

# Assessing the Practice and Challenges of Student-Centered Learning Approach; The Case of Mi'eso Secondary School Grade Ten in Focus

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**Abstract:** The purpose of this study was to assess the practice and challenges of student-centered approaches to learning. To this end, Mi'esso secondary school, which is found in West Hararghe Zone, Mi'esso Woreda, was selected. The participants of the study were four EFL teachers and 195 students in grade ten. A descriptive research design was used to conduct this study, and simple random sampling techniques for students and availability sampling were used for EFL teachers. Instruments used to collect data were a questionnaire, an observation checklist, and an interview. Then the data were analyzed through frequency and percentage score for quantitative data, and data obtained through observation and interview were analyzed qualitatively. The findings of the study revealed that the majority of EFL teachers had used traditional approaches or teacher-centered language learning method. The commonly stated factors for the low level of practicing student-centered approach were: most teachers have a tendency to use traditional methods/ lecture methods, there is lack of interest to practice learner centered approach, large classroom size and poor classroom condition and another factor that affect learner centered approach, and teachers and students have problems to implement learner centered approach though they believe that it helped them. Finally, recommendations were forwarded based on the major findings of the study. Accordingly, it is suggested that for EFL teachers: For effective practice of learner-centered approach in the EFL classes, teachers should perceive the importance of learner centered approach, teachers should use and practice learner centered approach in their EFL classes, so EFL teachers should practice learner centered approach using various teaching aids in the EFL classes, EFL teachers should continue to motivate, encourage, give attention for student-centered and support students' participation in the classroom. Students should: practice student-centered approach of learning in the classroom, and should participate actively in the classroom. Ministry of education: should give training for Teachers, should arrange the classroom condition. For other researchers: Since the student-centered approach is not implemented in this study, then it is recommended for other researchers to undergo further research in studying the assessment of student-centered approaches of leaning in English language classroom.

**Keywords:** Assessing, Practice, Challenges, Student-Centered, Learning Approach

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## 1. Introduction

### 1.1. Background of the Study

Effective teaching and learning require the use of different approaches and styles of teaching so as to meet the demand of learners, with regard to this, great teachers change lives, inspire, motivate and strive the way of the art of teaching. These teachers use learner-centered approach which helps to engage their students in EFL class. Also, they understand the

limitations of the traditional teacher-centered style of teaching [9]. Where a teacher leads the entire lesson, the students quietly take notes and answer a few questions; the teaching approach goes to teachers centered. In this way the students unlikely to understand the content if they are not actively engaged in the learning process. In contrast learner-centered approach encourages students to talk about what they are learning to learn from one another and to improve their understanding about the subject matter. [9].

Student-centered learning has been defined most simply as

an approach to learning in which learners choose not only what to study but also how and why that topic might be of interest [16]. In other words, the learning environment has learner responsibility and activity at its heart, in contrast to the emphasis on instructor control and the coverage of academic content found in much conventional, didactic teaching [6]. Additionally, learners find the learning process more meaningful when topics are relevant to their lives, needs, and interests, and when they are actively engaged in creating, understanding, and connecting to knowledge [10].

The history of learner-centered approach takes its roots from a constructivist theory in which students learn more by doing and experiencing rather than by observing. In this theory students are the initiators of their own learning and knowledge making rather than passive recipient knowledge from expert teachers [5].

There has been increasing emphasis in recent years on moving away from traditional teaching toward student-centered learning. This paradigm shift has encouraged moving power from the teacher to the learner, treating the learner as a co-creator in the teaching and learning process [3]. Teachers who deliver student-centered instruction include the learner in decisions about how and what they learn and how that learning is assessed, and they respect and accommodate individual differences in learners' backgrounds, interests, abilities, and [10]. The role of the teacher in student-centered classrooms is to encourage learners to do more discovery learning and to learn from each other; the teacher focuses on constructing authentic, real-life tasks that motivate learner involvement and participation [18].

Learner-centered learning is a method of instruction in which the student is in the center of focus and the teacher has the least impression in EFL classroom instruction. On the other hand, occurs in a setting that the teacher plays the main role, but the learner-centered approach means self and lifelong education when teacher should change their traditional roles from teller to coordinator and from material users to material providers [2].

The traditional "Chalk and talk" approach with the students as recipients of knowledge may not be suitable for today's learners. This is why in school throughout the world there is a movement from learning that is made up of facts to a new model that is learner-centered approach which emphasizes understanding, making connections in the world around us collecting and using information in active manner [9].

From these scholars' point of view, we can conclude that we should think of learner-centered approach in terms of students being intellectually active, or teachers do not simply expect students to memorize and repeat facts and also teachers should expect students to use information critically and analytically while they are learning EFL in the classroom. Moreover, from these scholars' argument, it can be realized that the use of learner-center approach is an essential method or style of teaching that bring problem solving capacity in to the reality.

Therefore, the Ministry of Ethiopian education introduces these instructional methods which is learner-centered

approach of teaching to be implemented at all levels of education, Nevertheless, there was a great gap between the ideas of the policy and its implementation [12]. Updating training on methodology has grown contributions for the effective implementation of the learner-centered approach. In line of the above, it can be concluded from the above arguments supported by different scholars understood that even though learner -centered approach is an important approach in education, in reality it is not practiced or implemented as it was being expected. For instance, in this study setting, most of the EFL teachers used teacher-centered approach than learner-centered approach.

The study, therefore, aimed to establish the extent to which the practice of student-centered approach was used in the Mi'esso secondary school specially grade ten students.

### ***1.2. Statement of the Problem***

The teacher uses chalk and talk method of teaching in which the teacher is active whereas the students are passive. This leads the students to the memorization of information and facts from their text book and notes. Therefore, this was considered to be the most effective method of teaching. This is the lowest level in the development of cognitive abilities. The absence of appropriate balance between the concrete and the abstract experience as one weakness of the teacher-centered approach. [1].

If the students are deprived of the necessary concrete experience during the teaching – learning process, such abilities as critical examination, analysis, synthesis and the like may remain under developed. Therefore, as a result of poor techniques and approaches used in school, students may face serious problem of connecting school learning with their daily life [1]. That means what students learn in classroom may not sufficiently prepare learners to understand their environments, solve problems and use information from their environment and other sources to make a better life.

These days, the role of the teacher is changed classrooms are places in which students learn rather than being mainly places in which teachers teach. Teachers are facilitators of learning in this sense; students are given the freedom to explore areas based on their personal interests and accompanied their striving solution by a supportive understanding facilitator. They are expected to achieve not only achieve high academic result, but also experience and increase the personal value such as flexibility, self – confidence, social skills and problem-solving capacity. [15].

In line with the above scholar's point of view all teachers at all level of education are expected to implement learner centered approaches in all level of EFL class since this approach is more effective and enable learner to be experienced by supporting or providing with practical exercises and tasks in EFL classes. To this end, EFL teachers are expected to implement learner– center approach of teaching at all in EFL class so as to attain the desired goal. Because student-centered approach leads to effective teaching learning process and promotes the development of student's critical thinking and engage them in the teaching

learning process actively and effectively.

However, researcher and experiences have shown that there was a difference between theory and practices in the Ethiopian context why the researcher selected this. This is to mean that what has been stated in the policy might not be implemented practically due to some reasons. In relation to this topic many studies have been conducted in different parts of the country at different levels of the schooling. For example, [7] has found out that traditional lecture methods dominated in most the observed classroom of Ethiopia, moreover, Lemma [8] in his research findings indicated that the level of utilization learner- centered style of learning pedagogy was found very poor in some selected schools of their studied areas.

In relation to the above-mentioned experience more specifically the researchers of this study have got an opportunity to observe closely the teaching and learning of EFL Classes in Mi'esso secondary school grade ten students learning.

Therefore, the researcher observed practically the problems in EFL classes in the teaching and learning process. As a result of this, most EFL learners consider that English subject is more difficult and it cannot be easily understood. Consequently, the result of most learners and even their interest towards English subject was low and they were unmotivated to learn the target language. Because of students' interest and their practice. Therefore, the researcher of this study had many reasons to conduct this research. First, the researcher practically observed the problem about the teachers' practice of learner centered approach in grade ten Mi'esso Secondary school classroom. Second, there was no similar study conducted in this study area or Mi'esso secondary School. Third, the researcher believed that little attention was given by these previously researchers of the practice of learner center approach as the researcher observed, teacher-center approach of learning and teaching was dominated at the study area.

Therefore, due to these observed problems and other related factors like large class, students' motivation, the researcher was initiated to conduct the study on the practice of student-centered approach of learning in the selected study area.

### **1.3. Research Questions**

1. How teachers and students do practice student- centered approach in EFL classroom?
2. What are the main challenges that affect the practice of student-centered approach in EFL classes?
3. What are the techniques that teachers use to alleviate the challenges?

### **1.4. Objective of the Study**

#### **1.4.1. General Objective**

The main objective of this study is to assess the practice and challenges of student- center approach of teaching and learning process in Mi'esso secondary school, grade ten in focus.

#### **1.4.2. Specific Objectives of the Study**

- The study will be guided by the following specific objectives:
1. To assess how do teachers and student practice student-

centered approach in EFL classroom.

2. To identify the main challenges that affect the practice of Student- centered approach in in EFL classes.
3. To identify the techniques that teachers employ to alleviate the challenge

### **1.5. Significance of the Study**

The purpose of this study was assessing the practice and challenges of learner- centered learning approach in Mi'esso secondary school grade ten students. Therefore, the researcher hoped that the result of this study was thought to be crucial for EFL teachers, students, MOE, and other researchers. It might help EFL teachers to improve their methodology of teaching and learning process in EFL classes and help them to identify factors that affect the use of learner-center learning approach in the actual teaching learning classroom. Moreover, it might help EFL teachers to develop the awareness of using the student-centered approach in EFL classes. On the other hand, it might help students to participate equally in the classroom, and specially develop their language skills. Further, this study might be contributed for curriculum developers and experts of education in the MoE to design instructional materials in line with student-centered approach. Finally, this study would help other researchers who will do research on the same and related title as a bench mark.

Finally, the findings of this study might be used to promote effective use of learner-centered learning in EFL classes and address the needs of learners in the language and also it would stimulate the possibility to other researchers to conduct further studies in this area.

## **2. Materials and Methods**

This chapter discusses about the research design, study area, source of data, sampling techniques, sampling design, data collection tools, and methods of data analysis.

### **2.1. Research Design**

As clearly stated in the first chapter, the main objective of this study would be assessed the practice and challenges of student-centered learning approach the case of Mi'esso secondary school grade ten students in focus. In line of this, [17] points out that descriptive research is used to describe the existing phenomenon explicitly more specifically survey method is used to collect data about a large number of people by collecting from a few of them. Accordingly, the researcher believed that this method was an appropriate to explore or find out the existing problem with regard to teachers' perception and practice of learner -centered approach in EFL classes at Mi'esso secondary school grade ten students.

### **2.2. The Sources of Data and Sampling Techniques**

#### **2.2.1. Source of Data**

This study was conducted in Mi'esso secondary school grade ten Students and English language teachers. Accordingly, grade seven EFL teachers and students were

source of data for this study. The reason for the selection was that since they were part of the teaching learning process in section (grade ten), the researcher thought that they would have provided enough information about the problem.

### 2.2.2. Sampling Technique

In order to get sample population for this study, the researcher used simple random and availability sampling techniques. The simple random sampling was used to select students because Simple Random sampling from a finite population refers to that method of sample selection which gives each possible sample combination an equal probability of being picked up and each item in the entire population to have an equal chance of being included in the sample.

On the other hand, availability sampling was used to select EFL teachers; this technique was more helpful to collect primary data sources. Moreover, the number of EFL teachers was too small and using these techniques makes the study manageable. To this end, the researcher relied on his own

judgment when choosing the number of teachers who were participated on interview so as to get primary data sources.

### 2.2.3. Sample Size

According to [14] the smaller the population, the bigger the sampling ratio has to be for an accurate sample. This means for small populations (under 1,000), a researcher(s) needs a large sampling ratio (about 30 percent). For moderately large populations (10,000), a smaller sampling ratio (about 10 percent) is needed to be equally accurate.

Accordingly, the participants of this study were Mi'esso secondary school grade ten Students and English language teachers. So, the total number of Mi'esso secondary school grade ten students were 195 from 195 students (males 110 and female 85) and the total number of EFL teachers were four (4 of them are males). To make this study manageable, out of the total number of students, 195 (30%) that means 59 students were selected through simple random sampling and 4 EFL teachers (100%) were selected through availability sampling.

*Table 1. About participants of the study, sample size and sampling techniques.*

No	Participants	Total population	Sample size	Sampling Techniques
1	Students	195	59	Simple random sampling
2	EFL teachers	4	4	Availability sampling
Total	-	199	63	-

## 2.3. Data Collection Tools

The researcher was used three data gathering instruments in order to get valid and reliable data: questionnaire, classroom observation and interviews.

### 2.3.1. Questionnaire

Open-ended survey questions allow respondents to answer in their own words. Open-ended questions also allow the researcher to explore ideas that would not otherwise be aired and are useful where additional insights are sought. They are also useful where the researcher is less familiar with the subject area and cannot offer specific response options.

In contrast, closed-ended questions require the respondent to choose from among a given set of responses [11] Closed-ended questions with ordered choices require the respondent to examine each possible response independent of the other choices. The choices form a continuum of responses, such as those provided by Likert scales and numerical ranges. These types of questions are easiest for respondents to answer and for researchers to analyze the data. Therefore; the researcher prepared close-ended questions for Mi'esso secondary school grade ten students. The researcher prepared questions in a written form to respondents who was expected to read and understand the question and write down the reply in the space meant for the purpose in the questionnaire. On the basis of this, the major target of this questionnaire was used to obtain truthful information, opinions and challenges from respondents about the current practices of the learner-centered approach in EFL classes. Those questionnaires were likert scale and the researcher triangulated data's by making confirming the questionnaire data with other sources of information on the topic.

The researcher was adopted close- ended questions for students. This method answers research question 1 and 2.

### 2.3.2. Pilot Testing of the Questionnaire

The researcher validated the instruments that were developed in this way. Before the actual data collection was started, the instruments were given to some colleagues of English Language teachers and other experienced teachers in order to get valuable comments and criticisms on the strengths and weaknesses of the items. Hence, based on the comments obtained, necessary modifications were made and then it was given to our thesis advisor for further comments, criticism and evaluation. Then after, pilot test was conducted in a small-scale that were undertaken in Mi'esso secondary school.

The pilot was conducted in order to:

- 1 Ensure the items of the questionnaire could be understood by the participants.
- 2 Check the reliabilities of each item.
- 3 Determine the administration of time.

After administrating, some participants were asked for feedback.

### 2.3.3. Classroom Observation

The other data gathering tool used in the study was class observation. [13] Says that "observations are useful tools for providing direct information about language and language learning, and it is the best data collecting technique for gaining insight into the subject in a natural environment." This is why a non-participant, classroom observation was chosen to collect data because in non-participant observation, the observers do not interact to a great degree with those he/she is observing; the researchers primarily observe and

record the data. Before the observation were conducted, teachers who are going to be observed were asked about their willingness and informed in advance.

There were four sections of grade seven students in Mi'esso secondary school. The researcher was observed English language teachers two times by using schedule each at English periods by using observation checklists. This was to observe the way English language teachers encourage their students when they teach using learner-centered method or how students were helped during their practice in learner-centered method. In addition, EFL teachers focus areas in learner-centered method was observed. During the classroom observations the researcher was used qualitative data in the form of observation check list made by the researchers themselves. The observations were tallied as 'yes/no' followed by detailed note-taking on the way teachers were teaching. This Classroom observation answered Research question 1.

**2.3.4. Interview**

The third method of data collection was interview. The purpose of the interview was to gather information about teachers' and students' perception with regard to learner-centered approach of teaching and learning process. As [4] noted that, this data collection instrument allows respondents to express themselves of some length and also prevents aimless rambling. The main advantage of an interview was that communication can be accomplished within a very short time, and it is less costly than the other methods of data collection. Based on this, the researcher was used semi structured interview in order to gather in-depth information from EFL teachers concerning the practice of learner-centered approach in EFL classes and factors that affect student-centered learning approaches. Four EFL teachers were involved in the interview.

Finally, the interview was conducted face-to-face with the participants. Therefore, this would be helped to check what has been obtained through questionnaire and observation to make the study effective.

**2.4. Collection Procedure**

The data collection process would be arranged at a time suggested the university's permission and the willingness of the participants. Based on this, the researcher distributed the final version of the questionnaire for the students along with adequate time and place and the pilot study were edited according to the

given comments. Which means the respondents were filled the questionnaire at their school. After the questionnaire distributed, classroom observation of lessons was followed to gather the necessary information by using the proposed check lists with the help of the researcher's co- observer. Then, the frequencies of the observed lists were tabulated and prepared for the analysis. After that, an interview was made for teachers to collect the necessary information regarding the practice of learner-centered approach in the actual EFL teaching and learning process.

**2.5. Methods of Data Analysis**

The study employed both qualitative and quantitative methods to analyze data. Quantitative data was analyzed using mean, percentage, and frequencies, while qualitative data was categorized and described through observation, interview, and open-ended questions. Results were presented using tables, percentages, and qualitative expressions. Discussions, conclusions, and recommendations were made based on the analyzed data.

**3. Results and Discussions**

This chapter introduces data analysis from teachers and students gained from questionnaires, interview and classroom observation.

**3.1. Introduction**

This chapter deals with analysis and discussions of the gathered data from the sample teachers and students of the total 195 students, 59 students and 4 EFL teachers were selected from Mi'esso secondary school in the study as respondents to fill in the questionnaire and all EFL teachers were selected for interview. Furthermore, classroom observation was conducted to get reliable data for this study. Therefore, the data gathered by the three instruments (questionnaire, interview and classroom observation) were presented and discussed after collecting the data based on their relationships and relevance to the point of discussion.

**3.2. Data Analysis and Interpretation Obtained from Questionnaire**

This section presents about the analysis and findings of the data that were collected from students' questionnaire.

**3.2.1. Activities to Be Done or Practiced by Students Using Learner Centered**

*Table 2. Students' response about the practice and use of learner centered approach during the lesson.*

No	Items	Responses									
		always		Usually		sometimes		Rarely		Total	
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
1	When teachers give activities to be done in groups or pairs, they go round and help you as much as possible they could.	9	15.3	11	18.6	7	11.9	32	54.2	59	100
2	Once teachers give activities to be done in groups they sit and do other things and finally give some conclusions and then they leave the class.	9	15.3	40	67.8	6	10.2	4	6.8	59	100
3	Most of the time your teachers focus on the process of students learning; not just the content of the discipline.	12	20.3	38	64.4	7	11.9	3	5.1	59	100

No	Items	Responses									
		always		Usually		sometimes		Rarely		Total	
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
4	Most of the time EFL teachers encourage you by doing in your actual classroom.	6	10.2	2	3.4	8	13.6	43	72.9	59	100
5	Your teachers are arranging you for different classroom activities like discussion, presentation group work, debating peer teaching etc.	4	6.8	5	8.5	9	15.3	41	69.5	59	100
6	Your teachers are regularly motivating you and give you more chance to practice activities in the class regardless of your mistakes that can be improved through practice.	-	-	7	11.9	5	8.5	47	79.7	59	100
7	Your teachers come to class having different teaching materials like short stories, proverbs, listening manuals etc. So as to make the subject interesting.	3	5.1	7	11.9	37	62.7	12	20.3	59	100
8	Learner- centered approach ads work load on you and your teacher.	5	8.5	29	49.2	14	23.7	11	18.6	59	100
9	Learner -centered approach makes you responsible for your own learning.	7	11.9	12	20.3	38	64.4	2	3.4	59	100
10	If your EFL teachers carefully plan their lesson and organize their student's using learner centered approach; it become interesting and improve the students' academic performance.	48	81.4	5	8.5	4	6.8	1	1.7	59	100
11	The contents of grade seven textbook invite you to be active participant.	35	59.3	12	20.4	7	11.9	5	8.5	59	100
12	The number of students in your classroom is large and highly unmanaged for teachers to practice learner centered approach of teaching.	39	66.1	8	13.6	11	18.6	1	1.7	59	100

In table 2, in the above 12 items were presented for students about the practice and use of learner centered approach during the actual classes so as to compare with the EFL teacher's responses. Based on this, each item was discussed in the following ways.

As shown that in the item 1, the responses about 32 (54.2) of the respondents answered 'rarely' to the question 'When teachers give activities to be done in groups or pairs, they go round and help you as much as possible they could.'

Therefore, this revealed that majority of the teachers did not help the students when they give activities to be done despite some supported it.

In item 2, 40 (67.8%) of the students replied 'usually' for the item to be asked, 9 (15.3%) responded always, 6 (10.3%) sometimes and 4 (6.8%) responded rarely. So, the respondents pointed out that while they were doing activities their teachers did not support them and simply, they give them some conclusions after the activities.

For item 3, 12 (20.3%) of the respondents' responded always, 38 (64.3%) usually, 7 (11.9%) responded sometimes and 3 (5.1%) responded that their teachers did not focus on the process rather they taught them content.

In item 4, 6 (10.2%) of the respondents' responded always, 2 (3.4%) usually, 8 (13.6%) responded sometimes and 43 (72.9%) Hence, this indicates that most EFL teachers were not encouraging learning by doing to their students.

For item 5, 4 (6.8%) of the respondents' responded always, 5 (8.5%) usually, 9 (15.3%) responded sometimes and 41 (69.5%). So, this implies that majority of their teachers were not given a chance to practice the activities though these where certain teachers were given a chance to them.

For item 6, 7 (11.9%) responded usually, 5 (8.5%) responded sometimes and 47 (79.7%) teachers are regularly did not motivating and giving their students more chance to practice activities in the class regardless of their mistakes that can be improved through practice.

In addition, in item 7, 3 (5.1%) of the respondents' responded always, 7 (11.9%) usually, 37 (62.7%) responded sometimes and 12 (20.3%). Hence, this data showed that most of the teachers did not come to the class with having different teaching materials. For item 8, 5 (8.5%) of the respondents' responded always, 29 (49.2%) usually, 14

(23.7%) responded sometimes and 11 (18.6%). Therefore, this indicated that most of the respondents reported that learner centered approach not adds workload on their teachers and for themselves.

For item 9, 7 (11.9%) of the respondents' responded always, 12 (20.3%) usually, 38 (64.4%) responded sometimes and 2 (3.4%). So, as the responses depicted that the majority of the respondents replied that learner centered approach becomes interesting and it can be improved their academic performance.

For item 10, 48 (81.4%) of the respondents' responded always, 5 (8.5%) usually, 4 (6.8%) responded sometimes and 1 (1.7%). When EFL teachers carefully plan their lesson and organize their student's using learner centered approach; it become interesting and improve the students' academic performance.

For item 11, 35 (59.3%) of the respondents' responded always, 12 (20.4%) usually, 7 (11.9%) responded sometimes and 5 (8.5%). The contents of grade seven textbook always invite students to be participated actively.

The last item 12, 39 (66.1%) of the respondents' responded always, 8 (13.6%) usually, 11 (18.6%) responded sometimes and 1 (1.7%). Accordingly, most of the respondents responded that the number of students in the class is large. Therefore, teachers have a problem to implement learner centered approach due to large classes.

According to the respondents above, we can conclude that this finding almost is similar with the teachers' responses about the practice learner centered approach in EFL lessons. So, with regard to the learners' responses the researcher pointed out the following points.

- 1) Teachers did not help their students as possible as they could.
- 2) Learners did not practice learner-centered approach rather they learn the content by their teachers.
- 3) Teachers were not encouraging learning by doing for their students.
- 4) Teachers did not arrange different activities.
- 5) Teachers did not offer a chance for their students to practice the approach.
- 6) Learner centered was not implemented due to learners' lack of interest and large class size.

3.2.2. Challenges That Affect the Practice of Learner Centered Approach of Teaching and Learning in EFL Classes

Table 3. Analysis of students' response on the challenges that affect the practice of learner- centered approach in EFL classes.

No	Items	Scales								Total Number of Respondents	
		Most Serious		Serious		Undecided		Not Serious			
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
1	Teachers' tendency to use traditional or lecture method	36	61.01	12	20.3	6	10.2	5	8.5	59	100
2	Teachers' lack of skill about learner centered approach.	10	16.9	39	66.1	4	8.8	6	10.2	59	100
3	Teachers and students lack of interest towards learner centered approach.	11	18.6	33	55.9	9	15.3	6	10.2	59	100
4	Teachers and students' perception.	12	20.4	37	62.7	3	5.1	7	11.9	59	100
5	Shortage of time from educational office or Bureau.	10	16.9	39	66.1	8	13.6	2	3.4	59	100
6	Lack of support from educational office or Bureau.	2	3.4	7	11.9	9	15.3	41	69.5	59	100
7	Lack of instructional materials like text books, manuals, audio visuals etc.	11	18.6	4	6.8	5	8.5	39	66.1	59	100
8	Organization of text books (Grade seven English text books).	9	15.3	5	8.5	11	18.6	34	57.6	59	100
9	Poor class room condition such as nature of black board, atmosphere of the class etc.	7	11.9	38	64.4	8	13.6	6	10.2	59	100
10	Large class size	4	6.8	32	54.2	11	18.6	12	20.3	59	100
11	Diversity of students' interest.	4	6.8	5	8.5	8	13.6	42	71.2	59	100
12	Some students are dominated during group discussion.	10	16.9	37	62.7	3	5.1	9	15.3	59	100

In this table, there are twelve items presented for the students concerning the factors affecting the practice of the learner-centered approach in the EFL classrooms. The purpose of this items was in order to compare the data that was obtained from teachers with the students' responses which is given in the above table, about the factors affecting the implementation of learner centered approach that can affect the EFL classrooms. On this basis,

For item 1, 36 (61.01%) of the respondents determined that it was most serious and 12 (20.3%) responded serious. On the other hand, 6 (10.2%) it was not decided and 5 (8.5%) of them replied that it was not serious. In item 2, 10 (16.9%) and 39 (66.1%) of the respondents answered that serious and the most serious respectively. and 4 (8.8%) and 6 (10.2%) respondents answered undecided and not serious about teachers lack of skill to practice the learner centered approach respectively.

Item 3, 11 (18.6%), 33 (55.9%), 9 (15.3) and 6 (10.2%) of the respondents replied as serious, most serious, undecided and not serious respectively about the teachers and students lack of interest towards learner centered approach. Besides, for item 4, 12 (20.4%), 37 (62.7%), 3 (5.1%) and 7 (11.9%) of the respondents replied that most serious, serious, undecided and not serious about teachers' perception.

Besides, for item 5, 10 (16.9%), 39 (66.1%), 8 (13.6%) and 2 (3.4%) of the respondents replied that most serious, serious, undecided and not serious about shortage of time from educational office or Bureau was the most serious problem. Besides, for item 6, 2 (3.4%), 7 (11.9%), 9 (15.3%) and 41 (59%) of the respondents replied that most serious, serious, undecided and not serious about lack of support from educational office or Bureau respectively. So, according to this data lack of support from education bureau was not serious.

Besides, for item 7, 11 (18.6%), 4 (6.8%), 5 (8.5%) and 39 (66.1%) of the respondents replied that most serious, serious, undecided and not serious about lack of instructional materials like text books, manuals, audio visuals etc.

respectively.

Besides, for item 8, 9 (15.3%), 5 (8.5%), 11 (18.6%) and 34 (57.6%) of the respondents replied that most serious, serious, undecided and not serious about Organization of text books (Grade seven English text books) respectively. Besides, for item 9, 7 (11.9%), 38 (64.4%), 8 (13.6%) and 6 (10.2%) of the respondents replied that most serious, serious, undecided and not serious about Poor class room condition such as nature of black board, atmosphere of the class etc respectively.

Besides, for item 10, 4 (6.8%), 32 (54.2%), 11 (18.6%) and 12 (20.3%) of the respondents replied that most serious, serious, undecided and not serious about large class size respectively. So, large class size was the serious factors that affect the student-centered approaches of learning in EFL classroom. Item 11, 4 (6.8%), 5 (8.5%), 8 (13.6%) and 42 (71.2%) of the respondents replied that most serious, serious, undecided and not serious about diversity of students' interest respectively. This shows that diversity of students' interest in student-centered was not serious.

Item 12, 10 (16.9%), 37 (62.7%), 3 (5.1%) and 9 (15.3%) of the respondents replied that most serious, serious, undecided and not serious about some students are dominated during group discussion respectively. This data shows that some students were dominated during group discussion was the serious factors that affect student-centered learning approach.

Hence, based on the above examples, the researcher concluded that the major problems about the factors affecting the practice of the learner centered approach responded by the students as follows:

- 1) Most teachers have a tendency to use traditional methods/ lecture methods.
- 2) There is lack of interest to practice learner centered approach.
- 3) Large classroom size and poor classroom condition and another factor that affect learner centered approach.
- 4) Teachers and students have problems to implement

learner centered approach though they believe that it helped them.

- 5) Sometimes teachers have lack of skill how to implement the learner centered approach in their lessons due to lack of training. So, thus, those were the major problems that we understood from most of the respondents in both sides.

### 3.3. Observation Data Analysis and Interpretation

In order to strengthen the data obtained from the teachers' interview and students' questionnaire, class room observation

was conducted for further understanding. The factors affecting the practice of learner centered approach in the teaching learning process in the EFL classes. To this end, classroom observation was conducted based on the requirements of the classroom checklists and four EFL teachers were observed two times each section that means there were four section and observed two times each (4x2=8). Furthermore, the observation was conducted by the researcher. Therefore, the analysis and presentation of the observed cases obtained through the classroom observation was presented in the following table.

*Table 4. Classroom Observation Checklist Data Analysis and Interpretation.*

No	Items	Responses			
		Yes		No	
		No	%	No	%
1	The classroom has adequate number of chairs and desks for the students	2	25%	6	75%
2	There is enough space for all students so that the teacher freely moves and helps the students.	1	12.5%	7	87.5%
3	Classroom sitting arrangements are convenient to apply learner centered approach	3	37.5%	5	62.5%
4	The classroom size is appropriate or manageable to the teacher to implement learner- centered approach in teaching in the EFL classes.	2	25%	6	75%
5	The classroom atmosphere is attractive to apply learner centered approach in teaching in the EFL classes.	1	12.5%	7	87.5%
6	Teachers Arrange the students for different classroom activities.	3	37.5%	5	62.5%
7	Teachers give directions and procedures for students how to do their activities.	2	25%	6	75%
8	Teachers encourage students to participate actively in the lesson.	3	37.5%	5	62.5%
9	Teachers explain new ideas, words and concepts so as to realize more the students during lesson.	6	75%	2	25%
10	The teachers give time for students to reflect their activities.	3	37.5%	5	62.5%
11	Teachers motivate the students to practice confidently though there are mistakes to be improved.	2	25%	6	75%
12	Teachers using an exercise to elicit students' ideas, knowledge and skills	3	37.5%	5	62.5%
13	The students do some activities such as group work, pair work, etc.	4	50%	4	50%
14	The students take part or participate while the lesson is going on.	4	50%	4	50%
15	Male and Female students participate equally in the given activities.	2	25%	6	75%
16	The students take part in peer teaching, demonstration and presentation.	1	12.5%	7	87.5%
17	The students participate in questions and answer as part of learning activities.	2	25%	6	75%
18	The students feel happy and relaxed when the teachers ask them to do activities in pairs or group work.	5	62.5%	3	37.5%

As it is shown in the above table 4, the class room observation result shows that most of the activities expected to be practiced by the EFL teachers were not observed. For example, the observed class were not implemented the different instruction materials that to be expected to practice in learner centered classroom.

Therefore, this indicated that there are a lot of factors that hinder for EFL teachers that not to be practiced the approach. This was some of the factors that were observed in the classroom observation. Students' lack of interest to participate in the activities, large class size, poor classroom condition, and might be lack of training of teachers how to implement learner centered approach in the EFL class are some of the observed problems in the classroom situations.

### 3.4. Interview Data Analysis and Interpretation

As it was pointed out in the previous chapter, semi – structured questions were used in interview as methods of data collection. The researcher believed that interview enable to assess the breadth depth of the EFL teachers' perception and the students' knowledge and skills concerning the practice of learner centered approach. Furthermore, the

purpose of this interview was in order to cross check the results that obtained through the questionnaire and the observation.

Therefore, the interview was hold with four EFL teachers and nine students using a semi – structured interview schedule so as to address them to this. Hence, the interview focused on the major issues and the responses and discussions of the interview were presented below.

Analysis of EFL Teachers' Interview indicates that, all the EFL teachers expressed their views concerning the different teaching methods and their perceptions about learner centered approach of teaching in EFL classes. Based on their responses, most of the time four of the EFL teachers were used group work and pair work, but the most important teaching strategies such as discussion, peer teaching, presentation, role play were not applied in their classes.

Concerning, how do teachers and students practice student-centered approach in EFL classroom as follows:

- 1) It gave opportunities for learners to present the language.
- 2) It encouraged them to solve problems and took responsibilities on their own learning.

- 3) Developed their thinking skills.
- 4) Developed students' communication and social skills.
- 5) Promoted intrinsic motivation to learn themselves.

With regard to the learner centered approach, the teachers were asked to give their responses when they were frequently used learner centered approach in their teaching lesson. So, based on this, only two teachers replied that they were used learner centered approach in their lessons. The two EFL teachers were not employed. Despite they have positive perception about learner centered approach.

Concerning to the common learner centered approach strategies that teachers expected to employ. Most of the teachers replied that they did not employ these strategies except sometimes group work and pair work. Besides, when they give such activities to their students. Most of the interviewed teachers said that their students were not happy to take part in the given activities. For example: group work, presentation, etc. In addition to this, the outlook of teachers and students about learner centered approach, the teachers have some extent positive awareness but the students were highly limited towards the practice of learner centered approach.

With regard to the common challenges that hinder or affect the practice of learner centered approach were put forward by the EFL teachers.

- 1) Most teachers have tendency to use lecture method.
- 2) Students lack of interest and poor participation.
- 3) Students' poor English language background.
- 4) Due to some students and teachers' negative attitude towards the language are some of the constraints that limit the practice of learner centered approach in the English lesson classes.

However, EFL teachers made some suggestions to the way of practicing the learner centered approach and they were put their views as follows:

- 1) Teachers should take time to change their students' attitude towards learner centered approach before implementing it.
- 2) Teachers give advice and supplementary reading materials in order to support their students.
- 3) Teachers should take or attend training and workshops to improve their teaching methods. Some of the suggested ideas were given by the teachers while we conduct interview.

## **4. Summary, Conclusion and Recommendation**

### **4.1. Introduction**

This chapter tried to provide the summary, conclusions and recommendations of the study. In the first part, summary of the study and the major finding of the study are presented. In the second part conclusions of the fundamental findings and finally, some possible recommendations were put on the basis of the findings of the study.

### **4.2. Summary of the Study**

As it has been mentioned in the above chapters, the purpose of this study was to assess the practice and challenges of learner-centered approach in Mi'esso secondary school EFL classes in grade ten in focus.

### **4.3. Major Findings**

Based on the data obtained on how do teachers and student practice student-centered approach in EFL classroom, from the data collection instruments which were questionnaire, classroom observation and interview was indicated that most of the teachers were used teacher centered approach than learner centered approach. Moreover, most of the activities expected to practice in the actual classroom lessons were neglected, which means that the various learner centered approaches in learning strategies that suggested in the syllabus and teachers' guides were hardly practiced in English lessons. In other words, little or no attention was given by the EFL teachers to practice those teaching strategies such as discussion methods, peer works, presentation, role play, debating, etc. but question and answer and sometimes group works were dominating the practice in the EFL classes. In addition to this, the overall findings of this study showed that the major teaching and learning strategies were failed to practice in the EFL classes. And this assured that from both participants.

Based on the data analysis, the main challenges or factors that affect or hinder for both EFL teacher and students from practice of the learner centered approach in EFL classes expressed in various ways. Some of the ways were presented below: most of the participants assured that students lack of interest, lack of participation in the given activities, large classroom size and shortage of time were also another obstacle, poor classroom condition, students' poor English language background knowledge, and EFL teachers lack of training are given little attention from the school officials towards learner centered approach are some of the most common factors that affect the implementation of learner centered approach in EFL classes.

### **4.4. Conclusions**

From the overall findings of the study, the following conclusions were drawn.

1. Most teachers were often likely to implement teacher centered approach or too traditional with chalk and talk ways of language teaching style in EFL classes due to lack of awareness or interest of the student's concerning learner centered approach.

2. Teachers and students have lack of interest to implement learner centered approach in EFL classes. This was due to lack of commitment, training, large classroom size and poor class condition or atmosphere were some of the common problems which were affect the implementation of learner centered approach.

3. Learner centered approach was found to be very interesting for students because it gives more chances to

learners and it creates a democratic relationship between the teachers and students. However, most teachers and students were accustomed the traditional or the teachers centered approach. So, it needs strong effort to change English teachers' attitude in order to practice learner centered approach.

4. Most EFL teachers used only a few learning strategies that promote learner centered approach, such as group works, discussions, question and answer, brain storming. Therefore, this was clear evidence that almost all EFL teachers did not use the major learning strategies which were neglected in the language teaching classes.

#### 4.5. Recommendations

Solving those identified problems is not an issue left for an individual or a sector to fill the gap or to make smaller. It should be solved by all concerned bodies or stakeholders (the subject teachers, Education bureau at different levels, School directors (principals), learners, and other sectors working to assure quality education beginning from elementary to higher institutions are expected to play the role that they should play or contribute their unreserved contribution to reconcile the prevailing inconveniences. Accordingly, from the discussion given above and conclusions reached, the researcher forwards the following recommendations:

### For EFL Teachers

- 1) For effective practice of learner -centered approach in the EFL classes, teachers should perceive the importance of learner centered approach.
- 2) EFL classes but teachers should use and practice learner centered approach in their EFL classes.
- 3) Learner centered approach provides an opportunity for learners to acquire knowledge about the language, so EFL teachers should practice learner centered approach using various teaching aids in the EFL classes
- 4) The teachers and the woreda education office should support in order to create attractive condition to implement learner centered approach.
- 5) EFL teachers should continue to motivate, encourage, give attention for student-centered and support students' participation in the classroom.

### Students Should

- 1) Students should practice student-centered approach of learning in the classroom.
- 2) Students should participate actively in the classroom.

### Ministry of Education

- 1) Teachers' training is the most important to improve their skills and the training should focus on exposing teachers with a variety of teaching materials besides of the learner centered approach. So, to improve the teaching and learning process.

2) EFL teachers and other concerning official bodies or government authorities should play a noteworthy role in this regard in order to create awareness the importance of the importance of learner centered approach for language teaching.

3) As the result of the study, showed that the classroom condition was not attractive to practice learner centered approach due to some problems, such as large classroom size, sitting arrangement, and other related factors.

### For Other Researchers

Since the student-centered approach is not implemented in this study, then it is recommended for other researchers to undergo further research in studying the assessment of student-centered approaches of leaning in English language classroom. Finally, the researcher recommends other researcher to conduct further studies in different schools in related topics to make the study complete and to improve the practice of student-centered approaches of learning.

### Conflicts of Interest

There is no conflicts of interest.

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