

Ethiopian Students' Perceptions of Learner-centered Grammar Teaching Methodology in Some Secondary Schools of Oromia Special Zone Surrounding Finfinne

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to investigate students' perceptions on the advantages of learner-centered approaches and grammar teaching methods in secondary schools. The study utilized descriptive research design, employing a questionnaire and an interview. Two hundred grade 9 students for the questionnaire and six students for an interview were randomly selected. Questionnaire data was analyzed using mean and standard deviation. The interview data was analyzed thematically to support the questionnaire data. The findings of the study revealed students had positive perceptions on some of the learner-centered-methods of grammar presentation because they believe that these methods help them to become users of the language for communication. However, they had negative perceptions on some of them. As a result, they were more interested in grammar explanation by their teachers since they were accustomed by lecture method. Implications suggest that teachers should make students active participants by bringing various grammar tasks that arouse students' interests; they should practice learner-centered methods namely pair work, group work, asking and answering questions and situational dialogue in order to build students' confidence.

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INTRODUCTION

In the era of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), grammar teaching was ignored because the main focus of language teaching in this approach is to help learners use the language for communication. For example, the main focus of language teaching should be expressing (Wilkins, 1971, as cited in Richards &

Rodgers, 2001). However, research shows that grammar teaching has got due attention because without the knowledge of grammar students may not be able to produce meaningful sentences. The debate on the ways of teaching grammar has existed for many years. The debate is whether to teach grammar directly through presentation or exposing the learners to the meaningful usage of the language (Nassaji & Fotos, 2011).

There is a shift from teacher-centered approach to learner-centered one in the modern teaching methodology. It is because of the fact that the traditional methods of language teaching haven't helped students to achieve the expected levels of proficiency in English. From the traditional methods of teaching grammar, the Presentation-Practice-Production model, for example, failed to support students to use the language for expressing their ideas (Bakori, 2022). Achieving the goals became difficult because the purpose of language teaching is not only imparting information but also making students use the rules for communication in both national and international levels. The traditional methods of teaching a language emphasize presenting rules to students, and some others focused on methodology that gives attention to learners instead of lecturing to them by considering their previous experiences.

Learner-centered methods help students use language they have learnt in real communication. A learner-centered method considers that learners are at the center of teaching and learning in order that they are supposed to be active participants while learning certain lessons (Emaliana, 2017). Some scholars argue students may develop the knowledge of grammar when they are taught directly. According to Risnah (2018), direct teaching of grammar supports students to get time to practice. However, Ismoilovna (2020) stresses teaching grammar rules should focus on how learners use the rules they have learnt in real communication. Additional findings which were concluded by Benitez-Correa et al. (2019) revealed that inductive approach to grammar presentation is preferable by students in creating a good teaching/learning atmosphere and bringing a friendly relationship. These ideas reflect that teaching grammar is expected to be implemented using a methodology which helps students to become active participants and use the target language in daily communication.

Even though teaching grammar should encourage learners to manipulate the rules in speaking or writing, students' perceptions on the advantages of learner-

centered methods and the various methods of presenting grammar lessons play a great role in employing the language for daily use. The Ethiopian education curriculum was prepared based on the notion that students learn best when active learning techniques are implemented (Ministry of Education, 2009). However, in Ethiopian secondary schools, teachers tend to focus on teaching grammar deductively, of which rules are presented first followed by practice. In addition, students are interested in to be taught using this method because teachers most of the time teach rules first by writing notes and lecturing to them. Also, students usually fail to express themselves with rules they have learnt.

There were some locally conducted studies in this area. First, Mingizem (2020) conducted a research related to using active learning in grammar lessons. The findings of the study revealed that teachers seemed to poorly implement this method in their grammar lessons because of shortage of time and appropriate material, and students are most of the time, passive listeners. Second, findings revealed by Tiglu (2008) showed that teachers are familiar with the communicative approach, but they are not implementing it at its full scale as a result of the failure of the lessons in the text presented in a meaningful way. In addition, students are not willing to express their ideas confidently in the rules learnt, and the Plasma TV does not give enough time to students for practice. Another finding obtained by (G. Girma, 2005) discloses that teachers are not fully implementing innovative methods of teaching grammar because of lack of training. Additional findings of the research conducted by (Girma & Degaga, 2022) reveal that students are unable to construct their own meaningful sentences in speaking as a result of the failure to use appropriate methodology by teachers.

Most of the studies done mainly focused on the teachers and the ways they practice teaching grammar even though some ideas from students' side included. The researcher was interested in collecting data from students in relation to perceptions because learning is very much related to perceptions. Without positive perceptions of grammar learning through learner-centred approaches, it may be difficult for a teacher to implement in the classroom as a result of reluctance of students to participate in classroom discussions and dependence on the teacher for lecture. In order to address the problems in this study, the following research questions were prepared:

- a) What are the perceptions of students towards the advantages of learner-centred methods?
- b) What are the perceptions of students towards the various methods of teaching/learning grammar lessons?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Historical Background of Learner- centred Methods of Teaching

Learner-centred method of teaching goes back to 20th century. Learner-centred language teaching commenced with the idea of 'learning by teaching' in the 1970s (Zohrabi et al., 2012). This method of teaching based itself on the view of social constructivism. Social constructivism stresses that learning/teaching effectively undertaken in the classroom when 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)). Therefore, a learner-centred teaching is an approach that puts students at the centre of teaching and learning processes. Besides, learner-centred learning/teaching is a compensation that the teacher does majority of the work in the classroom to the students who actively participate, and the teacher is there to support students to learn by themselves (Buditama, 2017). In addition, learner-centered methods emphasize students' active participation and take responsibility for their learning (Weimer,2002). Besides, these methods, with the help of a teacher, open a room for students to learn from one another and from their teacher also (Fufa, et al., 2023). These methods grounded in constructivist view of teaching and learning. According to Akpan et al. (2020), constructivism theory of learning/teaching considers students' previous knowledge in order to understand the current information provided to them. In addition, social constructivism also plays a great role in learning something. This theory reveals that students learn more through social interaction among the students themselves and their teacher and environment as well (Mohamad & Romli, 2021). In its implementation, learner-centred approaches shifted the roles from teachers to students and from teaching to learning (Oxford, 1990). This means students and the way they learn is the main issue that should be taken into account.

Grammar teaching and learning can also become learner-centred methods when students discover the rules by themselves from the examples provided to them. According to Samanta (2021), an inductive grammar presentation is student-

centred approach which results in bringing the expected results on students' performance. As reported by Amin (2015), students' grammatical mistakes are reduced when they write by contextualized grammar teaching. These are ways of implementing learner-centred methods while presenting grammar lessons. Group work, as a learner-centred strategy, is essential for grammar teaching. Groups are advantageous for students to take responsibility for their learning, which results in supporting one another (Hung & Long, 2019). Therefore, students learn grammar better through group work.

Advantages and Disadvantages of Learner-centred Teaching

Various approaches and methods have their own advantages and disadvantages to deliver a lesson to students. Accordingly, learner-centred method of teaching a language has the following advantages. Students become active and motivated when they learn through a learner-centred method which comes from a sense of ownership (Altun, 2023). This entails that when students learn certain points in the classroom, they develop an understanding that they can show their performance of activities by themselves. In addition, Rao (2020) reflects that it is an approach that paves a way for students to learn and develop additional skills and understanding in order to be successful in their life. Furthermore, this approach has the following advantages for learners:

- It is sensitive to individual needs and preferences.
- It encourages construction of knowledge and meaning.
- It draws on and integrates language learning with students' life experiences.
- It generates more student participation and target language output.
- It encourages authentic communication.
- It breaks down barriers between in-class and out-of-class learning.
- It opens up spaces for discussion of motivations, learning preferences, and styles.

(Benson 2001, as cited in (J. C. Richards & Bohlke, 2011))

Although learner-centred approach to teaching in general and language in particular is useful, it has some disadvantages. Some learners may not accustom themselves easily to this approach despite the teacher's attempt, and some of them are not interested in working in groups (Rao, 2020). He also listed some of the disadvantages as follows:

a. It requires a longer time for students so it is difficult to achieve curriculum targets.

- b. Takes a long time for teachers so that teachers in general do not want use cooperative learning.
- c. It requires special skills of teachers so that not all teachers can do or use cooperative learning.
- d. Specific nature of student demands such as the nature likes to work together.

Research on Learner-centred Methods

The importance of learner-centred language teaching has been discussed for years by a lot of scholars. Studies have been conducted to look into the practice and the challenges during its implementation. Research conducted in Thailand by Naruemon (2013) proves that teachers lack full understanding of this method so as to implement it at its full scale. Even though both learner-centred and teacher-centred approaches are advantageous for teaching, the usefulness of the former outweighs in teaching English as a foreign language (Al-Zu'be, 2013). Another studies conducted in Lesotho reflect that teachers and students usually are interested in doing certain tasks alone despite using some aspects of learner-centred methods on the side of the teachers (Matsau, 2007).

Teaching and Learning Grammar

For many decades different approaches and methods have emphasised the best ways to present grammar lessons in order to make students to achieve the expected levels of their proficiency. Even though there have been various methods of teaching grammar, their ultimate purpose is to benefit students to use the language. Accordingly, Richards & Reppen (2014) reflect that the purpose of grammar teaching is to help students use the target language in daily communication based on the situation. This concept discloses that teachers are responsible for creating favourable conditions in order for students to use the language in their daily lives. For a long time, grammar teaching has become a controversial issue whether to teach or not teach and how grammar lessons should be delivered. However, in recent years grammar teaching has got due attention. Grammar teaching is essential because it is promising to increase learners' communicative abilities (Richards, 2015; Ur, 2011). This idea is supported by research conducted by Quan whose findings confirm that new methods of teaching grammar helped students improve their grammar knowledge (Quan, 2024).

Grammar teaching plays a significant role in making students to produce unlimited forms of new things in language (Thornbury (1999). In addition, Zhang (2009)

emphasizes the teaching of grammar because students achieve grammatical competence, where they understand and use words and rules together which results in developing communicative competence. In general, the importance of teaching grammar in the second language classroom context has been taken into consideration by a lot of scholars. Grammar teaching is reconsidered recently as a result of its contribution for the second language acquisition (Ellis, 2006; Nassaji & Fotos, 2004).

People see grammar teaching in different ways. According to Ellis (2006), grammar teaching entails delivering certain rules and encouraging students in practicing separate grammar points. He also gives a broad definition saying that every methodology that makes students to focus on certain a particular structure so that they comprehend the language and make use of it. This definition tells us it is a methodology that a teacher uses to help students emphasize specific grammar rules.

In presenting grammar teachers may use various approaches. The first one is a deductive approach. This approach to grammar presenting begins from rules. Takala (2016) explains that in a deductive approach a teacher begins by introducing new grammar forms and making students practice. This concept is related to Presentation, Practice and Production (P-P-P) model. Shirav & Nagai (2022) also explain that a deductive approach is manifested, where teachers are responsible for presenting grammatical rules directly to students. A deductive approach is advantageous as a result of making a teacher to lecture a lot of rules within a restricted time provided (Sopin, 2015).

A deductive approach has weakness in that it doesn't support the idea emphasizing language for communication, and students are always busy in listening to lecture, which may put them in stress (Fakazli, 2021). In addition, students' participation and the relationship between them and their teacher decreases (Chalipa 2013, as cited in Sik, 2014).

The second is an inductive approach. Contrary to a deductive approach to grammar presentation, an inductive approach begins from providing students with some examples so that they learn the structure of a specific piece of grammar on their own. During inductive presentation of rules, students are provided with some examples that contain certain nuances for grammar points so that they learn by themselves (Male, 2016). An inductive approach creates an opportunity for students

to be independent learners so that they learn from their experiences (Ahmadzai et al., 2019). On the other hand, Brown & Lee (2015) state that an inductive approach to grammar teaching is preferable appropriate because:

i. It is related to how people learn their mother tongue and goes with the view of the features of both the target language and the mother tongue gradual changes.

ii. It allows students to enhance their initiation in learning through doing something, and students can also experience using the language while they are doing tasks in the classroom.

One of the learner-centred methods which can be practiced is contextualized presentation of grammar lessons. Teaching/learning rules in situations let students to understand the way these rules are used in groups of words, and grammar teaching in context becomes effective in using dialogues, which can help students to easily understand the rules (Mart, 2013). This means it is difficult to isolate language rules from context.

METHOD

Research Design

The study generally employed descriptive research design. Best (1970, as cited in Cohen et al., 2018) states descriptive research deals with perceptions, perspectives and attitudes that certain group of people has towards given issues; assists someone to explain what something looks like; talk about the similarities and differences among things. Data related to perceptions of students on the advantages of learner-centered approach and the various methods of presenting grammar lessons were collected using questionnaire, and for the qualitative data interview was employed. Questionnaire was used to describe perceptions of students on the advantages of learner-centered methods and the various methods of presenting grammar lessons. Interview was prepared to identify students' perceptions on advantages of learner-centered methods and ways of teaching grammar.

Participants and Sample Size

The study took place in Oromia Special Zone surrounding Finfinne: namely Sebeta, Burayu and Dire which are located on 24, 10 and 11 kilometers away from the capital, Addis Ababa (Finfinne). The participants of the study were grade 9

students in these three schools. These students had been learning other subjects in their first language, and English is given as a subject since grade one. However, they learn all subjects in English starting from grade 9. The schools were selected using convenience sampling for the researcher had an easy access to them. Convenience sampling is used in order to obtain the participants within a short period of time and at low cost (Golzar et al., 2022). Simple random sampling was employed so as to select 200 students from a total of 1289 to fill the questionnaire. In simple random sampling the participants of a study obtain unbiased chance to be selected (Noor et al., 2022). For an interview, one section each was selected randomly from the three schools. After that two students were randomly selected from each section by giving numbers 0 and 1. This code was given in order to include those students who drew 1 in the interview.

Instruments and Data Collection Procedures

Questionnaire

The questionnaire was prepared on a five point Likert Scale, which are: (5=Strongly agree, 4=Agree, 3=Undecided, 2=Disagree, 1=Strongly disagree), and it has two parts. The first part talks about the advantages of learner-centered methods. The second part consists of the various methods of teaching/learning grammar lessons, of which some of them are connected to learner-centered methods. After the English version had been prepared, the questionnaire was translated into the students' mother tongue to reduce barrier in understanding the questions. Before distributing the questionnaire, the researcher consulted the school administrators and students in that the data will be used for the research purpose only. Then, the students were informed that they don't need to write their name on the paper in order to keep the confidentiality and the informed consent. After collecting the questionnaire data, an interview was made with the selected students informing that the recording is confidential, and is used for the study only.

Interview

In this study, a semi-structured interview, which emphasizes the importance of learner-centered methods and the methods the teacher frequently uses to present grammar lessons were used to substantiate data collected through a questionnaire. Semi-structured interview is preferable because it is used to provide detailed data taking into account the purpose of the research (Ruslin et al., 2022). It contains questions which talk about perceptions of students on the advantages of learner-

centered approaches and grammar teaching methods. To obtain answers to these questions, six students (2 students from each school) were randomly selected. Before they were interviewed, the students had been told not to reveal their name and informed that their ideas are used for this research only.

Method of Data Analysis

This study used mixed methods of data analysis. Data collected through questionnaire was analyzed quantitatively using SPSS (Statistical Packages for Social Sciences) version 25. In using SPSS, the following procedures were followed. Before analysis began, data screening and cleaning had taken place. Data screening assists a researcher to find erroneous data and give correction while entering it (Won et al., 2017). This means this procedure paves a way for entering accurate data into the SPSS so that the expected results can be obtained. Accordingly, the data had no empty values which had not been filled. The screened data was coded. Therefore, the researcher continued to feed the data into SPSS. Based on the results of the mean values and the standard deviation, the data was analyzed interpreted. The interview data was recorded, transcribed and analyzed thematically from phrases and sentences that express perceptions of towards the advantages of learner-centered methods and the various methods grammar teaching to support the questionnaire data.

Reliability Test

The Cronbach Alpha Internal Consistency reliability analysis method was conducted to analyze the reliability of the two categories. As it can be seen from the table, all the items are acceptable as Cronbach Alpha reliability coefficient is 0.62 and 0.87 for the first and second category respectively. This result is approved because Ekolu & Quainoo (2019) assert that reliability coefficient $0.5 < \alpha < 0.8$ is for acceptable reliability.

Questionnaire Categories	No. of Items	Cronbach's Alpha
Advantages of learner-centered methods	5	0.62
Various methods of teaching grammar	8	0.87

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Results

The analysis of the study divided into two sections. The first section elucidates perceptions of students on the advantages of learner-centered methods, and the second one explains students' perceptions on the methods of grammar teaching/learning. Following this, the data collected through a semi-structured interview was added to corroborate the data. The findings haven't explained the details of the challenges in implementing the learner-centered methods while teaching grammar lessons. Therefore, further research can be conducted on the potential problems on the side of both teachers and students that may hinder the practice of learner-centered methods in language teaching in general and grammar in particular.

Students' perceptions on the advantages of learner-centered methods

No.	Items	Mean	St. Deviation
1.	Aids learning language rules for daily use.	4.14	1.074
2.	Promotes active language participation	4.23	1.025
3.	Encourages independence from the teacher.	4.26	1.05
4.	Enhances peer communication.	4.34	.979
5.	Builds teacher-student and peer interaction.	4.38	.933
	Aggregate	4.27	1.0124

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

As indicated in table 1 above, the aggregate mean is (M=4.27, SD=1.0124). This reveals that majority of the students agreed that learner-centeredness helps them to fulfill those ideas. In item 1, students reflected their agreement that the method helps them learn the rules of language for daily communication (M=4.14, SD=1.074). The interview data also supported this idea and the students showed their reflection as follows:

St.1: Depending on the rules I have learnt, it helps me to exchange ideas and write things with my classmates.

St.2: Since grammar is the heart of any language, understanding any grammar point means using it either in speaking or writing, and a learner-centred approach encourages this. For example, when the teacher teaches tenses such as present tense, a learner-centred approach can help us to write a sentence or speak in it.

These views reveal that a learner-centred approach supports students to use the rules of grammar either in speaking or writing, which in turn results in peer communication. Besides, learner-centered approach is an effective method to make students understand some grammar points in detail. Moreover, learner-

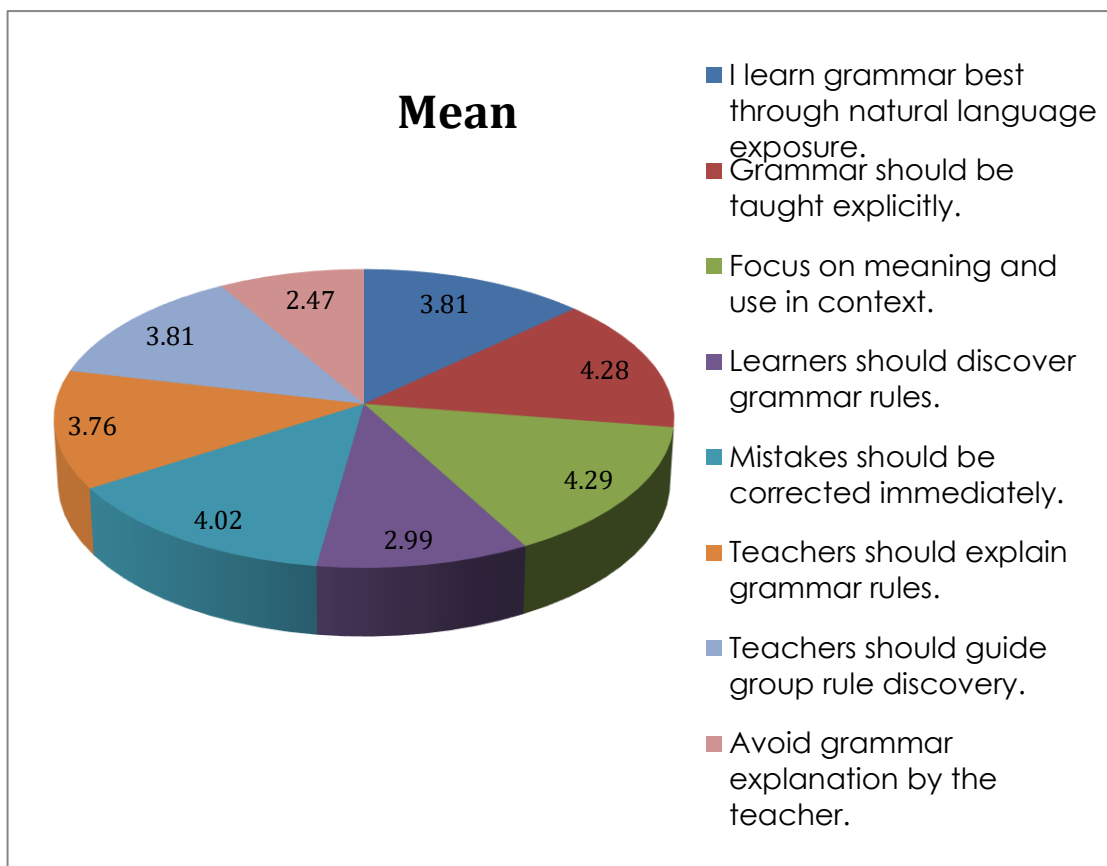
centered approaches create an opportunity for students to practice grammar rules and to learn from one another.

Concerning item 2, most of the students articulated their agreement that this method encourages them to become active participants in using the target language ($M=4.23$, $SD=1.025$). This means active participation is enhanced in the classroom while teaching and learning grammar through learner-centered approach. In addition, more than half of the students agreed that this approach supports them not to expect everything from the teacher all the time, which is the idea of item 3 ($M=4.26$, $SD=1.051$). Moreover, students agreed that learner-centered language teaching encourages them to communicate with their peers ($M=4.34$, $SD=.979$.) Finally, as shown in item 5, most of the students agreed interaction is built between the teacher and students and among students themselves using a learner-centered approach ($M=4.38$, $SD=.933$). Interview data also emphasizes this idea, which is:

St.3: First, it makes us responsible for focusing on the rules either in writing. Second, it encourages us to learn from other students. Third, it encourages us to interact with the teacher and other students as well. In general it makes things clear for us.

St.4: They are helpful because they make us practice something. In grammar lessons also they give us an opportunity to learn from one another.

Both questionnaire data and interview data reveal that students believe interaction between the teacher and students is facilitated through a learner-centered approach such as pair work, group work and asking and answering questions in order to learn from one another and practice the rules they have learnt. Students' perceptions on the various methods of teaching grammar



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

The pie chart above consists of items which are traditional methods of teaching grammar and more of learner-centered ones. Items 2, 5 and 6 are related to the former one. The 1, 3, 4, 7 and 8 are more of student-centered approaches.

Item 2 talks about whether grammar is expected to be taught in an explicit way. And with a value of (M=4.28), majority of the students agreed that it is preferable to teach grammar explicitly. This concept reveals students are more interested in explanation of grammar rules. In item 5, majority of the students agreed that their mistakes in English should always be corrected as soon as possible to prevent the formation of bad habits during learning grammar rules (M=4.02). This depicts students, most of the time, need correction from their teachers instead of correcting their mistakes by themselves. The mean score for item 6 is 3.76. This reveals more than half of the students agreed that teachers should always explain grammatical rules of English to them. The interview data also reflect this view:

St.4: I like if the teacher gives explanation first followed by giving examples.

St.5: I am interested in to be taught by the teacher beginning from explanation and giving some practice activities.

St.6: I prefer to be given notes first. After this, it will be better if explanation and extra examples are provided.

This reveals that even though they believe learner-centered approaches are important to them, they prefer to be lectured by teachers, which makes them passive listeners. This means students need explanation of rules. In order to identify the ways teachers present their grammar lessons, the researcher continued to interview the students. They reflected their ideas as follows:

St.4: At the beginning he gives us notes. Then, we practice.

St.5: First, he explains the rules to us. After giving one example, he makes us practice the rules.

St.6: She starts the lessons by writing notes followed by explanation. She gives us examples and questions. We will try to do, but we will correct the mistakes together with the teacher.

The students reflected that teachers present their grammar lessons starting from explaining the rules followed by practicing, which is related to deductive grammar presentation. Even correction is given with the help of the teacher, and this may not help students learn from their mistakes.

As previously mentioned, the remaining items are more of student-centered ways of presenting grammar lessons. These are: 1, 3, 4, 7 and 8. Learner-centered methodology prefers that grammar is taught as a process of arriving on certain language improvements for communication, which is advocated by communicative language teaching (CLT). Based on this assumption, in item 1, (M=3.81), more than half of the students agreed that they learn grammar best through exposure to language in natural contexts. In item 3, most students agreed that grammar teaching should focus on the meaning of structures and their use in the context (M=4.29). From learner-centered perspective, it is expected that students discover the rules of grammar from the examples provided to them by their teachers. In relation to this, the results of the students in item 4 show majority of them disagreed that grammar rules in English should be discovered by them rather than explicitly taught (M=2.99). In item 7, (M=3.81) shows more than half of the students agreed that their teachers should help them to work out grammar rules for themselves in pairs or groups. This shows that pair or group work is advantageous for them to exchange ideas so that they may arrive on the correct answer. The interview results also support this idea.

St.3: Our teacher sometimes makes us to discuss some grammar points in pairs or groups, which assists us to actively participate in the class, but students are not willing to participate. Even they don't do their homework. This is because of the background they come from.

St.5: If something is not clear for me, I will ask them, or if they fail to understand something, they will ask me. Through this way, we practice learning from one another.

St.6: Since all students cannot understand certain points equally, when we work together, we understand things easily; we learn something from each other.

The students' ideas reveal that pair or group work is important for them to learn grammar points from each other and by exchanging ideas through asking and answering questions. Even though they emphasized that pair or group work is essential, there is a gap in fully implementing by teachers while presenting grammar lessons. Moreover, low participation of students in classroom discussions is another problem. The result of item 8 depicts more than of the students disagreed that grammar explanation should be avoided by the teacher ($M=2.47$). This means students expect explanation from the teacher.

Discussions

Students' perceptions play a great role in fully implementing learner-centered methods in grammar lessons by both teachers and students. They are expected to have clear understanding of these methods for effective implementation in the classroom. Even though the curriculum emphasizes the practice of learner-centered approach in all lessons, the teachers tended to focus on lecture while students were passive listeners. Based on the findings, students' perceptions on advantages of learner-centered methodology and various methods of presenting grammar lessons are talked about in the following section.

Having positive perceptions on a methodology of language teaching plays a great role in order to fully implement in classroom. As has been stated in a literature review, learner-centered language teaching is advantageous especially for students. First, students are familiar in that it helps them use the rules they have learnt for communication. This shows students may employ the rules either in writing or speaking. The second point is active participation of students in the classroom. In line with this, learner-centered approach is more preferable than the teacher-centered approach. Students believe that this approach ensures their active participation and makes them independent learners. Al-Zu'be (2013) asserts that both teachers and students actively participate in the teaching and learning processes and students become independent learners. The main purpose of language teaching in general and grammar teaching in particular is to help students communicate with their peers. As a result, students articulated that this method of teaching can

encourage them to communicate with their peers while classroom discussions take place. Students have a lot of work in exchanging ideas in groups and there may not be no room for students to make a noise (Jeanne, 2009 as cited in Shah, 2020). The main focus of learner-centered method is an interaction as it develops a social relationship. Jony (2016) says that learner-centered method creates a good relationship between the students and the teacher, and the teacher is responsible to assess students' performance. Teo (2019) argues that interaction and actively participating in classrooms discussions come to effect when learner-centered methods are practiced. Students also affirmed that it helps them to interact with one another and their teacher as well.

Grammar lessons can be delivered in various ways. Some of the methods emphasize that teachers know everything so that they are given the mandate to convey the information to students. Others stress that teachers are not the only sources of knowledge, considering the students' experiences. Having these debatable issues into account, questions related to both concepts were included so as to identify the students' perceptions. The students were asked to reflect their perceptions towards the ways.

One of the learner-centered methods in teaching grammar is presenting rules in natural context. The students believe that learning grammar rules through exposure to the natural contexts can help them to fully understand the concept. This means teaching grammar should focus on helping learners use it in everyday life (Scrivener, 2005 as cited in Muhammed et al., 2018). Learner-centered approach gives attention to introducing rules of a language and its meaning in context. In line with this, students clearly understand that it helps them learn the rules to use in a meaningful way. Teaching grammar should help learners use the language interactional communication instead of teaching separately (Shams, 2019). In addition, research findings revealed by (Ha & Van, 2020) show that contextualized grammar teaching is useful in enhancing students' speaking skills and making them show their ability in dialogues. In a learner-centered classroom, teachers may write some examples on the board and students are expected to discover the rules by themselves. Students articulated that they do not agree on this concept. This shows that students expect everything from the teacher in the form of lecture. However, some research findings stress that inductive presentation of grammar rules are essential. Active participation of students increases at this time because they are

busy finding the way the rules work (Samanta, 2021). Findings from the research conducted by Shirav & Nagai (2022) also indicate that students' performance in grammar increased more through inductive approach, where examples are provided to them, and they work out by themselves. In addition, inductive presentation of rules promotes acquiring language skills (Latifah, 2023).

In the traditional methods of teaching, everything is done by teachers. Giving feedback is the one performed by them. Students want to get correction from their teachers as soon as possible in order to prevent habit formation. In the traditional methods of teaching grammar, teachers present information, and students have almost no roles in contributing to the teaching and learning processes in the classroom (Alessa & Hussein, 2023). Based on this idea, students are willing to be taught by the teacher despite the fact that they are familiar with learner-centered methods for grammar teaching, and they usually need correction from their teachers.

As learner-centered teaching techniques, pair and group work for language teaching have a positive effect because they encourage an interaction between the teacher and students and among the students themselves. In line with this, students believe that exchanging ideas in pairs and groups helps them learn grammar rules effectively. Both the questionnaire and interview data reveal that students emphasize the importance of group work for grammar learning. Group work improves students' grammatical performance at high level (Farisatma et al., 2017). Besides, group work enhances students' communication and self-worth (Wahyuningsih, 2018), and it encourages them to learn from each other (Alfares, 2017).

In most Ethiopian secondary schools, students are passive listeners during grammar presentation because teachers prefer to use lecture method. As a result of this, students are also accustomed with this trend. This shows that students consider their teachers as they know everything. This is the reason why they don't want their teachers to avoid explaining grammar rules.

Students' perceptions of the advantages of learner-centered approaches and various grammar teaching methods have been discussed. Generally, students believe that learner-centered methods create an opportunity to use the language in communication and improve their grammar knowledge. In addition, learner-centered methods such as teaching/learning rules in natural contexts and

exchanging ideas in pairs or groups while learning grammar are very useful. However, students were not interested in discovering the rules by themselves, and they were in favor of grammatical explanation by their teachers. This study can benefit the following bodies. First, teachers benefit from the findings to overcome the problems of teaching grammar through teacher talk only. That means they may give responsibility for their students to learn by themselves. Second, teachers may find grammar tasks, which motivate the students to attentively follow and become active participants in classroom discussions. Besides, teachers implement some learner-centered teaching strategies/techniques such as pair work, group work, asking and answering questions and role plays.

CONCLUSION

The purpose of this study was to investigate students' perceptions on advantages of learner-centered approaches and grammar teaching methods. To achieve this goal, data was collected through questionnaire and interview. The findings showed students have positive perceptions on the advantages of learner-centered language teaching, which can create an opportunity to use the target language for communication. Moreover, teaching/learning grammar in natural context together with identifying meaning of structures and their use in situation were the methods that were beneficial for students. They were also interested in learning grammar by exchanging ideas in pairs and groups. Research findings also reveal that group work plays a pivotal role in improving students' grammatical competence. Additional research findings stress that teaching grammar in context improves students speaking skills and assists them to construct their conversation. However, students had negative perceptions on learning grammar through discovering the rules by themselves from the examples provided. This contradicts from the findings disclosed by other researcher, saying that students' grammar achievement is increased by teaching them inductively.

Generally, students were positive on the learner-centered methods in grammar learning. However, they were more interested in explanation from their teachers all the time. This may arise from the fact that teachers all the time lecture their grammar lessons. In addition, fear of making mistakes and poor background in learning English when they were in the lower grades can be the challenges. In order to implement learner-centered methodology in grammar lessons, teachers are

expected to encourage students to build their confidence and motivate them to participate in the classroom. Using pair and group work are one of the ways of implementing learner-centered approach through which students can become confident. In addition, teachers and students should be given trainings to fully practice learner-centered methods especially teaching grammar in context and inductive approach to grammar presentation.

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