

ADDIS ABABA UNIVERSITY  
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PERCEPTIONS AND PRACTICES OF ACTIVE LEARNING IN  
EFL CLASSES OF DILLA UNIVERSITY

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PERCEPTIONS AND PRACTICES OF ACTIVE LEARNING IN  
EFL CLASSES OF DILLA UNIVERSITY

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SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES

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## DECLARATION

I, the undersigned, declare that this thesis is my work and that all sources of material used for this thesis have been duly acknowledged.

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## **ACRONYMS**

CLT:	Communicative Language Teaching
ICDR:	Institute for curriculum development and research
MOF:	Ministry of Education
GDE:	Guanting Department of Education
REB:	Regional Education Bureau
SNNP:	Southern Nations and Nationalities People
TESO:	Teacher Education System Overhaul.
TGE:	Transitional Government of Ethiopia
NETP:	New Education and Training Policy

## *Abstract*

*The purpose of this study was to investigate perceptions and practices of active learning, to assess how the perceptions of instructors and students influence their practices of active learning and to identify factors affecting the implementation of active learning. To conduct the study, qualitative method was employed. The study was conducted in Dilla University and the data were collected from 60 students and 8 instructors of the University. In the selection of the sample population purposive and systematic sampling were used. The main instrument of data collection was. The data were analyzed using percentage, mean and grand mean. The findings of the study revealed that the main implementers of active learning (instructors and students) have perceived active learning positively. In spite of their good perceptions, their practices of active learning were low. Among the factors affecting the effective implementation of active learning; instructors' and students' tendency to traditional/lecture method, lack of students interest, shortage of time, lack of instructional material and large class size were the major ones. Finally, recommendations were forwarded based on the major findings so as to minimize problems encountered and maximize the implementation of active learning.*

## **CHAPTER ONE**

### **1. Introduction**

#### **1.1. Background of the Study**

Effective teaching and learning require the use of different methodologies and strategies to meet the demands of the learners. The challenge is to find new ways and strategies to stimulate and motivate the creative abilities of today's generation who have varied set of orientations towards learning than the learners in the past.

The traditional 'chalk and talk' approach with the students as recipients of knowledge may not be suitable for today's generation. This is why in schools throughout the world there is a movement from learning that is made up of facts to a new model i.e. active-learning which emphasizes understanding, making connections in the world around us, collecting and using information in active manner (Leu, 2000:10).

We should think of active-learning first and for most in terms of students being intellectually active. By intellectually active we mean that teachers do not simply expect students to memorize and repeat facts. Teachers should expect students to use information critically and analytically.

Supporting this, Nardos (2000:87) has also pointed out that, in active-learning the learners have a marked degree of freedom and control over the organization of learning activities. Usually these activities involve problem solving, inquiry and investigational work etc.

Similarly, Aggarwal (1996:96) has mentioned that the basic purpose of education is to enable the learners to adapt him/her in a society, which is full of problems. Not only social life is full of problems but there are problems and puzzling situations, which are normal feature of a child's

every day life in school as well. Therefore, it is very important that problem solving skills should be encouraged in school learning.

It is in light of this argument, the Education and Training policy of Ethiopia gives due emphasis to strengthening the individual's and society's problem solving capacities at all levels. As stated in the ETP: (1994:7) one of the objectives of education is "to develop the physical and mental potential and problem solving capacity of individuals by expanding basic education for all".

From the above argument, it can be realized that active- learning is an essential component that can bring problem solving capacity to a reality.

Active learning is a broad strategy that includes such techniques as substituting active-learning exercises for lecture, holding students' learning responsibility for the materials that have not been explicitly discussed in class assigning open ended problems and problems requiring critical or creative thinking that can not be solved by following text examples, involving students in stimulating and role plays (Leu, 2000).

The main theoretical background that led to the growth of active-learning as stated by Nunan (1991:11) "... signifies a paradigmatic shift from the transmission model of teaching to a process oriented, participatory model, seeing learners as active agents in their learning and teachers as researchers of their work."

From the above argument supported by different scholars, it can be realized that active-learning is an essential element in education that have received a universal importance and it is a method of educating students that allow them to participate in class. It takes them beyond

passive listeners and makes them to take some direction and initiative during the class.

Therefore, the focus on problem solving (active- learning) by the Education and Training Policy of the country is appropriate and timely. However, there are some constraints which can impede the proper implementation of active-learning. Some of the factors are connected with the pressure of the syllabus, improper classroom organization and management, lack of trained teachers, school directors, perceptions of active-learning, the problem with the students etc. (Plass, 1988, Leu, 2000, Bone well and Eison, 1991)

Some local studies were conducted in relation to the implementation of active-learning in TTCs, TTIs and some government schools of west Harerghe. Among them is “The Implementation of Active Learning, Case of Kotebe College of Teacher Education” by Tibebu Tekletsadik in 2006. His major finding indicates that the magnitude of practicing active learning is very low. The other study conducted by Oli Negassa in the same year was entitled “The status of Active Learning Approach in the Teacher Education Colleges of Oromia Region.” His study revealed that the use of active learning practice in the teacher education colleges varied. Yet, another researcher, Yonas Amdemeskel conducted a case study on factors that affect the implementation of active learning in primary schools of west Harerghe. The study reported that large class size, shortage of instructional material, lack of skills in selecting variety of methods and lack of awareness on what active learning is the major factors that affect the implementation of active learning. However, none of these studies were actually intended to examine the perceptions and practices of teachers and students on active learning. Therefore, it is with this information that the researcher is initiated to conduct a research.

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

It is quiet evident that the active involvement of the students in classroom and out side the classroom teaching-learning process enables them to develop critical thinking skills. Nardos (2000:24) explains that active learning is likely to be enjoyed, offers opportunity for progress, and thereby fosters positive students' attitudes towards the subjects. Similarly, Silberman (1996) reminds us that real learning is not memorization. Most of what we memorize is lost in hours. That is, learning can not be swallowed. In order to retain what has been taught, students must put together what they hear and see into a meaningful whole.

In this case, active- learning leads to effective teaching- learning to bring about the expected behavioral change. Research and experience indicate that this is the case. The Education and Training Policy and the existing curriculum of Ethiopia call for active-learning. The curriculum reforms initiated imply a shift from passive-learning to more active education (Leu, 2000:13).

As indicated in the Education and Training Policy document of the Transitional Government of Ethiopia (TGE, 1994:4), the previous curriculum design and instructional processes suffered from old and traditional approach. There have been continuous revisions in the instructional approaches to offer quality training and make the active learning practical.

In addition, the policy document entitled as “Teacher Education System Overhaul (TESO) program was introduced in 2003. In this document, among other major programs, one emphasizes the implementation of

participatory, active- learning in the pre-service and in-service programs of teacher education (MoE, 2003:31).

However, it is hypothesized that there are different factors affecting the practices of active-learning. As stated in the background of the study some of the factors have not been assessed yet. Thus, the researcher of this study tries to investigate particularly the perceptions and practices of active learning in Dilla University EFL classes.

### **1.3. Objective of the Study**

The Purpose of this study is to investigate the perceptions and practices of active-learning in EFL classes of Dilla University.

To achieve the main purpose, the following specific objectives have been set.

1. To assess instructors' and students' perceptions of active-learning.
2. To examine how their perceptions influence their classroom practices of active-learning.
3. To explore factors which affect the practices of active learning in the EFL classes.

In line with the above objectives the following research questions are formulated.

1. How do instructors and students perceive active-learning?
2. How often do instructors employ active-learning strategies in their classrooms?
3. How often do students participate in active-learning?
4. What are the factors that affect the practices of active-learning?

#### **1.4. Delimitation of The study**

The researcher believes that it would be appropriate to conduct the study in large scale. Never the less, the limited time and other resources do not allow doing so. Hence, the study was confined to EFL classes of Dilla University.

#### **1.5. Limitation of The study**

Some of the challenges that encountered during the study were lack of cooperation among the subjects of the study and lack of the necessary materials written on the subject of the present study in the university. Moreover, the researcher had initially planned to audio record the interviewees. However, this plan was abandoned later on as many of the instructors and students were found to be reluctant to be recorded. Despite such challenges that confronted, the researcher has tried his best to collect the right information that helped to deduce relevant conclusions.

#### **1.6. Significance of the Study**

The research aims at investigating the perceptions and practices of active learning in EFL classes of Dilla University. Accordingly, the results of this study may have the following significances.

##### A. Policy wise

- It may help policy and decision makers to design viable strategy which can promote the positive perception of active learning.

##### B. Methodologically

- It may contribute to improve EFL teaching methodology.

- It may inform syllabus designers and module writers to consider active learning in the process of designing syllabus and module writing.

#### C. Theoretically

- It may contribute in modifying theories that focus on the perceptions and beliefs about active learning.
- It may also strengthen theories that focus on the advantages of active learning.

#### D. Practically

- It may develop instructors' awareness on the use of active learning.

#### E. Further research

- The study may serve as a supporting document for further study in the area.

### 1.7 Definition of Terms

**Active learning:** refers to active involvement of the learner on different learning tasks within and out of the classroom. It includes group work, role-playing, discussion, etc.

**Implementation:** is how teaching-learning activity put into practice in/out of classroom by teachers/instructors in educational institutions.

**Instructors:** teachers in higher educational institutions such as colleges and universities.

**Perception:** the view/feeling of instructors or students on the implementation of active learning.

**Teacher-centered method:** the traditional method of teaching in which teachers talk and students listen.

## CHAPTER TWO

### Review of Related Literature

In this chapter, literature related to active learning will be reviewed. In particular the chapter discusses perceptions/views about active learning and the way it is implemented and factors that may hinder the implementation of active learning.

#### 2.1. Classification of the Different Instructional Methodologies

Mutassa and Wills (1994) and ICDR (1999) argued that different researchers use different types of classification when referring to instructional methods. These different classifications can be confusing and hard to differentiate. The following are among the various types of classifications.

- Teacher-centered Vs Student-centered.
- Direct instruction Vs Indirect instruction.
- Conventional Vs Non-conventional instruction.
- Traditional Vs Modern instruction.

Though these classifications of methods use different terminology, mostly they have similar conceptual frame of reference, i.e. the degree of student's participation in the instructional process is the common basis of all these classifications. In line with this, Capel, *et.al*, (1995) supplemented that the classification of methods as direct (teacher-centered, traditional, formal, expository, didactic, authoritarian etc) or indirect (student-centered, democratic, active, informal, repressive etc) would be made on the basis of:

1. Source of the knowledge\_ i.e. who is the center of the knowledge?

2. Role of the teacher\_ i.e. is the teacher a stage settler or information provider?
3. Role of the students i.e. are the students active listeners or active doers?
4. Mechanism of evaluation \_i.e. is the evaluation system subjective or objective?

Finally, despite the variation in the names, it is witnessed that these terms have common features for their classifications. It is therefore, worth mentioning that these terms are implied by the terms Teacher\_Centered Vs Learner \_Centered (active learning) methods in this study.

### **2.1.1. Teacher- Centered Approach**

This approach gives the priority role and responsibility to the teacher. The teacher is considered as the center of classroom activity, and is thought to hold most of the knowledge necessary for the students to be successful. (ICDR, 1999, Frazel *et.al*, 1995, Mutassa and Wills, 1995, Eggen and Kauchax, 1996). The information to be learned is given to the learners in a completed form instead of letting the learners to interact with.

Similarly, Eggen and Kauchax (1996:180) described teacher- centered approach as follows:

Teacher-centered instruction refers to academically focused, teacher- directed classroom using sequenced and structured materials. It refers to teaching activities where goals are clear to students, time allocated for instruction is sufficient and continuous, coverage of content is extensive, the performance of students is monitored, and feedback to the student is immediate and academically oriented. Moreover, the teacher plays a primary role in structuring content, explaining it, and using examples to increase students' understanding.

In line with this idea, Borich (1984) argued that in this approach the teacher acts as the director of learning and the assumption is made that

the teacher knows best. Teaching takes a predominant role over learning. In deed, students are assumed to be “Empty Vessels” that have to be filled by the teacher (Plass, 1998; Lue, 2000).

In this case, the teacher will do most of the talking and it is the students’ duty to listen to what the teacher has to say, memorize and repeat it during reaction period or in examination papers (Eggen and Kauchax, 1996:179).

According to ICDR (1999:68), in this mode of teaching, the teacher uses “chalk and talk” or other methods of teaching in which he/she is active and students stay passive. The teacher either writes notes on the board, which the students passively copy in their exercise books, or memorize the information from their textbooks. Frazee *et al* (1995:205) explained that skills are taught by the teachers’ telling, describing, demonstrating and explaining the desired technique step by step in their attempt to master the techniques via drills, practice and recitation. Macharia and Waria (1994:39) have summarized some essential characteristics of the teacher- centered approach as follows:

- a. The teacher is more active than the students
- b. The teacher is active in explaining, monitoring and describing.
- c. The learners listen passively while the teacher ‘pours knowledge in to them’
- d. The desks are arranged in straight rows.
- e. The main activity of the learners is listening and perhaps copying notes from the chalkboard.
- f. There is usually no group work.

Scholars like Calahan (1992) and Plass (1998) have enumerated the outcomes of direct instruction as follows: most students do learn how to conform, obey and follow directions, but they are less likely to learn how

to apply classroom skills to the problems of daily life they encounter outside the classroom. Therefore, teacher-oriented methodology is the rigid, stereotyped patterns of behavior instead of flexible patterns that can be applied to a variety of life situations.

To sum up, such arguments seem to be sufficiently convincing that in the teacher-centered classrooms, learners are the passive receivers of knowledge. Teachers and texts are sources of authority. Lecture format dominates, and students learn in a rote fashion, reproducing the subject matter in set exercise, and in examinations. Moreover, the emphasis is on theory rather than on practice and the successful student is the one who can display his knowledge of facts that has been fed in to him/her.

### **2.1.2. Student- Centered (Active Learning) Approach**

This part deals with some of the basic concepts, features and advantages of active learning in the teaching-learning process.

#### **2.1.2.1. Concept of Active Learning**

The issue of active learning in different literature is usually discussed in contrast with the traditional lecture or teacher-centered method (Bonwell and Eison 2003, Temechegn 2002 for example) This is clearly seen in the following definition of active learning by Brad (2000) on <http://www.SecondarySchools.com/approach.htm>.

In traditional or pedagogical education, material to be learned is often transmitted to students by teachers. That is, learning is passive. In active learning, students are much more actively engaged in their own learning while educators take a more guiding role. This approach is thought to promote processing of skills (knowledge to a much deeper level than passive learning.

Similarly, it is written on ([www.neiu.edu/~dbehlrhe/hrd 408/ glossry.htm](http://www.neiu.edu/~dbehlrhe/hrd408/glossry.htm)) that active learning is a shift in classroom practice from a static view of learning in which knowledge is poured into the passive, empty minds of learners to a more dynamic view through different activities. Students in this case can play a more vital role in creating new knowledge to be applied to other professional and academic contexts. Moreover, according to Bonwell and Eison (2003:38), active learning is a process where by learners are actively engaged in the learning process, rather than 'passively' absorbing lectures.

Based on this, one can tell how teachers and students are viewed, what classroom participation looks like and how knowledge is gained in active learning method.

In this method, learners are actively involved in their learning. Therefore, they are not considered as "blank slate". It is rather believed that they are responsible and can play active role in their own learning. That is why Felder in [http://www.honolulu. Hawil; Edu/intrant/ teachtip. htm](http://www.honolulu.Hawil; Edu/intrant/teachtip.htm) (2000) states that "teacher-centered instructional methods have repeatedly been found inferior to instruction that involves active learning... in which students work in teams on problems and projects under conditions that assure both positive interdependence and individual accountability." Temechegn (2002) has also remarked that learner- centered method capitalizes on individual difference. It recognizes the different learning styles of students, which also demands the implementation of various active learning strategies. According to Bonwell and Eison (2003:106) students must do more than just listen. They must read, write, discuss or be engaged in solving problems. Most important, to be actively involved, students must engage in such higher order thinking tasks as analysis, synthesis and evaluation. In this

method, therefore, learning by doing is emphasized which leads to students learning.

This may show that students' learning depends on what they do. In general most learning is not the result of interaction. It is rather the result of unhampered participation in a meaningful setting. Most people learn by being with it Illich (1998:94) in Temechegn (2003:32)

Generally, in order to make teaching- learning process active the following are some basic points to be considered. (ICDR, 1999:93)

- Learning is effective only when students can use it, connect it to their day-to-day life, or actively participate in it.
- Effective learning is not memorizing facts and lists of knowledge.
- Teaching only by giving facts is damaging young learners in that we are preventing meaningful learning from taking place.
- Learning facts alone is not enough to prepare students to understand and participate in complex world.
- Teaching learning must prepare students to solve problems and to use information from their environment and other sources to make a better life for themselves, their families and their communities.
- We must provide the students with more than one source of information so that they can understand different perspectives and have many inputs.
- We must encourage students to communicate effectively about what they are doing and what they are learning.
- We must pose problems of emerging relevant to students. A focus on students' interest and use their previous knowledge as a departure point helps students engage and become motivated to learn. The relevant question posed to the students will force them to ponder and question their thoughts and conceptions.

- We must structure learning around primary concepts. This refers to building lessons around main ideas or concepts, instead of exposing students to segmented and disjoint topics that may or may not relate to each other. By such principles we seek and value students' point of view.

#### **2.1.2.2. Features of Active-learning**

In the new approach to education, often called active- learning, students not only receive information they also record it, discuss it, compare it with their day-to-day life, analyze it, draw conclusions from it, and communicate about it (ICDR, 1999:71). When they are given sources of information and facts from their teachers or their textbooks, they are asked to do something active and creative with the information- analyze it, think about it, and make reports on it. Aggarwal, (1996).

Similarly, Sguazzin and Graan (1998:57) explained that active-learning is a social process and the emphasis in this process is on collaboration and the exchanging of ideas, experiences, values and attitudes. It is a negotiated process where our understanding expands through interaction and active engagement with others. This is to say that the emphasis in viewing knowledge as something "out there". Positivist idea has shifted to the view of constructing knowledge (Frazee, *et al*, 1995:26). Thus the emphasis in teaching has shifted from transmission of "facts" or information to teaching learners how to learn, how to find information for themselves etc.

Here learners are placed in the center of the learning process (Lue, 2000:4). In relation to this idea Brophy (1992:69) as cited in Eggen and Kauchax 1996:83) puts the learner at the center of the learning process by stating:

Current research focuses on the role of the students. It recognizes that students do not passively receive or copy information from the teacher. Instead actively mediate by trying to make sense of it and to relate it to what they already know about the topic. Thus, students develop new knowledge through a process of active construction.

In line with this, Plass (1998:310) has explained that in learner- centered classroom students are actively involved in the learning process, and their prior knowledge and experience is integral part of that process. They are encouraged to articulate their ideas and opinions. The teacher creates opportunities for learning and encourages learner's autonomy.

Lue (2000:11) and Plass (1998:312) stated that in active learning, previous knowledge and experiences are so crucial and valued since they help to construct new knowledge. The role of the teacher is creating conducive environment for learning and offering guide, stage setting, facilitating, observing and evaluating his/her students in a more objective way. In other words, the teacher, as a facilitator and co-worker, is not expected to give information only, but he is also expected to design instructions that would lead students learning for understanding through debating, interrogating, discussing, creating and explaining..

### **2.1.2.3. Importance of Active Learning**

Researchers, for example, Bonwell and Eison (2003:66) explained that active learning is vital in the classroom because of its powerful impact up on students learning. Furthermore, several studies have shown that students prefer strategies that promote active learning to traditional teaching approaches. Active learning is a strategy that can increase participation as noted down in:

<http://www.honolulu.hawaii.edu/intrant/teachtiphtm>, many researches show that there will be improvements in student- faculty interaction,

student- student interaction, academic achievement, communication skills, higher level thinking skills, team work, attitude towards the subject and motivation to learn. Active learning therefore, plays important role to move students from passive recipient to participants who have their own role in their learning processes. This is due to the fact that “active learning is not only a set of activities, but an attitude on the part of the teacher and the learner that makes learning effective.” More specifically “the purpose of active learning is to stimulate life time habits of thinking, to stimulate students to think about HOW as well as WHAT they are learning and increasingly to take responsibility for their own learning.” Silberman (1997:32)

Learner focused methods and activities are useful to promote effective learning. This is because ICDR (1999:66) states:

- We all remember much more when we are active and when we participate.
- We all become more enthusiastic learners when we are active.
- Active learning is particularly important for younger learners.
- The young learners learn best when they can connect what is being learned with their own life; this makes it meaningful.
- Activities help to make meaningful connections.
- Learning how to learn or thinking is more important than memorizing facts.
- Active learning leads to long lasting knowledge.
- Active learning encourages participation, analysis and critique, which are higher order thinking skills.
- Active learning prepares students for participation in a democratic society.

What is discussed so far is summarized by Chet. *et.al* (1993:81)

Real learning is not memorizing. Most of what we memorize is lost easily. Learning can not be swallowed whole; to retain what has been taught, students must chew on it. Learning comes from exposure to different kinds of stimulation through the senses. When learning is active, the learner is seeking something to answer a question, information, to solve a problem, or a way to do a job. What a student discusses with others enables him/her to understand and master the learning.

In line with this Silberman (1996:180) states that active learning strategy clearly addresses the different learning styles of the students. He further illustrates the different learning styles:

Principles of learning styles reveal that some students are visual, they like carefully sequenced presentation of information. They prefer to write down what a teacher tells them and they are quiet in the classroom and are seldom distracted by noise. But the auditory learners do not bother to look at what a teacher does or they do not bother to take notes. They rely on their ability to hear and remember. Whereas: kinesthetic learners learn mainly, by direct involvement in activity. They tend to be impulsive, with little patience. They want to move about and do. Only few students are exclusively one style of learners; they share more than one. Thus different active learning methods create the best match for students with different learning styles. (Silberman, 1996:180-81)

## **2.2. Research Findings on Active Learning**

Johnson and Johnson (1989) have found that student-centered (active learning) instructions seem to motivate students to form closer relationship with one another in working together. Each student-centered group not only scored high marks academically, but they also gained some social skills through cooperative work. On the other hand, the students in the teacher-centered classroom did not spend as much

time working cooperatively and thus hoodless of working relationship with one another.

The teacher-centered classes were geared around lecture and the individual work of students. Both group studied the same content, though each interact with radically different ways. The first T-test chart shows how each group did on their pre-test. The average of both groups' pre-test scores was relatively going to the student-centered group. After giving tests for both groups, it was found out that not only did the student-centered group scored high; they also stated that learning was easier due to the review games and group assistance. Later, the roles had been reversed (the student-centered class received teacher-centered instruction and teacher-centered students received student-centered instruction); the student-centered group had hard time in adjusting to their assignment. However, the results of the scores and the amount of participation indicated higher achievement and better attitudes in the student-centered group.

Again for the last time the roles had reversed. Thus student-centered approach seems to yield better levels of achievements no matter what group received the treatment.

On the other hand; Halperin, (1994) comments on the domination of old instructional approach in most higher education. He suggests that most activities today, in majority of higher education continue to reflect an "old style of instruction where students sit quietly, passively receiving words of wisdom being professed by the lone instructor standing in front of the class.

In contrary to this finding, Amenu (2005) states that his research reveals that in different colleges of Oromia regional state, even though, lecture

method is practiced occasionally, much of the time is devoted to active learning instructional approach.

Silberman, (1996:44), delivers a key note that addresses a challenging issue to develop an environment in which students become actively engaged in learning. Thus, after decades of research on teaching and learning strategy, the effectiveness of active learning has been clearly documented. However, in the institution of higher learning there have been challenges to incorporate the new model of active learning in to their classrooms. Thus, some have embraced this approach to instruction with enthusiasm while others seem more cautious in moving towards adoption. Anyway, active learning occurs in an environment where the student is at the center and the instruction is student-centered. On the other hand, passive learning occurs in a setting where the teacher is the focus, described as teacher- centered instruction.

In the teacher- centered (passive learning) approach the teacher becomes the manager of the classroom with the learning process heavily dependent up on the pronouncement and enforcement of rules. Here, note that little is required or expected from the students to the very end. The students are presumably expected to ride the assembly line quietly and dutifully accepting all data transmission in a similar manner as an automobiles skeletal frame moves towards the new car dealer's show room. But practically, most cognitive psychologists and educators agree that instruction is effective when students are encouraged to become actively involved in their own learning. Besides, an allowance of time must be made for meaningful open interaction between students and teacher and group of students that nurture the student's natural curiosity.

Finally though some have criticized the effectiveness of active learning method/instructional approach, more studies show the true effectiveness of active learning on academic achievement and classroom participation.

### **2.3. Active Learning in the Ethiopian Education Context**

After the adoption of the currently working Education and Training Policy in Ethiopia, extensive changes have taken place in education. One of the changes is the paradigm shift in the model of teaching and learning which involves the shift from rote learning to active learning and the shift from a linear to an integrated curriculum (Leu, 1998). This change has brought a major paradigm shift in our thinking about education and the underlying ideas like active- learning approach, student-centered method, problem solving, student sensitive learning, the use of higher- order thinking skills etc have been introduced through this reform.

Similarly, in the teacher education system, there have been continuous changes in the curriculum and teacher's profile since the educational reform in the country. Particularly, at present, the teacher education program is guided by the Teacher Education System Over-haul (TESO) document (MoE, 2003). This document states that in the teacher education program, passive learning has to be replaced by active, learner-focused education. The document advocates, a Teacher Education System that develops and inculcates higher- order thinking skills in graduates and emphasizes that, teachers are essentially agents for positive societal change. This document also strongly criticizes the previous teacher education system, which was traditional; where the subject content has been treated in a theoretical way. As a result, according to the document, it has produced teachers who are not necessarily good at teaching in schools using active learning. Thus, the

intention of the new Teacher Education Program is to prepare teachers who can confidently teach using active learning approach and the development of problem solving skills through a learner- centered approach. In this assumption, teachers must be able to use a range of teaching strategies including active learning; interactive teaching and independent study and thus, be able to select strategies according to students' needs

## **2.4. Knowledge and Attitude to Active Learning**

For effective implementation of any new perspective, including active learning, positive attitude to the issues and sound knowledge and skills in the area are very important. Particularly, the underlying ideas, concepts, merits and demerits of the new approach should clearly be understood by teachers and students. In this review the knowledge and attitudes of teachers and students will be seen.

### **2.4.1 Teachers' Knowledge and Attitudes**

It is critical that teachers/ instructors have a thorough understanding of the nature and characteristics of the appropriate teaching- learning methods to be used in conjunction with curricular materials. Because, although to a certain extent some decisions may be determined for teachers/ instructors by official syllabi, students' textbooks or teachers' guide, it is the teacher/ instructor who is the ultimate implementer of the curricular materials (ICDR, 1999:60). But, unfortunately some teachers discourage active learning with the ground that it brings an extra demand in the planning and preparation of lessons. Some teachers feel as it is bounded by over crowded subject matter and thus pressurized by the limited time they have to teach. The belief persists that active learning takes too much time and thus covering the portion is difficult or impossible. Even, they come to the conclusion that active

learning may be nice in theory but unrealistic in practice. These all show that there have been no enough and concrete perception about how to install active learning in classroom, which may lead to negative reactions Capel *et al* (1995:229-30). These misconceptions show that teachers have not understood as active learning enables them to spend more time with groups and individuals to give access to special needs of students and contribute to a better and quality learning.

#### **2.4.2. Students' Knowledge and Attitude**

Authors like Dary and Terry; (1993:88) have stressed the importance of students' past experience, which is a transformative rather than passive accumulation of knowledge. They notice that unless learners consider the implication of the ideas there in their own lives and decide to act, know and believe in the ways; they are likely to adopt a passive acquiescence to the teachers' knowledge structure. And ultimately, this passive students' learning has not made a difference because, it has not been transformative and at best resulted in some accretion of knowledge. Thus, it is possible to suggest that active learning seeks the emancipation of learners from the old belief that has dominated methods of teaching over the last century. However, in spite of all the contributions of active learning discussed earlier, the students may not have appropriate perception and may have developed negative attitudes for various reasons. For example, students may look shy and uncooperative at the beginning of active learning. Because, they are accustomed to the traditional instructional method where they are expected to listen attentively and try to memorize what have been learned for the purpose of examination. This discloses that learners are not trying and/or have no access to use their prior experience. They do not challenge their old assumption or they do not create new meaning or perspectives that are more inclusive, integrative and open to alternative

views, which can emancipate them from strong belief on stimulus-response mechanisms. (Dary and Terry, 1993:93)

## **2.5. Practices of Teachers in Active Learning**

Eggen (1996:25) states that historically our great teachers learned both 'HOW' and 'WHAT' to teach from their own teachers. The critical content of any learning experience is the method or process through which the learning occurs. What is that students do in the classroom? They sit and listen to the teacher. Mostly they are required to make observation, formulate definition or perform any intellectual operation that go beyond repeating what some one else says is true. This is the case in the teacher-centered instructional approach.

In moving towards constructive approach (active learning) to teaching, Chikering and Gamson (1997:91) say that teachers will need to attend to their own conceptual change at least as much they attend to this process in their schools. If our schools are to provide experience for students that fire their spirits identify their nature and capacities as learners and enable them to be independent thinkers, then teachers should support students. Thus supporting students to be powerful in developing their skills and capacities is the most important practice of teachers in active learning.

What are essentially involved in active learning are the activities that are used in the process of learning. Many educators have strictly underlined that teachers play crucial role in the implementation of these activities. In this connection, Lue, (2000:5) has stated that teachers' practice in active learning is to use classroom methods that encourage the students to be as active as possible by analyzing and interpreting knowledge

through the use of higher order thinking skills, active learning, problem solving and communication based methods in their teaching.

Moreover, in active learning classroom, we want the teachers to offer their students options and choices in their work. In addition, teachers should reject the common practices of telling students what to do, rather engage their students in their interest and invite them to participate in activities that allow them to be involved in decisions about their learning. Students' active involvement in their own learning is a vital reality in active learning classroom.

In addition, in active learning classroom, the teacher has to structure the classroom so that students and teachers can share the control of their environment. Students are directly involved in all matters that occur in the classroom that affect their being there as learners and as people.

To sum up, the effective implementation of active learning is one of the basic criteria to be an effective teacher. If teachers are in a position to help students to learn, they must be able to select and use teaching strategies that produce learning.

## **2.6. Teacher Education and Active Learning**

Frazee *et al.* (1995:80) states that the training of teachers is a crucial factor among other factors that affect the implementation of active learning. Because the teacher is the final decision maker as regard to the actual learning opportunities provided to the students. The best designed curriculum as well as the poorest owes the ultimate success or failure to the quality of the teachers' planning and implementation. In other words, what Frazee *et.al* wants to say is, if teachers lack knowledge of the teaching (active learning) method which requires new roles and

commitment, implementation will be seriously hampered. Hence, provision of in-service teacher training is essential to acquaint teacher trainers with new teaching-learning methodologies, which are learner-oriented (active learning).

If the expectation that learners should be the agents of change is taken seriously; the capacities this work requires of them be considered carefully, current practice; pre- service and in- service teacher education be examined critically and ways to enhance teachers' learning across their careers should be explored more. (Mukalel, *et al*, 1999:301)

In line with this idea the Education and Training Policy of Ethiopia emphasizes new pre-service training packages which are strongly practice- oriented at all levels of training, so that graduating teachers attain the necessary skills and a positive attitude in the application of variety of methods (ICDR, 1998: 40)

In general, even though, the policy advocates active learning, there is a gap between theory and practice. Thus, teacher education needs to model class room teaching skills and methods that reflect and go in line with the Education and Training Policy.

## **2.7. Active Learning in English Language Teaching**

In the history of English language teaching, different methods of language teaching have been observed. These methods vary from Grammar Translation Method which focuses on lesson organized around grammar points (Richard and Rodgers 1986:19) to Communicative Language Teaching method which pays systematic attention to functional as well as structural aspects of language (Littlewood 1981:73).

The origins of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) are to be found in the changes in the British language teaching tradition dating from the late 1960s. And CLT marked a new phase in second/ foreign language teaching. This is because it is the first method that begins from what the language does, not from what it is. (Richards and Rodgers, 1986:64). In contrast to the grammar based methodology in which primary emphasis is on mastering grammatical rules, the main concern of the communicative methodology is how to use those grammatical rules to produce a meaningful language (Brumfit and Johnson 1979 and Savignon 1983 in Richard and Rodgers 1986) In short; the target of CLT is communicative competence.

Contemporarily, different countries such as China, Azerbaijan and Egypt have incorporated CLT in their curriculum with the intention of enabling students to use English language for communication. This method is also introduced in the existing curriculum of Ethiopia. Text books for different grade levels have been prepared based on this approach. The underlying assumption of using this method i.e. a shift in focus from form to function has the potential of bringing many changes in the classroom Feder on

<http://www.honolulu,hawaii.edu/intrant/teachtip.htm>.

Different scholars argue that, unlike activities in traditional setting, communicative activities are meaningful, motivating and purposeful. Larsen- Freeman (1986:133) explains that these activities incorporate many features of authentic communication such as information gap, choice and feedback. This means that as opposed to mechanical drill which allows learners little more than responding, such kind of activities enable learners to negotiate the meaning, to nominate a topic and to follow up. Therefore, in CLT communicative activities are promoted which

in turn develop learners' abilities to monitor the language as well as provide opportunities to engage them in using real communication.

In communicative language classroom, the learner is more than a passive recipient. He/she is an active participant. The communicative teacher, in his part is an initiator of situation which engages learners in language production; a facilitator of the process of communication as well as its participant (Harmer 1991); Littlewood (1981); Larsen- Freeman (1986) and Richards and Rodgers (1986). CLT therefore promotes a cooperative learning environment where teachers and learners support each other, accept each other and work together (Savignon 1983) in Richards and Rodgers 1986).

In general, according to Brown (1994:226) communicative language teaching is teaching second language for the ultimate goal of communication with other speakers of second language. In this method the learners have active role in the teaching learning process. Richards and Rodgers (1986:77) show this point as follows.

The role of the learner as negotiator between the self, the learning process, and the object of learning emerges from and interacts with the role of joint negotiator with in the group and with in the classroom procedure and activities which the group undertakes. The implication of CLT for the learner is that he should contribute as much as he gains and thereby learn in interdependent way.

Communicative language teaching therefore, advocates active learning or student- centered learning. Finally, as can be seen from the discussion above, CLT and active learning have commonalities with respect to the role the teacher and the students play in the classroom. Therefore, it can be said that the underlying methodological assumption of CLT goes in line with the active learning method.

## **2.8. Major Types of Active Learning Strategies**

To be effective, in the teaching-learning process, teachers should use different active learning methods. Because current thinking and practice in education highly advocates the need to actively involve the learner in their learning. There are lots of strategies that help to implement active learning in the classrooms. However, only some of the commonly used in EFL classes will be discussed in this section.

### **2.8.1. Group Work**

Group work is part of collaborative strategies of teaching learning. It is one of the best ways of encouraging active learning by arranging the learners' work together in group. It can take many forms involving pairs of students working together, up to ten learners together or it can involve students who work individually and come together in groups to compare and discuss the results of their group. If necessary, random, gender, interest and ability groups can be formed (kyriacou, 1998:39).

### **2.8.2. Role- playing**

Role- playing is a deliberate acting of a social role in a class room. During role-playing a small number of students present the content while others in the class observe. Students have the opportunity, to experience and analyze the specific situation being studied (Frazee, *et al* 1995:115). Role- playing fosters small group interactions. It allows students the opportunity to act out selected text.

### **2.8.3. Discussion**

Discussion in the classroom is an important kind of active learning strategy (ICDR, 1999:92). This strategy gives room for the students to

exchange, explore and air their views (Nardos, 2000:196). However, they need to be managed and organized well to be effective.

The purpose of discussion is to examine information in order to develop a deep and broader understanding of a topic. However, students should have prior knowledge and experience with a current topic for discussion to be successful. In line with this idea, Frazee, *et al* (1995:79) argued that, through discussion there is an opportunity for higher order thinking and increased interaction among all students.

#### **2.8.4 Brain storming**

This is when the students generate as many ideas as possible about a topic-an *ideal storm!* It can be a great way to start a class on any given topic. It may be done in a number of different ways: in groups –recording their ideas on chart paper, in pairs, or as a whole class, with the teacher (or a student) writing the ideas on the board or chart paper. It is a great way of finding out of the students what they already know on a subject as well as an excellent review activity. (Bonwell and Eison, 2003:132)

#### **2.8.5. Problem Solving**

Problem solving is an instructional technique where teachers and learners attempt in a conscious, planned and purposeful effort to arrive at some solution (Aggarwal 1996:91).

Learning; through problem solving focuses on activities that are relevant and useful to the life of the learner than just learning by memorizing facts that may have no connection with the learners' life. According to Lue, (2000:22) problem based learning is derived from the conviction that the learner is an active and creative individual with the will and ability to seek knowledge and self development.

In working with a problem, students can formulate hypothesis, gather relevant data, and organize the data to arrive at a conclusion.

### **Project method**

A project is a natural, life like learning activity involving the investigation and solving of problem by individuals or a group of students (ICDR, 1999:84). Ideally, project work should consist of a task to achieve some definite goal of real personal value.

The project method involves cooperative investigation of real life situation or problem under the supervision of the teacher. It encourages students to plan and carry out investigations of real life situations in the students' immediate environment individually or in group (Dary and Terry, 2000:17).

In general this approach produces a close contact with real life situations, encourages co-operations in between learners; offers opportunities to play a leadership role.

### **2.8.6. Peer-Teaching**

Peer-teaching is a participatory, active and democratic strategy integrated into the students' own experience; that results in deep learning. Peer- teaching involves occasional use of students in the class who have experiences because of their good background in particular area. Peer-teaching is also an appropriate strategy to be applied in teacher training program. It can solve the problem of large class size and it may release teacher educators' time for personal research or for producing resource based learning material (Benet *et al.*, 1996:38)

### **2.8.8 Demonstration**

A demonstration activity is when the instructors demonstrate how to do something in front of their class. The purpose of doing a demonstration is to show the students HOW to do something in both words and actions. When an instructor demonstrates, he /she should point out the process, step by step. Having written instructions on the board or on a piece of chart paper is also helpful. (Cpel, *et.al*, 1995)

### **2.8.9 Debating**

Debating is an organized discussion on an issue which is usually controversial. The class is divided into two groups, each supporting a “side” of the issue: the people who are “pro” and the people who are “against”. Each side has a leader and supporters. There is also a chair person, who keeps order during the debate. Each side presents its argument in an organized, clear, and intelligent manner. The chair person or chairing committee then decides on who has won. This is decided by judging who has made the strongest, logical arguments and who has refuted the other side’s arguments most successfully. (Chet, *et.al*.1995)

## **2.9. Factors Affecting Implementation of Active Learning**

Different educators have noted that the effective implementation of active learning can be influenced by a multiple of factors. Some of them are discussed below.

### **2.9.1 Teachers’ and students’ perception of active learning**

Teachers’ and students’ perception of active learning largely depend on the knowledge they adhere. This means that teachers and students who strongly support the traditional method of teaching assume that the teacher is the only source of knowledge and knows best. To such teachers and students teaching takes predominant

role over learning. Indeed students are assumed “empty vessels” to be filled by the teacher .O’Hara and O’Hara (1998:78). The authors further write “due to their perceptions many teachers and students tend to avoid active learning.”

### **2.9.2 Classroom Condition**

Besides social environment of a given institution, the location, size, shape and construction of the classroom, the presence and effective management of different instructional facilities like: furniture, resource center, laboratory and library services have direct bearing in the instructional methods.

Lue (2000:17) explains that teachers who teach many students in over crowded classroom often say that it is certainly not suitable to provide activities and group works for such classes. Similarly, REB of SNNP (2003:19), in its survey study has indicated that teachers believe that they cannot do practical activities, problem solving (active learning) in over crowded classrooms.

### **2.9.3 Class size**

It is not suitable to provide different experiments and group works having many students in over crowded classroom. Sguazzin and Graan, (1998:54) in their study have indicated that schools in many parts of Africa are composed of large number of students. Thus giving students enough attention and meeting the need of every student so as to engage actively in learning process is difficult.

### **2.9.4 The physical environment**

A number of schools confirmed that the physical environment (classroom arrangement, furniture arrangement, classroom appearance and layout etc) contribute a lot to promote active learning. A clean and well kept

room with appropriate resources and well aired room help to establish a positive contribution to implement active learning. (Sguazzin and Graan1998:77)

### **2.9.5 The design of the teaching module**

Most text books and modules do not incorporate active learning. They only serve one-way instruction. In one way communication the learner reads what has been written but in no way responds to the material. This greatly reduces the creativity of the learners and the implementation of active learning. (Leu, 2000:86)

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **Research Methodology and Design**

This chapter discusses the method employed, research design, procedures of data collection, the instruments used to collect data, the sampling procedure applied and the method of data analysis.

#### **3.1 The Method Employed**

As stated in chapter one, the objectives of this study are: to investigate instructors' and students' perceptions and practices of active learning; assess how the perceptions of instructors and students influence their practices of active learning and identify factors that affect the implementation of active learning. In order to achieve the intended objective, qualitative method was chosen. The reason for this basis itself on the idea of Huberman and Miles, (1994 in Bennet, *et .al* 1996) which says to investigate the issue in education, which is a human endeavor using qualitative method that seems justifiable.

#### **3.2. The Research Design**

The study attempts to describe the perceptions and practices of active learning in Dilla University. Thus descriptive survey was chosen as it enables the researcher to describe the current status of an area of study.

### **3.3. The Source of Data and Sampling Technique**

#### **3.3.1. The Source of Data**

This study was conducted in Dilla University. Hence the source of the data was English language instructors and students of the University.

#### **3.3.2. Sample Population**

According to the information obtained from the department of language, a total of 120 third year and fourth year students and 16 instructors were selected in Jan. 2008. Accordingly, 60 or 50% of the students and 8 or 50% of the instructors were included in the study. In order to secure additional information, three classes were observed three times. Further more, the three observed instructors and three students were selected and interviewed. All together 68 people were included in the study.

#### **3.3.3 Sampling Technique**

In order to get sample population purposive sampling and systematic sampling were used in the study.

### **3.4. Instruments and Procedures of Data Collection**

#### **3.4.1 Instruments**

Three main instruments of data collection namely: questionnaire, classroom observation and interview were used in the study.

##### **3.4.1.1 Questionnaire**

The questionnaires were prepared and completed by English instructors and students. The questionnaires had four parts. The first part of the questionnaire was intended to gather background information of the instructors and students. The second part of the questionnaire consisted of items that intended to examine instructors' and students' perception of active learning. The third part was about the practices of active learning strategies. In the fourth part of the questionnaire the

respondents were asked about factors that affect the implementation of active learning.

The researcher validated the instruments that were developed as follows: before the actual data collection was started; the instruments were given to colleagues so as to get valuable comments and criticisms on the strengths and weaknesses of the items. Based on the comments obtained, necessary modifications were made and given to the thesis advisor for further comments, criticisms and evaluation.

Then the instruments were tried out in small-scale study that was undertaken in Hawassa University.

The total number of participants in the try out study was 3 instructors and 12 students. After administering the instruments, some participants were asked for feedback. Hence, some of the questions were refined

The reliability of the instruments was tested by Cronbach alpha method. The computed reliability of the instruments was 0.82, 0.85 and 0.86. Thus, the instruments were found reliable to collect data for the main study and then administered as scheduled.

#### **3.4.1.2 Classroom Observation**

Lewy (1977:163) noted that observation is useful to indicate how the lesson is divided in a variety of activities such as: group work, individual work, role-playing, discussion and others. Hancock (1998:89) also says, "Because of the richness and credibility of information it can provide, observation being a desirable part of data gathering instrument.

Therefore, to obtain more information, observation in the actual classroom teaching and learning process was used as data gathering instrument. For the purpose of observation, checklist was employed. Based on this, the researcher, and his co-observer observed three classes. The average agreement calculated for each of the lesson observed was 87.2%, 83.4% and 81.6% respectively. According to Good and Brophy (1990) observers should achieve general agreement from 60-90% to get reliable data. Accordingly, the three selected classes were

observed three times each. Hence, a total of 9 observations were marked using the check list developed for the purpose. The observations were focusing on teacher- student interaction in relation to active learning, classroom facility, student population in the classroom, instructors' and students' activities.

#### **3.4.1.3 Interview**

As indicated in Wilkinson and Bhandarkar (1999:288), interviewing is necessary to get deep feeling, perceptions, values or how people interpret the world around them, and past events that are impossible to replicate. In the light of this, to supplement the data obtained through questionnaire the researcher conducted interviews with instructors and students using open- ended questions, which are related to the knowledge and practices of active learning.

#### **3.5. Procedure**

The researcher adopted three steps in collecting the data for the study. First, relevant literature was reviewed to get adequate information on the topic. Second, objectives and research question were formulated to show the direction of the study. Third, data gathering tools were developed and piloted. After the questionnaire was distributed and collected, classroom observations have taken place. Finally the interview with instructors and students was conducted.

#### **3.6 Method of Data Analysis**

The data obtained from instructors and students through questionnaires, observation and interview were analyzed using descriptive analysis method. And the result of the study is reported using percentages, mean and grand mean obtained from the numerical values assigned to the degree of agreement.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **Presentation and Analysis of Data**

#### **4.1 Analysis of the main Data**

This chapter presents the analysis and interpretation of data and the major findings of the study. In doing so, the data collected through the questionnaires and classroom observation are presented with the help of tables. The chapter is divided into three sections. Characteristics of the subjects, analysis of the main data and discussion of the major results are presented respectively.

##### **4.1.1 Characteristics of the subjects and Their Background**

###### **knowledge on active learning.**

Before discussing the data related to the major questions, a summary of characteristics of the subjects is presented here. As mentioned in chapter three, the intended information for this study has been gathered from two groups; namely, instructors and students of Dilla University. A total of 68 respondents were included in the study. Sixty of them were students and eight of them were instructors. All instructors are qualified with a Master's degree. Some of them had taken general method of teaching but most of them did not. As far as training on active learning is concerned, almost all of them did not take any, yet some are attending the Higher Diploma Program. Students on the other hand, reported that they have started attending methodology courses in the university and practicing active learning.

##### **4.1.2 Data obtained through questionnaire**

Using the instructors' and students' questionnaire, responses about their perceptions of active learning were calculated and presented. The data

taken from the surveys were analyzed in line with the research questions.

In analyzing the perceptions of instructors and students on active learning, questionnaire entitled “Knowledge and experience on active learning” (See Appendices A and B) served as the primary source of information.

**Table 4.1. Frequency Distribution of Data Collected on Perceptions of instructors**

Items	1= S. Dis agree		2= Disagree		3= Undecided		4= Agree		5= S. Agree		$(\sum vxf)$	$\frac{X=\sum Vxf}{N}$
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%		
1							4	50	4	50	36	4.5
2	4	50	3	37.5	1	12.5					13	1.6
3			4	50					4	50	32	4.0
4	8	100									8	1.0
5							2	25	6	75	38	4.75
6							2	25	6	75	38	4.75
7							4	50	4	50	36	4.5
8							5	62.5	3	37.5	35	4.4
9							1	12.5	7	87.5	39	4.9
10							5	62.5	3	37.5	35	4.4
11							2	25	6	75	38	4.8
12	2	25	6	75							14	1.8
13	3	37.5	5	62.5							13	1.6
14	4	50					4	50			20	2.5
15							4	50	4	50	36	4.5
16	4	50					4	50			20	2.5
G. Mean												3.5

Items 1-16 in Table 4.1 are presented in Appendix ‘A’.

Active learning demands not only teachers to be experts in their fields, but also that they understand how students learn. It is a challenge for teachers to accept an active learning approach. Thus it is not easy to get

teachers to join an active learning. (Derebssa, 2006:136). It was in cognizance of this fact that instructors were asked about their knowledge and experience on active learning.

Accordingly, items related to assumptions about active learning, advantages of active learning and their views about active learning were presented to find out their perceptions. The items are presented in 'Appendix A' and the data collected are presented in Table 4.1.

Item 1 says "Current knowledge depends on the previous understanding." It was widely supported by the instructors. As can be seen in table 4.1, the mean value of their responses (4.5) ranges from "Agree" to "Strongly Agree." Hence, all the Instructors agreed on the idea (assumption) that current knowledge depends on the previous knowledge or understanding.

On the other hand item 2 of the same table says. "The teacher holds most of the knowledge necessary for the students." The mean value for this response is between 1 and 2 i.e. the instructors reflected their strong disagreement. This implies that all the instructors believe that students can also be sources of knowledge.

Item 4 (see Appendix A) encountered strong disagreement by 100% of the instructors. This means that teaching facts alone is not enough to prepare students to understand their environment.

For items 5, and 6(see Appendix A) the mean values of the responses are 4.8 each. This indicates that instructors strongly agreed on the issues which say teachers must prepare students to communicate.

Item 9 says "Active learning offers opportunities for progress." Regarding this item, almost all (87.5%) of the respondents showed their strong agreement with the issue. Furthermore, the mean value of the responses (4.9) strengthens the support to the assumption raised.

Item 13 says “Active learning is not economical to use instructional aids.” A good percentage (62.5%) of the respondents disagreed with the statement.

Item 14 of the same table is about the requirement of active learning. Fifty percent of the respondents strongly disagreed with the idea and the other 50% of respondents supported the idea. But the mean value of the responses tends to disagree with the issue. The general analysis of all the items indicates that most instructors seem to have positive attitude towards active learning. The grand mean value (3.5) of all the responses tend to support the values for agree. Hence, one can deduce that the groups of instructors have perceived active learning positively. The instructors’ positive perception of active learning is strengthened by the interview conducted with them.

**Table 4.2. Frequency Distribution of Data Collected on Perceptions of Students**

Items	1= S. Dis agree		2= Disagree		3= Undecided		4= Agree		5= S. Agree		( $\sum vx_f$ )	$X = \frac{\sum Vx_f}{N}$
	F	%	f	%	F	%	f	%	F	%		
1	1	1.7	4	6.7	2	3.3	20	33.3	33	55	260	4.3
2	13	21.7	33	55	5	8.3	7	11.7	2	3.3	132	2.2
3	19	31.7	36	60	5	8.3					106	1.8
4	6	10	11	18.3	1	1.7	11	18.3	33	55	240	4.0
5					1	1.7	15	25	44	73.3	283	4.7
6	5	8.3	2	3.3	9	15	25	41.7	19	31.7	231	3.9
7					4	6.7	15	25	41	68.3	277	4.6
8	23	38.3	21	35	5	8.3	7	11.7	4	6.7	128	2.1
9					1	1.7	25	41.7	34	56.7	273	4.6
10					2	3.3	18	30	40	66.7	278	4.6
11					14	23.3	30	50	16	26.7	242	4.0
12	16	26.7	20	33.3	7	11.7	8	13.3	9	15	154	2.6
13	1	1.7	1	1.7	2	3.3	16	26.7	41	68.3	278	4.6
14			2	3.3	3	5	20	33.3	35	58.3	268	4.5
G.Mean												38

It is not only instructors' perception that affects the effective implementation of active learning instructional method. The perceptions and expectations of students also affect how learning is viewed and how teaching is organized (Derebssa, 2006:133).

In relation to this, 14 items were presented to students to find out their perceptions and their prior knowledge about active learning.

In table 4.2 item 1 states "I believe that learning depends on the previous understanding". In responding to this item 55% of the students showed their strong agreement whereas 33.5% of them expressed their agreement. About 6.7% of them showed their disagreement and 1.7 said

they strongly disagree with the idea. One of the assumptions of active learning says “The current knowledge depends on the previous understanding.” In responding to the related item, a total of 88.5% the respondents showed their agreement. This indicates that the students have good understanding on the assumption forwarded.

Item 3 states “lectures are the best ways of getting necessary knowledge.” The statement is not supported by almost all the respondents. Sixty percent of the respondents showed their disagreement and 31.7% of them strongly disagreed with the idea. A small number (8.3%) remained neutral. This seems to generalize that most of them have the assumptions that lecturing alone has nothing to do with their learning. But practically as witnessed during observation, instructors use lectures in their classrooms in contrast to their responses in questionnaire. The interview results also show that some instructors prefer lecture method to active learning. The reason for this may be the fear not to cover the portion. In item 5 of Table 4.2 (see Appendix B), the respondents were asked whether they believe active learning motivates them to learn. In responding to the item, the majority of the respondents (73.3%) replied that they strongly agree with the idea, and 25% of them again showed their agreement. And the mean value of the responses indicates strong agreement.

Learning by “doing” is a theme that many educators have stressed since John Dewey’s convincing argument that students must be engaged in all active quests for learning new ideas. Students should be presented with real life problems and then helped to discover information required to solve them (Jones, *et al.* 1994).

In line with this, respondents were given an item which states “I believe that active learning is learning by doing.” The majority of the respondents (68.3) answered that they strongly agree with the

assumption. The mean value of the responses also shows that the respondents strongly agree.

Item 10 which says: "I believe that active learning prepares us for participation." This issue was supported by the majority (66.7%) of the respondents. The mean value of the responses is between "Agree" and "strongly agree". The grand mean value of the responses of the students is between "Undecided" and "Agree".

Most instructors and students seem to have positive attitudes towards active learning. The grand mean values of instructors 3.5 and students 3.8 are tending to the value for "Agree". Hence, the two groups have perceived active learning positively. But, the observation result and the responses from the interview reflects that they do not implement active learning in their classrooms.

The next part shows us the instructors' responses on the extent to which they implement active learning.

Item 1-13 presents lists of active learning strategies presented in Appendix 'A' part II.

**Table 4.3. Frequency and Mean Values of Instructors' use of Active Learning Strategies**

Items	1= Not at all		2= rarely		3=some times		4=frequently		5= Always		$(\sum vx_f)$	$\frac{X=\sum Vx_f}{N}$
	f	%	F	%	f	%	F	%	F	%		
1					7	87.5	1	12.5			25	3.1
2			2	25	6	75					22	2.8
3					4	50			4	50	32	4.0
4					4	50	4	50			28	3.5
5							2	25	6	75	38	4.6
6									8	100	40	5.0
7					1	12.5	7	87.5			31	3.9
8					2	25	6	75			36	4.5
9	6	75	2	25							10	1.3
10							4	50	4	50	36	4.5
11							3	37.5	5	62.5	37	4.6
12					4	50	4	50			28	3.5
13					4	50			4	50	32	4.0
G mean												3.8

As can be seen from table 4.3 different active learning strategies were provided as representatives. Accordingly, the frequency distribution of the use of these strategies by respondents is presented as follows.

The first one is teacher focused method, which is “lecture/ explanation” method. It was reflected by almost all (87.5%) the instructors as it has been used sometimes. The mean value of the responses (3.1) indicates the same. In response to the item instructors pretended that they use lecture method only some times. But the observation result reveals that they tend to use lecture method frequently.

On the other hand, among common active learning strategies presented in the table 4.3, ‘Discussion’ was answered by 75% of the respondents. The method is employed ‘always’. The mean value for discussion is (5.0).

This value also indicates frequent use of discussion in the university under study.

The other active learning strategy favored by all the instructors was 'Brain storming'. The mean value (5.0) indicates that all the instructors use 'Brain storming' always. The mean value for 'Peer-Teaching' (3.9) is very nearly close to the values for 'Frequently'. This value also indicates that the instructors employ this strategy in their classrooms frequently.

Another commonly used active learning strategy, "Group work" is indicated by the mean value of 4.5. The mean value shows that the active learning strategy is used by the instructors frequently. In the same way 'Debating' is frequently employed by the instructors. The grand mean (3.8) is approaching to 4 Which is equal to the value for 'frequently'. From the instructors' responses, therefore, one can say that active learning is frequently employed in the university. Nevertheless, the observation result, the students' response and some interviewees' responses disprove this.

The following items (1-13) are related to active learning strategies in which students are supposed to take part. The items are presented in Appendix 'B' part II.

**Table 4.4. Frequency and mean values of students' participation in Active learning**

Items	1= Not at all		2= rarely		3=some times		4=frequently		5= Always		$(\sum vxf)$	$\frac{X=\sum Vxf}{N}$
	F	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	F	%		
1	2	3.3	3	5	7	11.7	25	41.7	23	38.3	244	4.1
2	20	33.3	14	23.3	11	18.3	9	15	6	10	147	2.5
3	4	6.7	12	20	17	28.3	19	31.7	8	13.3	185	3.1
4	5	8.3	10	16.7	22	36.7	12	20	11	18.3	194	3.2
5			8	13.3	15	25	12	20	25	41.7	234	3.9
6	4	6.7	7	11.7	23	38.3	14	23.3	12	20	203	3.4
7	2	3.3	6	10	23	38.3	15	25	14	23.3	213	3.6
8	6	10	14	23.3	27	45	5	8.5	8	13.3	175	2.9
9	36	60	20	33.3	1	1.7	1	1.7	2	3.3	93	1.6
10			2	3.3	10	16.7	25	41.7	23	38.3	249	4.2
11	2	3.3	6	10	10	16.7	18	30	24	40	236	3.9
12	5	8.3	9	15	17	28.3	21	35	8	13.3	198	3.3
13	2	3.3	10	16.7	27	45	11	18.3	10	16.7	167	2.8
G.Mean												3.3

The pedagogical shift from, teacher- centered approach, to student-centered / active learning, requires a fundamental change in the role of the educator from that of a didactic teacher to that of a facilitator of learning. The common element in the active learning approach is that teachers are removed from their role of standing at the front of a classroom and presenting the material. The students are placed in to the position of teaching themselves, and the instructor is converted into a coach and a helper in the process. Chet *et al* (1993).

Items in table 4.4 try to find out whether students are placed in the position of teaching themselves in participating in active learning.

The first item in the list is 'Lecture/ explanation' method. The students were asked how often they see their instructors using the strategy. In response to the item, 41.7% and 38.3% of the respondents said 'Frequently' and 'Always' respectively. The mean value of the responses (4.1) however, shows that 'Lecture/ explanation' method is frequently employed. As was seen in instructors' response to the same item, the use of lecture method was "sometimes", but the students' response and the result of observation show that lecture method is employed frequently.

As to item 5, "Discussion" is one of the most popular active learning strategies responded to by 20% and 41.7% of the respondents. The mean value of the responses is 3.9 which is very close to 4. This indicates that students participate in 'Discussion' frequently. The mean value for the response on 'Brain storming' is 3.4, and indicates that students take part in this strategy sometimes.

As far as 'Group work' is concerned, 41.7% of the respondents witnessed that they participate frequently and 38.3% of them responded that they always participate in group work. The mean value of the responses also indicates that students participate in the strategy frequently.

On the other hand, 'Debating' was responded by 45% of the students. Nevertheless, the mean value for the responses (2.8) shows that students participate in the strategy "Rarely".

The grand mean for the responses is 3.3, which means that the students participate in all the active learning strategies sometimes.

In the next part, a comparison between the instructors' use of active learning and the students is presented.

**Table 4.5. A comparison of Percentages and Mean Values of Instructors and students indicating the use of Active Learning Strategies**

No	Items	Instructors		Students	
		Frequent use of Active learning (%)	Mean Values	Frequent use of Active learning (%)	Mean Values
1	Lecture/ explanation	12.5	3.1	41.7	4.1
2	Project method	0.00	2.8	15	2.5
3	Problem solving	0.00	4.0	31.7	3.1
4	Role- playing	50	3.5	20	3.2
5	Discussion	25	4.6	20	3.9
6	Brain Storming	0.00	5.0	23.3	3.4
7	Peer- Teaching	87.5	3.9	25	3.6
8	Co-operative learning	75	4.5	8.5	2.9
9	Field trip	0.00	1.3	1.7	1.6
10	Group work	50	4.5	41.7	4.2
11	Question and Answer	37.5	4.6	30	3.9
12	Demonstration	50	3.5	35	3.3
13	Debating	0.00	4.0	18.3	2.8
G%age / mean		29.8	3.8	22.2	3.3

A comparison between the responses of instructors and that of students was made to determine the relationship between their implementation of active learning in their classrooms. The researcher also compared the average responses and mean values of instructors and students for each of the specified questions as shown in table 4.5.

According to the percentage and the mean values obtained, there is a difference in the implementation of active learning between instructors and students.

For example, problem solving approach (one of the strategies) of active learning is reported by instructors to be frequently used whereas students pointed out that they use it sometimes.

Brainstorming is again reported to be used always by the instructors but students said it is implemented only sometimes. The interview conducted with instructors and students however, revealed that both 'Problem solving' and 'Brain storming' are rarely used in the classrooms.

The mean value for debating is (4.0) for instructors, and it is (2.8) for students; i.e. instructors reported that they implement it frequently but the students claimed that they see it sometimes.

In looking at the grand mean of all the items (3.8) for the instructors, which is nearly close to "frequently", where as it is (3.3) by the students side which is only "sometimes", indicates that the implementations of active learning is not as expected to be.

The following table is about factors affecting the implementation of active learning. The items 1-12 in the table are presented in Appendix 'A' part III.

**Table 4.6. Percentage and Mean Values of Factors Affecting Instructors' Implementation of Active Learning**

Items	1= Serious		2= Undecided		3= Serious		4= Most Serious		( $\sum vxf$ )	$\frac{X=\sum Vxf}{N}$
	F	%	f	%	f	%	F	%		
1			4	50	1	12.5	3	37.5	23	2.9
2	4	50			3	37.5	1	12.5	17	2.1
3	3	37.5	1	12.5	4	50			17	2.1
4	5	62.5			1	12.5	2	25	16	2.0
5	5	62.5			3	37.5			14	1.6
6	3	37.5	2	25	1	12.5	2	25	18	2.3
7	1	12.5			3	37.5	4	50	26	3.3
8	3	32.5			1	12.5	4	50	22	2.6
9	2	25	2	25	4	50			18	2.3
10	4	50	1	12.5	3	37.5			15	1.9
11	6	75	2	25					10	1.3
12	2	25	2	25	3	37.5	1	12.5	19	2.4
G. Mean										2.3

Table 4.6 shows factors affecting instructors' implementation of active learning. In this part there were twelve factors assumed to be affecting factors in the implementation of active learning. Among these factors, the researcher has selected four of the factors to discuss. The factors are selected because they are indicated by the respondents to be significantly affecting factors in the implementation of active learning.

1. Students' lack of interest in active learning -50%
2. Students' belief and perception – 50%
3. Large class size – 50%
4. Instructors Belief and perception -50%

There is no question that interest, belief and perceptions are crucial factors in implementing active learning in classrooms.

As can be seen from table 4.6, one of the hindering factors for the implementation of active learning is lack of students' interest in active learning. This factor is proposed by 50% of the instructors as a serious one. Another negatively affecting factor of the implementation of active learning proposed by the instructors is students' belief and perception. According to the instructors' interview, students do not like to be taught by active learning method. Hence, instructors face difficulties to implement active learning.

It is also very difficult to apply active learning to large classes and in a situation where there is negative perception for the teachers/instructors become reluctant. In line with this, 50% of the instructors identified that large class size and perception of the teachers are the most serious factors affecting the implementation of active learning. Students on their part indicated factors that affect their participation in active learning.

Table 4.7 presents the items 1-12 which are in Appendix 'B' part III.

**Table 4.7. Percentage and mean values of factors affecting student's participation in active learning**

Items	1= Not Serious		2= Undecided		3= Serious		4=n Most serious		( $\sum vxf$ )	$\frac{X=\sum Vxf}{N}$
	F	%	F	%	f	%	F	%		
1	14	23.3	6	10	17	28.3	23	38.3	169	2.8
2	10	16.7	9	15	25	41.7	16	26.7	167	2.8
3	33	55	13	21.7	7	11.7	7	11.7	108	1.8
4	5	8.3	11	18.3	21	35	23	38.3	182	3.0
5	16	26.7	17	28.3	16	26.7	11	18.3	142	2.4
6	14	23.3	9	15	19	31.7	18	30	161	2.7
7	21	35	10	16.7	12	20	17	28.3	145	2.4
8	9	15	14	23.3	27	45	15	25	178	3.0
9	17	28.3	11	18.3	19	31.7	13	21.7	148	2.5
10	23	38.3	8	13.3	13	21.7	16	26.7	142	2.4
11	7	11.7	16	26.7	24	40	13	25.7	163	2.7
12	5	8.3	8	13.3	35	58.3	12	20	174	3.0

It is no wonder that the shortage of time (item 2) in applying active learning is indicated as one of the major factors. This factor was selected as a serious one by 41.7% of the students.

Some students' dominance and the design of the teaching module are also assumed to affect the implementation of active learning. Accordingly 40% and 58.3% of the students proposed these factors respectively as serious problems.

The other factor proposed as a hindering factor to implementing active-learning is instructors' tendency to use lecture method. Thirty eight

percent of the students pointed that this factor is the most serious one in the use of active learning.

Many researchers pointed out that time constraint is the major factor in implementing active learning. For example, Capel *et al* (1995), explain that, some teachers dislike active learning simply because it brings an extra demand in the planning, preparation and evaluation. They believe that active learning is pressurized by time table. In connection to this 30% the students pointed out that the time table is the most serious problem in the implementation of active learning.

Knowledge and experience of instructors and students have been assessed through different questions. Instructors and students were asked to reflect their perceptions on active learning as shown in table 4.6 (Instructors) and table 4.7 (Students)

#### **4.1.3. Presentation and Analysis of Data Obtained through Observation.**

The analysis and presentation of the data collected through classroom observation is presented below. To fulfill the purpose of the observation, three randomly selected instructors were observed. The data based on the requirement of the classroom checklist (see appendix “C”) were collected. They are analyzed in separate tables. The observation was conducted by the researcher and his co-observer and the result of observed cases were added up and presented in the following tabl

**Table4.8 Classroom condition**

<b>No</b>	<b>Items</b>	<b>Yes</b>		<b>No</b>	
		<b>No</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>%</b>
1	Is there enough sitting space for all students?	7	78	2	22
2	Are the seats movable?	7	78	2	22
3	Is the classroom lay- out arranged to facilitate active learning?	3	33	6	67
4	Are the desks arranged in straight row?	-	-	9	100
5	Is the class size appropriate?	1	11	8	89
6	Is there enough space for movement between desks?	1	11	8	89

As depicted in table 4.8 the data obtained from classroom observation proved that the classroom condition and seating arrangement is not convenient to implement active learning. One major problem observed in the classroom is the lay-out of the classes. Majority (67%) of the observation result indicates that the classroom lay-out is not arranged to facilitate active learning.

The physical environments of the classroom do not reflect the required condition for active learning practices.

**Table 4.9. Instructors' activities**

No	Items	Yes		No	
		No	%	No	%
1	Arranging students for different classroom activity	2	22	7	78
2	Clarifying the learning objectives	1	11	8	89
3	Giving direction about procedures and activities	1	11	8	89
4	Using different instructional methods to implement active learning	-	-	9	100
5	Encouraging students to become active participant	2	22	7	78
6	Managing the class for active learning implementation	2	22	7	78
7	Using questions to elicit students' ideas	3	33	6	67

In table 4.9 above, the classroom observation result indicates that majority of the activities expected to be practiced by the instructors were not observed. For instance, 100% of the observed classes did not show the use of different instructional methods to implement active learning. In the interview conducted with the instructors, some of the instructors confirmed that applying all the activities in classroom is difficult. This indicates that the instructors implement the traditional/teacher fronted approach to teaching. The reasons for not applying the activities mentioned in table 4.9 may be lack of training on active learning and classroom conditions such as large class size and fixed desks.

**Table 4.10. Activities of students during the lesson**

No	Items	Yes		No	
		No	%	No	%
1	Students are participating in problem solving activities	-	-	9	100
2	Students are playing roles	2	22	7	78
3	Students are discussing issues in groups	3	33	6	67
4	Students are taking part in peer-teaching	3	33	6	67
5	Students are practicing demonstration	1	11	8	89

The observation result of table 4.10 shows that students are not portraying the required behavior for their own learning. Among 9 observed sessions, only 33% of them were observed discussing issues in their groups. The main reason for their poor participation may be the failure of their instructors to use active learning in their respective classes.

**Table 4.11. Utilization of Instructional Materials**

No	Items	Yes		No	
		No	%	no	%
1	Are there charts, posters, diagrams, etc?	2	22	7	78
2	Does the instructor use the instructional materials other than books, charts, posters?	-	-	9	100
3	Does the instructor illustrate ideas using instructional materials?	-	-	9	100

Availability of instructional materials in classroom is the major factor to enhance the whole process of education. Whereas in table, 4.11 the observation result indicates that in the 78% of the observed classes, there was no instructional material. Moreover in 100% of the observed classes, the instructors do not use instructional materials.

To sum up, the utilization of instructional materials in the observed classes was found to be at a minimum level. This is might be due to lack of resources to be used.

**Table 4. 12. Classroom Evaluation**

No	Items	Yes		No	
		No	%	No	%
1	The instructor gives group work activities, for the learners to participate.	3	33	6	67
2	The instructor follows up students' participation	2	22	7	78
3	The instructor elicits responses from the students	4	44	5	56
4	The instructor evaluates students' group cooperation	4	44	5	56
5	The instructor checks and gives constructive feedback to students work	3	33	6	67

Table 4.12 above indicates that all classroom activities are not well performed by the instructors. For example, many instructors do not give group work activities, ask questions or give exercises. Moreover almost all of the instructors do not follow up students' participation and activities. According to the observation result, only 33% of the

instructors check and give constructive feedback to students' work. In an active learning classroom however, classroom assessment motivates the learners towards their learning. (TESO, 2003)

#### **4.1.4. Data obtained through interview**

##### **4.1.4.1 Presentations and analysis of Data Obtained through Interview**

The analysis of data gathered through interview has also shown consistent results with findings of questionnaire and observation. It has also signified that instructors employ active learning occasionally.

##### **4.1.4.2 Instructors' Perceptions of Active learning**

The interview with the instructors and students examined how they perceive active learning. General affective statements indicating negative or positive feelings towards active learning measured individual's perceptions.

The data were organized into two categories .They are instructors' and students' perception of active learning.

Perception plays a great role to facilitate or hinder individual's activity. According to Morgan, et al (1986:1580) perception of an individual refers to the way any event in the world and the world itself looks, sounds, feels, tastes or smells to him. Therefore, it seems apparent that instructors' perception of active learning has an important role in influencing the effective implementation of active learning in the classroom either positively or negatively. These conditions were highlighted in the interview conducted with the instructors' group about their perception on active learning. There were three instructors who participated in detailed interview. They perceived the active learning positively even though they did not employ it effectively in their classroom.

*The researcher: How do you feel about the practicability of active learning in your classroom?*

*The instructor (Daniel): I have experienced active learning for the last four years. I am really interested and believe in the views of active learning. It is exactly the way in which one can learn. I have also taken the training that improves my method of teaching. Before five years, I really thought that using active learning was wastage of time. But now I can practically see that student s learn more when they are engaged in activities that make them participant. As to its practicability, it is difficult to make it 100% because of some factors such as interest.*

*Another instructor (Admasu) on the other hand put his perception of active learning by saying “It is more of theory than practice.” And explained in detail what he feels. The researcher asked the same question:*

*The instructor replied: I think I see active learning differently. Some think as if it is totally practical “TESO” guide line for assessment for example, is theoretically very useful, but practically impossible for a number of reasons like large class size ,work load of instructors, lack of teaching material, lack of interest and some complaints of both the instructors and students. The same holds true with active learning implementation. Therefore, provision of teaching materials, budget and technology should be considered to make it effective. In addition to the above factors, instructors’ lack of interest and training on such methodology may affect its practicability. If all these problems are minimized and the instructors accept it willingly active learning may become suitable in different situations.*

*The researcher: To what extent is active learning used in your classroom?*

*Almaz: Even though a number of problems exist, I can say we have to try to use active learning in the classroom frequently. For instance I use active learning strategies like brainstorming, group discussion, role play, peer-teaching etc frequently.*

*The researcher: can you tell me some of your pre-service and in-service training and your experience on any different instructional methods?*

*Getahun: I have taken Higher Diploma Program; I have also taken training on teaching methodologies and attended work shops and seminars.*

#### **4.1.4.3. Students Perception of Active learning**

Most students have perceived active learning positively. There appeared to agree about the importance of active learning. Most of them felt that active learning is helpful. They have also experienced success in grades because they learn through this approach. Moreover, students expressed its positive implication more than its negative implication. The following view from an interview of students highlights the above ideas. One of the participant group members (S1) explained his perception of active learning as follows:

*The researcher: How do you feel about the practicability of active learning?*

*The student (Sinishaw): As to me the assumptions of active learning are useful for students' learning. But regarding its practicability, it depends on some factors like shortage of time, interest of instructors to teach using active learning, lack of modules etc. Such factors make its practicability less even though it is useful.*

*Another student (Endrias) explains his feeling as follows:*

*The researcher: Are there some benefits because you learn through active learning?*

*Endrias: Of course there are many. Active learning helped me to explain my feeling with confidence. Especially, during group work, and project work. I apply it in my own learning situation. But active learning is time killing and we are in short of time and modules. Some modules lack clarity to use them in active learning.*

*Another interviewee (Mignot) explained her feeling of active learning as follows:*

*The researcher: What do you comment on the method of teaching in general and the application of active learning in particular in your English courses?*

*The student (Mignot): As explained by friends, active learning in principle is a good way of learning. But it has also some short comings. For instance, in the name of continuous assessment some instructors give unfair grades. Further more activities given to students are too many and make students very busy. A disagreement of students during group discussion is also another short coming of active learning. Besides those problems, there have been encouraging steps in the department of languages.*

## **4.2. Discussion of Results**

In this part of the paper, an attempt is made to explain the results of the study with reference to the basic questions formulated under statement of the problem. The major ideas or theme of the discussion are:

- Perception of instructors and students
- Practices of active learning
- Factors affecting implementation of active learning

### **4.2.1. Perception of Instructors and Students**

Various research findings confirmed that there is strong tie between instructors' and students' attitudes towards active learning and their effort in implementing it.

For instance, a survey study carried out in Botswana, in 1999 proved that instructors and students who had a positive attitude towards active learning showed a better effort in implementing and using active learning than those instructors and students who perceived active learning negatively (GDE, 1999:69). Similarly, Sguazzin and Grann (1998) showed that teachers' attitudes have a great influence in the effective implementation of active learning. In line with these ideas, sixteen statements for the instructors and fourteen statements for the students were included in the questionnaires with the intention of assessing their knowledge or perception of active learning. Hence, it appeared that almost all of the instructors and students showed their agreement and strong agreement with the assumption of active learning raised in the questionnaires.

The level of their agreement with the assumptions of active learning shows us that the instructors and the students have perceived active learning positively. But their positive perception doesn't let them to

practice active learning in their classroom. This is also witnessed during the classroom observation.

#### **4.2.2. Practices of Active Learning**

To assess the extent to which active learning has been practically implemented in the university, the two groups (instructors and students) reacted either through questionnaire or the interview. To substantiate the data, structured observation was also made. To this end, the instructors' and the students' questionnaires were developed to determine the frequency of using various active learning instructional practices. The instructors and the students marked their questionnaires by indicating how often they practically use these active learning strategies by ticking a response to each item. By doing so, the magnitude of using active learning was treated.

Accordingly, the instructors identified the frequency with which they implement active learning from the responses of the questionnaire, observation and interview. These data indicate that the instructors implement active learning occasionally in their classroom. The responses of the instructors to question related to their use of active learning were validated by the responses of the students.

Students generally tended to agree with the instructors about the frequency of the use of active learning. (Appendix 'B' part III)

The most frequently practiced active learning strategies reported by the instructors and students were group work, discussion, role-playing, peer-teaching and cooperative learning.

These methods were employed widely because most probably, both the instructors and the students were familiarized with the methods. But these strategies especially, discussion and group work can help to

develop only lower level of cognitive domain. On the other hand, other active learning strategies related to higher level of cognitive domain believed to develop critical thinking and problem solving capacity of the students were not widely practiced. The majority of the students disclosed that these strategies were employed rarely.

In line with this, Bonweel and Eison (2003:76) noticed that students must do more than just listen. They need to read, write, discuss or engage in problem solving activities.

In real active learning model, students must be engaged in higher order thinking skills as synthesis, analysis and evaluation.

Again strong relationships between the perception of instructors and students established between group work and discussion. In general, both the instructors and students agreed that active learning practice takes place sometimes.

Finally, the remaining active learning strategies, role-play, debating, cooperative learning are practiced sometimes in the university as depicted in the finding.

Based on the position of the two groups of respondents and the interview and observation made by the researcher, it is possible to infer that the extent of the practice of active learning in the university is low.

#### **4.2.3 Factors affecting the implementation of active learning**

Like any other educational issue in the teaching-learning process, it is also possible to think that active learning may have shortcomings or constraints during its implementation in the real classroom conditions. Of these constraints, the researcher has selected four most serious possible factors affecting the implementation of active learning in the

university. These factors are selected on the basis of their frequencies in the responses of the instructors and students. Shortage of time is among these factors. With respect to this problem the two groups of the respondents agreed that the time table was the major problem negatively affecting the implementation of active learning. Supporting this fact, Farant (1980) explains the effect of time. The author stresses that shortage of time limits instructors and students from implementing active learning in the classroom.

In this study, the instructors' tendency towards traditional lecture method is blamed as an obstacle in the implementation of active learning by many students and some instructors.

With respect to this problem, the two groups of respondents again agreed that the tendency of instructors and students to the traditional methods of teachers' explanation or lecture was the major problem negatively influencing the effective implementation of active learning.

In this connection, Hailom (1998) explains the tendency of teachers to the traditional lecture method. He stresses that, many teachers perceived teaching as a transmission process where the teacher transmits knowledge to students and the students receive that knowledge based on specified official syllabus.

On the other hand, Bennet *et.al* (1996) noticed that most students fall into "old" curriculum and expect their instructors to lecture to them in traditional classroom manner. Sometimes, it is observed that students categorize teachers who initiated them to practice active learning in the class as either not well prepared or incompetent.

The question here is why instructors tend to use traditional method of teaching. It is observed from their background information that most of

them did not get training on active learning. Further more the classroom condition and the lack of resources force them to prefer lecture method.

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **5. SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION**

This chapter deals with summary, conclusion and recommendations. In this section first, a summary of the study and the major findings are made. Second, conclusions of the fundamental findings are drawn. Lastly some possible recommendations are forwarded on the basis of the findings of the study.

#### **5.1 Summary**

The purpose of this study was to investigate perceptions and practices of active learning in Dilla University's EFL classes. In order to achieve this purpose, the following specific questions were raised in the study.

- 1 How do instructors and students perceive active learning?
- 2 How often do instructors employ active learning in their classrooms?
- 3 How often do students participate in active learning strategies?
- 4 What are the factors that affect the practices of active learning?

The data were gathered mainly through questionnaire, observation and interview from all the respondents. The data obtained were analyzed in percentages, mean values and grand mean values. Based on the analysis of the data, the following findings were obtained from the study.

#### **5.2 Major Findings**

##### **5.2.1. Perceptions of instructors and students**

The analysis of the data indicates that almost all of the subjects of the study have perceived active learning positively. However, the extent of

perception varies between the instructors and students; i.e. it is higher among the students than instructors. Moreover, it was indicated that:

- a. The participant groups assure that when the instructors use active learning, the students learn better and develop the ability to express their feelings confidently.
- b. The participants view that active learning plays an important role in developing self-confidence.
- c. The respondents who developed negative feeling towards active learning say that active learning adds more work and requires additional effort.

### **5.2.2. Practices of active learning**

The analysis of the data disclosed that the extent of the practices of active learning in the university was found to be low. The two groups of the respondents confirmed that they practice active learning in their classrooms “sometimes”, which leads to the conclusion that the practices of active learning are low.

On the other hand, the practices of active learning varied as indicated in the analysis of the data. Accordingly,

1. Most instructors used lecture method in their classrooms frequently which mean it is a teacher-centered method.
2. Discussion and group work are the two predominantly employed active learning strategies in the university next to lecture method.
3. Project work and peer-teaching are the third most commonly employed active learning methods.
4. Although problem solving strategy as active learning method is believed to promote learners critical thinking ability, it has been employed rarely.
5. Field trip, role-playing and brain storming are not frequently employed in the university.

### **5.2.3. Factors affecting the implementation of active learning**

The findings on twelve factors indicated how active learning is affected in various ways. Some of them are presented below.

1. The majority of the respondents in the two groups asserted that students lack of interest in participating in active learning greatly affected the implementation of active learning in their classrooms.
2. The other factors suggested as problem for the effective implementation of active learning were shortage of time and lack of resources.
3. Large class size is also indicated as the major problem in implementing active learning.

### **5.3 Conclusion**

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

1. Although they lack the necessary commitment to implement active learning, the instructors of EFL in the university seem to be aware of the importance of active learning. Thus, it can be concluded that the instructors perceived active learning positively.
2. Active learning is practiced sometimes in the EFL classes of the university.
3. The quality and type of curriculum material is one major component in the implementation of active learning. But the finding of the study has shown that there is shortage of teaching module and some modules lack clarity to be used in active learning classrooms.
4. Concerning the key factors that affect the implementation of active learning, the following are found to be negatively affecting.

- Instructors and students tendency to favor traditional/lecture method.
- Large class size.
- Lack of recourses.
- Shortage of time.
- The design of the teaching material.

## **5.4 Recommendations**

### **5.4.1 Teachers' Training**

It is difficult to realize the intended objectives and practices without considering various factors that could contribute in one way or the other to enhancing learning at any level. This is because educational achievements are the outcomes of interwoven factors. Based on the findings of the study, the researcher would like to forward the following recommendations for the improvement of the practices of active learning.

1. From the background information of instructors it was observed that majority of them did not get training on active learning. This hinders their implementation of active learning. Therefore, it is important to conduct in- service training so that their use of active learning strategies will be improved.
2. The background information of the instructors shows that some of them did not get training on general method of teaching. This leads the magnitude of practicing active learning to be low. Hence, short-term training for the instructors on the issue should be emphasized in the university.

### **5.4.2 Class size**

Class size was one of the major factors which hinder the implementation of active learning. The condition of the classrooms and the number of

students do not match in the study area and this affects the implementation of active learning. Having appropriate class size may not always be possible. Therefore, the implementers of active learning should see alternative solutions such as, dividing students into two groups, using halls, language laboratories and fields.

#### **5.4.3. The design of Teaching Module**

The teaching material development should not be the task of one or two experts. It should be the result of cooperative effort of different knowledgeable and skilled professionals. Pedagogical, language and subject editors should be involved in the process of designing of teaching modules. Therefore, the module writers should include activities, exercises, group works, pair works, debating during the design of the modules since instructional materials have a great role in the implementation of active learning.

#### **5.4.4. Classroom conditions**

The result of this study revealed that the classroom condition to implement active learning tends to be low. The major reasons appear to be, large class size, lack of resources and other instructors and students related factors. Hence, an overall assessment and discussion is needed between implementers of active learning (instructors and students) to enhance the implementation of active learning.

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**Appendix - A**  
**Addis Ababa University**  
**Institute of Language Studies**  
**Department of Foreign Languages and Literature**  
**(Graduate Program)**

**Questioner to be filled by Instructors**

This questionnaire is designed to gather data on “perceptions and practices of Active learning in Dilla University.”

The data to be collected through the questionnaire is highly valuable to meet the objectives of this study. Therefore, you are kindly requested to fill in and return the questionnaire. The information you supply would be used for academic purpose only and kept confidential.

Thank you in advance

General instruction:

- Please, do not write your name on the questionnaire
- Please, follow the directions given in each part.

Part I Personal information

1. Sex \_\_\_\_\_
2. Qualification \_\_\_\_\_
3. Years of Service as a teacher \_\_\_\_\_
4. Work load per week \_\_\_\_\_

## Part I

**Instruction:** Items related to your knowledge and experiences on active learning strategies are provided below. Please give your appropriate response to each item based on your understanding and experience. Your responses could vary from “Strongly agree” to “strongly disagree” use tick “√” mark to give your responses.

Key: 5 = strongly agree  
4=Agree  
3 = Undecided  
2=Disagree  
1 = Strongly Disagree

No	Items	5	4	3	2	1
1	Current knowledge depends on the previous understanding.					
2	The teacher holds most of the knowledge necessary for the students.					
3	Students learn when there is interaction.					
4	I believe that teaching facts alone is enough to prepare students to understand their environment.					
5	Teachers must encourage students to communicate effectively.					
6	Teaching must prepare students to solve problems.					
7	Active learning is intellectually more stimulating.					
8	Active learning enhances the development of sense of commitment.					
9	Active learning offers opportunities for progress.					
10	Active learning prepares students for participation					
11	Active learning makes students responsible for their own learning.					
12	I know that active learning adds work load on teachers.					
13	Active learning is not economical to use instructional aids.					
14	Active learning requires a lot of time.					
15	The implementation of active learning requires well- trained teachers.					
16	In using active learning, teachers find it difficult to cover the prescribed syllabus.					

## Part II

**Instruction:** Items related to your practices of different active learning Strategies are listed below. Please indicate the extent to which you use them in your classroom and rate according to the following scale.

Key:                    5 = Always  
                             4 = Frequently  
                             3 = Some times  
                             2 = Rarely  
                             1 = Not at all

No	How often do you use these active learning strategies	5	4	3	2	1
1	Lecture/ explanation					
2	Project method					
3	Problem solving method					
4	Role-playing					
5	Discussion					
6	Brain storming					
7	Peer Teaching					
8	Cooperative learning					
9	Field trip					
10	Group work					
11	Question and Answer					
12	Demonstration					
13	Debating					

**Part III.**

**Instruction:** To what extent have the following factors impeded your use of active learning methods in your class room. Please, rate them from “serious” to “not serious” based on the seriousness of the problem and use tick “√” mark to indicate your response.

Key: 4 = Most serious  
 3 = Serious  
 2 = Undecided  
 1 = Not serious

No	Factors Affecting Implementation of Active learning	4	3	2	1
1	Instructors’ tendency to use traditional/ lecture method				
2	Shortage of time to practice active learning in classroom				
3	Student’ lack of interest in active learning				
4	Instructors’ lack of interest in active learning				
5	Lack of resources				
6	Time table				
7	Large class size				
8	Instructors’ belief and perception				
9	Students’ belief and perception				
10	Diversity of students’ interest				
11	Some students’ dominance during group activities				
12	The design of the teaching module				

\* If there are any other factors, please specify \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Appendix -C**  
**Addis Ababa University**  
**Institute of Language Studies**  
**Department of Foreign Languages and Literature**  
**(Graduate Program)**

The main purpose of this observation checklist is to assess the activities practiced in the classroom in relation to the implementation of active learning. The activities will be marked in the category of Yes/No on the basis of whether they happen or not in the classroom.

**Classroom Observation Check list for Active learning practices.**

**Part I.**

General Information

Name of the university \_\_\_\_\_

Lesson being observed \_\_\_\_\_

Number of students in the class: Male \_\_\_\_\_ Female \_\_\_\_\_ Total \_\_\_\_\_

**Part II.**

<b>No</b>	<b>List of Observation</b>		
<b>1</b>	<b>Classroom condition</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
1.1	Is there enough sitting space for all students?		
1.2	Are the seats movable?		
1.3	Is the classroom layout arranged to facilitate active learning?		
1.4	Is there enough space for movement between desks?		
1.5	Is the class size appropriate?		
1.6	Is there group work activity?		
1.7	Are the desks arranged in straight row?		
<b>2</b>	<b>Instructors' Activity</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
2.1	Arranging students for different classroom activity		
2.2	Clarifying the learning objective		
2.3	Giving direction about the procedures and activities		
2.4	Using different instructional methods to implement active learning.		
2.5	Encouraging students to become active participant		
2.6	The instructor is more active than the students.		
2.7	The instructor is active in explaining, monitoring and describing.		
2.8	Managing the class for active learning implementation.		
2.9	Using an exercise to elicit students' ideas knowledge and skill.		
<b>3</b>	<b>Activities of Students During the Lesson</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
3.1	Students are participating in problem solving activities		
3.2	Students are playing roles		
3.3	Students are discussing issues in groups		
3.4	Students are taking part in peer teaching		
3.5	Students are practicing demonstration		
<b>4</b>	<b>Utilization of Instructional Material</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>

4.1	Are there charts, posters, diagrams?		
4.2	Does the teacher use these instructional materials other than books?		
4.3	Does the teacher illustrate ideas, concepts or points with the help of different instructional materials?		
<b>5</b>	<b>Class Evaluation</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
5.1	Instructor gives group work, ask questions gives exercises for the learners		
5.2	Instructor follows up students' participation and activities		
5.3	Instructor elicits response from learners instead of supplying answers		
5.4	Instructor evaluates students group cooperation		
5.5	Instructor checks and gives constructive feed back to the students' work.		
3.6	Students are listing passively during the lesson.		

**Appendix- B**  
**Addis Ababa University**  
**Institute of Language Studies**  
**Department of Foreign Languages and Literature**  
**(Graduate Program)**  
**Questioner to be filled by Students**

This questionnaire is designed to gather data on “perceptions and practices of Active learning in Dilla University.”

The data to be collected through the questionnaire is highly valuable to meet the objectives of this study. Therefore, you are kindly requested to fill in and return the questionnaire. The information you supply would be used for academic purpose only and kept confidential.

Thank you in advance

General instruction:

- Please, do not write your name on the questionnaire
- Please, follow the directions given in each part.

Part I Personal information

1. Sex \_\_\_\_\_
2. Year \_\_\_\_\_
- 3.
4. Number of periods per weak \_\_\_\_\_

**Part I.**

**Instruction:** Items related to your knowledge and experiences on active learning strategies are provided below. Please give appropriate responses for each items based on your understanding and experiences. Your responses could vary from “Strongly agree: to “strongly disagree”. Use a tick “√” make to respond.

Key 5 = Strongly Agree      2= Disagree  
 4 = Agree                      1=Strongly disagree  
 3 = Undecided

No	Items	5	4	3	2	1
1	I believe that learning depends on the previous understanding.					
2	I believe that the teacher holds most of the knowledge necessary for us to learn.					
3	As to me lectures are the best ways of getting knowledge					
4	I learn more when I discuss in groups with students					
5	I believe that active learning motivates us to learn					
6	I believe that It is helpful if teachers tell us exactly what we need to do to learn.					
7	I believe that active learning is learning by doing					
8	I feel that active learning is a mechanism to make us busy all the time.					
9	I believe that learning is self- initiated.					
10	I believe that active learning prepares us for participation					
11	I learn more when I engage in open- ended activities.					
12	Active learning enhances passiveness instead of active involvement in learning.					
13	Active learning enhances self-confidence					
14	I feel that students work best when they are praised.					

**Part II.**

**Instruction:** The following are assessing the extent of your participation in active learning in your classroom. Please, provide appropriate responses using tick “√” mark in front of the corresponding items.

- Key:      5 = Always  
            4 = Frequently  
            3 = Some times  
            2 = Rarely  
            1 = Not at all

No	How often do you participate in these active learning strategies?	5	4	3	2	1
1	Lecture/ explanation					
2	Project method					
3	Problem solving method					
4	Role-playing					
5	Discussion					
6	Brain storming					
7	Peer Teaching					
8	Cooperative learning					
9	Field trip					
10	Group work					
11	Question and Answer					
12	Demonstration					
13	Debating					

**Part III.**

**Instruction:** To what extent have the following factors impeded your use of active learning methods in your class room. Please, rate them from “serious” to “not serious” based on the seriousness of the problem and use tick “√” mark to indicate your response.

Key: 4 = Most serious  
 3 = Serious  
 2 = Undecided  
 1 = Not serious

No	Factors Affecting Implementation of Active learning	4	3	2	1
1	Instructors’ tendency to use traditional/ lecture method				
2	Shortage of time to practice active learning in classroom				
3	Student lack of interest in active learning				
4	Instructors’ lack of interest in active learning				
5	Lack of resources				
6	Time table				
7	Large class size				
8	Instructors’ belief and perception				
9	Students’ belief and perception				
10	Diversity of students’ interest				
11	Some students’ dominance during group activities				
12	The design of the teaching module				

\* If there are any other factors, please specify \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Appendix-E**  
**Interview Guide to Students**

1. Can you tell me something about your experience on different instructional methods in your high school education?
2. What do you know about active learning?
3. What significant differences are there between active learning and traditional method of teaching?
4. What major problems do you think affect the implementation of active learning?
5. Do you think that the present teaching modules or text books are prepared in a way that instructors or students can employ active learning?

## **Appendix-D**

### **Interview Guides to Instructors**

1. How do you feel the practicability of active learning in your classrooms?
2. Do you think using active learning has advantages in the teaching-learning process?
3. Do you practice this strategy in your classroom? If yes, mention some of the strategies you employ.
4. What are the challenges you faced in the practices of active learning?
5. Do you think the way you have been taught affect the way you teach now?

## **APPENDIX\_F**

### Notes from the interview

The sample interview conducted with the instructors.

The researcher: how do you feel about the practicability of active Learning in your classroom?

The instructor (Daniel): have experienced active learning for the last four years.

-I'm really interested in the assumptions and views of active learning.

-It is the way in which one can learn.

-I have taken short term training that helps me to improve my method of teaching.

-Five years before I thought that active learning was wastage of time.

-But now----yea, I can practically see that I can Help my students in using active learning.

The researcher: Do you really think that using active learning has advantages?

Daniel: -Of course yes! You know ----students can practice every activities in active learning. For example, we are training the would be teachers. Therefore, they should practice it here.

-And experience what teaching looks like in the form of peer-teaching.

The researcher: You practice active learning in your classroom, right?

Daniel: -Yea! But you see there are problems to fully practice it.

The researcher: Like what?

Daniel: -For example, as you have observed the classes they are not convenient, no resources are there, some students are not

interested in active learning. But still I try all my best to use active learning in my classroom.

The researcher: How about the way you've been taught? Does it affect?

Daniel: -Before I took the training on how to implement active learning and Higher Diploma, it was really challenging to employ active learning. But the training changed the story. In fact, the way we have been taught can influence the implementation of active learning.

The researcher: Ok! Thank you for your genuine cooperation.

Daniel: -Thank you.

The second interviewee was Admassu

The researcher: how do you feel about the practicability of active Learning?

Admassu: - Active learning for me is more of theory than practice

-I see it differently

- It is impossible to practice it for a number of reasons

The researcher: Can you mention some of the reasons?

Admassu: the absence of teaching material, budget, technology, instructors' and students' lack of interest and many, others. If you ask me for example, I don't like it because, it doesn't Match to Ethiopian context.

The researcher: Have you ever practiced active learning in your classroom?

Admassu: I tried several times and found it not feasible. Hence, I decided to use the way I used to teach.

The researcher: Do you think that the way you have been taught is better than active learning and want to employ it?

Admassu: Look! If you don't have facility trying to use the new method may not be practical. But in the way I used to learn and I teach my students is better in that I give them highlight and students refer to books and learn more. This is what I personally think.

The next interviewee is a female, instructor in the university.

The researcher: Would you tell me about the practicability of active learning in your classroom?

Almaz: The assumptions, theories and principles of active learning are very nice

-As to me active learning is useful to both the teachers and the students.

-It is not time consuming as many people think

- Students participate actively in this method i.e active learning

-Because of this it is rather time saving.

The researcher: Do you practice it regularly in your classroom?

Almaz: -By the way it is not that easy to implement all the assumptions, theories and principles of active learning, there are shortcomings.

The researcher: What are these shortcomings?

Almaz: Well---time, resources, large class size, and students' interest can affect, the practices of active- learning.

The researcher: Which one is the most serious?

Almaz: -Large class size, shortage of time, lack of students' interest, even some instructors lack of interest the teaching module, lack of appropriate training on the practices of active learning the major ones.

The researcher: How about your interest? I mean----are you---

Almaz: Oh! Had there been good facility, there is no question for interest. All instructors will like it.

The researcher: Do you think the way we have been taught affect the  
Way we practice active learning?

Almaz: I don't think so! But some teachers like the traditional  
approach to teaching. But I think it is tiresome for me.

-The influence of the way we have been taught can be reflected  
On those instructors who use the traditional method.

The researcher: Thank you Almaz for your time

Almaz: Thank you too.

## **APPENDIX\_G**

Sample interview conducted with the students of the University.

The researcher: would you tell me something about your experience on instructional methods in your high school or here?

The student(Sinishaw): When I was a high school student, I can not Remember or identify what method did teachers Use in teaching.

-They come to class, usually give us notes on the Blackboard,

-Sometimes dictate us and explain things to us.

-Sometimes they ask questions

-But now I identify that teachers were teaching us using traditional approach to teaching. In this university, they use active learning .But not always.

The researcher: What is active learning?

Sinishaw: It is different from what our teachers used in high schools.

The researcher: Can you tell me how it differs?

Sinishaw: In high schools we answer questions if the teacher asks.

-But in active learning we all/students do all the things that The teacher does.

-Even here this is not always instructors use the same as Our high school teachers.

-If it is always active learning is very good method.

The researcher: What do you think are the major problems not to Practice active learning in classrooms?

Sinishaw: I think instructors do not like it.

-In fact some students as well expect the instructors to do What they have experienced in high school.

Active learning needs instructors to use facilities.

The researcher: What facilities?

Sinishaw: Like charts, graphs, pictures, and other technologies in fact

We students can not buy these things.

The researcher: How about the teaching modules? Aren't they enough?

Sinishaw: There is shortage of such things

Some of them are difficult to understand they are not clear.

## DECLARATION

I, the undersigned, declare that this thesis is my work and that all sources of material used for this thesis have been duly acknowledged.

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