
“TEACHER PERSPECTIVES ON STUDENT-CENTERED LEARNING IN ESL/EFL EDUCATION”

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ABSTRACT

The trend of developing teaching-learning lessons and activities by focusing on learning methods that involve student participation and collaboration, as well as students' own autonomy in the learning process, has become a major teaching approach in ESL/ EFL education. With increasing focus on the learner-focussed approach to pedagogy in many policy documents, it is no surprise that in many ESL/EFL settings, the approach is not consistently applied. However, this is largely influenced by issues of teacher perception, reality in the classroom and institutionalisation. To bridge this, the current review of the literature conducted a systematic analysis of empirical studies that involved teachers' perceptions of SCL in English as a Second or Other Language (ESL/EFL) education focusing on the three areas of active learning, learner autonomy, and implementation factors that bring the technology of SCL into context. This study took a qualitative inductive research approach, using the Systematic Literature Review (SLR) methodology to aggregate evidence from peer-reviewed empirical studies from the Asian, South Asian and international ESL/EFL settings (between 2015 and 2026) that measured 62. Thematic analysis was used to access and discern similar conceptual and practical patterns from within the teacher experience, allowing data to be analysed. The results of this research formed five main issues: positive orientation of the teachers towards student centred learning, the concept of active learning as a language catalyst, tensions in fostering learner autonomy, institutional and contextual obstacles to implementation and transformation of teacher identity, professional readiness. This review showed that, to a large extent, the teachers agree to the approach that they should use which is learner centered and that this approach has positive effects on building communication competence and on acquiring an engaged learner, however the use of this approach in the classroom is limited due to factors such

as learning dependency, examination focused systems, having a large class size, limited resources, and a lack of pedagogical support. Finally, the study found the conditions for successful implementation of student-centered learning in the ESL/EFL learning process are educational reform in the whole learning process which encompasses the condition of teacher development, the condition of scaffolding learning for student autonomy and the condition of institutional configuration.

KEYWORDS: Student-centered learning; ESL/EFL education; Teacher perspectives; Learner autonomy; Active learning.

1. INTRODUCTION

The term, student-centered learning (SCL) has gained tremendous popularity in teaching language nowadays, which is a significant deviation from the teacher-centeredness and highlights a more and more participative, collaborative, and learner-centered teaching way. This transition is especially important in ESL/EFL education where language learning has more recently come to mean an active, social, cognitive and contextually engaged process, not a passive memorization of grammatical rules taught by teachers. Student-centered learning is based on constructivist learning theory, which places learners as active constructors of the learning object in the learning activity, so that the role of the teacher in the learning process should no longer be the role of a content giver, but rather a facilitator, guide, and mediator in the behavior of constructing knowledge related to content (as cited in Vygotsky, et. al., 1978; Weimer, 2013). A pedagogical paradigm shift such as this ought to have some similarity with the language pedagogies of communicative language teaching, task based instruction, collaborative learning, inquiry-based learning, and self-regulated learning re worshipping the learner as a person who needs to be meaningfully engaged in the language learning process and with the language of learning (Richards, 2017).

Active learning is also an essential characteristic of student-centred pedagogical approaches in ESL/EFL settings including both instructions that involve learners in the learning process in cognitive, social, and behavioural ways, such as discussion, collaboration, problem solving, reflection and experiential classroom activities (Prince, 2004; Freeman et al., 2014), and instructions whose primary focus is learner participation rather than listening. These practices in language classes are generally referred to as active learning and have been demonstrated to enhance student engagement, communicative competence and motivation in language learning (Mercer and Dörnyei, 2020). Learner autonomy, which is closely related to the concept of

active learning is learners' ability to make decisions in their learning process, such as setting goals, determining teaching methods, monitoring, and self-evaluating. In recent studies, this construct has been extended further to include metacognitive awareness, self-regulation, digital literacy as well as self-directed engagement beyond the four walls of the classroom, especially when studying a foreign language such as English Language Learning (ELT) with technology mediated learning (TML) (Benson, 2013; Chong and Reinders, 2022).

While there are theoretical and empirical reasons for adopting student centred pedagogies, the application of student/ESL/EFL pedagogies in practice is less coordinated due to the fact that the teacher is the key player for pedagogical reform. Investigating how teacher perspectives (e.g., beliefs and attitudes, instructional confidence, professional identity, classroom experiences) influence the meaningful use of practices involving the teacher and the student reveals that such perspectives have a significant influence on the meaningful implementation or rhetorical endorsement of minimal implementation of student-centered practices. Instructors usually appreciate the importance of their teaching for active learning and learner autonomy, but practical challenges such as the curriculum requirements, assessment systems, classroom management, institutional requirements, inadequate resources and professional preparation become issues in the actual process of introducing the concept of student-centered learning (Nguyen et al., 2020; Almira et al., 2025). This means that the teacher perspectives are a significant factor explanatory for either successful or unsuccessful transformation of the traditional instruction to one based on students in ESL/EFL teaching.

In general, over the past decade international policy and pedagogical concepts have advanced to strengthen the philosophy of a learner-centered approach to English language teaching (LCLT). Throughout Europe and North America, communicative and autonomy-supportive pedagogies have taken root in the language curriculum frameworks as well as teacher development programmes, the integration of digital learning and formative assessment (triggering learner agency). Despite this overall positive environment, however, teachers identify issues regarding curriculum coverage and learner-led exploration, adapting the assessment process, and working with differences in levels of readiness for autonomous learning (Mercer and Gregersen, 2020). These difficulties are more severe in developing and transitional education systems that have more examination-oriented cultures, teacher authority, memorization and transmission-oriented pedagogy.

The practice of student-centered learning in ESL/EFL education has created some pedagogical paradoxes especially in the wider picture of the Asian context. Even though the developments of the learner-centred reforms are officially part of the educational policy in countries like

China, Japan, South Korea, Vietnam, Malaysia, India, Bangladesh and Pakistan, there is always empirical evidence that consistent policy aspirations and classroom realities are still accompanied by a narrow margin. Although teachers often say that they support active learning, collaborative engagement, and learner autonomy, a number of factors in the Spanish educational system have hindered them from doing so in practice: large class size, examination-driven educational cultures, heavy syllabus coverage, hierarchical teacher–student relationship, and pedagogical training for active learning facilitation (Littlewood, 2014; Lamb and Reinders, 2022). Moreover, in many classrooms in Asia, the role of "teacher" persists as a "reasoned authority," shifting the burden of learning to students is pedagogically difficult and sometimes contested, and a more dispersed "school-family nexus" is also a cultural hurdle to achieving this.

These conflicts are also clearly manifested in the Sri Lankan scenario. Significant changes in Sri Lankan education have been initiated to foster competency-based education, engagement in learning process, communicative competence and classroom interaction in English Education. The transformations in Sri Lankan education are notable including focus on competency based curricula, participation of the learners, communicative competence and classroom interaction in English Education. In both public education and higher education, there is a growing emphasis on active learning, critical thinking and student-centered pedagogy in the national educational policies. Implementation on the school level is inconsistent, however. Research shows that examination-oriented education, grammar instruction, dependence on the textbooks, overcrowding of classes, lack of teaching classroom materials, and lack of teachers' professional development in learner-centred teaching still have a significant effect on teaching and learning English in Sri Lanka. Furthermore, many instructors report that they often lack clear understanding about how the process of nurturing learners' autonomy might be realized in environments where the students are themselves indoctrinated with teacher-dependence cultures in which they have experienced (Karunaratne, 2019; Perera and Canagarajah, 2021). As a result significant gaps exist between the discourse of policy and pedagogical practice in ESL/EFL in Sri Lanka.

Although various countries in the world have explored student-centered learning, active pedagogy, and learner autonomy in general in language education, sustained studies on the perception, experience, negotiated and realised active pedagogy and autonomy in student-centered learning by teachers in the ESL/EFL classroom, especially in the region of Asia and Sri Lanka in particular, are admittedly in their infancy. Most literature has focused on the outcomes of learning and not consistently on a synthesis of the instructors' points of view. This

results in a massive gap in how teacher engagement with student-centered pedagogy is understood both conceptually and practically with respect to the beliefs, opportunities, tensions and barriers within institutions. This is significant as the successful implementation of sustainable pedagogy change in ESL/EFL education is not solely dependent on policy reform but on the interpretation and enactment of teachers in the classroom.

Therefore, the following two aims are guiding the interest of this systematic review:

1. To systematically review empirical literature on teacher perspectives toward student-centered learning in ESL/EFL education.
2. To identify and thematically synthesize the major factors shaping instructors' experiences in implementing active learning, learner autonomy, and related student-centered pedagogical practices in ESL/EFL classrooms.

2. MATERIALS AND METHODS

2.1 Research Design and Approach

The design of this research was qualitative which was used systematically to analyze the preliminary empirical studies about the teacher attitude towards student centred learning in ESL/EFL study. inductive analytical method was a method used in this study because it was considered appropriate for the type of data in this study. A qualitative approach was deemed to be most suitable as the underlying aims of the study were interpretive: to gain insight into the perception, experience, and negotiation of student-centered pedagogical practices (such as active learning, learner autonomy, collaborative engagement, and facilitation of the learning environment) of teachers in a variety of cultural contexts. Qualitative inquiry provides particular value in educational research when exploring socially constructed meanings, pedagogical experiences, and context that may not be fully captured by simply adding numbers together (Creswell and Poth, 2018).

To let themes and conceptual patterns rise from the literature reviewed and not be categorized a priori, an inductive approach was used. Inductive analysis is generally considered appropriate for the synthesis of generalised qualitative evidence, allowing researchers to learn about the concepts they are interested in and recognise common sets of terms or patterns within passages of text, while capturing the finer details of terminology or context which is unique to the specific text they are considering (Thomas, 2006). Teacher attitudes towards student centered teaching are influenced by institutional, cultural, pedagogical and contextual factors, so an inductive approach was applied which is flexible and theoretically appropriate for analysis.

2.2 Systematic Literature Review Strategy

This study was carried out by using a Systematic Literature Review (SLR). The systematic literature review (SLR) is a strict and transparent process that aims at the identification, selection, critical evaluation and synthesis of published research on a well-defined research question in the field of life sciences (Snyder, 2019). Systematic reviews, unlike narrative reviews, minimize selection bias and improve scholarly transparency by using explicit search procedures, formalized inclusion criteria, and standardized screening processes (Page et al., 2021). In conducting this present study, the systematic review method was particularly suitable as the scholarship regarding the pedagogical approach in ESL/EFL that focuses on the students' perspectives is widely spread geographically and rather wide in concept.

A systematic literature search was conducted in certain leading and high-quality databases, such as Scopus, Web of Science, ERIC, ScienceDirect, Taylor & Francis Online, SpringerLink and Google Scholar with emphasis given to scientific databases. The following keywords were selected as the focal points for each search string, those of student-centered learning, learner-centered pedagogy, teacher perspective, teacher belief, active learning, learner autonomy, ESL teaching and EFL education. Boolean terms AND and OR were used for narrowing down searches and improving retrieval accuracy.

The review was limited to peer-reviewed journal articles published in the last decade (2015-2026) for the synthesis to reflect recent pedagogical advances and address the challenges of contemporary classrooms in language education. However, some seminal theoretical writings, not published after 2015, were specifically added to constitute conceptual definitions and theoretical support as required.

2.3 Inclusion Criteria and Study Selection

The first data base search produced 487 articles. After removal of duplications (n = 96), 391 records were kept for title and abstract screening. The study aimed to determine the screening criteria for the study and differentiating inclusion and exclusion criteria was carried out explicitly.

The articles that were included must have met developmentally:

- Articles that were focused in the context of ESL or EFL education;
- Considered empirical results (qualitative, quantitative or mixed methods);

- Reviewed teacher perception, beliefs and attitudes about student-centered learning or experiences in the classroom; or
- used some of the above or other dimensions related to the addressed topics: active learning, learner autonomy, collaborative pedagogy, classroom interaction or/and learner engagement;
- Were published in English language peer reviewed journals.
- Studies that were excluded were those that:
 - did not include teacher data; and
 - were editorials and opinion pieces/empirical papers lacking empirical evidence; or
 - Reviewed topics outside of language classes; or
 - Showed some agreement with pedagogical implementation of a learner-centered approach.

A total of 124 articles were screened for full text and 62 empirical studies were selected for detailed synthesis. These studies were conducted in various contexts: Sri Lanka, India, Bangladesh, Pakistan, China, Japan, South Korea, Vietnam, Thailand, Malaysia, and Indonesia plus a selected set of African ESL/EFL contexts. However, for the purposes of this analysis, a focus was given to Asian and South Asian educational contexts and thus, Sri Lanka as the contextual relevance for both these fields.

2.4 Thematic Analysis Procedure

A thematic analysis (Braun and Clarke, 2006), one of the most frequently applied methods of language analysis in qualitative research, was used to analyze the selected studies, which is to identify, analyze and interpret common themes in qualitative data (Braun and Clarke, 2006). Thematic analysis was deemed to be an analytical method that best fits the study as it not only confers methodological flexibility but also creates rich interpretive synthesis across various studies, contexts and analytical traditions. It proves to be particularly effective in systematic qualitative review when an objective of the review is not just a descriptive summary but an interpretation in a higher order way – a concept comprehension (Nowell et al., 2017).

This study adopted the 6-phase framework of Braun and Clarke (2006; 2021), namely:

1. familiarization with extracted data;
2. generation of initial codes;
3. searching for recurring thematic patterns;
4. reviewing and refining themes;

5. defining and naming final themes; and
6. producing an interpretive narrative synthesis.

Common patterns were identified through repeated reading, coding, and multiple comparisons across studies of teacher beliefs, teacher classroom experiences, teacher institutional issues, pedagogical and learning adaptations, student readiness, and professional development. This process has allowed for strong themes to emerge as the explanations for how teachers view and implement student-centered learning in the ESL/EFL classroom.

2.5 Methodological Justification

The qualitative content analysis using a qualitative inductive design and the literature search in a systematic way coupled with thematic analysis, gave the present research a sound methodological basis. This comprehensive approach was particularly fitting because attitudes of the teacher toward student-centered learning are very complex, multi-layered, and context-dependent, resulting from a combination of various interrelated learning factors. Any kind of quantitative aggregation would have been inadequate to express the richness of these pedagogical experiences. The methodological approach adopted, by contrast, allowed for a complex, sophisticated and contextually rich synthesis of the teachers' perspectives, thereby creating meaningful insights into the reality of using learner-centered methodology in ESL/EFL.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 RESULTS

In the results of the thematic analysis of the 62 empirical studies found, the teacher perspectives in their context of learning and teaching ESL/EFL are formed through a complex matrix between pedagogical beliefs, lived realities in the classroom, institutional system, and sociocultural expectations. In the literature reviewed, it was found that generally teachers show a positive conceptual attitude towards student-centered pedagogy in relation to the development of students' engagement, their competence as communicators, and their development as independent learners. There were a lot of conflicts though found between the endorsement of the pedagogy and its enactment in the classroom. Five main themes emerged from the analysis.

3.1 Positive Teacher Orientation toward Student-Centered Learning

One of the commonalities among the reviewed studies was that the attitudes of ESL/EFL teachers toward SCL were, overall, positive and they believed that it is more pedagogically effective than teacher-centered instruction. Initially, teachers were prone to view learner-centered methods as methods that led to greater student participation and participation of the learners in communicative interaction, as well as greater motivation in language learning and greater depth of language learning. In a narrative inquiry project with Chinese university EFL teachers, Liu and Chen (2018) discovered that the university teachers strongly supported learner autonomy and acknowledged their roles as facilitators, counsellors and learning resources; that is, they perceived themselves as less like a transmitter of knowledge. Teachers observed that student-centred classrooms produced opportunities for real use of language, and for meaningful engagement of learners.

Likewise, Wang and Ryan's (2020) mixed methods case study with Chinese EFL teachers found that more such practices aimed at gradually shifting learning responsibility from the teacher to the student are preferred. They found that teachers perceived that implementing autonomy-supportive pedagogy would have positive consequences for linguistic growth and not only learners' confidence, agency, and ownership of their classroom, but also autonomy-supportive pedagogy was understood to have positive consequences in both respects. Similar positive impressions were obtained by the study made by Srijankaew (2023) in Thailand, who obtained that teachers widely perceived the development of learner autonomy as an important goal to set in EFL teaching and learning, specifically in the preparation of the learners for lifelong language learning outside their formal schooling.

The results indicated that at conceptual level teachers across Asian ESL/EFL contexts are not toxic to student-centered approach. Instead, they see the learner centredness more and more as one of the core features of effective 21st-century language teaching.

3.2 Active Learning as a Driver of Engagement and Language Development

The second theme was concerned with views teachers had on the use of active learning practices as a means to enhance language learning outcomes. It is interesting to note that throughout the studies reviewed, all instructors had stated that interactive pedagogical methods such as interactive tasks, discussion among peers, project-based learning, reflection, and task-based instruction had an impact on communicative competence in the classroom.

According to Mercer and Dörnyei (2020), active learner engagement is one of the highest leverage factors for successful language learning because it engages learners emotionally and cognitively. This was captured when this position was put under review with classroom-based studies. Ma (2023) has found that feedback dialogue, peer review and reflective writing assessment were valued as student-centered tools by EAP writing teachers, as they helped foster learner responsibility and self-monitoring. Teachers noted that when they focused more on developing the process and reflection on the activities and on collaboration, rather than simply on content, students were more engaged in learning.

The use of autonomy-supportive instruction in Thai EFL classrooms was studied by Upara and Chusanachoti (2023) who found that the teacher's use of out-of-classroom learning materials, guided reflection, and strategy training was effective strategies for enhancing student-centered classroom beyond the classroom. Teachers indicated, however, that a high level of scaffolding in terms of how to learn independently was key in enabling active learning.

Based on these results, teachers' active learning perception is different than that of only "active learning in class," but rather as a pedagogical process that should lead to deeper cognitive, social and communicative language development.

3.3 Tensions in Promoting Learner Autonomy

Although there was general agreement that learning is centered around the student and a student-centered pedagogy should be adopted for this reason, the point that appeared more frequently was teacher concerns IRC regarding "learner autonomy readiness. In various individual studies teachers reported that students continued to need a lot of teacher guidance, that they had poor self-regulation skills and that they were not very confident on learning independently.

Though much affected teacher autonomy in terms of principle, Liu and Chen (2018) have noted that teacher-led structures still existed in much of the teaching learning environment, due to teacher's belief that students were not ready to make decisions. Similarly, Wang and Ryan (2020) found that shifting the power from teachers to students was delicate and needed to be handled with care, as a sudden shift in the level of autonomy expectations often led to confusion or passivity/withdrawal of learners.

The same relevance was found in Thailand with regards to the need for learner readiness. Many of the reported findings indicated that learners had a weak level of self-management skills, intrinsic motivation and strategic awareness in autonomous engagement which made teachers wonder whether learner autonomy in study was having in the classroom (Srijankaew, 2023).

Upura and Chusanachoti (2023) also reported that teachers were often overt in asserting the independence of their learners, but followed the strategy with strong teacher mediation observed in the classroom that teachers worried about their learners' preparedness.

This indicates that teachers might not see the autonomy of their learners as something that is an instant reality of their classrooms, but more as something that needs to be explicitly scaffolded in the classroom and then given to students to negotiate with them over the course of time.

3.4 Institutional and Contextual Barriers to Student-Centered Practice

Along with that topic, another one that stood out was that of institutional challenges that affect the meaningful implementation of student-centered ESL/EFL pedagogy. In all the cases of the teachers across the three regions of South Asian, Southeast Asian and East Asian, the structural barriers to pedagogical flexibility were clearly emphasized.

The issue of large classes continuously emerged as a concern. There was a difficulty in facilitating interactive learning, providing individual feedback, and monitoring the learners in classrooms that are becoming too crowded (Upura and Chusanachoti 2023). There were also strong cultural features with respect to curriculum intensity and examination based cultures in teaching. In many Asian settings, teachers also expressed pressure to focus on content that must be covered, mastery of grammar frameworks, and on exam preparation rather than on the exploration of learner-centered activities (Littlewood 2014).

Limits in resources were also a key challenge. Srijankaew (2023) found that the obstacles to developing autonomy-supportive learning environment might be the learning technology, a lack of classroom materials, and institutional support. Likewise, Ma (2023) discovered that teachers' acceptance and capacity to adopt student-centered formative assessment were frequently hampered by assessment arrangements that involved more on standardization and less on learner agency.

The results indicate that the teachers' conceptions of SCL are influenced not only by pedagogical beliefs but also by institutional contexts which are often synchronised with the teacher-centered tradition.

3.5 Teacher Identity and Professional Readiness

The final key theme was on teacher identity transformation. An approach to instruction that is student-centered is one in which teachers include a change of roles from being an expert transmitter to a facilitator, a mentor, a coach, and a reflective practitioner. Many teachers found that the move towards facilitating teaching roles broadly welcome but unsure how to make it

work.

In their study of teachers in micro-credit training, Upara and Chusanachoti (2023) found that teachers' roles are gradually changing away from the traditional teacher's identity of classroom teacher to that of an advisor who guides them in using learner strategies, reflecting on these strategies, and selecting student resources. Likewise, Berlin and Wirza (2024) found that teachers considered autonomy building a key them in their classrooms, but indicated their need to be better equipped for that in terms of pedagogical training, design competence for curriculum, and professional development.

Another point put forward by Mercer (2020) and Gregersen (2020) is that learner-centered pedagogy creates new demands on teachers as a result of the change in shapes of classroom interaction and the need to be adaptable, reflexive teachers, and reliable in managing less predictable classroom interaction. Teachers repeatedly highlighted the importance of professional development in this literature review to advance student-centered to long-term classroom implementation.

4. DISCUSSION

This study aimed to systematically explore teachers' experiences towards student-centered (SCL) classroom in ESL/EFL education in terms of SCL pedagogy, active learning, student autonomy and context factors affecting students' learning outcomes. Based on a systematic review of finding 62 empirical studies in ESL/EFL context published since 1992 and an inductive thematic analysis, the study has been able to successfully discuss the first research problem identified, that is, the fragmented and inconclusive picture of teachers' perceptions, negotiations and practices of implementing students' centered pedagogies in ESL/EFL settings, particularly in Asia and South Asia. In addition, the two proposed research goals were accomplished. First, the review synthesized the body of empirical knowledge on teacher attitudes to SCL in an evidence-based way. Second, the thematic analysis uncovered and categorised key factors influencing teachers' experiences in the teaching and learning of LCP. The results suggest that ESL/EFL teachers from various contexts are overall strong in terms of their overall philosophical attitudes towards student-centred teaching values. As teachers become aware that the use of a learner's centered pedagogy fosters communicativeness, student participation in the classroom and group learning, deeper student engagement and learning, it has become more common among educators to adopt it. The results are in line with the general recent literature in language teaching that views learning as an active process, a dynamic interchange of motivation and meaning, and a process that is socially mediated (Mercer and

Dörnyei, 2020). Importantly, the critique implies that the critique to student-centred learning is no longer primarily an ideological one; rather, most teachers feel positive towards the pedagogical intent of the student-centred approach.

The analysis highlights, however, an implementation gap that is remaining between the pedagogical beliefs and the things that are actually taking place in practice. Among the most important that arose from the review is one towards the teachers' worry about learner's readiness for autonomy. For many teachers, students continue to rely heavily on teacher guidance and frequently lack self-regulatory learning skills, self-motivation and confidence in taking responsibility for their learning. This means that learner autonomy in ESL/EFL learning needs to be considered in stages, with scaffolding on the part of the teacher being structured and built gradually to the point where the student can take full and equal responsibility for the learning process.

Implementation is hindered by institutional and contextual obstacles. In Asian culture and more so in South Asian cultures, teachers still exist in exam oriented systems with fixed curricula, narrow resources and high numbers of students in a classroom, which can all be seen to enforce an education system that is organized around the teacher. Many of these dilemmas are echoed in the context of Sri Lanka, where policy-level calls for learner-centred English language teaching often clash with classroom conditions. Further, the review emphasizes the need for teachers to be content to become facilitators, mentors, and reflective practitioners, instead of authors of curricula and/or knowledge standards. Professional development, pedagogical support and institutional commitment are needed for such a transformation to take place.

Overall, this study has shed light on the significance of student centered learning for ESL/EFL education to show that not only is it possible to reform curriculum and instruction, but also, more fundamentally, to prepare teachers' preparedness, develop learner autonomy, and face contextual educational constraints by pedagogical changes that are holistic.

5. CONCLUSION

The methodology adopted in this study was qualitative systematic literature review and thematic analysis to gain insight into what the teacher thinks about student centered learning in English as a subject of teaching and learning (ESL/eFL). The results reveal the positive attitude of teachers on student-centered pedagogy and the importance of that pedagogy in achieving the goals of inculcating learning independence, collaborative learning, communicative competence, and increasing students' engagement in learning. Active learning strategies, for one, and autonomy-supportive classroom practice, in general, were considered instrumental in

today's language instruction.

The study reveals, however, that multiple interacting difficulties stand in the way of meaningful implementation, such as being dependent on teachers, a lack of student readiness for autonomous learning, institutional rigidity, examination-oriented teaching culture, limited resources, and underprepared professional attitudes to facilitative teaching positions. Such barriers are especially noticeable in Asian and South Asia ESL/EFL contexts in which the learner-centredness policy wishes and policy implementation challenges lie at the local level, such as Sri Lanka.

Based on the above findings, the study thus finds that the very success of student-centered learning in ESL/EFL learning cannot only be attributed to pedagogical advocacy but needs to include the systems changes in education that facilitate and support the teacher, educate the student for self-reliance, and embrace a curriculum, assessment and institutional structure that is learner centered. Educational reform should focus on teacher professional development, scaffolding teacher autonomy, and adapting instructional practices to the local context to make student-friendly teaching a reality in classrooms more often than it is a policy or intention.

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