

ENGLISH TEACHER'S PERSPECTIVES ON STUDENT CENTERED APPROACH IN SUPPORTING ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNING

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to investigate English teachers' perceptions of the implementation of the Student-Centered Approach (SCA) in English language teaching at the junior high school level. The Student-Centered Approach emphasizes the active role of students in the learning process, encouraging greater student autonomy, creativity, collaboration, and engagement in the classroom. In contrast to traditional teacher-centered methods, SCA shifts the focus from the teacher to the students, allowing them to take responsibility for their own learning. This research employed a qualitative method involving interviews, classroom observations, and documentation. The participants in this study were six English teachers at Sukma Bangsa Pidie Schools, a private School in Aceh, Indonesia. The data were analyzed using thematic analysis to identify patterns and themes in the teachers' responses. The results showed that most teachers had a positive perception of the Student-Centered Approach and had implemented various strategies such as group discussions, project-based learning, student presentations, and interactive games. However, several challenges were also identified, including limited time, lack of teaching resources, large class sizes, and varying levels of student motivation and proficiency.

KEYWORDS: Student-Centered Approach, English Language Learning, Student Engagement, English Teacher's

1. Introduction

In recent years, there has been a growing emphasis on implementing student-centered learning approaches in English language classrooms. The Student-Centered Approach (SCA) shifts the focus of learning from the teacher to the students, encouraging them to take an active role in constructing knowledge, developing critical thinking skills, and improving their language proficiency (Harris & Jones, 2021). Unlike traditional teacher-centered methods, SCA creates an interactive learning environment where students are actively involved through discussions, collaborative projects, and problem-solving activities. In the context of English language learning, the application of SCA is considered essential to foster students' confidence and communication skills, especially in developing speaking competence. Previous studies have shown that student-centered practices can significantly enhance learners' motivation and engagement, leading to better academic outcomes (Brown, 2020; Creswell, 2018).

However, despite its advantages, implementing SCA in Indonesian classrooms still faces several challenges, including large class sizes, varying student abilities, and limited resources (Sari et al., 2022). Understanding how teachers perceive and apply SCA in real classroom settings is crucial to improving English language teaching practices. Therefore, this study was conducted at Sukma Bangsa Pidie School, a private school located in Pidie Regency, Aceh, Indonesia. The

research aims to explore English teachers' perceptions and experiences regarding the implementation of the Student-Centered Approach in supporting English language learning. The findings are expected to provide valuable insights for teachers, school administrators, and policymakers in developing more effective and student-oriented English teaching strategies.

1.2 Research question

Based on the following background above has been proposed, the researcher would like to formulate the research question as follow;

1. What are English teachers' perceptions of the effectiveness of student-centered learning in improving students' academic achievement?
2. How do English teachers implement student-centered learning methods in their classrooms to support English language learning?

1.3 Objective of the Study

Based on the research problem above, the researcher aims is to find out about;

1. To explore English teachers' perceptions of the effectiveness of student-centered learning in improving students' academic achievement.
2. To examine how English teachers implement student-centered learning methods in their classrooms and support English language learning.

This study provides insights into the perceptions and practices of English teachers regarding the student-centered learning approach. The findings of this research can help educators, policymakers, and curriculum designers in improving the effectiveness of English language learning and students' academic performance in English.

2.1. Curriculum

Curriculum is a crucial component in the educational system that provides a structured plan for teaching and learning processes in schools. According to Rahmawati et al. (2022), the curriculum functions as a guide for teachers in determining learning objectives, materials, methods, and assessments to ensure effective learning outcomes. In the context of language education, particularly English language learning, the curriculum serves as the foundation for developing students' linguistic abilities, critical thinking, and communication skills. A well-structured curriculum enables teachers to create learning experiences that are not only informative but also engaging and relevant to students' needs. Moreover, the curriculum reflects the educational philosophy and goals of a nation, ensuring that learning is aligned with societal expectations and the development of students' competencies.

2.1.1 Types of Curriculum

The curriculum has continuously evolved over time to meet the changing demands of society, educational philosophy, and students' needs. Various types of curriculum have been introduced in different educational settings, each designed with specific goals to enhance the learning. One of the most common approaches is the subject-centered curriculum, which primarily focuses on delivering content knowledge based on specific academic disciplines. This type of curriculum emphasizes mastery of subjects such as mathematics, science, and language, where the teacher often serves as the central figure delivering information to students (Sari & Yuliana, 2021). However, critics argue that this approach tends to be teacher-centered, providing limited opportunities for students to actively engage in constructing their own understanding.

In response to these limitations, modern educational trends have shifted toward more student-centered models, such as the learner-centered curriculum. This approach recognizes students as active participants in the learning process, where their interests, needs, and individual differences are placed at the core of lesson planning and classroom interaction. Learner-centered curricula promote active learning, critical thinking, problem-solving, and collaboration, enabling students to develop not only cognitive abilities but also social and emotional skills (Andini et al., 2023). In this model, teachers are expected to act as facilitators, guiding students to discover knowledge through interactive and meaningful learning experiences.

Another widely recognized approach is the competency-based curriculum, which emphasizes the achievement of specific competencies considered essential for students' academic, personal, and professional development. In this curriculum, learning outcomes are clearly defined, and the focus is not only on acquiring theoretical knowledge but also on applying that knowledge to real-life situations. Competency-based education has been widely implemented in Indonesia, particularly to address the growing need to prepare students with practical skills required in the 21st century (Putra & Wahyuni, 2022). In addition to these types, many education systems have adopted integrated curricula that combine knowledge from different subjects to create meaningful connections between various disciplines. An integrated curriculum helps students see the relevance of what they learn in school to everyday life, fostering a more holistic understanding of concepts (Hakim et al., 2020).

In the Indonesian education system, the development of curriculum policies has reflected these global trends. One of the most significant reforms is the introduction of *Kurikulum Merdeka*, commonly referred to as *Kumer*, which aims to provide greater autonomy and flexibility to both teachers and students in the learning process. This curriculum represents a shift toward a more student-centered and competency-based approach, designed to foster independent thinking, creativity, and active participation in the classroom (Kemendikbudristek, 2022).

The *Kurikulum Merdeka* emphasizes the importance of adjusting learning materials and methods to the unique characteristics of students, allowing for a more personalized and meaningful educational experience. This approach aligns with the government's broader educational vision through the *Merdeka Belajar* or *Freedom to Learn* movement, which seeks to liberate teaching and learning from rigid structures and create opportunities for innovation in schools (Pratama et al., 2024). The following section will explore the concept and implementation of *Kurikulum Merdeka* in more detail, especially in relation to student-centered learning and English language education in Indonesia.

2.1.2 Kurikulum Merdeka

Kurikulum Merdeka, often referred to as *Kumer*, is one of the most recent educational policy innovations in Indonesia, designed to provide greater freedom and flexibility for teachers and students in the learning process. The term *Merdeka*, meaning "independent" or "freedom," reflects the effort to liberate learning from rigid and bureaucratic regulations so that schools and teachers can focus more on students' needs, potential, and characteristics (Kemendikbudristek, 2022).

The implementation of *Kurikulum Merdeka* has been driven by the need to create a learning system that is more relevant, adaptive, and responsive to current global developments. This curriculum emerged as a response to educational challenges in the 21st century, such as

technological advancement, social change, and the increasing demand for critical thinking, creativity, communication, and collaboration skills (Pratama et al., 2024; Hutabarat & Sari, 2023).

In *Kurikulum Merdeka*, the role of the teacher is no longer limited to being a transmitter of information but extends to being a facilitator who supports students to become active, creative, and independent learners. This approach aligns closely with the principles of student-centered learning, where students are positioned at the core of all learning activities, including the development of knowledge and practical skills (Andini et al., 2023).

Furthermore, *Kurikulum Merdeka* provides schools with the autonomy to determine much of the learning content and methods based on students' needs and characteristics, including in the context of English language learning. Through this policy, learning is expected to focus not only on academic achievement but also on developing students' character, higher-order thinking skills, and essential communication abilities needed to face global challenges (Putra & Wahyuni, 2022).

By promoting differentiated instruction, project-based learning, and the integration of 21st-century competencies, *Kurikulum Merdeka* aims to foster more meaningful and engaging educational experiences. In the field of English language education, this curriculum provides space for teachers to implement innovative, student-centered approaches that encourage students to use the language actively, creatively, and in real-life contexts (Pratama et al., 2024; Hutabarat & Sari, 2023). Overall, *Kurikulum Merdeka* represents Indonesia's commitment to transforming education to be more student-focused, flexible, and aligned with global educational standards, ensuring that students are well-prepared for the complexities of the modern world.

2. Method

Learning methods play a crucial role in the educational process as they determine how knowledge, skills, and attitudes are transferred from teachers to students. According to Rahmawati et al. (2022), learning methods refer to the strategies or techniques used by teachers to create an active, effective, and enjoyable learning environment to ensure that learning objectives can be achieved optimally. The selection of appropriate methods greatly influences student engagement, learning outcomes, as well as the development of critical thinking and social skills.

In practice, learning methods have evolved over time, in line with the changing needs of society, technological developments, and shifts in educational philosophy. In the past, learning methods tended to be conventional and teacher-centered, where teachers dominated the learning process as the primary source of information, while students mainly received the material passively. However, along with the advancement of modern educational theories, there has been a significant shift toward approaches that place students at the center of the learning process, known as the **Student-Centered Approach (SCA)**. This approach encourages students to actively construct knowledge, solve problems, and develop critical thinking and collaboration skills (Andini et al., 2023).

In line with this principle, the *Kurikulum Merdeka* implemented in Indonesia provides teachers with the flexibility to choose and apply various learning methods based on students' characteristics, learning needs, and the school context. This curriculum does not restrict teachers to using only one specific method but encourages the adoption of diverse, innovative, and adaptive strategies to create more meaningful, relevant, and contextual learning experiences (Kemendikbudristek, 2022).

Several methods recommended within *Kurikulum Merdeka* include **Project-Based Learning**, which emphasizes completing tasks or projects relevant to real-life situations, and **Discovery Learning**, which encourages students to explore and discover concepts or knowledge through investigation and exploration. Additionally, **Differentiated Instruction** has become an essential strategy, allowing teachers to adjust the content, process, or learning outcomes based on students' diverse abilities, interests, and learning styles (Putra & Wahyuni, 2022).

Through the implementation of various methods, the learning environment becomes more interactive, participatory, and tailored to individual student needs. In the context of English language learning, applying diverse methods is essential to improving students' confidence, language skills, and communication abilities in real-life situations. These methods also reflect the principles of the Student-Centered Approach promoted by *Kurikulum Merdeka*, where students actively participate in the learning process, and teachers act as facilitators who support the optimal development of students' potential (Hutabarat & Sari, 2023; Pratama et al., 2024).

2.1 Student-Centered Approach

The *Student-Centered Approach* (SCA) is based on the theory proposed by Weimer (2002), which emphasizes that effective learning must place students at the center of the learning process. In this model, the teacher no longer serves as the sole source of information but rather acts as a facilitator who guides students to be active, independent, and responsible in constructing their own knowledge.

One important component of SCA is collaborative learning, where students work in small groups to complete tasks or solve problems together. This approach not only helps students develop social and teamwork skills but also enhances critical thinking and problem-solving abilities. Through interactions between students, an exchange of ideas takes place, enriching their understanding of the learning material. Additionally, this approach adopts differentiated instruction, a teaching strategy that is tailored to the learning styles, interests, and abilities of individual students. Teachers design various activities and materials to ensure that every student has fair access to effective learning. This approach values diversity in the classroom and uses it as a foundation for creating inclusive learning.

Another key component is inquiry-based learning, where students are encouraged to ask questions, conduct research, and explore various possible answers. This process fosters curiosity and scientific thinking, which are highly relevant to 21st-century skills. Students become more active and engaged in discovering the meaning of learning, rather than passively receiving information. Student empowerment is also a pillar of SCA. Giving students autonomy in choosing topics, learning methods, or how to present their learning outcomes enhances their intrinsic motivation. When students feel they have control over the learning process, they are more likely to take responsibility and commit to their academic goals.

Furthermore, the use of technology plays an important role in creating flexible and independent learning. Technology allows access to a wider range of learning resources that are interactive and suited to students' needs. Learning applications, digital platforms, and multimedia help students explore material in more engaging ways that align with the times. Overall, the Student-Centered Approach not only changes teaching strategies but also transforms the role of the teacher from a source of information to a facilitator who guides students through their learning process. Teachers act as mentors who help students develop their full potential.

By implementing this approach, it is hoped that students will not only gain academic knowledge but also develop critical thinking, communication, collaboration, and creativity skills that are essential in the era of globalization and the 4.0 industrial revolution. This approach is aligned with the vision of 21st-century education, which places learners at the center and goal of the entire educational process.

Recent studies highlight the positive impact of Student-Centered Learning (SCL) on student engagement and academic achievement. Rohani and Siregar (2020) found that SCL enhances critical thinking and learning outcomes, and allows students to actively participate and gain a deeper understanding of the material being taught. Candra and Sari (2021) stated that SCL significantly boosts student motivation and academic performance, especially in foreign language learning. Other research by Mulyono and Setiawan (2022) shows that SCL has a positive impact in secondary schools, although challenges such as limited resources and insufficient teacher training remain obstacles. Salim and Wibowo (2023) found that SCL helps increase student engagement and language proficiency, particularly in English as a Foreign Language (EFL). Auliyah and Hadi (2021) identified challenges in applying SCL in vocational schools but emphasized the importance of overcoming these barriers to ensure successful SCL implementation.

A study conducted by **Nugroho (2020)** entitled *"The Effectiveness of Student-Centered Learning on Improving English Learning Outcomes of Eighth Grade Students at SMP Negeri 4 Surakarta"* aimed to determine the extent to which the Student-Centered Approach (SCA) is effective in enhancing students' learning outcomes. This research employed a quasi-experimental design with two groups: an experimental class taught using the SCA and a control class taught using conventional methods. The post-test results showed that the average score of students in the experimental class reached **81.3**, while the control class only achieved **72.6**. A t-test yielded a t value of **5.28** with **p < 0.05**, indicating a statistically significant difference between the two groups. Therefore, the Student-Centered Approach was proven to be statistically more effective in improving English learning outcomes. In addition to academic improvement, questionnaire results showed that **87% of students in the experimental class** felt more enthusiastic and motivated during the lessons. This indicates that SCA not only improves learning outcomes but also creates a more enjoyable and meaningful learning experience for students.

Another study by **Yuliana (2022)**, titled *"The Influence of the Student-Centered Approach on Interest and Participation in English Learning at SMP Negeri 7 Bandung"*, focused on how this approach affects students' affective aspects, such as interest and participation. This study used a descriptive quantitative method by distributing Likert-scale questionnaires and applying simple regression analysis. The results showed that **92% of students** felt more interested in learning English when the teacher implemented SCA methods such as group discussions and project presentations. Moreover, the level of active student participation significantly increased from **57% before** the implementation to **84% after**. The regression analysis showed a value of **R² = 0.63**, meaning that the Student-Centered Approach contributed to **63% of the variation** in student participation levels. The study concluded that SCA has a strong positive influence on students' interest and participation in learning and is recommended for broader implementation in junior high school environments. Meanwhile, **Mayang et al. (2021)**, in their study on the use of *Problem-Based Learning* assisted by EdPuzzle at the junior high school level, found that this approach

significantly improved students' critical thinking skills. The t-test result showed a significance level of $0.014 < 0.05$, confirming a significant difference between the experimental and control groups. This proves that a student-centered problem-based method can stimulate higher cognitive engagement.

Finally, Novela (2022), in her research on the MIKiR approach (*Experiencing, Interacting, Communicating, Reflecting*) at SMP Negeri 1 Bengkulu, found a significant increase in student interest after implementing the SCA. The t-test showed a significance value of $0.000 < 0.05$, indicating a real influence of the approach on improving student interest in learning Indonesian language subjects. Overall, these studies indicate that despite the challenges in implementing SCL, the approach is effective in enhancing student engagement, critical thinking skills, and academic success across various educational contexts.

2.2. Research Methodology

This chapter discusses the research methodology employed in this study. Research methodology is the way how the researcher gets results based on research questions in the first chapter. This research includes research design, data resources or participate techniques of data collection, and data analysis.

2.2.1 Research Design

This study adopts a qualitative approach with a phenomenological design, focusing on an in-depth understanding of the perspectives and lived experiences of English teachers in applying the student-centered approach in English language teaching. According to Creswell and Poth (2018), the phenomenological approach is appropriate when researchers aim to explore the meaning and essence of individuals' lived experiences regarding a specific phenomenon. In this case, the phenomenon under investigation is the implementation of the student-centered approach in English language learning.

Phenomenology emphasizes understanding how individuals make sense of their experiences and how these experiences shape their perceptions and actions (Neubauer et al., 2019). By applying this approach, the researcher seeks to explore how English teachers interpret and implement student-centered learning, as well as its perceived impact on the teaching and learning process. This research does not aim to generalize the findings but to provide rich, detailed insights into the subjective experiences of teachers, which can contribute to a deeper understanding of student-centered practices within the context of English language education.

In this study, semi-structured interviews serve as the primary instrument for data collection. This method is chosen due to its ability to elicit in-depth and nuanced information while providing flexibility to explore emerging topics during the interview process. The researcher conducts individual interviews with English teachers who have experience in implementing the student-centered approach. The interviews focus on the teachers' understanding of this pedagogical approach, their classroom implementation strategies, the challenges encountered, and the perceived benefits for both educators and students. This approach aligns with recent methodological studies that emphasize the effectiveness of semi-structured interviews in capturing rich qualitative data within educational research contexts (Ruslin et al., 2022).

2.2.2 Population and sample

The population in this study consists of English teachers who teach at junior high schools (SMP) and have implemented a student-centered approach in English language teaching. This

population is chosen because these teachers have direct experience in applying this approach within real classroom contexts. The researcher focuses on teachers who consciously and consistently apply the student-centered approach as a teaching method in their English language classes.

The sample for this study is selected using purposive sampling, meaning the researcher deliberately selects teachers who have relevant experience with the research topic. The researcher plans to select approximately 6 English teachers who teach at junior high schools, based on specific criteria, such as: (1) teachers who have implemented the student-centered approach in their English classrooms; (2) teachers who have at least two years of teaching experience to ensure adequate understanding and application of the approach; and (3) teachers who are willing to participate in interviews and share their experiences related to the implementation of the student-centered approach. The relatively small sample size is intended to allow the researcher to gain in-depth and comprehensive insights into the teachers' views and experiences regarding the implementation of this approach. Since the goal of this study is to explore the personal perspectives of teachers, a limited sample size enables the researcher to conduct more detailed interviews and gather richer qualitative data. Additionally, the researcher selects participants from schools with diverse student backgrounds and characteristics to provide a more holistic view of how the student-centered approach is implemented across different educational contexts.

2.3 Research Instrument

2.3.1 Questionnaire

In this study, the researcher uses a questionnaire instrument designed to measure teachers' perceptions of the implementation of the Student-Centered Approach (SCA) in English language teaching at the junior high school level. This instrument consists of 15 closed-ended statements using a 5-point Likert scale: (SS) Strongly Agree, (S) Agree, (N) Neutral, (TS) Disagree, and (STS) Strongly Disagree. The questionnaire items are grouped into several key indicators, namely: Student learning autonomy, consisting of three items, Active engagement in the learning process, consisting of five items, Interaction and collaboration among students, consisting of three items, The teacher's role as a facilitator, consisting of four items

This questionnaire aims to collect qualitative data that reflects the extent to which teachers support, understand, and implement the principles of the Student-Centered Approach (SCA) in their teaching practices (Creswell, 2014; Johnson & Christensen, 2019).

2.3.2. Interview

An interview is a method of data collection conducted through direct communication or a question-and-answer process with informants who have relevant knowledge about the issue being studied. In this study, the interview respondents were several English teachers. The interviews were conducted face-to-face and recorded with the participants' consent. The recordings were then transcribed and analyzed to identify key themes that enrich and support the findings from the questionnaire (Creswell, 2014; Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). The questions focused on the teachers' experiences in implementing the Student-Centered Approach (SCA), their perceptions of its effectiveness, and the challenges they face in the classroom.

2.4. Procedure of Data Collecting

2.4.1. Questionnaire

The questionnaire is a research instrument consisting of a series of questions related to the integration of Google Form. The steps are as follows:

a. The researcher creates a questionnaire on Google Form containing questions that address the phenomenon being studied. Then, the questionnaire link is distributed through digital media such as WhatsApp chat groups.

b. Then, the respondents click the link and answer the questions according to their perspectives. Respondents can answer by ticking the choices according to their preferences.

2.4.2. Interview

In the interview, detailed questions are used to obtain answers that can support the questionnaire results. The steps of the interview technique are as follows:

a. Initially, the researcher asks the participants for time to conduct the interview. If the participants do not understand the interview procedure, the researcher then explains it to them. After that, the researcher will ask questions regarding their views on the effectiveness of the Student-Centered Approach (SCA) in improving students' abilities. The researcher uses a recording device to record the data.

b. After conducting interviews with the participants, the researcher will analyze the raw data by summarizing the information and processing it into valid data.

2.5 Data Analysis

The process of collecting, modeling, and analyzing data using various statistical and logical tools and procedures is known as data analysis (Calzon, 2023). After all the data is collected, the next process is to analyze the information of the material using thematic analysis to get a conclusion by interview. Thematic analysis is a method for identifying, analyzing, and reporting patterns (theme) within data. There are 6 steps in thematic analysis:

In this research, data were obtained through questionnaires and interviews to explore teachers' perceptions of the implementation of the Student-Centered Approach (SCA) in English language teaching. The data from both instruments were analyzed using appropriate techniques to ensure comprehensive and accurate results.

2.5.1 Questionnaire Data Analysis

The questionnaire consists of 15 closed-ended statements designed to measure teachers' perceptions related to the use of the Student-Centered Approach. A 5-point Likert scale was applied, as follows:

Strongly Agree (SA) = 5, Agree (A) = 4, Neutral (N) = 3, Disagree (D) = 2, Strongly Disagree (SD) = 1

The responses were analyzed using descriptive quantitative analysis. The researcher calculated the frequency and percentage of each response category for every statement. The results were presented in the form of tables, percentages, and diagrams to clearly illustrate the overall tendencies of teachers' perceptions.

According to Sugiyono (2019), descriptive statistical analysis is commonly used in research to summarize data, identify response trends, and provide general conclusions based on the numerical results.

2.5.2. Interview Data Analysis

In addition to the questionnaire, interviews were conducted to obtain more detailed information regarding the implementation, benefits, and challenges of the Student-Centered Approach in the classroom. The interview process used a semi-structured format, allowing participants to freely express their views while maintaining focus on the research objectives.

The interview data were analyzed using thematic analysis. Braun and Clarke (2006) define thematic analysis as a flexible method used to identify, analyze, and report patterns or themes within qualitative data.

The process of thematic analysis in this study involved the following steps:

1. Data Transcription: All recorded interviews were transcribed verbatim.
2. Data Reduction: The researcher selected and grouped relevant information according to the research focus.
3. Theme Identification: Patterns, key ideas, and recurring responses were categorized into specific themes.
4. Interpretation: The themes were analyzed to draw meaningful conclusions that complement the questionnaire findings.

The combination of quantitative (questionnaire) and qualitative (interview) analysis provides a more comprehensive understanding of the teachers' perspectives on the use of the Student-Centered Approach in English language teaching.

3. Finding And Discussion

3.1. Finding

This research is conducted at Sukma Bangsa Pidie School, a private school located in Peukan Baro, Pidie Regency, Aceh Province. The school operates under Yayasan Sukma Bangsa, an educational foundation known for promoting innovative, student-centered learning that integrates both academic excellence and character development.

Sukma Bangsa Pidie School consistently applies the Student-Centered Approach (SCA) in its teaching and learning processes, especially in English language education. The school emphasizes the creation of a safe, inclusive, and engaging learning environment where students are encouraged to express their ideas, actively participate, and develop critical thinking skills.

The learning process is supported by adequate facilities, including multimedia-equipped classrooms and interactive learning tools, which enable teachers to implement SCA effectively through discussions, presentations, and project-based activities. The school also prioritizes character education, demonstrated through the implementation of the "4 No" values: No Bullying, No Cheating, No Smoking, and No Littering, to foster a positive and respectful school culture.

Furthermore, Sukma Bangsa Pidie School integrates technology-based programs, such as coding workshops, to enhance students' digital literacy. Extracurricular activities, including journalism, leadership development, and social projects, are encouraged to support students' holistic development. The school also promotes inclusivity by providing opportunities for all students, including those with special needs, to participate actively in the learning process.

With its supportive environment, modern facilities, and strong commitment to student-centered education, Sukma Bangsa Pidie School provides an ideal setting for implementing the Student-Centered Approach, particularly in English language teaching.

3.1.1. Teachers' Perceptions of the Effectiveness of Student-Centered Learning

This section presents the results of the questionnaire and interview regarding English teachers' perceptions of the effectiveness of student-centered learning (SCL) in improving students' academic achievement, particularly in English language learning.

3.1.2. Findings from Interviews: Teachers' Implementation and Perceptions of Student-Centered Approach (SCA)

This section presents the qualitative findings obtained from interviews with three English teachers regarding their understanding, implementation, challenges, and perceptions of the Student-Centered Approach (SCA) in supporting English language learning. The interview data were analyzed thematically, and five key themes emerged, as explained below:

3.1.3. Teachers' Understanding of Student-Centered Approach

All three teachers demonstrated a good understanding of the Student-Centered Approach (SCA). Responden 1 emphasized that SCA adapts to students' learning needs, whether auditory, visual, or through lectures. He integrates images, audio, and video in class to help students better understand the material. *Conclusion:* His understanding of SCA is based on meeting diverse student learning styles through multimedia.

Responden 2 highlighted the importance of building students' interest in English first by making lessons enjoyable. She believes students need to enjoy learning before deeper instruction takes place. *Conclusion:* She connects SCA with motivating students and making them enjoy English before applying active learning.

Responden 3 defined SCA as a learning approach centered on student activity, where teachers only contribute about 25% of the lesson, allowing students to be more active. *Conclusion:* She views SCA as giving dominant space for student participation, focusing on learner independence.

3.1.4 Strategies Used to Implement SCA

Teachers used various strategies to encourage active student involvement:

Responden 1 applied Problem-Based Learning (PBL) by using videos or images that present real-life dilemmas, prompting students to express opinions, enhancing critical thinking.

Responden 2 made lessons fun by showing films and preparing questions related to the content, making students more engaged with the material.

Responden 3 emphasized pre-lesson warm-ups, connecting topics to students' personal experiences (e.g., asking about cooking before teaching procedure texts) and using group discussions.

Conclusion: All teachers tailored activities that stimulate student engagement, either through real-life issues, interactive media, or connecting lessons to students' daily experiences.

3.1.5 Impact of SCA on Students' Speaking Skills

All respondents acknowledged that SCA positively impacts students' speaking ability:

Responden 1 observed that previously quiet students became more willing to search for vocabulary to express their opinions, increasing speaking frequency.

Responden 2 noted that creating an English-speaking environment, such as watching English podcasts or listening to songs, boosted students' confidence to speak.

Responden 3 explained that through consistent practice and reducing fear of making mistakes, students gradually became more confident in speaking English.

Conclusion: SCA contributes significantly to enhancing students' speaking confidence and vocabulary acquisition, though it requires ongoing practice and exposure.

3.1.6 Challenges in Implementing SCA

The teachers encountered several challenges:

Responden 1 mentioned the varying abilities among students (slow and fast learners), requiring different approaches to balance classroom engagement.

Responden 2 faced difficulties with new students lacking vocabulary, which she addressed by teaching familiar, daily-use words first.

Responden 3 found building students' self-confidence the most significant challenge, offering English Days and immersive language environments as solutions.

Conclusion: Common challenges include student confidence, vocabulary limitations, and varying learning speeds, but teachers actively applied solutions to support all students.

3.1.7 Students' Response to the SCA Approach

The teachers reported gradual but positive student responses:

Responden 1 observed that students felt more appreciated and improved classroom participation when SCA methods were applied.

Responden 2 noted an increase in student motivation and participation, emphasizing that consistent application yields better results.

Responden 3 explained that students were initially hesitant but gradually became more confident and accustomed to speaking English through habitual practice.

Conclusion: With consistent implementation and a supportive environment, students showed increased motivation, confidence, and participation in English learning.

3.1.7 Summary of Interview Findings

The qualitative data from the interviews support the questionnaire results, showing that teachers:

1. Possess a clear understanding of SCA principles tailored to student needs and active involvement.
2. Apply varied student-centered strategies such as Problem-Based Learning, discussions, films, and real-life connections.
3. Recognize the positive impact of SCA on improving students' speaking confidence and vocabulary.
4. Face challenges related to student abilities, vocabulary limitations, and confidence, but implement solutions such as familiar vocabulary and English-speaking environments.
5. Observe increased motivation, participation, and confidence over time with consistent use of SCA.

4. Conclusion

Based on the findings of this research, it can be concluded that the implementation of the Student-Centered Approach (SCA) in English language learning at Sukma Bangsa Pidie School has positively contributed to students' active participation, confidence, and language development. The teachers have successfully applied various student-centered strategies, such as group discussions, student presentations, and collaborative activities, which encourage students to play an active role in the learning process. Despite several challenges, including differences in students' abilities and motivation levels, the overall application of SCA has helped improve students' speaking skills and self-confidence in using English communicatively.

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