

ADDIS ABABA UNIVERSITY
INSTITUTE OF LANGUAGE STUDIES
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(GRADUATE PROGRAMMES)

**EXPLORING THE STATUS OF THE LEARNER-CENTRED
APPROACH IN EFL CLASSES: GRADE 8 IN FOCUS**



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A THESIS SUBMITTED TO THE
DEPARTMENT OF FOREIGN LANGUAGES AND LITERATURE
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IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENT FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTER
OF ARTS IN TEACHING ENGLISH AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE (TEFL)

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Abstract

This study was concerned with exploring the status of the learner-centred approach in EFL classes with particular reference to three selected primary schools in Addis Ababa, namely: Kilinto, Lafto and Hizbawi Serawit Primary Schools-Akaki Kaliti sub-city, Lafto sub-city and Yeka sub-city respectively.

To achieve the set objective two survey questionnaires, one for teachers and one for students, were used to survey participants about their responses. The students' questionnaire was meant to examine whether they like to learn English individually, with a partner, in small groups or in a large group. It also required them to identify the methods frequently used in their English classes. The questionnaire also incorporated issues related to teachers' approach towards error correction. Similarly, the teachers' questionnaire included key areas that revolve around whether or not they employ the suggested learner-centred methods in their English classes. On top of this, teachers were also asked to provide their views on the benefits of using specific active learning methods.

In addition interviews were held with teachers and students. Accordingly, the semi-structured interview questions for teachers consisted of seven points, which dealt with the methods that they used most of the time. Teachers were also inquired to express their opinions on the challenges and the solutions for effectively and efficiently implementing the learner-centred approach in their own context. The interview questions for students contained four points. They ranged from how they wanted to learn English to what they suggest in order to improve their English out of class. In a similar vein, focus group discussions were held with teachers and students. The focus points of the discussions with teachers were on the applicability, challenges, bottlenecks and solutions to this approach. Similarly, the students' focus group discussions included the type of topics they prefer to learn in their English classes. Discussions were also made with students on how they manage their own learning as part of their learning strategies.

Quantitative and qualitative methods were employed to analyze the results. The major findings showed that some of the challenges in effectively and efficiently implementing the learner-centred approach in primary schools are:

- i) large class size*
- ii) lack of awareness*
- iii) lack of training*
- iv) lack of support from stakeholders*
- v) lack of self-motivation*

Finally, the recommendations were made based upon the conclusions of the finding.

List of Tables	page
Table 1. Teachers' performance in using learner-centred approach.....	29
Table 2. General features of the teachers who responded to the questionnaire.....	34
Table 3. Grade levels the teachers taught	35
Table 4. In-service training programmes attended by the teachers.....	35
Table 5. Effect of the training on their teaching practices.....	36
Table 6. Teachers' awareness of learner-centred approach and its implementation.....	37
Table 7. Frequency in the use of Active learning methods and benefits of specific methods.....	39
Table 8. The roles of assessment and materials in the learner-centred approach.....	42
Table 9. Importance of training learners.....	45
Table 10. General features of the students who responded to the questionnaire.....	46
Table 11. Students' response on teachers' implementation of the learner-centred approach.....	47
Table 12. Students' view of teachers' encouragement and assessment techniques.....	50

List of Acronyms

The following acronyms have been used and their meanings are thus given:

CLT	Communicative Language Teaching
EFL	English as a Foreign Language
ELIP	English Language Improvement Programme
ELT	English Language Teaching
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
ICDR	Institute of Curriculum Development and Research
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
L1	First Language
MoE	Ministry of Education
REB	Regional Education Bureau
TEFL	Teaching English as a Foreign Language

Table of Contents

	Page
Acknowledgments -----	i
Abstract -----	ii
List of Tables -----	iii
List of Acronyms -----	iv
Chapter One: Introduction -----	1
1.1 Background -----	1
1.2 Statement of the Problem -----	2
1.3 Objectives of the Study -----	3
1.4 Significance of the Study -----	4
1.5 Scope of the Study -----	4
1.6 Limitations of the Study -----	4
Chapter Two: Review of Related Literature -----	5
2.1 Introduction -----	5
2.2 Definition of Learner-centredness -----	5
2.3 Teacher-centred versus Learner-centred Approach -----	7
2.4 Communicative Language Teaching and Learner-centred Approach -----	9
2.5 Materials in a Learner-centred Curriculum -----	11
2.6 Learner-centred Strategies -----	15
2.6.1 Role-play, Simulation and Drama -----	16
2.6.2 Co-operative Learning -----	18
2.6.3 Pair Work -----	18
2.6.4 Group Work -----	18
2.6.5 Question and Answer -----	19
2.6.6 Games -----	19
2.6.7 Students on Their Own -----	19
2.6.8 Assignments -----	20
2.7 The Roles of Teachers and Learners in Enhancing Language Learning Strategies -----	20
2.7.1 Teachers' Roles in Enhancing Learners' Language Learning Strategies -----	21
2.7.2 Learners' Roles in Enhancing Their Own Language Learning Strategies -----	22
Chapter Three: Methodology -----	23
3.1 Introduction -----	23
3.2 Description of the Samples -----	23
3.2.1 Schools -----	23
3.2.2 Subjects -----	24
3.2.2.1 Students -----	24
3.2.2.2 Teachers -----	24
3.3 Method of the Study -----	24
3.4 Instruments of Data Collection -----	25
3.4.1 Classroom Observation -----	25
3.4.2 Questionnaires -----	25
3.4.2.1 Students' Questionnaire -----	25
3.4.2.2 Teachers' Questionnaire -----	26
3.4.3 Focus Group Discussions -----	26
3.4.4 Interviews -----	27
3.4.5 Data Organization Analysis -----	27

Chapter Four: Data Presentations and Discussion -----	28
4 Introduction -----	28
4.1 Classroom Observation -----	28
4.2 Teachers' Questionnaire -----	35
4.3 Students' Questionnaire -----	48
4.4 Analysis of the Grade 8 Syllabus for English -----	51
4.5 Challenges in Implementing Learner-Centred Approach in Grade 8 -----	52
Chapter Five : Summary, Conclusions and Recommendations-----	57
5.1 Introduction-----	57
5.2 Summary -----	57
5.3 Conclusion -----	58
5.4 Recommendations -----	59
References -----	60
Appendices -----	64
Appendix I : English Curriculum Guide -----	64
Appendix II: Checklist for Classroom Observation -----	66
Appendix III : Teachers' Questionnaire -----	67
Appendix IV : Questionnaire for Students -----	70
Appendix V : Questionnaire for Students (Amharic) -----	72
Appendix VI : Teachers' Focus Group Discussion -----	74
Appendix VII : Teachers' Focus Group Discussion (Amharic) -----	75
Appendix VIII: Students Focus Group Discussion -----	76
Appendix IX : Students Focus Group Discussion (Amharic) -----	77
Appendix X : Teachers' Interview -----	78
Appendix XI : Teachers' Interview (Amharic) -----	79
Appendix XII : Students' Interview -----	80
Appendix XIII : Students' Interview (Amharic) -----	81



CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

Recent writings about the role of the teacher have suggested a shift away from his or her position as the central figure in the classroom, positing instead a learner-centred model in which teachers facilitate rather than control (Harmer, 1995:337). In a nut shell, the contemporary language teaching method gives priority to the learner rather than to the teacher. In this regard Nunan pointed out that in the 'learner-centred' view of language development, the emphasis at all times should be on the learners, not the teacher. In fact, the most extreme proponents of this view argue that it is not really possible to teach anybody anything, except in a superficial sense-all that the teacher can do is to attempt to establish the optimal conditions whereby learning can come about through the learner's own efforts' (1991:235).

Waters (1998:11) claims that in recent years, the importance of adopting a learner-centred approach to ELT classroom management has become axiomatic. This arises, as Tudor (1993:23) puts it, from the need to cater for language teaching in situations where a traditional classroom-based approach is not feasible. Littlejohn argues in his article Learner choice in language study that a truly learner-centred approach to language education must provide opportunities for learner choice in the method and scope of the study (1985:261). The implication of this view is also well recognized by Nunan (1988:22) who argues that no one person (not even a native speaker) ever masters every aspect of the language.

If this is the case, then there are some points that need careful consideration. The main one is developing important skills that help enhance learning. In this regard Brumfit and Johnson (1979:172) also suggest that learners need independent training. I believe that the idea of 'learning to learn' should start

early at the primary level especially in countries such as Ethiopia where there are challenges that are associated with large classes. One of the panaceas prescribed as a remedy for such problems is to give most of the responsibilities to the learner. Hess has made this clear in the following quote:

Teaching, of course, ultimately depends on the willingness of the student to learn; unless the learner takes some responsibility in the shape of active cooperation and effort, there will be no learning in spite of the efforts of excellent teachers. The realization that students must be responsible for their own learning is perhaps most applicable in the large multilevel class. In these classes, teachers cannot always know whether their assignments are useful for all students, and whether all students are making sufficient progress. It is then up to the students to monitor their own progress and to help the teacher and fellow students to notice where and how they need help (Hess, 2001:159).

The above quotation implies that a lot of responsibilities lie in the hands of the language learner.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

In a country like Ethiopia where English is used as a subject from grade one upwards and a medium of instruction in secondary schools, colleges and universities, teachers need to have the knowledge and skills so that they can implement learner-centred and communicative methods properly. In this regard one of the crucial issues is the extent to which teachers are willing to embrace the teaching of English communicatively. The common practice in Ethiopia is that teachers tend to address English as an object of study rather than promoting the use of the language for communication. More widely, it is about willingness and having the knowledge and the skill to employ a learner-centred approach as distinct from traditional instructional practices evidenced in teacher-centredness. However, teachers lack the necessary skills and knowledge to apply learner-centred teaching methods in their classrooms. This is particularly noticeable in primary education.

Being as it is, strategies for teaching English in Ethiopia are suggested in the curriculum guide (syllabus). Accordingly, it is stated that the English syllabus for grades 5-8 is designed to develop the communicative ability of the students. It also requires the students to use the English that they learn to say, read and write things that are both true and meaningful for them. All four skills, listening, speaking, reading and writing are developed simultaneously. Teachers are also expected to emphasize the communicative use of English by using English themselves in the classroom at the appropriate level of difficulty for their students (ICDR, 2004:i).

Researchers such as Alemu, (2004); Atakilt, (1998); Mulat, (2007) have carried out researches with a view of exploring ELT practices in secondary schools, university and college respectively. The studies indicate that teacher training institutions, colleges and universities train teachers giving emphasis to active learning methods, language learning strategies and communicative methodology. However, the practices of teaching English in Ethiopia have not changed. For instance, Alemu (2004) has confirmed that communicative methodology is not properly implemented in high school classes despite various efforts in organizing training workshops at the federal and regional levels with the view of orienting teachers about the classroom application of the communicative tasks. This research is different from the works of those researchers for it explores the teaching and learning of English in primary schools in the light of employing learner-centred methods. Therefore this study is believed to fill the gap in identifying the challenges in implementing these innovative methods in primary schools as they are the basis for the upper grade levels.

1.3 Objectives of the Study

The purpose of this study is to explore the use of learner-centred methods in primary schools. In this context the study investigates the underlying determinants of teachers in adopting the learner-centred approach in their classrooms and seeks solutions.

The specific objectives of the study are to:

- find out how much Grade 8 teachers are aware of a learner-centred approach ;
- explore the reactions of teachers and students to this approach;
- look into the procedures, activities and strategies in a learner-centred classroom.

1.4 Significance of the Study

The study is hoped to have the following significance in:

- Encouraging teachers to use the learner-centred approach so as to improve the teaching of English in their classes
- Drawing the attention of the Curriculum Development Department at the federal level to revisit their syllabuses
- Directing the Ministry of Education and REBs to design tailored trainings in current issues and approaches as part of the teachers' professional development programme
- Giving insight to others researchers so that they can make further exploration in the area

1.5 Scope of the Study

Due to time constraints and inaccessibility of reaching all the primary schools of the Addis Ababa City Administration, the scope of the study is bound to investigate the status in using the learner-centred approach Kilinto, Lafto and Hizbawi Serawit primary schools.

1.6 Limitations of the Study

The study might have limitations because the questionnaire prepared for the students did not include open-ended items. Hence, it might have limited their views and opinions.

CHAPTER TWO: REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

2.1 Introduction

This chapter explores the opinions of scholars regarding learner-centredness in general and learner-centredness vis-à-vis communicative language teaching and active learning methods. The chapter is divided into six sections. The first section defines *learner-centredness* from different perspectives. It is followed by a section which deals with the comparison between a teacher-centred and a learner-centered approach. Then comes a section which shows the relationship between communicative language teaching and a learner-centred mode of delivery. Next, there is a discussion on materials in a learner-centred curriculum. This is followed by a section which enumerates some of the strategies that can enhance learner-centred teaching for EFL learners especially at the primary level. The last section discusses the roles played by teachers and learners in the enhancement of learners' language learning strategies. It examines their distinctive characteristics.

2.2 Definition of Learner-centredness

In order to effectively implement the learner-centred approach in language classes, it is worthwhile to define 'learner-centredness'. Various writers define and view 'learner centredness' from different angles.

According to Nunan (1997) the term 'learner-centredness' has been defined in as many ways as there are people who subscribe to the notion. However, most definitions contain within them the idea that learners should be actively involved in their own learning processes. Tudor (1993:22) further indicates that the recent interest shown in learner-centredness in language teaching, apparent in concepts such as learner autonomy, self-directed learning, or syllabus negotiation, revolves around a redefinition of the role students can play in their

learning of a language. From this we understand the fact that the definition of the term is dependent solely on the role played by the learner.

For Richards (2001:117) the term 'learner-centredness' groups together educational philosophies that stress the individual needs of learners, the role of individual experience, and the need to develop awareness, self-reflection, critical thinking, learner strategies, and other qualities and skills that are believed to be important for the learners to develop. However, other writers in the area argue that such qualities and skills cannot easily be achieved by the learner, especially by the young learner. This view, I believe stems from the idea that the tasks are difficult for their age and grade level. Therefore, Tudor advises us to equip learners with an additional element of awareness development, which is designed to help them deepen their understanding of language learning and develop their ability to play an active and self-directive role in their language study (Tudor, 1996: 34).

Various writers such as Dickinson (1987), Ellis and Sinclair (1989), Tudor (1996), and Wenden (1991) suggest that 'learner training programmes' help facilitate learning especially for the 'self-directed' language learner. Tudor defines 'learner training' as

the process by which learners are helped to deepen their understanding of the nature of language learning, and to acquire the knowledge and skills they need in order to pursue their learning goals in an informed and self- directive manner (Tudor, 1996: 37).

The definition given above asserts the fact that the notion of 'learner training' should be taken as a pre-requisite for the better realization and implementation of 'learner-centredness'. Lee (1998:287) claims that learner training would benefit even the 'lazy' students, who might feel that they are doomed to failure in language learning due to their own laziness in the programme, by increasing their self-confidence and self-esteem.

All the definitions agree that a learner-centered approach allows learners to play a more active and participatory role for their learning. Moreover, the definitions suggest that lack of 'learner training' obviously has a negative impact on the proper utilization of learner centred approach.

2.3 Teacher-centred versus Learner-centred Approach

Wong-Fillmore (cited in O'Neill 1991:298) remarks that although lessons can be organized and structured in many different ways, they can 'jargonistically speaking' be subsumed under two labels. The first-which is characterized by a high level of explicit teacher control-can be referred to as teacher-directed or 'teacher-centred'. The second- which is open in structure and in which students work in groups 'cooperatively without much teacher involvement' and is thus characterized as having very little explicit teacher control-is 'student-centred'.

The learner-centred approach is based on the idea that learners can learn better when they are aware of their own goals. Thus, this model for language curriculum development shifts from *what should be done* in a course of study to *what is specifically done* by language teachers in their classes, through negotiation between teachers and learners in the planning, implementation and evaluation of language courses (Nunan, 1988).

Littlejohn (1985) claims that there are a wide range of approaches to language education that are claimed to be 'learner-centred' but he gives prominence to the three related to syllabus design, classroom activities and the idea of *who decides what* and *how* to learn. He labeled the classroom procedures employed by learner-centred approach as a 'healthy classroom'. According to him a 'healthy classroom' is '...the one in which learners are active and where teacher-talk is reduced to a minimum. We therefore spend considerable amounts of time devising tasks that require learners to work in groups, to do role plays, to fill in charts or grids, to give their personal opinions, and generally to engage in more oral work. These tasks have been devised particularly in relation to communicative approaches, since it is now believed that we should provide

activities that require learners to use the language for particular purpose (1985:253).

Tudor also discusses 'learner-centredness' at length. He expresses the term in four related but distinct perspectives on language teaching. They are summarized as follows:

- **An Approach to Activity Organization**

In this use of the term, learner-centredness relates to a way of organizing classroom activities. The basic idea is that learning activities will be more relevant if it is the students, as opposed to the teacher, who decide on the conceptual and linguistic content of these activities.

- **The Humanistic Perspective**

From this perspective, language learning is seen as an activity which involves students as complex human beings, not 'simply' as language learners. Language teaching should therefore exploit students' affective and intellectual resources as fully as possible, and be linked into their continuing experience of life.

- **Practical Necessity**

In recent years, there has been considerable interest in learner autonomy (Brookes and Grundy, 1988; Holec, 1979) and self-direction (Dickinson, 1987) in language teaching. In part at least, this arises from the need to cater for language teaching in situations where a traditional classroom-based approach is not feasible.

- **The Curriculum Design Perspective**

Writers such as Brindley (1984) and Nunan (1988) have suggested that curriculum design can be seen as a negotiative process between teachers and students. In this view, decisions regarding the content and form of teaching can be made at classroom level via consultation between teachers and learners Tudor (1993:22-23)

Nunan (1985) argues that the following advantages can be accrued in adopting the learner-centred mode of delivery:

Learners come to have a more realistic idea of what can be achieved in a given course;

Learning comes to be seen as the gradual accretion of achievable goals;

Students develop greater sensitivity to their role as language learners and their rather vague notions of what is to be a learner becomes much sharper;

Self-evaluation becomes more feasible;

Classroom activities can be seen to relate to learners' real life needs;

Skills development can be seen as a gradual, rather than an all-or-nothing, process (1988:5).

2.4 Communicative Language Teaching and Learner-centred Approach

Communicative language teaching (CLT) and the learner-centred approach are commonly interrelated. Regarding this view Nunan notes the following:

A major impetus to the development of the learner-centred language teaching came with the advent of the communicative language. In fact, this is a more a cluster of approaches than a single methodology, which grew out of the dissatisfaction with structuralism and the situational methods of the 1960s (Nunan, 1988:24).

As the above quotation implies, there have been different methods/approaches in teaching English as a second language. However recent studies indicate that 'communicative language teaching' is popular in our contemporary language teaching. It has {almost} become the accepted orthodoxy of TEFL (Cunningsworth1995:16).

Communicative language teaching, is therefore

an approach to foreign language or second language teaching which emphasizes the goal of learning..... communicative competence'...(It emphasizes the process of communication, such as using language appropriately in different situations, using language to perform different kinds of tasks.....; using language for social interaction with other people...(Richards and et al 1996)

Richards and Rodgers (1986) strengthen this point further. They argue that communicative language teaching has a rich, if somewhat eclectic, theoretical base. They present the communicative view of language as a system for the expression of meaning. They also state that the primary units of language are not merely its grammatical and structural features, but categories of functional and communicative meaning as exemplified in discourse (Richards and Rodgers 1986:71).

Such a methodology can, I believe, help the individual to learn the language without difficulty. It creates for the learner a conducive atmosphere to freely express their needs, opinions and views with no embarrassment. Unlike the more hardlined grammar-based language teaching, communicative language teaching facilitates the use of 'a wide variety of language and the teacher will not intervene' (Harmer, 1982:166). Non-communicative language practices, which Nunan identifies as 'pseudo-communication' such as 'error correction, the extensive use of drill and controlled practice, and interaction' (Nunan, 1986) on the contrary, deter the smooth flow of the language.

The following tables by Harmer clearly portray the characteristics of 'communicative' and 'non-communicative' activities.

Non-communicative Activities

Non communicative purpose
No desire to communicate
Form not content
One language item
Teacher intervention
Materials control

Communicative Activities

A communicative purpose
A desire to communicate
Content not form
Variety of language
No teacher intervention
No materials control

(Harmer 1982, p. 167)

Figure 1: Characteristics of 'Communicative' and 'Non-communicative Activities'

Penston (2001:8-9) has identified, though this is by no means an exhaustive list, nine guidelines for implementing the communicative approach. Of these 'personalization, role play, status of L1 in the classroom, approach to error, authentic materials (written for native speakers) and subjects and realia' can best be implemented if all the necessary inputs are available.

Hence, it can be concluded that communicative language teaching promotes a learner-centred methodology not only because the design of such programmes is based on the real-life needs and communicative goals of the student but also because the use of communicative methods plays a significant role in learner training. This assumption is supported by Nunan in his definition of 'the good communicative lesson':

The 'good communicative lesson' will:

- derive input from authentic sources
- involve learners in problem-solving activities in which they are required to negotiate meaning
- incorporate tasks which relate to learners' real-life communicative needs
- allow learners choices in what, how and when to learn
- allow learners to rehearse, in class, real-world language tasks
- require learners and teachers to adopt a range of roles, and use language in a variety of settings in and out of the classroom
- expose learners to the language as system
- encourage learners to develop skills in learning how to learn
- integrate the four macroskills
- provide controlled practice in enabling microskills
- involve learners in creative language use (Nunan, 1989: 132).

2.5 Materials in a Learner-centred Curriculum

I believe that education is dynamic. It is always changing, and ever growing. Materials are too. They are published, and reprinted in huge numbers every year to achieve a better quality.

Tomlinson (2004) uses the term 'material' to refer 'to anything which is used by teachers or learners to facilitate the learning of a language.' He provides a detailed explanation of the term as saying 'materials could obviously be cassettes, videos, CD-Roms, dictionaries, grammar books, readers, workbooks or photocopied exercises. They could also be newspapers, food packages, photographs, and live talks by invited native speakers, instructions given by a teacher, tasks written on cards or discussion between learners. In other words, they can be anything which is deliberately used to increase the learners' knowledge and/or experience of the language' (2004:2).

Different authors have different views regarding materials in ELT. Ur (2001:183) begins outlining her belief by raising a textbook argument. She asks how necessary is a coursebook? Her answer differs according to the teaching-learning context. She claims that

In some places coursebooks are taken for granted. In others they may not be used at all-the teacher works according to a syllabus, or according to his or her own programme, using textbooks and supplementary material as the need arises. A third compromise situation is where a coursebook is used selectively.

In a country such as Ethiopia where a coursebook is prescribed by the Ministry of Education or a similar body, the teacher, 'like it or lump it' has no option. As Ur puts it above, 'coursebooks (textbooks)' are taken for granted. Nunan(1988:98) ardently supports the importance of materials and expresses his view by saying 'materials are omnipresent in the language classroom and it is difficult to imagine a class without books, pictures, filmstrips, realia, games and so on. If this is the case I believe that materials development should carefully and professionally be underpinned.

According to Tomlinson (2004:2) materials development refers to anything which is done by writers, teachers or learners to provide sources of language input and to exploit those sources in ways which maximize the likelihood of intake; in other

words the supplying of information about and/ or experience of the language in ways designed to promote language learning.

The current trend in materials development is geared towards promoting resources that are more communicatively based than grammar based. In this regard Mc Donough and Shaw (2003:43) say that 'teaching materials following a traditional structural approach typically appear as an ordered list of grammatical items'. Such practices obviously force learners to manipulate the language in a vacuum. They go on to explain that the communicative approach came to the rescue of the traditional approach. They strengthen this point by saying ...the communicative approach not only consolidated a two-tier arrangement (functions and structures), but also opened up the possibility of the principled inclusion of other 'layers' of organization (function, structures, rules, skills, topics, and situation).

Scholars such as Mc Donough and Shaw (2003), Nunan (1988) and Tomlinson (2004) suggest that a range of materials which can be exploited in a variety of ways is more useful than a comprehensive package. Nunan argues that materials developed within a learner-centred context have generally two characteristics. These are:

1. Authenticity

Nunan (1985a:38 cited in Nunan 1988:99-100) defined 'authentic' materials as

those which have been produced for purposes other than to teach language. They can be culled from many different sources: video clips, recordings of authentic interactions, extracts from television, radio and newspapers, signs, maps and charts, photographs and pictures, timetables and schedules. These are just a few of the sources which have been tapped.

I believe that the above definition presented by Nunan fits with the range of materials listed by Tomlinson above.

2. Levels of Difficulty

Recognizing the inevitability of mixed groups of learners (both in terms of proficiency and also in terms of preferred learning styles), materials should be designed so that they are capable of being used in a variety of ways and also at different proficiency levels (Nunan 1988:99).

It is also important to note that when designing a syllabus, it is vital to know the needs and educational background of the learners so that the materials can be prepared at the right level. This point and other principles that underly the framework for materials writing are presented by Joly and Bolitho (in Tomlinson2004: 110-111). They are summarized as follows:

- **Materials writing is at its most effective When it is turned to the needs of a particular group of learners.**

The most effective materials are those which are based on a thorough understanding of learners' needs, i.e. their language difficulty, their learning objectives, their styles of learning etc.

- **Teachers understand their own learners best**

They understand learners' needs and their preferred learning styles. The more they become sensitive and responsive to these needs the more they become involved in researching their own classrooms

- **All teachers need grounding in materials writing**

The current emphasis on action research in teacher education programmes needs to be backed up by the establishment of materials writing as a key component of initial training courses and a regular feature of in-service training programmes.

- **All teachers teach themselves**

Enabling teachers to produce their own effective materials minimize the possibility of teaching against the grain and helps them to teach themselves

- **Trialing and evaluation are vital to the success of any materials**

Learners are the users of materials and we have to heed their opinions and listen to their feedback.

To sum up, the role of instruction materials within an individualized instructional system might include materials ‘...that will allow learners to progress at their own rates of learning and different styles of learning’. They should also be inclusive of materials that ‘... will provide opportunities for independent study and use’ (Richards and Rodgers 1986:26).

2.6 Learner-centred Strategies

O’Malley and Chamot (1985b cited in Brown 1987:92-94) divided strategies of learners of English as a second language into three main categories. “Metacognitive” is a term used in information-processing theory to indicate an “executive” function strategies that involve planning for learning, thinking about the learning process as it is taking place , monitoring of one’s production or comprehension, and evaluating learning after an activity is completed. “Cognitive” strategies are more limited to specific learning tasks and involve more direct manipulation of the learning material itself. “Socioaffective” strategies have to do with social-mediating activity and transacting with others.

Oxford (1990:8 cited in Richards *et al*: 63-64) identifies six general types of learning strategies.

- *Memory strategies*, which help students to store and retrieve information.
- *Cognitive strategies*, which enable learners to understand and produce new language.
- *Compensation strategies*, which allow learners to communicate despite deficiencies in their language knowledge.
- *Metacognitive strategies*, which allow learners to control their own learning through organizing, planning and evaluating.

- *Affective strategies*, which help learners gain control over their emotions, attitudes, motivations and values.
- *Social strategies*, which help learners interact with other people.

I believe that Oxford's classifications are more exhaustive and therefore best suited to the needs of learners of English as a foreign language.

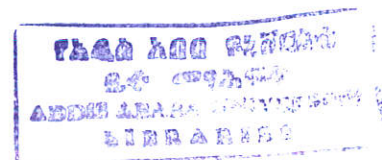
Below are some of the strategies that can enhance learner-centred teaching for EFL learners especially at the primary level.

2.6.1 Role-play, Simulation and Drama

According to Ur (1996:131) the term 'role play' is used to refer to all sorts of activities where learners imagine themselves in a situation outside the classroom, sometimes playing the role of someone other than themselves, and using language appropriate to this new context.

Role play is very useful for developing the interpersonal skills of learners-for example for training in the caring professions or the retail trades, for management training, and so on. It gives learners an opportunity to practice skills in a risk-free environment. It is also useful as an empathy activity where feelings and attitudes are being explored (Petty 1993:212). Matthews and *et al* (1985:34) argue that role play is one method of maximizing Student Talking Time, ensuring that students get an optimum level of practice during their limited class time. It also provides variety of activity and of interaction, and takes the focus of the class away from the teacher. The increased freedom thus obtained gives the teacher a useful opportunity to deal with individuals and to monitor their performance. Shy students can also benefit from group practice of this kind-they may be more forthcoming in small groups than when faced with the prospect of speaking in front of a whole class.

Petty further describes how to conduct role play activities either individually or in a group by saying 'role play is often a single performance viewed by non-players,



often taking the form of a social skill demonstration. Alternatively, several groups of students can carry out the same role-play activity simultaneously, allowing each member of the class to practice the social skill. The latter has the advantages of reducing stage-fright problems, involving the whole class, and giving every student practice in the skills' (Petty1993:212).

One of the advantages of drama, according to Petty (1993:214), is that it raises self-esteem and self-confidence, often allowing hitherto unremarkable members of a class to shine. Scarcella (1978 cited in Nunan 1989:128-9) came up with the idea of socio drama for the development of skills in social interaction. Unlike most role plays, sociodrama involves a series of specific steps. It is student-rather than teacher-centred in that students define their own roles and determine their own course of action.

An elaborate role-play activity is often called a simulation. Simulations can introduce an element of realism into our teaching, perhaps giving students experiences it would be impossible for them to have 'for real' and allowing them to develop skills without suffering the real-life consequences of their errors. By condensing time, and by eliminating non-essential distractions, they often provide powerful tools for teacher, They are now widely used in teaching and training in business studies, economics, stock market operations, political science and medical diagnosis (Petty1993:214-215).

Richards (1985b; 83 cited in Nunan1988, p87-88) sums up the characteristics both role play and simulations share in common in the following terms:

They provide opportunities to practice strategies for opening, developing, and terminating conversational encounters.

They require learners to develop meanings collaboratively.

They necessitate the use of turn-taking rules.

They practice use of conversational routines and expressions.

They involve learners in different kinds of roles, necessitating use of different styles of speaking.

They require negotiated completion of tasks.

They involve information sharing.

They focus on comprehensible and meaningful input and output.

They require a high degree of learner participation.

2.6.2 Co-operative Learning

According to Cohen and Manion (1994) co-operative learning is one learner-centred strategy or pedagogical practice which promotes learning, higher level thinking, prosocial behaviour and greater understanding of students with diverse learning and social adjustment needs. There is a great deal of relationship between cooperative learning and other strategies that require working together. For example, Jacobs and Ball (1996:99) believe that co-operative learning is a subset of group work methods. They also claim that properly structured co-operative learning activities are associated with positive educational outcomes.

2.6.3 Pair Work

According to Matthews et al (1985:213) 'pair work' is a work performed by the class in pairs in order to give students maximum opportunity to participate in an activity. Harmer (2001:116) believes that in pair work students can practise language together, study a text, research language or take part in information-gap activities. They can write dialogues, predict the content of reading texts, or compare notes on what they have listened to or seen.

2.6.4 Group Work

In large multilevel classes, group work is obviously a key element as it enables students to learn from one another. When working in small groups, students have a greater chance to practise oral fluency. Students are also far less intimidated in a small group, and once they become familiar with the procedure, they usually

enjoy sharing ideas and practising new language structures in this format (Hess, 2001:112).

2.6.5 Question and Answer

Asking and answering questions is vital to the learning process. Asking questions allows students to clarify points of uncertainty and also indicates the extent to which they are able to use new knowledge and ideas. Responding to questions requires students to recall a new fact or concept and, if the question is phrased appropriately, to apply their knowledge to a new situation. As they respond to questions, students get feedback on their own learning and the teacher gets feedback on students' understanding (Shamim *et al*, 30: 2007).

2.6.6 Games

Various scholars such as Harmer (2001), Mc Donough and Shaw (2003), and Petty (1993) claim that speaking activities based on games are often a useful way of giving students valuable practice, where young learners are involved. According to Harmer (2001:272) games which are designed to provoke communication between students frequently depend on an information gap so that one student has to talk to a partner in order to solve a puzzle, draw a picture (describe and draw), or find similarities and differences between pictures. This point is strengthened by Petty (1993:216) who claims that games produce an overwhelming desire to communicate, and so are excellent teaching methods. As regards the rules for playing games Dubin, and Olshtan (1986:82) note that players in a game are required to focus on objectives, follow clearly stated rules, and perform tasks both cooperatively and competitively.

2.6.7 Students on Their Own

If we wish students to work on their own in class we can, for example, allow them to read privately and then answer questions individually; we can ask them to complete worksheets or writing tasks by themselves. We can give

them worksheets with different tasks and allow individuals to make their own decisions about which tasks to do. We can hand out different worksheets to different individuals depending upon their tastes and abilities. We can allow students to research on their own or even choose what they want to read or listen to – especially where this concerns extensive reading (or learner literature' (Harmer 2001:115).

Harmer pointed out that the following advantages can be obtained from individualized learning:

- It allows teachers to respond to individual student differences in terms of pace of learning, learning styles, and preferences.

- It is likely to be less stressful for students than performing in a whole-class setting or talking in pairs or groups

- It can develop learner autonomy and promote skills of self-reliance and investigation over teacher-dependence.

- It can be a way of restoring peace and tranquility to a noisy and chaotic situation (Harmer 2001:115-116).

2.6.8 Assignments

Petty (1993:250) defines the term 'assignment' as a task or set of tasks for students to complete-usually individually, but sometimes in groups. Usually the students can exercise considerable autonomy over how, where, when and in what order the tasks are carried out.

2.7. The Roles of Teachers and Learners in Enhancing Language Learning Strategies

Richards and Lockhart (1994:66) claim that the current interest in learner strategies in second language teaching highlights ways in which teachers and learners can be collaboratively engaged in developing effective approaches to learning. Both are viewed as sharing the task of facilitating learning by finding

how learners can learn more effectively. Being as it is, the specific roles to be played by both parties are presented below.

2.7.1. Teachers' Roles in Enhancing Learners' Language Learning Strategies

To promote effective learning, teachers should play different paramount roles. They should not label learners as 'good' or 'bad' and even as 'successful' and 'unsuccessful' in learning since they do not have a clearly defined parameter. In this regard Brown (1987:95) warns us as saying, 'And until the utopian era when that definition is found, the teacher needs to recognize and understand a multiplicity of cognitive variables active in the second language learning process and to make appropriate judgments about individual learners, meeting them where they are and providing them with the best possible opportunities for learning.'

Hence, as teachers we cannot of course teach a whole class in a way that will fit every student's learning strategies. As teachers, it would be interesting if we recognize difficulties in teaching many disparate learners groups. Williams and Burden (1997:59) argue that whatever learning style and strategies learners use we shouldn't regard their ways of working as wrong. Instead, we need to motivate them to apply all means available to them as they are functional to learn language. Hence, learners need to express their own preferences for how they go about learning with the help of new materials and the like. Teachers have to use this information to help their learners expand their repertoire of learning strategies and thus develop greater flexibility in their ways of approaching language learning'. Hedge (2000:26) also adds 'Building [on] what we know of the strategies used by good language learners; it is possible to involve students in activities which help them to develop new strategies as well as strengthen existing ones'.

2.7.2 Learners' Roles in Enhancing Their Own Language Learning Strategies

It goes without saying that in a single classroom we may have different learners with different learning styles, learning strategies and the like. I found the suggestions forwarded by Rubin (1985 cited in Richards and Lockhart 66) to be comprehensible and exhaustive. They are presented as follows:

- Gain insights into their own approach to learning.
- Learn to choose strategies appropriate to a task and learning purpose.
- Learn to use these strategies in a classroom, self-study, or job situation.
- Learn to use these strategies specific to reading, listening and conversation.
- Be able to define strategies for improving memory for language learning.
- Learn how to effectively transfer knowledge about language and communication from one language to another
- Learn to use resources wisely.
- Be able to deal more effectively with errors.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

The main aim of this study is to explore the use of learner-centred methods in primary schools. The following are descriptions of the method of the study and the samples.

3.2 Description of Samples

3.2.1 Schools

The study was conducted in three primary schools in Addis Ababa. All of them were government schools. I chose only government schools for I believe that they depict the realities stated in the background of the study. The sites of the schools were purposefully chosen to represent different sub-cities in Addis Ababa. There were 10 sub-cities in total in Addis Ababa, out of which 3 were chosen for the study. Accordingly Kilinto Primary School, Lafto Primary School and Hizbawi Serawit Primary School delegated Akaki Kaliti, Lafto and Yeka sub-cities respectively. The schools were also chosen on the basis that they are comfortable for the researcher to carry out the study. Indeed one of the schools, Kilinto Primary School, has been among the seven pilot schools for developing new English language textbooks for Grades 1,2,6,7 and 8. This was a collaborative effort of the Ministry of Education, Ethiopia and Alabama A & M University, USA of which this researcher was a part of the writing team for Grades 1 and 2. A fourth school called Sefere Selam Primary School was selected for piloting the student's and teacher's questionnaires.

3.2.2 Subjects

3.2.2.1 Students

The total number of Grade 8 students at Kilinto Primary School was 170. Similarly, Lafto and Hizbawi Serawit schools had 552 and 171 students respectively for the same grade level. Thus the three sampled schools' Grade 8 students were 812.

When this study was conducted, Kilinto Primary School had three sections (A, B and C). In a similar vein Lafto and Hizbawi Serawit Primary Schools had 6 (A, B, C, D, E, F and G) and 3 (A, B and C) sections respectively. Accordingly, two sections were chosen from each school by lot. From each section of the three schools, 20 students were selected by the respective classroom teacher to fill in the questionnaire. Interviews were made with 6 students, two students from the sample schools. The students were among those students who filled in the questionnaire.

3.2.2.2 Teachers

The total number of grade 8 English language teachers in Kilinto Primary School, Lafto Primary School and Hizbawi Serawit Primary School was 2, 4 and 3 respectively. Due to their small number, all the nine teachers were included in the study.

3.3 Method of the Study

The study employed both qualitative and quantitative methods. However the qualitative aspect was dominant as the aim of the research was to explore, inquire and gain a deeper understanding and report the findings.

3.4 Instruments of Data Collection

3.4.1 Classroom Observation

To investigate the utilization of the learner-centred approach, classroom observation was used as one means of data collection. A checklist for classroom observation was developed to look into the procedures, activities and approaches in a learner-centred classroom. Moreover, the issues included in the checklist were purposefully designed to reflect the issues incorporated in the questionnaires. These, I believe, can help me to triangulate the result of the questionnaires. Accordingly, one teacher of the grade level from each school was selected for this purpose. Classroom observations were conducted twice.

3.4.2 Questionnaires

Two survey questionnaires (Appendices III and IV) one for teachers and one for students were used to survey participants about their responses.

3.4.2.1 Students' Questionnaire

The students' questionnaire was prepared in Amharic (Appendix V). All the one hundred and twenty students filled and returned the questionnaire. The questionnaire was meant to examine whether they like to learn English individually, with a partner, in small groups or in a large group. It also required them to identify the methods frequently used in their English classes. The questionnaire also incorporated issues related to teachers' approach towards error correction.

3.4.2.2 Teachers' Questionnaire

The teachers' questionnaire (Appendix III) contained both closed and open-ended questions and addressed the same issues as those in the observation schedule. This facilitated the process of analysis and comparison of data from different sources.

The teachers' questionnaire included issues that revolve around whether or not they employ the suggested learner-centred methods in their English classes. This key point was also accompanied by a question that required teachers whether they use this particular method 'always', 'usually' or 'sometimes'. On top of this, teachers were also asked to provide their views on the benefits of using specific active learning methods. A case in point was on the benefits of using group work activities. To this end, all the nine Grade 8 teachers in the selected schools participated and responded by filling the questionnaire.

3.4.3 Focus Group Discussions

From each school one English teacher and one student were asked to attend focus group discussions. Selection of teachers was made possible by recommendations of the Directors of each of the schools. The focus points of the discussions with teachers were on the applicability, challenges, bottle-necks and solutions to this approach. Similarly, the students' FGD included the type of topics they prefer to learn in their English classes. Discussions were also made with students on how they manage their own learning as part of their learning strategies.

The teachers and students were co-operative enough to spend their time with me as a result of which considerably important information was gathered. The results of the discussion are significant to maintain the reliability of the findings.

3.4.4 Interviews

The interviews for teachers and students were prepared in English and later translated into Amharic for avoiding language barrier. Accordingly, a total of three teachers, one from each school, were selected voluntarily. The semi-structured interview questions for teachers consisted of seven points, which dealt with the methods that they used most of the time. Teachers were also inquired to express their opinions on the challenges and the solutions for effectively and efficiently implementing the learner-centred approach in their own context.

The interview questions for students contained four points. They ranged from how they wanted to learn English to what they suggest in order to improve their English out of class.

3.4.5 Data Organization Analysis

The data obtained by employing the four instruments were tabulated, described and analyzed using percentage. To this end, the data was summed up as per its category. Finally conclusions and recommendations were offered based on the information obtained from the instruments.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA PRESENTATIONS AND DISCUSSION

4. Introduction

The main aim of this study is to explore the use of the learner-centred approach in the teaching of English in primary schools. It tries to find out how much Grade 8 teachers are aware of a learner-centred approach. The study also explores the reactions of teachers and students to this approach. Moreover, it looks into the procedures, activities and approaches in a learner-centred classroom. The following are descriptions of the method of the study and the samples.

4.1 Classroom Observation

As described in Chapter 3, a checklist was developed to look into the procedures, activities and approaches in a learner-centred classroom. For the sake of convenience, the items of the checklists were meticulously and systematically sequenced. The statements of the checklist are derived from the literature review.

Although the checklist contains eighteen individual items, they can fall into four categories (see Table 1). The first two items record the teachers' ability to create an atmosphere which is conducive for making the lesson student-centred. This stage is the preparation stage where the teacher introduces the lesson by allowing students to relate it to their real life.

Items 3-12 help to evaluate the teacher whether or not student-centred teaching is in place. Similarly, items 13-16 help to check the teacher's handling of errors. Elements of assessment are also included in this category.

The last two items are intended to show the overall picture of the particular lesson from the point of view of adopting student-centred teaching.

Table 1. Teachers' performance in using learner-centred approach

No.	Learner-centred practices	The teacher in Lafto Primary School				The teacher in Kilinto Primary School				The teacher in Hizbawi Serawit Primary School			
		Day one		Day two		Day one		Day two		Day one		Day two	
		Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
1	The teacher introduces the lesson focusing on its aims		✓		✓		✓		✓		✓		✓
2	The teacher encouraged the students to relate the content with their experience		✓		✓		✓		✓		✓		✓
3	Students work individually		✓		✓		✓		✓		✓		✓
4	Students work in pairs		✓		✓	✓			✓		✓		✓
5	Students work in small groups		✓		✓		✓		✓		✓		✓
6	Students do role-play/drama/simulation activities		✓		✓		✓		✓		✓		✓
7	Students play games		✓		✓		✓		✓		✓		✓
8	Students ask questions in English	✓		✓		✓		✓		✓		✓	
9	Students answer questions in English	✓		✓		✓		✓		✓		✓	
10	Students hold whole-class discussions in English		✓		✓		✓		✓		✓		✓
11	Students do assignments												
12	The teacher uses authentic sources		✓		✓		✓		✓		✓		✓
13	The teacher mainly focuses on the content rather than on the form of the language item	✓		✓			✓		✓		✓		✓
14	The teacher does not intervene now and then												
15	The teacher encourages the learners to develop skills in learning how to learn so that they can take responsibilities for their own learning		✓		✓		✓		✓		✓		✓
16	Evaluation of each student's progress is carried out on the different language skills and other language areas on a continuous basis		✓		✓		✓		✓		✓		✓
17	The students are actively involved in all stages of the lessons		✓		✓		✓		✓		✓		✓
18	All in all the lessons are well structured and effective in promoting active learning		✓		✓		✓		✓		✓		✓

4.1.1 The Teacher in Lafto Primary School

Observation-Day 1

As was observed during the observation on the first day the teacher in Lafto School wrote *Review questions* on the blackboard. The teacher right from the very beginning preferred to use *chorus work* for this particular activity. He was reading the multiple questions from his notes. All of the students were asked to choose the correct answer. The focus of all the questions was on grammar and vocabulary. The first question as read by the teacher is transcribed in the following way:

“When did you come here?” Azeb says. “In what way should Mulu answer?”

Tomorrow

Next week

Next month

Yesterday

Most of the students raised their hands but the teacher asked one of them to answer. The student answered “yesterday” and the teacher said “that is correct”. This is a case in point. The lesson continued in this way. It was also observed that the teacher was frequently correcting individual students when they did not provide the correct answer.

Observation-Day 2

On the second day the observation was carried out while the teacher was teaching vocabulary and different language patterns. As on the first day, the teacher seemed to be more interested in teaching grammar, albeit the syllabus promotes the integration of skills. He wrote the words *prohibitions* and *obligations* on the blackboard. He then translated the meaning of the words into Amharic. The purpose of this lesson was to relate the meanings of the key words with the language pattern *must not (mustn't) + the verb to*. On page 137 of the student's book there is a picture and it requires students to look at the picture and talk with partner about prohibitions for the taxi driver. However the teacher ruled out this

part and continued with other exercises that focused on mastery of the grammar points under discussion.

There is also another picture of a baby on his/her mother's back. The teacher's guide suggests that the teacher should tell students to look at the picture in the student book and discuss with a partner the absence of obligations for the baby on his or her mother's back. When we look this particular lesson on the surface it seems that it is purely a grammar lesson. But when we delve deep into it we understand the fact that it goes beyond that. It rather allows students to speak with their partner using the language items.

4.1.2 The Teacher in Kilinto Primary School

Observation-Day 1

During the first day observation the teacher in Kilinto School started the lesson by writing the topic on the blackboard. It was on *writing effective sentences*. The teacher made no attempt to introduce the lesson focusing on its aims. He simply said *people communicate with language*, which has no relevance to the topic. On top of that the teacher did not exert efforts to encourage learners to relate the topic with their experience. In a nut shell, the students failed to apply their previous experiences while learning the language items in this particular lesson.

On deeper analysis of the methods employed by the teacher we found out that he spent much of the time describing formation of words, phrases and sentences. The students were passive listeners during explanations. It was also observed that the teacher was focusing on giving definition of sentences. The teacher was soliciting various definitions for the concept 'sentence' from various students. From this we can say that the emphasis of the lesson was on the form rather than on the communication aspect of the language. On top of that, the teacher was calling on only a few students by name to answer the question. The majority of the students were left out

Finally the teacher asked the class to write five sentences of their own. He was very strict in telling the students that the sentences should reflect *Subject-verb-object* pattern. This is a clear manifestation as to how the teacher was grammar oriented. Indeed he made some efforts to tell the students to share their sentences with the students sitting next to them. Meanwhile the teacher was advising the students to ask and answer questions in English.

Item number 11 which reads *students do assignment* was not observed as it was not the purpose of that lesson.

Observation-Day 2

The second day's observation was on lesson three of unit eleven, which was mainly on reading. Prior to my visit for carrying out the observation, I had the impression that this lesson would be suitable for the effective use of various active learning methods as there were plenty of activities that required the students to do in pairs, in groups and individually. However this proved not to be the case. The teacher started the lesson by writing the key words and their definitions on the blackboard. He made no attempt to explain to students how to infer meanings of words from contexts.

The teacher did the pre-reading activities as required in the Teacher's Guide. He asked students to read the passage aloud to the class. This is contrary to the instruction which suggests the students and the teacher to do silent reading. The reading passage was followed by comprehension questions. The questions were meant to be discussed in pairs but the teacher was asking individual students to answer them. The teacher made no attempt to relate the figures presented in percentage in the reading passage with the chart that appears on the following page.

4.1.3 The Teacher in Hizbawi Serawit Primary School

Observations-Day 1 and Day 2

The two days observations were carried out consecutively. They were lessons 4 and 5 of unit 12, whose title is 'cost sharing'. The classroom practices employed by the teacher were not different from the methods used by the teachers in the schools discussed earlier. In a nut shell, a top-down, teacher-centred teaching methodology was the feature of the two lessons observed. On top of that the teacher's focus was mainly on the accuracy of the students rather than their fluency. Very little feedback was given to the class activities.

4.1.4 Discussion on the Result of the Two Days Observation

In the classrooms observed the teachers were unable to help learners relate the content with their experience. The observed lessons also revealed that the teachers made no attempt to pave the way for the effective and efficient implementation of active learning methods stated in the checklist. We can say that most of the observed lessons were devoid of communicative activities. This could mainly be attributed to the approach employed by the teachers.

With regard to teaching key words, the teacher's guide suggests to use visuals such as pictures, maps, or charts; use context clues; use synonyms and antonyms. Furthermore it underscores the fact that students should be taught to use new key words in speaking, listening, reading and writing activities.

When the teachers were observed, however, their classroom practices did not match with the principles of the communicative approach. Most of the lessons were traditional and teacher-centred. The lessons were also characterized by being grammar-oriented as the focus of the teachers was on the form rather than on the communicative aspect of the language.

Pair work activities were used in short instances. However, group work activities were never used in the observed classes. The classes were dominated by chorus-work activities.

Authentic materials were never used during the observed lessons. However, many authors have asserted that authentic materials have a positive effect on learner motivation in the foreign language classroom because they are intrinsically more interesting or stimulating than artificial or non-authentic materials (Peacock:1997).

All in all in the teachers' questionnaire the teachers indicated that they received training on current approach in language teaching despite the variation in the duration of the trainings. However the classroom practices show that most of the teachers had not been sufficiently trained on effectively implementing the learner-centred approach and CLT.

4.2 Teachers' Questionnaire

The teacher's questionnaire has twenty-six open and close-ended items all in all. It is broken down into two sections. The first section contains questions in order to gain information about the teacher's personal information and teaching experience. Analysis of this section is presented as follows.

Table 2. General features of the teachers who responded to the questionnaire

Sex		Age			Qualifications			Years of teaching experience				Years of teaching experience in teaching English			
M	F	20-29	30-39	Above 40	Cert	Dip		1-5	6-15	16-25	Above 25	1-5	6-15	16-25	Above 25
6	3	3	1	5	1	8		3	1	1	4	3	3	-	3

It can be seen from the above table that a total of nine teachers participated in this survey. Six teachers were male (66.7%) whereas the other three teachers (33.3%) were female. Generally, there are more male teachers than their female counterparts. The teachers ranged in age from their twenties to fifties. 44.4% of them were in their twenties and thirties whereas 55.6% were in their forties and fifties. There is a slight variation in the teachers' qualifications. With the exception of one teacher, all of them had earned a diploma in teaching English, which is in line with the Ministry's minimum requirement to teach in the grade level. As regards years of teaching experience, it ranged from one year to thirty-six years of experience. In a similar vein, the number of years they had taught English varied, ranging from less than 6 years (33.33%), 6 to 15 years (33.33%), and more than 25 years (33.33%).

Table 3. Grade levels the teachers taught

Grades 4-8	Grades 5-8	Grades 7-8	Grade 8
2	4	2	1

The above table shows that all the teachers have had the experience of teaching English in the two cycles (grades 1-4, first cycle and grades 5-8, second cycle) of primary education. Only one teacher has taught grade 8 per se. The other teachers have taught different range of grade levels. Two, four and again two teachers have taught grades 4-8, 5-8 and 7-8 respectively

Table 4. In-service training programmes attended by the teachers

Number of teachers received the training	Type of the training				
	Summer training	Workshop	Seminar	Conference	Others
8	-	5	2	2	1

From Table 4 it can be seen that all the teachers with the exception of one has received training on English language teaching methodology in the in-service mode. None of them has ever attended summer training programmes. The majority of the teachers participated in workshops ranging from 8 hours to five days in durations. Some teachers also took part in seminars and conferences. One of the teachers claimed that they received a special training called ELIP training organized jointly by the Ministry of Education and Regional Education Bureaus, which lasted for one week during a semester break.

Table 5. Effect of the training on their teaching practices

Whether the training brought about any change in their teaching career	Yes	No
	8	-

The above table clearly shows that all of the teachers, who received different types of training on teaching methodology, claimed that the trainings had helped them to improve their classroom practices. The teachers also listed down the benefits of the trainings as follows:

- It helped to make the teaching/learning process student-centred*
- I got insight to use continuous assessment in a student-centred class*
- To gain the best result by sharing other experiences and practising it in the actual class*
- It motivated me to do more*
- It brought a new change in methodology*
- It helped me to improve the teaching/learning process in my classrooms*

The second part of the teacher's questionnaire is said to have of paramount importance to this study as it mainly focuses on learner-centred teaching methods and other related issues. Analysis of this section is presented as follows.

Table 6. Teachers' awareness of learner-centred approach and its implementation

No	Items	Responses		Remark
		No. of Respondents	%	
1	Do you know about learner-centred language teaching methods?			
	Yes	9	100	
	No	-	-	
2	If your answer to item 1 is Yes, what are some of its features?			
3	Do you implement learner-centred teaching methods in your English classes?			
	Yes	8	88.9	
	No	1	11.1	
4	If your answer to item 3 is Yes, how often do you use them?			
	Always	3	37.5	
	Usually	1	12.5	
	Sometimes	4	50	
5	If your answer to question 3 is No, can you explain the reasons why you don't use learner centred teaching methods in your classes?			

The first item inquires about teachers' understanding of the basic concept under discussion. As can be clearly seen in the above table all of the teachers are aware of the concept 'learner-centred teaching methods'. The second item is an open-ended question. It asks the teachers to list the major features of the methods. Analysis of the data showed that the teachers thought that the characteristics of the approach revolve around giving more time for the students

to practice the language, allowing students to express their ideas freely, motivating the students to read and write by themselves, giving tasks to students to work in groups. In response to whether or not they implement learner-centred methods in the classroom, whereas 8 teachers (88.9%) indicated that they were currently using learner-centred methods or techniques in their classrooms, only one teacher (11.1%) responded negatively. This implies that teachers' conceptual understanding of the methods does not necessarily lead to the actual use of task in the classroom. Item number 4 asked the frequency of use of the methods by the teachers in their classes. 50% of the teachers said that they were using them "sometimes" whereas the others, namely 37.5% and 12.5% of the respondents chose "always" and "usually" respectively. The last item in the table concerned was completed only by the teacher who said "no" to item 3. Data analysis showed that the teachers attributed their failure in implementing the approach to two major factors; the size of the class and inconvenient seating.

4.2.1 Discussion of the Responses of Teachers' Questionnaire on Their Understanding of Learner-centred Method

According to the answers provided, the results of the teacher's questionnaire match with the practices observed during classroom observation, albeit with some discrepancies. A case in point is the first item which asked for the teacher's level of understanding of the concept of learner-centredness. As shown above the teachers claimed to have an understanding of the concept. The teachers were also asked to define the learner-centred approach. The examples for the definitions did not deviate from the definitions given by other scholars in the field. However there is ample evidence that a teacher-centred method of teaching is the common practice in the schools visited. They also indicated the frequency of the use of active learning methods as a strategy for implementing the learner-centred approach. The study shows that little application of the methods is made.

Table 7. Frequency in the use of Active learning methods and benefits of specific methods

No.	Items	Responses		Remark
		No. of Respondents	%	
6	Which of the following methods do you use as the best method in your English lessons? Please select the three top Active learning methods that you use most of the time. Rate them First, Second and Third according to their frequency			
	A. Role-play	3	33.3	
	B. Students on their own	1	11.1	
	C. Pair work	4	44.4	
	D. Group work	5	55.6	
	E. Co-operative work	1	11.1	
	F. Class discussion	3	33.3	
	G. Assignments	9	100	
H. Others, please specify	1	11.1		
7.	Do you encourage group work activities in your classes?			
	Yes	9	100	
	No	-	-	
8.	If your answer to question 7 is Yes, which of these goals do you think can be met?			
	A. Co-operative	2	22.2	
	B. Competitive	6	66.7	
	C. Individualistic	1	11.1	
9	What benefits can be achieved as a result of the goal?			

The first item in the above table asked teachers to choose the three most important active learning methods that they were using in their classes. All of the teachers picked up “assignments” as the most widely used method. “Group work” and “pair work” were also the other popular active learning methods as they were chosen by 55.6% and 44.4% of the teachers respectively.

Item 7 is to do with whether or not the teachers encourage group work activities in their classes. All of the teachers answered positively.

With regard to achieving goals, the majority of the teachers (66.7%) picked up “competitive” goal structure. 22.2% and 11.1% of the respondents were in favour of “co-operative” and “individualistic” goal structures respectively.

The last item in the table has an open-ended question. It required the teachers’ views regarding the benefits of the goal of their choice. Those who chose “competitive” goal structure stated, among other things, that the students would be able to develop listening and speaking skills. The teachers who were in favour of “co-operative” goal structure argued that slow learners in the group would have the opportunity to learn from others, who are brighter. They also noted that students can develop confidence to improve their language skill regardless of the difference in their proficiency level. On the other hand, the teachers, who picked up ‘individualistic’ goal structure, believe that each students would have a chance to show their ability in front of a small group.

4.2.2 Discussion of the Responses of Teachers’ Questionnaire on Active Learning Methods

The responses to the section of the questionnaire, which asked for the three top active learning methods that teachers use most of the time, indicate that teachers use ‘assignments’ as the most frequent method of the learner-centred approach. In addition to this a vast majority of the teachers indicated that they used ‘group work’ and ‘pair work’ as part of their teaching strategy. However the classroom

observations conducted show that the practice of using pair and group work is infrequent.

Item number six is particularly about each teacher's decision in encouraging group work activities in their classes. In principle all of the teachers encourage group work activities. However none of the teachers were seen using this particular method during the classroom observation. This shows that teacher's beliefs and their practices are diametrically opposite.

It was also confirmed through item 8 that the majority of the respondents do 'group work' activities for achieving the 'competitive' goal. It seems to me that people work together especially in pairs or in groups for cooperation rather than competition. The obvious benefit is that individuals can help each other. This point is well illustrated by Jacobs in his article Co-operative goal structure: a way to improve group activities. He argues that co-operation is the key to success in life in general, as well as in learning. He further pointed out that by structuring co-operative interaction among students in the classroom, we can not only improve the learning that occurs there, but also possibly make a contribution toward encouraging co-operation among people outside the classroom as well (Jacobs 1987: 100).

Table 8. The roles of assessment and materials in the learner-centred approach

No.	Items	Responses		Remark
		No. of Respondents	%	
10.	Do you believe that the textbooks being used consider the learners' needs and their learning style?			
	Yes	5	55.6	
	No	4	44.4	
11.	Do you accept errors as a natural part of the learning process?			
	Yes	4	44.4	
	No	5	55.6	
12.	Which of the methods do you use most of the time for assessing your students?			
	A. Final exams	1	11.1	
	B. Continuous assessment	7	77.8	
	C. If others, please specify	1	11.1	

From the above table it can be seen that 55.6% of the teachers believe that the textbooks being used consider the learners' needs and their learning style whereas 44.4% of the teachers answered negatively.

Item 11 is to do with whether or not the teachers accept errors as a natural part of the learning process. 44.4% of the respondents answered positively whereas 55.6% responded negatively.

The last item requested the teachers to identify the methods they used for assessing their students' progress in their classes. The majority of them (77.8 %) said that they adopted continuous assessment for measuring the progress of their students. One teacher said that they used final exams as principal

assessment method. Another teacher expressed their view differently by saying that they used a combination of the two methods.

4.2.3 Discussion of the Responses of Teachers' Questionnaire on the Roles of Assessment and Materials

Item ten deals with the extent to which the contemporary textbooks consider the learners' needs and their learning style. The Grade 8 textbook which is adopted by the Ministry of Education is used as the sole material in all regions of the country. Though the books do not have elements of political partisanship, they have other drawbacks in many respects. For one, they, for the most part, are not communicative. They fail to invite the learners to reflect on their experiences. Information gathered during focus group discussion showed that the materials are characterized by content overload. The participants also expressed their concern by saying that they cannot cover the whole portion within the allotted time. As illustrated by Derebsa the implementation of active learning requires a certain amount of time to think about and explore each topic. Such strategies may take more time than a straight lecture. Teachers complain of having heavy workload and excessive material to cover and this force them to emphasize on coverage. In such circumstances, it is the teacher who gets through the teaching material rather than the students and the saving of time can represent a false economy (Derebsa 2006: 130)

It was confirmed through item eleven that only some of the teachers accept errors as a natural part of the learning process. I believe that this is inherently related to the type of activity teachers frequently use. Therefore we can conjecture that most of the activities focus on accuracy rather than on fluency. Such types of activities are often associated with 'non-communicative' and 'communicative activities'. Harmer (2001:104) pointed out that the former are generally intended to ensure correctness whereas the latter are designed to improve language fluency. He illustrated this point further by giving an example

of an activity which is influenced by the approach employed by a teacher. According to him a game which forces the use of only one structure (with the teacher intervening occasionally), will come near non-communicative end [of the continuum] (2001:85).

The last item deals with the methods teachers used for assessing their students' progress in their classes. I believe that our assessment technique should reflect our teaching method as teaching and testing are two sides of the same coin. As indicated by the teachers most of them were using continuous assessment as one means of measuring the student's progress. I think this is a dubious point as it contradicts with the results of other studies conducted locally. A case in point is a study conducted by Derebssa (2006) on Tension between Traditional and Modern Teaching-Learning Approaches in Ethiopian Primary Schools. It is indicated that accomplishing active learning starts with involving the learners in making decisions about their progress. The learners should be made fully aware of the institutional requirements for submitting grades, but also instructed on the details of the importance and relevance of the self-directed learning experience. However, since examinations have a very high priority in the Ethiopian education system, active learning tends to be viewed with suspicion by students. With the constant focus on 'the right answer' to an examination question, students commit a large part of their time to memorizing chunks of information, because teachers mostly emphasize facts and information in their questions for exams /tests. Assessment, particularly in the form of examination, which emphasizes recall of a wide range of very specific information and problem solving by formula, does not encourage active learning (2006:15).

During focused group discussions the teachers did not hesitate to express their concern on the effective implementation of this evaluation system. As this technique is very young in its age, the teachers attributed most of the problems associated with it as due to lack of training and the heavy workload they have in their respective schools.

Table 9. Importance of training learners

No.	Items	Responses		Remark
		No. of Respondents	%	
13	Do you think that training learners to take responsibility for their own learning is important?			
	Yes	8	88.9	
	No	1	11.1	
14	If your answer to question 13 is no, can you explain the reasons why you say it is not important?			

The first item in the table above asked the teachers' view whether or not training learners to take responsibility is important. The vast majority of the participants (88.9%) agreed on the importance. In contrast one teacher (11.1%) opposed to the training.

In response to item 14 which asks the reasons why training learners is not important in making learners responsible for their own learning, analysis of the data revealed that the teacher was foreign to the key concept of "learner-training".

4.2.4 Discussion of the Responses of Teachers' Questionnaire on Importance of Training Learners

Despite the fact that 'learner training' has a good reputation among the teachers, both the theory and the practice are not well understood. During interviews and focus group discussions teachers were asked to name some of the characteristics of the concept. The responses they gave did not go beyond stating the most frequent practice, which is to do with giving homework as an individual activity. It seems to me that this is only rule of the thumb. The concept



of 'learner training', as indicated in Chapter 2, is very deep. It benefits all students in equipping them with the necessary skills and attitudes they need not only in their schools but also outside the school environment where access to English, in different modes, is limited. The effective application of the learner-centred approach is linked with 'learner training'. Therefore it is indispensable that the foundations should be present in the institutions.

4.3 Students' Questionnaire

The student's questionnaire was composed of ten close-ended items. It had two sections. The first section contained questions in order to gain information about the student's personal information. Analysis of this section is presented below.

Table 10. General features of the students who responded to the questionnaire

Sex		Age			
Male	Female	13-14	15-16	17-18	19
59	61	47	60	12	1

As can be observed from the above table, the survey included one hundred and twenty students. Fifty-nine students were male (49.2%) and sixty-one students (50.8%) were female. All of the students were in their teens although they differed in their age.

The second part of the student's questionnaire plays a significant role for this study as it is helpful in eliciting information from the students regarding teachers' handling of the learner-centred approach in English language classes. Analysis of this section is presented as follows.

Table 11. Students' response on teachers' implementation of the learner-centred approach

No.	Items	Responses		Remark
		No. of Respondents	%	
1.	How do you like to learn in English class?			
	A. Individually	9	7.5	
	B. With a partner	24	20	
	C. In small groups	26	21.7	
	D. In a large group	61	50.8	
2.	Does your English teacher arrange the classroom so that it is easy for you to interact?			
	Yes	24	20	
	No	96	80	
3.	Which of the following methods are frequently used in your English lessons? Rank them First, Second and Third according to their frequency			
	A. Individually	21	17.5	
	B. Pair work	29	24.2	
	C. Group work	41	34.2	
	D. Lecturing	35	29.2	
	E. Discussion	40	33.3	
	F. Chorus work	69	57.5	
	G. Question and answer	36	30	
	H. Co-operative learning	32	26.7	
	I. Assignment	57	47.5	
4.	Does your teacher encourage group work activities in English lessons?			
	Yes	24	20	
	No	96	80	

No.	Items	Responses		Remark
		No. of Respondents	%	
5.	How often do you do homework?			
	A. Always	70	58.3	
	B. Usually	31	25.9	
	C. Sometimes	16	13.3	
	D. Never	3	2.5	

As can be observed from the above table, almost half of the participants (50.8%) said that they wanted to learn in a large group in their English classes. In contrast a few of the students preferred to learn in small groups (21.7%), with a partner (20 %) and individually (7.5%).

With regard to the item that inquired whether or not their English teachers arrange the classrooms to facilitate interaction, only a few students said yes. On the contrary the vast majority of them answered the opposite.

Item three in the above table asked students to choose the three most important active learning methods used in their English classes. 57.5% of the respondents indicated that 'chorus work' was the most widely method used in their classes. It can also be seen in the table that homework (47.5%) and group work (34.2%) were being frequently used as learner- centred methods.

Item four was specifically asking students whether or not their teachers encourage group work activities. As the table shows only 20% said that they used the method in focus. In contrast, 80% of the respondents replied the opposite.

The last item inquired of the students the extent to which they do homework. More than half of the participants indicated that they “always” do homework. On the other hand, quite a few students did homework “usually” and “sometimes”. However, a few students said that they “never” did homework.

4.3.1 Discussion of the Responses of Students’ Questionnaire on Active Learning Methods

Most of the responses provided by the students who participated in this study are similar to the responses given by the teachers and the results of the classroom observations.

To begin with it was indicated through the first item that most of the students preferred to learn in a large group. During the observations most of the lessons were carried out without dividing the classes into groups or pairs. These are the most suggested strategies in the syllabus and the teacher’s guide. This seems to me that their preference is largely associated with the type of teaching method they were exposed in the previous grade levels. This is a clear manifestation that the lecture mode of delivery is the common practice in Ethiopian primary schools. However there are a few of the students who want to learn English either in small groups or, with a partner or individually.

Item two deals with the strategies of teachers in creating an atmosphere that is conducive for maximizing interaction in the classrooms. The students’ responses show that most teachers do not strive for such goals. Later on it was learned from focus discussions and interviews conducted with some students that the problem was mainly attributed to the seating arrangements made by their respective home room teachers and the nature of the chairs.

Item three is a testimony given by students regarding the popular active learning methods employed by their teachers. They indicated that ‘chorus work’ was the most widely method used in their classes. Although group work was chosen by

the students as the other learner-centred method, classroom observations results show that the reality is the opposite. Homework is the other method chosen by the respondents. I think this method is a common method as it is related to the teachers' and students' previous practices.

Table 12. Students' view of teachers' encouragement and assessment techniques

No.	Items	Responses		Remark
		No. of Respondents	%	
6.	Does your teacher encourage you to speak in English in class?			
	Yes	93	77.5	
	No	27	22.5	
7.	When you speak do you want to be corrected			
	A. immediately, in front of your peers?	61	50.8	
	B. later, at the end of the activity, in front of everyone?	39	32.5	
	C. later, in private?	20	16.7	

As can be seen from the table above 77.5% of the students claimed that their teachers encourage them to speak in English in class. 22.5% of them responded negatively.

In response to the item that deals with error correction almost half of the participants (50.8%) wanted to be corrected immediately and in front of their peers. Some students (32.5%) wanted the correction later, at the end of the activity, in front of every student. Only a few students (16.7%) preferred differently. They wanted the corrections to take place later in private.

4.3.2 Discussion of the Responses of Students' Questionnaire on Assessment Techniques

As stipulated in the responses of students, many teachers exert utmost effort in encouraging their students to speak in English. It was also noted in the observations that students were trying their best to use English when asking and answering questions. Students' active involvement was largely limited as the lessons were dominated by the teachers.

The last item of the questionnaire was intended to explore students' perception in error correction. As the data given above reveal, many students wanted to be corrected immediately and in front of their peers.

4.4 Analysis of the Grade 8 Syllabus for English

The English syllabus for Grade 8 contains an introduction and the main contents of course in a table which has six columns (see Appendix I).

The introduction focuses on the main purposes of the syllabus, the length of time taken to complete the course, the students' profile and the general objectives of the Grade 8 English course.

The table contains a list of selected and ordered language items to be taught in Grade 8. There are 14 units with specific topics on which all the language skills in each unit should be based. Analysis of the syllabus is made in the light of promoting learner-centred methods.

To begin with, the syllabus suggests that teachers should use specific learner-centred methods for different tasks and activities. It is also suggested that teachers are free to use any of the following active learning methods:

Individual, pair and group practice Role play, acting scenes, mime

Questioning: teacher/student, student/teacher, student/student

Language games

Silent reading and jigsaw reading

Information exchange and gap-filling

I believe that the syllabus is in line with the current approach in language teaching method employed in different parts of the globe.

4.5 Challenges in Implementing Learner-centred Approach in Grade 8

This section will explore challenges in implementing learner-centred approach in primary schools through interviews and discussions with teachers and students.

4.5.1 Teachers' Focus Group Discussion

Following an initial analysis of the data from questionnaires and classroom observations, a focused discussion was held to provide a third source of information. This was a follow-up from the initial analysis of data from classroom observations and the teachers' and students' questionnaires. The focused discussion was held in order to verify, refine and finally explore further information. The discussion points were:

1. Is learner-centred mode of delivery applicable in the Ethiopian Context?
2. How would you evaluate the use of learner-centred approach in your own context?
3. What do you think are the bottle-necks for properly implementing the learner-centred approach?
4. What do you suggest as solutions for the challenges in adopting the approach in Ethiopian primary schools?

Regarding the discussion point which asked the applicability of the learner-centred approach, all of them said that the objective reality they are in does not

allow them to fully implement the method. The context of their respective classes or schools is the reflection of the country's reality. The major bottlenecks, the teachers identified were

- *large class size*
- *lack of awareness*
- *lack of training*
- *lack of support from the stakeholders*
- *lack of self-motivation*

4.5.2 Students' Focus Group Discussion

The discussion points for the students were the following:

1. What type of topics do you prefer to learn in your English classes
2. How do you manage your own learning?

Most students who participated in this focused discussions pointed out that they wanted to learn and do activities that are highly related to their examinations. Their prime target is to pass exams so that they can achieve what they want. Regarding the point which asked how they managed their learning, most of them indicated that they were doing classroom activities and assignments as part of managing their own learning.

4.5.3 Teachers' Interviews

As explained in Chapter 3, semi-structured interviews were employed as methods of data collection. I believe that interviews would enable me to assess the breadth and depth of the teachers' knowledge, skills and perceptions. Accordingly, a total of three teachers were selected for this purpose.

Generally speaking the interview questions revolve around the following major issue. The responses and discussions of the interviews are presented below.

- Do you like teaching English?
- Which methods do you use most of the time?

- Do you believe that the method you employ most of the time is important for the students?
- Do you give some pieces of advice for your students to manage their own learning?
- What challenges you when implementing learner-centred approach in your classes?
- Do the books facilitate learner-centredness?
- What should be done in order to effectively and efficiently apply the approach in English classes?

All of the teachers expressed that they liked not only teaching English but also the teaching profession.

Concerning the methods they used most of the time two of the teachers said that they were using student-centred methods. They indicated that the policy requires teachers to use this method willy-nilly. When asked to give details on the typical characteristics of the methods almost all of the teachers made mention of group work, discussion and homework. The teachers also believe that the methods they are using are helpful for the students. They outlined the benefits in the following way:

It gives ample opportunity for the students so that they can practice the language without fear and embarrassment.

It helps learners to take responsibilities.

It encourages them to solve problems on their own.

Concerning giving advice to their students the teachers responded that they were making vigorous efforts to give advice to their students so that at the end of the day they can manage their own learning. One of the teachers talked about their particular strategy as saying

Students should be given a lot of assignments and homework on a daily basis. The benefits are twofold. Firstly students will be busy and

they will realize that they are doing the job for their own sake. Secondly they will develop the skill of working together (if the assignments are given for group members) or will learn how to manage tasks on their own.

With regard to the challenges faced by teachers most of them attributed the problems to:

- *The size of the class*
- *Economic problems of the students. It was indicated that the majority of the students belong to a family of low income.*
- *The attitudes of some teachers, school directors and students towards the language is negative*

However, as evidenced by the results of students' interviews and focused discussions, students have generally positive attitude towards learning English. The teachers were also asked whether or not the textbooks consider the needs of the students. They said that the books are not 100% perfect but are better than the previous books. When stating the reasons they said that the contents are reduced, the approaches encourage communications despite the difficulty levels of some contents.

Teachers made suggestions about the ideal way of implementing the approach.

They put forward their suggestions as follows:

- *Making efforts to reduce the class size*
- *Setting up language laboratories*
- *Providing supplementary reading materials*
- *Giving extra support for low achievers*

4.5.4 Students' Interviews

This section examines learners' perceptions of learning English and other issues.

The questions were:

- Do you like learning English?
- How do you want to learn English?
- Are the methods employed by your teachers helpful to you?
- What do you do to improve your English out of class?

For a majority of learners, learning English was important not only for their education but also for their future life. The reasons they put forward are summarized as follows:

We can differentiate a person who is educated from the uneducated one by the level of their English

We learn all subjects other than Amharic in English not only at this stage but also when we join colleges and universities

When asked whether the methods employed by their teachers were helpful to them, they said that they were helpful. They indicated that the task of improving English is the responsibility of the teachers not the students. From this we understand the fact that the idea of 'managing one's own learning' is viewed incorrectly.

To sum up, the use of learner-centred methods does not have a good track record in the Ethiopian context. The approach to teaching English is top-down, traditional and teacher-centred. Teachers do not dare to use communicative language teaching approach despite some obstacles both from inside and outside the school environment. Besides there is misconception on the part of the students that teachers are the only responsible people for their own learning. Summary, concluding remarks and recommendations will be discussed in the next chapter.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter attempts to provide the summary, conclusions and recommendations of the study.

5.2 Summary

As it has been mentioned in the preceding chapters this study focused on the use of the learner-centred approach at 2nd cycle primary schools with a special focus on Grade 8 students in three selected schools in Addis Ababa. The objectives of the study were three. Firstly, it tried to find out how much Grade 8 teachers are aware of a learner-centred approach. Secondly, it explored the reactions of teachers and students to this particular approach. Finally it tried to look into the procedures, activities and approaches in a learner-centred classroom.

Various instruments were designed and used as methods of data collection. One of the key instruments employed for this purpose was classroom observation. Following this, teachers' and students' questionnaires were used. The study also included focus group discussions for both teachers and students. Finally, semi-structured interviews were carried out with both teachers and students. The sample schools were also selected on the basis of their reputations in effectively implementing the learner-centred approach for English language teaching.

It is customary that teachers employ traditional and teacher-centred approach in their classes. Most of the observed lessons were geared towards achieving mastery of grammar rules. The activities were devoid of communicative activities. The various active learning methods suggested both in the syllabus and the teacher's guide were hardly used. Little or no attention was given to useful

teaching strategies such as pair work and group work. Chorus-work was the dominant mode of delivery employed by the teachers.

The preferred methods employed by the teachers have had a negative repercussion on the students. The students' focus group discussion implied that students were becoming exam-oriented. It was also highlighted in the teachers' focus discussions that challenges associated with large class size, lack of awareness and little support from the concerned officials were the major factors in deterring teachers from implementing the methods.

In the teachers' interviews it was highlighted that students' living condition was considered as the other challenge that stifles for properly applying active learning methods as required by the syllabus. In the students' interviews the major point emphasized was the students' perception of their learning. They thought that teachers are the sole responsible bodies for the teaching learning process.

5.3 Conclusions

Based on what has been found out as result of the research study and the summary stated above, the following conclusions are drawn.

5.3.1. The Grade 8 teachers assigned to teach are qualified to teach the grade level. However their perception and understanding of the approach is very limited.

5.3.2. Only a few learner-centred methods are used. The teachers' major approach to teaching English is the traditional chalk and talk.

5.3.3. The lecture mode of delivery is the common practice in Ethiopian primary schools.

5.3.4. Students are aware of the benefits of learning English because it is the medium of instruction in secondary schools, colleges and universities.

5.3.5. Students see teachers as the sole responsible bodies for the teaching learning process and all the classroom dynamics.

5.3.6 The textbooks are not only crowded with concepts but also their design

does not consider the students' needs and learning styles.

5.3.7. Assessment is viewed by teachers as a one-off task rather than an activity which should be done on a regular basis.

5.4 Recommendations

Based on the research findings of this study the following recommendations are made.

The use of learner-centred approach in Grade 8 in Addis Ababa is much less used than a teacher-centred approach.

Therefore:

- The training of teachers is indispensable. Besides the training should focus on exposing teachers with a variety of teaching methods including learner-centred ones.
- Teachers should participate in workshops, seminars and trainings in the in-service mode so that not only their level of understanding of the approach will be increased but also they will use it effectively and efficiently.
- Teacher training institutions should ensure that trainee teachers are equipped with the necessary knowledge, skills and attitudes in the contemporary methods of language teaching.
- The quality of textbooks should be of a higher standard and should address the issues of learner-centred approach.

The effective application of the learner-centred approach is linked with 'learner training'. Therefore it is indispensable that the foundations should be present in teachers training institutions.



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Appendices

Appendix I

ENGLISH CURRICULUM GUIDE FOR GRADES 5-8

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

The curriculum guide for grades 5-8 is designed to develop the communicative ability of the students. It requires the students to use the English that they learn to say, read and write things that are both true and meaningful for them. All four skills, listening, speaking, reading and writing are developed simultaneously. Teachers are also expected to emphasize the communicative use of English by using English themselves in the classroom at the appropriate level of difficulty for their students.

The following additions and changes have been made in this edition of the curriculum guide:

- Unit Objectives are given for each unit.
- The units have been reorganised and renamed to facilitate communicative methodology rather than concentrating on language functions.
- The Methodology section has been enriched in such a way that students should have more time to practise the language.
- Specific guidelines for teachers have been added for the Evaluation and Follow-up section.
- Additional 'Instructional Resources' have been introduced into the section formerly entitled 'Teaching Aids'
- The total number of periods has been reduced to 170, assuming an academic year of 34 weeks and 5 periods of 40 minutes per week.
- New topics have been introduced on important current issues using language appropriate to the age and level of the students, e.g. HIV/AIDS, Gender, Bad Traditional Practices, Environmental Protection, Rural Development, Respect for Work, Respect for Elders and Famous People, Love of Family and Country, Respect for Rules and Regulations, Road Safety, Saving, Diligence, Self-Reliance, Heroism, Honesty, Responsibility and Accountability, the Importance of Punctuality and Planning.

In each curriculum guide the units are arranged into 6 columns as follows:

- **Specific Objectives:**
The specific objectives for each unit in each of the four language skills are

- **Content:**

This column contains all the language items to be covered in listening, speaking, reading and writing activities
i.e. sentence patterns, structures and vocabulary.

- **Pds:**

This column contains the periods allotted to cover each unit.

- **Methodology:**

Suggestions on how to teach each language item are given in this column. However, the teacher is free to use any of the following instructional methods:

1. Individual, pair and group practice
2. Role play, acting scenes, mime
3. Questioning: teacher/student, student/teacher, student/student
4. Language games
5. Silent reading and jigsaw reading
6. Information exchange and gap-filling

- **Instructional Resources:**

In addition to course books and blackboard, these include the following:

1. Realia (real objects)
2. Picture cards, flash cards and reading cards
3. Shash board
4. Role-play cards
5. Dialogues
6. Recorded materials
7. English by Radio programme
8. Printed materials: books, magazines, posters etc.
9. Tables/charts

- **Evaluation and Follow-up:**

The following methods are recommended:

1. Checking individual performance, pairwork and groupwork
2. Listening to instructions and doing activities
3. Oral questions and assignments
4. Short written assignment
5. Tests

Appendix II

Checklist for classroom observation

No.	Learner-centred practices	Rating frequency scale					
		Day One		Day Two		Day Three	
		Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
1	The teacher introduces the lesson focusing on its aims						
2	The teacher encouraged the students to relate the content with their experience						
3	Students work individually						
4	Students work in pairs						
5	Students work in small groups						
6	Students do role-play/drama/simulation activities						
7	Students play games						
8	Students ask questions in English						
9	Students answer questions in English						
10	Students hold whole-class discussions in English						
11	Students do assignments						
12	The teacher uses authentic sources						
13	The teacher mainly focuses on the content rather than on the form of the language item						
14	The teacher does not intervene now and then						
15	The teacher encourages the learners to develop skills in learning how to learn so that they can take responsibilities for their own learning						
16	Evaluation of each student's progress is carried out on the different language skills and other language areas on a continuous basis						
17	The students are actively involved in all stages of the lesson						
18	All in all the lessons are well structured and effective in promoting active learning						

Note on any additional teacher activity observed:

Appendix III

**Addis Ababa University
Institute of Language Studies
Department of Foreign Languages and Literature
(Graduate Programmes)**

Questionnaire for Teachers

This questionnaire is part of the research work which deals with exploring the status of learner-centred approach in English language classes with special reference to grade eight. The effectiveness of the study relies on the information given by teachers. Therefore, I kindly request you to fill this questionnaire appropriately. All the data collected will be highly confidential and will be used for the research only.

There is no need to write your name.

Thank you very much for your cooperation.

Directions 1: The following questions are about your personal information and teaching experience.

1. Name of the school where you teach _____
2. Gender _____
3. Age _____
4. Educational qualification: _____
5. What was your major area of study at the institution you attended? _____
6. How many years teaching experience do you have? _____
7. For how long have you been teaching English? _____
8. what grade levels have you taught? _____
9. Have you ever participated in in-service training programmes for English language on teaching methodology? **(Please circle the letter of your choice)**

A. Yes

B. No

6. Which of the following methods do you use as the best method in your English lessons? Please select the three top Active learning methods that you use most of the time. Rate them First, Second and Third according to their frequency.

- A. role-play B. students on their own C. pair work D. group work
E. co-operative learning F. class discussion G. assignments
H. Others, please specify _____

7. Do you encourage group work activities in your classes?

- A. Yes B. No

8. If your answer to question 7 is 'Yes', which of these goals do you think can be met?

- A. co-operative B. competitive C. individualistic

9. What benefits can be achieved as a result of the goal?

10. Do you accept errors as a natural part of the learning process?

- A. Yes B. No

11. Do you believe that the textbooks being used consider the learners' needs and their learning style?

- A. Yes B. No

12. Which of the methods do you use most of the time for assessing your students?

- A. Final exams B. Continuous assessment

13. Do you think that training learners to take responsibility for their own learning is important?

- A. Yes B. No

14. if your answer for question 13 is No', can you explain the reasons why you say it is not important?

Appendix IV

**Addis Ababa University
Institute of Language Studies
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(Graduate Programmes)**

Questionnaire for Students

This questionnaire is part of the research work which deals with exploring the status of learner-centred approach in English language classes with special reference to grade eight. The effectiveness of the study relies on the information given by students. Therefore, I kindly request you to fill this questionnaire appropriately.

There is no need to write your name.

Thank you very much for your cooperation.

Directions 1: The following questions are about your personal information.

10. Name of the school where you learn _____
11. Gender _____
12. Age _____

Directions 2: The following questions are about learner-centred teaching methods and other related issues. Please select the letter of your choice.

1. How do you like to learn in English class?

A. individually B. with a partner C. in small groups D. in a large group

2. Does your English teacher arrange the classroom so that it is easy for you to interact?

A. Yes

B. No

3. Which of the following methods are frequently used in your English lessons?

Rank them First, Second and Third according to their frequency.

A. Individually

B. Pair work

C. Group work

D. Lecturing

E. Discussion

F. Chorus work

G. Question and answer

H. Co-operative learning

I. Homework

4. Does your teacher encourage group work activities in English lessons?

A. Yes

B. No

5. How often do you do homework?

A. always

B. Usually

C. Sometimes

D. never

6. Does your teacher encourage you to speak in English in class?

A. Yes

B. No

7. When you speak do you want to be corrected.....

A immediately, in front of your peers?

B. later, at the end of the activity, in front of everyone?

C. later, in private?

ሀ. ሁል ጊዜ ለ. ብዙ ጊዜ ሐ. አንዳንዴ መ. በፍጹም ሰርቼ አላውቅም

4. የእንግሊዝኛ ቋንቋ መምህር/ሽ በክፍል ውስጥ በእንግሊዝኛ ቋንቋ እንድትናገር/እንድትናገሪ ያበረታቱህ/ያበረታታሻል?

ሀ. ያበረታቱኛል ለ. አያበረታቱኝም

5. በክፍል ውስጥ በእንግሊዝኛ በምትናገርበት/በምትናገሪበት ወቅት ስህተቶች እንዴት ቢታረሙ ትፈልጋለህ/ትፈልጊያለሽ?

ሀ. ወዲያውኑ በሁሉም ተማሪዎች ፊት

ለ. ጥያቄውን ከሠራሁ በኋላ ሆኖ በሁሉም ተማሪዎች ፊት ቢሆን ግድ የለኝም

ሐ. የትምህርት ክፍለ ጊዜው ካበቃ በኋላ ለብቻዬ መሆን ይኖርበታል

6. የእንግሊዝኛ ቋንቋ መምህር/መምህርሽ የቡድን በቡድን በመከፍፈል ልዩ ልዩ ጥያቄዎችን እንድትሰሩ ያበረታታሉ?

ሀ. ያበረታታሉ ለ. አያበረታቱም

7. በእንግሊዝኛ ቋንቋ ትምህርት ክፍለ ጊዜ በተደጋጋሚ የምትጠቀሙት የትኞቹን ዘዴዎች ነው? ከሚከተሉት ውስጥ በብዛት የምትጠቀሙትን በደረጃ ከ1-3 ያሉትን 1ኛ፣ 2ኛ፣ 3ኛ፣ በማለት ባዶ ቦታ ውስጥ አስቀምጥ/ጭ።

ሀ. በግል በማሰራት

ለ. ከአንድ ከሌላ ተማሪ ጋር አብሮ በመሰራት

ሐ. በቡድን በማሰራት/ሶስትና ከዚያ በላይ ተማሪዎች/

መ. መምህሩ ብቻ ገለጻ በማድረግ

ሠ. በውይይት

ረ. ሁሉንም ተማሪዎች በማሳተፍ

ሰ. ጥያቄና መልስ በመስጠት

ሸ. በትብብር እርስ በርሳችን እንድንማማር በማድረግ

ቀ. የቤት ሥራ በመስጠት

Appendix VI

**Addis Ababa University
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Teachers' Focus Group Discussion

1. Is learner-centred mode of delivery applicable in the Ethiopian Context?
2. How would you evaluate the use of learner-centred approach in your own context?
3. What do you think are the bottle-necks for properly implementing the learner-centred approach?
4. What do you suggest as solutions for the challenges in adopting the approach in Ethiopian primary schools?

Appendix VII

**አዲስ አበባ ዩኒቨርሲቲ
የቋንቋዎች ጥናት ተቋም
የውጪ ቋንቋዎችና ሥነ-ጽሁፍ ትምህርት ክፍል
የድህረ ምረቃ መርሃ ግብር**

የመምህራን የቡድን ውይይት ጥያቄዎች

1. በኢትዮጵያ ባለው ተጨባጭ ሁኔታ ተማሪን ማዕከል ያደረገ የማስተማር ስልት አግባብነት ያለው ይመስላችኋል?
2. በምታስተምሩባቸው ትም/ቤቶች ተማሪን ማዕከል ባደረገው ሥነ ዘዴ አጠቃቀምን እንዴት ትገመግሙታላችሁ?
3. የመማሪያ ማስተማሪያ መጽሐፍቶቹ ተማሪን ማዕከል ላደረገ የትምህርት አቀራረብ የተመቹ ናቸው?
4. ይህን የማስተማሪያ ስልት በብቃት ለመጠቀም ዋነኞቹ ችግሮች የትኞቹ ናቸው?
5. ይህን የማስተማሪያ ዘዴ ችግሮች ቀርፎ በብቃት ለመተግበር ምን መደረግ አለበት ትላላችሁ?

Appendix VIII

**Addis Ababa University
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Department of Foreign Languages and Literature
(Graduate Programmes)**

Students' Focus Group Discussion

1. What type of topics do you prefer to learn in your English classes
2. How do you manage your own learning?

Appendix IX

**አዲስ አበባ ዩኒቨርሲቲ
የቋንቋዎች ጥናት ተቋም
የውጪ ቋንቋዎችና ሥነ-ጽሁፍ ትምህርት ክፍል
የድህረ ምረቃ መርሃ ግብር**

የተማሪዎች የቡድን ውይይት ጥያቄዎች

1. በእንግሊዝኛ ቋንቋ ክፍል ምን አይነት ርዕሶችን መማር ትወዳላችሁ?
2. የትምህርታቸውን የምትከታተሉት ሙሉ በሙ በመምህራችሁ በመመርኮዝ ነው ወይስ እራሳችሁ ትምህርታችሁን ታካሊዳላችሁ?

Appendix X

**Addis Ababa University
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(Graduate Programmes)**

Teachers` interview

1. Do you like teaching English?
2. Which methods do you use most of the time?
3. Do you believe that the method you employ most of the time is important for the students?
4. Do you give some pieces of advice for your students to manage their own learning?
5. What challenges you when implementing learner-centred approach in your classes?
6. Do the books facilitate learner-centredness?
7. What should be done in order to effectively and efficiently apply the approach in English classes?

**አዲስ አበባ ዩኒቨርሲቲ
የቋንቋዎች ጥናት ተቋም
የውጪ ቋንቋዎችና ሥነ-ጽሁፍ ትምህርት ክፍል
የድህረ ምረቃ መርሃ ግብር**

የመምህራን ቃለ መጠይቅ

1. እንግሊዝኛ ቋንቋ ማስተማር ይወዳሉ?
2. የትኞቹን የማስተማር ሥነ-ዘዴዎችን ነው በብዛት የሚጠቀሙት?
3. እርስዎ አብዛኛውን ጊዜ የሚጠቀሙት የማስተማር ዘዴ ለተማሪዎቻችን ጠቃሚ ነው ብለው ያምናሉ?
4. ተማሪዎች ትምህርታቸውን በራሳቸው ዕቅድና ኃላፊነት እየተመሩ እንዲከታተሉ ምክር ይሰጡአቸዋል?
5. እርስዎ በሚያስተምሩባቸው ክፍል ውስጥ ተማሪን ማዕከል ያደረገ የማስተማሪያ ስልት ለመተግበር ዋነኛ ችግሮችዎ ምንድን ናቸው?
6. የመማሪያ ማስተማሪያ መጽሐፍቶቹ ተማሪን ማዕከል ላደረገ የትምህርት አሰጣጥ የተመቻቹ ናቸው?
7. ተማሪን ማዕከል ያደረገን የማስተማር ስልት በብቃትና በውጤታማነት ለመተግበር ምን መደረግ አለበት ይላሉ?

Appendix XII

**Addis Ababa University
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(Graduate Programmes)**

Students' interview

1. Do you like learning English?
2. How do you want to learn English?
3. Are the methods employed by your teachers helpful to you?
4. What do you do to improve your English out of class?

**አዲስ አበባ ዩኒቨርሲቲ
የቋንቋዎች ጥናት ተቋም
የወጪ ቋንቋዎችና ሥነ-ጽሁፍ ትምህርት ክፍል
የድህረ ምረቃ መርሃ ግብር**

የተማሪዎች ቃለ መጠይቅ

1. የእንግሊዘኛ መምህርህ/ሽ የሚከተሉት የማስተማር ስልት ይጠቅምሃል/ሻል?
2. እንግሊዘኛ ቋንቋን በክፍል ውስጥ እንዴት መማር ትፈልጋለህ/ሽ?
3. የእንግሊዘኛ ቋንቋ ችሎታህን/ሽን ለማሻሻል ከክፍል ወጪ ምን ምን ነገሮች ታደርጋለህ/ሽ?

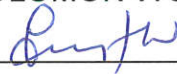
DECLARATION

I declare that this is my original work and has not been presented for a degree in any other university and all sources of material used for the thesis have been duly acknowledged.

NAME:

SOLOMON WORKU MEGRA

SIGNATURE



PLACE

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SUBMISSION

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