



CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE TEACHING APPROACH IN DIFFERENTIATED LEARNING ON STUDENTS' LEARNING INTERESTS AND LEARNING OUTCOMES

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Abstract

The implementation of the independent curriculum continues to raise numerous questions among educators. Teachers face the challenge of adapting to and successfully implementing this curriculum by employing engaging media and effective learning strategies tailored to their respective disciplines. This is especially crucial in the context of English language instruction, a subject often perceived as difficult by students. One potential solution to address these challenges is the adoption of differentiated learning strategies. Differentiated learning aims to unlock and maximize the potential of every student by aligning instructional methods with their individual needs, readiness levels, interests, and learning profiles. Within this framework, Cultural Responsive Teaching (CRT) emerges as a valuable approach, enabling educators to create inclusive and culturally relevant learning experiences that resonate with diverse student backgrounds. This study investigates the implementation of CRT in supporting differentiated learning strategies in English language education. Utilizing a pre-experimental design, the research was conducted at MAS Darul Qalam Bulukumba. Data collection methods included administering questionnaires to assess student interest and conducting pre- and post-tests to measure learning outcomes. The findings reveal a significant positive improvement in students' interest in learning English after the introduction of CRT, compared to their interest levels prior to its implementation. Additionally, the analysis of test results indicates a notable increase in students' academic performance, demonstrating the effectiveness of CRT in fostering both engagement and achievement. These results highlight the potential of CRT as a transformative tool in enhancing English language learning in the context of the independent curriculum.

Keywords: Differentiated Learning; Culturally Responsive Teaching; Learning Interests; Learning Outcomes



Abstrak

Penerapan kurikulum mandiri terus menimbulkan banyak pertanyaan di kalangan pendidik,. Guru menghadapi tantangan untuk beradaptasi dan berhasil menerapkan kurikulum ini dengan menggunakan media yang menarik dan strategi pembelajaran yang efektif yang disesuaikan dengan disiplin ilmu masing-masing. Hal ini sangat penting dalam konteks pengajaran bahasa Inggris, suatu mata pelajaran yang sering dianggap sulit oleh siswa. Salah satu solusi potensial untuk mengatasi tantangan ini adalah penerapan strategi pembelajaran yang berbeda. Pembelajaran terdiferensiasi bertujuan untuk membuka dan memaksimalkan potensi setiap siswa dengan menelaraskan metode pengajaran dengan kebutuhan individu, tingkat kesiapan, minat, dan profil pembelajaran. Dalam kerangka ini, Pengajaran Responsif Budaya (Cultural Responsive Teaching/CRT) muncul sebagai pendekatan yang berharga, yang memungkinkan pendidik menciptakan pengalaman pembelajaran yang inklusif dan relevan secara budaya yang sesuai dengan latar belakang siswa yang beragam. Penelitian ini menyelidiki penerapan CRT dalam mendukung strategi pembelajaran yang berbeda dalam pendidikan bahasa Inggris. Dengan menggunakan desain pra-eksperimental, penelitian dilakukan di MAS Darul Qalam Bulukumba. Metode pengumpulan data meliputi pemberian angket untuk menilai minat siswa dan melakukan pre dan post test untuk mengukur hasil belajar. Temuan ini menunjukkan adanya peningkatan positif yang signifikan pada minat siswa dalam belajar bahasa Inggris setelah diperkenalkannya CRT, dibandingkan dengan tingkat minat mereka sebelum penerapannya. Selain itu, analisis hasil tes menunjukkan peningkatan signifikan dalam kinerja akademik siswa, yang menunjukkan efektivitas CRT dalam mendorong keterlibatan dan prestasi. Hasil ini menyoroti potensi CRT sebagai alat transformatif dalam meningkatkan pembelajaran bahasa Inggris dalam konteks kurikulum independen.

Kata Kunci: *Pembelajaran Berdiferensiasi; Culturally Responsive Teaching; Minat Belajar; Hasil Belajar*

1. Introduction

Education is an important component in life and offers various kinds of improvements for human existence. One of them is a shift in social class in society, where access to education must be fair and equitable. Significant developments in the world of Indonesian education have been realized through the introduction of the idea of "Freedom to Learn" which was coined by Nadiem Anwar Makariem, Minister of Education, Culture, Research and Technology of the Republic of Indonesia. Nadiem Anwar Makariem, launched this strategy with the aim of increasing graduate competency in terms of soft skills and hard skills. Even though preparations for implementing the independent curriculum are not very mature, according to research conducted by (Rosmana et al., 2023), et al, it shows that the implementation of learning in the independent curriculum is quite effective. Classroom learning can be effective when there is good learning media or strategies. Especially in English subjects, media or strategies are needed that can support learning so that students' perspectives about difficult English can change through media or learning strategies.

One of the learning strategies in the independent curriculum is the Differentiated Instruction Strategy. Differentiated learning aims to maximize the potential of each learning within a certain scope by adapting instruction to student needs. Based on the results of research conducted by Nailis Saadah in (Wahyuni, 2022), it shows that the differentiated learning approach can be applied to English subjects because it can accommodate students' learning needs by considering students' learning readiness, interests, profile or learning style. In line with this, differentiated learning strategies can be implemented using the Cultural Responsive Teaching (CRT) approach.



According to Larson-Billing's opinion in (Rahmawati et al., 2020), Cultural Responsive Teaching (CRT) is a learning strategy that is responsive to the cultural diversity and values of each student's background. From the results of research carried out by, it shows that students' soft skills (English speaking) can be developed through culturally responsive teaching strategies which are in line with increasing competence in the 2013 curriculum.

The implementation of the independent learning curriculum presents significant challenges in the learning process, as identified through both literature and field studies. Educators often struggle to adapt to this curriculum due to the need for innovative and engaging teaching strategies tailored to specific fields of study. To address these challenges, it is crucial to explore approaches that align with students' diverse needs and interests while enhancing learning outcomes. The research, titled "*Culturally Responsive Teaching Approach in Differentiated Learning on Students' English Language Interests and Learning Outcomes*," aims to provide solutions by examining the impact of a culturally responsive teaching approach (CRT) within differentiated learning frameworks. This research will analyze how CRT influences students' interests and learning outcomes in English language learning, offering valuable insights into effective curriculum implementation strategies. By addressing these gaps, this research seeks to contribute to improving the quality and inclusivity of English language education under the independent learning curriculum.

2. Method

Experimental studies using quantitative research methodology are the methods used in this research. Research that uses statistical data to examine numerical data is called quantitative research. This research is a type of Pre-Experimental Design research with One Group Pretest Posttest Design, namely this research aims to ascertain whether something that is forced on the subject, in this case the student, has an impact or not. Without using a comparison class, this investigation was carried out in one class (Sugiyono, 2019).

This research was carried out for three months at the Darul Qalam Bulukumba Private Madrasah Aliyah, Bulukumpa District, Bulukumpa Regency from February to April 2024. The population was all students at MAS Darul Qalam Bulukumba who had implemented the independent curriculum, totaling 40 students. The independent variable (X) in this research is the Culturally Responsive Teaching approach. The dependent variable (Y) in this research is interest and learning outcomes.

In collecting data in this research, researchers will use 3 techniques, namely first, a questionnaire using a Likert scale in the form of Never (1), Rarely (2), Sometimes (3), Often (4), and Always (5). This test is made in the form of a multiple choice written test adapted to the topic or learning material that has been implemented with five choices for each question, namely A, B, C, D, and E. The learning outcome test is made using learning outcome indicators that depend on the subject or topic discussed in the research.

The data analysis technique used in this research is descriptive data analysis. Inferential statistics is a type of statistics used to extrapolate information from sample study data to generalize to the complete population. Using SPSS, the t-test is used as a testing method. However, necessary tests such as the normality test using the Shapiro Wilk test and the homogeneity test using one way ANOVA must be completed before testing the hypothesis using *uj-t*, namely the Paired Sample T-Test (Sugiyono, 2019).



3. Result and Discussion

The research questionnaire was answered by 40 respondents, then analysis was carried out using this data to determine students' interest in learning English using the Culturally Responsive Teaching approach. The results of the author's research describe the results obtained from the research clearly and informatively presented in the form of graphs, tables, or descriptive. Analysis and interpretation of these results is necessary before they are discussed.

Table 1. Results of Descriptive Statistics on Interest in Learning

Descriptive Statistics					
	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Learning Interest (Pre)	40	50	69	62,00	4,285
Learning Interest (Post)	40	65,00	80,00	71,00	3,88290

Table 1 was the result of descriptive statistics using SPSS version 25 which was answered by 40 respondents regarding students' interest in learning before and after treatment. , mean 62.002 and standard deviation 4.285. Meanwhile, the score for interest in learning is with a minimum score of 65, a maximum score of 80, a mean score of 71.00, and a standard deviation of 3.88290. Based on the results of the analysis above, we can see that there are differences in students' learning interest scores before and after the treatment.

From the data from the pre-test and post-test results which have been carried out via question sheets, they will then be analyzed using descriptive statistics using SPSS.

Table 2. Statistical Descriptive Test Results for Learning Outcomes

Descriptive Statistics					
	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Pre-Test	40	58	77	66,50	4,315
Post-Test	40	79	98	87,50	4,315

Table 2 above is the result of descriptive statistics using SPSS version 25 on the results of the pre and post tests that have been carried out. Based on this table, the pretest score was obtained with a minimum value of 58, a maximum of 77, a mean of 66.50, and a standard deviation of 4.315. Meanwhile, the posttest score obtained was a minimum of 79, a maximum of 98, a mean of 87.50, and a standard deviation of 4.315. From these results it can be seen that there is a significant difference in scores from pretest to posttest, from low scores to high scores.

To calculate the increase in students' English learning outcomes using the Culturally Responsive Teaching approach, pre-test and post-test data are first calculated using the normalized gain formula. The statistics are as follows:

$$g = \frac{S_{post} - S_{pre}}{S_{max} - S_{pre}} = \frac{3500 - 2600}{4000 - 2600} = \frac{900}{1400} = 0,6$$

The results of the gain value above show a value of 0.6, which can be seen based on the improvement criteria from the following pretest and posttest results:

Table 3. N-Gain Level Criteria

Gain Normalized Coefficient	Category
$g < 0,3$	Low
$0,3 \leq g < 0,7$	Medium
$g > 0,7$	High

Source: (Raharjo, 2021)

Based on the results of calculating the gain value above, a value of 0.6 is obtained, which indicates that the gain value is in the medium category. It can be concluded that the culturally responsive teaching approach is effectively used in differentiated learning to improve students' English learning outcomes.

The normality test is a test carried out by researchers to measure the normal distribution of data. Researchers used SPSS Version 25 to test the normality of the data as follows:

Table 4. Normality Test of Interest in Learning

One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test		
Unstandardized Residual		
N	40	
Normal Parameters ^{a,b}	Mean	,0000000
	Std. Deviation	4,27858961
Most Extreme Differences	Absolute	,128
	Positive	,068
	Negative	-,128
Test Statistic	,128	
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	,099 ^c	

Based on the results of the normality test using Kolmogorov-Smirnov above, it shows that the Asymp.Sig (2-tailed) value is 0.099, which indicates that the value $0.099 > 0.05$ means that the research questionnaire data is normally distributed.

Table 5. Normality Test of Learning Outcome

One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test			
		Pretest	Posttest
N		40	40
Normal Parameters ^{a,b}	Mean	66,5000	87,5000
	Std. Deviation	4,31455	4,31455

Most Extreme Differences	Absolute	,131	,131
	Positive	,109	,109
	Negative	-,131	-,131
Test Statistic		,131	,131
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)		,081 ^c	,081 ^c

The data above are the results of the normality test from the students' pretest and posttest results as the output of the students' English learning results. The normality test above shows that the value of Asymp. Sig (2-tailed) is 0.081 which indicates that the value $0.081 > 0.05$ means that student learning outcomes are normally distributed.

To find out whether two or more groups of data are homogeneous or have the same variance as each other, a homogeneity test is used. The condition for homogeneity testing in the ANOVA test is a Sig value > 0.5 . The results of the homogeneity test in this study are as follows:

Table 6. Test of Homogeneity of Interest and Learning Outcomes

Test of Homogeneity of Variance				
	Levene Statistic	df1	df2	Sig.
Learning Outcome	,000	1	78	1,000
Learning Interest	,069	1	78	,793

Based on the table above, the results of the homogeneity test were obtained with a significance value for learning outcomes of $1.0 > 0.05$ and a significance value for learning interest of $0.793 > 0.05$. So it can be concluded that the data comes from a population that has homogeneous variance.

This test was carried out to find out whether the Culturally Responsive Teaching approach was effectively applied to increase students' interest in learning and English learning outcomes.

Table 7. Paired Sample T-Test for Interest in Learning

		Paired Samples Test					t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
		Paired Differences			95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	Lower	Upper			
Pair 1	Pretest - Posttest	-31,0750	6,11173	,9663	-33,0296	-29,1203			



Based on the results of the paired sample T-test above, the Sig value was obtained. (2-tailed) of 0.000. The value $0.000 < 0.05$ means H_0 is rejected and H_a is accepted. So it can be concluded that the Culturally Responsive teaching approach is effectively used in differentiated learning for students' learning interests.

Table 8. Paired Sample T-Test Learning Outcomes

		Paired Samples Test							
		Paired Differences			95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	
	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	Lower					Upper
Pair 1	Pretest - Posttest	-1,42302	,2250	-21,6801	20,7698	-94,333	39	,000	

Based on the results of the paired sample T-test above, the Sig value was obtained. (2-tailed) of 0.000. The value $0.000 < 0.05$ means H_0 is rejected and H_a is accepted. So it can be concluded that the Culturally Responsive teaching approach is effectively used in differentiated learning for student learning outcomes.

3.1 An Overview of Students' Interest in Learning English in Using The Culturally Responsive Teaching Approach

The results of this research highlight the effectiveness of the Culturally Responsive Teaching (CRT) approach in differentiated learning for enhancing students' interest in learning English. The analysis using SPSS version 25 shows a significant improvement in students' learning interest scores after the treatment was applied. Specifically, the mean score for learning interest increased from 62.002 (pre-treatment) to 71.00 (post-treatment), with a significant paired sample T-test result (Sig. value = $0.000 < 0.05$), confirming the positive impact of the CRT approach.

These findings align with previous studies emphasizing the importance of culturally responsive teaching in promoting student engagement and academic achievement. For instance, (Gay, 2010) argued that CRT enhances students' motivation and learning outcomes by acknowledging and integrating their cultural backgrounds into the teaching process. Similarly, (Morrison et al., 2008) demonstrated that CRT fosters a more inclusive learning environment, making students feel valued and supported, which, in turn, boosts their interest and participation in learning activities.

Moreover, the study supports findings by (Tomlinson, 2017) on differentiated learning, which emphasized the necessity of adapting teaching strategies to meet students' diverse needs, interests, and abilities. The integration of CRT into differentiated learning, as seen in this research, reinforces the idea that when students' cultural and individual contexts are considered, their learning experiences become more meaningful and engaging.

This research contributes to the growing body of literature by showing that CRT not only enhances interest in learning but also works effectively within differentiated learning frameworks. It underscores the need for educators to adopt culturally responsive and adaptive teaching strategies to address the challenges posed by diverse classroom settings and the independent learning curriculum.



Future research could explore the long-term impact of CRT on academic performance and its applicability in other subject areas and educational contexts.

3.2. An Overview of Students' English Learning Outcomes Using the Culturally Responsive Teaching Approach

The findings of this research demonstrate a significant improvement in students' learning outcomes after applying the Culturally Responsive Teaching (CRT) approach in differentiated learning for English language instruction. The descriptive statistics analysis using SPSS version 25 reveals that the pre-test mean score was 66.50, with a range of 58 to 77, while the post-test mean score increased substantially to 87.50, with a range of 79 to 98. Additionally, the frequency distribution analysis shows a shift in student performance categories. Before the intervention, the majority of students (38 out of 40) were in the medium category (scores 51-75), while only 2 students were in the high category (scores 76-85). Post-intervention, the majority of students transitioned to the high category, highlighting the effectiveness of the CRT approach in enhancing student learning outcomes.

These findings are consistent with prior research emphasizing the positive impact of culturally responsive teaching on academic performance. For example, (Gay, 2010) and (Hammond, 2015) argue that CRT helps create a meaningful connection between students' cultural backgrounds and the learning material, resulting in improved comprehension and retention. This study corroborates those findings, showing how integrating CRT into English instruction significantly enhances learning outcomes.

Additionally, the results align with previous work by Morrison et al. (2008) who demonstrated that differentiated instruction tailored to students' cultural and individual needs leads to measurable academic gains. By addressing both the content and delivery methods in culturally meaningful ways, the CRT approach ensures that students feel valued and engaged, which fosters their academic success.

This research also reflects findings by Tomlinson (2017) on differentiated learning, which underscores the importance of adapting teaching strategies to students' diverse abilities and interests. By combining differentiation with culturally responsive practices, this research highlights a powerful framework for improving educational outcomes in diverse classrooms.

The significant increase in post-test scores suggests that CRT is particularly effective in enhancing English language learning in the context of the independent learning curriculum. Future research could explore the scalability of this approach in other subject areas, its long-term effects on student achievement, and its integration into teacher training programs to maximize its impact in diverse educational settings. The dominant students are in the very high category, namely in the 86-100 interval, totaling 30 students. Meanwhile, in the high category there were 10 students with interval scores of 76-85. It can be concluded that the Culturally Responsive Teaching approach is effectively used in differentiated learning to improve student learning outcomes.

Then, N-Gain was also used in this research. Based on the results of calculating the gain value, a value of 0.6 was obtained, which indicates that the gain value is in the medium category.

3.3 Effectiveness of The Culturally Responsive Teaching Approach in Differentiated Learning on Students' English Language Learning Interests and Outcomes

The findings of this study demonstrate a statistically significant improvement in students' English learning interests and outcomes following the application of the Culturally Responsive Teaching (CRT) approach. The results of the paired sample T-test indicate a Sig. (2-tailed) value of 0.000, which is below the threshold of 0.05. This confirms that the CRT approach effectively



enhances both students' interest in learning English and their academic performance, as evidenced by the rejection of the null hypothesis (H₀) and acceptance of the alternative hypothesis (H_a).

These findings align with previous research emphasizing the importance of culturally responsive pedagogy in fostering both engagement and achievement in learning. (Gay, 2010) highlighted that CRT bridges the gap between students' cultural experiences and academic content, making learning more relevant and engaging. This connection to cultural contexts often results in heightened interest and motivation, which are precursors to improved learning outcomes.

Similarly, (Ladson-Billings, 1995) emphasized that CRT empowers students by valuing their cultural identities and incorporating those identities into the learning process. The increased interest and improved outcomes observed in this study align with Ladson-Billings' assertion that culturally responsive practices can enhance students' sense of belonging and their ability to succeed academically.

Moreover, this research corroborates the findings of (Hammond, 2015), who argued that culturally aligned teaching strategies activate students' prior knowledge, making learning experiences more meaningful and effective. The significant improvement in students' English learning outcomes in this study reflects this principle, as CRT not only increased their interest but also facilitated deeper understanding and application of English language concepts.

By integrating CRT into differentiated learning, this research supports Tomlinson (2017) framework, which emphasizes tailoring instruction to students' diverse abilities and interests. CRT complements this approach by addressing cultural diversity, demonstrating that combining these strategies can significantly enhance both engagement and achievement in a diverse classroom setting.

This research contributes to the growing evidence that culturally responsive practices are vital for effective curriculum implementation, particularly in contexts such as the independent learning curriculum. Future research could explore the broader application of CRT in other disciplines, investigate its long-term impact on learning outcomes, and evaluate its integration into teacher training programs to enhance its adoption and effectiveness.

Previous research results support this research, namely (1) Research conducted by Aziz and Andanty (2024) regarding differentiated learning based on culture, the research results show the validity of learning resources based on Javanese cultural traditions in the eyes of experts and their implementation in the classroom. In terms of student responses and activity scores, this learning resource is also effective. Thus, the learning resources based on Javanese cultural traditions that were developed were proven to be valid, practical and effective. (2) Research conducted by Pertiwi (2021) stated that the output of this research is that students can map learning concepts based on Differentiated Instruction, namely learning readiness, interests and student profiles. This indicates that by using a culturally responsive teaching approach in differentiated learning students can map their own concepts based on learning readiness, interests and student profiles.

This research highlights the effectiveness of the Culturally Responsive Teaching (CRT) approach within differentiated learning frameworks in improving students' interest and outcomes in English language learning. The research demonstrates a significant difference in students' learning interests and outcomes before and after implementing the CRT approach, validated through rigorous testing and analysis of relevant data.

The significance of this research lies in several key areas such as by integrating CRT into differentiated learning, this research provides a practical, evidence-based approach for addressing the diverse needs of students in a classroom setting. The findings contribute to the development of innovative teaching strategies that bridge cultural and academic contexts, enhancing the overall quality of education. This research also aligns with the goals of the independent learning curriculum, which emphasizes adaptability and personalized learning strategies. The research offers educators a tested and effective method for fostering student engagement and improving learning outcomes,



making it particularly relevant for curriculum reform efforts. Besides, the research equips educators with insights into the benefits of culturally responsive practices, encouraging the adoption of teaching approaches that value and incorporate students' cultural backgrounds. This not only enhances student motivation but also promotes inclusivity and equity in education.

This research not only affirms the effectiveness of the CRT approach in differentiated learning but also sets a foundation for future exploration into its broader applications across various subjects and educational contexts.

4. Conclusion

The results of this study demonstrate that the Culturally Responsive Teaching (CRT) approach in differentiated learning effectively enhances students' interest and outcomes in learning English. The analysis shows a significant improvement in students' learning interest and performance after implementing the CRT approach. This is further supported by the results of the paired sample T-test, which indicate a statistically significant difference with a Sig. (2-tailed) value of 0.000 (< 0.05).

The findings confirm that the CRT approach not only increases student engagement but also positively impacts their academic achievements, highlighting its effectiveness as a teaching strategy in diverse educational contexts. This research underscores the potential of culturally responsive pedagogy to improve learning experiences and outcomes in English language education.

Based on the research findings, the teachers should use the Culturally Responsive Teaching (CRT) approach in their classrooms to improve student engagement and learning outcomes by integrating cultural elements into teaching strategies and also it suggests to the next researchers to conduct more studies on the long-term effects and broader application of CRT in different subjects and settings.

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