

**Teachers' Perceptions and Practices of Learner-Centred Grammar Teaching
Methodology in Selected Secondary Schools of Oromia Special Zone Surrounding
Finfinne**

Tamirat Tesfaye* and Abebe Gebretsdik

*Department English Language and Literature, Madda Walabu University
Department of Foreign Languages and Literature, Addis Ababa University
Corresponding Author: Tamirat Tesfaye, Email: ebamelala2023@gmail.com



Abstract

This study attempted to investigate teachers' perceptions of learner-centred grammar teaching methodology and their classroom practices. To collect data, three schools were randomly selected in Oromia Special Zone surrounding Finfinne, Ethiopia. The researcher used a mixed method that included a questionnaire and an interview. In order to fill out the questionnaire, twenty-four English teachers were selected using the census method since it was manageable. For the interview, four teachers were selected using purposive sampling. The findings of the study revealed that teachers have a clear understanding of learner-centred grammar teaching methodology. However, implementing the methodology was difficult because teachers usually focus on teaching grammar by presenting rules first followed by practicing examples. In addition, students' reluctance to actively participate in classroom discussion and fear of making mistakes were other problems. To create awareness in the implementation of a learner-centred method in grammar lessons, the concerned bodies like Woreda Education Office, Regional Education Bureau and Ministry of Education should prepare training sessions for both teachers and students. Besides, teachers should update themselves to the innovative methods of teaching grammar and encourage the students to participate in classroom discussions.

Keywords: Grammar, Learner-centred Methodology, Perceptions, Practices

1. Introduction

Language teaching in general and English language teaching in particular have passed through several stages of development. During the 1940s and 50s and even up to 1960s language teaching and learning were considered as knowing the syntactic rules and reading and understanding the literature of a language, which is a traditional approach to language teaching (Richards, 2006). According to (Asaoka, 2013), Grammar Translation Method, for

example, stressed the importance of grammar so that one can easily translate from and to a second language (L₂). On the other hand, the Audio-lingual Method much depends on the drills and pattern practice (Brown, 2000). Lord (1999, as cited in Khalid & Azeem, 2012) explains that the teacher-fronted method assumes that all students have similar experience in the course and can understand the contents at the same speed.

The traditional, teacher-fronted, methods of teaching have their own shortcomings. They do not encourage students' participation, and the students are considered as "blank slates" with the teacher's role is to fill this blank slate by imparting knowledge (Brandes & Ginnis, 1986). However, new methods of language teaching have been introduced recently as a result of the shortcomings of traditional approaches. Nowadays, language is considered a means of communication, which focuses on the authentic use of the language. If someone fails to communicate either in speaking or writing, we cannot say that he/she is using the language for a real purpose.

It is undeniable that the way we deliver lessons plays a great role in an EFL class because the students' success or failure mainly depends on the method of delivery. In this regard, Mackey (1965, as cited in Moon, 2004) states that the method a teacher uses can either lead to students' success or contribute to their failure. This idea highlights that students achieve language learning goals when the teacher uses appropriate methodology in the classroom. Conversely, they may not gain anything from the content if inappropriate methodology is used.

During grammar teaching, lecturing rules to students all the time may not help them use those rules effectively in speaking and writing. To ensure students can apply the rules they learn in communication, learner-centred language teaching must be practised in the classroom. Students are expected to actively participate in the teaching and learning processes. This "learning by doing" approach helps learners use the language for everyday communication. To support this, (Schiro, 2013) argues that students in the classroom are responsible for their learning through socialization and creating meaning from what they have learnt.

In relation to grammar teaching and learning, a teacher may use either a rule-driven or an inductive approach. The learner-centred teaching methodology takes into account the experiences of learners and encourages their active participation in classes. In light of this, the present study attempted to identify teachers' perceptions of this approach and its implementation while presenting grammar lessons in ELT in the Ethiopian secondary schools context.

Both teachers and students have new roles to play in a learner-centred classroom. Teachers act as guides during the activities, and students become active participants. This implies that the learner-centred method encourages both teachers and students to become active participants in the classroom (Shah, 2020). Grammar is also effectively taught when students are actively involved in the lessons enabling them to use the rules for communication. Based on the researcher's observation and experience, teachers were not fully implementing learner-centred grammar teaching methodology. This could be due to the influence of the traditional methods of teaching to which they are accustomed. Additionally, students may have failed to assume their roles effectively.

There have been several studies on learner-centred methodology. For example, (Girma, 2005) conducted his PhD thesis on innovative teaching focusing on how teachers present grammar lessons. Another research on the learner-centred method was conducted by Adinew (2015). These researchers focused primarily on the practices of teaching. In contrast, this research project is different from these studies in that it focuses on the perceptions of teachers and their classroom practices. Taking this into consideration, the researcher attempted to answer the following research questions:

1. What are the perceptions of teachers towards learner-centred grammar teaching methodology in English as a foreign language?
2. What do the teachers' practices of learner-centred grammar teaching methodology look like in English as a foreign language classes?

2. Literature Review

2.1 Origin, Definition and Advantages of Learner-centred Teaching

2.1.1 Origin of Learner-centred Teaching

Initially, the teaching and learning of languages were driven by the need of understanding the literature of classical languages such as Greek and Latin. This approach led to the adoption of the Grammar Translation Method for teaching grammar. Richards & Rodgers (2001) explained that the Grammar Translation Method, for example, prioritizes presenting rules first, and translating activities. However, these methods did not seem to have brought the expected results. This means that the people who were learning the target language were not able to communicate fluently either in writing or speaking. Historically, the learner-centred method of teaching goes back to 20th century. According to Zohrabi et al. (2012), learner-centred language teaching commenced with the idea of 'learning by teaching' in the 1970s. This method is based on the principles of social constructivism. Social constructivism

stresses that effective learning and teaching occur in a classroom where there is a social relationship between the teacher and the students, among the students themselves and with the classroom environment in general (William & Burden, 1997).

2.1.2 Definition of Learner-centeredness

Learner-centeredness has been defined by many scholars and educators. These people view learner-centeredness in various ways. According to (Meece, 2003), learner-centeredness is a methodology that emphasizes students' active participation in their course of learning and developing meaning from what they have learnt. Taking into account what and how students learn is the main focus of the learner-centred method as opposed to the teacher-fronted method, which stresses teaching rather than learning. (Brown, 2000) also defines learner-centred instruction as:

- techniques that focus on or account for learners' needs, styles, and goals
- techniques that give some control to the student (group work or strategy training, for example)
- curricular that include the consultation and input of students and that do not presuppose objectives in advance
- techniques that allow for student creativity and innovation
- techniques that enhance a student's sense of competence and self-worth

The author reveals that a learner-centred instruction gives due attention to learners' needs and styles of learning; techniques for organizing students in the classroom; ways that pave ways for learners to be creative thinkers and develops the sense of accepting themselves as learners.

The learner-centred teaching is a method that creates suitable environment for students to become independent learners throughout their lives. Teachers should shift from actively imparting knowledge to helping students use any materials for self-learning (Nonkukhetkhong et al., 2006). As result, it encourages students' engagement so that they can become independent learners and endeavours to fill the gaps of the traditional methods of teaching, which primarily focus on the output of learning.

Whether the learner-centred approach refers to curriculum, classroom activities or methodology, the teacher is expected to consider individual differences among learners because it is based on these differences that the teacher can design tasks which motivate students. To support this view, (Weimer, 2002) reflects that the teacher supports students in order to find out information by themselves and interact with one another and prepares real

classroom activities to increase students' engagement. This notion of learner-centeredness depicts that tasks and activities which stress students' participation should be designed and prepared by the teacher. Normally, some grammar activities are included in the textbook which enhance cooperation among students to discuss issues before they discuss rules in detail. However, English teachers have the right to incorporate activities out of the text to fulfil students' needs and interests.

2.1.3 Advantages of Learner-centred Teaching Methodology

The traditional methods of teaching have become less advantageous because of the fact that they haven't brought the expected results in students' performance in using the target language for daily communication. For instance, Lojova (2017) stresses that teacher-centred approach to language teaching is disadvantageous because students may not associate the content with their life; there could be low retention; they may lack confidence as a result of failing to understand the message. The goal of teaching and learning grammar is not expected to be focusing on memorizing the rules. The students could fail to use the rules in speaking or writing due to rote learning. In addition, students do not develop the confidence in using the language for interaction in communication.

Hence, there was a shift from teacher-fronted methods to learner-centred ones. Learner-centred methods of teaching have the following advantages:

- It generates more student participation and target language output.
- It encourages authentic communication.
- It encourages students to take more personal responsibility for their learning.
- It creates a community of learners by encouraging interaction within the class, helping them find learning partners and groups they are comfortable with, encouraging a sense of friendship among the students and to share interesting experiences to each other.

(Lim, 2010, Benson, 2001 as cited in Richards & Bohlke, 2011 p.26)

2.2 Teaching Grammar

2.2.1 Definition of Grammar

Grammar can be defined in various ways by different scholars. According to Thornbury (1999, p.1), "grammar is partly the study of what forms (or structures) are possible in a language." This definition states that grammar is considering how words come together to create meaningful sentences. It is obvious that words can never be arranged as they come to our mind because they don't convey meaningful ideas. An additional definition which

supports this idea is given by (Larsen-Freeman, 2001, p.151), saying that “Grammar is a system of meaningful structures and patterns that are governed by particular pragmatic constraints.” This shows that structures of sentences are controlled by syntactic rules.

2.2.2 Reasons for Teaching Grammar

With the introduction of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) in the 20th century, grammar teaching was to some extent ignored because it was assumed that it could not facilitate meaningful communication. The main focus of CLT is using a language for communication. Scholars understand CLT in different ways. For example, some understand CLT as an approach that is a bit more than combining rules and functions presentation (Richards & Rodgers, 2001). To support this, Littlewood (1981) stresses that CLT gives equal emphasis to both meaning and rule features of language.

On the other hand, some consider it as techniques for making students sit in pairs or groups in order to solve certain problems through activities (Richards & Rodgers, 2001). In general, in CLT, one important issue to be emphasized is that language teaching focuses more on meaning rather than on structure. This shows that rule presentation is somewhat underemphasized. However, in recent times teaching grammar has received due attention. Mart (2013) contends that grammar plays a significant role in language development and provides an opportunity for students to form meaningful sentences. In general, Swan (2002) mentions two useful reasons for teaching grammar. The first one is the concept of Comprehensibility. This concept is related to the fact that it helps students create certain acceptable structures. The second is Acceptability. This notion is connected to forming correct sentences that are acceptable to speakers of the target language.

2.2.3 Main Approaches to Teaching Grammar

2.2.3.1 Deductive Approach

The deductive approach to teaching grammar focuses on presenting the rules first and then giving examples for students to practice. Widodo (2006) and Thornbury (1999) mention that this way of teaching grammar prefers explaining the rules at the beginning and applying these rules to certain sentence-based exercises. This approach is a teacher-focused approach because the teacher controls everything and students listen to the presentation and do mechanical exercises. Regarding this, Eisenstein (1987) reflects that students are controlled and there is no room for committing errors while doing tasks. Besides, students involve themselves in studying the examples given so that they can gain knowledge of the rule (Widodo, 2006).

2.2.3.2 Inductive Approach

As opposed to a deductive approach, an inductive approach to grammar teaching emanates from a logical reasoning, which is related to specific examples of theories and information (Felder & Henriques, 1995). This depicts that various examples of rules are given to students by a teacher. Then, the students discover the rules by themselves (Morrison, 2009); (Nunan, 1999). Therefore, an inductive approach to grammar teaching stresses that various examples of the rules are provided to students so as to encourage them to discover the rules, and this practice is advocated by a learner-centred method.

Thornbury (1999) explains that this approach favours the way the first language is acquired by exposing students to many instances of the input. Therefore, it is sometimes called discovery teaching/learning. The same author also reveals that discovery learning incorporates attempts of learning from errors through the teacher's monitoring and comments. This exposes students to many examples for encouraging them to learn from their mistakes and getting direction and advice from a teacher.

An inductive approach to grammar teaching is related to communicative competence. According to Sasson (2007), there is a powerful relationship between inductive presentation and communicative competence because students obtain the opportunity to use the rules in context.

3. Methodology

3.1 Research Design

A research design helps a researcher to interpret and analyse data collected through observation, interview, questionnaire and focus group interview and other data collecting instruments. In this study, the researcher used a descriptive survey design. Best (1970, as cited in Cohen et al., 2007, p.205) states that a descriptive research design can help "... to see individuals, groups, institutions, methods and materials in order to describe, compare, contrast, classify, analyse and interpret the entities and the events that constitute their various fields of inquiry."

3.2 Participants and Sampling

The main focus of this research was to investigate teachers' perceptions and practices of the learner-centred grammar teaching methodology. For this, twenty-four English language teachers who were teaching grade 9 were selected from the seven schools in Oromia Special Zone surrounding Finfinne using census to fill the questionnaire. When we have access to reach everyone, census can be used (Dawson, 2007). For an individual interview, four teachers were selected using purposive sampling in order to obtain sufficient information.

3.3 Data Collection Instruments

In order to collect data, the following data collection instruments were used: questionnaire and individual interview.

3.3.1 Questionnaire

According to Singh (2006, p.191), "Questionnaire is a form which is prepared and distributed for the purpose of securing responses." This means that teachers' answers are not exposed to the researcher so that he/she does not know who filled the questionnaire so as to avoid bias. The questionnaire has contents composed of close-ended questions focusing on perceptions of teachers on classroom management, advantages of learner-centred teaching methodology, various ways of delivering grammar lessons and the practice of these methods in the classes were included. These close-ended questions related to perceptions were prepared on a five-point Likert Scale which are: (5=Strongly agree, 4=Agree, 3=Undecided, 2=Disagree, 1=Strongly disagree). Questions, which are related to the practice, were prepared on the frequency: (5=Always, 4=Usually, 3=Sometimes, 2=Rarely and 1=Never).

3.3.2 Interview

According to Kothari (2004, p.98) an interview, "...is probably the most widely employed method in qualitative research because it is used for getting in-depth information from the key informants." The researcher employed a semi-structured interview because it was more convenient than others allowing the interviewee to focus only on the point.

3.4 Method of Data Analysis

In this study both quantitative and qualitative data analysis were used. The data collected through questionnaire were analysed using mean values and standard deviation. Finally, the results were presented in tables and written words. The data collected through interview were analysed qualitatively. To do this, first, the data were collected by audio-recording. Next, they were transcribed. The transcription included the main ideas found in the interview questions. Finally, these main ideas were taken for discussion.

4. Findings and Discussions

4.1 Findings of the Questionnaire

Table 1: Teachers' perceptions on classroom management in a learner-centred grammar classes (N=24)

Items	Mean	Std. Deviation
1. In a large class size, learner-centred method is better.	2.75	1.327
2. Accessing majority of the students to make them work together is possible.	3.00	1.383
3. Explaining the need for working together as pairs or groups to students is important.	3.88	1.035
4. Rearranging the students regularly in a class where there are long rows facilitates effective teaching.	3.33	1.239
5. Pairing weak or shy students with different partners encourages them to help one another.	3.75	1.189
Aggregate	3.34	1.235

1.49 = Strongly Disagree, 1.5–2.49 = Disagree, 2.5–3.49 = Undecided, 3.5–4.49 = Agree, 4.5 = Strongly Agree

Classroom management plays an important role for an effective teaching to take place especially in a learner-centred classroom. The above table 1 indicates that the aggregate mean for the above items is (M=3.34, SD=1.235), which implies that most of the teachers responded saying 'undecided'. However, looking at some of the items separately is important because their results are different. In line with this, for the items 'Explaining the need for working together as pairs or groups to students is important (M=3.88, SD=1.035)' and 'Pairing weak or shy students with different partners encourages them to help one another (M=3.75, SD=1.189),' most of the teachers articulated their agreement.

Table 2: Teachers' perceptions on the advantages of learner-centred grammar teaching methodology (N=24)

Items	Mean	Std. Deviation
1. It addresses students' individual needs and preferences.	3.79	1.02
2. It integrates language learning with students' life experiences.	3.92	1.248
3. It helps students to learn the language rules for daily communication.	3.88	1.227
4. It makes students active participants in the classroom.	4.21	.977
5. It builds interaction between the teacher and students.	4.25	.897
Aggregate	4.01	1.074

1.49 = Strongly Disagree, 1.5–2.49 = Disagree, 2.5–3.49 = Undecided, 3.5–4.49 = Agree, 4.5 = Strongly Agree

The learner-centred language teaching methodology is pivotal for effective teaching and learning to take place in grammar lessons. Hence, teachers were asked to rate their agreement or disagreement on the advantages of learner-centred language teaching methodology. As shown in the table 2 above, the aggregate mean score of the respondents was (M=4.01, SD=1.074). This implies that most of the teachers expressed their agreement with the advantages of learner-centred language teaching methodology.

Table 3: Teachers' perceptions on the various methods of teaching grammar (N=24)

Items	Mean	Std. Deviation
1.*Grammar teaching should focus on the meaning of structures and their use in context.	4.04	.806
2.*Teachers should begin teaching a new grammar point by giving examples.	3.67	1.049
3. Correctness of form is a primary in grammar teaching.	3.08	1.248
4.*New grammatical points should be presented and practiced in situations.	3.88	1.035
5. Teachers should introduce grammar lessons by	3.08	1.316

explaining the rules.		
6.*Teachers should help learners to work out grammar rules for themselves.	3.83	1.167
Aggregate	3.60	1.104

1.49 = Strongly Disagree, 1.5–2.49 = Disagree, 2.5–3.49 = Undecided, 3.5–4.49 = Agree, 4.5 = Strongly Agree

Grammar lessons can be delivered to students in various ways by teachers. Some of these methods are teacher-fronted, and others are more of learner-centred methods. The questions with an asterisk are more related to learner-centred method. And the respondent teachers were requested to rate their agreement or disagreement on these items.

As indicated in table 3 above, the aggregate mean score of the respondents was ($M=3.60$, $SD=1.104$), which means most of the teachers expressed their agreement on the items listed in table 3 on the various ways presenting grammar lessons.

Nonetheless, looking at individual items is important because they have different results from the aggregate mean. For example, the mean values of the items ‘Correctness of form is a primary in grammar teaching ($M=3.08$, $SD=1.248$) and ‘Teachers should introduce grammar lessons by explaining the rules ($M=3.08$, $SD=1.316$) indicate that most of the teachers were not sure about these. In fact, these are teacher-fronted methods. When we observe the items with an asterisk: Grammar teaching should focus on the meaning of structures and their use in the context ($M= 4.04$, $SD=.806$); teachers should begin teaching a new grammar point by giving examples ($M= 3.67$, $SD=1.049$); new grammatical points should be presented and practiced in situations ($M=3.88$, $SD= 1.035$) and teachers should help learners to work out grammar rules for themselves ($M= 3.83$, $SD=1.167$), the mean values of each item reveal that majority of the teachers showed their agreement. From this result, one can understand that teachers emphasized the importance of learner-centred methodology to teach grammar lessons.

Table 4: The practice of different ways of teaching grammar by teachers (N=24)

Items	Mean	Std. Deviation
1. I explain grammar explicitly.	3.75	.89
2.*I teach the form and the meaning together when teaching new grammar.	3.54	1.103
3.*I provide students with opportunities to use grammar in context.	3.71	1.042

4. I correct students' errors immediately.	3.08	1.248
5. I teach the rule first and then give some activities for practice.	3.42	1.176
6.*I encourage students to discover grammatical rules for themselves.	3.42	1.501
Aggregate	3.57	1.156
1.49= Never 1.5-2.49= Rarely 2.5-3.49=Sometimes 3.5-4.49= Usually 4.5=Always		

The items in table 4 are related the various ways teachers use to present their grammar lessons. The items with an asterisk are more of learner-centred ways of presenting grammar lessons. The teachers were requested to rate their frequency practicing these methods. As shown in table, the aggregate mean score value is ($M=3.57$, $SD= 1.156$), which implies most of the teachers usually use the methods in order to present grammar lessons.

However, looking at the mean score of each item is important. First, most teachers responded that they always present grammar lessons explicitly ($M=3.75$, $.897$). On the other hand, most teachers replied that they sometimes correct students' errors immediately ($M=3.08$, $SD=1.248$); teach the rule first and then give some activities for practice ($M=3.42$, $SD=1.176$) and encourage students to discover grammatical rules for themselves ($M=3.42$, $SD=1.501$). This implies that teachers prefer using the traditional modes of delivery.

4.2 Findings of the Interview

In this interview, various questions were raised. These questions based themselves on the main ideas which include ways of introducing new grammar lessons, using Presentation-Practice-Production model, importance of learner-centred methods for presenting grammar lessons and advantages of using pair and group work in grammar lessons. These main points were considered for discussion.

4.2.1 Presentation of Grammar Lessons

4.2.1.1 Introducing New Grammar Lessons

Various methods can be used by teachers to introduce grammar lessons. In line with this, teachers were asked how they conduct their lesson. Their ideas are presented as follows. Teacher A responded, "I try to begin asking 'What do you know about this?'" This idea depicts that the teacher introduces the lesson explicitly to students by asking questions. She also explained the usefulness of brainstorming for teaching grammar lessons. This shows

that the teacher opens a way for interaction between her and the students, which is mainly advocated by learner-centeredness.

Teacher B reflected on how he introduces his grammar lessons saying, “When I enter the class, I first introduce the topic of the day. After introducing the topic, I will give some notes. Then, we will do some class activities.”

This quote depicts that teacher ‘B’ presents the rules to students first followed by activities to be done by students which is a deductive way of presenting grammar rules.

Teacher C replied that he begins presenting grammar lessons as follows: “As modern methods, I present the lesson of the day followed by asking questions about the lesson. After that I invite students to discuss in groups.” While presenting grammar lessons, giving an opportunity to students to work in groups is encouraged.

He also reflects, “I teach grammar lessons first by introducing the topic to students. Then I begin the lesson by asking students to check whether they are familiar with it.” The teacher thinks that brainstorming is important for grammar teaching. He adds, “I invite the students to discuss in their groups the topic that is to be presented in the lessons. I asked him about the importance of discussing in groups. He replied, “Even though students seem less confident in discussing certain grammar points in groups, I encourage them because group work is useful in order to understand the concept well.”

Teacher D adds the following concepts to how he starts his grammar lessons, “If I teach past tense, I provide some examples of what I did the previous day. Then I ask the students what they did yesterday”.

This quote shows that the teacher begins his lesson by providing his own examples followed by students’ examples. The teacher tried to create an interaction in asking students questions which can pave the way for discussion.

4.2.1.2 Using Presentation-Practice-Production Model

In the traditional methods of teaching grammar, the Presentation-Practice-Production model is very important. First, the lessons will be presented by a teacher, and then the students practice. Finally, they are expected to produce their own sentences. The teachers were interviewed whether this model can be used as an effective way of presenting grammar. Teacher A mentioned the importance of the Presentation-Practice-Production model as follows, “I think the students like presentation and practice and I use the model for teaching grammar.” This means that the teacher presents the grammar lesson by talking too much by standing in front of the class. Therefore, it is possible to conclude that the class was teacher-fronted. Teacher B explained the advantages of the procedures and model as follows:

I think it is important for students because presentation is given to the teacher to present his points. After listening to the presentation, the students get some understanding from the teacher's presentation. After the topic is presented to the students, the students can easily practice what they learnt.

However, he mentioned his fears that the model may not help students use the grammar rules for communication saying: "I think it doesn't encourage the students very much because it is in the form of feedback. First, you present your lesson to the class. After your presentation, you give chance to students to practice, so I don't think it is very much useful." From the teacher's idea, we can say the model does not encourage students to learn by themselves because the teacher controls everything.

Teacher C added, "I don't think that it helps the students to use the rules for communication. It focuses only on the rules. Therefore, it never makes the students use or practice for communication. It doesn't help." From this quote the teacher clearly understands that presentation-practice-practice does not help students use the rules for communication. As it is more of a teacher-led form of presentation, the time for students to use the rules to express their ideas is limited. Consequently, it doesn't encourage a student-centred approach to grammar presentation through which the students take responsibility for their learning and become active participants in the classroom. Teacher D explained that:

It is not as such undermined procedure. I don't undermine that procedure. Of course, when you bring this 3P to the way we use the classroom today, it is not that much far from that. Presentation can include introduction and presentation. As they practice important ideas can be stabilized.

The teacher relates the Presentation-Practice-Production model with stages of presentation which is read as Introduction, Presentation, Stabilization and Evaluation. He mentions that practice can lead to stabilization. And he mentioned the usefulness of the model as follows: "As they practice, they may speak or write or make role play or whatever. Consequently, as the teacher presents or the students may present in the classroom; it can help them. It is very important." This idea depicts the presentation of the rules and then practicing followed by production can encourage students to use the rules in speaking or writing.

4.2.1.3 Importance of Learner-centred Approach to Present Grammar Lessons

It is evident that learner-centred language teaching is a useful method. Teacher interviewees mentioned some of the importance of this approach. For example, teacher A revealed its advantages as follows, "It makes students to practice the language by themselves without expecting the teacher all the time and increases students' thinking ability." According to this view, this approach makes students creative thinkers. Besides, they become independent learners in order not to expect everything from the teacher.

Teacher B mentions its advantages as, “In fact, learner-centred teaching method is very important because it gives much opportunity to the students to practice grammar effectively. This idea depicts that using a learner-centred approach helps students to practice the grammar rules they have learnt in the classroom. He adds, “The students have to practice by themselves.” From this quote we can understand that the students have to take responsibility for what they have learnt so that they use the target language for communication. Besides, teacher C explained, “...rather than the traditional one, learner-centred method is a modern way of teaching through practicing grammar. That is very important.” This teacher clearly understood the importance of learner-centeredness as a modern teaching methodology. Teacher D confirmed that learner-centred approach is useful saying:

It is useful, but I don't think to just leave everything to the students in case of grammar especially in Ethiopian schools because our students couldn't learn English due to frustration of making mistakes while learning grammar.

He stresses the importance of learner-centeredness. However, he explains his fears because of the fact that students in Ethiopian schools are not confident enough to learn grammar through the student-centred approach.

4.2.1.4 Using Pair Work and Group Work

Using pair work and group work has been emphasized in the current and innovative teaching and learning processes especially in a learner-centred classroom. Teachers were interviewed how frequently they use pair work and group work and the degree of participation of students in grammar lessons. Hence, teacher A explains, “Using group work, pair work or individual work depends on the given topic. Our text by itself guides us to make students practice using pair work or group work.” Teacher B responded to this question by saying, “Most of the time the students do some class activities in group of four or three. Then, I will check their work.”

Teacher C forwarded his idea as follows:

First, I tell the students to form group and do activities by sharing different titles and help them to talk on it and move round and facilitate the activity. After that I help them to present by themselves through their group leaders as well. Finally, I summarize it and tell them the main points.

As I asked the teacher, and he responded “I make students sit in groups by putting the desks in circle as much as possible.” And the grouping took place by the school. The teacher told me that he has some experience in grouping students and forwarded the following idea:

As I have told you, we are experienced and trained to use group work by mixing students gender wise and their background. But there is problem of fear in using group work because the school arranged them; changing their seats does not as such interest them.

This idea tells us that teachers are familiar with using group work and implement new methods when teaching grammar. However, the teacher revealed that majority of the students do not want to be grouped regularly based on ability and gender because of fear of being with students whom they are not familiar with. “Even in the group formed by the school, the majority of the students do not participate in the group discussion with the teacher,” he confirmed.

As stated above the students’ talk is not as expected level as a result of change of group that can sometimes happen. The students were not willing to participate in group discussion. The teacher told me, “Even when I give them some minutes for discussion, some of the students talk about personal issues. To avoid this, I try to monitor some groups”. Accordingly, I interviewed him about the reason for not monitoring the majority of the groups. He explained:

As I have told you, one is the school problem. The other is the teaching background they come from. If I make them to stand and change their seats to talk with the other students, they will ignore one another.

The background, where the students come from, puts heavy burden on the teacher who is not able to monitor all the students to focus on the activities given, either in pairs or groups. The students’ resistance is the problem the teacher faces.

Teacher D confirmed that he uses group work in his grammar lessons as he forwarded the following, “First of all, I screen the students into the brilliant, middle ones and the slow learners. Then, I mix them to support each other; exchange experiences.” He added that he uses group work in his class saying, “On one hand, I will just make them to discuss with their friends in groups or pairs. And I will try to encourage them to come to the front and say whatever they like.”

From this idea we can conclude that he groups students in order to discuss *on* the grammar points under discussion. Following this, he gives an opportunity to students to present what they have discussed in their groups in front of the class.

5. Discussions

Based on the findings of the questionnaire and interview data, the following points were discussed.

Classroom management in a learner-centred grammar classroom plays a great role for effective teaching. In line with this, the findings of the study revealed that teachers have clear understanding in managing their classes by grouping students and mixing them while presenting grammar lessons. On the other hand, the finding also reflected that teachers did

not have clear ideas in using learner-centred approach in a large class size and rearranging the students where there are long rows. Therefore, it is possible to conclude that teachers assume that learner-centred approach is used in small class size only. However, Jones (2007) reflects that effective classroom management takes place in a large class size in grouping students by mixing students with different abilities to focus on their tasks.

As a modern teaching method, learner-centeredness is essential in bringing the expected results on students to fulfil their willingness while learning grammar. In line with this, teachers stressed that learner-centeredness is advantageous for students in order to learn language effectively. This indicates that teachers are familiar with the uses so that they may practice in their grammar lessons. Aghris (2018) confirms that the learner-centred method encourages students to become independent learners. This means that the main focus of the student-centred approach is students themselves and how they effectively learn the target language. One of the items mentioned was that learner-centred approach is advantageous, for it addresses students' individual needs and preferences. According to Attard et al. (2010, as cited in Aliusta, 2014), the learner-centred approach fulfils the learners' needs.

Grammar can be presented in various ways and teachers were asked to express their opinions on how to teach grammar best. The findings of the study revealed that teachers have clear understanding in using the learner-centred methods like presenting grammar lessons by focusing on the meaning of structures and their use in the context; teaching a new grammar point by giving examples and presenting grammar and making students practice in various situations. However, at the implementation stage, teachers did not fully seem to have presented their grammar lessons using the method. The interview findings also showed that teachers do not practice a learner-centred method at the expected level. For this failure, they mentioned that students' fear of making mistakes and large number of students are the causes. Besides, one can conclude that teachers, most of the time, were using the lecture method.

According to Ghazali (2006), the Presentation-Practice-Production is a way of presenting grammar rules which focuses on the rules first and similar to deductive method. Evans (1999) mentions a teacher takes some sort of language form from the syllabus or textbook and presents it to students explicitly. This definition reveals that the teacher is there to impart information to students and students become passive listeners which is the view of traditional grammar class. Teachers explained that the Presentation-Practice-Production model may not help the students because it focuses more on the way the teacher presents rules. Maftoon & Sarem (2012) stress the model emphasizes the correctness of form rather than using the

language for meaningful communication. And the teachers reflected that they do not encourage students to exchange ideas since the teacher controls everything.

One of the ways of implementing a learner-centred approach in grammar lessons is grouping students to exchange ideas. In theory, teachers reflected that group work is important for presenting grammar lessons. Brown (2000) says groups pave a way for students to start, exchange ideas, discussion on points for agreement, dialogue practice and playing their roles. On the other hand, mixing students according to their ability is one room for practicing learner-centred method. Richards & Bohlke (2011) explain that mixing students of different ability levels can create an environment in which they depend on one another for help. Jones (2007) recommends that occasionally teachers should bring fast learners and slow learners together. In line with this, the findings show that teachers articulated their agreement, but on the implementation, they were not fully practicing in their grammar lessons because of the resistance of students to actively participate in classroom discussion.

6. Conclusions and Suggestions

Based on the presentation and discussion of the data obtained through questionnaire and interview, the following points can be concluded. Teachers have clear understanding of the advantages of learner-centred approaches of language teaching methodology. For example, teachers believe that classroom management is helpful for the teachers in order to effectively implement learner-centred approaches in their grammar lessons.

The learner-centred approach is advantageous for grammar teaching. Concerning this, teachers are familiar with these advantages and they may practice in their lessons. On the other hand, teachers have clear understanding in the ways that learner-centred approach can be used to present grammar lessons. However, in implementing these approaches in grammar lessons, teachers complain that students' lack of confidence in classroom participation while using pair and group work and large class size are the challenges they usually face.

Even though teachers are certain that learner-centred methods are advantageous for presenting grammar lessons, the interview results showed that they tend to focus on the traditional methods teaching grammar by themselves.

In order to fully implement a learner-centred method in grammar lessons, teachers should update themselves in the innovative methods of delivering grammar lessons such as pair-and group work, teaching grammar in context and an inductive approach to grammar presentation. Besides, Ministry of Education, Regional Educational Bureaus and Woreda Education Offices are expected to prepare training sessions for teachers. In addition, students themselves should be given trainings to create awareness about this method so that they can

actively participate in the classroom. Furthermore, teachers should encourage their students to participate in classroom discussions.

References

- Adinew, T. (2015). Conception of Teaching and Teaching Practices in Relation to Student-centered Instruction in Selected Ethiopian Universities [Unpublished doctoral dissertation]. University of South Africa.
- Aghris, A. (2018). Promoting the Learner-centred Approach in the Moroccan EFL Classroom.
- Aliusta, G. O. (2014). An Examination of the Implementation of Student-centred learning (SCL) in High Schools in North Cyprus [Unpublished doctoral dissertation]. Eastern Mediterranean University.
- Asaoka, N. (2013). Willingness to Communicate—Group Dynamics and Seating Allocation at Beginning Level Japanese. <https://core.ac.uk/download/pdf/60542133>.
- Brandes, D., & Ginnis, A. (1986). A Guide to Student – centered Classroom. Simon & Shouter Education.
- Brown, D. (2000). Teaching by Principles: An Interactive Approach to Language Pedagogy (2nd ed.). Pearson Education, Inc.
- Cohen, L., Manion, L., & Morrison, K. (2007). Research Methods in Education (6th ed.). Routledge Taylor and Francis Group.
- Dawson, C. (2007). A Practical Guide to Research Methods (3rd ed.). How to Books Ltd., Oxford shire.
- Eisenstein, M. (1987). Grammatical Explanations in ESL: Teach the Student, not the Method. In Methodology in TESOL (pp. 282–292). Heinle & Heinle Publishers.
- Evans, D. (1999). A Review of ‘PPP’. University of Birmingham.
- Felder, R., & Henriques, E. (1995). Learning and Teaching Styles in Foreign and Second Language Education. Foreign Language Annuals, 28(1), 21–31.
- Ghazali, F. A. (2006). The Presentation-Practice-Production Vs. Consciousness-Raising: Which Is Efficient in Teaching Grammar? <https://usir.salford.ac.uk/id/eprint/22873/1>
- Girma, G. (2005). A Study of Secondary School English Language Teachers’ Implementation of Methodological Innovation: The Teaching of Grammar in Focus [Unpublished doctoral dissertation]. Addis Ababa University.
- Jones, L. (2007). The Student-centred Classroom. Cambridge University Press.
- Khalid, A., & Azeem, M. (2012). Constructivist Vs. Traditional: Effective Instructional Approach in Teacher Education. International Journal of Humanities and Social Science, 2(5), 170–177. <http://www.ijhssnet.com/journals>

- Kothari, C. R. (2004). *Research Methodology: Methods and Techniques* (2nd ed.). New Age International Publishers.
- Larsen-Freeman, D. (2001). *Teaching Grammar*. In *Teaching English as a Second Foreign Language* (3rd ed.). Thomson/Heinle.
- Littlewood, W. (1981). *Communicative Language Teaching*. Cambridge University Press.
- Lojova, G. (2017). Application of Selected Principles of the Learner-centred Approach to English Grammar Teaching. 10(4), 278–286. [http://doi: 10.18355/XL.2017.10.04.23](http://doi:10.18355/XL.2017.10.04.23)
- Maftoon, P., & Sarem, S. N. (2012). A Critical Look at Presentation, Practice, Production (PPP) Approach: Challenges and Promises for ELT. *Broad Research in Artificial Intelligence and Neuroscience*, 3(4), 31–36.
<http://edusoft.ro/brain/index.php/brain/article/viewFile/442/490>
- Mart, C. T. (2013). Teaching Grammar in context: Why and how? *Theory and Practice in Language Studies*, 3(4), 124–129.
- Meece, J. L. (2003). Theory and Practice in Language Studies. *Theory into Practice*, 42(2), 109–116.
- Moon, J. (2004). *A Handbook of Reflective and Experiential Learning*. Rutledge Falmer.
- Morrison, S. (2009). *Second Language Acquisition Research and the Teaching of Grammar: A Case for an Inductive Approach*. College of Charleston.
- Nonkukhetkhong, K., Baldauf, R. B., & Moni, K. (2006). *Learner-centeredness in Teaching English as a Foreign Language*.
http://espace.library.uq.edu.au/eserv.php?pid=UQ:8562&dsID=K_B_MThaiTESOL06
- Nunan, D. (1999). *Second Language Teaching and Learning*. Heinle & Heinle.
- Richards, J. C. (2006). *Communicative Language Teaching Today*. Cambridge University Press.
- Richards, J. C., & Bohlke, D. (2011). *Creating Effective Language Lessons*. Cambridge University Press.
- Richards, J. C., & Rodgers, T. S. (2001). *Approaches and Methods in Language Teaching*. Cambridge University Press.
- Sasson, D. (2007). *Teaching EFL/ESL students' grammar: Tips and strategies for grammar lesson plans*. www.suite101.com
- Schiro, M. S. (2013). *Curriculum Theory: Conflicting Visions and Enduring Concerns* (2nd ed.). Sage Publications, Inc.

Shah, R. K. (2020). Similarities and Difference between LCT and TCT. *International Journal of Creative Research Thoughts*, 8(7), 5694–5719.
<https://www.ijert.org/papers/IJCRT2007638>

Singh, Y. K. (2006). *Fundamentals of Research Methodology and Statistics*. New Age International (P) Limited.

Swan, M. (2002). Seven Bad Reasons for Teaching Grammar-and Two good Ones. In *Methodology in Language Teaching: An Anthology of Current Practice* (pp. 148–152). Cambridge University Press.

Thornbury, S. (1999). *How to Teach Grammar*. Pearson Education Limited.

Weimer, M. (2002). *Learner-centred Teaching: Five key Changes to Practice*. John Wiley & Sons, Inc.

Widodo, H. P. (2006). Approaches and Procedures for Teaching Grammar. 5(1), 122–141.
<https://education.waikato.ac.nz/journal/files/etpc/files/2006v5n1nar1>

William, M., & Burden, R. L. (1997). *Psychology for Language Teachers: A Social Constructivist Approach*. Cambridge University Press.

Zohrabi, M., Torabi, M. A., & Baybourdiani, P. (2012). Teacher-centred and/or Student-centred Learning: English Language in Iran. *English Language and Literature Studies*, 2(3), 18–30. <http://dx.doi.org/10.5539/ells.v2n3p18>