# STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS ON THE ADVANTAGES OF LEARNER-CENTRED APPROACHES AND GRAMMAR TEACHING METHODS IN SELECTED SECONDARY SCHOOLS

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| Article Info | Abstract |
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| **Article History**<br>Received: October 2023<br>Revised: July 2024<br>Published: January 2025<br><br>**Keywords**<br>*Grammar teaching methods;*<br>*Grammatical competences;*<br>*Learner-centered approaches;*<br>*Perceptions;* | *Nowadays, there is a shift from the traditional methods to the modern ones. Learner-centered methods have got due attention in language teaching because it encourages students to become active participants. However, in order to fully implement these methods, students' perceptions on the advantages of learner-centered approaches and different grammar teaching methods play a great role. Accordingly, 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 mixed methods research design, employing a questionnaire and an interview. The participants of the study were grade 9 students from three schools. Two hundred 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 believe that using learner-centered approach in grammar lessons helps them to learn grammar effectively. Students had positive perceptions on some of the learner-centered-methods of grammar presentation. 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 are supposed to 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.* |

## INTRODUCTION

English is serving as an international language because of its dominance in education, business and technology throughout the world. In a similar way, it is being used as language of instruction in most of the subjects in Ethiopian secondary schools. It is mandatory for students to attain the expected levels of the target language in order to communicate with outside world. For this, the methodology employed plays a great role in making students successful in all aspects. During the presentation of grammar lessons, students are also supposed to be familiar with the various methods because their understanding can contribute to their success in using the language for expressing themselves either in speaking or writing.

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 leaners 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 (Andika et al., 2023; Astiantih & Akfan, 2023). The Ethiopian education curriculum was prepared based 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 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 finding of the study revealed that teacher seemed they 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 at its full scale as 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 findings obtained by (Girma, 2005) disclose that teachers are not fully implementing innovative methods of teaching grammar because of lack training. Most of the studies done mainly focused on the teachers and the ways they practice even though some ideas from students' side included. Therefore, the purpose of this research is: a) to identify students' perceptions on the advantages of learner-centred methods, b) to investigate students' perceptions of various ways of teaching grammar lessons.

## Literature Review
### *Historical Background of Learner- centred Methods of Teaching*
Learner-centred method of teaching goes back to $20^{th}$ 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). These methods base themselves on 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).

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 when delivering lessons to students. Among these, the learner-centered method of teaching a language offers distinct benefits. According to Altun (2023), this method makes students more active and motivated as it fosters a sense of ownership in the learning process. When students engage in classroom activities, they develop an understanding that they can independently demonstrate their abilities. Additionally, Rao (2020) highlights that this approach facilitates the acquisition of additional skills and knowledge that students can leverage for success in life.

The learner-centered method provides several advantages for learners. It is sensitive to individual needs and preferences, encourages the construction of knowledge and meaning, and integrates language learning with students' life experiences. This method also enhances student participation and target language output, promotes authentic communication, and breaks down barriers between in-class and out-of-class learning. Furthermore, it creates opportunities for discussing students' motivations, learning preferences, and styles (Benson, 2001, as cited in Richards & Bohlke, 2011).

Despite these benefits, the learner-centered approach has some limitations. Not all students can adapt to this method easily, even with the teacher's support, and some may lack interest in collaborative activities (Rao, 2020). There are additional challenges associated with this approach. It often requires more time for students to complete tasks, making it difficult to meet curriculum targets. It also demands extra preparation time from teachers, which may discourage them from adopting cooperative learning techniques. Moreover, the method necessitates specialized skills that not all teachers possess and depends on students' willingness to collaborate and work in groups.

### *Differences between Teacher-centred and Learner-centred Approaches*

Disparities between learner-centered and teacher-centered teaching are evident from various perspectives, particularly in their areas of focus in language teaching. Each approach has its own strengths and weaknesses (Weinstein et al., 2003). According to Al-Zu'be (2013), several general distinctions characterize these methods.

In a teacher-centered approach, students do not typically engage in sharing ideas among themselves after the teacher delivers the lesson. In contrast, a learner-centered approach encourages students to exchange views and collaborate on tasks within teams. Moreover, a teacher-centered approach positions the teacher as the sole authority, with students expected to accept what the teacher communicates without question. Students are not actively involved in the teaching-learning process. Conversely, in a learner-centered method, both teachers and students play active roles, contributing to effective teaching and learning in the classroom.

Another notable difference lies in classroom dynamics. Teacher-centered approaches foster a quieter environment as students focus on listening to the teacher's explanations. However, learner-centered classrooms may be noisier due to students engaging in discussions in pairs or groups. Additionally, the way assessments are conducted varies between the two methods. In teacher-centered classrooms, the teacher evaluates students primarily through tests to determine whether they have understood the material. On the other hand, learner-centered assessments are designed not only to evaluate but also to encourage students, enhancing their learning experiences through collaborative efforts.

## 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 as expected. 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.

Thornbury (1999) reveals that grammar teaching plays a significant role in making students to produce unlimited forms of new things in language. In addition, Zhang (2009) emphasizes the teaching of grammar in that 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; Brown & Lee, 2015; Mart, 2013).

## RESEARCH METHOD
### Research Design
The study generally employed descriptive research. 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. Since both quantitative and qualitative methods have weaknesses, mixed methods are preferable to avoid these constraints (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Therefore, mixed methods research design was used in this study. 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. 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 the schools 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 selected randomly from each section by giving numbers 0 and 1. From all students in each section those students who drew '1' were interviewed.

### 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 employed a mixed-methods approach to data analysis, integrating both quantitative and qualitative techniques to ensure a comprehensive understanding of the research findings. Quantitative data collected through questionnaires were analyzed using SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Sciences) version 25. The analysis followed a structured process, beginning with data screening and cleaning. This preliminary step is essential for identifying and correcting errors during data entry, as noted by Won et al. (2017). Accurate data entry ensures the reliability of subsequent analyses and the validity of the results. The researcher confirmed that there were no missing or incomplete values in the dataset before proceeding. Descriptive statistics, including mean and standard deviation, were then employed to summarize and interpret the quantitative data effectively.

For the qualitative component, interview data were analyzed thematically to complement and enhance the findings derived from the questionnaire. This process involved identifying recurring phrases and sentences within the interview responses, which were then organized into themes to provide deeper insights. The thematic analysis helped illuminate patterns and relationships that supported the quantitative results, offering a richer and more nuanced understanding of the research context. By combining descriptive statistics with thematic analysis, the study achieved a balanced and integrative perspective, leveraging the strengths of both quantitative and qualitative methods.

**RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**
**Research Findings**

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.

Table 1
Students' Perceptions on the Advantages of Learner-Centered Methods

| No | Items | Mean | St. Deviation |
|----|-------|------|---------------|
| 1 | It helps us learn the language rules for daily communication. | 4.14 | 1.074 |
| 2 | It makes us active participants in using the target language in and outside of the classroom. | 4.23 | 1.025 |
| 3 | It encourages us not to always expect everything from the teacher | 4.26 | 1.051 |
| 4 | It promotes peer communication. | 4.34 | .979 |
| 5 | It builds interaction between the teacher and us and among themselves | 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, student reflected their agreement as 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 is reflected 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.*
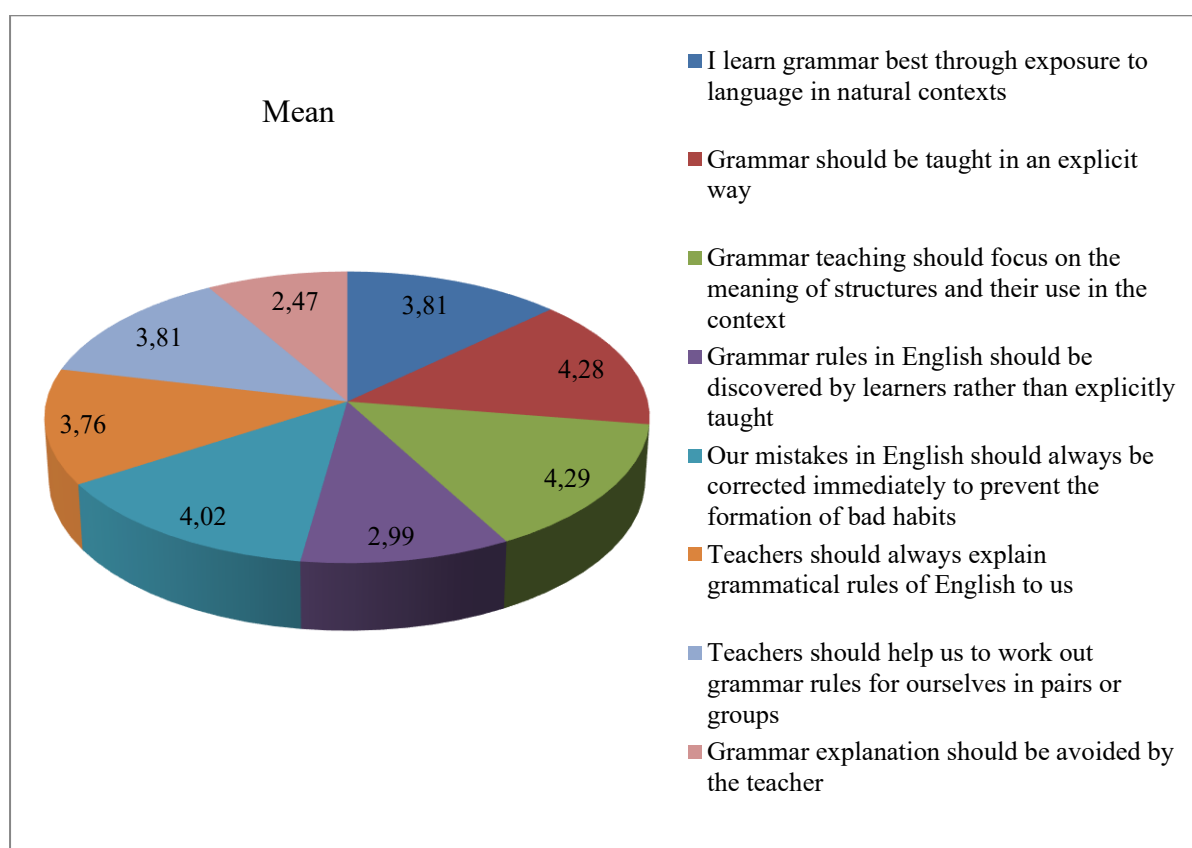
These views reveal that a learner-centred approach supports students to use the rules of grammar either in speaking or writing, which in turn results in peer communication. Besides, learner-centered approach is an effective method to understand some grammar points in detail. Moreover, learner-centered 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 as 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.

Mean



- ■ I learn grammar best through exposure to language in natural contexts
- ■ Grammar should be taught in an explicit way
- ■ Grammar teaching should focus on the meaning of structures and their use in the context
- ■ Grammar rules in English should be discovered by learners rather than explicitly taught
- ■ Our mistakes in English should always be corrected immediately to prevent the formation of bad habits
- ■ Teachers should always explain grammatical rules of English to us
- ■ Teachers should help us to work out grammar rules for ourselves in pairs or groups
- ■ Grammar explanation should be avoided by the teacher

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

Figure 1. Students' perceptions on the various methods of teaching grammar

Figure 1 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 a 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. 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.

**Discussion**

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 their understanding towards these methods for effective implementation in the classroom. Even though the curriculum emphasizes the practice of learner-centered approach in all lessons, the teachers and the students tend to focus on lecture. 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 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 been presented 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 preferable than the teacher-centered approach. And students believe that this approach ensures their active participation and makes them 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. 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. Students also affirmed that it helps them to interact with one another and their teacher as well.

Grammar can be presented 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. And 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' views reflected that they believe grammar rules are learnt more through exposure to the natural contexts. 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 also prefers introducing rules of a language and its meaning in context. In line with this, students clearly understand that it helps them learn the rules in order 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 use 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 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 are always dependent on their teachers for their errors to be corrected.

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 on the advantages of learner-centered approaches and various grammar teaching methods have been articulated in this discussion. 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 presentation of rules in context, using the rules in natural contexts and exchanging ideas in pairs or groups are the ones that got emphasis. However, students they 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. Second, they 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, role plays and so forth. They should also make students familiar with the ways rules can be discovered from the examples provided.

## CONCLUSIONS

The purpose of this study was to explore students' perceptions of the advantages of learner-centered approaches and grammar teaching methods. To achieve this objective, the study utilized a mixed-methods data collection approach. The findings indicated that students generally held positive views regarding the benefits of learner-centered language teaching. They recognized that such methods create opportunities to use the target language for communication, fostering practical application and engagement. Specific strategies, including learning grammar through exposure to natural contexts, understanding the meaning and usage of structures in context, and exchanging ideas in pairs or groups, were considered particularly valuable. Additionally, the research revealed that group work significantly enhances students' grammatical competence by providing collaborative learning experiences. Teaching grammar in context was also noted to improve students' speaking skills and their ability to construct conversations effectively.

Despite these positive perceptions, the findings highlighted certain limitations. Students expressed negative views toward learning grammar by discovering rules themselves from examples provided, a method that contrasts with the inductive teaching approach advocated by some researchers, who argue it enhances grammar achievement. Furthermore, while students generally appreciated learner-centered methods, they still preferred constant teacher explanations during grammar lessons. This preference may stem from traditional teacher-centered practices, where grammar instruction predominantly relies on lectures. Challenges such as fear of making mistakes and inadequate foundational knowledge of English from earlier education levels were also identified. To implement learner-centered methodologies effectively in grammar lessons, teachers need to encourage student confidence and participation. Additionally, both teachers and students would benefit from targeted training to fully embrace and practice learner-centered approaches in grammar learning.

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