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Investigating Students' and Teachers' Perceptions of the Implementation of the Student-Centered Approach in EFL Classrooms

A B S T R A C T

The student-centered approach, one of the basic components and features of Bologna Process, has been the topic of debate for more than four decades. Nonetheless, its application is still constrained by many advocates of teacher-centered approaches. This study utilizes a quantitative research methodology based on two data collection tools to investigate the extent to which teachers and students' perceptions of teachers' use of student-centered strategies inside classroom. Two questionnaires have been constructed to seek this quest. The results of the data gleaned by means of both questionnaires are not compatible. Although teachers advocate the full application of all student-centred strategies, students disagree and indicate the absence certain student-centred approach strategies. All in all, the overall findings reveal that teachers are not entirely committed to the application of the student-centred strategies, particularly those aiming at promoting students' autonomy and self-regulation, developing critical thinking and problem-solving skills, and creating collaborative learning environment. This lack of application may stem from insufficient understanding of student-centered strategies and the way they should be applied. As such, the study recommends assigning mentors to follow up novice teachers and guide them to run a more student-centered classroom.

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التحقيق في تصورات الطلاب والمعلمين حول تنفيذ النهج المتمركز حول الطالب في فصول اللغة

الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية

جوان حسين سليمان/ جامعة زاخو/ كلية العلوم الانسانية

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الخلاصة:

يُعد المنهج المتمركز حول الطالب احد المكونات الاساسية لعملية بولونا، وقد كان موضوعاً للنقاش لأكثر

من اربعة عقود. ومع ذلك، لا يزال تطبيقه مقيداً من قبل العديد من أنصار النهج المتمركز حول المعلم. تعتمد هذه الدراسة منهجية البحث الكمي، مستخدمة أداتين لجمع البيانات، وذلك للتحقق من مدى توافق تصورات كل من التدريسيين والطلبة حول استخدام التدريسيين في مرحلة الجامعة لاستراتيجيات التعليم المتمركز حول الطالب داخل الصف الدراسي.

تشير نتائج تحليل البيانات المستخلصة من الاستبيانين إلى عدم وجود توافق بين عيني البحث؛ فبينما يؤكد التدريسيون التزامهم الكامل بتطبيق جميع استراتيجيات التعليم المتمركز حول الطالب، لا سيما تلك التي تهدف إلى تعزيز استقلالية الطلبة وتنمية قدراتهم على التعلم الذاتي، وتطوير مهارات التفكير النقدي وحل المشكلات، وخلق بيئة تعلم تعاونية. وقد يعود هذا القصور في التطبيق إلى ضعف الفهم الكافي لاستراتيجيات التعليم المتمركز حول الطالب واليات توظيفها بشكل فعال، يعبر الطلبة عن عدم موافقتهم، ويشيرون إلى غياب بعض هذه الاستراتيجيات. وبناءً على ذلك، توصي الدراسة بتعيين موجهين لمتابعة التدريسيين الجدد وإرشادهم نحو إدارة صفوف دراسية أكثر تمحوراً حول الطالب.

الكلمات المفتاحية: عملية بولونيا، النهج المتمركز حول الطالب، النهج المتمركز حول المعلم، استقلالية المتعلم ، التعلم الذاتي

I. Introduction

The Bologna Process (BP), initiated in 1999 in Bologna, Italy, served as the foundation for the establishment of the European Higher Education Area (EHEA), which consists of 49 member countries committed to ensuring the uniformity and quality of higher education credentials (European University Association, 2005). Universities affiliated to Kurdistan Region of Iraq have adopted the European Bologna Process to align with the European Higher Education Area. The goal is to enhance student mobility and competitiveness in higher education, while creating a more standardized and cohesive educational system. This initiative has significantly influenced the teaching and learning dynamics, particularly in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) instruction. Following the contemporary trends in language pedagogy such as, Student-Centered Approach (SCA), which emphasizes the vital role of the students as active participants in the process of learning, is a

step towards fostering students' autonomy and critical thinking; and independent learning. These learning endeavors are boosted by distinct instructional strategies that focus on differentiated instructions, active learning, learner autonomy and collaborative learning forming the most up-to-dated teaching and learning goals of the 21st century.

II. The Problem to be Investigated

Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research (MHESR) in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq emphasizes innovative pedagogical approaches, particularly student-centered strategies. While teachers are trained in these techniques, the extent of their actual implementation in classrooms is questionable. Reports suggest that teacher-centered instruction prevails, with students relying on teachers for knowledge, and assessment methods remain traditional. This situation raises important questions about the effectiveness and application of student-centered strategies (SCSs), highlighting the need for further investigation into their usage and the promotion of student autonomy in learning.

III. Hypothesis

It is hypothesized that EFL teachers are not adopting SCA strategies inside their classrooms. They rather adopt teacher-centered teaching strategies that neither foster the sense of autonomy and leadership in students nor develop students' critical thinking skills.

IV. Research Questions:

1. Do EFL teachers implement SCA practices in their classrooms?
2. Do students believe that teachers employ SCSs?
3. What strategies are the most used strategies by the teachers?
4. What strategies are the least used by the teachers?
5. Do teachers employ strategies to promote students' autonomy?

V. Scope of the Study

This study is restricted to EFL teachers and students in English Language and Literature departments at University of Duhok (UoD) and Cihan University-Duhok. In line with Bologna Process use of terminology, the academic calendar in these two universities follows a semester-based system, as the term ‘year’ is used to refer to students’ academic progress (e.g. second-year students). Hence, the scope of this study is limited to third, fourth, fifth and sixth semesters only of the academic year 2024-2025. Accordingly, only second-year students and third-year students are the invited to take part in this study; along with those teachers that teach during these four semesters. The researcher understands that any limitation in sampling and setting may lead to different results.

VI. The Setting

This study is set in two universities in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq: one public university, the University of Duhok, and one private university, Cihan University-Duhok. Both universities are pilot universities since 2020 and involved in the implementation of the BP under the MHESR project. Data were collected over two academic semesters during 2024 and 2025.

VII. Student-Centered Approach

The SCA is so called as prioritizes students and their needs in the education process. McCombs and Whisler (1997) define the approach as a philosophical perspective that is based on empirical research which highlights the significance of comprehending each unique learner. This approach has taken grounds in a number of educational theories, the most prominent of which is constructivism that necessitates a thorough understanding of how learners perceive and engage in learning, both within and outside the confines of the classroom.

Correspondingly, taking grounds in Humanistic approach, the SCA believes in engaging the learner as a whole person- emotionally, socially and intellectually in

the learning process (Rahman, 2008). It stresses the significance of the learner's active participation in the educational process. It promotes exploration, analytical thinking, and autonomous learning. The SCA also takes its claims from Experiential Model which depicts teaching process as the alteration of knowledge and the Active Learning models which encourage students to take an active part in their learning process (Thamraksa, 2003).

Both, students and teachers are believed to work collaboratively to decide on the content of the curriculum (Nunan, 1988). Teachers are regarded as participants in the learning process alongside students, who provide guidance on student learning, assist with assignments, and oversee the educational process. On their part, students are required to work independently, prepare notes before discussions, undertake listening, writing, grammar or vocabulary exercises, take part in pairs and group discussions, reflect on their answers and contributions, and engage with the teacher and the entire class by posing enquiries or generating ideas collaboratively (Jones, 2007).

Finally, and according to Littlejohn (1985), in the language education domain, student-centeredness is mainly approached in two ways: firstly, in terms of what students will learn, i.e. how the syllabus is designed; secondly, in terms of how the student will learn, i.e. entailing the activities and instruments.

A. Characteristics of the Student-Centered Approach

Scholars like (McCombs & Whisler, 1997; Weimer, 2002; Thamraksa, 2003; Kutest Kids, 2025; Sora Schools, n.d.) have all agreed on assigning similar characteristics to the SCA such as: learner autonomy and student agency, collaborative learning, differentiated learning, developing students' critical thinking and problem-solving skill. When searching for key characteristics of the SCA, student agency and autonomy appear to be at the top of the list; as these features are not only encouraged but seen as integral to the learning process. When

students are given the chance to make decision about their own learning it helps foster a sense of ownership and responsibility within the students and consequently transforming them from passive recipient to active participants of their own learning journey.

Within the SCA, learning is flexible, i.e., students can learn on their own pace, which further fosters the sense of independence within students. Also, the student-centered classroom is equipped with adaptable seating and classroom setting to meet each student preference and learning styles.

Collaborative learning is another cornerstone of the SCA which emphasizes the importance of social interaction to enhance students' abilities to communicate effectively and negotiate resolutions. Students learn to identify and address issues constructively (Sora Schools, n.d.).

Differentiated instructions and personalized learning is another key feature of the SCA. Students are depicted as individuals who have different needs and learn distinctively. Accordingly, courses are designed to meet students' interest, learning styles and backgrounds.

The SCA also engages students in complex learning work and encourages reflection on learning processes. Knowledge is developed through authentic learning and by connecting educational experiences to real-world contexts. Students exhibit a greater tendency for intrinsic motivation, hence emphasizing self-motivation over external factors, and prioritize pride in their work rather than the pursuit of approval (Thamraksa, 2003).

B. Implementing Student-Centered Approach Strategies

The ultimate goal of SCA is to boost motivation, autonomy and independence in students, and to prepare students for a real world where they are capable of evaluate situations critically and make their own decisions and choices. Therefore, teaching should be engaging, effective, and viable, and curriculum should address

contemporary students' needs. To implement the SCA successfully, instructional practice needs to change in five elements that compromise the philosophy behind the SCA, namely balance of power, function of content, teacher role, responsibility for learning, and purpose and means of assessment- (Saulnier et al., 2008; Weimer, 2002 cited in Schiller, 2009).

Both Zophy and Weimar and other scholars working in this field (as cited in Thamraska, 2003), have observed how teachers resist implementing this kind of practices due to several reasons mainly related to the balance of power and what is expected from them to cover during a course of study. To overcome such barriers, Zophy and Weimar suggest several techniques to ease the application of this approach: firstly, teachers should allow students to complete more learning tasks, ask questions more, and create more in-class assignments to help them apply cognitive skills. Secondly, teachers should also model how experts learn and encourage self-explanation among students. Faculty and students should work together to create a learning climate that encourages responsibility for their own learning. Evaluation can be used to promote learning, such as peer assessment and feedback as a starting point for discussions. This approach helps students apply cognitive skills to relevant material and fosters a more engaging learning environment (Fahraeus, 2013).

Huda and Lubis (2019) suggested several socio-constructive teaching strategies that teachers can make use of during classes; these activities include: interactive lecturing, in-class or online discussions, case studies, learning by discovery, role plays and simulations. In additions to writing activities, like essays and reports, collaborative work may be conducted in pairs or groups. Similarly, Tang (2023) highlights the importance of project-based learning and its variants such as problem-based learning as a student-centered teaching strategy. Likewise,

strategies like gamification, peer-feedback, simulation and reflections are highly significant to this form of instruction.

VIII. Methodology

A. Study Design

This study adopts a quantitative approach to collect numeric data regarding students' and teachers' perceptions of the extent which teachers' actually implement student-centered strategies.

B. The Sample

The study employs convenience sampling, a non-probability technique that selects participants based on accessibility and willingness (Dörnyei, 2007; Creswell, 2012). This method offers advantages such as ease of access and cost-effectiveness, but carries a risk of sampling bias (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2018). Moreover, purposive sampling elements are present, as first-year students and Stage four students, who are preoccupied with graduation projects, were purposefully excluded. Thus, the sampling process is both criteria-based and practically feasible.

B(1) Students' Sample

Overall, two hundred and twelve students were the subject of this study. The questionnaire link was sent to all the 212 students. Only 137 students responded to the questionnaire. From these responses, 55% were third year students, and 43 students were second year students. The age of majority of students ranged between 21-23 at 62% followed by 18-20 at 24%. Most of the participants were females (62%) and 38% were male. 65% of students were from UoD, while 35% from Cihan University-Duhok.

B (2) Teachers Sample

It is worth noting that the participated teachers are only those teachers that teach second and third years of English Language and Literature department at both

subject universities. Overall, 14 teachers teach these grades at Cihan University and fifteen teachers teach same stages at UoD. The sample of teachers was decided upon in the light of the stages they were teaching, accordingly only those teachers were invited to take part in the study. Ten teachers participated in the piloting study and 19 teachers responded to the questionnaire.

IX. Research Instruments

A. The Questionnaires

A(1) The Construction of Students and Teachers' Questionnaires

Two 5-point Likert scale questionnaires have been developed to assess strategies central to Student-Centered Assessment (SCA). Each questionnaire consists of four sections. The first section outlines the study's purpose and includes a consent letter. The second section gathers personal information from students, such as year of study, age, gender, and university, while the teachers' version collects data on teaching stages, experience, specialty, and academic status. The third section addresses SCA objectives, including enhancing active learning, critical thinking, autonomy, collaboration, positive attitudes, and assessment methods. The final section allows for open comments from both students and teachers.

A(2). Validity of the Questionnaires

The questionnaires were submitted to a panel of juries, namely 7 professors specialized in applied linguistics to review and validate the content. They stated their views in terms of the suitability of the items for investigating the researched topic.

A(3) Reliability of the Questionnaires

After getting validity for both students and teachers' questionnaires, the students' questionnaire was piloted to a group of 7 students to ensure the consistency of the items. The reliability test was done through Statistical Package of Social Science SPSS25. The Cronbach Alpha score 0.9 shows the consistency among the items of

the questionnaire, and hence it became ready for administration to the students' sample of the study. As for teachers' questionnaire, it is totally identical to students' questionnaire except for section 2 that asks for more professional and career related questions. The questionnaire was piloted with 10 teachers, and got the Cronbach' Alpha score 0.7.

A(4) Administration and Conduction of the Research Tools

Both data collection tools were attached with a consent letter that stated clearly the confidentiality of the responses and the respondents' identity. The consent letter revealed clearly how the gathered data will be used solely for the sake of this study and will not be used for any other purpose.

X. Data Analysis

The extracts from questionnaire are analyzed by SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Sciences) version 25, recognized as the most prevalent software for evaluating data in educational research (Muijs, 2004). Frequencies, means, and standard deviations have been derived from descriptive statistics. Whereas, comparisons between students' and instructors' questionnaires have been conducted through an independent-samples T-test.

In the analysis of descriptive data, responses on the 5-point Likert scale were grouped into three categories to enhance interpretability. The options Never and Rarely were joined together to signify low levels of practice, while Sometimes was preserved as an intermediate level, and Often and Always were merged to denote high levels of practice. The combination was implemented solely for the representation of frequencies and percentages. The computation of means and standard deviations was performed with the original 5-point Likert scale values.

A. Analysis of Data Collected by Students' Questionnaire

Section Two from the questionnaire contains 27 items that are divided into six parts, namely enhancing students' active learning and engagement, developing

students' critical thinking and problem-solving skills, promoting students' autonomy and self- regulation, creating a collaborative learning environment, fostering students' positive attitude towards learning and means of evaluation and assessment, all of which focus on the objectives of SCA. The descriptive statistics are demonstrated in the following table:

Table 1: The Percentages, Means and Standard Deviations of Students' Responses to the Questionnaire

SCSs	Items	Never/ Rarely	Some times	Often/ Always	Mean	Std. Dev.
1. Enhancing students' active learning	1.1 The teacher ensures all students actively participate in the class.	7.25	30.43	61.59	3.87	1.021
	1.2 The teacher commends students for their participation.	10.14	26.81	62.32	3.85	1.061
	1.3 The teacher tries alternative methods of teaching (e.g., visuals, peer collaboration) when students have difficulty in understanding a topic.	16.67	31.16	51.45	3.55	1.104
	1.4 The teacher tries to integrate technology efficiently in class (e.g., multimedia resources, online platforms).	17.39	41.30	40.58	3.35	1.061
2. Developing Students' Critical Thinking and Problem- Solving Skills	2.1 The teacher provides students with tasks that are cognitively challenging	14.49	41.30	43.48	3.45	1.022
	2.2 The teacher assigns tasks that connect to students' real-life experiences.	18.12	35.51	45.65	3.44	1.077
	2.3 The teacher helps students brainstorm to develop their critical thinking for challenging tasks.	16.67	30.43	52.17	3.60	1.114
3.	3.1 The teacher provides students with a variety of task options to choose from.	21.74	37.68	39.86	3.28	1.129
	3.2 The teacher gives	10.87	28.99	59.42	3.75	1.076

Promoting Students' Autonomy and Self-Regulation	students enough time to accomplish these tasks.					
	3.3 The teacher gives students several chances to review and revise their work based on feedback.	13.04	35.51	50.72	3.61	1.067
	3.4 The teacher flips the classroom to promote students' sense of autonomy.	5.80	63.77	29.71	3.91	1.018
	3.5 The teacher gives students the chance to make decisions about their learning.	14.49	40.58	44.20	3.49	1.092
4. Creating a Collaborative Learning Environment	4.1 The teacher encourages students to work in groups.	6.52	28.99	63.77	3.89	0.975
	4.2 The teacher requires students to work in-pairs.	13.04	35.51	50.72	3.56	1.111
	4.3 The teacher ensures that collaborative learning occurs regularly.	13.04	39.86	46.38	3.50	1.015
	4.4 I am approachable and ready to assist during class hours	10.87	28.99	59.42	3.75	1.076
	4.5 I am available beyond class hours for academic assistance	13.04	35.51	50.72	3.61	1.067
5. Fostering Students' Positive Attitude towards Learning	5.1 The teacher gives students tasks that are enjoyable.	16.67	42.75	39.86	3.40	1.088
	5.2 The teacher gives students tasks that are useful.	10.87	31.88	56.52	3.73	1.047
	5.3 The teacher adapts the tasks to meet students' individual learning needs.	15.94	36.96	46.38	3.46	1.131
	5.4 The teacher helps me feel comfortable expressing my ideas in the classroom.	9.42	28.99	60.87	3.85	1.019
	5.5 The teacher makes me feel confident in implementing the knowledge I acquired out-side classroom settings.	13.04	32.61	53.62	3.70	1.133
	6.1 The teacher provides students with feedback on their achievement.	6.52	28.99	63.77	3.89	0.975
	6.2 The teacher offers tests	13.04	35.51	50.72	3.56	1.111

6. Evaluation and Assessment	that reflect what students have learned.					
	6.3 The teacher offers students opportunities to express their opinions on the tests.	13.04	39.86	46.38	3.50	1.015
	6.4 The teacher is flexible with deadlines.	7.25	61.59	30.43	3.87	1.021
	6.5 the teacher adopts different types of evaluations (projects, presentations, quizzes, open-book tests).	5.80	29.71	63.77	3.91	1.018

Part one: Enhancing Students' Active Learning and Engagement

The results highlight a significant teacher dedication to fostering classroom participation, evidenced by high percentages for Items 1.1 and 1.2, which pertain to student involvement and positive reinforcement. In contrast, Items 1.3 and 1.4 exhibit considerable response variation. Over half of the students report that teachers employ alternative teaching methods when students struggle, yet a noteworthy 16.67% marked "Never/Rarely," indicating inconsistent implementation. While many students acknowledge regular or occasional use of technology by teachers, 17% disagree, contributing to the lowest mean score of 3.35 for this item, with only 40.58% affirming that technology is frequently utilized. This suggests that despite some teachers incorporating digital tools, technology's role in education remains limited.

Part Two: Developing Students' Critical Thinking and Problem-Solving Skills

Standard deviation scores vary among items 2.1, 2.2, and 2.3, revealing variations in students' reactions to the statements. Despite a similar mean score indicating agreement on the frequent occurrence of each item, responses differed significantly between "sometime" and "often/always" by 41.30% and 43.48% for item one. Most students believe that teachers frequently assign tasks that connect to their

real-life experiences, promoting brainstorming and critical thinking in challenging tasks.

Part Three: Promoting Students' Autonomy and Self- Regulation

The mean score of each item in this category remains consistent, while the standard deviation varies between 1.129 and 1.018, showing students' disagreement over the statements. The item with the highest percentage in this group is 3.4, where 63.77% of students claim that teachers sometimes flip the classrooms to promote students' sense of autonomy. This category is followed by item 3.3 with 50.72% of students admitting that teachers most often give students chances to review and revise their tasks.

Part Four: Creating a Collaborative Learning Environment

All three items in this category witnessed a consensus over the effective role of teachers in encouraging students to work in groups and in pairs. Item 4.1 shows a lower standard deviation score than other items, indicating students' higher agreement over that item, unlike item 4.2, which shows a higher score of standard deviation, indicating less agreement in students' responses.

Part Five: Fostering Students' Positive Attitude towards Learning

The students have responded positively to the items in this part, as 60.87% of students claim that teachers help them feel comfortable, and 53.62% claim that teachers often make them feel confident. Disagreement answers are noticeable in item 5.1, where 16.67% of students claim that teachers rarely or never give them enjoyable tasks, nor do they adapt tasks to meet students' individual learning needs.

Part Six: Evaluation and Assessment

The highest score in this category is for item 6.1 where 63.77% of the participants claim that teachers always provide them with feedback on their achievements; and item 6.5 where 63.77% claim that teachers adopt different types of evaluations.

This is followed by 6.4, in which 61.59% of students admit that teachers are sometimes flexible when it comes to deadlines. Notably, 13.04% of students think that teachers rarely or never offer tests that reflect what students have learned, nor afford students opportunities to express their opinions on tests.

B. Analysis of Data Collected by Teachers' Questionnaire

Section Two of Teachers' Questionnaire forms the part where teachers' responses are supposed to be analyzed and discussed. It is identical to students questionnaire and contain 27 items that are categorized in 6 parts that focus on the strategies that are believed to formulate the core stone of student-centered classrooms.

Table 3: The Percentages, Means and Standard Deviations of Teachers' Responses to the Questionnaire

SCSs	Items	Never/ Rarely	Some times	Often/ Alway s	Mean	Std. Dev.
1. Enhancing students' active learning	1.1 The teacher ensures all students actively participate in the class.	0	5.6	94.5	4.33	0.594
	1.2 The teacher commends students for their participation.	0	11.1	88.8	4.33	0.686
	1.3 The teacher tries alternative methods of teaching (e.g., visuals, peer collaboration) when students have difficulty in understanding a topic.	0	27.8	72.2	4.17	0.857
	1.4 The teacher tries to integrate technology efficiently in class (e.g., multimedia resources, online platforms).	11.1	22.2	66.6	3.89	1.023
2. Developing Students' Critical Thinking and Problem- Solving Skills	2.1 The teacher provides students with tasks that are cognitively challenging	5.6	50	44.4	3.50	0.786
	2.2 The teacher assigns tasks that connect to students' real-life experiences.	5.6	22.2	72.2	3.94	0.873
	2.3 The teacher helps students brainstorm to develop their critical thinking for challenging tasks.	0	27.8	72.2	4.06	0.802

3. Promoting Students' Autonomy and Self-Regulation	3.1 The teacher provides students with a variety of task options to choose from.	16.7	38.9	44.5	3.44	0.984
	3.2 The teacher gives students enough time to accomplish these tasks.	5.6	0	94.4	4.39	0.778
	3.3 The teacher gives students several chances to review and revise their work based on feedback.	16.7	44.4	38.9	3.33	0.907
	3.4 The teacher flips the classroom to promote students' sense of autonomy.	5.6	16.7	77.7	4.06	0.873
	3.5 The teacher gives students the chance to make decisions about their learning.	0	16.7	83.4	4.39	0.778
4. Creating a Collaborative Learning Environment	4.1 The teacher encourages students to work in groups.	0	5.6	94.4	4.44	0.616
	4.2 The teacher requires students to work in-pairs.	0	16.7	83.3	4.28	0.752
	4.3 The teacher ensures that collaborative learning occurs regularly.	0	0	100	4.33	0.485
	4.4 I am approachable and ready to assist during class hours	0	0	100	4.33	0.485
	4.5 I am available beyond class hours for academic assistance	5.6	0	94.4	4.06	0.873
5. Fostering Students' Positive Attitude towards Learning	5.1 The teacher gives students tasks that are enjoyable.	0	27.8	72.2	4.06	0.802
	5.2 The teacher gives students tasks that are useful.	0	5.6	94.5	4.33	0.594
	5.3 The teacher adapts the tasks to meet students' individual learning needs.	0	16.7	83.4	4.00	0.594
	5.4 The teacher helps me feel comfortable expressing my ideas in the classroom.	0	0	100	4.39	0.502
	5.5 The teacher makes me feel confident in implementing the knowledge I acquired out-side classroom settings.	11.1	11.1	77.8	3.94	0.938
6. Evaluation	6.1 The teacher provides students with feedback on their achievement.	5.6	11.1	83.3	4.00	0.767
	6.2 The teacher offers tests that reflect what students have	0	27.8	72.2	4.11	0.832

and Assessment	learned.					
	6.3 The teacher offers students opportunities to express their opinions on the tests.	5.6	5.6	88.9	3.00	0.970
	6.4 The teacher is flexible with deadlines.	33.3	44.4	22.2	4.06	0.725
	6.5 the teacher adopts different types of evaluations (projects, presentations, quizzes, open-book tests).	0	0	100	4.39	0.502

Part One: Enhancing Students' Active Learning and Engagement

Here, the sample of teachers was asked about their role in enhancing students' active learning, in which the majority claimed to ensure all students actively participated in class and students got commend for their participation. Responses to item 1.3 differ, with 27% of teachers indicating they occasionally resorted to alternate teaching methods when students struggled to comprehend a topic, while 22% acknowledged they sometimes incorporated technology in the classroom. Merely 10% of educators reported that they never or infrequently utilized technology within their classes.

Part Two: Developing Students' Critical Thinking and Problem-Solving Skills

The percentages under this category, which are illustrated in 'table nine' generally indicate positive practices among the respondents. Teachers reported moderate use of cognitively challenging tasks with 50% responding 'sometimes'. The highest level of engagement was observed in items 2.2 and 2.3e where 72% of the respondents claim they give students tasks that connect to their daily life or facilitate brainstorming activities strategy at least sometimes, and most indicated they do so regularly.

Part Three: Promoting Students Autonomy and Self-Regulation

When teachers are asked about the means by which they help to promote autonomy and self-regulation in their students; almost all teachers agreed on giving students

enough time to accomplish their tasks and express their opinions on tests. While answers varied to item number one that asks teachers whether they provide students a variety of task options to choose from scoring a mean of 3.44. While 44% of respondents claim they sometimes give students several chances to review and revise their work based on feedback; and 83% confirmed they ‘always or often’ give students the chance to make decisions about their learning.

Part Four: Creating a Collaborative Learning Environment

All items under this category have registered a high mean. Means generally ranged between 4.28 to 4.44, indicating an immense agreement among all items. All respondents have agreed on ‘always or often’ encouraging students to work in groups and pairs. They also ensured collaborative learning occurs regularly, and all respondents have claimed to be available during and beyond class hours.

Part Five: Fostering Students’ Positive Attitude towards Learning

All items scored high means indicating consistency and agreement among all items. Teachers have reaffirmed their role in fostering students’ positive attitude towards learning.

Part Six: Evaluation and Assessment

When teachers were asked about their methods of evaluation, the majority have reassured giving students feedback on their achievements, giving tests that reflect what they have learnt, give students the chance to express their opinions on the test and adopt different types of assessments. Responses to item number four fluctuated between being ‘sometimes’ and ‘never/rarely’ regarding flexibility with deadlines.

C. Comparison between Students and Teachers' Responses to the Administered Questionnaires:

To statistically compare between students and teachers' responses to the administered questionnaires regarding the implementation of student-centered strategies in the classroom, independent-samples t-tests were performed using

SPSS. Before analysis, Levene's Test for Equality of Variances was applied to each item of the questionnaire. The significance values of Levene's test were greater than .05 in most cases, which means that the assumption of equal variances has been met. Consequently, the results presented under the assumption of equal variances have been utilized for interpretation. When this assumption is breached, the modified statistics reported under the premise of equal variances not assumed have been applied.

For the majority of the questionnaire's items, the $p < .05$ value is lower than 0.05. This indicates significant difference between how students and teachers view student-centered practices inside classroom. Nonetheless, some items do not show statistically significant variation, the $p \geq .05$ value is higher than 0.05, which indicates similar responses to those items. The difference between the 'Mean' of each item is also small, hence there has been a similar level of agreement between the two groups of respondents.

However, at the item-level, the results of the test indicate significant differences between the views of the two groups, including, Part One, namely Enhancing students active learning) are the values $t(26) = -2.38, p < .05$ and the Part Three: Promoting students' autonomy and self-regulation, which outline disparities in the responses by students and teachers $t(26) = -2.16, p < .05$ demonstrating that students frequently experience promotional strategies—such as stimulating participation or encouraging independence—less acutely than teachers assume they are implementing them. This emphasizes a possible discrepancy between pedagogical objectives and students' experiences.

Likewise, significant differences were identified for category four where the focus is on Creating collaborative learning environment ($p < .05$). These results indicate that while teachers claim frequent use of student-centered strategies, students on the other hand think these strategies are less practiced during actual class time. The

overall results of the independent sample t-test indicate a large gap between students and teachers' responses specifically in parts 3, 5 and 6.

Part 5, which aims at fostering students' positive attitude towards learning, has also witnessed disparities in responses between students and teachers. The students reported less evidence of fostering engagement than teachers claimed.

Nonetheless, 2 items (2.1 and 2.2) under part two that focuses on teachers working to develop students critical thinking and problem-solving skills; and 2 items (6.2 and 6.3) under the sixth part which focuses on Evaluation and Assessment do not show statistically significant differences ($p > .05$). These scores suggest how students believe that assessment practices are less supportive and less student-centered, in comparison to what teachers have claimed performing.

XI. Discussion of Results

In this study, quantitative research method has been adopted as a data collection technique to study students' and teachers' perceptions in accordance with the actual implementation of the SCA in genuine educational settings. The primary questions this study seeks to address are: Do EFL teachers implement SCA practices in their classrooms? Do students believe teachers employ SCSs; what strategies are the most used by the teachers? And what strategies are the least used by the teachers? Do teachers employ strategies to promote students' autonomy?

Question One: Do EFL teachers implement SCA practices in their classrooms?

To be able to answer this study question, the results of the two questionnaires are looked through and the results of the teachers' questionnaire indicate that teachers do show some effort in implementing some of the student-centered strategies inside their classrooms. All teachers claim implementing strategies that enhance students' active learning and engagement, strategies that develop students' critical thinking and problem solving skills, strategies that promote students' autonomy

and self-regulation, strategies that create a collaborative learning environment, strategies that foster students' positive attitude towards learning, and all teachers claim to adapt different types of tests, assessments and projects and give students freedom express their opinion regarding tests and assignments.

Question Two: Do students believe teachers employ SCSs?

When students are asked about whether teachers employ SCSs inside classroom the majority of the students claim that teachers employ these strategies but the degree of application differ from what teachers have claimed; for example, while 72% of the teachers claim to give students assignments that connect to their real-life experience, only 45% students agreed to this claim. And categories related to 'fostering students' autonomy' and 'creating a creating a collaborative learning environment' also show disagreement between students and teachers. These claims are proven by the results of Independent Sample t-Test. This can be interpreted as teachers not being fully committed to the application of student-centered strategies, with most practices either absent or not applied.

Question Three: What strategies are the most used by the teachers?

While all teachers claim to use almost all strategies to a high degree, this is not agreed on by the results of students' questionnaire, as high percentages are only recorded in the following strategies, based on students' perceptions: teachers commends students for their participation, teachers ensure all students actively participate, teachers help students brainstorm to help develop their critical thinking, teachers give students enough time to accomplish their tasks, teachers encourage students to work in groups, teachers help students feel comfortable expressing their ideas, teachers provide students with feedback on their achievement.

Question Four: What strategies are the least used by the teachers?

Students also believe that teachers do not integrate technology efficiently inside classes (a claim supported by comments from students), teachers do not provide students with a variety of task options to choose from, the teachers doesn't flip the classroom to promote students' sense of autonomy, teachers do not give students tasks that are enjoyable (this is also supported by comments from students), and finally, teachers are not flexible when it comes to tasks' deadlines.

Teachers also admit on not giving students enough tasks that are cognitively challenging, not providing students with a variety of tasks to choose from, not giving student several chances to review their tasks and not being flexible enough with exam deadlines.

Question Five: Do teachers employ strategies to promote students' autonomy?

The results of the students' questionnaire indicate lack of employment of strategies that promote students' autonomy, especially the point where students should be allowed to make decisions about their own learning; a claim that teachers disagreed on.

XII. Conclusion

The SCA forms one of the key features that the members of BP are obliged to adhere to, is an approach that is rooted in constructivism and humanism approaches which prioritize students' needs and helps learners be more independent and autonomous learners throughout their lives. This goal can only be achieved when students feel they are equal partners in the learning process and contributors in the creation of knowledge. University of Duhok and Cihan University-Duhok have both taken initiative to be part of BP and are adhering to key features of this system, among which, student-centered learning and teaching. All the teaching staff in both researched universities are required to complete a six-month pedagogical training course which stresses the recent trends in teaching and

learning, student-centered approach is one of those modules that is highly stressed during this course. Despite these efforts, EFL teachers seem to resort to teacher-centered approaches during actual class time.

This study is an attempt to understand whether EFL teachers employ SCA inside classes, if they do, then what strategies do they apply? do they employ strategies that foster students' autonomy and autonomous learning?

To be able to answer these questions, a quantitative research methodology subsuming two data collection tools, a students' questionnaire and a teachers' questionnaire has been adopted. Teachers report extensive use of SCSs strategies in the classroom, a claim contradicted by students who noted a lower application rate. Key SCA elements like fostering student autonomy, developing critical thinking, and creating a collaborative learning environment appear to be lacking in practice.

X.III Recommendations

- Teachers need to be more dedicated in following SCSs despite the subject matter they teach.
- All novice teachers recently graduated from pedagogy courses in Kurdistan Region need be followed up by mentor teachers to help them put the theoretical information they acquire during courses into practice.
- Teachers should give students more voice and autonomy inside the classroom in order to point the areas of strength and/or weakness in their teaching and those of students in their learning.

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