

Research Article

# Teaching-Learning Grammar via Cooperative Language Learning: Kombolcha Secondary School in Focus

Ashenafi Shimeles Shumiye\*

English Language and Literature Department, Oda Bultum University, Chiro, Ethiopia

## Abstract

This study is mainly concerned with the assessing challenges English teachers of Kombolcha Secondary School face in teaching grammar through cooperative language learning with particular reference to, grade 9. The data was gathered by four data gathering instruments questionnaire, interview, classroom observation, and text analysis. The data, which were obtained through a close-ended questionnaire, were analyzed and interpreted in the quantitative method, whereas the data which were gathered through interviews and classroom observation were interpreted and analyzed in the qualitative method. Finding shows that lack of student centeredness, lack of being facilitators, inappropriateness of CLL in grammar teaching were the major factors that hamper teaching grammar using Cooperative Language Learning. All concerned bodies including teachers, students, society, Ministry of Education, and others should facilitate a condition to prepare supplementary materials which provide detailed information about cooperative activities in addition to textbooks; support might be in the form of finance to prepare other

## Keywords

Grammar, Cooperative, Language, Learning, Teaching

## 1. Introduction

This chapter presents the background of the study, the statement of the problem, the objectives of the study, the research questions, the significance of the study, the scope of the study, the limitations of the study, and the organization of the research paper.

### 1.1. Background of the Study

Education experts now view effective instruction as more learner-centered than teacher-centered [1]. Cooperative language learning (CLL), as described by Atkins, J. Hailom et.al is one strategy for developing a learner-centered class-

room [2]. Additionally, learner-centered language classrooms allow students to advance their language proficiency while engaging with other students, as indicated by Students can improve their interpersonal skills, self-esteem, self-confidence, and other social skills during the engagement [2]. They can help them develop their social skills and optimistic outlook on learning.

One of the main tenets of cooperative learning in English as a foreign language instruction is educating students about grammatical ideas. Grammar instruction, thus, aids students in acquiring the abilities necessary for success in a variety of settings where English is spoken. The majority of students

\*Corresponding author: [ktwaass@gmail.com](mailto:ktwaass@gmail.com) (Ashenafi Shimeles Shumiye)

**Received:** 25 December 2023; **Accepted:** 8 January 2024; **Published:** 21 February 2024



who finished their secondary education and enrolled in tertiary education do not possess sufficient English language competency [3]. Learners of foreign languages commonly fall short of reaching an advanced level of communicative competence in the absence of grammar training [4]. This is supported by current study findings. Grammar must thus be taught in the language curriculum through cooperative exercises.

While linguistic information acquisition is a crucial component of language learning, traditional approaches to teaching second languages have focused primarily on this area. Teachers must, however, connect grammar instruction to meaning and application rather than focusing just on form. Language structure instruction ought to take place within the framework of a few fundamental cooperative language learning concepts [5]. The goal of teaching grammar is to use language that is as realistic as possible. Educators should present their students appropriate contexts and circumstances that would eventually motivate them to use the norms in interpersonal interactions. However, teaching grammar is a fundamental component of helping students become proficient communicators and enhance their communication abilities in second languages [4]. Therefore, in order to improve students' communication skills, grammar instruction should incorporate games, role-play, simulations, pair and group projects, information gaps, and problem-solving exercises [6].

## 1.2. Statement of the Problem

Cooperative language learning is now an accepted and highly recommended instructional procedure at all levels of education [1]. Cooperative learning in the language classroom especially in foreign language classrooms plays an important role in making students active and increasing their motivation and reduce their anxiety [2]. Stating the importance of cooperative learning, the same author writes that cooperative learning can foster learner growth in terms of academic achievement, personal growth, and the development of social and learning skills.

On the other hand, to get such a result, an appropriate curriculum that can provide quality education must be designed and implemented properly at all levels of education. Furthermore, the instructional materials must realize the method that encourages the active participation of students. The Education Policy highly encourages a paradigm shift from a teacher-centered to a student-centered approach. The student-centered approach leads to effective teaching and learning which promotes the development of students' critical thinking and engages them in the teaching-learning process actively and effectively. The quality of education is largely dependent on the type of instruction we use in the class. Therefore, we should pay proper attention to changing the strategy of old instruction and considerable efforts should be made to introduce new methods of instruction that make students to be problem solvers. Thus, the Ministry of Education

supports active learning methods during the teaching-learning process, however, many studies show that teachers and students fail to fit this method. Thus, what has been stated in the policy may not be implemented practically due to some reasons.

For instance, Brown, H.D. [1994], indicated that the level of utilization of active learning pedagogy was found very poor in some selected high schools in Ethiopia [7]. Moreover, Celce Murcia, M. [1991], has found out that traditional lecture methods dominated most of the observed classrooms in primary schools in Ethiopia [8]. Based on the above findings, the researcher assesses the challenges English teachers and students face in teaching and learning grammar. The researcher was motivated to conduct this study on grammar language learning, particularly because of the research gap in the area. In the past, research on the area of cooperative learning was mainly concerned with examining its practice [7]. However, as far as my reading is concerned little is researched about factors affecting teaching-learning grammar through Cooperative Language Learning. So, there is a gap that the researcher wants to fill.

## 1.3. Specific Objectives of This Article Are

To assess challenges English teachers of Kombolcha Secondary School face in teaching grammar through cooperative language learning

## 1.4. Significances of the Study

The researcher believes that this study may serve different purposes as its significance. It might be helpful for students to identify the major problems that hinder their English grammar competence in the class and out of the class. It might help teachers to apply various techniques in teaching grammar and create a communicative environment so that students would be active in and out of the classroom. It can also give some insights for professionals that develop language curricula and teaching materials in order to help students by including activities that entertain the use of cooperative grammar learning. It also can gain the attention of those who wish to develop curriculum and design ELT materials and teachers' training institutions so that they can use it as the preliminary source of information. Finally, it can give insights to individuals who have an interest to conduct research on related issues.

## 1.5. Scope of the Study

The study is mainly concerned with the assessing challenges English teachers of Kombolcha Secondary School face in teaching grammar through cooperative language learning with particular reference to, grade 9. The Cooperative Language Learning tasks treat all four skills and tasks in different grade levels. To study the issue thoroughly and effectively, the researcher chose only grade nine among the

different grade levels and feasible areas of sub-skill among others. Therefore, the data collection was limited to grade nine English teachers and students of Kombolcha Secondary School only.

## 2. Review of Related Literature

In this chapter, the researcher presented a historical overview of grammar teaching and basic concepts of grammar and second language teaching approaches. Additionally, grammar teaching methods and cooperative grammar teaching along with its guiding principles are also other issues considered in this chapter. Finally, the researcher looked into studies conducted on grammar teaching and grammar-related issues in the context of Ethiopian schools.

### 2.1. Basic Concepts of Grammar

All languages have their own grammar. It is a sound, structure, and meaning system of language. People who speak the same language are able to communicate since they instinctively share the grammar of the language. Students whose vernacular is English already recognize the grammar of English. Students in learning grammar know the sound of these words and different ways of putting words to make meaningful sentences [9]. "Grammar is the way in which words change themselves and group together to make sentences [10]."

Harmer further explains grammar is the description of the ways in which words can change their forms and can be combined into sentences in that language. This on the other hand points out all the elements in a sentence that attribute to its actual meaning. These include the two main parts of a sentence: noun phrase (NP) and verb phrase (VP). A noun phrase (NP) is further subdivided into a determiner (D) and a noun (N). A verb phrase (VP) is also further subdivided into a verb and another verb phrase (VP2) which constitutes a verb (V2) and a determiner (D2). These eventually get their correct order:

$S = NP + VP = D + N + V + D2 + N2$  active voice or

$S = D2 + N2 + be + V + by + D + N$  passive voice

Like in the sentences;

The Doctor treats the patients. (Active voice) or

NP VP

The patients are treated by the Doctor. (Passive voice)

D2 N2 be V D N

The grammar of a language informs what happens to

words, when they become plural or negative, what word orders are used when we make questions or join two clauses to make one sentence. Grammar is a system of rules of syntax that decides the order and patterns in which words are arranged together to make sentence [11].

However, some scholars argue that rules always may not be accurate. In other words, many rules are not really ruling at all but they are rather redundancies. Grammar tells us more than rules. In the first place, it makes the meaning clear. People use it to do certain functions like stating facts, introductions, accepting or declining invitation, asking for or giving directions, advising and so on [12]. It tells us the relationship between the participants and shows where the topic of the message. It is also a means of expressing time when the action took place through tenses and time words [13]. It informs us the mood such as certainty, obligation, or probability through helping verbs and whether the messages are statements or questions.

Grammar refers to the language patterns that indicate relationships among words in sentences. "Grammar is the way a language manipulates and combines words (or bits of words) so as to form longer units of meaning [14]." Grammar is not only the rule of how words can be combined in a sentence but also the different choices to be made in about which combinations to use for effective communication.

Grammar plays a significant role in supporting learners to acquire language and use it accurately. It is recognized that grammar instruction helps learners acquire the language more efficiently, but it incorporates grammar teaching-learning into the larger context of teaching students to use the language. In the teaching of grammar, students may need many opportunities to listen, read and practice a new structure before they internalize and produce it.

### 2.2. Benefits of Using Cooperative Learning in Grammar Teaching and Learning

In addition to what has been said about the concepts of CL, many potential benefits arise when CL is used in classroom instruction at different levels of grades. Researchers also have argued about the superiority and effectiveness of cooperative learning over competitive and individualistic learning on different grounds. This is true for all ages, and subject areas, and for tasks involving concept attainment, verbal problem solving, categorization, retention, memory, guessing, and predicting [15]. Some of the benefits of using CL that has been suggested by different scholars are presented as follows:

#### 2.2.1. Enhance Social Skill

In real life, people need to collaborate with others. In their families, in their jobs, and in their social lives, they need to be able to work with others to everyone's mutual benefit. However, schools have not done enough to prepare students for this purpose. Oftentimes, the students are conditioned to

compete with others and view others as enemies who obstruct their own success. Other pupils' failure increases one's own chances of success. In CL groups, the students can exercise their collective skills and practice working with others to achieve mutual benefits for everyone rather than thinking competitively and individualistically [16].

### 2.2.2. Individualization Base

In CL groups, there is the potential for the students to receive individual assistance from the teacher and their peers [17]. Help from peers increases both for the students being helped as well as for those giving the help. In other words, for the students being helped, the assistance from their peers enables them to move away from dependence on teachers and gain more opportunities to enhance their learning. For the students giving help, the CL groups serve as opportunities to increase their own performance [17]. "Placing students in small groups assists individualization for each group, being limited by its own capacities, determines its own appropriate level of working more precisely than can a class working in lockstep, with its larger numbers [18]."

### 2.2.3. Increase Participation

In CL students are an active learner who needs to construct knowledge by activating their own schemata [17]. When groups are used, the students receive much more chances to speak. First, there is an increase in the percentage of time when the students are talking instead of the teacher. Second, during the time for the students to talk, many of them are speaking at any one time.

### 2.2.4. Decrease Anxiety

Students often feel anxious to speak in front of the whole class. In contrast, there is less anxiety connected with speaking in the smaller group. When a student represents the group and reports to the whole class, he/she feels more support because the answer is not just from one student alone, but from the whole group [17]. "In group activities, the security of the student will be improved and each individual is not entirely on public display [19]."

### 2.2.5. Increase Motivation and Positive Attitude

As CL groups are interactive, the pace of communication becomes more student-centered than in traditional classrooms. In a traditional classroom, a teacher is bound to proceed too slowly for some students and too fast for others. In contrast, students adjust the pace of their communications in CL groups to the understanding level of their peers. They know if they go too fast, the team will suffer. Over time there develops considerable attention among team members to the understanding level of others [17]. Thus, in CL groups, the students can encourage and help one another. That is, the cooperative atmosphere of working in a small group may help them develop affective bonds among themselves. This,

in turn, greatly increases motivation and positive attitude towards their class.

### 2.2.6. Increase Self-Esteem and Self-Direction

One purpose of education is to enable students to become life-long learners, i.e. pupils who can think and learn without a teacher telling them what to do every minute. By shifting from dependence on teachers, cooperative group activities help the students become independent learners and form a community of learners among themselves [17]. At the same time, it has been claimed that using CL does not mean abandoning the teacher-fronted mode; it means combining various modes of learning. In addition, CL cannot solve all the problems that primary school students face. It gives students opportunities to learn from one another rather than receiving instruction from the teacher alone. Researchers suggest that CL provide benefit for teachers. CL helps classroom management and instruction [19].

From the perspective of second language teaching, Anwar, A. [2017] offers the following benefits of cooperative language learning [1]. These are:

1. Increase frequency and variety of second language practice through different types of interaction;
2. Possibility for development or use of language in ways that support cognitive development and increased language skills;
3. Opportunities to integrate language with content-based instruction;
4. Freedom for teachers to master new professional skills, particularly those emphasizing communication; and
5. Opportunities for students to act as resources for each other, thus assuming a more active role in their learning.

In spite of the various benefits of CL listed above, it possesses problems if it is not carefully managed. Many teachers believe that they are implementing CL when in fact they are missing the point and the scholars also added that cooperation is not:

1. Having students sit side by side at the same table and talk to each other as they do their individual assignment,
2. Having students do a task individually with instructions that the ones who finish first are to help the slower students (When this happens, group work will cultivate dependent learners rather than confidential learners), and
3. Assigning a report to a group where one student does all the work and others put their names on it [17].

Therefore, cooperation is much more than being physically near other students, and discussing material with other students, although each of these is important in CL.

## 3. Methodology

As mentioned in the preceding chapters, the main goal of

this study was to assess the challenges of teaching and learning grammar through cooperative language learning in Kombolcha Secondary School. This chapter deals with the research design, setting of the study, subjects of the study, sampling techniques, tools of data collection methods of data analysis, pilot test, and ethical considerations.

### 3.1. Research Design

It is rational to say this research is descriptive of its type hence the researcher believed that the design is appropriate to answer the research questions. Because the purpose of this study was to gain detailed information about factors that affect the teaching and learning of grammar cooperatively. The data was gathered by four data gathering instruments questionnaire, interview, classroom observation, and text analysis. The data, which were obtained through a close-ended questionnaire, were analyzed and interpreted in the quantitative method, whereas the data, which were gathered through interviews, classroom observation, and text analysis, were analyzed and interpreted in the qualitative method.

In this study, the researcher used simple random sampling techniques for selecting sample students. It was too difficult to incorporate the whole population of students in the study in terms of resources, money, and time. On the other hand, all the English teachers of grade nine were taken since their number was very small and manageable. It draws an equal chance to the number of students in a section that is prepared to be picked up by each student and then they have an equal chance to be selected. There were twelve (12) sections of students in grade nine. The total population of grade nine students was seven hundred twenty (720). On average there were sixty (60) students in each section. Out of seven hundred twenty (720) students, two hundred fifty-seven (257) students participated in the study. The researcher selected these participants by using Slovine's sample size determination formula.

Formula:

$$n = N/1 + N(e)^2$$

Where n: is sample size

N: total population

E: allowance of random error (0.05)

$$720/1 \times (0.05)^2 = 720 \times 0.0025 = 1.8 + 1 = 720/1.8 = 257$$

In this study, the researcher used different tools for data gathering. Four tools were employed for this study. First, a questionnaire was prepared for five teachers and two hundred fifty-seven (257) students. Classroom observation was conducted to assess the challenges teachers and students face in teaching and learning grammar using co-

operative language learning. Interview and text analysis were made.

### 3.2. Research Setting and Subject of Study

The study was conducted at Kombolcha Secondary School. The school is located in Eastern Harangue, Kombolcha Melkarafu, Kebele 02. It is 16 km away from Harar in the East direction. Kombolcha Secondary School was selected as a study site purposively because it is near the researcher's living area, and there was no similar research has been conducted in Kombolcha Secondary School. Both the teachers and the students of grade 9 at Kombolcha Secondary School were the target subjects of this study. Grade 9 English teachers and regular students of Kombolcha Secondary School were the main sources of relevant information for the study. The researcher selected grade nine students because grade ten students were in preparation for their national examination. At this time, teachers and students think only about national examinations.

## 4. Findings

This chapter presents the result which is found through questionnaire, interview, classroom observation and text analysis. The collected data was entered into SPSS version 20 software programmer for further processing and then data analysis was made quantitatively and qualitatively. The data which were gathered from teachers and students were discussed. The data which were gathered through close-ended questionnaire from students were analyzed through frequency, mean and percentage. The data which were gathered through interview, classroom observation, and text analysis were analyzed using descriptive method.

The analysis, interpretation, and discussion were responses of the majority of the population.

### 4.1. Challenges English Teachers Face in Teaching Grammar Using Cooperative Language Learning

In the following table, the data collected from the respondent teachers are presented based on the research objectives. Attempts were made to measure the challenges teachers encounter in teaching grammar via cooperative language learning. The respondents required to answer the questions by saying "strongly agree", "Agree", "undecided", "disagree", and "strongly disagree". The responses are scored in such a way that high response means good role and low response means poor role.

**Table 1.** Analysis of English teachers' responses on challenges they face in teaching grammar using cooperative language learning.

Items		Response in scale							Total	Mean
S. No		Freq. & %	5	4	3	2	1			
1	Cooperative learning is inappropriate for the subject you teach.	F	1	3	0	0	1	5	3.60	
		%	20.0	60.0			20.0	100		
2	There are too many students in your class to implement cooperative learning during grammar	F	3	2	0	0	0	5	4.6	
		%	60	40				100		
3	During doing activities in group the you doesn't move throughout the class and visit every teammate	F		1	1	3	-	5	2.60	
		%		20.0	20.0	60.0		100		
4	It is impossible to evaluate students fairly when using cooperative learning during grammar class	F	-	3	1	1	-	5	3.40	
		%		60	20	20		100		
5	You do not let them work in pair during teaching grammar.	F	-	2	-	2	1	5	2.60	
		%		40	-	40	20	100		
6	You doesn't tolerate (act as friendly) during feedback correction when teaching grammar	F	-	2	-	1	2	5	2.60	
		%		40		20	40	100		
7	Using cooperative language learning (CLL) wastes a lot of time to cover a single portion	F	1	3	-	-	1	5	3.60	
		%	20	60			20	100		
8	You doesn't facilitate teaching-learning process during grammar session	F		2	1	2	-	5	3.00	
		%		40	20	40		100		
Total mean									3.25	

Source: personal survey questionnaire, 2017/18

Item 1 in Table 1 above was designed to identify whether or not Kombolcha Secondary School English teachers perceive cooperative learning is inappropriate for the subject they teach, thus the challenge in teaching grammar via CLL is aimed to be inferred. As it is disclosed in the above Table 1 item 1 above the majority 3 (60%) of the selected Kombolcha Secondary School English teachers replied that cooperative learning is inappropriate for the subject they teach, while 1(20%) of the respondents articulated that CLL is suitable to teach grammar. Furthermore 1(20%) said "strongly disagree" to the proportion.

Regarding the challenges English teachers face in teaching grammar using CLL (see item 2, in Table 1), 100% of respondents at Kombolcha Secondary School replied that there are overcrowded students in their class to implement cooperative learning in grammar teaching. Based on the data, it can be said that Kombolcha Secondary School English teachers do accept the overcrowded of students in the classroom during teaching grammar using CLL. From this we can understand that the mean value of response is above 4. Thus, it indicates that the number of students considered as a challenge during teaching grammar.

Item 3 in table 1 above was designed to identify whether or not Kombolcha Secondary School English teachers apply during doing in group (pair), they do not move throughout the class and visit every teammate. Thereby the challenge in teaching grammar via CLL is aimed to be inferred. As it is disclosed in the above table 1 item 3 majority 3 (60%) of the selected Kombolcha Secondary School English teachers replied that during doing in group (pair), the teacher does move throughout the class and visit every teammate. While 1(20%) of the respondents articulated that during doing in group (pair), he/she doesn't move throughout the class and visit every teammate. Furthermore 1(20%) said "undecided" to the proportion. Based on the data, it can be said that Kombolcha Secondary School English teachers move throughout the class and visit every teammate during doing in group (pair). More than 60% Of respondents responsible to visit and checked their students during teaching grammar using CLL.

Item 4 in Table 1 above was designed to identify whether or not Kombolcha Secondary School English teachers evaluate students fairly when using cooperative learning during grammar class, thus the challenge in teaching grammar via CLL is aimed to be inferred. As it is disclosed in the above

table 1 item 4 majority 3 (60%) of the selected Kombolcha Secondary School English teachers replied that it is impossible to evaluate students fairly when using Cooperative Language Learning during grammar class. While 1(20%) of the respondents articulated that undecided. Furthermore 1(20%) said “disagree” to the proportion. Based on the data, it can be said that Kombolcha Secondary School English teachers replied that it is impossible to evaluate students fairly when using Cooperative Language Learning during grammar class. This tells us, the respondents’ responsibility on evaluating students fairly during teaching grammar using CLL is bad.

Item 5 in table 1 above designed to assess whether or not the teacher does not let students work in pair during teaching grammar using CLL. As it is disclosed in the above table, the majority of 3 (60%) of the selected Kombolcha Secondary School English teachers replied that the teacher let students work in pair during teaching grammar using CLL. Furthermore, 1(20%) do not have responsible to let students work cooperatively during teaching grammar using CLL. The responses, therefore, show that the majority of the responses believe in let students to work cooperatively during teaching grammar via CLL. This may create team spirit between students on teaching-learning process during grammar learning via CLL.

Item 6 in table 1 above was indicated that teachers’ tolerance during feedback correction on teaching grammar using CLL. Based the above table under item six, the majority of respondents 60% of the selected teachers replied that they tolerate (act as friendly) feedback correction during grammar teaching via CLL. Furthermore, 1(40%) do not have responsible for feedback correction during teaching grammar. Thus, the majority of teachers make teaching-learning grammar fun through acting friendly with their students.

As can be seen in the above table 1 item 7, the majority of respondents 4(80%) selected respondents answered using CLL during teaching grammar may waste a lot of time. However, 1(20%) of respondents do not support the proportion. Therefore, this statement tells us to teach grammar through CLL waste a lot of time.

Item 8 in table 1 above designed to know whether or not Kombolcha Secondary School English teachers have role of facilitator during teaching grammar using CLL. Thereby the challenge in teaching grammar via CLL is aimed to be inferred. As it is disclosed in the above table 1 item 8 majorities 3 (60%) of the selected Kombolcha Secondary School English teachers replied that teachers do facilitate teaching grammar through CLL. While 2(40%) of the respondents articulated that teachers do not facilitate teaching grammar via CLL. Based on the data, it can be said that Kombolcha Secondary School English teachers facilitate teaching grammar using CLL.

Generally, under table 1, attempts were made to identify challenges of Kombolcha Secondary School English teachers face during teaching grammar using CLL. The result concerning teachers’ challenges in teaching grammar indicates

that teachers were still reluctant to teach grammar via Cooperative Language Learning and emphasize on traditional teaching method than cooperative teaching. We can conclude that the teachers were not identifying their challenges properly to teach grammar through cooperative language learning. The researcher as tried to mention on chapter three, semi structured interview was held with four (4) English teachers.

Four leading questions were presented below for interview.

1. Do you know cooperative language learning and have you practiced it?
2. What kind of problem you have in terms of teaching grammar through cooperative language learning?
3. Have you ever participated any seminar on CLL? If yes how did you get it?
4. What would you suggest to make CLL method more effective in the future?

Attempts were made to find out the challenges of teacher encounter in teaching grammar using CLL.

T1 replied “*Since it is one of communicative language learning, I used it to teach my students*”. According to T1 response knows CLL and used to teach his students.

For the question of having problem during teaching grammar through cooperative language learning also

T1 answered “*when teach grammar through cooperative language learning, some students talking back and front, some of them are misbehaving in the classroom*”. This implies that students’ misbehaving and talking front and back in the classroom were affected the teaching-learning process negatively.

For the question have you ever participated on seminars on CLL? And how did you get it?

T1 answered “*By organizing the students in different group to share their idea freely and present their conclusion to the class*. We can conclude from the above idea, T1 was participated on seminar and took training about CLL.

Finally, the researcher asked for the question of what would you suggest for cooperative language learning is more effective in the future.

Almost 80% of teachers (4) replied that “*teacher should have an experience during teaching grammar via cooperative language learning. Students should have interesting during doing in pairs, teacher also have interesting when they apply cooperative method to teach grammar*”. From this anyone can conclude that teachers lack of experience, motivation, students’ lack of motivation were considered as a major challenge during teaching-learning process through Cooperative Language Learning.

For question number one the teacher asked the question of knowing cooperative language learning and practice it, T2 answered that “*somehow its practice*”. From this we can conclude that teacher two knows what does cooperative language means and he had positive feeling about it, but he used rarely to teach grammar.

Moreover, researcher asked the question of what is the problem during teaching grammar via cooperative language

learning.

T2 answered that *“the school location, the physical setup of the classroom, the shortage of time, the students’ lack of interest are the main problems in our school during teaching through cooperative language learning”*. From this one can conclude the school location, the physical setup of school, the shortage of time, and also students’ lack of motivation affected cooperative learning negatively.

For the question have you ever participated on seminars on CLL? And how did you get it?

T2 replied *“During cooperative learning all students try to participate on the lesson, sharing experience, and express their idea freely”*. This implies that “T2 also have an experience about CLL. This can help him to teach his students in good manner and share experience for the students.

Lastly, the researcher asked the teacher what would you suggest cooperative language learning is more effective in the future, T2 stated his answer as follows:

T2 *“teachers should believe in group learning, teachers should have an experience about cooperative language learning”*. This implies that in order to more successful in teaching grammar via cooperative language learning, teachers should believe in group learning and have an experience in cooperative language learning.

For the question number one for third teacher asked to know cooperative language learning and whether he practices it, T3 replied that *“yes I know and I practice it”*. Teacher three also know and apply cooperative language learning during teaching grammar.

Moreover, the researcher asked to know if there is problem during teaching grammar through cooperative language learning,

T3 answered. *“The major problem is students have not awareness about grammar”*. The researcher concludes that student’s negative attitude on grammar considered as a challenge during learning in group/pair

For the question have you ever participated on seminars on CLL? And how did you get it?

T3 said that *“yes I have participated. It was very excellent because it had given me a lot of knowledge regarding language”*. T3 also have an experience about CLL, and participated on it. Thus, the knowledge on cooperative learning is well enough to teach his students through CLL.

Lastly, the researcher asked the teacher to know what you would suggest to cooperative language learning is more effective in the future;

T3 replied. *“All English teachers should prepare themselves to teach grammar through cooperative language learning”*. This is implying that in order to come up with a good sounded learning, teachers should get ready to apply cooperative learning in teaching grammar. For the question asked to know about knowing cooperative language learning and whether he practice it or not.

T4 replied *“I used it to teach my students”*. Thus, teacher four is also known about cooperative learning and he practices it.

Moreover, the researcher asked to know the challenges/problems during teaching grammar via cooperative language learning,

T4 answered *“the numbers of students are overcrowded, chairs and tables are not comfortable and moveable, the scarcity of the time is also considered the major problems in our school environment”*. As can be seen on the above answer, the number of students in the classroom is very high and it’s difficult to teach students in pair/group. In addition to this, the researcher concludes that the scarcity of time, the discomfort ability of chairs and desks were hindering the teaching-learning grammar via cooperative language learning.

For the question have you ever participated on seminars on CLL? And how did you get it?

T4 replied *“I don’t participate on seminar”* this implies that teacher four didn’t participate on any seminars. This can indicate the role of teacher during teaching grammar via CLL is significantly limited. He didn’t have any idea about graduate seminar

Lastly the researcher asked the teacher what would you suggest to cooperative language learning is more effective in the future,

T4 replied *“the material should fulfill students’ need, teaching aid is also available in the school for both teachers and students”*. We can conclude from the above answer that in order to the teaching-learning process is more effective; the materials must fulfill students need. Teaching aid is also very important for teaching-learning process. This we generalize that the students disrespect of each other/misbehaving, school location, teachers’ lack of experience, students learning background and individual feeling are the major problems which facing during teaching grammar using Cooperative Language Learning.

#### 4.2. Classroom Observation Results of Challenges English Teachers Face in Teaching Grammar Using Cooperative Language Learning

The presentation and analysis of data collected through classroom observation is presented below. In order to see what is going on the class, observation was also conducted using the checklist prepared by the researcher which contains yes, and no. The following tables are the summary of classroom observation presented the challenges faced English teachers at Kombolcha Secondary School in six different sections in the same school.

**Table 2.** Classroom observation results on challenges English teachers face in teaching grammar using cooperative language learning.

Sr. No.		Response		
		Yes	No	Total
	Teachers' challenges and activities			
1	Teachers dominated during teaching-learning grammar via cooperative language learning	6	-	6
2	Teachers answer the questions in the target language during teaching grammar via cooperative language learning.	0	6	6
3	Teachers make competition among groups to motivate students by using cooperative language learning	0	6	6
4	The teacher applies competitive learning than cooperative one.	6	0	6
5	The teacher is a facilitator during teaching grammar via cooperative language learning	3	3	6
6	The teacher doesn't tolerate (act as friendly/guide students) during feedback correction	3	3	6
7	The teacher doesn't arrange students for learning-teaching grammar through CLL in groups	5	1	6
8	The teacher doesn't teach grammar contextually	2	4	6
9	The activities like role play, games, simulations, etc. are carried out during grammar class.	0	6	6

Source: own survey observation, 2017/8

As indicated in Table 2 above, out of all observation made, the teachers dominated teaching learning position in all class during teaching students to be autonomous learners. This implies that the teacher was applied traditional teaching method than modern one. This implies that teachers of Kombolcha Secondary School do not have an experience to apply contemporarily approaches to teach grammar via CLL. From this we can conclude that there is no student-centered learning rather teacher dominated.

For item two also most of the teacher answered the question in student's first language. Students also ask the question in their mother tongue. This can affect students' grammar competence negatively. There is no meaningful practice in target language. The teacher explained the questions in students' first language. They did not attempt to encourage students to practice their grammar competence in English. This can affect students' grammar competence negatively.

With regard making competition between groups to motivate students almost all of them didn't attempt it. This implies that students get unprovoked during learning grammar. Teacher also was not interested to arrange students and motivate every teammate.

During observation most of the teacher did not do this. Most of the time, the teacher applies competitive learning than cooperative learning. This is indicated that most of the teachers used traditional lecture method.

One of the important roles of teacher is facilitator but during observation some of them were not facilitator. On the other hand, some of the teachers tried to facilitate the teaching-learning process were others not. Teachers were not creating good condition of the teaching-learning environment

during teaching grammar using CLL.

In item six, in some classes the teachers tried to act as friendly with their students, in some classes the teachers didn't apply it. Acting as friendly can help teachers to run the teaching-learning process easily. While teachers tolerate the students during feedback correction, students also motivated to learning. This can create strong bond relationship between teachers and students during teaching-learning grammar via cooperative language learning.

During observation almost 80% of teachers didn't completely do this: most of the time the teacher teaches grammar in competitive way than organizing students in pairs/groups. Thus, the teachers were not raising their responsibility by organizing and arranging students in groups to work cooperatively.

Teaching grammar contextually is vital for students, but when the researcher observed during teaching grammar via cooperative language learning, almost all teachers didn't teach grammar contextually that teaching grammar in inductive method. The teacher wrote the formula of the tenses and gave examples. Based on the given example, students constructed their own sentences. This implies during teaching grammar, most of the teachers were not interested to teach grammar contextually via CLL.

The activity which is given by the teacher during observation was also doesn't includes game, role play common theme and jigsaw. In general, the result concerning teachers' role and activities indicates that teachers were still reluctant to teach grammar via Cooperative Language Learning and emphasize on traditional teaching method than cooperative teaching. We can conclude that the teachers were not identify

challenges faced them properly to teach grammar through cooperative language learning.

### 4.3. Discussion of Results

In this part, the data that had been gathered and analyzed were discussed under the theme of the research questions based on challenges of teaching-learning grammar using Cooperative Language Learning at Kombolcha Secondary School.

### 4.4. Responses on Challenges English Teachers Face in Teaching Grammar via Cooperative Language Learning

In this study, the findings show that under item 1 in [Table 1](#) was designed to identify whether or not Kombolcha Secondary School English teachers perceive cooperative learning is inappropriate for the subject they teach. Thus, the challenge in teaching grammar via CLL is aimed to be incidental. As it is disclosed in the [table 1](#) item 1 majority 3 (60%) of the selected Kombolcha Secondary School English teachers replied that cooperative learning is inappropriate for the subject they teach. While 1(20%) of the respondents articulated that CLL is to teach grammar. Furthermore 1(20%) said “strongly disagree” to the proportion. Based on the data, it can be said that Kombolcha Secondary School English teachers do not perceive CLL as an appropriate method to teach grammar. Despite, scholars suggest that students are able to improve their language skills while interacting with other learners in learner-centered language classrooms [19].

During interaction, students can enhance their social ability, self-confidence, self-esteem, and others that related with teaching-learning process [2]. They can foster their social skill, and positive attitude towards on education. So, students become autonomous learners when they are interacting with each other through cooperative language learning. Thus, the way how Kombolcha secondary school English teachers perceive of CLL is not matching to the scholars’ philosophy of language learning and thus considered as a challenge in teaching grammar via CLL.

Generally, under [Table 1](#), attempts were made to identify challenges of Kombolcha Secondary School English teachers face during teaching grammar using CLL. The result concerning teachers’ challenges in teaching grammar indicates that teachers were still reluctant to teach grammar via Cooperative Language Learning and emphasize on traditional teaching method than cooperative teaching. Finding shows that lack of student-centeredness, lack of being facilitators, inappropriateness of CLL in grammar teaching were the major factors that hamper teaching grammar using CLL. We can conclude that the teachers were not identifying their challenges properly to teach grammar through cooperative language learning.

Therefore, the study contradicts with scholars’ philosophy

of language learning: effective teaching has shifted from teacher-centered to learner-centered [1]. One of the ways of creating a learner-centered classroom is using cooperative language learning (CLL) [19]. This tells us, the way how Kombolcha secondary school English teachers teach grammar using CLL is affect negatively thus considered as a challenge in teaching grammar via CLL.

The interview data also showed that teachers were not convinced to teach grammar using CLL due to lack of adequate experience participation on seminar, shortage of materials that fulfill the requires of cooperative learning like audio, video cassette, etc. Despite: “Cooperative Learning Techniques (CLTs) refer practical classroom mechanisms teachers can use every day to help students learn any objectives, from basic skills to complex problem solving.” A variety of models and activities have emerged in the field of CL which are used both in schools and higher levels of education

In this study, the finding of observation showed that the students disrespect of each other/misbehaving, school location, teachers’ lack of experience on applying contemporary approaches, students learning background, large class size, lack of supplementary materials and individual feeling are the major problems which facing during teaching grammar using Cooperative Language Learning. The activities which are given by teacher do not game play, information gap, game, and role play etc. so, the study contradicted with the study of [3]. Grammar lessons should include games, role-play, and simulations, pair works, group works, information gap and problem-solving activities to enhance students’ communication [3].

Besides, [13] describe that it is more interesting for students to do grammar exercises in pair, orally or through writing, than doing alone. Pair work grants students the chance to use English meaningfully and naturally.

## 5. Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the researcher would like to forward the following recommendations for the improvement of teaching-learning grammar through cooperative language learning.

1. Appropriate support should be given to the concerned bodies including school administration, the Education Bureau of Kombolcha City, society, and the Ministry of Education.
2. Teachers should create awareness of the concepts about teaching grammar via cooperative language learning to students and how to convert these concepts into practice.
3. Needs to train teachers to teach grammar via cooperative language learning
4. Teachers should develop an efficient and effective mechanism to assess students’ autonomy rather than competition and follow up on their progress.
5. As the finding of the study revealed, the level of work-

ing together in Kombolcha Secondary School was not adequate. Thus, students should be able to create a team spirit that encourages working cooperatively. All the team members must have learned so that one or two students do not do all tasks.

6. All concerned bodies including teachers, students, society, Ministry of Education, and others should facilitate a condition to prepare supplementary materials which provide detailed information about cooperative activities in addition to textbooks; support might be in the form of finance to prepare other supportive materials.
7. The school principal in collaboration with the Ministry of Education should coordinate to invite experts in the field to share his/her experience of using cooperative learning during teaching-learning grammar and suggest alternative techniques in the absence of adequate teaching aids and supplementary materials.
8. Teachers should be responsible for his/her teaching grammar via cooperative learning.

## Conflicts of Interest

The author declares no conflicts of interest.

## References

- [1] Anwar, A. (2017). Factors Hindering the Implementation of Cooperative Learning in Secondary School of Harar Regional State, Ethiopia: *International Journal of Research and Review* Vol. 4.
- [2] Atkins, J. Hailom, B. and Nuru, M. (1995). *Skills Development: Methodology*. Addis Ababa: Addis Ababa University Press.
- [3] Bayat, O (2004). The Effects of Cooperative Learning Activities on Students' Attitude towards English Reading Course and Cooperative Learning. *MA Thesis*. Bilkent University.
- [4] Berhanu, G. (2000). A study of the Practice of Cooperative Learning in Grade 11: Group Work Organization in Focus. *MA Thesis*. Addis Ababa University.
- [5] Bayissa G. (2013). Exploring the Implementation of CLT In Teaching Grammar Skill at Fre-Hewot No 2 Secondary and Preparatory School. MA Thesis. Addis Ababa University.
- [6] Bloor, T. and Bloor, M (2004) *The Functional Analysis of English*. Arnold. Hadder: Headline Group.
- [7] Brown, H. D. (1994). *Principles of Foreign Language Teaching*: Cambridge University Press.
- [8] Celce Murcia, M. (1991). *Grammar Pedagogy in Second and Foreign Language Teaching*. TESOL Quarterly 25/3: 459-80.
- [9] Ellis, R. (1991). *Second Language Acquisition and Language Pedagogy*. Clevedon: Multilingual matters.
- [10] Freeman, D. L. (2000). *Techniques and Principals in Language Teaching*, New York: Oxford University Press.
- [11] Harmer, J. (1987). *Teaching and Learning Grammar*, London: Longman.
- [12] Johnson, D. W., Johnson, R. T., & Holubec, E. (1994). *The new circles of learning: Cooperation in the classroom and school*, Association for supervision and curriculum development.
- [13] Nunan, D. (2003). *Practical English Language Teaching*, New York: McGraw Hill.
- [14] Petrovitz, W. (1997) "The role of Context in the Presentation of Grammar." *ELT Journal* vol. 51/3.
- [15] Richards, J. and Rodgers, T. (2001). *Approaches and Methods in Language Teaching*: New York: Cambridge University Press.
- [16] Taye, A. (2013). An assessment of the Practice of the Implementation of Active Learning in Combined Army: *MA Thesis*: Addis Ababa University.
- [17] Ur, P. (1991). *A Course in Language Teaching*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- [18] Wondwosen, T. (2008). An Assessment of the Oral Group Lesson in "English for Ethiopia Grade Seven" in Promoting Cooperative Learning. *MA Thesis*. Addis Ababa University.
- [19] Yeabsira, K. (2015). Problems Affecting the Implementation of Cooperative Learning: *Primary School in Focus*. *MA Thesis*. Addis Ababa University.