

Assessing the Practices of One-to-Five Cooperative Language Learning of Grade 9 Students in EFL Speaking Classes

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Abstract: *The purpose of this study was to assess the practices of one-to-five cooperative language learning of grade 9 students in EFL speaking classes at three governmental general secondary schools in North Mecha Woreda. The data for the study were collected from 480 students and 16 EFL teachers of the school selected using simple random sampling and multistage sampling for the students and comprehensive sampling for the teachers. A descriptive survey method was employed and the data were gathered through questionnaire, observation and interview. The reliability of the questionnaires was tested by Cronbach's Alpha Test. The computed reliability of the questionnaires was 0.78 of students and 0.87 of teachers. The data obtained through qualitative and quantitative was organized and thematically categorized. The findings of the study revealed that teachers fail to facilitate, encourage, support and evaluate properly; students develop dependency and lack of interest to work in groups and were permanently grouped. Based on the implications of the findings, recommendation was made to language teachers, students, schools, Ministry of Education and concerned bodies. Finally, on the basis of the findings it was recommended that in order to improve the students' skill, the students ought to practice in one-to-five cooperative learning to develop their speaking skill in the target language by actively participating in the classroom speaking. On the top of this, teachers should also play their own role to improve the students' speaking skill by using one-to-five cooperative learning in EFL classroom.*

Keywords: One-to-five, Cooperative Learning, Active Learning, Focused Classes

Introduction

The teaching of English as a foreign language or a second language takes a significant place in many educational settings across the world. There is a general consensus among governments on the importance of English language as a medium instruction. In many countries, secondary schools' and universities' courses are taught in English. English is the main

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language of national communication and business. It is also one of the most important international languages (Barker and Westrup, 2000; Stern, 1983).

Effective teaching and learning requires the uses of different active learning methods to meet the demands of the students. Thus, cooperative learning has been taken as one of the active learning methods that are used to teach students in the student-centered approach (Bonwell & Eison, 1991). The literature offers a variety of definitions to cooperative learning but some features are common to all of them. Kessler (1992) stated for language learning contexts, cooperative learning is a within class grouping of students where groups learn together interactively while working on common tasks and projects. Cooperative learning is also broadly defined as an approach to organize classroom activities so that students are able to learn from and interact with one another as well as from the teacher and the world around them (Olsen & Kagan, 1992). In order to make small group work successful during the implementation of cooperative learning, a teacher has to make sure that five essential elements of cooperative learning are place in each lesson. Jonson, Jonson and Holubec (1993) explained the elements as positive interdependence, individual and group accountability, interpersonal and small- group skills, face to face promotive interaction and group processing. Slavin (1995) stated cooperative learning promotes academic achievement, social and personal development, and language learning. The cooperative group process especially can provide opportunities for frequent and extended interaction in the target language among students.

In Ethiopia, in line with the stipulation of the current education and training policy; active learning method or student- centered method, has come to practice since 1994 (MOE, 1994). Group work has been taken as one of the active learning methods. According to Johnson and Smith (1991), various names have been given to this group work like cooperative learning, collaborative learning, peer learning, study circles and team learning. Among these methods, cooperative learning by the name ‘cooperative learning’ is being used currently as a dominant teaching and learning method in Ethiopia schools from primary level to tertiary level. Here, ‘one- to-five’ refers to the number of students who participate in one group. And this means that one student who is possibly high achiever is selected as a group leader and the rest students are considered as the members of the group with their own responsibilities and participation. Hence, the total number of students is six. The present

researcher also thinks that this name can be acceptable from the notion of different scholars who have agreed about the number of students to form cooperative learning. For instance, Brown (1999) has put the maximum number of students in a group should be six. Moreover, the present researcher believes that it is not the name that matters but it should be the scientific basis behind the implementation of cooperative learning that plays a great role to the effective applicability of the method one-to-five cooperative language learning. Therefore, the present researcher believes that it is possible to say the name to organize the group and implement this one-to-five cooperative language learning by reviewing the literatures of cooperative learning. Richards and Rodgers (2001) explained cooperative organization and activities are central with communicative language teaching method. This means, cooperative learning shares many of the characteristics of communicative language teaching which promotes learning through communication in pairs or small groups. The recent teaching practices take learners and learning factors as the primary issues to address in teaching and learning.

It is inconceivably difficult to imagine what life would look like if people could not communicate verbally. Dakosuska (2005: 231) claims that speaking is now the most emphasized skill in the field of foreign language teaching, but unfortunately, it is also recognized as the most difficult one to develop in classroom conditions. In doing so, one-to-five cooperative language learning method is widely accepted method in EFL classroom during speaking skill. Nowadays, the new method that Ethiopian schools have subscribed to for classroom instruction is student-centered approach which needs active participation of learners, meaningful interaction among students and solving problems cooperatively for mutual benefit. Therefore, this paper aims to assess the practices of one-to-five cooperative language learning of grade 9 students in EFL focused classes during speaking skill at three governmental general secondary schools in North Mecha Woreda.

Statement of the Problem

The Ethiopian educational system has adopted communicative language teaching as a dominant instructional approach since the new educational and training policy was introduced. Over the same period, there have been two forms of scholarly moves in foreign language educational practice in this country. First, there were studies devoted to the assessment of their instructional processes and educational outcomes of this instructional approach (Yaye, 2000; Alemu, 2004; Animaw, 2010).

The results of these studies demonstrate that both the processes and outcomes of this instructional approach are unsatisfactory.

This evidence simultaneously prompted the continuous search for instructional models to improve the competence of learners in the target language. Particularly, it has become imperative to assess the role of instructional models that foster the target language competence through interaction of learners. One of such models that attract the researchers is cooperative language learning.

This instructional model is characterized by the use of small group so that students work together to maximize their own and each other's learning (Johnson & Johnson, 1989). Theoretically, it is founded on socio-cultural approaches to language learning. The idea underlying this theory is that language development is essentially a social process. These approaches view mind as distributed and learning as something inter-mental, embedded in social interaction. This means that individuals and environments mutually constitute one another and persons are not considered to be separable from the environments and interactions through which language development occurs (Ohta 2001; Hall & Verplaeste, 2000; Lantolf, 2000). Having this scientific base as its foundation, it is recognized as one of the active learning methods that encourages students to learn together by their own instead of always depending on their teacher. It has been implemented in secondary schools since 1994 in Ethiopia- when a new Educational and Training Policy was introduced.

Further, this instructional approach is widely used in our country's educational system in the name one-to-five cooperative language learning method. Here, 'one-to-five' shows the number of students in a group. A group is supposed to be formed from one group leader and five group members. This pattern of arrangement is meant to benefit the students and teachers. Moreover, educational administrators believe that it benefits foreign language teaching and learning. So, English language teachers are made to use them in the EFL classes. Currently, one-to-five cooperative language learning is being practiced in all school levels starting from primary level to tertiary level in our country since it is one of the active learning methods that can create different opportunities for the students to cooperate and to learn together.

Some local researches have also been conducted on cooperative learning and other related topics. For instance, the study which was conducted by G/Medihn (2011) has reported some of the problems related to cooperative learning like domination by some members of low English ability, and use of mother-tongue, misbehaviors and insufficient time. The focus of this one was on identifying the problems of cooperative learning while the purpose of the present study is to assess the whole practices of one-to-five cooperative language learning in speaking skill in three general secondary schools. Moreover, Birhanu (2001) conducted a research and his findings indicated that cooperative learning is not well practiced in the way that it should have been; nonetheless, teachers and students have positive outlook towards it. The present researcher believes that the present study is different because its focus is on the current group organization, especially in relation to the practices of one-to-five cooperative language learning during speaking skill. Dejen (2011) as cited in Dawit (2015) also conducted a research and his findings showed that cooperative learning has a direct influence to writing performance, gives opportunity to learners to practice writing in the classroom, enhances students' interaction, gives opportunities to write and rewrite before producing the final text and keeps students to communicate and to write their text. This study is different from the present research on account of the fact that it investigates the role of cooperative learning on writing skill but the present one focuses on its practice in EFL focused classes during speaking skill.

Above all, the aforementioned researchers did not study the practices of one-to-five cooperative language learning in speaking classes. Hence, to fill this gap, the present researcher wants to assess the practices of one-to-five cooperative language learning of grade 9 students in EFL focused classes during speaking skill at three general secondary schools in North Mecha Woreda.

Research Questions

This paper tries to answer the following key research questions:

1. To what extent is one-to-five cooperative language learning implemented in speaking classes?
2. How do students and teachers perceive the implementation of each component of CL in the current one-to-five cooperative learning teams in speaking classes?

Review of Related Literature

Educators put various definitions for cooperative learning. Johnson, Johnson and Holubec (1993) recognized that cooperative learning is the structured use of small groups in classroom to direct teaching and make learners benefit from each other's learning and they state:

Cooperative learning is a group learning activity organized so that learning is dependent on the socially structured exchange of information between learners in groups and in which each learner is held accountable for his other own learning and motivated to increase the learning of others (as cited in Richards & Rodgers, 2001, P.192).

Similarly, cooperative language learning has been defined as a teaching technique that brings students of different levels into small groups to work together towards a common goal (Slavin, 1995). Although students of different learning levels work on an assigned task together, each of them has an equal responsibility for the group's work (Strickland, Morrow & Pelovitz, (1991). Furthermore, cooperative language learning is defined by Kagan (1994) as a communal activity in which learning is carried out through the mutual exchange of information within this framework, knowledge as well as for facilitating the learning of other group members.

From the above definitions, one can understand that the core elements of the learning process students' interaction and their engagement are very crucial which are contradicted to the traditional lecture where students passively receive information from the teacher. Historically, the application of CL to classroom learning finds its root in the 1970s (Johnson & Johnson 1989, Kessler 1992). These days, cooperative learning is applied in almost all school content areas and increasingly in colleges and universities. In Ethiopia, before 1994, the learning process was being mainly held in lecture method, that is, it was dominantly a teacher centered method; however, a lot of active learning methods have been proposed to be used in all school levels since 1994. Among these active learning methods, cooperative learning is the one which is being implemented in secondary schools in EFL classes. Different individuals have stated a lot about the merits of cooperative learning method in the teaching learning process. Johnson and Johnson (1999) explained that cooperative learning is used as a strategy to develop healthy interaction skills, to promote success of the individual student, to group members and to form personal and professional relationship. Having understood this important active learning method, it is also being used in Ethiopia educational system by thinking that students learn together in the sense of

implementing the principles of cooperative learning. In the same way, students are grouped in to one- to-five group organization; considering that one group contains one group leader to five group members and finally the group contains six members.

Over the issue of teacher's interactional role in implementing cooperative language learning, Johnson explained that teachers play a very different role in the cooperative language learning classroom in contrast to the traditional classroom (Johnson et al. 1998). The fundamental change that the teacher should make is working as a facilitator which improves students in their learning, but it doesn't mean that he is too passive in the students' learning. Whereas, students' interactional role in implementing cooperative language learning Richards and Rodgers (2001) stated that learners should be aware and responsible for planning, monitoring and evaluating their own learning having in mind that learning is a process that requires students' direct and active integration of group works and participation in the activities. Moreover, students are expected to discuss the material to be learned in their group and encourage their partner to work hard so as to achieve a common goal.

Many researchers who have investigated the use of cooperative learning concentrate on positive outcomes, with few looking at the challenges and dilemmas teachers might face in using this approach. Randall (1999, p. 29) states that "so popular has cooperative learning become that its benefits may blind us to its drawbacks". Some of these drawbacks are curriculum coverage, large class size, loss of classroom control and noise, lack of experience with cooperative learning.

Methods

Design

In order to assess the practices of one-to-five cooperative language learning in EFL focused classes during speaking skill, the present researcher used descriptive survey research design to describe and interpret what an issue is because he has no control on the variables. To achieve the intended objectives, both qualitative and quantitative methods were employed as these methods enabled the researcher to develop insights into the basic practices of the study area.

Target population and Sampling Techniques

The main target group was both grade 9 English language teachers and students in three governmental general secondary Schools in North Mecha Woreda. According to the information obtained from students' record office from each school, a total of 1920 students and 16 EFL teachers were available. This area was intentionally chosen because the researcher has been working in Merawi Secondary School for the last ten years and this experience is hoped to enable him to get full cooperation from the participants. Since the number of students was unmanageable, multistage sampling techniques were used. There were a total of thirty-two sections of grade 9 in the selected schools, which were not manageable; fifteen sample students from each section were chosen using the lottery technique. Thus, 480 (25%) students of the total population and 16 (100%) EFL teachers were included in the study. Since the size of teachers was manageable, comprehensive sampling technique was employed. The study included all English language teachers found in the three schools as the participants of the study. However, students from these schools with equal proportion (i.e. 25%) of the students from each school were selected. Out of the 480 students who filled the questionnaire, six students were randomly chosen for the interview, giving equal proportion for each school. Similarly, out of the 16 teachers who were involved in the questionnaire, three were randomly selected for the observation and interview respectively.

Instruments

The researcher used three instruments: questionnaire, observation and interview in order to gather valid data which could help them to achieve the intended research objectives for both teachers and students.

Questionnaire

The questionnaires were filled by English language teachers and students who were the target population in the study. To do this, the present researcher used closed-ended questions and the questionnaire had two sections. In section one, the items had five-point scales which were ranged from (strongly agree, agree, undecided, disagree and strongly disagree) with values of 5 to 1 respectively in which the participants (teachers and students) responded to the given response options. In section two, the questionnaire were coded with statements on five-point Likert Scales ranging from 5 to 1 indicating (always, usually, sometimes, rarely and never) respectively for the teachers to respond the given questions accordingly. Teachers' questionnaire was written in English

language whereas students' questionnaire was prepared in Amharic language so as to make them understand easily. Regarding to this, twenty-one questions were prepared for teachers and twenty-three questions for students.

A pilot study was conducted before the main study to discover any methodological fault and weakness of the research design if any. Cohen et al. (2000) states the aim of the pilot study is to enhance the validity, reliability and practicality of the research. A descriptive survey design was used, but it was on a smaller scale than the main study. Hence, before the actual data collection process, the adapted questionnaire was piloted to the non-sample students of 48 students (10% of the actual sample size) to check the effectiveness of questionnaire and to make improvements. In the same way, the pilot study on teachers' questionnaire was conducted using 5 teachers at Brakat General Secondary School. Both the students' and teachers' questionnaire were piloted in another school because all of the participants from the three governmental general secondary schools were involved in the actual study. After the pilot study, improvements were made in the teachers' and students' questionnaire. The participants involved in the pilot study were not included in the sample during the administration of the final form of the questionnaire. In validating the two questionnaires, the following procedures were used. Before the actual data collection was started; the instruments were given to colleagues who had MED in TEFL at Merawi Preparatory School so as to get valuable comments and criticisms on the clarity and appropriateness of the items in answering the research questions. Based on the comments obtained, necessary modifications were made and given to the thesis advisor for further comments, criticisms and evaluation. The reliability of the questionnaires was tested by Cronbach's alpha method. The computed reliability of the questionnaires was 0.87 of teachers and 0.78 of students. Thus, the questionnaires were found reliable to collect data for the main study.

Classroom Observation

The classroom observation was conducted in order to check whether the teacher and students practiced one-to-five cooperative language learning method during speaking skill in EFL classroom while the actual lesson was going on. In doing so, checklist was developed and employed. The observation was conducted based on checklists which focused on classroom instructional activities or techniques employed by teachers, the role of teachers and students enrolled and instructional materials

employed in the teaching learning process. The checklist contained eight points with 'Yes' or 'No' answers. The classroom observations focused on classroom instructional activities or techniques employed by the teachers, the role teachers and students played in the teaching learning process and put a tick mark on the checklist. Thus, three sections were randomly selected from the total of thirty-two section of grade 9 students (one section from each school) and each session was scheduled for 42 minutes. The observation was conducted for six sessions all together; each of the three teachers was observed twice. In order to avoid personal bias that might occur to what was being observed; the observations were carried out by the researcher and one EFL teacher as a co-observer. To be consistent between observers at each observation, average result at a point was taken.

Interview

For the purpose of triangulating the data collected through questionnaire, the researcher designed five questions and conducted interviews with teachers and students. So as to come up with reasonable explanation and to enrich the study, semi- structured interview was conducted. Because this type of instrument helps the researcher to ask additional questions based on the responses of the interviewees. Therefore, the present researcher interviewed three teachers (one teacher from each selected school) and six students (two students from each school) by using simple random sampling techniques. Both interviews were conducted using a tape recorder.

Data Collection Procedures

Before the data collection activities took place, some important steps were undertaken to increase the reliability and validity of the instruments which were mentioned earlier. First, the instruments were selected in line with the practices of one-to-five cooperative language learning in EFL classes during speaking skills and adopted to improve their validity and reliability. All the instruments were dispatched to various experts to have their opinions. Then, they were revised and modified according to the experts' opinions. The questionnaire items were translated into Amharic and checked by language experts whether the items contained an equivalent meaning of the target language so that the respondents could understand them. Consequently, pilot-run was made. This was held with other school students that were not the part of the main study and that were selected through simple random sampling methods. Based on the pilot-run, detective items and irrelevant points were avoided. In addition,

ambiguous items and difficult wording were modified and simplified to suit the purpose of the study. In order to check the internal consistency of the items of the questionnaire, Cronbach's alpha test was employed. Next, the question was revised and prepared for distribution. Before distribution took place, the researcher gave a brief orientation for the participants how to fill the questionnaire. Meanwhile, the questionnaire was distributed and collected the following day. Then, classroom observation was held. During the observation, the researcher took note during classroom presentation. Finally, the interview was conducted for both teachers and students.

Method of Data Analysis

The data obtained from teachers and students through questionnaires, observation and interview were analyzed using descriptive analysis methods. Thus, the results of the study are reported using percentages and words obtained from the numerical values assigned. In order to analyze the data, both quantitative and qualitative techniques were used. This means that the data that were obtained from questionnaires and observation were analyzed and interpreted both quantitatively and qualitatively. Finally, the data from the interview was analyzed qualitatively.

Results and Discussion

In this section of the paper, an attempt is made to explain the result of the study with reference to the basic research questions formulated to guide the study. Hence, the following major themes which indicate the findings of this study are discussed: the extent to which EFL teachers in using one-to-five CLM, the roles that teachers and students take and the challenges in the implementation of one-to-five CLM.

Table 1: Students' Response

No	Sub-variables	M	SD
1	The Positive Interdependence	3.12	1.76
2	Individual Accountability	2.21	1.49
3	Face-to-face Promotive Interaction	3.31	1.82
4	Interpersonal and small Group Skills	3.75	1.94
S	Group Processing	2.93	1.71
	Average	3.06	1.74

Table 1 above presents the mean scores of students' responses to five groups of the questionnaire items referring the five components of cooperative learning. As shown in the table, the students rated their

perception about interpersonal and small group skills ($M=3.75$; $SD=1.94$) higher than any other component of CLM. Next to this, they rated Face-to-face Promotive Interaction, ($M=3.31$; $SD=1.82$) and positive interdependence ($M=3.12$; $SD=1.76$) higher than the mid-point of the five-point scale (3.00). The group processing element of CLM was rated ($M=2.93$; $SD=1.71$) a bit lower than the mid-point (3.00) of the scale, whereas the individual accountability element was rated ($M=2.21$; $SD=1.49$) much below the expected average score. What can be said in general is of course the data have demonstrated that the overall mean score calculated ($M=3.06$; $SD=1.74$) in a five-point Likert scale excelled the average score, 3.00, which means that the learners did not perceive their one-to-five CL experiences as much positively as the recommended level in the current educational practice.

Though the students rated the positive interdependence fairly positively as shown in Table 1, the data from the observations and interviews did not support this result. The classroom observation data revealed that many students were doing their tasks privately and they seemed not have assumed different roles and responsibilities in the group tasks. Some looked rather idle though they shared the same table with their mates. The interview also disclosed that some students were less interested in the group learning process.

Concerning individual accountability, the questionnaire data showed that this is the least rated component of CLM as shown in the table. This finding was corroborated by the interview data which disclosed that there are a lot of students who do not work in the sense of both individual and group accountability and the teachers do not also give equal chance for all students who work in a group to present the group's work due to shortage of time.

As shown in Table 1, the students perceived the face – to – face communication fairly positively; however, the data from the observations and interviews revealed the other way round. The observations disclosed that there were a lot of students who were not giving feedback and supporting each other in their one-to-five cooperative group. Almost all observed teachers did not give them chance to do so, either. There were a lot of students who did not take turns to express their ideas because the discussion was dominated by few students.

Furthermore, the findings from the students' questionnaire and interview revealed that one-to-five cooperative learning method created fertile ground to improve their communication skills and social skills; however, all students are not using it appropriately. Both the students and teachers in the interviews confirmed that one -to-five cooperative learning methods is also very important to develop student's social life and personal behavior especially for group leaders. They admitted that group members other than group leaders get little chance to speak but the group leaders always enjoy the chance to speak, communicate with each group members, to present the group's work and so on.

Even though the students' questionnaire data showed that the group processing element of CLM was rated ($M=2.93$; $SD= 1.71$) a bit lower than the mid-point (3.00) of the scale, the classroom observations and students' interviews did not confirm this finding. Almost all the interviewed students replied that they did not have any proper practice of evaluating or reflection on their group's function. One of them, said, "Our teacher sometimes asks the group leaders to evaluate the group's activity to identify those misbehaving or disruptive students during group discussion. Moreover, the teachers said that, despite their effort to encourage students to give feedback or comments on their own group work, they did not receive hardly any comment or feedback on use of one-to-five cooperative learning methods.

Both students and teachers were asked how they perceive the importance of and their roles in the practice of one-to-five group learning experiences. Their responses to the group items have been computed statistically and presented in Table 2 below.

Table 2: Perception about importance of and roles in one-to-five CLM

No	Sub-variables	Students (n= 471)		Teachers (n= 16)	
		Mean	S.D	Mean	SD
1	Importance of One-to-five CLM	3.50	1.87	4.45	0.91
2	Role in One-to-five CLM	3.40	1.84	4.12	1.97

Table 2 above shows the teachers believed about the importance of one-to-five cooperative learning method ($M=4.45$; $SD= 0.91$) better than the students did ($M=3.50$; $SD= 1.87$). The figures also indicate that the teachers believed that they discharged their role and responsibilities ($M=4.12$; $SD= 1.97$) better than the students did ($M=3.40$; $SD= 1.84$). in

one-to-five cooperative learning method. Despite this finding that teachers and students believed that one-to-five cooperative learning method is very useful, the collected data through the interview and observations revealed that they were not using it practically. One of the teachers described the situation as follows:

Not all students work in one-to-five CLM cooperatively, some are doing their private work during group's discussion, all students are not playing their own role in the group's task, and there are also few students who want to be successful alone. (Teacher 2)

Furthermore, the findings from both teachers' and students' interviews reflect that there are still some teachers who are not committed to using the method effectively and there are students who still resist not to work together because of different reasons, like shyness, being competitive and individualistic learners, domination of some high achiever students and less control of the teachers. For example, Teacher 3 also reported as follows:

Some teachers do not want to teach using one-to-five CLM. They do not train their students in the way that they get benefits from learning through this method, nor do they let their students share responsibilities and have equal participation.

The observation data also showed that students were not so actively engaged that they looked less responsible to work together and to be successful together.

Thus, students and teachers were not using one-to-five CL method properly in line with implementing positive independence. This is contrary to Johnson and Johnson's (1989) argument that the discipline using cooperative learning method should begin with structuring positive interdependence and each group member should have his/her own role and responsibility and be aware that that they sink or swim together based on their participation in the group work. Nevertheless, as can be seen from the data of this study, students and teachers do not implement this element effectively. Most of the students were observed sitting alone and becoming idle. This situation is likely to result in dependency among the group members. Johnson and Johnson (1989) argue that if students lack individual accountability, they also lack personal responsibility and group's success is unlikely to happen. Richard and Rodgers (2001) also stress that individual accountability and hard work result in strengthening the group's success

The finding of the study also indicated that the level of face-to-face communication was not that much satisfactory in giving feedback and supporting each other in their one-to-five cooperative group. However, the literature suggest that group interaction should be promoted among whole group members to contribute to each other's success, by giving effective help and assistance to one another, exchanging needed information, providing feedback to each other, encouraging shy students to assume different roles in the group like presenting the group's report.

The findings showed that the group processing element in the one-to-five CLM was not that much strong. This is just contrary to what is stated in the literature. For example, Johnson and Johnson (2003) emphasize that in group processing, cooperative groups need to describe what members actions are helpful and unhelpful and make decisions about what behaviors to continue or change. The data also showed that the teachers and students believed that one-to-five cooperative learning method was important and helpful to learn English language and that it would also create various opportunities to improve English language speaking skill; nonetheless, there were a significant number of students who had not understood the way how it should be practiced. The observations evidently showed that there were some students who were reluctant to work in their groups cooperatively by raising the reasons such as the lack of experience or exposure, and training, and less control of the teachers.

According to Terwel, Ashman and Gillies (2008), teachers should play a critical role in promoting interactions among students and cooperative learning provides opportunities for this interaction to be encouraged. Teachers induct students into ways of thinking and learning by helping them to express ideas, contest opposing positions, and reason logically, and in doing so, they are able to generate new ways of thinking. Besides, Larsen-Freeman (1986) said that a real teacher is the person who serves as guide and facilitator at the same time; he or she encourages students to be interdependent. Furthermore, teachers' role is more than teaching the language. They also teach cooperation. In addition, they are seen as useful tools of guidance who are always present to make cooperative learning a successful method to use in class, rather than are seen like judges who distribute grades. However, in this study most of the teachers reportedly did not play their own role in the right way, time and place to facilitate students' one-to-five cooperative group discussion by giving feedback, praising their best performance, giving time for their discussion, controlling the members' participations, motivating them to

use the target language during discussion, and giving chance to all group members for presentation.

The other point disclosed in the data was that students had to work with the same group members throughout the semester as they are assigned to the groups permanently. The students in their interviews also indicated that some students, especially the group leaders, work only for their own success and that anyone dissatisfied with the group leader could not leave the group and join another group. In line with this, the teachers mentioned in the interview that permanent grouping, immovable chairs and large class size are the major challenges in the implementation process. Eventually, based on the findings, it is deduced that although teachers and students have the experience in teaching and learning in one-to-five cooperative learning, the practice should be improved by minimizing the barriers explained from teachers and students in the analysis section.

Conclusions and recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following conclusions were drawn.

- 1) The degree of practicing it is found to be low by EFL teachers in the selected three governmental general secondary schools in North Mecha Woreda although teachers are currently urged to implement one-to-five cooperative learning due to the fact that they are not committed to use the method effectively.
- 2) Teachers do not also give equal chance for all students who work in a group to present the group's work. Then, this resulted in dependency among the group members. Some teachers do not also give feedback and comment about students' one-to-five cooperative group's discussion to do so.
- 3) The findings of the study reveal that there are a lot of students who do not work in sense of accountability. There are students who still resist not to work together because of different reasons like shyness, being competitive and individualistic learners, domination of some high achiever students and less control of the teachers.
- 4) The data showed that one-to-five cooperative learning method is very important to develop students' social life and personal behavior, especially for group leaders since they always get the

chance to communicate with each group members and present the group's work; however, they are not using it appropriately.

- 5) The classroom conditions: lack of enough space, large class size, fixed way of sitting arrangement, immovable furniture are also indicated as the major factors that affect negatively for the implementation of one-to-five cooperative language learning method.

It is difficult to attain the intended objectives and practices considering various factors that could affect in one way or other for implementing one-to-five cooperative learning method at any level. Based on the findings of the study, the researcher would like to forward the following recommendations for improvement of practicing one-to-five CLM in EFL classrooms at three selected Governmental General Secondary Schools in North Mecha Woreda.

- 1) In this study, there are some teachers who are not still committed to use one-to-five cooperative learning method appropriately. This impedes their implementation. Hence, the concerned bodies should refresh either pre-service or in-service training in these EFL teachers so that their use of one-to-five cooperative learning method will be improved.
- 2) The need for teachers with positive perception is unquestionable. However, in this study, teachers had a negative perception due to different factors. Therefore, the concerned bodies ought to make discussion with these teachers to avoid barriers.
- 3) Students should avoid dependency rather they are expected to work cooperatively. .
- 4) Teachers ought to reshuffle the group now and then after every activity. By doing so, they can create a new atmosphere that helps to capture the attention of the students in the implementation of one-to-five cooperative language learning method.
- 5) Problems related to classroom conditions: large class size, immovable furniture, lack of enough space and related problems should be give solutions by the concerned bodies.

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