 0.873 respectively which were higher than the minimum required (0.70).

The data collected from the Likert-scale questionnaire items were used to find out the teachers' attitude towards the Partnership Approach. Since there were 30 questionnaire items, for each item a mean score was computed, and then an overall mean score was calculated for the whole questionnaire. Table 3 shows the frequencies of the responses given by the teachers to the questionnaire items.

In all the questionnaire items, the mean scores were larger than the average value of the choices (i.e., 3.00), which shows that the surveyed teachers agreed with, and had positive attitudes towards, all the questionnaire items. They particularly agreed with items # 1 (M = 4.67), 9 (M = 4.55), 10 (M = 4.55), 26 (M = 4.55), and 27 (M = 4.55), which respectively state that employing the Partnership Approach increases

Table 3: Teachers' Responses to the Partnership Approach Questionnaire

Item	Strongly agree	Agree	No opinion	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Mean
1	27	13	0	0	0	4.67
2	21	19	0	0	0	4.52
3	20	20	0	0	0	4.50
4	13	19	0	6	2	3.87
5	12	16	3	9	0	3.77
6	18	22	0	0	0	4.45
7	15	21	4	0	0	4.27
8	17	18	1	2	0	4.10
9	22	18	0	0	0	4.55
10	22	18	0	0	0	4.55
11	15	18	1	6	0	4.05
12	9	30	1	0	0	4.20
13	15	19	6	0	0	4.22
14	10	27	3	0	0	4.17
15	15	18	4	3	0	4.12
16	6	19	7	8	0	3.57
17	6	19	6	9	0	3.55
18	12	22	6	0	0	4.15
19	18	13	6	3	0	4.15
20	18	12	3	7	0	4.02
21	15	7	9	9	0	3.70
22	18	18	4	0	0	4.35
23	12	22	3	3	0	4.07
24	15	16	6	3	0	4.07
25	18	15	4	3	0	4.20
26	22	18	0	0	0	4.55
27	22	18	0	0	0	4.55
28	11	15	12	2	0	3.87
29	12	10	6	9	3	3.47
30	15	22	3	0	0	4.30

the quality of their job, help the learners to learn better, motivate the learners, provide the learners opportunities to take risks and practice new ways of learning, and make students feel being valued and have a sense of belonging. Table 4 shows the overall mean score of the questionnaire as well as the results of the one-sample t-test conducted on the teachers' questionnaire data:

Table 4: One-Sample t-Test Results for Teachers' Attitudes towards Partnership Approach

	Test Value = 3					
	t	df	*Sig.* (2-tailed)	Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
					Lower	Upper
Attitude	19.46	29	.00	4.15	1.03	1.27

The overall mean score of the whole questionnaire equaled 4.15, which was greater than the average value of the choices (4.15 > 3.00). This shows that, on the whole, the teachers agreed with all the questionnaire items and had a positive attitude towards the Partnership Approach. To see whether their positive attitude reached statistical significance or not, the p-value under the Sig. (2-tailed) of the column had to be checked; since the p-value was lower than the significance level (.00 < .05), it could be concluded that the teachers held significantly positive attitudes towards the Partnership Approach.

Similarly, the data collected from the Likert-scale questionnaire items were used to find out the learners' attitudes toward the Partnership Approach. Table 5 shows the learners' responses to the questionnaire items.

In Table 6, all the mean scores for the questionnaire items turned out to be greater than 3.00, which shows the learners' agreement with (and positive attitude towards) all the questionnaire items. The highest mean scores in Table 4 belonged to items # 5 (M = 4.38), 6 (M = 4.29), 1 (M = 4.26), 2 (M = 4.16), 4 (M = 4.15), 16 (M = 4.13), and 30 (M = 4.13).

This means that the learners particularly agreed that it would be interesting to have a part in creating the material, they would learn

better.

Table 5: Learners' Responses to the Partnership Approach Questionnaire

Item	Strongly agree	Agree	No opinion	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Mean
1	29	36	5	1	1	4.26
2	23	42	5	0	2	4.16
3	10	48	10	3	1	3.87
4	26	35	9	1	1	4.15
5	23	42	5	1	1	4.38
6	23	39	5	3	2	4.29
7	15	42	8	3	4	3.84
8	20	30	20	1	1	3.93
9	20	30	15	4	3	3.83
10	16	39	11	2	4	3.84
11	14	42	7	6	3	3.80
12	12	27	16	14	3	3.43
13	18	37	9	4	4	3.84
14	11	30	24	4	3	3.58
15	14	40	13	3	2	3.84
16	24	40	4	2	2	4.13
17	17	39	8	4	4	3.84
18	5	37	18	6	6	3.40
19	20	32	15	4	5	3.91
20	11	35	23	3	0	3.75
21	10	24	21	15	2	3.34
22	12	44	10	5	0	3.83
23	22	26	14	8	2	3.80
24	15	34	20	2	1	3.83
25	11	44	13	3	1	3.84
26	23	29	11	9	0	3.91
27	9	44	16	3	0	3.81
28	12	39	12	9	0	3.75
29	13	25	20	12	2	3.48
30	20	43	8	1	0	4.13

and with higher quality, enjoy more, learning would be more challenging, they would feel more responsible, and have more opportunities to evaluate themselves. The mean score of the whole questionnaire, as is shown in Table 6, equaled 3.85, which was also greater than the average value of the choices (3.85 ¿ 3.00), indicating that, on the whole, the learners had a positive attitude towards the Partnership Approach.

Table 6: One-Sample t-Test Results for Learners' Attitudes towards Partnership Approach

	Test Value = 3					
	t	*df*	*Sig.* (2-tailed)	Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
					Lower	Upper
Attitude	18.52	29	.00	3.85	.76	.95

Table 6 shows whether the learners' positive attitude towards the Partnership Approach reached statistical significance or not. As the p-value under the Sig. (2-tailed) of the column in this table was lower than the significance level (.00 < .05), it could be inferred that the learners held significantly positive attitudes towards the Partnership Approach.

5. Discussion

Students have certain assumptions about each other, their language, and their language learning abilities. They also have developed different views regarding the language they are learning as well as regarding the nature of language learning and teaching. According to Popham (2005), the learners' attitudes and their affective dispositions can highly predict and influence their language behavior. Practicing partnership provides opportunities for the learners to contemplate on such assumptions and weigh up the way their attitudes and assumptions may influence their academic achievement as well as their relationship with their teacher and their peers. Marzano & Marzano (2003) believe that students' achievement will improve as a result of having a positive attitude towards learning, group work, and collaboration with peers and developing an interpersonal relationship.

Trowler (2010) studied research available on the role of students' engagement in the learning process. She concludes that based on the findings of these studies, students' engagement had a pivotal role in their active learning. She adds such engagement can be enhanced through students' active participation in the learning process both inside and outside the classroom, their participation in collaborative activities such as peer-to-peer learning and assessment, and their involvement in all learning programs like designing their learning, and in self-assessment. Students, who were interviewed, added that their participation in different classroom activities provides opportunities to speak more, share ideas, and cooperate to solve the problems which were in line with Simonsen, Fairbanks, Briesch, Myers, and Sugai, (2008).

The findings of the present study revealed that both the EFL teachers and students showed a significantly positive attitude towards the partnership activities which is consistent with the findings of some recent studies (Farzaneh & Nejadansari, 2014; Mehrvarz Bahambari, & Rahimi, 2016). Concerning the second question, EFL teachers were proved to have a positive attitude towards the Partnership Approach and claimed that partnership could positively influence their job which is also supported by Montuoro and Lewis (2015). They asserted that teachers who manage to establish a good relationship with their students are more successful in their job. "Successful partnerships provide new and established teachers with the opportunity to combine hands-on experience in the classroom with space for the reflection and discussion that transform this experience into learning." (Jerome, Aktan, de Sousa, & Verkewst, 2011, p.10).

The teachers' positive attitude towards what is done in the classroom can enhance the students' positive attitude as well. Contrary to Shun (2008) who found no significant relationship between the teachers' attitude and the educational methods they employ, some teachers claimed that their positive attitude could directly influence what they do in the class and how. During the interview session, teachers asserted that the Partnership Approach gave the learners the opportunity to have a share in decision-making and designing material which can highly motivate the learners. Besides, similar to the findings of Marzano and Marzano (2003),

and Popham (2005), both the EFL learners and teachers agreed that the Partnership Approach would increase the quality of learning. They asserted that students would learn more readily from their peers and experience lower levels of anxiety.

To address the third question in the study, the students' responses to the questionnaire items and their answers to the questions asked in the interview session were carefully studied and the findings revealed that they believe their participation in the learning and teaching practice provides more opportunities to speak, share ideas, and cooperate to solve the problems. This is following Simonsen, Fairbanks, Briesch, Myers, and Sugai, (2008) who claimed; the more opportunities students have to participate in the learning and teaching process, it will be more likely that they learn. Similar to the findings of Mehrvarz Bahambari and Rahimi (2016), the students maintained that their participation and engagement make learning more challenging, and they feel more interested in taking responsibility. Students also asserted that group work and engagement in the partnership learning activities would provide opportunities for them to ask for assistance when required, help them improve their self-confidence, motivate them to learn and make learning enjoyable which is also underpinned by Gallup (2013).

The findings of the study highlighted the impact of the partnership approaches on teaching and learning. The study has practical implications for the delivery of instruction in Higher Education. Innovative teaching methods and strategies need to be employed in order to improve the quality of instructional practices. Engaging students-as-partners in the Partnership Approach provides students and the teacher the opportunity to cooperate in order to enhance their learning and teaching experiences. The results showed that both the teachers and the students were in favor of the Partnership Approach and expressed willingness to implement it in the learning and teaching context. However, comparing the results for the EFL teachers and learners, teachers seemed to have even more concern about the application of the Partnership Approach.

6. Conclusion

Teachers' beliefs and attitudes have a significant impact on their teach-

ing practice and what they accomplish in the classroom, as well as on the learners' attitude and their progress. In order to motivate and raise the language learners' positive attitude to learn, teachers should carefully select and apply teaching strategies. Also, educational systems should make meticulous efforts to promote teachers' positive attitude towards new methods and techniques of teaching in order to improve the quality of the teaching program. It is important that teachers collaborate with their colleagues and the experts to discuss the potential ways of enhancing positive attitude in themselves as well as in their students. They need to attend more to their students' feelings and create an appropriate atmosphere in the class to encourage their students to take a risk and participate in the learning process. It is also important to develop a rapport among the students, as well as between the teacher and the students, raise the students' expectations, and challenge their engagement. The idea is that students are more involved when they feel welcomed and are expected to be involved by the teacher. It makes them feel more confident in their abilities.

Success in fostering partnership and collaboration in the EFL classrooms requires more investment into the realm of educational practice. Further scholarly research should be conducted to ensure that conditions for partnership exist. It is suggested that formal in-service teacher training courses be held to establish the foundations of collaboration in universities. In this relation, administrative leadership, the balance of control, creating the culture of partnership, shared objectives, mutual respect, and trust are of particular importance.

This study presents some limitations which should be taken into account and can be the focus of the future related studies. Firstly, an unequal number of male and female EFL learners participated in the study. Hence, the role of the participants' gender in their attitude towards the Partnership Approach has not been measured. Secondly, the study was confined to a small number of participants, and so the results of this study are not generalizable to the EFL learners and teachers at any EFL learning context. Moreover, attitude as an integral part of any educational program is an emotional and psychological factor which is usually rooted in the individuals' background and can be changed over

time. Similar studies can be conducted in different educational contexts for the EFL teachers and students of different language backgrounds. For the teachers, the length of their experience as an EFL teacher, and for the students, the years completed at the university may affect their attitude towards different teaching and learning approaches and techniques which can also be examined in the future studies. Finally, in deciding about the teaching methodology, strategies, techniques employed, and in designing learning tasks and activities, teachers should take the learners' attitude as a key concern and pay special attention to the learners' affective state.

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