



Full Length Research Paper

Teachers' Perceptions on Communicative Grammar Testing and Test Item Alignment with Communicative Language Testing Principles in Selected Secondary Schools of North Shewa Zone, Oromia, Ethiopia

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Abstract

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ysis.

This study aimed to investigate teachers' perceptions of Communicative Grammar Testing and the extent to which test items reflect Communicative Language Testing principles. To achieve the study's objective, a descriptive research design with mixed-method approaches aligned with the pragmatist paradigm was employed. Questionnaires were used as the research instruments for the 74 Grade Ten English teachers in the 15 purposively selected secondary schools. Interviews were also conducted among 10 conveniently selected respondents. In addition, test item analysis was carried out to evaluate the communicativeness of grammar Testing. Quantitative data were analyzed through descriptive quantitative analysis using frequencies and percentages calculated through the SPSS version 27 program. The data collected through interviews were narratively analyzed. The findings of the study revealed that teachers have overall favorable perceptions of the Communicative Grammar Testing approach since they understand its value in the development of the students' communicative competencies. However, the analysis of the items prepared for the test revealed partial implementation of the approach. Accurate and relevant challenges were identified, such as limited usage of context-based grammar tests, limited imaginative and flexible approaches, and limited focus on critical thinking and learner autonomy. The persistence of traditional rote memorization methods, for example, was identified as being potentially limiting for students' ability to apply grammatical rules to communicative situations. The study also recommends that schools provide professional development courses focusing on communicative grammar tests, context-based grammar tests, and flexible tests, along with critical thinking and learner autonomy, for students' best grammatical abilities.

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1. Introduction

Communicative language testing has become an important area of research in the education of the English language due to its relevance with regard to the opinions of teachers and the relevance of the assessments in terms of communicative ten-

ets. This is because assessment makes up an integral part of the processes of teaching and learning, as teachers spend much time on teaching and learning in terms of purposes and goals beyond simple assessment and scoring practices (Zulaiha *et al.*, 2020). In the context of teaching and learning in EFL settings in Ethiopia, there exists ten-

sion between old practices of language assessment in exams, which put emphasis on discrete grammar items in language examinations, and new practices of communicative language assessment in terms of actual language use.

Moreover, the degree of alignment between the practices of evaluation and the Communicative Language Teaching philosophy equally influences some pivotal aspects of education, for instance, the validity of testing, the quality of teaching, the curriculum's effectiveness, as well as the communicative competency of learners (Rothinam *et al.*, 2024). For instance, where evaluation is done authentically by embracing CLT philosophy through tasks that are context-driven, for example, role plays, tasks that involve answering in line with a variety of scenario requirements, as well as graded exercises that relate grammatically in an integrative manner in a way that they are similar to those in actual language use, there is an improvement in the learners' ability to use language fluently.

Furthermore, the quality of teaching is undermined by the mismatch between teachers' positive attitudes towards communicative grammar and what happens in the classroom. Holandiyah *et al.* (2021) proved that when teachers perceive grammar as an integral part of communication skills, they provide quality teaching by means of dynamic activity-oriented approaches such as role-playing activities, contextual tasks, and other engaging means of delivery. On the other hand, in a preparatory school in Ethiopia, there are strong examination pressures that result in a great disparity between what the teachers articulate in classrooms, claiming alignment with contextualized communicative approaches for teaching grammar, as compared to the focus on discrete grammatical details by means of rote learning (Tadegew, 2024).

Ultimately, learners' communicative competence, the end state of English language education, significantly decreases if the approaches of language assessments are not supportive of Communicative Language Teaching approaches. The

association of Communicative Language Teaching approaches was confirmed by Rothinam *et al.* (2024) to significantly enhance these aspects by providing authentic language use in interaction; even so, this positive association will be possible if the assessments are in line with these goals, not opposing them with single grammar exercises.

Moreover, Gurmesa *et al.* (2022) noted that the practices of teachers in assessing students rarely match the beliefs they hold, as the former is dominated by summative practices. This is because teachers may believe in the use of formative practices for ongoing feedback, which is in line with the CLT approach of improvement. However, the dominant use of end-of-unit exams for grading discourages risk-taking in communication and focuses more on the quantification of students' proficiency than the whole picture, which is common in high-stakes testing contexts such as Ethiopia's national exams.

Even though EFL instructors from Ethiopia support CLT tenets and show positive perceptions concerning the incorporation of grammar into communication, they display a paradoxical situational context, as they mostly prefer test-oriented grammar activities instead of communication activities despite diverse challenging situations that arise, which include large-class instruction, a lack of educational resources such as obsolete textbooks, insufficient use of multimedia facilities, a lack of students' interest due to unfamiliarity with communication activities, and background test pressures that dominate priorities (Daba *et al.*, 2022).

Furthermore, Tewachew *et al.* (2024) also demonstrated that EFL instructors do not get proper training in test design, and they skip critical steps in test design, including needs analysis, item writing, and validation, to design tests that are heavily grammar-focused with no critical thinking or problem-solving components, thus failing to incorporate models like Bloom's taxonomy. This taxonomy, which defines six levels of cognitive complexity from simple recall to more complex analysis and creation, is never utilized by these instructors, who design tests that are at

lower levels of complexity, emphasizing drilling over interaction. Such tests not only fail to reflect CLT but also do not allow students to interact with grammar, thus promoting outdated methodologies in resource-scarce Ethiopia.

The application of communicative language testing represents an important domain for study in English language learning, in terms of teachers' attitudes and harmony between language testing and communicative approaches. The current study focuses on teachers' perceptions of communicative grammar testing and checking if the test items align with Communicative Language Testing Principles in the selected secondary schools of North Shewa Zone, Oromia, Ethiopia.

2. Materials and Methods

2.1 Research Design

Pragmatism refers to a research paradigm in which emphasis is going to be given to problem-solving and methodology rather than the philosophical underpinnings or assumptions that have to be fulfilled in the other models and theories (Shah *et al.*, 2018). In this context, the research study selected the pragmatism research paradigm since it emphasizes or highlights the result rather than perspectives. Therefore, it is the most appropriate approach considering the perceptions of the teachers in connection with the testing of the communicative grammar. Moreover, the pragmatism research paradigm offers the creation of findings that are applicable and meaningful in theory and practice since it consists of both objective facts and personal experience.

Similarly, the descriptive research design was used to present the systematic description of the situation that is being investigated or examined. The descriptive research design is usually used to examine the description of the distribution of the variables as they naturally occur and without the intention to establish any relationship concerning causality. This research design was significant in investigating the perception and practices among teachers in relation to the testing of communicative grammar owing to the existence of the opportunity.

Moreover, the research was also based on different research methodologies to gain a detailed insight into the research issue. Mix research methodologies involve carrying out both quantitative and qualitative research methodologies in one research to gain insight into some of the complexities involved in education research (Oranga *et al.*, 2025). The research was based on quantitative research methodology that included questionnaires, item analyses, and tests to gather facts about some trends, patterns of behavior, or some specific behaviors in relation to certain issues or phenomena. At the same time, the research was generating non-textual research data that involved some facts or pieces of information gathered by carrying out some in-depth interview with people on some specific issues or phenomena about communicative grammar test implementation and some factors that influenced the implementation of the test.

2.2. Sampling Techniques and Sample Size

For this research, using the purposeful sampling method, schools were chosen for this particular research purpose. However, under this method of purposeful sampling, 15 secondary schools were chosen from the total of 52 schools located within the North Shewa Zone. The most important reason why this method was chosen for selecting the required samples was to identify schools capable of providing detailed and relevant information about the chosen area of research. Thereby, the researchers were also able to overcome time and cost factors by using this method of purposeful sampling.

To provide for the needs of the targeted population of interest across the targeted schools, a rigorous approach for selecting samples for the study was employed by the researcher for the purpose of providing to all 74 English Grade Ten Teachers across the quantitative part of this study. It was considered to be a good approach because it was anticipated that their number would fall within manageable proportions, thereby giving a clear illustration of the intended concept without the impression of any sampling bias.

In the case of the qualitative research, convenience sampling was employed in finding ten teachers who teach Grade Ten English. There were valid reasons for the use of convenience sampling, and these reasons are as follows: the need for teachers' availability, willingness, and flexibility in conducting the research process. The use of convenience sampling, in this context, was advantageous in that it enabled the research process to gain the following: the benefit of timely data gathering, which in turn enabled the research process to gain profound insights pertaining to the experiences encountered.

On the whole, different sampling techniques have been employed based on deliberate choice, keeping in view striking a balance based on the width and depth of exploration involved in the research. To sum it up, though comprehensive sampling was employed to enhance generalization, ensuring more representation and validity in arriving at findings, convenience sampling also contributed towards achieving validity in arriving at distinct and context-driven findings in the context of qualitative exploration. Furthermore, it could be said that such specific research acquired validity so as to explore both nuanced and concrete realities about classrooms, bringing into context communicative assessment in grammar within schools and broader trends of teaching strategies observed within such schools mentioned above.

2.3. Data Collection Instruments

In this study, the researcher applied three tools for collecting data regarding the usage of practices for communicative grammar tests. The researcher first introduced a closed-ended questionnaire, where there were 25 questions for collecting the perceptions, notions, and attitudes of the teachers regarding the application of communicative grammar tests for classroom assessments. With these questions, it was possible for the researcher to collect measurable information, depicting the tendencies of the teachers.

The researcher utilized a test item analysis checklist that was composed of 15 items in a bid to

scrutinize other grammar test items existing and determining their alignment to some communicative language testing concepts like meaning-focused usage, contextualization, authenticity, learner focus, and process focus. Lastly, a semi-structured interview guide that had six items was utilized in the study in a bid to collect in-depth information concerning teachers' experiences and perspectives regarding interactions and approaches involving communicative grammar testing. The tools utilized in this study enabled triangulation to take place and hence added richness to the findings as a result of combining both qualitative and quantitative findings.

2.4. Data Analysis

The data collected based on the three research instruments were analyzed both qualitatively and quantitatively, following the aim of the study. To begin with, the data derived from the closed-ended questionnaires was coded, entered, and analyzed descriptively. Frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations were calculated based on teachers' views on implementing communicative grammar testing, with the aim of summarizing the responses. In certain instances, the findings had to be presented in the form of tables to ensure proper understanding.

The quantitative study segment used descriptive statistics to examine the data from 25 Likert scales of surveyed responses, which were coded numerically and processed using SPSS software version 27 for efficient data management and, potentially, further sophisticated statistical calculations. This helped to derive quantified knowledge about the opinions of teachers on a large scale.

Quantitative data analysis of data collected from the test item analysis checklist was achieved through counting and determining the frequency and percentage of data. Moreover, each of the test items in the test was validated against the communicative language testing principles, with the level of alignment determined through the aggregated scores derived from the test item analysis checklist. The results, accordingly, indicated the

level at which the test items in an existing grammar test embraced communicative language teaching features such as contextualization, actuality, and student-centeredness.

Lastly, the data that was collected via the semi-structured interview method was analyzed via the method of thematic analysis. In this method, questions that were asked in the interview sessions with respondents were transcribed. Then,

3. Results

3.1 Teachers' Perceptions of Communicative Grammar Testing

This section presents the results of the data analysis, carefully organized to correspond with the major research objectives of the study. In particular, section 3.1 focuses on the perceptions of teachers of communicative grammar testing, using

Table 1: Teachers' Perceptions of Communicative Grammar Testing

Variables	Frequency	Percent
1. Strongly Disagree	3	4.1
2. Disagree	5	6.8
3. Neutral	10	13.5
4. Agree	40	54.1
5. Strongly Agree	16	21.6
Total	74	100.0

Table 1 presents teachers' perceptions of communicative grammar testing across a 5-point Likert scale, with 74 Grade Ten English teachers from North Shewa Zone providing responses that reveal distinct patterns at each level. The Strongly Disagree category (3 respondents, 4.1%) represents minimal outright rejection of communicative grammar testing principles. This small group likely included veteran teachers skeptical of shifting from traditional methods or those facing severe implementation barriers, viewing such approaches as impractical given exam realities.

Disagree responses (5 respondents, 6.8%) indicated mild opposition, totaling 10.9% negative sentiment. These teachers acknowledge some merit in communicative testing but remain unconvinced of its superiority over discrete grammar assessment, possibly due to familiarity with

responses given by participants to questions that were asked in the interview sessions were closely examined to identify certain themes that are related to teacher perceptions. Such analysis helped to increase the validity of the research study because, via such analysis, it became possible to attain a holistic understanding of the research study.

ing quantitative data from the survey and qualitative data from the interviews to determine their level of perceptions.

rote methods or concerns about time constraints in large classes. Neutral responses (10 respondents, 13.5%) reflected ambivalence or uncertainty. This moderate group appears open to communicative principles but hesitant about their classroom feasibility, likely weighing theoretical benefits against practical challenges like resource limitations and high-stakes testing pressures characteristic of Ethiopian secondary schools.

The Agree category dominates (40 respondents, 54.1%), signaling broad practical endorsement. These teachers actively support integrating grammar with authentic communication tasks, recognizing that context-rich assessments better prepare students for real-world language use compared to isolated drills. Strongly Agree responses (16 respondents, 21.6%) demonstrated enthusiastic conviction, with this vocal minority serving as

potential advocates for reform. Combined with the Agree group, 75.7% positive endorsement un-

derscores readiness among most teachers to embrace communicative grammar testing when feasible.

3.2. Results of Test Item Analysis

Table 2: Results of Test Item Analysis

No	Items	N	Scales				
			SD	Disa	Und	Agr	SA
1	Test items assess students' ability to use grammar in contexts.	10	1(10%)	6(60%)	2(20%)	1(10%)	0(0%)
2	Test items include dialogues that promote students' communication.	10	1(10%)	4(40%)	3(30%)	0(0%)	2(20%)
3	Test items simulate real-life language use situations.	10	1(10%)	4(40%)	2(20%)	3(30%)	0(0%)
4	Test items integrate multiple language skills.	10	3(30%)	2(20%)	2(20%)	1(10%)	2(20%)
5	Test items provide clear instructions for grammar test tasks.	10	2(20%)	5(50%)	2(20%)	1(10%)	0(0%)
6	Test items are presented in meaningful and contextualized situations.	10	1(10%)	4(40%)	1(0%)	4(40%)	0(0%)
7	Test items require problem-solving through language use.	10	1(10%)	4(40%)	2(0%)	3(30%)	0(0%)
8	Test items encourage students to focus on both meaning and form.	10	1(10%)	3(30%)	2(20%)	3(30%)	1(10%)
9	Test items include open-ended tasks that require creative language use.	10	2(20%)	6(60%)	2(0%)	0(0%)	0(0%)
10	Test items are aligned with communicative teaching objectives.	10	1(10%)	3(30%)	1(10%)	4(40%)	1(10%)
11	Test items assess language skills applicable to global communication.	10	1(10%)	6(60%)	1(10%)	2(20%)	0(0%)
12	Test items encourage students to reflect on their language use.	10	1(10%)	6(60%)	2(0%)	0(0%)	1(10%)
13	Test items allow students to demonstrate independent language use.	10	7(70%)	3(30%)	0(0%)	0(0%)	0(0%)
14	Test items present varying degrees of task complexity.	10	1(10%)	3(30%)	1(10%)	4(40%)	1(10%)
15	Test items assess overall language performance.	10	0(0%)	7(70%)	1(10%)	1(10%)	1(10%)

Note; SD=Strongly Disagree, Disa=Disagree, Und=Undecided, Agr=Agree, SA=Strongly Agree

As the table 2 showed, the data from the test-item analysis has many implications for understanding the appropriateness and formativeness of the test items for communicating grammar testing. In item 1, which focuses on testing students' ability to apply grammar, there were 1 Strongly Disagree response (10%), 6 Disagree responses (60%), 2 Undecided responses (20%), 1 Agree response (10%), and 0 Strongly Agree responses (0%). Thus, this item implies that it is ineffective in its application for enabling students to apply

grammar in meaningful contexts, including application, since students might not be sufficiently exposed to the application of grammar.

Likewise, Item 2, which consists of dialogues intended to develop students' communication, had 1 Strongly Disagree (10%), 4 Disagree (40%), 3 Undecided (30%), 0 Agree (0%), and 2 Strongly Agree (20%), while Item 3, which simulates real-life language use contexts, had 1 Strongly Disagree (10%), 4 Disagree (40%), 2 Undecided (20%), 3 Agree (30%), and 0 Strongly Agree

(0%). Taken together, it would appear that while there was some attempt at making the items more communication-focused, the items still do not extensively involve students in language use, which makes it less applicable.

Moreover, items on skill integration and clarity addressed other limitations. Regarding item 4 on skill integration, there was a total of 3 responses with Strongly Disagree (30%), 2 responses with Disagree (20%), 2 responses with Undecided (20%), 1 response with Agree (10%), and finally, there were 2 responses with Strongly Agree (20%). This showed a lack of integration between multiple skills. Some items addressed isolated skills instead of integrating each skill.

Likewise, Item 5, providing clear instructions, had a total of 2 Strongly Disagree responses (20%), 5 Disagree responses (50%), 2 Undecided responses (20%), 1 Agree response (10%), and 0 Strongly Agree responses (0%), implying that a lack of clarity in instruction might confuse and adversely impact the performances of the students.

Additionally, Item 6, providing meaningful and contextualized situations, had a total of 1 Strongly Disagree response (10%), 4 Disagree responses (40%), 1 Undecided response (10%), 4 Agree responses (40%), and 0 Strongly Agree responses (0%), implying that contextualization is only partial in its application. Finally, Item 7, engaging in problem-solving by using language, and Item 8, engaging in meaning and form, received some preliminary responses, implying that these items do not adequately facilitate higher-order thinking and fail to strike a balance between accuracy and meaning.

The findings further highlight significant weaknesses in promoting creativity, independence, and holistic language performance. Item 9, which includes open-ended tasks, had 2 Strongly Disagree (20%), 6 Disagree (60%), 2 Undecided (20%), and 0 Agree or Strongly Agree, indicating that students have minimal opportunities to demonstrate creativity or independent language use. In a similar vein, Item 13, which allows independent language use, had 7 Strongly Disagree

(70%) and 3 Disagree (30%), suggesting that autonomy in language production is largely absent.

In addition, Item 12, regarding reflection on language usage, has 1 Strongly Disagree (10%) responses, 6 Disagree (60%), 2 Undecided (20%), 0 Agree, and 1 Strongly Agree (10%); thus, metacognitive engagement is drastically low. While Items 10, 14, and 15, rating the alignment of the item with teaching goals and objectives and the complexity of the language tasks and overall language performance, respectively, elicited a few agreements, there were mostly disagreeing responses to the other items. Hence, the above-cited items mostly reveal that the test evaluates discrete skills for communication rather than integrated and holistically coordinated performance skills and achievements for authentic communication.

The interview results also indicated some use of Communicative Grammar Testing by teachers and an ongoing, incomplete trend towards increased use of communicative grammar testing. While Communicative Grammar Testing is not yet used on a standard basis, several teachers did indicate sporadic attempts at implementing communicative testing practices in their classrooms. One teacher explained,

"I apply communicative activities like pair work, narratives, and conversations in which students use grammar in meaningful messages. Such techniques enable students to learn the rules of grammar while concentrating on message delivery. Accuracy and fluency are simultaneously improved through providing feedback."

This means that sometimes the teacher employs communicative grammar testing in tasks like pair work, narratives, and discussions that enable learners to use grammar in useful messages. They believe such methods help learners learn rules of grammar because they focus on conveying good messages. Accuracy and fluency-focused feedback is crucial to parallel improvement in language capability. And yet another teacher said,

"I sometimes apply Communicative Grammar Testing through dialogues, and project

with the use of grammar structures in communicative situations. My methods include interactive discussion, inducing the use of grammar in natural settings. I also provide feedback with a focus on form and meaning."

This implies that the instructor sometimes conducts communicative grammar testing through role-plays, dialogue, and project work involving the practice of grammar in communicative contexts. They employ pair work, narrative, and interactive discussion to allow grammar to be used naturally. The teacher employs feedback encompassing both grammatical form and communicative meaning. Similarly, a third teacher noted, "I practice Communicative Grammar Testing through the utilization of projects, discussions, and group writing activities that require proper usage of grammar embedded in communication. I also provide formative comments based on grammatical function in language use."

This means that the teacher sometimes does communicative testing of grammar through project work, discussions, and group composition exercises, embedding grammar within communication. Formative grading based on the way grammar functions in language use is part of their assessment procedure. The focus is placed on ongoing assessment to develop learners' grammar in use. A fourth teacher said,

"I implement this testing approach using role-

4. Discussions

From the results of the study, there is an overwhelmingly positive perception of Communicative Grammar Testing, with 75.7% of 74 Grade 10 English Teachers from North Shewa Zone endorsing the idea, with 54.1% of them agreeing and 21.6% of them strongly agreeing. This shows that there is a strong inclination towards incorporating grammar with other forms of communication, which is an indication that they intellectually understand the significance of Communicative Grammar Testing.

This is in line with the findings of Kahsay (2020), which indicated that although Ethiopian teachers understand the benefits of communicative grammar teaching, they also strongly favor explicit

plays, simulations, and interactive group exercises that help students to incorporate grammar in communication naturally. Peer correction and self-assessment strategies assist in reinforcing learning."

This implies that the instructor occasionally utilizes communicative grammar testing through the implementation of role-plays, simulations, and interactive group activities, encouraging natural grammar incorporation within communication. Self-assessment and peer correction are the means through which learning grammar is supported. This implies a learner-centered learning environment in which learners participate actively in developing their communicative grammar. The fifth teacher explained,

"I apply this technique by intermixing oral and written communicative tasks where grammar develops naturally, such as presentations and group work. I provide explicit feedback on meaning and correctness."

This demonstrates that occasionally the teacher employs communicative grammar testing through a combination of oral and written tasks, for example, presentations and group tasks, where grammar comes out naturally. They provide explicit feedback emphasizing both meaning and grammar correctness. Balanced feedback is extremely crucial in building correct and meaningful use of grammar while communicating

grammar teaching (Cohen's $d = 0.95$). Furthermore, the preference increases with the amount of teaching experience. As such, the classroom continues to favor rule discussion and example formats, although the students appear to have little interest in actively participating.

In stark contrast to these understandings, test item analysis of the results also reveals critical failings in CGT implementation, which highlights a significant disconnect between theory and practice. For example, results on

Item 1 revealed a staggering 70% level of disagreement (10% Strongly Disagree, 60% Disagree) on the effectiveness of grammar application in relation to students' lack of engagement with

contexts that would facilitate functional grammar usage. Similarly, results on Items 2 (dialogues: 50% Disagree/Undecided) and 3 (real-life simulations: 50% Disagree/Undecided) revealed a lack of engagement with students in language production and communication.

These results reinforce earlier research by Tadege (2024), which found a significant disconnect between teachers' espoused values on the importance of contextualizing grammar teaching and communication and their primary focus on discrete grammar elements, which may be a product of a lack of engagement with the test construction process.

Likewise, the 13.5% Neutral responses in Table 1 also reflect ambivalence arising from the practical limitations and high-stakes testing commonly experienced in Ethiopian secondary schools, as Mihret and Joshi (2023) also pointed out the discrepancy between teacher-stated opinions and actual teaching practices. Similarly, Wado and Seid (2020) also pinpointed the limitations faced by teachers, such as the high number of students per class exceeding 60, student demotivation, teacher language proficiency limitations, inadequate test contexts, and lack of authentic materials, which make the reliance on traditional testing over the principles of communication inevitable.

This disconnect was exacerbated by additional item-level shortcomings. Skill integration (Item 4: 50% Disagree/Undecided) was not holistic; instructional clarity (Item 5: 70% Disagree/Undecided)

was at risk of being opaque; contextualization (Item 6: 50% split) was partial; and Items 7 and 8 did not effectively enable problem-solving or form-meaning balance. Creativity, autonomy, and metacognition were also undermined. Item 9 (80% Disagree/Undecided) eliminated open-endedness; Item 13 (100% negative) eliminated independent language use; and Item 12 (70% Disagree/Undecided) reduced reflection

This outcome is in line with the research carried out by Endale and Temesgen (2024), which revealed that there was a lack of alignment in grammar testing practice with the essentials of communicative language testing, with a preference for discrete, meaning-focused approaches to grammar over more authentic, process-oriented approaches to grammar in communicative language testing.

In line with this, Tesfaye and Gebretsдик (2024) highlighted that conventional teaching cultures among teachers and students' lack of active involvement, preference for passive learning, and conventional testing methods remain the main impediments to the successful translation of theoretical CGT knowledge into practice. This is, although the teaching staff has a reasonable level of understanding of communicative methods. However, conventional teaching cultures among the teaching staff hinder the successful implementation of these methods. As a result, the assessment of communicative skills remains purely theoretical, and little is being done practically, thus necessitating the urgent implementation of strategies to leverage the 75.7% perceptual readiness.

5. Conclusion

The results on teachers' perception on being positive towards grammar testing in a communicative manner indicate that there is a significant positive attitude towards grammar testing in a communicative manner by grade ten English teachers in North Shewa Zone. Though there was a slight rejection (4.1%) and mild rejection (6.8%) by a few teachers, which may be due to their commitment to conventional approaches and environmental limitations to accommodate

new approaches, most teachers were in support of grammar testing communicatively.

The neutral reaction by a significant number (13.5%) of teachers appears to temper other possible positive reactions towards the adoption of grammar testing in a communicative manner due to theoretical applicability and environmental limitations, like the availability of resources and pressure to perform on high-stakes tests. It is in-

interesting to note that a significant percentage either agreed (54.1%) or showed a strong positive reaction (21.6%) to grammar testing in a communicative manner due to a realization of its applicability to link grammar with meaningful communication to help students succeed at a higher level.

On the basis of the analysis of test items, certain inferences can be made. First of all, it can be said that test items have limited potential to stimulate and encourage the application of grammar in more substantial, communicative situations. Secondly, it can be said that there is no uniform pattern of assessment that covers skills of language, incomprehensible instructions, and a lack of context, which would make it less authentic and less reliable as an assessment tool. Thirdly, it can be said that it has less to do with higher-order thinking and more to do with the application of skills, and, lastly, it has less to do with integrated and authentic application of language skills, as it should have been more aligned to communicative principles of testing.

Based on the outcome of the interview, the implementation of Communicative Grammar Testing by the teachers sometimes includes pair work, dialogue, role plays, project work, discussions, and group writings that promote the use of grammar for communicative purposes. The outcome provides formative testing with attention to both accuracy and communicative aspects of grammar usage on occasions that sometimes include peer and/or self-corrected grammar testing. If all these aspects are considered, the implementation of Communicative Grammar Testing indicates an occasional focus on learning that promotes the development of accuracy and fluency together in the context of communicative grammar testing.

In general, the present study indicates positive perceptions of communicative grammar testing among teachers, test item development aspects, communicative grammar testing principles, classroom implementation strategies, pair work, dialogues, project work, discussions, and group

writings. At the same time, the present study provides a foundation for further study in the future since it focuses on student outcomes and the implementation of communicative grammar testing in Ethiopian secondary schools.

6. Implications

The implications are that teachers are generally supportive of the testing of communication grammar and the importance it plays in relating grammar to communication and developing language skills. But there are some practical constraints, like resource limitations, large class sizes, and pressurized testing, that are restricting teachers' efforts to implement it effectively. Moreover, the test items are not supportive, as they lack contextualization, skill integration, and higher-level objectives, and teachers are not consistently using communication strategies.

Based on the above results, the following are recommended: redesign test items to incorporate integrated skills, authentic and contextualized tasks, and options for higher-order use of language, making them compatible with communicative principles; provide teachers with professional development, practical guidance, and in-class strategies to facilitate formative feedback, peer correction, and self-assessment for better and more consistent implementation. Besides this, schools and policymakers need to ensure a supportive setting with resources and systemic encouragement that can enable teachers to use this type of grammar testing communicatively regularly. Such a move would further strengthen the validity of such assessments, while appealing more to the students, as the goals of accuracy, fluency, and overall communicative ability would be combined in one single area.

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Conflict of Interest

The authors stated that they have no conflicts of interest.

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