



IMPLEMENTING STUDENT-CENTERED PEDAGOGIES TO FOSTER SPEAKING DEVELOPMENT IN HIGHER EDUCATION EFL CLASSROOMS

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Accepted:
29 July 2026

Published:
31 July 2026

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates the implementation of student-centered pedagogies to foster speaking development in higher education English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classrooms. Employing a qualitative case study design, the research involved 25 undergraduate students and one English lecturer at an Indonesian higher education institution. Data were collected through classroom observations, semi-structured interviews, and document analysis, and analyzed using thematic analysis. The findings reveal that student-centered pedagogies created a more interactive learning environment by encouraging active participation, collaborative learning, learner autonomy, and authentic communication. Students demonstrated increased confidence, engagement, and willingness to speak English through discussions, presentations, and group activities. The lecturer's role shifted from knowledge provider to learning facilitator, while formative assessment practices supported continuous speaking development. However, challenges such as varying levels of English proficiency, managing diverse learner needs, and the time required for authentic assessment were also identified. In addition, professional development, adequate learning resources, institutional support, and continuous monitoring emerged as important factors influencing the successful implementation of student-centered pedagogies. Overall, the study concludes that student-centered pedagogies provide an effective instructional approach for enhancing speaking development and communicative competence in higher education EFL classrooms.

Keywords: *student-centered pedagogies, speaking development, higher education, EFL classrooms, qualitative study.*

1. INTRODUCTION

The field of English Language Teaching (ELT) has experienced a substantial pedagogical transformation over the past several decades, moving away from predominantly teacher-centered instruction toward student-centered pedagogies that emphasize learners' active participation in constructing knowledge (Harmer, 2017; Williyen et al., 2025; Saed et al., 2021). This shift is rooted in the belief that learning becomes more meaningful and sustainable when students are actively engaged in the learning process rather than functioning as passive recipients of information (Nunan, 2023; Thornbury, 2023). Student-centered pedagogy is underpinned by constructivist principles, which encourage learners to

collaborate, solve problems, reflect on their learning, and develop autonomy while teachers facilitate rather than dominate classroom interaction (Ghafar, 2023; Rosli & Azman, 2025; Katawazai, 2021). Within ELT, this pedagogical orientation is considered particularly important because language learning requires continuous communication, interaction, and meaningful practice in authentic contexts (Jaya et al., 2025; Sari et al., 2022).

The movement toward student-centered learning has become increasingly significant in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classrooms, where communicative competence is recognized as the primary objective of language instruction. Godwin-Jones (2018) argues that learner-centered classrooms enable students to "become

committed to improving their English" while simultaneously accommodating different learning styles and encouraging learners to support one another in developing their language skills. Rather than relying on lectures and teacher explanations, student-centered pedagogies engage learners in collaborative discussions, presentations, role plays, project-based activities, problem-solving tasks, and peer interactions that create authentic opportunities for language use (Cortázar et al., 2021; Kiong et al., 2022; Widiastuti et al., 2022). Such learning environments not only improve students' linguistic competence but also promote learner autonomy, motivation, confidence, and critical thinking, all of which are essential characteristics of successful language learners (Jaya et al., 2019; Ennis, 2020).

Among the four language skills, speaking is widely regarded as one of the most challenging competencies for EFL learners, particularly in higher education settings. University students are expected to communicate ideas effectively during classroom discussions, presentations, seminars, academic collaborations, and future professional activities. Nevertheless, many students continue to experience difficulties in expressing themselves fluently and confidently in English. These challenges are often associated with limited opportunities to practice speaking, communication anxiety, inadequate vocabulary, fear of making grammatical mistakes, and classroom environments where teacher talk dominates student interaction. Consequently, although students may demonstrate satisfactory knowledge of grammar and vocabulary, they frequently struggle to transfer this knowledge into spontaneous oral communication.

Student-centered pedagogies provide a promising solution to these challenges by creating learning environments in which students become active users of English rather than passive listeners. Through communicative tasks, collaborative learning, peer feedback, and interactive classroom activities, students are encouraged to negotiate meaning, exchange opinions, solve problems collaboratively, and develop communicative competence through authentic interaction. These pedagogical practices are consistent with communicative

language teaching principles that emphasize language use as a social process rather than merely the acquisition of grammatical knowledge (Akram et al., 2022; Saptiany & Prabowo, 2024; Yakavets et al., 2023). As learners participate more actively in classroom communication, they develop greater confidence, fluency, and willingness to communicate, which are fundamental components of speaking proficiency (Jin, 2023; Thi & Que, 2025).

Research investigating learner-centered teaching in ESL and EFL contexts has grown considerably over the past three decades. Numerous studies have explored the implementation and effectiveness of learner-centered approaches in various educational contexts (Weimer, 2013; Wahyuni et al., 2019; Fadilah et al., 2024; Wu, 2018). Most of these studies have been conducted in primary schools, secondary schools, or traditional university settings, where learner-centered approaches have been associated with improvements in students' engagement, motivation, language achievement, and communicative competence. The literature consistently suggests that classrooms characterized by active student participation provide more effective conditions for language acquisition than conventional teacher-centered instruction.

Despite the growing body of research on learner-centered teaching, relatively few studies have specifically examined the implementation of student-centered pedagogies to foster speaking development in higher education EFL classrooms. Much of the existing literature reports successful implementation within general school systems or conventional university contexts, while empirical evidence from higher education EFL classrooms that specifically focuses on speaking development remains comparatively limited. Furthermore, in many higher education institutions, English instruction continues to rely heavily on lecture-based teaching, textbook-oriented learning, and teacher explanations, leaving students with insufficient opportunities to engage in meaningful oral communication. This situation highlights the need for further investigation into how student-centered pedagogies can be effectively implemented to improve speaking competence among university EFL learners.

The increasing demand for graduates who possess effective English communication skills further strengthens the importance of implementing student-centered pedagogies in higher education. In today's globalized academic and professional environments, university graduates are expected not only to master English linguistically but also to communicate confidently, collaborate with others, think critically, and participate actively in intercultural communication. These expectations require English classrooms to move beyond traditional teacher-centered instruction toward pedagogical practices that encourage active learning, collaboration, reflection, and authentic communication. Student-centered pedagogies therefore offer an appropriate instructional framework for developing students' speaking abilities while simultaneously fostering the broader competencies required in twenty-first-century education.

Based on these considerations, this study seeks to bridge the existing gap in the literature by investigating the implementation of student-centered pedagogies to foster speaking development in higher education EFL classrooms. Specifically, the study explores how student-centered instructional practices are implemented in university English classrooms, examines their contributions to students' speaking development, and identifies the opportunities and challenges encountered during their implementation. The findings are expected to contribute to the expanding literature on student-centered language teaching and provide practical implications for English lecturers seeking to create more interactive, communicative, and learner-centered speaking classrooms in higher education.

2. METHODS

2.1 Research Design

This study employed a qualitative case study design to investigate the implementation of student-centered pedagogies in fostering speaking development among English as a Foreign Language (EFL) students in higher education. A qualitative approach was considered appropriate because the study sought to obtain an in-depth understanding of

classroom practices, participants' experiences, and the processes through which student-centered pedagogies facilitated speaking development rather than to measure causal relationships quantitatively (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Tisdell et al., 2025; Patton, 2020). The study was guided by the principles of interpretivism, which emphasize understanding educational phenomena from the perspectives of participants within their natural learning context (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011).

The study addressed the following research questions:

1. How are student-centered pedagogies implemented to foster speaking development in higher education EFL classrooms?
2. What challenges do English lecturers encounter when implementing student-centered pedagogies to promote students' speaking skills?
3. How do university students perceive the implementation of student-centered pedagogies in supporting the development of their English-speaking proficiency?

2.2 Research Site and Participants

The research was conducted at a higher education institution in Indonesia where English is taught as a foreign language. The study involved one undergraduate EFL classroom consisting of 25 students enrolled in a compulsory English course. The participants represented students from non-English majors who were taking English to develop communicative competence for academic and professional purposes. They had previously completed foundational English courses and possessed varying levels of speaking proficiency.

Purposive sampling was employed to select participants because it enabled the researcher to recruit individuals who possessed direct experience with the implementation of student-centered pedagogies (Makwana et al., 2023; Ahmad & Wilkins, 2024). In addition to the student participants, one English lecturer responsible for teaching the course participated in the study. The lecturer had experience implementing student-centered instructional practices such as collaborative learning,

classroom discussions, presentations, peer feedback, and problem-solving activities.

2.3 Research Procedure

The study was conducted over four instructional meetings, each lasting approximately 90 minutes. Throughout the implementation, classroom instruction was designed according to the principles of student-centered pedagogy, which emphasizes active participation, collaboration, learner autonomy, reflective learning, and authentic communication (Pollock et al., 2023; Alwadaeen & Piller, 2022).

During each lesson, students participated in various communicative speaking activities including small-group discussions, collaborative problem-solving, role plays, oral presentations, peer assessment, and reflective classroom discussions. These activities were designed to maximize students' opportunities to use English meaningfully while encouraging interaction among peers.

Consistent with student-centered learning principles, the lecturer assumed the role of facilitator rather than knowledge transmitter. Students were encouraged to participate in selecting discussion topics, expressing opinions, asking questions, providing peer feedback, and reflecting on their own learning experiences. The instructional process emphasized collaborative knowledge construction and communicative language use rather than teacher-dominated classroom interaction (Zhang, 2022; Wahyuni et al., 2019; Becerra-Posada et al., 2022).

The implementation of classroom activities was informed by the learner-centered teaching framework proposed by Arroba and Acosta (2021), particularly its emphasis on learner participation, instructional flexibility, shared responsibility, and authentic learning experiences. Throughout the instructional process, the researcher observed how these pedagogical principles contributed to students' speaking development and classroom engagement.

2.4 Data Collection

Data were collected through classroom observations, semi-structured interviews, and document analysis to achieve methodological

triangulation and enhance the credibility of the findings (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

Classroom observations were conducted throughout the four instructional sessions. All teaching and learning activities were video-recorded to facilitate detailed analysis of classroom interaction, students' participation, speaking performance, and the implementation of student-centered pedagogical practices. Observation field notes were simultaneously recorded to capture classroom dynamics, students' engagement, collaborative behaviors, and the lecturer's facilitative role.

Semi-structured interviews were conducted after the instructional implementation to explore participants' perceptions of student-centered learning experiences. Five students were purposively selected to represent diverse classroom participation patterns, including highly active participants, moderately engaged students, and less active learners. This variation enabled the researcher to obtain rich and diverse perspectives regarding the implementation of student-centered pedagogies. In addition, the English lecturer participated in an individual interview to provide insights into instructional planning, classroom implementation, challenges encountered, and perceived impacts on students' speaking development.

Relevant instructional documents, including lesson plans, learning materials, classroom tasks, and students' speaking assignments, were also collected to support the interpretation of observational and interview data.

Prior to data collection, informed consent was obtained from all participants. Participation was entirely voluntary, and confidentiality was maintained by assigning pseudonyms to all participants throughout the reporting of the findings.

2.5 Data Analysis

The collected data were analyzed using thematic analysis following the procedures proposed by Braun and Clarke (2022). Initially, all observation notes and interview recordings were transcribed verbatim. The researcher repeatedly read the transcripts to become familiar with the data before generating initial codes that represented meaningful units related to the

implementation of student-centered pedagogies and speaking development.

The coded data were subsequently organized into broader categories and themes reflecting patterns across participants' experiences. The emerging themes focused on instructional implementation, learner participation, speaking development, classroom interaction, challenges encountered, and participants' perceptions of student-centered learning.

To ensure the trustworthiness of the findings, data triangulation was conducted by comparing evidence obtained from classroom observations, interview transcripts, and instructional documents (Amin et al., 2020; Guba & Lincoln, 1989). Member checking was also employed by allowing participants to review interview summaries to confirm the accuracy of the interpretations. These procedures enhanced the credibility, dependability, and confirmability of the qualitative findings.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 RESULTS

1) *Balance of Power*

One of the fundamental characteristics identified during the implementation of student-centered pedagogies was the shift in classroom authority from the lecturer to the students. Rather than positioning students as passive recipients of knowledge, the lecturer encouraged them to become active participants in planning and carrying out learning activities. Students were invited to express their preferences regarding discussion topics and classroom activities, creating a learning environment that emphasized participation, collaboration, and shared responsibility. This instructional approach enabled students to play a more meaningful role in the teaching and learning process while increasing their opportunities to practice speaking English in authentic communicative situations.

Classroom observations showed that students dominated most of the speaking activities throughout the lessons. They actively participated in small-group discussions, role plays, classroom presentations, and collaborative tasks, while the lecturer primarily acted as a facilitator who monitored discussions, provided

guidance, and encouraged interaction whenever necessary. This classroom atmosphere allowed students to communicate more frequently in English, exchange ideas with their peers, and develop greater confidence in expressing their opinions orally.

Although the implementation of shared classroom authority generated positive learning experiences, it also presented several challenges for the lecturer. Allowing students to participate in selecting learning topics often resulted in differing opinions, making it difficult to reach agreement on classroom activities that accommodated everyone's interests. As the lecturer explained:

"Inviting my students to decide what topic should be discussed and what type of learning activity should be carried out in the classroom is quite challenging. I rarely find all students agreeing on the same topic or activity, so it is difficult to accommodate everyone's expectations."

Despite these challenges, the lecturer continued to encourage students' involvement in classroom decision-making because it promoted greater engagement and ownership of learning. Rather than viewing students as passive listeners, the lecturer treated them as learning partners whose ideas and preferences were valued throughout the instructional process. This participatory approach encouraged students to become more responsible for their own learning while simultaneously creating a more interactive classroom environment.

Interview findings also revealed that students responded positively to this instructional practice. They reported feeling more respected because their opinions were considered during classroom activities. Several participants explained that the learning atmosphere differed considerably from their previous English classes, where teachers generally dominated classroom interaction and students had limited opportunities to express themselves. The opportunity to contribute ideas and participate actively in classroom discussions increased their confidence to speak English and reduced their hesitation when communicating with classmates.

Overall, the implementation of student-centered pedagogies successfully

established a more balanced distribution of classroom participation. By encouraging students to contribute to decision-making, engage in collaborative learning activities, and communicate more frequently in English, the instructional process fostered greater learner autonomy, classroom engagement, and speaking development.

2) Function of Content

The implementation of student-centered pedagogies also influenced how instructional content was organized and delivered during speaking lessons. Instead of relying solely on predetermined teaching materials, the lecturer designed learning activities that encouraged students to construct knowledge through interaction, collaboration, and authentic communication. Speaking tasks were organized around topics that were familiar and relevant to students' academic and daily lives, allowing them to communicate more naturally while developing their oral proficiency.

One of the major challenges encountered during the implementation was the considerable variation in students' English-speaking proficiency. Some students were able to communicate relatively fluently, whereas others still experienced difficulties in expressing even simple ideas. This diversity required the lecturer to carefully design classroom activities that could engage students with different levels of language competence without excluding less proficient learners.

To address this issue, the lecturer implemented heterogeneous grouping by placing students with higher speaking proficiency together with those who required greater support. Through collaborative discussions and problem-solving activities, more proficient students naturally provided assistance to their peers by correcting pronunciation, suggesting vocabulary, and encouraging them to express their opinions in English. This collaborative interaction enabled less confident students to participate more actively in classroom communication while reducing their anxiety about making mistakes.

Reflecting on this instructional strategy, the lecturer explained:

“Although my students have different levels of English proficiency, my priority is to ensure that every student becomes actively involved in classroom activities. Instead of focusing only on selecting the perfect learning materials, I prefer designing activities that encourage all students to participate and speak English together.”

Classroom observations demonstrated that heterogeneous grouping successfully increased participation among students who had previously remained passive during speaking activities. Many students who initially hesitated to express themselves gradually became more willing to ask questions, share opinions, and contribute to group discussions after receiving encouragement from their peers. The collaborative learning environment also promoted mutual support, allowing students to negotiate meaning and practice spoken English in a less intimidating atmosphere.

Nevertheless, this instructional approach also revealed an important challenge. Students with higher English proficiency frequently assumed the role of peer facilitators, spending considerable time assisting classmates who experienced language difficulties. While this strategy benefited less proficient learners by increasing their speaking opportunities and confidence, it occasionally reduced the opportunities for more advanced students to engage in speaking tasks that matched their own proficiency level. Consequently, although heterogeneous grouping successfully fostered inclusive participation, it also highlighted the importance of designing differentiated speaking activities that provide appropriate challenges for learners across varying proficiency levels.

Overall, the findings suggest that the selection and organization of instructional content should not only consider the linguistic objectives of the lesson but also the diversity of students' abilities. By integrating collaborative speaking activities with carefully planned heterogeneous grouping, student-centered pedagogies created meaningful opportunities for all learners to participate actively in oral communication while fostering both individual speaking development and collaborative learning.

3) *Role of the Teacher*

The findings revealed that the lecturer's role underwent a substantial transformation during the implementation of student-centered pedagogies. Rather than serving as the primary source of knowledge, the lecturer functioned as a facilitator who created learning opportunities, encouraged interaction, monitored classroom discussions, and provided guidance when students encountered communication difficulties. This shift enabled students to assume greater responsibility for participating in speaking activities while allowing the lecturer to focus on supporting the learning process instead of dominating classroom discourse.

Throughout the instructional sessions, the lecturer intentionally minimized teacher talk and maximized students' opportunities to communicate in English. Most classroom time was devoted to collaborative discussions, pair work, group presentations, and problem-solving activities in which students actively exchanged ideas and negotiated meaning. During these activities, the lecturer circulated around the classroom, observed students' interactions, provided constructive feedback, and encouraged less active learners to participate more confidently in oral communication.

An important instructional strategy observed during the lessons was the lecturer's effort to involve every student regardless of their language proficiency. Students who were generally reluctant to speak were encouraged to share opinions, answer questions, and contribute to group discussions. At the same time, students with stronger English proficiency were encouraged to support their peers through collaborative learning activities, creating an environment in which learning occurred through interaction rather than direct instruction alone.

When reflecting on his role in implementing student-centered pedagogies, the lecturer emphasized the importance of providing students with sufficient opportunities to practice speaking. He explained:

"English is a language that can only be mastered through continuous practice. If students are not given enough

opportunities to use English regularly, achieving communicative competence will remain an expectation rather than a reality."

The lecturer further explained that facilitating interaction among students was one of the most effective ways to increase classroom participation. By organizing heterogeneous groups, students with higher proficiency were able to support classmates who experienced difficulties in speaking, while the lecturer supervised discussions and provided assistance only when necessary. Regarding this instructional practice, he stated:

"When students with lower proficiency work together with more proficient classmates, those who are usually passive become more active because they receive encouragement and support from their peers during the learning process."

Although this collaborative approach produced positive learning outcomes, classroom observations indicated that it also presented a pedagogical challenge. Students with higher English proficiency frequently assumed the role of peer mentors, dedicating considerable time to assisting classmates who required additional support. Consequently, opportunities for these advanced learners to further develop their own speaking competence were occasionally limited. This finding suggests that while peer collaboration effectively promotes inclusive participation, lecturers should also provide differentiated learning tasks that challenge students across different proficiency levels.

Overall, the findings demonstrate that the lecturer's role in a student-centered classroom extends beyond delivering instructional content. Effective implementation requires the lecturer to facilitate meaningful interaction, create an inclusive learning environment, encourage learner autonomy, and ensure that every student has opportunities to actively participate in speaking activities. By adopting these facilitative roles, the lecturer successfully created a communicative classroom atmosphere that supported students' speaking development while

fostering collaboration, confidence, and active engagement.

4) *Responsibility for Learning*

The implementation of student-centered pedagogies encouraged students to assume greater responsibility for their own learning, particularly in developing their English-speaking skills. Instead of depending primarily on teacher explanations, students were expected to participate actively in discussions, complete collaborative tasks, solve communicative problems, and reflect on their own learning progress. This learning environment shifted the responsibility for successful learning from the lecturer alone to a shared commitment between the lecturer and the students.

During classroom observations, students demonstrated increasing independence in managing their speaking activities. They initiated discussions, negotiated ideas with their peers, exchanged feedback, and attempted to solve communication problems collaboratively before seeking assistance from the lecturer. This gradual increase in learner autonomy suggested that students became more confident in directing their own learning while recognizing that regular participation was essential for improving their speaking proficiency.

The lecturer explained that the successful implementation of student-centered pedagogies was strongly supported by the instructional flexibility provided by the institution. Having the autonomy to organize classroom activities, determine learning strategies, and design assessment methods enabled the lecturer to prioritize students' communicative development rather than focusing solely on predetermined instructional targets.

Reflecting on this experience, the lecturer stated:

“The flexibility given to manage my own classroom allows me to focus on creating learning activities that encourage students to become active participants. My responsibility is not only to teach English but also to ensure

that students are willing to take responsibility for their own learning.”

The lecturer further emphasized that implementing student-centered pedagogies required continuous instructional creativity. According to the interview, providing opportunities for students to speak, collaborate, and solve problems independently was far more valuable than relying exclusively on conventional teaching methods. Students were encouraged to explore ideas, interact with classmates, and practice English in authentic situations, thereby developing both communicative competence and learning autonomy.

Classroom observations further revealed that students responded enthusiastically to this instructional approach. The classroom atmosphere became increasingly interactive as students engaged in discussions, exchanged opinions, and practiced speaking without waiting for direct instructions from the lecturer. Even students who initially demonstrated limited English proficiency gradually became more willing to communicate, participate in group discussions, and express their ideas orally. Their increased willingness to speak reflected a growing sense of ownership over the learning process.

Overall, the findings indicate that student-centered pedagogies successfully promoted learner responsibility by encouraging students to become active participants rather than passive recipients of instruction. Through continuous interaction, collaborative learning, and greater autonomy in classroom activities, students developed stronger confidence in using English while recognizing that their own participation played a crucial role in improving their speaking abilities.

5) *Purpose and Processes of Evaluation*

Another important aspect observed during the implementation of student-centered pedagogies was the transformation of classroom assessment practices. Rather than relying exclusively on formal speaking tests administered at the end of instruction, the lecturer employed a variety of formative assessment strategies that continuously monitored students' speaking development

throughout the learning process. Assessment was integrated into everyday classroom activities, allowing students to demonstrate their communicative abilities in authentic contexts while receiving immediate feedback for improvement.

During classroom observations, students' speaking performance was assessed through multiple activities, including peer discussions, group presentations, pair work, classroom questioning, and reflective speaking tasks. Instead of positioning assessment as a separate instructional stage, the lecturer embedded evaluation within collaborative learning activities. This approach enabled students to use English more naturally without experiencing excessive pressure commonly associated with formal oral examinations.

One of the assessment strategies implemented by the lecturer involved peer assessment during group discussions. While students exchanged ideas and responded to questions from their classmates, the lecturer carefully observed their speaking performance by taking notes on pronunciation, fluency, vocabulary use, grammatical accuracy, interactional competence, and confidence. This continuous observation allowed the lecturer to obtain a comprehensive understanding of each student's speaking progress without interrupting the natural flow of classroom communication.

Explaining the rationale for this assessment approach, the lecturer stated:

"I particularly like this type of assessment because it allows me to monitor my students' progress more effectively. The advantage is that students often do not realize they are being evaluated, so they communicate more naturally without the tension that usually occurs during formal speaking tests."

In addition to classroom observation, students also completed pair-speaking assignments outside the classroom. Each pair selected a discussion topic, conducted a recorded conversation, and later submitted the recording as evidence of their speaking performance. During the following lesson, students briefly presented the outcomes of

their discussions before submitting the recordings for further evaluation. This activity enabled students to practice speaking in a more relaxed environment while providing the lecturer with sufficient opportunities to review their oral performance repeatedly and more objectively.

Reflecting on the usefulness of recorded speaking tasks, the lecturer explained:

"Recorded conversations enable me to assess students' speaking development more accurately because I can replay the recordings as many times as necessary. This makes it easier to identify both their strengths and the areas that still require improvement."

Although recorded assessments offered considerable advantages, the lecturer acknowledged that they required significantly more time to evaluate than conventional classroom assessments. Listening carefully to each recording, analyzing individual speaking performance, and providing meaningful feedback demanded substantial time and effort. Nevertheless, the lecturer considered this investment worthwhile because it generated richer evidence of students' communicative development than relying solely on one-time speaking tests.

Overall, the findings demonstrate that assessment within student-centered pedagogies extends beyond measuring learning outcomes at the end of instruction. Instead, assessment becomes an integral part of the learning process itself, providing continuous opportunities for students to practice speaking, reflect on their progress, and receive constructive feedback. Through the use of authentic, formative, and performance-based assessment strategies, the lecturer was able to monitor students' speaking development more comprehensively while creating a supportive learning environment that encouraged continuous improvement in oral communication.

6) *Emerging Issues in the Implementation of Student-Centered Pedagogies*

In addition to the major dimensions of student-centered pedagogies discussed previously, the findings revealed several

contextual factors that significantly influenced the successful implementation of speaking instruction in higher education EFL classrooms. These issues were not explicitly represented within the pedagogical framework adopted in this study; however, they emerged consistently from classroom observations and interview data. The findings suggest that the effectiveness of student-centered pedagogies depends not only on classroom instructional practices but also on institutional, professional, and resource-related support.

One of the most prominent issues identified was the importance of continuous professional development for English lecturers. Implementing student-centered pedagogies required lecturers to possess not only strong pedagogical knowledge but also the ability to design communicative learning activities, facilitate classroom interaction, manage collaborative learning, and provide meaningful feedback during speaking activities. The lecturer acknowledged that adopting this instructional approach demanded ongoing reflection and continuous improvement in teaching practices.

Reflecting on this issue, the lecturer explained:

“Implementing student-centered learning requires teachers to continuously improve their teaching skills. We need to learn new strategies, adapt to students' needs, and become more flexible in managing classroom interaction because this approach is very different from traditional teaching.”

Another important factor identified during the study was the availability of adequate teaching and learning resources. Interactive speaking activities required sufficient instructional materials, flexible classroom arrangements, technological support, and learning media capable of facilitating collaboration among students. Both the lecturer and students emphasized that appropriate learning resources enabled classroom activities to become more engaging, communicative, and conducive to active participation. Conversely, limited resources could reduce opportunities for students to maximize their speaking practice during classroom interaction.

Regular instructional monitoring also emerged as an essential component supporting the successful implementation of student-centered pedagogies. Continuous monitoring enabled lecturers to evaluate students' participation, identify learning difficulties, and modify instructional strategies according to classroom needs. Rather than merely assessing learning outcomes, monitoring functioned as an ongoing process that informed instructional decisions throughout the learning process. Through continuous observation and reflection, the lecturer was able to provide timely support for students experiencing communication difficulties while maintaining active participation among all learners.

Furthermore, institutional commitment was identified as another determining factor influencing the sustainability of student-centered pedagogies. The lecturer highlighted that institutional support in terms of academic policies, professional development opportunities, instructional facilities, and administrative encouragement created a favorable environment for implementing innovative teaching practices. Without such institutional commitment, maintaining consistent student-centered instruction would become considerably more challenging despite lecturers' individual efforts.

Overall, these findings indicate that successful implementation of student-centered pedagogies extends beyond classroom instructional strategies alone. The integration of professional development, adequate instructional resources, continuous monitoring, and institutional commitment constitutes an important foundation for creating sustainable learning environments that effectively promote students' speaking development. Therefore, future implementation of student-centered pedagogies in higher education EFL classrooms should consider these contextual factors alongside pedagogical practices to maximize students' opportunities for meaningful oral communication and long-term language development.

4.1 Discussion

The findings indicate that the implementation of student-centered pedagogies successfully redistributed classroom authority by positioning students

as active participants rather than passive recipients of knowledge. Students were encouraged to participate in selecting learning activities, expressing opinions, and engaging in collaborative speaking tasks, which created a more democratic and interactive learning environment. This shift in classroom dynamics increased students' opportunities to communicate in English and contributed to greater confidence in expressing their ideas during classroom interaction.

These findings support the concept of learner-centered teaching proposed by Weimer (2013), who argues that effective learning occurs when responsibility and classroom authority are shared between teachers and students. Rather than controlling every aspect of instruction, lecturers should create learning environments that encourage students to become independent learners capable of making meaningful contributions to classroom activities. Similarly, Nunan (2023) emphasizes that learner-centered instruction enables students to become active participants in constructing knowledge through authentic language use rather than merely receiving information from teachers.

The increased classroom interaction observed in this study also aligns with Fadilah et al. (2024) argument that learner-centered language teaching provides greater opportunities for students to negotiate meaning, collaborate with peers, and develop communicative competence through meaningful social interaction. In the present study, students actively participated in discussions, presentations, and collaborative speaking tasks, demonstrating that communicative activities became the primary vehicle for language learning rather than teacher explanation. Such findings reinforce the principles of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), which emphasize that language acquisition develops most effectively through meaningful communication and interaction (Richards, 2016).

Although students appreciated having opportunities to participate in classroom decision-making, the lecturer experienced challenges in accommodating students' diverse preferences regarding learning topics and activities. This finding suggests that student-centered pedagogy

should not be interpreted as allowing students complete control over classroom instruction. Instead, lecturers remain responsible for designing learning experiences that balance students' interests with curricular objectives. Becerra-Posada et al. (2022) explains that a student-centered classroom is not one in which students determine everything they wish to learn; rather, it is a classroom where teachers carefully consider learners' needs while maintaining clear educational goals. Therefore, student participation should be viewed as collaborative decision-making rather than unrestricted learner autonomy.

The findings further demonstrate that students perceived themselves as respected partners in the learning process. Their increased confidence and willingness to participate suggest that student-centered pedagogies foster positive affective conditions for language learning. This finding supports Vygotsky (1978) sociocultural theory, which views learning as a socially mediated process in which knowledge is constructed through interaction with others. Collaborative discussions and peer communication enabled students to scaffold one another's learning while simultaneously improving their speaking competence.

Overall, the findings confirm that redistributing classroom authority through student-centered pedagogies contributes positively to speaking development in higher education EFL classrooms. Increased learner participation, collaborative interaction, and shared responsibility created authentic opportunities for students to practice spoken English while simultaneously enhancing learner autonomy, confidence, and communicative competence.

4. CONCLUSION

The findings indicate that implementing student-centered pedagogies effectively fosters speaking development in higher education EFL classrooms by increasing students' participation, confidence, collaboration, and opportunities for meaningful communication. Although challenges related to diverse proficiency levels and classroom management remain, this pedagogical approach creates a more engaging learning environment that supports

the development of students' communicative competence.

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