

Teaching English Language, Vol. 16, No. 1, Winter & Spring 2022, pp. 35-63
DOR: 20.1001.1.25385488.2022.16.1.2.3

Teaching English Language Journal

ISSN: 2538-5488 – E-ISSN: 2538-547X – <http://tel.journal.org>

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Please cite this paper as follows:

Pakdaman, A., Alibakhshi, G., & Baradaran, A., S. (2022). The impact of negotiated syllabus on foreign language learners' language anxiety and learning motivation. *Teaching English Language, 16*(1), 35-63. <https://doi.org/10.22132/TEL.2022.145402>

Research Paper

The Impact of Negotiated Syllabus on Foreign Language Learners' Language Anxiety and Learning Motivation

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Abstract

Negotiated syllabus, as a type of learner-centered syllabus, has been found to affect language learners' language achievement. This study aimed at investigating the foreign language learners' foreign language anxiety and motivation for learning. We selected two intact classes, consisting of 64 undergraduate language learners. We used a quasi-experimental research design. The two intact classes received foreign language anxiety and motivation scales before and after the treatment. The experimental group received a negotiated syllabus, while the control group received a teacher-developed syllabus. The two groups' scores on different aspects of motivation and language anxiety scales were analyzed through independent samples t-tests. The results indicated that while foreign language anxiety of learners in the experimental intact class significantly decreased, their motivation for learning English language increased. It was concluded that the use of

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negotiated syllabus can filter language anxiety and can significantly improve students' motivation for learning. Findings can be employed by English language teachers and learners.

Keywords: Language anxiety, Motivation for learning, Negotiated syllabus, EFL learners

Received: December 5, 2021

Accepted: February 20, 2022



1. Introduction

The review of the related literature shows that in teacher-centered approaches, teachers do most of the work and students are passive recipients of knowledge; therefore, it causes poor language performance and prevents students' educational growth (Duckworth, 2009). This approach was also reported to have a poor effect on the students' achievement (e.g., Alrabai, 2014a; Alrabai, 2014b; Alrabai & Moskovsky, 2016). Therefore, learner-centered approaches to curriculum development were employed by teachers to reduce the negative filters such as Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety (FLCA) and increase the learners' motivation for learning English language. The significant effect of the negotiated syllabus on learners' motivation (Rahmanpanah & Tajeddin, 2015), self-awareness (Nunan, 1989), writing and speaking (e.g., Abbasian & Seyed-Hendi, 2011; Abbasian & Malardi, 2013; Abbasian & Malardi, 2013; Nguyen, 2017), reading comprehension of ESP students (Peyvandi, Azarnoosh, & Siyyari, 2019) is well established. Nonetheless, to the best knowledge of the researcher(s), the effect of negotiated syllabus on EFL learners' Foreign Language Learning Motivation (FLLM) and FLCA has not been well documented. This study is an attempt to see whether or not negotiated syllabus as a learner-centered syllabus affects language learners' FLLM and FLCA.

Some researchers have recently recommended a gradual shift to student-centered classrooms in EFL settings to promote learner autonomy (Alibakhshi, 2015; Sarani, Alibakhshi, & Molazehi, 2014) and to avoid teacher and students' conflicts and resistance (Lynch, 2010; Peyton, More, & Young, 2010). Negotiated syllabus, as an alternative to traditional teacher syllabus, has attracted the attention of researchers from various fields, such as education and applied linguistics. The review of the related literature on syllabus design in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) shows that language syllabi can be divided into two types: product-oriented and process-oriented (Long & Robinson, 1998). While the main focus of the product syllabus is on what language learners learn as a result of teaching (Nunan, 2005), the process syllabus lays emphasis on the ultimate outcomes of learning and teaching can be achieved (Nunan, 2001; Shabbah, 2018).

1.1 Negotiated Syllabus

One type of process-oriented language syllabi is negotiated syllabus in which, there is a shared decision indicating a mutual agreement between teachers and learners on how to select the materials based on the language learners' needs and preferences and how to manage the class and evaluate the learners' achievement (Azarnoosh & Kargozari, 2018, Peyvandi, Azarnoosh, & Siyyari, 2019). As Boomer, et al. (1992) believe, this syllabus uncovers “a shared detailed understanding between teacher and students of what is going on, what needs to be done, and how it will be done” (p. 287). First, it was claimed that when teachers develop student-centered syllabus, students can have a better performance in a class (DiClementi & Handelsman, 2005), and perceive teachers as having teaching characteristics such as flexibility and approachability (Richmond, et al., 2014).

1.2 Statement of the Problem

The review of the related studies shows that there has been a plethora of research on syllabus development (Altman & Cashin, 1992; Cullen & Harris, 2009; Harrington & Gabert-Quillen, 2015; Richmond, Boysen, Gurung, & Tazeau, 2014; Richmond, et al., 2016a; Richmond, et al., 2016b). It can be argued that learner-centered syllabi have positive impacts on students' achievement (e.g., DiClementi & Handelsman, 2005; Harrington & Gabert-Quillen, 2015; Richmond, et al., 2014; Richmond, Slattery, Morgan, Mitchell, & Becknell, 2016b; Saville, Zinn, Brown, & Marchuk, 2010).

A couple of factors take place indispensably throughout a classroom context by which the degree and depth of negotiation between teacher and learners would be appointed. The first factor is a pre-determined curriculum. Even though a pre-determined curriculum has its advantages in specifying the aims and borders of a course, a procrastinated ongoing negotiation can tackle any probable discrepancy between learners' real needs and the designed course (Nunan, 1989) even if the government officially appoints the course policies and structures on a top-down hierarchy (Little, 1995). Further, on the theme of a pre-determined curriculum, learners and teachers can make the most of it as a guidance or a map to the soundness of both procedure and evaluation criteria so as not to become stuck in the conflict of learners' needs (Serrano-Sampedro, 2000).

The second factor has been reported to be cultural issues. Aside from the type of culture, cultural discrepancies among learners or between teacher and learners could cause obstructions on the way of negotiation (Azarnooosh & Kargozari, 2018). However, in some cases, learner-centered approaches are more effective in cultures where the stress is more on autonomy and self-direction of learners, and less on the centeredness of the teacher. On the other hand, according to Littlejohn (1983), negotiation is based on a learner-

centered schedule where passive and teacher-dependent learners could use if it takes steps over time with enough care and attention. In terms of difficulties, teachers' insufficient experience or wrong approach to negotiation, e.g., knowing where to intervene, could lead to a breakdown (Serrano-Sampedro, 2000).

The third factor was labeled class size and students' abilities. Individual-focused plans are an indispensable part of a class negotiation as learners' limitations, socio-emotional issues, self-esteem, and self-efficacies are different. However, teachers might find it more challenging to pay enough attention to individuals in a large classroom. Technically, when it comes to active self-initiated learners, they even go from strength to strength in terms of intrinsic autonomy and motivation (Ushioda, 2003). With this in mind, by negotiation, learners become more accountable for their cognitive processes as they reflect continually on their learning process. Consequently, they are responsible for their self-regulation and awareness (Smith, 2000).

The fourth factor which might influence the use of negotiated syllabus is the learners' voice. With regard to the learners' voice, vanLier (2007) asserts that learners are considered agents, namely they are in charge of their language learning and mounting their social interaction, collaboration, and say despite inevitable inequality of power in class (Sinclair, 2008). By interaction, learners come to the point that they are able to make progress in creating democratic and authentic decisions, but they also find it their say to come up with their opinions in case it demands (Boon, 2011). The relationship between teacher and learners is another point that is mutually subjected to improvement. The whole procedure results in a look-up by which all specific achieved outcomes are valued by both sides and the fact that developmental process gets along (MacKay, Oates, & Haig, 2000).

As opposed to explicit negotiation, the procedural type pivots around indirect negotiation of contents, procedure and evaluation posed by Breen and Little John (as cited in Gourlay, 2005); "teacher's interpretation of a syllabus and reasons for classroom decisions are usually covert, and learners' interpretations of what is done and how it relates to their learning are the focus of overt consideration" (p. 211). This sort of negotiation finds it more beneficial to realize learners' adjustment to class activities even if there seems to be a discrepancy between teachers' and learners' agendas through which the learning process is negatively affected. Accordingly, taking advantage of explicit and implicit kinds of procedural negotiation would be used at the right time in the right place (Gourlay, 2005).

Other factors are appointing the extent to which teachers and learners have the authority to negotiate syllabus design as Nation and Macalister (2010) maintained the great role of specificity in a lesson, decision-making realms, language skills, and curriculum design, in appointing the extent and degree to which a syllabus can be negotiated or unanimously decided on. Furthermore, as Mollaei (2013) believes, some or all parts of content including teaching methodology, assessment, and evaluation could be subjected to negotiation and shared decision-making.

As involving language learners in syllabus development has proved to have positive effects on their language achievement, it is necessary to investigate how negotiated syllabus affects foreign language learners' classroom anxiety and learning motivation.

1.3 Purpose of the study

This study investigates whether or not the use of negotiated syllabus significantly affects the foreign language learners' motivation for learning and foreign language anxiety. It also aims to investigate which aspects of motivation and foreign language anxiety are more affected by the use of

negotiated syllabus. More specifically, this study addresses the following research questions.

1. Does the use of negotiated syllabus have any statistically significant impact on EFL learners' motivation for learning English language?
2. Which aspect of motivation is more significantly affected by negotiated syllabus?
3. Does the use of negotiated syllabus have any statistically significant impact on EFL learners' foreign language anxiety?
4. Which aspect of EFL learners' foreign language anxiety is more significantly affected by using negotiated syllabus?

2. Review of the Literature

In this section, the studies on FLA, and motivation for language learning are reviewed.

2.1 Studies on FLA

English language plays an important role in the academic and professional lives of students from various disciplines (Al-Khasawneh, 2016; Al-Tamimi & Shuib, 2009; Teng & Sinwongsuwat, 2015). Moreover, great emphasis has been laid on the effective role of the English language in educational institutions, because it is one of the basic factors of success for students enrolling in the universities in which the English language is the medium of instruction (Pendergrass, Kowalczyk, Dowd, & Laoulache, 2001). However, students might encounter difficulties in mastering the English language. As Brown (2007) states, anxiety is one of the main affective factors in learning a second or foreign language. Similarly, it has also been argued that language anxiety is one of the most powerful predictors of students' performance and achievement and a serious challenge to language learners (Alrabai, 2014; Horwitz, Horwitz & Cope, 1986; Liu & Huang, 2011; Wu, 2010).

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Foreign language anxiety (FLA) has long come to the surface thanks to pervasive attention paid by Dunkel (1947), Chastain (1975), and Scovel (1978), as opposed to the fact that their works were not tracked until the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCSA) came up in the 1980s. This study utilizes FLCAS, which was more or less used by only one-third of earlier studies (see Kawashima, 2009; Williams & Andrade, 2008) especially Japanese learners of English who have already owned a plethora of FLA research cases.

FLA was in big part scrutinized through self-report anxiety scales as well as the pertinent reliability (Brown, Robson, & Rosenkjar, 1996), the relationship between FLA and reading skill (Matsuda & Gobel, 2001; Miyanaga, 2007), listening skill (In'nami, 2006; Matsumura, 2000), and language proficiency, performance, and/ or achievement (Asano, 2003; Yamashiro & McLaughlin, 2001; Matsuda & Gobel, 2004). There seem to be two research studies mainly considering FLA shift throughout mid-term and implementing pre- and post-test stages, which are exactly the dilemma that Dykes (2017) added to the present study have sought to proceed to.

There are thought to be a variety of FLA studies having revolved around its causes, features, and impacts on foreign learners of English (e.g., Alrabai, 2015); Dykes, 2017; Kondo & Yang, 2003; Saglamel & Kayaoglu, 2013; Suwantarathip & Wichadee, 2010). The most imperative finding was: the factor that can significantly lower FLA in students is developing learner-centered activities in the classroom; as Dykes (2017) made use of the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS) through an examination with Japanese college learners of English; the study whose results unanimously concurred that learner-centered classrooms, as well as CLT-based course decline FLA by peer support, attended through communications inside small groups (Horwitz et al., 1986).

Dykes' (2017) research findings were consistent with those of Young (1991) on how FLA is affected by the quality of peer support, as well as Von Worde's (2003) on how FLA and sense of community are intertwined. However, what Dykes initially conducted had deficiencies in terms of not entailing a control group; the case which is obviated in the present study by recollecting the original data within similar conditions inside which another group is considered to make a comparison.

2.2 Studies on Motivation for Learning

Motivation is one of the pivotal affective factors studied by quite a large number of researchers in SLA (Calafato & Tang, 2019; Zhao & Li, 2014; Huang, Hsu, & Chen, 2015); however, Gardner's (1985) socio-educational model seems to cover the most salient facets having to do with contributing factors in learners' mind in terms of second language learning. To scrutinize closely, to have practical performance in L2, learners need to be equipped with instrumental motivation (external needs), i.e. every individual has a strong desire (immigration, career improvement, recognition,) to learn a second language, which is immensely affected by instrumental motivation; while when it comes to blending in acceptably with a community (Gardner, where language and culture as communicative means are different among members, integrative motivation (internal needs) comes to play through interest and intrinsic preferences (Gardner, 2001). Both instrumental and integrative motivations are theorized to be quite influential in SLA (Smith, Briggs, & Pothier, 2018; Cocca & Cocca, 2019; Yu, 2019); however, the distinction between instrumental and integrative motivation can be empirically observed in how (Zhang, Dai, & Wang, 2020) Chinese English graduates choose their professional second language as regards their interest rather than what their major required them (English), i.e. integrative motivation conquered when their preference in opting for a career and

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language after graduation turned out to be different from what they were expected regarding their major.

In line with this, Dörnyei (1994) came up with a three-level model to go beyond Gardner's (1985) socio-educational model, by devising a model of three levels as he called language level (i.e., the language learners choose), learner level (i.e., learner's traits in terms of language achievement), and learning situation (i.e., whatever physically involved in L2 learning procedure). Later on, Dörnyei and Ushioda (2011) prioritized the teacher as the person who better knows how to holistically consider all three levels to trigger motivation in learners.

Review of the related literature shows that some other individual factors such as gender (Fryer, 2015) and metacognitive awareness (Vandergrift, 2005) affect the relationship between motivation and language proficiency. No matter instrumental or integrative, Zhang, Dai, and Wang (2020) refer to any motivation that brings enjoyment to SLA procedure as positive motivation; therefore, foreign language enjoyment (FLA) is what they found unnoticed among the prominent aspects of motivation. In fact, it is SLA enjoyment that channels learners into flexibility and liveliness, and consequently brings them sort of encouragement to further deal with language (Dewaele, Magdalena, & Saio, *The Effect of Perception of Teacher Characteristics on Spanish EFL Learners' Anxiety and Enjoyment*, 2019). Even though emotional classroom downsides like anxiety embark on the side of learners, FLA is ignited by the teachers and therefore is immense of the essence when it comes to performance (Dewaele & Alfawzan, 2018).

There is thought to be a positive correlation between FLE and motivation; both along with each other, when commenced, are more likely to lead to better L2 performance. Therefore, apart from the upturning effect of instrumental and integrative motivations on SLA proficiency (Smith, Briggs,

Pothier, 2018; Cocca, Cocca, 2019; Yu, 2019), FLE can be considerably housed as a mediator between them, i.e., second language proficiency is improved by instrumental and integrative motivations as they together raise FLE in learners (Zhang, Dai, and Wang, 2020).

While there are generally three approaches to learning on the side of learners, namely deep (i.e., learner's real intention to learn, appearing through interest) surface (i.e., superficial results shown by learners through task accomplishment), and "strategic" (i.e., examination results) (Ramsden, 2003), these strategies are intertwined with motivation. For instance, extrinsic motivation appears to be stronger in "surface" learners (Kirby, Silvestri, Allingham, & Parrila, 2008), whereas when it comes to "deep" learners, it is "intrinsic" motivation that drives learning high-end outcomes and satisfaction (Ryan & Deci 2000). Moreover, integrative motivation is a pivotal factor in determining a high level of interaction in English and, consequently, (predicting) learning outcomes (Yu, 2019) and success (Hernandez, 2006). Therefore, it is of immense importance to take into account integrative motivation when designing curriculum and syllabus (cultural considerations) to pave the way for learners to deal with authentic language and real English communities (Yu, 2019).

2.3 Studies on Negotiated Syllabus

Abdelmalak (2015) argued that negotiated syllabus has several advantages. However, by making all involved in class decisions, no overthrow is intended on the side of the teacher and the teacher is at the heart of initiating and leading negotiation to come to the best results. Therefore, teachers' intention to have such a syllabus is prioritized over other facets (Breen & Littlejohn, 2000a). Nation and Macalister (2010) also stated that negotiated syllabus "involves the teacher and the learners working together to make decisions at many of the parts of the curriculum design process" (p.19).

In the same vein, Öztürk (2013) believes that negotiated syllabus can provide learners' active involvement in the shared decisions about developing a syllabus through negotiating with the teachers. Breen and Littlejohn (2000a, p. 1) described this syllabus as "the discussion between all members of the classroom to decide how learning and teaching are to be organized." This syllabus gained popularity in education, in general, and teaching EFL, in particular, since a couple of decades ago because of the great attention paid to learner-centered approaches to language pedagogy on the one hand and post-method principles of language pedagogy, on the other (Alibakhshi & Rezaei, 2014).

In addition, Richards and Schmidt (2010) stated that the student-centered approach to teaching is deeply rooted in a "belief that attention to the nature of learners should be central to all aspects of language teaching, including planning teaching, and evaluation" (p.3). Student-centered instruction is deeply rooted in the assumptions of the constructivist view that lays more emphasis on the knowledge construction on the part of learners. In this view, students are not passive recipients of knowledge, but active learners who construct knowledge through synthesizing information and integrating this information with skills like communication, inquiry, and critical thinking (Baldauf & Moni, 2006; Brown, 2008).

3. Research Method

3.1 Design

To control the effect of the negotiated syllabus on EFL learners' motivation and FLA, we employed a quasi-experimental research method. We used a pretest/posttest experimental research design to collect data on the participants' scores on motivation and FLA scales before and after the treatment. More specifically, two intact classes were selected. Each class consisted of 38 undergraduate students at Allameh Tabataba'i University.

The students were all freshman students of Communication Sciences. They were taking General English course. The two intact classes were assigned to different conditions. The two intact classes received motivation and FLA instruments as a pre-test (on the onset of the study). To make the two groups homogenous, we excluded highly motivated students from the final analysis. Therefore, only 64 students were included in the final analysis. The two intact classes received the post-test (after the treatment). The schematic presentation of the research design is shown in Figure 1.

Groups	Pretest	Treatment	Posttest
Control	Motivation Anxiety instrument	Negotiated syllabus	Motivation Anxiety instrument
Experimental	Motivation Anxiety instrument	Teacher syllabus	Motivation Anxiety instrument

Figure 1. Schematic presentation of the research design

3.2 Instrumentation

The instruments utilized in this study were Foreign Language Learning Motivation Questionnaire (FLLMQ) and FLA instrument. FLLMQ was designed by Gonzales and Lopez (2015). The FLLMQ consists of 40 items, each measured on a five-point Likert scale. It consists of four factors. Factor 1 (Desire for career and economic enhancement) consists of 8 items, Factor two (Desire to become a global citizen) includes 8 items, but factors 3 (Desire to communicate and affiliate with foreigners), 4(Desire for self-satisfaction), 5(self-efficacy) and 6 (Desire to be integrated with other cultures) consisted of 6 items. The internal consistency coefficient for each factor of the FLLMQ was estimated by calculating Cronbach's alpha. The Cronbach's alphas obtained ranged from $\alpha = .76$ to $.83$ for each factor, and the Cronbach's alphas for whole questionnaire was 0.89 , indicating that the FLLMQ has very acceptable reliability indices by factor and the overall test.

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Language anxiety instrument was devised and validated by Zhao (2007). This questionnaire consists of 33 statements, of which 8 items are for communication anxiety (1, 9, 14, 18, 24, 27, 29, and 32), 9 items for fear of negative evaluation (3, 7, 13, 15, 20, 23, 25, 31, and 33) and 5 items for test anxiety (2, 8, 10, 19, and 21). The remaining 11 items constitute the fourth aspect named anxiety of English classes. The internal consistency coefficient for each factor of this instrument was estimated by calculating Cronbach's alpha. The Cronbach's alphas obtained ranged from $\alpha = .80$ to $.89$, indicating that this instrument has very acceptable reliability indices by factor and the overall test.

3.3 Procedure

In the first step, the two intact classes were assigned to teacher syllabus group and negotiated syllabus. The two intact groups received the FLLM questionnaire and FLA scales. The mean scores of the two intact classes on the two scales were compared through employing independent samples *t*-tests. The participants who scored very high and low on the two scales were removed from the final analysis. We negotiated with each other and made decisions about the topic to be discussed in the classroom, teaching activities, teacher and the students' roles, student-student interactions, teacher-student interactions, and the evaluation and assessment method. The topics with the highest rate of agreement among the students and teachers were prepared collaboratively. When the negotiated syllabus was prepared, the first author of the present study started teaching the syllabus to the intact classes. Having finished the treatment, we administered the FLLMQ and FLA instruments to the intact classes. We used descriptive statistics (means and SD) and an independent samples *t*-test to compare the two intact groups' scores on the FLLMQ and language anxiety instrument.

4. Results

This study consisted of four questions. In the following sections, the results of each research question are presented.

4.1 Research Questions 1 and 2

The mean scores of the two intact classes on FLLMQ and its different factors were submitted to independent samples-t-tests. Results are presented in tables 1 and 2.

Table 1

Means And Standard Deviations of T-Tests On FLLMQ

Variables	Control class		Experimental class	
	Mean	SD	mean	SD
The desire for career and economic enhancement	3.2	0.70	3.4	0.73
Desire to become a global citizen	3.1	0.71	3.3	0.72
Desire to communicate and affiliate with foreigners	3.4	0.59	4.6	0.50
Desire for self-satisfaction	3.5	0.60	4.7	0.42
Self-Efficacy	3.6	0.42	4.8	0.56
Desire to be integrated with other cultures	3.4	0.56	4.9	0.54
Foreign language learning motivation	3.3	0.49	4.2	0.34

Table 2

T-test for Comparing the Groups' Mean Scores on FLLMQ

	Levene's Test		t-test		
	F	sig.	t	df	p
The desire for career and economic enhancement	.08	.82	-.58	62	.561
Desire to become a global citizen	.09	.74	-.61	62	.63
Desire to communicate and affiliate with foreigners	.074	.78	-9.13	62	.001
Desire for self-satisfaction	1.064	.30	-8.2	62	.001
Self-Efficacy	1.1	.21	-9.7	62	.001
Desire to be integrated with other cultures	.384	.53	-9.4	62	.001
Foreign language learning motivation	3.08	.084	-8.00	62	.001

As shown in tables 1 and 2, the mean score of control group on the variable “*Desire for career and economic enhancement*” (M = 3.2, 0.7 =

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2.02) is not significantly higher ($t = -.58$, $df = 62$, two-tailed $p = 0.56$) than the mean score of the experimental group ($M = 3.4$, $SD = 0.73$). The results also verify that the mean score of the experimental group on the variable “*Desire to become global citizen*” ($M = 3.3$, $SD = 2.02$) is not significantly higher ($t = -0.61$, $df = 62$, two-tailed $p = 0.63$) than the mean score of the experimental group ($M = 3.1$, $SD = 0.71$) on the same variable. However, it can be seen that the difference between the experimental group mean ($M = 4.6$, $SD = 0.50$) and that of control group ($M = 3.4$, $SD = 0.59$) on the variable “*Desire to communicate and affiliate with foreigners*” is statistically significant ($t = 9.13$, $df = 62$, two-tailed $p = 0.001$). The findings also verify that the difference between the experimental group mean ($M = 4.6$, $SD = 0.42$) and that of control group ($M = 3.5$, $SD = 0.62$) on the variable “*Desire for self-satisfaction*” is statistically significant ($t = 8.2$, $df = 62$, two-tailed $p = 0.001$).

Results also reveal that the mean score of experimental groups on the variable “*self-efficacy* ($M = 4.8$, $SD = 0.56$) is significantly higher ($t = 9.7$, $df = 62$, two-tailed $p = 0.001$) than that of the control group on the same variable ($M = 3.6$, $SD = 0.42$). Also, the results indicate that the mean score of the experimental group on the variable “*Desire to be integrated with other cultures*” ($M = 7.8$, $SD = 0.54$) is significantly higher ($t = 9.4$, $df = 62$, two-tailed $p = 0.001$) than that of the control group on the same variable ($M = 3.5$, $SD = 0.56$). Finally, it can be seen that there is a statistically significant difference between the means of the control group ($M = 3.3$, $SD = 0.49$) and the experimental group ($M = 4.2$, $SD = 0.34$) in the variable “*Foreign language learning motivation*” ($t = 8.00$, $df = 62$, two-tailed $p = 0.001$).

To estimate *the* effect size for each variable, we calculated Cohen's d for each variable. Results showed that the variable, ‘Desire to be integrated with other cultures’, obtained the highest effect size (Cohen's $d = 2.72$), followed by the variable “Desire to communicate and affiliate with foreigners” which obtained the effect size of 2.56. The third highest effect size was obtained by the variable “desire for self-efficacy (Cohen's $d = 2.4$)

and the least effect sizes were obtained by the variables of self-efficacy (Cohen's $d = 2.31$) and the total language anxiety (Cohen's $d = 2.13$). Therefore, as the effect size for each variable exceeded 0.8, it can be strongly argued that negotiated syllabus has a large effect on the four variables of motivation, but it has a small (negligible) effect on the two aspects of motivation for learning English as a foreign language (Desire for career and economic enhancement; Desire to become a global citizen).

4.2 Research Questions 3 & 4

The third research question addressed the impact of the negotiated syllabus on EFL learners' foreign language anxiety and research question four aimed at comparing the effect sizes of different sub-components of language anxiety. To examine the effects of the negotiated syllabus on undergraduate EFL learners' English language anxiety, the participants' scores on different aspects of language anxiety instruments were submitted to independent samples t-test. Results are presented in tables 3 and 4.

Table 3

Means and Standard Deviations of T-tests on Language Anxiety Instrument

Variables	Control class		Experimental class	
	Mean	SD	mean	SD
Communication anxiety	19.6	3.4	6.8	2.8
Fear of negative evaluation	22	4.1	21.5	3.4
Test anxiety	12	1.49	4.6	1.3
the anxiety of English classes	30.7	3.9	14.4	4.2
Language anxiety (total)	74.3	15.9	47.3	11.7

Table 4

T-test for Comparing the Groups' Mean scores on Language Anxiety Instrument

	Levene's Test		t-test for		
	F	Sig.	t	Df	p
Communication anxiety	2.897	.05	12.3	62	.001
Fear of negative evaluation	1.524	.222	-1.1	62	.255
Test anxiety	5.390	.024	14.62	62	.001
the anxiety of English classes	.569	.453	10.6	62	.001
Language anxiety (total)	7.305	.009	10.6	62	.001

As it can be seen in tables 3 and 4, the mean score of the control group on the variable Communication anxiety ($M = 19.6$, $SD = 3.4$) is significantly

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higher ($t = 12.33$, $df = 62$, two-tailed $p = 0.001$) than the mean score of the experimental group ($M = 6.8$, $SD = 2.8$). Results also verify that the mean score of the experimental group on the variable “Fear of negative evaluation” ($M = 22$, $SD = 4.1$) is significantly lower ($t = -0.61$, $df = 62$, two-tailed $p = 0.63$) than the mean score of the experimental group ($M = 21.5$, $SD = 3.1$) on the same variable. However, it can be seen that the difference between the experimental group mean ($M = 4.6$, $SD = 1.3$) and that of control group ($M = 12$, $SD = 1.49$) on the variable “*test anxiety*” is statistically significant ($t = 14.9$, $df = 62$, two-tailed $p = 0.001$). Results also indicate that the difference between the experimental group mean ($M = 14.4$, $SD = 4.2$) and that of the control group ($M = 30.7$, $SD = 3.9$) in the variable “anxiety of English classes” is statistically significant ($t = 10.67$, $df = 62$, two-tailed $p = 0.001$). Finally, there is a statistically significant difference between the mean of the control group ($M = 74.3$, $SD = 15.9$) and the experimental group ($M = 47.3$, $SD = 11.7$) in the variable “*Foreign language anxiety*” ($t = 8.00$, $df = 62$, two-tailed $p = 0.001$). Therefore, it can be inferred that the use of negotiated syllabus significantly reduced the language learners’ foreign language anxiety, test anxiety, communication anxiety, and anxiety of English classes.

To investigate whether negotiated syllabus has the same effect on foreign language anxiety and its components, we compared the effect size for each component. Results verified that negotiated syllabus has a negligible effect on the variable “Fear of negative evaluation” (Cohen’s $d = 0.15$). However, it has the largest effect size of the variable test anxiety (Cohen’s $d = 5.4$). The next highest effect size was related to the variable “anxiety of English classes” (Cohen’s $d = 4.02$) followed by “communication anxiety” (Cohen’s $d = 2.38$). Finally, findings revealed that the calculated effect size for the total language anxiety was 1.9, which is very large.

5. Discussion

We investigated the impact of the negotiated syllabus on improving EFL learners' motivation for learning and foreign language anxiety. For this purpose, two intact general English courses were selected. The students in the experimental group negotiated preferences for the content of the syllabus while designing a negotiated syllabus through collaboration with the teacher and their classmates. However, the students in the control group were exposed to a pre-designed syllabus. The two groups' mean scores on the motivation and anxiety scales were compared. Analysis of the data verified that there was a statistically significant difference between the mean scores of the experimental group and the control group. It can, therefore, be argued that negotiated syllabus has a significant impact on the EFL learners' motivation for learning the English language. The findings of this study are consistent with the findings of some of the previous studies (e.g., Abbasian & Seyed-Hendi, 2011; Abbasian & Malardi, 2013; Baghbaderani & Afghari, 2015; Peyvandi, Azarnoosh, & Siyyari, 2019; Uztosun, 2013) which have found that negotiated syllabus has a significant positive effect on speaking and writing ability of the university students.

However, a detailed analysis of the findings shows that negotiated syllabus does not have a significant impact on the variables "desire for career and economic enhancement and desire to become a global citizen". However, the other aspects of motivation are positively affected by the negotiated syllabus. One possible justification for such a difference is the difference among the concepts of different aspects of motivation, which requires further qualitative studies. In line with the findings, it can be argued that negotiated syllabus increases the language learners' motivation to communicate with the speakers of languages other than the students' native language and the desire for self-satisfaction, self-efficacy, and integration with other cultures. The

findings lend support to the findings of some of the related studies (e.g., Azarnoosh & Kargozari, 2018; Breen & Littlejohn, 2000; Boomer et. al., 1992; Huang, 2006; Nguyen, 2010; Ozturk, 2013; Peyvandi, Azarnoosh, & Siyyari, 2019). Generally, it can be argued that negotiation between the teachers and the students in the classroom makes the course more appropriate for learners' needs, encourages students, and increases their self-confidence, motivation, and attitudes, develops learner-centeredness, and fosters autonomy.

We also found that language classroom anxiety of the students in the experimental group significantly decreased. Detailed analysis also verifies that except for *fear of negative evaluation*, the other aspects of foreign language anxiety significantly decreased. This finding is echoing Kassem (2018), who argues that the learner-centered approach promotes EFL students' affective variables and enhances students' integrative motivation, attitudes towards the language, self-efficacy, autonomy, and beliefs about language learning. The findings are also consistent with previous research (e.g., Amiri & Saberi, 2017; Mermelstein, 2015). Therefore, it can be strongly argued that students who take charge of their learning develop better attitudes, stronger motivation, higher levels of autonomy and self-efficacy, and more facilitative beliefs about learning a foreign language than the students who receive teacher syllabus and are dependent on their teachers. In this respect, Kassem (2018) suggests that "Students with debilitating anxiety can gradually get rid of their anxiety and become more self-efficacious when they actively participate in different formats of learning activities, i.e., in pairs, small groups and individually" (p.144).

It can also be inferred that when students are engaged in developing the syllabus, they have less anxiety for communication with their classmates and teachers, and their anxiety for attending English classes decreases. Besides, in

comparison to teacher-centered classes, student/learner-centered classes reduce the language learners' text anxiety. This finding supports suggestions made by a couple of researchers (e.g., Doyle, 2006; Garrett, 2008). More importantly, it can be argued that in negotiated syllabus classroom, as a kind of learner-centered approach, students rely heavily on hands-on activities, projects, small group work, and discussion to engage students and encourage active participation (Garret, 2008). Language learners can create positive and productive learning environments. Undoubtedly, student-centered instruction itself contributes to positive learning environments, and students who are participating in meaningful activities have little need or opportunity to be off-task or have language anxiety.

It is plausible that several limitations might have influenced the obtained results. The first limitation was the sample size and the sampling procedure. The other researchers are suggested to replicate the study using a larger sample. The second limitation was the data collection instrument. We collected data through instruments; however, classroom observations and interviews might yield richer data.

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