# The Incorporation of Student Centered Instructional Approach in 'Communicative English Language Skills I' Training Module and Its Implications for Classroom Practice: Jimma College of Teacher Education in Focus

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## Abstract

The objective of the study was to explore the incorporation of the student-centered instructional approach in Communicative English Language Skills I' module and assess the classroom practice of the approach at Jimma College of Teachers Education. A pragmatic research paradigm with a mixed method approach was employed to apply variety of methods of data collection, namely, content analysis, questionnaire, and classroom observation. While content analysis was used to collect the data from the module (task analysis), the questionnaire and classroom observation checklist were used to collect the data from teacher/s classroom practice. The questionnaire was administered to 45 English language major pre-service teachers who were enrolled into a new degree program for the first time in the college in the 2022 academic year. Both the content analysis and the teacher's practice were measured against four parameters of the application of student centered instructional approach, namely alternative assessments, language skills integrated teaching approach, focus on meaning and learner autonomy. The study revealed that almost all the tasks found in the module very rarely reflect the approach. Moreover, the English language instructors very poorly practice the approach in teaching the course Communicative English Language Skills. Thus, it was concluded that teacher educators in Oromia Colleges of Teacher Education are still practicing the traditional language-centered approach at the expense of student-centered approach. Thus, the researchers recommend that instructors should consider the four parameters of the application of approach when designing tasks the candidates should become independent learners.

**Key Words**: student-centered, task analysis, practice.

## 1. Introduction

### 1.1. Background of the Study

The teaching and learning approaches, methods and techniques have been constantly

evolving to meet the alarmingly increasing demands of using English language (Kumaravadivelu, 2012; Brown, 2007a; Nunan, 2013; Kumaravadivelu, 2012; Al Humaidi et al., 2014). As a result, being dissatisfied with the traditional language centered language teaching methods, researchers and practitioner turned their face to learner-centered instructional approach (Kumaravadivelu, 2006, 2012). The rationale for implementing the approach was drawn from the work on adult learning, communicative language teaching and task based instruction (Nunan, 2013; Al Humaidi et al., 2014). In all cases, the approach considers individual students' differences and diverse needs and focuses equally on the learner and learning (Kumaravadivelu, 2006; Birhanu, 2019; An & Mindrila, 2020). It also provides opportunities for students to meaningfully learn and reflect on the instructional contents. Moreover, properly implemented learner-centered instructional approach can increase learners' motivation to learn, their deeper understanding and positive attitudes towards the target language (Birhanu, 2019). This simply implies that information about and from learners should form the point of departure for all aspects of planned, implemented and evaluated curriculum. The primary rule in implementing learner-centered instructional approach is to engage students in hands-on activities and group work and (Zohrabi et al., 2012). Thus, the choice of this approach cannot be made unless a great deal is researched. Since no scholar or researcher invented the best teaching method (Freeman, 2016), evaluating other aspects of the English language curriculum materials like a training module or learning tasks for their implementation from the perspective of the approach is also mandatory (Brown 2004; Renandya & Widodo, 2016). Besides, it is better to focus on research based generalizations about the approach that could be used as a basis for planning, delivering and evaluating classroom instructions (Freeman, 2016).

## 1.2. Context of the Study

The Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, which is located in the north-eastern part of Africa, (Eyasu, et al., 2017), is currently working on four educational goals: access, quality, relevance and equity (FDRE, MoE, 2022). Moreover, being

dissatisfied with the existing language-centered instructional approach, Ethiopia has already declared that student-centered instructional approach is a crucial strategy to apply to curb students/ problem of command of English experienced at all educational levels (FDRE MoE, 2022). To this end, very differently from the context in which *Communicative English Language Skills I* was prepared for university English language teaching as a common course, Oromia National Regional State Education Bureau facilitates the module development process for every course, Communicative English Language Skills I, case in point. The module on this course was developed by English language teacher educators from the primary colleges of teacher education in the 2022 academic year. The module on the course is delivered to all departments as a common course in the regional colleges.

The would-be teachers of all departments are recruited based on their interest in each discipline and are enrolled to a four-year-12+4 degree program that was declared to be implemented throughout the country since the 2022 academic year for the first time. Then, they are assigned to primary schools to teach grades one-to-eight grades after the termination of the program. In the 2022 academic year, only the pre-service teacher education program was being run based on concurrent training modality where all courses including the professional ones are delivered at the same time during trainees' stay in the colleges. Thus, it was in this context that the English language major pre-service teachers (only one section) were enrolled to the program in the same academic year. Although claims about the importance of implementing the learner-centered instructional approach have been made by the ministry of education in the Primary Teacher Education Curriculum Framework (EFDRE MoE, 2022), the process is facing many problems, to be discussed below.

## 1.3. Statement of the Problem

In Ethiopia, English is being used paradoxically as a foreign language because it is used only by a small minority of educated, economic and/or political elite in the country (Institute of International Education, 2012; Jha, 2013). The vast majority of pre-service English major teachers in the colleges of teacher education in the regional state do not possess sufficient English even to understand what they hear from their instructors or read in their textbooks, let alone to communicate actively in the target language (Jha, 2013; Birhanu, 2019; USAID/Ethiopia, 2010; Yiheyis &

Getachew, 2014). Hence, the state of English teaching is as critical as it used to be fifty years ago; however, the highest crisis is for English language college graduates (Institute of International Education, 2012). Most of the graduates request their school leaders to allow them to teach their mother tongue at the expense of English language (Yiheyis & Getachew, 2014). The experience of the authors also confirms this particular finding. These all put the researchers in doubt of the proper incorporation of the principles of the learner-centered instructional approach in Communicative Language Skills I course module and the classroom practice of the approach and motivated them to carry out the study.

Regarding these two areas of study, the empirical researches carried out globally and locally (see the discussion section) are inconsistent in their findings. This indicates that further study is needed. The current study is different from those global and local researches in many ways. First, none of these studies made their focus the teaching of 'Communicative English Language Skills' courses from the English language teaching aspect. Second, none of them measured the application of the approach in terms of the parameters aforementioned.

Finally, none of the local studies treated the learner-centered instructional approach at degree level that has begun in 2022 academic year for the first time in Ethiopia. To carry out the current study, the researchers formulated two research questions:

1. "How do the learning tasks in the module on the course 'Communicative English Language Skills I' reflect the student-centered instructional approach?"

2. "How is student-centered instructional approach practiced in communicative English language skills I classes in the college?"

## 1.4. Review Literature

### 1.4.1. Overview

The fundamental principles of language-centered pedagogy were drawn from structural linguistics and behavioral psychology that informed the theory of language, language learning and language teaching. The method was founded based on a narrowly defined objective of mastery of grammatical structures, a syllabus with preselected and presequenced items (Kumaravadivelu, 2006). Thus, the new challenge was teaching the language as a face-to-face communication between speakers and writer-to-reader

communication. (Kumaravadivelu, 2006) As a result, student-centered pedagogists came up with communicative language teaching that supposed to use the language system for normal communicative purposes (Kumaravadivelu, 2006; Nunan, 2013). The contemporary option to communicative language teaching has been learning-centered approach, the context in which opportunities are given to learners to participate in open-ended meaningful interaction and language development is more incidental than intentional (Kumaravadivelu, 2006).

However, this approach has faced many challenges. First, there are no objective criteria to determine the linguistic, communicative and cognitive difficulty of learning-oriented tasks (Kumaravadivelu, 2006). Moreover, pedagogists from this approach think that what is essential is the teacher talk rather than student talking. Thus, they have left many crucial questions unanswered. As a result, it is the student-centered instructional approach that is still working in global and national contexts (Kumaravadivelu, 2006).

### 1.4.2. The Concepts of Student-Centered Approach

The concept *student centered-instructional approach* is credited to Hayward and Dewey

(O'Sullivan, 2004; Nunan, 2013; An & Mindrila, 2020). It is a context in which teachers consider the needs of the students, both as a group and as individuals, and encourage them to participate in the learning process all the time (Birhanu, 2019). Then, it was expanded to the concept *client-centered* to refer to a shift in power from the expert teacher in a teacher-centered environment to the *student learner*. Other related concepts include *child-centered education*, *individualized instruction* and *individualization* (Nunan, 2013). Finally, individualization was replaced in the 1980s by the term *learner-centeredness*, which refers to the belief that attention to the nature of learners should be central to all aspects of language teaching, including planning, teaching, and evaluation. Student-centered approaches in English language teaching take also a number of forms although they are fundamentally similar in nature, that is, they all refer to *learning by doing* (Al Humaidi et al., 2014). However, student- centered methods remain basically linear and additive as its proponents believe in accumulated entities (Kumaravadivelu, 2006). In sum, the concept of *student-centered instructional approach* is that decisions about what will be taught, how it will be taught, when it will be taught, and

how it will be assessed will be made with reference to the learner (Nunan, 2013; McDonough et al., 2013).

### 1.4.3. Parameters of the Application of Student-Centered Instructional Approach

The introduction of the communicative language teaching paradigm necessitates the learners to take the central stage in the teaching-learning process as they interact with their peers while their teachers take the role of active facilitators (Farrell & Jacobs, 2010; Jacobs et al., 2016). This paradigm also necessitates the integration of eleven different parameters of the application of student-centered instructional approach with language pedagogy (Farrell & Jacobs, 2010; Jacobs et al., 2016). These include alternative assessments, language skills integrated teaching approach, focus on meaning, learner autonomy, students and teachers as co-learners, student-student interaction, curricular integration, diversity, thinking skills, learning climate and motivation. According to these authors, these parameters are not instructional approaches; they are rather what have to be practiced or the indicators of the application of the learner-centered instructional approach.

## 2. Methods

It was based on the pragmatic research paradigm with convergent parallel research design that the researchers carried out the study following several procedures. From 13 colleges of teacher education found in Oromia Regional State until the 2022 academic year (Jimma, Nekemte, Robe, Chiro, Fitche, Adola, Dembi Dollo, Assela, Bule Hora, Sebeta, Metu, Shambu and Yabelo), only the first three (Jimma, Nekemte and Robe) began to deliver the degree program for the first time since the academic year. From the three, Nekemte was not given the quota of English major would-be teachers, which were the focus of the study. From the two, Jimma College of Teacher Education was selected based on convenient sampling technique, two of the researchers had experience of teaching the target language in the college. All available English major pre-service teachers in the academic year (45 in number and assigned into one section for degree program) were censusly selected for the study so that they provide the data regarding the classroom practice of student-centered instructional approach. The second data source was the module on the course Communicative English Language Skills I. From 5 units that embody the module, the second unit was randomly selected for the task analysis since

the contents were presented into similar sections in each unit. To this end, the tasks presented in the module were evaluated based on the four parameters of the application of student-centered instructional approach (see the review literature). The researchers purposively selected and focused on the first four parameters to minimize the time constraints.

To collect the data, three methods of data collection were employed: content analysis, questionnaire and observation. First, the data collected via content analysis were used to see whether or not the tasks reflect the principles of student-centered instructional approach. The checklist was adapted from Nunan (2013), Nation and Macalister (2010) and McDonough et al., (2013) but pilot-tested by the researchers. Moreover, a coding manual was developed and given to two coders with explicit guidelines on how to categorize the language lessons into four corresponding student-centered instructional approach parameters. The coders were selected based on purposive sampling technique as they were supposed to apply student-centered instructional approach in teaching 'Communicative English Skills' and have experience in applying the approach. To determine how well the coding system works and to test the reliability,

inter-rater reliability test was carried out by calculating Cohen's Kappa using version 26 statistical package for social sciences. While the coders participated in the process for the sake of pilot-testing the tool, the whole task analysis process was carried out by the researchers. Moreover, the study involved all the available English major pre-service teachers from the college and this helped the researchers to generalize the findings. Second, 30 close ended questionnaire (3 open ones attached to them, teacher-made but piloted for its effectiveness) was used to collect the data on the teacher educators' classroom practice of the student-centered instructional approach. It was administered to the pre-service English major teachers in a face-to-face fashion by the researchers. Moreover, it was scaled on the basis of Likert system with a five-point-scale, ranging from 5 (always), 4 (usually), 3 (sometimes), 2 (rarely) and 1 (Never). Third, a non-participatory and semi-structured type of observation was used to collect the data from teacher's classroom practice where the pre-service teachers along with their instructor were observed during the application of the principles of the student-centered instructional approach. To facilitate this, observation checklist was prepared and responses to each item were recorded by

assigning 0 to the response 'No' and 1 to the response 'Yes'. While observing the classes, the researchers completed a frequency checklist to record the frequency of the activities practiced from the perspective of the four parameters of the application of the approach.

To maintain the validity and reliability of the instruments of data collection, many procedures were followed. First, to measure the effectiveness of the content analysis method, coding procedure and coder training steps were followed and the procedures were clarified in terms of coding instructions, a form of check lists and coding format. Second, in order to increase the reliability of the data collected via observation, four-week periods (3 credits per week * 4 weeks=12 periods) were consecutively observed in each period for fifty-minutes. Moreover, to back up recordings and remedy the limitations with the recordings, the researcher took notes. Still, the credibility of the study was maximized by using mixed-methods in which the researchers used the advantage of both the qualitative and quantitative data. Finally, while the content validity of the questionnaires was achieved by using literature review on student-centered instructional approach practices to develop each item, the pre-service teachers'

questionnaire was evaluated for face validity and content validity by the two experts who have experience in carrying out empirical researches and applying the approach in teaching English as a second/foreign language. Then, the final version of the tool was made ready before it was administered among the would-be teachers. To measure the reliability of the questionnaire, *Cronbach's alpha* test was run by using version 26 statistical package for social sciences.

Several procedures were also followed to collect the data. First, the tasks embodied the module on "Communicative English Language Skills I" were analyzed by the researchers. Second, the classroom dynamics during the practice was observed for 12 rounds (3 credit hours per week * 4 weeks =12 periods) and then recorded for the purpose of interpretation. Moreover, to back up recordings and remedy the limitations with recordings, the researchers also took some notes. The questionnaire was administered by the researchers in a face-to-face fashion to maximize the research validity and reliability.

The data gathered through qualitative methods (content analysis and observations) were analyzed textually; both the qualitative and quantitative data were analyzed in

separated manner but interpreted in an integrated way. Then, the findings were summarized thematically. To analyze the data gathered through the questionnaire, the data on the number of returns and non-returns of the questionnaires were presented in a table form with special attention to number of respondents and non-respondents. To this end, 32 out of 45 returned the questionnaire. This might have been the limitation of the study. Secondly, based on a five-point Likert scale, the mean values were calculated to analyze the raw data collected through the closed questionnaires. The mean value (the average point) was 3 (5+4+3+2+1/5) as a respondent may rate one of these points for a certain item. Moreover, a descriptive analysis, a method of data analysis used in the field of Financing and Business Administration (Zaidatol & Bagheri, 2009) was conducted as it indicates the level of a practice based on the response for each item and was analyzed by comparing the mean and score of each variable. The mean score below 3.39 was considered as low; the mean score from 3.40 up to 3.79 is considered as moderate and mean score above 3.8 is considered as high. However, if it is exactly 3, this might indicate uncertainty about the impact each factor had on the practice. Thirdly, items of

the close-questionnaire relating to the same topic heading were set together from the very beginning to contrast the responses of different respondents on a given issue. Finally, regarding ethical considerations, permission was obtained from the Jimma CTE via a clearance letter. Then, the pre-service teachers were told not to write their names to keep confidentiality. Regarding their privacy, the participants were guaranteed that the information they provide is kept confidential, and that their personal information would not be publicized without their will.

## 3. Results and Discussion

### 3.1. Results

The first research question was, "How do the learning tasks in the module on the course 'Communicative English Language Skills I' reflect the student centered instructional approach?" As observed from table 1 below, only 50% of the total responses indicated practice of alternative assessment, one of the parameter of the application of student-centered instruction approach. Surprisingly, only 3 out 11 activities showed that English language skills are taught in an integrated fashion. On the other hand, 14 out of the 22 responses showed moderate practice of focus on meaning; the rest aim at practicing the form

of the language. Fortunately, majority of the activities (8 of 11) reflect the student-centered approach from the perspective of learner autonomy. In sum, 47 out 88 responses showed that the approach is being practiced while 41 out of 88 responses indicated that the approach is not practiced, meaning that the tasks found in the module on the course "Communicative English Language Skills I' very poorly reflect the student centered instructional approach. The second research question was, "How is student centered instructional approach practiced in communicative English language skills I classes?" The responses to items 14-18 indicate very poor practice of alternative assessment (Table 2); the trainees are not clear with the assessment goals (item 14); no negotiation is made on assessment tasks (item 15); the trainees never plan on assessment tasks (item 16); variety of assessment techniques such as self-assessment, peer-assessment, etc. are not practiced (item 17) and feedback on each assessment task are very rarely provided on time (item 18). Moreover, the teacher educators were observed applying a series of formal tests at the expense of alternative or informal assessment. Similarly, the results of the preservice teachers' questionnaire indicated that alternative assessments are

very poorly practiced (see table 3 below). As observed from Table 2, only 4 out of 12 frequency tallies showed the attempt to focus on producing meaning in 'Communicative English Language Skills I' class. Nine out of the 12 observations indicated that the maximum time given for the periods was used for teacher educator's talking. This implies that the class was highly teacher centered. Again, eight out of 12 tallies indicated that the pre-service teachers attend form based lessons instead of meaning focused one. This finding was supported by the module content analysis (Table 1) and the data from the questionnaire (Table 3, items 4 & 5).

**Table 1: Results of the Module Content Analysis**

| Sample unit | Recording Units | Learner Autonomy | | | Focus on Meaning | | | Alternative Assessments | | | Language Skills Integration | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | **Yes** | **no** | **$^\sharp$T** | **yes** | **no** | **T** | **yes** | **no** | **T** | **yes** | **no** | **T** |
| UNIT TWO: STUDY SKILLS | A* 2.1.1 (pre-listening) | - | 2 | 2 | - | 2 | 2 | - | 2 | 2 | - | 2 | 2 |
| | A 2.1.2 (while-listening) | 2 | - | 2 | 2 | - | 2 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 2 | - | 2 |
| | A 2.1.3 (post-listening) | 2 | - | 2 | - | 2 | 2 | - | 2 | 2 | 2 | - | 2 |
| | A2.2.1 (talking about famous people) | - | 2 | 2 | - | 2 | 2 | - | 2 | 2 | - | 2 | 2 |
| | A 2.3.1 (grammar: simple past) | - | 2 | 2 | - | 2 | 2 | - | 2 | 2 | - | 2 | 2 |
| | A 2.4.1 (pre-reading) | 2 | - | 2 | 2 | - | 2 | 2 | - | 2 | - | 2 | 2 |
| | A 2.4.2 (while-reading) | - | 2 | 2 | 2 | - | 2 | | 2 | 2 | - | 2 | 2 |
| | A 2.4.3 (post-reading) | 2 | - | 2 | 2 | - | 2 | 2 | - | 2 | 2 | - | 2 |
| | A 2.5.1 (building vocabulary) | 2 | - | 2 | 2 | - | 2 | 2 | - | 2 | - | 2 | 2 |
| | A 2.5.2 (Reflections) | 2 | - | 2 | 2 | - | 2 | 2 | - | 2 | - | 2 | 2 |
| | A 2.5.3 (self- assessment) | 2 | - | 2 | 2 | - | 2 | 2 | - | 2 | - | 2 | 2 |
| | **Total** | **16** | **6** | **22** | **14** | **8** | **22** | **11** | **11** | **22** | **6** | **16** | **22** |

* Activity

$^\sharp$Total

**Table 2: Results of Classroom Observation**

| | | *$I_1$ | $I_2$ | $I_3$ | $I_4$ | $I_5$ | $I_6$ | $I_7$ | $I_8$ | $I_9$ | $I_{10}$ | $I_{11}$ | $I_{12}$ | $I_{13}$ | $I_{14}$ | $I_{15}$ | $I_{16}$ | $I_{17}$ | $I_{18}$ | $I_{19}$ | $I_{20}$ |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Day 1 | Yes | | yes | yes | | | | | yes | | | yes | | yes | | | | | | | yes |
| | No | no | | | No | no | no | No | | no | no | | no | | no | no | no | no | no | no | |
| | Yes | | | yes | | | | Yes | yes | | yes | yes | | | | | | | | | |
| Day 2 | | | Item | | | Mean | | ☼Std. | | | | | | | *N | | | | | | |
| | No | no | no | | No | no | no | | | no | | | no | no | no | no | no | no | no | no | no |
| Day 3 | Yes | | | yes | | | | | yes | | | | | yes | | | | | yes | yes | yes |
| | No | no | no | | No | no | no | No | | no | no | no | no | | no | no | no | no | | | |
| Day 4 | Yes | | | | | | | | | | yes | yes | | | | | | | yes | yes | yes |
| | No | no | no | no | No | no | no | No | no | no | | no | no | no | no | no | no | | | |
| Day 5 | Yes | | | | | | | Yes | | | yes | | | | | | | | | | |
| | No | no | no | no | No | no | no | | no | no | | no | no | no | no | no | no | no | no | no | no |
| Day 6 | Yes | | | | | | | Yes | yes | | yes | | | yes | | | | | | | |
| | No | no | no | no | No | no | no | | | no | | no | no | | no | no | no | no | no | no | no |
| Day 7 | Yes | | | | | | | | yes | yes | | yes | | yes | yes | | | | | | |
| | No | no | no | no | No | no | no | No | | | no | | no | | | no | no | no | no | no | no |
| Day 8 | Yes | yes | | | | yes | yes | Yes | yes | | yes | yes | | | yes | | | yes | yes | | yes |
| | No | | no | no | No | | | | | no | | | no | no | | no | no | | | no | |
| Day 9 | Yes | yes | yes | yes | | yes | yes | Yes | | | yes | yes | | yes | | yes | | yes | yes | yes | yes |
| | No | | | | No | | | | no | no | | | no | | no | | no | | | | |
| Day 10 | Yes | yes | | | | | | | yes | | | | yes | | yes | | yes | | | | |
| | No | | no | no | No | no | no | No | | no | no | no | | no | | no | | no | no | no | no |
| Day 11 | Yes | | yes | yes | | | yes | Yes | yes | | yes | yes | | | | | | yes | | yes | |
| | No | no | | | No | no | | | | no | | | no | no | no | no | no | no | | no | no |
| Day 12 | Yes | yes | | | | yes | | Yes | | yes | | | | yes | | yes | | | yes | | yes |
| | No | | no | no | No | | no | | no | | no | no | no | | no | | no | no | | no | |
| Total | Yes | 4 | 3 | 5 | 0 | 3 | 3 | 7 | 8 | 2 | 6 | 7 | 1 | 3 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 3 | 5 | 4 | 6 |
| | No | 8 | 9 | 7 | 12 | 9 | 9 | 5 | 4 | 10 | 6 | 5 | 11 | 9 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 9 | 7 | 8 | 6 |
| | T | 12 | 12 | 12 | 12 | 12 | 12 | 12 | 12 | 12 | 12 | 12 | 12 | 12 | 12 | 12 | 12 | 12 | 12 | 12 | 12 |

*Item

**Table 3: Results of Preservice Teachers' Questionnaire**

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Item 1 | 4.00 | 1.19 | 32 |
| Item 2 | 3.53 | 1.22 | 32 |
| Item 3 | 3.72 | 1.20 | 32 |
| Item 4 | 2.22 | 1.41 | 32 |
| Item 5 | 3.09 | 1.38 | 32 |
| Item 6 | 2.75 | 1.5 | 32 |
| Item 7 | 3.47 | 1.54 | 32 |
| Item 8 | 2.37 | 1.45 | 32 |
| Item 9 | 3.22 | 1.26 | 32 |
| Item 10 | 3.25 | 1.37 | 32 |
| Item 11 | 3.78 | 1.26 | 32 |
| Item 12 | 3.75 | 1.16 | 32 |
| Item 13 | 3.31 | 1.09 | 32 |
| Item 14 | 3.37 | 1.21 | 32 |
| Item 15 | 3.47 | 1.29 | 32 |
| Item 16 | 3.56 | 1.48 | 32 |
| Item 17 | 3.69 | 1.42 | 32 |
| Item 18 | 3.41 | 1.32 | 32 |
| Item 19 | 2.84 | 1.37 | 32 |
| Item 20 | 3.19 | 1.33 | 32 |
| Item 21 | 4.31 | .89 | 32 |
| Item 22 | 3.19 | 1.33 | 32 |
| Item 23 | 3.62 | 1.07 | 32 |
| Item 24 | 3.46 | 1.39 | 32 |
| Item 25 | 3.65 | 1.33 | 32 |
| Item 26 | 2.59 | 1.18 | 32 |
| Item 27 | 3.43 | 1.29 | 32 |
| Item 28 | 3.68 | 1.25 | 32 |
| Item 29 | 2.87 | 1.23 | 32 |
| Item 30 | 3.09 | 1.32 | 32 |

☼Standard Deviation

* Total Number

As table 2 shows, 75% of the tallies indicated that the teaching and assessment processes are not learner centered; the trainees are not autonomous in learning and assessing their work. This finding was confirmed by the data from module content analysis (Table 1, only 6 out of 22 responses) and the data from the trainees' questionnaire (Table 3, item 7& 8). As observed from table 2, 75 % of the tallies indicated that the teacher educators had difficulty of satisfying the preservice teachers' learning style.

## 3.2. Discussion

The empirical researches reviewed were concerned with the two research areas of the study: the incorporation of the learner-centered instructional approach into English language teaching materials and the classroom practice of the approach from the perspective of the four parameters of the implementation of the approach, namely, alternative assessment, language skills integrated teaching approach, focus on learning and learner autonomy. This section discusses the findings thermalizing them under each of the parameter and comparing them with that of the current study.

Regarding the first research area aforementioned, only Yohannes' (2015) studied grade 9 text book pertinent to the incorporation of the learner-centered instructional approach from the angle of the language skills integrated teaching approach (focus on tasks) in English language teaching materials development (as far as the researchers' knowledge concerned) and he found that this issue was well understood and practiced by material developers. This finding contradicts with the findings of the current study in that almost all tasks in the module under the focus of the study very rarely reflect the approach.

Regarding the practice of the approach, researchers came up with inconsistent finding. First, regarding the findings of the study from the perspective of alternative assessment, Baeten et al.(2008) focused on the relationships between experiences with portfolio assessment, students' approaches to learning and their assessment preferences using the student-centered procedures at secondary teacher education level. They pointed out that, in reality, surface learning (language-centered or teacher centered approach) increased significantly. This finding highly supports the findings of the current study (see the result section).

Second, regarding the implementation of the teaching approach from the angle of language skills integrated teaching approach, Desta and Getachew's (2015)

descriptive survey carried out on the implementation of ESL integrated skills teaching approach at primary teacher education (Diploma level) pointed out that the teacher educators were not capable enough both on the knowledge and the theoretical orientations and on the practical skills to implement language skills integration; they hardly taught the four language skills in integration using communicative activities. This and other studies support the current findings. Alemayehu (2008) who studied the application of ESL integrated-skills teaching pointed out that the teachers lacked the practical skills. Moreover, Hymanot (2015) pointed out that the teachers had positive attitudes towards language integrated skills teaching but they were impractical; they were seen integrating two skills only in rare case. Mebea (2008), who carried out a study at primary teacher education diploma program on continuous oral assessment in EFL classes focusing on the perceptions of teacher-educators and student-teachers also pointed out that the process is a neglected area of practice. Similarly, Yiheyis and Getachew (2014), who looked into continuous assessment in ESL classes at primary teacher education (diploma program) focusing on writing skills,

concluded that both teacher educators and pre-service teachers very poorly practice alternative assessment.

Third, from the perspective of *focus on meaning* parameter, Geisli (2009) conducted an experimental study to determine the effect of student-centered approaches on student teachers' success. The study indicated that learner-centered methods are more productive and motivating than language-centered ones. Similarly, Ahmed and Mahmood (2010) investigated the effects of a traditional instruction model and two cooperative learning models and confirmed that the practice of cooperative learning and interactive learning experience provoke meaning rather than focus on mere forms of the language. These results contradict with that of the present finding regarding the practice of this pillar of the application of student-centered approach. However, O'Sullivan (2004) who carried out a case study on the impact of learner-centered approaches on unqualified primary teachers in Namibia reported that the approach cannot be implemented because of very limited cultural factors. In the same vein, An & Mindrila (2020) explored the EFL teachers' beliefs, perceived practice and the actual classroom practice in relation to behaviorist teacher-centered and

constructivist learner-centered teaching in Turkey. The results revealed that although the teachers expressed constructivist, their perceived practice was mostly traditional or teacher-centered. These studies support the current findings regarding the practice of the approach.

Finally, regarding the practice of the learner-centered instructional approach from the parameter of learner autonomy, Atara, et al. (2000) examined the effectiveness of active learning through the use of several learning tasks implemented in two higher institutions and pointed out that the learning tasks do not provoke the development of independent learning skills as learners lack the ability to plan on their learning strategies. These findings highly support the current ones. In sum, the review of these empirical studies show that majority of them do not support the real practice of the approach which highly support the current findings.

## 4. Conclusions

The results of both the task analysis and teachers' classroom practice indicated that the student-centered instructional approach is very poorly practiced at Jimma College of Teacher Education. Based on these findings, the researchers concluded that it is the traditional language-centered instructional approach that is still practiced in Oromia Colleges of Teacher Education in 'Communicative English Language Skills' classes at the expense of the student centered instructional approach.

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